



**UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**“PUPPETS AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE SPEAKING SKILLS IN
CHILDREN”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR´S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND
FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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ADVISOR'S APPROVAL

In my role as advisor of the research paper and title **“PUPPETS AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE SPEAKING SKILLS IN CHILDREN”** prepared by **DEL PEZO RODRÍGUEZ NOEMI ALEXANDRA y RODRÍGUEZ YAGUAL CINTHIA ALEJANDRA**, undergraduate student of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Major at School of Educational Sciences and Languages at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, I declare that after oriented, studied, and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,



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Statement of Authorship

We, DEL PEZO RODRÍGUEZ NOEMI ALEXANDRA, with ID number 2450078213 & RODRÍGUEZ YAGUAL CINTHIA ALEJANDRA, with ID number 2400274516 undergraduate student from Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, School of Education and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of Foreign Languages, in my role as author of the research project "Puppets as a tool to promote Speaking skills in children", certify that this work is of my authorship, except for the quotes and reflections in this research paper.



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Declaration

The content of the following graduation work named “Puppets as a tool to promote Speaking skills in children” is my responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena.

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Acknowledgment I

I wish to express my gratitude to God for giving me wisdom and strength, which at certain moments I lost, but he has his purpose, and I know that this was one. I would like to thank my parents, my mother, who is one of my models to follow professionally, and I also would like to thank my boyfriend for supporting me emotionally in my difficult times and taking me to college. To my friends, whose conversations and friendship made student life more dynamic. To my thesis partner for being patient with me and helping me during my busy times

- Noemi Alexandra Del Pezo Rodríguez

Acknowledgment II

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- Cinthia Alejandra Rodríguez Yagual

Dedication I

This research project is dedicated to my parents, Felipe Del Pezo and Alexandra Rodríguez, for their advice and values implemented since childhood and for their unconditional help when I needed it. Also, my sister is one of the people that motivates me to keep going every day to be an example for her.

-With love, Noemi Del Pezo Rodríguez

Dedication II

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Abstract

This research explored how puppets made learning to speak English easier and more enjoyable for children by creating a fun and safe environment where students felt comfortable practicing their speaking skills. Through activities like storytelling and role-playing, puppets helped children gain confidence, participate actively, and improve their fluency and pronunciation. The study applied a qualitative phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of five teachers in Santa Elena, Ecuador. Using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, teachers shared their insights on how puppets positively impacted engagement and willingness to speak, despite challenges like time constraints and maintaining focus.

The methodological framework relied on qualitative research, emphasizing subjective analysis and complex behaviors in natural educational settings. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility, allowing teachers to elaborate on their experiences. The data collected highlighted that puppets are a dynamic tool that supports English language learning by fostering an interactive and motivating classroom atmosphere. Teachers recommended integrating puppetry regularly and combining it with other methods to sustain student interest and maximize learning outcomes.

Keywords: puppets, speaking skills, fun, learning, confidence

Resumen

Esta investigación exploró cómo los títeres hicieron que aprender a hablar inglés fuera más fácil y divertido para los niños. El estudio analizó cómo los maestros usaron títeres durante las lecciones para crear un ambiente seguro y agradable donde los niños se sintieran cómodos practicando sus habilidades para hablar. A través de actividades como contar cuentos y juegos de roles, los títeres ayudaron a los niños a ganar confianza, participar activamente y mejorar su fluidez y pronunciación.

Los maestros compartieron sus experiencias mediante entrevistas, explicando cómo los títeres generaron entusiasmo y alentaron a los niños a expresarse sin miedo a cometer errores. También notaron que los niños se involucraban más y mostraban mayor disposición para hablar en inglés cuando los títeres formaban parte de la lección. Aunque se mencionaron desafíos como el tiempo necesario para preparar las actividades y mantener la atención de los estudiantes, los maestros encontraron maneras de adaptar el uso de títeres para diferentes edades y estilos de aprendizaje.

Finalmente, el estudio demostró que los títeres son una herramienta poderosa para enseñar inglés. Hicieron las lecciones más dinámicas y ofrecieron a los niños la oportunidad de hablar de manera natural mientras se divertían. Los maestros sugirieron usar títeres con regularidad y combinarlos con otras actividades para mantener el interés y la motivación de los estudiantes.

Palabras claves: títeres, habilidad oral, diversión, aprendizaje, confianza

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Introduction

The English language is widely recognized as essential for global communication and personal development. Speaking skills are fundamental for effective interaction and personal expression. However, children often face difficulties in acquiring these skills due to traditional and ineffective teaching methods, especially in contexts like the Santa Elena province in Ecuador. The lack of engaging strategies in schools has resulted in low motivation and limited proficiency among learners.

Internationally, innovative teaching tools, such as puppets, have been introduced to address similar challenges. Puppetry provides an interactive and creative medium, allowing children to engage in speaking activities within a supportive and anxiety-free environment. Nationally, studies suggest that incorporating puppets in classrooms can stimulate student participation and enhance their ability to articulate thoughts. Locally, the potential of puppets as a didactic resource remains underexplored, though early observations indicate their capacity to promote speaking confidence and creativity among young learners.

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of puppets as a tool to promote speaking skills in children. It seeks to analyze their impact on student engagement, confidence, and communication abilities. By exploring the application of puppetry in educational settings, this study aims to provide practical strategies for educators to improve English teaching methodologies and address the speaking skill challenges faced by young learners in Ecuador.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic

Didactic Resources and Speaking Skills

Title of Research project.

