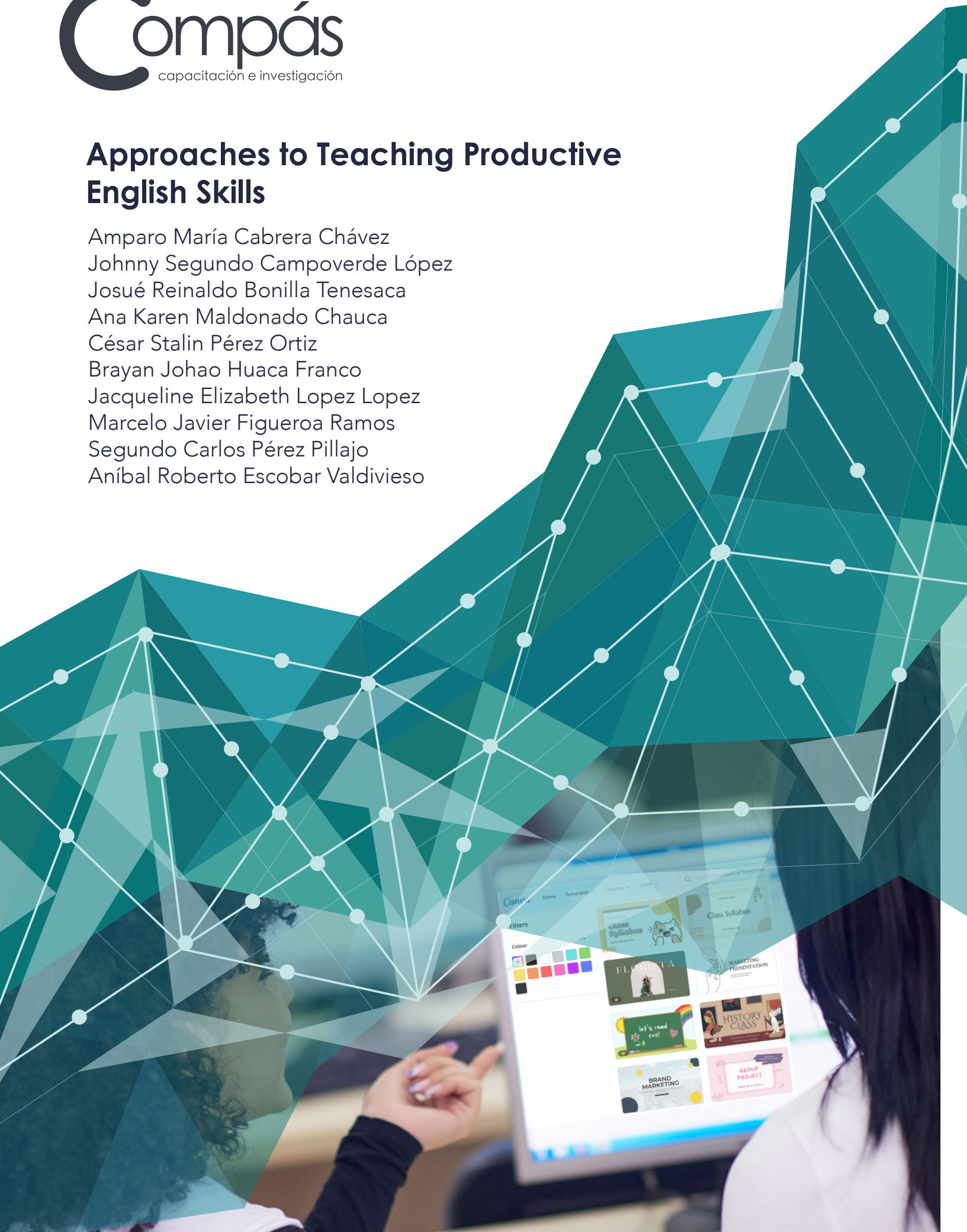


Approaches to Teaching Productive English Skills

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Guayaqui, Ecuador
www.grupocompas.com
<http://repositorio.grupocompas.com>

Primera edición, 2025

ISBN: 978-9942-33-931-7

Distribución online

 Acceso abierto

Cita

Cabrera, A. et al (2025) Approaches to Teaching Productive English Skills. Editorial Grupo Compás

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Influence of Professional Internships on developing Speaking Skills A2 level

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Education has undergone continuous evolution, constantly seeking innovative methods that enrich students' learning experiences. Within this evolution, the integration of professional

internships has emerged as a valuable resource to strengthen practical skills and apply theoretical knowledge in real work environments. This pedagogical approach not only provides a platform for professional immersion but also represents a unique opportunity for the development and refinement of language skills, particularly in the realm of oral expression in English. This background forms the basis of the article.

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in language teaching, increasingly focusing on students and their learning processes rather than solely on teachers and their instruction. This approach has spotlighted how students process new information and the strategies they employ to comprehend, learn, or recall it—a fundamental aspect in the realm of foreign language learning (Hismanoglu, n.d.). Furthermore, Ellis (2005) highlights that consistent exposure to the target language in structured and meaningful contexts is essential for the acquisition of communicative competence, which aligns with the opportunities provided by professional internships.

In Ecuador, tourism is a vital and growing sector of the economy, where the ability to communicate in English is an essential skill for tourism students. This research examines how professional internships not only provide valuable work experience but also play a critical role in enhancing English communication skills at an A2 level. According to Gass and Mackey (2015), meaningful input, interaction, and opportunities for output are fundamental components of second language acquisition, making internships an optimal environment for language development. Moreover, the professional development of students pursuing tourism careers at a national level is crucial. When combined with improved

English language skills, it becomes a gateway to sustainable destination development and broadens employment opportunities within the sector. Among the key strategies to be implemented in this study are social strategies and metacognitive strategies. Burešová's work (2007) highlights the importance of a student-centered approach to language teaching. This approach could serve as a foundation to consider how professional internships can foster a student-centered environment, promoting the use of social strategies to enhance English oral expression skills. Additionally, methodologies such as the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) (Alamri, s. f.), Cooperative Learning (Felder & Brent, 2007), and Community Language Learning (Ali, 2018) are mentioned, emphasizing the significance of effective communication and social cooperation in language learning. These concepts inspire ways in which internships can be designed to encourage cooperation among students and the development of oral expression skills.

Literature Review

Building upon reflections from Lejarreta, Garay, and Romero (2012), the significance of social strategies in the specific context of this study becomes evident. The effective implementation of these strategies can have a substantial impact on the development of language skills, particularly for A2-level tourism students during their professional internships. The primary objective is to enhance English communication through the practical application of these strategies, fostering students' linguistic advancement and fluency throughout their internship experiences.

Burešová (2007) highlights that social strategies, when utilized in student-centered environments, play a crucial role in developing language skills by promoting interaction, collaboration, and communication among learners. These strategies are especially impactful in professional contexts, where students engage in authentic interactions. Moreover, Burešová underscores that these strategies not only enhance fluency and communicative competence in English but also contribute to more effective and enduring learning. By applying language in real-world situations, students can experience meaningful practice that reinforces their learning outcomes.

Key social strategies, such as cooperation, empathy, and interaction with native speakers, are directly associated with the development of communicative competence in a foreign language. Their implementation enables students to communicate more effectively in professional settings. Additionally, these strategies align with active learning methodologies, encouraging interaction among peers, practical language use, and intercultural understanding. This engagement deepens students' connection to the learning process and motivates them to actively pursue their linguistic development.

The effectiveness of social strategies is well-supported by evidence from various studies, which demonstrate their ability to improve language skills and facilitate effective communication in foreign language contexts. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating social strategies into professional internships, particularly for students aiming to enhance their oral communication skills in English.

Metacognitive Strategies Applied in Professional Internships

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in language teaching, focusing on strategies that enhance student autonomy and self-regulation. Raoofi (n.d.) highlights the critical role of metacognitive strategies in second language learning, emphasizing their impact on students' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their progress. The effective integration of these strategies holds immense importance in honing language skills during professional internships. By incorporating these strategies into the research, an insightful analysis emerges of how the understanding and regulation of the learning process influence students' linguistic development.

It's significant to apply these strategies at every stage—preparation, execution, and post-analysis—as their consistent application throughout could significantly amplify their effectiveness. These strategies, centered on awareness and regulation of learning, establish a robust framework to enrich students' internship experiences. Beginning from the initial planning

phase through subsequent assessments, fostering awareness of the learning process, setting clear objectives, engaging in self-reflection, and meticulous documentation can be implemented to actively enhance English language proficiency.

This strategic integration not only fortifies students' language prowess in practical work settings but also nurtures self-regulation and critical reflection—vital skills for effective and enduring learning in the dynamic field of tourism. Leveraging tools such as heightened awareness, structured planning, thorough evaluation, introspective analysis, and detailed documentation can significantly enhance the learning experience and provide invaluable insights into assessing the impact of both metacognitive and social strategies on students' language competencies throughout their internships.

The study by Nosratinia, Saveiy, and Zaker (2014) emphasizes the interrelationship between self-efficacy, metacognitive awareness, and the use of language learning strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, which is relevant to my investigation on the impact of professional internships on language skill

development. This study provides a valuable perspective on how students' self-confidence and awareness of their cognitive processes can influence the effectiveness of language learning strategies. Findings from this research suggest that strengthening students' self-efficacy and metacognitive awareness can positively impact their ability to use language learning strategies during professional internships, potentially enhancing their linguistic performance in a real work setting.

This indicates that understanding and promoting self-efficacy and metacognitive awareness may be important considerations when designing internship programs aimed at improving English language skills for students in the tourism field (Nosratinia, Saveiy, & Zaker, 2014).

Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT),

According to Alamri (n.d.), the predominant approach in language education worldwide is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which enables students to express themselves and engage in collaborative activities during classes. Communicative teaching has brought about significant changes in language teaching and learning methods, focusing on developing communicative competence and teaching the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This approach is recognized for fostering active student participation in interactive and authentic classes, thus stimulating their interest in learning. Furthermore, communicative teaching has been widely adopted in schools, universities, and other language institutes globally, becoming a universally utilized educational approach. Its primary goal is to enhance students' communicative competence, prioritizing comprehension and effective language use in real-life situations.

As per Miguel (n.d.), the CLT approach tends to be a student-centered language teaching practice that is situation-oriented. Within these situational practices, teachers typically develop activities related to the communities and societies where students live. With these familiar backgrounds and a grasp of vocabulary and sentence application, students are more likely to share their thoughts with peers. Additionally, while situational speaking practices may not emphasize grammar and sentence translation accuracy, they enable students to enhance their comprehension, language usage, and communication skills.

Under this argument, the CLT approach provides a dynamic framework that fosters student engagement and active participation in the language learning process. By centering instruction around real-life situations and contexts relevant to students' lives, CLT creates an immersive learning environment where language acquisition occurs naturally. Pre-professional practice settings such as travel agencies, cruise terminals, airports, restaurants, and bus terminals play a

crucial role in facilitating meaningful interactions and collaborative activities that encourage students to communicate authentically.

Moreover, the emphasis on student-centered learning in CLT empowers learners to take ownership of their language development. Rather than passively receiving instruction, students become active participants in constructing their understanding of language usage and cultural nuances. Through hands-on activities and authentic communication tasks, they are better equipped to navigate diverse linguistic situations and engage confidently in real-world interactions.

Furthermore, the situational focus of CLT promotes language fluency and communicative competence by prioritizing meaningful communication over grammatical accuracy. By providing opportunities for students to express themselves freely and creatively, CLT nurtures their language skills in a supportive and interactive learning environment. As a result, students not only acquire linguistic proficiency but also develop the confidence and proficiency to effectively communicate in a variety of social and professional contexts.

Cooperative Learning Approach.

Modern pedagogical approaches, such as cooperative learning, emphasize active participation and collaboration among students. Felder and Brent (2007) highlight that cooperative learning not only enhances knowledge retention but also improves communication and problem-solving skills, making it an essential strategy for language acquisition. The idea that students learn more by actively engaging in a task rather than passively observing and listening has long been recognized by both cognitive psychologists and effective educators. By its very nature, cooperative learning entails active student involvement. Furthermore, cooperation enhances learning in multiple ways. Students experiencing difficulties tend to persist more when working in teams compared to when they work individually. Conversely, high performing

students, when tasked with explaining and clarifying concepts to their peers, often uncover gaps in their understanding and proceed to fill them in.

Additionally, when students collaborate, they exhibit increased involvement in group discussions, demonstrate a higher level of discourse, engage in fewer interruptions when others are speaking, and offer more intellectually valuable contributions. Collaborative work fosters an understanding of the common goal of the group and the importance of assisting and supporting each other's learning. Consequently, students are motivated to provide information, cues, reminders, and encouragement when their peers seek assistance or demonstrate a need for support (Gillies & Boyle, 2010).

Collaborative approaches, such as cooperative learning, prove to be effective tools for Among the key strategies to be implemented in this study are social strategies and metacognitive strategies. Burešová (2007) highlights the importance of a student-centered approach to language teaching, emphasizing how social strategies can foster effective communication and enhance language learning. Student collaboration not only fosters more active participation and higher-level discourse but also promotes a deeper understanding of concepts and intrinsic motivation to learn and assist others. These group dynamics can be particularly beneficial for A2-level students, providing them with a supportive environment and the opportunity to practice their language skills authentically. Consequently, internships that incorporate collaborative approaches have the potential to enhance the oral expression skills of A2-level students significantly.

Community Language Learning

Ali (2018) provides a detailed description of the Community Language Learning method, an educational approach centered around group dynamics and counseling. This method draws inspiration from Carl Rogers' ideas on education and emphasizes the importance of allowing students to express their feelings and experiences not only about the language but also about the learning process. In this approach, students are seen as a group in need of guidance rather than a traditional class.

In a study titled "A Pilot Case Study of a Student Learning Community", the dynamic and diverse nature of this learning community and its participants has been observed. In terms of focus, the primary goal of participating in the community is to enhance English speaking skills by discussing everyday topics. This study provides an initial insight into how a learning community can influence the development of specific language skills at an A2 level, highlighting the importance of defined roles, leadership, and language practices in the learning process (Hooper, 2020).

