



**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL**

**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

TITLE:

**Listening and Speaking Competence in Pre-Technical English Level of
students at the Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Técnica
Estatad de Quevedo, Ecuador**

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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for obtaining the degree of:
MASTER IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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17th May, 2018



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CERTIFICATION

**We certify that this research Project was presented by Varas Giler,
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STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

We, Varas Giler, Rosa Cecibel and Benítez Luzuriaga, Betsy Patricia

HEREBY DECLARE THAT:

The Research Project "**Listening and Speaking Competence in Pre-Technical English Level of students at the Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador**" prior to obtaining the **Degree of Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language** has been developed based on thorough investigation, respecting the intellectual property right of third parties regarding citations within the corresponding pages whose sources are included in the bibliography. Consequently, this work is our full responsibility.

Under this statement, we are responsible for the content, truthfulness and scientific scope of the aforementioned paper.

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AUTHORIZATION

We, Varas Giler, Rosa Cecibel and Benítez Luzuriaga, Betsy Patricia

Authorize the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil to publish this Research Project: **Listening and Speaking Competence in Pre-Technical English Level of students at the Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador**, in the institutional repository. The contents, ideas and criteria in this paper are of our full responsibility and authorship.

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URKUND ANALYSIS

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Analysed Document:	TESIS FINAL_Varas_Benites.docx (D38398695)
Submitted:	5/7/2018 3:44:00 PM
Submitted By:	sara.rivadeneira@cu.ucsg.edu.ec
Significance:	0 %

Sources included in the report:

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0

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my parents Francisco and Marianita for working as role models to reach my goals. In addition, to my husband Andrés and my older sister Miroslava for their support during my extensive study days; and, to my children Clara Belén and Juan Andrés for being my inspiration and reason to live.

I also express my heartfelt gratitude to my tutor, Dr. Max Arias, for his unyielding support throughout this process, for sharing his knowledge and helping me thrive as a student; and, to my dear colleague and great friend, Rosi Varas, who has worked very hard with me during this process.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who assisted me in the elaboration of this study, especially to the staff of UCSG and UTEQ community, which were key piece for this study.

Betsy

I would first like to thank God, for being my strength and my guide. Thanks to my thesis advisor Dr. Max Antonio Arias Segura, for agreeing to be our tutor. I would also like to thank MSc. Mariela Vásquez, my professor in the master's program, who was essential in my studies.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of UCSG, especially to C.P.A. Stephany Guerrero. Thanks to school management, teachers and students of Unidad Educativa "Líderes del Futuro" for their love and understanding. I am also grateful to Ing. Guadalupe Murillo Campuzano, Vice-Chancellor of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, and Dra. Jenny Torres Navarrete, Dean of Livestock Science Faculty for their unconditional support. My particular gratitude is for my dear students of courses A & B of Agricultural Engineering of Livestock Science Faculty who participated in the tests and surveys supporting my work in this way and helped me to get results of better quality.

Nevertheless, I would also like to thank my dear friend and colleague Betsy Benítez, my thesis' partner for her passionate participation and input. Together we conducted our great project.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my family for supporting me spiritually and helping me with words of encouragement in the most difficult moments. They know my determination and fortunately have always been with me.

Rosi

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family with all
the love in the world.

Betsy

This new way was carried out with the
support and loves of you, Cristofer,
Roxanna and Josslyn my beloved children.
This is for you.

Rosi



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List of abbreviations

BL	Blended Learning
CEAACES	Consejo de Evaluación, Acreditación y Aseguramiento de la calidad de la Educación Superior
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CES	Consejo de Educación Superior
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ICF	Informed Consent Form
L2	Second Language
LOEI	Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
SENESCYT	Secretaría de Educación Ciencia y Tecnología
TICs	Technology for Information and Communication
UTEQ	Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo

Abstract

The problem found in Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, was studied through a Case Study and an Action Research. The first part of the investigation is the Theoretical Framework where Methodology in EFL instruction; Definitions, Relevance, Types and Procedures of Listening and Speaking, their Relationship and Effects, and Attitudes towards these skills are expressed. The Literature Review provides information about Technology in English classes: Epistemological Foundation, Teachers' Attitudes towards its use and Benefits for Students by using ICTs. Likewise, Multimedia was revised in order to define specific strategies. An Action Research methodology was employed to study the problem which is the lack of Listening and Speaking Skills on students of Agricultural Engineering, courses A-B of Livestock Science Faculty. This research contains information encompassing class observations and learners' diagnostic evaluation and activity assessment. Checklists and corresponding results were used as data collection instrument for further analysis. After the analysis, it was concluded that English classes should have some modifications. Thus, a proposal was designed to accomplish this goal. It consists of the design of a Blended Learning System in EFL by using on line applications like Voicethread, Padlet, Discovery Education, and Masher. Formats and checklists were used to describe the objective and process of each strategy as well as an adapted evaluation instrument.

Keywords: Listening, Speaking, Technology Blended Learning, Competences, EFL, and ICTs.

Introduction

With the increasing use of English as a global language in fields as diverse as technology, media, commerce, medicine, business, and tourism a greater emphasis is being placed on the ability to communicate competently. As a result, English language teaching in the world over is turning its focus on effective communication skills to encourage learners to be able to actively use the language in interactional contexts rather than to study English as an academic subject, and the teaching methods are being adjusted accordingly, in words of Söderlundh, (2013) who also claims: “ The use of English as medium of instruction is a strategy of transnational character in the process of internationalizing Higher Education”.

Ecuadorian government, through different institutions like high schools and universities, has come to realize that English language education is an important factor in order to meet political, economic, and societal goals. In this regard, important efforts have been taking place on behalf of these parties to improve the English teaching process. For example, curricular reforms took place in the Ministry of Public Education as well as English Language Faculties at Universities. These reforms include the use and application of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), as the latest epistemological framework for the acquisition of the English Language.

According to Council of Europe, in its official site, it indicates that The Common European Framework generates the guidelines for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. It emphasizes in an understandable manner what language students must learn, focused in the use of language for communication and based on the acquisition of effective skills, considering the cultural context and defining levels of proficiency to measure learners' progress at each stage of the process. Moreover, this framework provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, and teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to make a reflection on their current practice where activities and

efforts must be grounded on students' real needs due to learners are their principal responsibility.

Why is CEFR required and why Ecuadorian students need to reach the CEFR level? CEFR mentions the reasons:

1. A further intensification of language learning and teaching in member countries is necessary in the interests of greater mobility, more effective international communication combined with respect for identity and cultural diversity, better access to information, more intensive personal interaction, improved working relations and a deeper mutual understanding.
2. To achieve these aims language learning is necessarily a life-long task to be promoted and facilitated throughout educational systems, from pre-school through to adult education.
3. It is desirable to develop CEFR learning at all levels, in order to promote and facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in different countries;

In general, the CEFR suggests the development of different competencies so Ecuadorian students achieve different linguistic levels. For instance, according to CEFR there are several competences such as linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic -and within these sub-competencies- important to achieve what Hymes (1992) call communicative competence.

However, in spite of the efforts to promote these changes, it seems to be a misunderstanding and a misapplication of the principles stated on the CEFR that hinders learners from developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

At this point, and even though Ecuadorian in-service English Teacher Standards proposed by Ecuadorian Ministry of Education are for high schools, it is paramount to consider the National English Curriculum guidelines, because they clarify the goal of CEFR. According to Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, n.d., The English Language Learning Standards (ELLS) is:

Outcomes students are expected to achieve at the end of a proficiency level in terms of knowledge and skills gained throughout the process. It means that they will show “what students must know and be able to do as they move toward full fluency in English. The ELLS are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) as they provide a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content, and methods. The English Language Learning Standards are developed taking into consideration the communicative language components and the language skills as a core part of the program: (a) listening, (b) speaking, (c) reading, and (d) writing. (p. 1)

More specifically, according to CEF the competences that students should have on listening and speaking skills for B2 level, are:

Listening:

I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonable familiar. I can understand most of TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.

Speaking – (Spoken interaction)

I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.

Speaking – (Spoken production)

I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

In light of this situation, this research project is based on determining what communicative competences on listening and speaking students of Agricultural Engineering Courses A-B of Livestock Science Faculty, of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, (UTEQ) have in relation to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Problem statement

Based on the English communicative competence on the sociolinguistic and pragmatic areas, the problem was perceived through classroom observations and administered tests in students of Pre-technical English program at Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo during the school year 2016-2017.

The students follow a six level English program, but listening and speaking are two of the most difficult skills probably due to their two hours of weekly lessons, to the limited use of technology, and the scarcity opportunities in the classroom to develop these skills. The problem was palpable after the tests taken to students where it was verified that audios and a conversation with the researchers were the most difficult activity for them.

Furthermore, it was appreciated demotivation and concern on students because of Ecuadorian regulation that require level B2 for higher students.

Justification

The low level of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences is common among university students; EFL teachers possess insufficient knowledge of the two above abilities and there exist inefficiencies and failures in teaching them to L2 learners. The low level of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences is common among university students; EFL teachers possess insufficient knowledge of the two above abilities and there exist inefficiencies and failures in teaching them to L2 learner.

This study is significant due to the influencing role of Listening and Speaking Skills in EFL instruction and it provides empirical evidence of the low level of these two skills which is common among students of UTEQ, according the English teachers interviewed.

This research attempts to demonstrate that mastering a language relies on the ability to develop comprehension of messages through listening, understanding speeches or expressions from other people and the ability to communicate orally effectively.

Justly, this study proves that university students need a suitable methodology in their EFL classes to help them improve their skills and consequently obtain the B2 level, according to the requirements of UTEQ and the CEFR.

Under these circumstances, this study proposes the implementation of Blended Learning (BL) strategies into an EFL curriculum, combining face-to-face classes with online instruction.

- On the one hand, the proposed project will involve students to a full extent in the application of listening and speaking strategies in their classes; therefore, developing a sense of commitment and priority towards communication and participation. In addition, this study will suggest strategies about learning and practicing English outside the classroom by using technological platforms as part of BL added to the existing curriculum.
- Furthermore, this study would benefit English teachers since it will drive them toward new perspectives in terms of educational technology given them new ideas for applying listening and speaking activities in their teaching practice.
- Finally, the implementation of this study would offer UTEQ to increase the number of students with B2 level, the degree of credibility of the Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty and consequently this will enhance this institution's prestige.

Research Questions

How can the lack of listening and speaking skills affect the development of communicative competence on students at the major of Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador?

General Objective

To determine student's listening and speaking competence in Pre-Technical English level of Agricultural Engineering' students courses A & B of Livestock Science Faculty at Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador, in regards to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Specific objectives

- To determine the level of listening and speaking competence on students.

- To establish the possible barriers for students to achieve the goals of EFL subject.
- To describe listening and speaking strategies used by English teachers of Livestock Science Faculty in their classes.
- To compare the criteria of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages with the results from students` inquiry.
- To propose strategies to better suit students listening and speaking competence.

Overview of Enquiry

This section will provide a breve summary of each chapter of this research that will offer an important overview of this study.

In theoretical framework is detailed the methodology in EFL instruction, as well as the implementation of Post-Method Macrostrategies to enhance communicative skills of EFL Learners, specifying main aspects of listening definition, listening comprehension their relevance and types of procedures; additionally it will be explain concepts of speaking and the relation and effects between listening comprehension and oral performance.

It will also provide information regarding Blended Learning.

In literature review, will be exposed essential aspects like: Technology in English classes'; the Epistemological foundation of multimedia in education; Teachers' attitudes towards the use of technology; and, Benefits for students by using technology in EFL instruction. The chapter will also present important argument of scholars who have the assumption that the nature of L2 learning involves not merely an integration of linguistic components of language, but also an integration of language skills. In addition important concepts regarding listening and speaking are exposed in order to highlight a deep process that enhance and develop the students' oral performance.

In methodological framework will be explained the main aspects on research design and the steps in conducting an action research, the action research cycle, participants, as well as the instruments used for data collection; how

was selected the sample in this research, procedures and ethical considerations.

The data analysis will present a complete overview about the existent problems with students regarding listening and speaking skills through graphs and tables that will show real aspects of the competences that students have. In addition, three English teachers will be observed through classes' observation that will help to researchers to clarify the objective of this study, finally the students' opinion will be considered through focus group that will elucidate the solutions according their points of view.

After a complete analysis of the data a possible solution that will improve the competences on Pre-Technical students of Agricultural Engineering will be proposed, with the implementation of BL activities. The proposal will have an essential analysis of literature review about this topic, the goal of blended learning, the influence of technology on BL, its dimension, and method and approaches. Also, a course syllabus will be presented where will be included different activities that in opinion of researchers will improve listening and speaking competences in students.

Finally, a conclusion based on results obtained of data analysis that will answer the research questions will be arrived. The recommendation part will provide responses and possible solutions to different issues found.

Chapter I

Theoretical Framework

Methodology in EFL instruction

Over time, there have been various educational theories that constitute the foundation of the teaching – learning process. The Cognitive Theory and Constructivism appeared many decades ago and nowadays their principles represent the cornerstone of major approaches to curriculum and instruction for English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The Cognitive Theory was created by Piaget (1970) and it is based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. Instead, the constructivist Vygotski (2001) expresses that the student learns by getting involved with other learners during the process of construction of knowledge (social construction), where feedback is a key factor in the final content acquisition.

Under these conceptions, a diversity of methods to teach EFL has been vertiginously evolving, from the Audio-lingual Approach to the recent Post Method Pedagogy. According to the author of the latter approach, Kumaravadivelu (2001), “the established methods are motivated and maintained by multiple myths that have long been accepted as professional articles of faith” (p. 163).

In addition, he claims that this method as a means of marginality has four interrelated dimensions—scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic. The scholastic dimension relates to the ways in which western scholars have treated local knowledge. Kumaravadivelu (2001) adds that “the linguistic dimension refers to the ways in which methods prevent nonnative learners and EFL teachers to make use of their excellent L1 linguistic resource to serve the cause of their L2 education” (p. 167).

The cultural dimension treats second-language acquisition as second culture teaching directed at helping L2 learners attain an understanding of the native speaker’s cultural context. Meanwhile, the economic situation entails employment opportunities for native speakers of English. Undoubtedly, the *Postmethod Pedagogy* is fundamentally a restructure of our view of language teaching and teacher education and it has appeared to review the character

and content of classroom teaching in all its pedagogical and ideological perspectives.

Furthermore, it seeks to readdress our educational system and to explore in uncharted waters by refiguring the redefined relationship between theory and practice. Kumaravadivelu (2001) affirms that *Postmethod pedagogy* can be visualized as a three-dimensional system consisting of three pedagogic parameters:

- Particularity (*situational understanding* and lived experiences of specific actors);
- Practicality (relationship between theory and practice and a self - monitoring on our teaching effectiveness); and
- Possibility (cultural and historical backgrounds).

To add, this author claims that the Post Method Pedagogy includes three important indicators:

- Learners who have an active and autonomous role in education
- Teachers who have the ability to develop a reflective approach to their own teaching, analyze and evaluate their acts, initiate and monitor changes in their classroom; and,
- Teacher educators, who must help prospective teachers to acquire necessary authority and autonomy by a dialogic education that promotes effective channels of communication.

Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2001) cites that there are three essential post-method frameworks:

- Stern's three-dimensional framework,
- Allwright's Exploratory Practice Framework, and
- Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategic framework, which constitute the fundamentals of a Postmethod Pedagogy.

Moreover, Kumaravadivelu (2001) claims that Stern emphasizes teaching strategies and learning strategies based on three dimensions:

- Intralingual- Crosslingual dimension
- Analytic- Experiential dimension; and,
- Explicit- Implicit dimension.

Kumaravadivelu (2001) adds that Allwright affirms that exploratory teaching is the integration of research and pedagogy, contributing to better the quality of classroom life by a collegiality between teachers, learners, academic researchers, colleagues and community in general. Differently, Kumaravadivelu (2001) proposes a framework consisting of macrostrategies (general plans or guidelines) and microstrategies which represent the classroom procedures or activities designed to meet the objectives of a particular macrostrategy. His opinion is that “this framework maximizing learning opportunities also entails a willingness on teachers to modify their lesson plans continuously on the basis of ongoing feedback” (p. 202).

Implementation of Post - Method Macrostrategies to enhance Communicative Skills of EFL Learners.

There are some scholars who have the assumption that the nature of L2 learning involves not merely an integration of linguistic components of language, but also an integration of language skills. Certainly, in some classes the four language skills are still widely used in isolation as the fundamental organizing guideline for curricular and materials design.

Justly, Kumaravadivelu (2001) emphasizes that there is a considerable discomfort with the idea of grouping the skills in terms of active - productive (speaking and writing) and passive - receptive (listening and reading) skills. Unfortunately, teachers do not engage to students in meaningful, transformative and human - making activities to enhance their communicative skills and even affect their personalities, adjust their codes of behavior and mold their autonomy as individuals. For this reason, this theorist defends his thesis of developing microstrategies or activities to achieve macrostrategies in the classroom practice.

Kumaravadivelu's thesis posits that microstrategies develop these macrostrategies: maximize learning opportunities; facilitate negotiated interaction; minimize perceptual mismatches; activate intuitive heuristics; foster language awareness; contextualize linguistic input; integrate language skills; promote learner autonomy; ensure social relevance; and, raise cultural consciousness.

Without doubt, microstrategies are conditioned and constrained by the national, regional, or local language policy and planning, curricular objectives, institutional resources, and other factors that create some conditions in learning and teaching context, keeping in mind the learners' needs, wants, and lacks, as well as their current level of language knowledge/ability. Nevertheless, it is crucial to mention that methodology in EFL instruction is intimately linked to innovative and vanguardist approaches that have generated a variety of forms to learn English as a Foreign Language, which nowadays include technology to enhance students' communicative skills.

Listening

Definition

The process of listening is often contrasted with hearing. Lundsteen (1979) considered hearing as a physical act and listening as a mental act. This scholar emphasized "hearing has to do with our physiological capacity to receive and process sounds and listening has to do with assigning meaning to the stimuli received by our brain" (p. 15).

According to Nichols (1954) listening is "to attach meaning to the aural symbols perceived" (p. 1). As we can see, listening is more complex than hearing.

In EFL, listening is part of the four skills to be developed by teachers while instruction is done in EFL courses and it can result a hard and stressful work. To maximize the potential for acquisition of language, the instructor must ensure that the learners are not stressed about the process. For this reason, it is recommendable that the teacher utilizes really comprehensible materials to the learners.

Purdy (n. d.) posits "listening is comprised of seven essential components: (1) volition, (2) focused attention, (3) perception,(4) interpretation, (5) remembering, (6) response, and (7) the human element" (p. 2). These seven components are an integral part of the dynamic and active process of listening. That listening is dynamic and can be in variation, therefore we must

be constantly alert and open to improvisation as the elements of the listening situation change.

It results evident that with a response, listening skills include physical, interpretative and analytical process, where the meaning of tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures take an important position, demonstrating the direct relationship between listening and speaking.

Hyslop (1988) affirms that listening represents “an active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising and generalizing which writing and reading demand. It involves an active process of receiving and constructing meaning and responding to spoken and/or non-verbal messages” (p. 39). Good listening habits involve not only thinking with the speaker but also anticipating the direction of thought. Although language learning begins with listening, communication cannot take place unless it is extended to speech. This is precisely why after listening children learn how to speak by imitating what they have previously heard.

Justly, in EFL listening is not an isolated skill. In the simple everyday educational process listening usually occurs together with speaking, and teachers can incorporate listening practice by listening to a lecture or listening to radio, theatre or radio programmes, just to figure out the meaning.

Teachers know that for teaching speaking, they must begin with the listening skill because to fully exploit the power of oral language, students must be able to listen effectively (Segura, 2012). Therefore, according to Mead (1985), listening can be defined as “an interactive process where a person alternatively assumes the role of speaker and listener both through verbal and non-verbal components” (p. 33). Absolutely, that interchange of roles constitutes the feedback, which is a primordial element to enhance students’ linguistic competences in the foreign language.

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is an important part of language learning, and it provides the appropriate situations for the acquisition and expansion of other language skills (Hamouda, 2013). Students could find listening

comprehension skill difficult to learn and this can also provide teachers with opportunities to change their listening exercises into more effective ones. In words of Pourhosein Gilakjani, A & Sabouri, N. (2016), “Developing listening comprehension skill helps learners to succeed in language learning to enhance comprehensible input”. Some of the definition of “listening comprehension” can be appreciated by Rost, M. (2002) and Hamouda (2013) who defined listening comprehension as an interactive process in which listeners are involved in constructing meaning. Listeners comprehend the oral input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, and the other linguistic or non-linguistic clues (as cited by Pourhosein Gilakjani, A & Sabouri, N., 2016). According to Brown and Yule (1983) and Hamouda (2013), listening comprehension is an individual understanding of what he has heard and it is the listener’s ability to repeat the text despite the fact that the listener may repeat the sound without real comprehension. (as cited by Pourhosein Gilakjani, A & Sabouri, N. 2016).

Relevance of Listening Comprehension

Undoubtedly, listening is the most common activity in daily life. It is part of our routine. Morley, D.D., & Walker, K. B. (1987) asserts that “we can expect to listening twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write” (p. 183). Listening is also the important for obtaining comprehensible input that is necessary for language development. Willson, P. J., & Gaventa, B. R. (1998) sum up that listening is more important in this communication – oriented age. They exemplify this idea affirming that “...in most companies, effective listeners hold higher positions than ineffective listeners” (p. 293). With all these considerations, English teachers should consider the importance of listening and speaking enhancing students to produce and transform knowledge as they shift through observations, evaluation of information and comparison of views. The connection of these two skills contributes to increase students’ critical thinking abilities and retention.

