UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE DE GUAYAQUIL

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

RESEARCH PROJECT TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF "LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA MENCIÓN EN LINGÜÍSTICA Y LITERATURA"

TITLE:
DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE EGB STUDENTS AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

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2020

RESUMEN:

English is considered a global language for communication, business, and the academic world. As a good oral communication is essential, the development of the speaking skill cannot be taken lightly, since it puts all the components of a language together. The current research work is directed to establish the influence of didactic activities on the speaking skills in 8th grade EGB students, who have difficulties to communicate and express their ideas orally, among other causes, because of a low students' motivation to produce oral utterances, resulting on a reluctant attitude to speak in front of the class. English teachers, on the other hand, seem to lack the necessary tools for helping students express themselves in spoken language. In order to achieve this objective, the project recognized the main theoretical foundations regarding the research variables, determined the role of didactic activities in the development of oral communication, and identified the common problems that students presented in oral production with the application of the observation, interview, and test techniques. The current research is classified as a

descriptive and field study, with a qualitative and quantitative approach. After the application of the research tools, it was possible to verify that didactic activities influence the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students. The present research work proposes the elaboration of a didactic guide based on a set of selected activities, to help students improve their oral communication and develop their speaking skills.

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS PATRIMONIALES

La estudiante egresada ROXANNA GISSELLA CORREA CAICEDO, declara bajo juramento, que la autoría del presente proyecto de investigación, DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE EGB STUDENTS AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020, corresponde totalmente a la suscrita y me responsabilizo (con los criterios y opiniones científicas que en el mismo se declaran, como producto de la investigación realizada.

De la misma forma, cedo los derechos patrimoniales y de titularidad a la Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil, según lo establece la normativa vigente.

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CERTIFICACIÓN DE ACEPTACIÓN DEL TUTOR

En mi calidad de Tutor del Proyecto de DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE EGB STUDENTS AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020, designado(a) por el Consejo Directivo de la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil.

CERTIFICO:

Haber dirigido, revisado y aprobado en todas sus partes el Proyecto de Investigación titulado: DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE EGB STUDENTS AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020, presentado por la estudiante ROXANNA GISSELLA CORREA CAICEDO como requisito previo, para optar al Título de LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA MENCIÓN EN LINGÜÍSTICA Y LITERATURA, encontrándose apto para su sustentación.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research Project to God, for being my helper and supporter throughout my whole life; to my beloved parents Esteban and Lucía, for giving me the strength to tackle every difficult situation, and for your unconditional love; to my children Christian and Andrés, who are the biggest love of my life. And to my Kiarita, Abi and Chester, for bringing so much joy to my heart.

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INTRODUCTION

The speaking skill is considered the most important skill in language learning, because it is through the use of this skill that oral communication is produced. Mastering speaking in any foreign language requires time and dedication. In English language this is not an exception, and it is an aspect that many students usually need to improve in language learning. For this reason, English teachers have an important role in the learning process, as they have the responsibility to provide students opportunities to practice their speaking with the use of real language, either inside or outside the classroom.

At "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", 8th grade EGB students in the school year 2019-2020 have difficulties to communicate and express their ideas orally, even in the case of those students with good command of this second language. The current study addresses the need to develop the speaking skill in students of English as a second language, who face problems to express their ideas effectively, and proposes elements to enhance it, so learners can have the ability to communicate at least comprehensibly.

Chapter I describes the background of the problem, which refers to inadequate development of the speaking skill of students and the influence that didactic activities have on it. Also, the broad and specific objectives are described in order to determine the role that didactic activities have on the speaking skill, as well as to explain the importance of such skill and identify the common problems students of 8th grade have in language learning. Additionally, the rationale of the study is explained according to its importance, social relevance, beneficiaries and impact of the proposal. The delimitation, the idea to defend, and the research line and subline of the Faculty are also detailed.

Chapter II includes the Theoretical Framework of the research project. In this section, other authors' researches, similar to the present work, are discussed and compared to establish the way they are related and prove this project suitability. The present chapter also includes the conceptual framework, including the core concepts used along the study, and the legal framework, in which the main laws and regulations related to the study are discussed.

Chapter III refers to the Research Methodology applied to this work, including the type and approach of the study, as well as the techniques and tools applied to collect the information to be processed. The results obtained from the application of the research tools are also discussed in this section, explaining the findings.

Chapter IV covers the proposal of the study, which is described in detail. This section will describe the objectives and the proposal description. The conclusions and recommendations are included after this chapter.

CHAPTER I
THE RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 Title

Didactic activities and the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", school year 2019-2020.

1.2 Background of the problem

Since decades, the English language has been considered a world's primary language for international communication, and its importance is not focused only on business, but also on the doors it opens in the academic world. Additionally, an important aspect to consider is that, even though the main goal of learning a language is to communicate, English skills should not be taken only as professional capital for individuals, but also as a factor that tells a lot about the levels of economic competition in a country, business opportunities, and development. For all these reasons, good oral communication is essential, and as a consequence, the development of the speaking skill cannot be taken lightly, due to the fact that it puts all the components of a language together.

In Ecuador, English is by far the language officially taught in public and private institutions. Being aware of this fact, the authorities have considered the importance of English language in the Ecuadorian educational curriculum. Ecuador has established minimum English teaching standards to empower the domain of language structure and communication, language acquisition and the development of language fluency (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). However, despite it seems Ecuador is following the right path, the level of English in our country, which is reflected in all its skills, is still low (EF, 2018).

Many public and private schools have not been able to provide students the appropriate elements to reach their proficiency level in foreign language learning. What is more, in some cases, teachers have difficulties to manage and apply suitable practices to plan classroom instruction in a supportive learning environment for students. Even though Ecuadorian reforms to strength English teaching are being applied, reforms take time, so

currently learners´ speaking production and interaction are far from producing, sustaining or exchanging utterances according to the conventional standards. Those standards are organized into five domains that fit with those stated for the general curriculum and of some which are related to English language teaching and learning. (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

In Guayaquil city, it has been observed that 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", in the school year 2019-2020, have difficulties to communicate and express their ideas orally, even in the case of those students with good command of this second language. This attitude may be caused by low students' motivation to produce oral utterances, maybe because students do not have the necessary vocabulary, do not have an appropriate grammar competence, or because they do not know the pronunciation of the words to be used. As a consequence, students prefer not to speak in front of their classmates because they are afraid of making mistakes.

English teachers, on the other hand, seem to lack the necessary tools for helping students express themselves in spoken language. One possible reason could be that they have not received appropriate training in material design or methodology, so they take hand of traditional elements and methods to teach English. In addition, those teachers that could be able to design appropriate material for their classes may find difficult to apply them, especially if they are related to technology, because the classrooms may not always be equipped with the technology needed. For this reason, the present research work proposes the elaboration of a didactic guide based on a set of selected activities, to help students improve their oral communication and develop their speaking skills.

1.3 Statement of the problem

What is the influence of didactic activities on the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", school year 2019-2020?

1.4 Problem systematization

- What is the role of didactic activities in the development of oral communication in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget"?
- What is the importance of the speaking skill in English language learning?

- What are the common problems that 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget" present in oral production?
- What didactic activities are appropriate to develop students' speaking skills?

1.5 Broad Objective

To establish the influence of didactic activities on the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", school year 2019-2020.

1.6 Specific Objectives

- To establish the theoretical foundations that support the didactic activities and the speaking skill through a bibliographical review.
- To identify the common problems that students present in the speaking skill with the application of the research tools.
- To determine the role of didactic activities in the development of oral communication in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget" through the application of a teacher's interview
- To explain the importance of the speaking skill in English language learning.
- To select a set of appropriate didactic activities to develop students' speaking skills, in order to elaborate a guide.

1.7 Rationale of the study

Even though speaking is considered one of the most difficult language skills to develop, it is still an aspect that needs to be improved in language teaching. Traditionally, this skill has been included into the background in a traditional language class, where reading, listening or writing have had more space and dedication, or where old practices are predominant (Leong, 2017). In this globalized society, where English is considered a world's language, it is teachers' responsibility to give students opportunities to speak a real language, either inside or outside the classroom. Thus, the current research work is *important* because it addresses the need to develop the speaking skill in students of English as a second language, who face problems to express their ideas effectively. Additionally, the study proposes elements to enhance it, so learners can have the ability to communicate at least comprehensibly.

On the other hand, it is well known that English is the language of international communication, including the media and the internet. People around the world, in Ecuador and in the Guayaquilean society, consider the learning of this second language a priority, as it opens the door to the progress and makes their speakers part of a competitive social environment. Under these circumstances, the present study is *relevant for our society*, as teachers and researchers may find it useful to consider students' speaking needs in teaching and learning context. This could give learners opportunities in life quality and education by breaking down communication barriers.

Didactic material selection is an important step in teaching a foreign language skill and should be included in the teaching process as essential tools to serve the communication of meanings. Teachers should start from considering who their students are, so they can connect language study not only to their current interests, but also to learners' future use. As a consequence, the use of didactic activities into the classroom may have an important *impact* in the development of the speaking skill, because it helps to overcome those communication difficulties arising under time pressure, stimulates the liveliness of learners, and includes them in a variety of situations.

The direct *beneficiaries* of this research work are the students of 8th grade EGB at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", who have problems to express themselves in English. Additionally, teachers of this second language, who have experienced learners' difficulties to communicate effectively, are also beneficiaries, as they will have at hand a set of didactic activities to face this problem in the classroom, and to improve their teaching practices. Finally, the institution will also be benefited, since their educational goals in foreign language teaching will be likely to be achieved.

1.8 Scope and delimitation of the study

Responsible Unit:	Universidad Laica Vicente Rocafuerte
Responsible person:	Roxanna Correa Caicedo
Field:	Education
Area:	English
Population:	24 students from eighth grade at "Unidad Educativa Particular Jean Piaget"
Execution period:	School year 2019 – 2020
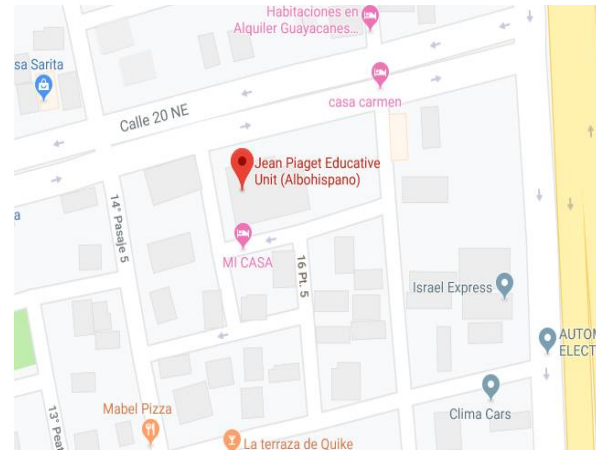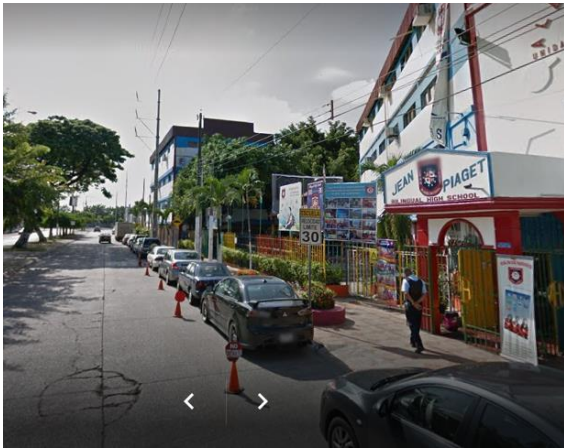
Figure 1. UE Jean Piaget location.
Source: Google Map (2019).

1.9 Idea to defend

Didactic activities influence the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", school year 2019-2020.

1.10 Research line

The present research work is developed according to the research line of the Education Faculty, which is the "performance and professionalization of the teacher", and also according to its research sub-line "communicative competencies in teachers and students".

The present study belongs to the subline "communicative competencies in teachers and students", because it focuses on elements that can improve speaking, one main communicative skill in English language, and also because this work establishes the relationship between the speaking skill, which is the dependent variable of this work, and didactic activities, the independent variable.

CHAPTER II
THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theoretical Framework Background

The development of the speaking skill in English language is a matter of concern for many educator and researchers. Among the studies that have covered both, the speaking skill and didactic activities or strategies, Criollo (2018), in his research, highlights the importance of speaking in language learning and discusses the effects of roleplays in the development of this skill, concluding that students have a better performance and showed a significant improvement with the application of this strategy. Koran (2015), discussed the role that teachers play in the development of the speaking skill, suggesting that, due to the fact that English is considered the "lingua franca" and the language that dominates worldwide, teachers should implement more natural strategies and activities so students can have an appropriate contact with the target language. The author also asserts that teachers should encourage students "to use English not only in the classroom but also in their daily interaction with their classmates, teachers or any other English speaking people" (p. 401).

In addition, Al-Eiadeh, A Al, Al Zoubi, & Al-Khasawneh (2016), in their article, aimed to enhance the oral communication skills, as their study revealed that students face important problems when speaking, such as confusion and embarrasement. The authors proposed to overcome the weakness in speaking skill, "by practicing speaking English inside and outside the classroom effectively, using the modern social media to communicate in English and to express the students feelings and needs" (p. 181). Rojano (2017), studied the influence of oral activities to improve the speaking skill. The study measured the implementation of VoiceThread to help students in their oral production, especially in their fluency and accuracy, and stressed the importance of including innovative tasks and activities with technology to promote opportunities to practice this skill. Ceballos (2016), analyzed the effects of applying appropriate activities, such storytelling activities to improve the English skills. This research concluded that the students improved their reading and speaking skills significantly. The author affirms that the results showed that the use of short stories in the classroom gives learners more opportunities to use meaningful language.

Malucin & Villacis (2016) developed a study to determine the relationship between useful activities, such as those that use the smart board, in order to develop the speaking skill. The authors affirm students responded positively to such activities and improved in great deal their oral communication. Morales & Vélez (2018) studied the influence of communicative language teaching activities to develop the oral communication in students. The results showed an increase in students' performance, and a considerable improvement of their oral production after the application of such communicative activities. López (2019), discussed in his research work the development of speaking fluency through authentic oral production. The results concluded that students increased significantly their communication, and also that student's attitude towards innovative activities in the classroom were positive and gave them more confidence. Ontaneda (2019) conducted a study to self-regulation through mobile devices in order to improve the speaking skill. The author affirms that this study showed a large impact for speaking, as that kind of study raised their oral production. Cedeño y Ochoa (2019) analyzed the didactic strategies, and its impact over the significant learning, and concluded that when teachers use didactic and creative activities, the significant learning improves.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Didactic Activities
2.2.1.1 Definition and Characteristics

Language instruction has five important components: students, teacher, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation. The activities, however, are very important for language instruction.

