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DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

**IN EFL YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH VISUAL AND
AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS**

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DESARROLLO DE HABILIDADES ORALES EN JÓVENES ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA A TRAVÉS DE MATERIALES VISUALES Y AUDIOVISUALES

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ABSTRACT

The acquisition of speaking skills in a foreign language is considered a challenge, especially for young learners. Research suggests that Affective Factors (AF), such as anxiety and motivation, may contribute to the blockade of the learning process and can hinder the participation, attention, and interest of students in class. Therefore, search for better teaching materials, tools, and methodologies that enhance students' motivation to learn is constant. As much of this line of research is developed outside of Latin America and focuses on teenagers or older, this study aimed to evaluate the effects of audio-visual materials on students', ages 8-9, speaking skills and their engagement with the lessons in an Ecuadorian primary public school. To do so, this study used a mixed method approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected through a pre-test and pos-test and a motivational test questionnaire, and qualitative data was collected through the student's feedback on the use of the proposed material via a focus group. The results show that audio-visual materials have a greater influence on grammar and vocabulary. In addition, evidenced low levels of anxiety and high intrinsic motivation had a positive influence on the acquisition of speaking skills.

Keywords:

Young learners, English foreign learners, teaching methodologies, affective filters, speaking skills.

RESUMEN

La adquisición de habilidades para hablar en un idioma extranjero se considera un desafío, especialmente para los estudiantes jóvenes. Las investigaciones sugieren que los Factores Afectivos (FA), como la ansiedad y la motivación, pueden contribuir al bloqueo del proceso de aprendizaje y pueden dificultar la participación, atención e interés de los estudiantes en clase. Por lo tanto, la búsqueda de mejores materiales didácticos, herramientas y metodologías que potencien la motivación de los estudiantes por aprender es constante. Dado que gran parte de esta línea de investigación se desarrolla fuera de América Latina y se enfoca en adolescentes o mayores, este estudio tuvo como objetivo evaluar los efectos de los materiales audiovisuales en las habilidades del habla de los estudiantes de 8 a 9 años de edad y su compromiso con las clases en una escuela pública primaria ecuatoriana. Para hacerlo, este estudio utilizó un enfoque de método mixto para recopilar datos cualitativos y cuantitativos. Los datos cuantitativos se recopilaron a través de un prueba previa y posterior, además de un cuestionario de prueba motivacional, y los datos cualitativos se recopilaron a través de la retroalimentación de los estudiantes sobre el uso del material propuesto a través de un grupo focal. Los resultados muestran que los materiales audiovisuales tienen una mayor influencia en la gramática y el vocabulario. Además, los bajos niveles de ansiedad evidenciados y la alta motivación intrínseca influyeron positivamente en la adquisición de la habilidad del habla.

Palabras clave:

Jóvenes estudiantes, estudiantes extranjeros de inglés, metodologías de enseñanza, filtros afectivos, habilidades para hablar.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most challenging language skills that students can face in the classroom since it is not precisely instructed but somewhat expected of learners to acquire by practicing and using the L2. (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012). In addition, in most settings where spoken language is used, successful communication in oral interactions relies on the proficiency of one's speaking skills. Speaking a language is something that needs constant practice. If learners neglect this aspect, acquisition will not consolidate properly. Consequently, language teachers must encourage spoken language in the learning process inside and outside the classrooms; therefore, outdated material, lack of proficiency and motivation become obstacles for students of a foreign language. In this way the interest in introducing methodologies that use visual and audiovisual materials to improve learning proficiency and engagement of students has been growing.

Patesan, Balagiu and Alibec (2018) highly recommend the use of technology to implement visual and audiovisual materials as they prompt a more interactive use of the spoken language in learning settings, helping to motivate students and grabbing their attention for longer periods of time. By encouraging spoken language through visual aids, students can learn more effectively and use them to communicate in authentic scenarios. According to Ashaver and Mwuese (2013), students do not retain what they have learned for long periods by using traditional material like text books and dictionaries. This instance leads to a lack of interest in learning the language due to the absence of a significant learning process. It has been proposed that learners require opportunities for free and relevant communication to promote speaking in the class (Kumar, 2021; Casallas & Londoño, 2000); the use of visual and audiovisual material could provide those opportunities. Visual and audiovisual materials reinforce language acquisition through the association of vocabulary and meaning, so if students are given this stimuli, they are encouraged and motivated to speak. Furthermore, visual and audiovisual materials are considered as an outstanding tool to improve language acquisition.

