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**Teaching Strategies That help EFL Learners to Develop Their Vocabulary and
Speaking Skills Through Communicative Tasks**

*Lärstrategier som hjälper EFL-elever att utveckla sina ordförråd och talfärdigheter
genom kommunikativa uppgifter*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the benefits of using different teaching strategies to develop EFL learners' vocabulary and speaking skills. Undeniably, there are some learners in grades 4-6 who have difficulties to speak and to learn new vocabulary in English classroom, due to many reasons. To examine the impact of different teaching strategies, an electronic research in educational databases ERIC via EBSCO was conducted. The materials used were peer-reviewed journal articles and literature. By examining and analyzing the different articles found, it is evident that English teachers often focus on writing and reading activities instead of communicative activities. Some teachers often use the first language in the classroom and learners will do as their teachers. Factors such as large classroom sizes and limitation of communication tasks can motivated learners and make them less confident in speaking and practicing English. These can be the reasons why some EFL learners do not speak and use vocabulary during the communicative activities in the classroom. Thus, this paper clarifies teaching methods and strategies that teachers can use to increase vocabulary learning and speaking in the EFL classroom. Results have shown that the theory of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning was beneficial to include all learner in authentic communicative activities, which also created an environment that was both communicative and supportive. The communication-based learning activities, such as songs, games, stories, pair work and project work, are useful for learners, since it establishes a communicative environment. Moreover, these activities increase the EFL learners' motivation towards speaking.

Keywords: *EFL, language development, speaking difficulties, vocabulary learning, Communicative activities, supportive environment, interaction.*

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1. Introduction

Communication and interaction are essential elements for learners who learn English as a foreign language. Gibbons (2015) considers that communication is key for language improvement where learners get opportunities for expanded learning by learning vocabulary that help them to speak and to express themselves. Moreover, it is beneficial for learners to participate in a social context where they use the English language.

During the communicative task learners could expand their vocabulary by speaking and interacting with each other (Lightbown & Spada, 2010; Lundahl, 2014). When learners are focused in the learning context, they will learn new vocabulary and make sense of the context of the English language. Learners will even unconsciously learn pronunciation and grammatical skills (Gibbons, 2015). Although, many researchers point out that teachers often meet learners who have difficulties or lack motivation to participate in communicative tasks (Sadat Mirzaei, Zhang, Struijk & Nishida, 2018). In addition, most of the EFL learners (English as a Foreign Language) have a tendency to not participate in activities that require speaking and prefer writing or reading activities, because they are insecure of their speaking abilities and their use of the appropriate vocabulary.

It is the teacher's responsibility to create lessons with different methods and strategies to encourage the learners to develop their speech, their vocabulary and their communicative skills (Lundahl, 2014; Gibbons, 2015). Furthermore, the learners do not enhance linguistic ability, if it is only the teacher who is active in the classroom and not the learners. This may affect the learners negatively to participate in developing social interactions.

According to the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2011) learners are demanding to interact and to participate in all-round communicative skills during English lessons. The English language is not only used as a tool to communicate, it is used to think and to learn as well. The learners should be stimulated to participate and interact in different learning contexts (Skolverket, 2011). Thus, the communicative classroom gives the learners opportunities to practice language in a variety of contexts, thereby learners get the chance to expand vocabulary through various learning methods. Communication is fundamental for language

development so when learners work together to solve a task they will learn vocabulary and develop different language skills, such as speaking, reading, writing and listening at the same time (Gibbons, 2015).

According to Westlund (2015) teachers should create opportunities for the learners that stimulate expression and to make themselves understood. These opportunities are beneficial and can enable the learners to see different perspectives in learning contexts. When learners are able to speak (use vocabulary and phrases to communicate with each other) they develop self-esteem to practice English for other different social contexts. To achieve this, teachers should focus on supporting learners' abilities to be active in the communicative classroom and should focus on planning lessons that are based on learners' everyday situations and interests, as well as contexts where English is used (Skolverket, 2011).

It is significant to address that Sweden is a multicultural and multilingual society, where a huge range of Swedish residents have the functionality to speak in several languages. This means that many learners in Sweden speak Swedish as a second language and typically speak Swedish at home instead of English. According to the Swedish National Curriculum (Skolverket, 2011), English is considered a foreign language and not as a second language due to Swedish educational contexts. So, it is more reasonable in this study to cite English as a foreign language in Sweden.