In light of Ali's (2018) detailed exploration of the Community Language Learning method, which underscores the significance of group dynamics and counseling in educational approaches, there arises a compelling prospect for its application within the realm of professional

internships for students pursuing tourism studies at ULEAM. By embracing this method, students can harness the supportive environment and collaborative ethos of a learning community to bolster their English-speaking skills in real-world contexts encountered during their internships. Encouraging participants to engage in discussions on everyday topics related to the tourism industry not only fosters language proficiency but also cultivates a deeper understanding of the nuances of communication within the field. Moreover, this approach aligns with

the ethos of the learning community, where students are viewed as a cohesive group in need of guidance and support rather than mere participants in a traditional classroom setting. Integrating the principles of the Community Language Learning method into the framework of professional internships offers a promising avenue for enhancing language acquisition and fostering holistic professional development among tourism students at ULEAM.

Oral expressions.

According to De las Casas et al. (2022), oral expression, as a linguistic skill, is an essential component of the communicative approach, requiring activities that foster effective communication. This skill integrates phonological, lexical, and morphosyntactic aspects, along with extralinguistic elements such as communication strategies, gestures, and proximity. Additionally, psycholinguistic constraints, including memory and anxiety, and interactive discourses play a significant role. These elements collectively suggest that oral expression is best understood as a form of interactive communication.

The study of oral expression in a second language frequently emphasizes fluency, accuracy, and complexity as key indicators of proficiency. (Arbaoui, 2023) underscores the importance of these components, asserting that task-based instruction effectively supports their development through structured and communicative activities. Research in this field typically focuses on four main areas: (i) establishing theoretical models for spoken language development, (ii) researching effective evaluation methods for oral English, (iii) exploring the characteristics and patterns of oral expression, and (iv) enhancing teaching methodologies.

Moreover, scholars have highlighted the relevance of communication strategies, individual differences, and the balance between fluency, accuracy, and complexity in oral expression. Despite these efforts, much of the existing research has primarily targeted freshmen and middle school students, leaving the needs of college students underexplored. Fewer studies have assessed the current state and critical issues of students' oral proficiency, particularly in higher education, with a predominant focus on fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

Skehan (1996) affirms that fluency, accuracy, and complexity are fundamental indicators of oral proficiency. Crookes and Wigglesworth further suggest that communication validity can be evaluated by examining grammatical accuracy in learners' oral expressions. According to Jiang

and Zhou (2022), a comprehensive assessment of spoken language ability should also include dimensions such as accuracy, richness, coherence, fluency, appropriateness, and flexibility.

This study applies a non-experimental design, focusing on observing and measuring variables without direct intervention. It employs a mixed-methods approach, as described by Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2003), which combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies, allowing for an integrated analysis throughout the research process. This methodology leverages the advantages of both approaches, despite adding complexity to the study design.

Research Design

The independent variable of the study is participation in professional internships, while the dependent variable is the development of English oral expression skills for A2-level students in the tourism field. These variables are explored through qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.

Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative Analysis:

- Statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential techniques.
- Metrics such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were utilized to evaluate the extent of improvement in speaking skills.
- Surveys with Likert-scale questions measured participants' self-assessment of fluency, vocabulary, and confidence.

Qualitative Analysis:

- Thematic analysis was employed to analyze responses to open-ended questions, identifying recurring themes and insights into participants' language development during internships.
- Data were coded and categorized to extract meaningful narratives reflecting students' experiences.

Population and Sampling

The study involved a sample of 41 participants (14 males and 27 females) aged 20–23 years, predominantly of Hispanic descent, with 95% from Manabí province, Ecuador. A heterogeneous composition was ensured by including participants from cities like Manta, Portoviejo, and other regions. Most participants come from lower-middle-class backgrounds, with 98% having attended public schools. Economically, many families rely on incomes near the minimum wage, with 5% of participants holding part-time jobs.

All participants demonstrated A2-level English proficiency and engaged in pre-

professional practices in tourism-related settings, such as travel agencies, cruise terminals, airports, and museums.

Ethical Considerations

Prior informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. Ethical guidelines on data handling, anonymity, and privacy were rigorously followed. Participants retained the right to withdraw at any stage without repercussions.

The instruments used in this study are demonstrated in Illustration 1, which provides a detailed overview of the tools employed for data collection and analysis. These instruments include surveys with Likert-scale questions to measure fluency, vocabulary, and confidence, open-ended questions to explore students' experiences and challenges, and observation sheets to assess performance and engagement during internships.

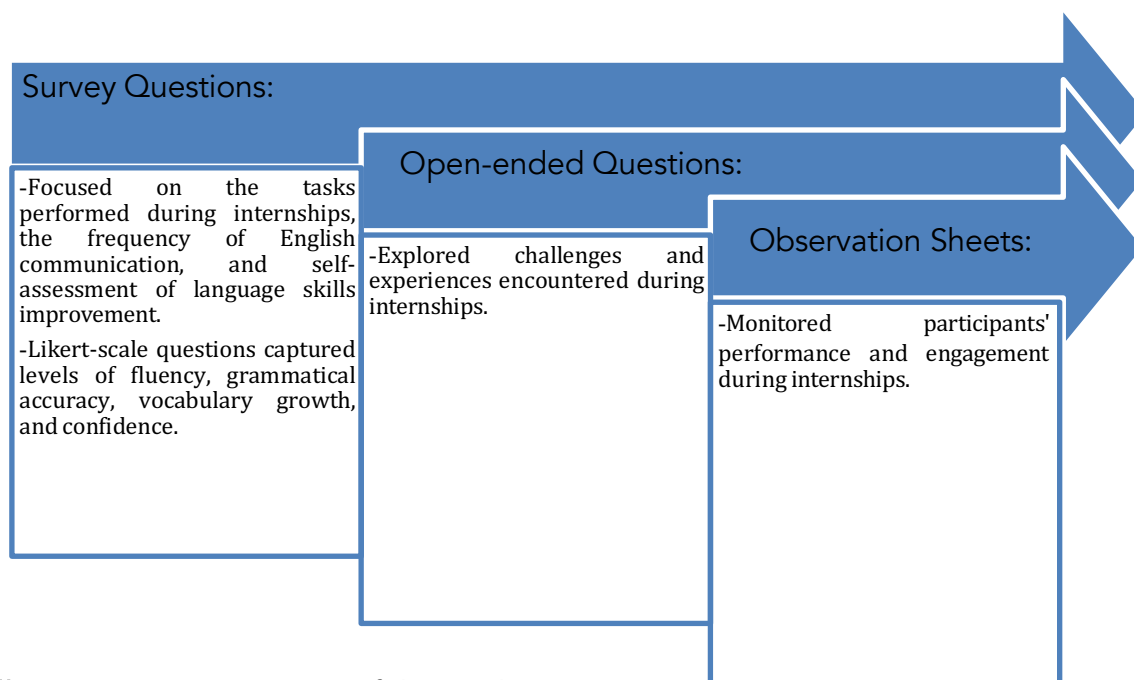


Illustration 1 Instruments of the study.

This section presents a detailed analysis of the survey responses, illustrating the impact of professional internships on various dimensions of language learning. The findings are organized into two key areas: (1) the independent variable—participation in professional internships, and (2) the dependent variable—development of English oral expression skills. The results not only highlight the effectiveness of internships as a pedagogical tool but also identify challenges that require attention to optimize learning outcomes. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how professional settings can support second language acquisition and align with theoretical perspectives on active and contextualized learning.

Table 1: Independent Variable Results.

Dimension/Item	Most Frequent Response	Other Observations
Q1: Hours dedicated to professional internships	16 hours per week (60%)	30% dedicate 20 hours 10% dedicate 10 hours
Q2: Tasks involving English communication	Customer service (50%)	Managing reservations (30%) Assisting in tourism activities (20%)
Q3: Interaction with native English speakers	Weekly (40%)	Monthly (35%) Never (25%)
Q4: Contribution of internships to English communication skills	Significant intensive (70%)	or Moderate (20%) Minimal (10%)
Q5: Level of supervision received for improving English skills	Significant (50%)	Moderate (30%) Minimal or none (20%)

Table 2: Dependent Variable Results

Dimension/Item	Most Frequent Response	Other Observations
Q6: Fluency in oral English before starting internships	Fair (35%)	Poor (40%), Good (25%)
Q7: Improvement in grammatical accuracy	Agree (60%)	Strongly agree (25%) Neutral (10%) Disagree (5%)
Q8: Vocabulary expansión	Agree (65%)	Neutral (20%) Disagree (15%)
Q9: Increase in confidence when communicating in English	Agree (35%)	Neutral (10%) Disagree (20%)
Q10: Challenges encountered while enhancing oral skills	Nervousness interacting with native speakers (50%)	Limited technical vocabulary (30%) Listening comprehension difficulties (20%)

This study highlights the significant role that professional internships play in developing English oral expression skills for A2-level students in the tourism sector. The findings demonstrate that internships provide students with meaningful opportunities to enhance their fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and confidence in real-world contexts. These outcomes align with theoretical perspectives, such as those of Gass and Mackey (2015), who emphasize the importance of interaction and output in second language acquisition, and Skehan (1996), who underscores the value of task-based approaches in promoting communicative competence.

Students reported notable improvements in their language skills, particularly when exposed to tasks that required active use of English, such as customer service and reservations management. However, challenges such as limited interaction with native speakers and insufficient supervision highlight areas for improvement in internship design. Addressing these gaps can further optimize the learning experience and maximize the potential benefits of internships.

The integration of social and metacognitive strategies, as discussed by Burešová (2007) and Raoofi (n.d.), proved to be instrumental in fostering self-regulation and active engagement among students. These strategies not only enhanced language development but also encouraged students to approach their learning with greater confidence and autonomy.

In conclusion, professional internships represent a valuable pedagogical tool for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. By refining internship programs to include more structured support, increased interaction with native speakers, and targeted feedback, educational institutions can further empower students to succeed in both their academic and professional pursuits. Future research should explore the long-term impact of internships on language proficiency and their potential application across different educational and cultural contexts.

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Implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning Methodological Guide to Improve Learning of Science in English

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching the English language has undergone significant changes in recent years, demanding improvements in traditional teaching methods. It is crucial to propose the application of a new method that not only enhances linguistic skills but also focuses on language development in specific subjects. In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education has provided instructions to incorporate Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for teaching natural sciences. CLIL is a teaching approach that emerged in Europe during the 1990s, developed collaboratively by educational administrators, researchers, and practitioners (Marsh, 2002). This research aims to explore the implementation and effectiveness of CLIL in the context of teaching natural sciences, aligning with the need to adapt English language instruction to subject-specific content.

By examining the principles and practices of CLIL, this study aims to enhance language learning outcomes and facilitate a deeper understanding of scientific concepts through an integrated approach. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of integrating language and subject matter to provide students with a comprehensive education. With the application of CLIL in the teaching of natural sciences, students can develop both their English language proficiency and their understanding of scientific concepts. This integrated approach promotes active engagement, critical thinking, and language use in authentic contexts, fostering a more holistic learning experience.

The specific instructions provided by the Ecuadorian Minister of Education emphasize the implementation of CLIL in science classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to integrate English language instruction with the teaching of natural sciences, ensuring that students actively use English to comprehend and communicate scientific ideas. The instructions also stress the importance of selecting appropriate materials and resources that support

CLIL principles, such as textbooks, articles, videos, and hands-on experiments that facilitate language learning and scientific exploration.

Moreover, the Minister of Education encourages teachers to create an inclusive and supportive classroom environment that promotes collaboration and interaction among students. Cooperative learning strategies, group discussions, and project-based activities are recommended to enhance language acquisition and conceptual understanding. Teachers are encouraged to provide clear language objectives and scaffold students' language development by providing necessary vocabulary, sentence frames, and explicit language instruction.

In the present research work, the authors will try to give a general vision of the pedagogical problems involved in the implementation of a bilingual program that includes the subject of natural sciences taught only and exclusively in English, specifically for the students of the seventh grade of Centro Educativo Internacional La Moderna. Within this program of bilingualism which has been applied since its foundation, from second grade to tenth grade of elementary school, Centro Educativo La Moderna proposes the teaching of different subjects in a foreign language (English) from an early age, in which the area of science stands out.

In spite of the fact that the process of bilingual teaching of natural sciences has resulted in an enriching and innovative experience in the institution, some particular weaknesses have been found in it. One of the main facts making struggles to carry out the classes effectively is that some of the teachers assigned to teach the subjects are not specialized in the disciplinary knowledge about a particular science, likewise, the majority of them are English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. Consequently, teachers often are limited to the repetition and memorization of vocabulary in a foreign language, instead of focusing on the sciences learning. However, this problem is not specific or unique to the educational unit, as it is constantly reflected in different private institutions with similar programs around the country, where, in general, the mastery of the foreign language prevails over the knowledge of science, due to the lack of specialization of teachers in the specific area of study, since they do not have a university center within the country that grants them a degree as teachers in specific subjects as in this case the subject of natural sciences in English.

This may be the result of the belief that a "bilingual" program implies only the use of English, thus excluding what is relevant and essential to achieving an effective teaching-learning process, which is to have absolute mastery of the subject to be taught.

Taking as a starting point what is expected by the Ministry of National Education and the needs of the educational unit La Moderna to provide an education with an emphasis in English, it has been evidenced in the diagnosis of the area made at the beginning of

the year 2022 that children have the ability to learn and acquire knowledge, however, there is a great gap to overcome between the elementary content of the subject and the inappropriate manner in which in previous years the subjects were taken; therefore, a detailed description of this process in the institution will be made, thus contributing to the strengthening of the bilingualism program.

Unfortunately, in Centro Educativo La Moderna, traditional methods of teaching science were applied before this investigation, they relied on rote memorization, repetitive worksheets, and passive learning, which was both boring and meaningless for students. These methods focused primarily on delivering information without actively engaging students in the learning process. Students felt disconnected from the subject matter and failed to see the relevance and practical applications of scientific concepts. The lack of hands-on activities, critical thinking exercises, and opportunities for experimentation diminished students' interest and hindered their ability to develop a deep understanding of scientific principles. The application of those traditional methods limited creativity and discouraged students from asking questions and exploring their own curiosity. As a result, students perceived science as a dull and disconnected subject rather than a fascinating and essential field of study.

