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"La enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera desde un enfoque comunicativo e inclusivo."

"Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a Communicative and Inclusive Approach."

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Resumen

Este artículo presenta una revisión teórica centrada en las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés como un área importante donde las tecnologías digitales mejoran la expresión oral de los estudiantes en la educación básica en Ecuador. Se revisaron tanto estudios recientes en América Latina como textos clave sobre cómo se aprende la comunicación. Luego se identificaron recursos como videos, notas de voz, plataformas de video, aplicaciones móviles y herramientas para practicar la pronunciación a partir de estas fuentes y se estableció cómo estos ayudan a mejorar la expresión oral. La tecnología se utiliza bien en la práctica para reforzar actividades estructuradas (como preparación planificada, ejercicios breves de habla, trabajo en pareja y retroalimentación) y no solo como complemento. Las alternativas de bajo costo en comunidades rurales o con acceso limitado son beneficiosas, incluyendo compartir dispositivos, realizar tareas sin internet y escuchar pistas de audio cortas para practicar, recibir retroalimentación y repetir. Persisten obstáculos como el desarrollo profesional docente, la evaluación de habilidades orales y las barreras de acceso. La preferencia por estudios en español y la selección de publicaciones también pueden influir en los resultados, dificultando el análisis. En definitiva, si utilizamos tecnologías digitales con objetivos de enseñanza y criterios de inclusión y equidad, se puede fortalecer la interacción entre las personas.

Palabras clave: Tecnologías Digitales; Competencia Comunicativa Oral; Enseñanza Del Inglés; Ecuador; Inclusión Educativa.

Abstract

This review of literature examines the impact of digital technologies on the development of speaking skills for students in English classes in Ecuador, which are centered around teaching modalities that stimulate communication and include everyone. It combines new research from Latin America and core ideas about how people learn to communicate and use technology. The review considers digital tools such as videos, voice notes, video platforms, mobile apps, and tools that help with pronunciation using artificial intelligence. The research shows that tech is most useful in planned lessons (guided preparation, speaking tasks, pair work, ongoing feedback), not when being used on its own. In poor rural areas or where internet is rare, good strategies may include sharing devices, doing activities without internet, and using brief audio recordings to practice and get feedback. Continuing issues include inequitable access, lack of teacher training, privacy, and testing concerns. In general, digital tools help the most when used with clear teaching goals and inclusion of all students.

Keywords: Digital Technologies; Oral Communicative Competence; English As A Foreign Language; Ecuador; Inclusive Education.

Introduction

This article explores how digital tools can support students in Ecuador to be able to learn to speak English in ways that include everyone. English is now perceived as key for school, online, and work communication. As a result, while English classes are graded not only on grammar, but also on the ability of students to exchange, understand, and participate in conversations because of their ability to share thoughts, understand and interact with one another, participants take into account whether they know others. This fits the Communicative Language Teaching curriculum, which emphasizes the correct use of language, managing conversations, and problem-solving, not simply grammar. In this review, "communicative competence" is defined as using correct grammar, speaking clearly when using words on the spot, selecting appropriate language for the moment, and negotiating communication difficulties satisfactorily.

This concept leads the review on the development of these abilities by the role of digital technologies. While the importance of oral communication is widely recognized, the number of instances where oral experiences can offer students chances to practice speaking remains limited in practice in many classrooms. We also provide supplementary opportunities for practice with digital tools, such as brief audio or video recordings, voice notes, chat tools, and online practices outside classroom activities or online communication.

The use of these resources is especially beneficial for the students with speech anxiety when speaking in front of peers. Simply adding technology does not automatically equate more learning for and about communication or inclusion. Research shows that digital tools are effective at scale when it is embedded into a well-planned instructional approach for example, guided preparation, brief speaking tasks, group work, clear feedback. Technology should serve specific learning targets, not just be for its own sake. According to the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), Technological Knowledge (TK) means understanding how digital tools are applied, Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) is what constitutes a good teaching method, and Content Knowledge (CK) is understanding the content knowledge. Speaking practice using Flipgrid — for instance, combines TK and PK while CK is supported with guided exercises. This can be depicted in a table that pairs tools with activities:

Flipgrid: Promotes rhythm and fluency as students record and reflect on spoken submissions as they work through exercises targeted at certain patterns of language.

