

**Speaking strategies used by English teachers to promote oral interaction with seventh-grade students in a private school in Medellin.**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the speaking strategies employed in private schools in Medellín, Colombia, to enhance the oral skills of teenage students. Given the importance of English in global communication and the need for improved language proficiency in Colombia, this research aims to identify effective practices that promote speaking development among adolescents. The findings highlight the use of personalized questions related to students' personal experiences as a key strategy for fostering engagement and meaningful conversations. By analyzing these strategies, the study provides insights into how teachers can adapt their methods to meet students' specific needs, incorporating real-life situations to build confidence in using English. The results suggest that interactive and speaking activities can significantly enhance student motivation and language skills development, contributing to both academic growth and personal development.

#### **Keywords:**

Foreign languages, Communication skills, Teaching Methods

**Estrategias de expresión oral utilizadas por docentes de inglés para promover la interacción oral con estudiantes de séptimo grado de un colegio privado de Medellín.**

#### **Resumen**

Este estudio investiga las estrategias de expresión oral empleadas en colegios privados de Medellín, Colombia, para mejorar las habilidades orales de estudiantes adolescentes. Dada la importancia del inglés en la comunicación global y la necesidad de mejorar la competencia lingüística en Colombia, esta investigación pretende identificar prácticas eficaces que promuevan el desarrollo de la expresión oral entre los adolescentes. Los resultados destacan

el uso de preguntas personalizadas relacionadas con las experiencias personales de los estudiantes como una estrategia clave para fomentar el compromiso y las conversaciones significativas. Mediante el análisis de estas estrategias, el estudio proporciona información sobre cómo los profesores pueden adaptar sus métodos para satisfacer las necesidades específicas de los estudiantes, incorporando situaciones de la vida real para fomentar la confianza en el uso del inglés. Los resultados sugieren que las actividades interactivas y orales pueden mejorar significativamente la motivación de los alumnos y el desarrollo de sus destrezas lingüísticas, contribuyendo tanto al crecimiento académico como al desarrollo personal.

**Palabras Clave:**

Lenguas extranjeras, Habilidades comunicativas, Métodos de enseñanza

## **Introduction**

The need for learning English in Colombia is fundamental due to the recognition of the international language of businesses and globalization, an essential tool of communication, for this reason, ELT in Colombia involves significant foreign private interests, Le Gal, D. (2018). The improvement of the language is always needed for different aspects of the country and in society, but there are some shortcomings in the learning process that make students not have an advanced level of the language. Private schools in Medellín implement different speaking strategies due to the different contexts or environments. So, the purpose of this study is to analyze those speaking strategies for a future learning practice that helps teenage students to promote learning development. Strategies have an important relation with the engagement of the students to promote their development, and also “can positively impact the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of students in their classroom by increasing student engagement in learning”(Reinke, Herman, Copeland, 2022).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Private schools in Medellín implement different strategies due to the different contexts or environments. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to analyze those strategies for a future learning practice that helps teenage students in their speaking skills development. By analyzing these diverse strategies, the study is intended to identify effective practices that can enhance speaking improvement among adolescent students in private schools in Medellín. This research could benefit students' academic growth and personal development. To effectively implement some speaking strategies, teachers need to adapt their methods to the specific needs of students. In addition, incorporating real-life situations can

help learners gain confidence in using English in everyday situations. By making speaking activities more interactive and goal-oriented, learners are more likely to stay motivated and develop their language skills effectively.

### **Literature Review**

Teaching English can be difficult when we deal with a context where English is not the native language. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to analyze speaking strategies that English teachers in private schools use to improve their students' English skills. In some articles related to our research object, we could find some important details that guided us in the construction of our project. According to Alipour (2018), there are different behaviors, strategies, contextual factors, and content knowledge mastery. With these aspects, we can identify some important elements such as the response (behavior) of the students to a specific teaching strategy that the teacher uses in the classroom or to take into account while developing their teaching practices. In the search, we analyzed that several articles have found as a central strategy the traditionalist method where classes are teacher-based, focused on translation and grammar use, and the communicative aspect is not developed in the students. Alcón (2004) considers that “The level of success in language learning depends on the quality of interaction that is tested in the classroom”. This means that we can consider promoting methods of interaction to reinforce and/or complement the ways that we find in the scenario we are going to analyze.

Moreover, there are factors to take into account when trying to select some strategies for the classroom that focus on the context/group of students that we are teaching. This is important because at the moment of developing the strategies and methodologies that could work or not work based on the age, diagnosis, context, number of children, and the topics that are being studied (Bahrami & Moradkhani, 2019). Besides the types of children and the

topics, there are more factors that teachers have to deal with to achieve the learning objectives in the class, those are the limited time and resources, so at the moment to plan a class, they have to take into account the possible and not possible activities to develop in a class because of the time or the resources (Gustini & Fatimah, 2021).

Teachers do not always plan their classes based on their beliefs or the context of the students, but to satisfy the students or the way the schools teach. This has different points of view; some of them say that teachers have an obligation in front of the schools because they expect them to follow a structure they have already established so the teacher needs to just plan their classes to aim at those objectives without the possibility to add some different strategies based on the experiences through the classes, the context, and the learning development of the students.

