REVISTA KRONOS

Factors that prevent the English oral production of students of first and second year of *bachillerato*

Vinicio Bermello García | iD Universidad Técnica de Manabí (Ecuador)
Mónica Vaca-Cárdenas | iD Universidad Técnica de Manabí (Ecuador)

ABSTRACT English has become the universal communication language of business, tourism, education, technology, and science. Developing students' oral skills in the classroom has become a great challenge for English teachers since there are limitations to producing the target language. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to identify the factors that prevent the English oral production of students of first and second year of bachillerato. This research used a quantitative approach where a survey and an observation guide for students and teachers were applied to collect the data information. The population of this study was 34 students and a teacher. The main results showed that learners cannot produce speaking skills because they are afraid of making mistakes in their oral presentations and they consider that English is difficult to pronounce. Additionally, the negative affective factors such as anxiety, pressure, nervousness, and apprehension influenced directly in their oral performance. These hindrances that learners face daily in the classroom can be diminished through constant motivation and confidence. Hence, it is advisable the frequent use of interesting and dynamic activities that promote communication in real situations and in that way to accomplish the academic goal which is to enhance students' oral proficiency.

KEY WORDS English language, oral production, limitations, factors, motivation.

Factores que impiden la producción oral en inglés de los estudiantes de primer y segundo año de bachillerato

RESUMEN El inglés se ha convertido en el idioma de comunicación universal de los negocios, el turismo, la educación, la tecnología y la ciencia. Desarrollar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes en el aula se ha convertido en un gran desafío para los profesores de inglés, ya que existen limitaciones para producir el idioma de destino. Por lo tanto, el propósito principal de este estudio fue identificar los factores que impiden la producción oral en inglés de los estudiantes de primero y segundo año de bachillerato. Esta investigación utilizó un enfoque cuantitativo, donde se aplicó una encuesta y una guía de observación para estudiantes y docentes, con el fin de recolectar la información de los datos. La población de este estudio fue de 34 estudiantes y un docente. Los principales resultados mostraron que los estudiantes no desarrollan habilidades para hablar porque tienen miedo de cometer errores en sus presentaciones orales y consideran que el inglés es difícil de pronunciar. Además, los factores afectivos negativos como la ansiedad, la presión, el nerviosismo y la aprensión influyeron directamente en su desempeño oral. Estos obstáculos a los que se enfrentan los alumnos a diario en el aula pueden reducirse mediante la motivación y la confianza constantes. Por lo tanto, es recomendable el uso frecuente de actividades interesantes y dinámicas que promuevan la comunicación en situaciones reales a fin de lograr el objetivo académico que es mejorar la competencia oral de los estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVE Lengua inglesa, producción oral, limitaciones, factores, motivación.

INTRODUCTION

A language is a system and a channel that we use daily to express ideas, feelings, thoughts, and opinions (Peutra, 2020). So, we live in a globalized world, where speaking a foreign language especially English is considered an essential part of a personal and professional life. As Ahmad (2016) stated that English has become the global communication language of travel, business, education, technology, and science. Dincer & Dariyemez (2020) expressed that even though English is the vehicle of communication worldwide; there is a limited number of people able to communicate in this language who are considered competent speakers. In the case of education, the classroom is the perfect platform and place to learn and develop communication skills, especially speaking ability (Rao, 2019).

According to Akhter *et al.* (2020) speaking is quite important because it is the means of communicating effectively with many people across the globe. Thus, without this ability, real interaction seems to be limited to get proficiency because of lack of practice. Leong *et al.* (2017) emphasize that speaking is an essential tool to keep in touch with mankind and provide oral messages in an easy and accurate way. As a consequence, in the academic setting speaking skill is less practiced than the other ones. This skill has been omitted and overlooked in the classrooms by many educators due to the use of traditional methods of teaching grammar and vocabulary rather than oral production (Bhattacharjee, 2018).

For that reason, it was necessary to take into account the factors that prevent the English oral production of students of the first and second year of bachillerato which are the key focus of this study. Most of the EFL learners in high school cannot produce the language in oral tasks since the ability of speaking is a challenge for both teachers and learners. Menendez (2017) indicates that speaking is a demanding skill for non-native speakers because they are not exposed to and immersed in the target language. Students have a few opportunities to enhance and practice their oral communication in real contexts since English is not spoken where they live.

According to Mazouzi (2013), EFL students struggle with many problems expressing their ideas and feelings without using adequate and accurate arguments because of psychological factors. These factors are anxiety, frustration, lack of motivation, and confidence (Richards, 2007). Salcedo (2021) showed that some linguistic components of the language such as vocabulary, utterance, and syntax also limit English oral production in students. It happens because they have to reorganize their ideas in Spanish to transfer them into English, which takes time and effort.