According to Al Hosni (2014) speaking skills and the use of the appropriate vocabulary are important parts of language learning, but there are many factors that contribute to speaking challenges among the EFL learners. Learners usually struggle with linguistic difficulties such as sentence structure and grammar when speaking English. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to encourage and motivate learners to speak English because when learners develop their speaking abilities they develop their vocabulary, linguistic skills, such as sentence structure and grammar (Al Hosni, 2014). In addition, learners can learn from each other by interacting and building on others knowledge and experiences (Skolverket, 2011).

Activities that require social interaction among learners are based on the sociocultural of theory by Vygotsky. This theory states that learners should be provided with opportunities to share their

own experiences, to discuss, to learn from each other, and to develop their learning (Gibbons, 2015; Lundahl, 2014). Lessons that are based on this theory should be well implemented in the classroom by the teacher. If the tasks are effective, supportive, and meaningful and develop language, learners will feel improvement from the learning experience which can create a positive learning environment in the classroom. The principle of this learning theory is called the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which provides a kind of scaffolding for the learners when adjusting assignments to their comprehension level. Lundahl (2014) and Gibbons (2015), Vygotsky learning theory occurs when learners are given opportunities to take part in various communication activities. When learners work together, they will develop all-around communicative skills in spoken language and texts (Skolverket, 2011).

To plan lessons that promote language learning, teachers should have many aspects in mind to create activities that benefit all learners' language development. An example of this is communicative activities which should include all learners regardless of their language level, and learners can support one another. Learners with low language level can learn more words from other learners at an advanced level. When learners work together, they will have the confidence to speak, interact and express their thoughts with advanced vocabulary (Lundahl, 2014).

Moreover, Vaca Torres and Gómez Rodríguez (2017) closely examines Project Based Learning (PBL) in the classroom. PBL can increase and develop EFL learners' speaking skill, which includes learners' vocabulary, phrases, pronunciation and organized discourse during a conversation. This project encouraged learners to speak, despite their basic language level. Learners helped each other 1) with the learning of the new vocabulary, which benefited their oral interactions, 2) with developing their vocabulary, and 3) with encouraging each other to reach their communicative needs in relation to their aim. Therefore, Vaca Torres and Gómez Rodríguez (2017) conclude that teachers should implement PBL because it encourages learners to participate in speaking activities where they need to use the language for communication and for receiving information.

Based on the information mentioned above, we can conclude that learning new vocabulary is one of the important aspects to develop speaking skills in the foreign language. However, it is

significant to emphasize the reasons behind why some elementary learners avoid speaking and avoid vocabulary and phrases during communicative activities. Therefore, this paper will emphasize teaching methods and strategies that stimulate an assisted communicative learning environment in the EFL classroom.

2. Aim and research question

This paper aims to investigate the benefits of using different teaching strategies to develop EFL learners' vocabulary and speaking skills through communicative activities, which boosts the development of English in foreign language contexts. Researchers have introduced the advantages of using different teaching strategies that have positive impacts on learners' speaking skills, where vocabulary is seen as an important part to develop the English language. Despite this, there are some learners who have difficulties speaking and to learn vocabulary for many reasons. We draw on scientific articles, literature and theories of the education system that are relevant to strengthen our arguments. Therefore, we have formulated the following research questions:

- What are the reasons behind some learners not speaking and using their vocabulary during the communicative tasks?
- What strategies and methods can be used by the teacher in an EFL classroom to develop learners' vocabulary and speaking skills?

3. Methods

In order to answer and analyze the research questions about the different teaching strategies that help EFL learners to develop their vocabulary and speaking skills, a variety of methods were used to find existing research studies to collect relevant information related to our paper. We have done an electronic search via Malmö University Libsearch which was the primary source to access peer-reviewed articles that are reliable and include relevant information to our research

questions. The secondary sources we have used are four different scientific books which have been useful to this paper.

3.1 Search Delimitations

As a starting point, we did a general search in the MAU Library's website to find studies on our subject and to look for key terms that could be useful for our paper. We, therefore, decided to use the following key terms "EFL or English as a foreign language", "vocabulary learning", "speaking difficulties", "supportive environment", "communicative activities", "language development", "interaction" in different combinations. We decided to search in the educational databases ERIC via EBSCO. During our search we found a great number of articles. After this, we limited the results to "peer-reviewed" texts. Then we limited the publication date from 2000 to 2020 to focus on the latest research. By limiting the results of our searching, we narrowed our search and found specific articles related to our questions and aim. We used also educational databases EBSCO to cross reference existing studies to ensure that the studies are legitimate studies. When we started to read and review the studies, we checked references of each article for the possibility to find more relevant studies. This method helped us to find more relevant materials. Among the found materials, we ended up finding 20 reliable and relevant studies and used only 8 of them for our paper.

