

**UNIVERSIDADE DE CAXIAS DO SUL
CENTRO DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS E EDUCAÇÃO
CURSO DE LETRAS-INGLÊS**

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**USING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING TO IMPROVE SPEAKING
SKILLS OF BRAZILIAN EFL YOUNG ADULT STUDENTS**

**CAXIAS DO SUL
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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado como requisito parcial para conclusão do curso Licenciatura em Letras- Inglês pela Universidade de Caxias do Sul na área de línguas estrangeiras.

Orientadora Prof. Dra. Sabrina Bonqueves Fadanelli.

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Aprovado em

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Abstract

This paper aims to suggest ways the Communicative Language Teaching could be used to improve fluency and pronunciation of Brazilian students of English as a Foreign Language. From the observation of difficulties faced by Brazilians when speaking English, regarding fluency and some specific aspects of pronunciation, it was noticed the need for proposing ideas to try to improve those aspects. The characteristics of the speaking issues faced by Brazilians, principles of Communicative Language Teaching and features involved in speaking skills were analyzed. In the sequence, some examples of communicative activities were suggested followed by commentary by the author. It is hoped the suggestions can be useful for English teachers in Brazil, however a research with data collection would be needed to make the point conclusive.

Keywords: Communicative; teaching; speaking; fluency; pronunciation.

Resumo

Esse artigo tem como objetivo sugerir formas em que o ensino comunicativo de idioma poderia ser usado para melhorar a fluência e pronúncia de brasileiros estudantes de língua inglesa como língua estrangeira. A partir de observações das dificuldades encontradas por brasileiros ao falar inglês, em relação à fluência e alguns aspectos específicos da pronúncia, notou-se a necessidade de se propor ideias para tentar melhorar esses aspectos. Analisaram-se as características de problemas da fala de inglês por brasileiros, os princípios do ensino comunicativo de idioma e aspectos envolvidos nas habilidades de fala. Na sequência, alguns exemplos de atividades comunicativas foram sugeridas acompanhadas de comentários pelo autor. Espera-se que as sugestões possam ser úteis para professores no Brasil, entretanto uma pesquisa com coleta de dados seria necessário para fazer esse ponto conclusivo.

Palavras chave: comunicativo; ensino; falar; fluência; pronúncia.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BP	Brazilian Portuguese
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L1	Native language
L2	Second/foreign language

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1. INTRODUCTION

The English language has been widely popularized over the years in Brazil. Travel, business, research, expectation for better and more well-paid jobs are some of the reasons why more and more people are interested in learning the language, which is the most popular in the world and the most widely spoken as a second and foreign language. Due to these factors, speaking English is already seen by many as a necessity.

With increasing demand, it has become very common to see advertisement for English language courses on billboards, newspapers, television, internet, and all means of promotion, making it a great business. Each of these courses promises fluency in the target language and claims to have an efficient, modern and innovative method. What is seen, though, is that many students are not as fluent as promised to them even after years of studying. Although they might hold a certificate saying that they have concluded the course and achieved a high level of English, this does not always correspond to the reality. Some of them might be able to form grammatically correct sentences, but fail when it comes to speaking in a real communicative situation.

Something that is common to some English courses is that they have an exaggerated focus on grammar rules, structure and forget to work on the real use of the language, comprehension and speaking skills. The students are sometimes taught to memorize a set of rules and short sentences, but they do not always work properly on the meaning of what they are learning and how to use that in a real situation. What sometimes happens in those cases is that students remain deficient in actually using the language and speaking for real. They do not know what to say and struggle with fluency. Besides that, I have observed that a high number of Brazilian speakers of English have considerable difficulty with pronunciation, especially in some specific features that seem to be a pattern e.g. epenthesis, *th* and *ing* sound, word-final *-ed*.

English spoken by Brazilians has been the target of several studies. In pronunciation, for example, Schneider (2009), Gutierrez & Guzzo (2013), Lucena & Alves (2010) and others investigated the occurrence of epenthesis; Silveira & Silva (2018) investigated affrication of alveolar stops, epenthesis and other aspects;

Lanteigne (2006) studied difficulties caused by phonemes that do not exist in Portuguese. Moving to fluency, Hashiguti (2017) investigated reports of Brazilians claiming to “freeze” when they try to speak English although they usually understand well the language.

The aim of this paper is to suggest ways Communicative Language Teaching can be used to help improve speaking skills of young adult Brazilian students who study English as a Foreign Language. For that, I will:

1. Analyze some specific difficulties Brazilians face when speaking English
2. Explore the theory behind CLT, speaking skills and aspects involved;
3. Suggest activities for teaching speaking within a communicative approach.

I decided to choose the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) – an approach based on meaningful communication – as a research topic for believing that it can help make English teaching more effective and improve students’ speaking skills.

This paper has 6 main parts. In section 2, I make an analysis of aspects involved in EFL speaking. That includes conversational routines, functions of speaking, communication strategies and pronunciation. The latter is subdivided in intelligibility, age and the role of the native language. In section 3, I point out the difficulties faced by Brazilian students when speaking English. This section is divided in two main parts. The first one is about the fear of speaking English and the freezing feeling some have when trying to speak. The second part points out the specific pronunciation difficulties commonly observed in the speech of Brazilian students. Moving to the theory, Section 4 explores the Communicative Language teaching. In this part I describe the main points of the theory, including the background and history, its characteristics, principles, the role of teachers and students, common activities and misconceptions. Next, section 5 regards elements to consider when teaching speaking. It aims to propose a reflection on three aspects involved: the spoken language and its importance; pronunciation, choice of model and accent; language teaching for adults and its possible implications. For last, in section 6 I propose suggestions of a few activities that could be used to apply CLT principles in order to try to help students improve their speaking skills. The activities are

separated in fluency, pronunciation and fluency + pronunciation building. Following that, I make comments about the activities proposed and why I believe they could benefit students.

2. SPEAKING SKILLS

Out of all the skills in language learning, speaking is probably the one considered by the majority of the students as the most important one. Frequently when asked about the interests in learning English, for instance, they say “I want to learn how to speak English”. Commonly, students evaluate their improvement in the target language according to how much better their speaking ability has gotten. (RICHARDS, 2008). This is also the skill which the majority of students claim to have most difficulty with.

Several aspects are involved in spoken language. It is particularly difficult because it involves creating meanings and is spontaneous. There is no time to get the book or dictionary to check words, expressions or grammar. You have to be able to express yourself with all you know almost instantly. It involves interaction and reciprocity. “When you are having a conversation with somebody you cannot study what they say at length before producing an appropriate reply; the whole process is instantaneous.” (MORROW 1983, p.61).

Spoken language is also different from written language. It may be planned or spontaneous; it might contain slips, errors, fillers and hesitation markers due to real-time processing; it contains more generic words, slang, vague and idiomatic language (RICHARDS, 2008). It is characterized by incomplete sentences, the use of active voice, a lack of explicit logical connectors, low level of grammatical subordination. Learning to speak a second language involves an interaction between knowing what the spoken language sounds like and knowing how to use it. (MALT, 2010). The spoken language of many English speakers is much simpler than written language. (BROWN AND YULE, 1997).

There is a great deal of variation depending on several factors and spoken language has a range of different functions and different purposes performed in daily communication.

2.1. CONVERSATIONAL ROUTINES

In conversation, certain functions give discourse the quality of naturalness. A marked feature is the use of fixed expressions, e.g. *This one is on me; I don't get the*

point; As I was saying; I see what you mean; Let me think about it; It doesn't matter .
(RICHARDS, 2008).

[...] There are routines for beginnings and endings of conversations, for leading into topics, and for moving away from one topic to another. And there are routines for breaking up conversations, for leaving a party, and for dissolving a gathering [...]. (WARDHAUGH, 1985 apud RICHARDS, 2008,p.20).

According to Pawley and Syder (1983), native speakers have thousands of routines, which when used in appropriate situations, create conversational discourse that sounds natural.

Richards (2008) suggests that when designing activities or materials for foreign language teaching, it is necessary to recognize the different functions speaking performs in communication and the different purposes for which students need speaking skills.

2.2. FUNCTIONS OF SPEAKING

Richards (2008, p. 21-28) classifies speaking in three main functions: *talk as interaction*, *talk as transaction* and *talk as performance*. He argues that each of these activities is quite distinct in form and function and requires different teaching approaches. According to the author, the characteristics of those functions are:

2.2.1. Talk as interaction

It describes interaction that serves primarily to establish and maintain social relations. It refers to what we normally mean by "conversation", for example, chatting to a passenger during a flight, telling a friend about an amusing weekend or people meeting at a party. In this kind of talk, usually someone raises a topic for comment and the other person responds and/or raises another one. There is usually frequent shift of topics in this kind of interaction. The participants do not typically challenge each other, argue or require repetition of what the other person said. The focus is more on the speakers and how they intend to present themselves to each other than on the message.

The main features are:

- Having a primarily social function;
- Reflecting speaker's identity;
- May be formal or casual;
- Reflecting degrees of politeness;
- Employing many generic words;
- Being jointly constructed.

Some skills in this function involve:

- Opening and closing conversations;
- Joking;
- Telling personal experiences;
- Interrupting;
- Reacting to others;
- Using appropriate style of speaking;
- Making small-talk;
- Complaining, apologizing, accepting, declining, inviting etc.

2.2.2. Talk as transaction

It refers to situations where the focus is on what is said and done. The focus is on the meaning of the message and making oneself understood accurately rather than how the participants interact socially. It is more carefully produced, so that the listener can understand it. What is primarily at issue is the transference of information, communicating the message. Transactional speaking is concerned to get things done in the real world, for example, a customer complaining to the garage, a patient discussing symptoms with a doctor, a teacher explaining the subject, discussing needed repairs with a technician, asking someone for directions on the street etc. The speaker is concerned to make his message clear and what matters is that the listener understands it correctly.