Exposure to oral English is crucial for EFL students who need to hear the language spoken in meaningful academic contexts in order to acquire

receptive (listening) language abilities which precede expressive (speaking) language abilities. So the student needs to spend a great deal of time listening in their classes as they develop their speaking abilities. With learners who do not listen to English language out from the school, it is convenient to create in the institution more and more opportunities to practice listening effectively.

Teachers should think about listening seriously. (Segura, 2012). Different professions and careers depend on listening as it is the way of getting ideas and information. Nowadays, in a globalized world where mass communication has highly expanded, messages are frequently transmitted orally. For this reason, it is of vital importance that students are taught to listen effectively and critically to help in developing spoken language.

Listening Comprehension: Types and Procedures

Galvin (1985) proposes “students need to choose an adequate role, distance and purpose to guide them as they listen as a help for the listener to select appropriate strategies and seek specific clarification, for noting down certain details and for scanning for the intent of the speaker” (p. 4). Justly, successive listening has to be learned through co-operative endeavor. This thinker identifies different categories of listening with general corresponding purpose as learning for new information. Interactional listening is learning for new information, that is, recognizing personal components of message and critical listening which involves evaluating, reasoning and evidence. Meanwhile, recreational listening helps in appreciating random or integrated aspects of event.

It is convenient to emphasize that listening is viewed as a linguistic, cognitive and social skill. On the one hand, Wolvin, A. D., Coakley, C. G., & Disburg, J. E. (1992) state that there are four kinds of listening comprehension:

- Appreciative listening, which refers to listening for pleasure or enjoyment and contributes the listener to gain sensory impression of the message and requires a lot of attention to language style;
- Emphatic listening that provides emotional support for the speaker focusing on the emotional content as well as the fact given by the speaker;

- Comprehensive listening which requires the listener to understand the message of the speaker; and
- Critical listening that entails the evaluation of a message for the purpose of accepting or rejecting it.
- On the other hand, Oxford, R. L. (1993) classifies listening into three types: Listening for details, related to the special attention of the listener to details;
- Listening for Main Ideas, which centers on broader concepts other than details and examples; and
- Relational listening that involves paying attention to the whole environment as part of listening comprehension.

The teacher can direct the students' attention to specific points using activities that actively support learners' understanding and guide their focus to specific parts of the spoken text. Moreover, the use of pre-listening activities helps to stimulate the students' schemata and all the activities related to listening comprehension are grounded on the Communicative Approach due to it involves modelling listening strategies and providing listening practice authentic situations, precisely those that learners are likely to encounter when they utilize the language outside the classroom.

Teachers' role in listening activities

To create a friendly atmosphere in their classes is one of the responsibilities of teachers, aspect that is essential on students. Harmer (1991) and Macháčková (2009) cited by Pourhosein Gilakjani, A & Sabouri, N. (2016) said that there are eight main roles for teachers:

a. Teacher as an Organizer

In this role, teachers should explain what their students want to do, give clear instructions, and give a useful feedback to their students. Teachers also prepare the listening lesson and give obvious guidance to their learners.

b. Teacher as a Controller

A teacher performs the whole lesson. It is a teacher's duty to arrange what students do, when they should speak, and what language they

should use. Teachers also determine what students should do in the listening phases.

c. Teacher as an Evaluator

Teachers evaluate their students and give them a feedback on their performance. They should evaluate the level of their students.

d. Teacher as a Resource

In this role, teachers give their students the necessary advice and help them to solve their difficulties specifically unknown vocabulary or grammatical patterns.

e. Teacher as a Tutor

Teachers act as a coach and a resource and help their learners to develop ideas. Teachers assist their learners in every stage and should help them towards predicting missing information.

f. Teacher as an Investigator

Teachers observe the activities in their lessons and assess their learners' performance. They evaluate the advantages of listening activities.

g. Teacher as a Prompter

Teachers urge their students and give recommendations toward activities that are carried out by their learners. Teachers should support their students during every stage of listening activity so that they can be successful.

h. Teacher as a Participant

Teachers take part in the listening activities and must be aware of leading in these activities. They can improve the classroom atmosphere. They participate in pre and post listening activities like discussions and role plays.

Learners' attitudes to listening comprehension and performance

The majority of people around the world have demonstrated they are poor listeners. Although they think they are listening carefully, they usually keep in mind only half of what they hear. It is evident that the learners' attitude, motivation, culture, traditions, feelings and sense of identity, create particular conditions that affect their listening and pronunciation. Besides, the learners' motivation, concern, feelings can have effect on their listening and

pronunciation. Frequently, foreign language students have a negative attitude or bias about their listening ability. Learners can become really anxious when they cannot handle a listening talk/task. For this reason, Oxford, R. L., & Lavine, R. Z. (1991) posit “highly visual learners are particularly vulnerable to anxiety when faced with complex listening activities” (p. 35).

Therefore, improving listening skills can be helpful in every part of life as good listening habits involve not only thinking with the speaker, but also anticipating the direction of his thoughts, objective, evaluating the verbal evidence offered in terms of the speaker’s purpose and produce a feedback, which is crucial to talk about the effectiveness of communication.

Many instructors have the bias that listening is just an innate ability, when it can be stressful and need to be developed upon. Although nowadays there are many advances in language teaching methodology, the traditional method of testing and teaching listening in English language still prevails in some countries. In general, there is very little time for oral testing in the secondary school examinations. In addition the absent of oral practice oriented to enhance students’ listening comprehension and their speaking performance produces lack of motivation and interest in these learners. In other words, effective listening and speaking are skills that need thorough learning and practice and facilitators should encourage learners to tap their own background knowledge, identify the objective of the listening task in order to conquer their fears and doubts about listening comprehension.

According to Krashen (1991), “a long held belief is that anxiety is an important factor in language acquisition. Anxiety, motivation and self – confidence are effective filter hypothesis which posits that learners with low levels perform better than anxious students” (p. 6). Indisputably, the potential effect of anxiety on student performance could produce little success in English classes.

Speaking

Conceptualization

Gbenedio (1996) claims “Oral performance or speaking is the ability and right to speak freely and clearly, unashamed, to fully vocalize, to choose to make contact with a word and to communicate that word successfully” (p. 6). In

other words, Speaking is the ability to express oneself clearly in flexible conversational language, nationally and internationally accepted. Oral performance includes the learning of vocal skills for a free and articulate delivery, as such oral performance may focus on production of speech, dramatization of speech and dramatic interpretation.

Speaking is an indispensable skill of the English language which provides basis for growth in reading and writing abilities. It involves activities before, during and after the actual speaking event. Hence, speaking enables students to make connection between what they know and what they are learning and provides choices to practice oral expression so students can become more competent communicators while practicing speaking skill.

Listening and speaking skills are essential components of the English language and highly useful in this study and these two activities are necessary to achieve the learner's ability to perform basic linguistic tasks which are mainly communicative in nature.

Significance of Speaking

While reading and listening are considered to be the two receptive skills in language learning and use, writing and speaking are the other two productive skills necessary to be integrated in the development of effective communication. According to Zaremba, A. J (2006) "...of all the four macro English skills, speaking seems to be the most important skill required for communication" (p. 2). Without a doubt, effective communication by means of speaking usually creates a number of benefits for both speakers and business organizations. For example, Osborn, S., Osborn, M., & Osborn, R. (2008) posit "effective speaking skills result in achievements during ceremonial speaking activities, job training activities, job interviews, and many other business purposes" (p .2).

Zaremba (2006) also pointed out a study indicating that speaking skills or communication skills were usually placed ahead of work experience, motivation, and academic credentials as criteria for new recruitment for employment. Students who study English as a foreign language (EFL) usually have limited opportunities to speak English outside the classroom

and also limited exposure to English speakers or members of the international community.

This might be one reason for educators to provide more situations and activities for students to strengthen their speaking competence. Justly, speaking for special communication usually occurs in contexts where speaking performance is conducted for an audience in differing circumstances.

Boonkit K. (2010) argues “the principles of public speaking are also intertwined with the development of speaking for special communication” (p. 3). that means that when a speech involves a specific audience, the act of speaking could be more complicated than general everyday conversation. In other words, a number of other skills must be included in the speaking delivery process, for example choosing topics, organizing thoughts, tailoring the message, and adapting to listener feedback.

Strengths and weaknesses of Speaking for EFL speakers

There are a series of factors relating to speaking skills to be considered for effective English speaking performance. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and collocations are singled out as important factors to be emphasized in building fluency for EFL speakers. Tam, M. (1997) observes that providing students with multiple situations and frequent speaking tasks plays a significant role in the improvement of students’ fluency. This scholar adds “confidence and competence usually lead to strengths of English speaking skills” (p. 3).

Accordingly, building up the learner’s confidence to eliminate fear of making errors is a priority that teachers should consider in order to make the learner feel comfortable with their language use and that confidence and competence in speaking could be developed from appropriate syllabus design, methods of teaching, and sufficient tasks and materials.

For effectiveness of speaking, Shumin (1997) pointed out a number of elements involved including listening skills, sociocultural factors, affective factors, and other linguistic and sociolinguistic competence such as grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence.

Hence, in order to convey meaning EFL learners must have an understanding of words and sentences; that is, they must understand how words are segmented into various sounds, and how sentences are stressed in particular ways. This grammatical competence enables speakers to use and understand English language structures accurately and unhesitatingly, which contributes to their fluency, which, in turn, develops confidence in speaking.

Listening Comprehension and Oral Performance: Relationship and Effects.

Speaking and listening are completely related skills. Because by listening to the language in large doses through sufficient exposure to oral presentations, listening skills will develop. There is a singular of interactive tasks to reinforce student's listening and speaking skills. Feyten (1991) claims "listening is a set of related abilities which can contribute significantly to the prediction of foreign language proficiency" (p. 173).

Moreover, speaking enables students to make connection between what they know and what they are learning and it contributes them to acquire knowledge and explore ideas. Under this context, the classroom must constitute a place where the use of spoken language is sensitively supported with tasks, activities and materials that help active listening to be developed and valued.

Brown, G., Anderson, A. H., Shadbolt, N., & Lynch, T. (1985) demonstrated that experience in the listeners' role in collaborative activities promotes sensitivity to the demand of the speaker's role which tends to be more explicit and more concerned with audience comprehension.

A good inference could be that listening comprehension has a great effect on oral performance as competence. For this reason, we spotlight the attention for listening ability in order to enhance and develop the students' oral performance.

Chapter II

Literature review

Technology in English classes

Mobile technologies offer learning experiences and engage people to use them dynamically in many different settings and with the particularity that those technologies are suited to promote a sense of ownership over their own work. Nowadays, in education, it is crucial for teachers to skillfully be able to manage mobile devices. Curricular benefits are more than just what a student can do with a device, and for this reason there are new and emerging practices related to how to use those devices trying to understand that they are not distractors, but on the contrary they can eliminate distractors and improve motivation, productivity and participation.

Teachers can have a series of reactions about the use of technology. There is not a 'one size fits all' solution to whether an educator should use technology in the classroom. Tutors usually bring their own personal background and bias into the classroom and can be heavily influenced with the pros of using technological devices in their daily practice, whereas another may not be so keen on using it.

Under these parameters, it is really fruitful to establish policy guidelines for mobile learning. UNESCO (n. d.) recommends to examine the unique educational potentials and challenges offered by mobile technology; avoid blanket prohibitions of particular devices; and, provide guidance on how new technological investments can work integrated to existing educational resources.

Depending on the context, mobile devices can be really fruitful. Referring to students, the effective integration of technology into classroom instruction can produce higher levels of children and teenagers' achievement, mastering their fundamental skills, becoming them into proficient users of technology and preparing them with enough intellectual tools to face obstacles in a postmodernist society.

It is primordial that children and teenagers be really excited learning with technology as a crucial part of their daily school experience. Bonnet (2015) suggests educators should address students not just as consumers but also as providers of important information. The author adds that mobile learners must be proficient about organization and effective contributors.

For many scholars in the ed-tech field and in education claim that new technologies are powerful tools to help schools meet the needs of ever-more-diverse student populations. Herold (2016) posits “the digital devices, software, and learning platforms offer a once-unimaginable array of options for tailoring education to each individual student’s academic strengths and weaknesses, interests and motivations, personal preferences, and optimal pace of learning” (p. 24).

In the last decade, the utilization of mobile devices for English instruction in Ecuador has been considerably increasing according to the learners’ necessities, for instance students use them to clarify ideas introduced by a classroom instructor or to search more information related to the curriculum.

Moreover, speakers and microphones embedded in mobile phones contribute to the listening and speaking practice. Previously, this type of speaking and listening practice required the presence of a teacher.

Additionally, students who strike up conversations with people fluent in a target language as English can use a mobile device to translate the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases to support communication. The mobility of the device makes this process fairly straightforward because it does not disrupt conversation in the same way that a paper, dictionary or laptop computer might. In addition, it is convenient to use mobile devices in the right way, especially when the impact on students’ learning attitudes and performance is tremendous because they can change from passive learners to truly engaged learners who are behaviorally, intellectually and emotionally involved in their learning tasks.

Undoubtedly, technology supports that vision because in many educational institutions technological resources are used to distribute assignments,

manage schedules, organize activities, modify situations, promote communication and track student progress.

One of the approaches that maximize the Educational Technology is Blended Learning (BL), which is a combination of face-to-face instruction with virtual classes. Under these premises, BL is linked to Mobile Learning due to the necessity of students use mobile resources or technological tools during their instruction in an appropriate and effective way.

For this reason, teachers must know that BL is an avant-garde approach with a pedagogical foundation to be correctly focused and achieve learning outcomes.

Epistemological foundation of Multimedia in Education

Constructivist Approach in education is a model that encourages students' participation at every level of learning and makes possible a real communication due to learners, who initially receive knowledge from their teachers, can progressively produce and generate effective results by a continuous feedback.

In actual technological societies, media serves as messengers in the communication cycle; and, multimedia in education is media and content that uses a combination of different content forms. It enhances the teaching and learning experience from two standpoints.

The first one is related to Semiotics, which is the study of signs and symbols, especially as means of language or communication in a social and cultural context; and, to the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning that, according to Mayer (2012), supports the fact that "a multimedia presentation of words, pictures, and auditory information is not processed at the cognitive level in a mutually exclusive fashion; rather, these elements are selected and organized dynamically to produce logical mental construct" (p. 3). In this way, students better understand an explanation when corresponding words and pictures are presented at the same time than when they are separated in time.

The second standpoint is about Professor Howard Gardner's theory, expressed in his book, *Learning Styles or Multiple Intelligences*. Gardner (2006) states "we all possess varying amounts of seven intelligences" (p. 2). His book showed the study at Carnegie Mellon University, which found that some people are more skilled at one at comprehension from listening or reading and typically exercise a preference for their more skilled form where possible.

Under these premises, in Educational Technology is essential to design and develop Constructivist Multimedia Learning environment to enhance computer skills for computer education learners. For Baskan (2012) "the Constructivist Multimedia learning environment comprises of 8 components as follows: (1) Problem base (2) Resources (3) Related case (4) Cognitive tools (5) Computer skill lab (6) Collaboration (7) Scaffolding (8) Coaching centre" (p. 1).

In addition, Baskan (2012) posits "the efficiency of the constructivist multimedia learning environment is shown in several aspects as following details: 1) The experts review 2) the learner's opinions 3) the learner's computer skills: basic skills, intermediate skills, and advanced skills" (p. 1).

Being part of Multimedia, Mobile Learning can be considered as the ability to obtain or provide digital educational content on media using personal pocket devices such as PDAs, smartphones and mobile phones.

Most researchers and educators probably view mobile learning as the immediate descendant or extension of electronic learning. By the year 2000, Clark Quinn, author of *Designing m-Learning*, published one the first definitions of mobile learning.

Quinn (2011) claims that mobile learning is "the intersection of mobile computing and e-learning: accessible resources wherever you are, strong search capabilities, rich interaction, powerful support for effective learning, and performance-based assessment ... e-learning independent of location, time and space" (p. 2).

According to Keskin & Metcalf (2011), “Current mobile learning theories are Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism, Situated Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Context Awareness Learning, Socio-Cultural Theory, Collaborative Learning, Conversational Learning, Lifelong Learning, Informal Learning as well as Activity Theory, Connectivism, Navigationism, Location-based learning” (p. 202), each with its particularities. These theories constitute the foundation of widely and deeply technological practices in education, always grounded in the enhancement of learners’ abilities.

Traxler (2009) defines six categories of m-learning: “Technology-driven mobile learning; Miniature but Portable e-Learning Solutions already used in Conventional e-Learning; Connected Classroom Learning; Informal / Personalized / Situated Mobile Learning; Mobile Training Performance Support; and Remote Rural Development Mobile Learning” (p. 325).

This and other classifications of mobile learning are based on a variety of functionalities, such as communication and collaboration, multimedia advance, evaluation tools, location service, and context management; and in education they have to take into account both learners’ and teachers’ visions.

Teachers’ attitudes towards the use of technology

Recent studies about teachers’ attitudes towards technology and their influence in curriculum standards and students’ academic development report that learners’ achievements are related and depend on teachers’ perspectives and beliefs and not to the technology itself.

According to Del Val and Fuentes, as cited in IJELLO special series of Chais Conference Best Papers (2011), “resistance to change is divided into cognitive resistance focused on identifying weaknesses of the change and enlisting reasons for maintaining the existing situation, and emotional resistance focused on expressing negative feelings like anger, hostility, sadness, tension, impatience, and disinterest” (p. 1). Additionally, sometimes resistance to change becomes active resistance, in which it is possible that teachers sabotage the process of change.

As we can observe, the implementation of technology in education can produce a series of reactions from teachers. Rockoff, J. E. in *The Impact of*

Technology on Student Achievement Paper (2015) explains there is not a one size fits all solution to whether an educator should use technology in their classroom.

Teachers bring their own personal background and bias into the classroom and can be heavily influenced with the pros of using technology in the classroom, while another may not be so keen on using it.

Benefits for students by using technology in EFL instruction

Referring to students, the effective integration of technology into EFL instruction can produce higher levels of students' achievement, mastering their fundamental skills, becoming them into proficient users of technology and preparing them in postmodernism with enough intellectual tools to face obstacles in society.

For this reason, it is primordial that children and teenagers are really motivated to learn with technology as a crucial part of their daily school experience. Some experts believe that technology provides educators with a way to individualize and customize the curriculum to match learners' developmental needs and also provide a nonthreatening and motivating environment for repetitious learning tasks.

States around the world are part of globalization and it demands the continuous use of technology in education. Ecuador is a Latin-American country which is immersed in the vertiginous technological advance.

The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is in charge of primary and secondary education in Ecuador. The Ministry designs the basic curriculum for the four Ecuadorian regions. Consejo de Educación Superior (CES) and Secretaría de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT) are responsible for higher education policy and its implementation., meanwhile the institution on charge of for quality assurance in higher education is Consejo de Evaluación, Acreditación y Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (CEAACES).

Ecuadorian Constitution and various education acts provide the legal framework for the national education system. The most significant acts are

contemplate in the actual Constitution 2011 that sets out the reforms in primary and secondary education (Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural, LOEI), and in Higher Education (Ley de Educación Superior, Ley No. 16. RO/77).

According to Izurieta, as cited in his paper “Technology Entered the Classroom without Permission”, in the year 2000 Ecuadorian schools had as few as three thousand computers for over twenty thousand public schools and at the beginning of 2014, there were over 80.000 computers. These numerical data evidences a huge jump on this field and a considerable investment to better the conditions of classrooms in public schools by the implementation of technology, which is much more than having a computer in the room but teaching students how to use mobile devices with pedagogical purposes even out the classroom.

Once students become familiar with technology, they quickly develop proficiency in its use. This opens up an exciting new world of learning possibilities for them, and their potential for achievement skyrockets. (Avidov-Ungar, O., & Eshet-Alkalai, Y. 2011)

Learners gain new skills and become familiar with new technologies that will help prepare them for future success in an increasingly technological world, becoming them more productive, specifically in EFL instruction. Notwithstanding, it is recommendable that students learn at their own pace through a program adapted to their specific needs and educational levels, trying to focus the appropriate utilization of technology, and precisely Blended Learning could optimize EFL instruction promoting students’ enhancement in the four basic skills.

For this reason, it is mandatory the predisposition of EFL educators to achieve their students make a critical reflection about that technology is more than a tool for entertainment. It should be seen as an instrument to empower students to express their ideas more clearly and creatively by the use a variety of communications media including words, images, audio, and video, creating a more academic and dynamic classroom environment.

What is more, technology promotes that many English teachers be more intellectually prepared and turn to digital media to strengthen students' basic skills. For example, the use of video and audio technology brings class material to life in a way that stimulates learners' minds and greases the wheels of learning. Furthermore, by incorporating pictures, sound, animation and multimedia significantly enhances students' ability to recall basic facts, as well as improving their understanding of complex systems (Herold, 2016).

For instance, Ecuadorian curriculum standards to teach English language include specific domains for language structure and communication, language acquisition and development and language fluency and it demands the use of resources and technology effectively in English and Content Based Instruction.

Technology is a tool or a support for this and other subjects from the national curriculum. Its role is active rather than passive so the student is actively making choices about how to generate, obtain, manipulate, or display information.

