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"Teaching Strategies to Develop the Speaking Skill in Adults: Learners' Perceptions"

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RESUMEN

La habilidad de hablar, de acuerdo a muchas investigaciones, es considerada la destreza primordial para dominar un idioma extranjero. Considerando esta afirmación, el siguiente proyecto reporta el estudio de noventa y ocho estudiantes de dos universidades de Cuenca sobre las percepciones de las estrategias de enseñanza que estudiantes adultos consideran esenciales para dominar el idioma Inglés. El estudio fue llevado a cabo mediante el uso de una metodología mixta en la que se usaron datos cualitativos y cuantitativos mostrando los resultados en forma individual y en otras, en conjunto. Entre las conclusiones extraídas se resalta la necesidad de tomar en consideración las opiniones de los estudiantes adultos para mejorar el vínculo entre la institución educativa y el estudiante, logrando de esta forma que lleguen a ser miembros activos de su aprendizaje. Finalmente, los estudiantes mostraron interés por actividades comunicativas en las que ellos puedan expresarse sin temor a ser reprendidos por sus errores.

Palabras claves: Estrategias de enseñanza, la habilidad de hablar, percepciones de los estudiantes adultos.

ABSTRACT

The speaking skill, according to many studies, is considered the primary skill to master a foreign language. Considering this, the following project reports the study of ninety eight students from two universities in Cuenca about the perceptions of the teaching strategies that adult learners consider essential in order to dominate the English language. The study was carried out by using a mixed methodology in which qualitative and quantitative data were used showing results in an individual manner and others, as a whole. Among the conclusions drawn, the necessity of taking into consideration the views of adult learners is highlighted to increase the link between the school and the learner, achieving this, learners become active members of their own learning. Finally, students showed interest in some communicative activities in which they can express themselves without the fear of being reprimanded for their mistakes.

Key words: Teaching strategies, the speaking skill, adult learner perceptions.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the most important people in my life: Freddy my husband, partner and my strength, Celia and Antonio my beloved children and Sara my daughter from the heart. To them I owe many hours of sharings, without their love this effort would be worthless. I am proud of all you and myself for having achieved one of the dreams in my life.

Consuelo

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INTRODUCTION

Most EFL learners show concern due to their inability in speaking the target language after they have studied the language for some years. This concern leads learners to question the reasons by which they cannot speak in the new language, request help through strategies that allow them to reach their learning objectives and carry out conversations using the target language competently.

According to some research, the difficulty in learning to speak a new language occurs because of emotional and social factors that inhibit learners from achieving a fluent dialogue due to the fear of making mistakes. Also, this is influenced by the context, as in Ecuador, the only place for people to practice speaking English is the classroom.

The present research is focused not only on knowing the reasons by which adult's learners are unanable of speaking English but of knowing their perceptions regarding the teaching strategies that they consider important for developing the speaking skill. To achieve this goal an investigation through the opinions of ninety eight students of advance level of two universities of Cuenca was carried out. Learners expressed their viewpoints about their preferences in the teaching strategies and chose some techniques that they consider suitable to improve their speaking skill.

The project contains five chapters. The first one explains and justifies the problem in study. Chapter two presents the compilation of basic concepts related to the topic. The third one explains the methodology used, in this case a mixed methodology in which qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. Chapter four analyzes and interprets the results from the surveys and student interviews

through tables and graphics. Finally, in chapter five the conclusions and recommendations are presented as a fundamental part of this project.

I. THE PROBLEM

1.1 Topic

This project aims to identify and analyze adult learners' perceptions regarding the teaching strategies for developing the speaking skill from advanced EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students at the Language Department of Universidad de Cuenca, and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana through surveys and interviews applied to students and to an expert in teaching strategies.

1.2 Description of the Problem

Developing the speaking skill is very difficult for foreign language learners (Shumin 204) turning into one of the problems that adults face when learning English. According to various studies, this problem is caused by emotional and social factors; for instance, lack of confidence and self-esteem, anxiety, fears, types of personalities, and styles. Besides these issues, there is an important aspect to consider: the direct influence of the context in learning, due to the fact that an EFL environment does not provide learners with enough opportunities to practice. This occurs because in an EFL environment everybody uses their mother language to communicate, which leads students to feel ashamed of speaking in the target language (Farroqui 99).

1.3 Justification

As previously mentioned, developing the speaking skill is one of the problems that learners, especially adults, face when learning English as a foreign language. This problem is present in different factors, such as emotional and social, and also by influence of the EFL environment, which becomes a barrier because it does not provide real conditions for practicing the speaking skill.

In Ecuador, there is not a research project that points out the reasons by which adult students are reluctant to speak in the target language. Hence, the need to carry out an investigation in which determine learners preferred ways for developing the speaking skill. According to McBride, to know the opinions of EFL students is vital because they are directly involved in the process and they can determine the differences existing on diverse settings (97, 98), in our case, in Ecuadorian classrooms. Likewise, she states learners perceptions about the effectiveness of the practices done in the classroom, vary according to their needs and goals, as well as their culture and prior experiences (95).

In this context, the concern for identifying the perceptions of adult learners arises as a need in searching for solutions to improve the learning process. Thus, this study aims to contribute with data regarding students' perceptions, the kind of teaching strategies, techniques, and activities that students consider suitable for their oral skill development.

These insights may be used by all institutions involved in this investigation, in order to implement changes in their academic proposals and strengthen their commitment, both as students and as adults emphasizing Gocer's words, who considers that success in learning a foreign language not only has to do with the

capacity or ability to learn, but also with factors as the strategies used in the classroom (197).

1.4 Research Question

- Which are the teaching strategies that adult advanced EFL learners at the Language Department of Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana consider important when developing the speaking skill?

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

To identify the perceptions of adult advanced EFL learners of the Language Department at the Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana about the teaching strategies to develop the speaking skill.

1.5.2 Specific Objective

- To carry out bibliographical research about the importance of adult learners' perceptions regarding the teaching strategies for developing the speaking skill in the EFL classroom.
- To design and apply a survey among students at higher levels at the Language Department of Universidad de Cuenca, and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana to determine their preferences regarding the teaching strategies when developing the speaking skill.
- To design and carry out an interview with an expert in teaching methodologies in order to give support to the findings and improve the teaching process for developing the speaking skill.

- To design and carry out an interview with ten students at higher levels at the Language Department of Universidad de Cuenca, and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana to determine and identify their opinions in relation to the teaching process for developing the speaking skill.

- To analyze the collected data to draw pertinent conclusions and recommendations to contribute as a source of information for improving the practice of the speaking skill in our educational settings.

II. DEVELOPING THE SPEAKING SKILL IN ADULT EFL LEARNERS

The following literature review will analyze relevant concepts related to the topic in study entitled "Teaching Strategies to Develop the Speaking Skill in Adults: Learners' Perceptions." Some issues concerning the same topic will be addressed for a better understanding about the focus of the problem with the current research.

2.1 Language learning process in an EFL context

2.1.1 Adult EFL learners

This research uses the term adult EFL learners referring to a mixed group with an average age of eighteen and older, as stipulated in the Código Civil Ecuatoriano ("art. 21"), learning English within an environment with another native language characterized by having different skills developed during their life and throughout their "educational and cultural backgrounds" (Southern Reg. Ed. Board). Those learners are distinguished "from younger language learners enrolled in primary and secondary schools; these groups possess very different characteristics from adult language learners" (Smith and Strong 1).

According to Mackeracher "Adult learning is a dynamic and interconnected set of processes that are emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and spiritual" (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 18). This dynamic should be known by instructors in order to have a better understanding of their expectations. Cercone stresses the urgent teachers' necessity of being "aware" of the aspirations and requirement of adults by considering their characteristics in planning the educational program (138).

In order to address the broad content of adult education Merriam and Caffarella encompass the adult learning within four lenses. These lenses are focused on:

- The nature of the adult learner

- The context within which adults learn

- The learning processes.

- The perspective of the educator (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 18).

According to Cross, Kidd, Knowles and Tough, the adult learners lens is centered on the learner and his or her own individualities (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 20) and the understanding of their characteristics (Cross and Knowles qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 20). This lens, also attempts to understand the demanding life of adults (Havinghurst qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 20), their desire or "motivations for learning" (Houle qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 20), and all the responsibilities that enclose the adult world (Merriam and Caffarella qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 20), that in many circumstances contribute to the success or failure of their learning. Furthermore, this lens relates the way how adults learn with the neuroscience theory which explains how education is connected with the brain, mind, body and context (Weiss qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 20).

The Adult learner lens is supported by the theory of Andragogy, developed by Malcolm Knowles in the 1960s, which will be detailed later. This theory should be known by educators in order to take advantage of the wealth of adult experiences (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 21). The knowledge of the Andragogy theory also allows the teacher to be aware of psychological and social problems, such as fears, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, schedule, economic, individual and social obligations (Merriam and

Caffarella, Valentine and Darkenwald, and Valentine qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 21).

The process lens is centered on the learners' acquisition process, namely, "on how adults learn" (Merriam qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 22). This lens is associated with the transformational learning theory, developed by Mezirow in 1978, which is defined as:

> The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting on these new understandings. (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 22)

Mezirow believes that most do not know the foundations of their way of thinking and acting. He adds, these bases are acquired from prototypes transmitted from beliefs of people close to children in the first years of life. From this view, Mezirow demands teachers to create a new perspective of transformation where adults realize how the culture has influenced their lives, thoughts, and social relations in order to encourage them to undertake expectations with new views beyond their learning. Mezirow also advises that the transformational perspective can be altered by unusual concerns "such as divorce", or the decease of relatives, that destabilize learners' lives. When it occurs, he recommends, teachers should encourage learners in three processes: "critical reflection on assumptions, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action" (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 23).

Regarding the learning context lens, it should be clear that the human being is a social being by nature; therefore, its main and first educator is the environment in which it grows. Jarvis declares "[l]earning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives, but that it is intimately related to the world and affected by it." He insists that we cannot fail to take into consideration the environment as this determines the learners' behavior as an active member of society (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 24).

The theory of situated cognition is related to this lens to explain in what way the context modifies the adult schooling (Caffarella and Merriam; and wilson qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 24). According to Wilson, adult learning should be seen "as a situated cognitive process in which adults no longer learn from experience, they learn in it, as they act in situations and are acted upon by situations" (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 24).

In the fourth lens, the authors recall that all educators hold particular views about the process of "adult" learning and regarding the "roles" played by them to achieve the educational goals. They indicate that every educator bases his/her teaching under the parameters of his/her own educational "experiences" as well as to the innate knowledge acquired from their lives (Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 26).

Because teachers base their teaching guided by his or her own experiences, the authors demand that they think about those beliefs and requests that they "examine the philosophical assumptions that guide their teaching beliefs and practices" (Elias and Merriam, Merriam and Brockett, Pratt and Associates, and Zinn qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 26). Elias and Merriam; Merriam and

Brockett establish the following benefits of taking into consideration the philosophical traditions:

> • Philosophies make us aware of the underlying values, beliefs, and theories guiding our practice.
>
> • Philosophies provide different quality criteria for making decisions and framing policy.
>
> • Philosophies highlight different educational purposes and help us construct a social vision.
>
> • Philosophies help us understand our own assumptions regarding learning content and processes.
>
> • Philosophies expand our awareness of different learning traditions and the impact on adult learning (qtd. in Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck 26, 27).

The aforementioned lenses are a proposal for understanding adult learning and its application in the classrooms with a wide vision of how adult learning works. Kiely, Sandmann, and Truluck state they can be used by the teacher at the time of planning their programs and as a source of analysis to face futures problems (28).