There are a number of drawbacks to bilingual education that make its implementation delayed or inadequate. There are a considerable number of disadvantages, or poor results, belonging to the students in centers where there is apparently good preparation and widespread knowledge of how the bilingual program needs to be carried out. On the one hand, there is a lack of specific knowledge and methodological preparation; the teacher not only requires outstanding linguistic competence but also a certain mastery of the specific subject to be taught. Teachers complain that there are very few initial and in-service training programs based on methods of teaching a subject in a language other than the one normally used. Private schools have didactic material adapted to this type of class, the problem lies in the teacher's preparation on that specific subject and how to make it work through CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), which meets the objectives of the foreign language in question and the subjects of the curriculum. That is why the present research work exposes the problems found in the education system, and it's a guide with possible solutions focused on the study of natural sciences in seventh-grade students

Learning Science encompasses the study of various scientific disciplines and their integration into educational frameworks. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of incorporating science education within the broader context of language learning, particularly in the teaching of English as a second language. The literature review aims to explore the intersection of science education and language learning, and the role of science in learning English. Science encompasses a vast array of disciplines, including biology, chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy,

and environmental science, among others. It involves the systematic study of the natural world, employing empirical methods, observation, experimentation, and analysis to generate knowledge and understanding. Science provides a framework for investigating and explaining phenomena, exploring cause-and-effect relationships, and developing models and theories to explain natural processes (National Research Council, 2012).

The primary purposes of teaching science extend beyond the mere transmission of factual information. Science education aims to cultivate scientific literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and an appreciation for the natural world. By engaging students in scientific inquiry, experimentation, and exploration, educators strive to foster a deep understanding of scientific concepts and the ability to apply them in real-life contexts. Furthermore, science education seeks to nurture curiosity, develop scientific reasoning, and promote the scientific method as a reliable means of investigating and understanding the world (Bybee, 2014). Further, science education plays a crucial role in equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate an increasingly complex and technologically advanced society. It enables individuals to make informed decisions, critically evaluate scientific claims and evidence, and engage in societal issues with scientific implications. Science literacy empowers individuals to understand and appreciate scientific advancements, contributing to a scientifically informed citizenry capable of addressing global challenges such as climate change, public health, and sustainable development (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993).

Integrating science education with language learning offers numerous benefits for English language learners. By incorporating scientific content into English language instruction, students are exposed to authentic language use within a meaningful and engaging context. Science provides a rich and diverse vocabulary, scientific discourse, and opportunities for language practice through reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. Moreover, learning scientific concepts in English promotes language acquisition by providing students with opportunities to use the language to explore, explain, and communicate scientific ideas (Snow, 2010).

Within educational institutions, science is typically classified into distinct disciplines, each with its own curriculum, content, and pedagogical approaches. In primary and secondary schools, science is often divided into broad categories such as biology, chemistry, and physics, allowing students to delve deeper into specific scientific domains as they progress through their education. At higher education levels, science may be further specialized into sub-disciplines, reflecting the depth and complexity of scientific knowledge. This classification facilitates a structured and progressive learning experience, enabling students to develop a comprehensive understanding of scientific principles (National Science Teachers Association, 2020). In Centro Educativo La Moderna, the subject of science is taught since 2nd grade, so students face the challenge

of studying a subject in a second language at an early stage. Taking into consideration that the school is endorsed as a bilingual school, the level of English needed is a requirement, but unfortunately, every single year a lot of new students with poor knowledge of English are accepted, making the conditions to achieve the goal more difficult for the teacher.

The existing literature on the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the context of teaching sciences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) comprises the effectiveness of CLIL methodologies to enhance students' learning outcomes, particularly in the field of science education. By analyzing relevant studies and scholarly works, this literature review will shed light on the theoretical foundations, instructional practices, and outcomes associated with CLIL in the EFL context. "CLIL has emerged as a prominent approach to language education, emphasizing the integration of content and language learning to promote meaningful and authentic language use" (Lorenzo, Lasagabaster, & García, 2021). This approach has gained considerable attention in recent years, as educators seek innovative ways to enhance language proficiency and subject knowledge simultaneously (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). By immersing students in content-rich learning experiences conducted in a target language, CLIL aims to develop both language skills and disciplinary understanding (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2017). In the specific context of EFL science education, CLIL offers a promising path for promoting language development and scientific literacy among students. Integrating the teaching of science concepts with English language instruction allows students to acquire scientific knowledge while simultaneously improving their English language proficiency (Wang, 2013). However, the effective integration of CLIL in science classrooms necessitates meticulous consideration of several factors. These include thoughtful curriculum design, comprehensive teacher training, effective assessment practices, and the careful selection of suitable materials and resources (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2014).

The theoretical foundations of CLIL reveal an educational approach that seamlessly integrates the teaching of content subjects with the acquisition of a second or foreign language. At its core, CLIL operates under the fundamental belief that language learning is best achieved through meaningful engagement with subject-specific content. Drawing upon theories of language acquisition, such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Cummins' linguistic interdependence hypothesis, CLIL emphasizes the importance of meaningful language use and contextualized learning experiences (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Cummins, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky posits that language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for cognitive development. The roots of CLIL can be traced back to the early 20th century when bilingual education models began to gain recognition as effective approaches for language learning. However, it was in the 1990s that CLIL emerged as a distinct and influential pedagogical

approach (Marsh, 2002). CLIL has gained significant attention and popularity in educational settings worldwide due to its ability to enhance language proficiency, facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge, and foster cross-cultural understanding (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010). This perspective aligns with CLIL's focus on providing students with authentic language usage in meaningful contexts, enabling them to construct knowledge and establish connections between language and subject matter (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), as it's happening in science classes all over bilingual program focus in English as a foreign language.

Assessment practices in CLIL encompass both content and language objectives. Formative assessments are employed to monitor students' progress and provide timely feedback, enabling instructors to tailor instruction to individual needs (Dafouz & Guerrini, 2022). On the other hand, summative assessments evaluate overall performance and achievement in both content knowledge and language proficiency. It is crucial that assessments in CLIL align with the integrated nature of instruction and reflect authentic language usage in relevant tasks and contexts (Hidalgo-McCabe & Sancho Guinda, 2019). Thus, CLIL is an educational approach that seamlessly integrates content and language learning, aiming to provide students with meaningful and authentic language experiences.

Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and language competence play a vital role in delivering effective CLIL instruction. Marsh (2002) emphasized the importance of teachers' content knowledge and their ability to make connections between language and science concepts. Furthermore, professional development programs that focus on CLIL methodologies and strategies have been shown to enhance teachers' instructional practices (Coyle, 2013). Moreover, providing appropriate instructional materials, curriculum support, and assessment strategies that are specifically designed for the CLIL context plays a pivotal role in ensuring effective implementation (Coyle, 2010). Overall, the implementation of CLIL in EFL science classrooms requires a multifaceted approach that involves curriculum design, teacher training, assessment, and the selection of appropriate materials and resources, which are provided by CLIL for improving science learning in EFL students and preparing them for success in a global economy (Doiz et al., 2014).

Considering the complexity and multifaceted nature of the research topic, a mixed-methods approach emerges as an appropriate paradigm. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Quantitative methods, such as surveys and pre and post-tests, can provide numerical data on participants' attitudes, knowledge, and achievement, allowing for statistical analysis and generalizability of findings. On the other hand, qualitative methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, can delve into the rich contextual details, capturing the nuanced experiences, beliefs, and practices of educators and learners in science education and language

learning settings. The integration of these approaches can provide a more holistic perspective, allowing researchers to explore both the breadth and depth of the research topic, uncovering patterns, and generating in-depth insights. By adopting a mixed-methods paradigm, this research project can leverage the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods, leading to a comprehensive and robust exploration of the intersection of science education and language learning.

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the effectiveness of implementing a CLIL methodological guide in improving the learning outcomes of seventh-grade EFL students in the field of science. In line with the research objectives, a descriptive survey research design was adopted to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the existing conditions, yielding valid and reliable results in education research (Babbie, 2019). Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the CLIL approach on student learning. Additionally, a theoretical framework was developed through a thorough review of relevant literature on CLIL implementation and its impact on science education for EFL students in seventh grade. This theoretical framework served as a foundation for identifying the main and supporting points, lending relevance and coherence to this research article.

Best and Kahn (2006) observe that a descriptive survey is a research design which aims at describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting existing conditions that yield valid and reliable education research results. Thus, the research modality selected for this study is the descriptive method with a qualitative and quantitative analysis. Additionally, it was important to create the theoretical framework (documentary investigation into the theories of the writers) concerning the implementation of a CLIL methodological guide as an independent variable and the improvement of learning of sciences in EFL students of seventh grade as a dependent variable. By doing this, the researcher assisted in the development of the major and supporting points that gave this research article pertinence (Creswell, 2012).

In terms of qualitative analysis, qualitative research approaches were employed to explore the ideas, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs of the participants, acknowledging that not all aspects of the research can be quantified (Merriam, 2019). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is an income to understand meanings assigned to social human problems. In addition, the research applied triangulation, which refers to the combination of methods or sources of data in a single study. It is also often thought of as a way of checking out insights gleaned from different informants or sources of data (Taylor Bogdan,& De Vault. , 2016). Triangulation, as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2018), was employed in this study, referring to the use of multiple methods or sources of data to validate and enhance the credibility of the findings (Patton, 2015). By utilizing data triangulation, which involved surveys, pre and post-tests, and checklists, the

researchers aimed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings.

Instruments

The instruments applied in this research were a survey, pre, and post-test. Before implementing the methodological guide, the instruments were piloted with students and modified. In the end, we took a survey to the teachers to know their opinions about the proposal.

Population

The population of students in Centro Educativo La Moderna is approximately 1900 students but for this study, the population sample consists of 114 seventh-grade students enrolled in the bilingual program seventh grade, in four parallels (A, B, C, and D). A purposive sampling technique has been used to select a representative sample of students who have been exposed to the CLIL methodological guide. The sample included students who had completed the science curriculum following the CLIL approach. The selection criteria will include students' English language proficiency levels, academic performance, and availability to participate in the research.

Research Questions / Answers

Research Question #1: To what extent will the application of CLIL improve language skills and scientific understanding?

The study employed CLIL methodology in science classrooms, where teachers integrated English language instruction with the teaching of natural sciences. A comprehensive analysis of the collected data was conducted to determine the impact of CLIL on language skills and scientific understanding.

The results showed that the implementation of CLIL positively influenced language skills, as students actively used English to comprehend and communicate scientific ideas. Language objectives were clearly defined, and teachers provided the necessary support for language development through vocabulary, sentence frames, and explicit language instruction. Moreover, the study revealed that CLIL effectively enhanced students' understanding of scientific concepts. By learning science in English, students were able to apply their language skills in authentic contexts, promoting active engagement and critical thinking. The integrated approach fostered a more holistic learning experience, bridging the gap between language and subject matter.

Research Question #2: What challenges and weaknesses are faced in implementing CLIL in science classrooms?

While the study highlighted the benefits of CLIL, it also identified some challenges and weaknesses in its implementation. One of the main challenges was the lack of specialization of teachers in both English language instruction and disciplinary

knowledge about natural sciences. Many teachers were English as Foreign Language (EFL) instructors, limiting their ability to focus on science learning rather than mere vocabulary memorization. The study also found that institutions lacked adequate training and resources for CLIL implementation. Teachers required specific training in teaching subjects in a language other than the one normally used, and there was a need for suitable didactic materials tailored to CLIL principles.

Research Question #3: What are students' perspectives toward the implementation of CLIL in science classes?

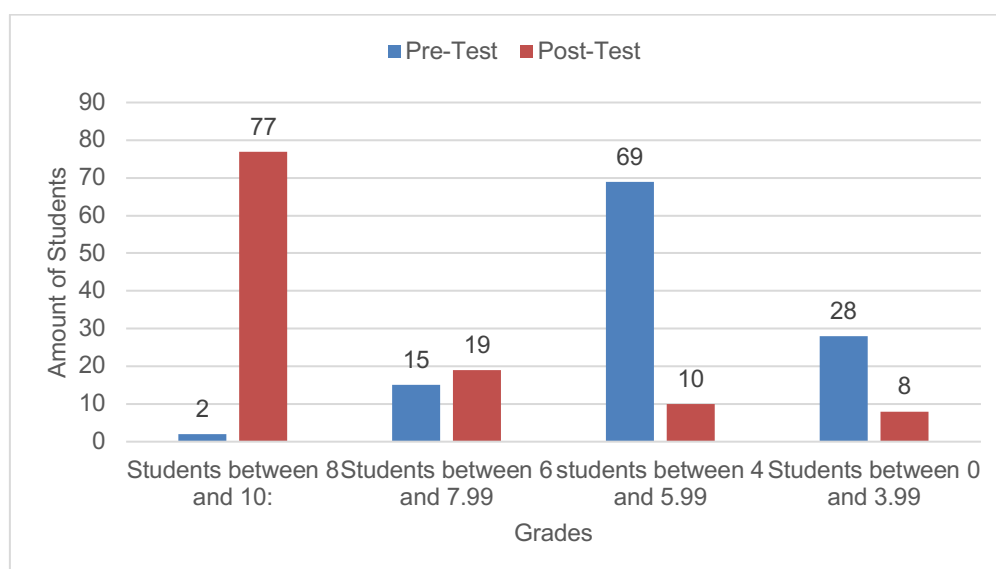
To gauge students' perspectives towards CLIL implementation, a post-survey was conducted at the end of the study. The results of the survey demonstrated positive feedback from the students. They acknowledged the benefits of integrating language and science, stating that it enhanced their language proficiency and scientific understanding. Students felt engaged and motivated, appreciating the opportunity to apply English in real-life scientific contexts.

Effectiveness of CLIL Approach in Enhancing Learning Outcomes

To assess the effectiveness of the CLIL methodological guide in improving learning outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Pre and post-tests were conducted to measure students' performance in science before and after the implementation of CLIL. Additionally, qualitative data, such as classroom observations and teacher feedback, provided valuable insights into the impact of CLIL on students' academic progress.

Chart 1

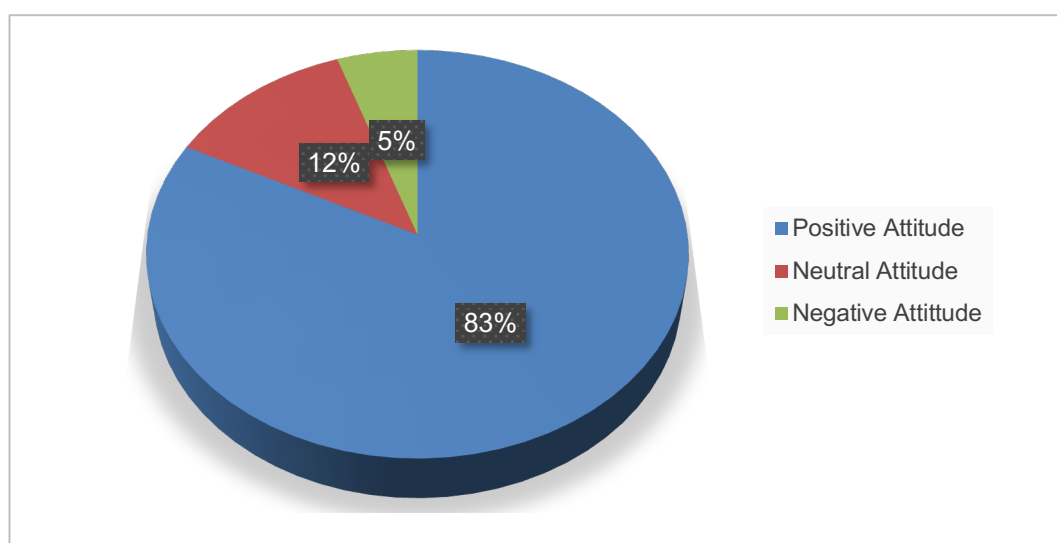
Comparison of Pre and Post-Test Scores in Science



The scores of pre and post-test scores in science show a significant improvement in student's performance after the implementation of the CLIL approach. The post-test scores indicate a higher level of understanding and knowledge of scientific concepts, highlighting the positive impact of CLIL on learning outcomes.