Performing authentic tasks, the students are in the position of defining their goals, making design decisions, and evaluating their progress, and these aspects are contemplated in the exit profile of high school students in Ecuador.

Although there are some educational institutions that still have limitations in the provision of technology in our country, Ecuadorian teachers play the role of facilitators, setting goals and providing guidelines and technological resources available to stimulate their students' work through interactive, dynamic and real classes according to EFL students' requirements.

When the venue for work is educational technology as a delicate combination of hardware, software and teacher training, students will possess technology savvy and will be eager to share their knowledge with others. Consequently, children and teenagers will develop their higher skills in critical thinking, understanding that technological devices are part of their lives and that their use affect how they shop, socialize, connect, play, and most importantly learn for the present and for the future.

Blended Learning Definition

In the words of Trapp, Blended Learning (BL) can be defined as “the combination of multiple approaches to pedagogy or teaching, e .g. Self-paced Collaborative, Tutor-Supported Learning or Traditional Classroom Teaching. Blended learning often refers specifically to the provision or use of resources which combine e-learning with other educational resources” (p. 1).

That is to say that BL refers to the integration and the blending of e-learning instruments and techniques with traditional methods. Trapp adds “Computer Based Learning is no longer considered as an alternative to traditional forms of learning/teaching” (p. 1). For this scholar, Computer Based Learning is integrated into a learning arrangement that combines specific methods based on learning aims and / or classroom environment.

Some authors believe that Blended Learning (BL) is not really a new concept due to teachers have always been using combined resources. Even, there are some criteria that BL is just a coherence of teaching or facilitation methods, learning styles, resource formats, a spectrum of technologies and a range of expertise.

For “UK Essays Page” (2015) BL involves the blending of learning programs in different formats to get general objectives and it represents the coalition of traditional face to face and online educational schemes to maximize the effectiveness of learning.

History of Blended Learning (BL)

According to “UK Essays Page” (2013), “Blended learning is a term that has been utilized for decades by educators and organizations, despite the fact that it only gained major attention in recent years” (p. 1). This page adds “in the past, blended learning has been viewed as a mixture of traditional face to face learning and any prevalent technology” (p. 1).

Actually, BL is highly applied as an effective way of passing knowledge through the combination of face-to face and online instruction; however, in

these times mobile devices and virtual applications used with this approach are more sophisticated in a globalized and completely technological world.

The goal of blended learning

On the words of Woodall (2010) the goal of Blended Learning is” to empower the individual to achieve an understanding of a given topic, become self-sufficient, improve his or her job performance and ultimately drive results that support business objectives” (p. 3) . That is to say, BL can support a variety of informal learning processes and this function is a crucial aspect of higher education o a part of the job for many corporate training departments. Therefore, Woodwall (2010) adds “Blended Learning expands the traditional role of training beyond its usual scope of formal training by providing a robust set of tools ... to obtain information and instruction they independently and uniquely need, all within the daily flow of work” (p. 4). Ultimately, good blending is about establishing a balance between the instructional advantages for the learner and the learning objective.

Dimensions of blended learning

Oliver and Trigwell, cited by Smythe (2014), claim these are the core dimensions of Blended Learning (BL):

- “Modes of Delivery (combination of Traditional Learning with Web-Based Online Approaches)
- Technology (mixture of media and tools / technologies employed
- Pedagogy (combination of a number of pedagogic approaches irrespective of learning technology use); and,
- Chronology (Synchronous -real-time and asynchronous approaches)” (p. 2)

In other words, BL combines education with communication -technology and its applications and practices vary vertiginously and pretend to suit the different needs of human beings and organizations.

Methods and approaches in blended learning

BL brings with it new challenges and new opportunities. Training professionals need to have a strong understanding of the suitability of various tools to achieving learning objectives. In words of Dr. Margaret Discroll, cited

by Woodall, D. (2004), BL uses a combination or mixing of at least four different methodologies, including:

- Mixing of technology-based learning (e-learning, collaboration, virtual classroom, etc.)
- Combination of pedagogical approaches (Behaviorism, Cognitivism and Constructivism)
- Mixing of forms of instructional technology (face-to-face, Internet, CD-ROM, etc.)

Technology in blended learning (BL)

According to Murray, Osborne and Crowther (2015) at Queensland University of Technology one of the pioneering in the utilization of BL, this approach is “a practical framework that can be used to encapsulate a range of effective educational approaches and it encourages the use of contemporary technologies to enhance learning, and the development of flexible approaches to course design to enhance student engagement” (p. 78).

Pertinently, Picciano A., Dziuban C., Graham C., (2014) state “in the world of technology and digital communications, five years is a lifetime. Many changes have occurred and new models have evolved demanding study and research. Facilities such as youtube videos, podcasting, wikis, and mobile technologies have been included in instructional blend” (p. 1). Thus, today these facilities are familiar for instructors and learners who have the challenge to learn more about this hybrid learning.

Bath & Bourke (2010) state “Blended Learning technologies can broaden the spaces and opportunities available for learning; Support course management activities (e.g., communication, assessment submission, marking and feedback); Support the provision of information and resources to students; and engage and motivate students through interactivity and collaboration”. (p. 7).

Phases in blended learning

According to Bath and Bourke (2010), designing for BL requires a systematic approach starting with:

1. Planning for integrating BL into a course

2. Designing and developing the BL elements
3. Implementing the BL design
4. Reviewing (evaluating) the effectiveness of BL design; and finally,
5. Planning for next delivery of the course, and improving the BL experience for both, staff and students” (p. 7).

Obviously, this process is not strict and linear, but flexible because it tends to accept adaptations eventually. Nevertheless, it is useful to keep this approach with the principles and considerations that are involved in each stage.

Blended learning in EFL

Educators of EFL have been constantly searching for effective teaching strategies to motivate students to learn for achieving better academic performances. This fact implies that each EFL instructor has to gain a practical knowledge of the new approaches, in this case the one related to BL in order to promote and achieve their learners’ communicative competence in the four basic skills.

Alpala, C. A. O., & Flórez, E. E. R. , (2011) express “Blended Learning has become one of the most common ways to teach EFL due to its double component, which integrates face-to-face classes with virtual learning in order to offer students a wide range of materials and resources organized in a methodological way” (p. 1).

As it is observed, over the years teachers and students have changed the way this educational process is seen because new technologies have been implemented in the educational system. Teachers must propose innovative ways of working to display materials that complement EFL face-to-face classes. Nevertheless, the implementation of BL should have a pedagogical foundation for each setting where it is planned in order to be developed, for instance on listening comprehension and oral production.

Implications of Blended Learning in Higher Education

Allen, I. E.; Seaman, J.; Garrett, R. , (2007) advocate the view that Blended learning (BL) – as a combination of e-learning and classroom teaching – is greatly implemented in higher education due to BL is basically used to obtain benefits related to efficiency as well as of effectiveness.

Aspden, L.; Helm, P.: , (2004) hold the position that “E-learning forms can increase the efficiency by cost savings which, in turn, build upon their virtualization potential. E-learning can lead to a virtualization of teaching and learning by overcoming temporal and spatial restrictions” (p. 3) Thus, travel costs, facility costs, and payments for instructors can be reduced to a considerable extent and didactical concepts can be improved by using the adequate mixes with respect to different learning contents and different groups of learners.

According to Garrison, D. R.; Vaughan, N.D., (2008), “...BL leads to a higher degree of personalization of learning processes. The advantages of BL can be accomplished by: the mutual compensation of weaknesses; of extremely diverse learning forms and by bundling their strengths to generate synergy” (p. 4).

Justly, to use blended learning in university teaching and to leverage its advantages, the need for a substantial infrastructure must be often mentioned. However, Bullen, M.;Janes, D. P., (2007) present arguments to emphasize that the infrastructure for blended learning does not only consist of technological information. On the contrary, these authors propose that it also encompasses other infrastructural sectors like, for example, organizational aspects, caretakers, coordinative committees, and more involved people, even cultural aspects such as educational philosophy of institutions, teaching as support of learning-principle, etc. and the financial resources dedicated to BL implementation.

Furthermore, there is a crucial aspect to be considered by utilizing BL. On the one hand, students may be forced to use e-learning instead of voluntary use or receiving rewards for the use. This is due to the fact that in blended

programs of study it is inevitable for students to use e-learning – otherwise they wouldn't get the credits needed to complete their degree.

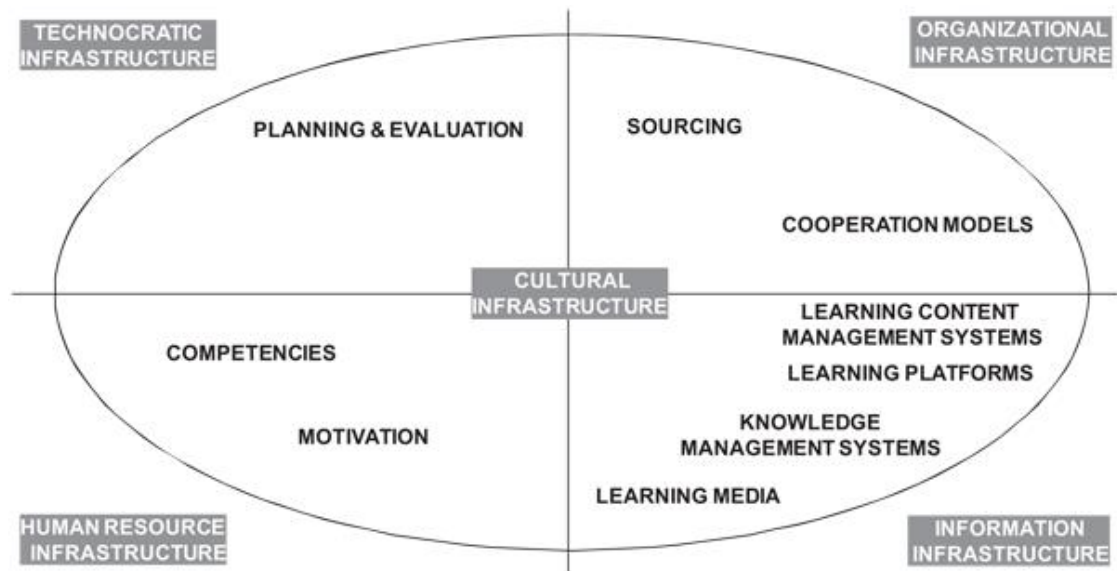
On the other hand, BL is only implemented in single courses and learners can avoid the use of e-learning by selecting courses that are completely based on classroom teaching. In the case of university management, the close link between embeddedness and the mandatory use of e-learning by students is enormously fruitful to foster students' motivation to use e-learning with the use of some motivation instruments, for instance rewards, credit points, grades, etc.

Infrastructure of Blended Learning in Universities

Steffens, D. , (2008) claims that the infrastructure of blended learning consists of two domains. Firstly, the production infrastructure contains manpower, facilities and other resources for the generation of learning assets (contents, tools, etc.). In the case of blended learning in university teaching, it encompasses human resources for content production as well as – as cited above - financial resources for the funding of blended learning.

Secondly, the coordination infrastructure accomplishes the alignment of learning activities, both for the coordination among all actors involved in the learning and teaching processes, such as: learners, teachers, commercial providers, educational institutions, public funding agencies and for the coordination of processes like: content production, IT support, learning, teaching, etc.

Steffens, D. , (2008) adds that this coordination infrastructure for blended learning in university teaching covers five sectors:



Graph 1 Coordination infrastructure for blended learning. Retrieved from <https://eleed.campussource.de/archive/6/2627>, by Steffens, D. (2008).

The information infrastructure for blended contains information instruments to support learning and knowledge management processes, from websites to provide teaching materials for download to elaborated learning platforms and technologies such as CSCW, learning content management systems and wikis.

In the human resource infrastructure for blended learning both motivation and competencies of the learners have to be taken into account. Sometimes e-learning elements are not easily accepted due to learners tend to stick to familiar methods of learning rather than embrace new forms.

For that reason, many institutions conduct specific trainings to achieve students accept Blended Learning and integrate it effectively and efficiently into their instruction.

The technocratic infrastructure consists of instruments for the planning of learning processes and the evaluation of learning performance. Many recent publications in the field of e-learning and human resource development focus on tools for performance evaluation.

The organizational infrastructure contains sourcing models, for instance: purchase and/or self-designing of learning contents and e-learning tools as

well as organizational structures, like: cooperation with other universities and / or private partners.

Definitely, the integration of BL in university teaching often requires extensive investment in IT systems and staff which cannot be raised alone by many universities. To deal with this financial challenge, cooperation in networks, as part of the organizational infrastructure, is common for many institutions.

The last factor proposed by Steffens, D. , (2008) is the cultural infrastructure. For instance in an university, the cultural infrastructure is represented by its philosophy, the dominating learning and teaching methods and styles, and its policies concerning attendance in classes vs. self-learning at home.

Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Blended Learning

Given the fact that the contemporary society is especially sensitive with regard to the development and the application of innovative technologies and due to current and future university students are increasingly 'digital natives', the role of language teachers to make the best use of ICT in teaching EFL becomes their most acute need and their biggest challenge.

For Bijeikienė , V., Rašinskienė, S., & Zutkienė, L. , (2011) “ If at present we cannot imagine our lives without e-banking and e-mailing, the future generations will not be able to imagine theirs without distance learning or blended learning” (p. 1). That is to say, BL is predominant in actual societies and will prevail in the next generations.

To meet these contemporary needs, already in 2009 the Centre of Foreign Languages (VMU) created four blended learning courses of general English for tertiary education at the levels A1-B2 posed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

While analyzing the possible threats and dangers arising along with the introduction of e-teaching/ learning, Rutkauskienė (2011) observes that “users might feel anxiety and have fear of losing control of the system, in which case they could lose face by showing themselves as ignorant in ICT” (p. 2).

Undoubtedly, the introduction of digital innovations might be especially face-threatening and challenging to the teachers provided that the current and future university students are increasingly 'digital natives', born – as Sharma, P. and Barrett, B., (2007) claim - "into to the world with ICT widely-spread".

The majority of the teachers can be regarded as 'digital immigrants' (as pointed out by Gary Anderson in his plenary speech at a conference in Kaunas, May 21-22, 2010) who need to adapt themselves to the rapidly changing digital world.

Therefore, Anderson (2010) argues that ICT is important because it allows best results, but also students' personal wish to keep pace well with the technology is crucial. Similarly, Sharma and Barrett (2007) generalize their understanding of blended learning as the learning processes where learners meet with a teacher for a face-to-face instruction, but in which the course includes a parallel self-study component such as a CD-ROM or access to web-based materials.

For Sharma and Barrett (2007), the term blended learning is applicable to a variety of teaching and learning situations and pertinent to a broad range of combinations with regard to face-to-face and computer mediated teaching and learning. In that sense, the concept of blended learning (BL) can be broader and more inclusive than distance learning and CALL, which makes blended learning function as a superordinate of the other two terms.

Effectively, BL is the teaching and learning process where face-to-face instruction is enhanced through the resources and activities designed and accessible in a computerized language learning laboratory and in a virtual environment.

This virtual environment includes a significant scope of teaching and learning materials such as theory presentations, video lectures, video episodes for discussions, audio records for listening comprehension and interactive tasks, and various means of communication like discussion forums and chats.

Regarding this topic, a diversity of researches demonstrate that the majority of the teachers indicate that the application of Blended Learning (BL) is a

common practice in their teaching routine and they appreciate the work in the multimedia language teaching/ learning laboratory.

Nevertheless, some teachers appear to be lacking skills for a more active and creative approach to the use of BL. On the one hand, most of them highlight their inadequate experience in the preparation of interactive teaching and testing materials. On the other hand, most of them reveal that their higher competence in BL would allow for a more effective teaching in the multimedia lab and therefore they indicate their willingness to increase their competence in specialized seminars about this contemporary approach.

Assessment in blended learning

Blended Learning can be implemented, monitored and assessed by a variety of tasks guided by a rubric with specific parameters, which generates a continuous feedback. For Bath, D., & Bourke, J. (2010), the purpose of this assessment is “to monitor student progress frequently and more easily (e.g., online quizzes, individual or group contributions to a discussion forum or wiki); to motivate students with online activities; to enable the design of authentic assessment tasks with the students’ collaboration” (p. 37).

Rubrics to evaluate quality

What is a rubric?

According to Smythe (n. d.) a rubric is “a scoring guide that sets out specific performance criteria. It defines requirements for meeting those criteria, and often assigns numerical scores to each level of performance” (p. 5). Therefore, a rubric makes possible that evaluators have an effective tool for assessing skills that do not generally lend themselves to objective evaluation methods. It is crucial to accentuate that when using rubrics for online education they can be used as instruments to evaluate how effective an online course can be.

How are rubrics designed to be used?

A rubric is designed to be used as part of a comprehensive institutional e-learning strategy. A well-designed evaluation rubric can be used as an

instrument in blended and online courses to guide the development, evaluation and improvement.

Smythe (n. d.) adds that Rubrics in general attempt to provide a framework to know the quality of a blended course, that is to say how that course is working in practice and how effective the instructor's facilitation skills are. This scholar posits that rubrics at the course-level are designed to be used in the following ways:

Self-evaluation tool (to provide a framework for new courses and to inform reworking of an existing course);

Evaluation tool (as a means to assist in the development of „quality“ online courses); and,

Exemplars (to identify best practices in online courses and recognize those that are creating quality courses)

As we can observe, an effective rubric should be based on empirical-research and integrates a range of pedagogical knowledge and principles. This rubric must be used in a variety of formal or informal situations or contexts with the application of adequate methodologies.

Rubric review

Smythe (2012) emphasizes “the most popular rubrics used in higher education for the quality evaluation of e-Learning are those developed by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) at California State University and the Quality Matters rubric” (p. 2).

For “Quality Matters” (2008), although there is relatively limited research providing evidence about the effectiveness of rubrics, it is evident the presence of considerable empirical research on the use of the pedagogy nested within some of these rubrics.

The CELT rubric developed at California State University covers a broad range of criteria and is designed to self-assess online course material as well as provide a means for rewarding quality online teaching and is widely used across a range of higher educational institutes.

Smythe (n. d.) explains that most published rubrics include quality criteria on organizational support, course design and layout, students' resources and support, learner motivation and interaction, effectiveness of mobile devices, assessment and instructional design.

In conclusion, it is significant to mention that in choosing BL approach for assessment, educators must review the course learning objectives and consider the nature of language outcomes.

Chapter III

Methodological framework

This chapter has its attention on the methodology for the study, conducted at investigating how the lack of Listening and Speaking skills can affect development of communicative competence on Agricultural Engineering students, Livestock Science Faculty at Universidad Tècnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador.

Researching in the social sciences requires, on behalf of the researcher, a coherent research path to obtain results. In these regards, the current chapter describes a series of methodological steps carried out to obtain valuable information for answering the research questions.

Research Methods

Regarding research method, Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., (2011) assert that:

Methods are the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction. Methods may also be taken to include the more specific features of the scientific enterprise such as forming concepts and hypotheses, building models and theories, and sampling procedures. (p. 47)

The research methods that will be used in this study are quantitative and qualitative in order to collecting, classifying, ordering, synthetizing, evaluating and interpreting all information gathered trough instruments. Also, validity and reliability will be applied to these two types of research, though how validity and reliability are addressed in these two approaches varies. Validity and reliability are addressed, using different instruments for data collection. It is suggested that reliability is a necessary but insufficient condition for validity in research; reliability is a necessary precondition of validity, and validity may be a sufficient but not necessary condition for reliability. (Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., 2011) (p. 133).

Validity and reliability in questionnaires

The advantages of the questionnaire are: it tends to be more reliable; because it is anonymous, it encourages greater honesty (though, of course, dishonesty and falsification might not be able to be discovered in a questionnaire); it is more economical than the interview in terms of time and money; and there is the possibility that it can be mailed. Hudson and Miller (1997) cited by (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K., 2013) suggest several strategies for maximizing the response rate to postal questionnaires (and, thereby, to increase reliability). (p. 157) They involve:

- Stressing the importance and benefits of the questionnaire.
- stressing the importance of, and benefits to, the client group being targeted (particularly if it is a minority group that is struggling to have a voice)
- providing interim data from returns to non-returns to involve and engage them in the research
- following up questionnaires with a personal telephone call
- detailing features of the questionnaire itself (ease of completion, time to be spent, sensitivity of the questions asked, length of the questionnaire)
- issuing invitations to a follow-up interview (face-to-face or by telephone)
- providing encouragement to participate by a friendly third party
- Understanding the nature of the sample population in depth, so that effective targeting strategies can be used. (Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., 2011). (p. 158).

Validity and reliability in observations

In addition to external validity, participant observation also has to be rigorous in its internal validity checks. There are several threats to validity and reliability here, for example:

- the researcher, in exploring the present, may be unaware of important antecedent events

- informants may be unrepresentative of the sample in the study
- the presence of the observer might bring about different behaviors (reactivity and ecological validity)
- the researcher might 'go native', becoming too attached to the group to see it sufficiently dispassionately.

On the words of Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011) "to ensure validity, a pilot must have been conducted to ensure that the observational categories themselves are appropriate, exhaustive, discrete, and unambiguous that effectively operationalizes the purposes of the research". (p.159)

Validity and reliability in tests

There is a range of issues which might affect the reliability of the test – for example, the time of day, the time of the school year, the temperature in the test room, the perceived importance of the test, the degree of formality of the test situation, 'examination nerves', the amount of guessing of answers by the students (the calculation of standard error which the test demonstrates feature here), the way that the test is administered, the way that the test is marked, the degree of closure or openness of test items. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011) (p. 159).

