

UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

"SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL ADULT LEARNERS"

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 under the **title Self-Directed Learning to Enhance Speaking Skills in EFL Adult Learners** prepared **by Floreano Orrala Andy Orly and Villon Lema Richard Esteban**, undergraduate students 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 in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

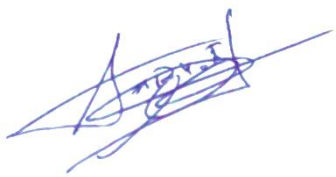
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Statement of Authorship

We, Floreano Orrala Andy Orly with ID number 245018526 and Villon Lema Richard Esteban with ID number 2400020620 undergraduate students from Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, School of Education Science and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages in our role as authors of the research project "Self-Directed Learning to Enhance Speaking Skills in EFL Adult Learners" certify that this study work is our authorship, except for quotes, statements, and reflections in the research paper.





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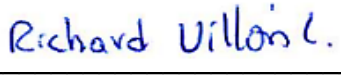
Declaration

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First and foremost, I thank God for His infinite faithfulness, for blessing me with the life, health, and wisdom necessary to complete this important stage. His presence has sustained me through every challenge and has allowed me to reach this point with hope and conviction.

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-Floreano Orrala Andy Orly

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-Villón Lema Richard Esteban

Dedication I

To God, who has been my support, my guide, and my strength throughout my life. Thank you for sustaining me in times of difficulty, for giving me the wisdom to make every decision, and for reminding me that, with faith and perseverance, anything is possible. This achievement is, above all, for His glory.

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With love,

Floreano Orrala Andy Orly

Dedication II

I dedicate this research project, first and foremost, to Jehovah for giving me life, strength, wisdom, and the opportunity to achieve this important goal. His guidance has been my source of hope and perseverance throughout this journey.

I also dedicate this achievement to my beloved family and friends for their unconditional love, encouragement, and support. Their trust in me inspired me to keep moving forward, even during the most challenging moments.

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Abstract

Developing speaking skills is one of the main challenges for adult learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), as it requires constant practice, confidence, and autonomy to communicate effectively. In this context, Self-Directed Learning has become an educational strategy that promotes the active participation of students in the planning, development, and evaluation of their own learning, thereby helping to strengthen their speaking skills. The objective of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of adult students of English as a foreign language regarding the contribution of Self-Directed Learning to the development of speaking skills. The study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, using semi-structured interviews as the data collection technique. Five adult students from the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) participated; their experiences helped identify the main benefits, strategies, and challenges related to Self-Directed Learning. The results showed that Self-Directed Learning strengthens speaking skills by encouraging more consistent language practice, increasing confidence in communicating in English, and promoting student autonomy and self-regulation. Furthermore, it was found that the use of mobile apps, digital platforms, videos, podcasts, and self-assessment activities contributes to the development of fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. However, challenges related to motivation, time management, discipline, and the need for feedback during the learning process were also identified. It is concluded that Self-Directed Learning is an effective strategy for strengthening the speaking skills of adult learners of English as a foreign language, as it promotes active participation, independent learning, and ongoing language practice.

Keywords: Self-Directed Learning, speaking skills, adult learners, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), autonomy.

Resumen

El desarrollo de las habilidades orales es uno de los principales retos para los estudiantes adultos de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), ya que requiere práctica constante, confianza y autonomía para comunicarse de forma eficaz. En este contexto, el aprendizaje autodirigido se ha convertido en una estrategia educativa que fomenta la participación activa de los estudiantes en la planificación, el desarrollo y la evaluación de su propio aprendizaje, lo que contribuye a reforzar sus habilidades orales. El objetivo de este estudio fue explorar las percepciones y experiencias de estudiantes adultos de inglés como lengua extranjera respecto a la contribución del aprendizaje autodirigido al desarrollo de las habilidades orales. El estudio empleó un enfoque cualitativo con un diseño fenomenológico, utilizando entrevistas semiestructuradas como técnica de recogida de datos. Participaron cinco estudiantes adultos de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE); sus experiencias ayudaron a identificar los principales beneficios, estrategias y retos relacionados con el aprendizaje autodirigido. Los resultados mostraron que el aprendizaje autodirigido refuerza las habilidades orales al fomentar una práctica lingüística más constante, al aumentar la confianza a la hora de comunicarse en inglés y al promover la autonomía y la autorregulación de los estudiantes. Además, se constató que el uso de aplicaciones móviles, plataformas digitales, vídeos, podcasts y actividades de autoevaluación contribuye al desarrollo de la fluidez, la pronunciación y el vocabulario. Sin embargo, también se identificaron retos relacionados con la motivación, la gestión del tiempo, la disciplina y la necesidad de recibir retroalimentación durante el proceso de aprendizaje. Se concluye que el aprendizaje autodirigido es una estrategia eficaz para reforzar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes adultos de inglés como lengua extranjera, ya que fomenta la participación activa, el aprendizaje independiente y la práctica continua del idioma.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje autodirigido, habilidades orales, alumnos adultos, inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), autonomía.

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Introduction

Learning English has become increasingly important in academic, professional, and social contexts due to its role as a means of international communication. In this context, developing speaking skills is one of the greatest challenges for students of English as a foreign language (EFL), especially among adults, since developing speaking skills requires not only linguistic knowledge but also confidence, constant practice, and the ability to use the language independently in real-life situations. This reality has sparked interest in identifying learning strategies that can strengthen speaking skills and encourage more active and independent learning.

Among these strategies, Self-Directed Learning has gained particular importance because it motivates students to take a leading role in their learning by planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating their own activities. From an andragogical perspective, this approach recognizes that adult learners have specific needs, experiences, and goals that can be enhanced through Self-Directed Learning and the use of technological resources. Consequently, Self-Directed Learning offers an alternative for strengthening speaking skills through continuous and flexible practice that complements classroom instruction.

Within this framework, the present study, titled “Self-Directed Learning to Enhance Speaking Skills in EFL Adult Learners”, was designed to explore the perceptions and experiences of adult learners of English as a foreign language regarding the contribution of Self-Directed Learning to the development of speaking skills. For this purpose, a qualitative study with a phenomenological design was conducted, using semi-structured interviews with five adult students aged between 25 and 30, with an English proficiency level between B1 and B2, enrolled in the National and Foreign Language Education Program at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE). The information obtained provided

insight into the benefits, strategies, and challenges that the participants experienced when incorporating Self-Directed Learning into the development of their speaking skills.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presents the research problem, objectives, and rationale; the second chapter develops the theoretical framework underpinning the study; the third chapter describes the methodology used; the fourth chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the interviews; and the fifth chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings. Overall, this research aims to explore adult EFL learners' perceptions regarding the contribution of Self-Directed Learning to the development of speaking skills.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic

Self-Directed Learning and Speaking Skills

Title

Self-Directed Learning to Enhance Speaking Skills in EFL Adult Learners

Problem Statement

In the field of teaching English as a foreign language, developing speaking skills remains one of the greatest challenges for adult learners. Globally, various studies indicate that, despite years of study, many students have difficulty communicating fluently and confidently in real-life communication (Roy, 2025). This situation is related to traditional teacher-focused methodologies, which reduce autonomy and effective oral practice in the classroom.