3.2 Inclusion Criteria

In our search for information, we focused on journal articles about primary school EFL learners in 4-6 grades. We also focused on evaluating and analyzing the articles that would be included in our paper. The articles that we have used in our paper are only peer-reviewed articles which have related information to our aim and questions. Although, learning languages have been a growing area for researchers and many studies about learning perspectives have been discussed over the past decades, we chose to limit the date-range from year 2000 to 2020. The reason behind this was that we only wanted to focus on new research which are more applicable for current educational purposes.

3.3 Exclusion Criteria

During our search for articles, we focused on different teaching strategies that can benefit and develop the learners speaking skills and vocabulary during the communicative tasks. Among the studies and journals found, we excluded several studies that were not about EFL learners. We found it irrelevant to compare native English speakers with EFL learners. Articles that were published earlier than year 2000 were also excluded and even articles about high school and university students, which were irrelevant for our target group. In Sweden, English is considered as a foreign language that is why we have excluded articles that focus on English as a second language.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Area of interest (Key terms)	Total number of references	Number of references used
EFL AND speaking difficulties, vocabulary learning	8	4
supportive environment OR communicative activities, language development, interaction	12	4
Printed Books	4	4

4. Results

This section contains the relevant information and perspectives that will be presented for our research area. The results are divided into two parts. The first part will address the different reasons and difficulties that some learners face during communicative tasks such as speaking, and vocabulary use in the EFL classroom. The second part will contain teaching strategies and activities that teachers can use to increase the learners' vocabulary and to develop speaking skills in the education practices.

4.1 Reasons behind some EFL learners not speaking and using vocabulary during the communicative activities

Several studies have shown that some EFL learners do not speak and use their vocabulary during the communicative activities for many reasons. A research by Liu and Chen (2013) examined EFL learners' language anxiety level in relation to multiple intelligence (MI) and learners' attitudes about interacting in the English classroom. The participants were 216 learners in grades five and six from two different elementary schools in Taiwan. The learners had different English learning experiences and 78% of them had extra English lessons outside the school to practice their speaking skills with native speakers. In this research, a method named (FLCAS) Foreign Language Anxiety Scale was used to assess EFL learners' language anxiety. Thus, the scale was adjusted to be appropriate for the fifth and sixth graders, and involved only five subcategories which were linguistic, mathematical, introspective, social and visual. Implementation of the study gave the learners possibilities to score on a 6-point scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The study even confirmed that more than 50% of the learners agreed that they felt language anxiety within the EFL classroom due to many reasons. For example, the fear of failing their English course and the constant worry of being unprepared to reply to surprising questions from teachers. This suggests that the learners do not have a supportive environment to use and to practice the language without feeling threatened by the teacher correcting their errors and asking them to answer some unexpected questions.

The learners drew conclusions that the different English levels in the classroom was another contributing factor that led them to avoid speaking in the classroom. This statement was mostly common amongst learners with low speaking abilities. The findings of this study indicate that there had been trends among the learners to underestimate their performance abilities, where some teachers targeted on correcting learners' mistakes in front of others. Therefore, it was not unusual that some learners were affected negatively and had a negative attitude towards speaking activities. Finally, Liu and Chen (2013) added that learners who had extra English lessons and opportunities to speak and to develop their English outside the school had a more positive attitude toward speaking activities.

Similarly, a research by Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) examined the factors for foreign language anxiety among young learners. The study took place in an elementary school in Greece which involved 15 learners aged 13-14 years. The participants had previously studied English for 5 years. The data was collected through group discussions, semi- structured interviews and observation of learners. The data collections revealed why some learners avoided participation during speaking activities in the classroom. Many learners thought that their English was inadequate and that they would get negative evaluations from their classmates. Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) found that EFL teachers would rather focus on reading and writing activities than listening and speaking activities. This meant that learners were not given enough opportunities to participate in communicative activities so they can develop their vocabulary and speaking ability. In addition, anxious learners did not feel comfortable speaking in the group during the few communicative activities that were used in the lessons. Thus, the target language (English) was not used enough, therefore learners felt that they were expected to produce faultless sentences. Learners focused more on grammar rather than on communicating and using their vocabulary. The researchers discovered that some learners tend to compare their vocabulary and speaking abilities with each other which sometimes can affect their social image in a negative way (Tsiplakides and Keramida, 2009).