The main features are:

- Focus on the message and information;
- Use of specific vocabulary;
- Clear language;
- More detailed information;
- Possibility of negotiation;
- There may be frequent questions, repetition and comprehension checks.

Some skills involved are:

- Making suggestions;
- Asking questions;
- Describing something;
- Explaining a need or intention;
- Asking for clarification;
- Agreeing and disagreeing;
- Confirming information.

2.2.3. Talk as performance

This function refers to public talk, transmitting information before an audience, such as giving a speech, public announcements, classroom presentations, giving a lecture or sales presentation. It often follows a recognizable format and is closer to written than conversational language. It tends to be in the form of monolog rather than dialog and focus on both message and audience.

Main features:

- Tends to be in a form of monolog;
- Closer to written language;
- Focuses on both message and audience;
- Often evaluated according to the impact on the listener.

Some of the skills involved:

- Using appropriate opening and closing;
- Using appropriate vocabulary and format;
- Presenting information in an appropriate sequence;
- Maintaining audience engagement.

2.3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

When speaking, learners might face difficulties with expressing what they mean due to limited knowledge of the foreign language and lack of vocabulary. Those difficulties can cause gaps in their speech, leading to communication problems. According to Syamsudin (2015), communication strategies are the processes used by L2 learners to solve these communication issues. For example, when a learner is trying to communicate but the linguistic items he needs are not available, he can apply communication strategies to handle the problem and express his ideas. The author used some examples of strategies, including:

- Avoidance: Avoiding topics that pose language difficulties.
- Compensatory strategies:
 - Exemplifying or describing the target word;
 - Using alternative terms to express the meaning as closely as possible;
 - Using sound imitation and gestures;
 - Using a word from the native or another language;
 - Appealing for help, for example, *what do you call...?*
- Time-gaining strategies: Using fillers and hesitation devices, e.g. *well... let me see...* in order to gain time to think.

Mentioning his own research made in the previous year, Syamsudin (2015) claims that raising learners' awareness on communication strategies and encouraging them

to use it might help learners facilitate their speaking skills, improving their performance.

Communication strategies are not just about techniques for carrying out a conversation when one lacks knowledge of the language. Malt (2010) refers to this knowledge as the ability to use the knowledge of spoken language to communicate, convince, entertain, persuade and so on. He mentions strategies related to the situation and context, such as moving the subject onto something one feels more comfortable with; using language to sound intelligent or persuasive or adjusting the speaking style to match that of the other person and suit the context.

2.4. PRONUNCIATION

An important aspect of speaking that cannot be forgotten is pronunciation. It is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use and combines with other factors to make communication possible. (Dalton and Seidlhoffer, 1994). Gerald Kelly (2000) argues that students feel pronunciation is something that would help them communicate better and it has great importance in language teaching and communication.

Teachers should regard features of pronunciation as integral to language analysis and lesson planning. Any analysis of language that disregards or sidelines factors of pronunciation is incomplete. Similarly, a lesson which focuses on particular language structures or lexis needs to include features of pronunciation in order to give students the full picture, and hence a better chance of being able to communicate successfully. (KELLY, 2000, p.13).

Our pronunciation is also a form of identity, likely to give away information such as our educational status, the social class we belong to and where we came from. Several aspects, like age and the native language of the learner, just to name two, can affect the pronunciation of those who are learning English as a foreign language.

Although pronunciation can vary greatly and accent is not necessarily an issue, it is important to bear in mind that variations and mistakes are different things, and some pronunciation errors can affect the intelligibility and inhibit successful communication.

2.4.1. Intelligibility

Defined as “the quality of being possible to understand” by Cambridge online dictionary, intelligibility is perhaps the most important aspect of speech. In *How to teach pronunciation*, Gerald Kelly (2000) uses the example of someone who is at a restaurant and asks for a *soap* when he actually meant *soup* to exemplify a situation that can affect the intelligibility of the speech and lead to misunderstanding.

Another example cited by the author is the word *rat*, which if one changed the middle phoneme from æ to ɒ, for instance, would become *rot*, a different word, characterizing a pronunciation mistake that would lead to misunderstanding. However, if the person pronounces the /r/ in a slightly different way, it would not change the meaning and it would be still understandable, just a matter of accent.

“Although there are slight differences in how individuals articulate sounds, we can still describe reasonably accurately how each sound is produced. When considering meaning, we see how using one sound rather than another can change the meaning of the words.” (KELLY, 2000, p.1).

It can be very difficult for a speaker from another language community to understand when a learner consistently mispronounces a range of phonemes. A learner who has a good command of grammar can get very frustrated when having difficulty in being understood and understanding a native speaker. (KELLY, 2000).

2.4.2. Age

In the compilation of analyses made by Celce-Murcia et al (1996) regarding the influence of age in pronunciation acquisition, the first hypothesis mentioned was the “Joseph Conrad phenomenon”. This term was used by Scovel (1969, 1988) referring to the Polish-born author, whose speech remained partly unintelligible to English speakers throughout his life. The authors mentioned that although Conrad had a brilliant control of morphology, syntax and lexis of English language, his acquisition of English phonology was not nearly as good as the other skills. This gives the idea that adults are unable to achieve targetlike pronunciation in a second language.

Supporting that claim, there is a line of research formulated by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and Lenneberg (1967). This research posits the *critical period*, that represents the biologically determined period during which maximal conditions for language acquisition exist. After that, according to the research, the assigning of certain functions to the different hemispheres of the brain is completed, process called *lateralization*. Scovel (1969) and Krashen (1973) claimed that along with that process comes an increasing loss of brain plasticity, which would make people incapable of achieving nativelike pronunciation in second language after puberty.

Not every second language researcher agrees with that hypothesis, though. Fledge (1981) cites the lack of empirical evidence of those statements and claims that “neither physiological maturation nor neurological reorganization renders an adult incapable of speaking a foreign language without an accent”. A research by Lieberman and Blumstein (1988) indicates that adults and children perceive sounds in a very similar manner. According to cognitive scientists, the idea that the adult brain becomes incapable of producing new sounds is erroneous, since the brain retains a measure of flexibility throughout its life (DIAMOND, 1988).

Massaro (1987) believes that differences between the two age groups may be related more to the information available than to innate differences in ability. Jacobs (1988) notes that the environment in which adults typically learn a second language may not be as rich as the experienced by children acquiring a second language in a more natural, input-rich environment. Overall, we should consider not only internal, but also external factors, such as exposure to the target language, when trying to understand the difference in child and adult performance in pronunciation.

2.4.3. The role of the native language

When teaching a foreign language, we need to take into account the native language of the students and be aware of the possibility that pronunciation patterns acquired in the first language might have an influence on the second language acquisition and the performance of the learners. One example of interference of the first language is explained by the *contrastive analysis hypothesis*. This theory holds that second language acquisition is filtered through the learner’s first language, so the native language facilitates acquisition in those cases where the target language structures are similar (positive transfer), and interfere with acquisition when the target

structures are not similar or nonexistent (negative transfer). (CELCE-MURCIA et al, 1996).

The same authors also mention the *information processing theory*. This theory predicts that learners will exhibit a tendency to interpret sounds in the second language in terms of the set of sounds that they control as part of their first language system. First, learners add new structures to their existing knowledge. Following that, they reorganize already-existing structures and create new schemata based on the preexisting patterns. For last, they modify the new or old schemata, making them more accurate. Phonologists claim that rather than substitute the native language phoneme for the target language one, speakers produce a middle ground between the two. (CELCE-MURCIA et al, 1996).

In the article *The role of the first language in pronunciation*, Ana Bittencourt (1993) suggests some possible explanations for interlingual errors, claiming that the less a bilingual the speaker is, the more interference will occur when communicating with speakers of the target language. Some of the possibilities stated are: learners are forced to use the target language before they are ready; pressure to perform; lack of natural exposure in the target language. Bittencourt (1993) points that the first language can have a substantial influence on the second language mainly in pronunciation, especially for adults and beginning level children.

In the next section, some difficulties shown by young-adult Brazilian speakers are analyzed. That includes “speech block” and some pronunciation difficulties that seem to be related to their first language and can hinder intelligibility.

3. DIFFICULTIES FACED BY BRAZILIAN STUDENTS OF EFL AND ISSUES WITH SPEAKING ENGLISH

Some Brazilians seem to struggle when speaking English even when they have certain knowledge of the language, understand it well and studied for years. Apparently, they “freeze” when trying to speak. Other than that, some pronunciation mistakes seem to be frequent with Brazilians and might be related to characteristics of their first language.

3.1 THE FEAR AND FREEZING FEELING WHEN SPEAKING ENGLISH

In *Can we speak English? Reflections on the unspoken EFL in Brazil*, Simone Hashiguti (2017) reports the difficulty some Brazilian students find to speak English. For that, she used postings collected from discussion forums on different websites.

Many Brazilian adult students of English as a foreign language (EFL) who can read, write, and understand the language well find speaking it almost an impossible task and often repeat this statement as they draw back from conversations in the language or simply paralyze when they have to speak it. (HASHIGUTI, 2017, p.214).

In order to find the posts, Hashiguti used the search tool on the browser, writing the equivalent in Portuguese for the tags *I can't speak English* and *I freeze when I have to speak English*. For selections, only posts made by non-academic common users of discussion forums were chosen. The idea with that was to use what is considered to be the common sense for many adult Brazilian EFL students and regular complaints made by them.

What some students of the data collection said:

* Student 1: *I have a big speech block when I have to speak in English. I would like to share it with you and to know if this really happens... I attended 6 years of English course. I understand, read and write well, but when it's time to speak, I panic. What is wrong with me? Fear, laziness... I don't know what is wrong [...].¹*

¹ My translation. Original in Portuguese: “Tenho um grande bloqueio na hora de conversar em inglês. Gostaria de compartilhar com vocês e saber se isto realmente acontece... Fiz 6 anos de inglês.