Puppets as a tool to promote Speaking skills in children.

Problem Statement

The English language has been established as an important language to learn across the globe, beyond being a communication tool is a language used for international interaction. According to Maghfiroh (2021), the English language has been used in academics and interpersonal communication, understanding information, and improving one's chances in many occupations. English has become an indispensable language to learn, since nowadays it is common to find texts, advertisements and terminology used in English, making it part of the daily life.

For centuries, English has been a subject part of the curriculum, however, currently, more emphasis is placed on its teaching from primary to higher levels, highlighting the importance of learning it and being able to function in any field, since it is present in work, academic, political and everyday situations. According to Shrishthy (2022), for those who practice the language from an early age, learning is facilitated, and they can build a solid command of English.

In the branch of English teaching, Teaching English for Young Learns (TEYL) is one of the most important subjects for language teaching, because a foreign language is introduced in early stages easing upcoming challenges in intermediate and advanced English levels. Based on Rizky (2019), the goal of primary education is to develop children's moral, spiritual, physical, linguistic, emotional, social and artistic development. Within these aspects

is to achieve literacy, ensuring that young learners are able to understand the relationship between the shape and sound of letters, and also the understanding of words in history. Additionally, it should be noted that early exposure to learning the language and constant practice allows for better retention of knowledge, facilitating the future learning process, in other words, those students who have learned English from an early age will find it easier to learn it in high school or higher grades, being able to function effectively in different scenarios in which the use of English is involved.

Teachers are the guides in the entire learning process, they are the facilitators of knowledge and assist students to overcome possible difficulties that they may face while acquiring a second language (Mejzini, 2019). Events of low proficiency led to poor interaction and lack of feedback. Several children struggle with speaking skills, which can hinder their ability to express ideas to connect with classmates and teachers. One aspect to consider is that the English level of children is always basic because there exist certain gaps in their mother tongue (L1) creating glitches in their second language (L2) acquisition.

Speaking skills are the most engaged in communicative approaches serving as a bridge to boost other English skills. According to Akhter et al., (2020), in the investigation titled “Exploring the significance of speaking skill for EFL learners” states that speaking is regarded as a vital skill, as it plays a key role in communication, which is quite essential in today’s world. Speaking abilities are necessary for conveying ideas and interacting successfully on both academic and daily basis.

Children used to experience trouble during speaking practice where pronunciation, vocabulary, and emotional aspects were involved. Hence, the teaching process must be adapted to these circumstances and overcome weaknesses by releasing and innovating teaching resources. Teaching approaches, didactic techniques, methodologies, and teaching practices are constantly undergoing changes and adaptations according to the current era,

traditional practices are disappearing, and new ones are emerging as a result. (Karasaliu, 2024).

Consequently, English teaching is continuously upgrading and adapting to new challenges, new practice allows educators to focus on developing English learning with new tools and innovative didactic resources such as puppets. Giannikas (2023), showed that incorporating puppets into English language learning is an enjoyable method to engage children while enhancing students' speaking abilities. By allowing them to step into the role of someone else, students can imagine the character they are representing, which encourages spontaneous interaction and reduces the fear of making mistakes.

In Ecuador there is a big problem with speaking proficiency in children, this problem must be tackled by using didactic materials that unleash the potential of peers. According to Bazurto et al., (2022), A major challenge in Ecuador for improving learners' English-speaking skills is the significant lack of both formal and informal vocabulary among learners. This issue is due to the current disinterest in learning English, as they perceive it to be neither engaging nor practical.

It was noticed a lack of speaking skills in public and private schools of Peninsula de Santa Elena province, the researchers could evidence of how the teaching strategies used for teaching English in the schools were odd and traditional; hence, the use of puppets started to become a great alternative to teaching speaking skills and to make students confident when speaking English language. The main objective of the investigation is to explore puppetry as a technique for improving speaking skills, moreover, the use of puppets is recognized by encouraging students to engage through storytelling and creativity. The study seeks to ponder teachers' perceptions of puppetry in promoting speaking skills and active participation in the classroom. The research is driven to give teachers alternatives to teaching English to connect with the students and guarantee a correct teaching-learning process.

Problem formulation

General Question

How useful are puppets in improving the speaking abilities of learners?

Specific questions

- What are the key theoretical foundations of the puppet technique for improving speaking skills, as supported by bibliographic research?
- How do specific puppet activities contribute to enhancing speaking skills in young learners?
- What are educators' perceptions and reflections on the necessity of using puppets to improve children's speaking abilities?

Objectives

General objective

- To explore the use of puppets to improve speaking abilities.

Specific objectives

- To examine the foundations of the puppet technique for improving speaking through bibliographic resources.
- To explore the use of puppet activities that enhance speaking skills.
- To reflect on educators' perceptions about the use of puppets to improve speaking skills in children.

Justification

Teaching English from an early age is essential for easing the learning process into more advanced stages, underscoring the need for teaching methodologies tailored to peers.

According to Yahaya et al., (2021), given that the learners came from diverse backgrounds, social standings, and varying proficiency levels, it was essential to gain insight into how students' mother tongue backgrounds address problems in English

language learning. Several students meet difficulties in developing English-speaking skills, often due to gaps in the native language (L1) that hinder the acquisition of English as a second, language (L2). Since speaking is a fundamental part of communication, it is fundamental to identify these challenges early to support children's wider language development.