Carrasco (2014) affirms in his book that the word *strategy* etymologically means the art of directing military strategies. In current times, this term is used in several fields of knowledge, explaining that they strategies are skills or abilities with a purpose. In the educational field, the strategies are those approaches that the teacher applies to direct students' learning. One of the most important elements that strategies include are the activities. Besides, activities are defined as "specific actions that facilitate the execution of the technique. They are flexible and allow you to adjust the technique to the characteristics of the group" (Ecured, 2019)

On the other hand, the didactics has come to play an important role in current education, restructuring the way in which knowledge is imparted, and modifying its processes. In this sense, didactics comes to be interactive and innovative, and cannot be taught without taking into account the individual, without leaving aside the particularities of each one (UNED, 2013). The didactic activities are then a set of actions carefully planned by the teacher, with the objective of helping student to achieve the knowledge construction and the class objectives. These kinds of activities are organized and oriented to obtain a clearly established goal. Its application requires the improvement of procedures and its design is the entire responsibility of the teacher. In addition, in his research work, Cardenas (2019) explains that the didactic activities are organized and planned by the teacher, who in addition, determines the way they will be applied considering all the time the main goal and students' way of learning. Therefore, the didactic activities represent the methods, techniques and procedures in language teaching. In order to carry out this kind of activities, it is necessary to select the appropriate technique according to students' needs.

2.2.1.2 Importance of didactic activities

Didactic activities are usually based on didactic materials. It is a term commonly used to describe the resources that teachers use to deliver instruction in a common class. These materials can support student in their learning process and help them succeed. Didactic material should be related to the topic to be taught, also to the students in whose class they are being used, and the teacher. "Teaching materials come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have in common the ability to support student learning" (Ministry of Education Guyana, 2016).

Didactic material is commonly referred to as learning or teaching material. The Ministry of Education of Guyana, explains the following:

Learning materials are important because they can significantly increase student´s achievement by supporting student´s learning. For example, a worksheet may provide a student with important opportunities to practice a new skill gained in class. This process aids in the learning process by allowing the student to explore

the knowledge independently as well as providing repetition. Learning materials, regardless of what kind, all have some function in student learning. (p. 1)

This assertion highlights the roles that didactic material has in language learning. It can be understood that the use of this kind of material helps to improve lesson planning and teachers' performance. It can be seen that students' achievement is increased because their motivation is increased, and it happens because the didactic materials were appropriate and applied correctly.

Another reason didactic materials are important in language learning is because they can assist teachers when they have to apply differentiation of instruction, which means adapting lessons to students' different learning styles and capacities (Ministry of Education Guyana, 2016, p. 2). Some didactic activities that assist teachers in the classroom are, for example, worksheets, group activity, games, or homework assignments. Teachers can modify activities to best activate each individual student's learning style.

Even though the importance of didactic materials lies on the fact that can be tailored to students' needs, finding reliable sources with appropriate didactic material is not easy, though is not so difficult either. Currently, teachers can find on the Internet lots of material that can increase significantly the contents. Teachers can also make their own materials (Ministry of Education Guyana, 2016, p. 2).

The Ministry of Education considers the Internet as a main source for didactic material. In fact, the internet is one of the most important sources of information, due to the variety of places where information is stored. Under these circumstances, every learning material developed by the teacher, will be an asset to be used later, so it is important to consider that the time and money dedicated to useful didactic materials may be an important investment of time or money.

2.2.1.3 Classification of didactic activities

Penso (2016), in his book, provides the following classification for didactic activities, based on the relationship they have with the contents of information, and also with their use. In this classification, the starting point is the information content. It can be a

description, a procedure, a mechanism or, as a more frequent case, a definition. This information content can be given through an oral explanation, an audio-visual presentation or a reading. The main characteristics of the types of learning activities are represented schematically in the following table (p. 12):

Table 1.
Didactic Activities

	MEMORIZATION	APPLICATION	CONTENT
INFORMATION	Specific	Specific	Non-specific
PROCESS	Repetition	Applied according to each case	

Source: Penso (2016).

The *memorization* activities reproduce the content, generally in the most literal and exact way possible. They are not necessarily easy, but they can be complex, as for example those that require specifying similarities and differences. In the *application* activities, on the other hand, the information that must be used is also specified, but the process no longer consists of simple repetition; instead, it consists on its use. It applies to a specific case or example. The learning activities that are least directly related to information are those classified as problems. In them, the *content* to be applied is not specified, but must be determined by the student, so its application requires making decisions about what kind of information to apply. The problems represent a greater degree of complexity than the application activities. However, the author considers that, in the sequence of learning activities, the most important qualitative leap is represented by the introduction of the case.

Ruiz and Arciniegas (2017), listed the types of didactic activities according to the Conole's taxonomy, which includes the detailed description of the nature of the task that the students will do as part of the learning activity to achieve the desired goals.

Assimilative activities: they intend to promote the students' comprehension about specific concepts that the professor presents via spoken, written, or visual texts.

Information management activities: involve the development of data search tasks, of contrasting and/or synthesizing, of collecting and analyzing quantitative or qualitative data and of analysis of a case, text, audio, or video. They are activities that demand from

students not only to look for information related to a query or problem that must be solved, but also to analyze it and understand it. They are activities that generally follow others based on assimilation.

Application activities: they demand from the students to solve exercises or problems applying principles or contents previously studied in class.

Communicative activities: they are those where the students are asked to present information, discuss, debate, share, inform, etc.

Productive activities: through them, students have to design, elaborate, and create a device, document, or new resource.

Experiential activities: they are those that try to place the students in an environment close to the future profesional practice, whether in a real or a simulated context.

Evaluative activities: they are the ones whose main and only objective is the evaluation of the student, regardless of the previous activities intentions to evaluate.

Figure 2. Conole's Taxonomy.
Source: Ruiz and Arciniegas (2017).
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

The types of activities proposed by Conole gather a great diversity of activities that could be classified in activity subtypes. In order to arrive at this sub categorization, the research done by Marcelo et al. (2015) was taken into account. They analyzed the specific components that university professors use to guide the students' learning process. And they do this through the analysis of the learning activities and tasks that they organize. One of the conclusions from this study is that there are no differences in general among professors of different fields of knowledge in function of the learning activities that they plan. Considering this conclusion, the activities can be classified in activity subtypes, not discriminating the field of knowledge where it is applied to, obtaining a sub classification of general use in the university context.

The process to reach the sub categorization of activities begins in the analysis of the 91 didactic activities consolidated in the study carried out by Marcelo. Having this list as an input, the activities were gathered in the types proposed by Conole (Ruiz & Arciniegas,

2017); and subsequently, sub-groups were arranged according to the nature of the task. The consolidated activities and sub-activities are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Conole's subtype of didactic activities

ACTIVITY TYPE 1	SUBTYPE	EXAMPLES
	Formation	Listen to the professors' lecture
	Reading	Reading Read materials and documents
Assimilative	Observation	Visit an institution or work zone with the purpose of observing
	Analysis	Analyze a document from a script
Information Management	Research	Search for information in recommended sources
	Training	Solve mathematical problems without the professor's presence.
Application	Tutoring	Solve students' doubts
	Assistance	Help students to accomplish something.
	Discussion and exchange of information	Participate in questions-answer
Communicative	Presentation	Defend a work
	Agreement	Get to common grounds
	Conference	Attend a conference, congress, workshop
Productive		Write an essay or composition
Experiential		Develop practice in a real context
	Written	Answer an evaluation instrument of previous knowledge.
Evaluative	Spoken	Maintain an evaluation interview with the professor.
	Feedback	Provide feedback of the result of an evaluation.

Source: Ruiz and Arciniegas (2017).
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Once the types and subtypes of an activity were identified, we proceeded to specify the resources necessary to carry out each didactic activity, and how the resource could be instrumented using technology. To illustrate the process, Table 2 presents the specification of resources for assimilative activities. In the case of the assimilative-formation activity, the conventional resources used are videos, a board, audiovisual aids and documents. Within the resources, the professors or presenters have been included, because at the moment of bringing them to the technology, it is necessary to provide a mechanism of communication that allows the interaction between professors and stu-dents.

2.2.1.4 Didactic activities and lifelong learning

Lifelong learning (LLL) is defined as encompassing all "learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective" (International Labor Organization, 2019).

The term LLL was treated as a key element for education and learning policy by the first time in Europe, in 2002, setting goals to achieve at least the 15% of adult participation in lifelong learning by 2020. According to the European Union (2016), the concept of lifelong learning is not only a set of traditional education programmes:

> While traditional educational institutions have been (and still are) primarily concerned with transmitting knowledge, modern learning opportunities and the LLL approach emphasise the development of individual capabilities and each person's capacity to learn. LLL implies a paradigm shift from the dominance of traditional education institutions to a diverse field of traditional and modern learning opportunities that are more processed and outcome-oriented, as well as of a modular structure. At the same time, responsibility for education and learning is shifting from the public (state) to non-governmental organizations and to individuals themselves. (p. 4)

As a consequence of the establishment of the term life-long learning, those who make policies requested statistics on individuals' participation in LLL, so it was necessary

to consider and classify the didactic activities, as a tool for statistical measurement. Each activity is classified as only one of the three broad categories of learning, that is formal education, non-formal education, or informal learning.

The manual for the classification of didactic activities (European Union, 2016), refers that the primary statistical unit for formal education is the educational programme, as defined by ISCED. The central or main SLA of formal education is 'taught learning' (face-to-face or distance). On the other hand, the primary statistical unit for non-formal education are institutionalized learning arrangements for learning one or more subjects. These arrangements can take the form of courses, non-forma education programmes or any arrangements where the central or main SLA is institutionalized and taught (face-to-face or distance). Informal learning, conversely, is the primary statistical unit for informal learning is the method used for one subject (European Union, 2016).

The categories proposed, as well as the classes and subclasses are summarized in the following way (Table 3):

Table 3.
Didactic Activities Classification

CODES	BROAD CATEGORIES / CLASSES / SUB CLASSES
1.	Formal education
2.	Non-formal education
2.1.	Non-formal programmes
2.2.	Courses
2.2.1.	Courses conducted via classroom instruction (including lectures)
2.2.2.	Combined theoretical-practical courses (including workshops)
2.2.3.	Courses conducted through open and distance education
2.2.4.	Private tuition (private lessons)
2.3.	Guided-on-the-job training
2.4.	Other not specified elsewhere
3.	Informal learning
3.1.	Taught learning
3.1.1.	Coaching / informal tuition
3.1.2.	Guided visits
3.2.	Non-taught learning

3.2.1.   Self-learning

3.2.2.   Learning-group

3.2.3.   Practice

3.2.4   Non-guided visits

Source: European Union (2016).
Elaborated by: Correa R. (2020).

2.2.1.5 The role of didactic materials

Currently, students are the center of language learning, that is, students are more important than teachers, materials, curriculum, methods, or evaluation. All the elements listed before belong to the language learning cycle. It is possible to say that a student is the most important element, because all the others need to be designed for learners and their needs.

According to Romero, De Gracia & Santamaría (2014), the teacher will have the responsibility to check if all of the elements in the learning process are working well for the students, and in case they are not, the teacher will have to adapt them. The authors explain that learners should be the center of instruction and learning, and that the role of teachers is to help learners to learn. In addition, Romero et al. (2014) affirm that as teachers need to follow the curriculum and provide, make, or choose materials, they may adapt, adopt, and elaborate on those materials and also monitor the progress and needs of the students and finally evaluate students.

The authors describe that materials as textbooks, video and audio devices, computer software, and visual aids, influence the content and the procedures of learning (Romero et al., 2014). They explain that among the elements influenced by didactic material, it is possible to find the role of memorization, the use of creativity and problem solving, production vs. reception. Additionally, the authors believe that even though students should be the center of instruction, in many cases, teachers and students count on materials as the center of instruction. According to Romero et al. (2014), since many teachers do not have enough time to prepare extra materials, textbooks and other produced materials are very important in language learning. However, the authors explain that it is important for teachers to know how to choose the best material for their classes, how to create additional materials for the class, and how to adapt materials.

The authors focus their explanation in how important didactic materials are. From their affirmations, it is possible to think that one of the roles of didactic materials is to support students' learning, because depending on the kind of material selected, students will be able to explore knowledge by themselves, and also to acquire knowledge through repetition.

2.2.1.6 Advantages and disadvantages of didactic material

Romero, De Gracia, & Santamaria (2014), summarize the advantages and disadvantages of didactic material for a language classroom in the following way:

Table 4.
Advantages and disadvantages of didactic material.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
• Students are exposed to real language. • There is factual acquisition from most of them. • Textbooks do not include inaccurate language. • Authentic materials may be inspirational for some students. • One piece of text may be used for various activities and tasks. • There is a wide choice of styles, genres and formality in authentic texts. • They can motivate students to read for pleasure.	• Authentic texts may be difficult to understand because of a culture gap. • The vocabulary may be not exactly what the students need. • They are rather difficult for beginners. • Preparation of the texts and activities is often demanding and time consuming. • There are many various accents and dialects in listening. • The materials become outdated quickly (news).

Source: Romero, De Gracia, & Santamaria (2014).
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

The authors classify the use of real language as an advantage in language teaching. Actually, according to the authors, real English is based on a very simple idea, the organization and exploitation of spontaneous speech.

2.2.2   The Speaking Skill

2.2.2.1 Definition and Importance

Speaking is defined as an effective way of communication that people use in daily interaction. This basic skill is, in addition, an indispensable element to deliver an idea and transfer a message to a receiver. Without it, individuals may find difficult to communicate (Irwansyah, 2018). Louma's research (cited in Irwansyah, 2018), defines communication as a cooperative act in which people deliver and receive information. According to the author, this information must be appropriate for the situation in which it occurs, as well as for the speaking purposes.

Additionally, Thomas, (2011) states in his research work that speaking is seen through different perspectives. One of them, in the context of communication with specific purposes, such as to inform or give explanations; another perspective is seen in terms of basic competences for simple daily communication purposes, such as ordering dinner, booking an airplane ticked, or asking directions. On this basis, the author affirms that communication and speaking are viewed together as an interactive process "in which individuals alternate in their roles as speakers and listeners and employ both verbal and non-verbal means to reach their communicative goals" (p. 17). Thomas also asserts that even though speaking is spontaneous, it considers the participants, the purpose and depends on the context in which it occurs.

The speaking skill is considered one of the most important skills in a foreign language because it implies the need of an effective communication. In the English language, the four skills, that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are all interconnected. The ability that learners have in each skill is crucial to establish an efficient communication. However, the ability to speak effectively, which means putting words together in a meaningful way to express opinions or feelings, gives learners of this second language an important advantage: to communicate easily and effectively with other people (Leong, 2017).

Since the English language has become a world's language, it plays a major role in people's lives. Media, communication facilities, Internet sites, research works, written

documents or recorded files, are all developed in English. It gives people a great variety of opportunities to improve life quality and education. Consequently, English has been included in the educational curriculum of nations, and is being learned around the world as an official second language (EF, 2018).

2.2.2.2 Characteristics of the speaking skill

Brown's work (cited in Segura, 2014) describes the speaking skill to be "the most challenging for students, mainly because it includes the use of contractions, slangs and idioms, intonation, stress and rhythm, and the interaction with at least one other speaker" (p. 19). In addition, Henrichsen (2019) affirms that one major characteristic of the speaking skill is that it is a complex process, and observes the existence of several factors that contributes with this fact. However, the author also considers that those factors can be organized under two key components of spoken language: accuracy and fluency. These two components are crucial to make language learners successful and confident enough to communicate in the target language.

