



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES,
EDUCACIÓN Y HUMANIDADES**

**CARRERA DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN
INGLÉS**

**Factors that influence high school students' English oral
communication skills in Ecuadorian face-to-face learning
environments**

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de

**LICENCIADA EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN,
MENCIÓN INGLÉS**

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SAMBORONDON

2023



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2023

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Loja, 1 de octubre de 2023

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Dedication

Firstly, I would like to dedicate this work to God, who gave me the capacity, wisdom, and perseverance to get my degree; to my parents, Alciviades and Ercita, who were the main motivation throughout my formation and to my family, of which I feel proud and for which I strive every day.

Luisa Clebel

Acknowledgement

I express my deepest thanks, firstly to God for allowing me to culminate this very important stage, secondly to the UTPL university, in particular to Mgtr. Alba Vitalina and my thesis director Carmen Benitez, who contributed through their guidance and feedback to the successful completion of this work, and lastly to all the teachers for sharing their knowledge, which significantly contributed to my professional training.

I also express my thanks to my family and friends who supported, motivated, and accompanied me along this path.

Luisa Clebel

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate which factors, linguistic or emotional, influence the development of oral communication skills in high school students in Ecuadorian face-to-face learning environments and identify which of them influences the most in order to find possible solutions to overcome the problem. It's a qualitative and quantitative study that used a teacher and student questionnaire, an interview, and an observation sheet as instruments to collect data. The participants were 40 EFL high school students and one teacher at a private school in Daule-Guayas, Ecuador. The results show that the linguistic factors that most influence the development of oral communication skills are the lack of grammar, the lack of vocabulary, the lack of accuracy, and the use of complex structures, while the fear of making errors, the fear of being laughed at, and anxiety are the emotional factors.

key words: EFL learners, emotional factors, linguistic factors, face-to-face learning environments, oral communication skills.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo investigar qué factores, lingüísticos o emocionales, influyen en el desarrollo de las habilidades de comunicación oral en los estudiantes ecuatorianos de secundaria en entornos de aprendizaje presencial e identificar cuál de ellos influye más y así encontrar posibles soluciones a aquellos problemas. Es un estudio cualitativo y cuantitativo que empleó un cuestionario, una entrevista y tres observaciones de listening and speaking clase. 40 estudiantes y un profesor de un colegio privado ubicado en Daule-Guayas, Ecuador participaron en el estudio. Los resultados muestran que los factores lingüísticos que más influyen en el desarrollo de las habilidades de comunicación oral son la falta de gramática, la ausencia de vocabulario, la falta de precisión y el uso de estructuras complejas, mientras que el miedo a cometer errores, el temor a la burla y la ansiedad aparecen como factores lingüísticos influyente.

Palabras claves: Estudiantes de EFL, factores emocionales, factores lingüísticos, clases presenciales, habilidades de comunicación oral.

Introduction

In many Spanish-speaking countries, such as Ecuador, teaching English as a foreign language has become mandatory from the first years of educational instruction. Therefore, students at the end of school should be able to read, write, listen, and speak in English. This means that students must effectively develop the four basic linguistic skills.

However, it has been observed that students have difficulties developing oral skills efficiently despite the many years they spend learning the language and the multiple strategies that teachers apply so that the students can develop this skill proficiency, making this a topic of investigation.

Many researchers argue that the lack of success in the development of communication skills in English can be due to linguistic factors such as the interference of the mother tongue, grammar structures, and lack of vocabulary, among others, as well as emotional factors like the fear of making mistakes when the students speak in English, the anxiety and tension when they talk in public, the lack of confidence, etc.

Therefore, this research attempts to analyze all these factors to determine in what way and to what extent they influence the acquisition of communication skills in face-to-face learning environments; hence, it will seek to answer three specific questions: What are those linguistic factors that affect the development of oral skills in high school students? Which are those emotional factors? And which of those linguistic or emotional factors influences the development of oral communication skills the most?

Some studies have been carried out in this context, providing a wide range of information on the subject and contributing to the development of pedagogical strategies that can help efficiently develop oral skills in students.

One of these studies was conducted by Amoah and Yeboah (2021), who investigated the factors affecting the speaking performances of Chinese EFL language learners at Ninjing Tech University. The study showed that the students have psychological difficulties like anxiety, fear of making mistakes, unwillingness, and fears of negative evaluation than

linguistic difficulties such as a lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and insufficient knowledge of grammar rules.

Fitriani and Apriliawati (2015) conducted an investigation about Thai speaking problems that students face in their speaking performances. The findings indicate that psychological issues are more common than language issues, with a mean rate of 20.70% versus 19.53%, respectively. Additionally, grammar mistakes continue to be the main difficulty impeding learners' ability to speak. The second problem that could affect students' speaking abilities is anxiety, a psychological problem, therefore students' anxiety has a big impact on how well they talk.

