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**MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS
CON MENCIÓN EN ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

THEME:

**THE ECLECTIC METHOD AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Research project prior to obtaining the Master's degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Language, with a major in English Language Teaching

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I CERTIFY

That the aforementioned research work has been reviewed in all its parts, and I consider that it meets the necessary requirements and merits to be submitted for public presentation by the designated Examination Board.

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Quito, March 19th 2026

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DEDICATORY

I dedicate this thesis to my mum whose perseverance, courage, resilience, and love have taken me where I am now. All the good that I am is thanks to her. I love you so much

To my cats, Kitty and Miguel Ángel, who have seen me sit down for hours in front of the computer and waited for me to pet them and give them some food.

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I love you all

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TEMA: THE ECLECTIC METHOD AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Este estudio analiza el impacto del método ecléctico en el desarrollo de las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés de los alumnos de secundaria de un centro educativo privado de Quito. El problema de investigación surge de las limitadas oportunidades de expresión oral que tienen los alumnos en el aula, lo que a veces hace que esta habilidad lingüística quede relegada a un segundo plano. No tiene sentido aprender reglas gramaticales si no se utilizan en situaciones simuladas o de la vida real. Esto, por supuesto, se traduce en un bajo nivel de participación y motivación por parte de los alumnos, así como en una fluidez y una pronunciación deficientes. Ante esta situación, el objetivo del estudio fue explorar las experiencias de aprendizaje de idiomas al implementar el método ecléctico en las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés de los estudiantes de secundaria, mediante la aplicación de una guía de actividades diseñada bajo la orientación de dicho método. La investigación se llevó a cabo con un enfoque cualitativo, empleando un diseño de estudio de caso, entrevistas y grupos focales como técnicas de recopilación de datos. Se utilizó un dispositivo de grabación de voz antes y después de la implementación de la guía de actividades para transcribir las respuestas de los participantes. Los resultados de este proyecto de investigación revelaron que los juegos de rol y los debates son los formatos de actividad más eficaces y motivadores para mejorar las habilidades orales de los alumnos. El apoyo del profesor durante la realización de las actividades desempeñó un papel importante a la hora de reducir el filtro afectivo de los alumnos, lo que les permitió ganar confianza y expresarse con mayor libertad. En conclusión, el método ecléctico influye positivamente en las habilidades orales de los alumnos. Al combinar estrategias de múltiples enfoques, fomenta una producción oral creativa, espontánea y orientada a tareas.

Palabras clave: fluidez, juegos de rol, método ecléctico, producción oral.

UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA INDOAMÉRICA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
MASTER IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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THEME

THE ECLECTIC METHOD AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH-
SPEAKING SKILLS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of the eclectic method on the development of English oral communication skills among secondary school students in a private educational institution in Quito. The research problem stems from the limited opportunities students have for oral expression in the classroom, which often causes this linguistic skill to take a back seat. It is unproductive to learn grammatical rules if they are not applied in simulated or real-life situations. This situation leads to low levels of student participation, motivation, fluency, and pronunciation. To address this issue, the research objective was to explore language learning experiences through the implementation of the eclectic method in the development of students' English oral skills, by applying an activity guide designed under the principles of this method. The research utilized a qualitative approach and a case study design, employing interviews and focus groups for data collection. A voice recording device was utilized prior to and following the implementation of the activity guide to transcribe participants' responses. The results of this research project revealed that role plays and debates are the most effective and motivating activity formats for improving students' oral skills. Teacher support during the activities played a significant role in reducing students' affective filter, allowing them to gain confidence and express themselves more freely. In conclusion, the eclectic method has a positive impact on students' oral skills. By integrating strategies from various methods, it encourages creative, spontaneous, and goal-oriented oral communication.

KEYWORDS: Eclectic method, fluency, oral production, role plays



INTRODUCTION

Importance and relevance

This research project is essential for analyzing the experiences of high school learners regarding the eclectic method aimed at improving their English oral production. This research will also focus on the students' insights about oral production activities in the EFL classroom and the outcome of the eclectic method to help learners develop their speaking skill. **Marcillo (2017)** states that “selecting the best methods, strategies, and techniques from all the existing conventional methods could be really useful for students to make progress on issues concerning the oral expression, such as: pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, range, and coherence” (p.138). Nowadays, there are several methods oriented to the English language teaching; however, a single method might not be as impactful as a complex method to ensure students' progress in oral production activities in the classroom and the real world.

The research line of this project is based on a pedagogical innovation since it will analyze the implementation of the eclectic method to boost students' oral skills in the English language. This will result in a very insightful and resourceful activity guide for teachers to use the eclectic method and generate meaningful knowledge in learners so that they can do better in oral production activities. This activity guide will bring the best out of the selected methods, and it will also emphasize in developing confidence, fluency, and pronunciation. The foreign language didactic subtitle governs in this research as the selected methods will tell educators how to make a more positive impact in students' learning experiences in the classroom.

According to **Cambridge (2020)** CEFR (Common European Framework), it emphasizes on learners' ‘communicative needs’, including dealing with the business of everyday life,

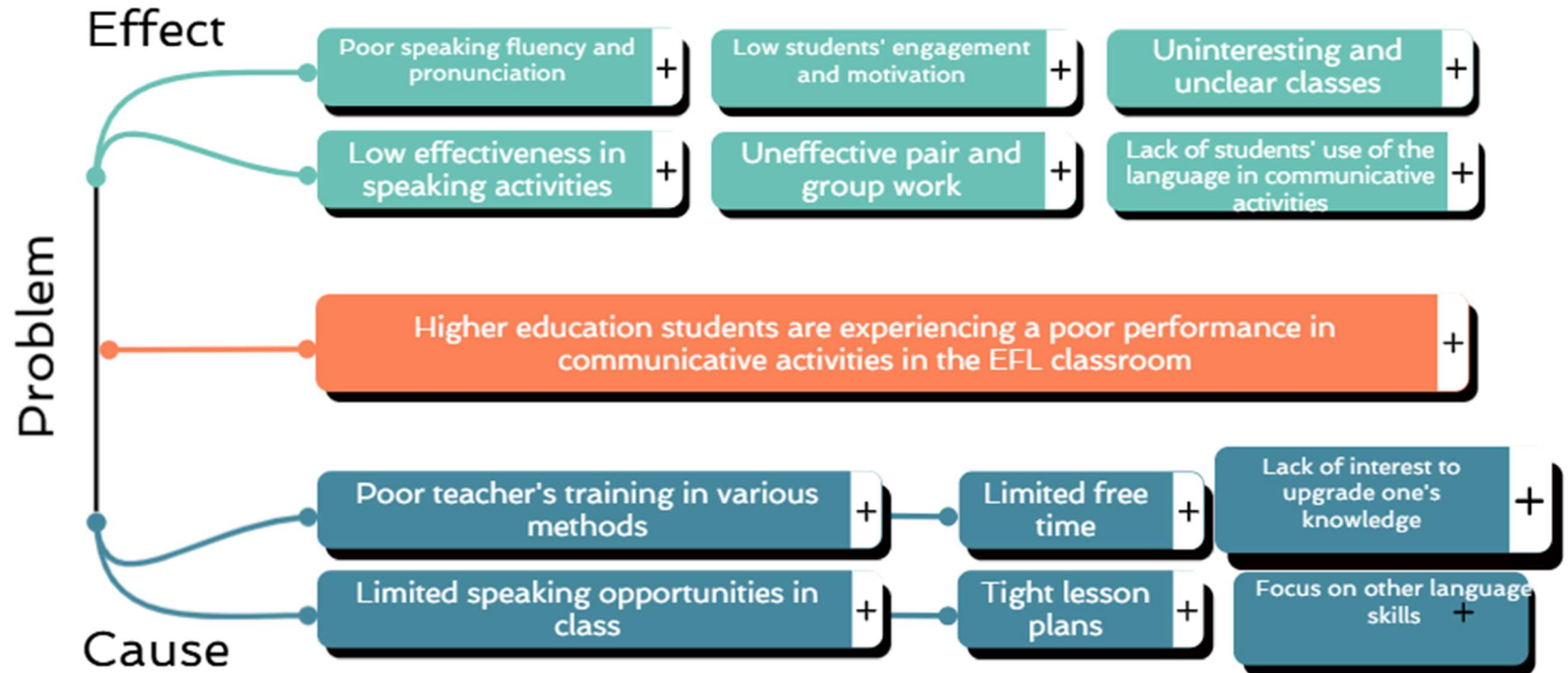
exchanging information and ideas, and achieving wider and deeper intercultural understanding. The outcome of learning a language is effective communication, which is facilitated by providing learners with real-life situations that require them to use the target language to negotiate, generate ideas, express opinions, accept or refuse proposals, request repetition, and so on.

Based on **Elchin (2024)** about the importance of the eclectic method in oral production, he mentions that, “this approach allows educators to draw on elements of different methods to suit specific linguistic and instructional contexts, making it particularly suitable for pronunciation teaching. Research shows that eclectic methods can help students make significant gains in both accuracy and fluency” (p. 139). Indeed, a single method might have its advantages, and it can truly help students become more fluent and accurate when speaking English. Nonetheless, a mixed-method approach can have a more significant impact on students’ learning process, as teachers can select the best features from various methods to tailor them to the classroom’s specific circumstances. In addition, an eclectic method might give educators a lot of flexibility because they do not have to stick to one single method.

Moreover, **Bonilla, Campoverde, & Egas (2025)** claim that “the Eclectic Approach uses all the available methods, approaches and techniques depending on the classroom circumstances, as it integrates the language-teaching methods depending also on the abilities of the learners” (p. 2845). This means that eclecticism adopts different features from different methods that have been widely recognized to teach English either as a second or as a foreign language. Of course, the selected methods need to be chosen under the influence of the classroom’s needs and realities to get the most out of the eclectic method in English speaking skills.

Problem tree

PROBLEM TREE



Problem statement

Learning a language not only means mastering different features, for example, grammar, vocabulary, fixed expressions, phrasal verbs, falling & raising intonation, but also using them to convey meaning in a given context. The last but not least feature is communication, since it is the outcome of learning a language. High school students might not feel confident when it comes to speaking in a foreign language due to various reasons. One of the biggest motives is the limited speaking opportunities in class. This truly makes a big difference in learners' perspectives of the language, as they might ask themselves the purpose of spending a lot of time checking a certain piece of grammar. There is no point in explaining grammar rules to our students if they are not meant to use them in simulated situations. Of course, this results in a low range of engagement and motivation of learners and poor speaking fluency and pronunciation.