WhatsApp Voice Messages: Develop voice notes exchanging and repair strategies where students practice and correct their words in an informal way and gain more nuances in conversation.
Zoom: Enables live turn-taking in conversation, providing speaking practice as conversation unfolds in real time, with targeted prompts to steer discussion topics.

As evident by bridging areas with language learning targets demonstrates an example how TPACK is relevant in practice (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Area-Moreira, 2020). The Ecuador EFL curriculum links its desired results with that of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, establishing communication as the dominant learning aim (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). However, access remains uneven in terms of availability of conditions that support spoken practice. Small networks and shared devices, inadequate professional development for teachers exist in rural and impoverished schools, and both the scale and effectiveness of technology-enabled speaking interventions are constrained (British Council, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

In urban schools in Quito, for instance, students frequently have their own laptops, access educational programmes, engage in live online discussions and are offered regular teacher workshops centered on incorporating technology learning. By contrast, rural classrooms in the Andean region might use one common device for instruction, with students patiently sitting waiting to be turned in and teachers struggling with constant connectivity and access to continuous professional development. The stark divides and inequities in access to and access to education make it clear the case that in the pursuit of real inclusion for all, these inequities need to be addressed. A collaborative mindset demands that we explore not just which tools are available, but whom can be part of the conversation, and when, and under which conditions. Practical options for low connectivity environments may include budget-friendly methods like projected AV access, the use of room speakers, offline audio activities and using one device in pairs or small groups for 15s and 30s at the time. Coupled with supportive classroom norms, respectful feedback from peers, and a focus on respecting privacy and emotional safety, these activities can also help to decrease speaking anxiety, increase participation and reduce the digital gap (UNESCO, 2023). Despite more research focusing on the technology of language learning, there is still little direct evidence that basic education exists in Ecuador. Most of these studies are smaller, only look at teacher training, or appear only in policy documents, which hampers understanding of how to practice these in

different situations. This synthesis aggregates recent Latin American literature from 2020–2025 and dominant theories of communicative competence and technology in learning to elucidate principal trends, the problems and practical routes to enhance EFL speaking abilities. The following is the question guiding this review: In what ways digital technologies are facilitators of oral communication skills in Ecuadorian EFL classrooms from a communicative and inclusive agenda? After the introduction, it outlines how sources were discovered, selected and analyzed, followed by a summary of the key trends reported within the literature. Lastly, the conversation looks at what the findings mean for practice in classrooms, teacher preparation and for educational policy—with particular focus on rural school environments and the situations where connectivity is limited or intermittent. The current review considers the concept of communicative competence as a way to examine how the use of digital tools has fostered the development of students' English speaking. Communicative competence is knowing how to use correct grammar to communicate, choosing the correct words for the particular situation, being able to handle a conversation and communicating effectively and solving problems while communicating. From an interactive and peer-supported point of view, students become better at speaking when they can learn by working out what the text means, participating in guided dialogues and having the feedback to help them notice and improve those skills. In digital settings, how well technology works depends upon how tasks are planned and teachers work with students. The review interprets the findings on the following three fronts: steps in speaking tasks: preparation, speaking, feedback, revision; who was able to take advantage of the opportunities for speaking; and how teachers use digital tools to achieve learning objectives.