Something worth mentioning is that previous studies focused mainly on the impact of visual and audiovisual materials on test results and scores, leaving aside the impact and the correlation that affective aspects have on the learning experience (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017). Studies have emphasized the need for a deeper examination of student's performance in more natural and communicative environments, as well as an analysis of learner's levels of confidence and anxiety (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017). According to Wang & Wu (2020), *"affections have the functions of stimulating, motivating, regulating, infecting and empathizing in human cognition; among them, stimulating function and dynamic function are especially important in the process of SLA"* (p. 1232). Therefore, the

way that teaching materials are implemented have a direct relationship with the affective filters among learners which can disrupt the learning process. By understanding the relationship between the use of visual and audiovisual materials and the affective factors, teachers can have a better understanding of the use of these tools, especially the ones applied with young learners.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the effects of using visual and audio-visual materials on speaking skills development in the EFL classroom, as well as to analyze its effects over communication and participation among young EFL learners and their perceptions. Research in this area could help determine appropriate strategies to enhance active communication among learners. Data was gathered by assessing speaking skills of students in control and experimental groups.

As this study aims to analyze the link between teaching materials (visual and audio-visual), engagement, and the communicative competence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the Communicative Language Teaching Approach and the Monitor Model was reviewed as they establish the conceptual background for this study.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) first appeared during the 1970's both in Europe and the United States. It refers to "the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events" (Savignon, 1991, p. 265). Often CLT is linked with the concept of communicative competence, which "describe programs that used a functional-notional syllabus based on needs assessment" (Savignon, 1991, p. 263). Similarly, Chomsky mentioned that communicative competence is necessary to "represent the use of language in social context, the observance of sociolinguistic norms of appropriacy" (as cited in Savignon, 1991, p. 264). However, the way communicative competence has been implemented and expanded in language learning has varied through studies, changing the resources and methodology to prioritize communication through meaning (Savignon, 1991). Because of this, CLT programs advocate for a diverse set of language learning goals and teaching strategies, as sociopolitical, cultural and regional contexts influence the development of language acquisition. Therefore, the selection of methods and materials should consider the learners' needs before the goals and context of teaching (Savignon, 1991). According to Littlewood (2010), the learning process is more effective when the person is involved in using the language in natural processes, such as a communicative activity, where the user is benefited by being actively involved in a social setting with their peers or teacher.

Krashen Monitor Model was first published in 1977 to explain the way learners acquire a foreign language and it consists of five hypotheses (Acquisition/Learning, Monitor, Natural Order, Input and Affective Filter) (Zafar, 2009) Of

their five hypotheses, two of them were highlighted; The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis, as explained by Richards, et al. (1987), is the separation in the process of acquisition and learning. Acquisition is an unconscious process: it is using and assimilating the language through meaningful communication; in contrast, learning is the conscious development of rules about language (Richards, et al. 1987).

Meanwhile the Affective Filter Hypothesis refers to how the emotional state of attitude affects the input necessary for acquisition. Therefore, a high affective filter (with feelings of fear or embarrassment) will block or impede the process. There are three variables to keep in mind in this hypothesis; motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. As the theory explains, to create basic communication skills, the topics and situational approach through the lesson, either to develop basic personal communication skills or academic learning skills (both oral or written), must be useful or relevant for the students and should derive naturally. Also, the design of the language lesson must not be constricted in order to adapt to the particular interests and needs of the students. "In setting communication goals, we do not expect the students...to have acquired a certain group of structures or forms. Instead, we expect them to deal with a particular set of topics in a given situation" (Krashen as cited by Richards, 1987 p. 135).

As affective factors relate with the emotional and psychological state of the learner (where factors like anxiety, fear, and engagement are taken into account) (Richards, 1987), they have intersections with the concept of communicative competence since both are affected by the context and their application depend on the social behavior between the class (Savignon, 1991). According to Wang & Wu (2020) "Affective factors have an important influence on the second-language learners' deep cultural differences, and the affective filter hypothesis has important practical significance for guiding learners' SLA" (p. 1240). Reaffirming that both concepts relate the language acquisition process with the context in which it is used, along with the environment, the students' motivations, self-esteem, and others. Therefore, any teaching method or strategy must take into account the context in which the language was applied and any predisposition students may have and their possible changes.