The authors describe the main features of speaking, and it is possible to think that one of the aspects that distinguishes this skill from the others is that it allows students to make connections through communication. Additionally, the factors the authors consider crucial, such as accuracy and fluency, will contribute to an effective communication. In consequence, the main purpose of speaking can be interpreted as an important fact that helps people to develop relationships with others.

- Speaking accuracy

The term accuracy is referred to describe the correct use of a language, and it includes other aspects such as structure, vocabulary and pronunciation (BBC, Teaching English, 2019). Henrichsen (2019) emphasizes that the spoken form of a language needs accuracy to succeed in communication. This is also one of the factors that make speaking complex, as those individuals that are beginning to learn English, spend time focusing on the correct form of their utterances. However, the author explains that once students acquire proficiency, they are meant to stop thinking too much about their accuracy to speak.

Henrichsen also describes the following features that should be considered in the classroom when teaching speaking:

a) Vocabulary. Knowing enough words to speak a language is one of the most important factors that students need to communicate in a foreign language. Lexical units have an important role in language learning, as they represent the words that individuals will use to communicate orally in an effective way (Alqahtani, 2015).

b) Sounds. Inevitably, people learn the sounds of a native language automatically from people around us. However, when learning a new language, students need to pay special attention to the sounds of consonants and vowels. Pronouncing consonant and vowels correctly implies a correct articulation to avoid miscommunication and misunderstanding (Henrichsen, 2019).

c) Grammar. Grammar refers to the rules or structures for using a language correctly. This factor is another key issue to have a successful communication, and requires students to place words in the correct position and form within a sentence. Structures are meant to be acquired also naturally with a daily exposure and interaction, and is considered another challenging aspect in language learning (Henrichsen, 2019)

d) Culture. It is considered that a language is closely related to culture. With communication, people transmit values, habits and beliefs that describe their identity and their feelings. In this way, speaking is turned into a way to preserve traditions and share values. Students' learning of cultural differences is an important aspect of an effective communication (Henrichsen, 2019).

- Fluency

Fluency in speaking a target language requires the ability to speak with appropriate speed, acceptable flow, and proper tone of voice. (Henrichsen, 2019). It is very common for students to focus all their attention on their language accuracy at a slow rate of speed. The British Council considers fluency in a language as "speaking easily, reasonably quickly and without having to stop and pause a lot" (2019). Even though a person can dedicate many hours a day to learn English, becoming fluent may take years. The institution suggests language learners to consider the following aspects to improve their fluency:

a) Communicate and get their message across smoothly, that means communicating the ideas as naturally as possible.

b) Take hand of every opportunity in class to speak English. Use the target language to speak in the classroom all the time.

c) Feel confident to speak in English.

d) Transmit a clear idea of the message you want to communicate.

e) Ignore mistakes, as the most important thing is to transmit a message.

f) Dedicate time to practice speaking.

g) Use some common little expressions like 'Er' or 'Erm' to gain time while thinking about what to want to say.

h) Use communication strategies to make your English sound more natural. (BBC, Learn English Teens, 2019)

Nunan (cited in Susanto 2017), describes what the speaking skill involves:

a) The production of English speech sounds and sound patterns.

b) The use of word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.

c) The appropriate selection of words and sentences according to the correct social setting, audience, situation and subject matter.

d) The organization of thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.

e) The language use as a means of expressing values and judgments.

f) Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called fluency (p. 188).

2.2.2.3 Types of Speaking

Brown (2017), explains in his work that speaking is an art, and through this kind of art, people can share information with a specific audience that can range from a small number of participants to some hundreds or even millions of people in front of a TV. The author states also that mastering speaking implies to know and differentiate between four types: ceremonial, demonstrative, informative and persuasive, which are summarized in the following way.

- Informative speaking. This kind of speaking is used by the speaker to explain something to the audience, for example, a concept. Usually, lectures involve informative speaking, even in College or business conferences, in which important information is shared. The core part of informative speaking is the information given, and the fact that the speaker does not expect the audience to agree with the content of his speech.

- Persuasive speaking. This kind of speaking is commonly used by politicians, lawyers and even church members. People that use it need to practice their voice inflections in order to convince the audience about his beliefs or ideas. Some of the most important features is that persuasive speaker applies emotional and strong language.

- Ceremonial speaking. It is used in special occasions or events, such as funerals, graduation ceremonies or weddings, among others.

- Demonstrative. This kind of speaking requires people to use a clear speech to describe actions at the same time than perform those actions. It could be used, for example, to explain processes. The main purpose of this kind of speaking is that people get the knowledge about how to do something (Brown, 2017).

2.2.2.4 The Four Speaking Skills

Lackman (2010), in his book, mentions that it is better to teach students specific speaking skills, than make them just speak. The author says that those specific skills are known as sub-skills or micro skills. Since conversations outside the class are bound to be better learning experiences than those inside the class, rather than trying to duplicate real world conversations in the classroom, we should be teaching skills that students are not likely to learn outside the classroom. By raising awareness of speaking sub-skills and providing classroom practice with them, we will be providing students with strategies to improve their communication outside the classroom, which is, or should be, the ultimate goal.

The speaking skills or micro-skills that every language learner needs to master are the following (Binus University, n.d.):

Fluency. Fluency is about how comfortable and confident you feel when you are speaking English. If you can speak for an extended period of time, that is an indicator of strong fluency. It is also about showing a clear connection between each point that you are trying to make. This skill makes the listener follow with what you are saying and does not get lost.

Vocabulary. Of course, if you don't have the words to say what you want to say, then you cannot say it. Being a good speaker means constantly growing your vocabulary. The more interesting words you know, the stronger your speaking skills will be. The best way to grow your vocabulary is to read in English and make a note of any new words that you encounter in a vocabulary notebook.

Grammar. The dreaded G word! Grammar does matter and the fewer mistakes you make, the better your speaking skill will be. However, do not worry about making mistakes either! A good speaker does not have to use perfect grammar. Certainly, though, it is a good idea to make sure that you have mastered the major tenses.

Pronunciation. Pronunciation is a complex area, with a lot of sub skills that can be practiced. The basic rule of thumb is that an average speaker can speak and be understood. A skilled speaker can use the sub skills of pronunciation to emphasize and make the communicative effect of their speech more impactful. The sub skills of pronunciation include word and sentence stress, intonation, rhythm and the use of the individual sounds of a language. A good way to practice your pronunciation is to copy! Simply listen to how someone with good pronunciation speaks and try to imitate them as closely as possible.

Lackman (2010), on the other hand, classifies and describes each speaking sub-skill as follows:

Table 5
The speaking sub-skills.

SPEAKING SUB-SKILLS	APPLICATION
Fluency Students practice speaking with a logical flow without planning or rehearsing.	Activities which require students to focus on meaning in communication without immediate concern for accuracy (errors can be corrected afterwards).
Accuracy with Words &	Students need to be able to use and pronounce words

Pronunciation

Students practice using words, structures and pronunciation accurately.

and structures correctly in order to be understood. Controlled practice activities are the most common way of working on spoken accuracy.

Using Functions

Students use specific phrases for purposes like giving advice, apologizing, etc.

Activities which stress that verbal communication is for a reason or function. Role plays and simulations are ideal.

Appropriacy

Students practice using language appropriate for a situation and making decisions about formality and choice of grammar or vocabulary

Activities which stress that the purpose of talking determines what language is appropriate. Students are required to make choices about grammar and vocabulary and also other aspects of communication like intonation and length of turn. For example, "What's the damage?" is inappropriate in a four-star restaurant.

Turn-taking Skills

Students practice ways of interjecting, eliciting an interjection or preventing one.

Turn-taking skills involve knowing how and when to interject, eliciting an interjection or preventing one. Students can practice listening for appropriate gaps in order to take their turn without irritating the speaker. While speaking, they can practice techniques such as pausing, which purposely allows others to take a turn or they can practice using hesitation devices such as 'ums' and 'errs' to hold on to a turn while they search for the next thing to say.

Relevant Length

Students practice speaking at a length appropriate to a situation.

Activities which show that the purpose of speaking or the context determines the appropriate length of a turn. For example, a one-word answer is acceptable for a market research survey but would not be sufficient in a job interview. Activities which require students to elaborate or be concise are useful.

Responding and Initiating

Students practice managing a

Activities which get students to practice managing a conversation in an appropriate way with specific

conversation by making responses, asking for a response or introducing a new topic or idea.	words and phrases such as, "What do you think about…", "Speaking of…", "Really?", etc. Gestures and other paralinguistic tools are also used in conversation management.
Repair and Repetition Students practice repeating or rephrasing parts of a conversation when they suspect that what was said was not understood	The spontaneous nature of conversation requires that participants constantly have to make sure that what's being said is understood. When misunderstanding is suspected, a participant will 'repair' parts of the conversation. The most common form to repair is repetition and individual words, or groups of words can be repeated by either the speaker or listener. Students can practice repairing when they suspect they haven't been understood or as listeners they can repeat to seek clarification or correction from the speaker.
Range of Words and Grammar Students practice using particular grammar and/or vocabulary for speaking on a specific topic or for doing a specific task	Students need to know a range of words and grammar and have the ability to choose from that bank the most appropriate words and structures for a specific task or topic. They are taught or made aware of words or structures appropriate for specific tasks or contexts and then are required to use them appropriately.
Discourse Markers Students practice using words/phrases which organize a talk (e.g. firstly, secondly, on the other hand, to summarize)	When speakers are required to take a particularly long turn, for example, when giving a presentation, they use specific words and phrases to help the listener recognize how their talk has been organized. Activities can be used to teach discourse makers and then require students to use them appropriately

Source: Lackman, K. (2010).
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

2.2.2.5 Teaching Speaking

Harmer (2015), states the following reasons for teaching speaking in the classroom:

a) Provides rehearsal opportunities to practice real-life speaking in the safety of the classroom.

b) Speaking tasks, in which students try to use all the language they know, provide feedback for both teacher and students.

c) The more students have the opportunity to activate the various elements of language in their brain, the more automatic their use of these elements become (p. 123)

The author affirms that good speaking activities can engage students actively. If they are all participating, and if the teacher has set up the activity properly and can then give sympathetic and useful feedback, they will get tremendous satisfaction from it.

What do teachers do during a speaking activity?

Harmer (2015) says that some teachers get very involved with their students during a speaking activity and want to participate in the activity themselves. They may argue forcefully in a discussion or get fascinated by a role-play and start 'playing' themselves. The fact that teachers start getting involved is not the problem, the author says. The problem is, according to Harmer, they may start to dominate. However, students can also appreciate teacher participation at the appropriate level.

The author affirms that teachers should participate as facilitator in every activity students' develop in the classroom. There will be many situations in which they will have to intervene in some way. For example, if someone in a role-play does not know what to say, or if a discussion begins, the teacher will have to decide if the activity should be stopped.

2.2.2.6 Standards and requirements

According to the general Ecuadorian curriculum, based on the English Language Teaching Standards, which are founded on the Common European Framework of References (CEFR), the target language includes "specific considerations for language structure and communication, language acquisition and development and language fluency" (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). This official document includes outcomes and skills that students are meant to gain throughout the learning process, for learning,

teaching, and assessment. Regarding the speaking production and speaking interaction, the following are the proficiency levels expected (p. 10):

Table 6. Speaking Production
Speaking Production

A1 PROFICIENCY LEVEL	A2 PROFICIENCY LEVEL	B1 PROFICIENCY LEVEL
Produce slow, hesitant, planned dialogues (i.e. communication still depends on repetition, rephrasing and repair).	Use a series of phrases and sentences linked onto a list to communicate in simple, routine tasks within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains.	Sustain a straightforward description of a subject or a variety of matters within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains rather fluently, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.

Source: Council of Europe (2020).

Table 7. Speaking Interaction
Speaking Interaction

A1 PROFICIENCY LEVEL	A2 PROFICIENCY LEVEL	B1 PROFICIENCY LEVEL
Interact and participate in brief informal discussions in a simple way by asking and answering simple questions about the learners' personal, educational, and social background. Communication is dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing, and repair.	Handle very short social exchanges within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains even though they can usually understand enough to keep the conversation going themselves.	Exchange, check, and confirm information to deal with less routine situations and explain why a problem has occurred. Enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are familiar, of interest, or pertinent to everyday life within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domain.

Source: Council of Europe (2020).
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

- **Speaking skill.** Speaking is one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced as means of effective communication. It is described as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information.

  Leong, L. & Ahmadi, S. (2017). *An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skill*. DOI: 10.18869/acadpub.ijree.2.1.34.

- **Communication**. It is an interdisciplinary concept as it is approached from different fields such as linguistics, psychology, ecology, mathematics, and others, enabling us to transmit and share facts, ideas, data, feelings, attitudes. It plays a key role in all the fields of activity; therefore, it should be effective, so as to be an element of success for every relationship, organization, meeting, research, etc.

  Essays, UK. (November 2018). Definition And Importance Of Communication English Language Essay. Retrieved from https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-language/definition-and-importance-of-communication-english-language-essay.php?vref=1

- **Sound Discrimination:** This is an activity to help students differentiate and produce the short / I / sound as in 'milk' and the longer / i: / sound as in 'beef', although it can be adapted to any pair of sounds which your students have differentiation problems with.

  BBC. (2019, 08 01). Sound discrimination. Retrieved from https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/sound-discrimination

- **Fluency:** Fluency in a language means speaking easily, reasonably quickly and without having to stop and pause a lot. Becoming fluent in a language can take many years, but here there are some tips to help you sound as natural as possible in speaking exams.

  BBC. (2019, 08 01). Fluency. Retrieved from: https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/fluency

- **Accuracy:** Accuracy refers to how to correct learners' use of the language system, including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Accuracy is often compared to fluency when we talk about a learner's level of speaking or writing.

  BBC. (2019, 08 01). Accuracy. Retrieved from: https://www.teachingenglish. org.uk/article/accuracy

- **Pronunciation**: It refers to the way in which we make the sound of words. To pronounce words, we push air from our lungs up through our throat and vocal chords, through our mouth, past our tongue and out between our teeth and lips.

  EnglishClub. (2019, 08 04). What is pronunciation? Retrieved from https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/what.htm

- **Vocabulary:** The noun vocabulary (or vocab for short) refers to the words used in a language. The word vocabulary can have at least three different meanings:
  - 1. All of the words in a language. New words are constantly being added to the English vocabulary.
  - 2. The words used in a particular context. Example: if you want to do an MBA you need to improve your business vocabulary.
  - 3. The words an individual person already knows.

  EnglishClub. (2019, 08 07). Vocabulary. Retrieved from https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/what.htm

- **Didactics**. The branch of pedagogy that deals with the theory of education and instruction and of how children are brought up by means of the teaching process.

  Didactics. (n.d.) The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 3rd Edition. (1970-1979). Retrieved June 7 2019 from https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Didactics

- **Didactic Activities:** Activities that motivate learners and facilitate the acquisition of the language.