Leong & Ahmadi (2017) affirmed that learners feel inhibited to speak because they cannot remember anything, accompanied by the fear of making mistakes, mockeries, and being criticized by their partners. Likewise, Han & Yusof (2019) declared that contexts, preparation of the class, and individual strengths and weaknesses of learners also influence in their oral interaction. Furthermore, Murad & Jalambo (2019) revealed that the lack of proficiency in the language, the attitude and the role of the teacher, and the resources used in class have repercussions on oral competency. Moreover, Escudero *et al.* (2020) referred that there are some external and internal difficulties that hamper the students' production of the L2. For instance, one of them is an extreme use of the mother tongue (Spanish) during the academic setting which diminishes tremendously the chances of students to enhance their speaking abilities and develop other ones.

Like many learners in other nations, Ecuadorian students face serious problems in producing oral English at school. Oral production is hard for students because this process requires the capacity to use language appropriately and coherently in social communications (Nurfitri, 2021). According to Shak *et al.* (2016), the problems that learners face in classes to produce the English language are the following: fear of speaking, nervousness, difficulty to pronounce, fear of making mistakes, and many more. Committing mistakes is such as shaming situations for students that affect their confidence when presenting an oral task.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS

Dilnoza (2021) mentions that in the learning process of the English language the main ambition of students is to master the four English skills, especially speaking. This productive ability is considered complex and demanding but vital in this new era. According to Qureshi (2007), speaking has huge importance in our daily lives that serves to communicate with others in different situations. This process implicates being a good speaker and a good listener to gain the audience's attention by providing clear messages. Speaking skills are seen as a necessity, as the most elementary way of communication between humans and the most challenging skills Ounis (2017). Rao (2019) highlighted that speaking is the vehicle for having international relationships that bring success in any sector. He also claimed that communication skills should be developed more within the classrooms to enhance learners' communicative competence and achieve their oral goals.

ENGLISH ORAL PRODUCTION

The oral production of the English language is quite pivotal which must be practiced constantly in EFL classrooms. Peña & Onatra (2009) emphasize that students need to develop abilities and techniques through different oral activities in order to promote meaningful social interaction, confidence, and a cooperative learning environment. To carry out all this, the role of the teacher is essential. Benalcázar & Ortega (2019) considered that one of the challenges for educators is to give students the adequate situations and environments to put into practice their oral competency. In fact, when learners try to speak the language, they struggle with many difficulties and hindrances. For instance, the variation and pronunciation of some words, the complexity of grammar structure, sound patterns, and anxiety (Pérez, 2010). As well as Arnold (2016) claims that the ability that causes more anxiety is speaking.

FACTORS THAT IMPEDE THE ENGLISH ORAL PRODUCTION

AFFECTIVE FACTORS OR PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

In her research Morales Cruz (2022) highlights those affective factors such as anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of confidence and motivation have great repercussions on students' English oral production. When students have to present any oral task, the nervousness takes over them which prevents them to speak. Those factors mentioned previously do not allow students to be successful in their oral communicative skills because of the afraid to make errors (Manurung, 2020). In fact, Jiménez (2015) declared that the fear of making mistakes affect directly the oral production of EFL learners.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment plays an important role in speaking production. According to Jiménez (2015), grammatical rules and corrections and lack of vocabulary affect communication within the EFL classroom. This occurs because teachers focus more on linguistic competence rather than on fostering and developing natural interaction in real contexts. Moreover, the teacher´s role and the techniques and strategies he uses are quite significant

as indicated by Ramírez (1995). As a result, students do not have the chance to enhance their speaking inside and outside the classroom.

MOTHER TONGUE INTERFERENCE

One of the biggest drawbacks for 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. According to Adwani & Shrivastava (2017) stated that students make positive and negative transfers at the moment of speaking and that is why they fail in the oral production of L2. On the other hand, Subandowo (2017) asserts that the mother tongue brings advantages and disadvantages. This can be proved when learners are working in groups, they tend to use Spanish rather than English which limits the practice and interaction of the target language. Similarly, Manrique (2013) explains that when students are speaking English, they strive some trouble putting together coherently their ideas which create a void in picking up knowledge and producing verbally.