* Student 2 (replying to student 1): [...] I think this is much more common than you think. Reading and writing, ok, but talking... We get embarrassed, we don't want to make mistakes, it requires a lot from us and it ends up blocking the conversation [...].²

* Student 3: [...] *I don't feel embarrassed at all when I am talking with people at the same level as mine, but when I am talking with someone who shows to be in a high level, above mine, oh my... I freeze [...].*³

* Student 4: *Guys... I always learn new words, expressions every day. I can even use it when writing. However when I'm speaking, they disappear from my mind. I use only basic stuff and due to that I can't speak properly. When I speak it in my mind, it seems like I am fluent, because I can say everything, however when it has to come out of my mouth... boom... nothing [...]*⁴

* Student 5: *I can understand very well English. But when it comes to speaking, I freeze. Why? I can understand very well native speakers. But when I try to speak it feels like the words disappear from my head. Why does that happen? What can I do to improve my "speaking".*⁵

Compreendo, leio e escrevo bem, mas na hora de falar, eu entro em pânico.... O que há comigo?? Medo, preguiça... Não sei o que há [...]"

Available at: <https://br.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080812080023AA3Drb2>. Accessed: May 5th, 2019.

² My translation. Original in Portuguese: "[...] acho que isso é muito mais comum do que você imagina. Ler e escrever, tudo bem, mas falar....a gente fica envergonhada, não quer errar, se exige muito e tudo isso acaba bloqueando a conversa [...]"

Available at: <https://br.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080812080023AA3Drb2>. Accessed: May 5th, 2019.

³ My translation. Original in Portuguese: "Não tenho vergonha nenhuma se eu estiver falando com pessoas que estejam no mesmo nível que eu, mas caso eu esteja falando com uma pessoa que demonstre ter um nível elevado, acima do meu, vixe... Eu travo! [...]"

Available at: <https://br.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20150315180650AAVsCtd>. Accessed: May 5th, 2019.

⁴ My translation. Original in Portuguese: Galera, sempre aprendo novas palavras, expressões todos os dias. Consigo até usá-la na escrita. Entretanto quando vou falar, elas desaparecem da minha mente. Uso apenas coisas básicas e devido a isso não consigo falar direito. Quando eu falo mentalmente, parece que até sou fluente, pois consigo falar tudo, porém quando é pra sair da boca pra fora... bum... nada. Available at: <https://www.englishexperts.com.br/forum/dificuldade-na-hora-de-falar-ingles-o-que-fazer-t21687.html>. Accessed: May 5th, 2019.

⁵ My translation. Original in Portuguese: "Eu consigo entender super bem o inglês. Mas na hora de falar, eu travo. Por quê? Eu consigo compreender muito bem nativos no idioma. Mas quando vou falar parece que as palavras somem da minha cabeça. Por que acontece isso? E o que posso fazer para melhorar meu 'speaking'?"

* Student 6: *Yo guys, I'm 14 years old and I am intermediate level in English, but there is a problem: I don't like to speak English (say the pronunciation) of the words. I can say the words but I don't like to say it right in English and ESPECIALLY the words with TH. I know we have to do that thing of putting the tongue and kinda blow, you know, but I just don't like to say, I don't know why, it seems kinda "gayish", you know...*

*One example of words is: with, month, north etc. [...] As I said, I know the pronunciation of all the words, but when I am with someone I start speaking that Brazilian English, you know? [...]*⁶

Among the posts some patterns could be observed. The students can usually understand what native English speakers say, are able to write and read, know many expressions and words, but these words disappear from their mind when it is time to speak for real. One student reveals to have attained an English course for 6 years and still has a "speech block". It seems like the presence of a native or just better speaker intimidates them, causing them to be afraid of speaking and to forget what they know. Those reports give the impression that although they study English, they lack of real speaking practice. Interestingly, one of them suggests the fear of making mistakes is what makes them get embarrassed and freeze.

The author makes an analysis based on the thought that qualifies the listener as a sort of judge of how one speaks and his presence as authoritative.

The foreigner is a position who seeks hospitality and acceptance in the territory of the other (in the case of EFL, the territory is the language itself); and the host is the one who must welcome and accept him/her in his/her difference. However, the position of the guest is imaginarily constructed with the sense of a debt, as if he/she needed to return a favor or do justice to the imagined/anticipated welcome. (HASHIGUTI, 2017, p.223).

Available at: <https://br.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20120918080009AA4KBMr>. Accessed: May 5th, 2019

⁶ My translation. Original in Portuguese: *Ae gente, tenho 14 anos e sou intermediário-bom no inglês mas tem um problema: Eu não gosto de falar inglês (dizer a pronúncia) das palavras. Eu sei dizer as palavras mas eu não gosto de dizer o inglês certo das palavras e PRINCIPALMENTE palavras com TH. Eu sei que tem que fazer esse negócio de colocar a língua e meio que assoprar sabe, mas eu simplesmente não gosto de dizer, não sei porque, parece meio "bixoso" sabe... Um exemplo de palavras são: with, month, north, etc. [...] Como já disse, eu sei a pronúncia de todas as palavras mas quando estou com alguém eu começo a falar aquele inglês brasileiro sabe? [...]*
 Available at: <https://br.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20150315180650AAvsCtd>. Accessed: May 5th, 2019

Following this thought, using the reports presented as example, the guest's (speaker) counterpart would be an acceptable pronunciation and an imagined 'perfect' grammar to please the host (listener). The author argues that some teaching practices for both Portuguese and EFL have been following an authoritative pedagogic pattern, focusing on teaching metalanguage and grammar rules. This would serve the purpose of stabilizing unquestioned correct linguistic forms of writing that are transferred to speaking, silencing any kind of oral production. As a consequence, students of EFL would not speak due to the fear of making mistakes and because of excessive consideration for grammar rules that work mostly for writing. When it comes to oral communication, according to her, "having a voice is not only being able to enunciate it because there is knowledge incorporated, but also to feel allowed and legitimate to say it [...]" (p.229). In this sense, speaking is dislocating oneself from the place of the silenced subject, entering the territory of the foreigner. Validation of EFL voice will make possible that one can recognize his knowledge is legitimate and his voice worthy. (HASHIGUTI, 2017).

3.2. PRONUNCIATION MISTAKES

Some Brazilian learners of EFL have great difficulty with pronunciation and often transfer syllabic patters from their native language to English. (SCHNEIDER, 2009). A common error observed that was target of several studies is the epenthesis, which is the insertion of a sound or letter in a word that should not be pronounced, e.g. [magnet] > [magnet]. A classic example of epenthesis Brazilians make is the insertion of /i/ in words, especially at the end e.g. [leg] > [legi], [big] > [bigi]. Another issue considerably common with Brazilians is the pronunciation of *-ed* as a separate syllable. There are several studies on this. Delattore (2010) makes a review of literature around this feature citing a good amount of studies.

There are many studies on epenthesis observed in speech of Brazilian EFL students. For example, Gutierrez & Guzzo (2013) analyze the variable production of epenthesis in final coda by Brazilian learners of EFL; Schneider (2009) analyses the recurrence of the epenthetic vowel found in word-medial clusters both in Brazilian Portuguese and in English learnt by Brazilians; Pereyron (2008) investigated the use of epenthesis in medial consonant encounters by students of a traditional English

school in the south of Brazil; Lucena e Alves (2010) investigate the occurrence of vowel epenthesis in medial code obstruents. Cruz (2008) and more recently Silveira & Silva (2018) studied the impact that epenthesis have in intelligibility.

Still on intelligibility, Silveira and Silva (2018) analyzes the impact of affrication of alveolar stops, epenthesis and other aspects. Moving to specific pronunciation features, a research carried out by Lanteigne (2006) investigated the difficulties caused by phonemes that do not exist in Portuguese.

3.2.1. Epenthesis:

This linguistic phenomenon is a type of intrusion, when an extra sound is inserted in a word. When the consonants do not fulfill the conditions of a syllabic form inherent to a language, in general, a strategy of repair is applied with the insertion of an element which aims to fix the distortion in order to keep a 'good' syllabic structure. Schneider (2009) understands that epenthesis is a strategy of repair to the malformation of a syllable, a form of avoiding the 'disrespect' of the language patterns and the 'good formation'. According to Cruz (2008), in Brazilian Portuguese consonants in word-final position does not usually occur. Due to this factor, it is likely that Brazilian speakers of English insert an extra vowel, being generally [i]. Some examples of this strategy of repair are *pneumonia* > *p[i]neumonia*, *submarino* > *sub[i]marino*.

In Brazilian Portuguese there is always a vowel as a syllabic core, which could explain why epenthesis is something so common to Brazilian learners of EFL. The epenthesis can occur at the beginning of the word, as in *ad[i]vogado* (lawyer/attorney), in the middle, as in *intac[i]to* (intact), or even at the end, as in *internet[i]* (internet). Such processes are also observed by transference of this patterns to English, as in *catch[i]*, *Bob[i]* and *music[i]*. This way, the words would be accepted by the phonetic patterns of the learners' native language. (GUTIEREZ & GUZZO, 2013). According to the authors, this seems to come from an innate syllabic knowledge of the speaker that tries to add rhythm to the speech.

In the acquisition of English as a foreign language, epenthesis is frequently observed in data of speech produced by Brazilian learners. However, in English the formation of the language and the syllabic forms are different and accept segments that are avoided in BP. Thus, the vowel insertion is commonly adopted as a strategy

of repair. The epenthesis in interlanguage might suggest then, that the process of English acquisition as a foreign language makes use of the same syllable conditions and formation of the native language. (SCHNEIDER, 2009). As BP has words with syllables that are usually more marked by vowels, epenthesis could be a manner of simplifying the syllabic patterns of the new language.