Material and methods

Material

This article is a theoretical literature review synthesized by narrative analysis. Primary data were not collected nor was any classroom intervention performed. Narrative synthesis of previous work informs the study. We examined relevant publications to document the extent to which digital technologies have enabled oral communication in EFL. Our research focuses initially on basic Ecuadorian education and similar Latin American contexts, noting unequal levels of access to devices and stable internet. This review was built in part from a corpus of several types of sources. It had peer-reviewed journal articles covering communicative competence, speaking development, and technology-enabled language learning, as well as books and book chapters that were cited in support of crucial theoretical concepts. In addition, theses and dissertations from Ecuadorian and Latin American universities, especially those detailing experiences in public and rural schools, were also consulted. Lastly, documents concerning language education, digital inclusion, and equity from institutions and policies were analyzed. We included both English and Spanish language sources. Materials in Spanish language were searched from regional databases and institutional repositories and then publications related to a given Ecuadorian or Latin American educational environment were prioritized. More recent research was used to address 21st-century digital mediation literature, while seminal work was kept where it fit to support core definitions and concepts when there were critical requirements. Not all texts were equally valuable for this review in practical classroom sense. Only sources that explicitly dealt with EFL speaking in the classroom, and by some reasonable specification described, at least briefly, how this evidence was acquired (e.g., what was done, to whom, and in what context) were retained. Papers with too broad a scope, that were simply opinion-based, and were not sufficiently detailed in their approach, were removed so that the synthesis might lean on evidence which could be interpreted and intermixed between similar teaching situations.

Methods

Sources were determined through keyword searching of academic databases and local repositories (e.g., Google Scholar, ERIC, SciELO, Redalyc), as well as by institutional repositories and reference chaining. Searches used both English and Spanish terms which described communicative

competence, speaking skills, EFL/ELT, technology integration / integración de TIC, digital pedagogy, mobile learning, video-based platforms, gamification, AI-based pronunciation tools, Ecuador and Latin America. The inclusion criteria were as follows: the source examined an EFL/ELT in school, teacher education, or a closely related educational setting; it studied oral proficiency, speaking growth, interaction, or communicative performance; it described digital tools or ICT that has a pedagogical value; and it provides support or theoretical claims applicable to Ecuadorian or similar low-resource contexts. The sources were omitted when they only emphasized written skills without any reference to oral/communicative result, when the technology was not linked to learning process and when the methodological description was not adequate to explain claims. All the sources were arranged into a bibliographic matrix (author/year, context, educational level, type of technology and pedagogy used, oral competence reported results (participation, fluency, pronunciation awareness, interaction), and restrictions reported (connectivity, device access, teacher preparation). A systematic coding was performed using deductive and inductive categories from the sources, and coding was iterative. Three researchers were trained in theoretical and practical considerations to guarantee coding reliability, conducting regular debriefs, concluding disputes in discussion, or, if necessary, by appeal with a supervisor. Consensus was evaluated for intercoder reliability based on Cohen's kappa, with substantial agreement. These themes were then synthesized into a narrative synthesis focusing on the patterns and implications for communicative and inclusive EFL teaching in Ecuador. To provide more transparency, four criteria for identifying sources were used for screening sources: relevance to EFL/ELT, explicit attention to oral competence (speaking/interaction), pedagogical use of digital tools, and applicability to basic education in Ecuador or similar Latin American contexts. In the end the synthesis preferred convergent patterns from across contexts and highlighted paradoxes when the evidence varied.

Results

Main findings in the reviewed literature are listed in this section. It showcases shared trends with international, Latin American, and Ecuadorian studies in digital technologies and oral communication skills in EFL. Profile of the reviewed literature. The sources included theory, research papers, and policy papers. The majority of the research are on small scale classroom studies: action research, project-based projects, quasi-experimental studies at schools and universities. A large number are drawn from Latin America, in Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico, and there is also some international research for communicative competence and digital teaching methods. The vast majority of studies reviewed revolved around speaking and listening skills, with the goal often being to help students develop their pronunciation. Fewer studies investigated how students use language in actual conversations or interculturally. Roughly 15 percent of the studies examined real conversation skills and about 10 percent looked at how students correct errors or use language in practical ways. The most popular technologies were video apps (Flipgrid, YouTube, Zoom), messaging and phone apps (WhatsApp voice notes and pronunciation apps), games to learn (Kahoot, Quizizz), online classroom systems (Google Classroom, Moodle). The research on this is still growing, some studies are quite short and concentrate in particular situations, as few lengthy studies have been run. In order to test learning in this digital realm, teachers need measures that involve things like fluency, clear speech, pronunciation or interaction. Having students check their own progress and give each other feedback also encourages them to think about their learning, so they can plan it out as well as to manage success. Digital instruments improve oral fluency and pronunciation during speaking activities, not just as peripheral instruments. Many times, repetition of audio/video recordings results in longer speech, larger enthusiasm when speaking and a slow improvement in rhythm and pronunciation. In Ecuadorian basic education research investigating the use of Flipgrid suggests that students can improve pronunciation and rhythm if they record a few performances at a time and review their performances (Burbano & Paredes, 2024). Game-like tools are often considered to be effective in getting more students involved or completing lessons, or feeling less nervous about talking (Vera, 2023). They get more participants and less shy to speak which can mean a smoother speaking. Apps that rely on artificial intelligence to improve pronunciation (e.g. ELSA Speak) may be of benefit for private practice by offering rapid feedback on various parts of speech