Niyat et al. (2019) conducted a research about the psychological factors that affect English-speaking performance among Malaysian primary school pupils. The study concluded that most of the students were not interested in speaking nor in using the language in daily communication; besides, they had a fear of speaking in class with the teacher and were also anxious to speak with partners.

The present study was carried out through a mixed approach that used qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. This research contains three chapters. The first one presents the literature review, which includes essential information that discusses different issues regarding the topic of the research and from investigations collected from trustworthy resources including books, scientific journals, articles, etc. The second chapter describes the methodology of the study, the participants, and the instruments that were used to carry out the investigation. The third chapter encompasses the description, analysis, and interpretation of the data, as well as the conclusions and recommendations based on the results.

The main beneficiaries of this investigation will be the students of English as a foreign language as well as the English teacher. With the results obtained in the study, it will be possible to know more about the problems and, starting from them, look for solutions so that EFL students can overcome all the problems previously described.

The study has three main limitations: limitation of place, limitation of number, and limitation of subject. The study addressed only one institution and one course. The students that participated in the interview were just six and one teacher; besides, the students had an English class in general, and they did not have a class that taught each skill separately.

Chapter One

Literature Review

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of current knowledge on the topic of research. It presents key concepts that will allow to go into the topic of research

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

In global world the importance of English cannot be denied or ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere. English is one of the most used languages in the world (Ilyosovna, 2020).

According to Rao, (2019) English has been identified as a dominant global language which occupies a unique place due to its extensively use in many other fields such as medicine, education, scientific research and many others fields. Hece, Ilyosovna (2020), agrees that English is a language that is helpful and even vital to learn. People all around the world choose to study English, and children begin studying it at a young age and according to their school's curriculum.

The Ecuadorian curriculum for the teaching of languages establishes that at the end of the third year of high school, learners will reach a B1 level of proficiency according to the common European Framework of References (CEFR) so that they can develop and use the English language for different purposes such as handle communication in familiar situation and in different contents; travel, school, work, etc. Currículo, (2016).

Even though, the English language has been established as a compulsory subject, the quality of English language teaching has not been optimal, and as a result Ecuador has a low level of English proficiency; in fact, Ecuador is ranked in the 82 out of 111 countries, according to Education First (*EF*). These findings highlight a several issues with English language instruction, including the limited amount of time for language practice, the use of traditional methods, and in many cases, untrained teachers.

Consequently, to improve EFL instruction, the Ecuadorian curricula for the language was modified and new policies were implemented by the Ministry of Education in 2016, such

as the increase of instructional hours from 3 to 5 per week and proper training of teachers to obtain the B2 certificate level of the CEFR (Ministry of Education 2016).

Muñoz et al. (2028) conclude, these modifications to the TEFL procedure have demonstrated that, despite adjustments made to new curricula, students continue to have a severe lack of proficiency in English as a Foreign Language. This failure was caused by a combination of elements, including modifications in technique that, at the time they were implemented, were not appropriate for the needs of the students.

English oral communication skills

The Tesol Department (2018) affirms that oral communication is an art that allows us to express and exchange our thoughts using words, so oral communication is one of the most important skills of the English language, and it is integrated with listening and speaking skills.

In this context, speaking is perceived as one of the fundamental language skills that students need to communicate in English as a foreign language, (Alseadan, 2021). Additionally, listening is the receptive skill that prepares learners to subsequently produce the language through the speaking skill. On the other hand, Alam (2013) considers speaking skills as a compound process due to the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, functional language, and communicative skills that learners need to develop in order to effectively express themselves in the target language.

Learning EFL speaking

Speaking is considered the most important of the four language skills because it requires the use of grammar structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation to produce a sentence, Uddin (2003) adds that speaking is the skill that produces what the learners have received from the listening skill.

Accordingly, Fauzan et al. (2016) indicate that EFL speaking is usually a challenge for learners because of the enormous effort they must put in to use the language in real-

time; moreover, speaking is a skill that is undervalued, and many teachers prefer to give more importance to reading and writing than listening and speaking.

Despite this, Riadil (2020) claims English language learners should be able to speak the language fluently and with confidence; however, he states that in practice, many English language learners struggle with speaking. Speaking issues are issues that contribute to a person's low speaking performance.

Speaking difficulties when learning EFL

Since speaking is an essential skill in the learning of EFL, it requires a lot of effort to integrate the linguistic knowledge in order to produce the spoken discourse; this is why most of the learners face difficulties when they have to deal with the speaking performance. These difficulties become real obstacles for EFL learners, so they get frustrated with their poor ability to communicate effectively in English, (Khudhair, 2019).