One tool in this regard is the use of puppets, which are an attractive didactic resource. According to Solis and Valiente (2023), puppets engage children and reduce anxiety, especially among those who are hesitant to take part in speaking activities. The researcher noticed that by allowing students to participate in a character through the puppet as a cartoon or any character, peers experienced more confidence and less fear of participating in class and making mistakes when talking and became more willing to express ideas and emotions in the English language.

This research is driven to explore how puppet activities can enhance speaking skills in children, and also to analyze its correct usage in classrooms. Speaking skills are quite important to develop so that, these techniques have to be reviewed to explore benefits for students' skills development. Ultimately, this research will help both educators and students to provide students a proper English language teaching and improve students' skills.

Chapter II

Theoretical framework

Background

In this section, there will be a gathering of papers and evidence that supports puppetry as a great technique to engage and improve speaking skills. Different sources explain its mechanism and outcomes after its application, these arguments help to build up the theoretical framework to start the discussion in chapter four along with data collected from the methodological chapter.

According to the research developed by Syafii et al., (2021), puppets are useful for enhancing speaking skills due to increased participation in class, which promotes the development of language skills. In this research, children were instructed to use puppets as a means to communicate stories by using storytelling techniques, the puppets boost confidence allowing them to convey information increasing students' proficiencies.

In the study of Luen et al. (2023), it is stated that younger learners develop their oral skills effectively, when integrating dynamic activities in the classroom. Additionally this will increase their confidence in speaking, allowing them to have a successful linguistic development from early education. The use of puppets as a tool to promote English language skills is an optimal choice to achieve an efficient learning process.

The results of the work conducted by Guihot-Balcombe (2024) conclude that engagement, stimulation, creativity and collaboration are elements that develop in students when they encounter puppet-based activities. The findings showed influence on students, with contrasting changes in behavior, and empathy.

The literature review study developed by Råde (2021), analyzed several authors to build up the conclusion that puppets are considered a pedagogical tool for developing language skills in the English language. This study reflects on the usefulness of puppets in

English skills and social engagement, it is mentioned that speaking skills are highly promoted through the increase of confidence without hesitating in making mistakes.

In the research developed by Siregar and Pardi (2022), there was an experimentation of hand puppets, which is the practical and crafty way to emulate puppets; the creative design makes the students engage with its creation fostering attachment to the pedagogical tool. There was an existing problem in the acquisition of speaking skills for kids because of oral proficiency and social troubles. The investigation was driven to validate the integration of puppets for developing Speaking skills, the findings discovered the innovation of using puppets to foster utterances by children.

Puppets seem to be a useful pedagogical tool to support speaking skills development, that is because the analysis of its integration and mechanism for improvement of skills must be examined. The findings of Aridasariea and Rohmah (2024), the use of puppet stories showed a positive outcome in Speaking skill improvement. Students were thoroughly engaged in every task and motivated to participate in discussions. The authors explored the puppet's traits, and the flow of the storyline, and shared what students found most captivating about the story, showing genuine interest and involvement throughout the activities.

In addition, the research carried out by Azizah (2024), proved that using puppets supports speaking skills improvements, there were several positive aspects of using puppets such as interaction in class, English language use during the whole class, and Speaking skills enhancements. Interaction serves as a means for feedback ideas and the exchange of ideas, this involves speech and its components. Based on the authors' review puppets seem to be a great option to improve Speaking skills in children, the improvement in speech and confidence makes the pedagogical tool highly recommended for language development in the early stages of learning.

Pedagogical basis

Constructivism

According to (Piaget, 1964 cited in Muhajirah, 2020), constructivism highlights differences from traditional teaching emphasizing learning outcomes and instead highlighting the learning process and its mechanism. According to Piaget (1964), learning involves exploring knowledge through experiences, adapting to others to learn from others' perceptions, and understanding how things are constructed through interactions with knowledge and participants. Overall, Constructivism allows students to construct knowledge based on meaningful activities that involve collaboration and emotional skills.

English teaching TEYL

Adults learn differently from children, in subjects such as motricity, vocabulary, and limited communication caused by narrow vocabulary. Teaching English to children has a different curricular design and teaching basis. According to Adisti et al., (2021), the TEYL methodology is accurate for the language development of children, and the use of authentic materials and gamification are mainstream for fostering communication in classrooms.

Interactive activities that involve discovery and self-awareness are compounds of lesson plans, regardless of the adaptation of teaching methodologies the content is not narrow instead is extended due to activities making easier learning processes. Teachers need to get to know new practices for teaching English to kids, connect with knowledge, and foster language development.

Theoretical Framework

English skills

Parupalli (2019), explained the threads of language basis mentioning receptive skills which are related to listening and reading; this means that inputs are given to internalize knowledge to afterward produce knowledge. On the other hand, productive skills are in

regard to speaking and writing emphasizing the production of knowledge based on analysis having outcomes such as opinions, statements, and more.

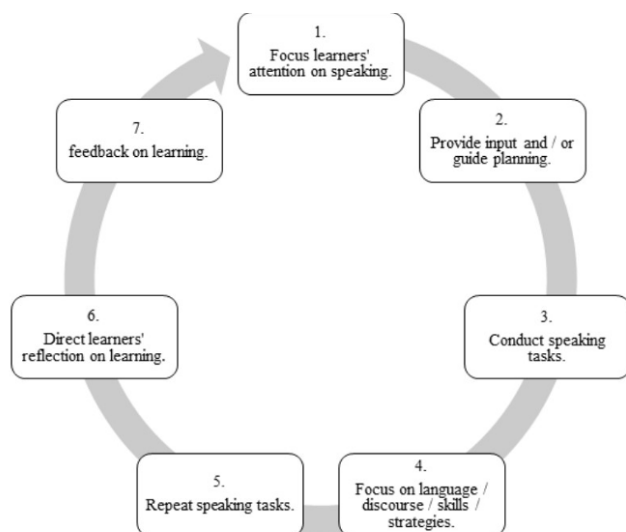
Additionally, through these units of language, individuals can interact with the world since interactions are the exchange of information, speaking is quite relevant to engage casual conversations or discussions due to verbal communication is the way to this active engagement necessitates practice along with grammar, vocabulary, and so forth English language sub-skills.