METHODOLOGY

The research has a quantitative approach because this method allows to collect numerical information and statistics. According to Sukamolson (2007), quantitative research involves numbers that represent and explain a phenomenon numerically. For data collection, two techniques were applied, a questionnaire for students and an observation for students and the teacher. They were carried out in a real class environment so that data was reliable and accurate. Moreover, it was also necessary to use other kinds of research such as bibliographic, descriptive, and explanatory to support and validate this paper.

POPULATION

This research was conducted in Santa Magdalena High school, a Fiscomisional institution located in San Plácido, Manabí province (Ecuador). The population in this study was one teacher and 34 students of first and second year of bachillerato whose ages range from 15 to 16 years old. It was not necessary to apply the sample selection formula because the population is small. So, this study was applied to the total population. On the other hand, in this school, there are only two English teachers one for elementary and one for secondary.

TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

To gather data, it was necessary the application of two techniques: a survey and an observation for the students and the teacher. The instrument for the survey was a questionnaire, and the instrument for the observation was an observation guide. These techniques and instruments were carefully designed. The survey contained 11 questions with multiple options which include sections like affective factors, motivation, and external and internal difficulties. On the other hand, the observation form contained some criteria related to the factors that hamper oral production, the role of the teacher, and the participation of learners in speaking tasks.

PROCEDURE

To implement the data collection techniques the researcher needed to request permission from authorities, class teacher, and student's parents. At the same time, the participants were explained the objective of the research, and the characteristic of confidentiality, informing them the data collected is anonymous. The students answered to a questionnaire composed of 11 items. Finally, the teacher was observed during three consecutive classes.

RESULTS

Having analyzed the data generated from the surveys and observations guide, the following are the results.

IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS.

According to the student's responses, 67,65% considered that developing speaking skills are very important, 26,47% of them considered it important, and 5,88% estimated that English is moderately important.

PARTICIPATION IN SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

The results showed that 61,76% of the learners sometimes like to participate in speaking activities. 23,53% of pupils very often participate in speaking tasks. In contrast, 8,82% of.

LIMITATIONS OF THE ORAL PRODUCTION

44,12% of the students indicated that what limits their oral production is fear of making mistakes; while, 29,41% of the learners said that what limits their oral production is the difficulty to pronounce English. Additionally, 14,71% of learners are afraid of mockery, and with the same percentage 5,88% state that the lack of motivation and anxiety limit their oral production. Finally, 2,94% of the students pointed out that what impedes their speaking is the lack of vocabulary.

REASONS WHY LEARNERS DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

The results reported that 44,12% of students do not like to participate in oral activities because they do not have a good pronunciation of the English language. 29,41% of learners indicated that they are afraid of making mistakes. Besides, 14,71% of the students indicated they have panic to speak in class, and finally 11,76% of them pointed out that they are afraid of the teacher, that is why they do not like to participate in oral tasks.

ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE ORAL PRODUCTION

73,53% of learners indicated that the activities that the teacher uses to promote oral production is through questions, 14,71% of them claimed that the teacher gives some

instructions to have oral presentations. Finally, 11,76% of the students said that the teacher does role-play to foster speaking ability.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS USED BY THE TEACHER

55,88% of the learners indicated that the resources that the teacher uses in the class is music,44,12% of them said that the educator use videos. While, 8,82% of learners pointed out that the teacher uses pictures, and 2,94% of students affirm that the teacher uses flashcards to carry out speaking activities.

TEACHER ENCOURAGEMENT

The results showed that 82,35% of the students are always encouraged by the teacher to speak in English; and, 17,65% indicated that the teacher usually stimulates learners to interact.

WAYS TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS

44,12% of learners indicated that the teacher motivates them by congratulating them. 29,41% said that the teacher gives them extra points to motivate them. Additionally, 14,71% of students said that the teacher gives rewards for their performance. Finally, 11,76% of students stated that the teacher exonerates them from doing some work.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING

61,71% of learners indicated that they sometimes feel frustrated and bored when the teacher is speaking. Besides, 23,53% of students expressed that they never understand what the teacher says. 8,82% of learners stated that they usually grasp the teacher´s instructions and 5,88% of students reported that they always comprehend what the teacher speaks.

