



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ENGLISH
LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

Major Paper

Title: *A Proposal for Developing Oral Fluency in English through the Multiple Intelligences Theory Application in Sophomore Students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos*

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ABSTRACT

The development of fluency in the oral activity is an important asset for the, acquisition, comprehension and final application of both the mother tongue and a foreign language. Thus, looking for the best ways to introduce the language contents in the classroom would make the students effectively use it in in-school and out-school contexts. The current paper presents —A proposal for developing oral fluency in English through the Multiple Intelligences Theory application in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegosll. The main aim of this research is to elaborate a proposal of tasks for developing oral fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos. In order to carry out this task, a set of theoretical, empirical and mathematical research methods were applied. Their application allowed the researcher to analyze, conclude and provide theoretical analysis of the information about the development of speaking skills in English in a fluent way, as well as modelling the tasks the paper presents. It also provides a wide perspective on the use Multiple Intelligences in favour of learning and use of English-as-a-foreignlanguage in a

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contextualised and professional context.

QUOTATION

“A lot of knowledge in any kind of an organization is what we call task knowledge. These are things that people who have been there a long time understand are important, but they may not know how to talk about them. It's often called the culture of the organization.”

Howard Gardner

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DEDICATION

To my dear mom, my Grandmother and my Father

To God

To all those people who devote themselves to teaching, especially me!

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It takes a lot of extra effort to accomplish any research. The support of a lot of people in several ways is also needed. Sometimes, because of their spontaneity when giving a hand to help you, they are unaware of how much they have offered to the research, the mankind, and to you.

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Keywords: Oral fluency, Multiple Intelligences Theory, Speaking skills, Sophomore students, English language learning

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INTRODUCTION

The human society gathers groups of men and women, having each of them special needs that are totally different within each individual. That is the distinction mark that makes men different from other living groups. History says that the first manifestations of collective life imposed the necessity of a communicative system. It is not important to have a scientific or religious formation. The theory of the spontaneous rising of the linguistic communities is as complicated as trying to understand all the aspects of human life.

Even when men speak different languages all over the world, there are supremacies for each of the stages of social development. First the tribes, then the cities and finally the empires, they all set languages that were the legacy for the coming generations. The —universal language condition is a temporary distinction and it is absolutely linked with the glamour of a civilization. Throughout history, there has been a parade of civilizations that gained the condition of considering its language as universal.

The English language has been getting richer and important worldwide recognition with the —Industrial Revolution and the colonial expansion of England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And this evolution was strengthened during the economic and military growth of the United States of America that came after World War I.

Most of the information gathered in books, newspapers, international matches, music and publicity all over the world is now published in English. The fact that English has become an international and universal language has conditioned the development of several courses for learning the language in contexts in which it is not spoken as a first language.

Although English language learning throughout the world has been improved lately, some authors consider that students are still learning the language passively. Most of the students think that it is hard to improve their oral English, and in most of the cases they are afraid to speak using the language fluently. This might be caused by

the presence of psychological factors that become barriers in the development of oral skills.

In Cuba, the study of English as a foreign language (EFL) has been developed for years. Nowadays, this subject is considered of a high priority for the Cuban Ministry of Education. It helps the students comprehend different materials that are edited in the foreign language, as well as expressing themselves in an oral and written form in a coherent and fluent way.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Cuban Ministry of Education has developed different strategies and approaches that involve the learning of EFL at different levels of education, including Higher Education.

The current approach for developing the teaching-learning process of English in Higher Education in Cuba is based on the application of the course contents related to the series "*At Your Pace*", which main objective is to provide learners with the possibility to develop communicative competence in English in an independent way (Pérez, J. et al, 2008).

This course is designed for providing general understanding of the language, as well as for developing the four major skills of language study, that is: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking; being the last one the skill the current study focuses on.

For years, researchers have focused their attention in the development of speaking skills in EFL, and most of the syllabuses have been developed to provide practice in this productive language skill. However, many teachers still do not find the appropriate ways to introduce the communicative aspects of the language in the teaching-learning process of English.

Speaking skills development involves students in the communication process by providing them with useful, natural English along with opportunities to discuss topics of personal interest and to communicate their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

The series —*At Your Pace*, as described before, deals with the development of speaking skills in a general context, so it is the teacher's aim at this stage to provide

the students with useful language that allows them to communicate appropriately in the foreign language.

Experiencing the teaching of English at the University of Cienfuegos some difficulties with the students' application of the foreign language in an oral way were detected, basically due to the student's misapplication of the communicative functions introduced both in and outside the classroom context.

Thus, it was the researcher's aim to diagnose the actual level of the development of speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics, in order to find out the students needs for the development of oral fluency in the FL

The main results of the diagnostic process are described as follows: out of 38 students who were diagnosed in speaking skills development, 7 of them used the communicative functions in a fluent way while developing the speaking activities assigned, representing the 18.4 % of the sample. The other 31 students belonging to the group did not show relevant skills while using the language fluently in a communicative situation given, which represents the 81.5 % of the students diagnosed. The main irregularities from the diagnosis process are the following:

- There is a lack of activities for providing the application of the communicative functions studied even though the course book provides some.
- There is no relation between the topics that the course book provides and the specific purposes of the student's career.
- Students do not usually apply the communicative functions in in-classroom tasks, mainly due to the fact that the series —At Your Pacell is designed to provide the students with a more independent learning approach.

The analysis of the diagnostic process developed, allowed the author of this research paper to state as **scientific problem**: *How could oral fluency be developed in sophomore students of Informatics for more effective language application?*

In correspondence with the scientific problem, the main **objective** of the current study is: *to elaborate a proposal of tasks for developing oral fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos*. Since the

object of study is the teaching – learning process of English in the major of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos, the **field of action** is defined as: *the development of students' oral fluency in speaking skills in English*. That is the reason why the following research states as **idea to be defended**: *the design and implementation of a proposal of activities based on the application of the Multiple Intelligences Theory will contribute to develop oral fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos*.

In order to accomplish the project goal some important **scientific tasks** were carried out:

- ✓ To diagnose the state of the development of speaking skill in English in sophomore students of informatics.
- ✓ Making bibliographical review about speaking skills development in English, and the use of the Multiple Intelligences Theory in the foreign language classroom.
- ✓ Elaboration of the proposal for developing oral fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics ✓ Assessment of the proposal.

There are some authors who have developed researches on the area of speaking skills in English. Most of them have provided sample activities for developing speaking skills at different levels of education. Vázquez (2001), Marín (2001), Cepero (2004), Alonso (2007), Jiménez (2007), Fernández (2008), Quevedo (2010), and González, A. (2010) have suggested different proposals for developing speaking with specific purposes and/or with a communicative approach at this level of education including Higher Education. However, none of them have been focused on the development of oral fluency through the application of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory in the language classroom.

For the purpose of this study, different scientific methods were applied. Thus, from the theoretical methods, the research follows:

1. **Analytic-synthetic**: It was taken into account to analyse and summarise the information related to the development of speaking skills in English, and the use of Multiple Intelligences in favour of the teaching process, as well as

analysing the results of all the instruments and techniques applied during the diagnostic process of the problem.

2. **Inductive-deductive:** It was used to operate with the results of the research at its different stages, so as to make generalizations about the development of speaking skills in English.
3. **Historical-logical:** It was applied in order to deepen in the historical background of the language teaching in Cuba -specifically English, as well as determining the regularities of the application of the Multiple Intelligences in favour of the teaching-learning of English.

From the empirical methods, on the other hand, the following methods were applied:

1. **Survey to students:** it was applied to sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos to find out their opinions about the development of speaking skills in English through the application of activities related to the Multiple Intelligences Theory (MI).
2. **Interview to teachers of "At Your Pace":** to seek for information about the development of oral fluency in English through the course —At Your Pace, as well as knowing the teachers' viewpoints on the importance they give to the application of the MI Theory in the learning process of the EFL at college level.
3. **Specialists' Assessment:** *To assess the effectiveness of the proposal for the development of fluency in speaking skills through the application of the MI theory in the FL classroom.*
4. **Observation:** it was carried out to English language lessons based on the application of the course —At Your Pace. The main purpose was to corroborate in practice the main strategies for the development of oral fluency in EFL that teachers use, as well as determining how frequently teachers encourage their students towards the development of fluency in speaking skills.

The practical contribution of the research is the proposal of tasks provided for developing fluency in speaking skills through the application of the MI theory in the

teaching-learning process of English in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos.

The paper is structured in an introduction, two chapters, conclusions, and recommendations. The first of the chapters deals with the background foundation on Speaking Skills development in English, and the application of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory in language learning based on the theory proposed by Gardner (1983). The second of the chapters presents the proposal itself, and the analysis of the previous and final results of the research.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND FOUNDATION ON SPEAKING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLISH. IMPLICATIONS OF THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES (MI) THEORY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

This chapter deals with the main aspects of the theoretical background related to speaking skills development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It presents theoretical analyses of communicative teaching in foreign languages, as well as outstanding remarks about the use of the Multiple Intelligences Theory in the learning process and its application in the language classroom.

1.1 The communicative teaching of speaking skills in English: trends for its development

Speaking is considered to be nearly the most important skill to be developed by the learner, most of the time proficiency in this skill is what judges the knowledge the learner has about the second language.

People have too many reasons to improve their speaking skills, such as expressing ideas, creating relationships, exchanging information etc. However, the development of this skill is not an easy task for anybody, there are many aspects a learner should take into account while developing speaking in a foreign language; they must be active and dynamic practicing and exchanging patterns that are important for the appropriate development of this skill.

Definitions of speaking have been expanded in the last decades (Brown 1984). One trend has been to focus on communication activities that reflect a variety of settings: one-to-many, small group, one-to-one, and mass media.

A second trend has been to focus on basic competencies needed for everyday life - for example, giving directions, asking for information, or providing basic information in an emergency situation. Another approach has been to focus on using communication to achieve specific purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to solve problems (Mead, 1985).

The latter approach has been stated in the Speech Communication Association's guidelines for elementary and secondary students. Many of these broader views stress that oral communication is an interactive process in which an individual alternately takes the roles of speaker and listener, and which includes both verbal and nonverbal components.

According to Spratt, Pulverness and Williams (2009) in —The TKT Course, speaking is a productive skill that involves using speech to express meaning to other people. Generally, when people speak they pronounce words; use intonation, take part in discussion, ask for and give information, respond appropriately, tell stories and take part in conversations.

According to these authors, teachers can develop learner's speaking skills by focusing regularly on particular aspects of speaking like body language, grammatical accuracy, and fluency-pronunciation; which is the particular aspect the author of the project emphasises on through the development of the research. While developing speaking skills in English, the learner must be exposed to communicative situations that take place in natural environments; and speeches in the target language should be as real as possible so they enable the learners to develop their awareness of conversational features and strategies.

It is the teachers' task, then to incorporate real communication patterns in the classroom, promoting interactive and realistic activities in order to help students gain confidence and feel motivated.

Despite its importance in language acquisition, the teaching of speaking skills in English has been focused for years on the development of repetition of drills, and memorization. Fortunately, today's approach for teaching speaking in English has been based on the improvement of students' communicative skills, since it allows them to express themselves and learn how to appropriately follow the social and cultural rules in each communicative context.

The second half of the twentieth century brought about different approaches for the development of speaking skills. Among this approaches, the one that best suits the development of speaking skills in English is the Communicative approach described by Hymes (1972).

The main aspects contained in this approach describe the necessity of creating situations in which the students can freely use the foreign language patterns in communicative situations provided.

According to Krashen (1982), learners use the language from the very moment in which they are able to understand the meaning of the messages provided in the communicative activity. The key point to fulfil this task is to use contextual key words that support the unknown linguistic elements.