2.1.2 Andragogy Theory

According to Knowles in his book *The Modern Practice of Adult Education,* Andragogy is a theory developed as a result of the incongruity in the application of pedagogy in adult learning, after adult education was established in the 1920s. This was developed when adult learners rejected the strategies that teachers applied to them, such as drills, quizzes, memorizations, among others, realizing

that education cannot be a transfer of knowledge but a construction of it; namely, learning "how to learn" either with children or adults (40, 41).

It was not until the 50s that Knowles began to shape this philosophy helped by some research with learning adults as well as his own experience. After that, he published his book entitled *Informal Adult Education.* In the year 1968, Knowles begins to use the term Andragogy and then, in 1970, he writes *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy* in which Knowles defines Andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" which contrasts with Pedagogy that is literally "the art and science of teaching children" (Andragogy in Action 4, 5, 6).

Knowles declares, that Andragogy is a theory focused on accomplishing adults' learning needs. He states that there are many learning differences "between children and adults"(qtd. in Cercone 137), and based on this, he developed five hypotheses related to their characteristics, which will be detailed below.

2.1.2.1 Self-concept of the learner

This assumption refers to the learners' ability to responsibly direct their actions and face uncomfortable events imposed by others (Knowles 9). Knowles bases this assumption on the psychological concept of adult, referring to "who has arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for one's own life, of being self-directing" (9). Despite this, Knowles points out a critical situation when adults come into an educational program because they become dependent learners, who need to be guided and instructed by teachers. Faced with this situation, teachers have to look for tactics to help them change the roles "from being dependent learners to being self-directed learners" (Andragogy in Action 9, 10).

2.1.2.2 Learners experiences

Andragogy considers that adults begin their educational period with a wide range of experience from their previous schooling and also by adulthood (Knowles 10). Merriam refers that the adult "has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning" (5).

Knowles elaborates, that between adults and young there is a considerable difference. He states adults have different roles than young learners since they face such responsibilities as work, being the head of the family, and citizenship. Additionally, adults usually have mental patterns, directing what they think and what they do. This challenges educators to work in the pursuit of strategies that transform adult patterns into opportunities for new learning (Andragogy in Action 10).

2.1.2.3 Readiness to Learn

Knowles explains this characteristic is developed when adults feel the necessity to learn to be skillful in doing something by themselves and to be more proficient in acting or performing different tasks (Andragogy in Action 11). Merriam defines it as "learning needs closely related to changing social roles" (5).

Their readiness is demonstrated by their will in performing tasks that transport them to a higher level of learning, but in some cases, this enthusiasm is easily collapsed by unforeseen events in learners' life. In these cases, teachers have to engage in a futuristic foresight to motivate them by making them aware of their own success, stressing upon what they are and what they can become (Knowles 11).

2.1.2.4 Orientation to Learning

According to Knowles, adults' orientation to learn occurs when learners have been challenged to improve in something (12). This situation implies that adults come into an educational setting with defined goals, namely, they set up their learning within a framework of "life centered" and clear purposes (Knowles, Andragogy in Action 12). Knowles thinks that "adults do not learn for the sake of learning; they learn in order to be able to perform a task, solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way." Therefore, here arises the "importance" of designing curricula with the possibility of including apprentices' knowledges (12).

2.1.2.5 Motivation to Learn

One of the motivations that encourage learners to schooling is improving their life conditions, both in jobs and in society (external motivation). However, Knowles considers what primarily motivates adults to learn is their "internal" motivation to achieve a better life (Andragogy in Action12). The learners who feel good about themselves, are confident and capable of their own abilities.

It is clear that the primordial aim of Andragogy theory is to take advantage of the great reservoir of experiences of adult learners, their knowledge, willingness to learn, independence, and of course   their motivation. Instructors should consider the great advantages of these characteristics and contemplate that they can provide a rich source of ideas, concepts, models,   interesting notions to improve and achieve a meaningful learning through them.

2.2 EFL learners' perceptions on language learning processes and its implications

2.2.1 What are learners' perceptions?

The term perception is understood as "an attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought" ("Perception"). Through perceptions people give their viewpoints regarding how good or bad something is or how a particular situation could be better.

Griselda Hernandez claims that perceptions about learning have to do with students' personal experiences, the influence of the "sociocultural" context in which they have been involved, the "culture" of their previous schools, and with the group setting developed within the classroom. She adds "student perceptions may differ to the extent that what is suitable for some is inappropriate for others" because of diverse views and personal criteria of perceiving situations around each one (77).

In the educational field, perceptions are subjective thoughts based on meaningful experiences lived by people in their schooling which are reinforced with individual maturity that can be either "positive or negative" (Mateos 286). In other words, perceptions are the results of emotional, personal and social factors from the background of the learner.

2.2.2 Adult learners' perceptions

Learners' perceptions contribute to improving the educational practices for the purpose of achieving the communicative skill that is the focus of all students. For adult learners, their willingness and ability to communicate increase, as they are more inclined, because of their experience and capacity, to "engage in discussions about language" (Lightbown and Spada 30). According to Robinson, it

is proved that the "cognitive and linguistic capabilities and conceptual complexity" of adult learners are superior than "younger learners" (qtd. in Smith and Strong 2); with variation in some adults, as Cohen states. However, Cohen emphasizes that adults, unlike than young learners, are more skillful to share criteria about fundamental aspects that involve learning such as "learning styles and strategies" (qtd. in Smith and Strong 2).

Lightbown and Spada declare that most learners are not "aware" of their capabilities and competences of learning, however, some of them are reluctant in their thoughts regarding to the manner that their education should be. "These beliefs are usually based on previous learning experiences and the assumption (right or wrong) that a particular type of instruction is the best way for them to learn" (66, 67). Lightbown and Spada report the findings of a survey applied to adult learners in which they blamed their teachers of their learning failure because their methodology did not match with their beliefs about how they wanted to be instructed (67). Moreover, Horwitz claims that these incongruities can trigger other problems, such as the little reliability with their class, that even leads students to quit attending their foreign classes (qtd. in Brown 22).

The importance of exploring about perceptions is to hold an agreement among the actors of the teaching and learning process of a foreign language. Fang-Mei Tai expresses that adults are more willing to learn when the information stored for them has occurred "in their own natural and preferred ways" (162) because the learning process has been developed in a respectful and participative context between teacher and student.

2.2.3 Importance and implications of adult EFL learners' perceptions on the language learning process

The exposure of learners' perceptions provide a valuable input to the educational field. Through its acquaintance, it becomes aware of students' goals, that, in most cases, does not coincide with those of the institution, which often causes frustration and disappointment in students (Mateos 286). Brown emphasizes that to appreciate learners' beliefs and perceptions is a clever tactic to improve the teaching practice in which students' learning is enhanced (22). Thus, "learners' perceptions and interpretations … have been found to have the greatest influence on achievement" (William and Burden qtd. in Brown 22). However, to get students to be independent and responsible in their own learning, it is necessary for teachers to make students aware of the importance of their opinions (Castrillon 76).

According to Brooks-Lewis, along the time, in adult education has been used methodologies focused on the object under study. Teachers assume that the learner "knows how to learn a language", without giving the adequate importance so that learners realize the significance of their learning (1682).

To Brook-Lewis, working with awareness is indispensable with adult learners due to "confrontation of expectations" that is "an increasing acknowledgement of the role played by human perceptions and expectations in both learning and teaching" (Hilles and Sutton qtd. in Brooks-Lewis 1685). She adds it is fundamental that adults know what they are going to learn although this pratice is not common in the classroom (1685).

Brook-Lewis, also ponders, that teachers should guide learners to construct their own learning, what nowadays is known as "learning -to- learn" (1685). She

emphasises that learning to learn is the assumption by which learners undertake their own challenge of learning in which fundamental principles like responsibility, and the acceptance of their errors contribute to an indispensable key for improvement of their learning process (1686). Learners should be conscious that the only negative thing about making mistakes is "to do nothing" to overcome them (1695).

2.3 The Speaking Skill

The speaking skill is the ability by which the language is used to share thoughts, feelings, opinions, and express meaning and information through interaction with others. According to Nunan "Speaking is a productive aural/oral skill and it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning" (qtd. in Tuğrul 91).

Lazaraton claims people consider that "the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication" (103). Bailey and Savage think "Speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills" (qtd. in Lazaraton 103). As well, this skill is considered the most necessary skill to communicate that provide multiple opportunities for personal and professional people (Zaremba qtd. in Boonkit 1306).

2.3.1 Some considerations to develop the speaking skill in an EFL classrooms

Nunan enlists some principles for teaching speaking. For example, He sets up the importance of learners' practice to get "fluency and accuracy" (qtd. in Hosain184). Tam ponders, "[p]ronunciation, vocabulary, and collocations" are

indispensable elements in the searching of fluency. She believes that recurrent speaking practices involving different "situations" increment fluency "when speaking" (qtd. in Boonkit 1306).

Boonkit also explains, that learners' "confidence and competence" are also two mechanisms that assist in English speaking proficiency. Proficiency is achieved by giving assurance to learners in order to dispel the anxiety of making mistakes and enjoy the use of their new language (Patil qtd. in Boonkit 1306). Bailey and Songsiri believe that it is possible to construct a special program where teachers apply a proper curriculum, innovative approaches, meaningful practice and the right materials (qtd in Boonkit 1306).

Likewise, Hosain considers it to be important when teaching speaking that teachers limit their participation in class and give enough occasions for students to talk either in pairs or groups. These practices must be guided appropriately by the teacher who should inspire confidence in the students to overcome their weaknesses at the time of speaking (184).

Nunan thinks that every class must practice using "transactional and intersectional speaking" (185). He says "language learners will have to speak the target language in both transactional and intersectional settings" since our lexic is composed of the two types of speech (qtd. in Hosain185). Interactional speech is developed in most of our daily conversations, namely "for social purposes" and without having a predictable pattern. Interactional speech "includes both establishing and maintaining social relationships." On the other hand, "transactional speech involves communicating to get something done, including the exchange of goods and /or services" (Hosain 185).

2.3.2 Adults EFL learners and the speaking skill

For adults, developing the speaking skill is not a simple task to attain. Not only must one learn "grammatical rules", but should also acquire the language through the interaction with other English speakers. By this interaction, learners realize how language is used in social interchanges in which other components are interrelated (Shumin 204). According to Shumin, the limited contact of EFL learners with natives causes adult learners not to perform speaking well, especially in "fluency, control of idiomatic expressions, and understanding of cultural pragmatics" (204).

Brown declares that to become a fluent speaker, it is necessary to integrate some linguistic elements "such as contractions, vowel reduction and elision" because if these elements are not incorporated, learners will continue with "their rather formal-sounding full forms" (qtd. in Lazaraton 103). He adds to the beforementioned elements, "the use of slang and idioms … stress, rhythm, and intonation", and expresses that the integration of all those elements is just developed by interaction with others (103), namely; to achieve fluent speech the speaker should be in regular contact with the language.

Shumin endorses that communication not only occurs verbally, but also uses "paralinguistic elements of the speech such as pitch, stress, and intonation" and "non-linguistic elements such as gestures and body language/posture, facial expression, and so on…" (204). As it is noted, to achieve a high level of speaking, learners should control each of the aforementioned elements; this being a cause of frustration to some adult learners who are not prepared to carry out dialogues that integrate all these elements. Lazaraton comments: "we had not been prepared for spontaneous communication and could not cope with all of its simultaneous

demands" (103). To this concern, shumin strongly asserts that "speaking is one of the central elements of communication … that needs special attention and instruction" (210).

2.3.3 Teaching Strategies for developing the speaking skill in EFL contexts

Teaching strategies are the actions employed by the teacher in order to obtain positive results in student learning. From this point, it is visible that the strategies for working with adults should be carefully analyzed. An online article highlights the use of teaching strategies. It explains that: "[t]he fundamental importance of teaching strategies is to make it easier to implement a variety of teaching methods and techniques" ("Teaching Strategies") where students are involved in an active learning rather than a passive.