Moreover, Winasih, Cahyono and Prayogos' study (2019) investigated significant differences between learners in speaking abilities. The study took place at an Indonesian Primary School and the participants were 61 learners in total. The participants were homogenous in their speaking ability and were divided into two groups. The learners speaking ability was measured through vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency. The first group of learners were taught a project called project-based learning (PBL) and used e-poster. The learners worked in small groups or in pairs where they were given a task to plan, create and then present an e-poster with a procedural text that is appropriate for the digital era. The second group of learners were taught by a conventional method where teaching was textbook-centered and teacher-led. The results of this study showed that the learners in the experimental group essentially outperformed the learners in the control group. The PBL method effectively increased speaking abilities among learners and vocabulary was one of the elements that was improved. Eventually, PBL can be very useful to implement in the EFL classroom to develop various language aspects. Project-based learning not only provides

opportunities for learners to work together, it also teaches learners different skills such as problem solving. PBL helps learners to be a develop critical thinkers and self-confidence also (Winasih, Cahyono & Prayogos, 2019)

A study by Al Hosni (2014) investigated problems with oral communication and what circumstances construct in an EFL classroom. The study aimed to find the speaking difficulties that fifth grade learners encounter. They investigated one basic education school with four English teachers and three classes. The research instruments for the investigation recorded interviews, lesson observations, and curriculum analysis. The qualitative data collection revealed that there were various factors that contributed to speaking difficulties among the EFL learners. The observations and interviews with learners revealed linguistic difficulties such as sentence structure and grammar when speaking English. Participants debated that they struggled with using the appropriate vocabulary that related to the chosen topic. Insufficient vocabulary and the weak sentence structuring were consequences of teachers leading learners to use their first language to share their learning experiences. This explains why some learners were too shy to speak the target language, due to the fear of making linguistic mistakes in front of their peers; so, they unconsciously focused on the form instead of on the content of what they are expressing.

Al Hosni (2014) highlights that speaking skills are the most important part of language learning especially when learners can use their language in different social context, which is important than just knowing about the language. Al Hosni's findings (2014) was supported by all interviewed English teachers who also pointed out the importance of speaking skills to achieve proficiency in a foreign language. In spite of this, the majority of teachers debated that they do not have the time to prepare the learners for oral language acquisition because every lesson contains more prioritized objectives. The teachers' goals were based on those contained in the textbooks required by the school supervisors. As a consequence, the teachers focused on the vocabulary aspects and the grammar that usually dominate the textbooks instead of focusing on speaking activities. The limitation of speaking activities in the textbooks did not encourage the learners to speak or to use their vocabulary in order to develop their speaking skills. This made the teacher secure about teaching reading and writing skills instead of speaking skills that involve communicative tasks. The teachers considered learners' learning vocabulary and mastering grammar rules adequate enough to help learners develop their speaking skills. The

teachers were also convinced that the limited speaking activities in the textbooks, in the form of asking and answering questions, were enough for the learners to learn speaking skills.

In addition, Al Hosni (2014) explained that the use of the first language was another mitigating factor and even the shortage of time and willingness to finish the content of textbooks. Most of the interviewed teachers said that they used their first language to explain the meaning of new vocabulary and the grammar points. Al Hosni (2014) concluded that the first language was used the most due to the lack of speaking strategies among teachers. The few communication tasks contributed to learners rarely tried to speak the target language to clarify their point, because the teachers did not speak the target language and used the first language themselves. In addition, the observation of the classroom showed that learners verbally spoke little amounts, and it was only to answer teachers' questions. The answers were limited to very short sentences that contained just a word or two. The reasons behind this is that the learners are not provided with activities opportunities to use English in authentic contexts.

Furthermore, according to the findings of Winasih, Cahyono and Prayogos' study (2019) there are significant differences between learners in speaking abilities that depends completely on the teaching methods which teachers implement in the classroom. One of the findings of Winasih, Cahyono and Prayogo (2019) showed that when lessons were based on textbook, learners were given less opportunities to speak or to use their vocabulary. This made them insecure to speak the target language. Moreover, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) found that some EFL teachers focused more on reading and writing activities instead of communicative activities which also resulted into learners with little opportunities to practice their speaking ability.

Al Hosni (2006) also pointed out that teachers have a tendency to focus on textbooks because they want learners to achieve the most important skills of the language which are writing and reading skills. The teachers focus less on speaking and listening skills. It was stated that teaching vocabulary and grammar would be enough to prepare the learners for oral language acquisition. Since most of the teachers highlighted the grammar structures, the learners understood mastering grammar more important than the meaning of communication. To sum up, teachers implemented traditional teaching that was textbook-centered. This means that learners were not provided with

sufficient tools or opportunities for developing speaking confidence. Although, some teachers pointed out that textbooks are useful because they give all the plans and lessons the teacher need to cover a topic in some detail. Textbooks provide learners with a variety of words and phrases which in the long term can be significant for communication (Al Hosni, 2006).