Researchers such as Buckingham and Alpaslan (2017), Kumar (2021), and Casallas and Londoño (2000) have stated that the use of different teaching materials, such as visual and audio-visual aids, can influence the interest of students, keeping them active and productive in an entertaining and instructive classroom environment. Even though the existing literature covers a variety of studies in favor of the use of visual and audio-visual materials, this segment focuses on the advantages and disadvantages gathered from the reviewed research. It is worth noting

that the literature encompasses several levels of education and some approach the research through a theoretical. In contrast to this article that focuses on the impact of visual and audio-visual materials in the development of speaking skills on young EFL learners in Ecuadorian elementary schools.

In the study conducted by Alsaraireh, (2022), the author analyzed the preferred learning techniques for enhancing speaking ability on 40 papers, the most commonly used techniques were cognitive and metacognitive approaches. Meaning that a student's self-regulation and management of one's own motivation for learning and practice were expected to affect the language acquisition process. In contrast social/affective strategies and memory approaches were less preferred as they are dependent on the students' proficiency, interaction and feedback, and emotional factors that tend to be disregarded when learning English. The researcher noted that Memory approaches like "Visual connections and pictures were reported to be used by students to boost their speaking abilities" (Alsaraireh, 2022, p. 376). In the case of new learners, they can use these strategies to keep essential information they hear and read while learning language, and is more frequently used on "elevated education institutions" (p. 376).

The study conducted by Kathirvel and Hashim (2020) inquired deeper on how audio-visual materials assist the acquisition and improvement of speaking skills. To do so they revised research done between the years 2004-2018 using Audio-Visual Materials among young English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, highlighting the affordances and constraints. The research concluded that Audio-Visual materials, understood as an "interactive tool with the combination of text, image, sound and video" (Kathirvel & Hashim, 2020, p. 2601), can contribute to both teachers and students in language learning and improving speaking skills by providing a practical approach to speaking skills training, generating long term learning of vocabulary by the use of context (either remembering the situation where they learn the word or generating mental images). Audiovisual materials also help them focus and have a more effective use of modern tools like media platforms (YouTube, social media), were the students and teachers can find material in more naturalistic and diverse settings; however, this last point should be handled with care, because the teachers need to find suitable technologies and appropriate material that aligns with the class curriculum, which is usually time consuming for the educator. Other disadvantages emphasized by the research was that insufficient teacher training, inefficiency of audio tools and materials, and the lack of support by schools' administration (either by lack of infrastructure, tools, etc) can hamper the use of visual and audio-visual materials in class.

More practical research, like the one produced by Kumar (2021) focuses on the effects of visual teaching materials and resources in the development of English-speaking skills in secondary-level students in India. The study had an experimental design with a pre-test and a post-test in a set of control groups. The results were approached through statistical analysis using percentages and frequency values on each aspect of evaluation (comprehensibility, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency) in addition to the participants' overall performance and perspectives on the materials. The findings concluded that participants who worked with written-visual material performed better than the ones using visual materials exclusively. Positive responses from the students observed found that written-visual materials were more memorable, motivating, and fun to use, which helped them learn words, speak faster and improved their vocabulary and grammar.

Similar research was conducted by Buckingham and Alpaslan (2017). They studied the relationship between the completion of Audio-Visual homework and the improvement of 3rd-grade Turkish children's speaking assessment scores through the comparison of the speaking test scores of an experimental group and a control group. To obtain a valid measurement of the students' improvement, the researchers applied a pre-test and a post-test to both groups before and after the visual and audiovisual materials were applied in the course of the semester. The scores were compared with the results of the control group. The study also included observations of the children's behavior and willingness to communicate (WTC) during the implementation period. The results showed that, although the children began at a comparable level, a significant difference in the scores in favor of the experimental group was found. Which suggests that the use of visual and audio-visual materials had positive impacts on learners. The researchers also remarked that "children produced fewer hesitations and pauses in their recorded responses by the end of the implementation period" (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017, p. 33). Said results were only visible at the end of the study (4 months), inferring that the progress was gradual.

In contrast, the study conducted by Dang, et al (2022), which conducted similar methodologies as the two previous examples (with the implementation of a pre-test and a post-test as well as a questionnaire given to an experimental and control group), focused more on the effectiveness of video recordings on EFL's college freshmen speaking skills and performance in Vietnam. The age and educational background of the participants contrast with the ones of previous research because all of the student's report having English lessons before entering university. Therefore, their methods of language learning are influenced by past experiences and preferences. However, the contribution of this research lays on how their findings can be implemented on all age groups and proficiency levels. Researchers concluded that although both groups began

