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The effectiveness of applications for learning English for listening and speaking in students' learning: A case study.

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Dedication

I dedicate this investigation to my parents who have given me their love, patience, effort and unconditional support throughout these years, without them I would not have achieved this goal. To my brother and nephews for always getting the best of me and because I love them infinitely. To my pet that was every night with me no matter what. To my best friend Emilia who with her advice and words of encouragement has never let me down. To my group of friends, Jaime, Juan Diego and Yoselyn with whom I have lived great moments full of laughter, scares and tears, without them my university life would not have been the same. And to all the people who have supported me during this process. I love you with my whole heart.

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Karen Anahí

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of applications for learning English for listening and speaking skills in students' learning through the use of Speaking Pal, Ed Puzzle, and English Speaking Practice. This research was carried out in a private high school in Loja with a sample of 24 students from first sophomore year who have an intermediate level of English as a Foreign Language. The investigation was elaborated through qualitative and quantitative approach. The data collections served to find out the benefits of the apps in the process of learning and at the same time students' perception regarding the effectiveness of apps. The instruments used were listening and oral pre and post-tests, a speaking rubric, an observation sheet, and a students' questionnaire. The results of this project revealed that the applications seem to be a great alternative for enhancing listening and speaking skills in students. Learners indicated a better understanding and comprehension of the information of the spoken language and expressed their thoughts and feelings coherently with a successful pronunciation and fluency.

Key words: applications, effectiveness, listening and speaking skills.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo investigar la efectividad de las aplicaciones para aprender inglés para habilidades auditivas y orales en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes mediante el uso de Speaking Pal, Ed Puzzle y English Speaking Practice. Esta investigación se llevó a cabo en un colegio privado de Loja con 24 alumnos de cuarto curso con un nivel intermedio de inglés como lengua extranjera. El estudio se elaboró a través del método cualitativo y cuantitativo. La recopilación de información sirvió para conocer los beneficios de las aplicaciones en el proceso de aprendizaje y las percepciones del alumno sobre las mismas. Los instrumentos utilizados fueron pruebas preliminares y posteriores auditivas y orales, una rúbrica de expresión oral, una hoja de observación y un cuestionario para estudiantes. Los resultados de este proyecto revelaron que las aplicaciones son una gran alternativa para mejorar las habilidades auditivas y orales en los estudiantes. Los estudiantes indicaron un mejor entendimiento de la información del idioma hablado y expresaron sus pensamientos y sentimientos de manera coherente con una pronunciación y fluidez exitosas.

Palabras clave: aplicaciones, efectividad, habilidades auditivas y orales.

Introduction

Over the years, previous and current generations have noticed a radical change in education due to globalization. Education has been changing for many reasons, and currently due to a viral pandemic called Covid-19, students have entered a new world of education. Under these circumstances learners have to continue their studies with the help of E-learning. According to Fandiño et al. (2019), it has been taken into consideration that E-Learning includes a huge variety of multimedia equipment inclusive of the Internet, interactive television, and all types of digital support, among others, all of which favor gaining knowledge and make them extra bendy and friendly for learners.

Indeed, technology has become a crucial instrument for the teaching-learning process because of the variety of applications and tools that it offers. According to Colas (2018), these advances have facilitated the development of new educational practices that improve the teaching-learning process of students. Nowadays, many applications have become pretty practical to improve English learning based on students' needs, lacks, and wants. As Mindog (2016) points out, apps are popular technological tools that have a lot of potentials to support language learning; they are easily accessible, free and cheap, highly portable for anytime-anywhere learning, customizable, and can be accessed via smartphones that many students already own.

Although mobile apps are a great option for learning, Ecuadorian curricula have never adopted this modern methodology into EFL classes. There are many obvious reasons why this happens, the lack of technological resources in schools being the most notable one, the economic situation of the institutions, and the lack of knowledge to choose the most appropriate apps for learning English. The integration of applications for learning English can be supportive for learners that have difficulties in listening comprehension and speaking, especially for learners who are not able to participate in classroom activities because of low motivation, lack of knowledge and confidence. For these reasons, the majority of learners are not capable of communicating effectively in the target language.

Providing these arguments, this research aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of applications for learning EFL listening and speaking skills in students' learning through the use of Speaking Pal, EdPuzzle, and English Speaking Practice apps in a private high school where any mobile learning app has never been utilized before, particularly for listening and speaking skills. For this reason, the following investigation intends to answer the following questions: How the use of applications improves learners' achievement in listening and speaking? Which application is the most effective one for students' learning output? What are students' perceptions on using applications for learning English?

To carry out this research, it was necessary to analyze some previous studies in order to make a comparison among the results obtained from the studies and from this research. One of these researches was conducted by Alzatma (2020) who made a study at the Islamic University of Gaza investigating the impact of mobile learning and its effectiveness on EFL learners for speaking skills. The results showed that the use of mobile apps had a good impact on enhancing English-speaking skills because learners improved their pronunciation, and become more fluent and accurate.

Another study was carried out by Duy and Oanh (2019) at Van Lang University in Vietnam in which the investigation pretended to know the effectiveness of an ICT tool named ReadOut for improving learners listening and speaking abilities. At the end of the study, learners demonstrated to show interest in using apps for practicing and improving speaking abilities, especially pronunciation. Authors also mentioned that learners were satisfied with the use of apps and they will make an effort in order to implement mobile applications in the process of learning. The last study was led by Zhang (2016) who investigated the impact of mobile learning on ESL listening comprehension. Although the author obtained excellent results on the implementation of applications in students' learning, he also declared that two limitations were presented. One of the drawbacks is the difficulty to know the certainty of the contribution of the listening apps in language learning; and, the second obstacle is that the lack of electronic registrations related to the usage of the applications makes it hard to exactly quantify tasks and the time used in them.

The present study is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the most relevant and scientific information associated to the study is described. The second chapter presents the methodology used in the research, including the participants and the process followed by the investigator to accomplish the main objectives. Later, the data obtained were described in the graphs and tables, analyzed and interpreted and supported with the theoretical support mentioned previously. Finally, the findings of this study are mentioned in the conclusion part followed by some recommendations.

As discussed before, this investigation has an outstanding importance for the implementation of mobile applications in the process of students' learning. The significance of the study comes from the necessity to reinforce the weaknesses of learners in listening and speaking skills and how these mobile apps will better develop English language abilities. This research also helps learners and educators in learning the target language in an interactive way having dynamic dialogues, interacting in a simulation with native speakers, and managing their progress. In this work, current knowledge of the effectiveness of apps for improving two essential skills, listening and speaking, was broadened. The beneficiaries of this project will be educators, learners, institutions and the whole community who can take this research as an example for teaching English by implementing mobile devices and learning applications in students' learning.

Finally, there were limitations in the study such as internet connection, time applied for each application, sample of students, and the lack of digital registrations regarding the use of the applications by learners. These drawbacks limited the process of students' learning, making the investigation hard to accomplish. It was difficult to precisely quantify tasks due to the limited time that was allowed for each class. Further, the sample of students could have been bigger and divided into two groups; the experimental and control one.

Chapter one

Literature review

Listening and speaking skills have been always considered difficult for many foreign learners due to the lack of resources used in class by educators to improve these abilities; for this reason, researchers have done studies in order to know the best procedures to support learners to acquire those skills. In the first chapter, the most pertinent topics associated to listening and speaking skills have been analyzed, starting from the importance of each skill on EFL classrooms, continuing with relevant information about the implementation of applications for learning a language, followed by a general review of the apps used in this investigation, and ending with a closing analysis of the latest researches on the field.

Importance of listening

Along the time listening has always been considered a secondary skill among the other four skills. Speaking and communicating with others in another language have been in the public eye, but these people are forgetting a vital aspect before accomplishing this objective. For example, Djabborova (2020) stated that if learners have the inclination for talking to natives, they must first understand the real language and comprehend the main message the native person is telling. Therefore, listening is a key for a successful and effective communication. In the same way, the author announced that numerous researchers have mentioned that although listening is not considered as valuable as other skills, listening should be seen as one of the fundamental foundations to understand any language due to the use that people give it daily in their lives. In the words of Burely (1995) our daily communication is based on listening ability with more than forty percent of usage than the other skills, followed by speaking with thirty-five percent, sixteen percent of reading, and only nine percent of writing.

According to Ahmadi (2016), he stated that listening or the ability to understand the spoken language has an important role in foreign language learning and use, and it is a

necessary skill for classroom real communication activities. In his study, he mentioned that an extraordinary method to improve learners speaking skills is to gain practice by listening and repeating, being educators the principal guides for their betterment. With this in mind, the educators are always the best models for learners when it is about listening, however it is useful for learners to be exposed to more than one voice. It is not unacceptable just to have one voice, but it could be more satisfactory to involve learners with two or more voices in class because of the variations of accents that exist around the world.

Likewise, Van Dozer (1997) held the position that listening is a critical element in the competent language performance of adult EFL learners, even if they are communicating at school, at work, or in the community. The researcher indicated that in order to make a more efficient improvement of listening skills at a workplace, the material used with adults might be authentic and relevant. The authenticity must be evident in language and in task. For instance, if a learner at a worksite needs support to recognize new codes and systems at an employee meeting, they should be assisted to enlarge the capabilities to identify the principal ideas and supporting details, advise comprehension or lack of it, and request for clarification. So then learners will be capable of finding greater and superior opportunities than people who do not have this ability developed, such as job success, an effective relationship with supervisors and subordinates, international opportunities and a variety of job promotions.

Given these points, listening skills are as crucial as the rest of the skills. The integration of the four skills will help learners and everyone to communicate successfully. It must be understood that listening is a valuable skill required in every language system and EFL classroom. Once the learners start practicing permanently listening skills in their EFL/ESL classrooms, they will get the mastery of these skills and perform well in the activities in and outside their classrooms.