With reference to the students and teachers themselves, there are several sources of unreliability:

- Motivation and interest in the task have a considerable effect on performance. Motivation to participate in test-taking sessions is strongest when students have been helped to see its purpose, and where the examiner maintains a warm, purposeful attitude toward them during the testing session (Airasian 2001), cited by Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011) (p. 160).
- The relationship (positive to negative) between the assessor and the tester exerts an influence on the assessment. This takes on increasing

significance in teacher assessment, where the students know the teachers personally and professionally – and vice versa – and where the assessment situation involves face-to-face contact between the teacher and the student.

- The conditions – physical, emotional, social – exert an influence on the assessment, particularly if they are unfamiliar. Wherever possible, students should take tests in familiar settings, preferably in their own classrooms under normal school conditions. Distractions in the form of extraneous noise, walking about the room by the examiner and intrusions into the room, all have significant impact upon the scores of the test-takers, particularly when they are younger pupils (Gipps 1994), cited by Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011) (p. 160). An important factor in reducing students' anxiety and tension during an examination is the extent to which they are quite clear about what exactly they are required to do.
- Simple instructions, clearly and calmly given by the examiner, can significantly lower the general level of tension in the test room. Teachers who intend to conduct testing sessions may find it beneficial in this respect to rehearse the instructions they wish to give to pupils before the actual testing session. Ideally, test instructions should be simple, direct and as brief as possible.
- The time of the day, week, month will exert an influence on performance. Some students are fresher in the morning and more capable of concentration (Stiggins 2001), cited by Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., (2011) (p. 160).
- Students are not always clear on what they think is being asked in the question; they may know the right answer but not infer that this is what is required in the question.
- Students' personalities may make a difference to their test performance.

- Students' learning strategies and styles may make a difference to their test performance.
- The context in which the task is presented affects performance: some students can perform the task in everyday life but not under test conditions. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011) (p. 161).

Research Design

The research design for this study will be observational where case study and surveys are part of this design. One fundamental aspect is that students and teachers will be observed through classes' observation. Observational data will comment on the physical environment, and will then be followed up with interview material to discover participants' responses to, perceptions of, messages contained in and attitudes to the physical environment. Artefacts, clothing, shared and private spaces, furniture, notices, regulations etc. all give messages to participants. (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. , 2011) (p. 97).

The research work is going to take a view on the students at the career of Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty at Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador, since they showed a particular situation in the problem statement, which requires close study on listening and speaking development at EFL course.

After careful consideration of six syllabuses of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo English courses, and based on students' statistical records of last English level called Technical Advance, the researchers decided to work with Pre-Technical English Level, which gathers 24 females students and 34 males. These students, according to syllabus of UTEQ, should have a basic knowledge of English equivalent to level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference or languages.

The researchers contacted the Dean of Livestock Science Faculty, and gained permission for this study at the institution. The research initiated on November 13, 2017. To approach the problem in a consistent way, the

methodology to be applied will be a mixed-method: case study and action research.

Mixed method

With the development and perceived legitimacy of both qualitative and quantitative research in the social and human sciences, mixed methods research, employing the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, has gained popularity. This popularity is because research methodology continues to evolve and develop, and mixed methods is another step forward, utilizing the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research. (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D, 2017)

In line with Venkatesh, (2013) “mixed methods research is an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods in the same research inquiry”. As researcher we have chosen the use of multiple methods to collect and analyze data, in this way we are looking for a high degree of reliability and validity in quantitative analysis (e.g., survey and direct observations). Proponents of mixed methods research appreciate the value of both quantitative and qualitative worldviews to develop a deep understanding of a phenomenon of interest. For example, a researcher may use interviews (a qualitative data collection approach) and surveys (a quantitative data collection approach) to collect data about a new IS implementation. (Venkatesh, 2013)

“...mixed methods is a research approach, popular in the social, behavioral, and health sciences, in which researchers collect, analyze, and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study” Creswell, J. W, (2013) (p. 204). Brannen (2017) claims: “the method of qualitative research par excellence is participant observation. With qualitative research it is the concepts and categories, not their incidence and frequency, that are said to matter”. Regarding quantitative research the same author asserts:

Is typically associated with the process of enumerative induction. One of its main purposes of quantitative method is to discover how many and what kinds of people in the general or parent population have a

particular characteristic which has been found to exist in the sample population. While qualitative methods have been typically associated with analytic induction where the researcher moves from the data through the formulation of hypotheses to their testing and verification”.

The differences which researchers feel exist between qualitative and quantitative approach have profound effects on the focus and conduct of research projects, especially the choice of method. (Brannen, J. (Ed.), 2017) Rossman, G. B., & Wilson, B. L. , (1985) in their article “Numbers and Words Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in a Single Large-Scale Evaluation Study” assert that:

“Using qualitative and quantitative methods in a single research project has been the subject of much controversy. Often confused and ambiguous, the debate is hindered by infrequently defined and overly broad concepts. At times the arguments rage at the paradigm level, whereas at others the concern is more with research strategy or technique. We have assumed that qualitative methods usually generate data not easily reduced to numbers, and that quantitative methods result in data to which the power of mathematical analysis can be applied easily. Additionally, each method has usefulness in a specific situation or phase of the research process. Numbers and words can be used together in a variety of ways to produce richer and more insightful analyses of complex phenomena than can be achieved by either one alone.

Purposes of Mixed Methods

- Mixed methods design strategies provide a powerful mechanism for researchers to deal with such situations and subsequently make contributions to theory and practice.
- Second, mixed methods research has the ability to provide stronger inferences than a single method or worldview (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003, 2009). Cited by Venkatesh, (2013)

- Finally, mixed methods research provides an opportunity for a greater assortment of divergent and/or complementary views (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003, 2009). Cited by Venkatesh, (2013)

Appropriateness of Mixed Methods Approach

A mixed methods approach will be a powerful mechanism to interject context into a research inquiry. (Venkatesh, 2013). So our view as researchers is to employ a mixed methods approach due to we intend to provide a holistic understanding of the problem that students of Pretechnical level have with Listening and Speaking skill that affect their linguistic competence.

Case study

According to Crowe, et al., (2011), “case study is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context” (p. 100). Additionally, on the words of Yin (1994):

Case studies can be used to *explain, describe* or *explore* events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur. The case study approach lends itself well to capturing information on more explanatory '*how*', '*what*' and '*why*' questions. The case study approach can offer additional insights into *what* gaps exist in its delivery or *why* one implementation strategy might be chosen over another. In order to develop a thorough understanding of the case, the case study approach usually involves the collection of multiple sources of evidence, using a range of quantitative (e.g. questionnaires, audits and analysis of routinely collected healthcare data) and more commonly qualitative techniques (e.g. interviews, focus groups and observations). The use of multiple sources of data (data triangulation) has been advocated as a way of increasing the internal validity of a study (i.e. the extent to which the method is *appropriate to answer the research question*) (p. 283-290).

Baxter, (2008) in her research called “Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers”, claims:

Potential data sources may include, but are not limited to: documentation, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts, direct observations, and participant-observation. Unique in comparison to other qualitative approaches, within case study research, investigators can collect and integrate quantitative survey data, which facilitates reaching a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In case study, data from these multiple sources are then converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually. Each data source is one piece of the “puzzle,” with each piece contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the whole phenomenon. This convergence adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case.

Additionally, Baxter (2008) explain :

Case study research is more than simply conducting research on a single individual or situation. This approach has the potential to deal with simple through complex situations. For the research a case study is an excellent opportunity to gain tremendous insight into a case. It enables the researcher to gather data from a variety of sources and to converge the data to illuminate the case.

Action research

In words of Nunan, (2006) “action research is a powerful professional development tool that can empower teachers to take control of their own professional development” Wallace, (1998) maintained that action research is "basically a way of reflecting on your teaching ... by systematically collecting data on your everyday practice and analyzing it to come to some decisions about what your future practice should be" (p. 42-56). In line with Mills, (2006) “action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how they particular school operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. (p.42-56). In this view, action research is a mode of inquiry undertaken by

teachers and is more oriented to instructor and learner development than it is to theory building, although it can be used for the latter. Although according to Chaudron, (2000), action research does not "imply any particular theory or consistent methodology of research" (p. 4), several steps in the action research process have been usefully identified by action researchers. For example, Nunan, (2006) provided a helpful overview of the process involved in conducting action research. "In all empirical research on second language classrooms—whether effect-of instruction, descriptive, or action research—the investigators share similar goals. These include wanting a better understanding of how second languages are learned and taught, together with a commitment to improving the conditions, efficiency, and ease of learning."

Steps in conducting an action research

Most writers agree that action research is a cyclical process, where two or more research cycles are usually required to resolve the problem. This cycle as reported by (Nunan, 2006) is listed below:

The action research cycle:

1. Problem/puzzle identification
2. Preliminary investigation
3. Hypothesis formation
4. Plan intervention
5. Initiate actions and observe outcomes
6. Identification of follow-up puzzle
7. Second Hypothesis
8. Second round action and observation

In this research, the authors intend to study individuals (students at UTEQ) and academic events in their natural setting, which is the EFL classes to have a complete picture of the phenomena being studied which is the identification of student's competence in the listening and speaking skills as well as the professor's use of materials for enhancing the learning process in these two language skills.

Also, qualitative research is often process-oriented, or open-ended, with categories that emerge beginning with few perceived notions, followed by gradual fine-tuning and narrowing of focus (Mackey, 2015). Brown, (1973) assert: “One of the great strengths often cited for qualitative research is its potential for forming new hypotheses” (p.485).

Participants

One important aspect of qualitative research is the tendency to work more intensively with fewer participants. The subjects under study are 58 learners and the authors will focus on investigating the students’ competence in listening and speaking skills in the classroom.

Personal information of participants was obtained with a registration sheet where students detailed phone numbers, emails, and personal backgrounds. These documents will be filed to protect students’ privacy.

The students participating in this research attend classes at the career of Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador, during the second term of the year 2017. They are registered in the morning. Their ages are ranging from 19 to 23 years old. This research takes place at the II semester of academic program 2017-2018.

Additionally, three English teachers will be observed while they proceed with their lessons with the purpose of describing the listening and speaking activities in normal classes; as well as, identifying their strategies and appreciating how students reply to the strategies.

Most of UTEQ’ students were high school graduates from state schools. (80%) and private schools (20%) 60% of them were from Quevedo, 20% came from towns near Quevedo and 9% from towns that are more than two hours away from Quevedo, 1% is from Colombia.

Although the test was for students with A2 level of English since they had approved three English levels, not all of them were able to understand all the statements in the questionnaire, verifying that at Universidad Técnica Estatal

de Quevedo, it is not applied a proficiency test to new students before starting classes.

The researcher' role

The researcher's role in qualitative research is critical, as he or she collects data and implements analysis (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D, 2017); therefore, our role in this study will be that of an observer-as-participant, serious and professional as we were the primary instrument of data collection and analysis that collected from tests, surveys, questionnaire and classes observation to discover the cause of the problem under study. Thus, as researchers we will answer questions when students will not understand something avoiding any influence or pressure that may change the outcome of the study, making this a very challenging balancing act of being objective and indulgent in our observations, and actions.

In our data collection we will use surveys, notes, photos, and a personal journal to document our ideas and opinions through the whole process, which will be use to further document the relationship we will have with the data and analysis.

According to Simon, M. (2011) "the researcher's role in quantitative studies is, theoretically non-existent. That is in the perfect quantitative study, participant act independently of the researcher as if he or she where not there". In qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is quite different. The research is considered an instrument of data collection (Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y., 2003)

In words of Simon, M. (2011) "This means that data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines". To fulfill this role, consumers of the research need to know about the human instrument. The qualitative researcher needs to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank, P., 2003)

In addition, according Simon, M. (2011) it is useful for the qualitative researcher:

...To keep a research journal explicating personal reactions and

reflections, insights into self and past, in a separate journal, and how bracketing takes place. A good qualitative researcher asks probing questions, then listens, then thinks, then asks more probing question to get to deeper levels of the conversation. An effective qualitative researcher seeks to build a picture using ideas and theories from a wide variety of sources.

The participants' role

All research use students as participant. When people participate in a research often they are called subject by psychologist who means that they are the object of the investigation. Korn, J. H., (1988) in the article "Students' Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities as Research Participants", clarify the reality of students from their point of view, divided in Role, Right and responsibilities that students may assume as research participant.

Role

Students have an essential role in a research, their participation can solve problems that researcher can change in solutions; also students have broader responsibilities with researcher, among them:

1. *Ask questions:* Understanding the research by asking questions is essential if students wish to perform well in the study (i.e. cooperate) receive the maximum educational benefit from participation, and avoid unpleasant experiences.
2. *Be on time for the research appointment:* Researcher often works on tight schedules; disrupting a schedule may inconvenience the researcher and other participants. Being on time implies that subjects will show up when they agree to participate.
3. *Participants should take the research seriously and cooperate with the experimenter:* Although the research may seem unimportant or the task may not make sense, participants can expect the experimenter to explain it later.
4. *When the study has been completed, participants share the responsibility for understanding what happened:* Participants should ask questions that help to clarify the situation and enable them to learn more about the topic and methods of research. Participants can be of

great help by telling the researcher anything they think might be of interest.

Right and Responsibilities

Teachers can lend credibility and add clarity to statement of right and responsibilities. Their position is critical; teachers are the gatekeepers of the research labor pool, ensure the provision of benefits to participants, and may be called on to act as mediator in disputes concerning right. This responsibility bears careful consideration.

Finally, researcher who benefit from such an inspirational introduction must surely feel obligated to conduct only relevant research and to provide participants with a significant educational experience. (Korn, J. H., 1988, p. 74-78)

The role of the students who will participate in this research will be carefully considered, as researchers we will have the responsibility of explain in greater details all of activities that will be part of this study, guaranteeing them of the security and confidentiality of the information obtained.

Instruments for data collection

One important phase in the research is the selection of the variables in the hypothesis, define the variable, and select an instrument to measure the variable. (Mackey, 2015) As well as answer the general research question:

How can the lack of Listening and Speaking skills affect the development of communicative competence on students at the career of Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Tècnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador?

As reported by Mills, (2006) there are some different ways to collect the information that teachers use. "Some techniques will work better for some teachers than others like Formative Data (Short quizzes, question and answer drills), Observational Data (Teachers learn to watch their students). Observe behaviors while interacting with the student, when they are working on assignments." P. 20

The research instruments used in this work were:

- **Two tests** selected from EOI ESTEPA Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Estepa (Sevilla), (2018) for assessing students' listening skills; and speaking test from Britishcouncil.org, (2018) site. The tests were taken from two important institutions well-known by their official English test, so both tests had been used to establish validity and reliability. Appendix A.

After selecting the tests, it was essential to analyze why assessment is important in higher education. In the article: "How do you know they are learning? The importance of alignment in higher education" Reeves (2006) assert: "Evaluations of traditional, online, and blended approaches to higher education teaching indicate that the most commonly misaligned factor is assessment. Simply put, instructors may have lofty goals, high-quality content, and even advanced instructional designs, but most instructors tend to focus their assessment strategies on what is easy to measure rather than on what is important".

According to Bain, (2004) "if something is not assessed in higher education, then it is not learned". At this point it is essential distinguish assessment from evaluation, as Reeves (2006) explain: "Assessment is defined as the activity of measuring student learning and other human characteristics such as aptitude whereas evaluation is focused on judging the effectiveness and worth of educational programmes, practices, and products. It may help to think that people are assessed and things are evaluated". (Reeves, 2006)

The scope of researchers will be defining on listening and speaking tests the domain of knowledge on these skills those students of Pre-Technical English level has. Looking for example on speaking if students be able to communicate individually or in group, for achieving specific purposes like: to advise, to convince, and to solve problems, and finally to emphasize on some aspects relating of our everyday life – such as, apologizing, giving directions, asking for information, or communicating in an emergency situation.

The steps that will be follow for assessing speaking are:

- The student will be requested to complete one or more oral activity. His or her presentation relate on the task will be graded.
- The task will be administered in different ways: individually, in a group or class setting.
- Tasks will be emphasized on themes that all students can easily talk about.

For some authors, such as Ur, P., (1996) “the difficulties involved in oral testing and assessment are so many that the real question is whether to test or not to test. By assessing students” Lázaro, L.A., (1996) affirms: “We check their progress at different stages of the course; we reinforce the students ‘learning by giving them regular feedback and we evaluate the teaching/learning process as well as the approach, aims, materials and assessment itself”.

On the words of Segura, (2012) informal assessment of speaking activities is very important since there are considerable difficulties in organizing formal oral tests in certain teaching contexts. As she explains:

In a good number of cases, it is the only way to assess speaking. Most informal assessment simply takes the form of student observation and monitoring of activities as they happen in the classroom. The information the teacher gets by observing and monitoring students’ needs to be recorded and, in that sense; it seems advisable to use a band scale, which provides some sort of standardization of perceptions so performance. A band scale provides some sort of standardization of perception so that teachers reach an agreement on what and how to assess.

On listening, the research will look if students are able to contain listening skills like analysis and synthesis, and nonverbal listening cues like the meaning of tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. (Mead, N. A. & Rubin, D. L.,1985). The evaluation of listening is carried out using more than one method and takes place on more than one occasion so as to back up less than perfect examination system.

The steps that will be follow for listening are:

- The students will answer multiple-choice questions showing their level of accurate and inferential comprehension.
- The material will reflect the language that students usually may hear in the classroom, in some places, or in informal conversations. The passages should be fascinating and short.

Regarding to questions, multiple-choice items will consider the most essential aspects of the passage avoiding insignificant details

The place for listening assessment will be free of interruptions. The material will be exposed clearly, with soft and appropriate tone.

- **A questionnaire for teachers** retrieved from Ramírez G. M., (2011-2012) with the purpose of describing what teachers' point of view on the development of competences on EFL students at UTEQ are and the way they organize and structure lessons as well as the solutions to different activities proposed. Appendix B.

Even though collecting research data through traditional paper-and-pencil methods can be costly and time consuming for researchers will be necessary to have physical evidence of the research. It will involve to visiting the university under study. (field work) in order to ensure that data collection will be done satisfactorily.

Boynton, P. M., & Greenhalgh, T. , (2004) claims: "The great popularity with questionnaires is they provide a "quick fix" for research methodology. Questionnaires offer an objective means of collecting information about people's knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Also, People often decide to use a questionnaire for research questions that need a different method. Sometimes, a questionnaire will be appropriate only if used within a mixed methodology study. This is just the researchers have used case study and action research as mixed method.

- **Three class observation to three teachers** will be proposed with the aim of seeing how they implement listening and speaking activities,

and verify students' responses. Retrieved from (Medway site) Appendix C.

The quantitative method will be applied from the need to have systematic and relatively objective data recording multiple classroom events and teacher/students behaviors. Three of their main components recommended by Allwright, D., & Bailey, K. M. , (1991) and that will be applied in this research will be:

1. Session teacher behaviors (e.g., praises good performances, motivates students, maintains a positive climate, and keeps students' attention).
2. Session teaching methods (e.g., uses cooperative learning, direct instruction, tutoring, ability grouping, and seatwork), and
3. Field Notes.

Classroom observations normally are directed by teachers, administrators, or instructional authorities, the aim is to offer teachers with positive feedback intended at improving their classroom management and instructional performances. According to Taber, K. S. , (2014) "classroom observations may be called learning walks, teacher observations, walkthroughs, and many other things, and they may be conducted for shorter or longer periods of time—from a few minutes to a full class period or school day". In this research the time destined for class observation was two hours for each class.

Some classroom observation approaches can be created by educators, or by educational experts. In some cases, the notes of observation should have guidelines that describe what observers should be looking for or what the observed teacher would like comment on.

Classroom observations' intension is to improve instructional excellence and teaching efficiency, and even though teachers have problem when they are being observed, or they do not accept the process being used, the strategy provoke changes in an educational institution improving the quality on teaching practices.

- **Focus groups.** The purpose is to gather information about point of view of students related to issues with listening and speaking, allowing for discussion and interaction by the participants. The obtained information with focus group will be used as a complement to students' survey.

We opted for group work because of our interest in to know different opinions of students regarding listening and speaking problems and what will be the possible solutions. In line with Kitzinger, (1994) Focus groups are “group discussions organized to explore a specific set of issues like people's views and experiences”. The group will be focused through a particular set of questions that help to us to analyze how they perceive the problem and how to solve it.

Krueger, (1994) suggested that it is ideal for the focus group to have a moderator team. This team typically comprises a moderator and an assistant moderator. The moderator is responsible for facilitating the discussion, prompting members to speak, requesting overly talkative members to let others talk, and encouraging all the members to participate. Furthermore, the moderator is responsible for taking notes that inform potential emergent questions to ask. In most cases, the moderator presents the focus group participants with a series of questions. However, instead, the moderator might present the members with stimulus material (e.g., newspaper article, video clip, audio clip) and ask them to respond to it. Alternatively still, the moderator might ask the members to engage in a specific activity (e.g., team-building exercise, brainstorming exercise) and then provide reactions to it. In contrast, the assistant moderator's responsibilities include recording the session (i.e., whether by audio- or videotape), taking notes, creating an environment that is conducive for group discussion (e.g., dealing with latecomers, being sure everyone has a seat, arranging for refreshments), providing verification of data, and helping the researcher/moderator to analyze and/or interpret the focus group data (Krueger, R. A., 2000).