In Ecuador, searching for the correct strategies to involve learners in speaking practices is really necessary. Since learners do not have enough practice outside the classroom, or with native speakers, it becomes necessary that English programs focus their practices within the classroom, always being conscious that outside it will be almost nil.

Bahrani and Soltani recommend the use of scripts or "minimal responses" as an alternative for facilitating communication with learners, especially those who are shy or "lack confidence." Minimal responses facilitate understanding dialogues between learners and "enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response" (27).

Khan, in his study on "Speaking Skills and Teaching Strategies" considers "technology" as an important factor to motivate students in the acquisition of English as a foreign language (14558). Technology allows learners to see English learning from a positive perspective. Nowadays, technology is in every classroom

and the teachers should take advantage of it to help learners in their learning (Khan 14558). According to Master Guillermo Pacheco, technology is a tool to enhance the speaking skill. He expressed: "Nowadays, I have implemented WhatsApp to have students record their own audios so they can reflect on how they sound and what they say." He considers, it is a good way for learners to see their mistakes in order to improve them (E-mail interview).

Furthermore, a strategy that Gocer considers primordial for teaching is to incite "interest" and optimism in learners for the language (196). He believes that teachers who give attention to learning atmosphere and construct pleasant environments are going to get results faster and better (197). At this point, it is important that the culture of the target language gets involved. For instance, the classroom could be set with pictures, posters or something that represents the culture; even, desks and seats should be arranged in a different way to which learners have been accustomed. It can be in groups or circles but not in rows (Bahrani and Soltani 26). Moreover, Gocer points out that informing students the learning objectives for each class also motivates them, so that they know what they will learn and how this is going to serve in their daily communication (197).

Other aspects highlighted for teaching is the integration of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), the use of visual aids and audio, and the use of the mother tongue when learners need to understand the language (Gocer 197). Usually learners, in their first levels, feel motivation of understanding the language by translating each word. At this stage, understanding the language motivates them more than trying to speak, and it is advisable for teachers to accept it because while they do attain self-confidence, it gradually disappears (Bahrani and Soltani 26).

Besides, Gocer recommends teaching students to apply what they have learned in their everyday conversations, using themes of their daily routines so that their learning could be meaningful (197). This practice should be made from the beginning of the course encouraging learners to do that just in the target language. This should go hand in hand of an adequate feedback, and the use of positive reinforcement as giving extra points each time they attempt to do so. This is a very good strategy because learners feel motivated by talking and at the same time practice their speaking (Bahrani and Soltani 26).

To conclude, Gocer states, that in the learning process the best strategy is teacher's ability to create a warm and encouraging environment where students feel comfortable, eager to learn, and meet their expectations through activities where students interact with each other and acquire knowledge by themselves from real life (199).

2.3.4 Definition and characteristics of communicative activities

Communicative activities are the basis of the communicative language teaching, the method which its main purpose is to promote learners learn the language using real conversations including topics of their daily life. Communicative activities require the participation of at least a speaker and a listener to carry out a conversation with purposes focused on "finding and exchanging information, breaking down barriers, talking about oneself, and learning about culture" (Rhalmi). Its principle is using authentic material to overcome problems of students understanding as well as "to expose students to natural language in a variety of situations" (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson126).

In the last years, the use of communicative activities in the classroom has increased as a tool for teachers to face the harsh reality of students' unwillingness

to speak (Riasati 1287). Teachers have the great challenge of promoting, in all L2 learners, interest in using oral activities in the classroom in order to develop communicative competences. When teachers encourage learners to use communicative activities, they provide students with more opportunities to use the language in authentic situations and not focus only on grammatical structures or isolated vocabulary (Trinity College London), namely, learners will have more contact with the target language through its real use with authentic materials.

Communicative activities have three characteristics in common: information gap, choice, and feedback (Johnson and Morrow qtd. in Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 122).

2.3.4.1 Information Gap

"This refers to the fact that in real communication, people normally communicate in order to get information they do not possess" (Richards 18). Namely, when a person does not know the information provided by the speaker. Some of the activities used in the information gap are: asking questions, jigsaw puzzles, giving directions.

2.3.4.2 Choice

This feature refers to the opportunity that a learner has in the choice of "what she will say and how she will say it." When an exercise does not provide opportunities for learners to choose or interact, it is considered a non-communicative activity, for instance, a 'chain drill' in which questions are often repeated (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 123).

2.3.4.3 Feedback

The feedback has the purpose to make sure that the information given by the speaker has been attained (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 123). Feedback occurs when the teacher generates opportunities so that learners return information according to the topic exposed ("Def. de Feedback"). Specifically, the practice of feedback is useful so that learners reaffirm their understanding about the topic in discussion. If the feedback is not provided, the activity is considered as a non-communicative activity (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 123).

2.3.5 Communicative activities

As this section is about communicative activities, it is essential to illustrate some of the most used techniques in the EFL classroom, their importance, their benefits, and the criteria to use them.

2.3.5.1 Discussions

Discussion is a very popular and important classroom activity for students. An effective discussion goes beyond asking and answering questions. It seeks to develop expertise at the time of speaking. In order to succeed in this activity, the teacher must prepare the activity with enough time to consider what to teach, to whom, and how ("Discussions").

Before starting this activity, it is necessary that the teacher reads the directions, establishes the purpose of the discussion and the topic to be discussed, as well as the rules for participation. Each student should be included and should get into small groups, (4-5) members in each group, and to set a specific time to work with the topic. During the discussion activity, the teacher should control students' involvement and ask questions to check their understanding, giving them some

seconds until they have their responses. In addition, teachers must provide follow-up questions in order to clarify any doubt. In this part of the activity the teacher must use non-verbal resources such as gestures, body movement, and eye contact. After the activity, the teacher must provide appropriate feedback in order that the activity be meaningful for learners ("Teaching through Discussion").

The aim of this activity is to seek students' participation in discussion of relevant topics in order to increase their argumentation showing agreement or disagreement (Kayi).

2.3.5.2 Role Play

Role play is another activity with a communicative purpose that uses humor and creativity to engage learners in speaking activities using unrealistic situations with unreal characters.

An online article lists some of the benefits of this activity:

- It is fun and motivating.
- Quieter students get the chance to express themselves in a more forthright way.
- The world of the classroom is broadened to include the outside world - thus offering a much wider range of language opportunities ("Role Play").

Role play provides an extensive contribution both as a way of teaching and as a way of learning. As a way of teaching, role play contributes to strengthening the "personality" of the learner by replaying imaginary behavior and circumstances of other people. Through this experience students acquire knowledge and understanding about real situations in their context, and the most valuable is that

they realize how they can use the target language in real and varied conditions (Lin 62).

As a way of learning, role play is "as a highly flexible learning activity which has a wide scope for variation and imagination" (Krish qtd. in Lin 63). Larsen-Freeman and Anderson highlight the importance of Role play because it offers students a chance to practice communication in varied contexts, interchanged roles either in a highly structured way in which the teacher is in charge of the whole script or in a less structured way in which students can choose a part of their performance (127,128). In conclusion, Role play is students' opportunity for language production by interacting with others with the role of a fictitious character (Lin 64) bringing to the class diversity and enjoyment.

2.3.5.3 Story Completion

To develop this activity, the teacher has to start narrating a story, telling just a section of the story and then stopping. The student is given free rein to complete the story using only his or her imagination. This activity allows learners to freely practice their speaking. "Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on"(Kayi). The success of this activity is that students participate, adding more events to the story, so they develop their speaking as well as their ability to interact among other students.

2.3.5.4 Jigsaw

"Jigsaw activities are more elaborated information gap activities that can be done with several partners." It consists dividing a topic in some groups among all students of the class.This activity is like a puzzle game where students work separately on the same topic to collaborate in completing the pieces. The topics

can be so varied, from cartoons, pictures, stories, and recording ("Developing Speaking Activities").

A jigsaw activity has a double function, namely, students learn by themselves and teach at the time. This activity help students to prove their speaking abilities and increase their ability to communicate (Bryanton, Jon Paul and Reschny).

2.3.5.5 Playing Cards

This activity requires groups of four. Each participant is assigned a topic as in the following example:

- Diamonds: Earning money
- Hearts: Love and relationships
- Spades: An unforgettable memory
- Clubs: Best teacher

Each member of the group picks up a card and writes some questions about the topic. These questions will be answered by the partner. For example: If the topic "Diamonds: Earning Money" is selected, here are some possible questions:

- Is money important in your life? Why?
- What is the easiest way of earning money?
- What do you think about lottery? Kayi)

It is important that the teacher sets up the rules before starting the activity. The goal is that learners are able to ask open-ended questions instead of closed questions which do not allow practice and the development of the speaking skill. This is a very good activity in which learners produce spoken language with a fun activity (Kayi).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method

Due to the fact that this research is centered on identifying which are the preferences of adult learners regarding teaching strategies, this study uses mixed method research techniques involving both qualitative and quantitative data.

As Bulsara explains, "Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating … quantitative and qualitative research … in a single study or a longitudinal program of inquiry", this project integrates the two types of research (qualitative and quantitative) to grasp a better understanding of a research problem (6). Thus, the quantitative approach will allow presenting the numerical results gathered from the survey, whereas the qualitative will attempt to find the answer to the research question: *Which are the teaching strategies that adult advanced EFL learners of the Language Department at Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana consider important when developing the speaking skill?*

For this purpose, a survey to students of both universities was applied, as well as a deep interview that contained open-ended questions to ten students and an expert teacher in teaching methodologies.

3.2 Human resources

As the goal of this project is to explore the perceptions of adult learners, the participants involved in this study were advanced students of the intensive mode of Language Institutes in both universities of Cuenca, Universidad Politécnica Salesiana and Universidad de Cuenca.

Eighty eight students of the mentioned universities took part of the study; fifty five participants from the fifth and sixth level at Universidad   Politécnica

Salesiana, and thirty three from the eighth level at the Language Department of Universidad de Cuenca. All participants were male and female Ecuadorians between 19 and 30 years old.

Due to the aim of this research, it was indispensable to choose adult advanced level students in order to find participants who have a clearer perspective about English learning throughout their educational and professional experiences. To clarify this, it is important to mention that these adults learners are in large part professionals or close to reach their professional degree.

As a final consideration, it is necessary to state that the two institutions involved in this research have a particular characteristic, one is public and the other one is private having as a result a possible variation in the responses.

3.3 Data gathering techniques

To achieve the goal of this study, two techniques have been used: a survey and a personal interview, with students and with an expert. With the results obtained from these techniques a triangulation of data was carried out.

To accomplish this, a research application letter, signed by the tutor and the researcher, which included the model of the survey and the interview, was previously sent to Master Rosita Torres at Universidad de Cuenca, and to Master Susana Castro at Universidad Politécnica Salesiana.

The implementation of these techniques would have not been possible without the cooperation of the Language Department authorities of both universities, as well as students who provided all the support for the process of data collection in a suitable and efficient way.

3.3.1 Survey description

The first step was to apply a pilot survey, based on studies carried out in countries like Bangladesh, Turkey and China. The objectives of this pilot survey were to determine its feasibility, to make any necessary changes for a better operability at the time of using it with the participants, as well as the moment of tabulating the information. The pilot sample was applied to the eighth level students of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca.

The survey was presented in English without any Spanish translation considering that the students selected to complete it were at the advanced level and would not have any difficulty understanding the questions. It was composed of fourteen questions divided in the following way:

In the first part, applicants had to complete basic information such as their university, their level and age. Then, questions one to eleven inquire about the participants' time of studying English, motivation, classes per week and the general situation within the classes. Finally, questions 12 to 14 ask participants to explain about their expectations towards the speaking skill proficiency in the classroom. See the survey template in Appendix 1.

