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THEME:

**LINGUISTIC AND NON-LINGUISTIC DIFFICULTIES THAT
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PRESENT IN ORDER TO
DEVELOP THEIR ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS.**

Research report before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and Foreign language
Pedagogy, English Major

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PUJILI-ECUADOR

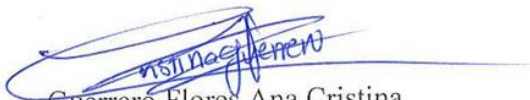
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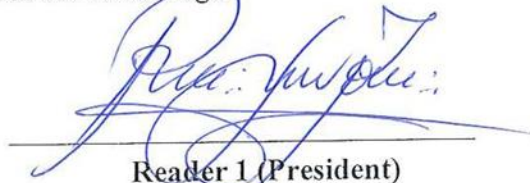
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GRATEFULNESS

It is a great pleasure for me to express my gratitude to God for being my guide and strength in this academic path, giving me health and perseverance. To my family, especially my parents and my brother Emilio, for their unconditional love, constant support and words of encouragement. To my tutor, whose guidance and knowledge were fundamental in the realization of this research. This achievement is the result of my effort together with the guidance of all the people who were involved in the process, to whom I express my deepest gratitude.

Cristina Guerrero

DEDICATION

With love and gratitude, I am pleased to dedicate this research to God who has given me the strength, wisdom and light to move forward at every stage of my life. To my beloved parents, Dalila and Pablo, for their unfailing support, for every sacrifice made in my name and for being my greatest example of effort and perseverance. To my grandfather Joaquín, whose presence, advices and unconditional love have left an indelible mark on my heart. Thanks to them, this achievement is possible and has an even more special meaning.

Cristina Guerrero

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

THEME: “Linguistic and Non-linguistic Difficulties that undergraduate students present in order to develop their English Speaking Skills”

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ABSTRACT

Oral proficiency in English is one of the most important skills to acquire during the learning process of this language, as it allows effective communication in everyday life, academic and professional contexts, representing a great advantage in a globalized world. However, some students face barriers that hinder the correct development of this skill. Although teachers implement pedagogical strategies and different techniques in their teaching procedures in order to encourage oral production, language learners are inhibited and unwilling to participate. The main objective of this research is to analyze the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that influence the development of English speaking skills in undergraduate students of the 3rd and 4th cycle of the Technical University of Cotopaxi during the academic period October 2024 - March 2025. The research had a qualitative approach and had a total population of 36 students. Data collection techniques such as observation through a checklist, semi-structured interviews applied to 6 students, and closed surveys forwarded to 30 students from both cycles were used. Thus, the results showed that the main linguistic difficulties were: poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, fluency and lack of grammar knowledge. On the other hand, non-linguistic difficulties, such as lack of self-confidence, anxiety, shyness, fear of making mistakes, fear of being judged and interference from the mother tongue, which are very common among all the students from the 3rd cycle and that mainly affected them. Consequently, it was concluded that non-linguistic difficulties have a greater impact on the development of oral skills in students.

Keywords: Difficulties, english, linguistic, non-linguistic, speaking skill.

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

TITULO: “Dificultades Lingüísticas y no lingüísticas que presentan los estudiantes de pregrado para desarrollar sus habilidades orales en Inglés”

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RESUMEN

La competencia oral en inglés es una de las habilidades más importantes a adquirir durante el aprendizaje de esta lengua, pues permite la comunicación efectiva en contextos cotidianos, académicos y profesionales, representando una gran ventaja en un mundo globalizado. Sin embargo, algunos estudiantes enfrentan barreras que dificultan el correcto desarrollo de esta habilidad. A pesar de que los docentes implementan estrategias pedagógicas para incentivar la producción oral, los estudiantes se muestran inhibidos y poco dispuestos a participar. Por ello, el objetivo principal de esta investigación es analizar las dificultades lingüísticas y no lingüísticas que influyen en el desarrollo de la competencia oral en inglés en estudiantes de pregrado del 3er y 4to ciclo de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi durante el periodo académico Octubre 2024 – Marzo 2025. La investigación tuvo un enfoque cualitativo y contó con una población total de 36 estudiantes. Se emplearon técnicas de recolección de datos como la observación a través de una lista de verificación, entrevistas semiestructuradas a 6 estudiantes y encuestas cerradas a 30 alumnos de ambos ciclos. Es así que, los resultados mostraron que las principales dificultades lingüísticas fueron: mala pronunciación, falta de vocabulario, fluidez y falta de gramática. Por otro parte, las dificultades no lingüísticas, como falta de confianza, ansiedad, timidez, miedo a cometer errores, miedo a ser juzgados e interferencia de la lengua materna, afectaron principalmente a los estudiantes de 3er ciclo. De esta forma se concluyó que las dificultades no lingüísticas tienen un mayor impacto en el desarrollo de las habilidades orales en los estudiantes.

Palabras claves: Dificultades, habilidad oral, inglés, lingüístico, no-lingüístico.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme: Linguistic and Non-linguistic Difficulties that undergraduate students present in order to develop their English-Speaking Skills

Starting Date: October 2024

Ending Date: February 2025

Place of Research: Technical University of Cotopaxi

Sponsoring Faculty: Extension Pujilí

Sponsoring career: Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Undergraduate Program

Macro Project of the Career: An interdisciplinary study of education and linguistics in linguistic-communicative contexts for English language teaching.

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Knowledge area: Education

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Research sub-line: Education, linguistics, literature, interculturality, and society.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Learning English as a second language has been considered as a main focus in the contemporary world. Thus, Thuan (2023) states that “The ability to communicate in English has become an essential skill, exceeding borders and cultures. As English continues to solidify its position as the language of international communication, the demand for proficiency in this language has never been greater” (p.62). This lingua franca implies the use of four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Above all, developing the speaking skill takes the main focus in the learning process of a new language since its main objective is to reach the fluency in producing and conveying ideas. Speaking English suggests some difficulties due to several factors that can limit students to communicate properly. All over the world, teaching methods and technics have been created to decrease this problem, however not all of them are effective to help to develop the skill.

In the case of Ecuador, the necessity to learn English has grown into an important problem for many decades. In 2022, English First (EF) applied the English Proficiency Index (EPI EF) in which 113 countries were evaluated to determine their students’ level. As a result, Ecuador was positioned in the 82nd place in the world and the 18th out of 20 Latin American countries (Sempértegui, 2022). This highlights the low level of the language proficiency and the Government’s lack of interest in changing this situation. The main problem lies in the short number of hours students have within the educational curriculum and the obsolete methodologies only focused on teaching grammar rules rather than encouraging students to produce the language usefully in their everyday context.

The Technical University of Cotopaxi offers Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages as a career where students are being trained to become English professors, receiving most of the subjects in English from the 4th level ahead (UTC PINE Curriculum, 2021). Thanks to a checklist that was applied, it has been observed that students from 3rd and 4th cycles have some trouble when developing their speaking skills. Although teachers apply technics and activities that encourage them to participate in class, they seem to inhibit themselves. This may be due to linguistic and non-linguistic factors that cause students to react negatively to teachers’ attempts to get them to produce the language. Consequently, this represents a major obstacle because when students become English teachers, they might face problems in transmitting their

knowledge to their students. Otherwise, both the quality of professionals and the level of knowledge transmitted can significantly reduce, resulting in poor levels of English Language performance.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What are the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that affect the development of English-speaking skills in undergraduate students from the 3rd and 4th cycles of the Technical University of Cotopaxi during the period from October 2024 to March 2025?

4. OBJECTIVES

3.1 General objective:

To analyze the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that influence the development of the English-speaking skill in undergraduate students from the 3rd and 4th cycles of the Technical University of Cotopaxi in the period from October 2024 to March 2025.

3.2 Specific Objectives:

- To determine theoretical concepts based on academic literature to create a solid and real theoretical framework so that it supports faithfully and accurately the whole research.
- To identify the difficulties that undergraduate students present when developing their speaking skills by applying checklists, interviews and surveys.
- To interpret the results obtained from the data collection instruments applied in this research to formulate conclusions and recommendations that could help to solve the problem.

4. ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEM IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED.

Specific Objectives	Activities	Verification Means
To determine theoretical concepts based on academic literature to create a solid and real theoretical framework so that it supports faithfully and accurately the whole research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search for information in papers - Analyze specific information related to the topic. - Write the theoretical framework. 	Theoretical Framework.
To identify the difficulties that undergraduate students present when developing their speaking skills by applying checklists, interviews and surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select the population under study. - Analyze the information found in the theoretical framework. - Create the data collection technics that would be applied in the study. 	Checklist Interviews Surveys
To interpret the results obtained from the data collection instruments applied in this research to formulate conclusions and recommendations that could help to solve the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply the data collection technics to the selected population. - Obtain the needed information. - Analyze and interpret the information. - Formulate conclusions and recommendations. 	Data Analysis Conclusions, and Recommendations

5. JUSTIFICATION

According to Cambridge (2024), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages “is an international standard for describing language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered the language” (para.1). So, the CEFRL helps language learners to understand what they are able to do in real life based on their level of proficiency in the target language and assist them on choosing learning materials that may be convenient. This is a very helpful teaching tool since it describes specifically how skills are developed in each scale. In this way, students start to acquire the four skills from the first

level (A1) until mastering all of them in the last one (C2). Therefore, learners who begin to improve their speaking skill in an A1 level, can use everyday expressions to communicate basic information like where they live, what they do, or who they know. On the other hand, students who have a C2 level are able to speak fluently and accurately. (Council of Europe, 2024)

When learning a new language, one of the most complex factors is acquiring the ability to communicate ideas and thoughts to others. Students present this specific problem while studying English as a second language since developing their speaking skills seem to be a major challenge that slows them down from acquiring this skill. “Speaking skill is an important thing to carry out a conversation in the language” (Nunan, 1999, mentioned in Maji et al., 2022, p.1). For this reason, in order to process ideas and transmit them verbally, the speaking skill is fundamental in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, Jeff (2019) identifies the English-speaking skill as the hardest ability for students to master caused by “low backgrounds of learners, shyness and the lack of interest in English language activities” (p.472). In this way, there are several reasons why language learners are unable to produce the L2 properly.

Being speaking one of the trickiest skills to foster, learners face several difficulties when producing the language. These complications are linked with linguistic and non-linguistic factors that affect their language production. Maji et al. (2022) mention that “the difficulties students have to master in speaking are not only caused by lack of knowledge but also the effect of psychological aspects” (p.2). It means that these obstacles are not only associated with students’ low level of knowledge, but also with emotional factors that influence the skill. The authors also state “it is needed not only linguistic knowledge but also non-linguistic aspects in order to convey the message correctly and clearly to the receiver of the message” (p.1). In short, with the purpose of communicating with others well, both linguistic and non-linguistic factors are essential in the communication process. This situation has been very evident in students of the 3rd and 4th cycles of their English career in the Technical University of Cotopaxi, being the main participants of this study, where most of them have shown difficulties at the time of oral production.

In terms of the research's significance, once the conclusions and recommendations are established, the main difficulties that inhibit learners from producing the language can be recognized and analyzed. For this reason, the results of the following research must provide

valuable information for students and teachers to deeply understand the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that affect the development of the English-speaking skill, so that specific strategies can be built up by fostering an appropriate learning environment for oral acquisition and competence.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1. Background.

The topic under research has been mentioned in other researches due to its level of importance, focusing on the fact that speaking is the ability to express oneself to be able to communicate properly and give opinions verbally. When students begin to learn a second language, it brings several inconveniences since many of them think learning English is very difficult, creating fear to express themselves in front of their classmates, losing confidence and interrupting the adequate teaching-learning process.

Jaya et al. (2022) developed a qualitative study where the main objective was to discover the students' speaking performance, speaking problems, and factors associated with these problems. The population for this investigation were 106 students from fifth semester of an English education program. In order to gather the data, two techniques were used: a speaking test and a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions divided in three aspects: affective-related difficulties, socially-related difficulties, and linguistically-related difficulties. The results of the speaking test showed that only 4% of the students got a high score between 86 and 100, while 52% got a score between 52 and 70. Also, the results of the questionnaire indicated that 74% agreed on having self-confidence problems. The rest of the students (26%) admitted having linguistic difficulties such as vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation. In summary, the applied techniques helped to infer that the speaking performance of the fifth semester students was still low.

Moreover, Chand (2021) conducted an empirical qualitative study that sought to explore the difficulties faced by undergraduate level students and the possible causes of their difficulties in speaking skills. The population under study were 15 non-fluent English students from college who were selected using the purposive sampling method. Open-ended questionnaires and semi-

structured interviews were used in order to collect data from the students. Both techniques were mainly focused on two questions: What are the difficulties presented by students? and What are the causes of them? The results revealed that the most noticeable problems faced by learners were: feeling nervous, lack of vocabulary, inability of using grammatical patterns, word pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, overuse of the mother tongue, and lack of self-confidence. To conclude, these responses helped the author to divide them into four categories: personal problems, linguistic problems, social problems, and environmental problems.

Also, Bermello & Vaca (2022) developed quantitative research with the purpose of identifying the factors that prevent the English oral production of students of first and second year of baccalaureate. The subjects for this study were 34 students and 1 teacher from a fiscomisional high school located in Manabí, Ecuador. A survey and an observation guide were applied in a real class environment in order to collect reliable data. The survey was a questionnaire with 11 multiple-option questions. The results indicated that 44,12% of students were afraid of making mistakes. In the same way, 29,41% of them have pronouncing difficulties while speaking. The 14,71 % were afraid of mockery, 5,88% mentioned that the lack of motivation was a factor that limits their oral production. Finally, 2,94% of students mentioned that low vocabulary was another difficulty. Thus, the authors concluded that the fear of making mistakes was the predominant difficulty in students.

Additionally, Maji et al. (2022) carried out case study research that aimed to investigate the difficulties and the cause encountered by students of vocational school SMKN while speaking in English. The authors used class observation and interviews as data collection techniques applied to thirty-five students. The results showed that there were two main factors that caused students not to produce the language properly and they are: Linguistic factors which include lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation and low grammar knowledge. Then, some non-linguistic aspects that were also identified such as fear of making mistakes, low motivation, shyness, anxiety, and the mother tongue influence. In conclusion, the linguistic difficulties presented on students were more dominant in affecting the language process.

Furthermore, Jeff (2019) executed a qualitative investigation to identify the most difficult basic skill and the factors faced by English learners. The individuals considered for this study were 750 students randomly selected from the first semester at the University of East Anglia.

The data collection technics used were a placement test and class observation. A comparative method was applied in order to analyze students' responses. The results indicated that the speaking skill was the hardest to develop. Some important factors that affected learners were: low-backgrounds of learners, shyness, lack of interest in English language activities, vocabulary knowledge, and mother tongue interference.

Finally, Normawati et al. (2023) developed descriptive research that aimed to investigate the difficulties faced by EFL learners in speaking English. The sample of the investigation were students from college who received English as a general course class. A questionnaire was applied and it showed that learners consider grammar as the most difficult factor in oral production. Also, pronunciation problems and not having enough vocabulary were other aspects mentioned by them. In summary, the biggest difficulty was mastering grammar as it is considered a key element in English speaking production.

After analyzing previous research, it has been determined that this study differs from others as it focuses on a specific target population consisting of students pursuing a university degree in languages rather than merely learning the language through a regular course. Furthermore, it is important to mention that this research is conducted in Ecuador, specifically in Pujilí, where no previous studies on linguistic skills have been recorded. Therefore, this study significantly contribute to other researches by providing important results that can clarify and help to understand the main difficulties preventing undergraduate students from developing their oral production.

6.2 Theoretical Framework

ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE

Nowadays, English has taken a huge advantage over any other languages as it is the one who is mostly spoken and understood for numerous people around the world. This can be easily identified in simple examples such as: foreign trade, tourism, signposting or any kind of information is always translated into English. Whenever people enter to a hotel, museum or restaurant, they can easily communicate in this language because everyone will understand it. There are even food menus, books, articles and movies translated into English. Indeed, its broad diffusion and its role as a lingua franca allow people of different cultures and languages to communicate effectively, facilitating collaboration and global exchange. However, as Crystal (2023) states “if there is one predictable consequence of a language becoming global, it is that nobody owns it anymore. Or rather, everyone who has learned it now owns it and has the right to use it in the way they want” (pp.2-3). This fact can make native speakers feel uncomfortable as they think the language belongs only to them. Nevertheless, by having a wide reach, the language is exposed to modifications done by non-native speakers according to their necessities as well as the way they choose to use it.

What is a Global Language?

Definition

According to Barker (2024) a global language refers to “a language that is learned and spoken internationally, and is characterized not only by the number of its native and second language speakers, but also by its geographical distribution, and its use in international organizations and in diplomatic relations” (para.1). In this sense, a global language is something that, due to its extensive use and acceptance in many regions of the world, becomes a frequent means of communication among people who do not share the same mother tongue. This language transcends geographical, cultural and international boundaries, as well as its use in different international contexts such as education, science, technology, diplomacy, business and even the media. Additionally, it not only facilitates the interaction among individuals with different backgrounds, but also allows the access to new opportunities in terms of education and work.

Why English is considered a global language?

In these times, English has become a commonly used language that allows people to communicate effectively worldwide no matter their cultures, ethnics or traditions and it represents an important part of individuals' everyday life. "Due to the fact that English has been used for developing communication, technology, programming, software, etc, it controls the web. 70% of all information stored electronically is in English" (Crenypa, 2010, mentioned in Mohamadaid & Rasheed, 2019, p.13). Thanks to its vast coverage in important topics like education, politics, technology and more, this language has been named as "a global language". Although English is not the official language in most countries, it is one the principal languages that is taught as an L2. In short, the combination of economic power, cultural influence, technological advancement and a globalized educational system have made English an essential language for international communication. Although there are many other important languages in the world, English has achieved a unique position as a worldwide language, facilitating exchange in all aspects of modern life and promoting unprecedented connectivity between nations.

BENEFITS OF LEARNING ENGLISH

Learning English has become a key skill in this globalized world. As it is spoken by millions of people around the world, this language not only opens doors to new professional opportunities, but also allows the access to a more diverse cultures, as well as scientific and technological variety. In a context where international communication is essential, mastering English is presented as an indispensable tool for those who want to expand their horizons and keep up with global advances. Some of the main benefits of learning English will be mentioned below.

Increase Student's Cognitive Ability

When learning a second language, the cognitive abilities improve due to several factors that have an effect on both the brain and the mental activity involved in the communication process.

It is known that people who speak more than one language fluently have better memory and are more cognitively creative than those who don't. Studies suggest that the onset of

dementia and Alzheimer diseases can be diagnosed to bilinguals later than monolinguals, meaning that knowledge of a second language can help us to stay mentally healthy for longer (Education for Life, 2023, section 4, para 2).