with the same speaking ability according to the pre-test comparisons, there was a significant difference in the post-test results of both groups, showing an improvement of the experimental group speaking skills, especially on fluency, grammar and vocabulary. The authors infer that the opportunity of rehearsal, colleagues' feedback, time for preparation and personal reviews may have contributed to the positive results. Another factor to highlight is that "students aimed to use the target language in real-life situations" (Dang, Nguyen, & Nga, 2022, p. 69) and that student felt their speaking skills were positively influenced by the use of video recording as it also complimented abilities like presentation, public speaking and teamwork skills. Thus, the benefits could also be obtained if similar conditions might be applied in the classroom because children have greater adaptability to resources and technology and therefore can get the most out of the learning process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study with two 4th grade classes (experimental and control group) aimed to find how the use of visual and audiovisual alongside an engaging and mindful teaching method could have a positive long-lasting impact on students' speaking skills acquisition and active communication development in English as a Foreign Language.

The study used a Mixed Method approach with the Convergent Parallel Design (before called Triangulation Design) that analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2012). This research is a quasi-experimental study, defined as "when individuals are not randomly assigned" (Creswell, 2009, p. 146). The study is applied to the students of two 4th grade classrooms available to the researcher. Qualitative and quantitative instruments were applied to collect data during 3 weeks. Before data collection started, the researcher contacted the school principal, parents, and students to provide information about the study and obtain permission.

The Quantitative data was used to contrast English proficiency of the students through the comparison of a pre-test and a post-test of the students' knowledge and dominance of pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary (grade A and grade B). The posttest took place at the end of the project (4 weeks). In addition, the results were contrasted with the survey's feedback from the students and the information obtained in the focus group.

The participants of the study were children aged 8-9 years old from fourth grade (A1 English level) in the 2022-2023 school year in "Unidad Educativa Ciudad de Cuenca," a public school in the city of Cuenca. A total of 36 students participated for the two groups sampled. Grade B (control group) had 18 participants, with 10 boys and 8 girls and group C (experimental group) had 18 participants, with 9 boys and 9 girls. The only inclusion criterion was the consent of participation of parents and kids since they were

intact groups (Mackey & Gass, 2005). If the guardians of a student decided to abstain from participating, the data obtained of said children were omitted from the analysis. It did not mean that they were excluded from the activities developed during the class. In order to ensure the learners' right to anonymity, their real names were kept confidential; instead, codes were used.

Pre-test and post-test: An adaptation of the A1 Movers Cambridge Speaking test (Cambridge English, 2022) was applied. It is scored over 100 points and measures five aspects on a scale of 1 to 4; each aspect is measured out of 20 points. The same test was taken before the intervention started (pre-test) and after it concluded (post-test). The data obtained from the examinations was compared.

Checklist and Unit Perception Questionnaire: The Motivation and Attitudes toward Learning English Scale for Children (MALESC) (Carreira, 2006) was adapted to measure two of five variables corresponding to intrinsic motivation and anxiety.

Focus Group: As focus groups are designed to obtain the sincere perceptions, motivations, concerns or opinions of the participants, they should be conducted in a non-threatening environment that allows children to be in a safe and comfortable environment (Gibson, 2007). Therefore, the discussion was conducted in their native language for a more fluent conversation in the timespan of maximum 20 minutes, in order to do so, four students were selected randomly from the experimental group at the end of the intervention. Correspondingly, open ended questions were used to enable the feedback of learners' perspectives of the methods and strategies implemented.

First the researcher obtained the consent of school authorities and legal guardians of the participants. Once this step was concluded the teacher applied the pre-test to the students in order to measure their knowledge on the subject before starting the treatment. After evaluating their level of speaking competence, a two-hour three-week teaching program with each group (control and experimental) was implemented, both groups received the same lessons, being the only difference, the type of didactic material used with each group. The experimental group worked with various audiovisual material while the control group with the textbook. Clear instructions were given to learners before administering each task in the classroom with the sample of students. Once the treatment ended, the researcher conducted the students' motivational test and the post-test (to contrast and compare it with the pre-test). Later, four children from the treatment group, chosen at random participated in a recorded open-question interview (focus group), where they shared their perceptions of the applied methodology. These interviews were

conducted in the participants' native language for more reliable feedback. Concluding data collection, the researcher generated the statistical analysis of the results between the pre-test and post-test and the relationship between the interaction levels of the students with their motivation shown through the quantitative and qualitative data collection. The results of each group were compared to each other to determine the influence of visual and audio-visual materials in contrast to a traditional approach.