Swain (1985), on the other hand, states that for attaining communication it is important the production in the foreign language.

It is the English teachers' aim then, to provide students with opportunities to communicate about topics which are relevant for them, taking into consideration their needs of study, the linguistic outcomes, and the supplementary material goals, the contents, and procedures to be used at every teaching level.

For Hymes (1972), the communicative process involves the presence of four competencies that complement the communicative competence described by him in 1972. These competences gather the linguistic competence, the sociolinguistic competence, the strategic competence, and the discourse competence. According to *The Essential of Language Teaching* (2004), the linguistic competence means knowing how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic

competence usually makes the student wonder what words they should use, and how they put things into phrases and sentences.

The sociolinguistic competence, on the other hand, refers to knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Thus, sociolinguistic competence puts the students to think about the words and phrases that might fit the setting or the topic they are talking about, how they can express a specific attitude like courtesy, authority, friendliness, and respect; and how they know about the attitude another person is expressing.

The strategic competence deals with knowing how to recognise and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language and the context. Strategic competence makes the students wonder how to know that they have misunderstood a message, or when someone misunderstood them, what to say then, and how they can express their ideas if they do not know the name of something or the right verb from to use.

As for discourse competence, it means knowing how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole. This competence asks the students how words, phrases, and sentences can be put together to create conversations, speeches, newspaper articles, etcetera.

Communicative competence has been one of the most discussed matters regarding language teaching. It is quite important to highlight that communication does not only imply a verbal process, since it also requires the understanding of non-verbal signals which are transmitted through visual texts such as: pictures, movies, photos, etcetera. These items will be taken into account by the author of the research when referring to the use of the multiple intelligences in terms of fluency in speaking skills development.

It is also important to note that out of the four competences contained in the communicative competence, the one that best describes the process of developing

fluency in speaking, in the author's opinion, refers to the development of the discourse competence, since the students should identify how to create words conversations or speaking tasks putting words, sentences and phrases together.

Communicative competence then is defined as the ability to use the language properly to complete communication objectives. The desired goal of language learning is the ability to communicate and not the ability to use language as a native would do.

For Hymes (1972), communicative competence is the knowledge and skill gathered by the use of language when precisely determining what to say, to who, why, how, where and when, and it includes the correct and appropriate use of the language. Communicative competence includes the four language skills: listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing. Thus, if considered that language is an instrument that is used to communicate, it is necessary to underline the importance of the four skills' interaction in the act of communication.

Listening, writing, speaking and reading do not occur in isolation, for example, in an oral conversation students assume roles of senders and receivers in the interactive exchange of information. On the other hand, by writing letters, articles, and summaries of texts, the information is received and shared with other students through written communication.

Speaking skills can also be developed through the introduction of an oral summary of a text, and after having heard or written about a particular topic. Therefore, when communicative language competence is developed, the four skills of language are being improved, so as the inevitable integration among all of them. For Canale and Swain, according to González (2010), in the overall design for language teaching, there are five important principles for supporting the development of the communicative approach in the English language classroom.

These principles imply that the communicative competence is composed of a strategic, discourse, linguistic and socio-linguistic competence, as described before.

Secondly, it can be said that a communicative approach is based on the communication needs presented in the learning process, and provides solutions to

them, specifying that the grammatical competence refers to the levels of accuracy in oral and written communication, meanwhile socio-linguistic competence includes requirements related to the situation itself, and the subject and the communicative functions to be used.

The foreign language student should have the opportunity to interact with native speakers, giving a response to genuine communicative needs in real situations. At the beginning of the language study, learning must make optimal use of those aspects of communicative competence matching between mother tongue and second language.

On the other hand, to develop competence in the communication process, teachers should provide students with information, practice and as much experiences as possible to address their communication needs in the foreign language.

The presence of these principles in the foreign language classroom will make easier the development of the communicative competence at a higher level. The author of this research considers that the more teachers are able to introduce these elements in terms of integrating the contained competences in communication, the greater and more effective the communication process would be in the foreign language.

The author of this research also agrees with Swain (1985) in the fact that producing the new language certainly helps students not only to create new messages in a fluent way, but also understand oral language as such. This fact will definitely give the students the practice they need to develop oral fluency in the current trends for developing speaking in English as a foreign language.

1.2 Importance of speaking skills development in the EFL classroom

Speaking is one of the main skills a person needs for accomplishing a complete communication process. A person usually learns first to listen, then to speak and read and finally to write either in the mother tongue or the foreign language. Speaking is the skill most language learners wish to develop as soon as they can. Learners can listen to a song by themselves, they can read a magazine on their own and/or write a letter without help; but they cannot definitely speak to themselves. At this point the communication process requires both a sender and a receiver of the oral message transmitted.

In foreign language classrooms, the development of oral skills plays a significant role in the application of language in a fluent and accurate way. Teachers of English have to encounter interesting elements when dealing with oral production development, which certainly involves developing speaking skills.

Most of the time, students are aware that learning English is an important and useful tool to be used throughout their lives. Learning this language gives more professional and socio-cultural alternatives to consider and take advantage of. Students usually wonder why they cannot speak fluently, referring to native-like fluency with good pronunciation; not noticing that fluency refers to speaking at a normal speed, without hesitation, repetition or self-correction (Spratt et al., 2009). Thus, developing speaking skills through fluency tasks highlights the desired outcomes learners want to achieve.

For students, it is difficult to communicate clear, spontaneous and quick ideas if they do not use the language accurately. It is believed that for most non-native speakers, problems can arise when they are using English to communicate accurate ideas rather than fluent ideas.

Other authors like Ramakanta (2011) in his *Essay on the importance of good communication skills for employability*, consider that whether people form to be executives, engineers, doctors, lawyers, software professionals, public relations practitioners, journalists, accountants or politicians, they cannot be successful without knowing how to speak.

A good speaker is a good listener too. Knowledge, confidence and delivery are the basic elements of an effective speech and that requires training. Learners have to develop self-confidence and try to remove fear of psychosis slowly. The following points should be taken into consideration before people speak.

Thinking before speaking.

Knowing the message to be transmitted

Knowing something about the audience

Getting the points quickly. Then, it is easier for the listener to remember what has been said

Planning and preparing in advance what to say

Using easy language and simple words

Giving importance to the subject, and voice should be sweet

- Modulating the tones
- Illustrating with examples
- Sticking to the time schedule
- Having the facts and responding well to questions

In summary, English teachers must frequently suggest opportunities for the

- students to use the spoken language. This requires from learners not only
- knowing how to produce specific points of language such as grammar,
- pronunciation, or vocabulary in an oral form, but also understanding when,
- why, and in what ways language needs to be produced.
- It is important then that teachers monitor learners' speech production to
- determine what skills and knowledge they already have and what areas need
- development.

1.3 Teaching fluency in speaking skills in EFL: tasks to promote its development

Traditional classroom procedures of presentation, drilling and practice will not themselves enable students to learn the linguistic system (Brumfit, 1981). These traditional procedures may assist students to store parts of the language in their memories. Thus, in the current research author's point of view, the storage of language in the students' mind is fully accomplished through the development of production in the foreign language.

The role of fluency in speaking skills then is essential for the appropriate acquisition of language and its final application. In a Foreign Language (FL) classroom, it is common that students tend to evade speaking for many reasons. Speaking in a FL requires students to pronounce different sounds the speech organs are not used to produce. And sometimes the teaching-learning process is disturbed when students realize that they do not have the proficiency to produce an effective exchange of thoughts.

Furthermore, for Kinegal (2005), teachers find a really heading problem when trying to implement oral activities in FL classrooms. For example, if the students are asked to work in pairs to practice speaking, they have a tendency to revert the product to their mother tongue (L1) since a lot of cognitive effort is required for using the FL.

However, during teacher controlled exercise sometimes students have to speak out loud in front of their classmates, which may increase their shyness. Thus, according to Montijano-Cabrera (2003), oral practice of a FL is a threat for both teachers and students, and as a result there seems to be a loss of motivation to perform oral tasks.

In this particularly complex area of FL teaching, if teachers consider one of the goals to be: their students' ability to speak the target language with some degree of fluency, as FL teachers they find themselves continuously trying to determine how they may better help their students to achieve this goal.

What tends to happen is that the more students practice speaking, the more they will be able to speak. That is, the more possibilities are provided for students to use the FL in and out of the classroom, the more efficient they will become as speakers of the language.

The author of this research considers that in many opportunities the amount of time that students spend communicating verbally in the FL classroom is in fact minimal. When teaching speaking, the teacher therefore has the responsibility to create plenty of opportunities for students to use -or negotiate with- the language they have learnt or been exposed to. Such opportunities, according to Brumfit (1981) and Kinegal (2005), can be provided by fluency work, in which students are expected to concentrate on the communication task, on the use of language, and not on formal accuracy.

On the other hand, syllabuses usually specify what the teacher has to teach. A great deal of work in class, however, must be concerned not with teaching, but learning. One of the teacher's biggest difficulties is that learner's speed of learning is different from the teacher's speed of teaching.

Making use of different activities to provide more oral practice is very important and will help students become more comfortable with the use of the FL, and consequently

speaking it with some fluency degree. These activities should be guided to set the stage for natural discourse in the classroom. One of the classic activities teaches do, in an attempt to provide more oral discussion, is to ask students to write a dialogue to be later performed in the class.

Allowing students select what they want to talk about is an important tool to be used in such activities. These memorized dialogues will give the students a certain confidence degree that may help them to go on spontaneous ones.

Authors like Mack-Donovan (2001) consider that doing these kind of performed dialogues do not provide the student with the opportunity to use the language spontaneously, since they give a model that students may follow only substituting main information. This will definitely break spontaneousness in the production process.

The author of this paper partially agrees with Mack-Donovan's ideas, since memorising dialogues is a good choice for students to have a pattern or model to follow, and then they can get to not only substitute language, but provide new models as well.

It is also really important for teachers to encourage students to speak by using their mother tongue when they do not know the vocabulary in English, as a bridge for making up complete ideas in the FL. This would be really helpful whenever the teacher guides the activities to help learners use the foreign language taking as bases their mother tongue. Asking questions like: How can I say *teclado* in English?, might be helpful.

Even when some syllabuses contain proposals of tasks and activities for the students to develop fluency in speaking skills, it is important that teacher take into account that there is a series of tasks that can certainly help the students master their skills in speaking.

In the authors' opinion, these tasks may include:

- working with video sequences with scripts,
- using songs in the EFL classroom, and
- working with dialogs construction

Other authors like Kayi (2006), consider that speaking skills eventually involve the development of group work in order to achieve a goal to complete a task. In such cases, the most useful tasks or activities to promote speaking skills development include:

- Discussions Interviews •
- Role play Story completion •
- Simulations Reporting •
- Information gap Picture narrating •
- Storytelling Picture describing •

A brief description of how to use these tasks is provided by the author of the research paper below.

Using *discussions* to promote the development of fluency in speaking might be useful after a content-based lesson, since students may arrive to conclusions, share ideas about events and/or find solutions to problems.

Before the discussion it is essential that the purpose of the discussion task is set by the teacher. Thus, the discussion points should be relevant to the students for avoiding spending time chatting about irrelevant things.

An example task for discussions may involve students controversial conversations where the teacher provides them with sentences like —people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel. Then each group of students works on their topic for a given period of time, and present their opinions to the class. This task fosters critical thinking and quick decision making as the students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with others. For efficient group discussions it is always better not to form large group. Group members can be either assigned by the teacher or decided by the students, but the group should be rearranged in every discussion task so that the students can work with various people and learn to be open to different ideas. Lastly, in class or group discussion whatever the aim is, the student should always be encouraged to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification, etcetera.