Analyzing how an EFL teacher facilitates oral interaction through personalized questioning and pronunciation-focused activities, this study highlights practical ways to bridge the divide between rigid institutional frameworks and dynamic, student-centered teaching practices. It aims to provide insights into how teachers can balance institutional expectations with improvements of strategies that promote meaningful communication and engagement in EFL classrooms.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### ***Learning Improvement.***

Learning improvement is the setting of goals that help involve students in their progress and identify areas for improvement. Careful planning allows the further development of learning approaches (Dean, 2004). Learning improvement is a continuous and planned process that helps students to enhance their skills, taking into account the needs of

the students and the context in which it is taught.

Learning improvement helps to provide the basis for analyzing how different speaking strategies influence students' language development. By understanding the factors that influence learning progress, this research can determine which strategies are most effective in promoting speaking proficiency among young learners. In addition, identifying areas for improvement allows teachers to refine their strategies, ensuring that speaking activities are adjusted to the learning needs of students and the realities of the classroom.

### ***Teaching Strategies***

According to Hattie, (200; Marzano et al., (2001); Wayne and Young, (2003) teaching strategies refer to the methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction. It is generally recognized that teaching strategies are multidimensional and their effectiveness depends on the context in which they are applied. Teaching strategies are adopted and adapted according to the teaching setting so that they are effective in their application in order to develop and enhance the student's skills, as they are flexible guides that promote meaningful learning.

Conceptualizing teaching strategies helps researchers understand how teachers promote oral interaction in the classroom, which is why this concept was fundamental in this project given the focus it has on understanding these communication patterns, deepening into the alternatives some strategies might have. Additionally, understanding how teachers adjust their strategies based on students' responses allows for insights into best practices that can be replicated or modified for broader application. It highlights the challenges teachers face, such as time constraints or institutional policies, and how these factors influence strategy implementation.

### ***Oral Interaction***

According to Tornqvist(2008) students improved their English skills from listening and talking to others, expressing themselves orally in English has great importance in our society today. On oral interaction in EFL classrooms, interaction is the process referring to “face-to-face” action. It can be either verbal channeled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channeled through thought, proximity, eye contact, facial expressions, gesturing, etc. Oral interaction facilitates the acquisition of a new language as it promotes understanding, provides conditions for negotiation and learners focus on transmitting meaning, and engages students in participation activities. According to (Richard, 2006) oral expression is regarded as a productive skill that prepares students to relate to the people around them, expressing their points of view, emotions, and ideas. This competence not only facilitates communication but also fosters the exchange of information between people. Promoting oral activities where students exchange ideas, thoughts, and emotions is essential because it improves fluency and the correct use of the language. According to Orozco Calleja (2023), oral interaction in the EFL classroom is enhanced by cooperative learning strategies, which allow students to develop their communication skills more effectively by working in dynamic and collaborative activities. These strategies not only improve fluency and pronunciation but also increase students' confidence in expressing themselves in a second language.

Oral interaction is the center of this research, as it is directly related to how learners develop their oral skills. By examining the oral strategies that are applied, teachers can determine which interaction methods lead to higher engagement and better language acquisition. It also contributes to understanding how different classroom dynamics influence the learning process.

**Research Question**

What different speaking strategies implement English teachers in private schools that can promote oral interaction in seventh grade students?

**Objectives*****General Objectives***

To analyze speaking strategies that English teachers use in private schools in order to promote oral interaction in seventh-grade students.

***Specific Objectives***

1. To categorize diverse teaching strategies that can be identified in the practice of an English teacher in private schools.
2. To describe speaking strategies used by English teachers in private schools to observe the response of seventh-grade students when they are exposed to similar strategies.
3. To identify the effects of the strategies that English teachers implement in this scenario.

**Method****Research Methodology Participants**

Participants in this study were an English teacher and two groups of seventh-grade students from a private school located in Medellin, Antioquia. The teacher has been teaching English for various years, with experience in using various communicative approaches to language teaching. The two student groups, each consisting of approximately 15 students, were selected because they were part of the same English learning and participated in similar speaking activities during their lessons. The population for this study provided valuable insights into their engagement and language development in an EFL context.

**Instruments**

During this study, researchers began collecting data by implementing two surveys with an English teacher at a private school in Medellin. The survey with the teacher focused on understanding the strategies and techniques he used to facilitate speaking activities, including any challenges he faced in promoting oral interaction. The researchers also used direct observation to categorize and explain the information to take them to conclusions. They conducted weekly observations of the English classes, focusing on how the teacher organized speaking activities, how he provided feedback, and how the students interacted with each other during these activities. According to the Evaluation Research Team, “Direct observation is when you watch interactions, processes, or behaviors as they occur”(2018), and according to Qualtrics “A survey is a method of gathering information using relevant questions from a sample of people with the aim of understanding populations as a whole. Surveys provide a critical source of data and insights for everyone engaged in the information”(2023).