(Martínez & Pineda, 2024). But these tools, the study indicates, should be used and supported by teachers, not instead of them. That opens up a vital question: What's the potential for student dependance, too much on AI feedback, in the absence of teacher support? Since AI tools can throw up mistakes, their findings should be used with caution, and checked for error where possible. Interaction, Feedback and Learner Autonomy

One more finding is commonality: Digital tools provide students with increased opportunities to interact and receive feedback. Live platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet facilitate real-time speaking, while platforms such as Flipgrid and WhatsApp voice messages allow students to plan, rehearse and craft more measured responses. When large class sizes and time constraints make oral training challenging, the tools allow for increased participation in speaking opportunities and feedback outside the classroom. The literature also suggests that technology can provide a variety of feedback modes (text, audio, video), enhance peer interaction and promote autonomy allowing repetition and self-monitoring. In teacher education, the training that links use of tools with the design of tasks facilitates better use of collaborative platforms in a manner that promotes interaction beyond classroom time and keeps the engagement going (Arias, Bravo, & Solís, 2023). Affective and motivational results

In addition to being better at doing things, there are several studies that suggest an emotional benefit when things involving digital speaking are well-organized and that the content of the tasks feels safe. In a low-pressure setting with short recordings, paired preparation, and structured peer feedback, students feel more comfortable with speaking and experience less fear in speaking, which can translate to better attitudes and feelings as they can practice and record a second time before giving a talk (Mango, 2021; Marzuki et al., 2023). Motivation generally increases over time to performing speaking tasks that feel relevant and achievable. This tends to occur when activities are short and have a defined time limit, and link back to students' real-life activities, like short video responses, simple narrated stories or oral projects linked to the local community. Gamification also has been found to be useful in terms of keeping students engaged when tools are used to facilitate communicative speaking practice (not replace it). Context has a large degree of importance in what technology can deliver. One key finding was the unequal access to connectivity, devices and institutional support at urban and rural schools and between public and private schools (Espinoza & Cedeño, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). Some 40% of students in rural Ecuador are now using a device

per classroom, using shared phones or offline because of spotty connectivity, recent reports showed. This stark difference from that of better resourced schools, which can easily house synchronous speaking tasks and multimodal projects, points to a pressing need for policy action to mitigate or narrow the disparities. One thing in high school that often determines what technology actually can do is context. A significant finding is the unbalanced availability of connectivity, devices, and institutional support between urban and rural schools, and public and private schools (Espinoza & Cedeño, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). Well-resourced schools support synchronous speaking activities and multimodal projects more easily, while under-resourced settings make use of shared mobile phones, less connectivity, or offline. It matters because equity governs who is able to rehearse, to record, to receive feedback and to try again. Inclusion includes the intercultural and special-needs perspectives as well. Certain studies refer to digital tasks, where learners present community traditions in English, aiding both oral development and cultural identity (Sierra & Carvajal, 2023). Accessibility features such as captions and speech-to-text are considered helpful, but they remain out of widespread use. Teacher digital competence and professional identity

Yet another obvious trend is that teacher digital competence impacts technology integration. When teachers feel confident and there is clear teaching purpose, digital tools are more likely to facilitate communication, feedback, and collaboration (González & Morales, 2023; Cabero-Almenara & Llorente-Cejudo, 2020). In contrast, limited training frequently relegates technology to use primarily for administrative functions and teacher-centered activities without facilitating greater opportunities to speak. In both sources, it is reported that teachers' roles are stretched beyond 'platform manage', they design, scaffold and make ethical decisions about privacy and exposure, which are inextricably tied to students' emotional safety in technologies and speaking (UNESCO, 2023). Integrated view of the findings