Research:

Gutierrez & Guzzo (2013) selected 12 students enrolled in the Foreign Languages Program at Universidade de Caxias do Sul, 7 of them were at the basic level and 5 were at intermediate level. They investigated the occurrence of epenthesis in final code, for example [laik] > [laiki] 'like' and [leg] > [legi]. It was obtained 1683 contexts for epenthesis and the occurrence was of 19% of the cases. The factor was observed mainly the insertion of the phoneme [i] in words like *fish*, *dog*, *like*, *catch* and *bridge*. As expected by the author, the occurrence of epenthesis was higher with students on the basic level than those on the intermediate level. The author says there is a tendency by the learners, especially at basic level, to use strategies of repair to adapt English to the syllabic patterns of Portuguese language. However, it is expected that with the acquisition of proficiency in L2, the transference of L1 characteristics tend to decrease.

Pereyron (2008) investigated the use of epenthesis in medial consonant encounters by students of a traditional English school in the south of Brazil. They received a list of words like *napkin*, *adaptation*, *bacterial*, *obtain*, *feedback* and sentences to read. The result obtained by perceptual analysis was 33% of occurrence. The most common occurrence was the insertion of the vowel [i]. An interesting fact was that the majority of occurrences was within the older group, between 35 to 57 years old in comparison with the students between 15 to 34 years old.

Lucena e Alves (2010) collected data from 22 Brazilian university students of Letras – Inglês (a course for English teaching) at elementary level to investigate the occurrence of vowel epenthesis in medial code obstruents. Words like *captain*, *doctor* and *after* were shown on screen in sentences for them to read. The frequency of epenthesis was around 21% of cases.

3.2.2. English sounds that do not exist in Portuguese + word-final *-ed* pronounced as a separate syllable

English language has some sounds that do not exist in Brazilian Portuguese and are likely to be difficult for Brazilians (Lanteigne, 2006). Some examples are:

- /ð/ (“th”, as in *that*),
- /θ/ (“th”, as in *think*),
- /ŋ/ (“ng” as in *ring*),

Knowing the importance of pronunciation in effective communication, the author decided to investigate the challenges BP speakers have with English pronunciation. The author made a research focused on common pronunciation challenges for Portuguese speakers, including the phonemes mentioned, the pronunciation of word-final *-ed* as a separate syllable as in *closed* > [klowzɛd] and also epenthesis, as in *speak* > [ispiki]. Working with 11 Brazilian students ranging from 20 to 25 years old in an intensive English program, the author found the mispronunciation issues ranged from irritation at someone’s name being mispronounced to misunderstandings when a word such as *think* was pronounced as *sing*. Her initial observations indicated that all of the students had difficulty with the pronunciation elements mentioned.

3.2.3. Coda modification and Intelligibility

A very important aspect of pronunciation is whether it affects the capability of listeners to understand what is said. There were studies with the purpose of investigating the impact of common pronunciation features of Brazilian spoken English in intelligibility. Here I cite two studies that investigated the impact of two common pronunciation mistakes.

3.2.3.1. Epenthesis (CRUZ, 2008)

In this study, Neide Cruz aimed to investigate whether vowel insertion in the speech of Brazilian learners of English is likely to cause unintelligibility. In order to

answer that question, the author analyzed 3 studies on the subject. Samples containing words with vowel insertion produced by Brazilian learners were presented to three groups of listeners: British unfamiliar with Brazilian English, British and Americans living in Brazil and another group of Americans and British familiar with Brazilian English pronunciation. The listeners had to listen to the samples once and write down what they heard. Overall, 8 words containing vowel insertion occurred in the data. One of the occurrences was the full vowel [i], as in [tɔuki] (talk), [ɛ k'spen.sivi] (expensive), ['.ridi] (ride) and ['gifti] (gift). Another one was the [ə] vowel, as in ['g.reitə] (great) and ['fudə] (food).

For the full vowel [i], the results of misunderstanding were: for the word *talk*, 73% of the listeners wrote it incorrectly. For *expensive*, 34%. For the word *read*, 38%. The word *gift* was misunderstood by 37.5% of the listeners. In total, 47% of words were transcribed incorrectly. The word *expensive*, for example, owing to the vowel insertion, was written as different expressions, such as *painfully*, *explain to me* and *explain to him*.

Results of the inserted ə vowel: the word *food* was misunderstood by 76% of the listeners and *great* was written incorrectly by 56.7% of them. The vowel insertion in *great* made 3 listeners understand it as *greatest*, for example. In total 66% of words were transcribed incorrectly.

Interestingly, one of the listeners who wrote it correctly said “I know how they say... I know what they say, because they say [spi:ki] and things like that. I know... when they say [gUdi], so I know that's *good*.” Another listener commented that English is a “stopped” language, and that when speakers say the words correctly, without the vowel insertion, it helps in fluency. Baptista (2001 apud CRUZ 2008) states that “When Brazilian learners add an extra [i] to the end of the English words, it interferes with the natural rhythm of English, making their speech difficult to understand.”

3.2.3.2. Epenthesis and affrication of alveolar stops. (SILVEIRA & SILVA, 2018).

The authors made a research to investigate the extent to which the modification of word-final coda affects the intelligibility of English spoken by Brazilians. For this purpose, a test was designed containing utterances with word-final codas produced with phonetic features typically found in English spoken by

Brazilians, including among others, vowel insertion e.g. *sick* > [siki], *weak* [weaki] and affrication of alveolar stops, e.g. *bed* > [bɛdʒ], *cat* > [kætʃ].

The utterances were presented with limited and with substantial semantic information. The test was designed with data from seven Brazilian speakers, with ages ranging from 21 to 49 years old describing images in English. The 30 samples selected contained one type of code modification. A group of listeners from diverse L1 background completed the intelligibility test listening to the samples and writing the missing words. All of them were living in Brazil.

The range of correct responses in general considering all kinds of modification was high, maybe due to the fact that listeners were living in Brazil. However, vowel insertion and affrication of alveolar stops were the modifications that hindered intelligibility more often. *Sick* > [siki], for example showed a low median of correct responses: 57.8%. *Bed* > [bɛdʒ] obtained the lowest score of intelligibility in the test when with limited semantic information (44%). One of the listeners commented “Pronunciation made it more difficult to understand, and also the hesitation of the speaker.”.

The authors commented that when codas were modified by inserting vowels after the final consonant, the listeners felt like transcribing exactly what they heard. Many of them added <y> at the end of some words, leading to low intelligibility scores. This would create an extra syllable, having an impact on rhythm. Also, modifications such as affrication of alveolar stops can make one word become another, for example, *cat* > catch. The authors believe that familiarity with L2 accents is a relevant factor in intelligibility and emphasize the importance of bringing to the classroom the target language as it is spoken by users from various nationalities. They argue that experience with different varieties can help with successful interactions in international contexts.

Next section is about Communicative Language Teaching theory. This approach holds that teaching should be based in meaningful communication practice, with authentic content and not just mechanical repetition of artificial dialogs, memorizing rules and drills out of context. I suggest that using this approach could help improve the speaking difficulties mentioned previously, as I believe exposure to authentic and real content with meaningful and spontaneous practice tend to be more effective in developing speaking skills. My point is that actually *doing* something, especially naturally, usually makes it better to be developed and remembered than

trying to *memorize* it in an artificial and strictly controlled way. I do not mean to say that controlled practice and specific drills are never useful, but *too much of that* and lack of meaningful practice could lead to speaking difficulties. I suggest that a more communicative approach might help improve speaking confidence, fluency and also pronunciation. Section 4 explores the Communicative Language Teaching theory.

4. COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)

Some decades ago, in the 1970s, educators started wondering if they were reaching the goal of making students able to communicate in the target language. Noticing that students could produce accurate sentences in the lessons but were not able to use them when trying to communicate outside the classroom, the educators realized that in order to communicate properly in the real world, mastering linguistic structures was not enough; students needed to perform certain functions in social context; in order for one to be able to communicate it was required not only linguistic, but also communicative competence, knowing when and how to say what to whom. (FREEMAN, 2010). With those perceptions, there was a shift from a linguistic structure-centered approach to a communicative approach.

4.1. BACKGROUND TO CLT

According to Richards (2006), traditional approaches had a priority in teaching grammatical competence as the basis of language proficiency, with direct instruction, much use of repetitive practice and drilling. Language learning was viewed as a process of mechanical habit, based on building up a large repertoire of sentences and grammatical patterns, learning to produce them accurately. Memorization of dialogs, grammar and word lists, question-answer practice and guided speaking and writing practice were commonly used, employed with great attention to accurate mastery of grammar and pronunciation. There was not space for errors. Those were avoided through controlled production, as it was assumed they could quickly become a permanent aspect of students' speech.

Over the decades, linguists started questioning if those methods were effective and if mastering of linguistic structures was enough in order to make students communicate. Widdowsom (1978) argued that we do not just learn how to compose correct sentences as isolated units of random occurrence, but also to use them appropriately to achieve communicative purpose. "We are not just walking grammars." (p.2). He says that acquisition of linguistic skills does not necessarily guarantee the acquisition of communicative abilities. On the contrary, apparently too

much emphasis on drills and repetition of sentences tends to inhibit the development of these abilities.

[...] the ability to compose sentences is not the only ability we need to communicate. Communication only takes place when we make use of sentences to perform a variety of different acts of an essentially social nature. Thus we do not communicate by composing sentences, but by using sentences to make statements of different kinds, to describe, to record, to classify, and so on, or to ask questions, make requests, give orders. (WIDDOWSON, 1972 apud BRUMFIT & JOHNSON, 1979, p. 118)

According to Johnson & Morrow (1983), manipulating correctly structures of the language is just a part of what is involved in learning a language. There is also the ability to be appropriate, and to know the right thing to say at the right time. As Hymes said, “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless.” (1970, apud JOHNDON & MORROW, 1983, p.2).