Cognitive process

Foreign language learners do not always know how to understand the spoken language. Learning and improving a language requires cognitive processes. When we listen,

several processes work in our mind in order to understand a message. In the case of listening skills, there are two essential cognitive processes that every learner must know when he or she is learning or trying to understand a language. These processes are: The top-down process and the bottom-up process. In general terms Yeldham (2018) mentioned that bottom-up processing implies building meaning from the linguistic content of a text, while top-down processing involves individuals using their existing knowledge to lead and enhance their understanding of the text. In the following paragraphs, these processes are going to be explained.

Bottom-up Processing

Vandozer (1997) noted that Bottom-up processing makes reference to deriving the meaning of the message based on the incoming language information, from sounds to words, grammatical relationships and meaning. As an addition to this definition, Nunan (2010) stated that this strategy is text based, relying upon language features such as sounds, vocabulary, and grammar. It is also a process of decoding the sounds, from the smallest units to complete texts; for example, listening for specific details, recognizing cognates, and recognizing word order patterns.

There are some researchers that discovered that there are many educators who do not know effectively how to develop this cognitive process in a class. For instance, Dimoski and Milliner (2019) made a research about "Three Bottom-up Listening Training Ideas for the English as a Lingua Franca Classroom". These researchers worked with a group of lower level ELF learners. They proposed a list of activities that promote bottom-up processing skills. These activities promoted learners' listening fluency. Findings from these authors' study of experienced English as a foreign language EFL instructors in Japan showed that even though there was not a formal collection of learner's feedback to find out the effectiveness of the tasks presented in their research paper, based on classroom observations, investigators reported that learners were engaged and appeared genuinely interested in improving their listening skills, pronunciation, and becoming more intelligible.

As has been noted, “bottom-up processing evolves segmenting the sound stream into meaningful units. Listeners who decode in a bottom-up manner construct meaning by accretion, gradually combining increasingly larger units of the meaning from the phoneme-level up to discourse-level features” (Hinkel, 2011, p. 456)

Top-down Processing

Top-down processing is as same as valuable as bottom-up processing. Listeners or learners who want to comprehend a message or information that others are transmitting to them, have to develop both procedures. In order to evolve these procedures, it is crucial to know how top-down processing works. According to Bekaryan (2016), bottom-up processing refers to a procedure that goes from language to meaning, and top-down processing goes from meaning to language. In this case, top-down processing functions by using background information to understand the meaning of the spoken message. In other words, listeners have to use their prior knowledge according the type of information, situation or context when listening to a spoken text and make an effort to comprehend it.

In brief, “top-down processing involves the application of context and prior knowledge to build a conceptual framework for interpretation purposes. Listeners use initial cues in the input or the context of the listening act to activate a conceptual framework for interpreting the input, much of which may be unintelligible to them” (Hinkel, 2011, p. 256.)

As authors mentioned before, both cognitive processes have been needed to considerably enhance listening comprehension. According to Henderson (2017), both types of strategies are necessary in the development of courses, materials, and lessons to help learners not only to discriminate among different sounds, but also to use what they already know to understand what they are hearing. In detail, learners must become competent about these both procedures in order to be capable of recognizing and understanding the information transmitted by others.

Importance of speaking

Unlike reading, writing and listening skills, speaking skills are considered the most important abilities to acquire in both EFL and ESL. Speaking and communicating with others

has been becoming essential in everyone's life because by speech people can express or deliver information, thoughts and feelings. So, if people do not speak or communicate, they will not be able to interrelate with others. Speaking skills have many reasons to be studied and learners even educators must pay attention to this fact. Apriani and Sari (2020) reported that learners have to see speaking as a tool for communication because this skill becomes a bridge to communicate with people who surround us. They also mentioned that speaking ability is vital for career enhancement due to the fact that managers or employers have always estimated the capability to speak well, they always attempt to upgrade this skill to their career evolution.

Alike, Gillis (2013) indicated that proficiency in the four basic skills is necessary to become a well-rounded communicator, but the capacity to speak skillfully allows the speaker with diverse distinct advantages. One of the advantages is the ability to inform, persuade, and direct. This point refers to the development of speaking skills to such a level that transforms educators, lawyers, among others into master communicators. The ability to talk clearly and assertively can capture audience attention imparting a favorable chance for the speaker to make the message noticed. Another advantage is the ability to stand out from the rest. This idea means that having a good speech will allow learners to become authentic speakers. Speakers that do not have nervousness or anxiety, trust and want to be the best version of themselves at the moment of speaking in front of a big amount of people. In the words of the author, people do not have to think that speaking skill is easy because it is not; not everyone can stand before others and speak effectively. Many people are afraid to speak in front of other people; others just do not have the facility to process information and transmit it constructively. For this reason, people must be prepared and work hard constantly to stand out from others.

According to Apriani and Sari (2020) and Rao (2019), both maintained the idea that speaking seems to be hard because speakers have to produce information in real time and cannot be edited or corrected such in writing. These authors affirmed that learners are not capable of improving this skill due to the deficiency of learning of grammatical structures,

vocabulary, and the lack of constant practice of the ability. Therefore, authors recommend the persistent practicing of the skill inside and outside the EFL/ESL classrooms, so that learners could become mastered communicators with a high level of fluency and accuracy in their speech. With this in mind, speaking skill is the most essential skill for every learner who wants to implement English to enhance their career, build confidence and motivation levels, get better job opportunities, make public speeches and so on.

Components of Speaking Skills

When people talk or speak to someone, they try to transmit the information or specific message in an understandable manner. According to Ganiyevna and Muhsin (2019) the clearer the message will convey, the clearer the thoughts will be reflected. For this reason, people have to realize that it is necessary to take into account some components such as, pronunciation and fluency when talking. These components will assist the mode people enunciate words. If they integrate these two elements into speech, their speaking skills will be improved productively. In the following paragraphs, pronunciation and fluency will be explained deeply.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the principal component by which learners have to consider the permanent development in the process of learning. Gilakjani (2016) mentioned that a clear pronunciation must be a basic requisite of learners' competence and one crucial feature of language instruction. The author also stated that if the learner has a good pronunciation, the learner will be lead to learn; but, if learners have bad pronunciation, it will provoke many difficulties in the process of language learning. In the light of Sahatsathatsana (2017), a clear and correct pronunciation of the speakers will make the audience able to comprehend easily what they are trying to express. In view of these researchers, pronunciation plays a meaningful role in the speech of learners or speakers at the moment of transmitting a message to others.

Although pronunciation must be taught in EFL classrooms, Pardede (2018) affirmed that along time pronunciation instruction has been neglected in second language (SL) and

foreign language (FL) teaching area. One of the reasons is because educators consider pronunciation as the hardest skill to develop in learners. Flores (1998) mentioned in her study that pronunciation is definitely the most difficult segment of any language specially for adult learners to master and it is the least preferred aspect for educators to teach in classrooms. However, with constant practicing and integration of it in EFL classrooms, pronunciation can support learners' outcomes. In the point of view of Hinkel (2011), it is relevant to mention that teaching and learning pronunciation in EFL classroom is just a piece of the whole process of learning a language in a course because in order to improve pronunciation it is necessary to integrate the vocabulary and grammar features of the language. With this in mind, pronunciation does not demand a large amount of time in EFL classrooms, but it warrants some time.

As stated above, pronunciation has been forsaken for many years, but according to Brinton (2016), the attentiveness in pronunciation enlargement seems to be growing. Nonetheless, modern educators and learners must find a way to distribute time well so that both can dedicate a short period for constant learning and practicing pronunciation skills in order to then transmit a message effectively.

Fluency

Fluency is another component of speaking skills. Fluency is a fundamental component that language learners should ace if they have an inclination for developing speaking skills. According to Loewen and Sato (2017), fluency is the capacity to speak at length with a small number of pauses. These analysts declare that in research, fluency in second language productions refers to the extent to which oral production flows, and to what quantity that flow is interrupted through pauses, hesitations, fake starts, and so on. Therefore, it is important that learners have a fluent oral production, so that they can produce a continuous speech without comprehension problems for the listener and keep communicative notions in a more constructive way (Yang, 2014).

Hinkel (2011, p. 452) pointed out that there are four conditions for the development of fluency. The first one is that the didactics which educator is going to work with must be

close to learners. This means, there is not possible to use vocabulary, grammar or discourse features and tasks that are unfamiliar for learners. The second aspect is the center of the task should be conveying messages; in other words, the activities should be focused on communicative competences. The third condition is the presentation of pressure or inspiration to carry out an activity as faster as usual speed. For example, if the educator wants to present an activity for speaking, the educator should present a task to be completed but with time limit in order to make learners engage and activate their knowledge to produce it in a faster way. The last but not least state is the quantity of practice of the skill in class. This makes reference to the amount of practice that learners and educators give to the skill. The development of fluency needs practice and repetition; so, the most you practice, the most you develop this skill.

Overall, fluency development is not an easy process, learners even educators have to dedicate some time to evolve this skill. This process demands the integration of time, practice, engaging tasks, and some pressure and inspiration from educators to learners in order to become experts in the production of the real language.

Grammar

Grammar is a vital component for improving speaking skills. It is the system and structure of any language, and it supports learners knowledge for communicating better. According to Handayani and Johan (2018), learning grammar is essential for learning English because it is the principal capital element in language, and one component of the English language besides pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary. Hence, if learners want to speak in an understandable and successful manner, learners should master grammar knowledge because the author affirmed that there is no language without structure.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and their meaning. It allows learners to enhance and express themselves clearly, and understand others' messages. In the point of view of Adam (2016), vocabulary is the key issue for students' ability to read, listen, write and speak. Regarding speaking skills, vocabulary facilitates learners to understand and

comprehend what others are saying and explain their ideas orally. The author also mentioned that if a learner has adequate vocabulary proficiency, they will be able to ease the real communication to a great extent. Therefore, learning vocabulary must be vital for every learner even educator in order to build the ability to communicate better and transmit any message effectively.