3.3.2 Student's interview

The participants of the interview were ten students, five from each university. They were chosen randomly the same day the survey was applied. The interview was composed of nine open-ended questions related to the speaking skill and the strategies they considered important to develop it. It should be noted that the questions of both techniques were checked and endorsed by both the tutor, at that

time Licenciado Juan Jose Santillan, and Master Ana Maria Calle, teacher at Universidad de Cuenca.

Before starting the interview, its purpose was given in detail to students, in order they could understand the importance of it. Also, it was explained that the interview had to be recorded in which they expressed their agreement.

During this process, it was noticed that not all students, mainly at Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, were able to understand the interview in English so it was necessary to conduct the interview using translation into Spanish. On the other hand, students from Universidad de Cuenca showed a higher understanding of the questions in the interview, making this process easier to use the target language. transcription of the interview is presented in Appendix 2.

Once the data gathering process was completed, tabulation of this information was made. In the next chapter this information will be presented through tables and graphics in order to accomplish the final objective of this study.

3.3.3 Interview with an expert in teaching methodologies in EFL classrooms

One of the specific objectives of this project was to carry out an interview with an expert in this subject. The goal of this interview was to support this research with a critical contribution from the experience of experts for which two interviews were developed. The interview was applied to Magister Verónica León and Magister Guillermo Pacheco, Associate Professor at the English language School at the Universidad de Cuenca who with their large experience in English teaching becomes a valuable contribution for the current project.

The interview was composed of twelve questions in which they could give their opinions on the topic of methodologies and teaching based on their experience as professors as well as their knowledge as researchers.

The input from the two interviews will be used to triangulate the information drawn along with the other techniques in order to expose valid conclusions and recommendations.

The complete interviews are presented in Appendix 3 for their respective review.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This section will analyze in first place, the responses from the survey applied to the eighty eight students of Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad Politécnica Salesiana. Then, the students' opinions obtained from the interview to the ten participants of the same universities will be analyzed.

4.1 Survey Results

The following responses will be described according to the characteristic of each question; namely, in some cases responses will be presented separately and in other, responses of both universities will be linked.

Question N° 1: How long have you been learning English? _____ years.

Table 1: Student's study time

Years of study	U de Cuenca	U.P.S	TOTAL
a. 0-3	2%	44%	43%
b. 4-7	39%	33%	35%
c. 8-11	6%	16%	13%
d. 12-15	12%	7%	9%

To analyze this question, results of both universities have been examined as a whole. Thus, responses between (a b) category reveled a high percentage (78%) of students that have been studying English between zero to seven years. This indicates that most of them have been learning this language parallel to their professional careers. Also, this result shows that a group of students has been learning the language for several years, in some cases until fifteen years, as indicate the third and fourth (c d) category of this question.

These results allow discerning that there may be a problem in the English teaching-learning process because despite the long time studying the language, learners have been unable to achieve it.

Question N° 2: What's your motivation for learning English?

☐ I'm interested in the language.
☐ I want to do (writing/reading) research work on English Language
☐ I want to get a good job.
☐ I want to study abroad.
☐ It is a requirement to graduate
☐ Other _____

Tabla 2: General results of students' motivation for learning English

Motivation for learning English U. of Cuenca		Motivation for learning English U.P.S	
I'm interested in the language.	79%	It is a requirement to graduate	60%
I want to study abroad.	55%	I'm interested in the language.	38%
I want to get a good job.	39%	I want to get a good job.	29%
I want to do research in English	18%	I want to do research in English	18%
It is a requirement to graduate	9%	I want to study abroad.	11%
Other		Other	7%

Table 2 shows learners' different motivation for learning English. Participants had six options and they could choose more than one. Some differences in responses between both universities emerged, therefore; it became necessary to analyze participants' results separately. At Universidad de Cuenca the three main responses to which respondents were inclined are: first, interest in learning the language; second, the desire to continue studying abroad, and third, they aim to get a good job. The two remaining options are divided between the requirement to graduate and doing English research. On the other hand, learners from Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, said studying English by requirement to

graduate as chiefly followed by the interest for the language and to get a good job. The percentage remaining is divided among the options of doing English research, studying abroad and other.

Question N° 3. How many English classes do you have per week? _____hours. Do you feel it is sufficient? Yes _____ No_____

Tabla 3: Amount of English class per week

Hours of classes	U de Cuenca	Hours of classes	U.P.S
20 hrs.	3%	8 hrs.	24%
10 hrs.	91%	4 hrs.	74%
5 hrs.	6%	2 hrs.	2%

In this question an average of ten hours per week was indicated as a majority with 91% by respondents from Universidad de Cuenca. The remaining nine percent is divided between five and twenty hours. A difference in the hours can be observed in the same table (3) regarding the other university. 40 out of 55 students (74%) agreed they have received an average of four hours of English class per week together with the 24% who said receiving 8 English hours.

Finally, to the matter, if they feel it is sufficient, there is an equal result (50%) between both universities that agreed with the hours of English class, and the other half that disagreed with it.

Question N° 4.   How many students are there in their classes?

a   10 to 20
b   20 to 30
c   30 to 40

Graphic 1: Representation of the number of students: U.C – U.P.S

Number of students in Engish class
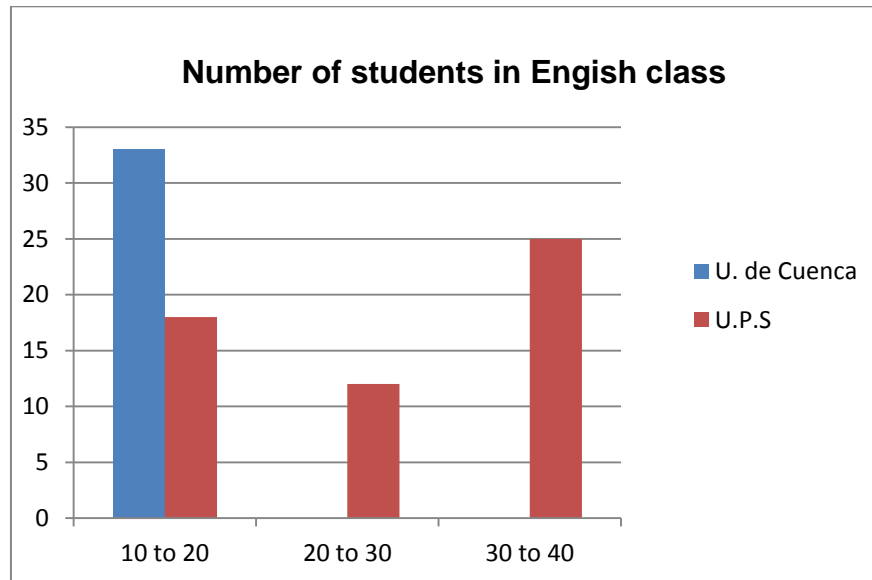
Through this question it is possible to appreciate a considerable difference in the number of students in both universities; namely, while Universidad de Cuenca, hundred percent of students confirmed an average of 10-20 classmates per English class; in Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, most respondents (45%) reported to be receiving classes with thirty and forty students as it can be observed in graphic 1. This factor (number of students per class) could be a significant data to take into account in the final learning outcome.

Question N° 5. How do you rate your English language skills? Please, use the following four point scale.

       4 - Excellent
       3 - Good
       2 - Fair
       1 – Poor

Graphic 2: Representation of students' proficiency of the four language skills: U.C - U.P.S
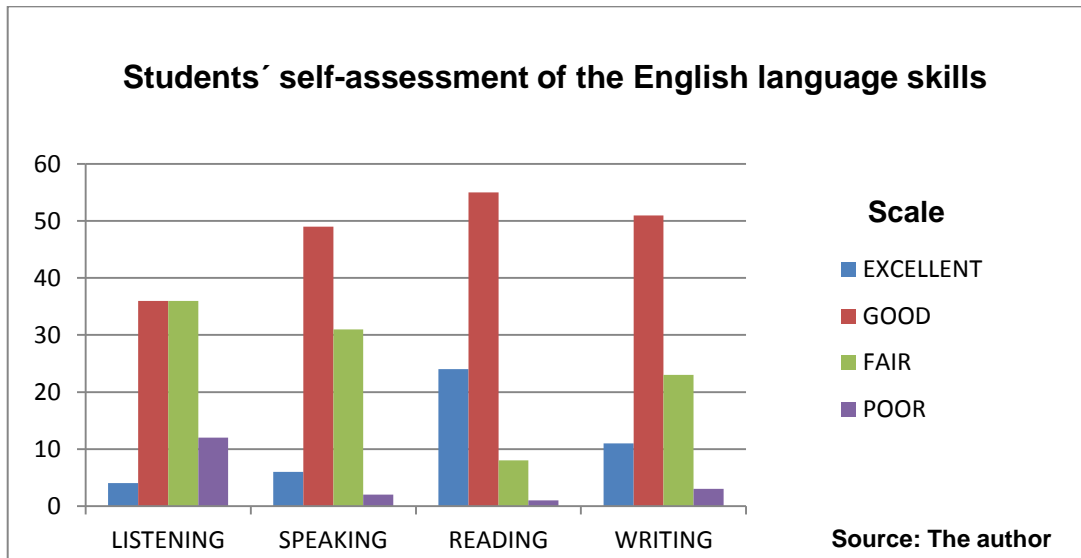
This question is addressed to know how students self-evaluate their mastery in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) using a scale ranging from "Excellent to Poor". Responses of both universities have been joined due to the proximity in their answers. In most of the skills the category that excels is "Good". Listening and speaking are the two skills where the category "Excellent" appears with the lowest percentage, 5% and 7%, respectively. Reading is the only skill where "Excellent" appears in second place after "Good", and the same skill got the lowest percentage in the "Poor" category (1%). In writing, percentages are similar to the other three skills indicating the categories "Good" and "Fair" over 80% on the top, and "Excellent and Poor" with less than 20%.

According to these responses, the skills that students more struggle are with listening and speaking. Although it is optimistic that in all skills the category "Good" appears in first place, it is expected that learners can rate them as an "Excellent".

Question 6. **How often do you speak English in class?**

Seldom _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

Graphic 3: Representation of students' responses about the frequency of speaking in class
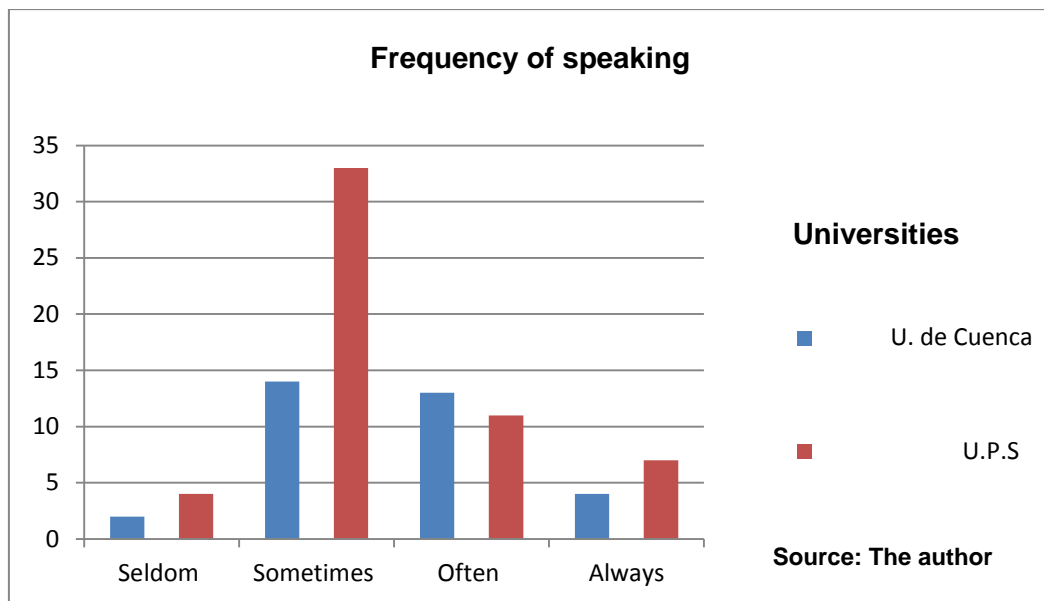
This question aim is to know the frequency of interaction in the target language that students have in class. In a scale ranging from "Seldom to Always" they had to place their speaking frequency. Results indicate that more than a half of students (53%) feel they speak English in class only "Sometimes" followed by 27% that indicate "Often", and 13% who said "Always", finally the 7% holding that they "Seldom" speak in English. These results express that there is not enough level of conversation during the class, that is, just the 13% has an acceptable rate of speaking in class.