The difficulties that affect speaking performance can be linguistic or emotional. Riadil (2019) mentions that the linguistic problems that impair speaking skills are a lack of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. However, mother-tongue interference, lack of exposure to the target language, accent, and fluency are also linguistic problems.

On the other hand, there are some emotional problems, which according to Riadil (2020) are lack of self-confidence, being nervous, and feeling shy when performing English. All these problems hinder students from successfully enhancing the speaking skill.

Linguistic difficulties in English speaking

Regarding the linguistic problems, Thao and Nguyet (2019) argue that one of the most common issues that EFL learners run into is related to their linguistic understanding, specifically their familiarity with discordant associations and structural elements. They also state that students lack grammatical understanding because they do not understand or do not have enough basic English consciousness.

On the other hand, Ali et al. (2020) state that language problems, such as a limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and an inability to understand English syntax, are also

related to linguistic problems, so students avoid speaking because they are not competent on this linguistic aspects.

Finally, Daburan (2020) asserts that mother-tongue interference is also a difficulty, so the EFL students consider that they don't flow naturally like a native speaker and they still use their mother tongue to communicate their thoughts.

Vocabulary use

Fitriani et al. (2015) affirm that "vocabulary is an individual word or a set of words which have specific meaning" (p. 5). Hence, vocabulary is the main tool for communication, and having an ample load of vocabulary is fundamental to producing good speaking. In this sense, Dakhi et al. (2019) affirm that, compared to another language aspect, vocabulary appears to be more important than the grammar role because it's a requirement for the other language skills.

However, EFL learners face a lack of vocabulary needed to talk, and this remains a problem that affects the development of speaking skills. Students are confused because they do not have sufficient vocabulary to use in different contexts, which prevents them from speaking accurately. The lack of vocabulary that EFL students face can be due to insufficient exposure to the target language, a lack of reading skills, or a lack of motivation to learn foreign words, among others.

Aswad et al. (2022) argued that instructors and teacher trainers must be aware of the importance of increasing students' vocabulary in order to be proficient in the use of the target language because fluency in the target language is significantly easier to achieve when one has an extensive vocabulary.

Grammar use

Grammar constitutes the framework of the language, and it clarifies how words are used to form complex sentences and thus use the language efficiently. It is the main aspect that learners have to acquire when learning English, and failure to understand it can be an obstacle to using the language correctly.

However, students face difficulties learning grammar and using it correctly. Belmekki and Kebiri (2014) explain that the problem is that the learners get confused about the great number of grammar rules like prepositions, articles, and mainly tenses.

The use of tenses is one of the problems that students face; many students are not capable of using these tenses accordingly, and sometimes they form incorrect sentences. As a result, they can't express themselves orally or in writing. Additionally, learners speak slowly in order to firstly structure in their minds what they are going to say later.

In conclusion, less mastery in grammar becomes an obstacle to developing the speaking skill, and in line with that, Wahyuningsih and Afandi (2020) argue that to enhance students' speaking fluency, mastery of grammar plays an important role, and Yaccob and Yunus (2019) add that learners can convey their message clearly, precisely, and easily to be understood by others when they master good grammar.

Pronunciation

Kobilova (2022) defines pronunciation as the act of producing sounds that convey meaning. It entails paying attention to a specific sound of a language (segments), such as intonation, syllable, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm, and voice quality, as well as gestures and expressions that are intimately tied to the way we speak a language.

On the other hand, pronunciation is a difficult skill that EFL students have to deal with in order to be understood. As a matter of fact, Mohammed and Idris (2020) affirm that the insufficient level of pronunciation diminished the progress of communicative ability that is necessary to construct the communicative connection between speaker and listener.

A current pronunciation problem that learners face is the difference in the sound system of English and the native language; the Spanish language has 24 phonemes, and the English language has almost double that, so according to Mohammed and Idris (2020), learners should be able to produce 44 phonemes while learning English. In this regard, it is obvious that these differences will affect the development of speaking skills.

In fact, Kelly (2018) states that learners who persistently mispronounce the phonemes will find it difficult to be understood by speakers of another language. He argued that this is very frustrating because it is difficult for a native speaker to understand a learner who may have proficiency in grammar or lexis but not in pronunciation. He also explains that the inadequate use of suprasegmental elements, such as stress or intonation, can cause problems too.

To sum up, effective pronunciation is the key to success for EFL students; consequently, having good pronunciation can help them speak effectively.