Role play, on the other hand, represents another way of getting students to speak (Harmer, 1984). In such tasks, students pretend they are in various social contexts

and have a variety of social roles. In role-play tasks/activities, the teacher provides the learners with the information they need to develop the task. This information may include characters such as who the students will perform and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can give the student hints like: —You are David, you have been working on a new computing program this year, and....

As for the use of *simulations* while developing fluency, Harmer (1984) states that this type of tasks are very similar to role-play, but what makes simulations different is that they are more elaborated. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if students are acting as computer programmers, they can bring laptops or CD-ROMs with softwares they may use during the task. This type of tasks motivates the students towards using the language in real contexts. Furthermore, Harmer (1984) suggests that simulations increase selfconfidence of hesitant students since they do not have to take the same responsibility as in role-play.

Information gap is a type of task in which students are mainly working in pairs. One student will have the information that the other partner does not have, so they have to share the information. Also, each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide each other with the information they both need. These tasks are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively using the foreign language.

Another good task for developing fluency might be *storytelling*. Through this type of task students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell to their classmates. Storytelling fosters creative thinking, and helps students express the ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending; including the characters and setting a story should follow for its development.

Interviews are tasks in which students have the opportunity to exchange information through question-answer sets in which the teacher usually provides a guide and/or model so that they know what type of questions they should use.

Conducting interviews allows each student to present his or her study to the class. On the other hand, a very enjoyable, whole-class, free-speaking activity in which students sit in a circle is *story completion*. In this activity/task, the teacher begins a story, and after a few sentences he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from three to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events descriptions and others.

As for *reporting* as a task, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine before coming to the classroom, and later in class, they report to their classmates and teacher about what they think are the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

Picture narrating and *picture describing* are two similar types of tasks that differ in the amount of pictures that are presented. In the first case, the task is based on several sequential pictures. Students are asked to tell the story taking place in the sequential pictures by paying attention to the criteria the teacher provides, which can include the vocabulary or structure they need to use while narrating. In the second case, the teachers provide the students with just one picture and have them describe what appears in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture in their groups, and then a spokesperson describes the picture to the whole class. This task fosters creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

In summary, teachers of EFL can use a wide variety of tasks and activities to develop fluency in speaking skills, but it is their responsibility to make an adequate and correct use of each of them. The author of the current research totally agrees with the tasks proposed by Kayi (2006), and Harmer (1984), and takes most of them as reference for the elaboration of the proposal the paper presents.

1.4 Multiple Intelligences Theory and its application in Language Learning.

The theory of Multiple Intelligences was developed by Howard Gardner in order to describe and analyse the concept of intelligence in the (1980s). For this author, the

concept of intelligence that had been defined in psychometrics or IQ tests didn't describe the wide variety of cognitive abilities that humans display (Gardner, 1983). Gardner proposes eight different —intelligences or ways to be intelligent. Although the amounts of intelligences that can be developed in humans have been expanded to nine during the last decade of the last century, the eight intelligences that Gardner described are:

- Verbal/Linguistic intelligence
- Logical/mathematical intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence
- Visual/Spatial intelligence
- Bodily/Kinesthetic intelligence
- Musical/rhythmical intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Naturalist intelligence
- Existential intelligence

According to Gardner, the schools and culture in each country focus most of the attention on the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence, even though there are people who develop some other intelligences mainly because of the type of work they do. Artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, and others who enrich the world in which humans live are among these people.

More recently, another type of —intelligencell has been pointed out. Thus, the theory's nine currently accepted intelligences include the eight ones previously mentioned and the Existential Intelligence (Slavin, R, 2009: 117)

The application of MI theory in the teaching-learning process proposes that teachers should be trained to present their lessons using the wide spectrum of possibilities that music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, inner reflection, and other types of tasks provide.

According to Fonseca (2007) though, the existential intelligence has not yet been applied to languages teaching.

As in many schools all over the world, it is the authors' purpose to provide changes to the way in which teachers educate children, teenagers, young adults, and adults through the application of the MI theory in the EFL classroom. The challenge for teachers is to look for the best ways for the students to learn what they need to in order to develop and/or foster the major skills in language learning.

A closer view to the main aspects contained in the MI theory is described as follows: When developing the Visual /Spatial intelligence, the students deal with spatial judgment, and the ability to visualize with the mind's eye. Developing this intelligence involves the students in the recognition and use of patterns of wide space and more confined areas. The ability to —think in picturesll to perceive the visual world accurately and recreate or alter it in the mind or on paper helps the students develop the process of language acquisition in a more effective way. For the Verbal/Linguistic intelligence, students easily learn through activities that have to do with words, spoken or written. People with high verbal-linguistic intelligence display a facility with words and languages. They are commonly good at reading, writing, telling stories and memorizing words along with dates. They tend to learn best by reading, taking notes, listening to lectures, and discussion and debate. Those learners with verballinguistic intelligence learn foreign languages very easily as they have high verbal memory and recall, and an ability to understand and manipulate syntax and structure.

On the other hand, students who easily develop skills in mathematics, and logical thinking processes learn better through the logical-mathematical intelligence. According to Fengqin (2005), this intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

This particular area has to do with logic, abstractions, reasoning, and numbers. It is often assumed that those with this intelligence naturally excel in mathematics, chess, computer programming and other logical or numerical activities. However, a more accurate definition places less emphasis on traditional mathematical ability and more on reasoning capabilities, abstract patterns of recognition, scientific thinking and investigation, and the ability to perform complex calculations. It correlates strongly with traditional concepts of "intelligence" or IQ.

The ability to learn through the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using the learner's whole body or parts of his/her body to solve problems. This is the skill to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. The core elements of the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence are control of one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skilfully.

In theory, people who have bodily-kinesthetic intelligence should learn better by involving muscular movement (e.g. getting up and moving around into the learning experience), and are generally good at physical activities such as sports or dance.

They often learn best by doing something physically, rather than by reading or hearing about it.

For Gardner, there is a relation between the mental and physical activity. Dealing with the musical /rhythmical intelligence, the author of this paper considers that this particular area involves working with sounds, rhythms, skills in performance, composition and appreciation of musical patterns. Thus, people with a high musical intelligence normally have good pitch and may even have absolute pitch, as they are able to sing, play musical instruments, and compose music.

Since there is a strong auditory component to this intelligence, those who are strongest in it may learn best via lecture. For Armstrong (2009), language skills are typically highly developed in those whose base intelligence is musical. In addition, learners will sometimes use songs or rhythms to learn. They have sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, meter, tone, melody or timbre.

As for the interpersonal intelligence, the author of the project agrees with Fengquin (2005) that this intelligence is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. Learning through this intelligence allows learners to work effectively with others. For Armstrong, this area has to do with interaction with others. In theory, people who have a high interpersonal intelligence tend to be extroverts, characterized by their sensitivity to others' moods, feelings, temperaments and motivations, and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group.

The students under this intelligence are able to communicate effectively and empathize easily with others, and may be either leaders or followers. They typically learn best by working with others and often enjoy discussion and debate. The intrapersonal intelligence, on the other hand, entails the capacity to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations; that is the ability to understand oneself and know what one does well and what one needs to improve.

According to Fengqin, in Gardner's view, the intrapersonal intelligence involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives (Fengqin, 2005:74).

Regarding the naturalistic intelligence, it is said that this has to do with the ability to recognize, categorize and draw upon certain features of the environment. Thus, this area has to do with nature, nurturing and relating information to one's natural surroundings, identifying and describing natural processes such as seasonal change, the growth of animals or plants.

The ninth of the intelligences deals with the ability to contemplate phenomena or questions beyond sensory data, such as the infinite and infinitesimal. This is what researchers call the existential intelligence.

A closer view to how teachers can relate the development of fluency in speaking skills with the application of Multiple Intelligences in the FL classroom is stated by the current research's author as follows:

Multiple Intelligence	Possible tasks for developing fluency in speaking
Verbal-linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompting discussions about interesting topics • Using poetry related to the specialty • Have the students develop speeches • Storytelling • Making oral reports • Presenting summarised information from the internet • Using newspaper articles to report about
Visual-Spatial	<p>Discussing about a topic that has been presented through a video sequence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting from information that has been introduced through visual aids in general • Presenting information contained in a poster.

Logical- Mathematical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on analogue situations that can exist in the mother tongue and the FL • Using games to prompt speaking development
Musical- Rhythmical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop choral drilling • Making song analyses • Creating raps with language issues
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing group projects • Presenting group tasks to others • Developing communicative situations (dialogs) • Role-play
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations • Developing game-liked activities that provide interaction.
Intrapersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for self-assessment in speaking skills • Recording himself/herself to correct pronunciation • Self-reflections on interesting topics • Reflecting about self-interpretations
Bodily- Kinesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing role—playing • Dramatisations • Providing opportunities for skits performance • Using body language to communicate • Using facial expressions • Lab work
Naturalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing collected objects from nature • Presenting an open talk on nature

Despite the fact that teachers can recognise that students learn differently, another important and remarkable fact is that the students recognise the ways in which they

process information and do problem solving. That is, the better the students identify the —intelligencesll they develop, the better they will learn from them.

According to Hazemi (2007: 14), M. Kaufeldt (2005) developed a model for students to determine which —intelligencesll they were stronger at, and which ones were the least developed. These statements are based on Gardner and

Armstrong’s books and help the students find out what intelligence to use to better learn a foreign language.

1.4.1. M. Kaufeldt’s checklist for determining the students’ “intelligences” during the teaching-learning process

For the purpose of the current study, determining the students’ ways to be intelligent is as essential as providing models for the introduction of the Multiple Intelligences Theory in the foreign language classroom. That is, both students and teachers need to know how to determine the type of —intelligencell the students are stronger at, and the ones they are not.

It is important then for teachers to provide the students with the *Eight Kinds of Smart student checklist* provided M. Kaufeldt (2005) so that they know their strengths and weaknesses while learning.

This checklist will help the students identify the ways in which they process the information and do problem-solving, as well as determine the type of intelligence they will make use of while learning.

For the students to determine if they are —word smartll and learn best through the **verbal-linguistic** intelligence, they may check the statements below:

- ___ Books are important to me.
- ___ I have a pretty easy time memorizing poems, stories, facts, etc.
- ___ I enjoy talking and telling stories.
- ___ I enjoy games like Scrabble, Boggle, and Hangman.
- ___ I like to write in a journal or write stories.
- ___ I like to look things up in books and encyclopaedias.
- ___ I like to listen to people read aloud to me.
- ___ When I ride in a car, I like to read signs or play the A-B-C Game.

I enjoy tongue twisters, rhymes, and puns.

I like to use big words when I write or speak.

As for the "Logic Smart" students (those who learn best through the **logicalmathematical** intelligence), they may wonder if...

I enjoy counting things.

I like to make patterns, and I notice patterns in my world.

I often ask adults questions about how things work or about things in nature.

I can add and subtract in my head.

I like to measure, sort, and organize things.

I like to do games or solve problems that require logical thinking.

I am interested in new inventions and theories in science.

I like to set up little experiments.

I enjoy doing math at school.

I like watching science shows or nature programs on T.V.

For those students who learn best through the **visual-spatial** intelligence, they should check the following list.

I enjoy drawing and painting pictures and designs.
I love colours, and I have some special favourites.

I enjoy putting together puzzles.

I like playing with blocks, Legos, Tinker Toys, etc.

I have vivid and colourful dreams.

I can close my eyes and visualize things in my head.