With those perceptions and realizing the need to focus on communicative proficiency, linguists and authors started talking about the communicative approach, which is a reaction against the view of language as a mere set of structures towards language as communication. In this view, meaning and uses are put at a central part. (BRUMFIT & JOHNSON, 1979; RICHARDS & RODGERS, 1986). It moved from the focus on mastery of structure and grammar and practice through control activities such as memorization of dialogues towards a view of language as communication, focused on the meaning, functions and the uses of language, such as requesting information, expressing disapproval, greeting, inviting, with practice based on meaningful interaction. (Richards, 2006).

Richards (2006), shares Widdowsom’s opinion that grammatical competence is important, but not the only aspect necessary to learn a language, and that someone can master the rules of sentence formation in a language and still not be successful in being able to use language for meaningful communication. He says that in the Communicative Approach, a syllabus should identify aspects of language use such as the learners’ purposes for learning the target language, the setting in which they will want to use it, the social role they will assume, the communicative events in which they will participate, the language functions and notions involved, the varieties of the language, vocabulary and so on.

The uses of language are very wide and it is not feasible to teach all functions in the same way we teach structures. According to Johnson & Morrow (1983), some criterion of selection that will identify the functions a particular group of students will find useful is needed. The author suggests that it is by analyzing the situations in which the learners will want to use the target language that we can decide the functions and notions that will be more useful for them.

4.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF CLT

Communicative Language Teaching is an approach that has a different and more practical way of viewing language acquisition. It does not claim that grammar competence and accuracy are not important. It defends that although important, there is more involved in language than only grammar competence.

CLT aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and to acknowledge that communication and language are dependent upon one another. (FREEMAN, 2010). According to Jack C. Richards (2006), communicative competence includes aspects like: knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions; knowing how to vary the use of language according to the situation and knowing how to maintain communication despite having language knowledge limitations and using different kinds of communication strategies. Richards (2006) proposes that learning through communicative approach results from processes such as: interaction between the learner and users of the language; collaborative creation of meaningful and purposeful interaction through language; attending to the feedback when learners use the language; paying attention to the language one hears, trying to incorporate new forms and ways of saying things.

According to Freeman (2010), the goal is to enable students to communicate in the target language and learning to use language forms appropriately is an important part of communicative competence. To do this, learners need not just knowledge of linguistic forms, but also meanings and functions.

They need to know that many different forms can be used to perform a function and also that a single form can often serve a variety of functions. They must be able to choose from among these the most appropriate form, given the social context and the roles of the interlocutors. They must also be able to manage the process of negotiating meaning with their interlocutors.

Communication is a process; knowledge of the forms of language is insufficient. (FREEMAN, 2010, p.128)

When communicating, the speaker thinks and chooses what and how he will say something and this choice is essential to a Communicative Approach. If an activity is so tightly controlled that students have only one way of saying something and the listener cannot provide authentic feedback, there is no choice; therefore, real communication does not occur. The choice means that there is always doubt in the listener's mind and he does not know exactly what comes next. It is desirable to give students opportunities to understand language as it is actually used. (MORROW, 1983; FREEMAN, 2010). If the listener already knows what the speaker will say, there will be no scanning for the content and neither responses formulated in real time based on the information received. Thus, the existence of doubt is an important prerequisite to fluency practice. (BRUMFIT & JOHNSON, 1979). The authors say that "If we create classroom situations in which the students are free to choose what to say, the essential information gap will have been created." (p. 202). On the same page, they complement saying that CLT may be seen as "the provision to students of sets of options from which selection can be made. It must also provide practice in the process of selecting from the options within real time."

In real life, people talk to each other with a purpose in their minds. What one says will be designed to reach that purpose, and what the other one says will depend on what he or she hears. (MORROW, 1983). Richards & Rodgers (1986, p.66) cite part of an English syllabus document for primary schools from 1981 that says that in communicative purposes "at least two parties are involved in an interaction or transaction of some kind where one party has an intention and the other party expands or reacts to the intention". Scott (1983) says that Oral communication is typified as an activity involving two or more people in which the participants are both speakers and listeners having to react to what they hear and make contributions. Each of them has goals that he wants to achieve in the interaction and has to be able to interpret what is said. They cannot know exactly what is going to be said and have to reply with the language they have at their disposal with their own intentions. In the communicative approach, the focus is not on accurate production of isolated utterances, but in fluent selection of appropriate expressions and words for communication.

Freeman, (2010) claims that one of the basic assumptions of CLT is that students will be more motivated to study a foreign language by learning to communicate, since they will feel they are learning to do something useful with the language and their security is enhanced by the many opportunities to cooperate in interactions.

4.3. PRINCIPLES

The main aim of CLT is to make students develop communicative competence and not just learn and memorize a set of language rules and lists of words. It is based in notions and functions rather than simply in terms of grammatical structure and activities that involve real communication and language that is meaningful to the learner have greater importance. With Morrow (1983), Freeman (2000), Richards and Rodgers (1986) and Richards (2006), some principles of CLT can be pointed out:

- It seeks to develop the ability to communicate, not just mastery of language forms. Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the beginning
- Whenever possible, authentic language should be used in real context. Contextualization is a basic premise and meaning is paramount
- It presents activities that require learners to negotiate and to interact meaningfully, using real-life situations.
- Grammar is not taught in isolation, but often arises out of a communicative task thus creating a need for specific items of grammar.
- The target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of study.
- It is allowed for the students to briefly discuss a point in their native language, as it can promote greater understanding and assimilation of new information.
- Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal. Comprehensible pronunciation is sought and accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
- Each function can have many different forms, therefore a variety of linguistic forms can be presented together

- Dialogs center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized. Students should be given opportunities to express their ideas and opinions
- Errors can be tolerated and seen as natural while working on communication and fluency skills. They can be noted to be mentioned and corrected at a later point.
- The social context of the communicative event is essential in giving meaning to the utterances and making them appropriate.
- Only by practicing communicative activities we can learn to communicate

4.4. ROLES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Prior to CLT, the teacher was a model for correct speech, with the responsibility of making students produce a set of error-free memorized sentences. According to Breen and Candlin (1980), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Freeman (2000) and Richards (2006), in the communicative approach, the teacher is expected to:

- Facilitate and give students opportunities to practice communication.
- Act as an adviser and monitor, contributing in terms of knowledge and abilities
- Make notes of errors for later correction.
- Encourage communication attempts from the beginning.
- Motivate students to work with the language.
- Organize resources and to be a resource himself
- Analyze the needs of students
- Act as an independent participant within the group

And learners are expected to:

- Participate cooperatively in classroom activities.
- Become comfortable with listening to classmates rather than relying just on the teacher as a model
- Take a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning

4.5. ACTIVITIES COMMONLY USED IN CLT

In CLT almost everything is done with a communicative intent. Students use the language through communicative activities such as games, role plays and problem-solving tasks. (FREEMAN, 2010). Oral communication, according to Scott (1983), is typified as an activity involving two or more people in which the participants are both speakers and listeners having to react to what they hear and make contributions. Each of them has goals that he wants to achieve in the interaction and has to be able to interpret what is said. They cannot know exactly what is going to be said and have to reply with the language they have at their disposal with their own intentions. Hamid (2016) points out some activities commonly related to a communicative approach:

Information gap activities: An important aspect of communication in CLT is the information gap. This is based on the fact that in their everyday lives people generally communicate in order to get information they do not possess. If students can be involved in exchange of unknown information, more authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom. By doing so, they will use available vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies to complete the task.

Communication Games: Intended to provoke communication in the classroom, they are generally in the form of puzzles, drawing pictures and putting things given in the correct order. The students have a piece of information which is part of the total and need to communicate with the others to get the necessary information. The idea is to create an unconscious learning and practice.

Story Telling: Students can tell story or a tale they heard or read or even create their own story to tell their classmates. This is intended to foster creative thinking and also help learners practice expressing ideas.

Group work: This is a form of cooperative learning. It helps in the development of communicative ability as it provides learners with a total freedom to express their ideas and knowledge engaging in a debate with their friends. Teachers can provide

learners different roles and tasks to motivate them to work in groups in order to promote their confidence and independence.

Discussion Activities: A discussion can be held for many reasons. The students might want to share ideas about an event or find solutions for a problem, for example. This is intended to make students engage in something that they might truly *want* to discuss, therefore making them practice speaking communicatively, using ideas from their own minds to make their points.

Role Play Activities: Role play is a method of acting out particular ways of behaving or pretending to be someone who deal with new situations. Role play is very important in teaching because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and to put themselves in another person's place for a while preparing for situations that might actually happen in real life.

4.6. PROCEDURES

The communicative language teaching could be applied in many ways. A possible example of steps following the principles of a communicative approach could be the following:

SETTING OBJECTIVES > PRESENTATION (TARGET LANGUAGE APPROPRIATE, SYNTAX, PHONOLOGY > PRACTICE (ROLE-PLAY, INFORMATION GAP ETC.)

Stating objectives: Just tell them. According to Scott (1983), telling the students explicitly what they are going to learn is far more defensible than saying, for example, that they are going to learn the present continuous tense. You could also show them an example of a real situation, for example: apology. Show them a picture or video of someone spilling coffee on another person.

Contextualization: the means by which the meaning of a language item is made clear. According to Scott (1983), It must be made clear to the students that what you can say takes on its meaning as a result of the context depending on several factors,

such as who speakers are, their relationship, what they are trying to do, what has just been said, where they are and so on. An expression can function in many ways, and the meaning of a sentence may change according to the context e.g. 'Is that your coat on the floor?' may be a simple question or an order to pick it up. 'I beg your pardon' may be a request for repetition of what was just said or an indication that you are offended.