Factors that affect the learning of listening and speaking skills in EFL students

It is a well-known fact that when learners are acquiring a new language, they always face difficulties. These problems affect the process of learning of apprentices and the implications in the progress of communicative competence usually demand a lot of attention from educators to their students. According to Yildiz and Albay (2015) listening holds an important place in foreign language learning process because it provides learners comprehensible input; however, language learners encounter some factors that affect listening comprehension. The factors are background knowledge, intelligence of the learner, and the topic of the listening text. All of these components define the comprehension of the listening skill, if a learner does not have well developed any of the characters already mentioned, they are not going to be able to be good listeners. In the following paragraphs the most frequent factors that influence learners learning listening skills are going to be explained.

Prior knowledge

In the process of learning a language, prior knowledge becomes a core element. Over the past years, many investigators studied the prior knowledge and its impact when someone is learning something new. A study performed by Yang and Quadir (2018) aimed to note that developed an educational game to ease English learning, researching how learner's different levels of prior knowledge, in terms of their prior English ability and online gaming experience, affect their learning performance and anxiety. The results showed that prior knowledge of English ability was positively correlated to learning performance. In particular, this study shows how prior knowledge plays an important role for learners when learning a second language.

Furthermore, Hailikari et al. (2008) reported that insufficient prior knowledge is a crucial trouble to keep in mind due to the fact if there's an inconsistency among the instructors' expectancies of learner's knowledge and the students' real know-how base, learning can be obstructed from the beginning of the studies. Likewise, it is considerable to point out that for listening and speaking skills prior knowledge is really helpful. If learners do not have any previous information about a certain theme, they are not going to be able to figure out the principal idea. They could make an effort to understand and respond to the speaker, but learners are not going to be able to communicate effectively.

Additionally, Wenk (2017) claimed that learners come to educators each with their own prior knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills and beliefs. When educators give learners new information or message, learners prior knowledge influence their thinking. Every learner understands the message in their own mode. The way learners process the current knowledge affects their abilities to solve the problems educators present, to reason, and to acquire new knowledge. As for students to share their previous knowledge with the new ones, they will need the help of educators. For this, educators should provide the best possible coverage of language during the process of teaching-learning according to learner's lacks, wants, and needs so that learners could get the best return in their learning.

Motivation

Motivation plays a super important role in EFL classrooms because it is highly significant in the effectiveness of teaching-learning process. According to Guido (2018) the motivation of the learners has been broadly accepted as a fundamental component which influences the rate and success of learning. It must be the most essential factor that educators should transmit into everyday classes of learners. To achieve a successful and an effective learning, educators need motivated, interested and hard-working students. If learners have a strong motivation in class, they will have a successful and effective participation before, during and even after class.

Based on the previous author research it seems that motivation does not have a certain definition since there are distinct points of views and perspectives of researchers on

what it concerns to. However, Alizade (2016) argued that motivation refers to the mixture of effort and desire to accomplish the goal of learning the language plus desirable attitudes towards gaining knowledge of the language. This means that motivation to study a second language refers back to the volume to which the character works or attempts to study the language due to a choice to achieve this and the contentment skilled on this task. Similarly, McDonough (2007) described motivation as a “Property of the learner” which can also come from a coach or an educator. Therefore, if learners or educators are not sufficiently motivated, it is possible that both mutually transmit and influence attitudes that are not suitable for a successful academic development.

As the authors mentioned before, educators are part of the improvement of learner’s motivation. Although nowadays motivation is a challenging and complex issue for tutors, educators are going to be the main piece of this process by finding new strategies and techniques to make learners be more active and participative in the classroom. For instance, a study performed by Khoshsima (2017) aimed that the implementation of Harmer’s ESA (engage, study, activate) elements in the EFL learners influence in the increasing of their motivation. To meet that accomplishment, he made a pre-test to 15 EFL learners at the beginning of a term to measure input motivation. After collecting information form the pre-test, the learners were taught around two months by applying ESA elements, and then the post-test was given to the same group of learners to gather data of learner’s perceptions. In sum, the results of this process proved that the treatment of the learners via ESA technique was quite influential in improving EDL learners’ motivation to speak. The authors found notable positive correlations between learners and educator’s motivation in the process of learning and teaching; in other words, researchers contended that motivation is an indispensable condition in an EFL classroom.

In the light of Guido (2018), he stated that if learners do not have enough motivation to be participative in any lesson, learners are going to be able to get bored, they are not going to be able to pay attention to the subject, and they are not going to be able to establish any connection with the studies done in the school and real life. For this reason, educators

have to be innovative, creative, and authentic in the process of teaching in order to promote and generate learner's motivation, so then, learners are going to be capable of keeping that motivation to succeed in the process of learning.

Lack of resources in EFL class

Considering the significant importance of resources in EFL classrooms, The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MinEduc), through the Undersecretariat of School Administration, in order to guarantee quality education and eliminate barriers to access to education, provides school texts to girls, boys and young people from public educational institutions around the country (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Even though the government supplies institutions with resources such as books, the lack of resources for improving listening and speaking skills is extremely remarkable. According to Fakhruddin et al. (2020), the issue mostly found in textbooks in EFL classrooms is the lack of listening skill material. These authors mentioned that the lack of listening resources in class provokes many difficulties in students' listening comprehension. The author also affirmed that the resources that educators should have at least for a satisfactory development of the communicative skills are audios from a variety of accents and topics, native speakers' interaction, and a well-constructed laboratory for the practicing of the language skills using technology.

In this concern, Ecuador and its government and policies need to update new methods, techniques, didactic and digital material, and technological resources for teaching-learning process in order to guarantee a high acceptable language education.

Lack of time

Another factor that affects learners' development in listening and speaking skills is the lack of time they receive to practice the language. For learning and producing a language satisfactory, time is vital in the process. Nevertheless, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2018) updated new policies for teaching English in the curriculum of public and private schools. It established schedules for English subject in classrooms. For instance, "Educación General Básica" from first year to seventh grade, learners have English classes

three hours per week; from eight to tenth grade, the hours were incremented to five hours per week for English. In the same way, “Bachillerato General Unificado” from first to second year of sophomore, learners have five hours for the English subject; but for the third year of sophomore, the hours were reduced to three hours per week for studying English.

As described above, the hours that the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education sets up are not enough for the development of a language especially if educators focus more on grammar and vocabulary instead of the rest of the basic language skills such as, reading, writing, speaking and listening. With this in mind, Harmer (2003) pointed out that educators who ignore teaching pronunciation and any other skill have so many things to do and it just increases a lot of issues for their instruction. The time that educators have for teaching English is not convenient for learners even for educators because educators have to divide those hours for teaching and developing the four abilities of English. According to Bai and Yuan (2019), even when educators tried to teach listening, speaking and pronunciation, they suffered from a lack of time because of school's curriculum and its strong focus on examination results.

It is difficult for educators to implement all the skills in the teaching-learning process, but at least they have to try to take advantage of the little time that the Ministry of education gives to them. Thus, educators must be innovative, creative and authentic to make students learn and exploit their knowledge inside the class so then, learners could produce the language outside.

Lack of experienced teachers

According to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2018), for the implementation of the English subject, public educational institutions must incorporate into their teaching staff, educator with at least B2 level according to the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages. Even though institutions must have at least educators with B2 level, the experience of English educators in Ecuador is not adequate for the modern world and learners. What learners need nowadays is communicative competences; hence, they

require the guidance of an expert or an educator that knows the importance of these skills in real life in order to support them in the process of learning.

English in Ecuador is considered just as another boring subject due to the attitude and motivation that educators showed to learners specially in public high schools. According to Fakhruddin et al. (2020), educators often ignored listening lessons and prioritized other skills such as reading and writing because of the lack of ability that educators have to teach listening, and their insufficient audio-visual teaching facilities. These researchers also stated that the lack of ability from educators to teach listening affect students' motivation and interest for learning the language.

Under those circumstances, educators, learners and community in general ought to know that education is changing over the time, technology is gaining approval in education too, educators are in the globalization era; with this in mind, Ecuadorian educators have to keep preparing themselves and improving their teaching strategies so then they could be the best guiders for their future learners.

English Learning apps

Along time apps have been becoming popular in the modern world due to the fact they are a great tool for learning a language. They are fast, effortless to use and funny. Students can use applications at any time even if they do not have internet connection because there are many apps that function without internet access. The usage of applications for learning a language is building merits to everyone who has the opportunity to manipulate them. It is highly effective to mention that technology is advancing, updating new content and resources for learning, and it is changing and improving every time.

Apps as an English learning resources in EFL classrooms

According to Solano et al. (2017), the integration of technology into EFL classrooms requires more than just educating computer abilities, it implies that educators focus on innovations in order to enhance learners' participation and construct their learning. Hence, a method or strategy to achieve this predominant point is the usage of educative technology in a successful way. Similarly, Luna and McGovern (2018) pointed out that as the usage of

technology evolves in education, an extensive range of new smart devices and digital applications is becoming available to academics. Therefore, there are many applications that nowadays are extremely helpful for educators and learners in order to improve any skill of language.

There are many researchers that implement applications for learning English in EFL classrooms and they have had excellent results. For example, Gamlo (2019) affirmed that the use of applications for learning English increase the motivation of students due to the facility of accessibility each application has. Moreover, Alamer (2015) argued that the correctly usage of mobile applications for the purpose of language education can ease and support language learning. Both authors together with Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi (2016) indicated that it is recommendable for educators to incorporate mobile game based language learning applications to strengthen learners' motivation and enhance lifelong learning.