I can usually find my way around my neighbourhood or town.

I like to take pictures or videos.

I love to look at picture books or magazines that have a lot of photos.

I can pick and match clothes to create great outfits to wear.

On the other hand, the students who use their body to communicate emotions, ideas, etc (**Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence**: "Body Smart") have to pay a closer attention to the following checklist.

I play at least one sport on a regular basis.

I find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.

- ___ I like working with my hands, doing activities like building, weaving, carving...
- ___ I think I am pretty coordinated.
- ___ I need to touch things in order to learn more about them.
- ___ I love wild rides at the amusement park and other thrilling experiences.
- ___ I often spend my free time outside.
- ___ I like to ride a bike or skateboard or go skating.
- ___ I enjoy dancing.
- ___ I can act out things and imitate other people's movements.

Students who are —music smartll, that is, they learn best through the **MusicalRhythmic** intelligence, should check out the list below:

- ___ I have a pretty good singing voice.
- ___ I can tell when someone sings or plays a wrong or off-key note.
- ___ I like to play or would like to learn how to play a musical instrument.
- ___ I like to listen to music on the radio, or on the stereo.
- ___ I sometimes catch myself humming a tune when I am working or learning.
- ___ I love to have music in my life.
- ___ I like to tap or bang on things to keep up a rhythm.
- ___ I've actually made up some of my own songs or music.
- ___ I notice non-verbal sounds (dog barking, waves, etc.) and hear things pretty well.
- ___ I sometimes get a melody or advertisement jingle stuck in my head.

Students who feel better working in a natural environment (**Naturalist intelligence**) will find interesting most of the things listed below:

- ___ I love nature, animals, and the outdoors.
- ___ I can sense and notice patterns in nature, and I enjoy pointing them out to others.
- ___ I am able to use patterns that I notice in order to navigate (get around) and I am not afraid of becoming lost in nature or a new environment.
- ___ I am sensitive to the changes in seasons, moon phases, tides, star patterns...
- ___ I am interested in learning the names and characteristics of various plants and animals.

___ I enjoy watching nature shows and programs about exploration and other cultures.

___ I find it fascinating, not frightening, to be in other environments different from my own.

___ I enjoy watching natural phenomena, like comets, sunsets, thunderstorms, waves.

___ I blend in easily within nature or a new culture; sometimes I even feel more comfortable in these situations than in others.

___ I often want to be out in nature when I am thinking about or problem-solving something.

As for the students who like interaction with other, they will find interesting the statements this checklist presents (**interpersonal** intelligence):

___ I usually have an easy time making friends.

___ I am a good person to help others do problem-solving.

___ I often want to help others.

___ I usually know what is going on with my friends and family (gossip!) ___ I am often a leader in clubs or cooperative learning groups.

___ I am the kind of person that others seem to come to for advice.

___ I prefer group sports instead of individual activities.

___ I like to play games with others over individual activities, like video games.

___ I feel comfortable in crowds and at social gatherings.

___ I think I notice when people are upset or having a hard time.

Finally, those students who like to self reflect, and feel they are —self smartll, will find connections in most of the statements hereby provided (**Intrapersonal** intelligence):

___ I am pretty independent; I don't rely that much on others.

___ I have hobbies that I like to do on my own.

___ Sometimes I have opinions or ideas that set me apart from others.

___ I like to keep a personal diary or journal.

___ I would prefer to spend time alone in the woods than at a busy, fancy resort.

___ I enjoy playing games by myself (video games, solitaire) rather than with others.

_____ I have some important ideas or goals that I like to think about.

_____ I need time to work on things by myself rather than in a cooperative group.

_____ I have a secret place or fort that I like to go to in order to get away from others.

_____ I sometimes have a difficult time talking with others in a small group.

In summary, developing language teaching through the application of the MI theory provides the students the possibility to use their own ways of being intelligent in favour of a better performance in the foreign language in both in and out the school context.

1.5 Using TBL in the language classroom. An overview for its implementation in speaking skills lessons

Speaking skills are the key to communication. Considering what good speakers do, speaking tasks can be useful not only in class but also outside the class context, especially if the tasks are related to the students' future professions.

The author of this paper considers that learning any language requires a supportive and relaxed atmosphere, where the student's perceptions and attitudes towards the target language play a relevant role in their oral proficiency development. That is why; providing speaking skills lessons a Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach allows the students to use the language in concrete tasks. The aim of TBL lessons, according to Spratts et.al (2009), is that the students complete a task, that is an activity in which students try to achieve something real, and have to communicate to do so.

In this particular teaching approach, the teacher can start by holding a discussion on a given topic, then give the students tasks to do so, discuss any new or problematic language the students may need for the task, and provide practice on the new language.

One of the most used approaches for developing EFL teaching through TBL is the one provided by Willis (1996), who suggests the use of tasks as the main focus in language classrooms, claiming that tasks create a supportive methodological framework. Often, when facing language learning problems, teachers look for

activities that create a difference in their classroom, and that is when TBL takes place.

A review of the main literature related to the topic suggest that TBL has increasingly achieved popularity in recent years and has been recommended as a way forward in English Language Teaching (Ruso, 2007).

Some influential experts, like Prabhu (1987), Nunan (1989), Willis (1996) and their definitions for tasks have also been analysed in this paper.

Prabhu (1987) is recognised as the first significant person in the development of TBL. His main contribution has been raising awareness of the English Language Teaching (ELT) world to TBL. Prabhu (1987: 24) defines a task as "an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process".

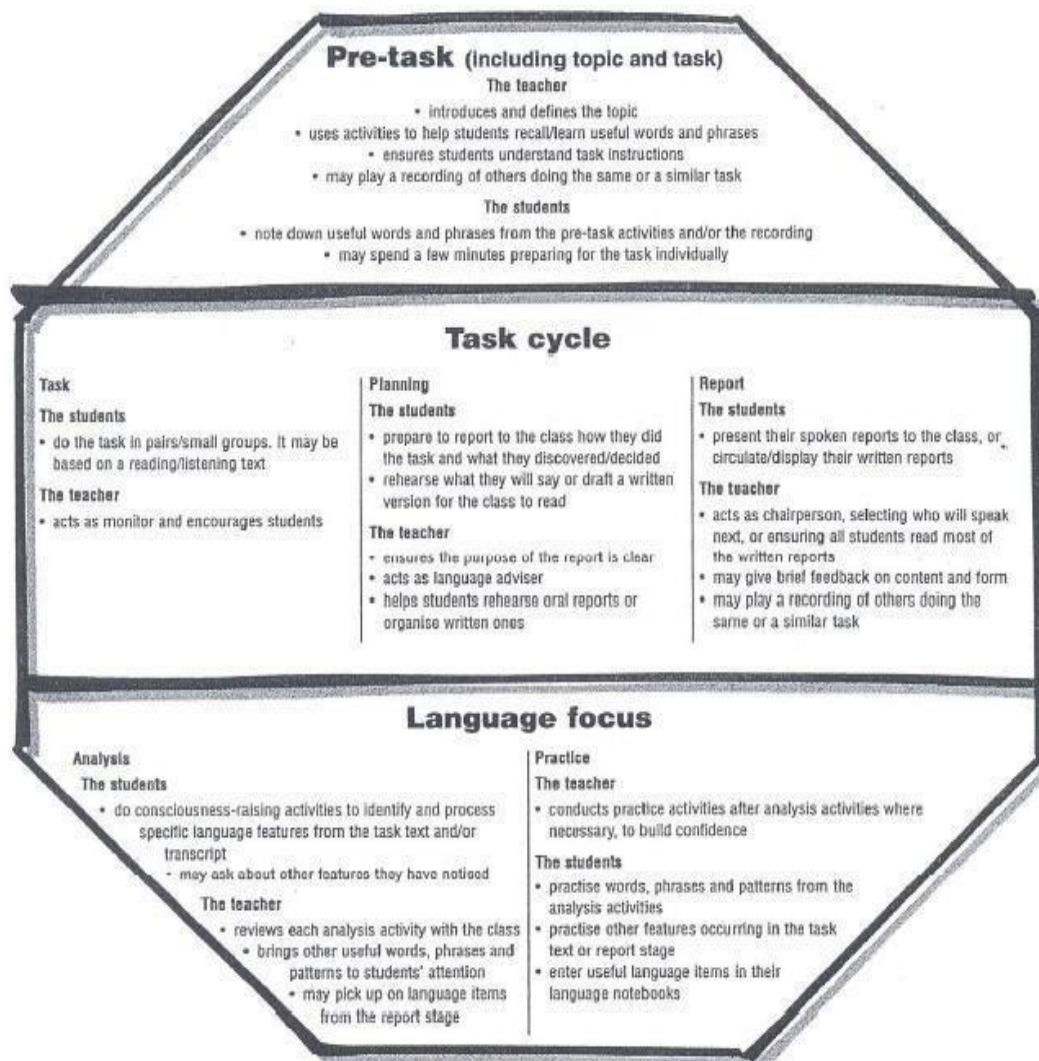
On the other hand, Nunan (1989: 10) uses the word 'task' instead of 'activity'. He defines a task as —a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form".

This author suggests that in all definitions of tasks, one can see communicative language use where the learner focuses on meaning instead of linguistic structure. Willis (1996) is another figure who contributes to the use of tasks in language classroom.

According to Willis (1996: 23) —tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome. Furthermore, Willis presents a TBL approach where tasks are used as the main focus of the lesson within a supportive framework. She holds that —the aim of tasks is to create a real purpose for language use and to provide a natural context for language study" (Willis, 1996:1).

The TBL framework Willis (1996) proposes consists of three main phases, and provides 3 basic conditions for language learning. These phases are the pre-task, task-cycle and language focus.

The following graphic represents what each phase or stage of the TBL process describes.



TBL Model provided by Willis (1996)

Pre-tasks are used to introduce the class to the topic and the task activating topic-related words and phrases, as well as for contextualising the students towards the topics they are working with to complete the task.

During the **Task Cycle**, on the other hand, learners have the chance to use whatever language they already know in order to complete the task and improve their language under the teacher's guidance while planning their reports on it. Task Cycle offers learners a holistic experience of language in use.

According to Ruso (2007), there are three components of a task cycle: the task itself, the planning and the report.

- a. *Task*: Learners use whatever language they can master, working simultaneously, in pairs or small groups to achieve goals of the task.
- b. *Planning*: Comes after the task and before the report, forming the central part of the cycle. The teacher's role here is that of a language adviser. Learners plan their reports effectively and maximize their learning opportunities.
- c. *Report*: is the natural condition of the task cycle. In this stage learners tell the class about their findings. So the report stage gives students a natural stimulus to upgrade and improve their language. It presents a very real linguistic challenge to communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately in language according to the circumstances.

The last of the stages for TBL implementation deals with the **Language Focus**, which allows a closer study of some of the specific features naturally occurring in the language used during the task cycle. Learners examine the language forms in the text and look in detail at the use and the meaning of lexical items they have noticed (Willis, 1996: 75).

The *Language focus* has two basic components: the analysis and the practice.

- a) Analysis activities draw attention to the surface forms, realising the meanings learners have already become familiar with during the task cycle and so they help them systematize their knowledge and broaden their understanding. Instead of the teacher presenting language to learners as new analysis activities, learners reflect on the language already experienced.
- b) Practise activities are based on features of language that have already occurred in previous texts and transcripts or in features that have just been studied in analysis activities (Ruso, 2007: 4)

In summary, many teachers have studied the implementation of TBL and tasks within their classrooms, and have advised using them in language classrooms suggesting that the motivation of students rises through assigned tasks. On looking at the positive results that the use of tasks may bring about in the EFL classroom, the

author of the research considers that using a variety of tasks in class gives positive results towards oral fluency development in English.

CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH IN SOPHOMORE STUDENTS OF INFORMATICS: A PROPOSAL OF TASKS

This chapter describes the analysis of the preliminary results of the research instruments and techniques applied during the diagnosis process. It also presents the description, foundations and assessment of the proposal of tasks for developing fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos, through the application of the Multiple Intelligences theory described by Gardner (1986).

2.1 The teaching of English to Informatics students: a need for a change The Cuban educational system assumes the greatest responsibility of forming students with a cultural and background on different issues, which occupies a prominent place among the essential components for the formation of the new generations.

As an institution of education, the University should consolidate and continue to foster the political formation of the students and the ethics and moral values they have acquired in previous educational levels.

The major of Informatics trains professionals to be committed to the Revolution, whose function is to develop processes related to information systems in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their operation. They usually use techniques for analysing and defining the settings for computational and information processing, and a pertinent relationship with a high level of professionalism.

This programme is also equipped with technological, organisational and managerial processes and knowledge that make possible for graduates to take part in all sectors of a society.

The graduate from the major of Informatics should be a professional with a solid technology training that deals with the collection, transmission, storage, processing,

protection and presentation of information through the efficient use of computers and other media.

Many areas of computer engineering are associated with the processes involved in the development and operation of a computer system; as well as selfmanagement of the learning process in correspondence with the systematic nature of the progresses in computer technology.

The close connection between theory and practice is an important support to provide resources that are necessary to appropriately accomplish the training process.

The educational system is designed to enable students to acquire appropriate knowledge included in the syllabus for each subject. The analysis and study of practical situations, seminars, laboratory activities and self-learning, including the course projects and professional practices form the bases for this knowledge.

The saying —learning by doing is used as a training principle. This principle provides more suitable practices for developing and managing software.

The major of informatics includes information related to each academic year where different subjects are taught, ensuring the development of independent work and evaluation systems that contribute to improve research and professional practice. This major of informatics also responds to different curricular strategies, including the learning of English language through the use of updated literature on the assimilation and use of software, as well as the review of materials to ensure independent work in both teaching and researching.

English language teaching has been given an increasingly important role in the professional formation of university students since the 1962 University Reform. During the eighties of the twentieth century, the development of reading skills with a strong emphasis in the professional field was favoured. In the current developed approach for teaching English at the university level, the technical needs of scientific and human sustainable development require an integrated concept for teaching this language; so a close attention has been paid to the linking of English within the academic and professional activity.

It is expected that the English Language syllabus is fully related to the teaching learning process of Informatics. As a result, the practical use of the language and its development are linked to the different activities the syllabus proposes for increasing the development of the student's cognitive independence.

English language teaching plays an increasingly cross-content role within the syllabus. This foreign language is an instrument of work and culture, so it is important that the subject contents contribute not only to the scientific and technical development of the students but also to the formation the future graduates.

Thus, the syllabus of English should be designed in order to develop the students' skills in speaking, writing, listening and reading comprehension, allowing them to communicate with some independence in contexts related to their field of work.

The English Language syllabus at this level is addressed to:

- Consolidate the ethic and moral values through group work and independent study.
- Strengthen the sense of individual and collective responsibility, social commitment, humanistic behaviour and professional ethics.
- Interact orally and in a written way with an intermediate level of independence in their professional context.
- Critically analyse oral and written texts in English related to their profession, at an intermediate level and from a neutral position.

Students are also supposed to acquire lexical structures as well as use communicative functions about providing and asking for information, expressing intellectual and emotional attitudes, and persuading and establishing social communication at the required formality level. They also have to know about the text structure (oral and written), along with the different types and purposes for reading.

The main skills Informatics students have to master are primarily based on academic and professional situations. They have to communicate orally with some degree of independence. They are also supposed to obtain information from oral and written

texts regarding general ideas, applying strategies of inference and critically evaluate what they read or heard.

In terms of writing, they have to develop note taking skills from oral or written texts, summarize the obtained information and use different kinds of communication with some degree of independence.

As for the study of integrated skills, students must use bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, and consolidate learning styles implementing strategies that will lead to further development of cognitive independence in English.

The language skills should be developed in an integrated approach to achieve mutual support. It is necessary for all the subjects to provide spaces for cultural development in students, so that they become active agents in the development of country.

Even when most of the objectives and expected outcomes the syllabus describes shows that students should be able to use language as a means of communication in their professional context, the actual development of integrated skills in the Informatics major classroom is not developed with such interest and importance. Most of the students at this level neglect the learning of English, or provide this process a second place in their priorities.

Trying to look for the appropriate ways of introducing language, making students systematise what they learn, and demonstrate the need for learning and applying the language in a professional context is one of the main goals the teacher of English at this level has.

The need for introducing a change the language is taught, and how the students can make use of it in different and specific contexts, leads the author of the current research to state that:

- Even when the English syllabus comprises the development of integrated skills to favour communication, students of Informatics still do not identify the need they have to learn and use the language in real life contexts.

- There is an increasing need to introduce tasks that promote the development of fluency in speaking skills, taking as bases the students' learning interest and academic fields.

2.2. Data collection and analysis of the preliminary research results

Analysis of the English syllabus for sophomore students of Informatics

The first decade of the Twenty first century brought about the idea of rethinking the ways English was being taught at universities in Cuba, so a number of specialists on this particular teaching area got together to look for a way to improve the development of skills in English in university students of every major.

According to Corona (2010), in the *ELT Conference held in March 2010*, the learning context of English needed to be rethought so that the role of teachers and students became a key component of the teaching-learning process of this subject.

The necessity of a text that allows the learning of English under these new conceptions required the application of technical resources that were accessible to all students at the university level, thus the series —At Your Pacell is recognized as the first Cuban language resource that allows the students to self-study the contents it presents.

These contents essentially tribute to the development of oral and written skills in English, allowing students to communicatively use the language in different situations that reflect daily life routines.

Communicative tasks in this series are addressed to prompt the teaching-learning process development in the students, not only from an intrapersonal point of view but taking as a start point the experiences exchanged among them. Each of the units gathered in this course pays a close attention to the integration of the basic skills of English Language; that is speaking, writing, listening and reading comprehension skills.

The tasks presented allow the students to self-study the contents and self-control their learning process, so as interact in English with their classmates, friends, family

members and neighbours in a way that they can self-evaluate the contents they study, and their personal pace while assimilating them (Figueredo et. al, 2005).

This series is divided into four parts. The first two ones complement each other including contents related to general English. Their main objective for all majors is addressed to the development of oral and written skills in English.

The third and fourth parts, differently from the first two ones, propose the development of the four skills of language from an academic and professional point of view. The last part —Stretching Your WingsII is specifically addressed to help college students to use the foreign language as a means of work in professional activities. The materials provided are designed to help the students improve and widen the knowledge and skills already learnt during the first three parts of the course.

Stretching Your Wings introduces materials like scientific articles of specialized journals, book chapters, reports, research, interviews, and summaries in order to continue improving the English language learning using thematic, interesting and useful vocabulary.

Within this course book, different activities for developing listening, speaking, writing and reading skills were designed. These activities allow students to "challenge themselves" since they have to make use of the skills they have previously developed to extract information that will help them review, compare, argue about a topic, or refute ideas, data or opinions.

In the particular case of sophomore students of Informatics, the syllabus for teaching English comprises the third and fourth parts of the series —At Your Pacell. The third part, dealing with English for Academic purposes is taught in the first semester of the academic year; while the fourth one is taught during the second semester, providing the students with opportunities to professionally apply the language.

This part of the course book -the fourth one- is divided into two sections, the first one is related to science and technology, gathering seven units and the second one is addressed to social studies with only five units .The main objectives of this course are intended to use the English language as a means of work in activities related to

the students' professional development. The proposal presented by the author of this research is intended to support the development of fluency in speaking skills using the contents that At Your Pace (Part IV) Stretching Your Wings proposes through —intelligentll tasks that will help the students communicate orally in a professional context.

2.2.1 Analysis of the preliminary results of the research

Analysis of the Survey to students:

The main objective of the survey to students was to gather the students' opinions about the development of speaking skills in English, through the application of tasks in which the Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory was taken into account. The first question was intended to seek for the students' information about the amount of time teachers provide to the development of fluency in speaking skills in English lessons. In this question, out of 38 students who represented the sample 28 considered that the amount of time teachers dedicated to the development of fluency in speaking skills is not enough. That is, the 73.6 per cent of the sample provided negative answers to this particular question.

On the other hand, the other 10 students considered that the amount of time teachers spent for the development of oral fluency is enough, representing the 26.3 % of the sample.

The second question was about the importance the students provide to the development of fluency in speaking skills for their professional performance. In this case, the 52.6 % of the sample considered that being able to communicate fluent ideas in English certainly provides maturity to their professional performance/development.

As for the other 18 students, they considered that fluently speak English would not provide any advantage to their professional lives; representing the 47.3 % of the sample.

The last of the questions was addressed to find out the types of tasks teachers use most frequently use for the development of speaking in their lessons. This time,

students had to choose among a list of possible tasks that were provided by the researcher.

The main results of this question are stated through the following chart, which describes the amount of students who agreed in using the particular tasks for the development of fluency, and the per cents they represent.

Tasks	Students who agreed in using the task for developing fluency	Per cent
Role play	18	47.3 %
Dramatizations	14	36.8 %
Oral reports about general topics	7	18.4 %
Oral reports about Informatics	10	26.3 %
Picture describing	5	13.1 %
Individual reflections for later debate	2	5.2 %
Spontaneous conversations	10	26.3 %
Direct interpretations	8	21 %
Others, Which ones?	4	10.5 %

In the case of the four students who stated that English teachers use other types of activities for the development of fluency in speaking skills, all of them added the interviews to the list provided.

Only three students considered that teachers do not usually use any of the task samples provided to develop speaking, which represents the 7.89 % of the students who were questioned.

Analysis of the diagnosis test

The diagnosis test was aimed at checking the students' application of the communicative functions related to providing personal information, discussing, and reporting about a specific topic.

For attaining this purpose, two questions were applied so that the students were able to communicate simple ideas related to the development of Informatics nowadays.

In the first question, the students had to interview their partners and discuss about the use of Informatics nowadays in Cuba, using as sample exponent questions like. What do you think about the application of ICT in Cuba nowadays?

During this performance of students' works, only 9 were able to communicate ideas that were easy to understand, and well-structured in the foreign language. That is the 23.6 % of the students diagnosed.

The other 29 were not able to transmit any coherent message in the foreign language, representing the 76.3 % of the sample.

For the second part of the diagnosis test, the students were asked to make a report for the rest of the classroom where they had to summarise the main ideas contained in the discussion with their partner. Only 8 students out of the 9 who were able to establish a conversation could develop this task, showing an actual problem with the development of speaking tasks in the foreign language classroom, even when the topic provided had to do with the specialty the students study at the university.

Analysis of the interview to teachers

The interview to teachers was applied to 5 professors who teach English with academic and professional purposes in other majors at the university. This time, teachers had to provide their opinions about the development of oral fluency in English, and the importance they give to the application of the MI Theory in the teaching-learning process of EFL.

In the first question, teachers had to provide priority to the development of speaking skills in their language lessons. This time, the total amount of teachers stated that speaking skills is the language skill they focus the most on all language lessons.

The second question was intended to find out if teachers include tasks in the lessons in which students need to interact among them for the development of oral fluency in English. Three of the teachers gave positive answers to this question, which represents the 60 % of the sample interviewed. The other two teachers considered

that even when they use tasks that are related to the development of fluency in speaking skills, not all of them provide interaction, since they also assign students to develop oral reports on personal experiences that they have to later present to the rest, or develop open talks about certain topics without having the chance to interact with other classmates.