  Retrieved June 7 2019 from https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Didactics

- **Strategies**: Teaching strategies refer to the structure, system, methods, techniques, procedures and processes that a teacher uses during instruction. These are strategies the teacher employs to assist student learning.

Northwest Missouri State University. (2019, 08 07). Education - Definitions. Retrieved from https://www.nwmissouri.edu/education/peu/pdf/ studentteach/mopta/Task3Definition.pdf

- **Development**. It is the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced:

Cambridge Dictionaries online. (2019). Retrieved June 7 2019 from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/development

2.4 Legal framework

CONSTITUCIÓN DE LA REPÚBLICA DEL ECUADOR
TÍTULO I
ELEMENTOS CONSTITUTIVOS DEL ESTADO
Capítulo primero
Principios fundamentales

Art. 3.- Son deberes primordiales del Estado:

1. Garantizar sin discriminación alguna el efectivo goce de los derechos establecidos en la Constitución y en los instrumentos internacionales, en particular la educación, la salud, la alimentación, la seguridad social y el agua para sus habitantes.

Art. 26.- La educación es un derecho de las personas a lo largo de su vida y un deber ineludible e inexcusable del Estado. Constituye un área prioritaria de la política pública y de la inversión estatal, garantía de la igualdad e inclusión social y condición indispensable para el buen vivir. Las personas, las familias y la sociedad tienen el derecho y la responsabilidad de participar en el proceso educativo.

Art. 27.- La educación se centrará en el ser humano y garantizará su desarrollo holístico, en el marco del respeto a los derechos humanos, al medio ambiente sustentable y a la democracia; será participativa, obligatoria, intercultural, democrática, incluyente y diversa, de calidad y calidez; impulsará la equidad de género, la justicia, la solidaridad y la paz; estimulará el sentido crítico, el arte y la cultura física, la iniciativa individual y comunitaria, y el desarrollo de competencias y capacidades para crear y trabajar.

LEY ORGÁNICA DE EDUCACIÓN INTERCULTURAL
(II Suplemento al RO 417 de marzo 31 de 2011)

Art. 3.- Fines de la educación.- Son fines de la educación:

a. El desarrollo pleno de la personalidad de las y los estudiantes, que contribuya a lograr el conocimiento y ejercicio de sus derechos, el cumplimiento de sus obligaciones, el desarrollo de una cultura de paz entre los pueblos y de no violencia entre las personas, y una convivencia social intercultural, plurinacional, democrática y solidaria.

ECUADORIAN IN-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER STANDARDS

The Ecuadorian in-Service English Teacher Standards are based on the document developed by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) as the organization's K-12 ESL Teacher Standards (2009) which is widely used in countries such as Albania, Paraguay, and the United States. The document is organized into five domains that fit with those stated for the general curriculum and of some which are related to English language teaching and learning.

The first domain, "Language" includes specific domains for language structure and communication, language acquisition and development and language fluency. Given the fact that Ecuador is a multicultural country, a certain number of

Ecuadorian students who are learning English may descend from indigenous cultures- where Spanish is their second language; and English their third- the second domain is about "Culture". Therefore, Ecuadorian English teachers need to have knowledge of other cultures and know how culture may affect their learning of English in Ecuador.

The third domain is devoted to "Curriculum Development", particularly aspects related to planning for standards-based English, implementing and managing standards, and using resources and technology effectively.

The fourth domain deals with "Assessment" (i.e. the gathering and evaluation of information related to English language learning) and includes the issues involved for learners, as well as those related to language proficiency and classroom-based assessment.

Finally, the fifth domain embodies the matter regarding "Professionalism and Ethical commitment" to keep teachers current with new instructional techniques, research results, and advances in the English teaching field for professional development. (Ministerio de Educación, 2012)

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

The present research work applies the inductive method, by means of which it is possible to extract the primary information and establish particular conclusions regarding the object of study. This will be done with the help of the application of research tools aimed to explain the importance of the speaking skill in English language learning and to identify the common problems that students present in oral production. In addition, the deductive method is applied, by means of which the idea to defend in the present study is outlined, and with which logical conclusions will be obtained starting from principles or premises.

3.2 Research Type

3.2.1 Descriptive research

Martínez (2019) explains that a descriptive research is the procedure that the science uses to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon, subject or population to study, and is limited to observing what happens, without seeking explanation.

The research type of the current study is descriptive, first, because it aims to describe the relationship between the variables under study and characterize the problemic situation through the research instruments. Second, it is descriptive because it does its best to elaborate the reasons or causes why students of the 8th grade EGB have problems with speaking during their performance in the classroom. The research also gives detailed information about the way in which comprehension, pronunciation, rhythm and other characteristics about the speaking skills are applied, in order to improve them through the application of a guide with didactic activities.

3.2.2 Field research

A field research is the collection of information in external environments, that is, it favors the collection of data in uncontrolled environments (Martínez C., 2019). For this reason, the present research work is considered a field of study, because the information gathered in the research process comes from a real-world institution, and involves students to be in practice not just at the assigned subject, but also in social and academic fields that

involved the development of the English language at a given or specific site or place. This kind of study will collect such data about students, their needs, and the proposal requirements that involve the observation and interviewing.

3.2.3   Applied research

The Applied research is designed in such a way that solves practical problems of the modern world, rather than just acquiring knowledge for knowledge's sake. One might say that the goal of the applied scientist is to improve the human condition. Martínez (2019) affirms that this type of research emphasizes on practical problem solving, focusing on how general theories can be put into practice. Based on this, the present research work is considered to have a practical nature, since a solution to a practical problem is proposed, in this case, the development of a guide with didactic activities to improve the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", school year 2019-2020.

3.3 Research Approach

3.3.1   Qualitative Approach

The Qualitative Research seeks to tell the story of a particular group's experiences in their own words and is therefore focused on narrative. The logic of qualitative research can be challenging for researchers more accustomed to the traditional deductive approach. As such, qualitative research tends to be more exploratory in nature, seeking to provide insight into how individuals understand aspects of their worlds (McLeod, 2019).

The qualitative side of this investigation also falls under the scientific method of observation, because it gathers non-numerical data and it justifies that the numerical data for further research could be backed up, giving results that can compare and sustain the other qualities of the investigation like students' performance, proficiency level, initiative and other qualities, as well that are mentioned in the investigation. The research tool used in the current study is the observation guide and the interview, applied to identify common problems that students present in speaking.

3.3.2   Quantitative Approach

McLeod (2019), explains that quantitative researchers aim to establish general laws of behavior and phenomenon across different settings/contexts. The author says that research is used to test a theory and ultimately support or reject it.

The current study has a quantitative approach because it emphasizes the objectives and measurements of the statistical, mathematical or numerical data that will be analyzed, in order to collect such information through surveys, tests and pre-existing data by using computing techniques. The withdrawn data will give a better perceptive about the investigation and supply the outcome with the appropriate percentages that measure the correlational methods numerically. In this study, a pre test and post test are applied to identify the common problems that students present in speaking.

3.4 Research techniques and tools

In order to collect the necessary information on the research topic, the following techniques were applied: observation, interview and survey.

3.4.1 The Observation

The observation is a technique used by the researcher to compile information to identify a problem and find a possible solution, through a natural observation in the classroom. Moreover, the researcher will see the behavior and participation of the students after teacher gives instruction to do an activity, and the development of the English class.

In order to collect data and evidence about common problems that 8th grade students have in speaking; the observation technique will be applied. The tool used to collect data is the observation guide. The application of this technique gives the results of how the class is conducted, the parameters that students are giving as objectives and the way and reasons why such problem with oral production is present with 8th grade students. The tool for the class observation consists of the content of the observation guide which addressed the students' performance in speaking, as well as the way in which the class is managed by the teacher.

3.4.2 The Interview

Interviews are defined as a qualitative research technique which involves "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation" (Baena, 2017, p. 95). In the current research work, the interview is addressed to the English teacher and the school director, to determine the role of didactic activities in the development of oral

communication in 8th grade EGB students and explain the importance of the speaking skill in English language learning.

3.4.3   The Pre and Post Tests.

The **Pre-Test** has a similar quality than a diagnostic exam, because the objective is to classify the performance that English language students have at the beginning of the research and their deficiencies and strengths as well. The pre-test will give an outcome of how much improvement is needed for students to improve adequately their performance and their quality of the language. The pre-test will also aid teachers to find out on which subjects to concentrate on in order to reach students' overall improvement in the language when speaking is involved.

The **Post-Test** is going to be the standard of the students' proof of improvement with the assistance of the proposal and the methodologies applied in order to be effective and meaningful. The post-test will also evaluate the students in the proper and adequate process of learning the language and their proficiency. The technique used in the post-test consists of the number of distractors that will be given as answers for each question on each skill.

In the current research work, the pre test and post test designs focused on speaking will be applied to measure oral production in 8th grade students EGB at UE Jean Piaget, in order to compare the degree of change occurring as a result of the proposed intervention. The tools used for these purposes are the diagnostic tests.

3.5 Population and samples

Sample was taken from the total of population for a better analysis consisting of 1 School Principal, 1 English teacher and 24 students of 8th grade EGB.

Table 8. Population and Sample.
Population and Sample.

Group	Population	Sample	Percentage
Students	24	24	100%
Teachers	1	1	100%
School principal	1	1	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

3.6 Results / Findings and Analysis

3.6.1 Students' Observation

An observation sheet was applied to 8th grade EGB students at UE Jean Piaget, in order to identify the different problems that they face in oral production. The criteria to interpret and analyze the results of such observation are the following:

Table 9. *Observation sheet scale.*

1	YES
2	NO

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

The observation sheet included 10 items to be observed in students during their English class sessions. The observation was carried out in three different sessions. The results were compared, unified and summarized as follows:

Table 10. Students' observation sheet.

ITEMS	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1. Students stop and hesitate before starting a sentence.	X		Mostly students think every word before pronouncing them.
2. Students make mistakes in sentence construction when they speak.	X		
3. Students mispronounce some words and do not have a natural pronunciation.	X		The kind of mispronunciation refers to words with more than 2 syllables
4. Students show a natural stress.		X	

5. Students use the correct intonation pattern	X	
6. Students speak logically structured.	X	
7. Students use cohesive markers.	X	
8. Students spell words correctly.	X	
9. Students use very basic vocabulary when speaking.	X	
10. Students use words incorrectly.	X	

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

The following perceptions were obtained as a result of the application of students' observation:

- Students speaking performance was based on real experiences. However, students were concerned about their role at the moment of speaking during the class. They looked confused more than twice in the same session, what caused sudden stops, hesitation and misused of words during their performance.

- Students mispronounced some words during their speaking performance, especially those with more than two syllables. Additionally, they did not show a natural pronunciation or stress, applying incorrect intonation patterns, and with a very plain vocabulary. Some of their deficiencies seemed to be originated on the necessity of increasing their speaking practice with appropriate resources.

- The resources used by the teacher attempted to encourage a positive experience during students' talking; however, it seemed to last little time. As such material were more traditional than innovative, students lower their interest and level of motivation to speak.

3.6.2 Teachers' Interview

An interview, and its instrument, the open-ended questionnaire, was applied to the English teacher of 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget". The purpose was to determine the role of didactic activities in the development of the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget". The interview questionnaire included 10 open-ended questions:

Table 11.
Teacher's Interview

QUESTIONS	ENGLISH TEACHER
1. **What kind of activities do you apply in the classroom to enhance speaking?**	I do activities like debates, activities in pairs or in groups, describing things, etc.
2. **What aspects do you consider for selecting speaking activities that you will apply in the classroom?**	The level of English in the students.
3. **Do you consider that didactic activities bring benefits to students in the learning process? Explain.**	Yes, I think so because these activities help develop a good relationship with the learners, make the classes interesting, and increase students' attention and learning.
4. **Do you think didactic activities should always be considered in any language class? Explain.**	I am not sure, but I think it brings important benefits.
5. **Do you believe that the resources used in the classroom motivate students? Explain.**	Yes. The best way to learn is with motivating activities or resources and to improve STT.
6. **Do you think teachers should take hand of any available resources on the Internet to promote speaking in the classroom?**	Yes, of course. I do this at home when I have time.
7. **Are didactic activities among the type of resources you use to enhance the speaking skill?**	No. Unfortunately, there is not time enough to prepare such material.
8. **Are your students usually motivated to speak when they work in the activities you apply?**	Yes, they like to participate in any activities that motivate them.
9. **Do you consider students' speaking weaknesses in the selection of didactic activities?**	Usually not. There is no time.
10. **Do you think didactic activities can help students improve their speaking?**	Yes. Students feel more motivated when using interesting resources. Unfortunately, the school does not have a reliable internet connection.

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Qualitative Analysis

- The English teacher mentioned debates, pairs or group work, and descriptions as common activities applied in the classroom to enhance speaking, which means he has a clear view of traditional resources. In addition, the teacher thinks that improving STT (students' talking time) is a key factor that will allow students to maximize the benefits of such activities.

- The teacher showed a positive attitude towards the application of didactic activities to enhance speaking, though he does not prepare this kind of material because of time and lack of resources.

- The teacher agrees that students' weaknesses and English level should be considered when selecting speaking activities, but he recognizes that he has no time to prepare such material.

3.6.3 Students' Speaking Pre-Test

In addition to the observation techniques, a speaking pre-test was administered to identify in detail the possible problems that 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget" face in oral production. The test selected is part of the English Cambridge Qualifications, level A1, updated to 2018. A rubric was applied to mark students' speaking performance. The performing criteria, rating scale and indicators included in the rubric are in Annex 5.

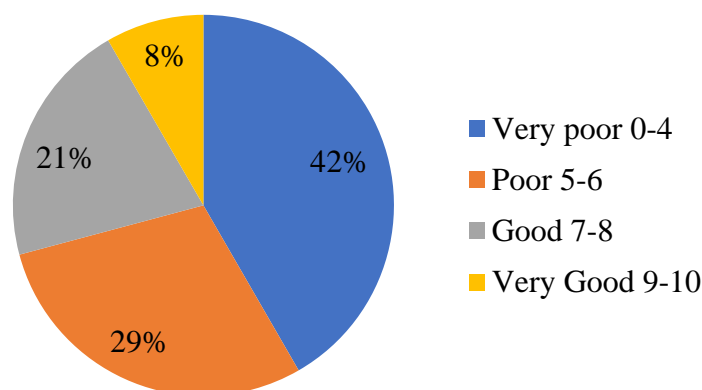The results of the application of the speaking pre-test are the following:

Table 12.