Impact on Students' Attitudes and Motivation

Chart 2 *Students' Attitude Towards Learning Science Through CLIL*

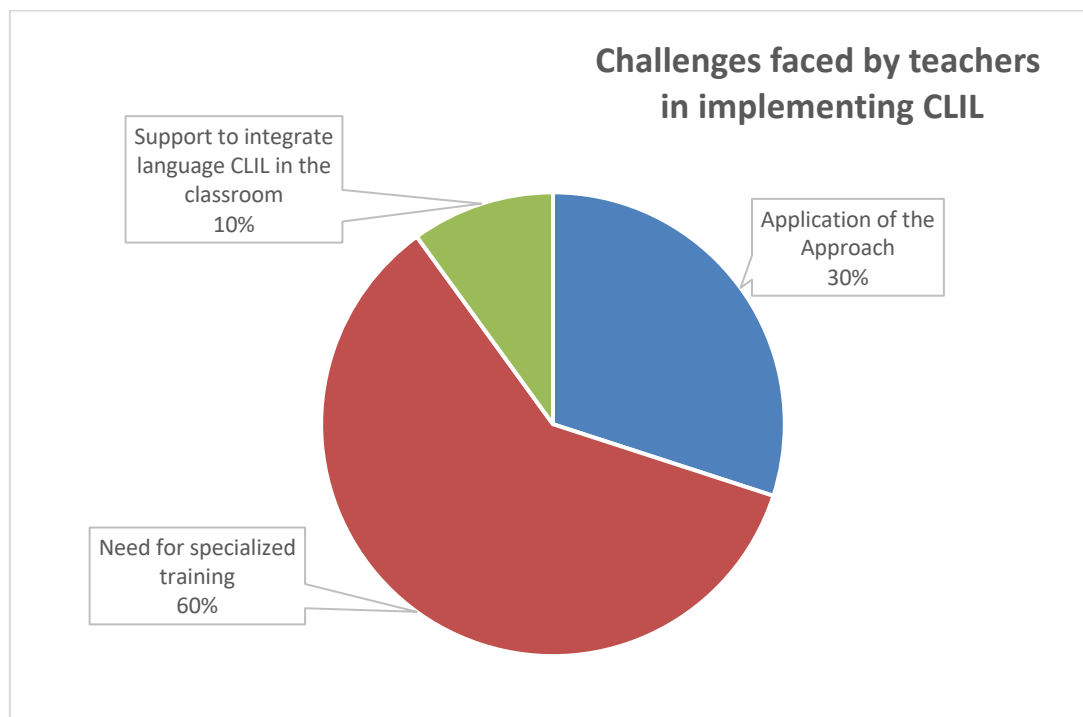


To gauge the impact of CLIL on students' attitudes and motivation toward learning science, surveys and interviews were conducted. Students were asked about their engagement, interest, and overall perception of learning science in English through the CLIL approach. So, the results in the attitude survey toward learning science through CLIL stand for a positive attitude. Significant students indicated increased interest and enthusiasm for science. The interactive and engaging nature of CLIL lessons contributed to a more positive learning experience, fostering a deeper connection to scientific concepts.

Teachers' Perspectives on CLIL Implementation

To understand the challenges and experiences of teachers in implementing CLIL, interviews, and focus group discussions were conducted. Teachers shared their insights on the benefits and difficulties of adopting the CLIL methodological guide in science classrooms.

Chart 3. Teachers' Views on CLIL Implementation Challenges

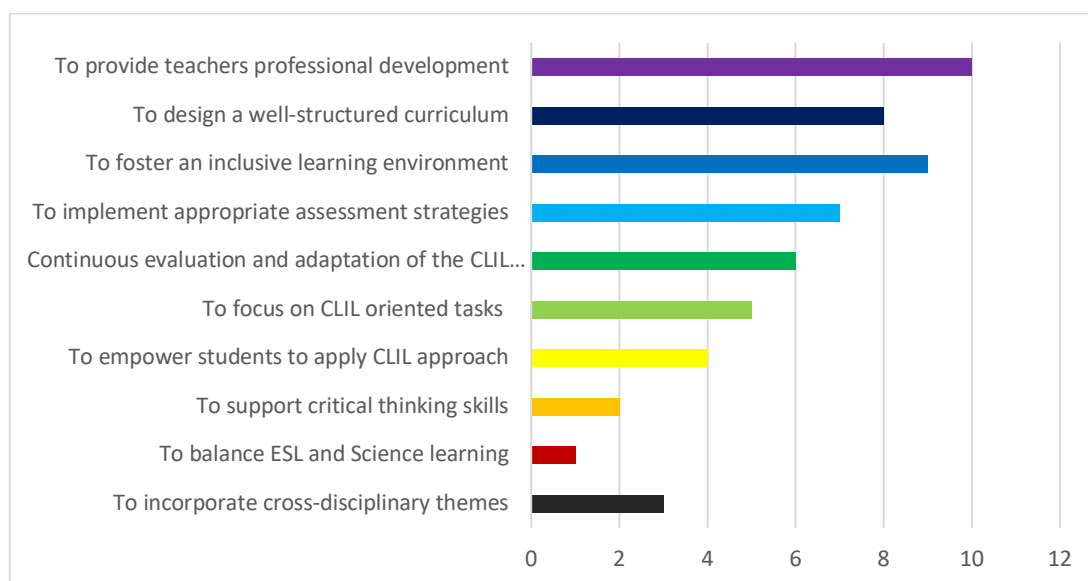


Results outline as well the challenges faced by teachers implementing CLIL. While many teachers recognized the potential benefits of the approach, they also acknowledged the need for specialized training and support to effectively integrate language instruction with subject-specific content. Professional development opportunities were identified as essential for enhancing teachers' expertise in both language and science instruction.

Recommendations for Successful CLIL Implementation

Based on the research findings and insights from both students and teachers, the study offers valuable recommendations for successful CLIL implementation in science classrooms.

Chart 4: Recommendations for Successful CLIL Implementation



Summarizing the key recommendations for successful CLIL implementation. These include providing teachers with professional development, designing a well-structured curriculum, fostering an inclusive learning environment, implementing appropriate assessment strategies, and continuously evaluating and adapting the CLIL approach. These recommendations serve as a guide for educators and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of CLIL in promoting language proficiency and science learning simultaneously.

Positive Results for Students:

The implementation of the CLIL methodological guide yielded significant positive outcomes for students at Centro Educativo Internacional La Moderna. The comparison of pre and post-test scores, as depicted in Chart 1, clearly indicates a remarkable enhancement in students' learning outcomes. This improvement reflects a deeper understanding and mastery of scientific concepts, showcasing the effectiveness of the CLIL approach in elevating academic achievements. Moreover, the impact of CLIL extended beyond academic performance. Chart 2 portrays the students' attitude towards learning science through CLIL, revealing a surge in enthusiasm and engagement. A substantial portion of students expressed heightened interest and a positive disposition towards science education. This shift in attitude can be attributed to the interactive and engaging nature of CLIL lessons, which fostered a more profound connection to scientific principles and concepts. The integration of language learning with subject-specific content enriched students' learning experiences, making science more relatable and enjoyable.

Positive Results for Teachers

Teachers played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of CLIL in science

classrooms. Despite the challenges highlighted in Chart 3, teachers reported several positive outcomes resulting from their involvement in the CLIL approach. The opportunity to merge language instruction with scientific content invigorated their teaching practices. The teachers' perspectives underscored the transformative potential of CLIL, as it encouraged innovative instructional methods and enriched their professional growth.

Furthermore, the CLIL methodological guide empowered teachers to bridge the gap between language and science, enabling them to facilitate more holistic and comprehensive learning experiences. While acknowledging the need for specialized training, teachers expressed a sense of accomplishment in fostering students' dual development in language proficiency and scientific understanding. This positive impact on teachers resonated throughout the institution, creating an environment conducive to collaborative and effective teaching methodologies.

Positive Impact for the Institution

The implementation of the CLIL approach yielded positive outcomes for Centro Educativo Internacional La Moderna as an institution committed to holistic education. The research findings showcased in Chart 4 provide valuable recommendations for successful CLIL implementation, enhancing the institution's overall educational quality. By prioritizing teacher professional development, designing a well-structured curriculum, and fostering an inclusive learning environment, the institution ensures a comprehensive approach to education that aligns with the demands of a globalized world. Furthermore, the positive impact of CLIL resonated within the institution's reputation. The successful integration of the CLIL approach positioned the institution as a pioneer in innovative and effective teaching methods. This recognition not only attracts students seeking a holistic and enriched learning experience but also contributes to the institution's prominence in the education sector. As a result, the institution's commitment to enhancing language proficiency and science education through CLIL serves as a model for other educational institutions seeking to enrich their curricula and elevate student outcomes.

Overall, the results of the study highlight the positive impact of the CLIL methodological guide on students' learning outcomes, attitudes, and motivation toward science education in English. The data visualization through charts provides a clear and concise representation of the research findings, emphasizing the significance of the CLIL approach in enhancing science education in the context of Centro Educativo Internacional La Moderna. By incorporating CLIL into science classrooms and addressing the challenges through the recommended strategies, educators can create a more immersive and enriching learning experience, equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. Overall, the positive results observed in students' academic achievements, teachers' professional growth, and the institution's reputation underscore the significance of the CLIL methodological guide at Centro Educativo Internacional La Moderna. The data

visualization provided through charts emphasizes the transformative potential of CLIL in enhancing science education within the institution. By embracing CLIL and leveraging its benefits, the institution has demonstrated a commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an interconnected global society.

Discussion

The study's results indicate that the application of CLIL in science classrooms has significant potential to improve language skills and scientific understanding. By combining language learning with subject-specific content, students not only improved their English proficiency but also developed a deeper comprehension of scientific concepts.

The theoretical foundations of CLIL highlight its role as an approach that integrates content and language learning. By engaging students in content-rich learning experiences conducted in a target language, CLIL aims to develop both language skills and disciplinary understanding. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Cummins' linguistic interdependence hypothesis form the basis of CLIL's emphasis on meaningful language use and contextualized learning experiences. As such, CLIL has gained attention for its ability to enhance language proficiency, facilitate content knowledge acquisition, and foster cross-cultural understanding. Science education plays a vital role in promoting scientific literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. By integrating science education with language learning, students are exposed to authentic language use within the context of scientific exploration. Moreover, integrating science concepts into English language instruction allows students to acquire scientific knowledge while simultaneously improving their language proficiency.

However, the study also revealed the challenges faced in implementing CLIL, particularly related to teacher specialization and the availability of suitable resources. To address these challenges, it is recommended to provide comprehensive training programs for teachers to effectively deliver CLIL instruction. Additionally, educational institutions should invest in the development of appropriate didactic materials and resources aligned with CLIL principles.

The positive feedback from students in the post-survey underscores the effectiveness of CLIL in promoting active engagement and motivation. Students' perspectives towards the integration of language and science were highly favorable, emphasizing the practicality and relevance of using English in scientific contexts.

Limitations

The study faced certain limitations, including the need for specialized teachers in both language and science. As some teachers lacked disciplinary knowledge in natural sciences, it impacted the implementation of CLIL and limited the depth of science

learning. Many teachers assigned to teach natural sciences were English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, leading to limitations in effectively delivering scientific concepts. The mastery of the foreign language often prevailed over the knowledge of science due to the lack of specialized training for teachers in specific subjects, such as natural sciences in English. This issue could not be so unique at Centro Educativo La Moderna, it could be rather reflected as a broader problem in private institutions with similar programs across the country, so further, this research could be a starting point for future research with a broader scope.

CONCLUSIONS

The research highlights the potential of Content and Language Integrated Learning as a powerful approach to enhance language learning and scientific understanding. By addressing the challenges and weaknesses through specialized teacher training and improved resources, CLIL can be successfully implemented to create a more comprehensive and engaging learning experience in science classrooms taught in English.

However, to ensure the successful implementation of CLIL, several factors need to be considered. These include comprehensive teacher training, thoughtful curriculum design, effective assessment practices, and the selection of suitable materials and resources. Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and language competence play a crucial role in delivering effective CLIL instruction.

Overall, the study highlights the potential of CLIL to revolutionize science education in the context of EFL instruction. By integrating language and subject matter, the school can offer a comprehensive education that prepares students to navigate an increasingly complex and globalized world. The findings of this research contribute to the growing body of knowledge on CLIL implementation and its impact on science education, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers striving to enhance language learning outcomes and subject-specific content knowledge.

Recommendations

To address the limitations and enhance the effectiveness of CLIL implementation, it is recommended to establish specialized training programs for teachers. These programs should focus on both language instruction and disciplinary knowledge to ensure comprehensive and effective CLIL delivery.

Additionally, educational institutions should invest in developing and providing suitable didactic materials and resources aligned with CLIL principles. Adequate technological infrastructure should be ensured to support seamless integration and engagement in CLIL lessons.

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Applying trading workshops for improving the oral skill in the English Language for the Amazon ecotourism

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Introduction

This research arises from the need to address a critical issue in the ecotourism sector in the canton of Cascales, province of Sucumbíos. This region is known for its extraordinary biodiversity and unique ecotourism opportunities that attract tourists from all over the world. However, despite the enormous tourism potential, local ecotourism providers face a significant challenge: the language barrier. According to Lapo (2023), the lack of oral communication skills in English has become an obstacle that prevents guides, tour operators, and other local providers from effectively communicating with international tourists. This not only affects the quality of the tourist experience but also limits the economic benefits these activities could generate for local communities. The language barrier creates misunderstandings, reduces visitor satisfaction, and decreases the potential to attract tourists from broader and more diverse markets.