Generally, the studies that were reviewed suggest a common result: digital devices can help with speaking practice, but the results vary significantly according to the school environment, as well as the nature of the activities. The better results tend to arise when the technology is leveraged for clear communicative ends, when the task is meaningful and to the students, when feedback is given in a way learners can use it, and when participation is carefully planned to ensure equitable provision. Such findings will provide a ground for the discussion: what they mean for basic

Ecuadorian education, teacher preparation and future studies in rural schools and with poor internet connections.

Discussion

The reviewed literature provides a mixed, positive, picture on the role of digital practices to facilitate speaking development in Ecuadorian basic education. No one tool will work by itself. Outcomes appear to depend on various contributing factors such as curriculum goals, the structure of speaking assignments, teacher support, students' self-assurance and emotions, sociocultural relevance, and resources at the level of each setting. Keeping this in mind, the discussion reflects the themes shared with the studies as commonality and ties these themes to everyday classroom activity, teacher preparedness and policy, both communicatively as well as inclusively. Key points from the literature. The first principle is that technology will improve speaking skills only if used within the context of a clear teaching approach. Digital tools do not simply improve oral performance simply by providing access; the likelihood of improving oral performance is greater when tools offer structured opportunities for interaction, practice, feedback and meaning-making. This is consistent with communicative and sociocultural perspectives in which, in oral forms, development relies on tasks with intent and guided activities rather than solitary exercises. Also, the second principle states, teachers' digital skills are crucial. If teachers choose tools with a clearly communicative intention and assign tasks and feedback that is in service of students' needs children participate more as they grow up and thus confidence levels will rise. If goals are not clear or teachers need to provide support for them, then technology use often remains quite basic– supporting presentations and administrative tasks without increasing speaking, interaction or feedback. The third rule is that emotion is deeply involved in speech study process. Speaking is a risk that students do not want to take, and many of them don't feel okay being corrected or judged in front of others. Digital tools can take some the pressure off, as they simply allow students to participate quietly, by having students work on short recordings, then practicing and replaying them. But they can also make students more anxious if the tasks are too performance or grading focused. There are big gaps in the research, despite some positive results. And while many studies are short and small, it's difficult to know if those results will remain stable over the long run, or

transfer to other settings. There are very few long-term studies, particularly in public schools, so perhaps little of course is known about whether or not students continue to develop speaking skills. And, surprisingly, few studies exist that address crucial conversational skills, such as taking turns, problem solving during conversation or using language correctly. Research on how digital tools assist learners with disabilities is extremely sparse. Evidence from several studies indicates that digital tools can still be used in the same old teacher-directed ways that hinder their potential to truly transform learning. From a classroom point-of-view, these challenges indicate that clearer evidence is needed on what constitutes an effective improvement in speaking and how to ensure more students will have opportunities. In order to bridge these gaps, some clear actions ought to be taken by future research. First, we need long-term follow-up studies, following students over time to see whether their speaking skills do change over time and whether they improve in such areas as taking turns and correcting mistakes with a device. Second, research should test whether certain digital tools are effective by providing pronunciation feedback on an app or teaching practice videos so that students can record themselves. Third, a large body of empirical work will be both quantifiable and personal, as students and teachers tell their stories about how technology supports learning in their schools. We also need to understand the effectiveness of teacher training programs, particularly for rural or low-resource schools. The research can also be done to investigate how to create and test low-bandwidth, offline technologies in places with inadequate internet services. Finally, research among teachers, students, and communities can establish digital practices specific to a local context. These were steps in improving teaching and policy of teachers about the use of technology in the English courses. The main objective is to not only use technology but use it purposefully. The goal is to get more students engaged, promote interaction and promote teaching that covers all students in schools with varied resources. Effective practice in the classroom typically begins with simple, sustainable strategies. High- and low-connectivity settings both respond to time-short voice messages, guided audio or video reflections, brief pair speaking routines, or peer feedback with a clear set of criteria. It is about giving students the time to speak through repeated rounds of preparation, speaking, feedback and evaluation, rather than only one-off oral performance. It is critical to develop those digital teaching skills, including when to decide on and adapt tools based on communicative ends as well as local conditions. Effective technology use is typically easier to maintain when teachers make plans collectively, look back on the impact and offer minor tweaks based on what emerges in the classroom. In rural and more isolated settings,