To analyze the quantitative data, the researcher used the Explanatory Design Analysis proposed by Creswell (2012) and due to the size of the groups, the non-parametric Mann Whitney U test was used. The quantitative survey (pretest-posttest contrast) first compared the control group to the experimental group concerning their previous knowledge and performance (pre-test). Once the post-test was also completed, both evaluations were compared to determine the improvement of the students in regard to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and interaction. The results of both groups were contrasted to analyze the difference in performance between the two. The t-Student test was used for related samples to compare the pre and post-test. The Repeated Measures ANOVA (RM ANOVA) was used to determine the influence of factors on student performance. The results are expressed through measures of central tendency and dispersion.

Learners' interventions during the focus group were audio recorded, transcribed, and translated. As it was aforementioned, to avoid misinterpretations the focus group was conducted in Spanish since language skills play a prominent role in the interview dynamics so the interviewee can develop and elaborate on what he or she wants to communicate (Marschan & Reis, 2004). Later, the researcher performed a rigorous thematic analysis in an attempt to produce trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis considered two aspects: participants' perceptions and preferences in class materials and the methodology used. Other patterns like enjoyment and motivation were also recognized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation began with the analysis of motivation and anxiety present in the students at the end of the intervention. When comparing the motivation and anxiety present in the contrast between the experimental and control group at the end of the intervention, a significant difference was identified, specifically in anxiety ($U = 87.5$; $p = 0.029$). As can be seen in figure 1 the control group ($M = 2.27$; $SD = 0.84$) manifested anxiety to a significantly higher extent than the experimental group ($M = 1.69$; $SD = 0.46$), while intrinsic motivation was similar between both groups.

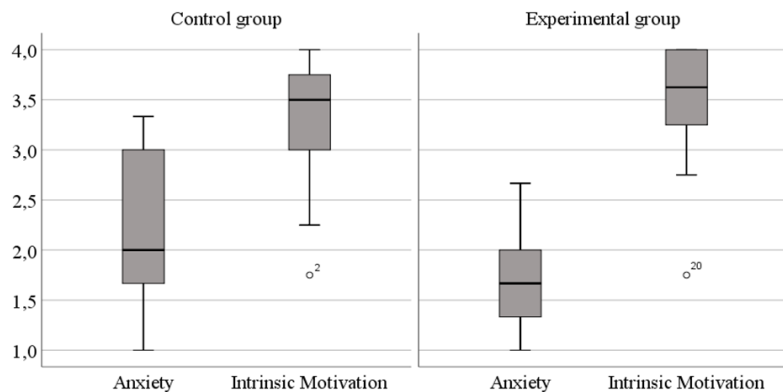


Figure 1. Anxiety and intrinsic motivation between groups.

The anxiety and intrinsic motivation of the students presented slight relationships with their development of the ability to speak in English. Anxiety had a negative impact ($r_s = -0.281$; $p = 0.048$) meaning that, the greater the anxiety, the lower the performance. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation had a positive influence ($r_s = 0.257$; $p = 0.049$); in other words, the greater the motivation, the greater the performance (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between motivation and anxiety with developing speaking skills.

		Total speaking post test
Anxiety	rs	-0,281*
	p	0,048
Intrinsic Motivation	rs	0,257*
	p	0,049

Note: *p (<0.05)

Pre and Post-test

According to the Cambridge test, the evaluation of speaking ability before the intervention showed that both groups presented deficiencies with similar scores ($U=6.23$; $p<0.01$). The control group got a mean score of 15.56/100 (SD= 13.09) in contrast of the experimental group that presented an average score of 20.22/100 (SD=11.86), which enabled the development of the investigation. At the end of the intervention, the final scores were significantly different ($U=23.5$; $p <0.01$). The control group increased its score to 28.3/100 (SD=14.93) while the experimental group reached the final mean score of 56.5 /100 (SD= 11.9).