Hence, learning English as a second language does not only involve acquiring vocabulary and grammar, but also a much deeper mental process that stimulates and improves many cognitive areas. By exposing the brain to challenges like complex tasks, acquiring an L2 can enhance key cognitive skills such as memory, attention, decision making, among others, which has positive effects on both intellectual development and long-term mental health.

Improves Communication Skills

By learning English, students can expand their vocabulary, improve pronunciation and become more agile in structuring thoughts clearly and coherently. Additionally, by exposing them to different cultural contexts, learners develop their ability to interact effectively in a globalized environment. Palomo (2018) states that “by learning a second language the pupils’ communicative competence improves in general with the acquisition of new concepts, strategies, abilities, attitudes and linguistic codes” (p.554). In this way, English not only facilitates communication in a different language, but also strengthens general communicative skills by increasing flexibility and confidence in speaking.

Improves Student’s Confidence

Mastering a new language brings a sense of accomplishment and personal growth. Steps like comprehension and pronunciation reinforce self-esteem, as students realize that they are able to communicate in a language that is globally used. Furthermore, by practicing English in everyday situations such as conversations with native speakers or in an academic context, learners gain confidence in their ability to express themselves and understand others. Education for Life (2023) states “self-confidence can take you far in the world of today, and mastering a new and useful language will certainly help you achieve it” (section 8, para. 3). Thus, confidence is not only limited to linguistic aspects, but also extends to other areas of life, as learning English fosters a positive growth mindset which is essential to face new challenges.

COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

Definition

The Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) is a system designed to describe and measure individuals' language level of proficiency in different languages. Created by the Council of Europe, the CEFR establishes a series of descriptors and scales that allow an assessment of the language skills such as listening, speaking, writing and reading. Council of Europe (2020) defines the aim of the Common European Framework of Reference as:

The CEFR is intended to promote quality plurilingual education, facilitate greater social mobility and stimulate reflection and exchange between language professionals for curriculum development and in teacher education. Furthermore, the CEFR provides a metalanguage for discussing the complexity of language proficiency of all citizens in a multilingual and intercultural Europe. (p.11)

Thus, this system aims to promote mobility and mutual understanding between European countries, facilitating foreign languages communication and learning, while providing a common standard that can be applied in language teaching and assessment at an international level. In this way, the CEFR establishes a six-level scale (A1-A2-B1-B2-C1-C2) in which the main objective is to evaluate the student's capacity to understand, speak, read and write a certain foreign language.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Scale

The CEFR for Languages scale establishes a structure to assess language skills ranking them from basic (A1) to advanced (C2). This scale permits a detailed description of the student's ability to communicate, both orally and written. The levels are designed to reflect the progress during the language acquisition, providing a standardized way of measuring language proficiency, regardless the context in which it is learned or applied. Through this scale, the understanding of language skills at an international level becomes easier, benefiting students and educational institutions all over the world in the process of teaching and assessing second language learning. In addition, The Council of Europe (2020) mentions an interesting background of the CEFR levels:

The six-level scheme is labelled upwards from A to C precisely because C2 is not the highest imaginable level for proficiency in an additional language. In fact, a scheme including a seventh level had been proposed by David Wilkins at an intergovernmental symposium held in 1977 to discuss a possible European unit credit scheme. The CEFR Working Party adopted Wilkins' first six levels because Wilkins' seventh level is beyond the scope of mainstream education. (p.37)

CEFR Global Scale

Council of Europe (2024) mentions in a general way the six levels presented in the CEFR in the following table:

Table 1

Global Scale – Common Reference Levels.

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/himself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/himself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, details text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediately relevance (e.g. very basic personal information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

	A1	<p>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</p> <p>Can introduce him/himself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talk slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</p>
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Note: This table describes, in general terms, the capacities that learners have at each level during the second language acquisition.

CEFR Competences and Sub-competences

Communicative Language Competences

Communicative Language Competences are a set of capacities that allow students to understand and produce messages effectively in different contexts. These skills include not only mastering grammar and vocabulary, but also the ability to adapt the discourse according to social and cultural needs. Through them, learners are able to interpret and interact with others, both verbally and non-verbally. The Council of Europe (2024) details the competences related with the language communicative capacities, such as linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. At the same time, these are sub-divided in “sub-competences” as explained below.

Linguistic Competences.

The Linguistic Competences refer to the knowledge of the grammatical rules of a certain language whose main objective is to get a correct production and understanding of clear and coherent messages, and are considered the basis for other communicative skills development. This competence is sub-divided into six sub-competences as follows.

General Linguistic Range. Range of language, use of complex vocabulary, formulation of thoughts, elimination of ambiguity.

Vocabulary Range. Variety and complexity of expressions used.

Grammatical Accuracy. Learner's capacity to remember daily expressions in a correct way and formulate verbally thoughts.

Vocabulary Control Learner's ability to choose correct and useful vocabulary and expressions while speaking.

Phonological Control. The level of accent presented in the learner's repertoire. The hardest the accent, the poorest the phonological control.

Orthographic Control. Learner's capacity to spell, write and punctuate expressions. Mostly related with the writing and reading skills.

Sociolinguistic Competences.

Sociolinguistic Competence allows speakers to use a second language appropriately according to the social and cultural context. This involves knowing when, how and with whom to use certain expressions and adapting them to the social norms' variety. When acquiring an L2, the development of this competence is fundamental since it is directly related with the master and understanding of linguistic variations. So, it is sub-divided in one sub-competence.

Sociolinguistic Appropriateness: Learner's ability to use polite expression correctly, use of idioms and slangs, natural development in daily contexts.

Pragmatic Competence.

The Pragmatic Competence is the ability to use the language appropriately in certain situations, considering not only grammatical rules, but the speaker's intention and social context as well. Additionally, it implies understanding speech features such as: asking, offering, apologizing, knowing how to adjust language according to the tone, level of formality, among others. Developing this competence is essential to avoid misunderstandings and interact naturally with others. In this way, the Pragmatic Competence is sub-divided in six sub-competences.

Flexibility. Learner's ability to adapt the language to different and new situations and contexts.

Turn taking. Learner's ability to take the initiative to start a conversation with others.

Thematic Development. Learner's capacity to organize ideas in a logical and clear way in a written way or while speaking.

Coherence and Cohesion. Learner's ability to correctly produce the language using grammar features like connectors, punctuation, linking words, among others.

Propositional Precision. Learner's capacity to think and formulate how he wants to express something verbally.

Fluency. Learner's ability to produce the language in a fluent and natural way. The more fluency a speaker has, the higher level of proficiency.

ENGLISH SKILLS

Definition of Skill

Güneş & Söylemez (2018) define skill as “the activation of one's total cognitive resources, such as the concept, knowledge, methods, techniques and processes, and putting them into practice” (p.4). So, skill is a person's ability acquired from knowledge and understanding in order to develop an activity by using a cognitive process to put it into practice in a real context. Moreover, Güneş & Söylemez (2018) also describe the term skill as “one's capacity to perform a task. This capacity has three key components: knowing, taking action and performing a task/duty” (p.4). In this sense, these three main stages refer to the phases needed to develop a skill.

In short, skill is explained as the faculty to carry out an activity efficiently and effectively. Also, skills can be innate or acquired over time, and are classified in types such as physical, mental, social, among others. These skills are fundamental in daily life since they make problem solving and decision making easier.

Definition of Language Skills

According to Dash (2022) language skill refers to “a person's ability to use a language effectively, in its spoken and written forms, for different activities and purposes” (p.1). Hence, language skills are the capability that enable people to understand, produce and use a specific

language successfully in a variety of communicative situations. These skills are mainly divided into four areas: listening comprehension, which allow individuals to be aware of what they hear; speaking, that encompasses the ability to convey ideas clearly and coherently; reading, which involves interpreting written texts; and writing, that consists in creating structured and comprehensible texts. All of them are fundamental for effective communication, and their acquirement depends on the interaction between cognitive and social factors.

The Four English Skills

Mastering English as a second language implies four main skills that allow language learners to communicate fluently in many contexts. These skills cover both the ability to understand and produce messages orally and written. As students' progress in learning English, they not only acquire the knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical rules, but the capacity to interact with others as well. The English skills are explained below.

Listening

The Listening Skill is defined by Unuoha & Agwuocha (2024) as “the act of receiving, processing, interpreting and understanding messages delivered orally” (p.3). In short, listening skill is very important when learning English because it enables students to understand and process information received orally. Furthermore, this skill involves not only understanding words and phrases, but also grasping contextual meaning of what is being heard.

Hence, developing listening facilitates effective interaction in everyday situations, whether in formal or informal conversations in English. By fostering the skill, learners can strengthen their understanding of the language, become familiar with different accents and pronunciations and acquire a wider vocabulary. However, in despite of the importance of this skill and the several benefits that it brings to the leaner, it is considered as the least important. In fact, Unuoha & Agwuocha (2024) mentioned that “the listening skill receives the least attention in language teaching because students are expected to automatically develop this skill on their own” (p.1). This is due to lack of understanding of what listening actually means. It involves more than just listen to sounds. It needs a high level of attention and concentration to interpret the message being received.

Speaking

Mishra (2017) explains the speaking skill as “the ability to express opinions and thoughts and feelings to a person or a group verbally, whether face or by distance” (p.138). Thus, developing the speaking skill is crucial during the English learning process, since it helps students to communicate their thoughts and emotions in a clear way. This skill also implies the capacity to use adequate vocabulary and correct grammar expressions to formulate ideas verbally. Additionally, it requires self-confidence while speaking to others and being able to adapt the speech to different contextual circumstances such as having a conversation, making academic presentations, discussing a topic, among others. While learners foster the skill, they are able to understand the language in a better way because speaking needs a fast process of what is being heard and transform it into a coherent answer, everything in a real time.

Reading

Reading skill is a fundamental competence in the English acquisition process as it facilitates the deep understanding of written texts. This skill not only involves the ability to decipher words and grammatical structures, but also to interpret and critically analyze the content, understanding the text, identifying main ideas and making inferences. According to Abbasi (2021) “reading is considered especially valuable under the foreign language context because it is one main source for students to achieve language content” (p.1). Thus, developing this skill while learning English allows learners to access a wider range of academic and professional resources, enriching their vocabulary and cultural knowledge. In addition, the constant practice of reading contributes to the strengthening of other language skills like writing and speaking.

Writing

As stated by Ghosh et al. (2021) writing skill is defined as

The ability of a person to express his/her thoughts, ideas, feelings, etc. in written form in paper or in digital form. It doesn't mean to accumulate words randomly side by side but it is an art or arranging words in a sequence to produce faithful meaning with which one can express himself/herself. (p.26)

In nutshell, this skill encompasses a series of complex cognitive processes including the appropriate selection of vocabulary, the application of grammatical and syntactic structures, and the logical organization of ideas, which allows construction of solid and well-founded

arguments. Writing in English also requires a deep understanding of the specific textual conversations such as academic, formal and professional. Additionally, students not only develop the ability to communicate ideas effectively, but also to sharpen their capacity to interpret and apply linguistic norms accurately.

Productive Skills

Productive skills encompass speaking and writing as key elements during the process of learning English as a second language. By using these skills, students are capable to understand the language and communicate effectively. Furthermore, they allow learners to formulate thoughts, ideas and opinions in English, facilitating the interaction with native and non-native speakers. In the case of speaking, language learners develop the ability to correctly pronounce words, to use appropriate vocabulary and to structure sentences in a coherent way. On the other hand, writing helps students to organize their ideas clearly and logically which is important and useful in many contexts.

Moreover, Hossain (2015) states “they are crucial as they give students the opportunity to practice real-life activities in the classroom” (p.2). It means that they have an important role because they allow students to master the language in real situations. In fact, productive skills require more autonomy in the language use as they involve the active creation of content.

Receptive Skills

As Sreena & Ilankumaran (2018) mention “receptive skills are the ability to listen and understand a language” (p.670). In other words, receptive skills in EFL refer to the learner’s capacity to recognize and process information without having to directly produce the target language. Listening and reading conform these skills and are essential since they allow students to receive and interpret the message that others send.

In addition, by developing receptive skills, language learners can acquire a deeper understanding of the language. During the learning process, receptive skills function as the first step towards the language production. As students listen and read English, they absorb grammar structures that are internalized and applied in their oral production. As Sreena & Ilankumaran (2018) say “through the interest and search of knowledge, the learner may earn maximum receptive skills” (p.670). Consequently, constant exposure to English content such as videos,

movies, music, newspapers and books can help students to foster and strength their abilities to acquire a second language.

THE NATURE OF SPEAKING

The speech process acquisition is a complex phenomenon that requires biological and social factors as it is developed over many stages in people's life. Beginning in childhood, humans start to learn linguistic systems through interaction with their environment, which allow them to acquire phonological, lexical and grammatical skills. As they grow, these abilities are refined due to the cultural and social context in which they developed. In fact, Guebba (2021) states "speaking is the physical realization of ideas, concepts, and assumptions existing in the human schema. It transforms abstract ideas to sounds and utterances that form meaning" (p.10). In this sense, speaking is not only configured as a cognitive skill, but also as a tool for social interaction.

Furthermore, speaking as a skill in ESL, is the ability to produce and understand oral messages effectively, using the language linguistic system in an appropriate manner. This skill involves the use of grammatical structures, knowledge of vocabulary and the management of correct word pronunciation in order to communicate in different situations. According to Fattah (2016) "speaking is one of the four language skills. It is the means through which learners can communicate to others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes, and viewpoints" (p.13). Hence, the main purpose of speaking is to give learners the power to communicate with others in a real-life context. By producing the language, they can fulfil their needs, express ideas, achieve their goals, among others since the master level in this skill indicates how successful students develop in society.

Moreover, Rao (2019) says "speaking skills have been undervalued and most of the EFL/ESL teachers have been continuing their teaching of speaking skills just as memorization of dialogues or repetition of drills" (p.8). It has been observed in different learning contexts that English teachers do not use the appropriate strategies and materials to teach effectively this skill. In fact, Brown & Yule (1983) mentioned in Guebba (2021) state "for most of its history, language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of written language" (p.10). It means that, most of the time English as a second language has been taught only focusing in teaching

grammar rules to students. Although the grammatical aspect is necessary to acquire the language, it is not the main purpose. So, by using speaking activities, teachers can analyze and identify student's level of knowledge to involve them in real situations so they can master this essential skill.

Finally, Bueno et al. (2006), cited in Rao (2019) claim "speaking is one of the most difficult skills language learners have to face" (p.8). This due to the several problems students deal with while producing the language in a daily-life context. In the same way, Ainy (2022) mentions that speaking "is the most challenging area that needs attention. Learners may be able to read and write, listen and think, however, may go completely numb and silent when it is his/her turn to speak out." (p.60). Consequently, the speaking skill should be the main focus during the English learning process since students may face different problems during their oral production. Also, developing good speaking skills is fundamental because the principal success in learning any language is measured by the capacity of students to carry out natural and spontaneous conversations in the target language with native speakers.

THE PURPOSE OF SPEAKING

According to Rao (2019) "speaking is the most important skill among all the four language skills in order to communicate well in this global world" (p.6). Nowadays, communicative skills like speaking are fundamental to interact with others. As English is considered a global language and thanks to the fact that most of the information that can be found in books, the internet and other sources is in English, improving speaking skills is a must in the era. Royani et al. (2023) mention "the goal of teaching speaking skills is to communicate effectively. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest" (p.15). Thus, the key purpose of the speaking skill in learning English is to provide students the ability to communicate clearly in different context such as in academic or professional situations.

Additionally, Royani et al. (2023) argue that "learning to speak English requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules. Students need to know how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange" (p.15). It means that, this skill allows them to participate in spontaneous conversations, express opinions, ask questions and

solve problems, which is essential in life. In this way, speaking becomes a fundamental instrument for interpersonal communication and for integration in environments where English is required.

Also, Richards & Renandya (2002), cited in Royani et al (2023) state “speaking seems important because its purposes” (p.24). Therefore, fostering the speaking skill is important depending on the learner’s intention. For instance, if the student wants to study abroad, speaking English can be useful since he can communicate with other people without having any interference in his utterance. Another example is related with the professional field. It is easier for a person to get a better job if he knows to express coherently in a second language. Just as Rao (2019) says “everything is linked with speaking skills. One who has good talented in speaking can conquer the whole world” (p.10). Hence, speaking is not just a mean of communication, it is the vehicle through which people can build relationships and become successful in any context in life.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPEAKING

As explained by Burkart (1998) mentioned in Royani et al. (2023), the speaking skill constitutes three principal spheres of knowledge:

- 1. *Mechanic Knowledge:*** It is related with grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation aspects. It aims to help students to correctly arrange words, sentences and ideas by using the appropriate grammar, vocabulary and intonation.
- 2. *Function Knowledge:*** Thanks to this knowledge, learners can understand the importance of giving and receiving a clear message while communicating.
- 3. *Cultural and Social Knowledge:*** It assists students in understanding who they are talking to, the purpose of the conversation, the topic, and social context type.

MICRO-SKILLS OF SPEAKING

According to Orwig (1999) cited in Royani et al. (2023), speaking skill is sub-divided in micro-skills that language learners need to take into account as well.

Pronounce of Sounds: Clear pronunciation of words in order to make the message understandable for others.

Stress and Rhythmic: Correct use of intonation of words so that the receiver of the message can understand it without any problem.

Words Form: Related to grammar knowledge. Proper use of grammar rules when speaking.

Words Order: Accurately arrange words in order to transmit a coherent message.

Vocabulary Use: Related to vocabulary knowledge. Appropriately use of vocabulary in the oral production.

Language Variety: Appropriate use of the language according to the context.

Discourse: Transmit the message in a coherent way.

ELEMENTS OF SPEAKING

Producing a language requires a combination of aspects that enable a person to communicate successfully from the moment an idea is articulated to the moment the interlocutor's response is received. In other words, some elements intervene to ensure that the message is expressed clearly and correctly understood. The way sentences are structured, words are chosen, and the intonation of the conversation, all play an important role in oral production. Therefore, speaking skill is conformed of 5 key elements explained below.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is an important element when developing speaking skills in English. It implies the correct articulation of sounds, stress, intonation and rhythm. Pronunciation is the key to ensure the speech's clarity and promote effective communication, as inadequate pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings by listeners. Furthermore, an appropriate use of pronunciation contributes to verbal fluency and speakers' confidence, allowing them to participate actively in

communicative interactions. In short, the development of this element lets individuals sound more natural and closer to native speakers.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of communicative competence in speaking English. It refers to the wide and diverse knowledge of lexicon as well as the ability to use it appropriately in different circumstances and the discourse intention. A deep command of vocabulary favors the fluency and coherence of the speech, allowing speakers to articulate ideas accurately. In addition, the enrichment and expansion of vocabulary contribute to greater use of language, letting individuals to adapt to various situations, from everyday exchanges to the production of more formal speeches.