Candidate answered name, family name and age.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Candidate asked name, family name and age.	42%	29%	21%	8%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Candidate answered name, family name and age

Graph 1. Candidate answered name, family name and age.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

The first performing criteria included in the pre-test refers to the introduction of a conversation between the examiner and the student, in which the examiner asks the student what his/her name and surname is and how old he/she is. Few students answered correctly and were graded with 9 to 10 marks (very good) and a huge 42% was graded with 0 to 4 marks (very poor). Students' performance shows an important problem in oral communication, as saying the name and surname is a basic instruction that can be easily answered.
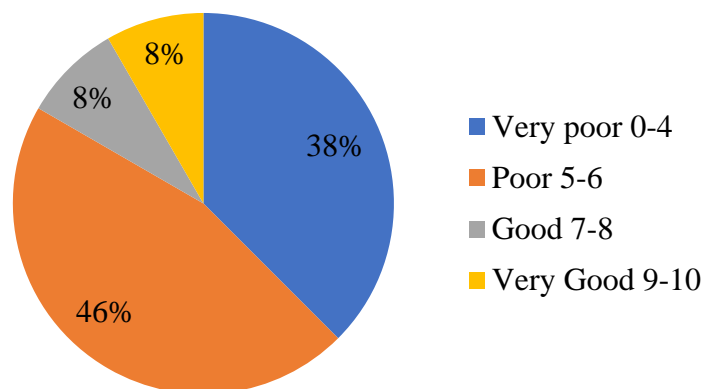

Table 13.
Understand statements and respond with differences.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Understand statements and respond with differences.	38%	46%	8%	8%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Understand statements and respond with differences.

Graph 2. Understand statements and respond with differences.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the second performing criteria, the student needed to understand statements and respond with differences. The 8% of students got 9 to 10 marks (very good), while the 38% obtained 0 to 4 marks (very poor). This item confirms students' difficulties to decode a message and to express thoughts orally. It is possible that students know the correct answer in their mother tongue, but could not express it by spoken word.
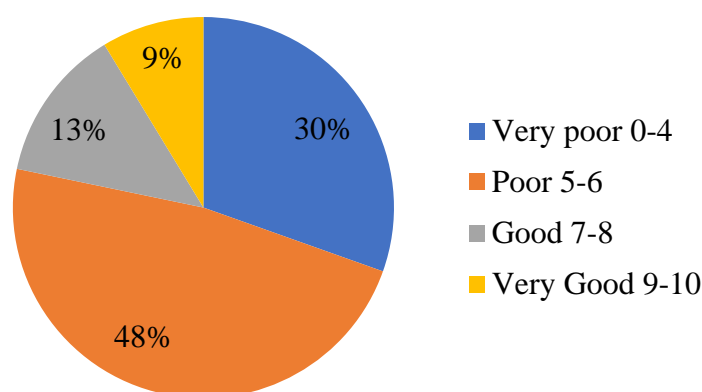

Table 14.
Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.	30%	48%	13%	9%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture

Graph 3. Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

During the third performing criteria, the examiner asked the student to identify six differences in student's picture from statements about examiner's picture. The student also had to say how the picture was different. Few students were graded very good, and almost half of them were graded as poor. The results obtained denote students' difficulties to establish and explain comparisons by looking at two similar pictures.
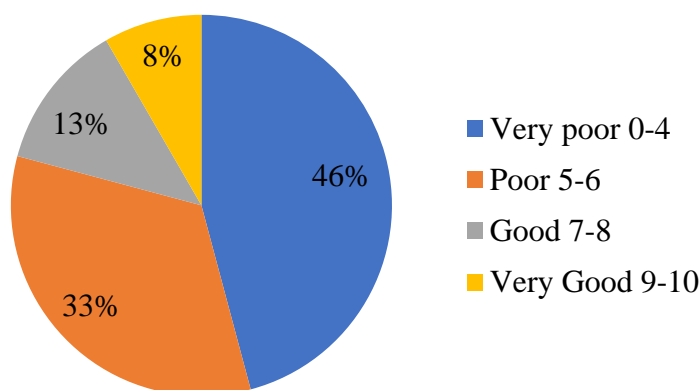
Table 15.
Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Suggest a picture which is different and explain why.	46%	33%	13%	8%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it

Graph 4. Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the fourth performing criteria, the student had to suggest a picture which is different and explain why. Few students were graded very good, and around half of them 46% was graded very poor. This makes possible to confirm that more than half of students have a low academic performance describing a picture, as they cannot elaborate complete information sentences with a variety of vocabulary.
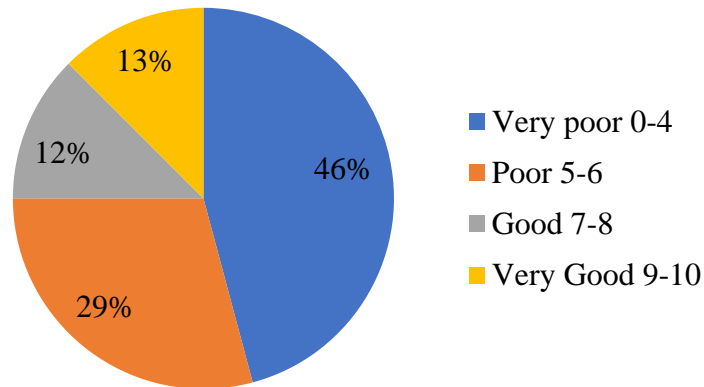

Table 16.
Identify odd one out and give reason.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Identify odd one out and give reason.	46%	29%	12%	13%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Identify odd one out and give reason

Graph 5.Identify odd one out and give reason.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the fifth performing criteria, the student had to identify the odd out and give reasons. Few students were graded very good, while almost half of them was graded very poor. It is possible that students succeeded in identifying the odd elements in the picture, as they can perform this as a mental process However, they failed in giving reasons, mainly because it is a more complex activity.
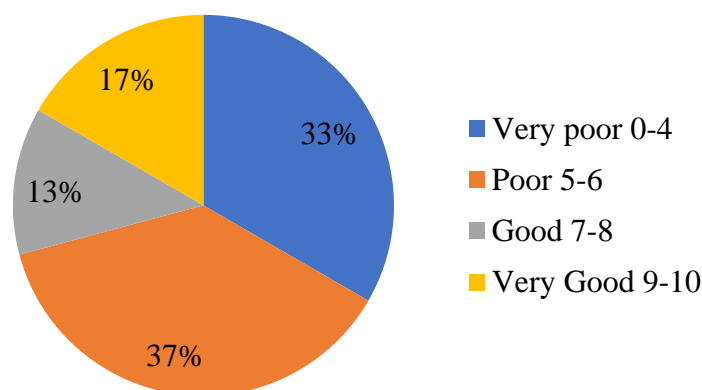

Table 17.
Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story.	33%	37%	13%	17%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story

Graph 6. Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the sixth performing criteria, the student had to develop accurate and well-structured sentences based on pictures to create a story. Few of students were graded very good, while many of them were graded poor. Accuracy is a key component in the acquisition of a second language, and requires a precise answer, so it represents a more complex performance because the speaker must focus on the use of grammar. This is particularly more important when a student has to create a story with his own words.
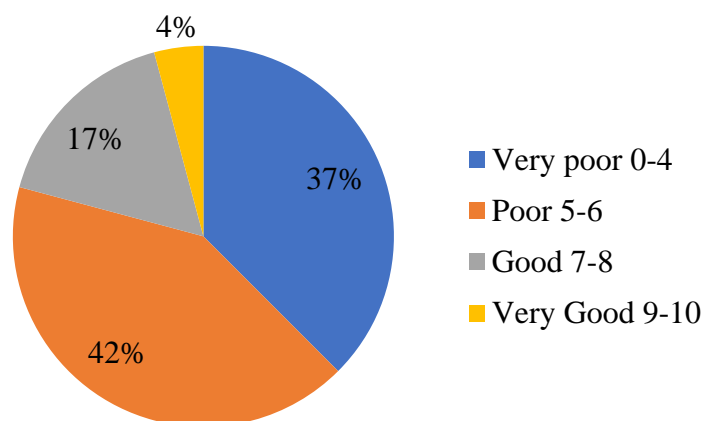
Table 18.
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.	37%	42%	17%	4%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions

Graph 7. Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the seventh performing criteria, the student had to use a variety of vocabulary and expressions. In this item, few students were graded very good, while most of them were graded poor or very poor. The use of vocabulary and expressions in speaking constitutes the basis for the development of the other skills in language learning. Students need to use as many words and expressions as they can to strengthen their ability to grasp ideas and think logically.
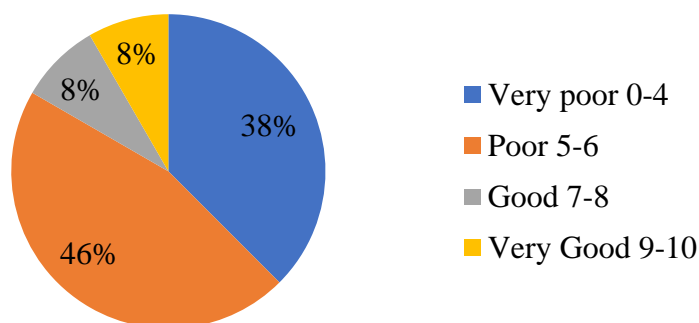

Table 19.
Stay on task and communicate effectively

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.	38%	46%	8%	8%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Stay on task and communicate effectively

Graph 8. Stay on task and communicate effectively.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the eighth performing criteria, the student had to stay on task and communicate effectively. Few students were graded very good, while almost all of them were graded poor or very poor. An effective communication gives students confidence and increases their interest in their academic issues. Oral communication and physical expressions work together to achieve success in speaking. There are at least four things a student should consider having an effective communication: to use "I" messages, to keep an active listening, to be assertive, and to use appropriate body language.

3.6.4 Students' Speaking Post-Test

As a last phase of the research tools application, speaking post-test was administered to measure students' improvement in oral production in 8th. grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget". The test selected is also part of the English Cambridge Qualifications, level A2, updated to 2018. The same rubric than the one applied to the pre test is applied to this post test to mark students' speaking performance. The performing criteria, rating scale and indicators included in the rubric are included in Annex 6:

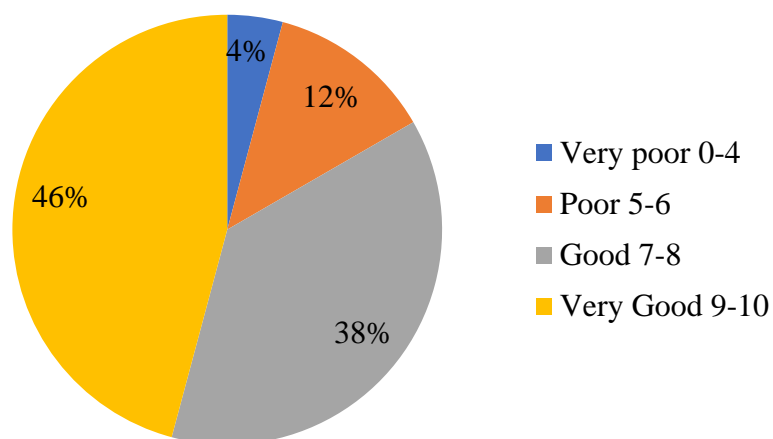The results of the application of the speaking post-test are the following:

Table 20.
Candidate answered name, family name and age.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Candidate asked name, family name and age.	0	0	7	17	24

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Candidate answered name, family name and age

Graph 9. Candidate answered name, family name and age.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
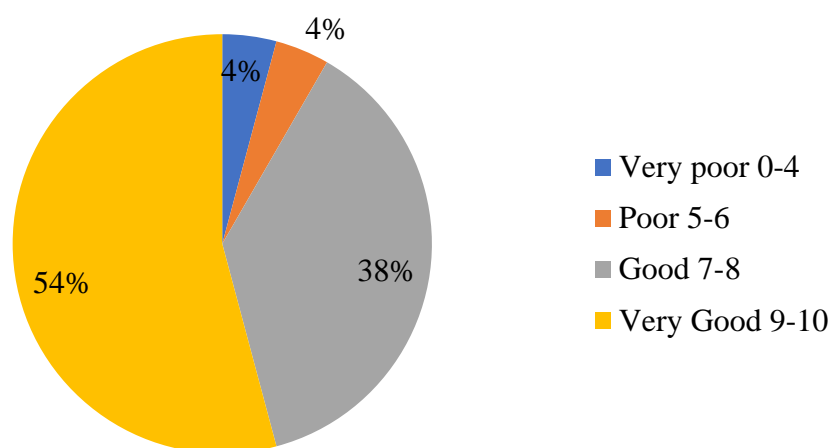Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

The first performing criteria included in the Post-test replicates the pre-test, and refers to the introduction of a conversation between the examiner and the student, in which the examiner asks the student what his/her name and surname is and how old he/she is. Contrary to the previous results, this time most students were located in the "very good" scale (46%) and "good" scale (38%). The others belonged to the " poor" (12%) and "very poor" (4%).

Table 21.
Understand statements and respond with differences.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Understand statements and respond with differences.	4%	4%	38%	54%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Understand statements and respond with differences.

*Graph 10.*Understand statements and respond with differences.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the second performing criteria, the student needed to understand statements and respond with differences. The "very good" scale (54%) is better in number of students than in the pre test. Other students got grades to belong to the "good" (38%), "poor" (4%), and "very poor" (4%) scale.
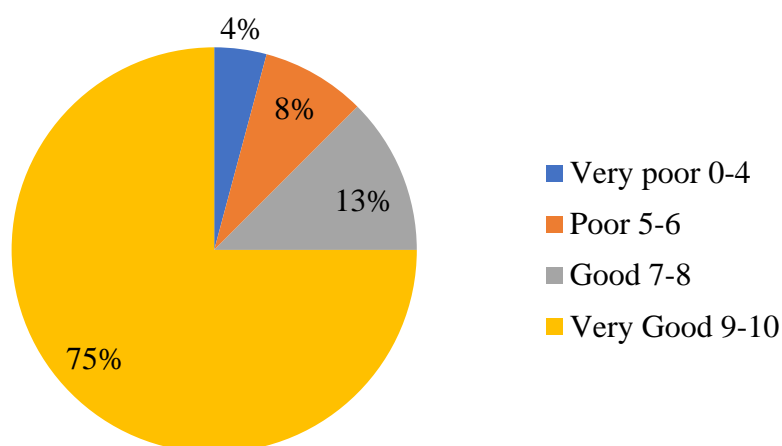
Table 22.

Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.	4%	8%	13%	75%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture

Graph 11. Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

During the third performing criteria the examiner asked the student to identify six differences in student's picture from statements about examiner's picture. The student also had to say how the picture was different. Contrary to the pre test, a larger number of students obtained the highest marks and belonged to the very good scale, while few of them were graded very poor or poor. The improvement in this item shows that students

improved also comprehension by recognizing details, and making abstract ideas more concrete.
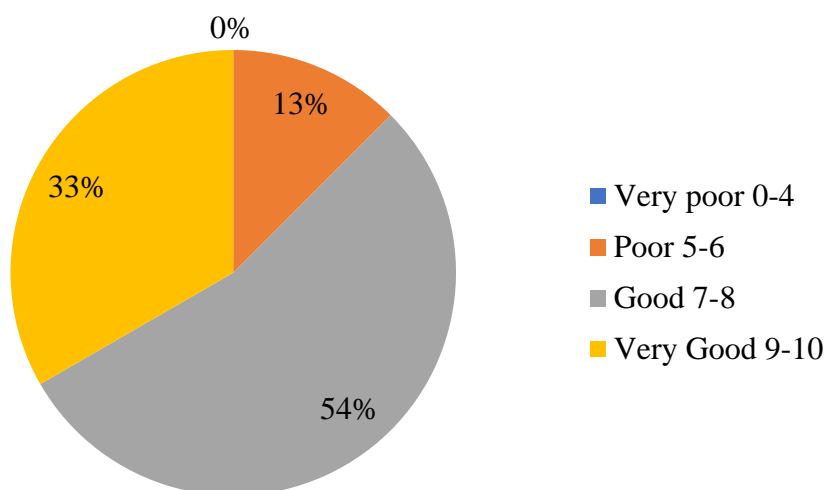
Table 23.
Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Suggest a picture which is different and explain why.	0%	13%	54%	33%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it

Graph 12. Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).
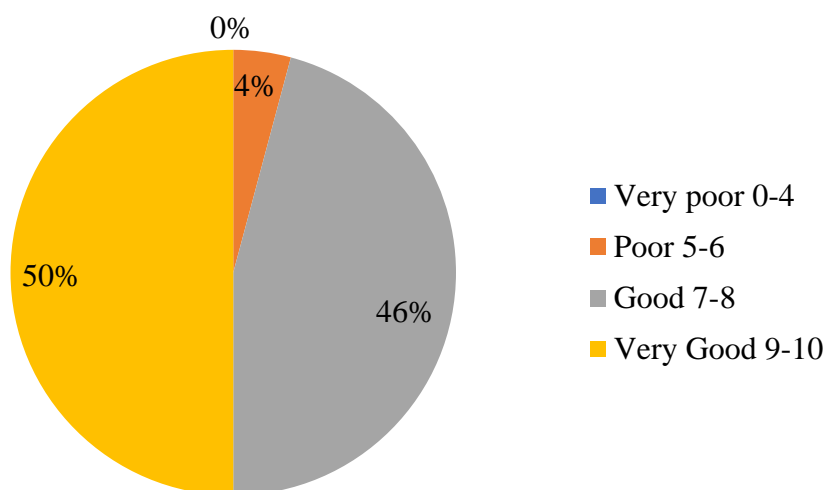
Analysis

In the fourth performing criteria, the student had to suggest a picture which is different and explain why. The results are also better than in the pre test, as students belonged only to three grading scales, with most of them graded very good and a minor portion in the poor scale. Identifying differences implies a process of comparing information and making connections. The importance of this task for students is that by identifying differences or similarities, they will help them understand more complex problems.

Table 24.
Identify odd one out and give reason.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Identify odd one out and give reason.	0%	4%	46%	50%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Identify odd one out and give reason

Graph 13. Identify odd one out and give reason.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the fifth performing criteria, the student had to identify the odd out and give reasons. In the same pattern than the previous items, almost all students were graded very good or good, being only very few of them in the poor scale. In an effective communication, to explain why something happens is essential. Students that can explain a reason or a cause of something keep an advantage in language learning.
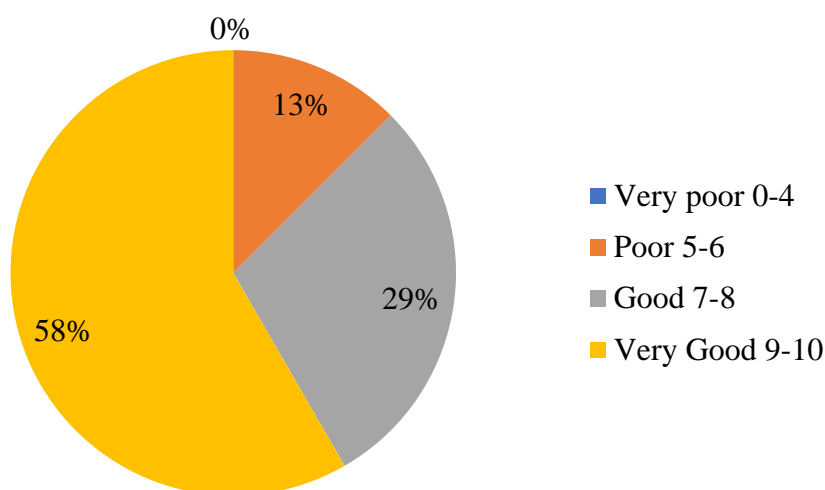
Table 25.

Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story.

Question	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total Students
	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story.	0%	13%	29%	58%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.

Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story

Graph 14. Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story.

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.

Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the sixth performing criteria, the student had to develop accurate sentences based on pictures to create a story. It was detected that most students were graded very good and good, with still a small number of them belonging to the poor. This improvement remarks the importance of a correct use of the English language system to convey ideas.
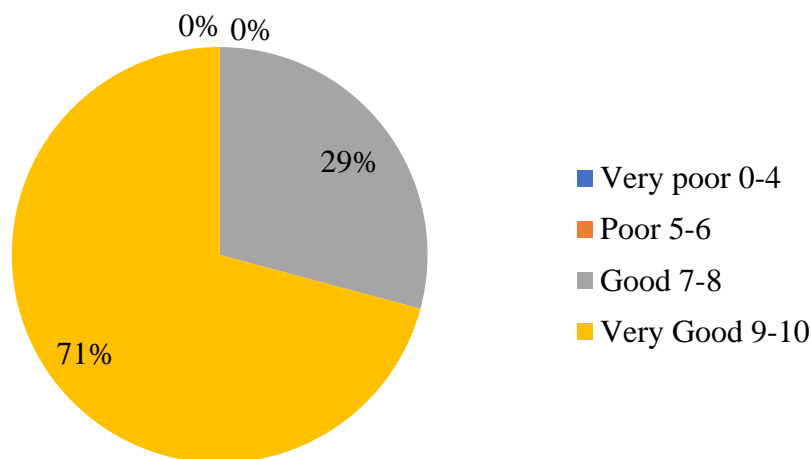
Table 26.
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.

Question	Very poor 0-4	Poor 5-6	Good 7-8	Very Good 9-10	Total Students
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.	0%	0%	29%	71%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions

Graph 15. Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
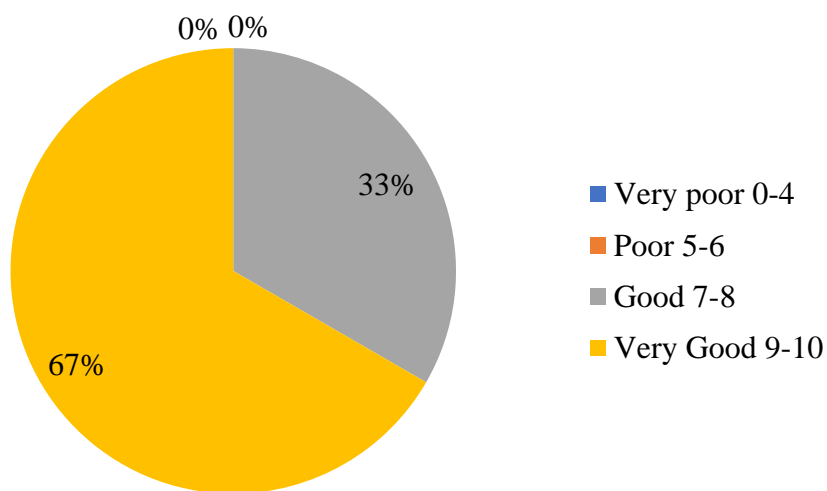Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the seventh performing criteria, the student had to use a variety of vocabulary and expressions. Opposite to the pre test results in this items, in which few students belonged to the very good scale, in the post test most students got the highest grades (very good or good). Students taking hand of a variety of vocabulary manage to communicate, expressing their ideas and decoding a message.

Table 27.
Stay on task and communicate effectively

Question	Very poor 0-4	Poor 5-6	Good 7-8	Very Good 9-10	Total Students
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.	0%	0%	33%	67%	100%

Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Stay on task and communicate effectively

Graph 16. Stay on task and communicate effectively.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

Analysis

In the eighth performing criteria, the student had to stay on task and communicate effectively. In the same way than the previous items, there are only two scales in which students' results were distributed: the very good and good scale. An effective communication in students implies they managed to organize their thoughts and express them appropriately.

Post Test Qualitative Analysis

The post test results showed a clear improvement of students' speaking performance in all the items measured. In some cases the "poor" and "very poor" scales had no students in them, which means their skills were good enough to avoid those categories. What is more, the "very good" scales are larger in the post test than in the pre test, which means that even those students with good grades in the pre-test improved their speaking performance and stayed in the same high scale.

3.6.5 Preliminary conclusions

Once the research tools were processed and discussed, the following preliminary conclusions have been drawn:

- The observation tools allowed to perceive that the teacher commonly use traditional material in the classroom. This factor lowers students' interest, causing them hesitation and misuse of words. There were not enough didactic activities to promote students' speaking. Instead, repetitive strategies were used, which barely motivated students. As a result, students looked sometimes overwhelmed, and at the end, their collaborative work did not produce the results expected. An important aspect to remark is that the classroom was equipped with few basic technological resources such as a computer. There was not internet connection.

- The teacher's interview showed that debates, pairs or group work, open questions, and descriptions as common activities applied in the classroom to enhance speaking, which means he has a clear view of traditional resources to enhance speaking. The teacher showed a positive attitude towards the application of didactic activities to enhance speaking, though he does not prepare this kind of material because of time and lack of resources.

- The pre-test applied to students showed that some students still have difficulties to express orally in basic sentences, such as family name and age, or in understanding statements. Even though most of them got a good grade in the test, those who failed and got a poor grade are an important portion of the sample. On the other hand, the post-test showed a considerable improvement in students' speaking performance.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Title

- Didactic activities: Guide to Develop Students' Speaking Skills

4.2 General objective

- To design a guide with a set of appropriate didactic activities to help 8th grade students develop their speaking skills, at Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.

4.3 Specific objectives

- To motivate students to speak through didactic activities in the classroom.
- To improve students' speaking skills by using a set of didactic activities.

4.4 The proposal scheme and development

4.4.1   The proposal Scheme

Activity 1
- Title: My Favorite Pancake!
- Objective: To describe the steps for preparing a recipe, using specific vocabulary.
- Type of speaking: Demonstrative speaking.

Activity 2
- Title: Picture Description
- Objective: To describe, compare or contrast the pictures, using linking words.
- Type of speaking: Informative Speaking.

Activity 3
- Title: A Story in a Bag
- Objective: To create an oral story by applying appropriate pronunciation and vocabulary.
- Type of speaking: Demonstrative Speaking.

Activity 4
- Title: Performing a Role Play
- Objective: To express and ask for opinions with fluency.
- Type of speaking: Persuading Speaking

Activity 5
- Title: Speaking Bingo!
- Objective: To express and ask for opinions with fluency.
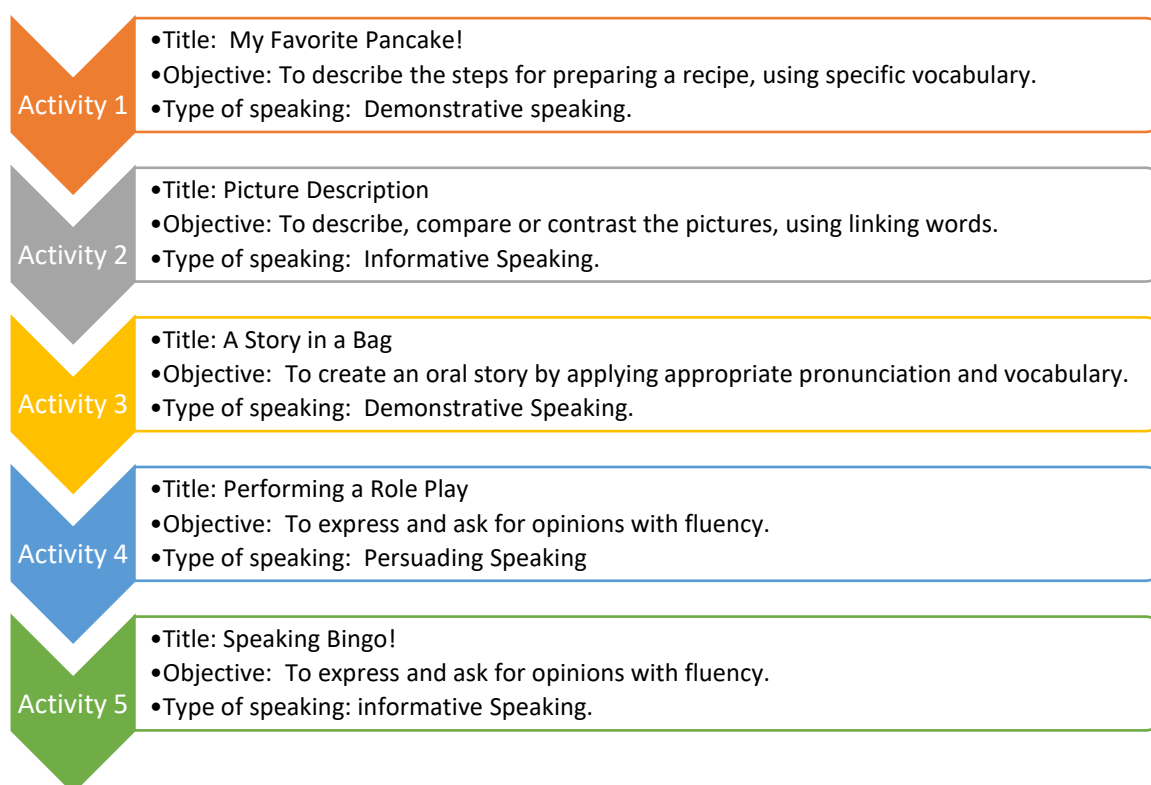- Type of speaking: informative Speaking.

Figure 3. The Proposal Scheme.
Source: Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget.
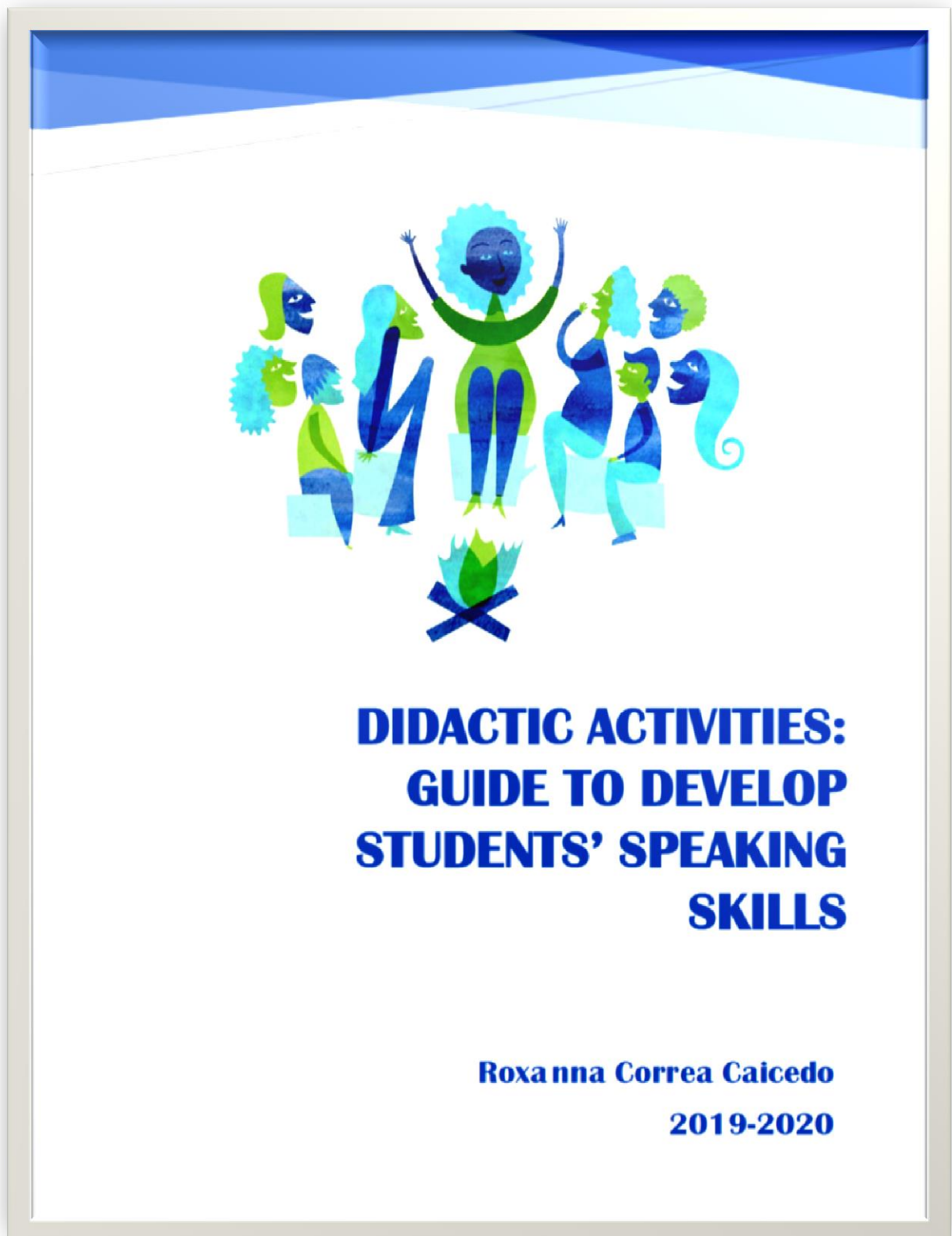Elaborated by: Correa, R. (2020).

4.4.2 The Proposal Development.

Figure 4. Didactic activities.
Didactic activities.

INDEX OF ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

The current globalized world demands a good linguistic performance in English, because it promotes intercultural relations and access to information. Being considered English as a universal language of communication, it should be noted that it is an important requirement in several fields. In Ecuador, the English language is defined as a foreign language, since it is not used as a language of communication between people living in this country. Generally, non-native students do not have immediate access to use it outside the classroom. This represents a great challenge for English teachers, both in relation to the methodologies applied and the resources used to motivate students. One effective way to increase motivation to learn this language is with the materials that teachers select.

The didactic material is usually taken as a link between the teacher and reality. Ideally, teaching and learning should be carried out in contact with real life, but it is not always possible, and for this reason, teachers take hand of resources or materials that serve as a bridge between what is learned and the real world. Therefore, the didactic material replaces reality and tries to represent it in the best possible way. There is a varied terminology to refer to the materials. There are those who talk about "media" or "teaching resources", "teaching aids", "educational media", "teaching materials" or "curricular material". The current proposal refers to didactic material.

Activity # 1

My Favorite Pancake

Activity:	My Favorite Pancake
Objective:	To describe the steps for preparing a recipe, using specific vocabulary.
Type of speaking:	Demonstrative speaking.
Duration:	At least 5 minutes each pair.

Figure 5. Pancakes.
Source: Google Images. (2019).

Resources / Materials:

To prepare a brochure:
- Color pencils
- Color pens
- Ruler
- Sheets of paper
- Pictures / photos

Other materials:
- Ingredients to prepare hotcakes.
- A cellphone or a video-camera

Basic Vocabulary:

- Tablespoon
- Teaspoon
- Cups

- Beat
- Preheat
- Melt

- All-purpose
- Flour
- Baking powder

Procedure:

- Students work in pairs and find an easy recipe to make hotcakes. Explain they will have to make hotcakes of different shapes.
- Students have to record the process. They will explain in English how to make hotcakes step by step.
- Students bring both the final product and the video to the class.
- In pairs, students present the recipe and the process in an innovative way.
- Students have to wear an outfit according to the theme.

Rubric:

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD
Content				
Delivery				
Visual Aid				
Knows words and can define it				
Pronounces words correctly				

Activity # 2

Picture Description

Activity:	Picture Description	
Objective:	To describe, compare or contrast the pictures, using linking words.	
Type of speaking:	Informative speaking.	
Duration:	15 minutes.	*Figure 6.* The kitchen. Source: Google Images. (2019).

Resources / Materials:

- List of expressions
- Pictures
- Projector
- Computer
- Board

Expressions to be used:

Expressions to describe pictures:
- The picture shows…
- We can see…
- There is / are…
- It seems…
- It looks like…

Expression to compare pictures:
- Similar to
- Like
- The same as
- In the same way

Expressions to contrast pictures:
- Whereas
- Unlike
- Instead of
- On the other hand

Useful expressions: Adding.
- And
- Moreover
- Also
- Too
- As well as
- Furthermore

Useful expressions: Illustrating.
- For example
- In the case of
- Such as
- For instance

Useful expressions: emphasizing.

- Above all
- Specially
- In particular

Useful expression to give opinion:

- In my opinion
- From my point of view
- As I see it
- Taking… into account
- If you ask me

Pictures to be described:

Shopping

Figure 7. Toy Store.

Figure 8. Market.

Leisure time

Figure 9. At the park.
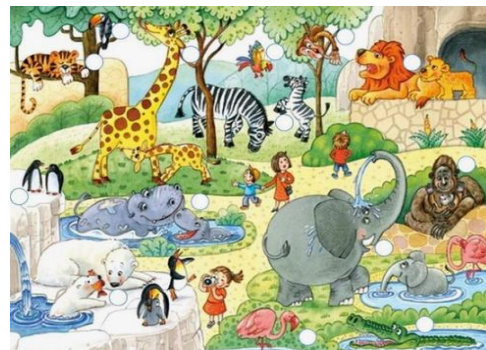
Figure 10. At the zoo.

At work

Figure 11. At the Vet.

Figure 12. At the bookstore.

Procedure:
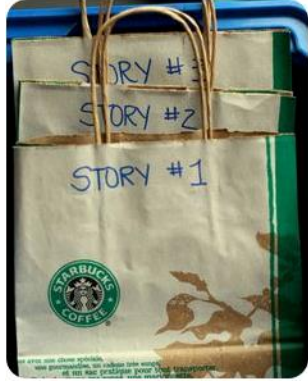
- Students work in pairs to describe, compare, or contrast a pair of pictures.
- Provide students the list of expressions to be used.
- Explain they will have two different pictures related to the same topic, so they will have to describe both by taking turns.
- Ask students to use linking words and the expressions suggested to connect and develop their ideas.
- After the description, ask students to give their opinion on the pictures.

Rubric:

CRITERIA	Very poor (0-4.99)	Poor (5-6.99)	Good (7-8.99)	Very Good (9)	Excellent (10)
Accuracy					
Content					
Fluency					
Pronunciation					
Vocabulary					

Activity # 3

A Story in a Bag

Activity:	A story in a bag
Objective:	To create an oral story by applying appropriate pronunciation and vocabulary.
Type of speaking:	Demonstrative speaking.
Duration:	30 minutes.

Figure 13. Story bags.
Source: Google Images. (2019).

Resources / Materials:

- Bags of paper
- Diverse objects

Suggestions for filling the bags:

- A postcard
- A can opener
- Keys
- Other objects selected randomly

- Credit cards
- A candle
- A box of matches

- A surgical mask
- A concert ticket
- A Teddy bear

Procedure:

- Before starting the activity, the teacher fills the bags of paper with 5 to 6 random diverse and unrelated objects. There will be needed 1 bag per group of students.
- Divided the class in groups of 4.
- Ask the groups to open their bags, remove the objects inside and create an oral story, including all the objects found in the bag given.
- Explain that all the objects should be present in the plot.
- The story must be oral. Students will not be allowed to write and then read the

story.

- Once the groups finish, each one will share its story with the class. Every student in the group must participate speaking.

Rubric:

CRITERIA	Very poor (0-4.99)	Poor (5-6.99)	Good (7-8.99)	Very Good (9)	Excellent (10)
Accuracy					
Content					
Fluency					
Pronunciation					
Vocabulary					

Activity # 4

Performing a Role Play

Activity:	Performing a Role Play	
Objective:	To express and ask for opinions with fluency.	
Type of speaking:	Persuading speaking.	
Duration:	30 minutes.	*Figure 14.* Role play. Source: Google Images. (2019).

Resources / Materials:

- Role play cards
- Scenery Stuff
- A world map
- The board

Suggested Role Play Cards:

- **Role Play 1:**

Student A
You've just arrived in your first country at the beginning of your world tour. You're worried about money and so you'd like to find a cheap hotel to stay in. Try and convince your friends that this is the best option.

Student B
You've just arrived in your first country at the beginning of your world tour. You want to start your holiday in style and stay in a nice hotel. Try and convince your friends that this is the best idea.

Student C
You've just arrived in your first country at the beginning of your world tour. Your friends have got different ideas about where they would like to stay. Listen to them and decide who you agree with.

- **Role Play 2:**

Student A
You're now in your second country but unfortunately you've just been mugged and have lost your bag with your passport,

Student B
You're now in your second country but unfortunately your friend's bag's been stolen. You're at the police station to help

air tickets and money in it. You're at the   your friend.
police station to report the theft.

Student C

You're a police officer. Two westerners are in your police station to report a theft. You don't believe their story. Ask them a lot of questions to find out if they are telling the truth.

- **Role Play 3**

Student A   **Student B**

Because of the mugging you phone home   You are Mum. You are upset about what
to talk to your parents. You want your   has happened to your child. You don't
parents to send you some money urgently   want to send him/her any money because
because you have no money left. Reassure   you want him/her to come back home
your parents that everything is OK and get   immediately.
as much money as possible.

Student C

You are Dad. You are upset about what has happened to your child. You don't want to send him/her any money because you want him/her to come back home immediately.

- **Role Play 4**

Student A   **Student B**

You're in Malaysia and you've fallen in   You're in Malaysia and feel quite happy.
love with Asia. Now you really want to go   Your two friends have got very different
to Thailand because you've heard they've   ideas about where to go next. Listen to
got the best beaches in the world. Try and   your friends and then tell them what you
convince your friends to come with you.   would like to do.

Student C

You're in Malaysia but you want to leave. You are tired of travelling and you miss your home and your home cooking. Try and convince your friends to come home with you.

Procedure:

- Divide the class in groups of 3 students. Each group will have to perform a role play.

- Give each group a set of role play cards.

- Explain students they will go on an imaginary tour around the world with two friends.

- Show the world map to students and ask them to select a place they would like to

go.

- Encourage students to think about possible problems during the trip. Then, ask them to imagine they arrived to the place they chose and that they have to play the roles described in the cards.
- Each group will act out their roles.
- The teacher should take notes of the vocabulary or pronunciation problems to give feedback later.

Rubric:

CRITERIA	Very poor (0-4.99)	Poor (5-6.99)	Good (7-8.99)	Very Good (9)	Excellent (10)
Accuracy					
Content					
Fluency					
Pronunciation					
Vocabulary					

Activity # 5

Speaking Bingo!

Activity:	Speaking Bingo!	*Figure 15.* Bingo. Source: Google Images. (2019).
Objective:	To express and ask for opinions with fluency.	
Type of speaking:	Informative speaking.	
Duration:	20-30 minutes.	

Resources / Materials:

- Bingo grid
- List of words
- Board
- Projector
- Computer

Procedure:

- Give each student a bingo grid template.
- Show the list of pre-selected words on the board. Have a list of about 35-40 words.
- Ask students to fill the grids randomly by selecting any words from the list.
- Choose a student to start.
- The first student will describe a word without saying the word. The next student describes another word, and so on.
- The student who fills the bingo card first wins.

Rubric:

CRITERIA	Very poor (0-4.99)	Poor (5-6.99)	Good (7-8.99)	Very Good (9)	Excellent (10)
Accuracy					
Content					
Fluency					
Pronunciation					
Vocabulary					

CONCLUSIONS

Once the current study was developed and the data analysis obtained from the application of the research tools, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- The development of the current research work that implied the bibliographical review and the application of research tools, allowed to establish that the didactic activities influence positively and effectively the speaking skill in 8th grade EGB students at "Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget", school year 2019-2020.

- The speaking skill is crucial for everyday communication. Thus, in second language learning, students need to master at least the basic speaking skills, so they will be able to transmit a message and to understand others.

- Through the study of different stages, it was possible to establish the relationship between the didactic activities and the speaking skill in the English language. Once the research techniques and tools were applied it was determined the extent to which students face difficulties in their speaking performance.

- Teachers' limitations in the classroom were caused not only because of lack of technology, but also because they do not receive enough training to design modern didactic material, so they take hand of traditional methods and resources.

- It was possible to identify students' problems in speaking, that derived lack of motivation to participate actively in the classroom was caused by the use of more traditional than modern resources in the English class, so their performance was not the appropriate, showing the necessity of modern didactic resources for an effective speaking practice.

- English teachers are aware of the benefits that innovative didactic materials bring to the classroom, they recognized the students' needs to improve their weaknesses in speaking, and showed a positive attitude towards the application of modern didactic activities. However, they expressed that there is no time to prepare their own

material, as there are limitations in the classroom regarding to technology, in addition to other requirements they need to fulfill for the institution.

- It was established that the didactic activities play an important role in language learning and specifically on speaking skill. The application of the didactic material proposed, based on cooperative learning, real situations and real life material, proved to be an important aspect to enhance the speaking skill in students, and helped them to progress significantly in their performance in this skill, which according to the pre-test results needed to be developed. In addition, this kind of activities helped students in the development of higher-level thinking, self-management, and leadership skills.

- There are some other aspects that students can improve with the application of the activities proposed. Due to the fact that the activities include cooperative learning, the students' interaction with their peers and with the teacher are meant to increase, as well as their retention, self-esteem, and responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Once the application of the pre and post-test was carried out, it was possible to establish that students improved to some extent their difficulties in the speaking skill. For this reason, it is strongly recommendable to use the proposed guide to develop students' speaking skills. However, the activities proposed are only a scheme with the most important aspects teachers should considered in the planning and elaboration of didactic material. Teachers need to plan and design the activities correctly, according to the content and considering students' needs.

- The institution iin this case- Unidad Educativa Jean Piaget, should improve the classroom resources, such as a reliable internet connection, a projector, some speakers, and others, so teachers can take hand of these resources, and plan their material with innovative ideas by using technology.

- Parents or representatives should follow up students' speaking practice at home, as the time in the classroom is not enough for the appropriate development of this skill. When students practice a skill more than their school time, that is, outside the classroom, it tends to enhance the use of the language inside the class.

- The proposed guide of didactic activities should be considered as an important resource to improve students' speaking skills. Therefore, teachers should take it into consideration for their English classes, bearing in mind that it has to be increased and improved with new innovative materials and including the aspects that each group of students need to develop.

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ANNEX 1

**UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE
DE GUAYAQUIL**

Students' Observation Guide

Date: _____   **Observation Guide #:** _____

ITEMS	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1. Students stop and hesitate before starting a sentence.			
2. Students make mistakes in sentence construction when they speak.			
3. Students mispronounce some words and do not have a natural pronunciation.			
4. Students show a natural stress.			
5. Students use the correct intonation pattern			
6. Students speak logically structured.			
7. Students use cohesive markers.			
8. Students spell words correctly.			
9. Students use very basic vocabulary when speaking.			
10. Students use words incorrectly.			

ANNEX 2

**UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE
DE GUAYAQUIL**

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

1. What kind of activities do you apply in the classroom to enhance speaking?
2. What aspects do you consider for selecting the speaking activities that you will apply in the classroom?
3. Do you consider that didactic activities bring benefits to students in the learning process? Explain.
4. Do you think didactic activities should always be considered in any language class? Explain.
5. Do you believe that the resources used in the classroom motivate students? Explain.
6. Do you think teachers should take hand of any available resources on the Internet to promote speaking in the classroom?
7. Are didactic activities among the type of resources you use to enhance the speaking skill?
8. Are your students usually motivated to speak when they work in the activities you apply?
9. Do you consider students' speaking weaknesses in the selection of the didactic activities?
10. Do you think didactic activities can help students improve their speaking? Explain.

Speaking Pre-Test

(8th grade students)

Student's name: _____   Date: _____

A1 Movers Speaking

Summary of procedures

The usher introduces the child to the examiner. The examiner asks the child 'What's your name?' and 'How old are you?'

1. The examiner asks the child to describe several differences between the two Find the Differences pictures, e.g. 'Here it's a cloudy day, but here it's a sunny day.'

2. The examiner tells the child the name of the story and describes the first picture, e.g. 'These pictures show a story. It's called, "Fred loves food". Look at the pictures first. (Pause) Fred's at home with his family. They're in the kitchen and Mum's giving him his dinner.' The examiner then asks the child to continue the story. The title of the story and the name of the main character(s) are shown with the pictures in the candidate booklet.

3. The examiner demonstrates how to do this task with the first set of four odd-one out pictures and then asks the child to choose one picture in the other three sets and say which is different and why. For example, 'You don't eat a book. You read it.'

4. The examiner asks questions about a topic, e.g. 'Let's now talk about parties. What do you eat at parties?'

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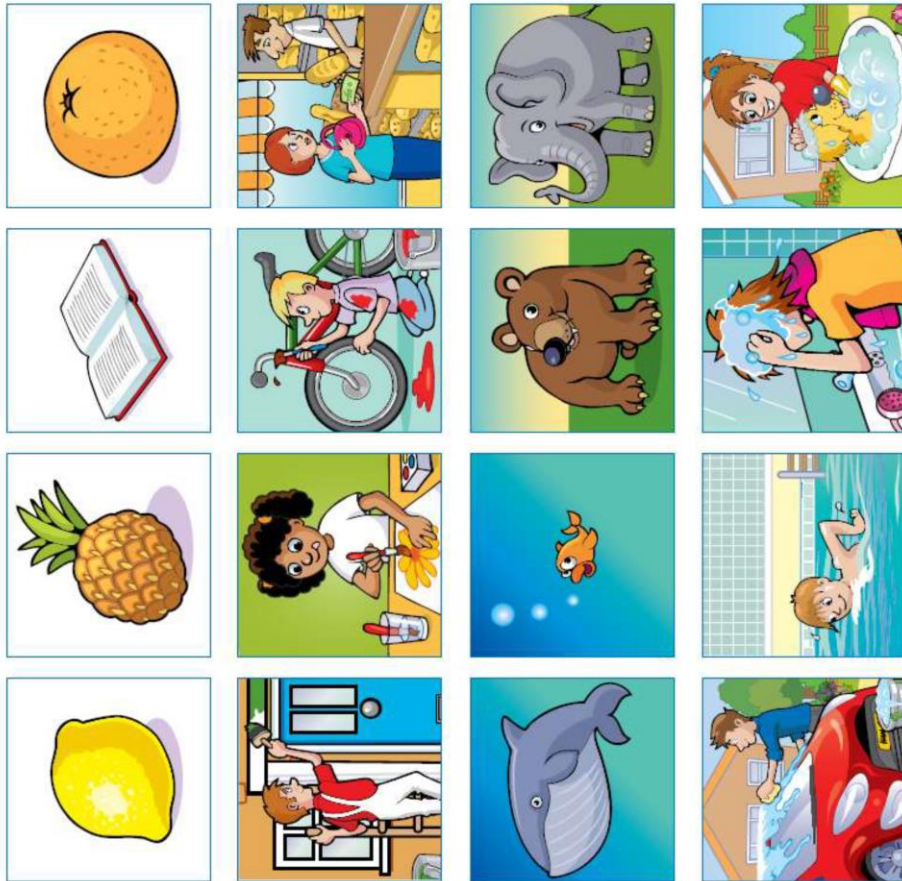https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/young-learners-sample-papers-2018-vol1.pdf

A1 MOVERS SPEAKING. Find the Differences

Fred loves food

A1 MOVERS SPEAKING. Picture Story

TEST ONE

A1 MOVERS SPEAKING. Odd-one-out

ANNEX 4

UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE DE GUAYAQUIL

Speaking Post-Test
(8th grade students)

A2 Flyers Speaking

Summary of procedures

The usher introduces the child to the examiner. The examiner asks the child what his/her name and surname is and how old he/she is.

1. The examiner shows the child the candidate's copy of the Find the Differences picture. The child is initially shown the examiner's copy as well, but then encouraged to look at the candidate's copy only. The examiner then makes a series of statements about the examiner's picture and the child has to respond by making statements showing how the candidate's picture is different, e.g. (examiner) 'In my picture, the man is pointing at a cloud on the map.' (child) 'In my picture, he's pointing at the sun.'

2. The examiner shows the child the candidate's copy of the Information Exchange. The child is initially shown the examiner's copy as well, but then is encouraged to look at the candidate's copy only. The examiner first asks the child questions related to the information the child has, e.g. 'What's the name of Robert's favourite restaurant?' and the child answers. The child then asks the examiner questions, e.g. 'What's the name of Sarah's favourite restaurant?' and the examiner answers.

3. The examiner tells the child the name of the story and describes the first picture, e.g. 'These pictures tell a story. It's called "The Brave Teacher". Just look at the pictures first. (Pause) Nick and Anna are looking out of the classroom window. The teacher isn't happy because they're not doing their work.' The examiner then asks the child to continue telling the story. The title of the story and the name of the main character(s) are shown with the pictures in the candidate booklet.

4. The examiner asks questions about a topic, e.g. 'Now let's talk about some different months of the year. What's the best month at school?'
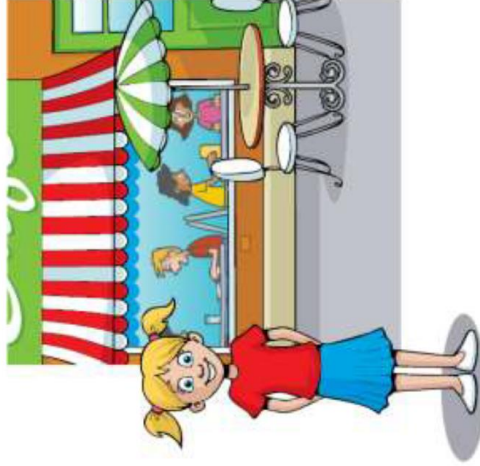
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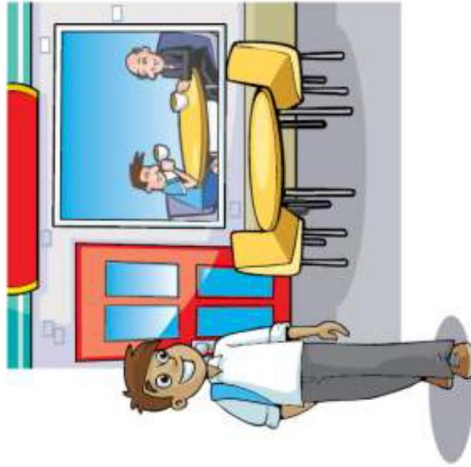
A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Find the Differences

A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Find the Differences
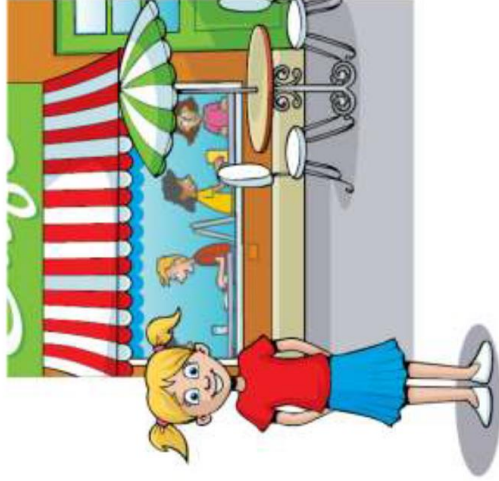
Sarah's favourite restaurant

Name	?
Like eating	?
Where	?
Time / open	?
Cheap / expensive	?

Robert's favourite restaurant
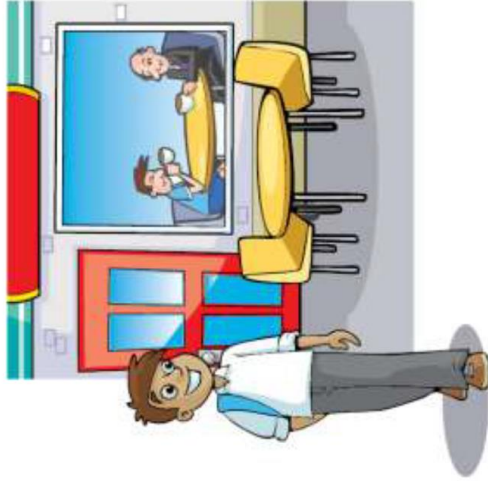
Name	The Black Cat
Like eating	pasta
Where	North Street
Time / open	12 o'clock
Cheap / expensive	expensive

A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Information Exchange

Sarah's favourite restaurant

Name	Rainbows
Like eating	pizza
Where	Hill Street
Time / open	12.30
Cheap / expensive	cheap

Robert's favourite restaurant

Name	?
Like eating	?
Where	?
Time / open	?
Cheap / expensive	?

A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Information Exchange

The Brave Teacher
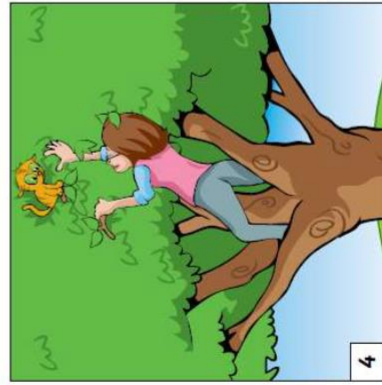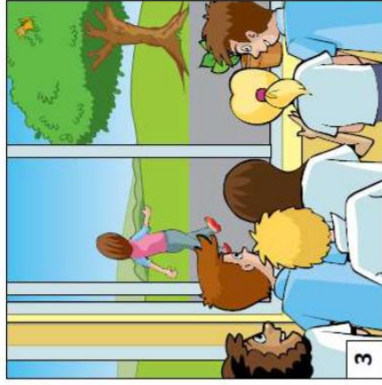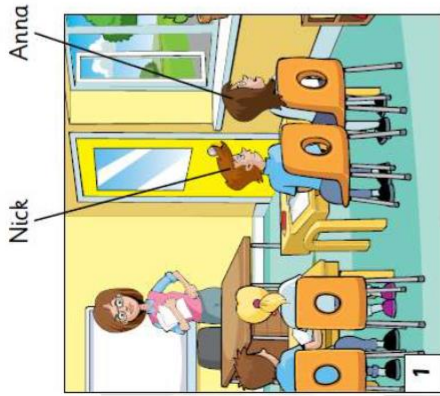
A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Picture Story

ANNEX 5

ULVR

UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE
DE GUAYAQUIL

RUBRIC TO MARK STUDENTS' SPEAKING
PRE TEST AND POST TEST

CRITERIA	RATING SCALE			
	Very poor (0-4)	Poor (5-6)	Good (7-8)	Very Good (9-10)
Candidate answered name, family name and age.				
Understand statements and respond with differences.				
Identify six differences in candidate's picture from statements about examiner's picture.				
Suggest a picture which is different and explain information about it.				
Identify odd one out and give reason.				
Develop accurate and well structured sentences based on pictures to create a story				
Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions.				
Stay on task and communicate effectively: almost always respond appropriately, and others tries to develop the interaction.				

ANNEX 6
VALIDATION SHEETS

UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE DE GUAYAQUIL
Validation of the proposed Project Plan

"DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE STUDENTS EGB AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020"

Rating Scale

Alternatives	Very significant	Significant	Somehow significant	Not that significant	Not significant
Scientific aspect	X				
Social impact	X				
Feasibility	X				
Relevance	X				
Originality	X				
Language	X				
Comprehension	X				
Creativity	X				

Comments:

It is a very well-structured guide. The activities proposed motivate students and promote oral communication.

Name:	Mgt. Sarita Orellana B.	
Occupation:	English Professor	
Phone number	0958720302	

Author: Roxanna Correa Caicedo

UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE DE GUAYAQUIL

Validation of the proposed Project Plan

"DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE STUDENTS EGB AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020"

Rating Scale

Alternatives	Very significant	Significant	Somehow significant	Not that significant	Not significant
Scientific aspect	X				
Social impact	X				
Feasibility	X				
Relevance	X				
Originality	X				
Language	X				
Comprehension	X				
Creativity	x				

Comments:
These activities are very useful because speaking needs to be practiced in many different ways.

Name:	Mélida Campoverde	
Occupation:	University Professor	
Phone number	0986103613	

Author: Roxanna Correa Caicedo

UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE DE GUAYAQUIL

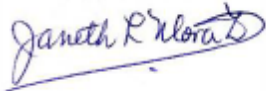**Validation of the proposed Project Plan**

"DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND THE SPEAKING SKILL IN 8TH GRADE STUDENTS EGB AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JEAN PIAGET", SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020"

Rating Scale

Alternatives	Very significant	Significant	Somehow significant	Not that significant	Not significant
Scientific aspect			✓		
Social impact	✓				
Feasibility	✓				
Relevance		✓			
Originality		✓			
Language	✓				
Comprehension	✓				
Creativity		✓			

Comments:

The structure of the proposal is appropriate to the level of the students. The

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Occupation:	English Director School of Languages ULVR	*Janeth R Mora*
Phone number	0990536501	

activities combine theory and practice.

Author: Roxanna Correa Caicedo

ANNEX 7

PHOTOS