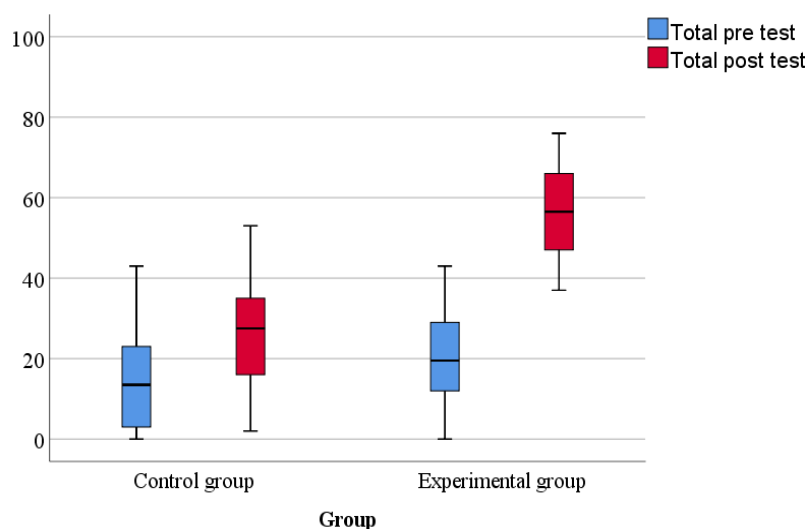


Figure 2. Total Score pre-test y pos- test – control and experimental group.

Likewise, when comparing the different aspects of the ability to speak in English, no significant differences were identified before the intervention while after the intervention the differences were important ($p < 0.01$). There were at least 4 points of difference between the control group and the experimental group in the post test, the aspect with the greatest difference was the vocabulary with a mean difference between groups of 7.05 points. At the end of the investigation, the experimental group obtained a higher score than the control group by 28.22 (Table 2).

Table 2. Speaking Aspects pre y post test.

	Pre test					Post test				
	Control group		Experimental group		U	Control group		Experimental group		U
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(p)	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(p)
Grammar	2,44	2,23	3,44	2,31	119,500 (0,171)	4,44	2,48	11,11	2,40	8,00* (0,000)
Vocabulary	2,33	2,11	3,39	2,28	119,000 (0,165)	4,56	2,68	11,61	2,48	9,00* (0,000)
Pronunciation	3,11	2,83	4,67	2,66	109,000 (0,090)	5,50	3,37	11,00	2,52	32,00* (0,000)
Fluency	3,72	3,23	4,28	2,85	144,000 (0,566)	7,28	3,97	11,33	2,50	71,00* (0,004)
Interaction	3,94	3,19	4,44	2,81	139,000 (0,463)	6,50	3,00	11,44	2,50	33,50* (0,000)

Note: *p (<0.05)

Both the experimental and control group revealed a significant improvement in their learning process ($p < 0.01$). However, the control group increased from 2.00 to 3.56 points, with special progress in fluency while the experimental group increased their knowledge in the five aspects evaluated between 6.3 and 8.2 points, mainly in vocabulary and grammar (Table 3).

Table 3. Difference (Learning Process).

	Control group			Experimental group		
	Difference (Post test - Pretest)	t	p	Difference (Post test - Pretest)	t	p
Grammar	2,00	-5,40	<0.01	7,67	-13,28	<0.01
Vocabulary	2,22	-5,66	<0.01	8,22	-13,64	<0.01
Pronunciation	2,39	-4,98	<0.01	6,33	-10,56	<0.01
Fluency	3,56	-5,71	<0.01	7,06	-11,61	<0.01
Interaction	2,56	-4,98	<0.01	7,00	-10,58	<0.01
Total	12,72	-6,23	<0.01	36,28	-13,54	<0.01

It was identified that all the students of the experimental group increased by at least one point in the total ability to speak in English while the control group had 14 students who had positive changes and the remaining four students kept the same scores or even decreased their ability compared to the Pre-test.

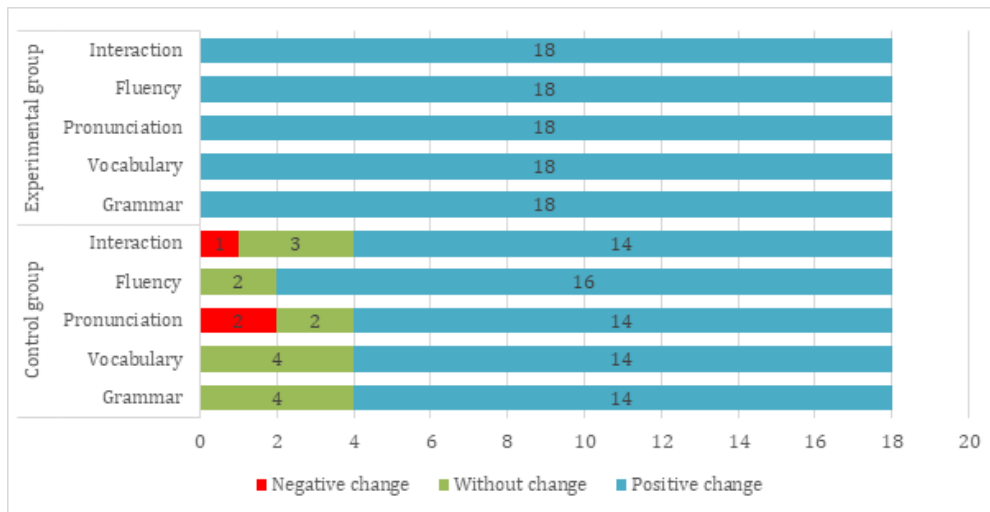


Figure 3. Changes in total score.