in which formal training is more difficult to supply, there may be practical professional learning communities, online when possible or organized locally, that really facilitate continued support, shared material and feedback over time. Curriculum and policy oral proficiency is likely to improve when curriculum expectations are supported from what teachers can realistically meet. National contexts such as community or university schemes can enable this by ensuring that there are concrete guidelines for communicative speaking tasks, continuous support of teachers and equitable access to fundamental resources, so that the speaking goals are accessible in well-resourced schools and schools with fewer resources. Connectivity and device policies are much more educational when properly paired with classroom guidance on how audio and video recording can be done, and inclusion initiatives that keep these actions in balance. Practically speaking, that translates to preparing for students who share devices, or who may have shaky internet connections, so that technology promotes participation rather than exacerbating divides between those who will connect easily and those who won't. Technology-mediated speaking tasks must prioritize privacy, consent, and students' emotional safety. Voice or image recordings have to give the intention of learning a clear meaning, and they only should be used with some level of safety protection. In practice this means consent is requested as necessary (to include families where learners are minors), recordings are to be kept away from view, access to them must be restricted, and contracts with the classroom developed to avoid teasing or bullying of students. These measures obtaining consent, storing files in a safe or secure location, sharing only when needed and protecting student identity, were perceived as critical in applying recordings ethically across the studies reviewed. These have included encrypted storage and regular surveillance, in compliance with privacy requirements that were being followed. Inclusion also requires supporting learning tools for all learners (e.g., captions, transcripts, flexible formats or mutual support from friends). The review highlights that oral communicative skills are well suited to learn when we use digital technologies to increase teaching and learning interaction and access to diverse feedback and enhanced participation in the teaching of EFL in Ecuador. Sustained enhancement, however, needs to be in line with different ways of teaching, teacher development and policy support to ensure a consistent goal of communicative and inclusive in all schools. One has several principles to improve oral communicative competence that are resource-constrained. First, create scenarios with speaking tasks broken out into short cycles — preparation, performance, feedback and revision — as more practice with repetition leads to a better outcome than speech alone. Second, encourage

engagement with low-stakes experiences of pair-preparation, short cassette-recorded pair sessions, and structured peer-feedback to minimize anxiousness and normalize making a mistake as part of the learning process. Third, give priority to inclusion by allowing alternative participation options (audio, video, live conversation) and plan for access obstacles (sharing, offline activities, low-bandwidth tools). Fourth, safeguard privacy and emotional safety by securing consent, securing data, and having a clear classroom protocol for recording student voices or images. Last (but not least) invest in teaching teachers in the digital skills that are what are more important than using any of the tools to be effective.

Conclusions

A review of existing research on digital technologies employed to develop oral communication skills in basic education EFL in Ecuador is focusing on communicative and inclusive teaching. The findings demonstrate that technology enhances spoken language skills when applied with a clear pedagogical goal and over time. The gains are highest when digital tools are integrated into a range of regular communicative activities including interaction, practice, feedback and revision, not separately or in lieu of classroom communication.

Equity and context very much condition what is possible in Ecuadorian schools. Where internet is unreliable and devices are shared, participation in technology speaking activities is uneven, particularly in rural areas. And that is why the literature suggests pragmatic low-bandwidth alternatives like a small number of audio tasks, offline routines and shared-device work, all of which can help ensure students can learn and become included while at the same time maintaining a good pace.

The review also discusses teacher preparation. When teachers are supported, both digitally and pedagogically, it's easier to plan speaking tasks to which students can really relate, maintain students' investment in language activities and provide feedback on how to improve. Recording is easier to handle well, and people can be confident that everyone will keep their own privacy and feel emotionally safe. In brief, digital tools potentially support oral communication in Ecuadorian EFL classrooms, particularly when teachers are empowered for use and student input over time is accommodated.

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