Speaking skills

Speaking skills form part of the productive skills for the English language, they provide interaction through verbal communication. Children used to barely speak due to a lack of vocabulary and age, nonetheless, peers can express fragments and short sentences that help to communicate with teachers. Nguyen (2023), highlights that speaking is a complex process that involves sharing words and exchanging information. Besides, speaking skills involve communication and social skills, it requires interaction, understanding, and collaboration with speakers. Sometimes kids struggle with the production of speech in the English language caused of a lack of language and social skills.

Teaching cycle of Speaking skills

The teaching approach used by (Goh and Burns, 2012, as cited in Chou, 2021), is divided into stages, each designed by scaffolding to enhance learners' speaking proficiency in a second or foreign language setting. This structured approach is based on the development of all linguistic competencies such as grammar, and vocabulary, furthermore, as a second stage, it is focused on building communicative skills through meaningful tasks connected to real life. The stages involve metacognition, language immersion, task-based practice, and feedback, the model fosters fluency and accuracy for oral expression.

Figure 1*Teaching cycle for speaking skills instruction*

Note: The teaching speaking cycle figure elaborates on the focus of teaching by stepping into different stages of language acquisition (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 153 as cited in Chou, 2021)

In the first part of the cycle, learners develop a metacognitive approach and reflect on previous experiences where English was involved, these experiences serve as a warm-up to connect with the student. There is a strong connection to constructivism because experiences and class collaboration are involved in constructing knowledge. In the second stage, the teacher provides inputs to support new knowledge that will be learned, usually, it employs relevant vocabulary, word choice, phrasal verbs, and so on components. Over stage three, tasks involve acquiring speaking skills and improving fluency through meaningful activities aligned with students' English level. Several speaking tasks are employed to motivate students to talk such as dialogues with gap spaces using worksheets, discussion, and so forth. In Stage Four, the aim is to reinforce communicational strategies and details for the effective delivery of ideas. Cohen and Henry (2020), stated that the use of diverse activities improves students' retention of knowledge, also learners practice using these strategies to enhance fluency and manage interactions correctly (p. 170).

Stage five makes learners apply speaking skills to communicate with accuracy by following past stages, which involve active communication and feedback, while the final stages focus on performance monitoring and teacher feedback to give solid knowledge acquirement. The teaching cycle covers English skills and sub-skills and uses different teaching methods all of them driven to improve speaking skill development. The current study aims to fill this gap by examining how Goh and Burns' framework influences speaking performance and strategy use, in comparison to a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach (Goh and Burns, 2012, as cited in Chou, 2021).

Activities for developing Speaking skills in children

Nosheen et al., (2020), identified that teachers often utilize read-aloud activities for engaging speech, giving feedback to students, and motivation to polish skills. In addition to this approach, Salamea and Fajardo (2023), referred that teacher of young learners run interactive activities such as role-playing, puppetry, storytelling, and brainstorming. Furthermore, question-and-answer exercises and group discussions are frequently used to facilitate English language development. These activities support the development of active communication skills in the target language, nevertheless, puppets are mentioned as an important tool to develop Speaking skills.

The use of puppets to promote speaking skills

Giannikas (2023), mentioned that incorporating puppets into English language learning is an accurate activity to make children enhance their speaking skills. Puppets offer a safe and comfortable learning environment to promote interaction during the lessons (p. 1). Puppets help to establish a relaxed learning atmosphere, encouraging students to express thoughts and practice the foreign language without shyness promoting speaking skills development.

Activity 1

Children and caregivers create a puppet.

(New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (2020), explored activities to foster speaking skills, the first step is to make children design puppets with monitors teachers, or caregivers, they explore ways of interaction for this instance students use puppets to communicate ideas among classmates and teachers. This activity encourages teachers and students to act up at the same levels of communication by using puppets for interaction, since instructions for activities and feedback (p. 3).

The puppets should be introduced after an activity, this helps students to use ideas and experiences that came from previous activities such as reading or writing tasks. At this stage, students can use imagination and exploration of the language integrating audio-visual and kinesthetic approaches, by moving the puppets with hands and relating stories.

Storytelling is widely connected to the use of puppets, after reading activity students can share summaries of stories making them reflect and practicing speaking skills. Lastly, this activity fosters active participation and speech production by using puppets.

Activity 2

Children explore the creation of animals, insects, or imaginary character puppets with moveable parts.

According to the NY Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (2020), this activity encourages imagination along with vocabulary and critical thinking. Students have to create a character by using animal parts, which pushes them to analyze the vocabulary of living creatures, brainstorming must be executed to organize ideas and recall vocabulary (p. 5).

Moreover, character creation activity can be shaped to use another vocabulary such as nouns to create personalities for puppets, also vocabulary of means of transportation can be

used to construct a transformer. The reflection of the activity is held by the teacher, the students have to talk about habitat, features, and so on related to creation, this encourages the activity of show and tell, which works perfectly with puppetry.