When executing the ANOVA of repeated measures, it was determined that the learning process measured in time had an intervention of 36.4% on the students. The interaction between the treatment group to which the methodology was applied and the factor influenced 8.4% of the value and the effect between subjects that the audiovisual material generated on the performance of the students in the ability to speak was 16.4%. This model had an acceptable fit ($R^2=0.523$) (Table 4).

Table 4. Repeated measures ANOVA.

	Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Within Subjects Effects	Learning process	10804.5	1	10804.50	211.6	< .001	0.364
	Learning process Group	2496.9	1	2496.9	48.9	< .001	0.084
	Residuals	1735.6	34	51.0			
Between Subjects Effects	Group	4867.6	1	4867.6	16.95	< .001	0.164
	Residuals	9766.6	34	287.2			

Focus Group

The discussions maintained with the children focused on 2 aspects; participants' perceptions and preferences in class materials and the methodology used. In the first part of the conversation, the children were asked what was their opinion of the classes and to justify it. The responses and comments given by the students could be categorized in three types: genuine enjoyment, usefulness of the classes, and general perception about learning the language (figure 4). The majority of the students expressed a positive view of the English classes as well as the methodology and materials (audio-visual) used for each lesson; this was expressed as genuine enjoyment while learning English, some examples of responses are: "I like the games and songs in English (class)" (FGS3) or "It helps me learn and if I want to go to other countries I can communicate" (FGS1). It is important to mention that all students liked the method and enjoyed the lessons.

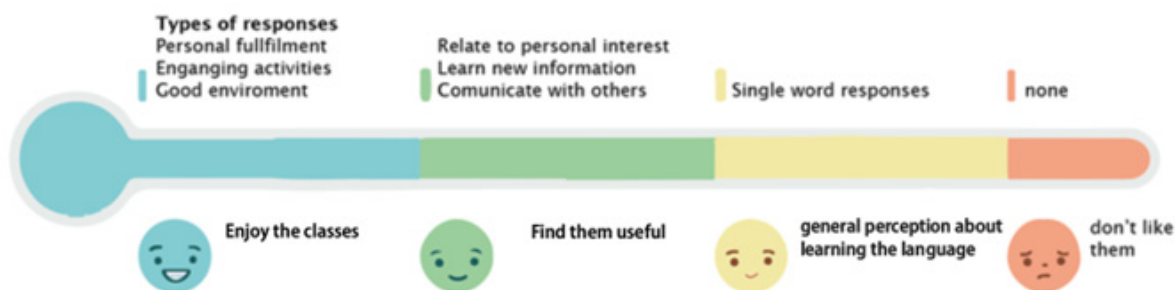


Figure 4. Perspective of English classes.

On the second part of the focus group, students discussed their preferences of materials used in class to learn English. While most of the students in the group showed preference for visual and audio-visual materials being movies, songs, and videos the most commonly mentioned are shown in Figure 5, dynamic activities like games or teamwork were also mentioned.



Figure 5. Word cloud of preferred materials.

Comparison between Qualitative and Quantitative Data

When comparing the results of both the quantitative and qualitative data (Table 5) it was determined that both the experimental and control group maintained or improved their performances in vocabulary grammar and fluency independently of the method applied; in addition, the MALESC test didn't show a significant difference on the intrinsic motivation. However, this last result gets contradicted by the data obtained in the focal groups, that show that 1) the control group was extrinsically motivated (concentrating in the advantages of learning a language) and only showing a modest development on speaking skills (emphasized on fluency) and 2) the experimental group was intrinsically motivated, focusing more on the enjoyment generated by the types of activities used in the learning process and the environment generated during class, getting an overall improvement in the development of speaking skills. Regarding the qualitative data, the information was collected from the focus group of students who belong only to the experimental group since they were the ones with whom the methodology was applied, so, it is important to mention that they showed a wide range of preferences on material implemented in language acquisition, which may have influenced the significant improvement in their process, particularly in grammar and pronunciation

Table 5. Comparison of qualitative and quantitative results.