According to **Elchin (2024)** and the problem with university English programs is that “despite the proven advantages of eclecticism, many pronunciation programs still rely on traditional, singular methodologies, which may fall short of meeting the diverse needs of university students. These programs often lack the adaptability required to address individual pronunciation challenges” (p. 140). The second main reason for this matter is the poor teacher's training in various methods. This, of course, makes a huge impact on the effectiveness of a lesson since the teacher is the one who takes into account the different circumstances in his class and proceeds to select the best methods to be used. Because of the limited free time, educators find it uncomplicated to stick to a single method and use it daily rather than collecting features from different methods to cover learners' needs. Indeed, this has a very negative impact in students' appreciation of the class and might lead to a very low

level of attention during the class, and as a result, it might be unlikely that any speaking activity can be done in this environment.

Research Idea

Explore the language learning experiences that students had during the implementation of the Eclectic Method, a blended approach to communicative competence in EFL classrooms, where the researcher will design an activity guide with activities that he will create based on the students' perspectives and preferences towards oral production activities. These activities will be aligned with the most appropriate methods oriented to boost speaking skills in high school students.

Beneficiaries

The first beneficiaries of this research project are the high school students from B1 level of English whose ages range from 16 and 17 years old. The activity guide that will come out of this project covers the classroom's circumstances. Besides, it will be student-centered to provide as many opportunities as possible to improve their English speaking abilities through the use of features from various methods; such as, CLT, Audiolingual method, and TBLT. The second beneficiaries are the teachers from high schools since this project will take place in this level of education, and it will also take into account the classroom's reality. Of course, with the activity guide previously mentioned, educators can use it in the best way possible to foster students' confidence to improve their pronunciation, fluency, pitch, rhythm, and so for. Finally, the research community will also benefit from this project as it will propose an innovative implementation and useful information to change the dynamic of someone's classroom, and it can also serve as a reference for future investigations related to one or both variables.

Research question

How does the eclectic method foster in the oral English production of high school students?

Objectives**General objective**

- To explore the language learning experiences of implementing the eclectic method in English-speaking language skills in high school students.

Specific objectives

- To describe students' perspectives of oral production activities in the EFL classroom through guided interviews.
- To design an activity guide for the implementation of the eclectic method oriented to boost the oral production in high school students.
- To reflect on the implementation of an eclectic method to foster the English language speaking skill.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, we will discuss 4 previous studies that support the subject matter of this research project. These studies will be directly related to one or both categories: the eclectic method and English-speaking skills. We have selected not only international research but also national research to have a deeper understanding of the categories. We will also dive into different aspects of each category that will lend a hand to the various concepts that involve each category of this research project.

Najmus (2020) conducted a research project whose objective was to highlight the needs of the learners and help the teachers to achieve their teaching goals with the planned learning outcome through the Eclectic method. The researcher employed a mixed-methods research design, focusing on female undergraduate students from the College of Science for Girls at King Khalid University in Abha, Saudi Arabia. After applying the eclectic method in the language classroom, the study revealed that it effectively integrates various language learning activities. This approach also allows for personalized attention, even in large groups, helping students feel more engaged and self-assured. The findings showed a notable improvement in the learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Overall, the study highlights that the eclectic method is effective across different proficiency levels, making the learning process creative and accessible. One of its key advantages is that it enables teachers to adapt their strategies based on students' skills and needs, leading to more meaningful and tailored instruction.

Based on these research findings, we can state that the eclectic method is more student-centered oriented due to its characteristic of taking into account the learners' needs to

dispose more didactic and meaningful strategies to boost the students' skills. Indeed, engagement is key to get the most out of a certain lesson and this method also considers this. This method is as innovative as it can get because it works well with small and large classes. These results can help us ensure the power of the eclectic method to boost the oral communication competence in students of high school, as the beneficiaries in our project are also from this level of education. Besides, the discoveries are widely positive, and that gives us a clear notion that the learners' experiences with this method were engaging.

Elchin (2024) carried out another research project to examine the impact of the eclectic approach on enhancing pronunciation skills in university-level English learners, focusing on both segmental and suprasegmental features. Using a quasi-experimental approach, learners were assigned to two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was taught using a variety of instructional strategies, such as minimal pairs exercises, shadowing techniques, intonation drills, role-playing activities, and the use of technological tools. The findings showed that students in the experimental group experienced notable enhancements in their pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and confidence when communicating. In addition, qualitative responses from participants reflected a high level of engagement and overall satisfaction, highlighting the adaptability and effectiveness of the eclectic method. These findings highlight the potential of integrating eclectic pronunciation techniques into university curricula to meet diverse linguistic needs and improve overall communicative competence.

Despite the approach this research used, it can totally support our project since it is related to both categories, the eclectic method and pronunciation skills. On one hand, the researcher applied different strategies to involve learners in the class and he made sure all the

students participated. On the other hand, he also interviewed the students and got more insights about their experiences. The findings in this work are also positive as students showed a high level of engagement and participation through the development of different activities intended in the eclectic method.

Bonilla, Egas, & Campoverde (2025) worked on a research project to provide a review study of English teaching experiences where the eclectic approach could be used to support language teaching. The study employed analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive, and hermeneutic-dialectical methods to analyze and interpret the processed data. Teaching experiences were gathered from a group of 21 professors enrolled in the Master's Degree Program in Pedagogy of English as a Foreign Language at the University of Ecuador (UBE) since 2022, all belonging to Group 1. Out of 72 practical assignments completed in the Second Language Acquisition course, 21 activities related to teaching methods from Unit 1 were selected for analysis. The evaluation criteria included the number of methods applied in the classroom, the integration of language skills, and aspects of didactic planning. The review revealed a pattern of method integration, showing a preference for eclectic teaching practices. Moreover, the analysis offered valuable insights for participants on how to implement the eclectic method in English instruction. This research highlights the positive outcomes of using an eclectic approach, encouraging its consideration in future academic investigations.

The results in this research showed that a large number of professors prefer using a wide range of activities to teach a certain unit. The outcome also established the number of methods used in the class and the integration of language skills. Even though this project does not focus on a single language skill, it still proves that a complex method can truly help students become more engaged and motivated to participate in class activities and, most

importantly, to show interest in learning new things about the target language. This research can also help us understand the impact of the eclectic method and how to implement it in English instruction.

Merino & Cevallos (2024) executed a research project in the Ecuadorian context, and its main objective was to identify the most effective strategies based on the eclectic method to improve oral production among elementary students at Unidad Educativa Daniel Reyes. To achieve this, a mixed-methods approach was used, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Specifically, interviews were conducted with the institution's vice-principal, the academic coordinator, and the elementary-level English teacher. Additionally, a survey was administered to fourth-grade students in the Educación General Básica (EGB). The findings suggested that a lack of academic resources significantly contributes to the low level of English speaking proficiency, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). As a result, a didactic guide featuring engaging and innovative strategies was developed to encourage students to enhance their speaking abilities. The conclusion indicated that students are motivated to improve and are likely to achieve the standards set by the Ministry of Education if given appropriate and appealing educational materials.

Based on the findings from the research above, the idea of using an eclectic method rather than a single one makes total sense. Although the project was carried out with elementary students, the outcome is similar to the ones previously discussed. The eclectic method is the detonator of students' interest in learning. As the researcher concluded, appropriate and appealing materials will result in a more meaningful and engaging lesson for students. This project can support us to contrast the activity guide that will come out as a

result of the implementation of the eclectic method to identify the impact on students' learning experiences.

Theoretical framework

In this section, we will take a look at the theories of communicative language learning from different scholars and how their theories shaped what we know as communicative competence. In addition, we will dive into the features of the speaking skills and methodologies designed to develop oral communication competence. We will delve into the goals, characteristics, and roles of both teachers and students in the classroom to make the lessons more effective and engaging for the learners.

Communicative language theory in English learning

There have been many scholars whose contributions have led to the development of the communicative language theory. It was not until Chomsky's (1957) linguistic competence that communicative competence emerged. Linguistic competence is defined as a native speaker's implicit knowledge of the grammar rules, syntax, and vocabulary that govern their mother tongue and which allow him to communicate in concrete scenarios. It is also believed that a mental system exists in every single individual, and this system stores everything individuals know about the language. Chomsky also thinks that linguistic competence is free from errors since there are no external factors that can influence that system and make it vulnerable. This system also helps individuals understand different levels of formality, even if they have never heard of or used a certain structure before. However, this linguistic competence might not be enough to measure the knowledge of someone's language, and as a result, **Hymes (1970)** coined the term communicative competence.

Hymes considers that communicative competence is attached to some actors, for instance, grammatical structure, culture, and society, and that is the reason why he believes that language competence is a social competence for communication. As a result of these assumptions, he came up with four categories that define communicative competence.

- Linguistic competence: It refers to an individual's language knowledge, such as syntax, grammar structures, vocabulary, phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, word formation rules, etc.
- Sociolinguistic competence: The ability to put into practice the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in real-life situations.
- Discourse competence: The use of grammatical forms and context in both oral and written formats. To do this, language convergence and semantic coherence are required.
- Strategic competence: The ability to improve communication effectiveness to avoid misunderstandings through the use of functional language expressions.

Hymes' contributions to what communicative competence is have been undeniably meaningful for EFL teachers, as they now understand that communicative competence is as important as linguistic competence. There is no point in mastering a language in terms of grammar structures, reading and listening skills, vocabulary, or idiomatic expressions if an individual cannot use it properly in a real-life situation. All the linguistic knowledge of a language has to be ready to be used in different settings, considering the culture, the communication problems, the strategies to fix communication, and the level of formality.

Thanks' to Hymes' contributions of communicative competence, there were other scholars that followed his footsteps to deeply develop this matter.

Also, **Canale & Swain (1980)** stated that it is important to distinguish communicative competence and grammatical competence. The first one refers to the relationship and interaction between the knowledge of grammar rules and the knowledge of those rules of language use, which is essentially the sociolinguistic competence. Then, it is vital to define communicative performance, which is the realization of these competencies. In other words, this communicative performance can be reached once the previous terms are understood to have an actual production and comprehension. They also came up with a cornerstone in communicative competence in order to use a language effectively and appropriately in social contexts. The grammatical competence is what allows us to construct sentences with correct use of grammar rules, to understand the meaning of sentences and their structures, and to use the correct tense, prepositions, articles, and punctuation.