Grammar

It refers to the mastery of rules and structures that control the organization of words in sentences and the appropriate use of different linguistic elements to express coherent and precise meanings. This element encompasses the formation of words, the organization of sentences, as well as the ability to apply these rules in real contexts. Good grammatical command allows speakers to build clear sentences avoiding ambiguities and misunderstandings. Also, the knowledge of grammatical aspects like verb tenses and sentence structures is essential to keep fluency in speech.

Comprehension

Comprehension, in the context of learning English, involves the capacity to decode and process verbal information in real time. This element encompasses not only the recognition and interpretation of grammatical structures, but also the ability to infer meaning from the context. Developing comprehension enables learners to interact in real-life situations, facilitating their adaptation to different dialects in English. Practicing through sources like conversations and presentations can help students to process speech in different speeds and levels of complexity.

Accuracy and Fluency

Accuracy and fluency are two fundamental components in the development of English language proficiency. Accuracy refers to the ability to produce the language in a grammatically

form by using grammar structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation correctly. Additionally, it involves a level of attention to the language details, avoiding mistakes that may change the meaning of what is being said.

On the other hand, fluency is the faculty to speak naturally without interruptions. While accuracy ensures de coherence of the message, fluency facilitates spontaneous interaction. Therefore, during the English learning process, balancing both elements are essential. A lack of fluency can produce insecurity, while excessive fluency without accuracy can generate misunderstandings.

SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Definition of Difficulty

The Oxford Dictionary (n.d.) defines the term difficulty as “the quality, fact, or condition of being hard to accomplish or perform; lack of facility or easiness”. Consequently, difficulty refers to something that constitutes a complication that demand a certain level of knowledge, skill and patience to be developed and overcome. Moreover, Gallego et al. (2018) add “difficulty is usually understood as the effort required to successfully complete an activity” (p.2). It means that, the more effort a person has to put into developing something, the higher level of difficulty it would have. In this sense, difficulty varies according to the individual’s capacities to solve it and the context in which the complexity is presented.

Definition of Language Difficulty

“Language problems may become the obstacles reason for the students to improve their language performance” (Doris & Jessica, 2007, mentioned in Maji et al., 2022, p.5). Difficulties in ESL are related to problems that language learners face while developing their English skills. Auspeld (2022) mentions “children underachieve academically for a wide range of reasons including factors such as emotional issues, ineffective instruction; or, inadequate curricula” (p.4). Based on this, these difficulties are presented on students for many reasons like, personal issues, low exposure to the language, the influence of the mother tongue, teaching methods, among others. Thus, these possible factors can inhibit students from interacting and practicing

the target language. That is why adequate teaching strategies and activities are needed to ensure learners' higher understanding and a good level of English proficiency.

Also, Gallego et al. (2018) says "when skills and difficulty are balanced, learners enter a state of flow. Flow is sometimes defined as a feeling of complete and energized focus in an activity, with a high level of enjoyment and fulfillment" (p.2). It means that, when difficulties are overcome students can truly enjoy their learning process, acquire more knowledge and foster their skills.

Definition of Speaking Difficulty

Speaking difficulties are defined by Maji et al. (2022) as "problems that hamper students to speak. These problems are obstacles for students that make them failure in English speaking competence" (p.5). Consequently, these difficulties cause learners not to develop English skills appropriately, preventing them from carrying out basic activities such as: communicating their thoughts, sharing ideas, interacting with other people, among others. Hence, all of these actions are essential to make students enhance good communicative skills. However, when they have problems doing so, the language acquisition process is interrupted and slowed down.

Additionally, speaking difficulties can occur due to various factors related to learning, as well as unrelated to it. They have been identified as linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties, which also include some aspects that influence the second language learning. As Maji et al. (2022) argues "students' success in speaking performance is not caused by lack of linguistic knowledge by also caused by psychological factors" (p.5). That is, the success of a language learner in producing the language depends on overcoming both linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties, which are detailed below.

Linguistic Difficulties

Language difficulties faced by students who want to learn English are obstacles that appear during the language learning process. According to Alyan (2013), mentioned in Jaya et al. (2022) "communication problems occur because students encounter a word they do not understand, a form of word they do not know how to use, or find that they are unable to express their intended meaning" (p.106). In this sense, these difficulties may arise thanks to the interaction between the linguistic characteristics of the target language and the students'

previous knowledge. Therefore, while learners acquire new structures, tenses, rules, and expressions, they can experience confusion or misunderstandings which may complicate their capacity to communicate fluently. Some of these problems are raised below.

Lack of Vocabulary

Lack of Vocabulary is a notable difficulty that impacts on the English speaking skill, as it restricts language learners' ability to express accurately. Maji et al. (2022) mention "even though they are confident to speak if they do not have sufficient vocabulary or diction then they will have big problems while speaking English" (p.8). As a result, when students do not have enough words in their repertoire, they are forced to use imprecise expressions which cause misunderstandings in the oral production.

Furthermore, Normawati et al. (2023) add "for EFL students, mastering the meaning of words from a new language can be very challenging. A low mastery of the meaning of the vocabulary can cause problems that affect the fluency in speaking" (p.8). It means that, this difficulty can inhibit learners to participate fluently in real conversations, slowing down their language acquisition process. Finally, a lack of vocabulary can create insecurities in learners, by feeling unable to express themselves as they would in their mother tongue, enriching their frustration, low self-esteem or demotivation.

Lack of Grammar knowledge

Grammar is considered the hardest aspect to overcome in speaking. Based on this, difficulties related to grammar knowledge can appear thanks to several reasons. One of them is the different grammatical structures between the students' L1 and the target language. Maji et al. (2022) argue that "differing in language grammar between English and the students' native language has caused it difficult for them to construct English sentences even phrases in a proper structure when speaking" (p.10). This means that, grammar aspect of the L2 may not be the same in the L1 that is why language learners present problems when trying to formulate sentences that have accuracy.

In addition, Grammar provides the structures needed to form coherent sentences and transform them into an understandable speech. As explained by Normawati et al. (2023) "students have poor grammar mastery. They converse using structures; hence, they mostly do

not realize that they make mistakes and errors in structure. This issue eventually leads to ineffective communication as the meaning is not conveyed properly” (pp.7-8). Consequently, without a proper use of grammatical rules, learners can make mistakes in verb tenses, prepositions, or sentences’ structures which difficult a fluent communication. These errors can create an incomplete message, affecting the clarity of ideas.

Poor Pronunciation

English has a large number of sounds hard to find in other languages. This is the principal reason why students’ problems in speaking are related with pronunciation. Another cause is spelling as it does not accurately show how words should be pronounced, which adds even more confusion when producing the language.

Additionally, Normawati et al. (2023) mention “the students’ problem with pronunciation is also caused by inhibition, and it leads to the inaccuracy of their speaking in delivering information” (p.8). Learners may use stress or words pronunciation in a wrong way and this can generate difficulties for other speakers to understand the discourse. Thus, pronunciations problems can also be related with individuals’ repression to talk which can impair their ability to interact naturally in many contexts.

Lack of Practice

Lack of practice is one of the main difficulties that affect the development of speaking skills, since communicating naturally requires constant exposure to the language. If students do not have opportunities to interact in the target language in situations such as: spontaneous conversations, classes, social activities, among others; their oral production can be limited. Ork et al. (2024) say “the lack of vocabulary that the students face in speaking can be a manifestation of a lack of input. Since they have no input related to vocabulary, it is hard for them to speak the language” (p.7). In this sense, poor vocabulary is also a limiting factor as learners may not have interest to learn more about the language because their repertoire is not enough to construct phrases, express their ideas and produce the language.

Moreover, Ork et al. (2024) add “the more they practice, the more they improve their knowledge” (p.7). So, the lack of practice prevents students from speaking fluently, developing

self-confidence, practicing in advanced situation and in general acquiring more knowledge about the target language.

Non-linguistic Difficulties

Non-linguistic difficulties, refer to external elements that affect significantly the learning process of an L2. These aspects are related to students' emotions which can interfere in the acquisition of the target language. Jaya et al. (2022) mention that learners "might be confronted with certain feelings that usually affect them when speaking English such as unconfident, shy, anxious, nervous, and worried. These for sure are big problems for them" (p.106). For this reason, if these difficulties are not correctly addressed and overcome, they can lead to a lack of progress towards learning, create barriers that hinder fluency in the use of English, and decrease students' confidence.

Lack of Self-Confidence

The lack of confidence is one of the main elements that affects the acquisition of a second language. This difficulty may be a consequence of negative prior experiences such as criticism or mockery. Learners might have felt pressed by the teacher or their classmates, thinking that they are not capable of communicating. Additionally, Jaya et al. (2022) mention that "speech is often clearer when a person is feeling confident and relaxed" (p.106). In fact, it is important to create a safe class environment where students feel free to show their knowledge, formulate sentences, and express their ideas. By providing them with a sense of relaxation, they can produce the language naturally and fluently.

Shyness

According to Baldwin (2011), pointed out in Ork et al. (2024) "one of the more prevalent phobias that students have is speaking in front of people, and that feeling shy causes their minds to go blank or makes them worry that they will forget what to say" (p.5). Shy learners tend to avoid speaking English in public because they are afraid of judgment from their classmates, which significantly reduces their interest to practice the language in real-life contexts. This lack of active participation limits students' development of communicative skills as learning a language requires constant practice, especially in spontaneous situations. Moreover, Ork et al. (2024) also say "many students experience shyness on an emotional level when they are asked

to speak in English class. This suggests that students' learning activities in the classroom, particularly in speaking, may be hampered by shyness" (p.5). This can be interpreted as students inhibit themselves from participating in class as they feel shy and uncomfortable with their environment, feeling exposed to negative comments. In fact, shyness can create emotional barriers that limit language learners' motivation to keep learning.

Fear of Making Mistakes

Ork et al. (2024) mentions that one the main language learners' difficulty when developing their oral production is that "they are afraid of making mistakes because they are afraid of getting nasty comments from other people" (p.5). Hence, this fear becomes a limiting factor for English students since instead of seeing errors as an opportunity to increase their knowledge, they perceive them as failures. As a result, they may avoid participating in conversations, ask questions to the teacher, or also stop expressing their ideas. All of these characteristics are part of the acquisition of an L2 and if students inhibit themselves to do so, they can slow the learning process.

Thus, the fear of making mistakes is a feeling related to anxiety experienced by students when they feel they are being judged or failing a task. This sensation concerns one's own or other's expectations, as learners may believe they are not capable of performing an activity well enough. As a consequence, it creates a feeling of insecurity. In the context of learning a new language, this fear is heightened because students are aware that making mistakes is a part of the process.

Anxiety

Anxiety refers to an emotional response that is distinguished by feeling fear or worry, often followed by physical symptoms like palpitation and sweating in different parts of the body. In the context of language learning, anxiety is presented in students when they are afraid of not being able to communicate properly, making several mistakes, or not meeting other's expectations. This fear can be so overwhelming that it interferes in learners' capacity to relax and enjoy the process, limiting their willingness to develop communicative activities.

Gallego et al. (2018) explain the process that students go through when getting anxious in the class:

When difficulty is much higher than learners' skills, anxiety appears. This is psychologically explained by learners perceiving their skills as insufficient, thus getting demotivated. They normally feel that the activity requires too much effort compared to their perceived capacities. This often leads to early abandon. (p.2)

In this way, anxiety becomes an obstacle in students' capacity to communicate. Feeling anxious constantly can lead to avoid situations where they are required to speak, reducing the practice opportunities needed in order to improve the language. Therefore, overcoming anxiety is essential for pupils to approach learning English more confidently and to increase their knowledge.

Mother Tongue Interference

The use of the native language in ESL indicates the students need to apply their L1 rather than the L2 in order to acquire the language. Bermello & Vaca (2022) state:

One of the biggest drawbacks for the EFL students is the interference of L1 in the oral production of L2. The excessive use of the mother tongue (Spanish) and the translation of words into the target language hinder students to communicate appropriately. (p.11)

In other words, learners may use their native language to translate, understand or express ideas while learning. Although this method can be helpful at the beginning to make comprehension easier, excessive use of the L1 can be a great drawback. By constantly translating what they are supposed to learn in English, students do not develop their ability to think in a foreign language and consequently they are unable to produce the language fluently as they cannot interact naturally and coherently with other speakers. Hence, in order to achieve a good English proficiency, it is fundamental to minimize dependence on the mother tongue by promoting situations where students can only communicate in the target language, allowing them to think and react naturally in real-life contexts.

Lack of Motivation

Lack of motivation is a state in which students do not present any interest to learn or actively participate in the English learning process. Akbari (2016), cited in Chand (2021) mentions that:

Language learning difficulties may occur due to the lack of understanding of the key role of English plays in their life; that means motivation plays a vital role in learning a language. If learners are informed about the use of English language in their life, then they may be highly motivated to learn English. If learners are motivated, then they show their concentration in study and learning becomes faster. (p.49)

Thus, it is fundamental that students understand the importance of English, as nowadays is considered a global language which is the bridge to be able to communicate worldwide. Additionally, learners need to keep in mind that learning English brings them several advantages in both, educational and professional fields. In fact, motivation is a crucial element to overcome any other difficulty that may raise during the acquisition process.

STRATEGIES TO ENHACE SPEAKING SKILLS

Definition of Learning Strategy

Akbari (2016), cited in Chand (2021) defines learning strategies as “special tools for enhancing the learning capacity of learners; adopting a special kind of learning strategy may boost up an understanding of the learners” (p.49). In this sense, a learning strategy refers to a set of techniques that both, students and teachers can use to facilitate and enhance learning, allowing them to achieve goals, foster the understanding and store knowledge more effectively. Their main objective is to promote learners’ active participation in class and the application of the acquired knowledge in real-life situations.

In addition, these strategies can be adaptable according to the students’ needs, transforming the traditional teaching into a meaningful and lasting learning where students maximize the development of their skills in order to increase their cognitive level.

Definition of Speaking Strategy

Speaking strategies are methods applied by teachers to improve students’ ability to communicate naturally and coherently in the target language. As Razi et al. (2021) say “in order to learn the skill in English, the strategies are useful in the class activity and also in out-of-class situations. Teaching strategies are very essential since they determine the success of the teaching process” (p.3). Based on this, they are focused on making oral communication

elements such as fluency, accuracy and confidence, easier. Also, it is essential to use these strategies during the class so learners can foster the capacity to acquire a new language and apply this knowledge outside the educational context.

Moreover, Razi et al. (2021) add “in order to be effective in teaching speaking skills, the teacher may use the numerous strategies to choose from” (p.4). Hence, speaking strategies help to create a more dynamic learning environment in which students feel comfortable and motivated to practice the language. By using them, the interaction is encouraged, communicative skills are developed, anxiety is overcome, confidence is built and language proficiency is improved. In general, suitable speaking strategies are the key to achieve English learning. Therefore, some examples that teachers and students can use during the teaching-learning process are mentioned below.

Role Play

Role-plays are an effective teaching strategy that help students to practice the target language by acting everyday life situations through the interpretation of specific roles. This technique produces a dynamic class environment where learners participate by interacting naturally with others while they perform the roles. Thus, it promotes an active and meaningful learning of the language.

Moreover, by using role-plays as a learning strategy, teachers can design a more creative and engaging mean of knowledge transmission. In this way, students would see English as a fun activity, rather than feeling forced to learn a second language. By applying this strategy, learners can get in touch with real situations and could make them understand the importance of communicating in English. Finally, the application of role-plays in the class during the learning process come along with some benefits such as: development of fluency, vocabulary growth, better pronunciation, more confidence when speaking in public, among others.

Conversation Cycles

Conversation cycles strategy is another learning technique that is focused on improving English speaking skills through conversational exchanges. This technique leads students to interact in groups from 4 to 6 members where they ask and answer questions related to a real topic. During the development of this strategy, learners naturally reinforce grammatical

structures, vocabulary and communicative skills. Among its main benefits are: to increase fluency, improve pronunciation, reduce shyness and nervousness, and boost the capacity to respond spontaneously in different contexts. Likewise, conversation cycles facilitate a dynamic, interactive and highly effective learning process.

Picture Describing

In order to develop speaking skills, teachers need to apply different strategies that can make the learning process more effective, interesting and meaningful. Picture describing is one of the purposed strategies to achieve communicative goals in students. In fact, it seems to be a simple technic with almost no repercussion in the learners' acquisition process, however this strategy is very effective to make them interact in the class, increase their fluency and foster speaking skills, among other advantages.

The key to make picture describing successful is to choose the correct pictures to show in front of the class. For this, the images need to be clear, visually interesting and associated with a real topic. Additionally, the teacher can boost its benefits by asking questions and make students have a conversation based on the pictures.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful tool to develop speaking skills in English. Through this technique, students involved themselves in the creation and narration of stories, allowing them to practice the target language in a meaningful way. Storytelling has multiple benefits such as: stimulates the imagination, fosters creativity, develops grammar knowledge, and promotes the use of vocabulary. By using stories, the educational process is transformed into a motivating and deeply enriching experience.

Language exchanging

Language exchanging is one of the most effective and direct learning strategies to develop speaking skills. This tool consists in creating spaces where students can interact with native speakers in the target language for an authentic English practice. It provides language learners multiple advantages like: improving pronunciation, acquiring more vocabulary, fluency, spontaneous responses, and learning about the culture of the native speaker. To use language

exchange as a strategy, both educational institutions and teachers need to provide connection to make this technique effective. For example, create programs with other institutes abroad to establish partnership, promote online conferences with international students, encourage learners to be interested in this type of interaction by creating questions and topics to discuss, etc. Likewise, it is extremely important that teachers guide students through the process of language exchanging, so that they can take the greatest number of benefits from this strategy by getting in touch with a new culture and improving their speaking proficiency.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1. Research Approach

Ugu & Eze (2023) outline the Qualitative approach as “the study of the nature of phenomena, which includes their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear, or from the perspectives from which they can be perceived, but excludes their range and frequency” (p.20). According to this definition, the following research is based on a qualitative approach since it allows a deeper understanding of the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that undergraduate students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career face when developing English speaking skills. The main objective of the present research is to explore individual experiences and perceptions, which are essential to recognize subjective factors such as anxiety, confidence, shyness, among others, that influence learners’ oral production proficiency.

Furthermore, the development of English-speaking skills depend on personal, emotional and contextual factors. Thus, the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that students may present vary according to each individual. For this reason, the qualitative approach is the one that best aligns with the purpose of this research as it helps to discover and analyze complex phenomena of human interaction according to the emotions and academic context of each participant.