Quantitative Results	
Experimental G.	increased by at least one point in the total ability to speak in English (interaction, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar)
Control G.	Some students underperform in aspects like interaction and pronunciation

Qualitative Results:

Qualitative results cannot be compared since these were obtained only from the experimental group; however, it is worth mentioning that part of the results of the interviews showed a personal enjoyment of the classes, where the students exhibited preferences over the methodology applied rather than the traditional.

Regarding the first research question related to the effects of using visual and audiovisual materials on speaking skills development in the EFL classroom, the present study demonstrates that despite the fact that the two groups had a similar initial performance, the analysis showed that the implementation of visual and audiovisual materials in class is related to the total English-speaking score and could generate emotional and cognitive benefits for the students. Furthermore, the results obtained in this study are similar to the one conducted by Alsaraireh (2022) who states in the results that students with a happy mindset were more successful and used more learning techniques, additionally they were driven to study and had specified language development ideals for themselves. This is also justified in the present study by the fact that anxiety was significantly lower on the experimental group (who incremented their score by 36.28 points) in contrast to the control group (increase of 12.74 points), which answers the second and third research questions regarding

the effects over communication, participation and perception of learners about the applied methodology. The study also shows a relationship between the intrinsic motivation having a positive, and higher, impact on the experimental group in contrast to the control group, who was extrinsically motivated. In the same way, audio-visual materials demonstrate their benefits above all in factors such as vocabulary, that was significantly higher in the experimental group, inferring that the availability of a greater range of materials could increase the development of speaking skills, especially vocabulary and grammar. These results mirror those of the study conducted by Kathirvel and Hashim (2020) that states that audio-visual materials have been contributing language learning, especially in improving speaking skills. In the present study it was demonstrated that the implementation of Audio-Visual materials allowed to create an interactive, fun and most importantly, effective language instruction to students.

Results of this study also showed that the methodology used with the experimental group influenced the improvement of 36.4% in the students' performance, and the group itself had an influence of 16.4% over the final score; along the same lines are the results of Kumar (2021) that had an experimental nature with a design with a pre and posttest in a set of control groups like the one used in the present study. The results of Kumar's study yielded positive responses from the students since the written-visual materials were fun, motivating, and consequently memorable, which helped students to learn words, speak faster, and improve vocabulary and grammar which is also demonstrated in the present study, since the interaction of the learning process with the treatment group influenced the final performance by 8.4%.

Qualitative data also showed that audiovisual materials have a positive effect over students' participation and motivation; these results can be compared to the research by Buckingham and Alpaslan, which remarks that "children had fewer hesitations and pauses in their recorded responses by the end of the implementation period" (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017, p. 33), inferring that the improvement progress was gradual as were the results obtained in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to examine the effect of visual and audiovisual materials over the speaking skills of young learners as well as to find out their perceptions and emotions towards the methodology implemented. After conducting the study, it is valid to say that the research fulfilled its purpose and demonstrated that audio-visual materials have been contributing to both educators and learners in the language learning process, especially in improving speaking skills (Kathirvel & Hashim, 2020).

By implementing audiovisual materials educators can create a supportive learning environment where students

feel confident and enjoy the activities and most important of all can develop their speaking skills by lowering the affective filter factors like anxiety, judgment, low self-confidence through meaningful interaction, tasks, and materials rather than on learning rules (Shehadeh, Ali, 2020).

Through the instruments applied in this study, it was possible to identify that there are emotional and cognitive benefits on students. It is also important to mention that the levels of anxiety were significantly reduced in the experimental group, and that there is a relationship between the affective factors and the student's performance. Even though both groups showed an improvement, the experimental group had a notable development, especially on vocabulary retention, so it can be inferred that the use of audio-visual materials improves the retention of words.

Findings also revealed that participants enjoyed the use of audio-visual materials and that their perception is that they learn faster and that this allows them to interact and communicate better. Even so educators should consider that creating or searching for the right audio-visual materials for each lesson can be time consuming and knowing the age, level and context of students in advance is important to meet the purposes.

It is also important to recognize that the study had its limitations; among them there are the time available for the study and application of the methodology. Further research should apply the methodology during an entire semester. Regarding the focus group, it is suggested that the person conducting the interview is not the investigator in order to obtain unbiased answers due to the familiarity of the participants with the researcher. More research on the application of audiovisual materials to improve speaking skills is also recommended because most EFL students have speaking difficulties; likewise, the criteria to select the audio-visual materials could be given more attention for upcoming studies.

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