When we read our favorite book or listen to our favorite podcast, this competence is what helps us understand the content. Picture that a person is sending an email to a colleague about an assignment they have to do together. He might use different tenses, such as the simple present or present continuous, to arrange a time of meeting, to set a date and complete the task, or to ask questions about the assignment. Then, the sociolinguistic competence, which was previously discussed, helps individuals know when to use the language, how to use it, and what to say in different sociocultural contexts

For instance, in some cultures, tipping the server of a restaurant is common, and you may use the expression *keep the change*, however, in Ecuadorian society, it is uncommon to do this, and people might react positively or negatively, since the waiter might think he is seen as a poor person. Now, the discourse competence is what provides individuals with the ability to connect sentences coherently through the use of conjunctions and transitions in both

oral and written forms. Imagine that a student is on a debate about whether AI tools are preventing students from developing their critical thinking and he has to provide with pros and cons. In this case, he need to use conjunctions of contrast, such as, *nonetheless, however, yet, but, whereas*. And finally, the strategic competence, which is the ability to cope with difficulties in communication through the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies, such as, gestures, clarification, and paraphrasing. If a Spanish speaker does not know the exact word for a *spoon*, he will probably use a paraphrase to fix the breakdown in communication, and he might say *it is a utensil that people use when they eat soup*.

Therefore, these concepts play an important role in this scientific research, as the main issue for higher education students is that they are experiencing poor performance in communicative activities. Their linguistic competence in the English language needs to take a step further to develop their communicative competence. Consequently, we need to dive into what English-speaking skills involve.

Speaking skills feature in the EFL classroom

Accuracy in Speaking

Brown (2007) defines accuracy as the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences with proper pronunciation and vocabulary. It is essential for clear communication and the avoidance of misunderstandings. Accuracy is one of the principal features of English speaking skills since this is what makes our speech clear and understandable. Therefore, there will not be any trouble in communication, and the message will be delivered successfully to the receiver. It also has to do with the grammar aspect of the target language, and here we can see how this links to one of the methods that will be discussed afterward. Grammar is as much needed as communicative competence, since if one of them fails, poor communication

might be the result. Minimal pairs are a good exercise for Ecuadorian speakers to practice different English sounds and realize that a single vowel might have different sounds. For instance, the vowel *u* has different pronunciation in the following words: up (ʌp), university (ju:ni'vɜ:səti), and bury ('beri). An individual who possesses a good range of vocabulary is more likely to use synonyms or different structures to express the same idea. For example, one individual can say *I am hungry*, but others might say *I am starving* or *I could eat a horse*.

Ellis (2003) defines accuracy as the degree to which language conforms to grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation norms. This also backs up what **Brown (2007)** mentioned about accuracy. EFL teachers have to carefully address the issues that students might present in their speaking. Feedback is key when letting students know how correctly they used the language during the execution of a speaking task. Accuracy can be measured by counting the errors in the learner's speech. For instance, a student says *Yesterday I visited my grandmother, and we watched a movie*, this sentence shows a high level of accuracy in terms of the correct use of language norms due to the correct pronunciation of regular verbs' past forms and the good use of pronouns to state that he went to his grandma's and they watched a film. In addition, the time expression *yesterday* is key to referring to the past.

Regarding the teacher's feedback and its impact on students' learning process, **Lyster & Ranta (1997)** established 6 types of corrective feedback: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. Based on their research findings, they concluded that teachers used *recasting* as their preferred corrective feedback method. However, students did not produce a high learner uptake, which means learners did not identify the correction anytime soon. Learners are supposed to correct themselves at any point because this gives them a great opportunity to negotiate form. This

results in students actively thinking about grammar during communication. According to the authors, elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition are the 4 key type of feedback that lead students to develop accuracy even if they are making mistakes. For instance, a learner says *she go to the beach yesterday*, and the teacher uses *metalinguistic feedback* to make the student think about the grammar use and correct himself, therefore, the teacher might ask *What's the past of go?*. This single question can trigger students' brain and realize that the past form of go is necessary to accomplish accuracy.

Pronunciation and Intonation

Celce-Murcia (2010) states that pronunciation includes the articulation of individual sounds, stress patterns, rhythm, and intonation, all of which affect the intelligibility of speech. Perhaps this might be the most complex aspect of communicative competence since a good flow of communication will purely depend on one's pronunciation of words. Yet, it is not only what pronunciation makes it complicated; a language also has rhythm, and this is what makes a certain language melodic, and it can also express emotions. Words have stress patterns, and that will depend on our intention, whether we want to express happiness, confusion, surprise, or other feelings. **Thornbury (2005)** also states that mastering other skills, such as intonation and stress patterns, helps students use the target language in communicative settings naturally and effectively. Therefore, educators must take into consideration these features of the English speaking skill to come up with creative and dynamic ways of fostering this skill in high school students.

Skehan (2003) designed a model for measuring the speaking performance in Second Language Acquisition classrooms. He came up with the framework called *CAF*, which stands for complexity, accuracy, and fluency. The first term deals with how complex or rich the

language is. To illustrate, a B1 English level student is more likely to say *I can't agree more with the idea you just proposed*. This shows that the language user disposes of a wide range of vocabulary and grammar structures. The second term has to do with how correct the language is in terms of grammar rules. And the last one refers to how smoothly and quickly students produce the language in real time. It can be said that these factors might alter or contribute to one's speaking skill. It is essential that teachers who are intended to improve the English speaking skills consider these elements in the activities that will be applied in the classroom.

Fluency is another key feature in English speaking skills, and this implies that this single feature cannot work by itself; instead, it has to work together with the accuracy and complexity of the language. **Skehan (2003)** defines fluency as the ability to produce language smoothly and rapidly during communication tasks. This means that hesitation is rarely noticed, and pauses are purposefully made. It is necessary to bear in mind that using sophisticated grammar rules and rich lexical in one's speech is what leads students to reach fluency, since they feel comfortable using different structures of the language, and they can hold a conversation and keep fluency to understand the message and to transmit ideas. EFL teachers must consider these features to foster high school students' English speaking skills. Making mistakes is part of the journey; nevertheless, the type of feedback that educators can provide is the bridge between the current gap in learners' minds and the enrichment of their continuous learning process.

Communicative activities and interaction

Through meaningful exchanges such as group discussions, interviews, and role-plays, learners can improve both their fluency and confidence in speaking. This interaction

encourages them to focus not only on grammar and vocabulary but also on conveying meaning effectively. According to **Richards (2006)**, communicative tasks simulate authentic language use and help learners develop their communicative competence. Furthermore, when students engage in dialogues, they practice listening and respond in context, which supports the natural development of speaking skills. As a result, communicative interaction transforms the classroom into a dynamic space where learners actively use English rather than simply learning about it. This approach promotes autonomy and motivates students to participate more, making language learning more engaging and effective. Group discussions are a massive way to make students use the language as they are sharing their opinion with the class, but in addition, they are also using the target language and different structures, cohesive devices, and vocabulary to express their ideas. Besides, the cooperative work that they are required to do in these kinds of activities can build a wall of trust among students to talk in English more confidently. In the cultural context of the students who are taking part in this scientific research, they struggle with the pronunciation of some unknown words. In this case, reading aloud is one way to diagnose what sounds, stress patterns, or morphemes they have most trouble with. Additionally, students can track how much flow they possess when it comes to reading a passage.

Now that we understand what speaking in the English language involves, it is essential to take a look at the methods that have been designed to enhance the students' participation in speaking activities to foster their communicative language competence.

Teaching methods

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

It is believed that communicative-oriented methods only focus on communication, and

the grammar competence is left behind. To no one's surprise, there is a term that comes along when we talk about communicative competence, and that term is grammatical competence. According to **Richards (2006)**, grammatical competence refers to the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language. It refers to knowledge of the building blocks of sentences (e.g., parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns) and how sentences are formed. It is vital to talk about the grammar aspect in a language since it is what helps us understand how the sentences are formed in a certain way, and what grammatical rules govern the target language. Moreover, the grammatical aspect of a language provides with a clearer notion of the chunks in a language, and this is the first step to boost our communicative competence.

For the last 50 years, learning a language was seen as a mechanical process where errors were not acceptable, and accuracy in forming sentences was a priority in an EFL classroom. Nonetheless, thanks to the contributions of different authors, such as Hymes, learning a language involves more than mastering grammar points in a certain language. CLT seeks to make real communication the focus of language learning, provide opportunities to develop accuracy and fluency in learners, and let students induce or discover grammar rules. This is why the roles of both teachers and learners have widely changed in this methodology. Learners now participate in collaborative activities where they can help and trust each other to generate meaningful insights about the target language. The teacher is not seen as a model for precision, instead, he is the facilitator and provider of opportunities where students can create communication.

This method can truly work in higher education settings, as most students, if not all of them, have a grasp of the English language thanks to their early years of learning this

language in primary school or high school. CLT can be applied in this environment with collaborative activities, such as getting to know each other activities, group discussions about a determined topic where they share their opinions, debates where a topic is discussed with its pros and cons, or interviews where students use the target language to answer questions. This method can help students develop, first of all, their confidence when talking in English because in the activities previously mentioned, learners work collaboratively and consequently they start trusting themselves to reach an agreement, complete a task, or answer questions. They are constantly exchanging their ideas, and this confidence that is being developed, then might take them one step closer to their communicative competence. In addition, this method focuses on the student rather than on the teacher, who just acts as a provider of collaborative and communicative activities where the target language has to be used.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

There is a certainly revolutionary method that is task-based language learning, whose focus is the task itself. According to **Ellis (2003)**, Task-based language teaching is an approach that aims to provide learners with a natural context for language use. Learners work to complete a task, and language is acquired as a by-product of this activity. This means that learners use the target language as a vehicle of communication to complete the task. For example, students are learning about the importance of hand-washing, and they are asked to prepare an informative chart about it. Students will use the target language to convey meaning and prepare the material and information needed to communicate why hand-washing is so important. This method emphasizes on three phases, the pre-task where students are barely taught huge amounts of new language, yet they are informed what they

are going to do, then the main task involves working collaboratively and completing the task, and finally the post-task that is the phase where teachers and students reflect on the activity developed, and analysis is as essential as the reflections of the process.