Gibbs, A., (1997) “The role of the moderator is very significant. Good levels of group leadership and interpersonal skill are required to moderate a group successfully”

Selection and sample

Moffatt S., (2015) mentions “A sample is a subset of the population, and can be considered as the smaller group of elements selected through a rigorous and definite procedure from a particular population; i.e. the elements that constitute the sample are those that are actually studied.” (p. 53). According to Barlett, J. E., Kotrlik, J. W., & Higgins, C. C. (2001):

The determination of sample size is a common task for many organizational researchers. Inappropriate, inadequate, or excessive sample sizes continue to influence the quality and accuracy of research. A common goal of survey research is to collect data representative of a population. The researcher uses information gathered from the survey to generalize findings from a drawn sample back to a population, within the limits of random error. Using an adequate sample along with high quality data collection efforts will result in more reliable, valid, and generalizable results; it could also result in other resource savings.

Within a quantitative survey design, determining sample size and dealing with nonresponse bias is essential. “One of the real advantages of quantitative methods is their ability to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would be prohibitively expensive to study” (Holton, E. H., & Burnett, M. B. 1997)

The chosen sample for this work was intentional, there were chosen 58 individuals 24 males and 34 females from 19 to 23 years old from two courses (A-B), since these two groups are the only ones in the Pre Technical English level, which is close to achieve the minimum level required by National Educational Authorities. Being this a case study research, these groups were suitable for particular observation.

Procedures and ethical considerations

Every research has ethical issues that should be considered for avoiding physical and emotional damage. Firstly, the Dean of the Livestock Science

Faculty was visited at her office, to ask permission to conduct this research project. It was explained to her that the research would have important impact for teaching English at this university because it was going to be analyzed two important skills in students like listening and speaking. The Dean through written authorization gave all help required like permission for gathering data from students and teachers; as well as, for participating in class observations. The authorization letter can be seen in Appendix D.

Secondly, there was a conversation with Agricultural Science Coordinator, who took to Pre-technical A and B' classrooms. Students received the researchers with curiosity and positive attitude. After explaining to students the purpose of the research they accepted to collaborate.

Third, we provided students with an Informed Consent Form (ICF) regarding the research and to obtain their authorization to participate in the study. The ICF informed about the goal of the study, the research design, the time and the schedule the study would take, and all things needed for concluding the research. In addition, special considerations regarding their safety were included, the test they will take and information regarding confidentiality and anonymity will be carefully handled. It is important to mention that students showed enthusiasm and good attitude.

Data analysis

Introduction

This research was structured to study listening and speaking development in a group of Pre-Technical English students of Livestock Science Faculty, from Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo. In this section it is going to be presented the results that were found during the time of this research.

Listening and speaking tests

Looking for tests to measure listening and speaking skills, it was found EOI ESTEPA (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Estepa (Sevilla) and its program "That's English!" (2018). The test found is the one corresponding to the basic levels (A2) and Intermediate (B1) of the English language in official language

schools in Sevilla. It consists of five questions corresponding to simple present and simple past tenses.

To complete the assessment for analyzing speaking skills, it was included a test from the British Council site, Learn English Teens, Speaking Exams (2018). In the second part of Listening Comprehension, students had to listen carefully “A tour guide talk with a group of people about a field trip”. Students had to fill in the gap with information from audio.

The tests were taken by 46 students, and were divided in one test for listening and three tests for speaking. Unfortunately, twelve students failed to arrive to the test because of their academic activities. The following day one of the researchers visited students in their classroom to take the test, however they indicated that they did not feel prepared for the test. The tests are:

Test 1 – Listening Comprehension

Test 1 – part 2- Listening Comprehension

Test 2 – Speaking - Oral Production

Test 3 – Speaking – Oral Interaction (pair)

Test 4 – Speaking – Oral Production (individual)

Test 1: Listening comprehension. This test had two parts: on the first five questions students were asked to listen an audio called “Rita talks with her friend about a party”; students had to select the correct answer of alternative A, B or C. The modality is multiple choices.

Test 1, part 2: Listening comprehension, filling the gaps. Students were asked to listen to a touristic guide talk with some people about a field trip. The audition was related to: “A morning and afternoon’ programme; and, what to bring to that programme”. Listening exam grade was determined on the numbers of correct answer converted to a scaled score. The total scaled score is obtained by adding both parts of the test.

Test 2 – Speaking oral production

In this test students responded eight questions, and were graded according from options: correct, incorrect and partially correct. This test is important because it enables non-native students of English to be admitted in universities abroad. The questions were yes/no answers.

Test 3: Oral Interaction (pair)

In this test students were asked to keep a dialogue with a partner, because it is an excellent opportunity to immediately diagnose and correct any major misconception. The face to face dialogues create a good experience in students and are well suited for final exams. Students in this task should comment about a weekend break at a hotel in Las Vegas. There were some problems with their room. They had to look at the list below and make a request to the hotel receptionist. In case of they were unsatisfied; they could ask to see the manager. They had to talk in a one-minute timeframe. The options for the dialogue were:

- 1) There is no water in the minibar.
- 2) There is no toilet paper in the bathroom.
- 3) It is extremely cold in the room.

Test 4 – Speaking – Oral Production (Individual). In this typical speaking test students were required to speak for just one minute selecting one of the following topics:

1. Talk about yourself
2. Describe a photo, picture or a person.
3. Information gap activity. (Britishcouncil.org, 2018)
4. Tell a story or personal anecdote. (Britishcouncil.org, 2018)
5. Oral exhibition. (Britishcouncil.org, 2018)

The results were different of pair interaction due to students chose a relevant topic for them like “Talk about yourself or describe a photo, picture or a person, Tell a story or personal anecdote (Britishcouncil.org, 2018); and, Oral presentation” as can be appreciated in the figure.

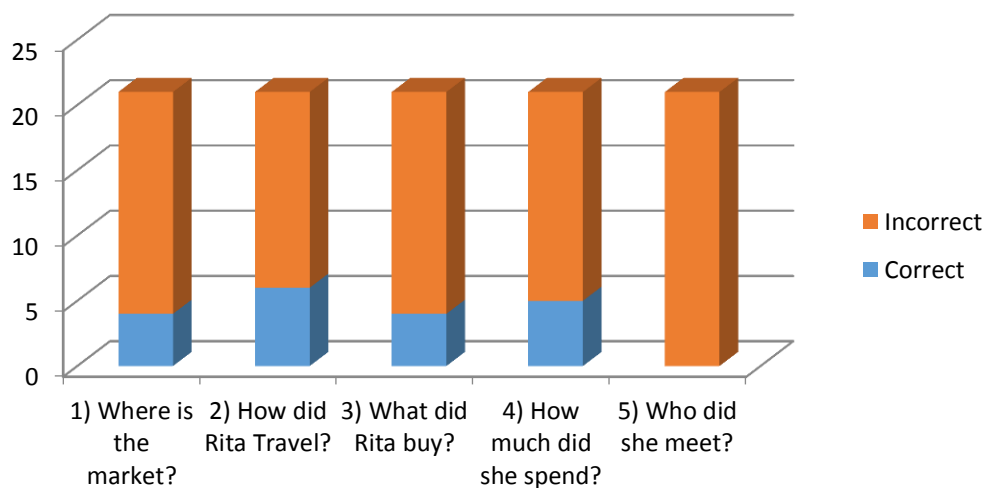


Figure 2 Test 1 on listening comprehension, Course A

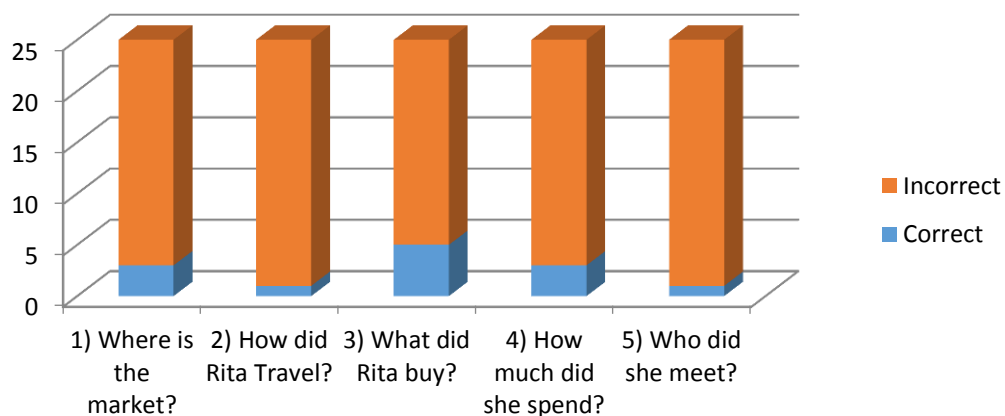


Figure 3 Test 1 on listening comprehension, Course B

Figures 2 and 3 correspond to the listening comprehension tests administered to courses A and B. The first figure displays the right answers (in blue) given by students, which with the same questions, corresponds to the 10.4% of the total. The second figure shows that in course B; there were very few correct answers, there were just only 13 right listening comprehension question, this corresponds to the 10,4% of the total

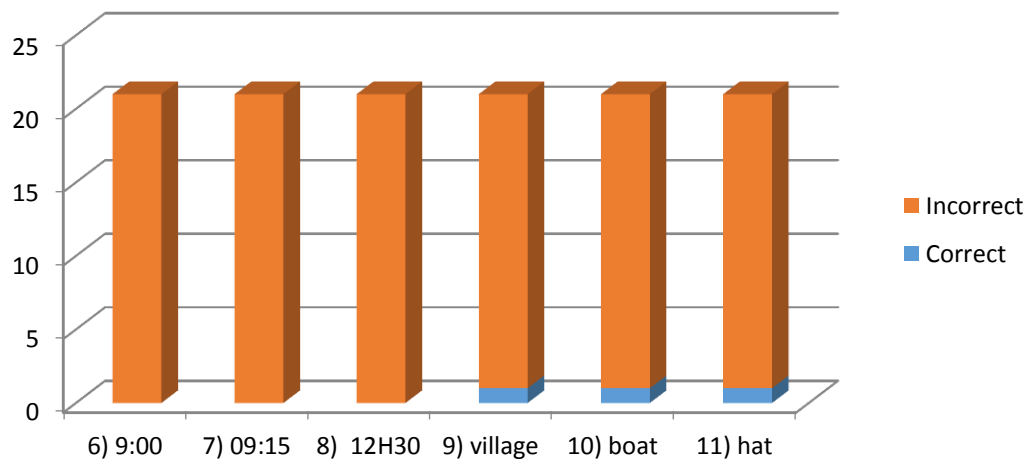


Figure 4 Test 1, part 2 on listening comprehension, Course A

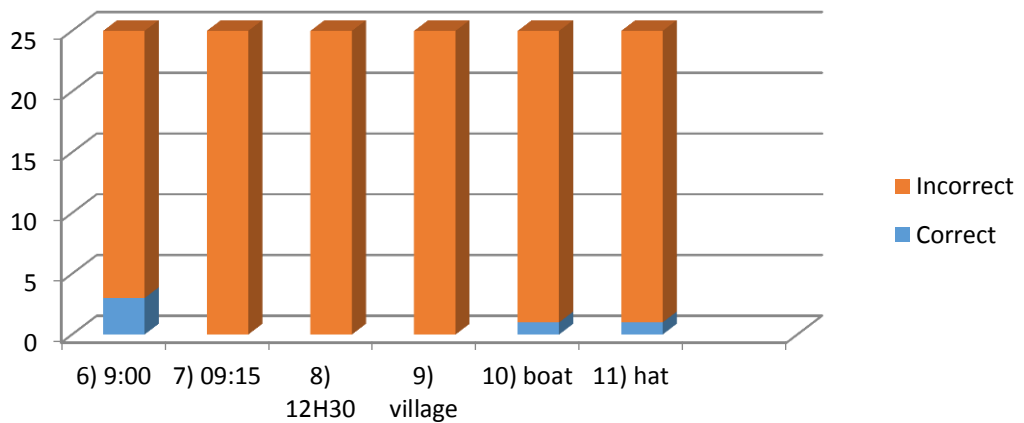


Figure 5 Test 1, part 2 on listening comprehension, Course B

Both figures 4 and 5, demonstrated that the majority of students did not understand the audios and could not fill in the gaps of the statements. For just 2, 4% from course A could answer correctly; and course B showed 4% of the total.

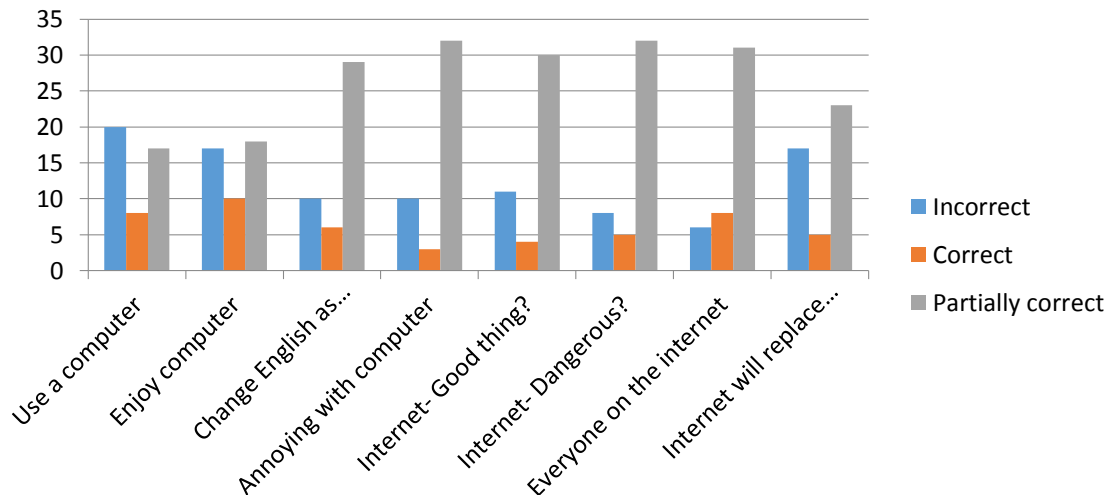


Figure 6 Test 2, on speaking oral production, Courses A & B

Students of courses A and B participated together. Figure 6 shows that students did not have a good performance when answering short questions, as it can be appreciated in this figure. The 27, 5% of the questions were answered incorrectly. While most of the responses (58, 9%) were partially incorrect answered in spite of the fact of some questions were explained in Spanish because students did not understand English questions. Notably, very few questions were answered correctly (13, 61%).

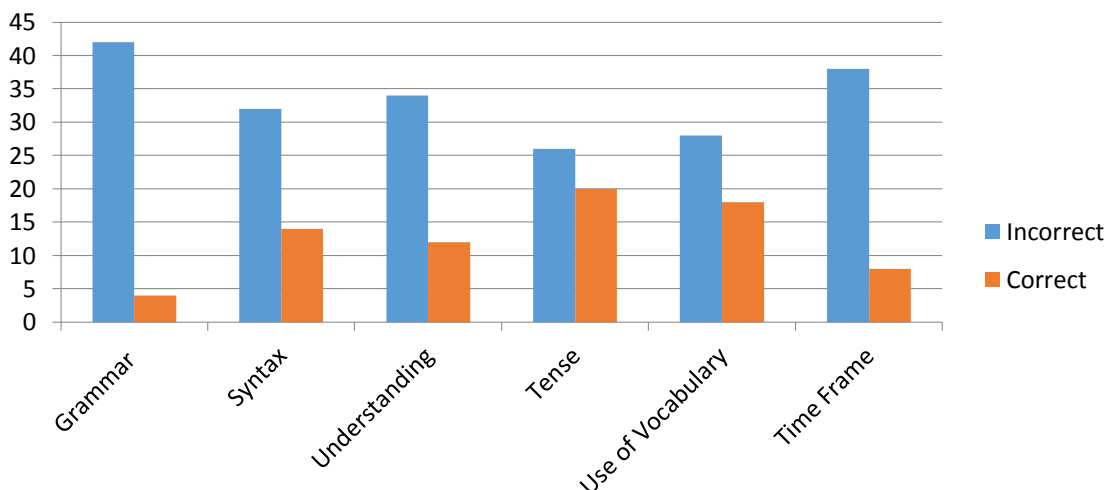


Figure 7 Test 3, on speaking oral production, (pairs) Courses A & B

Figure 7 demonstrates that a large amount of questions were answered incorrectly (72, 46%). Most of the students had problems with details also it was observed there was confusion with tenses. Their expressions were vague, and they did not connect ideas coherently. Students completed the

required time however it was evident that they cannot organize their speaking properly. Very questions were replied correctly (27.53%)

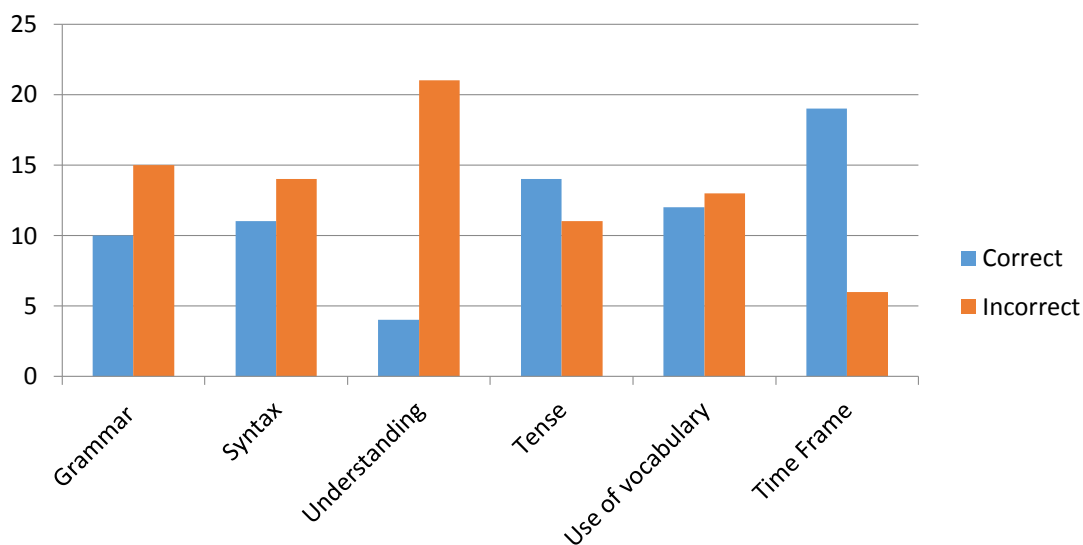


Figure 8 Test 4, on speaking oral production (individual), Course A

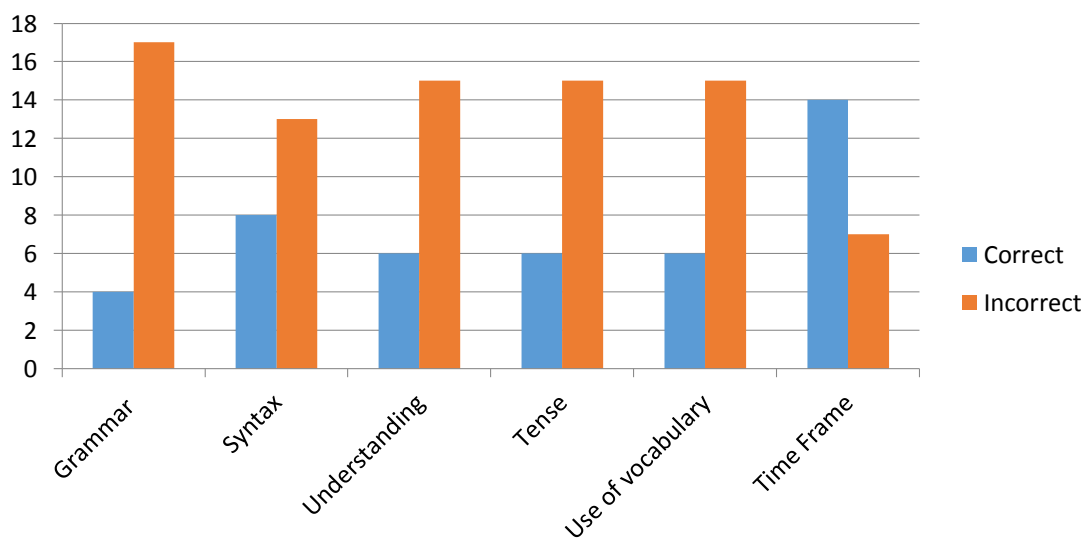


Figure 9 Test 4, on speaking oral production (individual), Course B

Fig. 8 and 9 correspond to the speaking comprehension tests administered to courses A and B. The first figure displays the right answers (in blue) given by students of course A (46, 67%) and incorrect (in red, 53, 33%)

The second figure shows that in course B; there were very few correct answers (34, 92%), and incorrect were (65, 08%) of the total. Both figures

demonstrate that students had difficulty on elaborate coherent sentences probably due to lack of vocabulary, and problems with grammar and syntax. Time frame was complete because students tried to reach it with regular breaks.

Analysis of teachers' questionnaire

This questionnaire describes what teachers' point of view on the development of competences on EFL students at UTEQ are and the way they organize and structure lessons as well as the solutions to different activities proposed. Retrieved from (Ramírez G. M., 2011-2012), the instrument has three parts:

1. The first six questions of the questionnaire are related to the use of audio visuals and the target language in their classrooms:
2. Questions 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were related to the attitude of the teacher regarding the use of audio visuals in class.
3. The last 3 questions are related to the materials available and the training that teachers have.