In Latin America, this problem is also evident, as approaches to teaching English often prioritize grammar and translation over the communicative use of language, which means that students acquire theoretical knowledge but fail to acquire functional oral competence (Portero López & Arias Odón, 2024). Given this reality, it is fundamental to incorporate methodologies that promote self-regulation and autonomous learning, especially in adult university students who seek to develop speaking skills useful for their academic and professional development.

Self- Directed Learning, proposed by Malcolm Knowles (1984) as one of the fundamental principles of Andragogy, posits that adults can take responsibility for their own

learning process. According to Knowles (1984), “as a person matures, their self-concept shifts from dependent to self-directed”. This principle suggests that adult learners can learn speaking skills to be more effective when they take an active, thoughtful, and responsible approach to their English learning process.

In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education and universities have implemented policies to improve English proficiency, recognizing its importance in education and the workplace. However, a gap remains between theoretical knowledge and practical speaking skills. Many university students understand the language but feel insecure and lack oral fluency (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2023).

At the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE), students in the National and Foreign Language Education program also face this problem. Although they are motivated to improve their English, they rely heavily on teacher guidance and formal classroom settings. This dependence limits their autonomous development and confidence when speaking. Considering this situation, Self-Directed Learning itself is a teaching alternative that can enhance autonomy and strengthen oral practice outside the classroom.

Problem Question

How does Self-Directed Learning enhance speaking skills in adult learners of English as a foreign language at UPSE?

Specific Questions

What are the perceptions of adult EFL learners regarding Self-Directed Learning for developing speaking skills?

What self- directed strategies do students use to enhance their speaking skills in the English Language?

How do self- directed strategies contribute to the development of confidence and fluency in speaking among adult EFL learners at UPSE?

Justification

This study is justified by the need to understand and improve the speaking skills of adult students of English as a foreign language at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE). Although advances in educational policies aim to improve English skills in higher education, a gap remains between theoretical knowledge and its communicative application, especially in spoken language. This gap directly affects students' academic and professional performance, and their ability to communicate clearly, fluently, and confidently in real-life contexts.

The research is particularly relevant because it is grounded in the principles of andragogy, which holds that adults learn more effectively when they take an active, reflective, and autonomous role in their learning. Recent studies show that incorporating self-directed strategies allows learners to assess their needs, select appropriate resources, and practice independently, thus promoting the development of speaking skills (Portero López & Arias Odón, 2024). It is essential to study how these practices manifest themselves among UPSE students to understand their impact on English Language learning.

Furthermore, according to international research, autonomous learning fluency, self-confidence, and active participation in speaking activities encourage continuous and meaningful practice outside the classroom (Wael et al., 2023). In Latin America, where the standard teacher-centered educational model is very common, Self-Directed Learning is considered an option that can change the way students develop their speaking skills (Putri & Chandra, 2023). Therefore, this study contributes to filling the knowledge gap on how adult

higher education students use Self-Directed Learning strategies to improve their speaking skills in English.

The qualitative approach of this study is also justified because it allows understanding the perceptions, experiences, and actual practices of adults with respect to Self-Directed Learning. This type of understanding is essential for designing more appropriate pedagogical approaches for the adult population.

Finally, the research is relevant to UPSE because its results will allow the identification of specific needs of language students and offer recommendations that strengthen their autonomy and oral performance. In this way, the study will contribute not only to the academic development of students but also to the improvement of teaching practice and institutional strategies to improve communicative competence in English. Therefore, this work is justified from both a theoretical and practical point of view, as it brings a necessary vision of the relationship between Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in adults studying English as a foreign language.

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze how Self-Directed Learning helps the development of speaking skills in adult learners of English as a foreign language at UPSE.

Specific Objectives

To identify the perceptions of adult EFL learners regarding Self-Directed Learning in the development of their speaking skills.

To describe the Self-Directed Learning strategies used by learners to improve their speaking skills in English.

To explore how Self-Directed Learning strategies foster confidence and fluency of speaking in adult learners of EFL at UPSE.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

In the field of the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), developing speaking skills is one of the main challenges for adult learners, especially in contexts where opportunities to practice the language are limited. Various studies have shown that many students struggle to communicate orally in a fluent and confident manner, a challenge linked to reliance on traditional teacher-centered methodologies and limited self-directed language practice (Alaon, Delos Santos, & San Jose, 2023; Wael, Akib, Hasanudin, & Akib, 2023).

In this context, Self-Directed Learning has taken on relevance as an approach that allows students to take an active role in their learning process. This approach is characterized by the ability of the student to make decisions about their learning, identify their needs, and create opportunities for practice outside the classroom (Putri & Chandra, 2023; Yang, 2023). From this perspective, the development of speaking skills does not depend only on formal instruction, but also on the initiative of the student to engage in independent practice activities.

Multiple studies have examined how Self-Directed Learning influences speaking skills. Syamsuriani et al. (2024) observe that students who use self-directed strategies tend to engage more frequently in speaking activities, which promotes the development of fluency. Similarly, Butarbutar (2023) notes that digital tools used in Self-Directed Learning facilitate consistent language practice, allowing students to strengthen their oral production independently.

Regarding Self-Regulated Learning, Kumar et al. (2023)indicate that strategies such as self-assessment and peer assessment allow students to reflect on their performance, which

is linked to the progressive development of their speaking skills. Likewise, Revelo Trujillo and Ramírez Román (2024) point out that the use of cognitive strategies and technological tools, when managed autonomously, is associated with improved fluency and oral interaction.

Furthermore, the development of speaking skills is also linked to factors such as confidence and self-efficacy. Gomez et al. (2024) indicate that students who perceive greater control over their learning tend to participate more actively in oral activities. In this regard, Self-Directed Learning is related not only to language practice but also to the development of confidence in using English.

Furthermore, the use of technology in Self-Directed Learning has expanded opportunities for speaking practice. Zhang (2024) notes that mobile learning allows students to practice the language flexibly, while Zou et al. (2023) highlight that self-assessment tools for speaking support the development of pronunciation and fluency when used in a self-directed manner.

Pedagogical basis

The pedagogical basis of this research centers on an approach that promotes active learning, student autonomy, and the development of speaking skills in the study of English as a foreign language. In this context, Self-Directed Learning is a relevant approach for adult learners because it encourages active participation and personal responsibility for their learning.

From an adult learning perspective, Knowles (1984) contends that adults learn differently from children because of their need for independence and prior experiences. He proposed six core principles of andragogy: the need to learn, self-concept, prior experience, readiness to learn, learning orientation, and intrinsic motivation. These principles are particularly relevant to adult EFL learners because they emphasize autonomy, practical

learning experiences, and intrinsic motivation. In the context of this study, they support the idea that adult students are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning process and developing their speaking skills through Self-Directed Learning strategies. Furthermore, Andragogy provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how adult learners can effectively engage in autonomous and meaningful language learning experiences. These principles emphasize that adult learners need to recognize the practical importance of their learning and participate actively in real-world experiences.