English learning apps for listening and speaking skills. Applications have become progressively well-known for learning English, but apparently, learners cannot find the appropriate applications for developing the basic skills of English. It is complicated to find a trustworthy app that really helps learners or people, in general, to improve and evolve specific skills separately such as reading, writing, listening, or speaking. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, three language learning apps that are designed just for learning English for listening and speaking skills have been described.

EdPuzzle. EdPuzzle is a free and suitable application dedicated for educational purposes. Educators can use the app to develop learners' listening skills in class. It is available in mobile devices such as computers, phones, tablets or IPads. The app allows educators and learners to have an account by signing in with their personal e-mails. According to Mischel (2019), the main focus of this app is the usage of authentic videos in classrooms. There are a variety of videos that everyone can find in the platform such as, Ted Talks, YouTube, Khan Academy, National Geographic, Veritasum, Numberphile and Crash Course videos. If the educator does not like the videos there, or cannot find the

appropriate video for learners, the educator has the opportunity to update his or her own video and makes the necessary changes if it is needed. Once the educator uploads the video, if the video takes too much time, the educator can cut it according to the requisites that he or she is searching for or according the lesson he/she is teaching.

Besides, Abou Afach (2018) mentioned that with EdPuzzle a teacher can make any video his/her lesson in three easy steps. The first step is to find a video. Educators can find the video on YouTube according to the topic that they are interested in or they can choose a video created by another educator on the platform. The next step is to edit it so then the educator can create the lesson. For this, the educator can crop the video to shorten it according his or her needs. Apart from this, educators can personalize the video by recording their voice and adding it to specific parts of the same. In the same step, educators are able to assigned questions while the video is playing. If there is any question during the video, the video is going to stop and it is not going to continue until the learner answer the question. According to Mu and Paparas (2016), “many teachers particularly like being able to add “quizzes” to the video” (p.2). What the researcher tries to say is that by adding quizzes you can add comments, open ended and multiple choice questions for learners. The last step is to assign the video to learners and check their progress in real time while they learn at their own pace.

In essence, EdPuzzle lets learners and educators develop their comprehension skills. Giyanto et al. (2020) declared that EdPuzzle is a platform that can help educators conduct interactive video learning between educators and learners. A strength feature of EdPuzzle is that this app supports learners learn through authentic videos following their respective learning speed and capability (Kay and Dermott, 2019). Given these points, EdPuzzle app seems to be an effective application to develop listening comprehension skills and it can be used as a great alternative to the process of learning.

Speaking Pal. Speaking Pal application can be used for the development of both skills, listening and speaking. The app is available in Google Play Store and App Store. Learners, educators, and people in general can download it in their mobile devices and then

in order to start using it, they need to create an account by using their e-mails. Although the application is paid, it has many free lessons for practicing speaking. Carrier (2016) affirmed that the lessons are varied; for example, for the free lessons, there are a variety of topics to talk about such as everyday situations, friends, work, travel and even English sounds. Each free lesson allows everyone to complete just three sub-lessons which have from five to ten levels. When the levels are ended, a multiple choice quiz is presented. Apart from this, the app has a segment for vocabulary where you can record your voice and compare it with the correct pronunciation as well as listen to some examples.

This app helps learners how to speak English clearly due to the advanced characteristics that it has such as speech recognition in every lesson. Duy and Oanh (2019) asserted that Speaking Pal is a software that can understand and show speaking mistakes. For example, when learners are recording their answer from the dialogue, the software immediately detects what and where the mistake is and allows them to listen to the audio again, compare it with the real person and record again the answer. The authors mentioned that the advanced speech recognition of the application gives learners immediate feedback on every word and sentence, and the mispronounced words are going to be presented in red so that learners can try to improve them.

As seen above, "Speaking Pal provides tasks where the learners interact with a program called English Tutor in short, real-life dialogues where the user controls the conversation flow, like in a real video/ phone call. The app is able to provide instant feedback on the student's speaking performance along with a review mode for later practice" (Carrier, 2016 p. 105)

English Speaking Practice. English Speaking practice is a free application that is available in Google Store and App Store, and everyone that has a mobile device can download it. For starting the usage of this app in a phone, tablet or iPad, it is necessary to create an account with an e-mail and then everyone can log in. The application could be used for improving listening and speaking skills due to the tasks that this app provides for the community. This app is composed by two categories: Beginner English Conversations

and Basic Business Conversations. Each category has sub-categories, and each subcategory has twenty conversations from different topics such as daily life, debates arguments, complaints and feelings, among others.

This application gives to the community the chance to choose a dialogue between two people from a variety of topics. When people already choose a topic, the app is divided in four essential parts, listening, quiz, practice and record. The first part is listening where learners have to listen to a dialogue carefully. The second step is the quiz in order to assess the comprehension that learners have from the dialogue by answering to multiple questions. The next part is the practice, where learners have to listen to the audio again, choose a person of the dialogue, and the learner has to follow the speed of both people. So then, for the last part that is recording, the learner is going to be ready for recording his or her voice.

According to Duy and Oanh (2019), English Speaking Practice is an app that can be used on mobile devices. They also mentioned that the app helps learners and educators to improve their speaking skills by practicing well-prepared daily dialogues thanks to the advanced software of the app that allows users to select a person to play role and English Conversation Practice will act the remaining roles. Learners and software speak the sentence followed by the direction of the selected dialogue. Additionally, learners can record the conversation to listen to it again later. Even though the app does not point out learners' mistakes, the software allows learners to get familiar with basic dialogues.

Previous studies

As discussed before, many researchers have mentioned in their studies that listening and speaking are the key skills to communicate and learn a language. The authors also stated that there are applications that help learners to improve these abilities in the process of learning. In the following section, previous studies that are closely related to this investigation have been included. This information will help to manage and validate the data obtained in this project.

Alzatma (2020) investigated the mobile learning's impact and the effectiveness of "Mobile-Assisted Language Learning" (MALL) on EFL students to improve English speaking

skills. The research was conducted at the Islamic University of Gaza "IUG" with a sample of thirty EFL female junior students. The researcher applied "oral test" as a statistical tool for observing the effectiveness of mobile apps on learners speaking skills before and after training them on using the apps. The oral test included pre-test and post-test. For this research, the author recorded students' performance before and after the usage of mobile apps and examined them based on IELTS speaking skill assessment tool. The results of the study indicated that there was statistically high amount of differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of the study participants; in the post-test, learners were more capable of dealing with speaking tests since they become more fluent and accurate, and their pronunciation increases as well.

Zhang (2016) conducted a study on the impact of mobile learning on ESL listening comprehension. The author aimed to examine if the implementation of mobile technology could enhance learners' listening skill and motivation through mobile-assisted language learning. Two groups of learners were selected, the experimental and the controlled group. For this, a group of one hundred and twenty college learners were randomly chosen. The experimental group with sixty participants worked on extensive listening practice on mobile phone, while the control group with also sixty participants practiced listening by applying traditional methods. For the investigation, it was necessary to apply pre-test and post-test of listening comprehension, and a questionnaire that asked learners to describe the usage they do of their mobile devices for learning English. The results revealed a positive change in the experimental group as they outperformed the control group on their listening comprehension. Although the author has excellent results, he mentioned that two limitations were presented. One of the drawback is the difficulty to know the certainty of the contribution of the listening apps in language learning; and, the second obstacle is that the lack of electronic registrations related to the usage of the applications make it hard to exactly quantify tasks and the time used in them.

Duy and Oanh (2019) made a research about self-designed model that support learners overcome their issues in speaking and listening skills. In the model, learners used

ICT tool called ReadOut which is based on speech recognition engine and it could point out the mistakes learners commit when speaking. The participants that helped for the development of this study were students from the Faculty of Information Technology at Van Lang University in Vietnam that were full-time English majors and had pronunciation problems. The model was divided in three parts. The first one was the controlled practice where the educator asked students to listened to a reading text available in the text book and the tape script learnt in class. In this step the tool provided different accents of pronunciation and intonation. The second part was self-practice where learners could choose by themselves the source of their listening or any content closely related to their major to learn. For this part, the tool acted as a supervisor which provided instant feedback to learners' practicing. The last step was free practice where learners choose the schedule of their studies, and the tool monitored their results and their self-progress on learning English. The results showed that educators and learners have positive feedback of the tools. Learners demonstrated be interested in using apps for practicing and improving speaking abilities, specially pronunciation.

Alabsi (2020) conducted an investigation about the impact of adding subtitles to videos on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' listening comprehension. The study was managed at Taibah University with seventy-six prep college EFL learners aged nineteen and twenty years, native speakers of Arabic. The participants were divided into two groups, thirty-eight for each; the experimental group which watched and listened to English learning videos and added text subtitles to the video by apps, and the control group that watched and listened videos but without subtitles, and wrote what they heard on a blank paper. In order to carry out with the results, pre and post-test were applied for both groups. The results showed that there was a significant impact in the experimental group because of the implementation of captions on videos on EFL learners' listening comprehension. By using caption on videos with the apps allowed learners to pay attention to rapt attention, be aware of particular sounds, apprehend unusual words, examine variations in usage, become more confident learners, and learn the correct pronunciation and spelling of words.

Abu-Ayfah (2020) made an investigation about the impact of Telegram App in Learning English and learners' perceptions. The study was carried out at Tibah University in Saudi Arabia with randomly selected participants of the English and Translation department. The participants were three-hundred EFL students, two-hundred females and one-hundred males. The study was managed with a quantitative method in which a questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The results manifested that most of the students perceived Telegram as a useful tool for learning English, particularly, vocabulary. Additionally, around 172 students found the application suitable for the development of listening skills. It deduced that learners find the application uncomplicated to use them anywhere and anytime. Also, it gave them the chance to practice with real context language in listening. Regarding to speaking skills, 56,8 % of students thought that Telegram facilitates the ability to speak English due to the variety of activities learners could do such as storytelling, sent audios or just kept them in the chat so then they could hear their own voice and try to improve their pronunciation as well as accuracy. In general, the participants realized that Telegram was an adequate app for learning English.