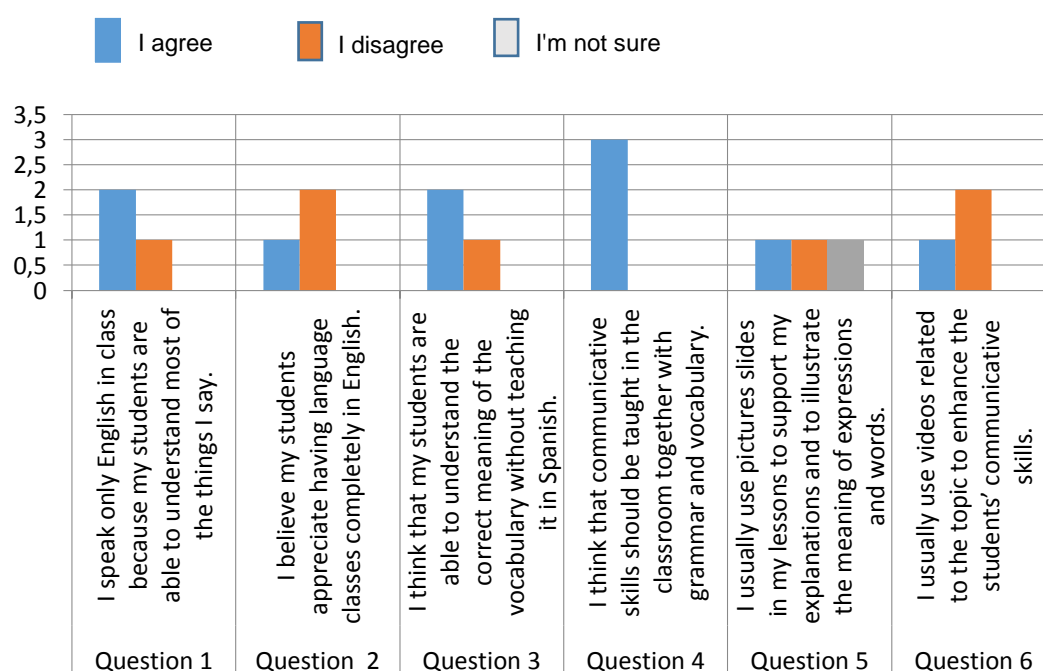


Figure 10 Teacher Questionnaire, part 1

Statements 1 to 6 are related to the use of audio visual and the target language in the classroom. Three English teachers of Livestock Science Faculty were consulted and their answers were different: two of them admitted speaking only in English because their students can understand this language; however, in the second statement teachers agree students do not appreciate that classes be completely in English.

Regarding to the third statement two teachers commented their students can understand vocabulary without translating words in Spanish, one assured their students do not understand English words without translating them.

On statement four, all teachers agree about the importance of teaching communicative skills along with grammar and vocabulary, but on statement five the answers were different because one teacher has different attitudes about use of pictures and slides for supporting classes, two of them admitted using videos for enhancing the students' communicative skills.

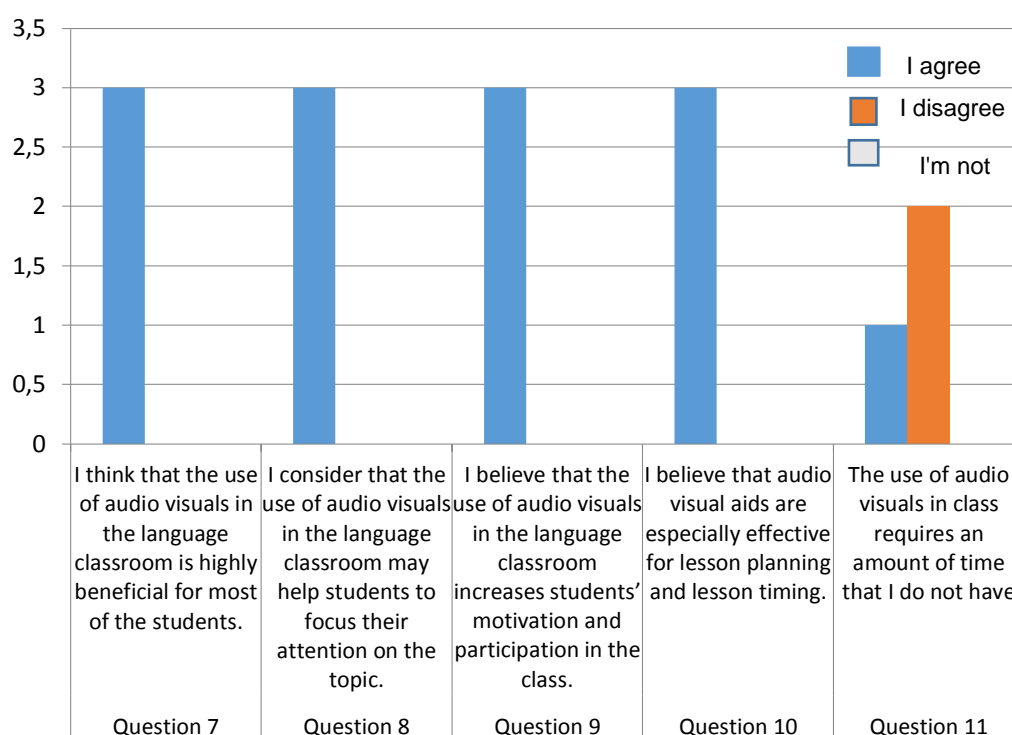


Figure 11 Teacher Questionnaire, part 2

Statement seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven are related to the attitude teachers have regarding using audiovisual in classes. Teachers consulted said that audiovisual are highly beneficial for students, can help them to improve daily because increases students' motivation and their participation

in classes, also audiovisual are effective for planning lesson, and using them in classes do not require lot of time.

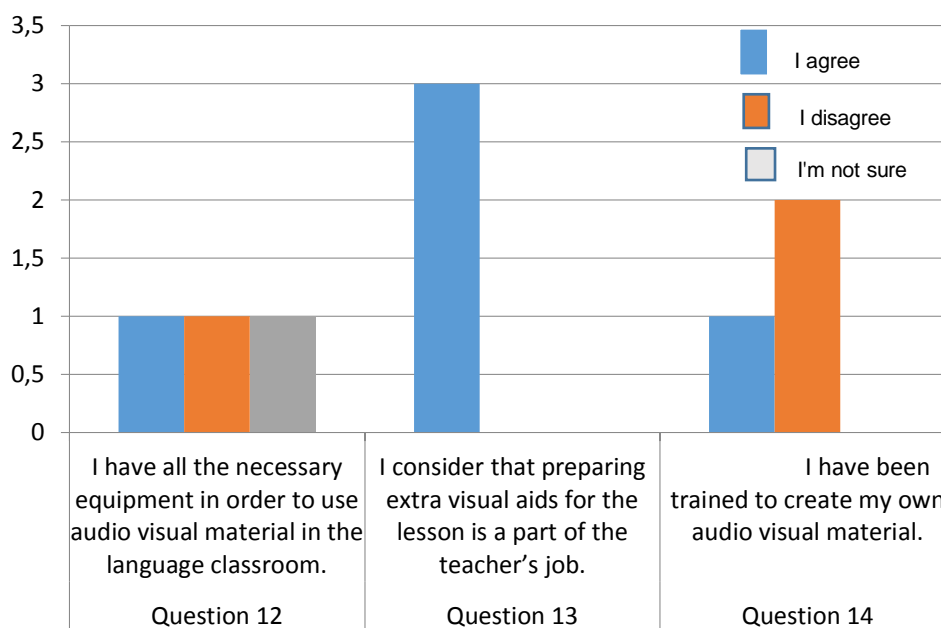


Figure 12 Teacher Questionnaire, part 3

The materials available and the training that teachers have are being considered in statements 12, 13 and 14. Teachers are disagreeing about having materials available in the classroom, and although they replied that extra visual aids are part of teachers' job only one of them admitted is trained to create their own audiovisual material.

Analysis of Class Observation

The researchers consider that class observation is a good instrument because it helps to educators to be more conscious of how they perform in the classroom as well as the needs of students' needs; promote dialogue and discussion in a school district including everything we can learn from other. Three teachers of Livestock Science Faculty were observed while they were given their lessons to verify the answer that students gave in their questionnaire. The Class Observation sheet had four parts:

1. General teaching aspects
2. Knowledge and language
3. Procedures and Techniques
4. Managing the classroom and Learning

The grading was considered in this way: (5 excellent) (4 very good) (3Good) (2 Acceptable) (1Need to improve). The instrument used was a Course Observation Checklist used by Cantos L. (2016) in her thesis called: “Enhancing Students’ speaking performance in a TOEFL course through ICT task at Unidad Educativa Interamericano”. Two course observations for each teacher were observed in December. The class observation started in December 1st. December 7th, December 8th, December 14th, December 15th, until December 22nd. Each class was of two hours, and teacher are mentioned in this research as Teacher No. 1, Teacher No. 2 and Teacher No. 3, unfortunately there were some holidays and several academic activities for students and teachers that impeded more observation. Annex 3

Teacher No. 1 -

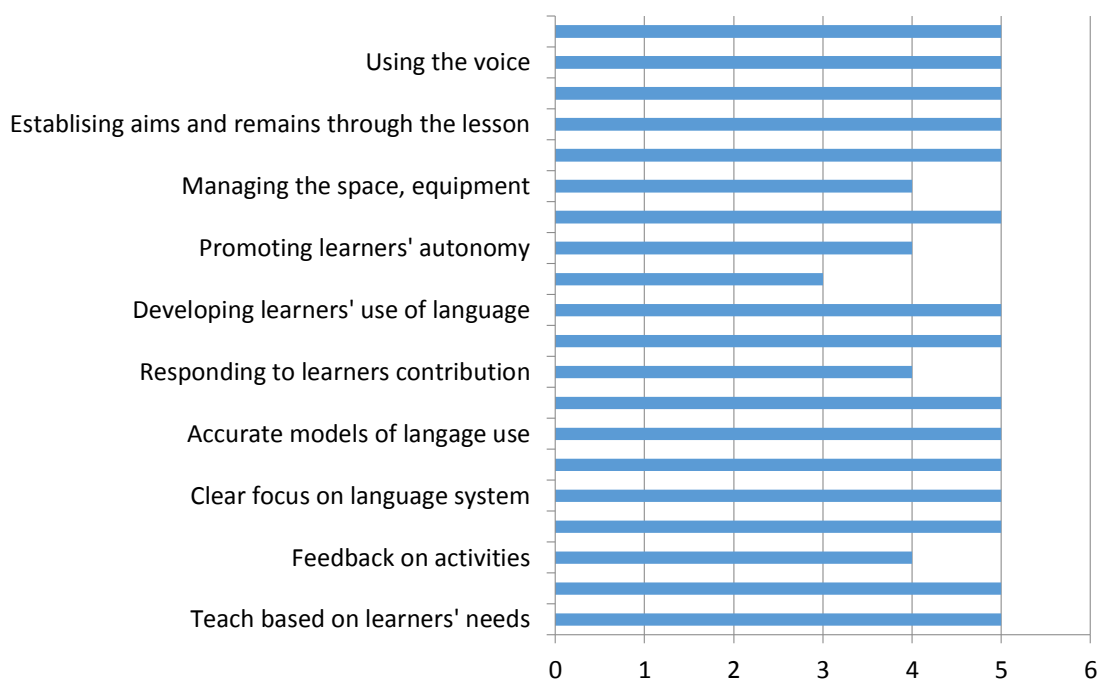


Figure 13- Class Observation – Teacher No. 1

The first class observation took place in December 1st. and the schedule was 07H30 – 09h30 the focus was about **Was/Were born; Past of Be**, the course was Pre-Technical, IV semester of Livestock Engineering course A.

As general aspects, it was appreciated that teacher used some listening activities like a song as warming, then she clarified the topic of the lesson,

explaining ideas in different ways; she asked students some questions about the last course, she used open ended questions, and used the same questions to elicit responses from different pupils participating in the discussions about the topic of the lesson (First Born Ex. Junco Tabei, Neil Armstrong, Venus and Serena Williams, etc.)

Students made use of their textbooks and photocopies. Teacher used a whiteboard and a projector for expanding students' book. She explained the class in a more interesting way. She continuously checked instructions and gave feedback on activities. Although students seemed to be motivated to answer some questions; they did not want to participate answering what teacher No. 1 asked.

Regarding to the area of knowledge and language, the teacher employed an appropriate level of English that was easy to understand, she presented the language correctly giving information on form, meaning and use. It is necessary to mention that she praised students when they participated in the class.

Regarding to Procedures and Techniques, teacher checked practice of grammar as well as lexis and discourse. She tried to develop learners' fluency when she asked questions about the topic in discussion; however it was limited because students did not interact according to her prompts. It was observed that teacher was not rigorous on skills because students made mistakes in a presentation, but she encouraged students to correct themselves.

Regarding to managing the classroom and learning, it was appreciated a positive learning atmosphere, students were quiet and enjoyed the class. The classroom is small and there were no space for walking around the course, the setting arrangement did not promote communication because it was in a traditional form. She established some academic activities in pairs and remains the aims of the lesson through the entire course. Her instructions were clear, concise using a normal voice and checking students understanding.

The second class observation took place in December 15th, 2017 the purpose was to analyze the activities related to listening and speaking. It could be seen that teacher used a projector for explaining her classes, a tape-recorder for listening exercises and she encouraged students to use the language. One of the activities was a presentation about students' interest. Each student presented a power point slide where they talked about the members of their families. The speaking practice was easy and students received teacher' feedback in order to motivate them to continue with this activity even though most of them had mistaken in syntax and pronunciation.

Teacher no. 2

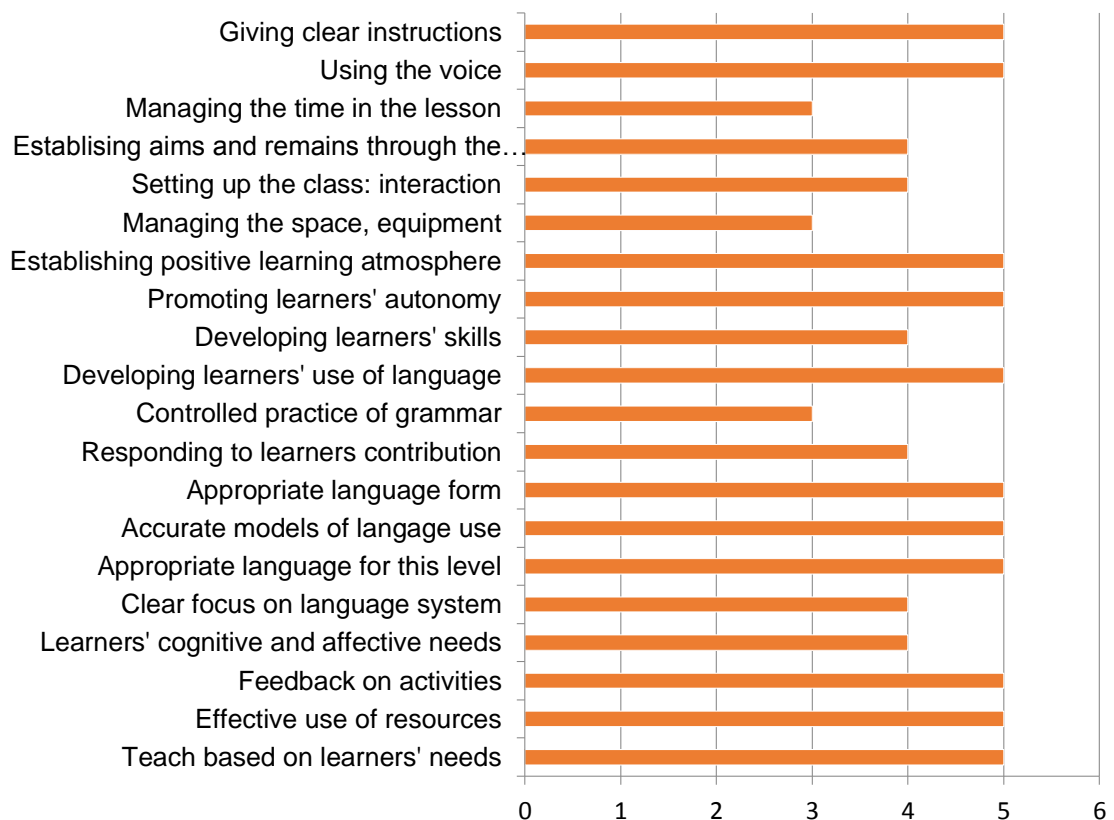


Figure 14 Class Observation – Teacher No. 2

The first course observation took place in December 8th. and the schedule was 07H30 – 09h30 the focus was about Use of A/an and Demonstrative Adjective, the course was Basic Level, I semester of Food Engineering course A.

As general aspects, it was appreciated that teacher started the class with a warming related to “Jolene” song and students should guess how many times it is mentioned the word “Jolene” in the song. It was a relaxing and funny activity for students. Then he clarified the topic of the lesson, explaining grammar part he used yes/no questions. Not all the time was taking into account the learners’ need because teacher continued with the lesson even though not all of them seem to learn it. He always gave feedback on activities. Not all students used official textbooks and most of them used just photocopies.

Regarding to the area of knowledge and language, the teacher used the language according to students’ capacity. He explained some language form, their meaning and use. It is necessary to mention that not always he took into account when students participated in the class.

Concerning to Procedures and Techniques, teacher unchecked the language system neither lexis nor discourse. He tried to develop learners’ fluency asking questions about the topic in discussion, however students limited their participations. It was observed that teacher was not rigorous on skills because students made mistakes when they answered questions. The positive aspect was he encouraged students to correct themselves their mistakes.

In relation with managing the classroom and learning, it was appreciated a positive learning atmosphere, students were calm and the desks were simply put all in rows, everyone sat facing the teacher and the board. There was no pair or group work observed; individual work only. The aim of the lesson remained during the time of the course although sometime teacher spent a lot of time with examples; tasks had more time that is required. The voice of the teacher was soft and gentle even when she was giving instructions.

Second course observation took place in December 8th, 2017, the purpose was to analyze the activities related to listening and speaking, however there was not a regular class but presentation about students’ interest. The speaking practice was easy and students received teacher’ feedback.

Teacher No. 3

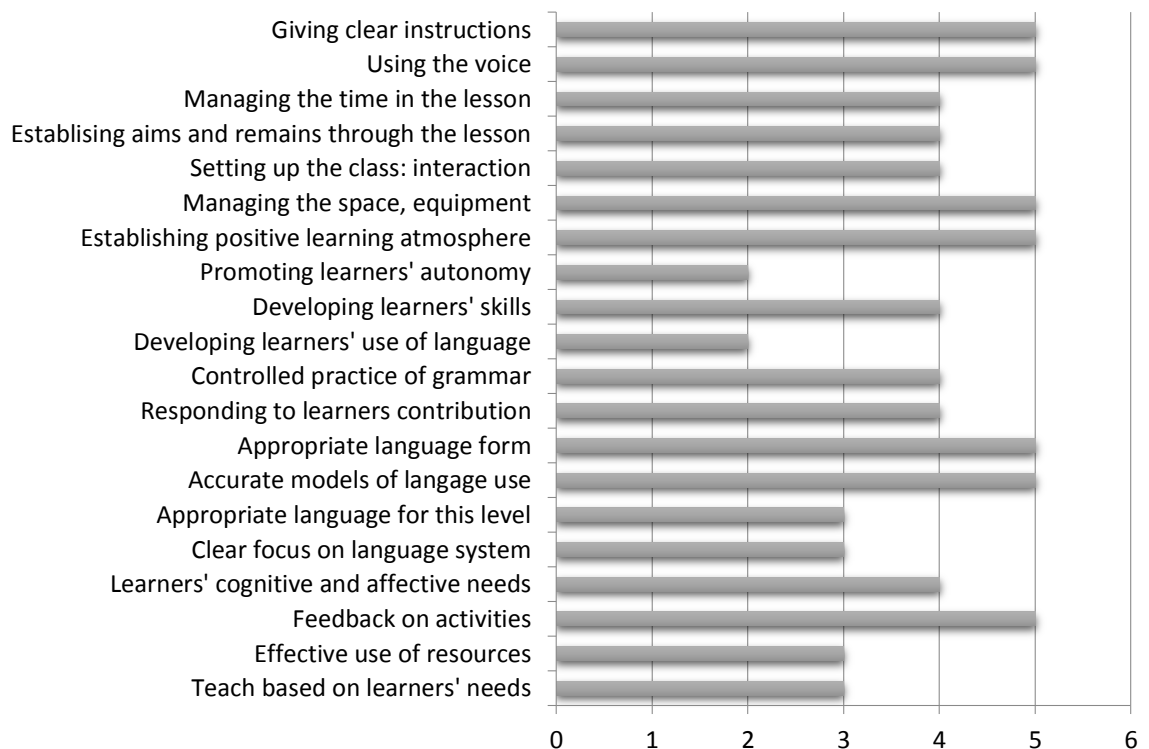


Figure 15 Class Observation – Teacher No. 3

The first course observation took place in December 7th and the schedule was 10:00 – 12:00 in the morning, the focus of the lesson was **Present Continuous**, this course was carefully observed because it is Pre-Technical Level, Course A IV semester of Agricultural Engineering, one of the studied course in our research.