In the context of learning English as a foreign language, these principles focus on developing speaking skills through independent practice and active student participation. Putri and Chandra (2023) note that self-directed strategies enable students to take responsibility for their learning, promoting language practice outside the classroom. Furthermore, Yang (2023) indicates that autonomy enables students to manage their learning more independently, strengthening their participation in communicative activities.

On the other hand, in Self-Directed Learning, the role of the teacher is focused on facilitating and supporting the learning process. Ardiningtyas et al. (2023) emphasize that teacher support fosters the gradual development of student autonomy through guidance and support strategies. In this regard, teachers can create opportunities for oral practice and encourage the use of speaking skills.

Furthermore, the use of self-directed strategies and technological tools expands opportunities for language practice. Syamsuriani et al. (2024) highlight that self-directed strategies promote active participation in speaking activities, while Butarbutar (2023) points out that the use of digital platforms facilitates opportunities for independent practice outside the classroom. Moreover, Zhang (2024) and Zou et al. (2023) indicate that technological tools support the improvement of pronunciation, fluency, and oral interaction among students of English as a foreign language.

Therefore, Andragogy provides the theoretical foundation for this study by explaining how adult learners develop autonomy, responsibility, and active participation in their learning process. These principles support the implementation of Self-Directed Learning as an effective approach for enhancing speaking skills, since adult learners are encouraged to set learning goals, use appropriate resources, and engage in meaningful speaking practice both inside and outside the classroom.

Theoretical Basis

Self-Directed Learning is the central focus of this research, since it relates to the ability of students to take an active role in their learning process. This approach allows learners to identify their needs, set goals, and select strategies to strengthen their English language skills. According to Knowles (1984), Self-Directed Learning involves adults developing autonomy and responsibility for their education, actively participating in decision-making related to their learning.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Self-Directed Learning refers to independent speaking practice outside the classroom. Putri and Chandra (2023) indicate that students who employ self-directed strategies tend to engage more frequently in speaking practice activities, thereby progressively strengthening their communicative performance. Similarly, Syamsuriani et al. (2024) highlight that Self-Directed Learning encourages students' active participation in speaking activities, promoting fluency and confidence in language use.

Also, Butarbutar (2023) points out that using digital resources in Self-Directed Learning makes it easier to access opportunities for independent English practice, allowing students to strengthen their speaking skills independently. So, Self-Directed Learning is

linked to developing autonomy, consistent practice, and active student participation in their learning process.

Self-Regulation in Language Learning

Self-regulated learning is the ability of students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. This process enables learners to reflect on their performance and adopt strategies to improve their language skills.

Kumar et al. (2023) indicate that strategies such as self- and peer-assessment encourage students to reflect on their oral performance, thereby promoting more deliberate participation in speaking activities. Similarly, Revelo Trujillo and Ramírez Román (2024) indicate that the use of cognitive strategies and technological tools contributes to strengthening pronunciation, fluency, and oral interaction when students actively participate in managing their own learning.

From this perspective, self-regulation is linked to Self-Directed Learning, as both approaches promote student autonomy and responsibility in the development of their English-speaking skills.

Speaking Skills in EFL Contexts

Speaking skills represent one of the most important components of learning English as a foreign language, given their role in effective communication in both academic and social contexts. However, various studies show that many students struggle to express themselves orally with fluency and confidence.

Valdivieso-Arcos and Argudo-Serrano (2022) say that communication activities promote the development of speaking skills when students actively participate in real-life communication situations. In this sense, speaking involves not only a grammatical

understanding of the language but also the ability to interact and express ideas in a way that is easy to understand.

On the other hand, Wael et al. (2023) indicate that constant practice and participation in independent activities promote the gradual development of oral fluency. Equality, Gómez et al. (2024) highlight that factors such as confidence and self-efficacy influence the participation of students in speaking activities, especially when learners perceive greater control over their learning process.

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is the ability to use language effectively across diverse communication contexts. This approach considers not only mastery of linguistic structures, but also the ability to interact appropriately and meaningfully in real-life situations.

In the context of learning English as a foreign language, developing communicative competence requires ongoing opportunities for interaction and oral practice. Valdivieso-Arcos and Argudo-Serrano (2022) emphasize that communicative tasks promote meaningful language use, allowing students to strengthen their speaking skills through practical communication experiences.

Likewise, Zou (2024) notes that the use of digital tools and mobile learning facilitates opportunities for ongoing language practice, contributing to the development of speaking skills. Similarly, Zou et al. (2023) emphasize that automated speech assessment tools help improve pronunciation and fluency when used as supplementary resources in Self-Directed Learning.

In this way, communicative competence is linked to Self-Directed Learning, as both approaches encourage students to actively engage in the practical use of the English language.

Legal Basis

This study is based on the Ecuadorian legal framework, which establishes clear guidelines for higher education and language instruction, particularly regarding the development of speaking skills and independent learning among students.

Firstly, Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador recognizes that education is a fundamental right and inescapable of the State, aimed at the comprehensive development of the person. It also established that education must be participatory, inclusive, and student-centered, reflective, and autonomous. These principles are directly related to Self-Directed Learning, as they foster student responsibility in their educational process. (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008)

Similarly, the Organic Law on Higher Education stipulates that institutions of higher education must ensure quality education based on the development of professional, research, and speaking skills. In this context, learning English becomes essential as a fundamental tool for accessing knowledge and integrating into a globalized environment. (Organic Law of Higher Education (LOES), 2018)

On the other hand, the Council for Higher Education (CES) sets academic standards for the University of the country, promoting the implementation of innovative methodologies that strengthen independent learning and the use of technology in the classroom. These standards support the use of Self-Directed Learning as a pedagogical strategy to improve university student speaking skills. (Council for Higher Education (CES), 2022)

Likewise, the Ministry of Ecuador has promoted policies designed to strengthen English language learning at all educational levels. In this regard, national guidelines emphasize the importance of developing speaking skills as a fundamental part of the academic and professional education of students. (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2023)

Furthermore, the Ecuadorian educational approach promotes lifelong learning, which is consistent with the principles of andragogy. This approach recognizes that adult learners require flexible methodologies that promote autonomy, self-regulation, and the practical application of knowledge. Within this framework, Self-Directed Learning emerges as a relevant strategy for developing language skills in higher education. (Organic Law of Higher Education (LOES), 2018)

Finally, it is important to point out that current regulations also promote the integration of information and communication technologies into the educational process. This provides access to digital resources that facilitate English language learning and strengthen speaking practice outside the classroom, thereby contributing to the development of speaking skills in real-life contexts. (Council for Higher Education (CES), 2022)

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This study adopts a qualitative approach because it seeks to understand adult student perceptions, experiences, and opinions regarding Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language. Qualitative research allows the analysis of experiences and meanings within a specific educational context.

Qualitative

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire designed for semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire consists of ten open-ended questions relating to Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language. Although the interview includes ten questions, the analysis presented in Chapter IV focuses on questions 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, as these are directly related to the general objective of the study and to its central purpose of analyzing how Self-Directed Learning enhances speaking skills in adult EFL learners.