Akkara et al. (2020) developed a research applied to understand the impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in improving speaking skills, segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation, and the viability of bringing your own device (BYOD) method. Data collection took place over fifteen weeks with twenty-five participants at Jawaharla Nehru Technological university Kakinada. The study included four applications, Voice recorder, video recording and editing apps, WhatsApp and English pronunciation (British Council). BYOD method was utilized in class, in other words, each participant brought their own devices to the English language lab. For this investigation it was administered a pre and a post-test based on IELTS Speaking Test pattern. Additionally, interviews were assigned to know the perceptions and experiences of participants. The study included a daily listening activity at home, reading aloud and recording the same modeling after the native speakers during the lab hours, listening to their recording for self-reflection and review, and rerecording the conversation until they felt they had reached a

satisfactory level. The results revealed that participants noticed that these apps give more flexibility in the process of learning as they could have brought their phones, tablets or iPad anywhere. In the same way, participants realized an improvement in word and sentence stress, fluency, pronunciation and intonation. In fact, the usage of these apps influence learners to learn English and improve listening and speaking skills in the process of learning.

Chapter two

Method

Setting and participants

The present investigation was carried out in a private high school from the city of Loja. The sample chosen for this study consisted of 24 students ranged from 14 to 16 years old. There were 13 females and 11 males from first year of sophomore of a private high school who have an intermediate level of English as a Foreign Language.

Procedure

Based on the general and specific objectives of this research, the data collection was obtained through scientific methods and approaches. For this, it was essential to follow some steps to develop the investigation. The first step to carry out this study was to gather information from different sources such as scientific articles, journals, books, and previous studies in order to get the bibliographical information of the study and support the theoretical foundation of this research.

To be able to collect the data a mix-method of qualitative and quantitative approach was used. The quantitative approach aided to know the student's perceptions regarding the usage of applications for developing listening and speaking skills in class; on the other hand, the qualitative approach was used to know the benefits of the apps in the process of learning.

Following the research process, the sample of students took four lessons for each application, EdPuzzle, Speaking Pal, and English Speaking Practice. During the intervention, learners and the researcher held classes via Google Classroom. During the process of the study, a pre and post-test, a speaking rubric, a students' questionnaire, and an observation sheet were applied. The pre and post-tests see appendix 1 had 10 questions in which 7 multiple questions included listening skills and 3 open-ended questions involved speaking skills. The speaking rubric see appendix 2 was used to evaluate the speaking skills of students before and after the usage of apps in order to judge and confirm if learners have improved their abilities along the process. The criteria assessed was knowledge of the topic,

fluency, pronunciation, grammar usage, vocabulary, and comprehension. Another instrument was the students' questionnaire see appendix 3 with 16 questions created through Likert Scale using the choices of totally agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and totally disagree to find out learner's perceptions after using the applications, and the benefit of the apps in the process of learning for listening and speaking skills. The last instrument was the observation sheet see appendix 4 that was utilized to evaluate the performance and behavior of students in classroom during the study.

Lastly, the information obtained was compiled and processed through the use of Excel and Online surveys to obtain the statistical graphs and tables that allowed the researcher to analyze and interpret the results and consequently respond to the research questions that were the main goals for developing the thesis.

Chapter three

Description, analysis, and interpretation of results

In the following section, once the data was collected through the instruments of listening and oral pre and post-test, a speaking rubric, an observation sheet, and students' questionnaires, the results of the investigation have been described, analyzed, and interpreted. The analysis was divided in three sections according to the objectives. The first section corresponds to how the use of applications improves learners' achievement in listening and speaking skills. The second section indicates the most effective application for students' learning output. Finally, the results obtained from the questionnaire about students' perceptions on the use of applications for learning English for listening and speaking skills is presented.

How the use of applications improves learners' achievement in listening and speaking?

Table 1

Results of the listening pre and post-test

Category	Pre-Test	Post-test
	Private School Experimental Group	Private School Experimental Group
Excellent	10	17
Good	3	6
Fair	11	1
Total	24	24

The listening pre and post-test were applied the first and last day of the investigation correspondingly. The level and the contents were according to the topics taught in learners' classes. The listening test had three parts. The first part had five multiple questions; for four questions, learners had to listen to an audio and choose from four pictures the correct one according to the information obtained; and for the fifth question, learners had to listen to the

audio again and match the speakers to the role they involved in a newspaper production. The second part had one question where learners had to listen to an interview and fill in the blanks with a right answer. The last part consisted of a True and False statements where learners had to listen to an interview, write True or False according to the dialogue and if the sentence was false, they had to write a correct complete sentence.

Based on table 1, the results of the pre-test show that the majority of students did not show sufficient listening comprehension to complete the variety of tasks provided in the test. During the pre-test, it was noticed that 14 students who corresponds to 58% did not complete the whole test; most of them did not accomplish with the time for completing the test and they also got wrong answers on it. However, 10 learners who corresponds to 42% were able to complete the test, have also made some mistakes. The majority of mistakes were presented in the second and third part of the test. In these parts, learners had to listen carefully to an audio and write their answers according to their comprehension. Additionally, learners did not complete all the blanks although the audio was repeated two times. These negative results could have been obtained due to their lack of practice and the lack of attention being paid to these skills inside the class. Besides, it is crucial to highlight that it is difficult to practice these skills in online classes because of some limitations that educators have been facing such as internet connection, lack of time and low motivation of themselves. According to Guido (2018) the motivation of the learners has been broadly accepted as a fundamental component which influences the rate and success of learning. In the same way, Bai and Yuan (2019) claims that even when educators tried to teach listening, speaking and pronunciation, they suffered from a lack of time because of school's curriculum and its strong focus on examination results. Thus, these two factors might support the low performance in listening skills obtained from the pre-test. It is hard to help learners to develop listening and speaking skills during online classes, but searching for new methods and strategies such as apps for learning English could be possible.

At the end of the study, students had to complete a post-test, which was the same as the pre-test, in order to confirm the effectiveness of using applications for learning English

for listening and speaking skills. Regarding table 1, the experimental group outperformed their own results in the post-test. The majority of students demonstrated a great improvement in listening comprehension skills through the use of EdPuzzle, English Speaking Practice, and Speaking Pal learning apps. Alamer (2015) declared that the correct usage of mobile applications for the purpose of language education can ease and support language learning. As a matter of fact, these results could have been reached due to the easy acceptance of students of using the applications inside and outside the classroom for learning. Another characteristic that could help students to get these results could be the desire they showed in class to learn English through the apps. In class, learners were quite attentive and cooperative, when they had doubts or questions about the instructions, they asked the researcher. In the same way, if any student had any issue for answering any question, a classmate helped her or him. It is vital to mention that their motivation and participation was noticeable while they were using the applications in class. According to Gamlo (2019), the author affirmed that the use of applications for learning English increase the motivation of students due to the facility of accessibility each application has.

Table 2

Average Results of the listening pre and post-test

Criteria	Number of students	Average result of the pre-test	Average result of the pots-test
Experimental Group	24	7,70	9,34

The average results of the listening pre-test (7,70) and post-test (9,34) from the sample of students from the private school, which are shown in table 2, demonstrate a difference of 1,64 between the averages. These results reveal that learners really improved listening comprehension skills through the use of EdPuzzle, Speaking Pal, and English Speaking Practice apps. Akkara et al. (2020) affirmed that the usage of applications influences learners to learn English and improve listening and speaking skills in the process

of learning. The average results demonstrate a significant improvement in the post-test for the sample of students. In the same way, according to the observations the tasks completed inside and outside the classroom such as daily dialogues, business conversations, authentic videos, among others were beneficial for students, not only for practicing and improving their skills but also to acquire new vocabulary. The same authors confirmed that learners realized an improvement in word and sentence stress, fluency, pronunciation and intonation.

Additionally, Alabsi (2020) claimed that the use of apps allows learners to pay attention, be aware of particular sounds, apprehend unusual words, examine variations in usage, become more confident learners, and learn the correct pronunciation and spelling of words.

To evaluate the oral test, the researcher used a rubric to assess the speaking skills of students before and after the usage of applications in order to judge and confirm if learners improved the skills along the process. The criteria assessed was knowledge of the topic, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Table 3

Results of the oral pre and post-test regarding fluency

Criteria	pre-test	post-test
Some effort is required to maintain the conversation (4-5 pauses).	8	0
A bit of effort is required to maintain the conversation (2-3 pauses).	13	9
A bit of effort is required to maintain the conversation (1 pause).	3	13
Student act as a facilitator, helping the conversation's flow (no pauses).	0	2

Based on table 3, regarding fluency, learners outperformed their results in their post-test. The test was graded taking into account four aspects as seen in the graph. In the pre-test, there were eight learners who corresponds to 33% that demonstrated difficulties to maintain a conversation by having four to five pauses. It was observed that these learners did not have enough understanding of the content of the topic. This was noticeable because they started looking to different sides of the computer and hesitations were presented. Additionally, there were thirteen students who corresponds to 54% that needed a bit of effort

to maintain the conversation due to the fact of the hesitations and pauses presented in their answers. Furthermore, learners seemed to be nervous at the moment of answering the questions and for these reasons they could make some mistakes on pronouncing few words. Hasibuan (2020) affirms that when learners are nervous at the moment of speaking it is because they are afraid to make mistakes and this situation can affect the continuity of students' speaking performance. In the same way, three students who corresponds to 12% showed that a bit of effort was required to maintain the conversation but just with one pause presented, and no student acted as a facilitator, helping the conversation's flow. The minority of learners who had great fluency looked confident and sure about their answers, however there was needed some improvement.