Question N° 7. What's the proportion of teacher talking time, to student talking time in your class?

Graphic 4: Representation of teacher talking time: U.C – U.P.S.
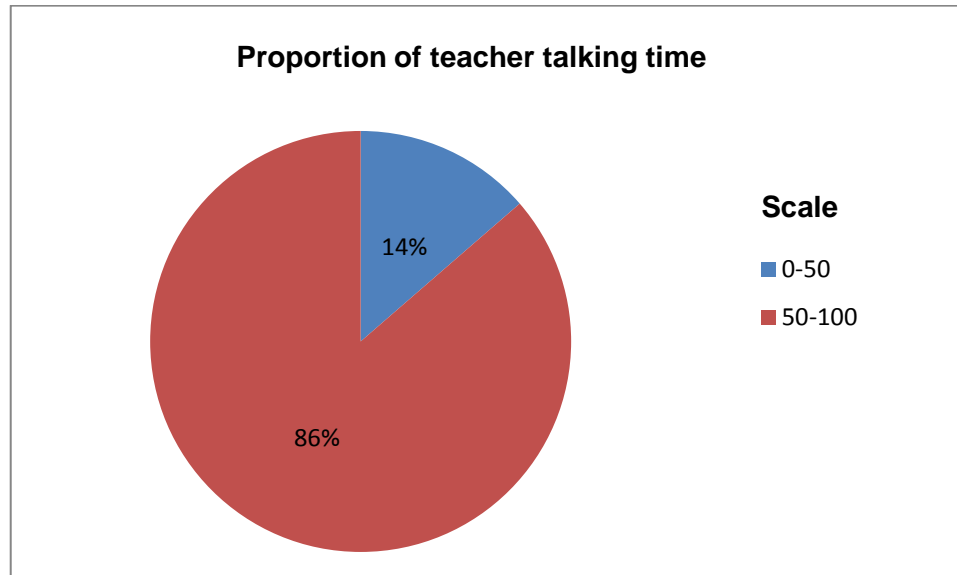
Question seven makes references to the proportion of teacher to students talking time during the class. 76 out of 88 respondents indicated that teacher talking time is 86% during the class. This result points out that teachers do not give enough opportunities to students for practicing the speaking in class. As it is stated in responses from students interview where they ask for more chances to speak in class.

Question 8. Does the university provide students with any facility to learn English language (for example, language club, computer lab, etc.)?

Yes___No___ if your answer is yes, please specify which are they?

Graphic 5: Students' responses about facilities that universities provide them
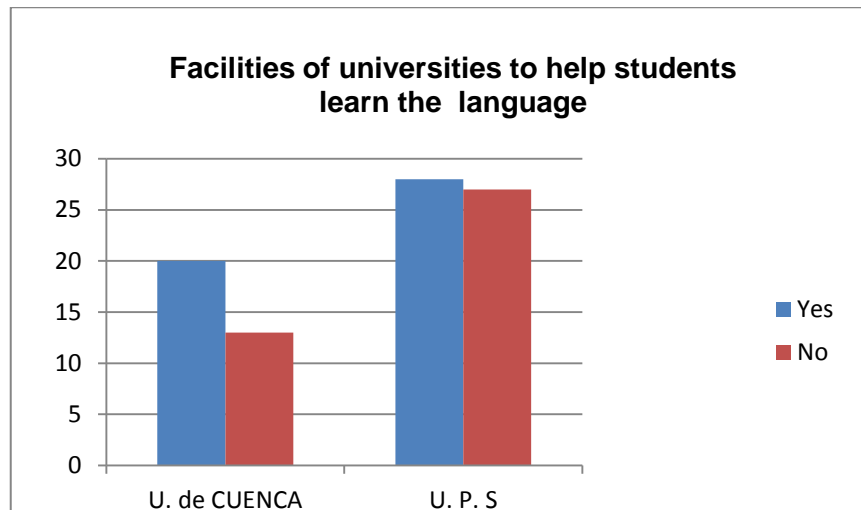
This question aims to know if universities are supporting students' learning through other alternatives. Students' responses of both universities yielded the following results: "Yes" 55% - "No" 45%. Some of the facilities that their universities provide them to learn the language are: computer labs, the language department, virtual platform, projectors and tandem's program.

Question 9. Do you feel comfortable speaking the language (English)?
Yes_____No_____If your answer is **NO,** please, explain the reason.

Graphic 6: Students' responses about comfortability speaking the language: U.C – U.P.S
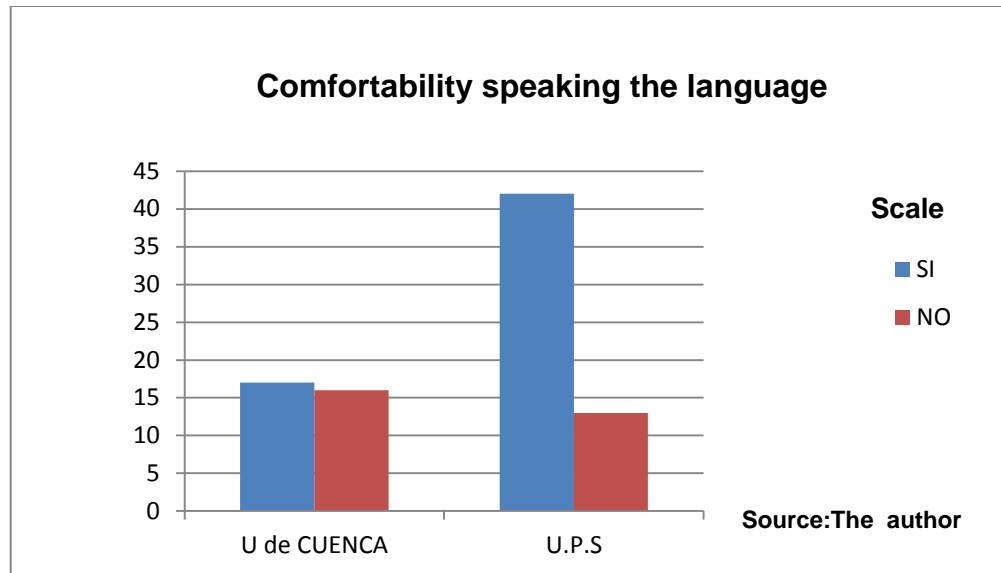
This question enables us to identify how comfortable students feel speaking the language. These were their total responses: 67% of students expressed feeling comfortable when speaking the language, whereas the 33% said they do not feel good doing that. On the other hand, regarding the factors that inhibit speaking, they listed: the high number of students in class, the fear of making mistakes, the lack of vocabulary and the lack of practice**.**

It is positive that most students feel comfortable speaking the language since knowing the inhibiting factors listed by themselves, teachers could take action.

Question 10. What obstacles do you think students face when speaking?

(You can select more than one)

- ☐ Lack of vocabulary
- ☐ Grammar errors
- ☐ Lack of fluency
- ☐ Pronunciation
- ☐ Lack of communicative strategies
- ☐ Nervousness
- ☐ Shamefulness
- ☐ Shyness
- ☐ Lack of confidence
- ☐ All the above

Tabla 4: Responses ordered from high to low percentage about students' obstacles when speaking

Obstacles	U de C	U.P.S	TOTAL
Nervousness	73%	75%	74%
Pronunciation	82%	67%	73%
Lack of vocabulary	82%	58%	67%
Grammar errors	36%	67%	56%
Lack of fluency	67%	38%	49%
Shyness	33%	25%	28%
Lack of confidence	15%	13%	14%
Lack of communicative strategies	12%	13%	13%
Shamefulness	9%	15%	13%
All the above		4%	2%

This question gave some options to help students define the difficulties they have when speaking English, which have been categorized from high to low percentage. These choices are similar to the answers provided for learners in the previous question such as, fear of mistakes, lack of vocabulary and lack of practice. In the current question the order drawn by participants was:

First, nervousness. This issue is strongly affecting students' oral production, occupying the 74% of the whole sample.

Second, pronunciation with a high amount of responses (73%). This indicates that students avoid speaking because they do not trust in their pronunciation.

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Third, lack of vocabulary. With 67% of responses this factor is also an important point to consider, especially when it is one of the most requested by students indicating that teachers should put more emphasis on increasing this fundamental part of the skill.

Fourth, grammar errors, with more than a half percent (56%) this category is considered as an obstacle for speaking in class.

The following categories were also ranked as obstacles when students speak, and although they have less than 50% of responses, it is important to consider them at the time of planning lessons. They are: lack of fluency, shyness, lack of confidence, shamefulness, and lack of communicative strategies. For a better description of the percentages, see table 4.

Question N° 11. Do you like the way in which you practice the speaking skill? Yes_____No_____ If your answer is negative, please explain why:

Graphic 7: Representation of students' responses regarding if they like the way of practicing speaking: U.C – U.P.S.
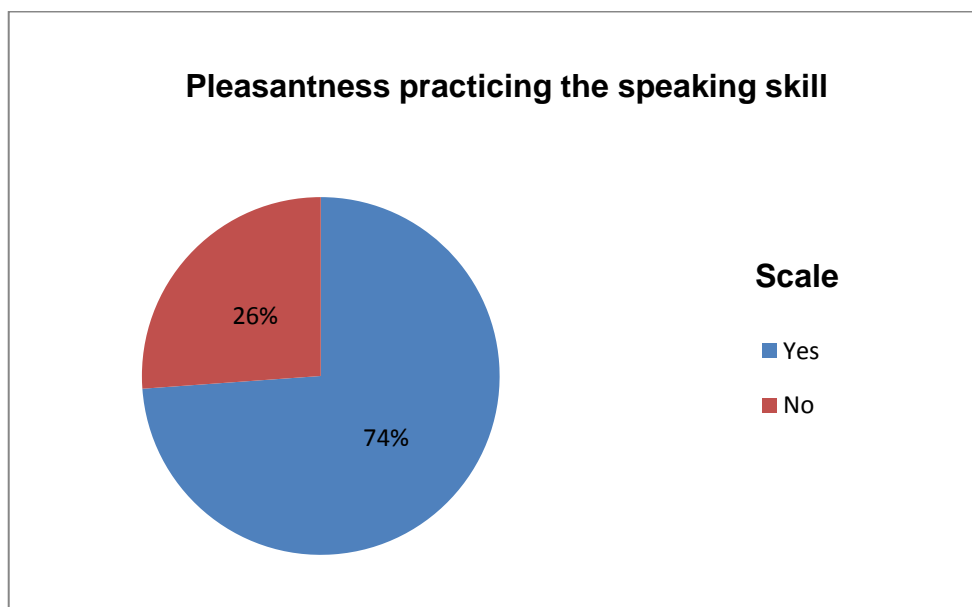
Question eleven was aimed to know the students' grade of satisfaction with their speaking practice. 74% stated a positive satisfaction and 26% stated a negative one.

Among the reasons by which learners do not like the way of practicing the speaking skill are: poor vocabulary, self-confidence problems as nervousness, fear, insecurity, shyness, among others; problems of pronunciation and grammar, the necessity of more speaking and listening practice, as well as they claimed that there is not a specific conversation class.