Nunan (2004) establishes that a task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on meaning rather than form. It is imperative to say that this definition does not intend to leave grammar behind. Of course, grammar is taught previously for students to have the necessary tools to complete a task. As a result, this method will be more likely to be successful. In the pre-task stage, certain pieces of vocabulary might be introduced, yet it is quite different from the way vocabulary is normally taught, since in this stage, students will be introduced to the discussion topic.

This TBL method can take higher student learners' communicative competence to the next level thanks to the variety of topics that the teacher can propose to prepare a comparative chart, a mind map, a travel guide, a design of a dream home, and its furniture. Besides, this method can also allow learners to develop their critical thinking through the realization of a topic that they might never have heard of before. The teacher can let students choose the topic they are most interested in, and this can ensure that the task will be done with more enthusiasm and interest. As a result, students can talk about different topics that are nowadays important in our society, such as the impact of AI in education, how to become more effective in our lives, or what makes a good student and/or teacher. And at the same time, students are using the target language to convey meaning and inform the audience about a certain topic.

Audio-lingual method

The English speaking skill needs to be aligned with the input skill, that is, the listening. And that is what the Audio-lingual method is intended to do. Repetitions and choral drills are the main focus in this method, and it is believed that a language is learned by stimulus and repetition. **Freeman (2000)** says that the Audio-Lingual Method, like the Direct Method, is also an oral-based approach. However, it drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. This method, like the CLT, focuses on grammatical competence and uses repetition as the principal vehicle to practice the language in an aural way. The focus on grammar will ensure that students accurately practice the target grammar through controlled practice from the teacher. This method also uses dialogues to practice oral communication. Here we can appreciate one big difference between this method and CLT, that is, the role of the teacher. In the first method, the teacher is the guide and the one who models the sentences, yet in the second one, the teacher is the facilitator, and students can also learn from each other.

While this method demands more teacher's intervention and modelling, that does not necessarily mean that students are acting in a passive way. Instead, they are receptors and producers of the information they are listening. This methodology can work in higher education students due to the fact that the teacher might be the person they rely on, at first, and then they can start trusting their classmates. Therefore, the participation of the professor is vital for those who have confidence limitations when speaking in English. The teacher can provide individual and group drills to ensure learners' understanding of a specific grammar point, for instance, repetition of sentences focusing on pronunciation and intonation, substitution drill using the same grammar structure, but changing the complement,

transformation drill changing affirmative to negative or vice versa, or chain drill where students ask and answer the same question, but get different answers. Students can benefit from these activities to start developing their communicative competence through the use of these different drills. Although the output generated can be on a short-term basis, it is the teachers' job to take it on a long-term basis, and that is possible with the combination of other methods.

The Eclectic Method

All the methods previously mentioned have been advocated to state how they are intended to develop the students' speaking skills in the English language. All of them have been successful to some extent, yet they might have some limitations, especially when it comes to covering all the classroom's circumstances and learners' abilities. That is why the eclectic method was proposed, as many authors sought to highlight the best of existing methods. **Brown (2018)** mentions that eclecticism is a conceptual approach that does not hold to a single paradigm or a set of assumptions but draws upon multiple theories, styles, or ideas to gain complementary insights. Unlike a single method with a fixed set of assumptions and activities for developing certain language skills, the eclectic method employs various approaches, resulting in a highly flexible method that can change several times to reach the objective. Eclecticism has been criticized, yet it has finally been accepted due to the lack of complete success of previous methods.

According to **Freeman (2000)**, teachers should not rely on one teaching method, such as Grammar Translation, Audio-lingual, or Communicative Language teaching. Instead, teachers should select techniques from different methods depending on students' needs, learning objectives, and classroom context. This eclectic method is an innovative approach

that attempts to be maneuverable and flexible to ensure that all the language skills and classroom circumstances are taken into account. It is relevant to remember that communicative competence not only emphasizes oral formats, but also written ones. That is why the teacher might need to change from one method to another to cover those formats. In high school settings, this method can be beneficial thanks to its flexibility, which means one method will not guide the nature of the class, but many.

This is more likely to result in a more dynamic and interesting class where students find the class and the teacher unpredictable. The professor can start explaining a certain grammar point and put it into practice through the use of chain drills, where students use the target grammar and get different responses from their classmates, and then switch to a task where they have to work in small groups and discuss their ideas about a specific topic. The teacher is key to the success of the eclectic method as he needs to adapt their teaching to cover the students' needs and learning styles. He is the one in charge of selecting the best activities to do in order to develop the students' communicative competence.

Harmer (2007) emphasizes that learners learn to speak by speaking. Learners need many opportunities to use English for real communication, not only to study grammar or vocabulary. Among the activities he suggested are discussions, role-plays, interviews, and problem-solving tasks. He also argues that teachers should use different teaching techniques to address the multiple aspects of speaking, such as fluency, accuracy, and confidence. In this sense, the eclectic method takes into account these features and helps students focus on the real use of the language; however, it also focuses on the correct use of the language.

The teacher's role in using the eclectic method to foster speaking skills is as a facilitator of the language; it means teachers help students with vocabulary or grammar rules

before, during, and after a speaking task. Feedback is key to ensuring students' continuous learning process. On one hand, teachers also explain the activity and provide clear instructions. The instructional language the teacher uses is good enough for students to understand instructions, explanations, ideas, examples, and questions. Teachers also function as a prompter when students cannot find the exact word they want to use. On the other hand, students' role under the influence of the eclectic method is as active users of the target language. They use all the grammar rules and vocabulary they already know and put into practice the ones they are learning. Learners also work as critical thinkers thanks to the activities that teachers propose, where students might need to use the language to solve a problem or to debate ideas about a trending topic.

Shukurova (2025) carried out a research about how the eclectic approach affects students' language performance in EFL classrooms. He concluded that the eclectic method helped students become more motivated because lessons included varied and interactive activities rather than repetitive instructions. The eclectic approach can support the speaking skills by combining communicative activities, grammar support for accuracy, vocabulary practice, and cooperative learning activities. This suggests that students are more immersed in the lessons and this can lead to a good classroom behavior, which can help with their attention to the teacher's explanations and instructions. As a result, students are more likely to improve their communicative competence by completing the activities proposed in the activity guide. The activities will cover these features discussed in this section, not only to foster learners' speaking skills, but also to contribute to their learning process.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

In this chapter, we dive into the methodological plan to better understand the research approach and design selected by the researcher to achieve the main objective, which is to explore the experiences of implementing the eclectic method in English-speaking language skills among high school students at the B1 level. In the first section, we describe the research approach and design, which are determined by both the general and specific objectives. In the next section, there is a description of the participants who were involved in this research project, and one about the context of the research that gave us a clearer idea of the circumstances of the classroom and the candidates.

Research approach and design

Based on the general objective, which is exploring the experiences from the implementation of the eclectic method for fostering speaking skills in high school students of B1 English level, the qualitative method has been selected for this research project.

Aspers & Corte (2019) define qualitative research as “an iterative process in which improved understanding of the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied” (p.16). Indeed, this research project explored perspectives of the students from using the eclectic method in the classrooms, and to do so, the researcher used observation as the main tool to describe the learners’ behaviours before, during, and after the implementation of the eclectic method. Moreover, this approach allowed the researcher to situate himself in the context of the phenomenon to appreciate closely what happened inside the classroom.

This research project has implemented the case study as its research method to get a

deeper understanding of the phenomenon of learners at the B1 English level. This design allowed us to understand their natural settings with a clear vision.

Yin (2018) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. This design method describes in detail the appreciation of the students in speaking activities inside the classroom to understand the problem, which is the lack of speaking opportunities in communicative activities. We also acknowledged which EFL teaching methods are ideal for fostering students' oral proficiency to perform better in oral activities in the classroom. In addition, we reflected on learners' perspectives after implementing the eclectic method-based activity guide to determine whether the chosen methods were sufficient to improve students' speaking skills.

Description of the case and the context of the research

There was a total of 8 participants who were an important part of the research project to get the needed information, and understand certain behaviors and/or appreciation regarding the speaking activities inside the EFL classroom. These participants, whose ages are between 16 and 17 years old, were at the B1 English level.

Data collection

Techniques and data collection instruments

Creswell (2014) claims that a notable characteristic of this method is that the researcher collects data at the exact spot where participants experience the issue or phenomenon. This also means that the researcher is the one who designed their instruments to observe, collect, and analyze the information. To do this, researchers have plenty of

instruments to be used as the information that was gathered has to be accurate, and that is why these instruments were ideal to use: interviews, observations, documents, and focus group discussions. It is believed that the researcher has to pay attention to their thinking about the meaning of the problem, instead, they have to focus on what the participants think about the problem or issue.

Given the first specific objective, which is to describe students' perspectives of oral production activities in the EFL classrooms, the chosen technique was the interview, and the instrument is the interview guide, whose purpose is to provide a structure with 10 open-ended questions, which explored the participants' thoughts, feelings, and preferences about speaking activities in the EFL classroom. These questions were divided into sections: context, enjoyment and motivation, usefulness and learning, challenges and difficulties, and feedback and support. These sections helped the researcher analyze and interpret the participants' insights in the guide interviews.

For the second objective, which is to design an activity guide for the implementation of the eclectic method oriented to boost the oral production skill in high school students, the researcher selected 3 methods: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), the Audiolingual Method, and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). These 3 methods ruled the 10 activities the researcher designed.

Finally, for the third specific objective, which is to reflect on the implementation of the eclectic method, the technique and instrument are the focus group and the interview guide, whose purpose is to explore group dynamics and shared viewpoints. There were 6 questions divided into 3 blocks: Feelings towards Speaking in English, experiences with Speaking activities, and challenges and suggestions. Participants reflected on the experiences

they got from the activities the teacher carried out in class. To get a deeper understanding, the interview guide had some follow-up questions.

Reliability

Here, it is essential to ensure that the selected techniques and instruments accurately measure the constructs they are intended to assess. To guarantee this, the researcher used categorization and coding as the technique for data analysis. This is the process in qualitative data analysis of grouping coded data segments that share similar properties or meanings into broader categories. These categories helped organize and reduce the data, and served as a progress toward developing codes, categories, and deeper interpretation.