Moreover, the ability to communicate in English is crucial for conveying knowledge about local biodiversity, sustainable practices, and the importance of environmental conservation. Without effective communication, tourists cannot gain a complete understanding of the ecological and cultural value of the region, which in turn diminishes their appreciation and support for conservation initiatives. The central question addressed by this research is whether the implementation of training workshops focused on improving oral communication skills in English can enhance the communication abilities of local ecotourism providers. This improvement is expected to increase tourist satisfaction, generate economic benefits for local communities, and facilitate more effective environmental education.

In the canton of Cascales, ecotourism is a primary source of income and a key strategy for promoting environmental conservation. However, the effectiveness of this sector is compromised by the language barrier. Many tourists who visit the region speak English,

which presents a considerable challenge for local providers who often lack solid oral communication skills in this language. This situation can diminish the quality of the tourist experience and limit the economic income derived from tourism. Ecotourism in Cascales has the potential to be a powerful tool for sustainable development. By offering authentic experiences in a unique natural setting, it can generate income that not only supports local communities but also funds conservation and environmental protection efforts. However, the language barrier significantly limits these opportunities. Tour guides, lodging operators, and other service providers who cannot communicate effectively in English face difficulties in conveying crucial information about local flora, fauna, and sustainability practices (Montoya, 2022).

Luna et al. (2022) state that this lack of fluent communication not only affects tourist satisfaction, as they may feel frustrated by not being able to fully interact with their hosts, but also prevents these visitors from fully understanding and appreciating the ecological and cultural value of the region. The inability to adequately explain the importance of conservation and the specifics of the Amazonian ecosystem can lead to lower tourist valuation and support for conservation initiatives. Additionally, tourists who do not have a positive experience due to communication barriers are less likely to recommend the destination to others or return in the future, which negatively affects sector growth. This dynamic creates a cycle where development and conservation opportunities are reduced by the lack of linguistic skills among local providers.

Furthermore, competition with other global ecotourism destinations, where providers can communicate in multiple languages, puts the canton of Cascales at a disadvantage. Tourists may choose destinations where they feel more comfortable and understood, diverting potential income to other areas. Addressing this language barrier is essential to maximizing the benefits of ecotourism in Cascales. Implementing English training programs for local tourism service providers can significantly improve the quality of the visitor experience and, consequently, increase tourism-derived income. Training should not only focus on basic language skills but also on terminology specific to ecology, conservation, and the cultural particularities of the region.

This study is crucial because it addresses a significant gap in current ecotourism practices. Improving communication skills in English will not only benefit the tourist experience and economic income but also empower local communities with transferable skills to other sectors. Moreover, effective communication is fundamental for promoting education and environmental advocacy. Local guides play a vital role in raising awareness about conservation efforts and the ecological importance of Cascales. The ability to communicate in English will enable them to convey critical environmental messages more clearly and persuasively to a global audience. By doing so, they can more effectively explain the region's unique biodiversity, the threats it faces, and the necessary actions for its preservation.

Improving English proficiency will also allow local providers to access more resources

and international training opportunities, collaborations, and professional networks. This will contribute to their continuous professional development and the improvement of the quality of services offered. Additionally, better English communication will facilitate participation in international conferences, seminars, and workshops, where they can share experiences and learn from successful practices in other parts of the world. This approach will not only increase the competitiveness of ecotourism in the canton of Cascales but also promote greater inclusion and equity by providing local community members with the opportunity to interact with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Exposure to different perspectives and knowledge can enrich understanding of environmental issues and foster a sense of global solidarity in the fight for Amazonian conservation.

Finally, based on the above, the objective of this research is that training workshops in oral communication skills in English will significantly improve the ability of local ecotourism providers to interact with tourists. This, in turn, will increase tourist satisfaction, generate greater economic benefits, and strengthen environmental education and advocacy efforts. This will be achieved by evaluating the improvement in oral communication skills in English among local ecotourism providers as a result of the training workshops, analyzing the impact of these improved skills on tourist satisfaction and the overall visitor experience in the canton of Cascales, and identifying and addressing the specific difficulties faced by local ecotourism providers in acquiring and applying these skills.

The research is classified as applied and quasi-experimental. It is applied because it aims to address a specific problem in the field of ecotourism in the canton of Cascales by implementing training workshops to improve oral English communication skills among local providers. At the same time, it is quasi-experimental as it involves an intervention (the workshops) and will assess its impact on communication skills, tourist satisfaction, and economic benefits, without a formal control group.

The study population includes local ecotourism providers in the canton of Cascales, Sucumbíos province, such as tour guides, lodge staff, and local artisans. The sample will consist of 14 participants selected for their basic English skills (level A1), chosen in collaboration with the Tsampi Etze Muyu Artisans Association. Selection is based on their relevance to ecotourism and the need to improve their English communication skills.

The study will be conducted in the canton of Cascales, Sucumbíos province, Ecuador, specifically at the Tsampi Etze Muyu cultural center, which houses the local artisans' association and is representative of ecotourism in the region. Quasi-experimental and mixed-methods approaches will be used to analyze the results. Techniques will include pre- and post-workshop surveys to measure improvements in oral English skills, interviews with ecotourism providers, tourists, and local community members to obtain detailed insights, and focus group discussions with workshop participants to explore their

experiences and suggestions.

Statistical methods will include descriptive analysis to evaluate improvements in communication skills and tourist satisfaction, comparative analysis to measure the impact of the intervention, and qualitative analysis to identify recurring themes in interviews and focus group discussions. Training materials will include educational resources in English, study guides, and teaching materials, technologies such as online learning platforms and language learning apps, and equipment like audio and video recording devices for training sessions and feedback.

Findings

In the context of the ongoing efforts to enhance English communication skills among local ecotourism providers in the canton of Cascales, Sucumbíos, it is crucial to assess both the challenges faced and the effectiveness of recent training initiatives. The following survey results shed light on key aspects related to English language use in the

Amazon ecotourism setting, focusing specifically on providers' experiences and perceptions.

The survey includes a series of questions designed to explore various dimensions of communication challenges and the impact of training workshops on improving English proficiency. We seek to understand how frequently providers feel nervous during English conversations, how often they miss opportunities to practice their English skills, their commitment to improving fluency, their hesitation in engaging with native speakers, and their overall confidence in speaking English within the ecotourism context.

These questions are aimed at capturing a comprehensive view of the current state of English communication among local providers. By analyzing responses to these questions, we can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of the training workshops and identify areas where additional support may be needed. The results will provide a clearer understanding of how well the training programs are addressing the language barriers and contributing to the enhancement of communication skills crucial for delivering high-quality ecotourism experiences.

In the subsequent sections, we will present the detailed findings from the survey, highlighting the key trends and implications for improving English communication skills among ecotourism providers.

Table 1. Results of Perception and Attitudes Towards English Communication in Trading Workshops

Aspect	Frecuency				
	Always	Usually	Sometime	Rarely	Never
Self-perceived confidence in oral English communication skills	64,29%	21%	14%	-	-
Taking advantage of opportunities to improve one's English speaking skills	21%	21%	57%	-	-
Effort to improve one's fluency in English	14%	14%	36%	7%	29%
Confidence to interact with natives	64%	-	14%	21%	-
Interest in workshops to improve English skills	57%	14%	7%	-	21%

The majority of respondents (64.29%) perceive themselves as highly confident in their oral English communication skills, especially in the context of ecotourism. However, this positive perception contrasts with the low percentage of participants who always take advantage of opportunities to improve their English (21%) and the minimal constant effort to enhance fluency (14%). The lack of active effort, with 29% never making an effort to improve, suggests a discrepancy between self-perceived confidence and actual action. Despite feeling confident interacting with native speakers (64% Always), some participants still do not feel completely comfortable (21% Rarely). Interest in English training workshops is high, with 57% showing consistent interest, although 21% are not interested, which could impact the effectiveness of training programs if they are not tailored to meet the needs of all participants. This analysis reveals that while confidence in English communication is high, the lack of ongoing effort and uneven interest in training may limit the actual development of English skills among local ecotourism providers.

These findings align with some studies in the field but also diverge in important ways. For instance, research by Luna et al. (2022) highlights a similar gap between perceived and actual communication abilities, indicating that while individuals may feel confident, their actual communication practices and skills often fall short. Montoya (2022) supports the notion that language barriers impact the effectiveness of ecotourism providers, yet the current study reveals a more nuanced issue where the lack of ongoing effort to improve language skills significantly affects actual performance.

Future research should focus on several key areas. Firstly, it would be beneficial to explore the specific barriers that prevent ecotourism providers from actively engaging in language improvement efforts. Understanding these barriers could lead to more targeted and effective training interventions. Secondly, longitudinal studies could examine how sustained training impacts both confidence and actual communication skills over time. Additionally, investigating the role of cultural and contextual factors in shaping language learning experiences would offer valuable insights into how to better support local providers in diverse ecotourism settings.

In a broader context, these findings underscore the importance of aligning self-perception with actual language skills and efforts. They highlight a critical need for practical, ongoing support and training that addresses not only language acquisition but also the motivation and strategies necessary for effective communication. This research prompts a call to action for designing more effective language programs and exploring innovative approaches to language learning in ecotourism and similar fields. By addressing these gaps, future studies can contribute to enhancing the overall quality of communication in ecotourism and fostering better interactions between local providers and international tourists.

Table 2. *Results of Key Aspects in Oral English Skills*

Aspect	Frecuency				
	Always	Usually	Sometime	Rarely	Never
Ability to communicate effectively with tourists	36%	14%	21%	7%	21%
Attention to oral English skills	-	43%	21%	-	36%
Difficulty in managing the correct intonation in English	43%	7%	7%	7%	36%
Challenges in pronunciation and fluency	86%	14%	-	-	-
Tendency to seek feedback on their oral English skills	36%	14%	50%	-	-

The results presented in Table 2 offer a complex view of oral English skills among ecotourism providers in the Amazon. Although 36% of participants report that they can always communicate effectively with tourists, 21% indicate that they never achieve this, revealing notable variability in communication competence. This disparity contrasts with Hernández & Rodríguez, (2020), who argue that ongoing, specialized training can lead to more uniform communication competence. This finding suggests that current training may not be adequately tailored to the specific needs of ecotourism in the region.

Regarding attention to oral skills, 43% of participants report that they usually pay attention, while 36% never do. This pattern reflects a lack of consistency in focusing on language skill improvement, something Ngu et al, (2021) considers essential for effective second language development. The lack of ongoing attention may limit participants' ability to improve their oral skills, directly impacting their ability to communicate with tourists. For intonation, 43% of participants face significant difficulties in managing it correctly, while 36% never experience this issue. This aligns with Islam & Stapa, (2021), who notes that intonation is one of the most challenging aspects to master in a second language. The high difficulty in this area highlights the need for more specialized training approaches that specifically address these challenges.

Additionally, 86% of participants report persistent issues with pronunciation and fluency. This result supports Hong et al, (2022), who states that pronunciation and fluency are particularly difficult areas to achieve in second language learning. The high proportion of difficulties in these areas indicates that educational interventions should focus intensely on improving pronunciation and fluency to support effective communication in the ecotourism context. On the other hand, 50% of participants show a strong tendency to seek feedback on their oral skills, while 36% always seek feedback. This behavior is consistent with Lapo, (2023), who highlight that feedback is crucial for learning and skill improvement. The willingness to receive feedback may be a key factor in the continuous improvement of oral skills.

In summary, while there is notable effort by participants to seek feedback and pay attention to oral skills, the results indicate persistent challenges in critical areas such as pronunciation, fluency, and intonation. Addressing these issues requires providing training tailored to the specific needs of ecotourism and fostering a culture of continuous feedback. This approach will not only enhance communication with tourists but also potentially increase economic and educational benefits for local communities, thus supporting a more effective and sustainable ecotourism model.

Conclusions

The research highlights several key findings about English communication skills among ecotourism providers in Cascales, Sucumbíos. Despite some providers being confident in their ability to communicate with tourists, significant variability exists, with 21% struggling to communicate effectively. This inconsistency indicates that current

training programs may not fully address the specific needs of the region's ecotourism sector.

Attention to improving oral skills is inconsistent, with 43% of participants paying attention regularly and 36% rarely doing so. This gap between perceived effort and actual practice limits the effectiveness of communication. Challenges with intonation, noted by 43% of participants, and persistent issues with pronunciation and fluency, reported by 86%, further highlight the need for more targeted training. These difficulties align with existing research, underscoring the importance of focusing training on these areas.

On a positive note, a significant portion of participants actively seeks feedback, which is crucial for skill improvement. This willingness suggests that incorporating regular feedback into training programs could enhance their effectiveness. Overall, addressing these communication challenges through tailored training programs can improve tourist satisfaction, increase economic benefits, and support environmental education and conservation efforts, ultimately contributing to a more successful ecotourism model in Cascales.

Recommendations

Future research should focus on several key areas. First, longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate the long-term impacts of English language training on ecotourism providers. These studies would help determine if improved communication skills result in sustained benefits for tourist satisfaction, economic growth, and environmental advocacy. Additionally, exploring how cultural and contextual factors influence the acquisition and application of English skills could lead to more culturally tailored training programs. Comparative research between providers in Cascales and those in other ecotourism destinations could identify successful strategies and practices that might be adapted to improve communication skills across different regions.

Investigating the role of technology in language learning, such as through apps, virtual reality, and online platforms, could offer innovative solutions to overcoming language barriers. It would also be valuable to examine how involvement in professional networks and international collaborations affects language skill development, as global connections might facilitate the exchange of best practices and enhance skill acquisition. Furthermore, studying the effectiveness of different feedback mechanisms—whether peer reviews, expert evaluations, or self-assessments—could provide insights into the most effective methods for improving language proficiency.

Alternative approaches to tackling the problem might include developing community-based training programs that engage both local providers and tourists, creating immersive learning experiences directly related to ecotourism needs. Incorporating ecotourism-specific content into English courses would make training more relevant and practical. Collaborating with language experts and educational institutions

to design specialized training programs could also bring valuable resources and innovative teaching methods to address specific communication challenges.

Overall, this research underscores the critical role of effective communication in ecotourism. Addressing language barriers can significantly enhance tourist experiences, boost local economies, and support conservation efforts. Continued exploration in this field promises to improve training programs, foster international collaboration, and advance best practices in ecotourism. Engaging with these recommendations will deepen the understanding of how communication skills influence tourism and conservation, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable practices in the industry.