7.2. Research Design

According to Manjunatha (2019) the Descriptive Design “describes the characteristics of the population of phenomenon that is being studied. This methodology focuses more on the what of the research subject rather than the why of the research subject” (p.863). Hence, the

descriptive design suits best the following research since it permits to identify, classify and analyze the difficulties that students have when developing their ability to speak in English. By describing these difficulties, the descriptive design allows to build an overview that facilitates the presentation of the most relevant and recurrent aspects found in the participants of this research, which is essential for the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

7.3. Population

The population used in the following research were 36 students from 3rd and 4th cycle of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Cotopaxi located in the canton Pujili. From this total number, 3 students from 3rd and 4th cycle respectively were voluntarily interviewed. Additionally, 14 students of the 3rd cycle and 16 students of the 4th cycle of the career were surveyed. Both cycles were chosen according to the career curriculum because third cycle includes fewer subjects in English compared to the fourth cycle. In this way, the present research seeks to identify if there is any difference in the difficulties found in the cycles mentioned.

7.4. Data Collection Techniques

The techniques used for the data collection were observation, semi-structured interviews and closed surveys. The observation was applied to 33 students in the Basic English A2.2 class of the 3rd cycle and 33 students in the Basic English A2.3 class of the 4th cycle of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview was directed to 3 students of the 3rd and 4th cycle respectively. Finally, a closed survey was applied to 14 students of the 3rd cycle and to other 16 students of the 4th cycle of the career.

7.5. Data Collection Instruments

Three data collection instruments were applied in the following research in order to gather relevant data from the participants. First, a checklist was used to observe the 3rd and 4th cycle students' real interaction and oral production during the Basic English A2.2 – A2.3 class in order to help the researcher to identify the statement of the problem and to write conclusions and recommendations. This checklist consisted in 14 criteria to take into account during the observation of the class. The researcher marked with a check if the purposed criterion was being

fulfilled in the class or not. The checklist was applied to 33 students of the 3rd and 4th cycle respectively which was the total number of learners.

Then, a semi-structured interview was applied to 3 students of the 3rd and 4th cycles respectively. The interview included 13 open-ended questions previously prepared by the researcher about the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that students may present to develop their English-speaking skills. These questions were answered by the participants with complete honesty.

Finally, a questionnaire was applied to 14 students of 3rd cycle and 16 students of 4th cycle. Google forms was used to create the questionnaire, facilitating students' respond as it is an online tool that all of the participants had access to. This questionnaire consisted in 16 multiple option questions divided in three sections: the first section included 4 questions about the linguistic difficulties, the second section was 7 questions related to non-linguistic difficulties, and the last section contained 5 questions about the teacher's role.

7.6 Data Collection Procedure

The information was collected through three processes. First, an observational checklist was applied to 33 students from the 3rd and 4th cycles during an English class. This allowed for the observation of students' and the teacher's attitudes and behaviors, the taking of notes, and the gathering of inputs for the development of strategies applicable to solving the identified problem.

Secondly, a random selection sampling method was applied, giving all students the same probability of being selected and thus avoiding any bias in the required information. In this way, three students from each cycle voluntarily participated, and an interview on the research topic was conducted. The interview was conducted in the students' native language (Spanish) to ensure they could express themselves freely while also obtaining objective information. Each interview lasted six minutes, and clear instructions were given, including a request for honest and coherent responses.

Finally, a survey was administered to 30 students: 14 students from the 3rd cycle and 16 students from the 4th cycle of the program. The questionnaire aimed to gather information regarding students' feelings about the identified issue.

7.7. Ethical Justification

The present research was conducted in accordance with fundamental ethical principles that ensure the integrity, respect, and well-being of the students. Prior to the application of data collection instruments (observation, interviews, and surveys), students were informed about the objectives of the research, the purpose of the collected data, and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Additionally, the protection of the participants' identity and privacy was guaranteed. The data obtained was used exclusively for research purposes and handled anonymously, without associating responses with names or personal identifications. A neutral and respectful language was used in interviews and surveys to avoid any bias that could cause discomfort or pressure. All students had an equal opportunity to participate in the research through a random selection method, preventing any form of discrimination or exclusion. Finally, the data collected was rigorously analyzed and used exclusively for the purposes established in the study. The research was conducted under ethical principles that ensure the transparency of the study, respect for participants' rights, and the relevance of the results for improving strategies in conflict management and peacebuilding in the educational field.

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

8.1. The Results of the Checklist

Table 2

3rd Cycle Checklist Results.

CRITERION	YES	NO
Teacher's Role		
1. The teacher motivates students to participate during the class.	●	
2. The teacher uses the appropriate language during the whole class.	●	
3. The teacher creates a comfortable environment where students feel free to participate.	●	
4. The teacher creates activities that promote speaking skills development.	●	
5. Teaching technics are applied by the teacher to make students participate.	●	
6. The content is presented in a dynamic way to make students feel interested.	●	
Linguistic Difficulties		
7. Students use adequate vocabulary to express themselves when participating.		●
8. Students use correct grammar when participating.		●
Non-Linguistic Difficulties		
9. The rest of the class reacts in a proper way when one of the students is participating.		●
10. Students feel confident while speaking in the class.		●
11. Students feel any time of discomfort while speaking in the class.	●	
12. Students react in a proper way when the teacher or classmates correct them.		●
13. If making any mistake, students feel any type of discomfort.	●	
14. Students have previous knowledge about the topic to help them easily participate in class.		●

Note: This table represent a summarized version of the checklist's results applied to 33 students of the 3rd cycle. For deeper and complete analysis see *APENDIX A - Checklist 3rd Cycle.*

Based on Table 2, it was observed that students looked nervous and anxious while participating, they answered every question shortly and with a low tone of voice. When one of the students was participating, some students did not pay attention, they were laughing at the classmate and talking between them in Spanish. Additionally, students looked shy and did not participate unless the teacher asked them to do so.

On the other hand, most of the students did not use adequate vocabulary nor did they use the correct grammar to express themselves when participating. Also, some of them did not have prior knowledge about the topic of the class which caused a low level of participation. Students got shy when the teacher corrected them, and they looked uncomfortable when they notice that they make any mistake.

Finally, the results showed that the teacher motivated students to participate during the class by asking several questions in order to make them interact, the teacher used English during the entire class and created a comfortable environment where students felt free to participate, she used different techniques and activities such as dialogues, oral presentations, and debates to promote the speaking skill development. The content of the class was presented in a dynamic and interesting form by using technological resources that capture students' attention.

Discussion.

The results obtained indicate that the low level of oral skill development in 3rd cycle students is not solely attributed to the methodology employed by the teacher, as various strategies were implemented to encourage participation in class. Despite this, it was evident that students exhibited high levels of anxiety and shyness when expressing themselves in English, suggesting that other factors influence their oral performance.

One of the most relevant factors is the students' lack of confidence when participating. The observation showed that they responded with short phrases and in a low tone of voice, which suggests that they do not feel comfortable speaking in another language. This behavior may be related to the fear of making mistakes and being judged by their classmates, creating a psychological barrier that limits their oral development. In fact, the negative reaction to the teacher's correction reinforces this hypothesis, as students seemed even more insecure and withdrawn when corrected. This situation highlights the need to strengthen students' self-

esteem and confidence, creating an environment where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process.

Another influential aspect is the lack of prior knowledge about the class topic. It was identified that several students had difficulties constructing sentences properly due to limited vocabulary and incorrect grammar use. This not only affected their ability to express themselves but also reduced their motivation to participate. In this regard, constructivist learning theory suggests that prior knowledge is fundamental to developing new skills, as it allows students to connect new information with what they already know. The absence of this foundation makes it difficult to assimilate new concepts and can lead to frustration among students.

Additionally, a lack of commitment and respect was observed among some students, who mocked their classmates or conversed in Spanish instead of paying attention to the class. This type of attitude not only affects the classroom dynamic but also influences students' willingness to participate, as they may avoid speaking to prevent being ridiculed. In this sense, it is essential to foster an environment of respect and collaboration in the classroom, where all students feel safe to express themselves without fear of judgment from their peers.

On the other hand, although students showed insecurity and low participation, the teacher's role was crucial in trying to counteract these difficulties. It was observed that the teacher used various strategies, such as asking questions, using English exclusively during the class, and implementing dynamic activities like debates and oral presentations. Likewise, the use of technological resources was a positive factor, as it captured students' attention and made the class more engaging. However, despite these efforts, students' responses remained limited, suggesting the need for strategies specifically focused on reducing anxiety and increasing confidence in oral production.

In conclusion, the low participation and limited development of oral skills in 3rd cycle students are not based solely on the teacher's methodology but rather involve emotional, academic, and social factors. Anxiety, lack of prior knowledge, fear of making mistakes, and some students' attitudes are key elements affecting linguistic development. Therefore, these issues must be addressed to improve classroom participation. It is essential to implement strategies that enhance students' confidence, promote a respectful and collaborative

environment, and provide prior learning opportunities before oral production so that students feel more prepared and secure when expressing themselves in English.

Table 3

4th Cycle Checklist Results.

CRITERION	YES	NO
Teacher's Role		
1. The teacher motivates students to participate during the class.	●	
2. The teacher uses the appropriate language during the whole class.	●	
3. The teacher creates a comfortable environment where students feel free to participate.	●	
4. The teacher creates activities that promote speaking skills development.	●	
5. Teaching technics are applied by the teacher to make students participate.	●	
6. The content is presented in a dynamic way to make students feel interested.	●	
Linguistic Difficulties		
7. Students use adequate vocabulary to express themselves when participating.		●
8. Students use correct grammar when participating.	●	
Non-Linguistic Difficulties		
9. The rest of the class reacts in a proper way when one of the students is participating.	●	
10. Students react in a proper way when the teacher or classmates correct them.	●	
11. Students feel confident while speaking in the class.	●	
12. Students feel any time of discomfort while speaking in the class.		●
13. If making any mistake, students feel any type of discomfort.		●
14. Students have previous knowledge about the topic to help them easily participate in class.	●	

Note: This table represents a summarized version of the checklist's results applied to 33 students of the 4th cycle. For deeper and complete analysis see *APENDIX B - Checklist 4th Cycle*.

Based on the Table 3, students felt comfortable and confident while participating. The rest of the class was very respectful and pay attention when other students were participating. Furthermore, some students did not use adequate vocabulary to express themselves. The observation showed that they presented some difficulties at choosing the correct words to communicate. Nevertheless, their knowledge in grammar was better. Although they had some mistakes when articulating phrases grammatically correct, they showed a higher level in grammar.

On the other side, most of the students had previous knowledge about the topic which helped them to interact and actively participate during the class. When students notice that they made a mistake, this was irrelevant for them and did not show any negative reaction. Also, they seemed to have a positive response when the teacher corrected them.

Finally, the results revealed that the teacher encourage students' participation by asking various questions to facilitate interaction. She conducted the entire class in English, fostering a relaxed atmosphere where students felt comfortable engaging. Her attitude was always friendly. Also, the teacher employed a variety of methods and activities including dialogues, oral presentations, and debates in order to enhance the development of the speaking skills. The class content was delivered in an attractive manner, incorporating technological tools like audios that captured students' attention.

Discussion.

As in the previous case, the results indicated that the level of oral skill development in 4th cycle students is not directly linked to the teacher's behavior. Even though the teacher implemented various activities to motivate students to practice oral expression and maintained a friendly and open attitude to resolve any doubts, most students faced linguistic difficulties that prevented them from participating regularly.

One of the most relevant aspects observed in this group is that they showed greater confidence and comfort when interacting in English. However, although they seemed more willing to participate, they still faced significant challenges when expressing their ideas fluently and clearly. In other words, elements such as vocabulary mastery and constant practice play a crucial role, highlighting that even though students have developed a certain foundation in the

language, their lexical repertoire remains limited, which restricts their ability to communicate effectively.

On the other hand, a positive aspect identified in this group was their grammatical proficiency, which suggests a more structured approach to grammar instruction. This has allowed them to better understand sentence construction and language rules. Another key aspect that can be interpreted from the results is the relationship between prior knowledge and the level of participation in class. It was observed that most 4th cycle students had previous knowledge of the topic discussed, which facilitated their participation. This finding aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of connecting new knowledge with previously acquired information to enhance the learning process. Students appeared more confident and willing to interact, whereas those with less prior knowledge tended to participate less frequently or limit themselves to brief responses.

Additionally, these results highlight the importance of the teacher's role in motivating students and creating an environment conducive to oral communication. Although 4th cycle students showed more confidence, their participation remained inconsistent, suggesting the need for strategies that encourage the active use of vocabulary and promote fluency in communication.

In conclusion, the 4th cycle students demonstrate greater confidence and grammatical knowledge; however, their main weakness is the lack of vocabulary, which represents a significant obstacle to their development. These results are fundamental for defining the research problem and can serve as a basis for formulating conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving English learning in this group of students.

When comparing both groups of students, it is evident that 3rd cycle students face emotional barriers that limit their participation, whereas 4th cycle students are more affected by a lack of vocabulary, which hinders effective communication. Krashen (1982), in his Affective Filter Hypothesis, argues that emotional factors such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes can hinder second language learning. This perspective explains why 3rd cycle students, despite the teacher's efforts to motivate them, avoid actively participating. In contrast, 4th cycle students demonstrated greater confidence when speaking in English; however, they

faced difficulties related to a lack of vocabulary, which affected their fluency and ability to express themselves clearly. Nation (2001) emphasizes that vocabulary mastery is an essential component of communicative competence development, and its absence can limit students' ability to effectively formulate ideas.

Another key aspect in the comparison is the relationship between prior knowledge and the level of classroom participation. Ausubel (1968) highlights that meaningful learning occurs when students can relate new concepts to prior knowledge, facilitating their comprehension and use in communication. In this regard, it was observed that 4th cycle students, having more prior knowledge about the class topics, participated more actively compared to 3rd cycle students.

In both situations, the teacher's role was essential in motivating students and fostering a positive learning environment. However, the results suggest that, in the case of 3rd cycle students, strategies focused on reducing anxiety and strengthening confidence in oral production are needed. For 4th cycle students, it is crucial to implement lexical enrichment strategies, such as explicit vocabulary instruction.

8.2. The Results of the Interview

Table 4

3rd Cycle Interview Results.

Teacher's Role	
Q1	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 1:	I feel more comfortable.
Participant 2:	I try to use English always because is one of the teacher's rules.
Participant 3:	I prefer to use Spanish because it's hard to communicate in English.
Q2	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 1:	Yes
Participant 2:	Yes
Participant 3:	Yes
Q3	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 1:	I'm a little nervous but I feel okay because I learn more.
Participant 2:	I take it with a positive attitude because I can learn more.
Participant 3:	Nervous, but at least I know where I was wrong
Q4	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 1:	Yes, the teacher uses fun activities.
Participant 2:	Yes, the teacher uses questions, recaps, and speaking activities.
Participant 3:	Yes, their teacher makes us role-play real like situations.
Linguistic Difficulties	
Q5	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 1:	Nerves and pronunciation.
Participant 2:	Nerves.
Participant 3:	Nerves and the lack of vocabulary.
Q6	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 1:	Not much.

Participant 2: Yes.
 Participant 3: No, I think I need more grammar knowledge

Q7 Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?

Participant 1: Yes
 Participant 2: Yes, because I get nervous.
 Participant 3: Yes.

Non-Linguistic Difficulties

Q8 How do you feel when you notice that you are being judged when you speak in the class?

Participant 1: Demotivated and even more nervous.
 Participant 2: It doesn't affect me because I don't care about other people's opinions.
 Participant 3: It demotivates me, I feel bad.

Q9 If you make any mistake, how do you feel?

Participant 1: It makes me feel bad and I get more nervous.
 Participant 2: I get even more nervous
 Participant 3: It makes me feel bad.

Q10 Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?

Participant 1: Yes, a lot. I am afraid of making mistakes and being judge.
 Participant 2: Yes, a lot because I am afraid of making mistakes.
 Participant 3: Yes, a lot because I am afraid of making mistakes and being judge.

Q11 Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?

Participant 1: I feel more comfortable.
 Participant 2: I try to use English always because is one of the teacher's rules.
 Participant 3: I prefer to use Spanish because it's hard to communicate in English

Q12 How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?

Participant 1: I don't usually participate much. I am an introvert person.
 Participant 2: Not much, I am an introvert and shy person.
 Participant 3: I rarely participate because I think I am an introverted person.

Q13 Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?

Participant 1: A Little.
 Participant 2: Yes, definitely.
 Participant 3: Not much.

Q14 Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?

Participant 1:	I need more previous knowledge.
Participant 2:	Yes, it has helped me to perform better in class.
Participant 3:	I don't know some topics and it is hard to participate.

Note: This table represents a summarized version of the interview's results applied to 3 students of the 3rd cycle. For deeper and complete analysis see *APENDIX D - Interview 3rd Cycle*.

According to Table 4, the information suggests that students' main difficulty is nerves but also pronunciation and lack of vocabulary presented in participants 1 and 3 respectively. Two participants consider that they do not have enough grammar knowledge to formulate sentences and express them verbally, however one of them answered that she has a good knowledge of grammar. Additionally, lack of fluency was a factor that prevents all participants from appropriately developing speaking skills due to their nervousness. Moreover, all of them mentioned that they felt nervous when participating in any oral activity as they are afraid of making mistakes and being judge. As a consequence, two of the students responded that they feel demotivated and even more nervous when they notice that they are being judge, but one of them said that she did not care about other people's opinions.

Furthermore, participant 1 and 3 mentioned that they use their mother tongue (Spanish) during the class as they feel more comfortable and because it is difficult to communicate in English, nevertheless participant 2 said that she tries to use English always because is one of the teacher's rules in the class. In addition, the students agreed that the teacher always has a positive and friendly attitude during the class as well as motivating them to develop their speaking skills by making positive comments and pushing them to interact and participate. Three students also mentioned that the class is always presented in an interesting way through fun activities such as singing songs, watching videos, role-plays, among other.

Finally, participant 1 and 3 responded that they feel a little nervous when the teacher corrected them and participant 2 mentioned that she takes in a positive way the teacher's correction, however they all agree that mistakes explanations are needed in order to learn more. Besides, participant 1 and 3 indicated that they do not have a lot of previous knowledge as some

topics are more difficult than others and this prevents them from participating during classes. At last, students said that they do not participate frequently as they are introvert people and they tend to get shy.

Discussion

The results showed that students of the 3rd cycle present a non-linguistic difficulty that prevents them from developing their English-speaking skills. The main difficulty that was mentioned by the participants of the interview was nerves, a factor that affects them in several areas of the learning process. First, their level of participation is compromised due to nerves. By having this feeling, students prefer not to participate in class even if they have the correct answer as they are afraid of making mistakes and being judge.

Based on this, the fear of making mistakes is another non-linguistic difficulty that all participants presented. When they realize that they make mistakes, they tend to feel bad and demotivated, which reinforces the idea that it is better not to participate in class. Furthermore, all the interviewees mentioned that fluency is a factor that stops them from achieving speaking skills appropriately. This is how the first linguistic difficulty is identified.