Type of Research

This study uses a phenomenological design because it seeks to understand adult learner experiences and perceptions regarding Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language.

According to Sinfield et al. (2023), phenomenological research allows understanding and interpreting the experiences of participants related to a specific phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon relates to the experiences of students regarding the use of Self-Directed Learning strategies to strengthen their speaking skills.

A phenomenological design is appropriate because it allows exploring the opinions, experiences, and perspectives of participants within their educational context. Furthermore, this approach facilitates an understanding of how adult students experience autonomous learning and the oral practice of English in a university context.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection method used in this study is the individual interview, or one-on-one interview. This method allows for the collection of detailed information about participant experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language.

The interview will be semi-structured because this type of interview allows researchers to follow a set of pre-determined questions while also providing flexibility to explore the responses of participants in greater depth. According to Kallio et al. (2022), semi-structured interviews facilitate the collection of detailed information and promote a deeper understanding of experiences in qualitative research.

Furthermore, this technique is appropriate for the present study because it allows exploring the personal experiences of adult EFL learners regarding the use of Self-Directed Learning strategies to strengthen their speaking skills within a university setting.

Instruments

Questionnaire

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire designed for semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire will consist of ten open-ended questions relating to Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language. Although the interview includes ten questions, the analysis presented in Chapter IV focuses

on questions 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, as these are directly related to the general objective of the study and to its central purpose of analyzing how Self-Directed Learning enhances speaking skills in adult EFL learners

Type of questions

The questions will be open-ended, as this type of question allows participants to freely express their opinions, experiences, and perceptions regarding Self-Directed Learning and speaking practice. According to Braun & Clarke (2022), open-ended questions in qualitative research encourage more detailed responses and allow for a deeper exploration of personal experiences.

The questionnaire will be administered in person using printed copies on the campus of the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE). In addition, the interviews will be conducted in English to gather information regarding the experiences and perceptions of the participants with respect to Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills.

This instrument is directly related to the research objective, as it seeks to gather information on adult student perceptions and experiences regarding Self-Directed Learning and its contribution to the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method that allows researchers to identify, organize, and interpret patterns of meaning within participants' responses. First, all interview responses were carefully reviewed several times to become familiar with the information provided by the participants. Then, meaningful ideas related to Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills were identified and grouped into common themes.

The main themes that emerged from the analysis included independent learning strategies, the use of technological resources, confidence in speaking English, oral fluency, and challenges experienced during independent learning. Finally, these themes were interpreted and compared with the theoretical framework presented in Chapter II to explain how participants perceived the contribution of Self-Directed Learning to the development of their speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language.

Data Collection, Processing, and Resources

Table 1

Data Collection Process

Questions	Explanations
What	Semi-structured interviews.
Where	At Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, La Libertad - Santa Elena Province
When	2026
How	Ten Open-End questions - Face to face.
What for	To analyze how Self-Directed Learning contributes to the development of speaking skills in adult EFL learners.

Note. This table summarizes the data collection process and the purpose of the study.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of students in the Program of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE).

The sample will consist of five adult students aged between 25 and 30 with an English proficiency level between B1 and B2. Participants will be selected through intentional or

purposive sampling because this type of sampling allows the selection of participants who possess characteristics and experiences related to Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language.

According to Campbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research because it allows for the selection of participants who can provide meaningful and relevant information about the phenomenon under study. In this study, participants are expected to provide valuable insights related to Self-Directed Learning and the development of speaking skills in English as a foreign language.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

This chapter presents the results obtained from interviews with the participants in the research. The information collected allowed for an analysis of the perceptions, experiences, and practices related to Self-Directed Learning and its contribution to the development of speaking skills among adult learners of English as a foreign language.

For the purpose of this chapter, the analysis focuses on questions 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, as these are directly aligned with the general objective of the study and the central purpose of analyzing how Self-Directed Learning enhanced speaking skills in adult EFL learners. The findings are interpreted and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter II to provide a deeper understanding of how Self-Directed Learning contributes to the development of speaking skills, communicative confidence, and fluency among the participants.

Interpretation of Data from the One-on-One Interviews

The following interpretation is based on the responses obtained from the one-on.one interviews conducted with the five participants. The analysis presented below focuses on questions 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, as these are directly aligned with the general objective of the study and its central purpose of analyzing how Self-Directed Learning enhances speaking skills in adult EFL learners.

Question 3. What activities or strategies do you use independently to improve your speaking in the English language?

Participant mentioned various Self-Directed Learning strategies to improve their oral English skills. Among the most common activities were repeating phrases from videos, songs, or recordings; practicing speaking in front of a mirror; recording their voices to identify mistakes; reading aloud; and regularly engaging with English-language audiovisual content. The responses indicate that participants perceive independent practice as an effective strategy for improving their speaking skills and adapting their learning process to their individual needs and interests.

These results underscore the importance of independent practice in developing English-speaking skills. In this context, Putri and Chandra (2023) argue that Self-Directed Learning strategies enable students to take an active role in strengthening their language skills. Similarly, Syamsuriani et al. (2024) report that independent practice promotes the development of speaking skills. Furthermore, Wael et al. (2023) emphasize that consistent practice outside the classroom contributes signification in students' learning English as a foreign language.

Question 5. Which technological tools or digital resources do you use to practice speaking independently?

Participants reported using a range of technological tools and digital resources to improve their English skills. The most frequently mentioned resources included language-learning apps, speaking practice platforms, AI-based tools, educational videos, podcasts, and multimedia content on digital platforms. Interviewees emphasized that these resources enable them to practice pronunciation, expand their vocabulary, listen to diverse speech patterns, and receive feedback on their oral performance, thereby promoting more flexible and accessible learning.

Participants perceived technological tools as valuable resources that provide flexible and accessible opportunities to practice speaking English independently. The results show that technology plays an important role in Self-Directed Learning by providing ongoing opportunities for practice outside the classroom. In this context, Butarbutar (2023) argues that digital platforms facilitate the development of speaking skills by offering spaces for independent language practice. Similarly, Zhang (2024) notes that technological tools expand opportunities for student interaction and participation in English learning activities. Furthermore, Zou et al. (2023) highlight that resources based on artificial intelligence and automated assessment contribute to improving pronunciation and oral fluency through practice and continuous feedback. In addition, several participants stated that these tools allow them to identify errors and make adjustments to their oral performance, promoting self-assessment and continuous improvement.

Question 6. In your opinion, how has Self-Directed Learning influenced your confidence in speaking English?

The participants agreed that Self-Directed Learning has positively impacted their confidence in communicating in English. The responses indicate that the ability to learn at their own pace, select resources to meet their needs, and practice in comfortable settings has made them feel more confident when speaking. Additionally, several interviewees noted that consistent practice and vocabulary expansion have reduced their fear of making mistakes and enabled them to participate more confidently in communicative activities. However, some participants acknowledged that developing confidence through Self-Directed Learning requires continuous practice, personal commitment, and overcoming the fear of making mistakes when communicating in English.