About the frequency in which teachers use tasks for the development of fluency in speaking skills, most of them agreed that they sometimes use this type of tasks in the classroom.

In the third question teachers had to select the tasks they commonly used for the development of speaking skills in English.

The main results are stated as follows:

Tasks provided for teachers to select	Teachers who agreed in using the task for developing fluency	Per cent
Role play	5	100 %
Communicative micro-situations	5	100 %
Oral reports	3	60 %
Dramatizations	2	40 %
Picture describing	2	40 %
Spontaneous conversations	3	60 %
Open talks	4	80 %
Using games to prompt speaking development	1	20 %
Developing game-liked activities that provide interaction	1	20 %
Others...	2	40 %

The fourth question was aimed at finding out if teachers consider that making the most of Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory in the language classroom would make the students learn the FL better.

In this case, the 5 teachers agreed in the fact that the application of MI theory in language learning favours the development of the four basic skills of language in different ways. Some teachers consider that to make mental pictures for each part of speech, and to learn how to use it correctly in speaking and writing, is a tangible way of learning grammar. Some others prompt the use of different parts of the body to convey meaning. They also state that experimenting with surrounding sounds would be an efficient way for developing new vocabulary. Finally, three teachers considered that practicing speaking convincingly from a range of perspectives on a single issue would increase the students' capacity for passing into the perspective of others.

The last of the questions was related to the teachers' opinions for the application of MI theory for the development of oral fluency in the EFL classroom. This time, they had to say whether they agree or not with the previous statement. Out of the five teachers who were interviewed, four considered that using MI would effectively contribute to the development of oral fluency; that is, the 80 % of the teachers stated a positive opinion towards the formulated question.

2.3 Foundation and description of the proposal

Taking as starting point the main regularities defined in the process of diagnosis of the students' needs for the development of fluency in speaking skills, it can be said that the proposal the paper presents is based on different perspectives that include the application of the task based learning (TBL) in the language classroom described by Willis (1996), and the implementation of the Multiple Intelligences Theory defined by Gardner (1986).

The elaboration of the tasks responds to the linguistic objectives for the development of fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics, taking into consideration the main contents that the fourth part of the series —At Your Pacell presents for communicating professionally.

As previously stated, the didactic foundation of the proposal relies on the application of the TBL phases, providing the speaking skills development the transitions through pre-tasks for the contextualisation, activation of students' background knowledge

and preparation for the development of the task itself during the task cycle. Finally, the proposal presented allows the students to focus on the aspects of language they need to communicate the messages in the foreign language.

As for the psychological foundation, the proposal is supported by the application of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory in the EFL classroom. Thus, the students' best ways for learning are taken into account for effectively convey the messages in a fluent way. These intelligences allow students to identify the best way(s) to accomplish the task. That is, students who feel more comfortable speaking will learn better through the verbal linguistic intelligence. Those who like to analyse problems logically will better learn through the logical-mathematical intelligence, those who have the skills to compose, perform, and appreciate musical patterns will prefer the musical-rhythmical intelligence, and those who use parts of the body to solve problems will probably better learn through the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

On the other hand, those students who have the ability to —think in picturesll will better learn through the visual-spatial intelligence. Those who have the capacity to recognise or understand intentions, motivations and desires of others, will learn better through the interpersonal intelligence, and those who like to reflect on their own about their own feelings, fears and motivations will absolutely learn better through the intrapersonal intelligence.

The proposal presented in the paper takes the above mentioned elements into account while prompting the development of fluency in speaking skills, so that all students in the class can communicate and convey messages making the most of their own way(s) of being —intelligentll.

From the philosophical point of view, the proposal is based on the dialecticmaterialist approach as a methodological basis, since it allows the establishment of the relationship existing among language-thinking-sign and codes, as an essential means for human knowledge, and eventually the consequent development of fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics from a professional point of view.

The proposal compiles 28 tasks that were designed under the principles described above, and that share a common topic from different perspectives that allow students

use their —way(s) of being intelligentll to communicate fluently in English. The description of the tasks, in correspondence with the syllabus objectives, is described below:

Common Tasks Aim: To develop fluency in speaking skills through the application of the Multiple Intelligences Theory in the language classroom		
Topic of the tasks	Syllabus Unit they relate to	Intelligences they cover
Topic 1: <i>Biotechnology in Cuba I, II</i> <i>(Tasks 1-7)</i>	—At Your Pace 4. Stretching Your Wingsll Section 1: Units 1 and	Verbal-linguistic Interpersonal Visual-Spatial 2. Logical-mathematical Musical-rhythmical Bodily-kinesthetic Intrapersonal
Topic 2: <i>A new Bacterium I, II</i> <i>(Tasks 8-13)</i>	—At Your Pace 4. Stretching Your Wingsll Section 1: Units 3 and	Verbal-linguistic Visual-Spatial Interpersonal 4. Logical-mathematical Musical-rhythmical Intrapersonal Naturalistic
Topic 3: <i>Antioxidants, Micronutrients and HIV</i> <i>(Tasks 14-19)</i>	—At Your Pace 4. Stretching Your Wingsll Section 1: Unit 5	Verbal-linguistic Logical-mathematical Interpersonal Intrapersonal Bodily-kinesthetic Visual- Spatial Musical-rhythmical Naturalistic

Topic 4: A new vaccine developed in Cuba (Tasks 20-23)	—At Your Pace 4.	Verbal-linguistic
	Stretching Your WingsII	Interpersonal
	Section 1: Unit 6	Visual- Spatial
		Intrapersonal
		Logical-mathematical
		Bodily-kinesthetic
Topic 5: The Ripe Fruit Syndrome (Tasks 24-28)	—At Your Pace 4.	Verbal-linguistic
	Stretching Your WingsII	Interpersonal
	Section 2: Unit 1	Intrapersonal
		Musical-Rhythmical
		Logical-mathematical
		Bodily-kinesthetic

2.4 The proposal for developing fluency in speaking skills through MI theory application in the EFL classroom

Since students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos consider English as a subject that is included in the major curriculum to improve their language awareness, and not as a subject they think they should master to appropriately use the language in favour of their future projects; it is the teacher's aim to look for new ways of making the most of language study.

English is taught in four semesters of the major, and the research presented through this paper is intended to develop fluency in speaking skills of sophomore students of Informatics. That is why a general appraisal about how to implement the MI theory in speaking skills lessons aimed at developing fluency, is provided below. If a sophomore student of Informatics needs to read important information related to programming in computer science, and also has to develop or run a specific computer program, he/she should certainly develop the Verbal/Linguistic intelligence as he/she completes the task. It would be useful then to ask the students to give an oral report on what he/she did through the task in order to foster the development of speaking in the Foreign Language (FL).

If the students need to develop problem-solving or decision-making tasks, so as classifying information into groups, they are developing the logical/mathematical intelligence.

Having the students make a mind map, compare or contrast tables and later report on the content, would make them develop the visual/spatial intelligence.

Making observation notes describing changes in processes related to the environment, and then classifying objects according to their qualities for later speeches, teachers encourage students develop the naturalist intelligence. Using background music to go with story telling activities related to the Informatics or any other relevant topics refers to the development of musical/rhythmical intelligence.

On the other hand, if the students share or complete stories to make jigsaw activities that are to be narrated later, the need to exchange information would make the students develop the interpersonal intelligence.

However, if a student is asked to describe himself/herself, and/or assess his/her own work to improve his/her speech, then the teacher is encouraging the student to develop the intrapersonal intelligence.

The bodily-kinesthetic intelligence will be developed when students are involved in role-plays, or any tasks demanding the potentials of using his/her whole body or part of the body to solve problems.

On the other hand, recognising the students' intelligences is crucial for the teachers to assign different tasks according to the type of intelligence they develop. However, an important component of the teaching-learning process the proposal pays a closer attention to, is the assessment process.

According to Gardner (1993), it is desirable to have assessment occur within the context of students working on problems, projects or products that genuinely engage them and motivate them to do well. Teachers can improve their instruction by making use of such instruments of assessment and at the same time learners can have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a real application of the FL. In the particular case of the proposal presented through this project, the author decided to provide teachers and students with sample rubrics for assessing speaking skills (See

Appendix 5), understanding rubric as a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor (Andrade, 2011).

For elaborating a speaking skills-related rubric, different criteria should be taken into account, especially those related to fluency and accuracy while speaking. Thus, different models like the one presented by Dharamsi and Lowery (1995) were adapted for the purpose of the research work. The criteria defined in the rubrics are based on the Criterion-Referenced evaluation/assessment, since this type of evaluation to a prescribed curriculum requires that criteria are established based on the learning outcomes listed under the curriculum organizers of the subject.

2.4.1 The proposal

The proposal comprises 28 tasks; all of them are aimed at developing fluency in Speaking Skills in sophomore students of Informatics.

They all respond to different topics, sections and unit objectives of the syllabus —At Your Pace: Stretching Your WingsII, which main approach is communicating professionally. Thus, even when the syllabus proposes tasks for the development of speaking at certain points of the comprehension process, the author of the research provides other ways to develop such skills from an —intelligentII perspective using the MI theory as previously stated.

The tasks also relate to 5 topics that are in correspondence with the course units and sections.

Topic 1: Biotechnology in Cuba I, II

Task 1: You are a team leader of a group of Informatics who are asked to develop a software related to new advances in Biotechnology that have been taking place in Cuba. Prepare an oral report where you address to your team members for explaining the biotechnological bases for the software elaboration. (**Verballinguistic Intelligence/interpersonal intelligence**)

Task 2: You have recently participated in a video conference on Biotechnology in Cuba that has been recorded. As a computing trainee, you have to summarise the main aspects contained in the video conference, and be ready to present it to your classmates. Prepare the oral report and present it in class.
(VisualSpatial/VerbalLinguistic)

Task 3: Having to produce new software, there is a series of formulae that you have to develop. As a team coordinator for a software elaboration about Biotechnology in Cuba; you have to explain to the rest of the team members the calculations you had to do to create the computing resource. Prepare your talk on the explanation, and be ready to provide discussion in the team.
(Logicalmathematical/Verballinguistic/interpersonal)

Task 4: Your teacher has recently presented new vocabulary related to biotechnology in Cuba that you need to remember for later use. As you like music a lot, you create your own song to recall the introduced structures and vocabulary.
(Musical-rhythmical)

Task 5: Develop the communicate situation below **(Interpersonal/bodilykinesthetic)**:

Student A	Student B
<p>You are assigned to develop software for the Laboratory of Molecular Oncology (LMO) so you attend a conference on Oncology to become familiar with the main vocabulary. You meet new specialists on the Informatics and Biotechnology branches that you approach and start a conversation with. Use the language presented in class to establish a conversation.</p>	<p>You are a specialist Informatics/Oncology from Canada. Cuban computing specialist approaches you and starts a conversation about oncological software creation. Provide as much information as you know about the topic in an oral way.</p>

on
A

Task 6: Your teacher has recently provided you with an interesting material about how Biotechnology issues are reflected in computing works. Reflect on your own about the material, then make an oral report based on your reflections.

(Intrapersonal/Verbal-linguistic)

Task 7: You are a prominent investigator working in London and you are assigned to deliver a speech to a group of students from Cuba about how Informatics have influenced the creation of Haemophilus Influenza type b vaccine (the only synthetic vaccine of this kind in the world). Prepare your speech taking into account that your students are not English speakers; remember to use appropriate body language.