On the other hand, it can be inferred that the students' speaking skills development is not related with the teacher's attitudes and behaviors. This is concluded since all the participants stated that the teacher motivates them to participate and interact through several activities, making the class interesting and dynamic. Furthermore, the teacher's attitude is always positive, willing to help and solve any doubt. Likewise, the teacher regularly emphasizes the importance of learning English and improving communicative skills as an educational benefit, but also as a personal advantage in the students' daily life.

Lastly, it is important to mention that the level of participation of the 3rd cycle students is directly related to their personality, since the participants interviewed mentioned being introverted and shy. For this reason, it is assumed that their low participation in oral activities is due to their introvert personality, but also thanks to non-linguistic difficulties like nerves and fear of making mistakes.

Table 5

4th Cycle Interview Results.

Teacher's Role	
Q1	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 1:	By correcting us on how to use vocabulary or grammar express ourselves
Participant 2:	By making friendly comments so that we participate.
Participant 3:	She gives us a lot of activities in English so we are forced to speak.
Q2	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 1:	Yes
Participant 2:	yes
Participant 3:	yes
Q3	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 1:	I feel good because I learn in this way.
Participant 2:	I do like it when the teacher corrects me because I learn more.
Participant 3:	I appreciate when the teacher corrects me because I learn more.
Q4	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 1:	Yes, the teacher uses interesting tools such as videos, songs.
Participant 2:	Yes, the teacher uses games and all those dynamics are interesting.
Participant 3:	Yes, because we do role-plays, conversations and debates.
Linguistic Difficulties	
Q5	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 1:	Lack of Vocabulary.
Participant 2:	Lack of Vocabulary.
Participant 3:	Lack of Vocabulary.
Q6	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 1:	Yes.
Participant 2:	Yes.
Participant 3:	Yes
Q7	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?

Participant 1: Yes
 Participant 2: Yes
 Participant 3: Yes.

Non-Linguistic Difficulties

Q8 How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?

Participant 1: It doesn't affect me at all.
 Participant 2: It doesn't really affect me.
 Participant 3: It doesn't affect me.

Q9 If you make any mistake, how do you feel?

Participant 1: I like to know where I went wrong, I like to be corrected.
 Participant 2: It does not influence me negatively.
 Participant 3: It doesn't make me feel bad or uncomfortable

Q10 Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?

Participant 1: Not really, I like to participate.
 Participant 2: No. All of my classmates are there to learn just like me.
 Participant 3: No at all.

Q11 Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?

Participant 1: I feel much more comfortable speaking in Spanish.
 Participant 2: I try to use English always because I can learn more.
 Participant 3: I don't use Spanish during English classes because I want to learn.

Q12 How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?

Participant 1: I participate regularly; I really like to talk. I am an extrovert person.
 Participant 2: I participate, but I know I could participate more if I had more vocabulary
 Participant 3: I always participate in all activities because I am extroverted.

Q13 Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?

Participant 1: Yes.
 Participant 2: Yes
 Participant 3: Yes

Q14 Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?

Participant 1: Yes, it helps to develop verbal skills better.
 Participant 2: Yes, it is easier to participate, and I enjoy it more.

Participant 3: Yes, it makes me participate more, even with more confidence.

Note: This table represent a summarized version of the interview's results applied to 3 students of the 4th cycle. For deeper and complete analysis see *APENDIX E - Interview 4th Cycle*.

As presented in Table 5, the main difficulty according to the students from the 4th cycle is the lack of vocabulary. All the participants agreed on having enough grammar knowledge to express themselves orally. In addition, the 3 students that were interviewed manifested that the lack of fluency was a factor that prevented them from appropriately developing their speaking skills. Besides, participants mentioned that they do not feel nervous when taking part in speaking activities because they like to participate. Also, they said that it does not affect them emotionally when they notice someone judging them.

Moreover, participant 1 mentioned that he felt more comfortable speaking in his mother tongue. As he does not have enough knowledge, it is easier for him to say everything in Spanish. However, participants 2 and 3 expressed their pleasure in speaking English during the class as that was the way in which they can learn more. Additionally, students indicated that their teacher motivates them when speaking by making friendly comments, showing them how to use vocabulary and grammar properly, and creating different oral activities to make them participate. Based on this, all participants agreed that their teacher always had a positive attitude towards them the entire class. Furthermore, learners revealed that making mistakes does not influence them negatively as they do not feel bad or uncomfortable. In this way, when the teacher needed to correct students, they appreciate it as they consider this as an effective way to increase their knowledge.

Finally, all participants mentioned that the teacher uses games, role-plays, conversations, debates, songs and videos in order to catch their attention and make the class interesting. Also, participants 1 and 3 mentioned that they like to participate regularly because they are extroverted, nevertheless participant 2 indicated that she is also an extrovert person and she likes to participate but she probably would participate more if she has more vocabulary knowledge. Lastly, all the students interviewed agreed on having previous knowledge which

help them to participate more during class, enjoying the process even more and feeling more confident as well.

Discussion

The results analyzed above suggest that the main difficulty that students in the 4th cycle have, is the lack of vocabulary knowledge, which is considered a linguistic difficulty that prevents them from properly developing their speaking skills. Likewise, the lack of fluency is another linguistic factor that, according to the interview, affects students in their learning process and use of English.

On the other hand, the interviewees stated that when participating in oral activities they do not feel nervous or uncomfortable because there is no reason why they should be since all students are learning. According to this reason, it can be interpreted that during the learning process, making mistakes is natural as knowledge is being built. In this way, feeling nervous should not be a difficulty that affects them since being nervous is something completely normal.

In relation to this, the results showed that learners do not present any type of negative feeling when making mistakes or being judged as they understand that it is part of learning and that realizing mistakes makes them improve. Similarly, teachers' correction is not synonymous of demotivation since they appreciate this action as they are aware that it makes their language level increase in order to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

Also, as presented in the previous discussion, teacher's behavior is not linked to the learners' language development. This is because all the participants interviewed agree with the fact that the teacher motivates them through the use of different activities and technological tools, which turns the class dynamic. In addition, the teacher's attitude is always positive, creating an atmosphere in which the students feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, as in the previous case, the students' level of participation is compromised by their personality. In this case, the interviewees claimed to participate frequently during classes because they considered themselves extrovert people who like to talk. Likewise, the results of the interview showed that having prior knowledge generates more confidence in students when participating, as well as greater enjoyment of the activities.

3.8.3. The Results of the Questionnaires

For the presentation of the survey data applied to students of the 3rd and 4th cycles, the questions were grouped into 3 sections: linguistic difficulties, non-linguistic difficulties, and teacher's role. Similarly, within each section, questions with the same response options were grouped together, presenting these results in a single chart, which was then analyzed. The same procedure was followed for all sections.

3TH CYCLE

Section 1: Linguistic Difficulties

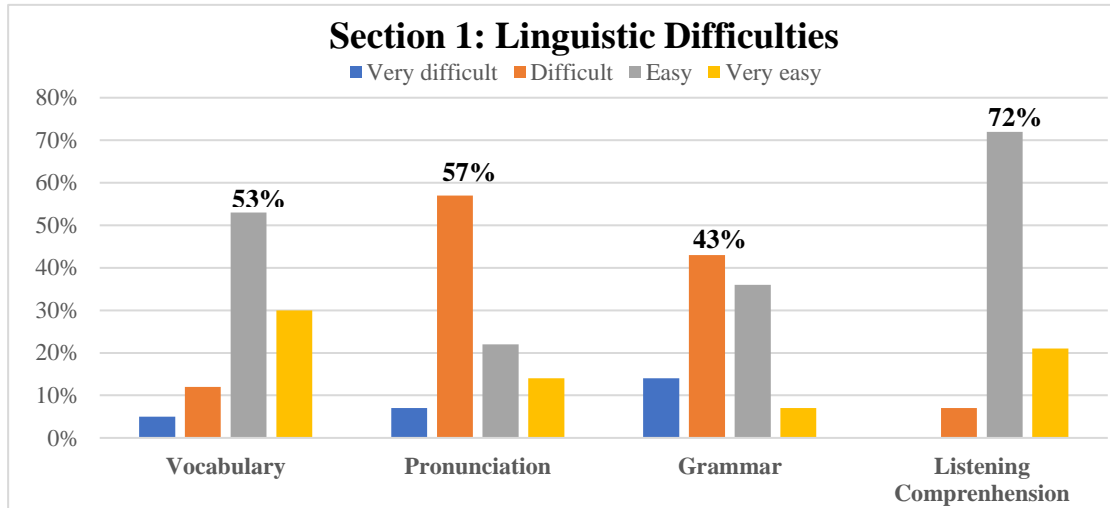
Table 6

Answers options with percentages - Linguistic Factors

Questions	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
1. <i>How difficult is it for you to apply new vocabulary when you are speaking?</i>	5%	12%	53%	30%
2. <i>How do you consider pronunciation as an obstacle to communicate?</i>	7%	57%	22%	14%
3. <i>Does English grammar difficult your speaking fluency?</i>	14%	43%	36%	7%
4. <i>How do you rate your listening comprehension in a conversation?</i>	0%	7%	72%	21%

Figure 1

Results section 1: Linguistic Difficulties



The results regarding the vocabulary factor indicate that 53% of students find it easy to incorporate new vocabulary into their conversations, while 30% consider it very easy; only 5% report experiencing significant difficulty. Another highly relevant aspect concerns pronunciation as a barrier to communication. In this case, 57% of respondents perceive pronunciation as a difficult aspect, while 7% report facing significant difficulty, and 22% consider it easy. Regarding English grammar, 14% of respondents state that they experience great difficulty, while 43% report moderate difficulty. Meanwhile, 36% find grammar easy, and only 7% consider it very easy. Finally, in response to the question *How do you rate your listening comprehension in a conversation?* 72% of respondents state that they find it easy, 21% describe it as very easy, and only 7% consider it difficult.

Section 2: Non-linguistic Difficulties

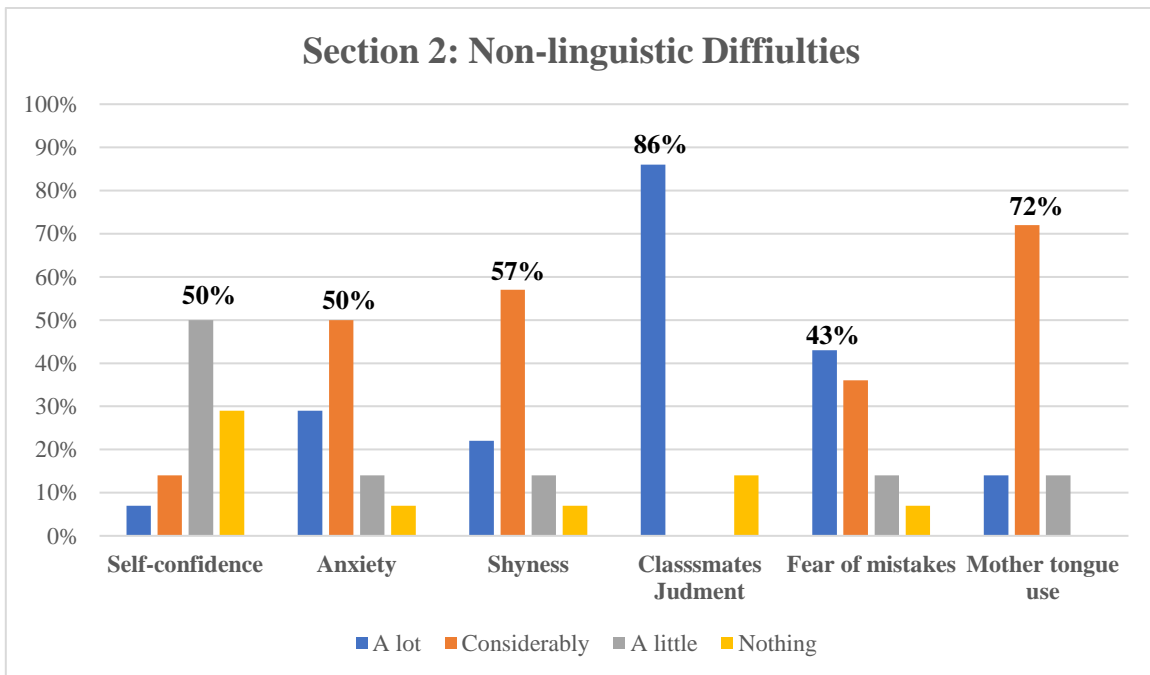
Table 7

Answers options with percentages – Non-linguistic Factors

Questions	A lot	Considerably	A little	Nothing
5. How confident do you feel when you speak in front of the class?	7%	14%	50%	29%
6. Do you feel anxious when you have to participate in a speaking activity?	29%	50%	14%	7%
7. Is shyness a factor that inhibits you from improving your speaking skills?	22%	57%	14%	7%
8. How much do you feel judged by your classmates when you participate in class?	86%	0%	0%	14%
9. How much does the fear of making mistakes affect you when interacting verbally in class?	43%	36%	14%	7%
10. Do you use your mother tongue (Spanish) to express your ideas in class?	14%	72%	14%	0%

Figure 2

Results section 2: Non-linguistic Difficulties



The non-linguistic aspects were also analyzed in the questionnaire administered to third-semester students at UTC. When asked about these factors, the following results were obtained:

Regarding the confidence they feel when speaking in front of the class, 50% of students reported feeling a little confident, while 29% state that they have no confidence at all. Conversely, 21% of respondents are divided between those who feel considerable confidence and those who feel very confident. Another non-linguistic factor considered is anxiety, experienced by learners when participating in speaking activities. The results indicated that 50% report feeling considerably anxious, while 29% state that they experience a high level of anxiety. On the other hand, 14% of students report feeling only a slight level of anxiety, and 7% do not experience any anxiety during speaking activities.

Moreover, non-linguistic factors also include shyness, as this factor has been shown to inhibit the development of speaking skills. Hence, 57% of students consider their level of shyness to be considerable, 22% describe it as very high, while 21% report feeling little or no shyness at all. Additionally, 86% of third-semester students report feeling considerably judged by their classmates when participating in class, whereas a smaller percentage (14%) stated that they do not feel judged at all.

Likewise, the fear of making mistakes when speaking in class affects 43% of students a lot, while 36% consider themselves considerably affected. Meanwhile, 14% state that they are only slightly affected, and finally, 7% report not being affected at all. Finally, students were asked about their use of Spanish to express their ideas in class. Therefore, 72% state that they use Spanish to express their ideas, 14% report using it frequently, and a similar percentage (14%) indicated using it very little.

Section 3: Teacher's Role

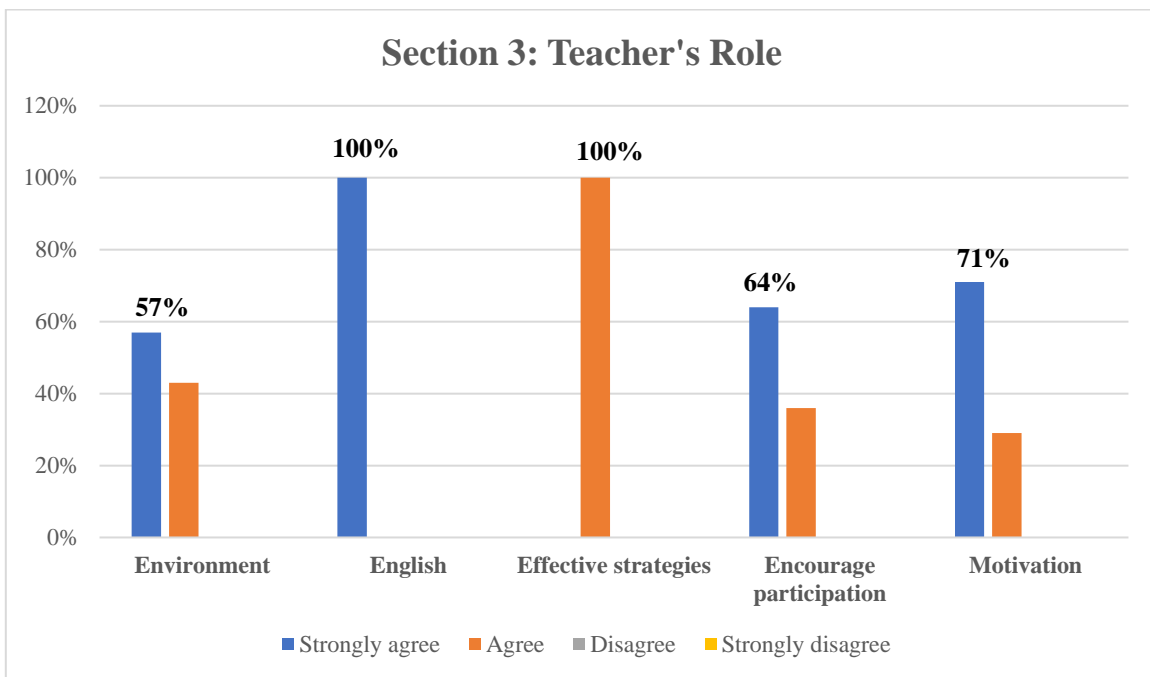
Table 8

Answers options with percentages – Teacher's Role

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. <i>Does the teacher create an environment where you feel comfortable to ask her any type of question?</i>	57%	43%	0%	0%
12. <i>Does the teacher use English during the class?</i>	100%	0%	0%	0%
13. <i>Do you think your teacher uses effective strategies to teach English speaking skills?</i>	0%	100%	0%	0%
14. <i>Does your teacher encourage the participation in speaking activities during the class?</i>	64%	36%	0%	0%
15. <i>Does your teacher motivate you to improve your speaking skill?</i>	71%	29%	0%	0%

Figure 3

Results section 3: Teacher's Role



Regarding the question *Does the teacher create an environment where you feel comfortable to ask her any type of question?* 57% of third-semester students surveyed strongly agree, while 43% agree. Another important aspect of the research concerns the teacher's use of English during class. In this case, 100% of respondents, meaning the entirety of the surveyed students, agree. The question *Do you think your teacher uses effective strategies to teach English speaking skills?* was also posed to third-semester students. Thus, 100% of respondents agree. In relation to the statement *Does the teacher encourages participation in speaking activities during the class*, the results indicated that 64% of students strongly agree, while 36% agree. Finally, in response to the question *Does your teacher motivate you to improve your speaking skills?* 71% of third-semester students surveyed strongly agree, whereas 29% agree.