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Reflective Journals in WhatsApp to Improve Writing Skills in A2 Level Students

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Introduction

According to Nishanthi (2018), the impact and importance of the English language in the contemporary society is extremely noticeable since it is spoken in every part of the world. Akther (2022) states that this foreign language is vital for the personal and professional growth of any human being in the world. Andayani (2022) commented that English is also a requisite in the work place for finding a job and also for obtaining a promotion in their jobs resulting in people's motivation as well as their interest in learning English. As a result, Ilyosovna (2020) affirmed that many nations include English in their school syllabus so that children study the language from childhood; educational institutions have decided to implement the learning of this language in their curriculums as an obligatory subject; to increase the advantages of people worldwide so that individuals can access to international opportunities in the work or education field. Needless to say, Latin American countries, such as Chile, Costa Rica and Ecuador, too.

There have been done some previous studies that have positioned the Latin American nations as the less proficient in the English language, and in Ecuador, the situation the same, in fact, Ortega et al. (2017) found out that the proficiency in English of students was not satisfactory, which clearly evidenced the data that talk about the low level in the foreign language of Ecuadorian learners.

On the other hand, the English learning is a process that takes time in order to achieve a proficiency in the language, H. (2023) said that it is needed 200 assisted learning hours for reaching the next level, and that it is required at least 1200 hours to achieve a C2 proficiency. Due to the fact that it involves the development of receptive and productive skills, Sreena and Ilankumaran (2018) voiced that this were listening, reading, writing and speaking. From them writing could be a challenging skill to domain, indeed, the English writing is tough for native speakers, and this is equivalent for the non-native ones because these speakers evidence difficulties in composing understandable paragraphs, determining the skills required for writing as well as the omission of ineffective words or phrases (Sulaiman & Muhajir, 2019).

As it was pointed out before, the problem is the students' limitations in the English language. This limitations are because the lack of use of innovative and engaging learning activities. Rone et al. (2023) stated that professors are in charge of finding strategies and teaching methods that are more suitable for the learners and their level since teachers ought to engage learners in their lessons. In other words, students engagement is gained by teachers as long as their learning activities catch students' attention because of interactive features. Teachers also need to find activities that involve reflection in class.

Review of the Literature

One relevant character who was interested in reflecting was the famous John Dewey. Dewey (1910) mentioned that the process of reflective thought is a belief intentionally sought and its adequacy to support it. In other words, it is the pursuit of the reasons and foundations of a belief using reflective thought, known as critical thinking in this modern age. Adam (2020) affirmed that the art of reflecting is a vital element of learning and teaching, in other words, it is necessary to apply reflection activities in school lessons to assess and make students relate what it has been learned to what learners already know about the topic. Additionally, Waugh (2023) claimed that Schön also proposed the reflection-on-action which refers to reflecting after an event has happened.

These principles could be applied in education since students could reflect on what it was learned after receiving specific content, which involves the analysis and evaluation of that content, which supports the idea of reflection as a means to lead a meaningful students' learning. Nevertheless, it is believed that professors have to establish reflection in the educational curriculum (Yost et al., 2000 as cited in Cavilla, 2017), which means that reflection is left behind by educators. These reflection activities could be covered by the implementation of reflective journals.

Speaking about reflective journals, Seema Yadav (2022) sustained that reflection activities as the composition of reflective journals can help in the connection of previous and current knowledge. The University of Edinburgh (2024) declared that there are some aspects which are in favor of reflective journals since these enable students to develop their critical thinking skills and other complex learning outcomes. Another point of view that supports the use of reflective journals is provided by Ahmed (2019) who remarked the usefulness of reflective journals as these encourage students to learn, master written skills, assess how well students deliver their reflections, and promote professional growth. Santiana et al. (2024) revealed that reflective journals have the potential to increase their self-awareness as well as their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which means that these journals can help to discover what learners think about the class and what they have really learned from the lesson while putting into practice critical thinking and writing skills. The composition of reflective journals is a common activity prepared in order to reflect on the learning course.

However, there are also some drawbacks when writing reflective journals.

According to Akhmetova and Khaliullina (2023) one key challenge at the moment of composing reflective journals is the students' ability to formulate their ideas or reflections in sentences. This means that it is limiting for students to express themselves clearly. In addition to this, prior experiences using reflection activities in class, language barriers, and differences of conceptual understanding of reflection because of culture are other challenges (Moon, 2004 as cited in Veine et al., 2019).

The good point is that these reflective journals can be implemented by the use of technological means in the classroom. Ratheeswari (2018) pointed up that technology can play a vital role in the education field as it could provide innovation and engagement in the classroom. This can be reached through the application of the information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning process. Technology has the potential to establish students engagement in the classroom.

The use of information and communication technologies, also known as ICT, are extremely important because not only does technology catch students' attention but also create interest in learning about any topic in this new technological and digital era. Henderson (2020) asserted that the use of technology in the classroom has the power to transform a traditional class into a more hilarious and enjoyable one, improves students' retention since learners are more likely to recall information when it interests them, foster individual learning because of the flexibility that digital tools offer to the learners, and encourages collaboration owing to the fact that young adults prefer virtual interaction than the face-to-face one and students can work without being physically in the same place. Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) developed a research whose results manifested that teachers who have implemented ICT in their lessons have made their teaching more effective, and the teachers who do not apply them expressed their willingness to learn how to use ICT in the teaching and learning process. Charles et al. (2023) also agreed that will definitely have a positive impact on the teaching practice as it has been doing in the last years.

There are some ways in which technology can be employed in English classes. For example, Santiana et al. (2024) also concluded that learners admitted that digital reflective journals are beneficial in English lessons; needless to say, the use of technology was required in order to write those digital journals. The development of these reflective journals provided accessibility and flexibility to students. However, there are other alternatives to take advantage of technology in the English lessons and classrooms.

According to the Oxford University (2011), the use apps can make the teaching of a foreign language a more catching process. It is undeniable that there have been designed some applications developed specifically for learning languages, but there

are also others whose function is helping people to socialize and express their feelings and thoughts, but English teachers may use them as technopedagogical resources. In fact, it was concluded that WhatsApp can be used for teaching English thanks to its benefits, which makes it more interesting (Afsyah, 2019). Rai Savitri (2022) comments that WhatsApp can certainly boost students' writing skills by using one app English language learners all know how it works.

Coulmas (2002) exposed that writing can be defined as a system of language through visible marks. This is the representation of a language through signs, symbols and marks that are put on a piece of paper by making hand movements in order to form them by using an item that allows to make it visible for others who read it. Furthermore, there are four elements which take part in the writing process, which are the messenger, the content, the media, and readers Suparno and Yunus 2008 as cited in Ferira (2020). Writing skills also involve vocabulary, spelling, accuracy and communicative competence.

The three main indicators of vocabulary are form, meaning and use. Form is the written forms of a word and the recognition of its parts, meaning is interpreted as the form-meaning relationship, and use refers to the grammar function of words, collocations and its usage (Nation's, 2013 as cited in KILIÇ, 2019). Afzal

(2019) concluded that students faced difficulties in structuring words as well as guessing the meaning of words from the contexts. In accordance with Harb (2020) spelling is challenging for language learners as they need to connect patterns and also because it involves spelling rules which are indicators of the spelling dimension. According to Hahn et al. (2020), accuracy goes hand in hand with both grammar and word order/arrangement. Fauzan et al. (2022) found that students' challenges encompass grammar and syntax errors, which means that their grammar is limited as well as the knowledge of how words are arranged in a sentence. For Kiessling and Fabry (2021) communicative competence involves organization, selection and application of skills. Competence also implies processes and coordination in a sequence. Fauzan et al. (2022) also discovered that students had difficulties in organizing their ideas because of the lack of appropriate words, writing logical sentences and punctuation, which are important element for reaching the communicative competence in writing.

Writing is also crucial for reaching communicative competence through written communication since Walsh (2010) claimed that if a learner is unable express himself written, he will also be unable to communicate properly with his professor, colleagues or employers, due to the fact that the majority of professional communication is carried out by writing essays, proposals, formal letters, and reports, which demands a high proficiency in writing.

Hence, the research object of this study is to demonstrate if applying reflective journals by using WhatsApp has an incidence on writing skills in students in the second level of

Unified.

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It was decided to apply the quantitative one. Ghanad (2023) said that the quantitative approach is addressed to quantify data and generalize findings from various perspectives. It consists of gathering and analyzing numerical data, multiple-choice interrogations, and array-type questions by using standard research instruments to describe characteristics and find correlations, which means that the type of research is the descriptive one. Ghanad also put an emphasis on statistical information presented through charts, tables, figures among others. This research approach will be applied to determine and know if there is an improvement in students' writing skills from the educational institution after applying the composition of reflective journals.

The research theoretical methods are analysis-synthesis for the collection of data and students' needs analysis for the characterization of the object considering the psychological, linguistic, didactic features of the language and technological aspects of the research through the second model of needs analysis proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), which classifies these target needs into three categories, which are necessities that make reference to what students must know to act successfully, wants that are viewed as what students think it is needed to learn, and lacks that are gaps between what students know and the necessities; Inductive-deductive for the logical understanding of the problem and object, to substantiate the nexus between the different structures that frame the logic of this research, arrive at pertinent conclusions, including the final proposal; and systemic-structural for the selection of topics, establish the links that guarantee their practical functioning of the research proposal.

Regarding the population to be considered for this research paper, the overall population is constituted by the educational community from Unidad Educativa Salinas Innova, which institutional AMIE code is 24H00328 District 24D02 zone 5 in Salinas city, province of Santa Elena, Ecuador. Salinas Innova is known for its prestige, having primary and high school education working with children and teenagers who are studying at their school level in the morning. It has a complete infrastructure since it has science and robotics laboratories, as well as computer and media labs, a cafeteria, library, and green areas. Besides, it also recognized in the province because of its curriculum prioritizing the English subject as students receive 10 hours per week of English classes, which are covered by six teachers in high school and 4 in the primary level; some of them are certified by international qualifications.

The sample will be composed of 11 students from the Informatics specialty, second Unified General Baccalaureate, class C whose ages range from 15 to 17.

Table 1. Summary of the sample

Participants	Sample	Percentage
Males	8	72,73%
Females	3	27,27%
Total	11	100%

Source: *Elaborated by the author*

The research instruments, surveys and statistical interpretation will be carried out in order to know what students think about the use of reflective journals, the use of technology and WhatsApp in the classroom, and students' perceptions of writing skills; as well as the second model questions of Need Analysis in order to determine the effectiveness of reflective journals in WhatsApp on students' writing skills based on the results obtained.

The instruments to gather data are a questionnaire for the survey with closed-end statements and the second model questions proposed by Hutchinson and Waters. Additionally, a diagnostic test will be applied to know the students' English levels, a pretest to assess students' level regarding writing skills before the implementation of the proposal and a posttest after it to identify whether students had an improvement in their writing skills or not. The intervention was applied for 8 weeks in which students answered the survey, took a diagnostic test and a pretest before the implementation of the proposal; and a posttest after the implementation. The diagnostic test was elaborated by Cambridge University Press. This consisted of 60 multiple-choice questions related to the grammar and vocabulary that appears in all the parts and skills of the international Cambridge exams of English proficiency from the Cambridge A1 Movers to the B2 First.

Table 2. Description of the diagnostic test

Skill	Number of items	Points	Task
Use of English (Grammar and Vocabulary)	60 (each answer 1 point)	60	Multiple-choice

Source: (Cambridge University Press and UCLES (2016)

Table 3. Scores and levels

Scores	Levels
0-9	Level 1 (A1)
10-18	Level 2 (A2)
19-27	Level 3 (A2+)
28-36	Level 4 (B1)
37-45	Level 5 (B1+)
46-54	Level 6 (B2)
55-60	Level 7 (B2+)

Source: Cambridge University Press and UCLES (2016)

The pretest consisted of 4 parts, with 10 as the full score. The dimensions are in order to determine how well students' level regarding their writing skills are before the implementation of the proposal.

The posttest consisted of 4 parts, with 10 as the full score. The dimensions are in order to determine how well students' level regarding their writing skills are after the implementation of the proposal.

Table 4. Description of the pretest

Dimensions& indicators	Number items	of	Points	Type
Vocabular: word form and meaning	5 (each answer points)	0,50	2,50	Multiple-choice
Spelling: recognition of patterns and	5 (each answer	0,50		Selection of

spelling rules	points)	2,50	elements	
Accuracy: grammar usage and word order	5 (each answer points)	0,50 2,50	Selection elements	of
Written communicative competence: coherence, cohesion and punctuation	1 (2,50 points)	2,50	Development	

Source: Elaborated by the author

Table 5. Description of the posttest

Dimensions & indicators	Number of items	Points	Task	
Vocabulary: word form and meaning	5 (each answer points)	0,50 2,50	Multiple-choice	
Spelling: recognition of patterns and spelling rules	5 (each answer points)	0,50 2,50	Selection elements	of
Accuracy: grammar usage and word order	5 (each answer points)	2,50 0,50	Selection elements	of
Written communicative competence: coherence, cohesion and punctuation	1 (2,50	2,50	Development	

points)

Source: Elaborated by the author

After administrating the diagnostic test, pretest and the survey, the students performed the proposal which consisted of sending the learners answering reflective questions every day, and the learners had to send their journals in a private WhatsApp group.

The first results are from the diagnostic test.

Table 6. *Students' English level*

Total	Number of students	Percentage	Level
11	2	18,20%	A1
	5	45,50%	A2
	1	9,10%	A2+
	0	0%	B1
	2	18,20%	B1+
	1	9,10%	B2

Source: Elaborated by the author

These results evidenced that the average level of English proficiency is falls into the A2 level which fits the level to work with. As the diagnostic test was designed to identify students' English proficiency, this means that their writing skills could be at an A2 or nearly a B1. The Council of Europe (2001) established that an A2 can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because". A B1 can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.

The second results are from the pretest.

Table 7. Results of the pretest applied to students

Nº	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
11	2,50	9,50	5,27

Source: Elaborated by the author

The third results are the description of students' needs analysis

Students' necessities are what they need to know. So, they need to know that English is necessary here because is a compulsory subject in all courses. Also, the English language will be used in class in informal interactions with other classmates, for writing reflective journals. It is needed that students know that the language taught is General English. It is essential that they bear in mind that General English is used for communicating with other students, teacher, friends from other countries or relatives. Students' wants are personal expectations. So, one expectation about learning English is that it can increase the opportunities of finding a job. Also, students have commented that English is necessary for getting promotions at work, which is something they want to. Students would like to communicate more effectively in English. Students want to learn English with attractive and engaging teaching methodologies. They also want to learn English vocabulary through didactic and unconventional learning activities outside the classroom using technological means, including WhatsApp. Students' lacks are aspects that learners ignore or do not do for developing their English language. So, students do not practice English outside the classroom. They have some opportunities to reflect on the content checked in class. Students do not know how to use smartphone apps for educational purposes. Students do not do activities using other technological means. Students do not have the opportunity to perform many learning activities outside the physical learning environment.