In this question it is possible to observe that participants again discuss issues such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, self-confidence problems as well as the absence of a conversation class as hindering factors to speak.

Question N° 12. What would you like to do to improve the speaking skill?

Tabla 5: Students' options to improve the speaking skill

N°	Category	%
1	More practice in the English class: dialogues about specific topics, conversation clubs, conversations about stories, discussion, debates.	40%
2	Learn more vocabulary	15%
3	Speaking practice with native people and native teachers	11%
4	Practicing pronunciation	10%
5	Through strategies: learning idioms, use of phrasal verbs, listening advices from the teacher, work group, etc.	9%
7	Fun activities: Watching tv programs (movies, videos, radio)	9%
8	Listening to music or singing	8%
9	Use of technology (online classes, use of multimedia devices)	6%
10	Practice reading	5%
11	Time in class to speak just English	3%
12	Improve fluency, grammar	3%
13	Projects as interviews and interchanges	2%
14	Take nervousness, and shyness out	2%

15	Teacher introduces each class with listening	2%
16	Include the speaking in another subject	1%
17	Talking about science and technology	1%
18	Oral homework	1%
19	See more videos as an obligation	1%
20	Describe pronunciation on the board	1%
21	More questions	1%
22	Equal time to practice for each student	1%
23	Travel to other countries	1%

Through the answers to this question, it is possible to see the varied needs that students have in order to improve their speaking. Table 5 illustrates answers in percentages from the highest to the lowest. The main necessities cited by students were:

Speaking practice with 40% of the total responses. The students ask that they practice using topics in which they develop free dialog and conversation clubs.

Fifteen percent (15%) of the students requested new vocabulary as part of their curriculum. A frequent necessity that students claim is the need to practice with native people as well as the presence of native teachers in the classroom. This opinion was shared with 11% of the respondents.

Practicing pronunciation also presented a percentage to take into consideration of 10%. Likewise, the other options, although with less percentages are not less important than those already mentioned. On the contrary, each of them should be analyzed to be included as strategies to improve the learning.

Question N° 13.   What would you like to take out from your speaking classes?

Tabla 6: Students' suggestions to take out from their speaking class

N°	Category	%
1	Nothing	23%
2	Teacher' speaking speed	14%
3	Old strategies (memorization, the distribution of the chair, homework, teacher talking time more didactic and funny class)	8%
4	Grammar	5%
5	Boring topics (politicians)	3%
6	Others (videos, bad atmosphere, improvisations)	3%
7	Work in pairs to avoid speaking Spanish	2%
8	Bad pronunciation	2%
9	Teacher's pitch of voice	2%
10	Test	1%
11	Reading	1%
12	Books	1%

Table 6 shows some students' opinions of what they would like to take out from their speaking classes. Firstly, they consider that "nothing" should be removed, but rather it should be implemented with new strategies and take out the old ones. Other students' requests are for example the speed when the teacher talk to them, this item got 14% among all students. Grammar with 5% of the responses, pair work or group work because they think it facilitates them to speak Spanish, the teacher' pitch of voice, among others.

Question N° 14. In the scale from 1 to 4, rate the importance and effectiveness of each technique when developing the speaking skill. (Please, circle the number that you choose)

Table 7: Students' ranking of techniques to improve the speaking skill

Techniques	4. Extremely Important		3.Very Important		2. Important		1.Not Important	
	U.C	U.P.S	U.C	U.P.S	U.C	U.P.S	U.C	U.P.S
Conversation and Discussion	22	1	10	5	1	16		33
Using gestures	4	4	14	18	15	22		11
Individual work	5	7	10	11	13	18	5	19
Using idiomatic phrases	14	4	14	13	5	24		14
Pair work and small group work	8	5	18	10	6	22	1	18
Role play	10	4	17	17	4	25	2	9
Picture description	8	3	9	15	15	21	1	16
Oral diary; oral weekly report	15	6	11	9	7	23		17
Watching TV programs and films in English	17	5	14	5	2	17		28
Storytelling	10	6	20	12	3	25		12

This question leads to understanding students' perceptions regarding the techniques used for teaching speaking. Students had to rank ten techniques using a scale from 4 to 1 (being 4 the most important and 1 the least important). The answers have been grouped according to the categories with the highest number of responses. In table 7, it can be observed how respondents of both universities ranked each technique; however, for a better understanding these have been grouped by categories as shows graphic 8.

There, it can be observed that the category "Extremely Important" is labeled "Conversation and Discussion, Oral Diary and Oral Weekly Report, Watching TV Programs and Films in English". In the category "Very Important" are grouped the

following techniques "Using Idiomatic Phrases, Pair Work and Small Group Work, Role Play and Storytelliñg, then, in the category "Important" are "Using Gestures, and Picture Description", and in the last category labeled as "Not Important" "Individual Work".

Graphic 8: Representation of techniques for developing the speaking by categories

Rating of importance and effectiveness of each technique when developing the speaking skill
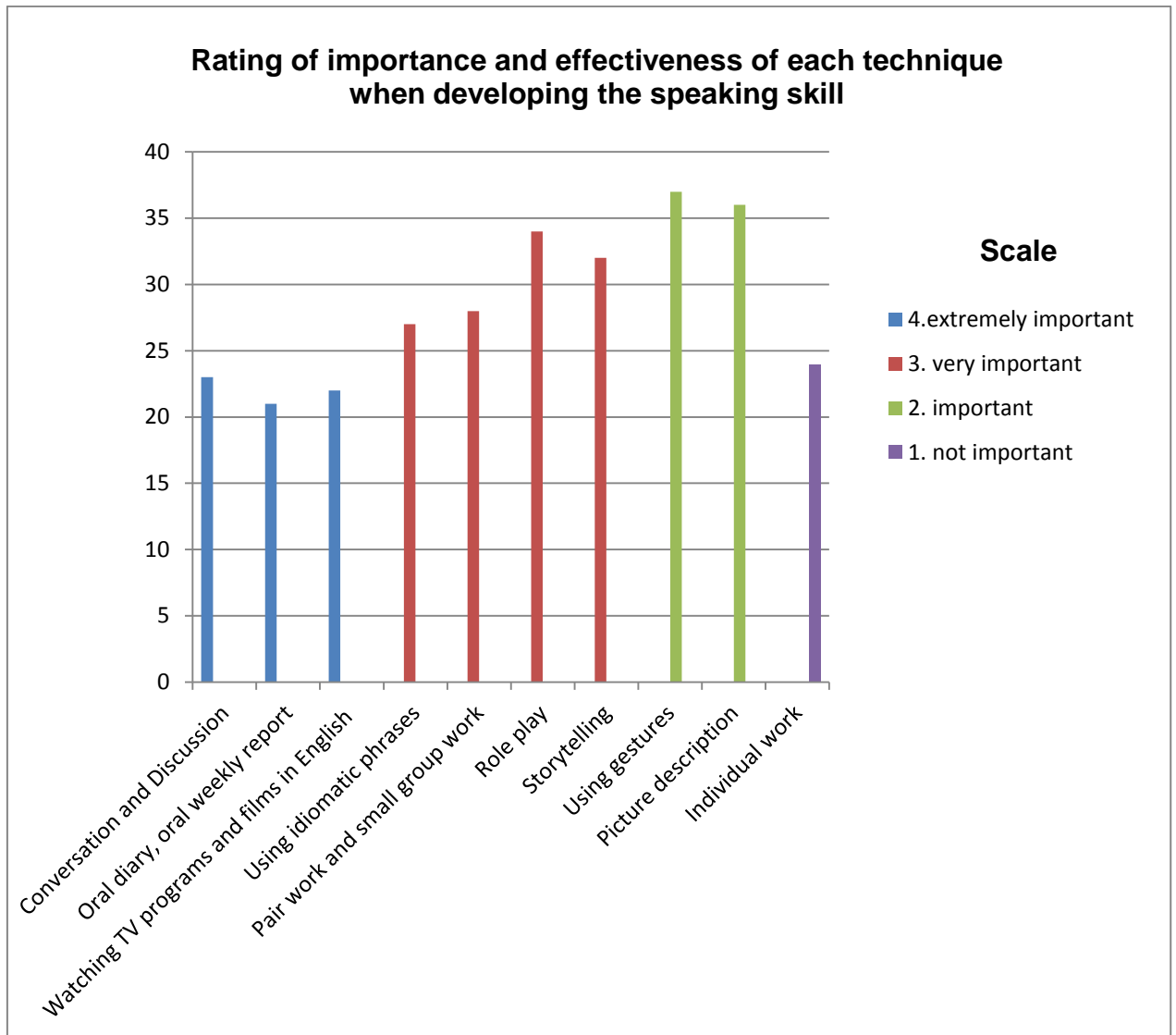
4.2 Analysis of the students' interview

The following analysis is based on the responses of the nine questions applied to students of both universities to determine and identify their opinions in relation to the teaching process for developing the speaking skill.

The first question was aimed at knowing which of the skills participants would like to develop to improve their English. Eight out of ten answered "speaking". Three of them said that besides speaking they would like to improve writing, reading and listening. Results confirm students' desire to learn English and improve their speaking skill as the main objective in learning.

The second question had the intention to explore students' opinions about the strategies used for developing the speaking skill. Students feel that some teachers do not have much interest in their learning because they talk all the time and students speak just a little. They think teachers should implement strategies to learn English in a natural way without including so much grammar even though they do not understand it yet. Some students agreed that expositions are a good form to improve speaking because it increases their vocabulary and helps them to lose the fear of speaking in front of other people or their classmates. They also expressed that teachers should encourage them to speak more in an informal way about familiar topics.

The third question was to ask about how students would like teachers to help them improve speaking in English. Some respondents believe that it could be through debates in which all students can participate; making the class more interactive, fun and comfortable with games, role plays, and include more listening and speaking. Moreover, they want teachers to include topics related to their careers in English, as they are already familiar to those in Spanish. Additionally,

they endorsed teachers should consider the distribution of the chairs, in other words, they suggested that in order to carry out a conversation the chairs should not be in rows but in a circular form.

Question four asked how students consider teachers should encourage them to practice the speaking skill. They noted teachers should not motivate them just saying "English is easy", but they should show the importance of English nowadays, especially in each of their professions. As well, they added that teachers should use programs where students can have conversations with native speakers, watch more videos for learning new expressions, and to have more reading and listening exercises as homework assignments.

Question five questioned what students believe is necessary for an effective communication. They expressed: first, the context. They think it is very necessary knowing how to communicate according to the place where the conversation occurs due to the variation in the using of the words. Second, to reinforce self-confidence. Students consider self-confidence important because they could talk to everyone with conviction and aloud and not with a low tone as occurs with people who is learning English. Third, to know a lot of vocabulary and grammar. In this part they reported divided opinions. Some of them consider vocabulary as the most important tool to carry out communication and perceive innecesary to focus just in grammar. However, other responses pointed out grammar as an essential aspect for speaking since it is not only uttering words, but doing it appropriately. Thus, it is noticeable that the context, self-confidence, vocabulary and grammar are four points they consider very important for the development of speaking.

Question six asked how they would like their speaking activities to be in the classroom. To this, they replied that classes could be more dynamic where

everyone can interact. They believe teachers should propose debates about interesting topics at least one time per week. Besides, they request teacher's confidence to talk freely about topics as: daily activities, hobbies, movies, and careers. In the same way, most students like expositions as speaking activities, but they do not like teachers correcting their errors in front of their classmates in order to avoid embarrassment. Nonetheless, others consider that errors should be corrected at that same moment to notice what was wrong. As a final point, they noted pair work should be controlled or avoided because students take advantage of this time to use Spanish.

Question seven was focused on knowing the problems students had when speaking. Students' responses mentioned were: nervousness, shyness, shamefulness, mispronunciation, fear of making errors, insecurity, among others. They think these problems affect students' performance because people make fun of those mistakes. Other factors mentioned by students were: lack of fluency and vocabulary which do not allow them to use the language freely as they do not know how to say something.