(Bodily-Kinesthetic/Verbal-linguistic)

Topic 2: A new Bacterium I, II

Task 8: After having completed activity IV on page 19 of your textbook —At Your Pace 4: Stretching Your Wingsll about the work of the Cuban and Canadian researchers to try to locate an endophytic bacteria, prepare a power point presentation in which you summarise and illustrate the experiments. Be ready to discuss the presentation with your classmates. **(Verbal-linguistic/Visual-Spatial/ interpersonal intelligence)**

Task 9: After having read the text on page 21 of your textbook —At Your Pace 4: Stretching Your Wingsll, and analysed the data presented about the isolation and purification of nitrogen-fixing bacteria; elaborate graphical guides that allow you to present these results using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in a conference. Be ready to offer an explanatory presentation about your computing product to the people who are presenting the results in the conference. **(Verballinguistic/Visual-Spatial /Logical-Mathematical/ interpersonal intelligence)**

Task 10: You are recently working on a computing website that will promote scientific knowledge about the nitrogen-fixing bacteria reported as endophytes in sugar cane. You have almost finished designing the website tools, but you still miss the musical background you will locate. Make an electronic musical background that fits the

website's purposes. Be ready to explain why you used the selected music background. (**Musical-Rhythmical/Verbal-Linguistic**)

Task 11: You are asked to prepare a video sequence on the development of the nitrogen-fixing bacteria reported as endophytes in sugar cane. For doing so, you have to collect proves in the field so you can make your video real. Reflect on the material you are preparing, and incorporate visuals, music, and explanation on your work so you can present it to the class. (**Verbal-linguistic/Visual-**

Spatial/intrapersonal intelligence/Musical-Rhythmical/Naturalistic)

Task 12: As a computing student, you are asked to illustrate the types of bacteria that are presented in the Discussion Session provided on page 22 of your textbook

—At Your Pace 4: Stretching Your WingsII. In completing such task, you have to develop a search in internet so you can download the images you need. Once you have found the images of the different bacteria, use the pictures to describe orally how they look. (**Visual-spatial/verbal-linguistic**)

Task 13: Search for further information about Klebsiella in internet. Summarise the main points about this bacterium, and be ready to present the summary to the class. (**Verbal-linguistic**)

Topic 3: Antioxidants, Micronutrients and HIV

Task 14: After having read the article: —*Antioxidants, Micronutrients and Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV)*II on page 27 of your textbook, find further information about the ratings of HIV in Cuba in internet. Then, prepare an oral report to be presented to your classmates and teacher. (**Verballinguistic/Logicalmathematical**)

Task 15: Working in pairs, develop a group discussion about the origins of AIDS that are presented on page 27 of your textbook. Develop further research in Google to support your presentation. (**Verbal-linguistic/interpersonal**)

Task 16: After having developed exercise 5 on page 29 of your textbook —At Your Pace 4: Stretching Your WingsII, record your own summary using computing tools

that are designed with that purpose; then exchange your recording with other classmates and the teacher so they can determine whether you made any pronunciation mistakes. **(Interpersonal/intrapersonal/Verbal-linguistic) Task 17:** You are invited to take part in a conference where experts are making a debate about the use of computing resources to support an anti-HIV campaign in Cuba. Some attending experts are deaf people whose expertise area is related to this topic. Take part in the discussion, and make sure all of the people attending the conference can understand you -use body language and pictures. **(Bodily-**




Kinesthetic/Verbal-linguistic/interpersonal/Visual-spatial)

Task 18: After having conducted some research about HIV and AIDS, create a song where you express how you feel about this issue. Feel free to add music to your lyrics and record yourself for later presentation using computing tools. **(Musicalrhythmical/interpersonal/intrapersonal/verbal-linguistic)**

Task 19: Go to a clinical centre in your town where people with HIV are treated. Then, find out information about the administration of micronutrients to these people, and interview them in a natural, realistic environment that makes them feel comfortable to talk about their condition. Record your interview so your classmates can download it from the website. **(Verbal-linguistic/Naturalistic/Interpersonal)**

Topic 4: A new vaccine developed in Cuba

Task 20: As a student of Informatics, you and a classmate have to develop a medical website where you state important facts about vaccines, especially those that have been developed in Cuba. For completing such task, you have to look for information about different vaccines, and present it to your classmate so you both elaborate the website together. Summarise the information, discuss it with your partner and elaborate the website requested. **(Verbal-linguistic/interpersonal) Task 21:** Look

	Name the disease the speaker mentions	Provide the definition of Meningitis (orally)	What are the main consequences of Meningitis?		Mention and locate the body areas meningitis affects	Mention the most vulnerable age of Meningitis victims What other types of bacteria cause Meningitis? 
	<p><u>Task 23:</u> Listen to Audio text 6 of Section I, Unit 6 page 33 of your textbook —At Your Pace 4: Stretching Your WingsII. Then</p>					

for information about Meningitis in internet, then locate pictures that describe people who present the symptoms that are introduced in exercise II page 33 of your textbook. Once you have located the information, reflect on your own on what you have found, and elaborate a video sequence where you record yourself describing the images you put together in the video. (**Visual-spatial /verballinguistic/intrapersonal/logical-mathematical/bodily-kinesthetic**)

Task 22: Go to <http://www.sciencemag.org> and look for the article: *A Synthetic Conjugate Polysaccharide Vaccine against Haemophilus influenza Type b*. By V. Verez-Bencomo et. al. Once you have located the full article, read it over and summarise the main points the authors present on it. Prepare a brief open-talk about the main topic of the article, and be ready to present it to the class.

(**Verballinguistic/interpersonal**)

in groups of four, play this game using a dice, and answer the questions in the boxes so you can establish a discussion about the disease the listening material presents.

Reflect about the information presented and summarise it in a written form for later recall. (**Logical-Mathematical/ Verbal-Linguistic/ Interpersonal/ intrapersonal/ bodilykinesthetic**)

Topic 5: The Ripe Fruit Syndrome

Task 24: As a student of Informatics, you are asked to elaborate an e-block for providing discussion of different matters, including Cuban politics. A classmate is currently connected with you on the block, and he is requesting information about The Ripe Fruit Premise, a policy US developed against Cuba in the 18th Century. Summarise the main aspects related to this matter using the information presented in the article *The Ripe Fruit Syndrome* on page 47 of your English textbook. Be ready to present orally to your classmates your own points of view on the topic. (**Verballinguistic/interpersonal/intrapersonal**)

Task 25: Using the main aspects contained in the article: *The Ripe Fruit Syndrome* on pages 47-49 of your textbook; make a rap where you state your own viewpoint on the US policy towards Cuba. (**Musical-Rhythmical/verballinguistic/intrapersonal**)

Task 26: Look for information about the damages the economic blockade the US has exercised against Cuba for over 50 years. Once you have located the information, make a graphical representation of the damages, and be ready to share your analysis with the rest of the class. **(Logical-Mathematical/Verballinguistic/interpersonal)**

Task 27: After having completed exercise 1 page 50 of your textbook, prepare an open talk about the Platt Amendment, and be ready to share it with the rest of the class. **(Verbal-linguistic/interpersonal)**

Task 28: (To complete this task, the teacher will divide the class into three teams. Taking turns, each of the team members are dictating parts of paragraphs 1 and 2 that appear on page 48 of the students' book. Students are keeping their books closed. The book that dictators are using is the one the professor will place on the teacher's desk, so students have to come forward to dictate. The more effective the dictation is, the more points the team will accumulate)

Taking turns, dictate paragraph 1 or 2 on page 48 of your textbook —At Your Pace 4.Stretching Your Wingsll to the rest of the class. Pay special attention to the pronunciation so your classmates can copy the right words you are saying.

(Bodily-Kinesthetic/Verbal-linguistic/interpersonal)

2.4.2 Assessment of the proposal

For evaluating the effectiveness of the proposal of tasks for developing fluency in speaking skills, the author of the current research decided to apply the specialists' assessment. Experiencing the implementation of the tasks in the FL classroom demonstrated that it is really hard to evaluate the students progress in speaking using the MI theory in a practical way, specially because one student might develop more than one task having the ability to learn through more than one

—intelligencell.

In order to define who the specialists for the assessment of this project were to be, the author decided to briefly define —specialistll. A specialist, according to Ramírez Urizarri (1999) is either an individual or group of individuals or organisations that are capable of providing conclusive evaluations about a problem, and make

recommendations with a maximum of competence in the area or field he/she is evaluating.

For the selection of the specialists, the author of the research defined as main criteria the following:

- Having taught English using as main syllabus the series —At Your Pacell
- Teaching Experience in the field of EFL
- Academic Degree
- Will to participate in the assessment of the proposal

The composition of the specialists selected comprises a Philosophy Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences from the University of Pedagogical Sciences in Camagüey, six Masters of Sciences and three Bachelors in EFL teaching.

The average years that the specialists have devoted to teaching English is 20 years. On the other hand, one of the specialists is a full professor, three of them are associate professors, two are assistant professors and the rest are instructor professors at the University level.

Seven of the professors work with the course-book —At Your Pace IVII at the University of Cienfuegos. One of them works at the University of Holguin, and the other one at the Pedagogical Sciences University in Camagüey.

This shows the variety of opinions that were taken into account for presenting the final proposal of tasks the research presents.

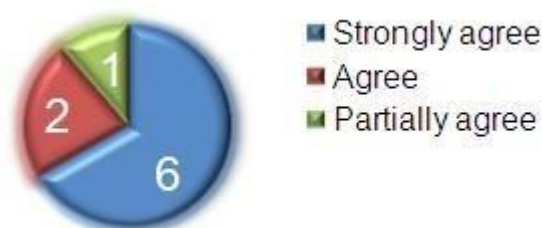
The main criteria for the assessment of the proposal presented in this paper is defined and stated by the author of the research in Appendix 4.

After having analysed the specialists' opinions about the effectiveness and pertinence of the proposal, the main results are described as follows:

The first question was intended to seek for the specialists' opinions about the correspondence existing between the proposal of tasks presented, and the syllabus objectives for teaching English to sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos. This time, out of 9 specialists who were consulted, 6 strongly agreed with the statement provided, which represents the 66.6% of the interviewees opinion. Two of the specialists agreed that there is an actual link

between the proposal of tasks and the syllabus objectives, which represents the 22.2% of the opinions, and only one partially agreed with the fact that there is total correspondence with the syllabus objectives.

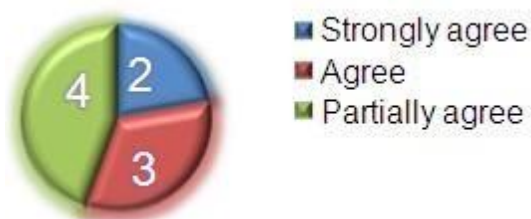
A graphical representation of the results in these criteria is stated hereby:



The second of the questions was about the real possibility the proposal provides the students with for developing fluency in speaking skills using their best ways to learn the foreign language.

This time, out of the nine specialists who were interviewed, four partially agree with the statement, which represents the 44.4% of the opinions. Three agreed that the proposal provides possibilities for selecting different ways to learn the FL, which represents the 33.3% of the specialists. The other 2 considered that the proposal provides the students with the possibilities for determining and choosing the best ways to develop fluency since it presents a variety of tasks that include the presence of the eight —Intelligencesll Gardner describes, and that they give the students the possibility to develop more than one task according to the amount of

—Intelligencesll he feels comfortable with; these two specialists strongly agreed with this criteria, which represents the 22.2% of the interviewees.



As for the third criteria provided to the specialists in regard to the fact that the tasks provided clearly support the linguistics contents and specific topics of the

Units the textbook —At Your Pace IVll presents, only 2 specialists partially agreed with this idea, which represents the 22.2% of the interviewees.