The outcome of these activities is to engage speaking skills by using semi-controlled activities such as storytelling and show and tell as oral presentations.

Legal basis

Constitución de la República Del Ecuador

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” (Constitución del la República del Ecuador, 2008).

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. La educación es indispensable para el conocimiento, el ejercicio de los derechos y la construcción de un país soberano, y constituye un eje estratégico para el desarrollo nacional” (Constitución del la República del Ecuador, 2008).

Art. 28.- “La educación responderá al interés público y no estará al servicio de intereses individuales y corporativos. Se garantizará el acceso universal, permanencia, movilidad y egreso sin discriminación alguna y la obligatoriedad en el nivel inicial, básico y bachillerato o su equivalente. Es derecho de toda persona y comunidad interactuar entre

culturas y participar en una sociedad que aprende. El Estado promoverá el diálogo intercultural en sus múltiples dimensiones. El aprendizaje se desarrollará de forma escolarizada y no escolarizada. La educación pública será universal y laica en todos sus niveles, y gratuita hasta el tercer nivel” (Constitución del la República del Ecuador, 2008).

Articles 26, 27, and 28 of the Ecuadorian Constitution highlight the fundamental role of education for every person and address how English should be used in academic settings because this subject is involved in schools and universities. These laws emphasize the importance of education in personal and social development and discuss the significance of learning in schools and universities. Furthermore, they elaborate on the close relationship between the government and citizens.

Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI)

Art. 2.- Principios. - La actividad educativa se desarrolla atendiendo a los siguientes principios generales, que son los fundamentos filosóficos, conceptuales y constitucionales que sustentan, definen y rigen las decisiones y actividades en el ámbito educativo:

bb. Plurilingüismo. - Se reconoce el derecho de todas las personas, comunas, comunidades, pueblos y nacionalidades a formarse en su propia lengua y en los idiomas oficiales de relación intercultural; así como en otros de relación con la comunidad internacional;

Art. 5.- La educación como obligación de Estado. - El Estado tiene la obligación ineludible e inexcusable de garantizar el derecho a la educación, a los habitantes del territorio ecuatoriano y su acceso universal a lo largo de la vida, para lo cual generará las condiciones que garanticen la igualdad de oportunidades para acceder, permanecer, movilizarse y egresar de los servicios educativos. El Estado ejerce la rectoría sobre el Sistema Educativo a través de la Autoridad Nacional de Educación de conformidad con la Constitución de la República y la Ley (Ley Organica de Educacion Intercultural, 2011).

Dependent and independent variable*Dependent Variable*

Use of puppets

Independent Variable

Speaking skills

Chapter III

Methodological framework

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a model of methodology that is based its analysis on subjective information and complex behaviors, also it is widely used in Social Sciences and Humanities due to its scope. Focusing on educational settings Ponce et al., (2022), examined qualitative research as crucial to the scope and capture the dynamism of education, moreover, this approach seeks to understand participants to create hypotheses regarding the data collected.

In addition, Hatch (2023), explained its characteristics and functions for different research in educational fields, features such as nature settings, participant perspectives, researcher as a Data-Gathering Instrument, extended firsthand engagement, reflexivity, inductive data analysis, Emergent design, subjectivity, wholeness, and complexity and central” (p. 13); these meaning are layers that support qualitative research by exploring various factors involved in the investigation.

From the researchers’ point of view, qualitative suits perfectly to analyze the phenomenon of using techniques that have outcomes in the learning process, also it is accurate to collect data from interviews this data is related to opinions and experiences, furthermore the use of open questions to allow the participant to elaborate answers to them, this reinforces the hypothesis of the research project in development.

Type of investigation

Phenomenological study

Phenomena are events pushed by nature or by external factors, in the field of education the use of techniques to teach or adapt learning that afterward are events concerned to become analyzed to overview the impact of them and mechanism. According to Ghamrawi et al., (2024), explained that phenomenological studies are highly attached to the education

framework, in this study, it was decided to apply qualitative phenomenology as a scope to gain a vision of lived experiences of teachers (p. 2). Due to its characteristics of phenomenology, the inductive and reflexive methodology is applied to gather and comprehend insights into teachers' experiences in English language teaching.

Data collection techniques

Semi-structure Interview

Interviews are the most interactive way to gather information, and the versatility of understanding and subjectivity in analysis based on behavior and experiences supports the construction of reflections. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), stated that semi-structured interviews are quite preferred by researchers to understand phenomenology since participants view a component of experiences further than just the phenomenon. Lastly, it is important to analyze its characteristics such as research supporting *the* autonomy of exploration by tailoring questionnaires in the function of information desired to extract. Taking into consideration the use of semi-structured interviews for the research project, it is expected to collect large augments of teachers by letting them narrate lived experiences.

Instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a guideline for an interview component is questions formed based on the topic of research such as variables of investigation. With consistency and efficiency, also mentioned three characteristics to follow to succeed in the interview general form, question sequence, and question formulation were highly remarked (p. 5).

Questionnaires serve to collect data factual information and understand behaviors, and subjective factors, which makes questionnaires important to apply in qualitative methodology. The researchers built up a questionnaire considering variables and possible

postures of teachers having the background of using the technique proposed by researchers, the use of questionnaires ensures the collection of information adequately.