As general aspects, it was appreciated that teacher started the course with a Christmas song and students listened to it several times. Then, the teacher began the class speaking only in English and students were silent because it was observed that the majority did not understand any questions. One or two students translated to their classmates all what teacher said. The classroom did not have projector or internet because it is located in an old building. The teacher used a whiteboard and a radio recorder during the course. Learning activities were carefully planned and the instructions were repeated continuously. Not all the time teacher took into account the learners' needs

like a guided interaction for working collaboratively with other students, she did not use explicit instructions because it was appreciated that students did not understand what is being asked of them, and she did not use graphic organizers taken into account that visual learning is extremely helpful to all students, especially EFL learners. The teacher continued with the course even though not all of them seem to understand the lesson, nevertheless she gave feedback on activities.

Regarding to Knowledge and Language, it was observed that teacher do not adapt her language to students level. It was clear that it was not appropriated for this group. The teacher seemed to be nervous probably due to the class observation.

Related to Procedures and Techniques, teacher tried to develop learners' fluency and confidence using the language for communication, as well as developing students' skills. One positive aspect was teacher promoted students' autonomy because they were responsible for the proposed activities.

On managing the classroom and learning, it was appreciated a tense atmosphere due to the teacher only speaking in English, despite her effort, students did not participate in the course. The seats were in u-shape allowing a better eye-contact with all students, and giving to the lesson a more collaborative feeling. The tension lowered when students were asked to work in groups creating a poster about their experience, and teacher was continuously walking around the course responding students' questions in English. The instructions were understood by students due to one or two students translated them for their classmates.

Second course observation took place in December 8th, 2017, the purpose was to verify listening and speaking activities again, however the course was unilateral, only teacher spoke therefore listening and speaking activities were not appreciated.

As researchers, the class observations are considered essential; however after the second observation they were suspended for some reasons:

First: teachers had different activities like presentations, exams, and sometimes only group works that impeded to observe listening and speaking activities, and the time for the observation was short.

Second; teachers were anxious with the observation and in our opinion the classes were unreal, because teachers wanted to know the data of observation classes in advance for preparing them in a better way. It was observed for instance that teacher No. 3 -who has the two courses under study- that she speaks all the course completely in English and students were nervous because they had difficulty for understand her.

After the lesson the researchers talked with some students and they explained that they did not understand why teacher was talking the entire classes in English because not always she did that. They indicated that in previous classes the teacher often speak in Spanish or translate some words.

Finally, teacher No. 2 did not allow us to observe more than two classes, expressing that he was informed by Dean of Faculty that the class observations will only be two.

Even though two courses were only observed, the second teacher used projector for the first time -we assumed it was for our class observation-, and the third do not use a projector because her classroom is located in an old building and there are no internet connection. All teachers used songs as warming, and follow the syllabuses on each lesson.

Focus group

- This activity was carried out with students of Pre-Technical English courses A and B at the English Classroom in Livestock Science Faculty. There were two groups from courses A-B, each group consisted of six and ten students approximately, on average ten participants and the discussion lasted approximately 1 hour. The questions posed were the following:
 1. What are the main problems when listening and speaking?
 2. What are the possible solutions?

3. When students go from one English level to another, have they attained the skills according to CEFR or because of fulfill tasks and lessons?

The students were called for this activity and their opinions were considered in the research. The fact that research participants already knew each other had the additional advantage that friends and colleagues could relate each other's comments according their particular experience. According to Kitzingler, (1994) "it is useful to work with pre-existing groups because they provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are clear and the problem are visualized immediately". (pag.106). The researcher explained the goal of this focus group and the questions encouraged them to answer them during the time of the discussion. Each discussion had its own dynamic and directions looking for make students feel comfortable in the group.

Providing an audience for each course encourages a greater variety of communication that was helpful in this research. Students explained that listening and speaking are the two most difficult skills for them, and they pointed out the following issues:

- Few hours of instruction.
- English is not practiced outside classes.
- Little interest in the language.
- Students do not understand pronunciation.
- Students do not learn English in high school as must be.
- I don't like teachers' methodology.
- Audiovisuals are not used in courses.
- I do not like English.

Among possible solutions, students identifying following options:

- Increase the numbers of class hours – they have two hours weekly-.
- Classrooms should be equipped with tics.
- Classrooms should include audiovisuals for more interesting classes.

Students were asked if in their personal opinion all students after finishing six English levels could have a good competence in English. They answered no because they know that their classmates pass their English level completing tasks and memorizing the specific part for their test only. Students do not reach good competence as indicated in Common European Framework of Reference for Language, obviously with some exceptions.

This version was confirmed by teachers who were consulted and they answered:

Teacher 1

"I do not think students have high competence in any of the skills. In my opinion it is rather modest, students do not reinforce their learning outside classes how is due or with self-employment. Most of them just copied the tasks that few have done by themselves, or even another person did their homework.

According this teacher these students rather could get to level A2. The problem the researchers appreciated was that not all students have money to purchase the textbook with access to the online platform, and sadly they do not consider English as an important subject for their career that is the reason why they do not give the due relevance to its study".

Teacher 2

"The students demonstrate an acceptable level in listening and speaking on the topics covered in course and its application to real life.

Personally, I think that I am not the person for giving an opinion on the matter. Therefore, students should be submitted to a test to be evaluated for knowing the real results."

Teacher 3

Indicated: "In my case I had 17 students of sixth English Level of Food Engineering. None of them failed the module. I believe that they are between basic and basic-intermediate in speaking and listening. Some students may achieve level B2; however others still have difficulties in language skills".

To sum up, and in consequence with Kitzinger, (1994) it is important to indicate the advantages of focus group as instrument:

- Highlights the respondents' attitudes, priorities, language and framework of understanding.
- Help to identify problems from different points of view.
- Provides possible solutions.
- Encourages open conversation about a common problem, given the participants the opportunity to interact among them.

In order to clarify the results obtained in figures and tables, it was necessary to use a quantitative approach, taken into account what Jackson, R. L., Drummond, D. K., & Camara, S. , (2007) assert:

If you are a quantitative researcher, you will want to statistically assess some aspect of a research problem through the use of experimental or survey design procedures. The purpose of an experiment is to test the impact of an intervention on an outcome while controlling for various factors that might influence that outcome (p. 22).

Benefits of Going Quantitative

In consonance with Cressweel, cited by Jackson, R. L., et al., (2007) "When a researcher wants to know about certain attitudes, trends, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population, a survey design is employed. Both experimental and survey designs result in the report of generalizations made by a sample in representation of a particular population" (p. 22)

Chapter IV

Proposal

Introduction

The term Blended Learning (BL) is finding acceptance among higher education staff due to its contribution to face to face teaching. BL works with and within students' context and institutions like UTEQ must implement this approach which is based on the adoption of technology during instruction.

The significance of BL as a driver for transformative course redesign is highly being recognized in higher education around the world. Justly, the importance of transformative course level designs is identified as one of three characterizations of BL.

Moreover, this method is part of educational technology and helps students develop their conceptions of the learning process, engaging them to learn more with adequate activities, designed and evaluated by instructors during all the instruction.

In order to support learners, it is vital that in BL environment educators are consistent and transparent in communicating to the students their expectations about, for instance, attendance, responsibility, task accomplishment, and plagiarism. For this reason, it is crucial that BL strategy is correctly designed in the curriculum.

In the case of EFL classes in Pre-Technical English Level students of Livestock Science Faculty from Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, the analysis of results obtained in this research revealed that most of Pre-Technical English level' students have not developed their listening and speaking skills in EFL classes and they present serious difficulties for understanding or speaking simple topics like an elemental conversation. These important aspects were confirmed during classes' observation done to three English teachers.

As part of the research students were tested with simple activities. They were asked to hear a conversation in order to complete gap exercises; however

they could not finish this activity successfully. In speaking part, students were asked to talk in pairs and individually in order to verify their most common errors. It was confirmed their issues with grammar, syntax, vocabulary, tense and time frame while speaking. Unfortunately, their expressions were vague, incoherent and had difficulty on connect ideas correctly.

Additionally to this, all professors consulted are conscious on the necessity of applying technological resources in EFL classes, but in the practice most of them do not utilize TICs in a sufficient and effective way. Generally, EFL classes in Livestock Science Faculty, are not taught by using technological devices because of the lack or shortage of time, -only two face-to-face hours per week in the English Curriculum, and not all the classrooms are equipped with projector or internet service.

For this reason, Blended Learning could be a significant methodological strategy within a flexible learning structure to provide exclusive opportunities and absolutely incorporate educational technology to the teaching – learning process. Besides, BL can be introduced as part of a transformative redesign process to enhance students´ skills.

As cited in the second paragraph, BL is currently being used in universities. According to Oliver, M., & Trigwell, K. , (2005) “BL includes four dimensions: Modes of Delivery, Technology, Pedagogy, and Chronology” (p. 2), which evidence that this approach is highly effective to incorporate crucial aspects and promote meaningful and contemporary knowledge in higher education students.

Accordingly, it is necessary the instructor´s support during face-to-face and on line classes, ensuring that students become more reflective about the correct use of technological devices.

With these explanations, this research propose the implementation of Blended Learning strategy in the actual English Curriculum of that faculty in UTEQ using important digital tools that reinforce the competence of students about listening and speaking. Some of these tools are:

Google docs: A Web-based document management application for creating and editing private and public, word processing and spreadsheet documents. These documents can be stored both online on the Google cloud and/or on the user's computer. Students can access to these files available from any computer with an Internet connection and a fully-featured Web browser. (Mc.Dougald, J. S. 2013).

Youtube: YouTube is a website designed for sharing video. Millions of users around the world have created accounts on the site that allow them to upload videos that anyone can watch.

Voicethread: a web based tool that allows learners to work collaboratively using multimedia slide shows with voice (conversations) while storing images, documents, videos and audio files. (Mc.Dougald, J. S. 2013).

Canva (Makes it easy to create beautiful on-brand marketing materials, presentations and social media graphics for every organization).

Padlet: an online virtual "bulletin" board, where students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, share links and pictures, in a secure location. Padlet allows users to create a hidden wall with a custom URL. Padlet creators can also moderate posts, remove posts, and manage their board. 24/7. McDougald, J. S. (2013)

Masher (online video creation and sharing application that allows students to create videos using uploaded photos, video clips and music in addition to the library of resources available to each user. McDougald, J. S. (2013)

Discovery Education, Discovery Education's Puzzle maker provides teachers, students, and parents, the tools necessary to create crossword, puzzles, word search puzzles, mazes and more online.

Definitely, BL will help these university learners to enhance their English communicative skills in a dynamic and interactive environment, and consequently to obtain the B2 level, which is mandatory for students in Ecuadorian higher education.

Current situation

The following proposal acknowledges the recommendation on using ICTs (Technology for Information and Communication) which was found in the data analysis about the lack of audiovisuals activities developed by teachers in order to improve students' communicative competence of Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Tècnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador.

Particularly, this proposal pretends to respond to the great challenges that UTEQ have with regulation in Ecuadorian Law that in Art. 31 of Regulation of Academic Regimen determine: "...In the third level grade, shall be understood as adequacy in the management of a foreign language at least level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages".

For this reason, aligned with Singh (2003), who claims "Blended Learning focuses on optimizing achievement of learning objectives by applying the right learning technologies to match the right personal learning style to transfer the right skills to the right person at the right" time (p. 51-54), the researchers will base the proposal on Blended Learning (BL) approach.

According to Singh (2003) BL is grounded in the belief that learning is a continuous process that mixes face-to-face classes with online learning. Moreover, it is essential to highlight that the innovation using ICTs in educational practice will impulse the beginning of new strategies that help teachers to potentiate students' listening and speaking skills

General objective

To enhance the development of students' communicative competence in the Agricultural Engineering Major of the Livestock Science Faculty at Universidad Tècnica Estatal de Quevedo through the Blended Learning modality as an essential resource for improving speaking and listening competencies.

Specific objectives:

- To implement a Blended Learning system to be incorporated into the regular English instruction at A & B courses of The Agricultural Science Engineering Major at UTEQ.

- To create Blended Learning strategies for achieving the B2 English level on the students of A & B courses of Agricultural Science Engineering in UTEQ.

TITLE

“BLENDED LEARNING METHODOLOGY AS A COMPLEMENT TO REGULAR INSTRUCTION OF TECHNICAL ENGLISH LEVEL STUDENTS AT THE LIVESTOCK ENGINEERING FACULTY OF UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA ESTATAL DE QUEVEDO”

Conceptualization of blended learning

The term Blended Learning appeared in the literature around 1999 with the development of the Internet. Through the years, this expression has been challenging to define it despite its influence in different types of education. Notwithstanding any considerations over its conceptualization, nowadays the use of the phrase blended learning is enormously accepted. Moreover, it is omnipresent in all types of education and training and develops from individual courses to entire academic programs, mainly in universities.

Essentially, Blended Learning is about effectively integrating ICTs into course design to increase the teaching and learning experiences by face-to-face or distance mode with the utilization of a diversification of media and methods.

Blended Learning is also called hybrid learning *and* mixed-mode learning, and it integrates blended-learning experiences which may vary widely in design and execution in schools and universities. This type of learning may be followed by only a few teachers or by all the teachers' staff.

Brief description

Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo -UTEQ- is one of the best higher education institutions in this city. This institution has six English levels for all graduates. One of them is Pre-technical. The aim of this level program is that students can communicate through short texts with sentences and use frequent expressions (functions) related to their interests.

The syllabus of the Pre-Technical English level is organized in Grammar, Vocabulary, Functional Language, Listening and Pronunciation, Reading and

Writing, and Speaking. Syllabi organization is grounded on learning competence (grammar-function).

The learners

Students of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo come from households of lower-middle class; 80% come from public schools and 20% from private bilingual schools. Students are authority-oriented learners, because they prefer professor explaining everything. The official textbook during the last five years has been Four Corners by Jack Richards and David Bohlke. Students also use their notebook and occasionally photocopies or magazines.

UTEQ's students receive two hours of English per week, that in words of their teachers are insufficient to achieve the main goal of UTEQ is that students obtain B2 English level according to CEFR at the end of their academic program. On this background, this proposal aims to design a BL system that can be adapted to the regular instruction as a solution to achieve EFL communicative competence in UTEQ students, and at the same time to contribute to this institutional general EFL goal.

Nowadays, students of Agricultural Engineering have two hours of instruction weekly. The authors' proposal is to create a BL teaching format for five hours of virtual contact. An important potential advantage of BL is an easier access to discussion groups and email. Similarly, allow access to material and professionals who might not be available otherwise; the final result is an engaging learning environment better than a traditional campus classroom.

Development

The selected BL strategies that will improve listening and speaking competence applicable for next Technical English level according to Arabi, (2014) includes the following aspects:

Reflection

Reflection optimizes metacognition. Students will be encouraged to share their understanding of the content with their peers or using graphic organizers/presentations to add their knowledge with their

online resources. In the classroom the teacher gives feedback. (Arabi, 2014)

Story Mapping/ Concept Mapping/ Mind Map

Students will be asked to organize an illustration of a story with the information covered online. To represent real life situation students will work in group creating the scenery, atmospheres and conclusion, then they will create a story, concept or mind map in class that will be share with their partners. In the classroom the teacher gives feedback.

Compare and Contrast

Teachers will create activities based on the concepts presented online, for comparing and contrasting those concepts with their peers during classes. Students will use graphs organizers because they are engaging. In the classroom the teacher gives feedback.

Peer Evaluation

Students will be motivated to play the role of the instructor as an evaluator. Teachers will provide clear rules and guidelines for evaluating each other's works. (Arabi, 2014)

Role-play or Interview

Role-plays are activities that will offer students with opportunities to simulate aspect of their real life, reinforcing their knowledge. Students should practice with their peer acting role-plays or interviews and recording and uploading them with their Learning Mobile System (LMS, for example Facebook, Whatsapp or Line) giving to them a sense of ownership to their efforts.

Games

Teachers can use different games for reinforcing the content reviewed in class like KAHOOT because they are fun and help to students to learn enjoying with the game.

Problem Solving

An impactful activity in class will permit students expose a problem to students and they will be asked to solve it online during a specific period of time given by teachers.

Debates

Debates are open or closed discussion where students will share their ideas with their classmates, revealing essential aspects of the content studied in classes.

Designing the course syllabus

Table 1 Syllabus General Information

Instructors:	Rosa Cecibel Varas Giler and Betsy Patricia Benítez Luzuriaga Office: 32 , First floor near to ADUTEQ Office hour: 6 p.m. -8 p.m. Cellphone: 0990018397 (please do not call before 7:00 a.m. or after 10 p.m.) Email: rvarasgiler@hotmail.es - bbenitezuesma@yahoo.es	
INSTITUTION	UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA ESTATAL DE QUEVEDO	
SUBJECT:	BLENDED LEARNING COURSE	
FACULTY:	LIVESTOCK SCIENCE ENGINEERING	
CODE:	ACME-001	
NUMBER OF CREDITS:	4	
YEAR:	2018-2019	
AREA:	Livestock Engineering	
CLASS/SEMESTER	May 2nd. – August ^{10th}	
NUMBER OF PERIODS PER WEEK:	2 hours of at presence contact and 6 of virtual contact per week	
COURSE LENGTH SCHEDULE:	16 weeks	
PROFICIENCY LEVEL:	B1	
PREREQUISITES:	Pre-Technical Level	
CONTACT HOURS:	32	
INDEPENDENT STUDY:	96	
LEVEL:	Intermediate	

IN-CLASS		TOTAL NUMBERS OF WEEKLY HOURS
Theoretical	Online	
2	6	8

Adapted from Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo' English Syllabus Courses.

Methodology

- The student must prepare the items prior to their attendance to at presence sessions. Professor will act as facilitator, it is compulsory that students come with prepared the topics corresponding to the working session.
- Ad hoc consultations may be made to the teacher through the use of the institutional mail.
- Students' participation in class will be evaluated as well as online participation, assessment will be considered according to the quality of the contributions they make to the discussion of topics.

Resources

The teachers and students will be the human resources that will make possible this course. It is expected 20-30 students in the classroom. As physical resources it will be use online newspapers, CDs, e-books, videos, movies, virtual magazines, websites, etc. also, Fourcorner and Sakai platforms that belong to the students textbook, Data projector, Laptop, Textbook' Cds, Main textbook, English –Spanish online dictionary.

Classroom procedures

This course requires eight hours of class work each week. Every lesson will start with warm up activities. The course will have also group and pair activities, discussions, to give feedback of the online works.

Assignments and assessments will support students in accomplishing the intended learning outcomes. Assessment will consist of activities designed to evaluate students' knowledge. There will be reading, speaking, working in teams, presentations. Not all assessment will be graded. Some of the

activities will be formative and students will receive feedback in order to improve their performance.

This course will grade works in Four Corners and Sakai platforms.

At the beginning of the course will be created a WhatsApp group in order to have fast communication or if students need help during their activities.

Grading procedure

The semester lasts 16 weeks. Every 8 weeks students will be assessed with two quizzes and a partial test. At the end of terms, the grades will be uploaded to the University Grading System (SICAU). The grading system is over 10 points distributed as follows 3/10 minimum points in the first court, 3/10 in the second one and 4/10 in the final exam. The minimum for passing is 7/10.

Table 2 Syllabus Assessment

Assessment		First Evaluative Part		Second Evaluative Part		Total
Partials and Frequent Assessments	Oral lesson	5%	30%		30%	60%
	Online platform activities	20%				
	Written test	5%				
Partials and Frequent Assessments	Oral lesson			5%	30%	60%
	Written test			5%		
	Online platform activities			20%		
Final Assessment	Written test					40%
Total average						100%

Main textbook and other supplementary material:

Basic bibliography:

Richard J. and Bolhke D. , *Four Corners Level 3A Student's Book with Self-study CD-ROM*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Library Code - UTEQ 10.02499

Complementary Bibliography:

Marriages and Families – Olson David H. Mc Graw Hill - 2003

MURPHY, Raymond, *Essential Grammar in Use*, Third Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

SWAN, M. Oxford English Grammar Course. First edition 2011.

Internet Resources:

<http://www.cambridge.org/us/esl/touchstone/student/index.html>

www.voicethread.com

www.infoFig.ic.com

www.padlet.com

www.masher.com

www.potatoes.com

Object of study of the course.

This course aims is to provide students with the most important strategies of blended learning that help students to improve their linguistic and communicative competence

Specific Objectives:

1. Listening: listening for specific information/main ideas
2. Reading: reading and answering a questionnaire.
3. Writing: writing and replying to invitations/ well-formed paragraphs
4. Speaking: talking about past events – giving/effective oral presentation

Learning outcomes.