4TH CYCLE

Section 1: Linguistic Difficulties

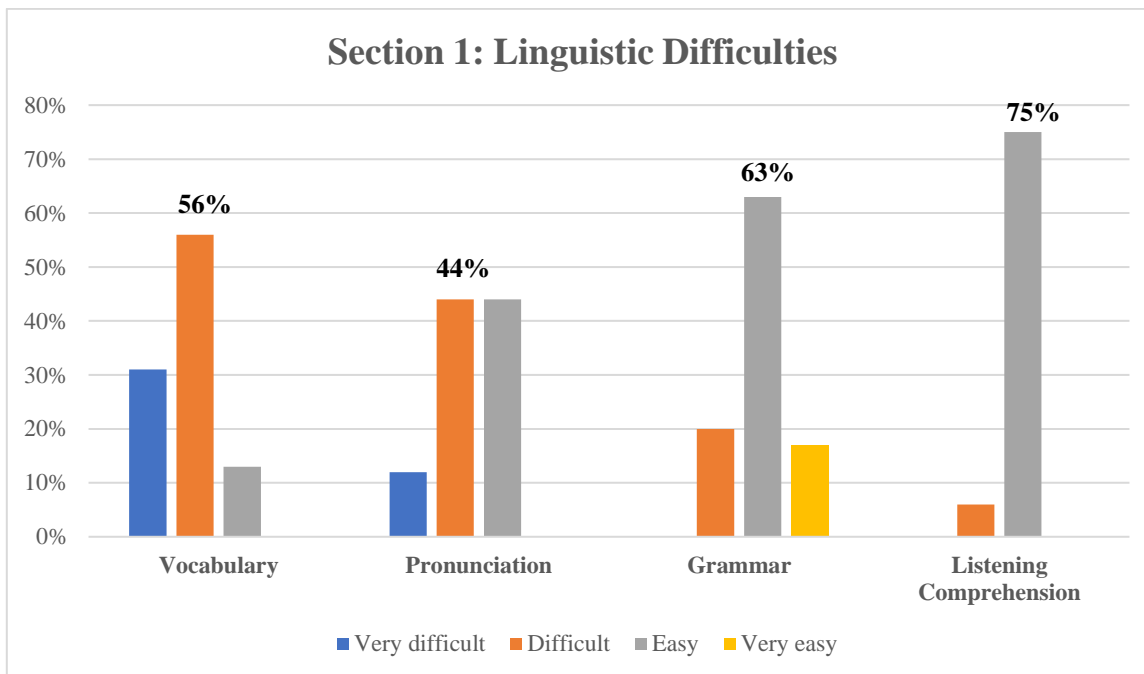
Table 9

Answers options with percentages - Linguistic Factors

Questions	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
16. <i>How difficult is it for you to apply new vocabulary when you are speaking?</i>	31%	56%	13%	0%
17. <i>How do you consider pronunciation as an obstacle to communicate?</i>	12%	44%	44%	0%
18. <i>Does English grammar difficult your speaking fluency?</i>	0%	20%	63%	17%
19. <i>How do you rate your listening comprehension in a conversation?</i>	0%	6%	75%	19%

Figure 4

Results section 1: Linguistic Difficulties



Regarding the linguistic difficulty of applying new vocabulary when speaking, the survey results indicated that 56% of respondents found it difficult, while 31% stated that it was very difficult, however 13% reported that it was easy. Concerning pronunciation as an obstacle for proper communication, 44% of the participants considered it difficult. Interestingly, an equal percentage (44%) perceived it as easy, while the remaining 12% stated that it was very difficult. Regarding whether English grammar affects their speaking fluency, 63% of fourth-semester students reported that it was easy, whereas 20% found it difficult, and 17% considered it very easy. Finally, in terms of listening comprehension, 75% of the students who completed the questionnaire stated that it was easy, 19% found it very easy, and only 6% reported that it was difficult.

Section 2: Non-linguistic Difficulties

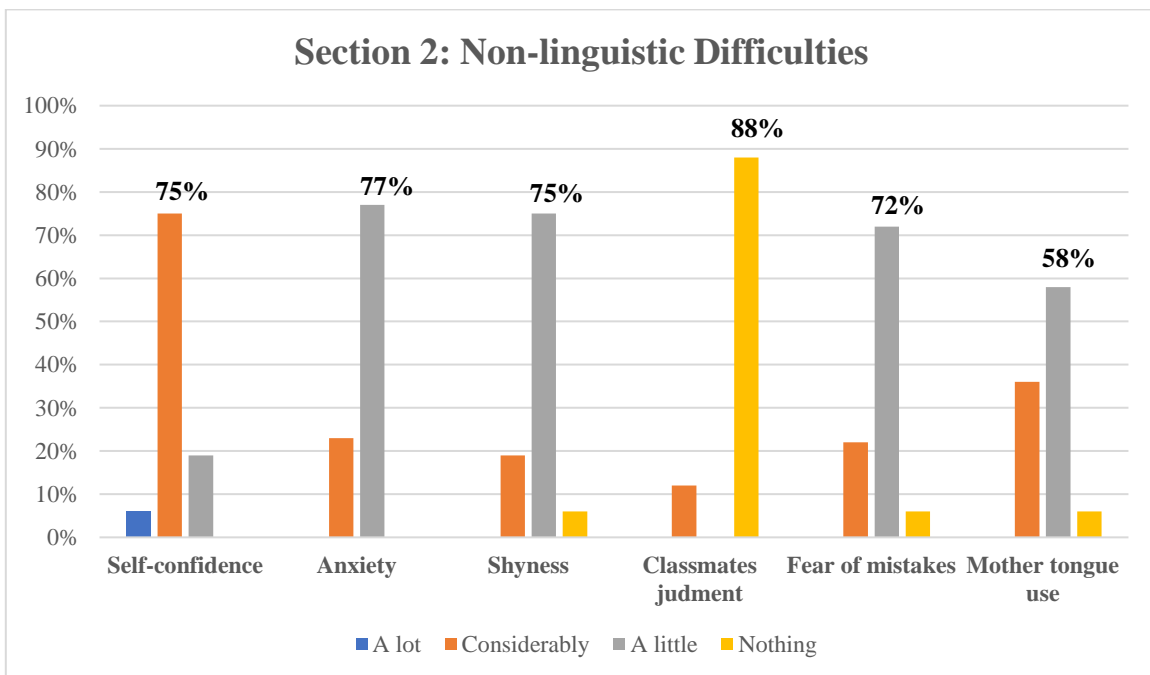
Table 10

Answers options with percentages – Non-linguistic Factors

Questions	A lot	Considerably	A little	Nothing
20. <i>How confident do you feel when you speak in front of the class?</i>	6%	75%	19%	0%
21. <i>Do you feel anxious when you have to participate in a speaking activity?</i>	0%	23%	77%	0%
22. <i>Is shyness a factor that inhibits you from improving your speaking skills?</i>	0%	19%	75%	6%
23. <i>How much do you feel judged by your classmates when you participate in class?</i>	0%	12%	0%	88%
24. <i>How much does the fear of making mistakes affect you when interacting verbally in class?</i>	0%	22%	72%	6%
25. <i>Do you use your mother tongue (Spanish) to express your ideas in class?</i>	0%	36%	58%	6%

Figure 5

Results section 2: Non-linguistic Difficulties



Non-linguistic factors are highly significant, that was why a questionnaire was administered to fourth-semester students to assess them. Regarding self-confidence, 75% of the students reported feeling fairly confident, 19% stated that they felt a little confident, and 6% expressed feeling very confident. In terms of anxiety levels, 77% of students indicated experiencing low anxiety, while 23% confirmed experiencing considerably anxious.

Furthermore, shyness was another factor addressed in the questionnaire, 75% of learners reported feeling little shyness, while 19% stated that they felt a considerable level of shyness, and 6% claimed not to feel shy at all. The questionnaire also inquired about feelings of being judged by peers. 88% of students reported not feeling judged by their classmates, in contrast to the 12% who felt judged.

In addition, regarding the fear of making mistakes and its impact on verbal interactions in class, 72% of students indicated that it affected them to a small degree. On the other hand, 22% felt considerably impacted, and 6% stated that they were not affected at all. Finally, fourth-semester students were asked about the use of Spanish in the classroom. In this regard, 58% stated that Spanish was used minimally, 36% indicated that it was used to a considerable extent, and 6% claimed that Spanish was not used at all in the classroom.

Section 3: Teacher’s Role

Table 11

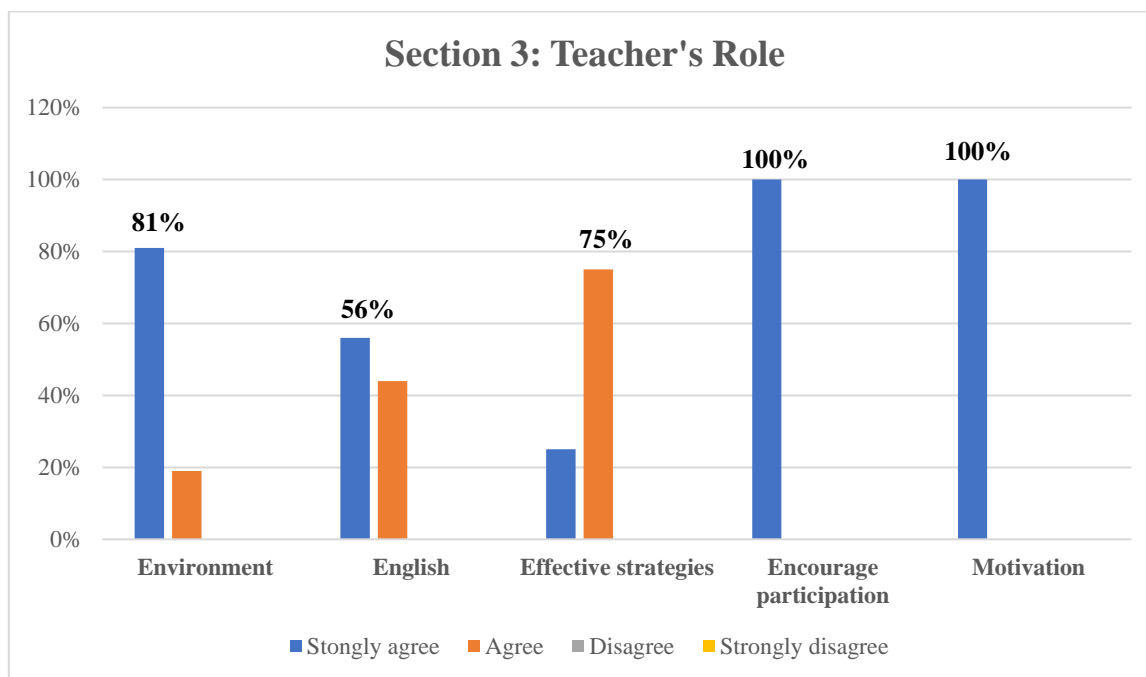
Answers options with percentages – Teacher’s Role

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26. <i>Does the teacher create an environment where you feel comfortable to ask her any type of question?</i>	81%	19%	0%	0%
27. <i>Does the teacher use English during the class?</i>	56%	44%	0%	0%
28. <i>Do you think your teacher uses effective strategies to teach English speaking skills?</i>	25%	75%	0%	0%

29. <i>Does your teacher encourage the participation in speaking activities during the class?</i>	100%	0%	0%	0%
30. <i>Does your teacher motivate you to improve your speaking skill?</i>	100%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 8

Results section 3: Teacher's Role



The 81% of the fourth-level students stated that they strongly agree that the teacher creates an a comfortable environment for students to openly ask questions to her, while 19% agreed. Another question addressed the use of the teacher's use of English language during the. The responses from the participants indicated that 56% strongly agreed, while 44% agreed. Regarding whether the teacher uses effective strategies for teaching speaking skills, 25% strongly agreed, and the majority, 75%, agreed. When asked about the encouragement provided by the professors, 100% of the fourth-semester students surveyed strongly agreed. Finally, 100% of the students affirmed that their teacher motivates them to improve their speaking skills, strongly agreeing with the statement.

Discussion

After applying a questionnaire to 14 third-cycle students and 16 fourth-cycle students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career, it was concluded that learners from both cycles present linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that hinder the appropriate development of their speaking skills and, consequently, slow down the language acquisition process.

Linguistic Difficulties

According to Maji et (2022) linguistic difficulties are:

Elements of the language that cover master of vocabulary, good pronunciation and good grammar. Linguistic problems appear due to language learning acquisition. Language problems may become the obstacles reason for students to improve their language performance. Poor in language learning acquisition will hamper them in speaking activity. (p.2)

Consequently, students in both cycles present some linguistic difficulties that impede the advancement of their speaking skills during the English learning process. In the third cycle, it was possible to identify pronunciation as the first linguistic issue. More than the half of the survey participants (57%) indicated that pronunciation was a frequent problem to communicate during class, which may be due to the lack of exposure to the language. Additionally, grammar knowledge is the second linguistic factor faced by learners, since 43% of them mentioned that grammar considerably influences their speaking ability.

On the other hand, students from the fourth cycle present different linguistic factors in comparison with the third cycle. Here, the first linguistic obstacle found was vocabulary knowledge, which is considered by learners as very difficult (31%) and difficult (56%) to implement when expressing their ideas in class. This suggest that for most of them, vocabulary is seen as a great challenge to properly develop their speaking skills. Also, pronunciation is presented as another linguistic factor that, for a considerable percentage of students (44%), represents a barrier that inhibits them from being able to express themselves orally.

Therefore, it was possible to identify 3 linguistic difficulties that affect students in the 3rd and 4th cycle: *lack of grammar, poor pronunciation, and lack of vocabulary knowledge*. The

presence of these obstacles is probably due to the poor self-preparation of each learner and the lack of exposure to the language. The knowledge acquired only during class is not enough to learn a second language, so students should commit to expose themselves, practice and use English outside the academic context in everyday activities such as reading books to increase their lexicon, watching movies or series in the target language or even something as simple as listening to music. It is contradictory that students should include more listening activities when their problem is related to the speaking skill, however as Giolando (2022) mentions “think about how a baby learns a language: by listening, catching on the context, and repeating. Children listen to native speakers for years before speaking. Do the same when you’re learning your second language” (section 2, para. 5). In this way, through constant practice and exposure to English, learners are able to not only improve their speaking skills, but also overcome these linguistic difficulties and increase their proficiency in the language.

Non-linguistic Difficulties

Effendi & Muin (2018) argue that non-linguistic difficulties “mean talking about the language teaching problems without relating it with the linguistic principles. It means problems of language teaching which come from outside the language itself” (p.3). Hence, the primary non-linguistic obstacle identified among third-cycle students was lack of self-confidence, with 50% of respondents admitting to feel highly insecure when speaking in class. Furthermore, 29% stated that they did not feel confident at all during classroom participation. This issue not only undermines their belief in their abilities but also hampers their second language progress.

Similarly, anxiety emerged as another significant factor in the third cycle, as 50% of survey participants reported frequently experiencing anxiety during the class. Additionally, 29% indicated that they always feel anxious when engaging in oral activities. These findings imply that speaking in class is perceived as a stressful and unpleasant task, which can impair students’ capacity to think clearly, articulate their ideas, and communicate effectively.

Shyness also surfaced as a notable non-linguistic difficulty that learners have to confront. A significant majority (57%) indicated that shyness negatively affects their speaking ability, while another 22% strongly concurred with this perspective. Moreover, the fear of being judge significantly impacts students’ confidence, with over half (64%) frequently feeling judged

when participating. But who do they feel judged by? A striking 86% of participants reported feeling judge by their classmates. This concerning statistic highlights that learners do not feel comfortable expressing their ideas freely and naturally. Also, the fear of making mistakes represents a challenge since a significant number of students (43%) mentioned that it affects them a lot.

In addition, native language interference constitutes another non-linguistic factor affecting students, as 72% frequently use Spanish when communicating during English classes. This tendency likely stems from their exposure to most subjects in Spanish in their career, which fosters a reliance on their native language for comfort an ease of expression. Nevertheless, this habit hinders the proper advancement of their speaking skills, as it prevents them from practicing English in suitable contexts.

On the contrary, most of the students in the 4th cycle do not face non-linguistic difficulties compared to the 3rd cycle. They exhibit a higher level of self-confidence, as over half of the participants (75%) reported feeling confident when engaging in the class interactions. Additionally, the majority of students (77%) stated that they rarely experience anxiety during oral activities. Similarly, shyness does not appear to affect the development of their speaking capacities, as 75% disagreed with this as a factor to inhibit their skills.

Moreover, a significant distinction between both cycles is that most 4th cycle students do not feel judge by anyone (88%), meaning that the fear of being judge does not represent an obstacle to their language learning. Likewise, the fear of making mistakes is not perceived as a difficulty, with over half of the participants (72%) affirming that this factor does not impact them. Furthermore, the use of Spanish as a native language is infrequent among students (58%). This could be attributed to their greater exposure to English, as the majority of subjects in the 4th cycle are taught in this language, making communication in the target language less challenging.

Therefore, the non-linguistic difficulties presented exclusively in the 3rd cycle include: ***lack of self-confidence, anxiety, shyness, fear of judgment, fear of making mistakes, and mother tongue interference***. In contrast, the majority of participants in the 4th cycle did not exhibit any of these issues as shown in the questionnaire responses.

These results can be alike to the study of Bermello & Vaca (2022) where similar results were found, showing that the most notable non-linguistic factor that prevented students from enhancing their speaking skill was the fear of making mistakes (44,12%) followed by anxiety, nervousness, and fear of making mistakes, which predominate over linguistic factors of which pronunciation and lack of vocabulary were mentioned as issues. Furthermore, Chand (2021) in his investigation presented related data indicating that the majority of students faced non-linguistic difficulties such as: lack of confidence, hesitation, anxiety, fear of criticism, and fear of committing mistakes. However, a minority of learners also presented linguistic difficulties such as: lack of appropriate vocabulary, pronunciation and poor grammar knowledge. Thus, the information obtained in the present research is closely related to the aforementioned studies, which reinforces the great influence that non-linguistic factors have on students and the challenge they represent for the appropriate development of their speaking skill.

The notable difference between the cycles could be attributed to the proportion of subjects taught in English and Spanish in the career. Third-cycle students, who have 4 subjects in Spanish (UTC PINE Curriculum, 2021) struggle to communicate effectively in English. With only 1 subject conducted in English (UTC PINE Curriculum, 2021), they are neither used to thinking in the target language nor to managing in contexts where its consistent use is required. Therefore, this limited exposure leads to numerous non-linguistic difficulties that hinder the proper improvement of their speaking skills, resulting in a lower level of English proficiency. Moreover, these factors contribute to the low participation levels among students. Feeling uncomfortable, insecure, anxious, and shy inhibits them from participating in oral activities proposed by the teacher. This eliminates opportunities for learners to practice the language and thereby increase their knowledge. This finding raises concern, as constant and active participation is crucial during the language learning process.

Teacher's Role

Brown & Lee (2015), cited in Khanh (2024) mention:

In the contemporary educational landscape, teachers are tasked not only with the responsibility of imparting knowledge but also with the creation of an environment conducive to effective learning. Recognizing and addressing the diverse learning capacities

of students, English teachers play a pivotal role in fostering an atmosphere that supports and motivates learners, contributing to a more successful language acquisition experience. (p.79)

In other words, teachers are recognized as key emissaries in motivating and supporting students during their language learning process, as their role does not only involve teaching English, but also fostering a positive atmosphere that facilitates effective and meaningful EFL acquisition. Likewise, it is important for teachers to identify the diverse students' learning abilities, which in turn requires adaptive teaching methodologies focused on individual needs.