Some EFL learners are insecure about their speaking English and the use of the appropriate vocabulary in the classroom due to anxiety problems (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Liu & Chen, 2013). The reasons were that some learners compared their speaking abilities and their use of vocabulary with each other (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Liu & Chen, 2013).

Contrastingly, a study by Chou (2014) shows that when teacher had theme-based topics in the classroom with songs, games and stories, learners were motivated to participate and to speak with each other during these communicative activities. Learners reacted positively towards games and songs connected to learning topics. Learners enjoyed the lessons which increased their participation, their vocabulary use and were confident to speak with each other (Chou, 2014).

In summary, traditional methods are useful to implement in the classroom. However, learners need a varying environment with different teaching methods, where they can use their vocabulary and phrases to speak and to express themselves fluently (Al Hosin, 2006).

4.2 Strategies and activities that encourage learners to learn vocabulary and to speak through communicative activities in EFL classroom

Many studies have addressed what would possibly represent effective teaching strategies and methods to develop the English language. Learning vocabulary and speaking through communicative activities in EFL classrooms.

Research by Chou (2014) investigated the advantages of applying theme-based topics to reduce anxiety among elementary learners, and to encourage learners to participate in different styles of communicative and interactive tasks. To gather qualitative knowledge, classroom observation

and semi-structured interviews were approved during this study. The participants of the study were a group of seventy-two grade 2 (age 8) to grade five (age 11) learners and 4 English lecturers from school in Taiwan. During this study, the lecturers used theme-based topics, together with songs, games and stories. The results show that adapting games, songs and stories to English lessons increased speaking within the EFL classroom. Most of the learners had positive attitudes towards games connected to learning topics. The learner agreed that games enlarged their vocabulary and they became confident to speak with their classmates (Chou, 2014). Beside this, stories were additionally favored by the learners (Chou, 2014). The learners were divided into four teams where every group sat round the teacher and listened to the stories. From the start, it had been problematic because learners were not used to stories in English, however with the teachers' encouragement within the storytelling, led learners to willingly participate. The learners became inspired to speak with the teacher and expressed opinions regarding the story and asked questions about the stories. Chou (2014) argues that an auditive stimuli is a fundamental tool for learners to find out pronunciation and develop communicative skills with the teacher and their peers. The observation of the classroom confirmed that teachers' motivation and performance established a secure setting for the learners' participation in activities. Theme-based songs promoted repetition of words and phrases which was helpful for all learners, particularly for learners who struggled with linguistic errors. The sensation of doing one thing proved to be effective for engagement within the target language. Involvement in these activities enlarged the advance of learners' oral skills, wherever each learner was involved in these theme-based activities (Chou, 2014).

Similarly, a study by Pérez (2016) classified different learning strategies to increase speaking activities among younger learners and task-based learning was conclusive for this investigation. The aim of this study was to discover the results of task-based learning and how it affects learners' motivation in the direct interaction of spoken English. Task-based learning is based on actual communications tasks related to pairs and work groups, which is useful for learners who have little familiar to English. To assess the advantages of task-based learning many methods were included such as 1) non-public domain, 2) qualitative techniques, 3) test (pre-and post-test), commentary, and 4) oral interviews. These devices purposefully discovered learners' oral abilities in communications tasks. The participants were 12 boys and 24 girls, aged 14-17, in a

public school in Colombia. The analyzed data collection indicated that task-based activities provided interaction among learners to solve many common tasks. Learners spoke freely and spontaneously by expressing themselves without being anxious about pronunciation or structuring sentences. These kinds of activities gave the learners the motivation they need to speak and use their vocabulary regardless of knowledge level and capability. Task-based learning provided many communicative activities to increase learners' participation rather than applying traditional teaching. This drew learners' attention and curiosity because communicative tasks provided interesting challenges that were based on real-life situations, such as tasks based on learners' hobbies and interests (Pérez, 2016). The motivation of the learners increased because the task-based learning involved interactive group work and interesting role-playing related to learners' learning levels.

The interesting challenges of solving tasks led to the free and spontaneous oral interaction of learners without thinking or fearing negative evaluations from other participants. Furthermore, this strategy demonstrated that learning skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) were developed because the learners were involved in activities by thinking, matching words, grouping vocabulary and also solving. Learners interacted in English and were given a relaxed learning environment which supported shy and low-proficiency learners in using the target language. Another teaching strategy that encouraged the learners was the teachers' highlighting the importance of speaking to achieve vocabulary, accuracy and fluency. These were the aspects that made learners involved in their own learning and increased their participation (Pérez, 2016).