Types of questions

Open-ended questions

Open-ended question establishes a framework for an extended collection of data because questionnaires are driven to capture elaborate details that help to support post-analysis. Dunwoodie et al., (2022), defined open-ended questions as part of instruments of investigation that build the methodology used to consistently gather reliable information. Open-ended questions are useful for the project since the experiences of teachers play a key role in extending, inferring, and interpreting upcoming discussions and analysis of answers.

Data collection processing and resources

Population and Sample

Selecting participants to execute instruments tends to be complex when the number of interviewees is small, or the population is not consistent since they do not meet the same background to be assessed through interviews. Mncedisi (2024), population refers to a large group or universes of participants that share the same features such as demographics, education, and so on (p. 77). Hence, the population must be discriminated against by various kinds of investigation to obtain the target population and ease the execution of the investigation. The group selected by researchers were public and private teachers of Santa Elena province; the spectrum of the population was based on teachers who had used puppets during their teacher journey and had positive outcomes.

On the other hand, sampling involves narrowing the population to be capable of extracting information without burning out and overcharging information to researchers, the target population is used to accurately collect data avoiding the troubles previously mentioned.

According to the study carried out by Knott et al., (2022), it stated that when the sample does not reach large numbers. The sample can be focused on selecting representative interviewees that meet the variables. For this reason, the authors selected five teachers who work in public and private schools, these teachers have an extended background of teaching practice and experiences in schools that can contribute to guiding future teachers.

Chapter IV

Analysis of findings

Brief analysis of findings

The analysis emphasizes the influence of puppets on developing speaking skills in the classroom by analyzing teachers' teaching experiences. Teachers highlighted that puppets are useful when the classroom experiences a lack of communication, so puppets worked on developing speech to make the class interactive and participative engaging the content and tool. Activities such as role-play, and improv, Simon says were used along with puppets to make students succeed in the classroom.

These activities support the practice of speaking in an engaging way but also encourage spontaneous conversation and interaction. Through these activities, fosters report and engages students in practicing speaking skills, which is key for building fluency and confidence.

As a general statement, teachers expressed that after implementing puppets in their classes they obtained positive reactions from the students, who were more motivated to participate and interact with their classmates, fostering a safe environment that helped them to feel comfortable learning and become more involved in the learning process.

Analysis of data and interpretation

The analysis was done using codification by analyzing relevant information from interviewees, the educators elaborated on perspectives and experiences with puppets, and the questions were related to puppets in educational frameworks, activities, challenges, and experiences of teachers. It was selected clue words that summarize parts of teachers' narratives to make further analysis and discussion with bibliographic resources.

Table 1*Table of answers to interviews*

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?	Facilitators; storytelling; role-play to make lessons interactive	To model language; guide dialogues; and icebreakers for engagement.	Integrated into storytelling and songs; skits related to lesson.	Used for role-playing and leading discussions.	Assist in explaining concepts; lead discussions.
What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?	Bridges students to practice; reduces fear; and builds confidence.	Creates imaginative settings; reduces stress; and fosters natural practice.	Encourages playfulness; redirects attention to puppets.	Promotes comfort; builds natural articulation.	Nurtures a safe environment; transforms language practice into fun.
What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?	Storytelling; Q&A; role-playing.	Puppet shows; interviews; and group discussions.	Puppet-led debates and discussions; storytelling; Q&A.	Real-life role-playing; collaborative puppet shows.	Puppet-led dialogues; story creation; Q&A.
How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?	Positive; safe and entertained; active involvement.	Enthusiasm and curiosity; excited and engaged.	Laughter and anticipation; attention sparked.	Attentive and excited; treat puppet as a playful friend.	Smiles and attention; more engaged.
How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?	Lowers anxiety; promotes natural practice.	Encourages speaking in a pressure-free way; enhances vocabulary.	Builds confidence; encourages experimenting with tones.	Lowers anxiety; encourages focus on pronunciation.	Builds fluency; helps retain language skills.
Based on your experiences, how has your experience been	Positive; lively lessons; better retention.	Rewarding; hesitant students become open.	Successful; breaks monotony; boosts engagement.	Increase participation and enjoyment.	Fantastic; bridges instruction and participation.

using puppets in the classroom?					
What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?	Maintaining novelty; overcoming shyness.	Time-consuming preparation; perceived as juvenile.	Ensuring focus and fitting content to objectives.	Balancing fun and structure.	Managing excitement; adapting for ages

Note: This table summarizes the data collected from interviews highlighting relevant statements from educators

For question number one “**How puppets are commonly used in educational settings?**” teachers expressed that the use of puppets turns traditional classes into active and interactive lessons. Giannikas (2023), highlighted the role of puppets in creating a relaxed environment conducive to learning. This statement confirms that puppets are a great incentive for students to participate by introducing new educational content. This confirms that puppets worked for introducing topics for teaching English, also it encourages participation through activities where puppets can be used.

In the second question “**What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?**” it was intended to explore the interconnection between the development of oral expression with the use of puppets, as a result it was concluded this material reduces the anxiety that many students feel when speaking in English, this supports the authors Solis and Valiente (2023), who pointed out that puppets help children to express themselves without fear of making mistakes, thus creating an imaginative environment full of confidence. This approach contributes to spontaneous interactions, which are essential for language development, as highlighted by Luen et al. (2023).

In question number three “**What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?**” educators stated that activities of this type include storytelling, role play, and puppet discussions. These activities comply with the theoretical framework of

active and meaningful practice in learning a language. Salamea and Fajardo (2023), state that puppet-based activities related to theater are included and also enhance the fun aspect of learning the languages the students are taught.