In this sense, thanks to the questionnaire applied to the aforementioned cycles, it can be understood that the role of the teacher is essential for the development of students' speaking skills. Thus, the results are presented based on what Harmer (2001), cited in Rochsantiningasih (2020) suggests "three crucial aspects to create effective language class: language environment, language system, and the teachers themselves" (p.11).

Language Environment

This aspect constitutes the environment in which students learn. According to the questionnaire, 57% of 3rd cycle students and 81% of 4th cycle students strongly agree that the teacher creates a comfortable and safe atmosphere where they feel free to ask questions and clarify doubts. Additionally, it also encompasses language exposure in the class. The results show that 100% of the 3rd cycle participants and 56% of 4th cycle students fully agree that the teacher uses English the entire class, highlighting her effort to immerse them in the target language. Finally, this factor refers to opportunities to practice the language meaningfully. Most third-cycle students (64%) and all 4th cycle respondents (100%) indicated that the teacher consistently encourages participation in oral activities such as dialogues, role-plays, and debates. These activities simulate real-life scenarios, enabling students to interact and develop their speaking skills in practical contexts.

Language System

This feature refers to the teacher's ability to teach the main characteristics of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Hence, the teacher corrects her students when necessary, guides them in the correct use of grammar rules when formulating sentences, teaches them the appropriate use of vocabulary, and the correct pronunciation of these words when they

participate in speaking activities. This is why, in the case of the 4th cycle, the majority of the survey participants (72%) indicated that when they make mistakes and their teacher corrects them, it does not negatively influence them because this does not represent a greater issue.

The teacher

This element constitutes underscores the teacher's pedagogical competence in effectively delivering the class. Consequently, 100% of the third cycle students and 75% of the fourth cycle students agree that the teacher employs appropriate teaching strategies to instruct English and successfully enhance their speaking skills. Additionally, this factor encompasses the teacher's capacity to motivate the class. All participants from both cycles (100%) strongly agree that the teacher encourages them to improve their speaking skills, thereby boosting their self-confidence.

9. RESEARCH IMPACTS

The following research represents a great impact in both, the educational and social spheres as it shows the main difficulties that students face when developing their English speaking skills. By identifying that the principal obstacles are those related to non-linguistic factors, this research provides relevant information for teachers and authorities to design more effective teaching strategies. In particular, the results revealed that 3rd cycle learners, receiving limited exposure to English within their curriculum, are the most affected and show the need to improve their immersion in the language from the beginning of the career.

At a social level, this research can be useful in order to improve the learning experience of students from the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career, and to promote an inclusive and empathic classroom environment. Knowing that emotional factors directly affect English oral performance, teacher can take action in order to reduce anxiety and build confidence among students. Therefore, the information of this research not only benefits learners by facilitating their language development, but also strengthen teachers' pedagogical practices, generating a positive impact on English teaching process in higher education.

Finally, it opens the door for future investigations that explore in depth the relationship between the academic load in Spanish and de improvement of English language skills, especially in the

early stages of university education. It also lays the groundwork for possible implementation of new strategies to balance the curriculum with greater exposure to English. Thus, the impact of this research extends beyond the immediate context.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. Conclusions

1. The construction of the theoretical framework, based on academic theories proposed by different authors, allowed to solidly support the present research. Consequently, it is concluded that all the concepts detailed through the theoretical framework such as linguistic difficulties, non-linguistic difficulties, speaking skills, among others, influence directly the English learning process, since they affect the proper development of the students' speaking skills acquisition. They also constitute different internal and external obstacles which limit the learners' capacity to produce the language effectively and lead them not to communicate appropriately and to express their ideas naturally in different contexts, having a negative impact in their English proficiency.
2. Through the implementation of checklists, interviews and surveys, the difficulties faced by undergraduate students when developing their oral skills in English can be identified. Therefore, the results showed that the main linguistic difficulties presented in both cycles were: *poor pronunciation, lack of vocabulary knowledge, fluency, and lack of grammar*. On the contrary, non-linguistic difficulties were only evident in 3rd cycle students: *lack of self-confidence, anxiety, shyness, fear of being judged, fear of making mistakes, and the mother tongue interference*.
3. After interpreting the information from the data collection instruments applied to 36 third and fourth cycle students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career, it is concluded that non-linguistic difficulties are prevalent and have a higher level of impact on learners when developing their English-speaking skills. On the other hand, the students' participation from both cycles was directly linked to their level of English knowledge and their self-confidence when speaking. Finally, it is also concluded that the teacher's strategies and techniques such as dialogues, debates, role-plays, and motivation towards the English importance in learners' daily life were not

part of the difficulties that interfere the correct development of students' oral skills. However, it was found that students require a very confident and respectful environment among them, since some of them mentioned feeling judged by their own classmates, creating a limited learning atmosphere.

4. The research presented limitations due to the time available for its development. As Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2014) point out, the rigor in research depends largely on the depth of the analysis and data collection, aspects that were restricted by the short time frame established. The lack of time prevented a broader exploration of literature, as well as the application of more detailed methods for the collection and analysis of information. In future research, it would be advisable to extend the study period to obtain more solid and representative results.

10.2. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that teachers of the career implement adequate strategies to simultaneously address problems related to the target language and its external factors. Likewise, it is advised that teachers include more interesting activities in their lesson plans so that students can openly practice the language in their daily life and class environments. For example, the use of dramatizations with various everyday topics or interview simulators; foster cooperative learning through practical group projects or academic presentations; and even integrate technological resources like educational videos, online conferences, music, or TV series in English. These dynamics can allow learners to become familiar with the use of English in real contexts, reducing their anxiety and improving their confidence when expressing themselves inside and outside the classroom.
2. It is proposed that the teachers implement a continuous monitoring system for their students based on formative assessment tools such as interviews, surveys, or reflective journals, in order to diagnose the linguistic and non-linguistic obstacles faced by learners. With this information, personalized plans can be designed according to the difficulties to be able to identify them in an early stage. This can guide teachers to efficiently solve students' obstacles without letting them become more complicated over time. On the other hand, it is necessary that students deal

with their linguistic difficulties by practicing the language more frequently outside the academic context. For example, they can choose an activity that they enjoy doing in Spanish such as listening to music, watching movies, or reading books and do it in English. This could introduce the language in a natural way and can prevent students from feeling obligated to do these activities. In addition, since non-linguistic difficulties are more prevalent, it is recommended to implement emotional intelligence workshops, and academic coaching sessions that allow strengthening of self-esteem. Finally, collaboration with professionals in psycho-pedagogy could contribute to the creation of strategies to reduce the stress associated with English oral production.

3. It is recommended that a speaking and listening test be incorporated into future research, as these skills are essential for assessing comprehensive language proficiency. The inclusion of these tests would allow for a more complete view of the participants' level and improve the validity of the results, ensuring a more balanced assessment of language skills.
4. It is recommended that both students and teachers create a safer and confident classroom atmosphere that encourage active participation. Additionally, it is suggested that teachers establish rules that promote respect and mutual support among learners, so that students do not feel afraid of criticism speaking English. For instance, teachers can include positive feedback as a strategy for building an inclusive and motivating environment. Finally, it is recommended that the authorities of the career incorporate more subjects in English from the early cycles as currently most of them are taught in Spanish, which limits learners' exposure to the language. Thus, increasing the number of subjects in English would help students get used to its use gradually, so that their skills in the target language can be properly boost. Hence, early immersion in English could not only reduce anxiety and shyness when speaking, but it could also help decrease students' dropout rates.

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12. APPENDICES

Appendix A








Checklist – 3rd cycle








CRITERION	YES	NO	OBSERVATIONS
1. The teacher motivates students to participate during the class.	✓		The teacher asks several questions to the students so they can speak and interact among them.
2. The teacher uses the appropriate language during the whole class.	✓		The teacher uses the appropriate language (English) during the entire class.
3. The teacher creates a comfortable environment where students feel free to participate.	✓		The teacher is very friendly and kind. She helps students and ask them if they have any doubt about the topic.
4. The teacher creates activities that promote the speaking skills development.	✓		The teacher develops oral presentations during the class as an activity to make students practice speaking and interact among them. She also applies pair activities and dialogues.
5. Teaching technics are applied by the teacher to make students participate.	✓		Even though the teacher asks multiple questions; students do not want to speak.
6. The content is presented in a dynamic way to make students feel interested.	✓		The teacher uses activities and technological resources to make the class topic interesting to the students. For example, she uses debates and pair discussions about real-life situations. Additionally, she uses audios as a resource to explain the class.
7. Students feel confident while speaking in the class.		✓	They look nervous and anxious while talking. They answer shortly and use a very low tone of voice.

<p>8. The rest of the class reacts in a proper way when one of the students is participating.</p>			<p>Some students do not pay attention when one of them is participating. They talk between them using their mother tongue and laugh at the classmate who is speaking.</p>
<p>9. Students feel any time of discomfort while speaking in the class.</p>			<p>Students look shy so they do not participate or speak unless the teacher ask them to do it.</p>
<p>10. Students use adequate vocabulary to express themselves when participating.</p>			<p>Most of the students do not have enough knowledge about what kind of vocabulary they can use to answer the teacher's questions. Their level of English was limited.</p>
<p>11. Students use correct grammar when participating.</p>			<p>They cannot formulate complete sentences grammatically correct Students use short answers to respond to the teacher's questions such as: yes, no, I like pet.</p>
<p>12. Students have previous knowledge about the topic to help them easily participate in class.</p>			<p>Most of them seem not to have previous knowledge about the topic so they inhibit themselves to speak and participate.</p>
<p>13. Students react in a proper way when the teacher or classmates correct them.</p>			<p>Students stop talking and get very shy when the teacher corrects any mistake.</p>
<p>14. If making any mistake, students feel any type of discomfort.</p>			<p>They seem uncomfortable and speak even more lower.</p>

Appendix B

Checklist – 4th cycle

CRITERION	YES	NO	OBSERVATIONS
1. The teacher motivates students to participate during the class.			The teacher asks several questions to the students so they can speak and interact among them.
2. The teacher uses the appropriate language during the whole class.			The teacher uses the appropriate language (English) during the entire class.
3. The teacher creates a comfortable environment where students feel free to participate.			The teacher acts very friendly and kind. She helps students and ask them if they have any doubt about the topic.
4. The teacher creates activities that promote the speaking skills development.			The teacher develops an oral presentation during the class as an activity to make students practice speaking and interact among them.
5. Teaching technics are applied by the teacher to make students participate.			She applies debates, pair activities and dialogues. Even though the teacher asks multiple questions students do not want to speak.
6. The content is presented in a dynamic way to make students feel interested.			The teacher uses technological resources to make the class topic interesting to the students. For example, she uses debates and pair discussions about real-life situations. Additionally, she uses audios as a resource to explain the class.
7. Students feel confident while speaking in the class.			In general terms, they look comfortable while speaking. They seem nervous sometimes but they speak with a confident tone of voice interacting constantly with the teacher.

<p>8. The rest of the class reacts in a proper way when one of the students is participating.</p>			<p>The rest of the class pay attention while the student is participating. They stay quiet and wait until their classmate finish talking</p>
<p>9. Students feel any time of discomfort while speaking in the class.</p>			<p>Students do not look nervous. Most of them participate constantly during the class.</p>
<p>10. Students use adequate vocabulary to express themselves when participating.</p>			<p>The majority of students do not have enough knowledge about what kind of vocabulary they can use to answer the teacher's questions. However, they keep participating.</p>
<p>11. Students use correct grammar when participating.</p>			<p>Most of them are able to formulate complete and coherent sentences grammatically correct. They do not answer the teacher's questions shortly.</p>
<p>12. Students have previous knowledge about the topic to help them easily participate in class.</p>			<p>Most of the students have prior knowledge about the topic so their level of participation is higher.</p>
<p>13. Students react in a proper way when the teacher or classmates correct them.</p>			<p>Students reacted in a positive way when the teacher corrected their mistakes.</p>
<p>14. If making any mistake, students feel any type of discomfort.</p>			<p>They do not look uncomfortable. They seem like they do not notice when they make mistakes.</p>

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Linguistic and Non-linguistic Difficulties that Undergraduate Students Present in order to Develop their English Speaking Skills.

Interviewer: Cristina Guerrero

General Objective:

- To analyze the linguistics and non-linguistics difficulties to develop English speaking skills in undergraduate students from the 3rd and 4th cycles of the Technical University of Cotopaxi in the period from October 2024 to March 2025.

Specific Objective:

- To recognize the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that students form 3rd and 4th cycles of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career present during the development of their speaking skills.

Instructions

1. Please, listen each question carefully.
2. Answer each question honestly.

Questions

Section 1: Linguistic Difficulties.

1. What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
2. Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
3. Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?

Section 2: Non-linguistic Difficulties.

4. Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
5. How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?

6. Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?

Section 3: Teacher's Perception

7. How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
8. Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
9. If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
10. How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?

Section 4: Extra factors

11. Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
12. How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?
13. Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?
14. Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?

Guía para la Entrevista

Dificultades Lingüísticas y No-lingüísticas que presentan los estudiantes de pregrado para desarrollar sus habilidades orales en Inglés.

Entrevistador: Cristina Guerrero

Objetivo General:

- Analizar las dificultades lingüísticas y no lingüísticas que afectan el desarrollo de las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés, en los estudiantes de pregrado de los ciclos de tercero y cuarto de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi durante el periodo académico Octubre 2024 – Marzo 2025.

Objetivo Específico:

- Reconocer las dificultades lingüísticas y no lingüísticas que presentan los estudiantes de tercer y cuarto ciclo de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros durante el desarrollo de sus habilidades de expresión oral.

Instrucciones:

1. Por favor, escucha cuidadosamente cada pregunta.
2. Responde cada pregunta con honestidad.

Preguntas

Sección 1: Dificultades Lingüísticas.

1. ¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
2. ¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?

Sección 2: Dificultades No Lingüísticas.

4. ¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?

6. ¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con que frecuencia?

Sección 3: Percepción del Profesor

7. ¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
8. ¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
9. Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
10. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?

Sección 4: Factores Extra

11. ¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?
12. ¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?
13. ¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?
14. ¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?

Appendix D

Transcript Interview – 3rd cycle

Participant 1

3rd semester

Interviewer:	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 1:	My main difficulty is nerves but a pronunciation.
Interviewer:	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 1:	Not much, some grammar topics are difficult for me to understand and that's why it's difficult for me to formulate sentences when I have to speak.
Interviewer:	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?
Participant 1:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
Participant 1:	Yes, a lot. Because I am afraid of making mistakes and of my classmates making fun of me.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?
Participant 1:	It demotivates me and makes me even more nervous.
Interviewer:	Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?
Participant 1:	Honestly, I feel more comfortable when I speak in Spanish because it is easier for me to express myself and for the rest of my classmates to understand me.
Interviewer:	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 1:	The teacher motivates us with positive comments. Honestly, she motivates us a lot to speak in English.
Interviewer:	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 1:	Yes
Interviewer:	If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
Participant 1:	It makes me feel bad and I get more nervous.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 1:	A little nervous but I feel okay because I learn more.
Interviewer:	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?

Participant 1: Yes, the teacher uses fun activities such as making us sing a song, games and other activities in which we all participate.

Interviewer: **How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?**

Participant 1: I don't usually participate much. For example, I may know and have the answer to what the teacher asks us, but I get nervous about making mistakes and I prefer that another classmate participate. I also think I'm an introverted person.

Interviewer: **Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?**

Participant 1: A little

Interviewer: **Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?**

Participant 1: Yes, it definitely helps. But in my case, I think I need more previous knowledge and that is why I don't participate a lot.

Participant 2

3th semester

Interviewer:	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 2:	My main difficulty is nerves.
Interviewer:	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 2:	Yes, I think I have enough grammar knowledge.
Interviewer:	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?
Participant 2:	Yes, because as I get nervous my fluency is not very good.
Interviewer:	Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
Participant 2:	Yes, a lot because I am afraid of making mistakes
Interviewer:	How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?
Participant 2:	It doesn't really affect me because I don't care about other people's opinions.
Interviewer:	Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?
Participant 2:	I try to use English always because the teacher asks as to speak only in English and it is a rule of the class as well.
Interviewer:	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 2:	The teacher always motivates us to speak more English because she tells us that it is very necessary not only for our careers but also in our daily lives.
Interviewer:	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 2:	Yes, she is a very good teacher.
Interviewer:	If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
Participant 2:	Honestly, I get even more nervous.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 2:	I take it in a positive way because in that way I can learn more.
Interviewer:	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 2:	Yes, the teacher uses questions, recaps of previous classes and oral activities.
Interviewer:	How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?
Participant 2:	Honestly, not much because I am an introverted person and shy to participate.
Interviewer:	Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?

Participant 2: Yes, definitely.

Interviewer: **Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?**

Participant 2: Yes, because I already have the base of topics that I learned in school and that has helped me perform better in class.

Participant 3

3rd semester

Interviewer:	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 3:	My main difficulty is nerves and the lack of knowledge of vocabulary.
Interviewer:	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 3:	No, I think I need more knowledge about grammar.
Interviewer:	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?
Participant 3:	Yes, I think I need more fluency and it stops me from speaking
Interviewer:	Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
Participant 3:	Yes, a lot. Because I am afraid of making mistakes and that my other classmates can judge me.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?
Participant 3:	It demotivates me, I feel bad.
Interviewer:	Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?
Participant 3:	I prefer to use Spanish because I don't have enough vocabulary and it's difficult for me to communicate in English. I also feel much more comfortable.
Interviewer:	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 3:	The teacher puts pressure on us in a good way to speak more English.
Interviewer:	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 3:	Yes, the teacher is very good. She always motivates us to learn more, she tells us that English is not only learned in the classroom but also at home with movies or songs.
Interviewer:	If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
Participant 3:	If it makes me feel bad, I think it does affect me. Because I don't have the right words.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 3:	Nervous, but at least now I know what I did wrong and I can improve next time.
Interviewer:	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 3:	Yes, the teacher makes us role-play real life situations, like being in restaurants, so she always explains and emphasizes the importance of learning English.

Interviewer: **How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?**

Participant 3: I rarely participate because I think I'm an introvert. Also, since I don't know much vocabulary, I'm afraid my classmates will make fun of me.

Interviewer: **Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?**

Participant 3: Not much

Interviewer: **Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?**

Participant 3: Yes, it helps, but I haven't studied some of the topics that the teacher presents us before, so it's difficult for me to participate in topics that I don't know about.