Participants perceived that Self-Directed Learning positively influences their confidence when speaking English by allowing them to learn at their own pace and reducing anxiety related to speaking. These findings suggest that Self-Directed Learning fosters the development of confidence by allowing students to take an active role in their learning process. In this regard, Goméz et al. (2024) state that students who perceive greater control over their learning tend to develop higher levels of confidence in participating in speaking activities. Equally, Yang (2023) notes that autonomy strengthens students´ commitment and confidence in language use. Additionally, Knowles (1984) argues that adult learners show a greater willingness to learn when they can make decisions about their educational process, thereby fostering more active and confident participation in various communication contexts.

Question 7. Do you think that independent practice has helped you improve your fluency in speaking English? Why?

The participants agreed that independent practice has significantly contributed to improving their fluency in spoken English. According to their response, consistent practice has allowed them to become familiar with linguistic structures, expand their vocabulary, and express themselves more naturally. In addition, several interviewees noted that being able to practice at their own pace has helped them reduce pauses when speaking and develop a greater ease in communicating ideas in English. Some participants also recognized that maintaining regular independent practice can be challenging, particularly when managing time effectively and remaining motivated throughout the learning process.

Participants perceived that independent practice plays an important role in improving their fluency and communicative performance in English. The results suggest that independent practice promotes the gradual development of oral fluency by providing ongoing opportunities to use the language. In this context, Syamsuriani et al. (2024) contend that frequent participation in Self-Directed Learning activities strengthens speaking skills and promotes more fluent communication. Likewise, Wael et al. (2023) assert that consistent practice outside the classroom contributes to the development of oral fluency through regular language use. Furthermore, Revelo Trujillo and Ramírez Román (2024) highlight that self-regulation strategies and continuous practice enable students to progressively improve their communicative performance in English.

Question 9. What recommendations would you give to other students who want to improve their speaking through Self-Directed Learning?

The participant recommended that other students practice consistently, organize their study time effectively, and take advantage of available resources to strengthen their English-

speaking skills. They also emphasized the importance of choosing topics of personal interest, using technology, setting realistic goals, and not being afraid to make mistakes during the learning process. Similarly, several interviewees emphasized that patience, perseverance, and enjoying the process are key to making significant progress in developing speaking skills.

Participants perceived that perseverance, autonomy, and effective time management are essential elements for achieving meaningful progress in speaking skills through Self-Directed Learning. The recommendations provided by participants also reflect some of the challenges associated with Self-Directed Learning, such as maintaining discipline, establishing consistent study habits, and remaining motivated when learning independently.

The responses indicate that the success of Self-Directed Learning depends largely on the student's commitment and sense of responsibility. In this regard, Knowles (1984) argues that adult learners achieve better results when they actively participate in planning and managing their learning. Likewise, Putri and Chandra (2023) state that self-directed strategies promote autonomy and enable students to tailor their learning to their individual needs. Furthermore, Roy (2025) emphasizes that perseverance and personal commitment are essential elements for promoting sustainable and effective learning in the development of language skills.

Table 2

Analysis of the Interviewees' Perceptions of Self-Directed Learning in EFL Adult Learners

Questions	**What activities or strategies do you use independently to improve your speaking in the English language?**	**Which technological tools or digital resources do you use to practice speaking independently?**	**In your opinion, how has Self-Directed Learning influenced your confidence in speaking English?**
Answers	The interviews mentioned such things as talking to themselves, repeating phrases, reading their voices, practicing in front of a mirror, and regularly consuming content in English to improve their speaking skills.	Participants indicated that they use apps for language learning. AI-based tools, podcasts, YouTube videos, and digital platforms to practice speaking on their own and receive feedback on their performance.	Participants indicated that Self-Directed Learning has strengthened their confidence by allowing them to practice at their own pace, focus on their needs, and gradually reduce their fear or insecurity when speaking English.
Authors	Putri and Chanda (2023) confirm that self-directed strategies promote independent language practice. Also, Syamsuriani et al. (2024) highlight their contribution to the progressive development of speaking skills.	Butarbutar (2023) emphasizes that digital platforms promote independent practice of speaking skills. Likewise, Zhang (2024) and Zou et al. (2023) highlight the contribution of technological tools and artificial intelligence to the development of speaking skills.	Gomez et al. (2024) argue that confidence and self-efficacy have a positive influence on oral participation. Likewise, Knowles (1984) associates autonomy with personal growth and the responsibility of adult learners.

Table 3

Analysis of the Interviewees' Perceptions of Self-Directed Learning in EFL Adult Learners

Questions	**What technological tools or digital resources do you use to practice speaking independently?**	**What recommendations would you give to other students who want to improve their speaking through Self-Directed learning?**
Answers	The interviewees agreed that independent practice promotes the development of fluency due to constant exposure to the language, repetition, and frequent use of English in meaningful learning situations.	The participant recommended staying consistent, creating a study plan, using technology, being patient, and choosing topics of personal interest to improve speaking skills through Self-Directed learning.
Authors	Syamsuriani et al. (2024) affirm that Self-Directed Learning promotes fluency through continuous practice. Furthermore, Wael et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of self-directed strategies for the development of speaking skills.	Roy et al. (2025) highlight the importance of autonomy and ongoing commitment to sustainable language learning. Furthermore, Yang (2023) emphasizes responsibility and independent decision-making in Self-Directed Learning environment.

The findings obtained from the interviews and summarized in the tables above provide valuable insights into adult EFL learners' perceptions of Self-Directed Learning and its contribution to the enhancement of speaking skills. The results identified the Self-Directed Learning strategies, technological resources, and independent practice that participants use to strengthen their speaking performance. Furthermore, participants perceived Self-Directed Learning as an effective approach that promotes autonomy, confidence, and oral fluency. However, the findings also revealed several challenges, including maintaining motivation,

managing study time effectively, practicing consistently outside the classroom, overcoming the fear of making mistakes, and dealing with limitations in vocabulary and pronunciation. Despite these difficulties, participants considered that continuous independent practice, the use of technological resources, and personal commitment helped them gradually overcome these challenges. Overall, the findings indicate that Self-Directed Learning contributes positively to the progressive development of speaking skills while fostering greater learner autonomy and confidence among adult EFL learners.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis of the perceptions and experiences of adult learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) regarding Self-Directed Learning and its contribution to the development of speaking skills. The conclusions are aligned with the objectives of the study and summarize the main findings related to autonomy, confidence, fluency, and independent learning practices identified throughout the research.

Conclusions

First, this study found that adult students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena perceive Self-Directed Learning as an approach that contributes positively to the development of their speaking skills. The findings showed that taking an active role in the learning process allows them to practice the language consistently, develop greater autonomy, and become more actively engaged in their education. Consequently, it is concluded that Self-Directed Learning supports the progressive strengthening of speaking skills and promotes student-centered learning, in line with the needs of adult learners.

Second, the findings of this study revealed that the use of Self-Directed Learning strategies and technological resources facilitates the development of speaking skills among adult EFL learners. Independent practice using mobile apps, educational platforms, videos, podcasts, and other digital resources facilitates continuous exposure to the language and contributes to better pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Therefore, it is concluded that the planned integration of independent learning strategies and technological tools is a

fundamental element to strengthen speaking skills and promote more meaningful and continuous learning.