However, the rest of them strongly agreed with the criteria presented, which represents the 77.7% of the specialists` opinion. A graphical illustration of these results is provided below:



The fourth statement was about the fact that the tasks proposed in the research actually provided the students with the possibility of using the language in a context related to their professional field, as it is stated in the syllabus. Out of nine specialists, six strongly agreed (66.6%) that the tasks certainly provided a positive environment related to the students professions where they were able to use the language. Two of them agreed with this idea being the 22.2 % of the interviewees and only one partially agreed.



In the fifth question, 8 the interviewees strongly agreed (88.8 %) that the tasks presented combine the application of more than one —intelligencell in most of the cases, so the students have the opportunity to develop more than one task in each topic. This time one of the specialists agreed with this idea. Bellow, a graphical illustration will reveal theses facts:



In the sixth criteria, the specialists had to state whether they agreed or not with the fact that the tasks proposed in the paper are germane and engaging.

This time, six professors agreed with the fact that the tasks proposed are engaging, and appropriate for the level of the students; which makes them germane as well.

This represents the 66.6% of the opinions.

Two of the specialists partially agreed with this criterion, which represents the 22.2%.

They stated that the proposal of tasks might motivate learners towards the development of fluency in speaking skills, since they are related to the Computing Sciences (Informatics) however it does not guarantee that they will be engaging. One of the professors/specialists considered that the proposal is totally germane and engaging; which represents the 11.1% of the interviewees. A graphical representation of these criteria is stated as follows:



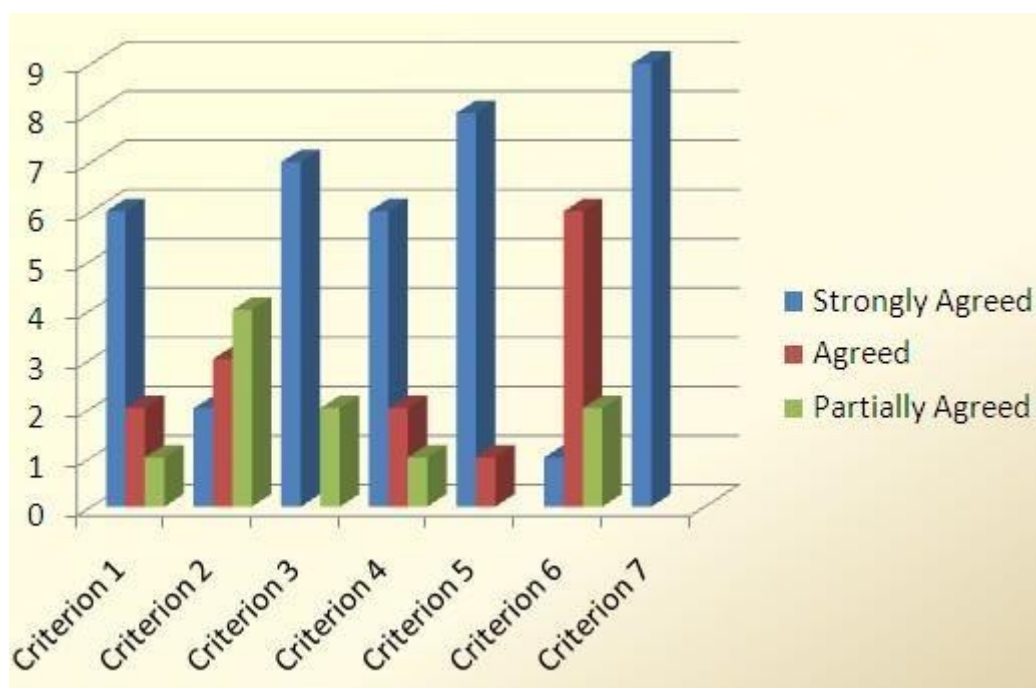
Finally, in the seventh question, the 100% of the specialists stated that the tasks proposed variety to the ways teachers develop fluency in speaking skills in the FL classroom.

In summary, after having analysed the experts' general opinions about the pertinence, suitability, adaptability and effectiveness of the proposal, so as their individual opinions for each of the criteria provided for its assessment; it can be stated that:

- Most of the specialists strongly agreed on the fact that there is a correspondence between the proposal of tasks presented, and the syllabus objectives for teaching English to sophomore students of the Major of Informatics.
- The proposal provides the students with opportunities for developing fluency in speaking skills using their best ways to learn the foreign language.

- The tasks provided clearly support the linguistic contents and specific topics of the Units the textbook —At Your Pace IVII presents.
- Te tasks proposed in the research actually provided the students with the possibility of using the language in a context related to their professional field, as the syllabus proposes.
- The tasks presented combine the application of more than one —intelligencell in most of the cases.
- The tasks proposed in the paper are germane and engaging.
- The tasks provide variety to the ways teachers develop fluency in speaking skills in the FL classroom.

A comparative graphical analysis of all the results obtained from the assessment process can be illustrated as follows (See Assessment Criteria on Appendix 4):



CONCLUSIONS

After having conducted a research about the development of fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics through the application of Multiple Intelligences in language learning, the author of the current research concludes that:

- ✦ The need for the development of fluency in speaking skills is increasing as students use the foreign language in professional contexts.
- ✦ The application of the Multiple Intelligence Theory and the task-based learning approach in language teaching helps students improve their fluency in speaking skills, specially communicating at a professional level.
- ✦ The proposal of tasks for the development of fluency in speaking skills is elaborated for supporting the course-book —At Your Pace IVII, and is essentially based on the application of the MI theory and the TBL approach.
- ✦ The application of the proposal of tasks for developing fluency in speaking skills showed a factual progress in language learning and application in sophomore students of informatics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✦ To extend the proposal of tasks for developing fluency in speaking skills to other majors in which the course-book —At Your Pace IVII is used for teaching English.
- ✦ To elaborate other proposals for the development of oral skills (either speaking or listening), based on the application of the MI theory and the TBL approach.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Diagnostic test to sophomore students of Informatics

Aim: To check the students' application of the communicative functions related to providing personal information, discussing, and reporting about a specific topic.


Questionnaire

1. Interview your partner, and discuss about the use of Informatics nowadays in Cuba.

Sample exponent: What do you think about the application of ICT in Cuba nowadays?

2. Make a report for the rest of the classroom where you summarise the main ideas contained in the discussion with your partner.

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Appendix 2

Survey to sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos

Aim: *To revise the students' opinions about the development of speaking skills in English through the application of activities related to the Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT)*

La presente encuesta forma parte de un proceso investigativo dirigido a desarrollar la fluidez oral en Inglés en los estudiantes de Segundo año de la carrera de Informática en la Universidad de Cienfuegos. Su objetivo esencial es mejorar la práctica educativa en la enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa a partir de su transformación en función del aprendizaje del idioma extranjero.

Le rogamos se tome su tiempo y responda el siguiente cuestionario de la manera más sincera posible.

Cuestionario:

¿Consideras suficiente el tiempo dedicado al desarrollo de la expresión oral en inglés en las clases de idioma? Si ____ No: ____

1. ¿Le atribuyes importancia al desarrollo de esta habilidad de la lengua (expresión oral) para tu desempeño como profesional? Si ____ No: ____

2. ¿Qué tipo de actividades de las que a continuación se relacionan, consideras son utilizadas con más frecuencia por el profesor de idiomas en las clases de expresión oral?

____ Juego de roles

____ Dramatizaciones

____ Reportajes orales sobre temas diversos

____ Descripción de láminas

____ Reportes orales sobre la informática

____ Reflexiones individuales para su posterior debate.

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____ Conversaciones espontáneas ____ Interpretaciones directas.

____ otras, ¿cuáles? _____

Appendix 3

Interview to teachers of “At your pace” in other majors

Aim: To explore the opinions of other teachers who work with the same program in order to develop oral fluency in English, as well as the importance they give to the application of the MIT in the learning process of the EFL.

Dear colleague:

It is extremely important for this research to know your opinions about the teaching of oral fluency in speaking skills through the program —At your pacell. Please, take your time, and respond to the following questions. Be as honest as possible.

Your contribution will be useful for us.

Academic title: _____

Teaching category: _____

Teaching Experience: _____

Questionnaire

1. Do you prioritize the teaching of speaking skills in your language lessons?
____ YES ____ NO
2. Do you include tasks in your lessons in which the students need to interact among them for developing oral fluency in English?
____ YES ____ NO

If positive, please state how often:

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_____ frequently _____ sometimes _____ rarely

3. Out of the tasks listed below, which do you consider are most used in developing speaking skills in English?

_____ Role play

_____ Communicative micro-situations

_____ Oral reports

_____ Dramatizations

_____ Picture describing

_____ Spontaneous conversations

_____ Open talks

_____ Using games to prompt speaking development

_____ Developing game-liked activities that provide interaction.

_____ Others, which ones?

4. Do you think that making the most of Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT) in the language classroom would make the students learn the FL better?

_____ YES _____ NO. Why?

5. Do you think using MIT for developing oral fluency would be an effective way to develop speaking skills in FL Students?

_____ YES _____ NO

Appendix 4

Specialists' assessment questionnaire

Aim: To assess the effectiveness of the proposal of tasks for developing fluency in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics.

Dear colleague:

After having conducted a research about fluency development in speaking skills in sophomore students of Informatics at the University of Cienfuegos, we are very pleased to inform you that you have been selected to take part in the process of assessment of the proposal of tasks the research suggests.

The proposal is aimed at developing fluency in speaking skills in English through the application of Multiple Intelligences Theory in the language classroom. Thus, the students have the opportunity to communicate in the foreign language using their best ways to learn in a contextualised setting that takes into account their professional field.

We will very much appreciate your collaboration.

Full name: _____

Academic/scientific degree : _____

Teaching Experience: _____ **Questionnaire:**

1) The tasks presented to develop fluency in speaking skills in English are in correspondence with the syllabus objectives for teaching English to sophomore students of Informatics at this level.

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree

2) The tasks presented in the proposal provide the students with the possibility of developing fluency in speaking using their best ways to learn the foreign language.

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree

3) The tasks provided clearly support the linguistic contents and specific topics of the Units the textbook —At Your Pace 4ll presents

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree

4) The tasks proposed in the paper provide the students with the possibility of using the language in a context that is related to their professional field, as the syllabus states.

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree

5) The tasks proposed combine the application of more than one —intelligencell in most of the cases, so the students have the opportunity to develop more than one task in each topic.

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree 6) The

tasks proposed are germane and engaging.

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree

7) The tasks proposed provide variety to the ways teachers develop fluency in speaking skills in the FL classroom.

Strongly agree Agree Partially agree Disagree

Appendix 5

Rubrics for assessing speaking skills

ORAL PRESENTATIONS ASSESSMENT

Student: _____

Evaluation Scale: 1- Struggling/minimal effort 2- Experiencing difficulty 3- Average work 4- Above average 5- Outstanding/extra effort	<u>Expression/intonation:</u> Used effectively to enhance presentation <u>Enthusiasm/interest:</u> Props, costumes, gestures used to enhance Presentation 1 2 3 4 5
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CONTENT

<u>Organisation:</u> Ideas presented clearly and logically Basic material adapted/personalised	1 2 3 4 5 /10 <u>Creativity:</u> 1 2 3 4 5 /5
--	---

LANGUAGE:

<u>Conveyance of message:</u> Structures and vocabulary used correctly <u>Use of class time:</u> On task during work time: Works cooperatively with groups and contributes ideas DELIVERY:	1 2 3 4 5 /5 1 2 3 4 5 /5
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TOTAL /30

COMMENTS:

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