Practice and transfer: When the teacher is sure students understood and are competent with the language, he can put them to practice dialogues, taking turns to perform the roles. Students decide what they are going to say instead of repeating and memorizing a sample of dialogue, so that the listener does not know what he is going to hear, thus creating an information gap. The listener will reply according to what he hears and the context, and each answer will affect the outcome of the conversation, creating then a real feedback.

Note: Although some examples could be pointed out, Richards and Rodgers (1986) argue that due to the wide variety of classroom activity types discussed in the literature of CLT and because communicative principles can be applied to any skill, it is not feasible to describe what is a *typical* set of procedures of a lesson based on CLT principals. The authors say that Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Although theoretical aspects can be discerned regarding language and learning theory, when it comes to design and procedure there is much more room for individual interpretation and variation.

4.7. MISCONCEPTIONS OVER CLT

A common criticism over Communicative language Teaching is that it supposedly encourages students to make mistakes and that it considers pronunciation and grammar as non-important aspects. It is indeed true that in this approach it is said that trivial mistakes that do not affect communication could be ignored when learners are trying to speak in order to let the conversation flow and avoid blocking the student's performance because of fear of making mistakes and constant interrupting. However, it is generally recommended that teachers note the mistakes for correction in a more appropriate moment, and not just ignore it.

Lanteigne (2006) says being understood is part of communication and that students' speech must be intelligible, as the goal of language instruction is to enable students to communicate in the target language. Moreover, it is a mistake to believe that pronunciation and grammar are not important aspects of communication.

Firstly, 'trivial' mistakes of grammar or pronunciation are often not trivial at all. Even a teacher who adopts a totally communicative stance must accept that grammatical and phonological mistakes hamper communication, and enough of them – especially in the wrong place – can totally destroy it. Secondly, a learner who makes mistakes because he is trying to do something he has not yet mastered, is not really making a mistake at all. Trying to express something you are not quite sure how to say is a vital feature of using a foreign language [...]. (MORROW, 1983, p. 65).

Brumfit & Johnson (1979) suggest reorienting language teaching towards communication practice, as this can be expected to develop linguistic skills, not just because the aim is teaching communication. However, the authors also say that “absolute beginners cannot be expected to solve communication problems in which they are totally ignorant.” (p. 170).

Communicating, according to Morrow (1983), involves using appropriate forms in appropriate ways, and the use of inaccurate forms goes against communication. In addition, the author argues that niggling criticism of what the learner produces will destroy his confidence in the ability to use the language. The CLT, that according to Savignon (2002, p. 210) is more appropriately considered an approach rather than a method, understands language to be inseparable from individual identity and social behavior.

It might seem contradictory to some, but it has to be clear that the idea of this approach is not to completely ignore some aspects of language like accuracy. It suggests a different way of looking at it and focuses more on the use of language with real purposes of communication.

5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING SPEAKING

The first thing to consider is that the teacher must have knowledge of the target language, but not just practical proficiency. The teacher must be able to identify specific aspects of language, select and combine them to work in class in a way that is effective for learning. If the teacher can only use his own speech as an example of performance, the students will not readily discern crucial phonological distinctions and will have to work out what is significant by themselves. (DALTON AND SEIDLHOFFER, 1994). Gerald Kelly (2000) says that language teachers need to be aware of variations and different accents of English as it makes their teaching more likely to be informative. Given the importance that pronunciation has in speech and the existence of variations in spoken language, EFL teachers might ask themselves: What serves as an appropriate model for teaching speaking?

5.1. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

Regarding variations, some teachers might prefer to focus on American accent for being popular, while others might choose to use the British English for considering it the original language and the perfect example of “correct speech”. There are, of course, variations within each of those accents, but in courses it is usually classified as American or British English without more deep specifications. Additionally, we cannot ignore the existence of other English accents and the fact that it goes beyond the generic classification *American vs British*. Teachers should be aware of those variations and consider the possibility that focusing on only one of them might not be ideal. Showing the students those variations could benefit them and enhance their communicative competence, as they might need to speak to people from different backgrounds with different accents. As Malt (2010) says, most interactions in English take place between non-native speakers, and English serves most commonly as a means of communication worldwide between people who do not share a common culture and language.

Furthermore, according to Dalton and Seidlhoffer (1994), pronunciation is a matter of self-image and learners might prefer to keep their accent deliberately. Therefore, obliging students to conform to an alien code of conduct may be seen as forcing them to reject their own identity and insisting on ‘correct’ pronunciation may

not always be desirable. This is not to say that there should not be model of pronunciation, just that we should be careful with *how* we use it, and that we should establish models for guidance, not norms for perfect imitation.

5.2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE

When it comes to spoken language, Brown and Yule (1997) question if it is right to pretend incompleteness and frequent disrespect for grammar do not exist in spontaneous native speech. According to the authors, there was an expansion of courses beginning to use real and authentic conversations, radio broadcasts, lectures etc., which encouraged students to use spoken language forms spontaneously. They suggest this expansion must be welcomed, as it provides for students the ability to communicate with speakers of the foreign language.

Still in the matter of communication, Brown and Yule (1997) point that the teacher should realize that simply training students to produce short turns in conversation does not automatically prepare them to perform satisfactory in long turns. It must be clear, according to the authors, that students who can only produce short turns will experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language. They may have basic interactional skills and know language forms to request information and services, for example, but still be far from being able to express themselves in the foreign language. (BROWN & YULE, 1997).

Sometimes, teachers might have an exaggerated correctness of speaking and students may focus too much on perfection. Brown & Yule (1997) argue that it seems reasonable that the student should not be corrected when producing, in conversation, partial sentences and incomplete phrases of the sort that native speakers produce. The authors say that when listening to native speakers talking spontaneously, students

[...] should realize that speakers of this foreign language talk like human beings, like he talks in his native language. They don't produce ideal strings of complete, perfectly formed, sentences. They use language manipulatively, exploratorily, to communicate with and make up what they say as they go. (BROWN & YULE, 1997, p.21).

Regarding appropriateness, the authors argue that a system that puts great emphasis on correctness in speaking a foreign language might make students feel

themselves to be failures, since only few would be able to hold a conversation using exclusively 'correct' and 'complete' forms. It might be even inappropriate in some situations when the language spoken is exaggerated 'correct' and formal. Instead, they suggest being more sensible to concentrate on exposing students to a range of modes of speech appropriate to different contexts of situation.

5.3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING ADULTS

In courses of English as a foreign language, the audience is most commonly composed by young learners. However, occasionally the classroom might be occupied by adult students, which is considered more challenging for teachers. According to Cozma (2015), there is a common myth that adult students are generally more ineffective as language learners. Although research seems to indicate that younger students may really be better in acquiring pronunciation in a foreign language, adults are perfectly able to reach high levels of proficiency. Harmer (2007) and Cozma (2015) point out some characteristics of adult learners:

- Motivation represents a factor of central importance for learning, and adults almost always have a reason why they are studying, and that is their primary motivation;
- Adults are more cooperative and disciplined, normally seeing the point of the instructional situations. Therefore, there is no need to "camouflage" learning by using games or songs, for example, although it can be appropriate when well used;
- They have more learning experience, which can be both beneficial and problematic. On the one hand, they can have well-developed learning strategies and the teacher can help them use it. On the other hand, adults have certain expectations about the learning process and may become critical towards the instruction in case their expectations are not met;
- Adults might be less confident with their abilities, leading to anxiety when learning a foreign language, reluctance for speaking and fear of making mistakes;

- Because of lower energy level and various responsibilities, they tend to come to class with some fatigue;
- They may not be so patient with the results of the course and might want to acquire knowledge as soon as possible, feeling the need to have that knowledge proved in real life situations.

Cozma (2015) argues that adults have a rich range of experiences, and teachers can take advantage of this, connecting it whenever possible with the learning. She argues that the tasks must be practical, have a clear purpose and be relevant to the students' lives. Moreover, teachers should be aware that life and work situations present a more appropriate framework for adult learning.

6. COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE SPEAKING

In this session I suggest a few examples of activities that could be applied in an attempt to help Brazilian EFL learners improve their speaking skills based on CLT principles and the problems mentioned previously. Following this, there is commentary explaining how these activities can be helpful.

6.1. FLUENCY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Fluency activities aim to make students engage in speaking, using their knowledge and strategies to talk as fluently as possible. At this point, accuracy is not very important as long as the listener understands the message. Students should not be interrupted and mistakes should be noted for correction in another moment.

1. Role-play⁷:

In pairs students play the characters and create a scene according to the situations below. They are totally free to choose what and how to say.

A. The neighbour's request: In pairs, students role-play this situation: Your neighbour on the other side, Kate, knocks on your door in the evening. What does she want? How would you reply?

Some examples:

I want to make a cup of coffee, and...

My watch has stopped and...

I've just found a spider...

My car has broken down and...

⁷ Activities A and B were based on suggestions by Brumfit & Johnson (1979).

B. A request at work: Students have to role-play a boss and an assistant. The assistant wants to make the requests below. The pair keeps changing roles after each scene.