Creswell (2014) highlights the importance of ensuring findings accurately represent reality, mirroring internal validity in qualitative research. This is why the strategy was the case study, and the techniques were the categorization and coding. As a result of this strategy, other researchers or teachers can apply them in different contexts or settings. Creswell also refers to reliability and mentions that it refers to the soundness of the research, appropriate methods, and consistency across different researchers and different projects. Therefore, the instruments were carefully selected to measure what they are intended to measure, considering the general and specific objectives that were previously mentioned.

The role of the researcher was of utmost importance, as they were directly involved in examining and interpreting the phenomenon under study. It was the researcher's responsibility to inform participants about the purpose and procedures of the study, ensuring they clearly understood the activities designed to explore their perspectives on the issue. In this case, the researcher implemented an innovative activity guide and observed participants' reactions to it. Furthermore, the researcher obtained formal authorization from the

coordinator or immediate supervisor to guarantee the ethical conduct of the study and safeguard the participants' rights. It was also essential to protect participants' personal information, such as names, dates of birth, and ages, particularly when dealing with sensitive research topics.

In qualitative research, participants are typically selected through purposeful sampling, as researchers intentionally choose individuals who can provide the most relevant and insightful data regarding the phenomenon. Unlike quantitative approaches, which rely on random sampling, qualitative research values depth of understanding over representativeness. Therefore, careful consideration was given to selecting participants who could best contribute to the research objectives. Additionally, the use of multiple data collection instruments was vital, as qualitative researchers often spend extended periods observing participants and engaging with the research context to gather rich, detailed information.

Analysis of the results

Once the data was collected from the guide interview and the focus group, the categorization was used to analyze the data. The information was classified into codes, and these codes were gathered into categories to facilitate the process of interpreting the participants' answers. This data was transformed into meaningful patterns. This categorization served as guidance for the researcher to create an ordered structure to work with. As a result, the researcher could notice similar experiences, common perspectives, and shared problems, and experiences.

Creswell (2014) describes creating codes, categories, and themes as a core step of qualitative research. This structured analysis of data led the researcher to, first of all, understand the students' perspectives towards speaking activities in class, and then use the

interpreted data to answer the research question. Besides, the interpretation of data before and after the implementation of the activity guide allowed the researcher to come to conclusions.

Presentation and analysis of the results

In this section, there was a discussion and interpretation of the results obtained from the first instrument, the interview guide, whose purpose is to explore the perspectives of participants towards speaking activities in the EFL classroom. For this aim, the data was divided into codes and categories, and finally, each of the students' responses was analyzed to have a clear understanding of their appreciation of oral communicative activities. Three figures show the categories and the codes that the researcher has used to interpret the data and comprehend participants' attitudes and opinions. After the implementation of the activity guide, the researcher carried out a focus group with all the participants, where he also voice-recorded participants' interventions about the impact of the speaking activities that took place. He also transcribed the data and divided it into codes and categories for further analysis. One figure shows the categories and codes from the focus group.

Figure 1

Learning Experience and Engagement

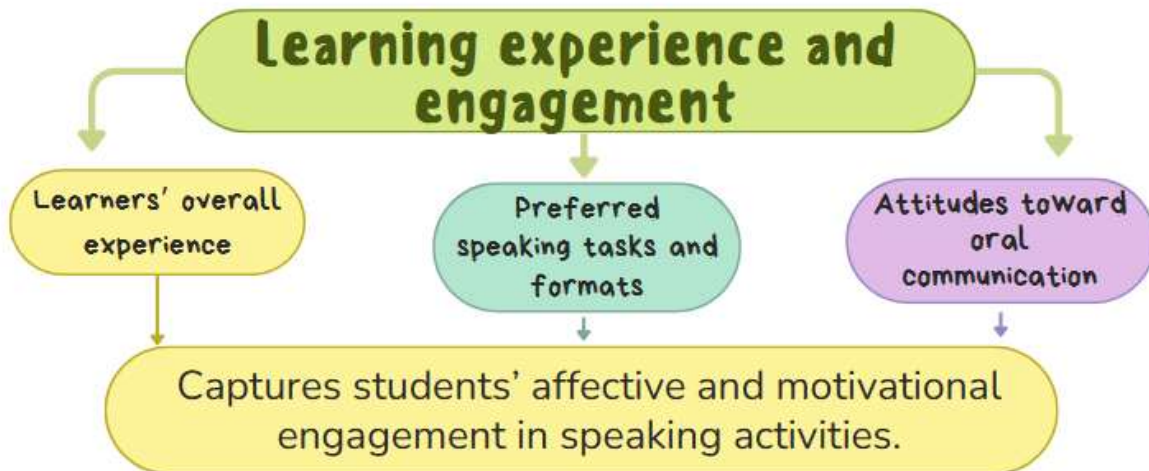


Figure 1 shows the first of three major categories, each aligned with specific codes about students' engagement in previous communicative activities in the classroom. These codes emerged from the questions in the guide interview and were supported by the students' responses in this first pre-intervention.

The first theme is learning experiences and engagement, and its codes are learners' overall experience, preferred speaking tasks and formats, and attitudes towards oral communication. One of the main points in their experience with oral communication activities is that the tasks they have done in class have had a meaningful impact on their learning process, as they explained clearly one of the tasks they did in their class recently. Most of them recall an activity about the future where they got together with a partner and talked about technology and things that may be shocking for them. *P01* stated this:

“Las predicciones del futuro, lo que nos asusta del futuro, sobre aplicaciones de la inteligencia artificial”.

Among the preferred formats, participants showed an important orientation for role plays, games, and debates. They all have confirmed that these three formats make them feel more comfortable thanks to their flexibility, dynamism, and engagement. They are very keen on role plays, since they have to improvise rather than stick to a determined script. Plus, working with a partner and checking how others carry out the activity made them feel safe while performing the task. Games seem to be the most dynamic and fun format for students, as their engagement in the activity is more noticeable. Debates were the second most preferred oral activity because they like exchanging opinions with others and waiting for their partners' responses to show whether they agree with that idea. In addition, they showed a big interest in listening to what their partners have to say, not only to discuss that idea, but also to learn vocabulary from others. *P05*'s statement, in favor of taking part in debates, was this:

“Mmm, yo considero que debates porque me llama la atención ver cómo se desenvuelven mis compañeros en inglés y tratar de aprender lo máximo posible de eso.”.

Even though students have openly expressed their favorite speaking formats, some of them are not keen on debates, as they have clearly mentioned that, because of shame, they are afraid of talking in front of people. Others have manifested that they disliked debates since people get triggered easily, and they become upset. A few of them do not rely on their English pronunciation, which prevents them from speaking freely. As a result, they take longer than others to express their ideas, or they wait for someone else to come up with the same or a similar idea. *P03* mentioned this:

“Soy una persona que me da mucha pena al momento de hablar en inglés”.

This confirms that even though the participant might speak in English, he does not do it very often because of shame. This is a factor that prevents students from talking, as they

think they might get judged by their classmates. This is one of the teacher's roles where he boosts students' confidence through meaningful feedback after any speaking activity.

Losi & Nasution (2022) concluded in their work that students showed positive attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The students felt excited about learning through communicative activities, such as pair and group work, role-playing, and games. This proves that these oral activities can surely change students' attitudes towards their English-speaking skills, thanks to the variety of activities that teachers can carry out with their students. As a result, students' confidence can get higher and it will let students improve significantly their speaking skills. That is why the eclectic method is the basis for designing the activity guide, which is grounded in CLT, the Audiolingual method, and TBLT. With this in mind, learners will be more likely to develop self-confidence and change their mindset towards the English oral production. We, as EFL teachers, must provide students with opportunities to develop their communicative competence, but also confidence when speaking.

Figure 2

Instructional support and speaking practice opportunities

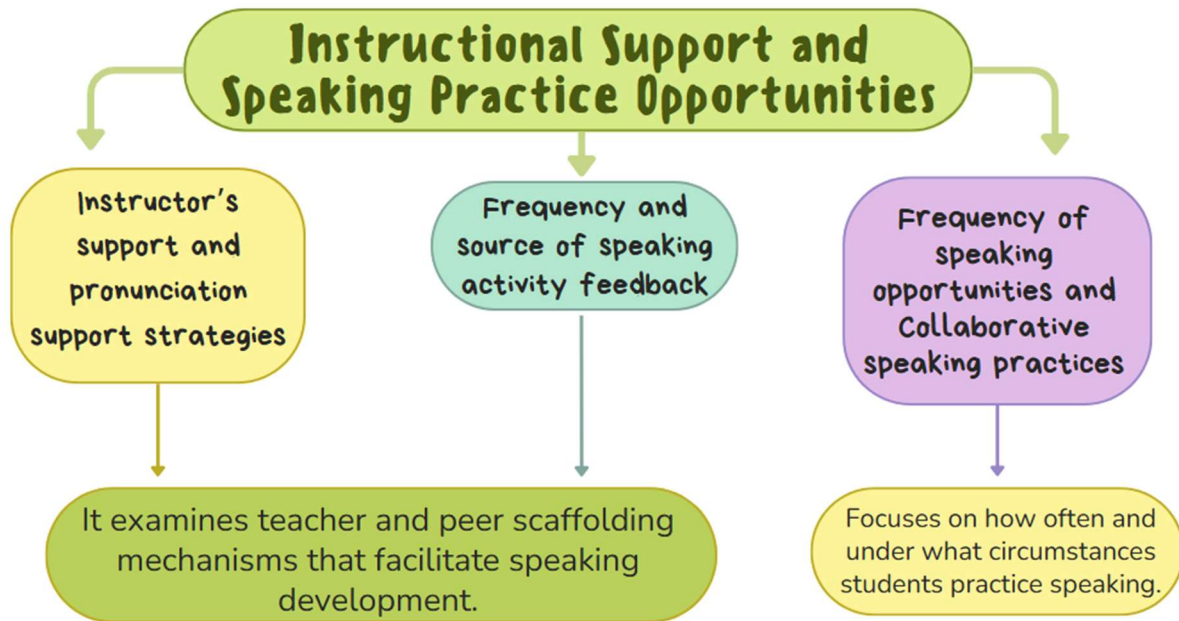


Figure 2 demonstrates how participants receive support from their teacher in oral communication activities and what strategies they apply to improve their pronunciation. It also shows interviewees' preferences when receiving feedback after the completion of a speaking task. In addition, this graphic deals with how often students take part in speaking activities in the EFL classroom and the circumstances students perform oral communication tasks.