Third, the results of the research showed that self-learning strategies strengthen confidence and fluency in speaking in English by providing students with opportunities to practice the language consistently and progress at their own pace. This experience fosters greater confidence in participating in oral activities and taking responsibility for their own learning process. Therefore, the research demonstrates that Self- Directed Learning not only contributes to the development of speaking skills but also promotes competencies such as autonomy, self-regulation, and lifelong learning, essential aspects of the education of adult learners of English as a foreign language.

Recommendations

First, it is recommended that students learning English as a foreign language develop a personal learning plan that includes clear goals, a weekly schedule of activities focused on developing speaking skills, and self-assessment strategies that allow them to monitor their progress. It is also suggested that they systematically incorporate resources such as mobile apps, educational platforms, podcasts, videos, and artificial intelligence tools to supplement their speaking practice outside the classroom. Consistent application of these strategies will promote independent learning and enable students to progressively improve their communicative performance in English.

Second, it is recommended that teachers incorporate Self-Directed Learning strategies to complement classroom instruction by designing activities that promote independent practice before and after class sessions. To this end, they can implement learning journals, self-assessment activities, oral production assignments, feedback sessions, and the targeted use of technological tools that enable students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own

learning process. These actions will help strengthen speaking skills, increase student confidence, and reinforce independent learning habits.

Third, it is recommended that the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena continue to strengthen self-directed English language learning by implementing conversation clubs, ongoing speaking workshops, virtual interaction spaces, and extracurricular activities supported by technological resources that expand opportunities for speaking practice beyond the classroom. Likewise, it is recommended to promote future research related to Self-Directed Learning, incorporating larger samples and different methodological approaches that will expand the evidence regarding its contribution to the development of speaking skills in various contexts of English language instruction.

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Annexes

Annex A. Certified Anti-Plagiarism System

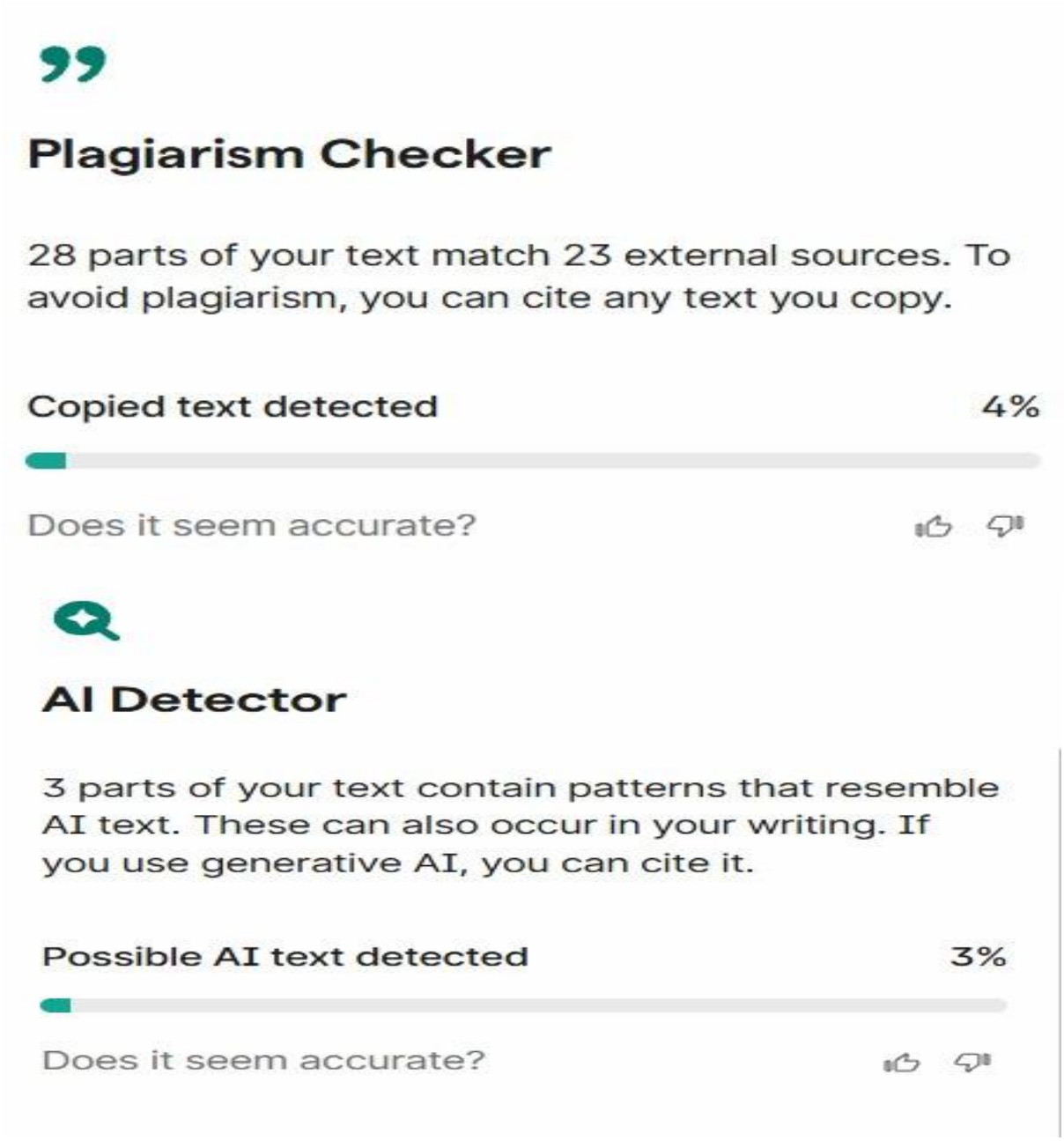
Certificado Sistema Anti-Plagio

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado "SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL ADULT LEARNERS" elaborado por los estudiantes **Floreano Orrala Andy Orly y Villon Lema Richard Esteban** de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio GRAMMARLY , luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 7% de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.

Atentamente

Vera Cruzatti Rossana Narcisa, MSc.

TUTOR



Plagiarism Checker

28 parts of your text match 23 external sources. To avoid plagiarism, you can cite any text you copy.

Copied text detected 4%

Does it seem accurate?

AI Detector

3 parts of your text contain patterns that resemble AI text. These can also occur in your writing. If you use generative AI, you can cite it.

Possible AI text detected 3%

Does it seem accurate?

Annex B. Structured Interview Questions

Self-directed learning to enhance speaking in EFL adults learners.

1. What does self-directed learning mean to you in your English learning process?
2. What difficulties have you experienced in developing your English-speaking skills?
3. What activities or strategies do you use independently to improve your speaking in English language?
4. How often do you practice speaking in English outside of the classroom? Can you describe those experiences?
5. What technological tools or digital resources do you use to practice speaking independently?
6. In your opinion, how has self-directed learning influenced your confidence in speaking English?
7. Do you think that independent practice has helped you improve your fluency in speaking English? Why?
8. What kind of learning methodology motivates you to continue practicing English language?
9. What recommendations would you give to other students who want to improve their speaking through self-directed learning?
10. How would you describe your learning English experience as a foreign language?