The fourth results from the survey applied to students consisting of 10 statements and a scale of agreement, which are from totally disagree (TD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A) to totally agree (TA). These survey results are represented in percentages.

For the first statement, 18,2% of the participants totally disagreed, 0% disagreed, 36,4% were neutral, 9,1% agreed and 36,4% totally agreed with this statement, which means that most of the participants reflected on the content learned in each class, but also some of them do it.

For the second one, 18,2% of the participants totally disagreed, 9,1% disagreed, 18,2% were neutral, 27,3% agreed and 27,3% totally agreed with this statement, which means that most of the students write reflective journals regularly, but others do not employ them.

For the third statement, 9,1% of the participants totally disagreed, 9,1% disagreed, 9,1% were neutral, 9,1% agreed and 63,6% totally agreed with this statement, which means that many of the participants share the view that reflective journals can develop critical thinking skills whilst some of them do not consider it.

For the fourth statement 18,2% of the participants totally disagreed, 0% disagreed, 9,1% were neutral, 36,4% agreed and 36,4% totally agreed with this statement, which means that most of the learners consider that reflective journals in WhatsApp can be useful in English classes, but few of them did not consider their effectiveness in English classes.

For the fifth statement, 9,1% of the participants totally disagreed, 9,1% disagreed, 9,1% were neutral, 54,5% agreed and 18,2% totally agreed with this statement, which means that the majority of the students relate what they have learned to what they already know about the topic, whereas few of them do not do it.

For the sixth statement, 18,2% of the participants totally disagreed, 9,1% disagreed, 36,4% were neutral, 18,2% agreed and 18,2% totally agreed with this statement, which means a few of them do not face problems with vocabulary, most students do not have any idea of their difficulties in vocabulary while some struggle with vocabulary with vocabulary since it requires word form and meaning.

Table 8. Results of survey applied to students

Nº	Statements	TD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	TA (%)
1	I reflect on the content learned.	18,2	0	36,4	9,1	36,4
2	I regularly employ reflective journals.	18,2	9,1	18,2	27,3	27,3
3	Reflective journals can develop my critical thinking.	9,1	9,1	9,1	9,1	63,6
4	Reflective journals in WhatsApp can be useful in English classes.	18,2	0	9,1	36,4	36,4

5	I relate what I have learned to what I already know about the topic.	9,1	9,1	9,1	54,5	18,2
6	I have difficulties with vocabulary since it requires word form and meaning.	18,2	9,1	36,4	18,2	18,2
7	Spelling is hard as it involves recognition of patterns and spelling rules.	27,3	36,4	0	18,2	18,2
8	Accuracy is not easy since it has to do with grammar usage and word order.	36,4	0	27,3	18,2	18,2
9	Written communicative competence is difficult for me as it requires coherence, cohesion, and punctuation marks to organize my ideas correctly.	27,3	27,3	9,1	18,2	18,2
10	Writing is vital in the development of my communicative competence.	18,2	0	18,2	18,2	45,5

Source: Elaborated by the author

For the seventh statement 27,3% of the participants totally disagreed, 36,4% disagreed, 0% were neutral, 18,2% agreed and 18,2% totally agreed with this statement, which means that most of the learners do not consider that spelling is that hard even if it involves recognition of patterns and spelling rules, but some of them agree with this element.

For the eighth statement, 36,4% of the participants totally disagreed, 0% disagreed, 27,3% were neutral, 18,2% agreed and 18,2% totally agreed with this statement, which means that some of the participants do not face accuracy problems, some consider that accuracy is hard since it has to do with grammar usage and word arrangement while others think that in some cases it is also hard.

For the ninth statement, 27,3% of the participants totally disagreed, 27,3% disagreed, 9,1% were neutral, 18,2% agreed and 18,2% totally agreed with this statement, which means that a good number of the participants believe that written communicative competence is not difficult despite it requires coherence, cohesion and punctuation.

For the tenth statement, 18,2% of the participants totally disagreed, 0% disagreed, 18,2% were neutral, 18,2% agreed and 45,5% totally agreed with this statement, which means that the vast majority of the participants agreed that writing is a vital element in the development of their overall communicative competence whereas few of them do not feel the same.

Last but not least, the fifth results to be revealed are the scores obtained in the posttest

Table 9. *Results of the posttest applied to students*

Nº	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
11	6,00	10,00	8,05

Source: Elaborated by the autor

Students' overall level of proficiency in English is A2. The council of Europe (2001) stated that users of level A2 can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because". This is evidenced in the students results in the diagnostic and pre tests since in one question students needed to write an essay in which all of them could write a piece of writing using simple sentences and connectors, but a reduced number of them could write straightforward connected texts in a familiar subject within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence, which are the descriptors of higher levels.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) asserted that considering students' necessities, wants

and lacks are necessary. Students' needed to know that pupils had to write their reflective journals with general English to share with their classmates. Students wanted to learn English through other engaging learning activities motivated by the idea that learning this language could be useful for getting a promotion at work and academic purposes. Students' lacks of opportunities to learn English using other technological means to practice their writing skills outside the classroom by reflecting on the contents learned in class.

Adam (2020) affirmed that reflection is vital for learning and teaching. The data obtained from the survey revealed that a good number of the participants reflect on the content learned in each class because of the vitality for the teaching and learning process of every subject. This assumption agreed with Adam's affirmation

Moreover, professors need to establish reflection in the educational curriculum (Yost et al., 2000 as cited in Cavilla, 2017), in other words, it says that reflection is left behind by educators since they need to put it into practice in their teaching praxis. The data obtained from the survey revealed that they do apply reflection activities in class, therefore, reflective journals are somehow included in their learning activities. This is the reason why students employ reflective journals regularly as a good number stated this fact in their responses. This result contrasts with the perspective commented before.

Santiana et al. (2024) revealed that reflective journals have the potential to increase their self-awareness as well as their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Taking into consideration this premise, the data exposed that the participants share the view that reflective journals can develop critical thinking skills. This finding confirms that reflective journals can promote the development of critical thinking skills.

Ratheeswari (2018) pointed up that technology can play a vital role in the education field as it could provide innovation and engagement in the classroom. Furthermore, the Oxford University (2011) manifested that the use of apps can make the teaching of a foreign language a more catching process. What's more, Afsyah (2019) concluded that WhatsApp can be used for teaching English thanks to its benefits, which makes it more interesting. In other words, these reflective journals can be implemented by the use of technological means in the classroom. Agreeing with these conceptions, most of the participants consider that reflective journals in WhatsApp can be useful in English classes, which means Ratheeswari's point of view is supported by the learners' opinion.

Seema Yadav (2022) sustained that reflection activities as the composition of reflective journals can help in the connection of previous and current knowledge. In accordance with the previous description, the data from the survey confirmed this thought as the participants expressed that they relate the content learned to what they already know about it. This result concords with the Seema Yadav's affirmation.

Afzal (2019) concluded that students faced difficulties in structuring words as well as guessing the meaning of words from different contexts. Stemming from these notions, most students manifested that they do not have any idea of their difficulties in vocabulary bearing in mind that it requires word form and the meaning of them.

In accordance with Harb (2020) spelling is demanding for language learners as it is needed to connect patterns and also because it involves spelling rules. Considering these parameters, a good number of participants do not consider that spelling is that hard although it involves recognition of patterns and spelling rules. These results refute Harb's argument.

According Fauzan et al. (2022) found that students' challenges encompass grammar and syntax errors, which means that their grammar domain is limited as well as the knowledge of how words are arranged in a sentence. Based on the data gathered by means of the survey, some consider that accuracy is hard since it has to do with grammar usage and word arrangement while others think that in some cases it is also hard.

Fauzan et al. (2022) also discovered that students had difficulties in organizing their ideas because of the lack of appropriate words, writing logical sentences and punctuation, which are crucial elements for reaching the communicative competence through writing. Taking into account this fact, a good number of the participants believe that written communicative competence is not difficult despite it requires coherence, cohesion and punctuation to organize their ideas correctly. This means that students feel that they can organize their ideas sequentially using features of written communicative competence, which does not support the previous statement.

Writing is also crucial for reaching communicative competence through written communication since Walsh (2010) claimed that if a learner is unable express himself written, he will also be unable to communicate properly with his professor, colleagues or employers, due to the fact that the majority of professional communication is carried out by writing essays, proposals, formal letters, reports, and articles, which demands a high proficiency in writing skills. This fact tallies the participants' answers as most of them expressed that writing is vital in the development of their communicative competence.

Last but not least, after taking the posttest to the learners who took part in this research work, it disclosed the students really improved their writing skills as the pretest, the first mean was 5,27, obtaining 2,50 as the lowest score and 9,50 as the highest one. In contrast, the second mean was 8,05, the lowest score was 6,00 and the highest one was 10,00 which was the full score in the posttest. This indicates that their writing skills had a positive impact after practicing their writing skills by composing reflective journals using the smartphone app known as WhatsApp due to the fact all of the participants obtained nearly a B1 level in writing. The council of Europe (2001) states that a B1 can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects

within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.

Conclusions

From the results presented, of their analysis and discussion, the following conclusions can be obtained regarding the implementation of reflective journals in WhatsApp: 1) the main characteristic of the proposal employed lies on the significant improvement on writing skills in A2 level learners of English as a foreign language; 2) the proposal does not require demanding effort to implement in English

classes because of the fact that teachers only need to establish reflection by formulating reflective questions to be sent through WhatsApp, which is a smartphone app that every student knows to use, so that not only can the learners develop their critical thinking but also their writing skills, including their communicative competence in the English language by using technology outside the classroom; 3) the results attained demonstrate that the use of reflective journals in WhatsApp can develop students' writing skills as the participants showed an improvement in their vocabulary, spelling, accuracy and written communicative competence; 4) the proposal employed on the 11 participants can be applied in other contexts with a wider range of sample to know how well it works in other English as a foreign language contexts around the world.

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The application of Problem Based Learning to improve verbal communication in EFL students' level A2

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INTRODUCCIÓN

The interconnectedness of communicative skills and problem-solving abilities lies at the heart of their significance. Effective communication is often the foundation upon which problem-solving efforts are built. When individuals can articulate their thoughts, concerns, and ideas clearly, they can collaborate more effectively, share knowledge, and leverage each other's strengths to tackle complex challenges. Conversely, strong problem-solving skills can facilitate more effective communication, as individuals are better equipped for problem resolution by the time, they are learning the language.

The benefits of possessing strong communicative skills and problem-solving abilities are multifaceted and far-reaching. At the individual level, these skills can enhance personal and professional relationships, foster a sense of confidence and self-efficacy, and open up new opportunities for growth and development. The importance of effective communication and problem-solving skills cannot be overstated. These interconnected skills are essential for navigating the complexities of modern life, fostering positive relationships, and driving innovation and growth. By cultivating strong communicative skills and problem-solving abilities, individuals can unlock their full potential, achieve greater success, and make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world at large. As we move forward in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world, the significance of these skills will only continue to grow, making them essential for individuals, organizations, and society.

One of the key aspects of successful language acquisition is being able to communicate and express ideas in the target language. This refers to the ability of students to overcome linguistic obstacles and find solutions to effectively communicate in the English language by thinking and communicating verbally. Spoken language has been the primary means of communication, enabling individuals to convey their

thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others. English language learners often face various difficulties in their language production. These difficulties may include understanding complex grammar rules, expanding vocabulary, improving pronunciation, or even overcoming anxiety when using English in real-life situations (Yamin, Setiawan, & Retnaningdyah, 2022). Traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on student-centered approaches tend to overlook these challenges, as they usually follow a fixed curriculum and certain rigid teaching techniques. However, by implementing centered approaches, educators can better address the learning needs and provide effective solving strategies (Ranggi & Yuliani, 2021).

Problem-solving encourages students to identify and analyze their language learning difficulties independently. By doing so, students become active problem-solvers rather than passive recipients of knowledge. One effective problem-solving strategy for learning English is to provide authentic and meaningful learning opportunities (Tsuji, 2017). Authentic materials and

real-life situations allow students to encounter genuine language challenges, providing them with an opportunity to apply their problem-solving skills. For example, incorporating role-plays, debates, or simulations in the English language classroom can enable students to handle different communicative scenarios independently, forcing them to think strategically and employ appropriate language resources (Andleeb, Asgher, & Zimi, 2023).

As a result of traditional methodologies, students' learning has not been successfully guaranteed. In the past, language courses were focused on syllabus completion, covering contents but not applying them, repeating theoretical knowledge rather than practical. While teachers are active and students are passive, this is typical of the teacher-centered approach. The traditional method has received some criticism because it relies on behaviorism theory, whereas student-centered approaches aim to promote 21st-century skills. In student-centered approaches, learners play an important role in learning by doing practice and collaborating with peers thus, student-centered approaches are based on constructivism (Obloberdiyevna & Odilkhonovna, 2022). Quality teaching has become an important topic in higher education and has evolved over time. New students require inspiring classes. Governments, students, and their families are increasingly demanding efficient processes in educational systems. The most recognized institutions around the world, such as the University of Michigan, Western Governors, and Northern Arizona, incorporate learner-centered methods into their programs. Some language courses focus on syllabus completion, theoretical knowledge rather than practical, covering contents but not applying them; traditional teachers tend to perform a direct transmission of knowledge; instructors are engaged in lecturing while students are positioned like information receivers. Therefore, students received more summative than formative assessment (Li, 2020). The key personnel in educational institutions are required to achieve transformational learning (Li, 2020). This research aims to determine: How does problem-solving improve verbal communication

in EFL students' level A2?

Justification of the research

Student-centered methods are crucial to producing meaningful and innovative learning. Pedagogy is the heart of teaching and learning; innovative practices will contribute to how students express their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and knowledge verbally in the classroom and in life. Learning based on problem-solving places the student at the center of learning so that they can autonomously solve certain challenges or problems. The problem-solving method supports learners in developing their ideas and their language skills.

Learner-centered teaching methods give opportunities to learn languages in real-world contexts in collaborative and challenging ways. These methods are focused on constructivism.