The teacher's support plays a crucial role in the learners' confidence when producing the target language, as participants have mentioned that they have developed, first of all, reliance on their professor to ask questions about the correct pronunciation of words that they found tricky, and second of all, self-confidence. For instance, *P03* said "*mi profesor, que me ayuda bastante a tener también confianza en mí y a hablar sin pena*".

One important finding in the participants' responses to the teacher's support in class is that all of them mentioned the word *confidence*. This means that once a bond of trust is developed, this will push students' self-confidence to the fullest and allow them to talk freely, and if they find any difficult word to pronounce, they will probably ask their teacher and continue talking. *P01* mentioned this “*Consulta con mis apuntes o con mi profesor sobre palabras que no entiendo*”

Providing feedback after an oral communication activity helps students develop self-confidence and raise awareness in aspects where they can improve. Students reflected on when it is best to get the feedback and whether the teacher or students can be the source of this feedback. As a result, five of the interviewees tend to expect their professor to provide feedback right away, as they claimed their brain is fresher and the information will be clearer to relate to what they just did in the speaking task. Here is what *P04* said:

“Yo sí prefiero de inmediato de parte del profesor, porque después se me va a olvidar lo que dije en el speaking y ya pues no le voy a entender bien la retroalimentación”.

It can be said that providing feedback may be more impactful on students' learning process when they hear it just after performing the speaking task. Nonetheless, *P07* did not feel the same, as he claimed that feedback is best delivered the day after they participated in an oral activity because they can refresh what they learned yesterday.

Referring to the source of the feedback, most participants feel secure when the teacher is the one in charge of providing comments that make students grow and reflect on their learning process. *P05* would feel more confident, so to speak, if the teacher were the one providing feedback. Contrary to this, *P03* feels that although the professor is more knowledgeable, their peers can also provide some kind of feedback because they are also

learning. This shows that students receiving comments from their classmates might also be a good idea, as they can learn from one another. The teacher's feedback can come afterwards to increase students' self-confidence and have two different sources of information.

Fang (2018) found that students tended to provide varying communication strategies that were not taught in the study but were considered beneficial to their overall oral communication performance. This suggests that students can come up with impactful comments towards their partners' speaking performance, and provide different ways to improve in upcoming activities. Even though interviewees showed a strong posture against hearing feedback from their classmates, teachers can provide questions or instructions for learners to know exactly what they are expecting to reflect on. For instance, students can reflect on what their partners did best in their speaking performance, choose one expression they liked a lot, give some advice to improve, or spot any grammar correction. The teacher's feedback can come up later to ensure what they heard from their partner match with the professor's. As a result, students will feel more comfortable getting feedback not only by their teacher, but also by their peers.

Figure 2 also shows the collaborative work and frequency of speaking activities. In this sense, participants have manifested that the speaking activities they have recently done, were mostly in pairs, but also in groups. For instance, *P02* recalls working in pairs and he said that it was fun. *P06* not only recollected he worked in groups, but he also remembered the students' names with whom he worked. This suggests that working collaboratively has a strong impact on students' learning process as they are interacting with each other, and this can lead to the development of self-confidence to lower the affective filter. It is vital to bear in mind that selecting the student's partner is key to boosting the students' speaking

performance. Getting together with their favorite classmate is a great idea; nonetheless, changing their partner once in a while might also be good.

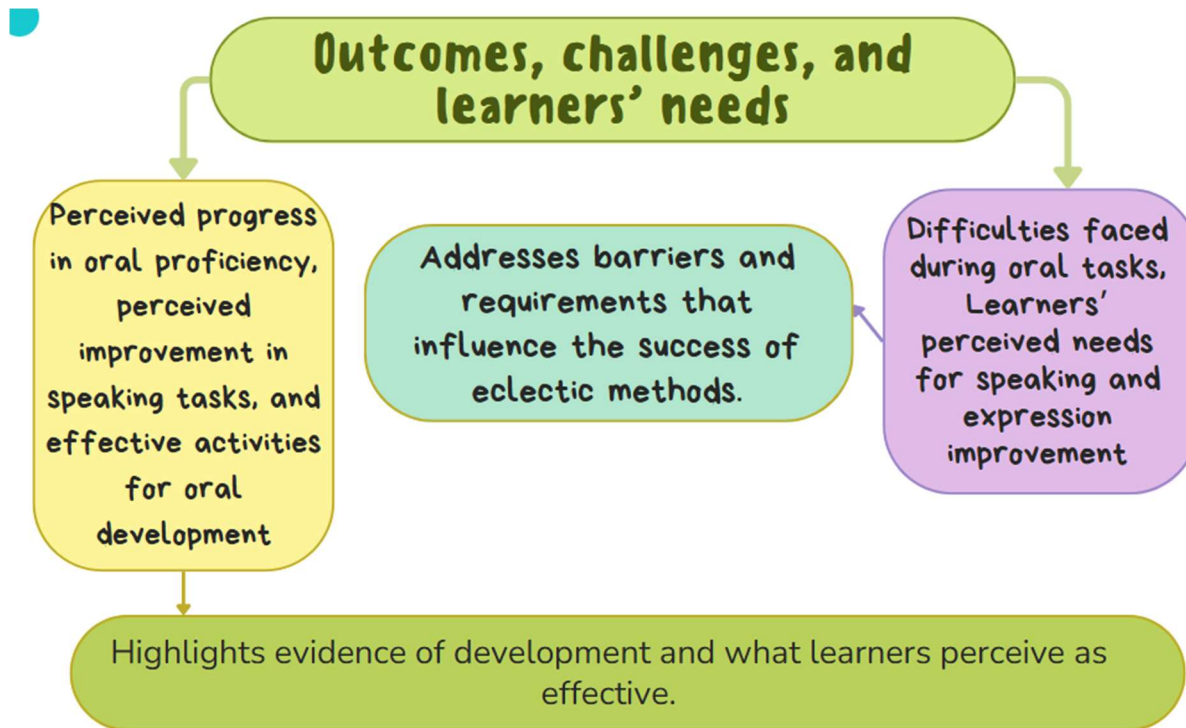
Finally, the frequency of speaking activities in the EFL classroom is also a valid point to discuss whether students are making progress or not. How can someone decide if their students are boosting their English-speaking skills in the opportunities provided in class are not enough? Thankfully, all interviewees have stated that they always carry out speaking tasks. To illustrate, *P07* said this:

“Casi siempre con usted. Usted me anima un poco más a seguir hablando en inglés”.

This shows that the teacher might be the first step for students to start producing the target language. The format of speaking activities and the way they are carried out can be transformative for their learning progress. The teacher is the one who pushes students to their limits with speaking opportunities where they can state their opinion and develop their critical thinking through real-life situations.

Figure 3

Outcomes, challenges, and learners' needs



This figure shows participants' thoughts about their learning progress in their English-speaking skills. The fact that *P03* stated that role-plays have helped him expand their vocabulary a little bit more thanks to the flexibility of using a variety of words in this kind of speaking activities. *P05* also show a strong posture in favor of role-plays, as he claimed that the situations they have role played are very close to what they might experience in the future. *P04*, however, mentioned that debates have been helpful to make the student get deeply into the vocabulary to win the debate.

As a result of these practices inside their EFL classroom, interviewees reflected on what they have developed. Confidence is the most repeated word they came up with. For example: *P03* feels he has developed confidence through communication activities, and now

he is not ashamed of speaking in front of people. In this sense, *P04* said that because of the class is smaller, she feels like everyone is watching her and that has led to her developing confidence when speaking in the target language.

One of the most concerning this for the participants is the fact that sometimes they have to deal with unknown words that might cause trouble to keep the flow of the speaking performance, and this can lead to getting stuck in the task. *P01* said that there are words that she neither knows how to pronounce some words, nor what they mean. *P03* referred to the amount of time he usually has for developing speaking activities, and he mentioned that he gets worried, as the time is limited to accomplish the task. *P04* is concerned that debates talk about topics he might not know anything about, and as a result, that would probably prevent her from performing at her best in the debate. These challenges need to be addressed by the teacher beforehand to ensure that students will produce the target language with proper support before, during, and after a speaking task.

As a final insight into students' need to address some of the issues mentioned above, they have stated that time for planning is a good strategy to organize their ideas. Additionally, a list of vocabulary helps develop thoughts. And this lets them lower their affective filter as they are planning what to do beforehand. However, *P04* highlighted the importance of having a list of vocabulary, as this helps the student when he is improvising. This participant did not refer to having some time to plan; instead, he is comfortable with just having a word bank. This suggests that having some time to organize thoughts can boost the students' performance in the speaking task, as they can generate ideas and organize how they are going to say them. Besides, they can get support from their classmates and teachers to ensure that what they want to say is grammatically and phonologically correct. However, teachers can

opt for grouping students who like to improvise and have a practice before their presentation. As a result, everyone is practicing at their own pace.

To sum up this interpretation of data, it can be said that students' most preferred speaking-task formats are role plays and debates. Although students are more keen on these activities, it is important to give extra support to those who are not comfortable while talking in front of people or acting out. It is also evident that learners like to improvise rather than write a script. There is also clear evidence that pair work had a meaningful impact on students' speaking-task performance since they had no problem recalling who they worked with and what they did. They showed interest in knowing what their partners said and how well they performed. The occurrence of speaking tasks has also helped students feel more confident when speaking in the target language. And there are some aspects that students were concerned the most: time limit and unknown words. These aspects have to be addressed and supported by the teacher to lower the students' affective filter.