Transcript Interview (Spanish) - 3rd cycle

Participante 1

3er semestre

Interviewer:	¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
Participant 1:	Mi mayor dificultad son los nervios, pero también la pronunciación.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
Participant 1:	No mucho, algunos temas de gramáticas se me hacen difícil de entender y por eso se me hace difícil formular oraciones cuando tengo que hablar.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?
Participant 1:	Si
Interviewer:	¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
Participant 1:	Si, mucho. Me da miedo equivocarme y que mis compañeros se burlen de mí.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?
Participant 1:	Me desmotiva y me pongo aún más nerviosa.
Interviewer:	¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con qué frecuencia?
Participant 1:	La verdad es que me siento más cómoda cuando hablo en Español porque es más fácil para mi poder expresarme y que el resto de mis compañeros me entiendan.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
Participant 1:	La profe nos motiva con comentarios positivos. La verdad es que nos motiva mucho para hablar en inglés.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
Participant 1:	Si
Interviewer:	Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
Participant 1:	Me hace sentir mal y me pongo más nerviosa.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?
Participant 1:	Un poco nerviosa pero bien, porque así aprendo más.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?
Participant 1:	Si, la profe utiliza actividades lúdicas como hacernos cantar una canción, juegos y otras actividades en las que participemos todos.

Interviewer: ¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?

Participant 1: Suelo no participar mucho. Por ejemplo, yo puedo saber y tener la respuesta de lo que la profe nos pregunta, pero me pone nerviosa equivocarme y mejor prefiero que otro compañero participe. A demás creo que soy una persona introvertida.

Interviewer: ¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?

Participant 1: Un poco

Interviewer: ¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?

Participant 1: Si, definitivamente ayuda. Pero en mi caso, creo que me falta más conocimiento previo y por eso no participo mucho

Participante 2

3er semestre

Interviewer:	¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
Participant 2:	Mi mayor dificultad son los nervios.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
Participant 2:	Si, considero que tengo suficiente conocimiento de gramática.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?
Participant 2:	Si, por que como me pongo nerviosa mi fluidez no es buena.
Interviewer:	¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
Participant 2:	Si, mucho. Porque tengo miedo a equivocarme.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?
Participant 2:	A mi realmente no me afecta porque no me interesa la opinión de las demás personas.
Interviewer:	¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con que frecuencia?
Participant 2:	Intento utilizar siempre inglés por que la profe nos pide que hablemos solo en inglés y además es una regla de la clase.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
Participant 2:	La profe siempre nos motiva a hablar más ingles porque nos dice que es muy necesario no solo para nuestra carrera sino también en nuestra vida diaria.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
Participant 2:	Si, es muy buena profesora.
Interviewer:	Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
Participant 2:	La verdad me pongo más nerviosa.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?
Participant 2:	Lo tomo con buena actitud porque así puedo aprender más.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?
Participant 2:	Si, la profe utiliza preguntas, recapitulaciones de las clases anteriores y actividades orales.
Interviewer:	¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?
Participant 2:	La verdad no mucho porque soy una persona introvertida y tímida para participar.

Interviewer: ¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?

Participant 2: Si, definitivamente.

Interviewer: ¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?

Participant 2: Si, porque ya tengo bases de temas que aprendí en el colegio y eso me ha ayudado a desenvolverme mejor en la clase.

Participante 3

3er semestre

Interviewer:	¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
Participant 3:	Mi mayor dificultad son los nervios y la falta de conocimiento de vocabulario.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
Participant 3:	No, creo que aún me falta tener más conocimiento de la gramática.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?
Participant 3:	Si, a mí me hace falta mucha fluidez y eso me impide hablar
Interviewer:	¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
Participant 3:	Si, bastante. Porque me da miedo de cometer errores y que otros compañeros me juzguen.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?
Participant 3:	Me desmotiva, me siento mal.
Interviewer:	¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con que frecuencia?
Participant 3:	Prefiero utilizar español por que como no tengo suficiente vocabulario, se me hace difícil comunicarme en inglés. A demás me siento mucho más cómoda.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
Participant 3:	La profe nos presiona en el buen sentido para que hablemos más en inglés.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
Participant 3:	Si, la profe es muy buena. Siempre nos motiva a aprender más, nos dice que el inglés no solo se aprender en el aula sino también en nuestras casas con películas o canciones.
Interviewer:	Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
Participant 3:	Si me hace sentir mal, creo que si me afecta. Porque no me se las palabras adecuadas.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?
Participant 3:	Nerviosa, pero al menos ya se en que me equivoque y en la próxima oportunidad puedo mejorar.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?

Participant 3: Si, la profe nos hace role-plays de la vida real como el estar en restaurantes entonces ella siempre nos explica y recalca la importancia de aprender inglés.

Interviewer: **¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?**

Participant 3: Participo pocas veces porque creo que soy una persona introvertida. Además, como no se mucho vocabulario me da miedo que mis compañeros de burlen de mí.

Interviewer: **¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?**

Participant 3: No mucho.

Interviewer: **¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?**

Participant 3: Si, si ayuda, pero algunos temas que nos enseña la profe yo no los he estudiado antes así que se me hace difícil participar en temas que no se.

Appendix E

Transcript Interview – 4th cycle

Participant 1

4th semester

Interviewer:	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 1:	My main difficulty is the lack of vocabulary to express myself.
Interviewer:	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 1:	Yes, I consider I have enough grammar knowledge.
Interviewer:	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?
Participant 1:	Yes, I think the lack of fluency is something that stops me from correctly expressing myself.
Interviewer:	Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
Participant 1:	Not really, I like to participate.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?
Participant 1:	Honestly, it doesn't affect me at all. I don't pay attention to those things.
Interviewer:	Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?
Participant 1:	I feel much more comfortable speaking in Spanish because I can express myself better that way. Since I don't have much vocabulary knowledge, it's easier for me to say everything in Spanish. But I also think it's because I haven't found classmates who want to practice English with me and develop our speaking skills together.
Interviewer:	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 1:	She motivates us a lot by correcting us on how to use vocabulary or grammar to express ourselves better and encourages us to improve.
Interviewer:	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 1:	Yes, she is friendly and always has a good attitude. Also, the atmosphere that the teacher creates during class is good.
Interviewer:	If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
Participant 1:	I like to know where I went wrong, I like to be corrected and to know how I can improve. Honestly, being corrected doesn't make me feel in any negative way because that's how you learn, having someone who can correct you.

Interviewer:	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 1:	I feel good because I learn in this way. It doesn't make me angry, sad or demotivates me.
Interviewer:	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 1:	Yes, the teacher uses interesting tools such as videos, songs and always gives the class in an interesting way.
Interviewer:	How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?
Participant 1:	I participate regularly because I really like to talk. But I also think that it depends on the personality of each student. In my case, I consider myself an extroverted person and that is why I really like to participate.
Interviewer:	Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?
Participant 1:	Yes, because it is content that I have probably already studied in high school.
Interviewer:	Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?
Participant 1:	Yes, I think that having prior knowledge of a topic helps us to develop verbal skills better.

Participant 2

Semester 4th

Interviewer:	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 2:	My main difficulty is the lack of vocabulary.
Interviewer:	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 2:	Yes, I think I have enough grammar knowledge.
Interviewer:	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?
Participant 2:	In my case, the lack of fluency does influence the way I speak.
Interviewer:	Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
Participant 2:	No, I think there is no reason for me to be nervous. All of my classmates are there to learn just like me.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?
Participant 2:	It doesn't really affect me.
Interviewer:	Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?
Participant 2:	I try to use English always because I know in that way I can learn more.
Interviewer:	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 2:	The teacher motivates us by making friendly comments so that we participate.
Interviewer:	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 2:	Yes.
Interviewer:	If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
Participant 2:	Honestly, it does not influence me negatively.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 2:	I do like it when the teacher corrects me because that way I learn more.
Interviewer:	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 2:	Yes, the teacher uses games, we guess sentences and all those dynamics are interesting.
Interviewer:	How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?
Participant 2:	Yes, I do participate, but I know I could participate more if I had more vocabulary knowledge. Also, I think I am an extrovert who likes to talk a lot, but I just need to learn more vocabulary.
Interviewer:	Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?
Participant 2:	Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?

Participant 2: Yes, when I already know what the topic is about, it is much easier for me to participate and I even enjoy it more.

Participant 3

4th semester

Interviewer:	What is the main difficulty you face when trying to express yourself in English?
Participant 3:	My biggest difficulty is the lack of vocabulary knowledge.
Interviewer:	Do you think you have enough knowledge about grammar to formulate sentences and express them orally? Why?
Participant 3:	Yes, I consider that I have enough knowledge of grammar.
Interviewer:	Do you consider that lack of fluency is a factor that prevents you from appropriately developing speaking skills?
Participant 3:	Yes, it is a factor that prevents me from speaking well.
Interviewer:	Do you feel nervous when you are participating in any oral activity during class? Why?
Participant 3:	No at all.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when you notice that you are being judge when you speak in the class?
Participant 3:	It doesn't affect me because I don't pay attention to it.
Interviewer:	Why do you use your mother tongue when speaking during the class? How frequently?
Participant 3:	I don't use Spanish during English classes because I want to learn and even if I make mistakes I always try to use English when I speak.
Interviewer:	How does your teacher motivate you when you are speaking?
Participant 3:	Yes, the teacher gives us a lot of activities in English so we are forced to speak.
Interviewer:	Do you think that your teacher has a positive and friendly attitude during the class?
Participant 3:	Yes.
Interviewer:	If you make any mistake, how do you feel?
Participant 3:	It doesn't make me feel bad or uncomfortable.
Interviewer:	How do you feel when your teacher corrects a mistake that you made?
Participant 3:	I appreciate when the teacher corrects me because that way I learn more.
Interviewer:	Do you think that the content on the class is presented in a dynamic way? Why?
Participant 3:	Yes, because we do role-plays, conversations and debates, then all these activities catch our attention and the class becomes interesting and dynamic.
Interviewer:	How often do you participate in speaking activities during the class?
Participant 3:	I always participate in all activities because I am extroverted and I like to talk a lot. Also, I am aware that the more I participate, the more I will learn.
Interviewer:	Do you have previous knowledge about the topic?

Participant 3: Yes, I consider that I have good basis in English.

Interviewer: **Do you think that having prior knowledge about the topic helps you participate more in class and thus develop your speaking skills even more?**

Participant 3: Yes, knowing the topic of the class beforehand makes me participate more, even with more confidence.

Transcript Interview (Spanish) – 4th cycle

Participant 1

4th semester

Interviewer:	¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
Participant 1:	Mi mayor dificultad es la falta de vocabulario para expresarme.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
Participant 1:	Si, considero que tengo suficiente conocimiento de gramática.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?
Participant 1:	Si, pienso que la falta de fluidez es algo que si me detiene de expresarme correctamente.
Interviewer:	¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
Participant 1:	La verdad no, porque si me gusta participar
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?
Participant 1:	La verdad no me afecta en lo absoluto, no presto atención a esas cosas.
Interviewer:	¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con que frecuencia?
Participant 1:	Me siento mucho más cómodo al hablar en español porque así me puedo expresar de mejor forma. Como no tengo mucho conocimiento de vocabulario, se me hace más fácil decir todo en español. Pero creo también que es porque no he encontrado compañeros que quieran practicar ingles conmigo y desarrollar nuestra habilidad de habla juntos.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
Participant 1:	Si nos motiva bastante al corregirnos sobre cómo utilizar el vocabulario o la gramática para expresarnos mejor y nos incentiva a mejorar.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
Participant 1:	Si, es amigable y siempre tiene una buena actitud. Además, el ambiente que crea la profe durante la clase es bueno.
Interviewer:	Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
Participant 1:	Me gusta saber en qué me equivoqué, me gusta que me corrijan y así saber cómo puedo mejorar. La verdad, el que me corrijan no me genera ningún sentimiento negativo porque así es como se aprende, teniendo alguien que te corrija.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?

Participant 1:	Me siento bien porque así aprendo. No me enoja, no me pone triste, ni tampoco me desmotiva.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?
Participant 1:	Si, la profe utiliza herramientas interesantes como videos, canciones y siempre da la clase de forma interesante.
Interviewer:	¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?
Participant 1:	Yo participo regularmente porque me gusta mucho hablar. Pero pienso también que depende de la personalidad de cada estudiante, en mi caso me considero una persona extrovertida y por eso me gusta mucho participar.
Interviewer:	¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?
Participant 1:	Si, por que es contenido que probablemente ya lo he estudiado en el colegio.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?
Participant 1:	Si, creo que el tener conocimiento previo de algún tema ayuda mucho a que los estudiantes nos desenvolvamos verbalmente de mejor manera.

Participant 2

4th semester

Interviewer:	¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
Participant 2:	Mi mayor dificultad la falta de vocabulario.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
Participant 2:	Si, considero que tengo suficiente conocimiento de gramática.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?
Participant 2:	En mi caso, la falta de fluidez si influye en la forma que hablo.
Interviewer:	¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
Participant 2:	No, creo que no hay razón para ponerme nerviosa. Mis compañeros están ahí para aprender al igual que yo.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?
Participant 2:	La verdad no me afecta.
Interviewer:	¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con qué frecuencia?
Participant 2:	Siempre intento utilizar inglés porque así yo sé que puedo aprender más.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
Participant 2:	La profe si nos motiva haciendo comentarios amigables para que participemos.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
Participant 2:	Si.
Interviewer:	Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
Participant 2:	La verdad no influye negativamente en mí.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?
Participant 2:	A mi si me gusta que la profe me corrija porque así aprendo más.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?
Participant 2:	Si, la profe utiliza juegos, adivinamos oraciones y todas esas dinámicas son interesantes.
Interviewer:	¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?
Participant 2:	Si participo, pero yo sé que podría participar más si tuviera más conocimiento de vocabulario. Además, creo que soy alguien extrovertida que le gusta mucho hablar, solo que me falta aprender más vocabulario.
Interviewer:	¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?

Participant 2: Si,

Interviewer: ¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?

Participant 2: Si, cuando yo ya sé de qué se trata el tema se me hace mucho más fácil participar e incluso lo disfruto más.

Participant 3

4th semester

Interviewer:	¿Cuál es la principal dificultad que enfrentas al expresarte en inglés?
Participant 3:	Mi mayor dificultad es la falta de conocimiento de vocabulario.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tienes suficiente conocimiento de gramática para formular oraciones y expresarlas oralmente? ¿Por qué?
Participant 3:	Si, considero que tengo suficiente conocimiento de gramática.
Interviewer:	¿Consideras que la falta de fluidez es un factor que te impide desarrollar adecuadamente las habilidades de expresión oral?
Participant 3:	Si, es un factor que me impide hablar bien.
Interviewer:	¿Te sientes nervioso/a cuando participas en alguna actividad oral durante la clase? ¿Por qué?
Participant 3:	No, para nada.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando notas que te están juzgando al hablar en clase?
Participant 3:	La verdad no me afecta porque no le pongo atención a eso.
Interviewer:	¿Por qué utilizas tu lengua materna al hablar durante la clase? ¿Con qué frecuencia?
Participant 3:	Yo no utilizo español durante las clases de inglés porque yo quiero aprender y aún me que equivoque siempre intento utilizar ingles cuando hablo.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te motiva tu profesor/a cuando estás hablando?
Participant 3:	Si, la profe nos hace muchas actividades en ingles así que nos obligan a hablar.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que tu profesor/a tiene una actitud positiva y amistosa durante la clase?
Participant 3:	Si
Interviewer:	Si cometes algún error, ¿cómo te sientes?
Participant 3:	No me hace sentir mal ni incomoda.
Interviewer:	¿Cómo te sientes cuando tu profesor/a corrige un error que cometiste?
Participant 3:	Agradezco que me corrija porque así aprendo más.
Interviewer:	¿Crees que el contenido de la clase se presenta de una manera dinámica? ¿Por qué?
Participant 3:	Si, porque hacemos role-plays, conversaciones y debates, Entonces todas estas actividades nos llaman la atención y la clase se vuelve interesante y dinámica.
Interviewer:	¿Con qué frecuencia participas en actividades de expresión oral durante la clase?

Participant 3: Participo siempre y en todas las actividades porque soy extrovertida y me gusta hablar mucho. Además, soy consciente que mientras más participo más voy a aprender.

Interviewer: **¿Tienes conocimientos previos sobre el tema?**

Participant 3: Si, considero que tengo buenas bases de inglés.

Interviewer: **¿Consideras que el tener conocimientos previos sobre el tema te ayuda a participar más en clase y así desarrollar más tus habilidades orales?**

Participant 3: Si, el saber previamente el tema de la clase me hace participar a un más, incluso con más confianza.

Appendix F

Questionnaire Guide

Google Form questionnaire links

3rd cycle:

<https://forms.gle/kUrTYVwrcCMVruqF8>

4th cycle:

<https://forms.gle/ag8xKTKnH2VxxQYw9>

General Objective:

- To analyze the linguistics and non-linguistics difficulties to develop English speaking skills in undergraduate students from the 3rd and 4th cycles of the Technical University of Cotopaxi in the period from October 2024 to March 2025.

Specific Objective:

- To recognize the linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties that students from 3rd and 4th cycles of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career present during the development of their speaking skills.

Instructions

3. Please, read each question carefully.
4. Select the option that best reflect your opinion.
5. Answer each question honestly.

Section 1: Linguistic Difficulties.

1. **How difficult is it for you to learn and apply new vocabulary when you are speaking?**
 - a) Very difficult
 - b) Difficult
 - c) Easy
 - d) Very Easy
2. **Do you think that your pronunciation is an obstacle to communicate with others?**
 - a) Always

- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

3. How much does English grammar difficult your speaking fluency?

- a) A lot
- b) Quite a bit
- c) A little
- d) Not at all

4. How do you rate your listening comprehension in a conversation?

- a) Very low
- b) Low
- c) Good
- d) Very good

Section 2: Non-linguistic Difficulties.

5. How confident do you feel when you speak in front of the class?

- a) A lot
- b) Quite a bit
- c) A little
- d) Nothing

6. How frequently do you feel anxious when you have to participate in a speaking activity in the class?

- a) Always
- b) Frequently
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

7. Do you think shyness is a factor that inhibit you from improving your communicative skills?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree

d) Strongly disagree

8. Do you feel judge when you participate in class?

- a) Always
- b) Frequently
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

9. By who do you feel judge the most when you participate in class?

- a) Classmates
- b) Teacher

10. How much does the fear of making mistakes affect you when interacting verbally in class?

- a) A lot
- b) Quite a bit
- c) A little
- d) Nothing

11. How often do you use your mother tongue to express your ideas in class?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

Section 3: Teacher's Role and Teaching strategies.

12. Does the teacher create an environment where you feel comfortable to ask her any type of question?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

13. Does the teacher use English during the class?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

14. Do you think your teacher uses effective strategies to teach English speaking skills?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

15. How frequently does your teacher encourage speaking activities during the class?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

16. Does your teacher motivate you to improve your speaking skills?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree