



Perspectives of EFL Student's Difficulties in Speaking: A Descriptive Study

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Modality: Descriptive Study

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Proyecto de Investigación

Certifico que Diana Nataly Mendieta Alvarez ha cumplido satisfactoriamente su investigación descriptiva como pre-requisito de graduación de Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés.

Su investigación es parte del proyecto Perspectives of EFL Students in Speaking cuyo objetivo general es conocer desde la perspectiva de los estudiantes sus dificultades al momento de hablar en inglés. Esta información nos servirá para realizar mejoras en el proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés en nuestro context.

El proyecto se implementa en varios niveles de eficiencia en inglés. En este proyecto, cada participante desarrolla la recolección de datos en un contexto educativo diferente. Las secciones de literatura y metodología (instrumentos y análisis de datos) son las mismas.

Particular que comunico para los fines consiguientes.

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Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive research was to identify how difficult it was for learners to speak in English. This research was conducted in Cuenca, Ecuador, at a public high school. Quantitative and qualitative data were examined in this research. A survey was applied to collect data from 50 students between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. They were in the first and second years. The survey included statements that examined students' challenges, activities, and attitudes on pair work in speaking. The questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms, and the analysis was performed using the SPSS program. Findings indicated that poor pronunciation and vocabulary were the major impediments, which discouraged students from speaking because they were afraid to take risks in front of the teacher and peers. In English speaking activities, participants engaged in conversations, vocabulary practice, and oral presentations. Students expressed pleasant perceptions about pair work, but they were neutral about the idea that working in pairs is an effective way to improve communication since students with greater speaking ability may interrupt and deny others the opportunity to participate. These findings may be of interest to English teachers who work with students who have trouble communicating.

Keywords: speaking activities, speaking difficulties, pair-work, English language.

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Resumen

El propósito de esta investigación descriptiva fue identificar qué tan difícil era para los estudiantes hablar en inglés. Esta investigación se realizó en Cuenca, Ecuador, en un colegio público. En esta investigación se examinaron datos cuantitativos y cualitativos. Se aplicó una encuesta para recolectar datos de 50 estudiantes entre las edades de 15 a 18 años. Estaban en primer y segundo año. La encuesta incluyó declaraciones que examinaron los desafíos, las actividades y las actitudes de los estudiantes en el trabajo en pareja al hablar. Los cuestionarios se distribuyeron a través de Google Forms y el análisis se realizó mediante el programa SPSS. Los hallazgos indicaron que la pronunciación y el vocabulario deficientes eran los principales impedimentos, lo que desalentó a los estudiantes a hablar porque tenían miedo de correr riesgos frente al maestro y los compañeros. En las actividades de habla inglesa, los colaboradores participaron en conversaciones, práctica de vocabulario y presentaciones orales. Los estudiantes expresaron percepciones agradables sobre el trabajo en parejas, pero fueron neutrales sobre la idea de que trabajar en parejas es una forma efectiva de mejorar la comunicación, ya que los estudiantes con mayor habilidad para hablar pueden interrumpir y negar a otros la oportunidad de participar. Estos hallazgos pueden ser de interés para los profesores de inglés que trabajan con estudiantes que tienen problemas para comunicarse.

Palabras clave: actividades de habla, dificultades para hablar, trabajo en pareja, idioma inglés.

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Perspectives of EFL student's difficulties in speaking: A Descriptive Study

Nowadays, learning a second language has become the primary goal for people all over the world, particularly those who consider English to be the world's official language. Rao (2019) affirmed that “in the twenty-first century, the entire world has become narrow, accessible, shareable, and familiar for all the people living on this earth as English is used as a common language” (p.65). To practice a new language, it is required to develop the four fundamental skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. All of these skills are essential for communicating and integrating into a global and multicultural society by using English as a lingua franca. According to Marlina and Xu (2018), the lingua franca enables all speakers from diverse cultures to use English as a communication tool, and employ a variety of strategies to interact with multiple intercultural contexts.

Despite the fact that all of the skills required to acquire a language are important, some researchers estimate that speaking ability is the most difficult to acquire. According to Jarrin and Kim (2019), some studies showed that “speaking difficulties may arise due to the difference between systematic forms of speaking learned and spontaneous speaking” (p.88). Likewise, the main problems that learners face during the production of the speaking skill are frustration, lack of confidence, and motivation. In addition, students have linguistic conflicts such as pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. According to Ur (1996), one of the most common challenges that students experience is the fear of making mistakes in front of their peers and teachers. Students feel shy, and they are afraid of criticism. Students do not want to participate in classes, and that makes teachers feel frustrated and upset. Additionally, learners may not want to speak because they have nothing to say and are not inspired to do so. Since learners feel less vulnerable while speaking in their native tongue, they use it all the time.

Similarly, speaking helps students communicate with people in real-world situations and increases their linguistic skills in the classroom. Students will be better prepared for a

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variety of future academic and job possibilities, responsibilities, and experiences by learning how to communicate in the international language of English. (Ministerio de Educación, 2019)

According to Tohidi and Mehdi (2012), motivation in students has numerous consequences on how they acquire knowledge, and how they act out when they study a particular subject. Consequently, it is a challenge for teachers to develop strategies to motivate students and make them speak by using the English language inside and outside the classroom.

People in the educational sector have been interested in determining the causes and probable solutions for speaking problems in schools for several years. There are various descriptive studies conducted internationally to try to understand the major causes of speaking difficulties. Wulansari (2013) investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the methods applied by educators in teaching speaking, as well as the difficulties confronted by the educators and learners during the oral language production. Likewise, Barokah (2014) examined the problems faced by the students at the moment of speaking. The author found that the students' difficulties include a limited vocabulary, pronunciation and structure difficulties, and a factor of anxiousness. The teacher used many strategies to address the issues, such as consistently advising and inspiring the students about the value of their participation in speaking class, and establishing a positive relationship between the teacher and the students, Shen and Chiu (2019) explored the main factors that caused the learners' English speaking complications and then investigated the successful learners' strategy used to improve their English speaking performance in Taiwan.

There are also several national studies and researches that outline the primary obstacles that individuals face when speaking. Alcivar (2021) investigated the main speaking challenges faced by EFL students at two Ecuadorian universities. The research found a

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connection between students' speaking difficulties and their feelings of worry and anxiety. Similarly, Angulo (2020) studied the perspectives of EFL students' difficulties in speaking, and the key result was that students struggled in cognitive, social, psychological and affective areas at the moment of speaking.

This study took place at a public institution located in Cuenca, Ecuador. It was applied to students between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. They were in the first and second years of high school. They have an A2.2 level of English according to the Common European Framework (CEFR). Many of them have pronunciation problems, low grades in oral presentations, feel embarrassed when participating in dialogues, and dislike working in pairs or groups.

Literature Review

Speaking

Speaking is conceptually defined as the students' ability to express themselves verbally, coherently, proficiently, and appropriately in a specified meaningful manner to serve both transactional and interactional purposes using good pronunciation, grammatical structures, and terminology. Brown and Yule (as cited in Torkey, 2006) said that "speaking can serve the two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) and interactional (maintenance of social relationships)" (p. 14). According to Boonkit (2010), "speaking is one of the four macro skills that are required for efficient communication in any language, especially when presenters are not speaking their native tongue" (p.1305).

For Chaney and Burk (1998), speaking is the process of creating and communicating meaning in a variety of circumstances by using verbal and nonverbal indicators. According to Yuliantono (2020), speaking is the skill which allows the use of both the brain and the mouth. The mouth creates the sound of a word after the brain creates its structure.

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Speaking is regarded as a skill that is useful and significant in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Teachers should ensure speaking exercises are properly thought out and supported, both for production and understanding (Ministerio de Educación, 2019).

According to Renandya and Nguyen (2022), speaking a second or foreign language is particularly challenging since it requires a diversity of knowledge and abilities to coordinate them in real time and in practical circumstances. One of the most important objectives of learning a second language is being able to communicate effectively in English in a variety of situations. However, it can be challenging for learners to communicate adequately in the target language. Also, according to Sabnani and Renandya (2019), speaking is a necessary part of language acquisition, and communication is facilitated by having productive conversations with other interlocutors. Students who speak with confidence are able to participate actively in discussions with teachers and classmates to advance their academic comprehension and acquire a second language.

Speaking Teaching Principles

Brown (as cited in Khomarudin, 2012) proposed seven principles for training speaking skills. The author recommended the application of fluency and accuracy in which students can express clear and understandable ideas when speaking by having few grammatical errors, demonstrating a command of the language, and communicating easily, quickly, and with few pauses. Also, the application of interesting and challenging techniques to motivate the use of real language inside and outside the classroom. When students practice productive skills, it is important to give appropriate feedback to learners to take advantage of the natural connection between speaking and listening, which provides opportunities for students to introduce and support the development of communicative language abilities.

Nguyen (2015) said that one important principle for teaching speaking is motivation since it determines the preparedness of learners to communicate. To ensure students'

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satisfaction, it is necessary that the teacher choose interesting topics for a lesson based on learners' experiences and meaningful contexts. Also, teachers can generate interest in a topic by discussing it, and demonstrating passion. Educators can create a relaxed and non-anxious environment in the classroom by applying guessing games, and small group activities.

Likewise, Nababan (2012) suggested the following six guidelines for instructing speaking: It is useful to pay attention to fluency depending on the lesson, activity, and purpose. Also, it is necessary to employ interesting and demanding teaching strategies that are centered on the values and goals of the students. In real circumstances, it is beneficial to apply the language effectively by providing helpful advice and suggestions to the learners. Similarly, teachers should provide feedback to students on their interpersonal communication abilities since it can help them improve their communication. It is helpful when oral practice is divided into fluency and accuracy exercises since teachers can use them to correct particular spelling, word choice, and pronunciation errors that students make when speaking (Harmer, 2007).

Speaking Components

According to Harris (as cited in Kurniati & Novitri, 2015), speaking ability consists of five components: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

Comprehension

It refers to the ability to recognize and comprehend long periods of conversation, as well as to construct representations of the content of sentences. Understanding a foreign language is more difficult to develop since it is not directly observable, and must be inferred through verbal and nonverbal answers. Also, comprehending refers to the speakers' knowledge of what they are saying to the listeners in order to avoid miscommunication; it also serves to make it easier for the listeners to comprehend the information from the speaker (Balasan, 2015). Furthermore, according to Khalidah et al. (2013), comprehension in

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speaking requires not only knowing how to produce the language well, but also understanding when, what, and why to produce it.

Grammar

Grammar and speaking are strongly connected. Students should be educated by using a structured language system. Word order must be explained to students to encourage learners to speak more fluently (Ramayani, 2019). Harmer (as cited in Balasan, 2015) stated that the grammar of a language refers to the manner in which words in that language can change forms and be integrated into sentences.

Vocabulary

The right terminology employed in communication is referred to as vocabulary. People cannot communicate successfully, or express their opinions in both oral and writing form without a proper vocabulary. Learners who have a restricted vocabulary have a challenge to acquire a second language. Nothing could be communicated without grammar or vocabulary. As a result of this argument, the researchers came to the conclusion that English learners who do not acquire vocabulary sufficiently will not be able to speak or write English properly (Kurniati & Novitri, 2015).

According to Balasan (2015), to understand the spoken language, the terminology used must be highly familiar, and it has to be employed in regular conversation. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language acquisition. Words, meanings, spelling, and how they are spoken are all important for students to comprehend the language. As a result, when teaching vocabulary, teachers must consider meaning, spelling, and pronunciation.

Pronunciation

It is not the purpose of pronunciation instruction to have students pronounce like native speakers. Instead, the primary goal of oral communication should be to communicate comprehensively. In some cases, students having perfect pronunciation are more likely to be

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understood even if they make other mistakes, whereas those with poor pronunciation will not be understood even if their syntax is excellent (Pourhosein, 2016).

Kline (as cited in Balasan, 2015) explained that when students speak, pronunciation is a mechanism for them to develop clearer language. It suggests that even if a student's vocabulary and grammar are limited, they may communicate successfully if they have strong pronunciation and intonation. Also, pronunciation is the method by which learners generate understandable spoken words to communicate. Kurniati and Novitri (2015) concluded that “pronunciation is the knowledge of studying about how the words in a particular language are produced clearly when people speak.” (p.6).

Fluency

It is considered the capacity to read, speak, or write easily and expressively. So, the speaker is able to read, understand, and answer by using the language in a clear and concise manner relating to meaning and context. The capacity to talk fluently and accurately is known as fluency (Kurniati & Novitri, 2015). According to Brumfit (as cited in Sanchez, 2019), one of the most important aspects of speaking ability is fluency. Fluency refers to students' ability to communicate effectively in the language they have learned. This occurs when the speakers are able to maintain a logical and long-lasting discussion despite their language barriers.

Pair work

Cambridge dictionaries define pair work as the activity that is done by two people working together when they are learning something, such as language. Pushpanathan and Sathee (2017) stated that the value of pair work as a type of collaborative learning is highlighted by many theories and language teaching methodologies such as the communicative approach and task-based learning. Also, working in pairs enhances and encourages meaningful interaction between the students, increasing their language

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production. Lightbown and Spada (as cited in Pushpanathan & Sathee, 2017) expressed that when learners work in pairs, they are able to improve their English language competence, and perform better in a collaborative atmosphere.

Methodology

Design

This is a descriptive study including qualitative and quantitative data analysis. This type of study enables teachers to investigate facts in order to evaluate, analyze, observe, and determine important facts about a specific topic. Many disciplines, including education, psychology, and the social sciences have used descriptive research methods to conduct studies. These kinds of studies are also becoming more common in the field of second language teaching and learning. A descriptive research project's purpose is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This study is more interested in what rather than how or why it happens (Nassaji, 2015).

Likewise, this study establishes the following research questions: What are students' difficulties speaking English? What types of activities do students prefer for speaking? and what are students' perspectives on pair work?

Participants

The present study has the participation of fifty students from a public school located in Cuenca City. The students are in the first and second years of high school. There are 12 men and 32 women. Eighty-two percent of the participants have a medium socioeconomic status and sixteen percent have a low income. The age of the participants in this descriptive study ranges from 15 to 18 years old. The majority of the students, which represents sixty-eight percent, have a basic level of English proficiency; twenty-four percent of the students have an intermediate level; and eight percent of them have a beginner level. Likewise, to get the students' information, a letter was sent home asking for permission from the student's

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parents. Also, students had to complete a document and agree if they wanted to participate in the research study through a virtual survey.

Instruments

The participants in this descriptive study were required to complete a two-part survey. The primary goal of the first part was to collect information from the candidates. The second section included thirteen questions that included open-ended, multiple-choice, and Likert scale options. The questions in the survey aimed to learn about the participants' English learning experiences, as well as their speaking complications and difficulties.

Data Analysis

The responses to the survey were categorized and inserted into an Excel document. The document was then exported to the SPSS application, which produced descriptive statistics. The survey results were presented in tables with the averages. The results that were not relevant were not taken into account.

Ethical Considerations

In all research studies, the protection of human participants through the application of suitable ethical norms is fundamental. Because of the in-depth nature of the study process, ethical questions have a special significance in qualitative research (Mohd, 2018). Some principles of ethics were strictly followed during the research. First, the researcher received approval letters from the authorities of the institution. Authorities granted permission and provided the necessary resources to conduct the surveys. Second, participants were given information about this study, its goals, and its academic significance. Third, data confidentiality was preserved throughout the procedure, and the names of the participants in this research were replaced by numbers.

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Results

The survey's findings are reported and discussed in this section. Tables are used to produce reports. The results are organized in accordance with the study questions. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about students' speaking concerns, the activities they generally performed in class, and their thoughts and opinions on pair-work as a way to improve oral skills.

To answer the first question of this study, what are students' difficulties speaking English? Participants had to use Likert scales represented by these codes, to a great extent (5), a lot (4), some (3), a little bit (2), and none (1). The main goal of this question was to figure out what was wrong with the students' speaking skills. The table below summarizes the main findings.

Table 1

Difficulties in Speaking

<i>When you speak in English, you.</i>	Mean
Feel confident about the topic.	3.44
Know what to say.	2.86
Respond quickly.	2.58
Look for words to respond correctly.	3.76
Translate what you want to say.	3.92
Pronounce clearly.	2.84
The speech is free of errors.	2.90
Say phrases.	3.18
Interact in a conversation.	2.48
Feel embarrassed of making mistakes.	3.46
Understand what the other person is saying.	2.78
Speak without any pauses.	2.66

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Speak spontaneously.	2.66
Consider you speak correctly.	2.44
Have a good intonation of questions.	2.96
Have a good intonation of sentences.	2.82
Have good pronunciation.	2.66
Use word stress.	2.62
Use sentence stress.	2.68
Think the topics are interesting.	3.70

According to the results, students reported many complications when they speak in English. The findings demonstrate that some students do not know what to say when they are using the English language (2.86). Also, the results show that students occasionally respond quickly (2.58). Some students consider that their pronunciation is not clear, and they rarely have good intonation of questions (2.96) and sentences (2.66). Students can interact in a conversation sporadically because, in many situations, they do not understand what the other person is saying (2, 78). Students sometimes speak spontaneously and without any pauses (2.66). Another trouble is that students feel embarrassed about making mistakes (3.46). Students are able to say phrases (3.18), but they have to look for words to respond correctly (3.76).

Based on the research findings of this descriptive study, there are some causes of students' problems in speaking English. The results of the survey in the open-ended questions showed that the students' speaking complications are related to pronunciation and vocabulary. Students feel afraid to speak English in the class because of their fear of making mistakes with the pronunciation. One of the students wrote, "*I am very confused about the difference between the words that I write and the words that I pronounce*" Another student expressed, "*I don't know how to pronounce the words very well, and I'm embarrassed. It*

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makes me sad that my classmates make fun of me” Another concern mentioned by participants was the deficiency of vocabulary. One contestant said, *“I do not have the necessary knowledge of some words to be able to make sentences and speak fluently.”*

Likewise, applicants expressed that another complication to speak English is the limited time to practice the language. A student stated, *“I don't have the opportunity to practice the language because the classes are short, and because the English language is not used outside the school”*.

To answer the second question of this research, what types of activities students prefer for speaking? The participants were faced with the choice of selecting between speaking tasks that they had previously practiced, and those that they had not. Likewise, they have to select the speaking activities that they would like to do or they do not like. To analyze this question, it has been considered the frequency from each item, and the results are in the following table.

Table 2

Speaking activities

Item	Yes	No	I would like	I do not like
Created a short speech	19	14	14	3
Made an oral presentation.	31	8	7	4
Participated in a forum.	8	26	14	2
Commented on a general topic.	16	15	15	4
Created dialogues to practice with peers.	17	13	19	1
Written a dialogue from ideas from the book.	19	16	14	1
Practiced a dialogue about free ideas.	20	15	12	3
Listened to my peers' recordings.	22	13	13	2
Recorded audios.	35	6	7	2
Provided feedback to my peers' oral participation.	10	25	13	2
Self-assessed my oral participation.	25	14	10	1
Used rubrics to provide feedback.	9	24	15	2

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According to the results, the speaking activities that students prefer for the English classes are related to oral presentations and short speeches on general topics. They prefer activities in which they develop, produce, and perform conversations based on themes from the book or their own opinions and free ideas. Likewise, the results show that participants like to record audio, they like to listen to their peers' recordings, and they self-assess their own oral participation. On the other hand, the findings demonstrate that students do not participate in a forum, they do not provide feedback to their peers, and they do not use rubrics.

In the last question of this descriptive study, the researcher tries to answer the question about the student's perspectives towards pair work. This inquiry was designed to find out what students thought about the value of pair work in improving and developing the oral production of the language. Respondents had to choose from the following scales to respond to this statement: totally agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and totally disagree (1). The following are the responses.

Table 3

Students' perspectives towards pair work

Item	Mean
Pair work is useful to practice speaking.	3.00
Pair work for speaking is difficult because the student who knows more dominates the conversation.	3.64
It is advisable although some pairs speak slowly.	3.28
It is advisable although some pairs do not pronounce correctly.	2.82
The pair makes constant interruptions.	3.10
It takes too much time.	3.38
It is good if I work with the pair I choose.	3.70

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The main findings in this research question about students' perspectives towards pair work demonstrate that some participants are neutral about the idea that pair-work is useful for practice speaking (3.00). They expressed that the pair work is advisable although pairs speak slowly or they do not pronounce correctly. They consider that pair work is difficult because students who know more vocabulary and pronunciation dominate a conversation during the production of language. Likewise, the participants agreed that pair work takes too much time if the pair makes constant interruptions. However, students expressed that it is good to work in pairs as long as they choose their partner.

Moreover, when the respondents participated in the open-ended question, they mentioned several benefits and drawbacks of working in pairs. Some of the students said that pair work has many benefits, such as practicing the language fluently and confidently without fear of making mistakes in front of the teacher. One of the learners expressed, *"I feel more comfortable when I practice speaking with a partner instead of the teacher because I feel less nervous, and I do not make mistakes."* Another advantage of working in pairs is collaborative work. Someone stated, "An advantage is that the person who has more knowledge helps their partner, and both can improve pronunciation".

On the other hand, some students believe that pair work has some disadvantages, such as distractions, waste of time, and teasing by peers. A participant wrote, "Whenever I work in pairs, my partner laughs at what I say in English, and we cannot practice the language." Another student detailed, "The dialogue is not taken seriously, and there are laughs and other distractions that obstruct the oral production of the language".

Discussion

According to this descriptive study, the most difficult aspect of speaking English is pronunciation, which is crucial when people want to communicate among each other. When students speak, Kline (as cited in Balasan, 2015) explained that pronunciation is a mechanism

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for them to learn clearer language, and students who have good pronunciation and intonation can communicate effectively. The main finding of this study is that when learners practice the language, they have no idea of what to say, and they do not have a clear pronunciation. They stated that they do not know how to pronounce the words because they are not the same as they are written. "Pronunciation is the knowledge of studying how the words in a particular language are produced clearly when people speak" (Kurniati & Novitri, 2015, p. 6).

Therefore, the survey of this research demonstrates that students have trouble speaking when their vocabulary is limited. Students expressed in the survey that they have to look for words to answer a question or interact in a conversation since they do not know what to say. Kurniati and Novitri (2015), mentioned that learners with a limited vocabulary face difficulties in learning a second language because the English learners who do not acquire vocabulary sufficiently will not be able to speak or write English properly. Balasan (2015) said that vocabulary is a fundamental component of language acquisition. Words, meanings, spelling, and how they are spoken are all essential for students to comprehend the language.

Furthermore, the survey shows that oral presentations and short speeches are the students' favorite speaking activities in English since they help students improve their language understanding. In order to prevent language misunderstandings, Balasan (2015) expressed that comprehension refers to the speakers' awareness of what they are communicating to the audience. Additionally, Khalidah et al. (2013) stated that comprehension in speaking involves not only knowing how to produce the language well, but also understanding when, what, and why to produce it. On the other hand, a small number of students said in the survey that they do not give feedback to their classmates during oral participation, and they do not use rubrics. These results are considered as a weakness since giving the appropriate feedback to learners provides an advantage of natural connection

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between speaking and listening, gives opportunities for students to introduce communication skills, and develops the language (Brown as cited in Khomarudin, 2012).

Additionally, this descriptive study reveals that participants have a neutral attitude regarding pair-work in the classroom. They stated that working in pairs to practice speaking is impartial. They also agreed that pair work for speaking is challenging since the student with more knowledge dominates the conversation, which can lead to speaking problems because the other student feels frustrated and embarrassed for not being able to express himself during the dialogue. According to Ur (1996), one of the most prevalent obstacles that students face is their nervousness in front of their peers and teachers because they are shy and fearful of criticism. However, students stated that being able to choose the partner with whom they will work in class is beneficial because it makes them feel secure and confident.

Lightbown and Spada (as cited in Pushpanathan & Sathee, 2017) said that students perform better in a cooperative way and enhance their English language proficiency when they work in pairs.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to learn more about the speaking difficulties that students have in English lessons. The findings of this survey revealed that having proper pronunciation is the most difficult problem for students. As a result, students are worried about making errors, which discourages them from communicating. The research also revealed that students lack vocabulary, and their lexical is limited. Similarly, students are terrified of making mistakes when speaking since they do not understand what the other person is saying.

Likewise, the majority of the participants are neutral towards the pair work to practice the language. They believe that choosing a partner with a higher English ability will aid them in improving their pronunciation. However, they recognized that a better partner may obstruct

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their development by denying them the opportunity to speak or by causing interruptions from the student who knows the most.

Furthermore, learners are afraid of speaking since they feel insecure or scared of failure, and they fear being judged by their teachers and classmates.

Limitations

The surveys for this descriptive study were conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was difficult to provide participants with clear and specific instructions about the research questions. As a result, the lack of technology and internet connection was the most major impediment to the completion of this study. Due to absence of internet availability, some participants were unable to finish the survey. As a result, the number of volunteers was considerably reduced from 70 at the start of the study to 50. Because they did not have access to technological tools, they took longer to complete the survey.

Recommendations

As a recommendation for future study, the researcher should verify that all students comprehend the survey questions since many of them were very long, and despite being in Spanish, the translation was not reflected in the devices. Similarly, having a reserve of money to print questionnaires for individuals who do not have access to the internet or technological tools to complete them physically is advised.

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Appendix 1

Survey about perspective of speaking in English

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Consent letter from school

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Consent letters from parents

Available upon request.