Annex C. Interview of students face-to-face

1. What does self-directed learning mean to you in your English learning process?

1: To me, it means having the freedom to identify which areas of the language I need to improve, and choosing the method, pace, and materials that best suit my learning style. It is taking initiative and responsibility for my own progress, beyond what we cover in class.

2: For me, self-study is a learning method where you learn at your own pace and according to your own abilities, without needing someone to tell you what to do; you manage your own time and choose the way you learn. This method has been very important in my process of learning English because, thanks to it, I've improved my listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills on my own—obviously reinforcing what I've learned in class. Additionally, this method has worked for me because I've set study schedules; for example, I practice listening for half an hour, reading comprehension for an hour, speaking for half an hour, and writing for an hour. Furthermore, this method is more practical because it allows you to search for information instantly; I can review or study topics at any time. It makes it easy to use different learning resources—there are currently many platforms where you can search, such as videos or websites. Thanks to this ease of access to any resource, self-learning becomes more effective and practical.

3: To me, it means that I am responsible for finding different ways to learn English without having to wait for a teacher to explain everything to me in the classroom. At home, I can also read, look up information, and educate myself to expand my knowledge of the English language.

4: For me, self-directed learning means taking responsibility for my own learning process. It involves setting personal goals, finding resources, and practicing English independently without relying only on my teachers.

5: SDF in my learning process of English is a fundamental part of this. Knowing the way of how I can learn, which material, and what objective become more meanable for the student to start the planification, the curriculum, the classes, etc.

2. What difficulties have you experienced in developing your English-speaking skills?

1: At first, one of the biggest challenges was feeling insecure when expressing myself, because I was afraid of making mistakes or mispronouncing words. I also found it hard to find opportunities to practice with others and to learn how to organize my thoughts quickly while speaking.

2: I find speaking really difficult because I get scared and nervous when I'm in front of other people—I worry they'll judge me for not speaking correctly. This is generally speaking, but if we set that aside, what makes it hard for me to speak English is my lack of vocabulary. When I have an oral presentation, I prepare, but I tend to memorize everything, so when I go up front and speak, if I forget a word, I forget everything I wanted to say. So I attribute this to my lack of vocabulary and my inability to interpret things on my own, which is essential for speaking. On the other hand, there’s also the issue that I mentally translate word for word, which slows me down in understanding a conversation and also slows me down when I want to say something or respond to someone because in my head, I’m translating from Spanish to English, and this makes my speaking very difficult.

3: One of my biggest challenges is pronouncing English words correctly; the difficulties involved in learning proper phonetics create a major barrier to communicating with native English speakers.

4: One of the main difficulties has been feeling nervous when speaking English. I have also struggled with pronunciation and finding the right words quickly during conversations.

5: During my experience I have an encounter with a lot of problems, but It was one that emphasize from the others, it was the sounds, the fact every letter from the alphabet has a proper sound and can change constantly depending on the position was exhausted.

3. What activities or strategies do you use independently to improve your speaking in English language?

1: I like to repeat phrases I hear in shows or recordings to imitate pronunciation and intonation. I also tend to speak out loud about what I do during the day, or record myself briefly to listen back and see what I can improve. Additionally, I read English texts aloud to get my voice and ear used to the language.

2: To improve my speaking skills, I've found it helpful to talk to myself. Whenever I'm alone or feel comfortable, I start talking about any topic—for example, how my day went, what I did during the day, I try to explain my daily routine, or even share my opinion or analysis on a topic that interests me. This really helps me identify where I'm falling short when speaking English. It also helps me build my vocabulary because, while practicing, there are words I don't know how to say in English, so I look them up and start using them in my speaking practice. Another thing I do is practice in front of a mirror. This helps me develop my body language and facial expressions when speaking so I can connect with my audience. It helps me express what I want to say and ensures others understand what I'm conveying, rather than just looking like a robot in front of everyone.

3: Personally, I try to listen to audio recordings, songs, or watch movies that catch my attention and interest me, where people have good pronunciation so that my brain can naturally process the information and learn the language correctly.

4: I usually watch videos in English, repeat dialogues, practice speaking in front of a mirror, and record myself to identify mistakes and improve my pronunciation.

5: At the beginning, it was a casual activity similar as watching TV or a favorite drama. In the internet you can find topic of interest in many languages, then English was a priority. During the first days, only watch videos and listen how people behave and express. Sounds funny, if you always consume this content, later you will start to acquire that knowledge and try to imitate it.

4. How often do you practice speaking in English outside of the classroom? Can you describe those experiences?

1: I try to practice whenever I get the chance, even if it's just for a few minutes a day. Sometimes, when I watch content in English, I imagine myself taking part in the conversation or explaining what I have understood. Also, when I meet people who speak the language, I try to join in respectfully and calmly, and I really value those moments to put what I know into practice.

2: Outside the classroom, speaking was the skill I practiced the least, but now I practice it consistently for half an hour to an hour three or four times a week because it's the most important skill you need to develop to communicate with others. Before, when I didn't practice, I had a hard time saying what I wanted to say, and this hindered my ability to participate in class. Now, however, I practice my speaking three to four times a week on my own—and since we also practice in class—it has helped me feel more confident during

speaking exams. for example, in some classes, teachers ask for your opinion on a topic or your summary of a book you've read. If they had asked me that in previous semesters, I wouldn't have answered—I would have stayed silent—but now I can confidently answer the question, and I can also understand what I'm saying and express what I mean.

3: Outside the classroom, I usually teach English to my 3-year-old daughter. I teach her the basics, like colors, numbers, and animals, and she's learned quite a bit. I often sit down with her for about 15 minutes every day to read her a story in English; I don't do it for too long because she gets bored. But it's fascinating to see how easily young children pick up the English language.

4: I practice several times a week. Sometimes I talk to friends in English, participate in online conversations, or describe my daily activities aloud in English. These experiences help me become more comfortable using the language.

5: As I mentioned in the last question, it becomes like a routine for me. Outside the classroom, I said very confident: "I really enjoy the English from Internet, is so charismatic and absurd". Not only watching random videos, sometimes could be a instructive for grammar or new words, often entertainment videos like podcasts, gameplays, or reviews of movies or videogames.

5. What technological tools or digital resources do you use to practice speaking independently?

1: I use apps that let me listen and repeat phrases, as well as platforms with recordings by native speakers to get used to different ways of speaking. Watching videos or listening to podcasts also helps me a lot, because I learn new words and ways of expressing myself, which I then try to use myself.

2: I learned about the digital resource I use from a teacher; it's called "Speak and Improve." It's a website where you can practice your speaking skills. There, you can practice reading a text aloud, answering questions about yourself, giving recommendations on a topic, discussing a specific subject, and more. This website is very practical because it lets you record audio clips ranging from 10 seconds to longer, depending on what's asked of you. Based on those recordings, you receive feedback on how your practice went, so you can identify which areas to improve and reinforce. That's what has helped me improve my speaking skills.