STUDENT'S AFFECTIVE FACTORS

73,53% of students indicated that they feel nervous when they have an oral presentation. An additional 11,76% of learners pointed out they feel frustrated when they have to present a speaking activity. Besides, 5,88% of the learners indicated that they feel excited and finally with the same percentage, 2,94% of learners feel confident, happy, and eager to participate in oral tasks.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE SPEAKING

44,12% of students expressed that to improve their speaking abilities they listen to music in English. 29,41% of them indicated that they watch movies in English. Besides, 14,71% of learners declared that they speak in English with their partners and other people. 8,82% of them expressed that they send audios in English and 2,94% said that they read books to boost their English oral production.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

The results of the observation showed that most of the students paid attention to the teacher´s instructions at the beginning of the lesson. However, only some of them could accomplish the teacher´s instructions and commands. Unfortunately, only a few learners promoted communication in English. Those students that participated constantly were rewarded, which allowed some of the students to feel motivated to speak. Some of them also felt happy and enthusiastic in oral tasks. Although students' participation was minimal, most of them were corrected by the educator while they were having a conversation in L2. Fort that reason, most of the learners felt anxious and nervous in oral production. As a result, all of the students appealed to their mother tongue (Spanish) in order to give an answer because they did not remember the words in English. Finally, learners recognized that all of them needed effective feedback for effective speaking and they accepted the suggestions and recommendations for better performance.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR THE TEACHER

The results of the observation showed that the teacher tried to catch the student's attention at the beginning of the lesson. He also gave clear instructions, and commands and provided learners a lot of opportunities to practice speaking skills. To accomplish this goal, the teacher used comprehensible input and suitable hands-on materials. In fact, the teacher promoted communication in the L2 among students and motivated them to interact in the target language. Moreover, students' performance and participation were rewarded. As the role of the teacher was quite vital in front of the class, he felt happy and enthusiastic to promote oral tasks.

On the contrary, one of the disadvantages was that the educator often corrected students' mistakes while they were having a conversation. This could be a reason why students were afraid of speaking. However, during the observation the teacher tried to diminish anxiety, pressure, and nervousness through different activities such as group work. Since learners interacted in Spanish rather than English in the activity mentioned before, the teacher asked them to use English as much as they could. If they did not have the answers in the L2, students may use their mother tongue. At the end, the teacher provided effective feedback related to oral competency.

DISCUSSION

In this research, it was found that 7 out of 10 students considered very important to develop the speaking skill. Similarly, Clement & Murugavel (2018) highlighted the importance of boosting communication competence for many job opportunities. They stressed that if people cannot speak this language appropriately it will affect the interaction, the same situation occurs in the classroom.

Besides, 6 out of 10 students like to act in speaking class. The rest of the students were reluctant to participate in class mainly because of shyness, they did not the answers and they were afraid of making mistakes. Likewise, Leong, & Ahmadi (2017) in their study reported the same difficulties from learners. Moreover, students face other linguistic aspects such as grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Murad & Jalambo (2019), agree that one of the reasons learners remain silent and reluctant in spoken tasks is due to low vocabulary, incomprehensibility, and the usage of special expressions which are difficult to learn by heart.

There are some useful activities to be applied in the classroom, 7 out of 10 pupils pointed out that to foster speaking production the teacher used some techniques such as questions, presentations, and role-plays. This gave the chance for learners to use the target language as much as they could. It was also evidenced that the resources and materials used by the teacher as comprehensible input played a crucial role in the class.6 out of 10 students indicated that the teacher used music and videos to promote interaction among partners. According to Khoirunisya & Masithoh (2018), the use of digital media like videos gives some advantages to the teacher to enhance students' speaking skills. A considerable majority 8 out of 10 students indicated that the teachers motivated them to interact and participate in any oral lesson.

Concerning the ways to motivate students to increase their English competency, 4 out of 10 students mentioned that they were congratulated by the teacher, he gave learners extra points and exonerated them from doing some work. 6 out of 10 learners indicated that they sometimes understood the teacher´s instructions, and 2 out of ten never grasped what the teacher said which diminished the possibility to produce the target language and brought students frustration and apprehension to speak.

Many researchers have discovered that the factors that most affect the students' speaking ability are affective factors such as anxiety, lack of motivation and confidence, and low self-esteem. Based on the results 7 out of 10 of them feel nervous and frustrated when they have an oral presentation. Nurfitri & Rahmawati (2021) found similar results where students face internal problems such as shyness, nervousness, and pressure in front of the class, creating some drawbacks in the communication process. Finally, to improve their oral skills as extra activities, 4 out of 10 students did activities like listening to music in English, watching movies, and speaking in the target language with some friends and other people.