Problem-solving lets students state real-life problems from a different and new perspective through the integrated way of questions they will explore and apply. An individual will state a problem, solve it in different ways, and characterize it in different terms. Problem-

solving involves encouraging students to master the skills and strategies that allow them to learn, as well as the use of the knowledge available to face challenges and different situations.

Innovation in methodologies in teaching languages has become a critical aspect of language learning in today's rapidly changing world. As technology continues to advance, traditional methods of language instruction are being supplemented or even replaced by innovative approaches that incorporate critical thinking. This research will explore some of the key innovations in language teaching methodologies and discuss their impact on learners (Hoff, 2019). This research is aligned to pedagogy, didactics, and management of education research lines; pedagogy and didactics are two closely related concepts that encompass the theory and practice of education. Pedagogy refers to the art and science of teaching, focusing on the methods and strategies used by educators to facilitate learning. Didactics, on the other hand, refers to the principles and techniques of instruction, including curriculum design, lesson planning, and assessment. Together, pedagogy and didactics play a significant role in shaping the educational experiences of students and the future of teaching and learning. Doing research in the field is intended to track the evolving needs of teachers and students. Moving forward, it will be important for educators to continue enhancing their instructional practices in response to the changing needs and opportunities in the educational field. By embracing innovation and collaboration, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments that prepare students for success in

the 21st century.

The object of the research

One of the key ways in which problem-solving improves verbal communication is by fostering a systematic and analytical approach to addressing challenges. When individuals are faced with a problem, they must engage in ways to assess the situation, gather relevant information, and consider various options before arriving at a solution. This process requires them to use reasoning and logic to evaluate the potential outcomes of different courses of action, enhancing their capacity for critical thought and communicative skills.

To investigate how the application of the Problem-Based Learning approach influences verbal communication in EFL students' level A2.

Description of the variables of the study (independent & dependent) Independent variable - Problem-solving

Problem-solving involves the application of logical reasoning. When confronted with communication difficulties or uncertainties, individuals need to employ logical thinking to identify potential solutions. This logical approach to problem-solving enables individuals to overcome language-related challenges and enhance their language skills effectively (Whitehouse, Rahm, Wozniak, & Breunig, 2021).

Dependent variable -verbal communication

Verbal communication has been a tool in the transmission of language and culture. Before the advent of writing systems, oral communication was the primary way in which knowledge and information were passed down from generation to generation. People communicate orally through storytelling, songs, and conversations, allowing them to share their experiences, beliefs, traditions, and even culture with others. In recent years, technological advancements have transformed the way communication is used in language learning. With the rise of digital tools and online platforms, learners now have access to a wide range of resources to help them practice their speaking and listening skills. Language learning apps, virtual classrooms, and video conferencing platforms have made it easier for learners to engage in real-time conversations with native speakers and receive feedback on their language use. These technological innovations have enriched the learning experience and provided learners with new opportunities to improve their verbal communication skills (Sutiyatno, 2018). Despite the many benefits of oral communication in language learning, there are also challenges and limitations that need to be considered. One of the main criticisms of oral communication-focused language teaching is that it may neglect other important language skills, such as reading, writing, and grammar. Some educators argue that a balanced approach to

language teaching is essential, where learners have the opportunity to develop all aspects of their language skills, not just speaking and listening. Additionally, not all learners may feel comfortable or confident in engaging in oral communication activities, which can hinder their language acquisition and motivation to learn.

Description of the beneficiaries and their main characteristics

- Number of students: 95
- English level: A2
- Age: 18-22
- Institution: "Escuela de Formación de Soldados del Ejército- ESFORSE"

The students at the Military Schools are the future officers of the Ecuadorian Army, they are loyal, men and women, respectful of human rights, and must have abilities, skills, and vocation to serve the country. Military students, also called "Trainees" enter the first military course, after

a rigorous psychological, medical, academic, and physical selection process; During the first military course, they complete their militarization process, which includes coupling to their new military life, training them with knowledge, skills, and abilities as combatants. They must approve different subjects of a military scientific nature, including physical condition evaluations, behavioral performance evaluations, and compliance with the practice of principles and values. Description of the practical contributions of the proposal

By applying analytical skills, evaluating language resources, and utilizing logical reasoning, individuals can overcome obstacles in language acquisition and improve their ability to communicate effectively. By doing so, individuals can enhance their language skills and thrive in today's interconnected world (Ranggi & Yuliani, 2021).

The importance of the proposal comes from the following perspectives: Professional, methodological, technological, and social needs

In some educational contexts, it is common for education to continue focusing solely on content and leave aside the development of skills, so it is necessary to find ways of teaching for future centuries (Sari & Wardhani, 2020). In Ecuador, educational institutions are pluralistic and open to all doctrines and forms of universal thought; they direct their activities to educate citizens to nurture a diverse and inclusive community. These institutions give students the opportunity to get professional qualifications or undergraduate degrees.

Over time, the importance of quality teaching in universities has grown. Modern classroom technology and innovative teaching strategies are needed by the students.

These days, governments, students, and their families are calling for educational systems to operate with greater efficiency. This is especially true when it comes to the quality of teacher preparation, which is crucial for education at all levels. In addition to curriculum and expertise, quality calls for qualified individuals who can effectively and efficiently meet the expectations of today's society. Within the 'active learning' category, problem-based learning provides students with opportunities to gain critical knowledge and relevant skills for the twenty-first century. The use of teaching-learning methodologies is not only an approach for evaluating a subject, but it also helps students in their professional development (Rustamovich, 2023).

The research was primarily focused on providing a comprehensive description and explanation of the effectiveness of the problem-based learning approach in enhancing the verbal communication skills of trainees at Escuela de Formación de soldados del Ejército "ESFORSE". The descriptive aspect involved a thorough assessment of the current verbal communication proficiency levels of the trainees, aiming to establish a solid baseline for the study. Additionally, the study went deeply into the nature of the problem-based strategy and its practical implementation, aiming to provide a detailed account of how these interventions were carried out.

In addition, the research aimed to clarify the impact of these activities on trainees' verbal communication skills by conducting post-tests and meticulously analyzing the gathered data. Moreover, the study was required to clarify the complex relationship between the intervention (problem-based approach) and the development of verbal communication skills among the trainees, addressing the distinctive aspects of how and to what extent these activities contributed to improvements in their verbal communication abilities. Finally, the research had a practical and applied focus, aiming to provide valuable insights and useful recommendations for educators and institutions looking to enrich students' verbal communication learning experiences through the application of the problem-based learning approach.

The research also had an experimental aspect, as it aimed to examine the effectiveness of problem-based learning in enhancing verbal communication skills among trainees. The experimental nature of the study involved a descriptive approach with a pretest and posttest design and, a sample of 95 students. This experimental design was intended to evaluate the impact of the problem-based approach on the trainees' verbal communication skills, allowing for comparisons between the four groups. Through quantitative data collection methods, including pre and post- tests, the research is required to establish causal relationships and draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the problem-based learning approach in improving the trainees' verbal communication proficiency.

Activities and sessions

Aim: the general objective of the application of the activities is that students will be

able to expand and consolidate their language skills to communicate effectively in any setting at A2 level by applying the problem-solving strategy.

Proposal objectives

- Synthesize written information through charts, graphs, and maps. Identify the main ideas, supporting details, and author's purpose. Organize information into graphic organizers.
- Understand the main points, supporting details, and tone of medium-length narratives with clear standard input. Identify the sequence of events.
- Demonstrate an ability to use English in specific contexts.

Competencies

At an A2 level, Students will be able to improve their:

- Communicative skills – verbal communication
- Fluency, group interaction, comprehension
- Abstraction ability, analysis, and synthesis.
- Research skills.
- Problem-solving and decision-making ability

Through a literature review, the most relevant aspects of problem-solving were analyzed, and some of the most relevant and modern findings regarding the topic of this proposal were taken into consideration.

Sessions

Interesting lessons will stimulate EFL students, for this reason, problem-based learning activities motivate students to work cooperatively and improve 21st-century skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, flexibility, and social skills), when oral and written skills are encouraged, this means better academic performance. Problem-based activities are presented in this section, including the driving questions, situated inquiry, collaboration, technological tools, the creation of artifacts, monitoring, and assessment are included:

Table 1 Methodology Sessions

	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3
Driving question (10 min)	Solving transportation problems	Exploring ways to protect ocean and marine creatures	Helping homeless people in the community
Situated inquiry (20 min)	Conduct research to explore parking spaces, streets, crime, accidents, traffic jams, rush hour, etc.	Process information from video material, listening, restoring oceans	Brainstorming ideas about the causes of poverty and inequality
Collaboration (30 min)	In groups, students read a blog and identify main ideas, they propose solutions to transportation problems.	In pairs, students discuss the causes of ocean contamination and find solutions for this problem.	Students read a text and identify new vocabulary by discussing the causes of poverty
Creation of artifacts (30 min)	Students create and present in class an informational infographic related to transportation problems	Students create and present in class, a KWL chart about marine conservation.	In groups, make questions and think about ways to help people, then they prepare for a debate
Monitoring (20 min)	Peer dialogue	Feedback	Debate about the causes and consequences of poverty
Assessment (10 min)	Comprehension, communication, group discussion, interaction	Comprehension of details, oral	Organization of ideas, fluency, group interaction, comprehension

The application of problem-based learning (PBL) holds significant importance for several reasons:

Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills: By grappling with real-world scenarios, students are actively engaged in analyzing situations, evaluating options, and formulating solutions. This hones their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, crucial skills for success in academics and beyond.

Enhance knowledge retention: PBL encourages students to apply acquired knowledge to solve problems. This active application strengthens understanding and improves knowledge retention compared to passive learning methods.

Promote collaboration and communication skills: Working in groups on PBL activities fosters collaboration and communication skills. Students learn to exchange ideas, listen effectively, and present solutions persuasively.

Boost self-directed learning: PBL empowers students to take ownership of their learning. They actively seek information, research solutions, and make decisions, fostering self-directed learning skills.

Increase motivation and engagement: PBL presents challenges that are relevant and engaging. Students become more motivated to learn as they see the practical applications of their knowledge in solving real-world problems.

Prepare students for the future: Many professions involve problem-solving and collaboration. PBL equips students with the necessary skills to thrive in such environments.

These are just some of the reasons why PBL is considered an important educational approach. By incorporating real-world problems and fostering active learning, PBL prepares students for success in a dynamic and ever-changing world.

Table 2 Survey Results

Questions: (Before applying the intervention proposal)	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Have you ever experienced difficulty speaking clearly or coherently?	10,5%	16,8%	34,7%	26,3%	11,6%
How often do you take part in face-to-face English conversations with others on a daily basis?	11,6%	35,8%	42,1%	10,5%	0%
How often do you actively work on improving your verbal communication skills?	18,9%	41,1%	34,7%	4,2%	1,1%
Do you think technology has impacted face-to-face communication?	32,6%	32,6%	22,1%	12,6%	0%
Are you satisfied with your current level of verbal communication skills when it comes to problem-solving?	33,7%	35,8%	22,1%	8,4%	0%
Do you feel comfortable speaking English in public or in front of a group?	28,4%	40%	24,2%	6,3%	1,1%
(After applying the intervention proposal)					

How confident do you feel in your understanding of the problem-based strategy regarding verbal communication?	26,3%	32,6%	35,8%	5,3%	0%
How often do you use problem-based activities to communicate verbally with others?	18,9%	35,8%	36,8%	8,4%	0%
Do you believe having a solid understanding of problem-based activities improves the effectiveness of your verbal communication?	26,3%	36,8%	27,4%	8,4%	1,1%

The survey results can be broadly divided into two parts: those collected before the intervention proposal was applied, and those collected afterwards. Here's a breakdown of the findings from each part:

Before the intervention proposal

A significant portion of respondents (34.7%) indicated that they occasionally had difficulty speaking clearly or coherently. Daily face-to-face English conversations were not very frequent, with only 35.8% of respondents reporting engaging in them frequently.

A similar proportion (41.1%) reported frequently working on improving their verbal communication skills. Over a third of the respondents (32.6%) believed that technology had an impact on face-to-face communication. While a sizeable portion (33.7%) expressed satisfaction with their verbal communication skills for problem-solving, a considerable number (35.8%) also indicated being frequently satisfied. Public speaking appeared to be a challenge for many, as only 28.4% reported feeling comfortable speaking in public or in front of a group frequently.

After the intervention proposal

The survey results after the intervention proposal are focused on problem-based

activities for improving verbal communication skills. A relatively high proportion of respondents (35.8%) indicated feeling confident in their understanding of the problem-based strategy.

Using problem-based activities for verbal communication was reported as frequent by a similar number of respondents (35.8%). There seems to be a positive perception towards the impact of problem-based activities, with 36.8% of respondents believing it improves the effectiveness of their verbal communication. Overall, the survey results suggest that while there was a focus on improving verbal communication skills, there was still room for improvement before the intervention proposal was implemented. The positive results after the intervention suggest that the problem-based strategy may have been an effective way to address this need.

Based on the survey results, here are some possible conclusions regarding the research application of problem-based learning (PBL) to improve English communication:

The positive impact of Problem-based learning

Increased understanding and application: The survey shows a rise in confidence regarding the understanding of the PBL strategy (35.8% after vs. not measured before). Additionally, frequent use of problem-based activities for communication increased (35.8% after vs. not measured before). This suggests PBL was effectively adopted by participants. Improved perception of communication effectiveness: A significant portion (36.8%) believed PBL activities improved their verbal communication effectiveness. This indicates a potential positive impact on the core objective of the research.

Need for further investigation

Limited data on pre-intervention communication skills: While the pre-intervention data highlights areas for improvement (difficulty with clear speaking, infrequent daily conversations), it lacks specific scores to directly compare with post-intervention results.

Focus on specific communication skills: The survey doesn't delve into whether PBL specifically improved fluency, vocabulary usage, or other targeted communication skills.

Overall, the results suggest that PBL has promise as a method to enhance English communication skills. However, further research with more comprehensive pre- and post- intervention data, as well as a focus on measuring specific communication skills, would strengthen the conclusions.

Here are some additional points to consider

Qualitative data: Including open-ended questions or interviews could provide valuable insights into participants' experiences with PBL and its impact on their communication confidence.

Long-term effects: Investigating if the perceived improvements in communication effectiveness are sustained over time would be beneficial.

By addressing these limitations and incorporating further research methods, a clearer picture of PBL's effectiveness in improving English communication skills can be established.

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ISBN: 978-9942-33-931-7



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