Similarly, Tsiplakides and Keramidas' study (2009) examined interventions to overcome foreign languages' vocabulary learning among young learners. Project work, teacher-student's relations, indirect correction and establishing a supportive classroom environment were the foundation for this study. Project work is important to increase learners' motivation to learn new vocabulary and to speak. The benefits of project work are that learners had a more active role in the learning and the learners did not feel that they were being assessed. This led learners to focus on reaching goals rather than on accuracy. In addition, it increased the self-confidence of low ability learners. Establishing a supportive classroom environment through collaborative work reduce learner's anxiety of making mistakes (Tsiplakides and Keramidas, 2009). Another intervention to decrease

fear was creating norms and rules, considering linguistic mistakes as a regular part of the learning process. Furthermore, the teachers intentionally divided groups that contain learners with different abilities. The purpose was to give the learners opportunities to learn from each other experiences and talents. In addition, norms and rules stimulated learners to contribute to each other without being judged. During the last intervention the teacher provided scaffolding through indirect correction of learners' speaking mistakes. In this way, the teacher managed to indirectly correct the learners' speaking mistakes without making them anxious. The result of this intervention led to all learners speaking without paying attention to the form of the language (Tsiplakides and Keramidas, 2009).

Likewise, a study by Vaca Torres and Gómez Rodríguez (2017) examined whether Project Based Learning (PBL) could increase speaking in the classroom and thereby promote EFL learners' speaking skill development. This considered, for instance, learners' vocabulary, pronunciation and organized discourse during a conversation. The participants were 30 sixth-grade learners in Colombia and all of them had basic English language level. In this study, the data collection was field notes, video recordings of the participants, transcription of learners' conversation. The project lasted for three months and the learners worked in groups and contributed to the development of three different projects in their community. The learners were encouraged to speak English throughout the ending of these projects. Since the learners had a basic language level, the learners had to help each other with the use of new vocabulary which was approved by the teacher. Data revealed that PBL helped and motivated the learners to develop their vocabulary for reaching their communicative needs in oral interactions. Therefore, Vaca Torres and Gómez Rodríguez (2017) conclude that teachers of EFL should implement PBL as it encourages learners to participate in speaking activities, where learners need to use the language for communication and for receiving information.

A study by Janssen (2019) conducted teachers' practices in a CLT (communicative language teaching) and clarified the teachers' teaching method in the EFL classroom. The information collected from nine English teachers from one elementary school and three secondary schools through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Teacher's pedagogical competence and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory were the foundation of the CLT achievements.

The sociocultural perspective on language learning were the foundation for the lesson planning and the teachers' knowledge of how to use the learning tasks to create a positive communicative environment. Janssem (2019) implemented four different teaching methods which encouraged learners to use English for communicating with each other. First, the lessons began with conversation in English which required the use of vocabulary for promoting continual responses in the target language. Second, the teachers used different introductory strategies such as video clips, pictures and games to encourage learners to use related vocabulary to the chosen theme. Third, the teachers avoided to interrupt the learners by correcting the linguistic mistakes because interrupting can have negative impacts. Instead, the teachers encouraged learners to use the right vocabulary while communicating. Lastly, using semi-communicative activities provided the learners with opportunities to interact with each other by exchanging information to different pairs and group works.

The result of this study claims that using these strategies supported theme-based communicative tasks. Whereby, learners were given opportunities 1) to share their thoughts and experiences with each other, and 2) to use the learned vocabulary. This resulted in improving learners' speaking skills due to the use of the variation teaching strategies and the supportive learning environment (Janssem, 2019).

To summarize, all the above- mentioned studies (Chou, 2014; Pérez, 2016; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Vaca Torres & Gómez Rodríguez, 2017; Janssem, 2019) implemented different teaching methods and strategies in the EFL classroom to increase communication among the EFL learners. All the studies concluded that creating a communicative environment made the learners feel positive, supported and safe. The supportive environment can be the key to increase the learners' oral interaction during the tasks. In addition, the results of the investigations concluded that teachers had significant roles to create motivational lessons that required learners to speak the target language. Teachers provided learners with a safe and judgment-free environment which contributed to increased interaction among the learners.

According to the findings of Perez (2016), and Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) studies, EFL learners had positive attitudes during the pair and group activities, because the tasks were based on previous knowledge, interest and hobbies. This increased learners' participations. Moreover,

Perez (2016) pointed out that groups that contained learners with mixed and different knowledge levels supported the learners and allowed them to be involved in authentic communication activities. The task-based learning in the classroom produced a diversity of peer/group work and active role-play. Learners were given the opportunities to practice speaking skills and to be critical thinkers to solve the problems in the tasks (Perez, 2016). Similarly, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) emphasized that implementing project work as a teaching strategy improved the learners' confidence to speak freely without a pressure of being constantly assessed by the teachers.