Figure 4

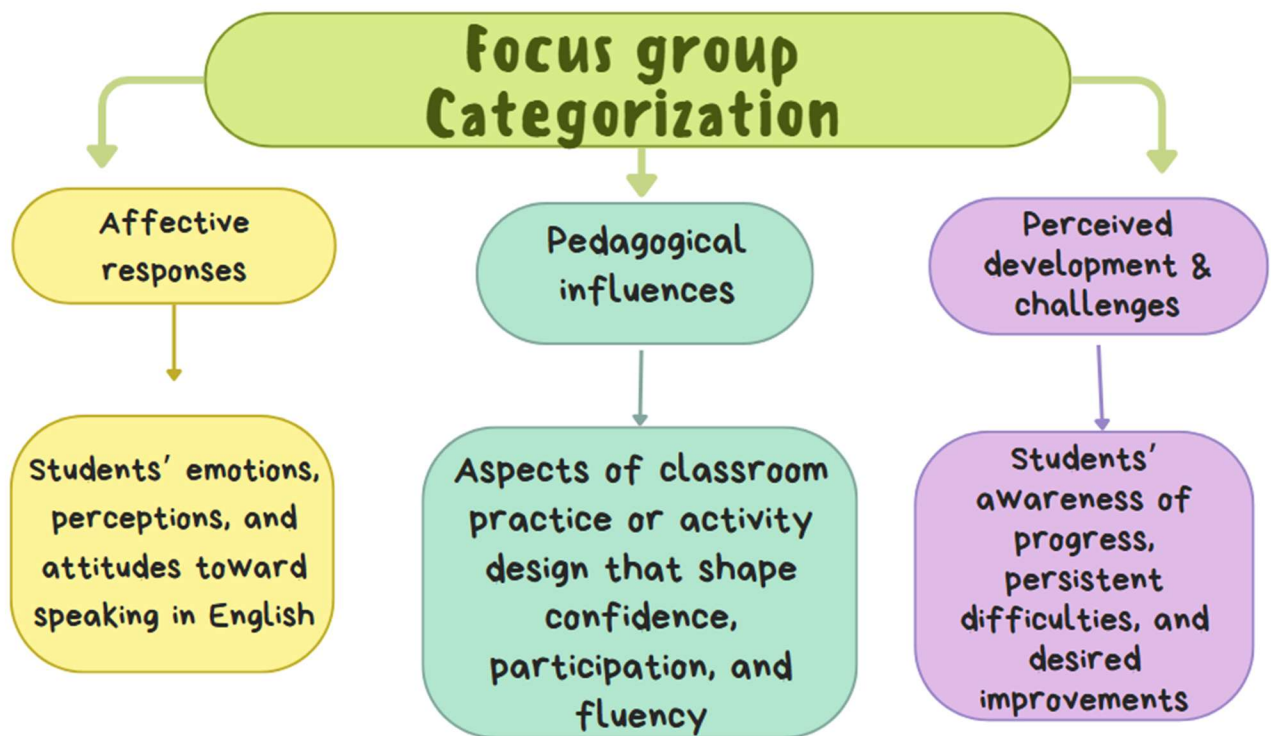


Figure 4 illustrates three major categories that are influenced by the questions from the focus group, whose objective is to reflect on the impact of the eclectic method in fostering speaking skills. The first category covers students' attitudes towards the experiences they got from the activity guide. The next section describes the influence of the guide activity on students' speaking performance, and the last section covers the progress learners have made after implementing the activity guide.

When it comes to attitudes towards speaking activities, there are two sides of the spectrum, since some students showed a high level of confidence when talking and participating with other peers. Nonetheless, some of them felt nervous because they participated with peers that are not in their social circle. This seems to be a huge factor in how immersed learners are in the activities. Whether they participated with a partner or not,

they completed the assigned tasks.

For instance, P03 said this “*como no son como mucho de círculos sociales, como que la conversación llega hasta lo mínimo*”. This confirms that students are more likely to get the most out of the speaking activity when they get together with a partner they know well. Despite this, this participant had no trouble accomplishing the activity. Contrary to this, P02 mentioned that “*hablar con otra gente que no tiene círculo social, me pone un poquito nerviosa, pero igual fue, fue, fue divertido*”. Students getting out of their comfort zone can bring some feelings that might prevent them from freely talking. It might be a good idea for teachers to inform students that they will participate with different partners for their mindsets to adapt to the classroom circumstances or the activity that will be held.

Surprisingly, P04 said that “*me hizo sentir confiado porque... En sí, yo no tengo ningún problema para socializar con otra gente*”. This suggests that interpersonal factors play an important role in accomplishing speaking activities in class, as some students might find it uncomplicated to interact with not only their favorite peer, but also different people from their class, or even from other classes.

Krashen (1982) stated that affective variables such as anxiety, motivation and self-confidence determine whether learners can process and produce language effectively. This advocates that intrapersonal factors have a significant impact on students’ performance when speaking in the target language. Teachers need to lower the affective filter and provide support to let them realize that their speaking performance depends on how open they project themselves towards their partners. A high affective filter always compromises the learners’ ability to engage in communicative tasks.

Regarding the level of confidence students developed throughout the execution of the

speaking activities, two factors have been mentioned by participants: The teacher's support and the questions or sentence starters. P02 remarked this *“es más fácil si ya nos da unos parámetros entablar la conversación con la persona que no es, pues, amigo de uno, conocido o tal”*. This suggests that providing students with questions to start a pair discussion can result in a favorable speaking performance even though they may not know well.

In favor of this, P01 added this *“me hizo sentir más confiada en algunas actividades por la relación que, que suelo tener con algunos de mis compañeros. Y también el hecho de que usted nos ayuda”*. This confirms that teachers' support fosters students' confidence to get immersed in the proposed speaking activities in class. It is the teacher's role to ensure all the students have the chance to talk and express their ideas or feelings so that they can benefit from each other. Students can also learn from their peers, and the teacher's intervention can function as a trigger to motivate students and perform at their best.

Ellis (2003) stated that teachers play a key role in preparing learners for communicative tasks by offering support before, during, and after interaction. This indicates that teachers' assistance at any stage of communicative tasks can result in a more highly productive speaking performance. This depends on the interpersonal relationship the teacher establishes in the classroom so that students feel free to ask any questions to perform successfully in these activities. With this teacher support, students can also notice any gap they might have in their language and improve oral performance eventually.

Referring to pedagogical influences, group discussions, interviews, and role plays have been mentioned by participants who remembered the level of exigency that these activities demand in oral communication. As a result of these performances, learners developed both confidence and creativity to accomplish the assigned task. For instance, P04

reflected on how helpful role plays are, and he said this: “tienes que inventar la respuesta y eso te obliga a pensar en inglés”.

This suggests that role plays establish a determined situation where learners pick one role, and they get immersed in that situation. Whether the role play has a sentence starter or not, students have to improvise and use the target language to accomplish the task. This excels the learners’ capacities to get the most out of them. Furthermore, interviews can also help students develop their creativity and fluency, thanks to the questions that teachers can include to make students talk freely. These activities also propose a role that students have to pick to start a conversation. PO1 referred to interviews and how they helped become more creative “No es una pregunta, tienes que crear algo tú. Entonces, eso me hizo improvisar y ser creativo”.

Based on this statement, it can be said that providing students with situations that they may encounter in their real life is what pushes them to flow the conversation and use all the grammar structures, vocabulary, and expressions they know. For example, one of the activities carried out in class was a comfort food session, where learners interviewed different partners about their food preferences. As they were talking, the proposed questions were used, but answers were notoriously different as the teacher walked around the room. Besides, swapping partners is what allows students to step out of their comfort zone because they are not sticking with their favorite partner; rather, they are interacting with other peers who may use similar or different grammar structures, and this can result in more fluent and dynamic conversations.

Celce-Murcia (2001) emphasizes that role plays enhance fluency by encouraging improvisation, negotiation of meaning, and interactional competence. Regarding the

interaction in role-plays, Learners can benefit from these activities because they have a common objective, which is taking up a role and hold a conversation with a partner based on a given situation. Role plays also encourage active participation by creating a communicative need for learners to express ideas and negotiate meaning. In addition, students can swap partners to increase the speaking time that might result in a more enriched-vocabulary conversation.

The teacher's support plays a key role when students are performing oral communication activities, as he might be the primary source of information for doubts in vocabulary, grammar structure, or fixed expressions. This assistance can alleviate the affective filters, and consequently, learners might feel more motivated to continue with the activity. To illustrate, P02 manifested this concerning the teacher's action inside the classroom to promote learners' participation, "El profe nos apoya siempre en las preguntas que tengamos". No question must be left behind; otherwise, the teacher's credibility might be damaged, and this can result in a poor student's speaking performance, as they may not consider asking questions anymore. This surely prevents students from growing in their fluency and vocabulary expansion.

Concerning the challenges and perceived progress from learners after the implementation of the activity guide, they felt both ways. On the one hand, some students referred to the interpersonal aspect they encountered when interacting with different classmates. They highlighted the importance of continuing to perform these communication activities, as they recognized they still struggle to hold a conversation with other people. Nonetheless, they found the activities fun because they covered different topics of interests. Regarding this matter, P04 said "Quizás que siga haciendo las actividades hasta que pueda,

pues, familiarizarme con esto de hablar con otras personas, porque es cierto que me cuesta bastante”. Teachers can address this issue beforehand so that learners set their mindset and they are somehow prepared to change partners and perform at the same level they would with their favorite partner.

On the other hand, concerning the performance difficulty level, P03 said this “también hay compañeros que en cambio la ponen demasiado fácil para que se entienda o demasiado fácil para hablar y eso”. This suggests that even though students are from the same proficiency level, there might be occasions where a conversation can have either the most flow and interaction or the lowest interaction and performance. However, teachers can opt for grouping students in a certain way, for example, two high proficiency students can definitely support each other and boost their performance to the fullest. One can think that grouping two average proficiency level learners might not be the best idea; nonetheless, they can still support each other and perform at their own pace, along with the teacher’s support to develop self-confidence and get prepared to participate with more advanced proficiency students.

As a concluding idea on the data obtained from the focus groups after the implementation of the activity guide, it can be said that learners have identified some issues they possess when performing oral communication activities. There is also clear evidence that students enjoyed the activities due to the level of creativity they demanded to perform the task. Participants also manifested the desire to get out of their comfort zone and continue improving their speaking skills. These activities have raised awareness in learners to identify strong points when speaking in the target language, but also aspects that need to be addressed.

CHAPTER III

THE PRODUCT

Innovative Proposal to the Problem

Proposal Name

“Unlocking voices: An eclectic activity guide for secondary learners”

Type of product

The type of product selected is an activity guide. **Buch (2023)** defined it as instructions directed at the teacher, guiding the use of didactic learning materials, that is, learning resources created for teaching and learning. In this research project, this activity guide provides useful communicative activities to foster English-speaking skills. There are not only instructions for the teacher, but for the learners, too. This means that teachers will know exactly how to conduct the activities with the students, how to use the resources from the guide, and what empirical or theoretical background it has.