Upon successful completion of this course, students can:

- Ask and talk about routines
- Express prohibition and obligation
- Ask and talk about feeling and reactions
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages
- Describe what was happening in the past
- Announce news
- Close a conversation
- Tell personal stories
- Describe embarrassing moments

- Ask and talk about past fashions
- Ask where something is in a store
- Ask for specific product
- Express opinions about style and fashion
- Ask and talk about current fashion
- Ask and talk about life experience
- Check and clarify meaning
- Describe details of their experience
- Ask and talk about a memorable experience
- Compare human-made structure
- Express disbelief
- Say that they don't know something
- Ask and talk about geographical features
- Describe natural wonders in their country
- Ask and talk about weekend plans
- Offers to take a message
- Leave a message
- Make request, promises, and offers
- Discuss ways to manage time effectively

Table 3 Syllabus content

<p>UNIT 3 Style and fashion (8 hours)</p>	<p>Students can: Ask about and describe past fashions Ask where something is in a store Ask for a specific product Express opinions about style and fashion Ask and talk about current fashions</p>	<p><i>Used to</i> Defining relative clauses</p>	<p>Asking where things are Asking for an alternative</p>	<p>Canva (Makes it easy to create beautiful on-brand marketing materials, presentations and social media Fig.ics for every organization). Padlet (an online virtual “bulletin” board, where students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, share links and pictures, in a secure location. Padlet allows users to create a hidden wall with a custom URL. Padlet creators can also moderate posts,</p>	<p>Based on the concepts presented in the virtual classroom, students will create posters for the class comparing and contrasting the old fashion with current fashion. Students will use infoFig.ics.</p>
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				<p>remove posts, and manage their board. 24/7.</p> <p>McDougald, J. S. (2013)</p> <p>Sakai platform.</p>	
<p>UNIT 4</p> <p>Interesting lives</p> <p>(8 hours)</p>	<p>Students can:</p> <p>Ask and talk about life experiences</p> <p>Check and clarify meaning</p> <p>Describe details of their experiences</p> <p>Ask and talk about a memorable experience.</p>	<p>Present perfect</p> <p>Present perfect Vs. simple past.</p>	<p>Checking meaning</p> <p>Clarifying meaning</p>	<p>Masher (online video creation and sharing application that allows you to create videos using uploaded photos, video clips and music in addition to the library of resources available to each user.</p> <p>URL:http://www.masher.com/</p> <p>McDougald, J. S.</p>	<p>Students will create in Masher a video in which they will talk about their life experiences , giving details and explaining the most interesting experience.</p> <p>Students will share their video. Students should comment at least two videos of their classmates.</p>

				(2013) Sakai platform.	
UNIT 5 Our World (8 hours)	Students can: Compare human-made structures Express disbelief Say that they don't know something Ask and talk about geographical features Describe natural wonders in their country.	Comparatives Not as....as Superlatives	Expressing disbelief Saying you don't know	Youtube Padlet	Students will watch the video 10 Most AMAZING Natural Wonders Of the World in Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbgELNEy7fw Then using Padlet, will create their wall writing opinions and comment about what people should to do for care this Natural Wonders. Students will paste their Padlet URL in Sakai platform and students will comment at least three students' padlets.
UNIT 6 Organizing your time	Ask and talk about weekend plans Offer to take a message	Present tenses used for future	Offering to take a message	Discovery Education, Crossword puzzles	Students will use Discovery Education for creating a crossword related to the vocabulary learned in the class that will be shared with their classmates in Sakai platform.

(8 hours)	<p>Leave a message</p> <p>Make requests, promises, and offers</p> <p>Discuss ways to manage time effectively.</p>	<p>Request</p> <p>Promises and offers with will</p>	<p>Leaving a message</p>	<p>Sakai platform</p>	<p>Students should print their crossword and share them in the classroom.</p>
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Table 4 Syllabus Calendar

WEEKS	DATES	THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SCHEDULES ACTIVITIES
1	May 2nd-4 th	Teacher and students' introduction	Guidelines and rules for the new Course	Introduction
2	May 7th-11 th	Unit 1 - Education a.- I'm taking six classes b.- You're not allow to Unit 1 - Education	Simple present vs Present continuous	Practical Classes & Workshop Students' presentation about routines. (blended learning)
3	May 14th – 18 th	c.- My behavior d.- Alternative education Oral Assessment	Zero conditional Quiz 1	Practical Classes & Workshop Assessment
4	May 21st-24 th	Unit 2 – Personal Stories a.- What were you doing? b.- Guess what?	Past continuous vs simple past	Practical Classes & Workshop
5	May 28th June 1st.	Unit 2 – Personal Stories c. - I was really frightened! d.- How embarrassing Review of Fourcorner platform Units 1-2	Participial adjectives Frequent Evaluation	Practical Classes & Workshop Assessment

6		Quiz 1	Mid-term Evaluation	Assessment
7	June 4th-8 th	Unit 3 – Style and fashion a.- Fashion trends b. - Does this come in...?	Used to....	Practical Classes & Workshop
8	June 11th-15th.	Unit 3 – Style and fashion c.- The latest look d.- Views on fashion Unit 4 – Interesting lives a. - Have you ever been on TV?	Defining relatives clauses Present perfect	Practical Classes & Workshop
9	June 18th - 22nd.	Unit 4 – Interesting lives b. - What I mean is.... Oral assessment	Present perfect vs. simple past Quiz 2	Practical Classes & Workshop Assessment
10	June 25th-29 th	c.- Life experiences d. - What a life!	Present perfect vs. simple past	Individual work Group work
11	July 2nd. - 6 th	Quiz	Quiz 3	Assessment

12		Unit 5 – Our world a.- Older, taller, and more famous b. - I don't believe it!	Comparatives	Presentation
13	July 9th – 13rd	Unit 5 – Our world c.- World geoFig.y d.- Natural wonders	Not as.....as. Superlatives Present tenses used for future	Practical Classes & Workshop
14	July 16th - 20 th	Unit 6 – Organizing your time a.- A busy week b. - Can I take a message?	Not as.....as.	Practical Classes & Workshop
15	July 23 rd – 27 th	Unit 6 – Organizing your time c.- Can you do me a favor? d.- Time management	Requests Promises and offers with will	Practical Classes & Workshop
16	July 30 th August 3 rd .	Review Fourcorners platform Units 5-6	Quiz 4	Assessment
17	August 6 th -10 th	FINAL EXAM	Final Evaluation	Assessment

BL is the incorporation of face-to-face classes with virtual classes. Thanks to this approach students can reinforce all they learn in the classroom, offering them a lot of materials, resources, online activities, at the same time and the most highlighted aspect is the autonomy that students develop toward the learning process. However, educational organization plays an important role too, like expressed by Singh, H., & Reed, C. (2001) who affirm that “organizations are rapidly discovering that blended learning is not only more time and cost effective, but provides a more natural way to learn and work”. Organizations that are in the forefront of this next generation of learning will have more productive staffs, be more agile in implementing change, and be more successful in achieving their goals.”

To paraphrase Jack Welch, legendary chairman of General Electric, a competitive advantage for any organization is the ability to learn, and rapidly convert that learning into action. The higher education must look beyond the traditional limitations of classroom instruction matching their best educational practice with new trends in learning and technologies to potentiate results, empowering authorities, teachers and students to become active members in the educational process.

The authors consider that if UTEQ authorities point to the success must be considered what Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004) claims “... a successful adoption of a blended learning approach to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning will require the following:

1. Creation of clear institutional direction and policy
2. Frame the potential, increase awareness, and commit
3. Establishment of a single point of support, quality assurance and project management,
4. Creation of an innovation fund to provide the financial support, and incentives to faculty and departments to initiate blended learning course transformations,

5. Investment in establishing a reliable and accessible, technology infrastructure
6. Strategic selection of prototype projects that prove to be exceptionally successful exemplars of effective learning
7. Development of formal instructional design support available through a blended format systematic evaluation of satisfaction and success of the teaching, learning, technology and administration of new course.
8. To create a task group to address issues, challenges and opportunities as well as communicate and recommend new directions to the University community. (p.95-105)

Suggestions

After developing this action-research project, the researches have come to recommend as follows:

1. - To suggest the creation of a fund in the university to provide the financial support and incentives to Agricultural Engineering in Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Tècnica Estatal de Quevedo and initiate blended learning course transformations.
2. - To increase two more hours of regular instruction and 6 virtual hours of Blended Learning in the English curriculum of this university.
3. - To consider that each English tutor could work not more than 20 presence hours per week, because they will work with additional virtual hours.
4. - To incorporate a Blended Learning modality in the daily teaching practice with the supervision of EFL Department.
5. - To promote in the institution a permanent research and innovation process about Blended Learning due to the vertiginous change of technological resources in our society.
6. - To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Blended Learning in students' English proficiency by the development of research projects on the performance of the BL system.

7. - To create a blended format systematic evaluation of satisfaction and success of the teaching, learning, technology and administration of Blended Learning Courses.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn based on the results of the data analysis.

- Most of UTEQ students have not developed their Listening Comprehension in EFL classes and are unable to fill the gaps of statements after listening to a basic conversation in a test. The majority of these learners do not have a good Speaking performance when answering short questions in English and even teachers have to use Spanish to be understood. University students have considerable errors in grammar, syntax, vocabulary, tense and time frame while speaking. Their expressions are vague, and they do not connect ideas coherently and properly.
- It was established as possible barriers for students the lack or shortage of time (only two face-to-face hours of English classes weekly), few activities using TICs because even though two of three English teachers used projector in EFL classes, it was not observed the use of any application available on the internet or important websites. Lack of opportunities outside of classes for developing speaking or listening skills. Furthermore, teachers of Livestock Science Faculty have to use Spanish in their English classes because many students cannot understand when they are speaking in the foreign language during the instruction.
- All professors consulted on this study are conscious on the necessity of applying technological resources in EFL classes, but in the practice most of them do not utilize TICs in a sufficient and effective way.
- After classes observation was verified that teachers as strategies used songs, and the use of projector for expanding the textbook in order to

motivate students, there were fewer participation of students in classes, probably due to lack of vocabulary and knowledge on the use of correct language. In the classes only teachers speaks the target language.

- Unfortunately, it is impossible to compare the level of English that Pre-Technical' students of Livestock Science Faculty have, with the criteria established by the CEF regarding listening and speaking. The Fig.s show that students do not understand audios; neither can hold a conversation grammatically correct, therefore their competences are severely limited to answers yes or no to questions that are even translated by teachers to get answers. Factors that prevent to obtain the B2 level according to the requirements of this institution.
- The strategies that will help students to improve their listening and speaking skills are included in the blended learning proposal oriented to enhance their competences troughs the use of application like Padlet, Youtube, The Education Discovery, etc. that will reinforce their activities in their English classes.

Recommendations

Based on the previous conclusions, these are the recommendations:

- The figures show that students do not understand audios; neither can hold conversations grammatically correct despite some limitations; also, teachers must motivate students to made use of website applications outside the classroom, to achieve a full immersion in the target language. Also, students have to be engaged to express their ideas and answer in English in spite of their errors in grammar, syntax, vocabulary, tense and time frame while speaking, being motivated to better their level with more study.
- Livestock Science Faculty from Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo must implement Blended Learning strategy into the EFL curriculum, combining face-to-face classes with online instruction. Therefore, this approach can be really fruitful due to the effective integration of

technology into classroom produce higher levels of children and teenagers' achievement, mastering their fundamental skills, becoming them into proficient users of TICs and preparing them with enough intellectual tools to face obstacles in a postmodernist society.

- As researchers our proposal is reinforce English classes backed up by blended learning activities where students will have the opportunity of use TICs at the same time improve their linguistic competences. The main goal is students can obtain the B2 level according to the requirements of this institution and the Common European Framework of Reference.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Expresión e interacción oral

Task 1: oral production

Answer these questions

1.	Do you regularly use a computer? For work? For communication? For games? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
2.	Do you enjoy computers or are they a necessary evil? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
3.	English is the international language of computing, do you think this will change? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
4.	What annoys you about computers? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
5.	Is the internet a good thing? Why? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
6.	Is the internet dangerous? How? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
7.	Will everyone in the world soon be on the internet? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()
8.	Will the internet completely replace TV, cinema, letters, etc? Correct () Incorrect () Partially correct ()

Retrieved from http://www.eoiestepa.es/?page_id=358

Task 2: Oral Interaction

Please keep the following dialog with your partner.

You are having a weekend break at a hotel in Las Vegas. There are some problems with your room. Look at the list below and make requests to the hotel receptionist. If you are not satisfied ask to see the manager.

- There is no water in the minibar.
- There is no toilet paper in the bathroom
- It is very cold in the room

Names:	
Class:	
Topic:	
	Grammar
	Syntax
	Understanding
	Tense
	Use of Vocabulary
	Time frame (3 min)

Task 3: Oral Production

Typical speaking task. Chose one of these tasks. Each person will speak for just one minute about the topic. The topic can be found on British Council site.

<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/typical-speaking-tasks>

1. Talk about yourself
2. Describe a photo or picture
3. Discussion
4. Information gap activity
5. Tell a story or personal anecdote
6. Oral presentation

Name:	
Class:	
Topic:	
	Grammar
	Syntax
	Understanding
	Tense
	Use of Vocabulary
	Time frame (1 min)

Appendix B

Teachers' questionnaire

1	<p>I speak only English in class because my students are able to understand most of the things I say.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
2	<p>I believe my students appreciate having language classes completely in English.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
3	<p>I think that my students are able to understand the correct meaning of the vocabulary without teaching it in Spanish.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
4	<p>I think that communicative skills should be taught in the classroom together with grammar and vocabulary.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
5	<p>I usually use pictures slides in my lessons to support my explanations and to illustrate the meaning of expressions and words.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
6	<p>I usually use videos related to the topic to enhance the students' communicative skills.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
7	<p>I think that the use of audio visuals in the language classroom is highly beneficial for most of the students.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>
8	<p>I consider that the use of audio visuals in the language classroom may help students to focus their attention on the topic.</p> <p>I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()</p>

9	I believe that the use of audio visuals in the language classroom increases students' motivation and participation in the class. I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()
10	I believe that audio visual aids are especially effective for lesson planning and lesson timing. I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()
11	The use of audio visuals in class requires an amount of time that I do not have. I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()
12	I have all the necessary equipment in order to use audio visual material in the language classroom. I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()
13	I consider that preparing extra visual aids for the lesson is a part of the teacher's job. I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()
14	I have been trained to create my own audio visual material. I agree () I disagree () I'm not sure ()

Retrieved from Ramírez, M. (2012). Usage of multimedia visual aids in the English language classroom: a case study at Margarita Salas secondary school. *Unpublished master thesis*. <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/119-2015-03-17-11.MariaRamirezGarcia2013.pdf>.

Appendix C

Class observation checklist

Teacher:

Class:

Lesson Focus:

Date:

Observer:

	GENERAL	1	2	3	4	5
1	Teach the class and individual within it, with sensitivity to the learner's needs, level and context: relevant/real language for the learners? Appropriate for this level?					
2	Make effective use of learning materials and resources: aid, equipment (CD player, whiteboard), photocopies, etc.					
3	Monitor learning and manage relevant feedback: coverage of students? Un obtrusive? Feedback on activities.					
4	Take account of learners' cognitive and effective needs: clear concise, checked instructions? Variety of activities. Balance of students and teacher talking time?					
5	Include a clear focus on an area of either the language system or the skills of English: Organization, planning and objectives?					
	KNOWLEDGE & LANGUAGE					
1	Adapting his/her own use of language to the level of the group: level of English appropriate for this level?					
2	Providing accurate and appropriate models of language use: Is the language presented correct?					
3	Giving appropriate information about language form, meaning and use.					
4	Responding to and exploiting learner contributions: Praise? Interested in students? Range of correction techniques?					

PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES						
1	Focusing on learners' control of the language system: Controlled practice of grammar? Lexis, phonology and discourse?					
2	Developing learners' fluency and confidence in using the language for communication: freer and authentic practice?					
3	Developing learners' skills and sub-skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing (prediction, specific information, details, etc.)					
4	Promoting learners' autonomy: self and peer correction, use of dictionary, students responsible for own learning decision, etc.					
MANAGING THE CLASSROOM AND LEARNING						
1	Establishing and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere: Rapport, Students involvement, respect students, listen to students.					
2	Managing the space, furniture and equipment: different seating arrangement, everyone sees the teacher and the board, etc.					
3	Setting up the classes: variety of interaction (whole, group, pair, individual)					
4	Establishing aim and objectives and remains through the lesson					
5	Managing the time in the lesson: variety of pace, appropriate time for task, etc.					
6	Using the voice: voice projection, variety (intonation, etc.)					
7	Giving instruction: clear, concise, check if students understood them, etc.					
	Consignese de la siguiente manera: " (5 Excellent) (4 Very Good) (3 Good) (2 Acceptable) (1 Needs to					

improve)					
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Retrieved from Cantos, (2016). Enhancing Students' Speaking Performance in a TOEFL Course through ICT Task at Unidad Educativa Particular Interamericano. *Unpublished master thesis*.
<http://repositorio.ucsg.edu.ec/bitstream/3317/6997/1/T-UCSG-PRE-ART-CLI-34.pdf>
LourdesMadeleineCantosSánchez2016.

Appendix D

Authorization from the Dean of Livestock Science Faculty



UNIVERSIDAD TECNICA ESTATAL DE QUEVEDO
CAMPUS UNIVERSITARIO LA MARIA
Km. 7 ½ Vía Quevedo-El Empalme, Entrada a Mocache



Acreditada

Teléfonos : FCP (Fax) 783 487 UTEQ (593-05) 750 320 / 751 430 / 753 302
Fax UTEQ : (593 -05) 753 300 / 753 303
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Quevedo – Los Ríos – Ecuador

CASILLAS
Guayaquil : 10672
Quevedo : 73

La Primera Universidad Agropecuaria del País. **Acreditada**

Memorando UTEQ-FCP-0211
Quevedo, 7 de diciembre de 2017

PARA : Lcda. Rosy Varas Giler
Lcda. Betsy Benitez Luzuriaga

ASUNTO : Aceptando dar facilidades para recopilar información para tesis de Maestría

En atención a su comunicación, relacionada a brindar lecciones de Listening and Speaking con recursos audiovisuales auténticos (audio, libros canciones, historias, juegos entre otras) a partir del 8 de diciembre de 2017 hasta el 19 de enero de 2018, los días viernes de 07h30 a 09h30 a los estudiantes de IVA y de 09h30 a 11h30 a los estudiantes de IV B de la carrera de Ingeniería Agropecuaria, información que les permitirá la culminación de la maestría en Enseñanza de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero.

Con lo anotado, sabiendo que la intención es reforzar las destrezas de los estudiantes y mejorarlas, comunico que la Facultad esta presta en atender de manera favorable lo solicitado en su comunicación.

Atentamente,


Dra. Yenny Torres Navarrete
DECANA FCP

Copia:
Ing. Gerardo Segovia Freire, CIAPE.

Recibido
07-12-2017
16 H30
RGS



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DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, VARAS GILER ROSA CECIBEL y BENÍTEZ LUZURIAGA BETSY PATRICIA, con C.C: # 1202054654 y 0703443911 autoras del trabajo de titulación: ***Listening and Speaking Competence in Pre-Technical English Level of students at the Livestock Science Faculty of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador*** previo a la obtención del grado de Máster en Enseñanza de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

1.- Declaro tener pleno conocimiento de la obligación que tienen las instituciones de educación superior, de conformidad con el Artículo 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, de entregar a la SENESCYT en formato digital una copia del referido trabajo de graduación para que sea integrado al Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior del Ecuador para su difusión pública respetando los derechos de autor.

2.- Autorizo a la SENESCYT a tener una copia del referido trabajo de graduación, con el propósito de generar un repositorio que democratice la información, respetando las políticas de propiedad intelectual vigentes.

Guayaquil, 1 de marzo del 2018

f. _____
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C.C: 1202054654

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FICHA DE REGISTRO DE TESIS/TRABAJO DE GRADUACIÓN

TÍTULO Y SUBTÍTULO:	Listening and Speaking Competence in Pre-Technical English Level of students at the Livestock Engineering Faculty of Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Ecuador		
AUTOR:	Vera Giler Rosa Cecibel, Benites Luzuriaga Betsy Patricia		
REVISOR(ES)/TUTOR(ES)	Mariela Fátima Vásquez Barros, MSc. Nadia Acosta Ramírez, MGs.		
INSTITUCIÓN:	Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil		
UNIDAD/FACULTAD:	Sistema de Posgrado		
MAESTRÍA/ESPECIALIDAD:	Maestría en Enseñanza de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero		
GRADO OBTENIDO:	Magister en Enseñanza de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero		
FECHA DE PUBLICACIÓN:	17 de mayo del 2018	No. DE PÁGINAS:	139
ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS:	Metodología, educación, tecnología		
PALABRAS CLAVES/ KEYWORDS:	Listening, Speaking, Technology, Blended Learning, Competences EFL		
RESUMEN/ABSTRACT:	<p>The problem found in Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, was studied through a Case Study and an Action Research. The first part of the investigation is the Theoretical Framework where Methodology in EFL instruction; Definitions, Relevance, Types and Procedures of Listening and Speaking, their Relationship and Effects, and Attitudes towards these skills are expressed. The Literature Review provides information about Technology in English classes: Epistemological Foundation, Teachers' Attitudes towards its use and Benefits for Students by using ICTs. Likewise, Multimedia was revised in order to define specific strategies. An Action Research methodology was employed to study the problem which is the lack of Listening and Speaking Skills on students of Agricultural Engineering, courses A-B of Livestock Science Faculty. This research contains information encompassing class observations and learners' diagnostic evaluation and activity assessment. Checklists and corresponding results were used as data collection instrument for further analysis. After the analysis, it was concluded that English classes should have some modifications. Thus, a proposal was designed to accomplish this goal. It consists of the design of a Blended Learning System in EFL by using on line applications like Voicethread, Padlet, Discovery Education, and Masher. Formats and checklists were used to describe the objective and process of each strategy as well as an adapted evaluation instrument.</p>		
ADJUNTO PDF:	<input type="checkbox"/> SI	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
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