- * Have the afternoon – day - week off
- * Leave 5 minutes - 30 minutes - 1 hour earlier.
- * Change a holiday – desk - secretary
- * Get his/her own phone – a company car

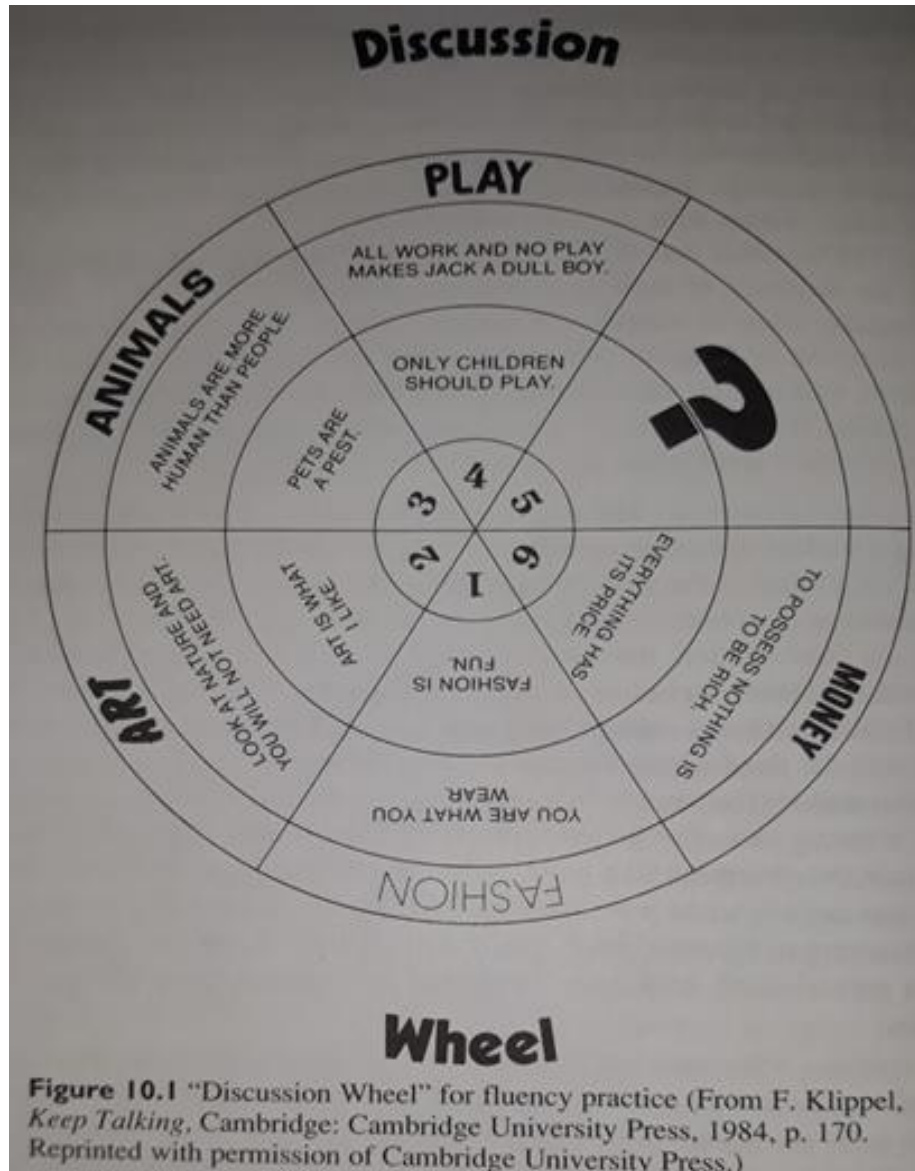
C. The interview game: One of the students (the interviewed) sits with his/her back to the board. The other students discuss ideas and write on the board a situation that the interviewed cannot see, for example:

- You are a famous musician who suddenly decided to leave everything behind and become a monk.
- You are a soccer player who just got divorced and is fighting over the custody of the ex-couple's dog.

The situation will say who the interviewed is and what s/he is going to talk about. The other students will play the audience, making questions to the interviewed, who will have to be quick and creative to answer based on what s/he assumes to be the situation. The questions will eventually lead the interviewed to guess what the situation is.

2. Discussion/group work

A. Discussion wheel: In this game designed for fluency practice, students are divided in groups and given a number each to represent them. Each group has three dice, which are tossed before each turn. The first two indicate which students take part in the discussion for that turn; the third dice indicates which topic will be discussed (Topic 5 is free and the students decide). In a pair, each student talks about one of the opposing points of view for a given period of time. Then the other students join the conversation until they finish the topic and move to the next turn.



Extracted from Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (1996).

B. Value Topics: This game is similar to the discussion wheel and the aim is also to engage students into discussing about a set of topics, for example, the *ideal wife or husband*, *hopes for the future*, *a job they would like*, *habits*, *things they like* and so on. Divided in groups, the players toss the dice and move their counters forward the indicated number of spaces. If they land on a topic square, they must discuss that topic for a given amount of time. If they land on a *Free question* square, the other players can pose a question, which the player can either refuse or answer.

booth and has information on train departures, prices, etc. The other needs to obtain information on departure times, prices, etc. They role-play the interaction without looking at each other's cue cards.

B. Jigsaw: The teacher takes a story and splits it into sections depending on the number of students. Each student gets one section of the story. Students must then move around the class and by talking to their classmates, decide where in the story their section fits, putting the whole story together in the correct sequence.

C. Drawing: In pairs, students receive a picture. One of them has to look at it and describe with details what the picture looks like. The other student has to listen and try to draw it according to the instructions and details received. Later on, the drawings are revealed and given points according to the details and information correctly included. The beauty of the drawings is not important.

6.2. PRONUNCIATION BUILDING ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to tackle specific pronunciation difficulties students might have in a communicative way.

Activity 1: The thoughts and feelings of animals

* Identification: The teacher shows a video called *What animals are thinking and feeling and why it should matter*⁹. Before playing, he asks students to listen carefully paying attention to the pronunciation. When ready, the video is played with English subtitles to facilitate the identification of words.

* Focus on the issues: After students watch the video, the teacher shows on screen some utterances extracted from the video to tackle features that are commonly mispronounced by the students. The utterances were chosen to tackle **a)** the *th*

⁹ Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wkdH_wluhw&list=PLMlgwitKUX7seR6ZKjrk14jlXwCIBNxL8&index=16&t=164s. Accessed: 01/06/2019.

sounds /ð/ and /θ/, **b)** *ing* sound /ŋ/, **c)** affrication of alveolar stops, **d)** epenthesis, **e)** word-final -ed. Students are then asked to read the utterances and if the feature is mispronounced, the classmates are asked to discuss what the mispronunciation is. If they fail to guess by themselves, teacher focuses on the target words and explains the special aspect of pronunciation. Following this, the specific parts of the video are played again to show it more clearly and students practice it.

Examples:

a) *Who are you? That's a better question for animals, I think. (0:55) / The same thing with dogs with obsessive compulsive disorder: you give them the same drugs used to treat OCD in humans, it works for them too. (2:37)*

* Focus on *that, think, the, thing, with, them.*

b) *The adults are resting too, but they are just dozing and they are staying a little vigilant all the time. (5:12) / ... they are hungry when they are eating, and they are tired, when their tongues are hanging out (9:02)*

* Focus on *resting, dozing, staying, eating, hanging.*

c) *It means that all of your sensory input is stopped. (6:53) / ... a certain insecure sense of our own superiority, which is the main thing that matters to us. (4:28)*

*Focus on *input, that.* (likely to be pronounced as *inputch, thatch*)

d) *What are they doing with those big brains? Can they think? Can they feel? (1:09) / Humans not only feel grief, humans create grief. (10:45) / That's a good place to let the babies go to sleep. (5:04)*

*Focus on *big, think, grief, sleep.* (words likely to be pronounced as *bigi, thinki, griefi, isleepi*)

e) *They look relaxed because they are relaxed. (5:20) / They seem alarmed. They are alarmed. (5:32) / The oldest kind of empathy is called contagious fear. (7:25)*

* Focus on *relaxed, alarmed, called.*

* Communication practice: Students are separated in small groups or pairs and receive some questions to discuss:

- a) About animals thinking, how could we know what is going on in their heads?
- b) Do you think there are things in our minds that are abilities exclusive to humans?
- c) “But there are others brains out there. Some of them are very big.” Considering this, What do you think some animals are they doing with those big brains? Can they think? Can they feel?
- d) What do you understand by “sweep of evolution”?
- e) Have you ever noticed anything considered unusual in the behavior of an animal?
- f) What is your opinion about projecting human emotions on animals?
- g) Do you think animals dream when they sleep?
- h) Do human beings create grief?

Activity 2: Hot dog

This activity aims to give more practice to avoid affrication of alveolar stops and vowel epenthesis.

- a) Introduction: The video *Behind the Scenes with a NY Hot Dog Guy*¹⁰ is played. The students are simply required to watch it listening carefully. There are no subtitles this time.
- b) Conversation: Students talk about the video, telling each other if they like and usually eat hot dogs on the street, if they know how it is were made etc.
- c) Role-play: In pairs, students role-play the seller and the costumer at a hot-dog stand.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWWrxPJ-Q94>. Accessed: 01/06/2019.

Activity 3: The medical consultation¹¹

This activity aims at giving more practice to the *th* sound /θ/, in case students still struggle with it, which is reasonable to expect, as it is a very difficult sound for Brazilians to pronounce.

Practice: Students role-play a patient and a doctor in a medical consultation. The first receives a card with a drawing of the body part that hurts, and the latter receives a card with commands the questions he will have to ask. For example: The patient receives a drawing of a throat and the doctor receives the cue “Find out what is wrong”. Other body parts could be *mouth*, *teeth*, *thigh* and *thumb*, for example. They switch role each round.

6.3. FLUENCY + PRONUNCIATION BUILDING ACTIVITIES

This activities aim to develop both fluency and pronunciation in a communicative situation.

1. Speech: In order to practice fluency while being careful with pronunciation, students are asked to think of a theme they believe their classmates might be interested in hearing. With at least one week to prepare, each student will have a pre-determined time to speak in front of everyone in class.

2. Real conversation with a native speaker: This one might not be applicable for every course, but if possible, it can be a great activity to practice both fluency and pronunciation. It is very simple and there are no specific steps. The teacher uses an online website or app to connect students with a native speaker and have an informal chat. The conversation can be about anything. However, the teacher could suggest some topics to keep the conversation flowing and maybe choose some that are likely to involve the pronunciation difficulties that students have.