3: In recent months, I've downloaded Loora, an AI app that helps you practice speaking. Loora asks you questions and corrects you if you answer incorrectly, giving you tips on how to respond better. It's a great app; it even has a reminder that notifies you every day that it's time to practice.

4: I use language-learning apps, YouTube videos, podcasts, and AI tools that allow me to have conversations and receive feedback on my speaking skills.

5: I usually use the most typical tools for someone that start to learn a new language. Duolingo is considered high top of apps for practice and learning. Access to exclusive podcasts or movies in Spotify and YouTube, which give information from other topics as science, education, drama, physic, etc.

6. In your opinion, how has self-directed learning influenced your confidence in speaking English?

1: It has been very important, because by progressing at my own pace and choosing what I practice, I have been able to overcome small challenges step by step. Every time I notice I am understood better or can express an idea more clearly, I feel more confident and at ease, and that encourages me to keep trying with greater assurance.

2: It has had a big impact because it has boosted my confidence. Learning on my own has allowed me to develop my speaking skills in a comfortable environment with flexible schedules that I set myself, so when I speak in front of other people, I imagine I'm in the comfort of my own home and just start talking. I also feel more confident when speaking because my vocabulary has expanded, and thanks to practicing speaking to myself, using the digital resources, and practicing most days of the week, this has become a habit, which makes me feel confident.

3: It has really helped my confidence because I'm learning at a pace where I don't feel pressured, and I take it easy, focusing on my own learning needs without comparing myself to how others are learning.

4: Self-directed learning has increased my confidence because I can practice at my own pace and focus on the areas I need to improve. The more I practice independently, the more comfortable I feel speaking English.

5: In my opinion, SDL give something that in a class, course or even online classes could not give me, and it is the comfort and total control over my learning process. Make you grow more as an adult, take the responsibility for your proper benefice.

7. Do you think that independent practice has helped you improve your fluency in speaking English? Why?

1: Yes, definitely. When I practice alone, I can take all the time I need to think, correct myself, and repeat as many times as I want without pressure. That consistency has helped words and structures come out more naturally and quickly, and I feel more comfortable speaking, even if I make a mistake.

2: Yes, independent study has helped me improve my speaking skills because setting a schedule and knowing which resources I'll use to improve my speaking helps me establish

a study method where I decide how to progress and at what pace—since everyone learns at a different pace. Thanks to independent study, I've been able to figure out what works for me and which resources to use to improve my speaking.

3: Yes, because I practice based on my personal interests and goals, and this helps me develop comprehension, which is essential for speaking English fluently.

4: Yes, definitely. Independent practice provides more opportunities to use the language regularly, which helps me speak more naturally and reduces hesitation when communicating.

5: In my case, the fluency was a total struggle for me in the first days. The independent learning is always on the person, the dedication you must do is huge, put your goals and claim them.

8. What kind of learning methodology motivates you to continue practicing English language?

1: I feel very motivated by activities related to topics I personally enjoy, such as music, stories, or general culture. It also helps to see my own progress over time; knowing that what I learn helps me understand the world better and communicate with more people is a great incentive to keep learning.

2: In addition to self-study, methods like the immersion method or shadowing motivate me to keep learning English because it's not just about sitting in a classroom listening to the teacher speak; it's about feeling immersed in the language yourself, This allows you to connect with it more deeply, and as a result, you learn much more effectively. Furthermore, methods like shadowing encourage active learning, as they let you listen, repeat, and imitate phrases, words, and so on. This way, you learn actively and improve certain skills at the same time.

3: I believe that the language immersion methodology is key to effective learning. Learning should be based on a natural, real-life context so that we can immerse ourselves in the language naturally, without much stress or complication.

4: I am motivated by communicative and interactive methodologies that involve real-life situations, discussions, role-plays, and the use of technology because they make learning more engaging and meaningful.

5: Inquiry-Based Learning is a methodology that I almost use in my classes, and I make use of that as well. Acquiring data and extra details is clear mean of independent, because it is you that who are looking for the information and from that create your proper ideas.

9. What recommendations would you give to other students who want to improve their speaking through self-directed learning?

1: I would tell them to be patient and kind to themselves, because learning a language takes time and making mistakes is normal. To try practicing a little every day, even for a short while, and to choose topics they like — that way it will be easier and more enjoyable. Also, not to be afraid to speak up, because every attempt is a step toward improvement.

2: My advice to you would be, first of all, to develop a passion for the language, to get organized, and to commit to your studies—because what's the point of starting something you're not going to finish? So the first step is to get organized: look for apps you can use, create a study schedule, identify your weaknesses, and reinforce what you've learned in class. This way, you'll have a study plan you can follow, and you won't get confused when it's time to study. This also helps you go straight to the tools you'll be using, so you won't feel lost and can keep learning. Another important thing is that by getting organized, you'll save time. And if a technique or tool doesn't work for you or you don't see results, you can switch

to another one and adapt your study technique however you like—that's the advantage of self-directed learning. So keep that in mind: with the tools we have today, anything is possible.

3: I think they should start by focusing their learning on a topic that captures their interest. That way, they'll find the motivation for self-directed learning. For example, if they like cooking, they could start watching cooking tutorials in English and then recreate the tutorials by speaking and explaining the recipes in English. This way, they learn in a fun, interesting, and natural way.

4: I would recommend practicing consistently, not being afraid of making mistakes, using a variety of resources, and setting realistic goals. Regular practice is more important than studying for long periods occasionally.

5: To the news learners I have only one advice, be patient and have fun. When you take your time, and begging enjoy it, there is when you really learning. Through games, music, and movies, you can expand the vocabulary list, the social media as Meta, X and apps give a plus in the recipe for a correct learning development.

10. How would you describe your learning English experience as a foreign language?

1: It has been a very enriching and rewarding experience. At first it was a challenge, but little by little I have discovered that it lets me learn new ways of seeing the world, understand other cultures, and connect with different people. It has taken effort, but every step forward has brought me great satisfaction and opened many doors.

2: It's a long road ahead, but it's a wonderful experience. You learn from everything. There were times when I felt overwhelmed and like I couldn't go on, but little by little you make progress. When you look back and see who you were compared to who you are now,

there's a huge difference. It's all a matter of perspective. Learning English can change your life and open up more opportunities in various professional fields. It also helps you connect with others since it's a language spoken worldwide. The journey is tough and difficult, yet these are experiences you gain and improve upon. The best part of all is when you can show that you've made significant progress in the language and feel proud of it—that's the best feeling you can experience.

3: My experience has been positive. There are many interesting things that happen when learning a foreign language—you don't just learn the language, but you also immerse yourself in its culture and history. I've learned that the most important thing is to be able to understand and listen well when communicating with others.

4: My experience has been challenging but rewarding. Over time, I have improved my speaking skills, gained confidence, and discovered new opportunities for personal and academic growth through learning English.

5: I think both languages between the English and Spanish, they are quite similar in many aspects. However, there are some contrasts that everyone must know and prevent mistakes. In my case, English was like a big door, inside were a lot of stuff to try, besides, it is part of a lingua franca, you can establish conversations with other people, even if they are from Asia. English is a universal language.