Question number four **“How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?”** was focused on getting to know the response of students after using puppets in classes. Educators narrated experiences with children who showed a willingness to participate when puppets were involved in the classroom. Syafii et al. (2021), mentioned that the response of puppets is always positive, students feel engaged with puppets activities. Teachers' perceptions echoed the idea that puppets capture students' attention and promote active participation in the classroom.

Over the fifth question **“How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?”** according to the teachers' responses, it was concluded that puppets play an important role in improving students' speaking ability, as it decreases nervousness, which is conducive to the development of fluency and pronunciation practice. Giannikas (2023), emphasized that puppets enhance learners' language proficiency and also provide a positive learning environment.

In question number six **“Based on your experiences, how has your experience been using puppets in the classroom?”** teachers considered puppets as useful tools to enliven learning, their use transforms classes into more engaging and interactive ones. According to the research conducted by Aridasariea and Rohmah (2024), active participation and improved speech production are positive results after including activities with puppets. Teachers' reflections underscore the benefits of puppets in developing meaningful lessons.

In question seven **“What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?”**. Challenges included maintaining students' focus on the background of the class which is learning English while puppets make the class fun and

attractive. Middle school and High school students felt these activities were not accurate for their current age, echoing Bazarro et al. (2022), who pointed out that a lack of motivation can hinder learning in the case of teenagers. The balance of gamification has to be balanced between fun with assessments that challenge students.

After analyzing responses from teachers and matching bibliographic references, it is clear that the use of puppets has a profound role in classrooms. Furthermore, puppets provide a wide range of activities that involve students and make classes enjoyable instead of traditional lessons. The development of speaking skills and confidence are factors that meet improvements by puppetry, using the correct focus of lessons and encouragement ensures a proper learning process.

Chapter V

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions

The use of puppets in teaching speaking skills research demonstrated that it enhances speaking skills and classroom engagement by providing a safe learning environment to interact. Puppets are pedagogical and didactic tools that foster speech and interactive learning environments where students can practice speaking without fear or anxiety. Therefore, teachers often utilize puppet activities such as reading, aloud, storytelling, role play, and daily commands of the classroom, the activities mentioned promote natural speech while learning the English language.

These techniques help to reduce the pressure in speaking activities promoting authentic language use in real-life scenarios. The use of puppets is a technique used to encourage interaction and language practice when classrooms are based on traditional methods and quiet classrooms without interaction and didactic materials. Among the activities that can be carried out for learning English with the use of puppets are dynamic question and answer sessions, storytelling and Puppet Theater. Teachers have to be wise in the addition of these activities to certain age and learning objectives, its effect will make a difference in the classroom.

The perceptions about puppets were positive, the outcomes of using puppets for speaking skills were increased engagement, positive attitude, and improvements in social skills. However, difficulties were also evidenced, among them the need to organize their use well with the class time to be effective; in children it can be beneficial but in adolescents the initial response is not always good; the cooperation of the representatives to carry out the activities. It is important to maintain a strategic planning to enhance the implementation of

puppets in the educational process and to obtain positive results from the students when developing their speaking skills.

Recommendations

To integrate puppetry into teaching speaking skills, several practical strategies should be adopted. First, puppets should become a regular feature of the class not merely an occasional activity, to make routines and make students get used to input. Activities like storytelling, imitation, and interactive Q&A sessions should be carefully structured to provide accomplishment in speaking proficiencies and opportunities for speaking practice.

Adapting puppet activities to different age groups and language proficiency levels is important due to the previous knowledge, learning styles of students, disabilities, and personalities. For younger students, interesting storytelling of narratives and role-playing games enhanced fluency and conversational confidence, however, for teenagers it is necessary to engage in discussions on current topics and attractive rewards, fostering critical thinking and advanced speaking skills. Furthermore, combining puppetry with other interactive methods, such as games and ludic activities allows students to feel interest in activities and address students' strengths and weaknesses when they participate since the use of puppets promotes the exchange of ideas and social skills development.

Puppets fit the best for children which is why teachers have to keep experimenting with puppets to analyze puppets' influence on English language teaching and share experiences to model new activities and approaches that will enrich the research community. By following these recommendations, educators can utilize the usefulness of puppets to enhance speaking skills, creating a motivating environment that benefits all learners and teachers.

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Annexes**Annex A: Certified Anti-plagiarism System.**

La Libertad, 06 de Diciembre del 2024

CERTIFICADO ANTIPLAGIO

En calidad de tutor del trabajo de titulación **“PUPPETS AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE SPEAKING SKILLS IN CHILDREN”**, elaborado por las estudiantes **DEL PEZO RODRÍGUEZ NOEMI ALEXANDRA Y RODRÍGUEZ YAGUAL CINTHIA ALEJANDRA**, de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, PINE, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, previo a la obtención del título de Licenciado en Inglés, me permito declarar que el sistema antiplagio Compilatio Magister, señala el 5% de similitud; por consiguiente se procede a emitir el presente informe.

Adjunto reporte de similitud.



García Villao Rosa Tatiana, MSc.

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Ubicación de las similitudes en el documento:

Annex B: *Questionnaire.***Questions aimed at teachers**

1. How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?
2. What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?
3. What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?
4. How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?
5. How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?
6. Based on your experiences, how has your experience been using puppets in the classroom?
7. What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?

Annex C: Transcriptions.**Interviewee 1:****1. How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?**

Puppets often act as facilitators in classrooms, creating a friendly and fun environment. They're commonly used to narrate stories or engage students in role-play, making lessons more interactive.