Question eight examined how teachers should help adult students to overcome the problems that inhibit speaking in the target language. Here, it is necessary to remember the diverse difficulties that adult learners face when studying, such as, social, economical and familial issues which demand special behavior from the teacher. Students indicated they do not like feeling pressured to learn, but to learn in a relaxed environment in which communication between the teacher and students is opened. Likewise, they desire the teacher to be friendly and flexible, despite their errors; not just to say what their mistakes are, but rather to encourage them to continue with the activity. The participants emphasized that a good

interaction between both actors will help the teacher be aware about students' weaknesses, making them feel more comfortable when speaking.

The last question examined how influential the relationship between the teacher and the students is on the development of the speaking skill. Answers like, "I think it is the most important factor for developing the speaking skill and all the skills because when you feel comfortable with your teacher then you will get it in better ways when studying, in other words, when you are not comfortable you are not going to learn" with others; allowed to me to have as a result that a good relation between teachers and students help them learn faster, clarifying doubts which might not be explained in the book.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The accomplishment of this project is not just the fulfillment of a requirement to graduate but also the desire to contribute to the educational process in which many adult learners seek an opportunity to learn English as a foreign language. However, it is worth to say that its purpose is not to do an evaluation of the current work of teachers, but to provide supplies directly from learners to strengthen weaknesses that according to their views could help in their learning process.

It is necessary to highlight that this research has not been subjected to verification or negation of a hypothesis, but to achieve the main objective through fulfillment of specific objectives that will allow answering the research question set out at the beginning of the investigation. So, the implementation of those objectives yielded the following conclusions and reccomendations.

5.1 Conclusions

1. Adult learners have a reflective capacity to provide criteria about methodologies; therefore, their opinions are vital to set up strategies in their learning.

2. Learners' perceptions create a link between the school and the learner leading to enhance the educational practice through recognition of learners' needs.

3. According to previous research, teachers should make their students aware about the importance of their opinions, motivating them to be active and participative in their learning.

4. Learners consider listening and speaking as the most demanding skills and which they ponder essential to master the language.

5. The lack of vocabulary is one of the major obstacles faced by learners at the time of speaking.

6. Learners like presentation activities, but they do not like to be corrected in front of their classmates because they feel embarrassed.

7. The techniques chosen by learners to practice the speaking skill were:

   a. Extremely Important: conversation and discussion, oral diary/oral weekly report, watching TV programs and films in English.

   b. Very Important: using idiomatic phrases, pair work/ small group work, role play, and storytelling.

   c. Important: using gestures and picture description and:

   d. Not Important: individual work.

8. Learners feel comfortable using the language. However, they consider that to carry out effective communication they need more speaking practices using pragmatic language, ample vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.

9. Learners claim they do not have an exclusive conversation class where they can practice solely the speaking skill.

10. A good relationship between teacher and students is considered by them as a predominant factor for developing speaking skills. Learners consider that to acquire another language they must study in a comfortable environment where they feel confident with their teacher.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Create spaces for dialogue where adult students can give their opinions and these can be taken into consideration in order to gather supplies that support teachers' labor where their learning preferences get be heard and applied.

2. Motivate learners to discover their own way to learn and not just focus the teaching process in one methodology, but apply eclectic methods in order to analyze learners' individual learning styles.

3. Promote listening activities as a first step to approach speaking skill in learners.

4. Put emphasis on teaching vocabulary that works as a database to build up speaking. With this in mind, engage students in interesting dialogues for them, for instance about their careers, hobbies, movies, stories, discussions, and debates.

5. Take actions to face the problems that inhibit learners when speaking, to construct an atmosphere where they do not feel anxious when using the language.

6. Never correct learners in front of the class, instead always provide feedback after they have concluded their oral practice in order to help students avoid feeling frustrated or blocked.

7. Construct class activities taking into consideration the techniques and strategies that learners have rated as the most significant ones for the development of their speaking.

8. Implement speaking practice that involves conversations in different social contexts in order for learners to differentiate the use of the language according to the place where the communication occurs.

9. Implement a specific conversation class to practice the speaking skill as well as to include more communicative strategies and take out the traditional ones.

10. Establish a culture of confidence and respect where students are helped to feel comfortable in their learning, making them accept their mistakes as a necessary stage to acquire a new language.

As it is clear, this study was built in the frame of learners-centered education because its main objective was to know about learners preceptions to improve the speaking skill. The recommendations and suggestions of this study were based mostly on students' perceptions and teachers' opinion responding the reseach question that guided this study. The findings point to several issues for further research within the field of EFL learners' perceptions. Maybe, future research should explore learners' beliefs and perceptions much deeper and construct a proposal to do changes in the educational system. Visibly, learners claim an inclusion in their learning process and with this research is sought that the teacher knows a little more about their thoughts to apply methods that suit their needs.

As a final point, it will be recommendable to replicate this study with larger samples in others universities and English schools.

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APPENDICES

Apendix 1: Survey Template

Universidad de Cuenca

This survey aims to collect information related to the teaching strategies for developing the speaking skill on advanced students at the Language Department of the Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad Politecnica Salesiana. This data will be used as evidence for the undergraduate project "Teaching Strategies to Develop the Speaking Skill: adult perceptions." This information will be strictly used for the purposes of the project, and it will remain in confidence.

Name of your university _____level:_____

Student´ age _____

1. **How long have you been learning English**? _____ **years.**

2. **What's your motivation for learning English?**

   ☐ I'm interested in the language.
   ☐ I want to do (writing/reading) research work on English Language
   ☐ I want to get a good job.
   ☐ I want to study abroad.
   ☐ It is a requirement to graduate
   ☐ Other _____

3. **How many English classes do you have per week?** _____ **hours**
Do you feel it is sufficient? Yes _____ No _____

4. **How many students are there in their classes?**

   a   10 to 20
   b   20 to 30
   c   30 to 40

5. **How do you rate your English language skills? Please, use the following four point scale.**

	4 – Excellent	3 – Good	2 – Fair	1 – Poor
Listening	4	3	2	1
Speaking	4	3	2	1
Reading	4	3	2	1
Writing	4	3	2	1

4 – Excellent
3 – Good
2 – Fair
1 – Poor

Consuelo Agustina Triviño Sabando

6. **How often do you speak English in class?**

   Seldom _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____ Always _____

7. **What's the proportion of teacher talking time, to student talking time in your class?**

Give a percentage: Teacher talking time _____% Student talking time _____%

8. **Does the university provide students with any facility to learn English language (for example, language club, computer lab, etc.)?**

   Yes___No___ if your answer is yes, please specify which are they?

_____

9. **Do you feel comfortable speaking the language (English)?**
Yes_____No_____If your answer is **NO,** please, explain the reason.
_____
_____

10. **What obstacles do you think students face when speaking? (You can select more than one)**

    ☐ Lack of vocabulary
    ☐ Grammar errors
    ☐ Lack of fluency
    ☐ Pronunciation
    ☐ Lack of communicative strategies
    ☐ Nervousness
    ☐ Shamefulness
    ☐ Shyness
    ☐ Lack of confidence
    ☐ All the above

11. **Do you like the way in which you practice the speaking skill?**
    Yes_____No_____ If your answer is negative, please explain why:
_____
_____

12. **What would you like to do to improve the speaking skill?**
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. **What would you like to take out from your speaking classes?**
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. **In the scale from 1 to 4, rate the importance and effectiveness of each technique when developing the speaking skill. (Please, circle the number that you choose)**

No.	Strategies				
1	Conversation and Discussion	1	2	3	4
2	Using gestures	1	2	3	4
3	Individual work	1	2	3	4
4	Using idiomatic phrases	1	2	3	4
5	Pair work and small group work	1	2	3	4
6	Role play	1	2	3	4
7	Picture description	1	2	3	4
8	Oral diary; oral weekly report	1	2	3	4
9	Watching TV programs and films in English	1	2	3	4
10	Storytelling	1	2	3	4

Scale

4 – extremely important

3 – very important

2 – important;

1 – not important

Appendix 2: Transcription of the students' interview

Interview 1: students from Universidad de Cuenca

1. Which skills would you like to develop for improving your English performance?	- writing and speaking - speaking - writing - speaking - speaking
2. What is your opinion regarding the strategies used for developing the speaking skill in your English classes?	Well, sometimes some teachers use good techniques but other no, it is like if they were not interested that student learn or improve their English for example, at class teacher speaks most of the time and students do not participate a lot.
	I think that right now we have good strategies like presentations, I think that at the beginning when we are starting to learn a language, it could be better like speak more or work in a little bit less in grammar try to focus in speaking.
	I think to develop the speaking is speaking with our friends and also with the teacher.
	I think the teacher should develop strategies to help students learn English in a natural way as when he was a child without learn grammar or something like that. We first should learn how to speak and how to pronounce say things that little by little you should how to speak and then how to make sentences and structures.
	I think this is a little bit low because we do not practice so much English, for example, in the first level the teacher should speak English all the time even when they do not understand, this is the way that students feel like as a challenge to be in the same level that the teacher.
3. How would you like teachers teach you to speak in English?	Maybe doing different conversations and that everyone one in class gives their opinions and that we can improve our thoughts that we are talking.
	It could be in a better distribution of the sits could be a semi-circle distribution because in this distribution he can interact with all students talk more with them.
	I think teachers can teach more with talking, speeches, debates.
	I would like teachers do activities that involve the whole class when we can participate all together and interact with the teacher and with other students.
	I would like the teacher be more creative and

	make the class interesting so that the people feel comfortable with games, role plays, not all the time and not just go the class and grammar, reading, listening and things like that but also you can be fun and be comfortable.
4. How do you think teachers should encourage students to practice the speaking skill?	Giving interesting topics that we can listen or reading at home, it should be interesting because if teacher sends homework we have not time to do it and this is not a way to improve our speaking skill.
	It could be a good idea to use programs where people can have conversations with native speakers.
	Teachers encourage our English with homework or also speaking in class, watching videos and listening to music.
	I would like practice with native speaker is very important to improve our speaking skill and also watching videos and listening because that help to learn expressions that you can use.
	The teacher should motivate us not just saying English is easy and giving example about that because the teacher is the most important person that will make that you like English because some people that start English but they do not likes it and when you do not like something you do not learn nor be comfortable with that.
5. What do you think is necessary for an effective communication?	Use the correct vocabulary and the grammar and also the pitch of the voice that is absent in the people who are learning English.
	First, you have to have a good vocabulary, obviously self-confidence to talk free with any you want.
	I think it is necessary to have a good communication with friends with teachers a think that developing self-confidence.
	I think that it is important that students have a good knowledge about the language about grammar, vocabulary so that they can use it when they are speaking.
	I think it is important that first you have self-confidence and if you make mistakes do as matter about it because it is the way to do not affect communication.
	Practice more, having more conversations especially in class, also do not work in pair because we are Spanish speaker and speak Spanish and not body control

6. How would you like your speaking activities to be in the classroom?	It should be in other group where the teacher can control that everybody talking English.
	In classroom speaking activities could be like debates and sometimes you can do speeches about interesting themes or something like this.
	I think with debates and more expositions.
	I think that doing presentations, speaking to the class and with the teacher is important to improve but you need that the teacher correct the mistakes not only be in front of the class speaking but correct what you do wrong.
	It should be expositions, presentations also it would be a challenge for us if we feel challenge we will feel challenge to improve to learn more about English.
7. Which factors do you think affect students' speaking skill performance?	Sometime some people are shy to having mistakes and they do not want talk in public like giving a speech and another is when you do not know a word you stop to talking.
	Well, personal factors like that students feel nervous or maybe he is shy. it is very important they avoid this personal factors that perjudican with a high self-confidence.
	I think affect our schooling when we are nervous, shy, and lack of self confidence.
	I think that the main factor is that since we are children we learn a lot of vocabulary and grammar but we do not use it, so we need to keep it and use these things that we learned by speaking and practice a lot so that we can keep in our brain because we forget when we do not use it.
	I think that lack of self-confidence I say that also we are nervous but also is the culture that people when you say something wrong you are afraid that all people see or make mock of you so you should change face this and realizing that you can learn making mistakes.
8. In your opinion, how should teachers help adult students to overcome the problems that inhibit them to speak in the target language?	When the teacher tries to encourage all the time although students have mistakes they do not stop you and continue whatever the problem.
	It could be maybe being friendlier with students also giving more confidence, then to avoid these personal factors consist very hard to overcome that.
	I think the most important is being comprehensible in order that students do not feel embarrassment to talk and have a better communication in English.