Additional findings by Jansem (2019) were that semi-communicative activities provided learners with various opportunities to interact and to exchange information. Learners used the vocabulary they have learned and used related vocabulary to the theme-based tasks.

In contrast, Chou (2014) and Perez (2016) stated that implementing songs, games and stories in the classroom contribute to learners' increased speaking abilities. These activities consisted of repetition of vocabulary and phrases, which were very common in songs, games and stories. Repetition is beneficial for learners because they were unconsciously learning vocabulary and grammar. In addition, the learners' pronunciation had also improved which made them more confident to speak and more willing to take part in oral interaction (Chou, 2014).

Furthermore, Jansem (2019) pointed out that implementing games in the lessons is beneficial because it helps learners to expand their vocabulary and to enhance knowledge that are related to the theme-based tasks. Lastly, establishing norms and roles is an effective strategy to provide learners with a learning environment that is both communicative and supportive. This allows every learner to have the opportunities to accomplish the aims of the target language without feeling worried of making language mistakes (Jansem, 2019).

On the other hand, Vaca Torres and Gómez Rodríguez (2017) emphasized that implementing Project Based Learning is a beneficial and useful method to implement in the EFL classroom. BPL- method encourages learners to participate in speaking activities where they need to use the language for communication and for receiving information. These types of projects can encourage learners to be more involved in real life projects. Learners are given the opportunities to learn new vocabulary, to speak during conversations and to learn pronunciation. Moreover,

learners are supported by each other and their teachers to reach their communicative needs in oral interactions.

Furthermore, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) explained that when teachers and learners do not pay attention to linguistic mistakes and consider them as part of the language learning process, the learners' anxiety will reduce, and they will become more confident to speak. This strategy of indirect correction of the linguistic mistakes encourages the EFL learners to keep interacting and expressing themselves in English. Similar findings by Jansem (2019) learners' motivation and participation can increase if the teachers focus on the content and meaning of the lesson instead of the learners' speaking performance. For example, language mistakes and grammar structure. This encourages the learners to use their vocabulary and to interact in order to contribute to the tasks.

5. Discussion

In this section, we will connect the findings of the studies and the theories we have presented in the introduction. In addition, we will discuss their relevance for the EFL learners in elementary school in grades 4-6. The first research question was about finding the reasons why some learners do not speak or use their vocabulary in the EFL classroom. The results showed that there are several factors which led to learners not speaking during the communicative tasks. The aim of this paper was to investigate what reasons are behind learners' difficulties to speak English and to learn new vocabulary. The analyzing of the studies indicated that there are many issues, such as having few or limited communication opportunities, focus on reading and writing, using of first language and mostly teachers following the textbooks or having a lack of communicative teaching strategies (Liu & Chen, 2013; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Winasih, Cahyono & Prayogo, 2019; Al Hosni, 2014).

Conversely to what is mentioned above, here are findings about the studies that suggested a variety of teaching methods and strategies that can be beneficial to implement in the EFL classroom. These studies aimed to develop learners' vocabulary and to increase interaction through the communicative activities (Chou, 2014; Pérez, 2016; Vaca Torres & Gómez

Rodríguez, 2017; Jansem, 2019). All of the presented studies suggest communicative teaching methods and strategies that are based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, where communication and interaction among learners and teachers is the foundation of the CLT achievements. Moreover, the teacher's knowledge of implementing the communicative tasks in the classrooms is vital to creating a positive communicative environment to encourage learners to achieve the speaking requirements in the target language.

In addition, implementing games, songs and stories in the classroom provided learners with opportunities to learn the English language (Chou, 2014; Jansem, 2019). This method made the learning more joyful and meaningful, which resulted in an authentic learning where the activities of the lessons were linked to the learners' hobbies and interests (Perez, 2016).

Perez (2016) emphasizes that a communicative atmosphere stimulated low-proficiency learners but also gave them the opportunities to learn advanced words and phrases with the help of their high-proficiency classmates. Adapting theme and task-based learning that includes creative and exciting group work with activities related to learners' previous knowledge is beneficial to implement in the EFL classroom. Tasks that are based on learners' previous knowledge and experiences provide them with repetition of words and phrases (Perez, 2016). This strategy will help the learners to step forward in their learning process, i.e. their Zone of Proximal Development (Lundahl, 2014).

All the mentioned teaching strategies and methods are relevant for EFL education and even useful for the communicative classroom in the primary school, since they are relatable to The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2011).