An activity guide is for teachers and/or for students, and its activities are designed to achieve a specific objective. This guide focuses on the students' preferences regarding the use of the target language in communicative activities and the teacher's experience in the classroom. For this matter, the eclectic method has been selected to guide teachers and use different teaching methods to design communicative activities.

Mwanza (2017) states that “The eclectic method to language teaching is understood to be the use of several methods in one lesson. It is also argued that it is a reaction against a single method because each of the individual methods has strengths and weaknesses.” Indeed, this activity guide will be governed by different communicative methods such as communicative language teaching (CLIL), task-based language teaching (TBLT), and the

Audio-lingual method. A single activity might have more than one communicative method in use to make activities more engaging, meaningful, and impactful in the students' learning process.

Objective of the proposal

The objective is to boost students' English-speaking skills through communicative activities that have been designed based on the Eclectic Method.

Structure of the product

The activity guide consists of 10 activities, which will be divided into stages, and they will focus on developing students' speaking skills in the target language. These activities will contain clear instructions on how to approach the class and get students to speak and use the language in different contexts. There will be pair and group activities to ensure active participation from students and work collaboration to learn from each other, too. The lesson activities will be designed in Canva.

Each activity will contain a cover with the title of the activity, the target audience description, the time for the activity, and instructions for the teacher in each stage of the activity. There will be step-by-step instructions about how to start approaching the topic and make students brainstorm ideas as well as the teacher's intervention in delivering new vocabulary or grammar point (input activities) to make students use the target language in different speaking activities, such as role-plays, checklists, Venn diagrams, interviews, and pair conversations. Each lesson will also contain a "What I learned today" section where teachers read or listen to their students' perspectives on the activities developed in class to take immediate action and adapt or change something in the material.

The activities are composed of 5 stages. In the first stage, the teacher will introduce

the topic and vocabulary using definitions or card descriptions that demand learners to think about the corresponding word. Some controlled practice can also be found at this point. From short dialogues or discussion question cards. In the second stage, students will start using grammar structures according to the topic, and they are expected to support their ideas with examples or experience. Learners can enroll themselves in pair and group activities where they are using the target language.

The third stage involves students' most active intervention in the lesson. They can take part in debates, role-plays, discussions, and interviews. They can work on individual activities where they present the information to the rest of the class, or group activities where they interact with each other to accomplish the activity. In stage four, the teacher typically focuses on the accuracy of students' speaking performance. He will present expressions that show a high level of complexity, and he will praise students for that. The teacher will also have to show sentences that need to be fixed to be more accurate. This activity will ensure students' realization of common mistakes in grammar or pronunciation. This stage concludes with the teacher's feedback. This one can be individualized or generalized. For the last stage, students will participate in reflective activities such as *Exit tickets* or *What I learned today*, to identify what insights students have about the class. This is beneficial for their continuous learning process, and it is also helpful for teachers to determine the success of the lesson.

Activity guide

[Unlocking voices: An eclectic activity guide for secondary learners](#)

Evaluation of the proposal

To document the impact of the activity guide, a focus group was conducted using a

semi-structured interview protocol. Two sessions were held, each composed of four students, who were asked questions related to their perceptions of the speaking tasks implemented during the intervention. The focus group provided qualitative data that the researcher later transcribed and organized into meaningful categories and patterns. This process enabled a comparison between the pre and post-intervention results of the ten speaking activities. Consequently, the researcher was able to draw informed conclusions and critically reflect on the overall impact of this innovative proposal.

Validation of the proposal

To validate the proposal, method 3 of the Manual de Estilo Posgrado UTI (2020), "Validación a través de la aplicación de una aplicación práctica," and option 1, "Verification of results demonstrating a transformation with respect to the initial diagnosis through the implementation of the proposal, in whole or in part, to the entire study sample," are considered. Referring to the validation of the proposal, the 10 activities in the activity guide were carried out. These activities focus on fostering the learners' speaking skills through an eclectic method: Task-based learning, Communicative language teaching, and Audiolingual method. The analysis of data through the focus group helps the process of validating the proposal, too.

Conclusions

The findings show that the eclectic method positively influences students' speaking skills. By combining strategies from multiple approaches, it promotes creative, spontaneous, and task-oriented oral production, allowing learners to adopt roles, improvise, and develop ideas on topics of interest using the target language.

First of all, learners' perspectives indicate that role plays and debates are the most effective and motivating activity formats for improving their speaking skills. These talks allow students to assume roles, improvise, and sustain interaction by responding to their peers' ideas. Although many participants reported experiencing public shame when speaking, they emphasized that consistent teacher support significantly increases their confidence. Moreover, they acknowledged the value of both teacher and peer feedback in fostering linguistic development and broadening their perspectives. Overall students' insights highlight the importance of interactive, supportive, and feedback-rich environments for enhancing oral communication in the target language.

Second, the use of the eclectic method in the development of the activity guide to boost students' speaking skills have served a great use for students thanks to the variety of proposed activities, for example, role plays, interviews, and group discussions. The chosen topics have been widely accepted by participants who showed previous knowledge in them, as a result, they could participate and shared their opinion in the various stages of the activities. The level of interest was higher in some topics, for instance, students contributed the most with the topic "*Help*" because the role play they did was about real-life situations they have already come across. This resulted in a high level of performance where learners got the most out of their speaking skills to accomplish the task.

Finally, the implementation of the activity guide suggested that students enjoyed the activities proposed, as they could function as users of the target language. Even though they addressed an issue concerning the participation with different classmates, they still had the opportunity to express their ideas, considering that the conversation might have ended sooner than the conversations they held with their favorite partner. The teacher's support during the execution of the activities played an important role in lowering the students' affective filter so that their level of confidence grew to make them speak freely and with no pressure. Learners also reflected on the importance of the continuous process of speaking in public to gain confidence and get out of their comfort zone eventually.

Recommendations

- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate varied speaking activities to promote regular oral practice and reduce students' anxiety when using the target language. Providing clear instructions and consistent feedback is essential for raising learners' awareness of their performance and guiding improvement. Educators should also consider students' preferences when selecting activity formats to ensure effective task completion and achieve the desired learning outcomes.
- It is also advisable that teachers apply the eclectic method when designing speaking activities, as it allows for greater critical thinking and reflective analysis of learning progress. The selected methods should align with classroom realities and learners' preferences to ensure well-structured tasks and improved performance. Additionally, students should be guided to reflect at the end of each lesson to monitor what they have learned.
- Because students reported difficulties interacting outside their usual social groups, teachers should implement planned rotation systems to help them build confidence when communicating with a wider range of peers. Ongoing teacher support remains essential for lowering the affective filter and should be deliberately integrated into lesson planning. Speaking tasks should also increase gradually in complexity and audience size, moving from pair work to small-group activities and finally to brief presentations.
- Given the positive impact observed, future studies could investigate how the eclectic method influences the development of specific sub-components of speaking proficiency, such as fluency, accuracy, and interactional competence, over a longer

period of time. Conducting a longitudinal study or comparing different levels of learners could offer deeper insights into which combinations of eclectic strategies produce the greatest improvement in each aspect of speaking performance.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – instrument – guided interview

Instruments

Technique: Interview

Instrument: Interview guide

Interview Guide – Students’ Perspectives on Oral Production Activities in the EFL Classroom

Purpose: To explore students’ thoughts, feelings, and preferences about speaking activities in English class.

Estimated time for participant: 15 to 25 minutes

Section 1 – Warm-up and Context

1. “Tell me something about a speaking activity you did recently in your English class.”
 - (What was the activity about? Did you work alone or with someone else?)
2. “How often do you do speaking activities in class?”
 - (Do you think that’s enough? Why or why not?)

Section 2 – Enjoyment and Motivation

3. “Which speaking activities do you enjoy the most?”
 - (Role plays, interviews, presentations, group discussions, games? Do you prefer individual, pair, or group speaking activities?)
4. “Is there any speaking activity you don’t enjoy?”
 - (Why? What would you change in that speaking activity?)

Section 3 – Usefulness and Learning

5. “Which speaking activities help you learn English the most?”
 - (Why do you think so?)
6. “What have you learned from recent speaking activities?”
 - (confidence, pronunciation, fluency?)

Section 4 – Challenges and Difficulties

7. “What makes a speaking activity challenging for you?”
 - (Not enough time? Not knowing the words? Feeling nervous?)
8. “What usually helps you when you feel nervous or stuck in speaking activities?”
 - (Support from teacher, working with a partner, notes?)

Section 5 – Feedback and Support

9. “How do you like to get feedback after speaking activities?”
 - (Right away? Later? From the teacher? From classmates?)
10. “What kind of help do you want before or during a speaking activity?”
 - (Examples, vocabulary lists, time to plan, sentence starters?)

Appendix 2 – focus group

Technique: Focus group

Instrument: Interview guide

Estimated time for group: 40 to 50 minutes

Block 1 – Feelings Toward Speaking in English

Q1. How did you feel when you participated in speaking activities in English class?

- **(Probe:** Did you feel nervous, excited, shy, or motivated? Can you explain why?)

Q2. What made you feel more confident or less confident when speaking in English?

- **(Probe:** Is it the topic, the group size, your vocabulary knowledge, or the teacher's support?)

Block 2 – Experiences with Speaking Activities

Q3. Which types of speaking activities (e.g., role-plays, discussions, games, presentations) have you enjoyed the most? Why?

- **Probes:** What was special about these activities? Did they make you speak more or feel more comfortable?

Q4. Can you describe an activity that helped you speak more freely or express your ideas better in English?

- **Probes:** What did the teacher do during the activity? Did you work alone, in pairs, or in groups? What part of the activity made it easier for you to talk?

Block 3 – Challenges and Suggestions

Q5. In what ways do you think your speaking skills have improved through classroom activities?

- **Probes:** Do you feel you speak faster, use more vocabulary, or feel less afraid of making mistakes?

Q6. What difficulties do you still face when speaking in English, and what kind of activities could help you overcome them?

- **Probes:** Do you struggle with pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or fluency? What activities would you like to try in the future?

Appendix 3 – transcriptions – guided interview

[Participants - transcriptions - coded](#)

Appendix 4 – transcriptions – focus group

[Transcription - focus group - coded](#)

Appendix 5 – Informed consent

[Informed consent by parents](#)