### **Procedure**

The procedure of the research involved a case study conducted by two researchers who observed two classes each week during three months, focusing on the interactions between seventh-grade students and an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. The study aimed to explore the speaking strategies employed by the teacher to promote oral interaction in the classroom. The researchers conducted their observations during these sessions, paying attention to the response of student participation and the effectiveness of various teaching strategies.

### **Data Analysis**

This analysis examines the speaking strategies implemented by an English teacher in a private school to promote oral interaction among seventh-grade students. The findings are

based on observational data collected during classroom activities, focusing on how these strategies facilitate meaningful communication and enhance students' engagement. One of the most effective strategies identified is the teacher's practice of asking students various questions related to their personal experiences.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study stands by ethical principles to guarantee the protection and well-being of participants while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the study. The following ethical considerations are covered:

Before the participation, participants in the study received a clear and detailed explanation of the objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the research. Participants were asked to give their informed consent, thus guaranteeing their voluntary participation.

### **Risk and Management**

The potential risk of this study is the violation of the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. If personal data and sensitive information are not managed appropriately, the identity of participants could be exposed with unexpected consequences. To mitigate this risk, all data collected will be fully anonymized, securely stored, and accessible only to authorized researchers.

An additional potential risk was not obtaining the expected information or results that can be directly applied to future teaching practices. In case the study did not provide clear or applicable results, the researchers were ready to focus on documenting and analyzing the challenges encountered, ensuring that future studies can build on this knowledge.

## **Impact**

This research has the potential to positively impact educational quality by identifying and promoting effective teaching practices that improve oral skills in English. By analyzing the speaking strategies used in private schools in Medellín, the study offers valuable information to help educators enhance their methodologies, creating more engaging language learning experiences and supporting students in the development of their oral skills. Moreover, the findings further inform teacher training programs, curriculum design, and institutional policies, contributing to the improvement of English language teaching on a broader level.

## **Results**

This study reveals several key findings regarding the strategies employed by the teacher to improve students' oral interaction in the English language classroom.

### **Engagement Through Personalized Questions**

The teacher effectively utilizes questions related to students' personal experiences to foster meaningful conversations. This approach not only encourages active participation but also provides students with a purpose to engage in language use. Observations and analysis of classroom interactions indicate that these opening questions significantly improve student participation, making the learning experience more engaging and relevant to their daily lives.

### **Pronunciation Activities**

The teacher selects activities specifically designed to focus on students' pronunciation skills. This emphasis on correct articulation and modeling proper pronunciation helps students develop confidence in their oral proficiency, which is crucial for effective communication. Through the observation of the classes, it was clearly identified that the

teacher chooses activities that focus on students' pronunciation and corrects students' mistakes in order to guide them through the learning process . Also “it can positively impact the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of students in their classroom by increasing student engagement in learning.” (Reinke, Herman, Copeland. 2022).

### **Interactive Strategies**

The teacher employs a range of interactive strategies to promote oral skills. These include role-playing, group discussions, and debates, which encourage students to think critically and respond spontaneously. Additionally, storytelling and interview exercises are incorporated to further stimulate students' ability to articulate their thoughts on the spot. The use of pair work and small group activities creates a supportive environment where students feel more at ease when speaking, thereby enhancing their confidence and fluency in English.

Overall, these findings highlight the effectiveness of a learner-centered approach that combines personalized engagement, pronunciation practice, and interactive activities to improve students' oral interaction skills in the English language classroom.

### **Discussion**

The analysis provided valuable information about the oral strategies employed by an English teacher in a private school in Medellín and their effect on students' oral interaction. The research revealed that techniques such as questions, pronunciation, and error activities significantly increased students' engagement and participation in speaking exercises.(Alcón, 2004; Richard, 2006), They emphasized the importance of interaction and communicative approaches in language learning.

An important finding was the beneficial influence of individual questions on learner engagement. By connecting the questions with the learners' experiences, the teacher fostered

a positive environment that encouraged the students to share their ideas and thoughts.

Bahrami and Moradkhani (2019) stated that learning strategies can help language learners become more motivated and engaged. Teachers who use student-centered questions can help students speak better in English classes.

In addition, pronunciation activities played a crucial role in improving students' oral language skills. The teacher's emphasis on correct articulation and modeling proper pronunciation helped students develop confidence in their oral proficiency. Gustini & Fatimah (2021) highlighted the importance of pronunciation exercises in EFL contexts, emphasizing that it directly influences students' fluency and comprehension.

Error correction strategies also emerged as an important aspect of improving oral skills. The teacher employed various strategies such as recourse for students' errors, allowing them to continually overcome them. Hattie, (2001) and Marzano et al., (2001) mentioned that the principles of communicative language teaching argue for corrective feedback that does not demotivate learner participation.

Overall, this research underscores the need to employ learner-centered communicative strategies to improve English language learners' speaking skills. Results indicate that questions, oral exercises, and error correction can significantly improve learners' speaking skills. Future research can examine the lasting effects and investigate new strategies to improve the teaching of oral skills in other places.

With this research, there can be limitations with the transferability of the findings to other contexts, and it does not provide detailed information about the sample size or demographic characteristics of the participants. This could affect the reliability and applicability of the results across diverse student populations.

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