In the post-test, the results revealed better. Although nine students who corresponds to 38% still needed a bit of effort to maintain the conversation, the majority of learners who corresponds to 62% really improved their fluency by just having one and none pauses. Learners reduced pauses and hesitations in their answers. The majority of learners really improved their fluency after using the apps. Based on the observations, learners' knowledge of the topic, fluency, and pronunciation were greatly satisfying thanks to the tasks that every app provided. These results show that learners really have overcome their speaking abilities by reducing pauses at the moment of maintaining a dialogue fluently and they could act as facilitators helping the conversations' flow and development without pauses. Therefore, it is important that learners have a fluent oral production, so that they can produce a continuous speech without comprehension problems for the listener and keep communicative notions in a more constructive way (Yang, 2014).

Table 4

Results of the oral pre and post-test regarding grammar

Criteria	pre-test	post-test
Low level of control of simple grammatical forms	10	0
Sufficient level of control of simple grammatical forms	9	9
Good level of control of simple grammatical forms	5	12

Good level of control of simple and tries complex grammatical forms	0	3
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In table 4, regarding grammar, learners made an improvement of their skills after using the applications. In the pre-test learners showed a low, sufficient and the minority of them a good level of control of grammatical forms on their answers. Before using the apps, learners did not make proper sentences while speaking. During the investigation, it was observed that learners made some mistakes on verb agreement such as the usage of verbs correctly with the present and past simple tense, and pluralization such as *the plural of child is children*, but they said *childs*. In the present simple sentences, they did not use the rules of the verbs for third person, and in the past simple they forgot to make negative statements using “did+not+ verb in the base form”.

In the post-test, results improved increasingly. No student had a low level of control of simple grammatical forms, nine students who corresponds to 37% kept the same grade of sufficient level of control of simple grammatical forms. However, the majority of learners showed a good and exemplary level of control of simple grammatical forms. In the observation of the post-test, learners presented an amazing enhancement of grammar use. Most of them, made correct sentence construction with proper pluralization and verb agreement. According to Handayani and Johan (2018), learning grammar is essential for learning English because it is the principal capital element in language, and one component of the English language besides pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary. Hence, learners should master grammar knowledge because the author affirmed that there is no language without structure.

Table 5

Results of the oral pre and post-test regarding vocabulary

Criteria	pre-test	post-test
Uses only basic vocabulary and expressions	10	0

Uses limited vocabulary and expressions	12	11
Uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions, but makes some errors in word choice	2	10
Uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions	0	9

As shown in table 5, students obtained better results of vocabulary in their post-test.

In the pre-test, most of the learners used limited and basic vocabulary and expressions for their answers. Reached from the observations, the majority of these learners used poor vocabulary for describing a place, job or people according to their level. For example, some poor and repetitive words that most of the learners mentioned to answer the questions were “*play, games, school*” However, very few learners tried to use complex vocabulary, connectors and expressions such as “*although, educational, educators, among others*”, but they made some errors in word choice. According to Khan et al. (2018), the fundamental purpose for learning vocabulary is that a rich vocabulary makes listening, speaking, reading and writing skills easier to perform. Therefore, learners must dedicate their time not just to general learning but also to specific aspects such as vocabulary.

After using the applications for learning English for listening and speaking skills eleven students who corresponds to 45% used limited vocabulary and expressions and ten students who corresponds to 41% improved their vocabulary and expressions but still made some errors in word choice. Besides this, nine students who corresponds to 37% used a variety of vocabulary and expressions without errors. Based on the observations during the study, it was evidenced that learners' vocabulary was better than the first time they did the test thanks to the fact that the applications provided a part dedicated to vocabulary. This part was presented at the end of dialogues in Speaking Pal app where learners could find unknown words with each definition, sound, and examples. Every dialogue showed underlined words so that If the learner did not know the meaning, he or she could click on the word and see its meaning and listen its pronunciation. Learners who improved their

vocabulary used a variety of words such as lateness, hometown, entertainment, among others.

Besides this, the most common expressions that learners used were *"I totally agree/disagree; I really appreciate, Actually, I, among others"*. These results illustrated that most of learners enhanced vocabulary and expressions in their speaking skills. With this in mind, Tso (2020) confirmed that the use of well-designed apps for learning English especially vocabulary allows learners to develop their skills significantly, grasp core vocabulary learning strategies, which include vocabulary use, phonological, morphological and contextual analysis, and to communicate effectively.

Table 6

Results of the oral pre and post-test regarding pronunciation

Criteria	pre-test	post-test
Lacking and hard to understand	9	0
Sufficient. Inhibits understanding	13	7
Good. Understandable with some errors.	2	13
Excellent, easy to understand. Sounds natural	0	4

Regarding table 6, in the pre-test thirteen students who corresponds to 54% had a sufficient level of pronunciation according to their level. Furthermore, there were nine learners who corresponds to 37% with a pronunciation that was hard to understand because of their hesitations and mispronounced words. This could happen due to the fact that learners do not practice enough pronunciation in their classrooms. During the practice of dialogues that the apps offered, learners had problems with some words pronunciation. Learners just read the words as they were written. These mispronounced words led to have some struggling to understand the whole dialogue. Gilakjani (2016) declared that if learners have bad pronunciation, it will provoke many difficulties in the process of language learning.

In the post-test, most of the students improve pronunciation. The majority of learners who corresponds to 71% demonstrated good and excellent pronunciation that was easy to understand, with a natural sound. The results obtained showed that thanks to the dialogues practiced in class and the simulation of speaking with real native speakers, students passed from a lacking and hard pronunciation to an excellent, understandable and natural one. Abu-Ayfah (2020) affirmed that the use of applications facilitates the ability to speak English due to the variety of activities learners could do to improve their pronunciation as well as accuracy.

Table 7

Results of the oral pre and post-test regarding topic knowledge

Criteria	pre-test	post-test
No understanding of the information. No answer questions about the topic.	11	0
Uncomfortable with information. Answer only basic questions.	11	9
Understand the information. Answer some questions about the topic.	2	10
Full knowledge, answer all questions with explanations.	0	5

Based on table 7, regarding topic knowledge, learners outperformed their results in their post-test. In the pre-test, there were eleven learners who corresponds to 45% that demonstrated difficulties to understand the information and they could not answer questions about the topic. Additionally, there were eleven students who corresponds to 45% that felt uncomfortable with the information asked and they answered only basic questions. In the same way, two students who corresponds to 9% had an understanding of the information and could answer some questions about the topic, and no student demonstrated full knowledge answering all questions with explanations. Although the test was made based on recent topics that students learnt, the results show low level of comprehensions of the theme. These results could be presented due to the fact of the lack of prior knowledge of the topic. Hailikari et al. (2008) reported that insufficient prior knowledge is a crucial trouble to keep in mind due to the fact if there's an inconsistency among the instructors' expectancies

of learner's knowledge and the students' real know-how base, learning can be obstructed from the beginning of the studies.

In the post-test, there were nine students who corresponds to 37% that still felt uncomfortable with the information asked, they only answered basic questions. Nonetheless, the majority of learners understood each question they were asked to answer. They demonstrated more knowledge of the topic than the first time by giving better and coherent explanations. During the process, it was observed that learners could describe and contrast pictures using the corresponding vocabulary, grammar structures and without many mispronounced words. The tasks and content provided by the apps were fundamental for their mastering regarding topic knowledge. Horne (2015) said that the content taught is important because it motivates learners by incrementing their curiosity, enhances subject and language competence simultaneously, along with cultural awareness, and critical and creative abilities. Above all, graph 6 show that learners highly overcome their topic knowledge after using the applications for improving listening and speaking skills.

Table 8

Results of the oral pre and post-test regarding comprehension

Criteria	pre-test	post-test
Little comprehension of questions (3-4 questions repeated).	10	0
Understand most of what is asked (2 questions repeated).	13	4
Understand almost everything (1 question repeated).	1	15
Fully comprehension of questions. All questions asked once.	0	5

In table 8, regarding comprehension, it was one of the most difficult aspects for learners. The results demonstrated that students overcame their results in the post-test thanks to the implementation of the apps for learning. In the pre-test, most of the learners showed an understanding of most of what was asked. Their comprehension was sufficient and some questions were repeated more than one time. Similarly, just one student who corresponds to 4% demonstrated a good understanding of almost everything of what was asked and one question was repeated.

In the post-test, students outperformed their first results that no student had little comprehension of questions. There were four learners who corresponds to 17% that understood most of what was asked and the questions were repeated two times. However, more than fifteen students who correspond to 83% had almost fully comprehension of questions and only one question was repeated. These results point out that the participants highly improved their comprehension ability after using the applications for learning English particularly for listening and speaking skills. It is vital to mention that for accomplishing these results, it was necessary to accomplish activities proposed inside and outside the class. For example, inside the classroom, students took their time to complete a lesson, and outside the classroom, they had to complete two lessons. Every lesson had a short quiz, so, after the lesson was concluded, students had to assess their comprehension by answering some questions in order to know if they understood and comprehended the main topic of each conversation and the meaning of some words. If the learner did not remember information, they could repeat the audio or dialogue in order to answer correctly the quiz. According to Alabsi (2020), by using different tasks or activities for listening comprehension with the apps allowed learners to pay attention to rapt attention, be aware of particular sounds, apprehend unusual words, examine variations in usage.

In general terms, the average results of the oral pre-test and post-test from the sample, show that learners really improved speaking skills through the use of EdPuzzle, Speaking Pal, and English Speaking Practice apps. Additionally, the dialogues practiced inside and outside the classroom were supportive for the improvement of learners' pronunciation and fluency thanks to the advanced and authentic activities that Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice has. Their speech recognizing gave learners the correct pronunciation and meaning on every word and sentence. Similarly, in each lesson, after learners completed the lesson individually, every learner participated in a dialogue between two or three people for the whole class. This activity was helpful for the researcher even for learners in order to know if they were improving during the intervention or not.