2. What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?

Puppets serve as a bridge between students and speaking practice. They encourage children to speak without fear of judgment by making conversations playful and relaxed. This interaction boosts confidence and fluency.

3. What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?

Teachers can use puppets for storytelling, question-and-answer sessions, and role-playing scenarios where students create dialogues or act-out scenes.

4. How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?

Children respond positively, becoming more engaged and willing to participate. The puppet's presence makes them feel safe and entertained, leading to active involvement.

5. How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?

It enhances speaking by lowering anxiety and making language practice enjoyable. Students get to practice pronunciation and expression naturally through interactive sessions.

6. Based on your experiences, how has your experience of using puppets in the classroom?

My experience has been overwhelmingly positive. Puppets have made lessons livelier, and students seem to retain what they learn better when puppets are involved.

7. What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?

One challenge is maintaining the novelty of the activity. If used too frequently, puppets might lose their charm. Also, some students might initially feel shy or find puppets childish until they become accustomed to them.

Interviewee 2:

1. How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?

Teachers use puppets to introduce topics or model language, guiding students through dialogues in a way that feels less intimidating. Puppets act as icebreakers to engage students in conversation.

2. What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?

Puppets create an imaginative setting where children feel free to express themselves. This method helps reduce stress and builds confidence, fostering natural speech and conversation practice.

3. What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?

Activities include puppet shows where students create their own scripts, interviews with puppets as guests, and group discussions facilitated by the puppet.

4. How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?

Children typically respond with enthusiasm and curiosity. The novelty of a puppet makes them excited, and they often participate more readily than in typical lessons.

5. How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?

It provides an opportunity for students to practice speaking in a fun, pressure-free way. They can develop their vocabulary, practice intonation, and build conversational skills without feeling self-conscious.

6. Based on your experiences, how has your experience been using puppets in the classroom?

It's been rewarding; students who were once hesitant to speak are now more open and willing to contribute. The use of puppets has made lessons more dynamic and interactive.

7. What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?

The main challenge is time management, as preparing and conducting puppet activities can be time-consuming. Additionally, some older students might initially perceive puppets as juveniles.

Interviewee 3:

1. How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?

Puppets are integrated into storytelling and songs, making lessons captivating and encouraging participation. They can also be used for acting out short skits related to the lesson content.

2. What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?

Puppets encourage a playful atmosphere where children feel free to express themselves. They help kids overcome the fear of speaking in front of others by redirecting attention to the puppet.

3. What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?

Teachers can organize puppet-led debates, storytelling exercises, and interactive Q&A sessions where students ask the puppet questions or respond to its prompts.

4. How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?

They react with laughter and anticipation. The puppet's animated nature keeps their attention and sparks their interest, making them eager to participate.

5. How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?

Puppetry helps children practice language in an entertaining format. It builds confidence and allows them to experiment with speaking styles, tones, and expressions.

6. Based on your experiences, how has your experience been using puppets in the classroom?

My experience has been quite successful. Puppets have consistently broken the monotony of traditional teaching, leading to higher student engagement and retention.

7. What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?

A significant challenge is ensuring all students remain focused, as the activity can become too playful. Another is preparing engaging content that fits well with educational objectives.

Interviewee 4:

1. How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?

They're essential for role-playing activities where students practice real-life conversations. Puppets often introduce topics or lead discussions, making lessons more interactive.

2. What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?

Puppets promote an open environment where children feel comfortable speaking. This sense of comfort helps them articulate their thoughts more fluently and build language skills naturally.

3. What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?

Role-playing real-life scenarios, collaborative puppet shows, and puppet-led classroom discussions are great ways to use them. These activities make practice relatable and enjoyable.

4. How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?

Children become more attentive and excited. They treat the puppet as a playful friend, making them more willing to speak up and engage in activities.

5. How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?

Puppets can lower speaking anxiety and create a fun learning environment. They encourage active participation and help children focus on conversational flow and pronunciation.

6. Based on your experiences, how has your experience been using puppets in the classroom?

I've found that puppets significantly increase participation and enjoyment. They make lessons more appealing, and children often remember puppet-led activities vividly.

7. What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?

It can be challenging to balance fun with structure. Also, some older students might initially resist, thinking puppets are only for young kids until they see their benefits.

Interviewee 5:

1. How are puppets commonly used in educational settings?

In my classroom, puppets are like little assistants who explain concepts and involve students through questions and stories. They also help lead discussions and demonstrations.

2. What is the connection between using puppets and the development of speaking skills in children?

Puppets foster a nurturing environment that motivates children to practice speaking. They transform language practice into an entertaining experience, helping students develop more natural speech.

3. What activities can teachers use to include puppets in speaking practice?

Teachers can design puppet-led dialogues, story creation activities, and question-and-answer sessions where students interact directly with the puppet.

4. How do children often respond to puppets during speaking activities?

They generally respond with smiles and attention. The interactive element of puppetry keeps them engaged and makes them more willing to participate without feeling shy.

5. How does puppetry improve speaking skills in children?

It helps children build fluency and practice new vocabulary through an enjoyable medium. This hands-on approach promotes better retention of language skills.

6. Based on your experiences, how has your experience been using puppets in the classroom?

It was fantastic! Puppets have bridged the gap between teacher-led instruction and student participation, creating a more relaxed and inclusive atmosphere.

7. What challenges might arise when using puppets to enhance speaking skills in children?

One challenge is managing classroom energy, as puppets can sometimes lead to excitement that needs careful direction. Another is adapting activities for different age groups.