	I think that the teacher should try being friendly with students like not be so serious and try to make the class interesting and funny for students so they do not feel as push to learn and they want to learn.
	I think that the teacher should be friendly with students but also on the time when they doing mistakes teacher should be soft when they say what are their mistakes so the people will not the next time feel afraid to speak. Teacher should encourage students saying !go on! And not just wait that the teacher tells them what their mistakes.
9. How do you consider that relationship between teacher and students influence in developing the speaking skill?	The relationship between teacher and student should be good so good because the student has to have the possibility to answer the teacher any question and on this questions try to improve the English.
	Ok, it is a very important point because the teacher is so serious or maybe some teachers are boring, the students want to stop with him and then the classroom will be silent and just acting with the teacher.
	I think it is important confidence between students and teachers because we feel good and to stop English.
	I think it is the most important factor to developing speaking skill and all the skills because when you feel comfortable with your teacher then you will get in better ways when study in other ways when you are not comfortable you are not going to learn.
	I think that teachers and students should have a very good relationship so they feel comfortable and they will have communication not just about the class but students can ask more about other things about their life and others.

Interview 2: students from Universidad Politécnica Salesiana

1. Which skills would you like to develop for improving your English performance?	Speaking Listening Speaking and reading Speaking Speaking and listening
	I like the strategies that the teacher uses because she promotes the writing, she also promotes that we practice the reading every day, as well as expositions and these activities help us to speak more in English and consequently to expand our vocabulary.
	I think expositions help us to develop the ability to speak in front of people and so learn to speak, but also I think teachers should encourage us to speak among peers or classmates in an informal way.
	There are some strategies that are good for developing the speaking, for example, presenting expositions help us to develop better and to lose the fear to speak in front other people. Likewise, it helps us to learn vocabulary because when we have to expose we have to read and when reading we learning more vocabulary.
	That the teacher speaks just in English because it helps a lot in the daily life because we can accustom to listening to that language.
	Answering any questions about topics of the day, watching some videos, and make that we listening conversations about topics that we understand.
	Assigning more interactive readings or more dynamic books, also that the classes b not always reading slides and just ending but the teacher is more related with students and speak more with them.
	The teacher tries to develop a conversation in the class not just the teacher speaks and the students listening but that all student speak about a topic.
3. How would you like teachers teach you to speak in English?	An interesting way to learn is that the teacher related topics regarding the different careers of us because the English that we want to focus on is the one related to our

	career, and as this is already known by us in Spanish, it would be an interesting way to learn English. To it should not be joined various careers in a class as it currently happened.
	I recommend that the teacher speaks directly with the student, I do not consider that the teacher accepts that the expositions be just read, I consider that the teacher should take the expositions individually.
	I consider that the teacher should include more listening and speaking in order to make more interactive the class.
4. How do you think teachers should encourage students to practice the speaking skill?	One way could be asking us to watch movies in English with subtitles also in English. Thus, we learn new words and expand our vocabulary and can express by ourselves.
	Through conversations of topics of interest of the students because it would be a good motivation.
	I think teachers should explain the importance that it has in the career of engineering, in this way I think that everybody is going to be interested because the English is the base to engineering.
	I recommend applying more games because in the high school a teacher did so and the class turned more interactive and we lost the fear of speaking.
	Showing the importance that English has currently. We need to learn English for reading texts in the internet, to communicate with people in other countries, to do some investigations for homework or projects and for improving ourselves.
	To keep communication it is necessary to know how we want to communicate and it is very necessary to know the way how we want to communicate.
	I think that there are two important things to have a good communication: vocabulary and grammar. These two things are so important because it depends not only on how to talk but in doing it correctly.
5. What do you think is	I think the most important thing to communicate is to know a lot of vocabulary and not concentrate just in grammar because grammar is not very important in an informal conversation.

necessary for an effective communication? (respuestas en reversa)	To have a good conversation is necessary be able to analyze the context where the conversation occurs because in English the words vary its meaning according to the context.
	Grammar is necessary for us at the time of speaking because sometimeS we do not know the structure of the sentence and speak nonsense words.
6. How would you like your speaking activities to be in the classroom?	Speak about topics of our interest for instance, hobbies, movies, and career.
	I would like these were more dynamic in which students can interact among all, and the teacher offers confidence to speak even with mistakes to do not feel embarrassment from ourselves.
	Questions and answers related between teacher and students.
	Acting
	It would be really good that the teacher talk about daily activities that we do every day.
7. Which factors do you think affect students' speaking skill performance?	Fear to make mistakes and that people make fun of them, and the lack of fluency.
	The few vocabulary because when you want to say something you do not know how to say that.
	Fear of public speaking and that people make fun of us although, I personally do not care if they make fun because everyone can make mistakes, but still there is fear.
	Shame of speak a language that for us is foreign and that we cannot pronounce very good. Temor a equivocarnos
	The low knowledge of vocabulary
8. In your opinion, how should teachers help adult students to overcome the problems that inhibit them to speak in the target language?	Maybe that the environment be more relaxed, also that there is more trust among all of us and those jokes do not affect us at the time when speaking or presenting expositions.
	Maybe, having a previous conversation with the teacher in order to correct mistakes and feel security of speaking in front of the public.
	I think they should encourage them to practice more, as you practice… you go improving and losing all those fears.
	More interaction between teacher-students in order that he observes the weaknesses of students.

	Teachers should motivate that student practice more the speaking because we need practice more this skill.
9. How do you consider that relationship between teacher and students influence in developing the speaking skill?	It influences so much because if we have trust with the teacher we can go where he or she for help and maybe having some tutorials before of classes in which students feel confidence between student and teacher.
	The relationship influences a lot because we can clarify doubts that maybe in a book or in the class you do not find but in the practice you feel necessity of clarify it and we can ask anything to our teacher freely.
	The relationship influences in having confidence with the teacher, if we have confidence with the teacher we can say he what thing we do not understand.
	It helps a lot because in this way student feel comfortable of speaking or ask any question.
	A good relationship between student and teacher help to everbody to learn faster.

Apendix 3: Interviews to experts in Teaching Methodologies in EFL Classrooms

Interview with Mgt. Guillermo Pacheco

1. **How do you define teaching strategies?**

   I would say it is a plan of action teachers carry out to accomplish the achievement of learning goals.

2. **According to various research projects the speaking skill is the most demanding skill to master for EFL learners. Do you agree with this assertion?**

   Developing the speaking skill is definitely a challenging one; however, I would say the writing skill is the hardest one.

3. **How do you think adult learners' needs should be met in the classroom?**

   Based on previous research, I would say adults prefer to have a teacher who guides them through the process. They are also inclined towards more traditional practices rather that modern ones.

4. **What do you think is necessary to carry out an effective communication?**

   Handling a great amount of vocabulary, will definitely give you the scaffold, one needs to build up speaking.

5. **What methodology do you consider suitable for teaching the speaking skill in adults?**

   I would say that nowadays we should not focus and rely on a single methodology, rather on one that encompasses what can help us meet our students' needs. In this frame, promoting listening, as a first stage, is

definitely a great approach to speaking. Making them feel comfortable with listening, can give you that stepping stone into speaking.

6. **Which strategies do you think are necessary to enhance students' speaking skills?**

Nowadays, I have implemented whatsapp to have students record their own audios so they can reflect on how they sound and what they say. The main goal is to have them hear themselves and go over common mistakes they make for further improvement.

7. **Which techniques do you consider important for developing the speaking skill in adults?**

Fisrt of all, I would say being patient will really help. Then striving for confidence, will give the chance to move out their comfort zone.

8. **Which are the most common obstacles that students face when developing the speaking skill?**

Making mistakes, being afraid to say something, to mention some. I would say that our culture does not help to make them feel comfortable. Therefore, we should reflect on the way we teach. We might be surprised to see how much we can do with our students if we turn into more tolerable teachers.

9. **What actions should the teacher take to help students overcome these barriers?** Refer to question 8.

10. **What do you think is the key to involve students in comfortable speaking practices?**

Setting up a scenario where they are not afraid to sepak. How do you do that? By stating that making mistakes is a common issue when one learns a language.

11. **What teachers should not do when students practice the speaking skill?**

Neither correct them nor embarrase students in front of the class. What I normally do is to collect common mistakes to later on go over them with the class as a whole.

12. **How do you consider the relationship teacher-students should be?**

That is the key to helping students develop their language skills. However, there are some groups which may be more difficult to get along with than others.

Apendix 4: Interviews to experts in Teaching Methodologies in EFL Classrooms

<u>**Interview with Mgt. Verónica León**</u>

1. **How do you define teaching strategies?**

   Teaching strategies help students take more responsibility for their own learning and enhance the process of teaching for learning. There are teaching strategies we can use in the classroom to facilitate the learning process, such as metacognitive strategies, metalinguistic, technological, and especially those which are useful to encourage collaborative learning.

2. **According to various research projects the speaking skill is the most demanding skill to master for EFL learners. Do you agree with this assertion?**

   Well, I think every single skill has its own challenge. However, the speaking skill, as it is productive, is challenging for students because all the grammar structures and vocabulary are conjugated at the moment of produce the language for a specific situation especially when interacting with someone else.

3. **How do you think adult learners' needs should be met in the classroom?**

   As teachers, we have to study all the implications that it conveys to teach adults; all the methods, strategies, and techniques that are more convenient to teach them a new language. Especially, it is important to promote in adults autonomous learning strategies.

4. **What do you think is necessary to carry out an effective communication?**

5. **What methodology do you consider suitable for teaching the speaking skill in adults?**

Communicative Approach- Task- based learning teaching, flipped method, and eclectic methods oriented to the development of speaking skills.

6. **Which strategies do you think are necessary to enhance students' speaking skills?**

Critical thinking for discussions, debates, minimal responses, recognizing scripts, information gap, jigsaw, role plays.

7. **Which techniques do you consider important for developing the speaking skill in adults?**

Critical thinking for discussions, debates, minimal responses, recognizing scripts, information gap, jigsaw, role plays.

8. **Which are the most common obstacles that students face when developing the speaking skill?**

They cannot produce the language they have in their minds. Their lack of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Their lack of knowledge regarding pragmatics.

9. **What actions should the teacher take to help students overcome these barriers?**

To Use and develop frequently the strategies mentioned beforehand, promoting autonomous and cooperative learning.

10. **What do you think is the key to involve students in comfortable speaking practices?**

To present real life situations and experiences.

11. **What teachers should not do when students practice the speaking skill?**

Correct them at the moment they are speaking. This can affect their confidence. They can feel frustrated. The feedback should be done after they have finished their oral presentations or productions.

12. **How do you consider the relationship teacher-students should be?**

There should be confidence and respect all of the time. The class must be student-centered and dynamic. There is a web page which includes 10 qualities that summarize how a great teacher must be in order to have a good relationship with their students. The following web page answers this question in my opinion.

http://teaching.monster.com/careers/articles/9144-top-10-qualities-of-a-great-teacher?page=1