What are students' perceptions on using applications for learning English?

Table 9*Student's perceptions on using applications for learning English*

Criteria	Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
I like to use applications for learning listening and speaking skills in the class.	21%	67%	12%	0%	0%
I feel confident to use applications to develop listening and speaking skills in the class.	9%	83%	8%	0%	0%
I feel satisfied with the usage of applications in class.	25%	67%	8%	0%	0%
The apps used in class to develop listening and speaking skills were motivating.	0%	79%	21%	0%	0%
The applications are simple to handle.	21%	75%	4%	0%	0%
Practice listening and speaking skills using the applications was easy.	13%	83%	4%	0%	0%
I think using applications in learning can help build and develop English listening and speaking skills.	25%	62%	13%	0%	0%
I would like to continue learning English listening and speaking skills with these applications in class.	25%	58%	17%	0%	0%
I am encouraged to use the applications outside the classroom to improve English listening and speaking skills.	29%	50%	21%	0%	0%

Based on the first statement, results demonstrate that more than the 60% of learners liked to use the applications for learning listening and speaking skills in the class.

Meanwhile, just 12% of learners were neutral to the statement. During the research, it was

observed that students showed interest, they looked curious to work with applications, and they did not complain or show any hesitations. In the same manner, the second parameter shows that more than 50% of learners felt confident to use applications to develop listening and speaking skills in the class and just the 8% keeps the neutral posture. They possibly felt confident because of their individual work in the class, and nobody heard them because they were focused on their phone practicing the dialogue or task thanks to the advanced activities and feedback that each app brings. It is important to highlight that learners sometimes felt anxious because they had fear to commit mistakes, but by using the apps as a resource of learning, learners reduced those points. Kacetl and Klímova (2019) affirm that the use of mobile devices in the process of learning is gladly accepted by learners because it helps low-achieving students and motivate them to spend more time studying inside and even outside the classroom.

In respect of the third statement, results show that most of the students felt satisfied with the usage of applications in class and just the 8% learners maintained a neutral position. The students who felt satisfied must have had results in their learning process. Based on the class observations, they definitely improved their skills significantly such as their pronunciation, fluency, comprehension and understanding of the information. In addition, they seemed prepared for making and following a coherent dialogue, describe and contrast pictures in different situations, and give their own opinion about any topic. According to Abu-Ayfah (2020), learners like and prefer applications for language skills improvement in their learning process due to the fact that apps are easy to manage, help learners to learn in an interactive and engaging way, and at their own speed and needs.

Regarding to the parameters four, five, and six, 79% of learners affirmed that the apps used in class to develop listening and speaking skills were motivating while the 21% maintains a neutral posture on the statement. This could be happened because more than the 70% of learners considered the apps simple to handle, and more than 75% of them declared the apps easy for practicing and developing both skills just as shown in the table 9. It is vital to highlight that before the usage of apps, slides were presented with the

instructions and management of each app so that learners could practice without problems in class; and, during the development of the study, it was noticed that learners seemed to be confident to work with the apps, they worked excellently, and they did not have difficulties with the apps. In this concern, Alamer (2015) affirms that the usage of mobile applications correctly for the purpose of language education can ease and support language learning. Similarly, Gafni et al. (2017) in their study declare that using mobile applications in learning is helpful, simple and easy to use and learning is improved notably.

In the seventh parameter, results indicate that 62% of learners claimed that the use of applications in learning can really develop English listening and speaking skills, meanwhile 25% of learners considered the apps helpful to learn English, just the remaining 13% of them maintained a neutral position. The results show that the majority of learners thought that applications for learning English are practical and effective. In the words of Kaceti and Klímová (2019) mobile learning and smartphone applications for learning English are really helpful for learning due to the benefits that they provide such as the improvement of the learner's cognitive capacity, motivation, autonomy, confidence, and its support to achieve students' learning goals.

Concerning the eighth parameter, results rate that more than the 50% of students agreed to continue learning English listening and speaking skills with the applications in class while just the 17% of learners kept a neutral position. In the same manner, the ninth statement estimates that more than 70% of learners were encouraged to use the applications outside the classroom to improve English listening and speaking skills, while the 21% remaining maintained in a neutral posture on the statement. In this investigation, learners have stated their interest on keep learning English with the use of EdPuzzle, Speaking Pal, and English Speaking Practice for improving their listening and speaking skills. It is important to highlight that it was learners' first time using a language learning app particularly for listening and speaking skills and their inquisitiveness and interest to improve the language through mobile devices and its apps was notably noticed everyday based on observations. In fact, Kusmaryani et al. (2019) argues that using device learning apps

outside the classroom enlarge students' skills and make them become more independent learners. Similarly, Nurwahida (2020) affirms that finding some time to learn English with applications outside the classroom make students able to enhance students' cognitive skills and their self-confidence.

Which application is the most effective one for students' learning output?

Table 10

Effectiveness of applications on students' learning output

Criteria	EdPuzzle	Speaking Pal	English Speaking Practice
Which application have you considered the most motivating one to develop listening and speaking skills?	71%	17%	12%
Which application have you considered the most motivating one to develop speaking skills?	0%	45%	55%
Which application have you considered the most effective one to enhance listening skills?	50%	30%	20%
Which application have you considered the most effective one to enhance speaking skills?	0%	45%	55%

The first parameter rates that the most motivating app for developing listening skills was EdPuzzle with a 70% of average of learners. In the study, learners seemed to be more fascinated for this app. This could be happened because while they were using their phones watching the authentic videos that the app provided, their results were displayed on the screen. The activities that were carried out in practice were not only done by the students on their phones but also with the help of the researcher. Learners were given a short time for each activity and then the researcher shared the screen with them to carry out, compare, and check the activity together, which was not possible with the other applications. According to Kay and Dermontt (2019), a strength feature of EdPuzzle is that this app supports learners learn through authentic videos following their respective learning speed and capability. Therefore, learners preferred this app for learning listening skills.

Regarding the second statement, for speaking skills, the most motivating app was English Speaking Practice with a 55% average, while Speaking Pal was considered motivating but not as much as the app mentioned before with a 45 % average of learners answers. Based on the observations, learners seem more excited using English Speaking Practice app. These results were reached because of the management of the app and its content. According to Duy and Oanh (2019), English Speaking Practice helps learners and educators to improve their speaking skills by practicing well-prepared daily dialogues thanks to the advanced activities of the app that allows users to select a person to play role and English Conversation Practice will act the remaining roles.

These results show that learners were motivated to learn English thanks to the enhancement of new mobile devices apps which differed the traditional routines of a normal class. In this regard, Gamlo (2019) affirms that the use of applications for learning English increase the motivation of students due to the facility of being accessible each application has. Besides this, Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi (2016) indicate that it is recommendable for educators to incorporate mobile game based language learning applications to strengthen learners' motivation and enhance lifelong learning.

In concern to the third argument, learners affirmed that the most effective application to enhance listening skills was EdPuzzle with 50% of learners answers, the second one was Speaking Pal with 30% of answers and the third one was English Speaking Practice with an average of just 20% of learners answers. During the intervention, it was observed that the majority of students demonstrate more enthusiasm for learning when they use Ed Puzzle application because of the dynamic activities and videos that the application has. In view of Heliawaty et al. (2020), EdPuzzle is an effective app for improving listening skills because it contains interactive activities such as watching videos and answering questions on the sidelines of the video that make students understand the ideas reviewed.

Respecting the last parameter, the most effective application to enhance speaking skills was English Speaking Practice with 54% of answers, and the less effective was Speaking Pal with 46% of answers. These results could be reached because English

Speaking Practice was considered the easiest app for learners. Based on the observations, learners did not have difficulties to manage the app, the variety of dialogues, characters and situations hooked the attention of learners. According to Duy and Oanh (2019) English Speaking Practice is an effective application for improving speaking skills due to the variety of situations it presents such as daily dialogues, trip conversations, among others that make learners get familiar with the basic conversations.

Table 11

Effectiveness of applications on students' learnign output

Criteria	Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
I have learnt to correctly pronounce words in English using Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice.	25%	50%	25%	0%	0%
I have learnt to make a dialogue and follow the conversation coherently using Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice.	25%	45%	30%	0%	0%
The applications help me to understand and comprehend better the information of the spoken language.	12%	79%	9%	0%	0%
The applications help me to express better my thoughts and feelings.	0%	55%	45%	0%	0%

In the first parameter, 50% of students affirmed that they learn to correctly pronounce words in English using Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice apps, the 25% of students agree and 25% keeps a neutral position on the statement. In like manner, the second statement demonstrates that 46% of learners agreed and 25% totally agreed that

they learn to make a dialogue and follow the conversation coherently using Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice, and the 29% remaining kept a neutral posture on the statement. These features were observed in the process of the study application with the tasks and lessons that learners were assigned to do inside and outside the classroom.

With respect to the third argument, 79% of students declares that they understand and comprehend better the information of the spoken language with the support of applications used in class, the 13% of students agreed with the statement and the 8% just keep their position neutral. Concerning the last parameter, it was found that 54% of students indicated that the applications used in class help them to express better their thoughts and feelings while the 46% of them maintains a neutral position of the statement. These aspects were observed and evidenced in class along the process of the investigation. While applications were used by students, they demonstrated a better understanding and comprehension of the instructions, and they answered instantly with a coherence response.

As mentioned before, the majority of students agreed with the benefits and results they obtained by using the apps. Having said that, the results were remarkable during the application process. Based on previous tables, students had outperformed their own results regarding their listening and speaking abilities. According to Kusmaryani et al. (2019) the implementation of phone applications as a learning source can assist students to improve their speaking skills and critical thinking in English language learning. In their investigation, these authors mention that by implementing applications in class for learning, students share awareness, construct and apply new comprehension by building new information and knowledge.