It was observed that learners felt anxious and nervous during speaking activities and unfortunately, all of the students spoke in Spanish, in order to give an answer. Nevertheless, a few learners tried to communicate in English. This minimal participation could motivate the other students to speak in English too. On the other side, it was observed that the teacher tried to reduce those negative affective factors to speak, through motivation and by using hands-on materials to promote speaking in English as much as possible.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the main factors that prevent students´ English oral production in the class are: the fear of making mistakes, the difficulty of pronouncing English, and the nervousness/anxiety. During the English classes, most of the students did not participate in speaking activities because they were afraid of making mistakes, they felt reluctant to speak. Additionally, the lack of vocabulary, poorly structured sentences, accents, and embarrassment created a mental block that prevented them from speaking in the target language effectively and appropriately.

Since English is not the student´s mother tongue, they found quite difficult to speak in the foreign language, due to this language encompasses tedious linguistic competencies, especially the pronunciation which is very demanding. The main reason why students did not participate in speaking activities was that they do not have good pronunciation at it.

When students had to present any kind of speaking activities, they felt under pressure, this pressure took over them creating inhibition, tenseness, and nervousness. All of this directly influenced the participation of the students' oral tasks. Even though the teacher urged them to speak and tried to diminish effective negative factors such as anxiety and timidity, learners do not want to participate. These barriers make the interaction less effective and prevented students from developing their oral skills competence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to enhance oral production, it is recommended to provide many opportunities for students to speak in English without taking into consideration grammar errors and syntax, giving them confidence and security to speak. The English pronunciation is a challenge for EFL students, it is suggested that the teacher provides phonology classes also. Little by little the students will get used to the correct pronunciation. Furthermore, in order to reduce negative affective factors of the students in oral tasks, educators should motivate learners to practice their oral skills daily; and the classroom is the perfect place for meaningful learning.

Future research should be done on strategies and techniques to practice the speaking skill with students in the classroom.

REFERENCES

Adwani, P. & Shrivastava, S. (2017). Analysis of factors affecting second language acquisition. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management, 4*(3), 158-164.

Akhter, S., Haidov, R., Rana, A. M., & Qureshi, A. H. (2020). Exploring the significance of speaking skill for EFL learners. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 17*(9), 6019-6030.

Bhattacharjee, N. (2018). Developing speaking skill at secondary and higher secondary levels: problems and few recommendations. *Stamford Journal of English, 4*, 15-29.

Clement, A. & Murugavel, T. (2018). English for the workplace: the importance of english language skills for effective performance. *The English Classroom, 20*(1), 1-15.

Dilnoza, K. (2021). Developing speaking skills of esl and efl students. *Web of Scientist: International Scientific Research Journal, 2*(09), 116-119.

Dincer, A. & Dariyemez, T. (2020). Proficient speakers of English as a foreign language: a focus-group study. IAFOR *Journal of Education, 8*(1), 83-99.

Escudero, G. I., Cutiopala, D. J., & Caisaguano, J. A. (2020). A comprehensible overview of EFL students' drawbacks to produce oral communication. *Revista Espacios, 41*(18).

Jiménez, G. V. (2015). Three communication difficulties of EFL students. *Revista de Lenguas Modernas,* (23).

Khoirunisya' Masyhudianti, U. & Masithoh, H. (2018). A teacher's beliefs and practices of using video to teach speaking: A case study at SMA As-Salam Surakarta. *Vision: Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning, 7*(1), 11-22.

Manrique, C. M. R. (2013). Mother tongue interference over foreign language: a case study about A2 oral production in a colombian public university. *Opening Writing Doors Journal, 9*(1), 91-119.

Manurung, Y. H. (2020). Analysis on students' english speaking performance at University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. *Vision, 16*(2).

Morales Cruz, S. Y. (2022). *Affective factors that influence english oral production in the 8th level students of basic general education at Juan Pablo II high school in Ibarra* (Bachelor's thesis).

Murad, A. I. & Jalambo, M. O. (2019). EFL students' reluctance in participating in english speaking activities at university college of applied sciences: challenges and solutions. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(03), 28.

Ounis, A. (2017). The assessment of speaking skills at the tertiary level. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 7*(4), p. 95.

Qureshi, I. A. (2007). The importance of speaking skills for EFL learners. *Department of English, Alama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan. Psycholinguistics*.

Subandowo, D. (2017). The language interference in English speaking ability for EFL learners. *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang, 5*, 205-210.

Rao, P. S. (2019). The importance of speaking skills in English classrooms. *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal* (ACIELJ), *2*(2), 6-18.

Rao, P. S. (2019). Adopting various strategies and techniques to improve speaking skills among young EFL/ESL learners. *Journal of English Language and Literature*, *6*(1), 182-191.

Shak, P., Lee, C. S., & Stephen, J. (2016). Pronunciation problems: a case study on English pronunciation errors of low proficient students. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics*.