¹¹ Based on an activity by Celce-Murcia (1983)

6.4. COMMENTARY

Several activities can be applied in this approach, especially given that it is open to individual interpretation as mentioned before. The idea was to show a few examples that could be applied with young-adult students in an attempt to make them more fluent and help them practice the pronunciation difficulties in a practical and meaningful way, following CLT principles.

Students in these activities are not tightly controlled, having freedom to speak; pronunciation is approached within context, with exposure to authentic material and practiced in a meaningful and not mechanical way; content of activities is thought to be appropriate for mature students; students have some autonomy, paying attention on how language is used and practicing with classmates; teacher facilitates learning instead of being himself a model for “correct” speech; content approached is thought to be interesting and useful to students.

Being more practical and meaningful, these activities could make it easier for learners to develop their speaking skills, become more confident and lose the fear of speaking, understand and keep in mind the aspects of language and pronunciation features.

6.4.1. Fluency building activities

These activities are designed to engage students in speaking as fluent as possible. Learners must try to use their knowledge of the language, creativity and communication strategies to keep conversation flowing naturally. At this moment, students should not be bothered for mistakes that do not hinder communication, as it might affect negatively their confidence and make them afraid of speaking. Errors should be dealt with in another moment. Learners should be told that they do not have to worry about trying to sound “perfect” and be afraid of making mistakes, as it is a normal process of speaking.

1. Role-play: *The neighbor's request* is an informal situation that might happen in real life. Also, in the context presented in this activity people would normally speak naturally, without worrying about sounding “perfect”. They would probably use contractions, phrasal verbs, idioms and conversational routines common to each

situation. That is a good activity for developing interaction practice and spoken English. *A request at work*, which also simulates a possible real occasion, makes it more specific as it is a work situation. This exercise could interest those who are studying English for work purposes, making it more meaningful for them. *The interview game*, although not necessarily a real situation, is designed to bring some fun to class while at the same time encouraging students to think quickly and improvise, improving their communication skills. They have total freedom to say whatever they want, and the one who plays the interviewer will have to be creative and quick, as his answers will be based on an imaginative situation, influenced by the clues of the questions. The fun of the activity should make them more relaxed to speak English.

2. Discussion/group work: Discussion activities are good because they are free. Students can say what they think and share their opinions, engaging in a genuine conversation. While they are exchanging ideas, at the same time they are developing communicative competence and fluency. *Discussion wheel* is about sharing opinions. The topics are suitable for adults as it requires them to reflect and talk about art, fashion, the value of money, the relation between work and play and opinion towards animals. *Value topics* follows basically the same idea of the previous game. It encourages students to talk about topics such as their happiest moments, their imaginative ideal house, ideal wife/husband, most important possession, a job they would like, hopes for the future etc. Those topics could be very interesting for young-adults, making the conversation practice interesting and consequently flowing well. *Relevant problems* aims to make students engage in exchanging ideas about matters that are relevant to them, discussing how important those problems are and what could be done to make the situation better.

3. Information gap/communication games: The three activities follow the principle that the listener cannot know exactly what the speaker will say. *Train station* simulates a transaction talk that is very likely to happen when you are travelling abroad. Therefore, it is a purposeful activity that might help students develop their fluency and help them prepare for a real situation that requires speaking English. *Jigsaw* stimulates students to interact to each other in order to get information they need. They have to communicate successfully so they can understand and be

understood. *Drawing* is a game that is aimed to bring fun to class at the same time it makes students practice transaction of information. Learners have to use communication strategies to communicate the necessary information even if they lack specific vocabulary. While learners focus on communicating and understanding specific information, the results of drawings could bring some good laughter to class, maybe making their days better reminding them that they can still have fun and that learning does not have to be hard.

6.4.2. Pronunciation building activities

These activities are designed to improve pronunciation skills communicatively. While it aims to tackle pronunciation features and accuracy, these activities are thought to use authentic material and to be practiced in context, within meaningful communication. The suggestion is that inserting the target pronunciation features in meaningful communication should be more effective and easier to remember than just repeating and memorizing minimal pairs out of context. Ideally students would be shown a great variety of examples, with exposure to different accents and also be told that having an accent is not a problem, with no reason to fear speaking. However, some aspects of pronunciation affect communication and they should be aware of that.

1. The thoughts and feelings of animals: This activity aims to tackle all the pronunciation difficulties mentioned in session 3.2 at once in a communicative way. Firstly, there is an input, as it is not reasonable to expect that learners will develop pronunciation without examples and exposure to the language. However, instead of an artificial example of someone reading an artificial text that was developed by course designers, the input is a real context, with a person giving a speech in front of an audience. The video is a good example of what Richards (2006) referred to as talk as performance. That also serves as example of communication strategies, such as entertaining the audience and using clever jokes to amuse them.

At the first moment, students are given a chance to try to identify the pronunciation features by themselves. Then if necessary, the teacher will explain how they are pronounced and show specific parts of the video to exemplify it. As explained in the activity, some parts of the video are transcribed containing words

likely to have the target pronunciation features. If needed, those pronunciation features will be explained. However, the examples are inserted in a passage from the video, contextualized and not isolated as a list of words. This should make it much easier to be understood and remembered. Those parts are played again to exemplify it.

After that, students engage in conversation that will make them practice the target pronunciation features communicatively, with questions that contain the features and are also thought to have answers likely to include those features as well. I believe that this is a much easier and effective way of practicing and remembering pronunciation features than trying to memorize pairs of words. As with everything, what we do is more likely to be kept in our mind than what we try to force into our head by memorization out of context.

2. Hot dog: Aiming to give more practice to avoid affrication of alveolar stops and epenthesis (a very common feature), it uses a traditional food which name is target of the two mentioned pronunciation problems. This is an expression that sometimes is not translated in Brazil. However, when saying it in English, many people pronounce something similar to “hotchy doggy”. To help students reinforce the pronunciation of these two features, a video of a hot dog maker/seller is shown. The expression “hot dog” is said several times, but there are also other words that help to tackle the target pronunciation features such as *street*, *back*, *meat*, *salt* and *out* (they could be pronounced as something like *streetchy*, *backy*, *meatch*, *saltch* and *outch*). Following the video, students talk about it and role-play that situation, putting in practice those words and again, simulating a situation likely to happen in real life. This activity will make learners say several times word that contain the target pronunciation features, but in a communicative way, not a mechanical practice.

3. The medical consultation: Another role-play activity, this one aims to give extra practice on the *th* sound /θ/, which is very difficult for Brazilians to pronounce given that this sound does not exist in Brazilian Portuguese. This time, learners practice the pronunciation of /θ/ sound while simulating a medical consultation context at the same time. This specific sound has to be practiced many times as it is new for Brazilians. The communicative situation and visual cards should make it much easier to be remembered.

6.4.3. Fluency and pronunciation activities

In these activities, both fluency and accuracy are important. Learners have to try to keep the conversation flowing, keep the listener entertained while at the same time being careful with pronunciation.

1. Speech: This activity is designed to make students practice what Richards (2006) called “talk as performance”. Students will have to use communication strategies to keep the speech fluent, clear and easy to understand while at the same time engaging the audience in the subject. This kind of activity usually makes students nervous. Therefore, with time and practice, it should make learners more confident when speaking. Another advantage of this is that students get used to being more careful with pronunciation as a speech has to be very clear.

2. Real conversation with a native speaker: Thanks to technology we have more tools available than in the early ages of the Communicative Language Teaching. Now we can use internet that opens a world of opportunities, connections and contents for us. For example, we can connect with people anywhere around the world using online websites or apps, talking to them without even leaving the room. The idea of this activity is that students will simply talk, putting in practice everything they know. The difference is that the listener does not speak their language and might not be aware of their way of speaking; therefore learners have to try to be both fluent and accurate. The conversation is natural and free, although some suggestions of topics can be made just to avoid lack of subject and even tackle some specific pronunciation features. The fact that it is online and the listener is not really in front of them might help decrease that fear some have when speaking with a native speaker. With time and practice, they could become more confident to speak in front of a native speaker without “freezing”. In addition, this conversation offers a great example of pronunciation spoken naturally. Moreover, this practice of real use of the language can be very motivating and exiting, making students engaged in learning.

7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of this paper was to suggest ways the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) could be used to help improve speaking skills of Brazilian young-adult students. In order to reach that aim, it was made an analysis of aspects involved in speaking, some of the issues observed in the speech of Brazilians and the theory behind CLT. For last, communicative activities were suggested as examples of what could be used in class to develop speaking skills targeting the issues mentioned.

Overall, Communicative Language Teaching focuses on meaningful and purposeful communication, and not memorizing dialogs and rules. Students learn by paying attention to the language they hear, trying out and experimenting different ways of saying things; the focus is on the real world, with authentic and not artificial material; students should be able to choose what to say, have some autonomy and not be tightly controlled. Unfortunately this approach is commonly misunderstood as a methodology that ignores grammar and accuracy. It is, in fact, a set of principles open to individual interpretation and many ways of being applied, not a specific method of teaching. It just focuses on a less mechanical and more practical and meaningful way of teaching language, targeting its real use.

Young-adults are usually underestimated in language learning, but perhaps they just need more practice, contact with the language, encouraging and more real-life and mature content, although some games might benefit them by bringing some fun relieving the stress of adult life. Speaking involves several aspects, such as communication strategies, different functions and conversational routines. The language used in spoken language is usually different from written language and varies depending on several factors. It all should be taken into account when teaching speaking.

The activities suggested make students explore and practice the speaking features that cause them difficulties in a communicative way. Students are exposed to authentic material, have freedom and autonomy to speak with meaningful practice. It is suggested that an approach that is more communicative could be more appropriate to young-adult students and help improve aspects that cause difficulties to Brazilian learners. This way it could be easier for students to become more confident when speaking, understand and keep in mind aspects of language and

speaking. This proposal could be improved in the future by doing a research putting in practice the ideas described and analyzing with data collection its possible effectiveness.

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