According to The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2011) learners have to interact and to participate in all-round communicative skills during English lessons. Activities that provide a communicative atmosphere promote confidence and encourage learners to speak English and to use the vocabulary they know. When learners work in pairs or groups, they will develop "Views, feelings and experiences" and "strategies to understand and make themselves understood" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 33-34) when their language skills are lacking. This shows that language is not only used as a tool to communicate, but it is used to think and to learn as well

(Skolverket, 2011). Moreover, we as teachers have responsibility to provide our learners with opportunities to enhance their development in the four skills of the language, including interaction and speaking skills (Skolverket, 2011).

After analyzing the materials of our topic, we can conclude that teachers have problems with some learners who refuse to speak or to interact in the EFL classroom due to various reasons (Liu & Chen, 2013; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Winasih, Cahyono & Prayogo, 2019; Al Hosni, 2014). Consequently, the methods and the strategies of the presented studies will inspire and help the teachers to increase participation, interaction and vocabulary learning in the communicative EFL classroom (Chou, 2014; Pérez, 2016; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Vaca Torres & Gómez Rodríguez, 2017; Jansem, 2019).

Other findings by Jansem (2019) and Al Hosni (2014) indicate that EFL learners' anxiety might be linked to teachers' pedagogical choices of learning methods, strategies and activities. Further, these suggested teaching methods and strategies for developing speaking and interaction can be useful for us as future teachers to be inspired by or even to adapt in our classes. Despite these facts, we have to bring to mind that the studies maintain limitations due to different factors in the researchers' investigations. The researchers used different methods and procedures to perform their studies and even had different competence levels and different participants. Moreover, these studies were conducted in different schools and different countries. It is important to note that the differing results of the studies depended on the varied learners and their knowledge's level as well.

At the end of this discussion, we as future teachers have to identify the reasons that can make some EFL learners anxious about speaking and interacting in the communicative classroom. This is an essential process to figure out which teaching method or strategy should be used and how to adapt them to provide learners with opportunities to succeed in their vocabulary and speaking development.

6. Conclusion

Our findings demonstrate that some EFL learners struggle to speak and to use vocabulary that they already knew. The reasons can be the few communicative activities implemented in the classroom because teachers tend to focus more on writing and reading activities. Thus, teachers should also focus on communicative activities that require speaking and interaction among learners. Further, teachers that use the first language instead of English in their classroom signal for the EFL learners that it is ok to use the first language to express themselves. Teachers who overuse textbooks that do not cover all the learning objectives stated in the curriculum. Some EFL learners feel the pressure to use the appropriate vocabulary and to express a correct sentence during the communicative activities. Learners are afraid of the negative evaluations from their classmates which can make them anxious and focus on grammar structure instead of their speaking skills. Large classroom, limited time, various teacher demand creates insecure environment for learners, and they will be anxious to speak in English.

This paper presents different teaching methods and strategies that helps the teacher to improve communication and motivation in the EFL classroom. Implementing songs, stories and games as teaching strategies in the EFL classroom are useful, because these strategies consist of repetition of word and phrases which increase learners' oral skills, pronunciation and grammar structure. Teaching strategies that use songs, games and stories that include the repetition of words and phrases increase learners' oral skills, as well as pronunciation and grammar structure.

Perez (2016) and Janssem (2019) claim that theme-based respective task-based learning promotes EFL learners to use vocabulary related to the theme and its tasks. The involvement of learners' interests, hobbies and previous experiences create a positive attitude toward speaking activities. Task-based learning contribute into creating a positive effect on vocabulary learning because it gives an authentic significance and encourage the learners to learn English.

Teachers' indirect correction is useful since it permits learners to keep on speaking despite their linguistics mistakes (Tsiplakides and Keramidas, 2009). Moreover, communicative language teaching (CLT), Project Based Learning (PBL), semi-communicative tasks and directive-in

presentations of tasks in target language can establish a communicative classroom (Vaca Torres & Gómez Rodríguez, 2017; Janssen, 2019).

As mentioned earlier in introduction, some learners in primary school avoid speaking, struggling with the appropriate vocabulary. Thus, strategies and methods mentioned in our paper can be beneficial in the learning context. It is the teachers' responsibility to identify the appropriate strategies and methods to implement in the EFL classroom. The communication-based learning would be useful for learners, since it establishes a communicative environment among EFL learners.

Finally, for a future research it would be interesting to investigate the impact of different kinds of digital tools such as websites, applications, and platforms for educational settings. Since learners vary in their learning needs and will encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, it would be interesting to investigate what kind of digital tools help learners expand their vocabulary. Similarly, how these tools can encourage active learning and promote interactions in communicative classrooms. Thus, teachers should evaluate which digital tools can create new possibilities for their learners and adjust lessons especially for EFL learners.

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