Conclusions

The implementation of mobile applications EdPuzzle, Speaking Pal, and English Speaking Practice as learning resources can help learners improve their listening and speaking skills in English language learning.

Speaking Pal, Edpuzzle, and English Speaking Practice apps are valid options to online or face to face courses since learners can practice the language at their own speed and level, and inside or outside the classroom. The structure of each application such as voice recorders, instant feedback on every word or sentence, and different levels for practicing listening and speaking skills makes learners the authors of their own process of learning.

The use of applications inside and outside the classroom allowed learners and educators to share knowledge, demonstrate a better understanding and comprehension of the information of the spoken language, and express their thoughts and feelings coherently with a successful pronunciation and fluency.

For learners, the most effective application for improving listening skills was EdPuzzle due to the dynamic activities they worked on during online sessions each week. The tasks and structure of the app aided learners to understand the ideas reviewed in each topic, increase their comprehension, and develop the skill each week.

Through the use of "Speaking Pal" and "English Speaking Practice" applied for improving speaking skills, learners affirmed that the best app to develop this skill was English Speaking Practice. The variety of situations it presents such as daily and trip dialogues makes learners get familiar with basic conversations, understand more phrases, acquire new vocabulary, and most importantly they improve how to communicate better.

After using the apps for learning, learners felt satisfied and motivated. The use of the apps reduced their fear and anxiety to participate in class. Learners who were shy at the beginning, during the use of applications, they have become participative, independent, and more confident learners at expressing themselves inside the classroom.

Recommendations

The evidence of this study highly recommends learners and educators to use mobile applications in the process of learning not as a vital tool to learn the language but as a helpful source to enhance learners' speaking and listening abilities.

It is highly advisable that every language course should include the use of apps for learning and developing listening and speaking skills in students' learning depending on learners' wants, lacks and needs since the majority of learners are familiarized with the apps and its function for learning.

Students can use the apps mentioned above as a source of extracurricular activity. If any task was not completed in class, learners should use the apps outside the classroom for practicing and learning English skills in order to continue becoming independent, motivated and autonomous learners.

It is highly recommendable for learners and educators to use EdPuzzle as a tool for improving listening skills. The structure of the platform allows learners and educators to follow their progress, and accomplish the activities as a whole group. In the same way, the variety of videos and activities let learners and educators get engaged in the process of developing the skill.

It is advisable to implement English Speaking Practice in the process of students' learning as an extra resource for developing speaking skills. Its daily simulated dialogues with natives, short quizzes, and content made learners improve their pronunciation, fluency, and comprehend how to communicate better in different situations.

The results of this study recommend to implement apps inside an EFL classroom because learners could increase their motivation, interest, curiosity, and stimulate learning autonomy for developing their abilities in the learning process.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Listening and oral test

Listening test.

PART 1

You will hear four different people talking about the roles they involved in a newspaper production.

For questions 1 – 4, choose the picture that best fits according to the question.

1. What is the picture that best describes the job for the first speaker.



2. What does Claire Davis do for the newspaper?



3.

4.

3. What is the role of Tom Middleton in the newspaper?



4. What is the role Kim Harris involved in the newspaper production?



5. Listen to the audio again. Match the speaker to the role they involved in the newspaper production. There are three extra answers.

___ Speaker 1

a. photographer

b. columnist

___ Speaker 2

c. journalist

d. secretary

___ Speaker 3

e. publisher

f. press operator

___ Speaker 4

g. editor

PART 2

You will hear an interview about a process of a newspaper production.

For question 6, write one word in the gap or the letters in bold.

6. Listen and complete the interview.

Matt: Good afternoon, Mr. Graham. I want to know about

the process of **a.** _____ production. How did you produce the last piece of news about the truck accident?!

Mr. Graham: Well, we published it last week and we worked as a team. The process involved different **b.** ____ and different staff. At 4:00AM, the **c.** _____ went to the

scene where the event had taken place. When she arrived, the photographer had **d.**_____ taken some pictures of the accident.

Matt: What did the journalist do after she arrived on the scene?

Mr. Graham: At 4:15, the **e.**_____ asked questions and recorded the information. **f.**_____ the interviews, she had checked her voice **g.**_____, of course! At 5:30, the journalist wrote the news story.

Matt: Did the journalist show her article to the **h.**_____?

Mr. Graham: Yes. **i.**_____ the editor gave the text to the **j.**_____, he had already checked the content of the story. The graphic designer used the pictures that the **k.**_____ had sent him one hour before and selected those that best **l.**_____ and supported the article.

Matt: What happened during the final **m.**_____ of the process?

Mr. Graham: Finally, the graphic designer created the page **n.**_____ and produced the final version of the newspaper article. It was ready at 7:30. We published the news at 8:00 after the **o.**_____ had printed it.

PART 3

You will hear an interview about a new library project.

For question 7, write True or False according to the dialogue. If the sentence is false, write a correct complete sentence.

7. Listen to an interview. Write True or False according to the dialogue. If the sentence is false, write a correct complete sentence.

- Tina is a teacher at Brown High School. _____
- Tina and her classmates had an initiative related to a new library project.

- Tina and her friends had already gathered 150 old books. _____
- Last year Tina and her classmates noticed the lack of new books in the school library. _____
- The book collection process was not a great success. _____

Speaking Test.

PART 1

In pairs discuss the following questions. (1 minute)

- How important is it to have a university education to get a job in your country?
- What type of excuses do you think are alright for lateness?
- What should a visitor see and do in your country?
- What do young people do for entertainment in your hometown?
- Do you think it is important that children are given homework? Why? Why not?

PART 2

Three situations are going to be presented. For each situation, you have to make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, and choose from some choices the best option. (1 minute)



A young man works very hard, and has only one free day a week. He wants to find an activity to help him relax. Talk together about the different activities he could do, and say which would be most relaxing.

PART 3

I am going to give you a topic. You have 30 seconds to talk about it.

- a. Daily routines
- b. Favorite film
- c. Popular activity in your country
- d. Important event in your life
- e. Technology

Appendix 2. Speaking rubric

	4	3	2	1
Topic Knowledge	Student demonstrates full knowledge by answering all questions with explanations.	Student have an understanding of the information and can answer some questions about the topic.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only basic questions	Student does not have an understanding of the information and cannot answer questions about the topic.
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is excellent. It is easy to understand. Sounds natural	Pronunciation is good. It is understandable with some errors.	Pronunciation is sufficient. It inhibits understanding.	Pronunciations is lacking and hard to understand
Fluency	Student acts as a facilitator, helping the conversation's flow and development. No pauses are present.	A bit of effort is required to maintain the conversation because of a pause. (1 pause)	A bit of effort is required to maintain the conversation because of some pauses.(2-3 pauses)	Some effort is required to maintain the conversation because of a few long pauses.(4-5 pauses)
Grammar	Shows a good level of control of simple grammatical forms, and tries some complex grammatical forms.	Shows a good level of control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows sufficient level of control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows low level of control of simple grammatical forms.
Comprehension	Student shows fully comprehension of questions. All questions are only asked once.	Student understands almost everything of what is asked of him/her. (1 question repeated)	Student understands most of what is asked of him/her. Some questions are repeated more than one time. (2 questions repeated)	Student shows little comprehension of questions. A few questions are repeated more than one time. (3-4 questions repeated)
Vocabulary	Uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions.	Uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions, but makes some errors in word choice.	Uses limited vocabulary and expressions.	Uses only basic vocabulary and expressions.

Appendix 3. Students' questionnaire

Gender: Masculine () Feminine ()

Age: ()

Dear students.

Read the following questions and mark your answers.

1. I think using applications in learning can help build and develop English listening and speaking skills.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

2. The applications are simple to handle.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

3. Practice listening and speaking skills using the applications was easy.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

4. I have learnt to correctly pronounce words in English using Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

5. I have learnt to make a dialogue and follow the conversation coherently using Speaking Pal and English Speaking Practice.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

6. I feel confident to use applications to develop listening and speaking skills in the class.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

7. I like to use applications for learning listening and speaking skills in the class.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

8. The applications help me to understand and comprehend better the information of the spoken language.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

9. The applications help me to express better my thoughts and feelings.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

10. I encourage to use the applications outside the classroom to improve English listening and speaking skills.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

11. I feel satisfied with the usage of applications in class.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

12. I would like to continue learning English listening and speaking skills with these applications in class.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

13. Which application have you considered the most effective one to enhance listening skills?

EdPuzzle ()

Speaking Pal ()

English Speaking Practice ()

14. Which application have you considered the most effective one to enhance speaking skills?

Speaking Pal ()

English Speaking Practice ()

15. The apps used in class to develop listening and speaking skills were motivating.

Totally Agree ()

Agree ()

Neutral ()

Disagree ()

Totally Disagree ()

16. Which application have you considered the most motivating one to develop listening and speaking skills? Choose one for listening and one for speaking. Write L for the listening one and S for speaking.

EdPuzzle ()

Speaking Pal ()

English Speaking Practice ()

Appendix 4. Observation sheet

	Always	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost never	Never
Learners pay attention to the teacher's instructions.					
Learners ask questions and clarify doubts.					
Learners participate actively					
Learners feel motivated doing activities					
Learners respond carefully to teacher's questions					
Learners have difficulties managing the apps					
Learners feel confused and nervous when answering questions					
Learners are engaged in their work					
Learners use prior knowledge to complete activities					
Learners express themselves with confidence					
Learners give clear opinions					
Learners demonstrate a great pronunciation and fluency with difficult words					
The content of the apps seemed suitable for					

learners age and level.					
The activities of the apps seemed engaging for learners					
The daily dialogues seem interesting for learners					
Learners listen and complete the lessons successfully.					
Learners have difficulty to understand the videos					
Learners have difficulty to answer questions about videos.					