Fluency/accuracy

Fluency, according to Bao (2023), deals with the proficiency of the speaker to plan and execute speech. In this sense, learners are fluent when they speak with speed, maintaining the conversation's flow. Other authors define fluency as the number of words or syllables per minute and the length of pauses that the speaker makes. Meanwhile, accuracy deals with the preciseness of speech. In other words, fluency is scored by the speed of production, and accuracy is scored by the quantity of errors.

Actually, getting fluent in English is quite difficult for some reasons. First of all, there is not much time to practice speaking skills in the classroom, and out of it, Nation and Newton (2019) mention that there is little attention given to fluency development in the language course because it does not involve new concepts and thus does not represent an advance in language learning. Second of all, the author explains that if the fluency activities involve unknown vocabulary, it is not a fluency activity, so the fluency activities should involve learning new items and getting good at using what the learners already know.

In conclusion, practice is the key to getting fluency in speaking, and Nation and Newton (2019) add, "It is therefore not surprising that developments in fluency are related to developments in accuracy" (p. 152).

Mother tongue interference

The mother tongue, also known as a native language, is the language that is generally spoken in the learners' home. On the other hand, Abdullaev (2021) explains that mother-tongue interference refers to a type of cross-linguistic effect in which mother-tongue patterns are transferred to the target language.

Goswami (2020) distinguishes two types of transference: positive and negative. It is said that if the target language has many differences, negative transfers will occur; on the contrary, if the target language has similarities, positive transfers will occur.

In this case, learners face difficulties, so they become confused and produce incorrect sentences if the target language differs a lot from their mother tongue, and Noviyenty (2021) recognizes that one of the difficulties that learners encounter is the grammar differences between the mother tongue and the target language.

Instead, Abdullaev (2021) argues that aspects that are similar between the mother tongue and the target language can be helpful in acquiring the target language.

Emotional difficulties when speaking English

Arifin (2017) claims that speaking is the most crucial part of language; however, it is also the one in which learners frequently lack proficiency during the English class. Besides, he argues that psychological issues frequently have an impact on students' capacity, willingness, and motivation to develop speaking proficiency, and as a result, learners encounter a lack of confidence, shyness, fear, nervousness, and anxiety to speak in English.

Lack of motivation is the most common linguistic problem that affects students learning. EFL students are not motivated to learn a language because it is seen as difficult to learn, the topic is not interesting, they do not have opportunities to practice the language in real life, they think learning a new language is not necessary, etc. In line with that, motivation is a fundamental element in students' learning to achieve the success point, (Nijat, 2019).

Additionally, students' perceptions about their own English ability are negative, which makes them feel that they are not capable of speaking English properly and would not be

understood by their partners, so they are not confident in their speaking performance, (Wulandari et al. 2021).

Finally, many EFL students feel anxious when they have to perform in English due to their low competence in English, which prevents them from speaking, and as a result, their speaking skills will not develop.

Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of apprehension, nervousness, worry, and tension. Daud et al. (2019) describe speaking anxiety as the fear that students face when they need to perform in public speech, and the authors emphasize that speaking anxiety occurs when the students are not proficient enough with their English abilities, so they are afraid and shy to perform in English and are scared about making mistakes.

Accordingly, anxiety remains a main factor in psychological problems when speaking English, (Umisara and Faridi, 2021). In addition, Kalra and Siribud (2020) argue that students may feel anxious when they have difficulties using the linguistic components or are not knowledgeable about these components.

Hasibuan and Irzawati (2020) emphasize that when students are anxious, they sometimes hesitate to speak and may even be terrified of making mistakes, and this condition will affect their speaking performances.

Fear

The fear of speaking English is a common difficulty that EFL students face in the classroom. The fear that students feel about their performance inhibits their capacity to produce the language. In this sense, three main fears that students experience before and during their oral presentations can be identified.

First, the fear of making mistakes; in fact, students tend to be afraid because they feel that they are not competent English speakers, so for them, expressing themselves orally generates anxiety and a fear of making mistakes. Indeed, the fear of making a mistake

makes them unwilling to speak, and they fear being ridiculed by listeners (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Second, negative evaluation is another cause of fear. In line with this, Damayanti and Listyani (2020) indicate that learners of foreign languages consider that they will be evaluated negatively by the teacher or their own partners. Furthermore, if the evaluation focuses only on their language errors, the improvement of their speaking skills will be limited.

Finally, students fear the oral presentation; according to Damayanti and Listyani (2020), students with low competence in English speaking feel uncomfortable speaking in public. They fear the audience, so they worry about not having enough preparation and, as a consequence, forget the speech or are reluctant to speak.

Lack of confidence

Self-confidence is people's appreciation of their own talents; it's recognizing that they are good at something. Instead, lack of self-confidence in speaking is a factor that is considered a barrier to effective communication because it reduces the capacity to speak English proficiently, according to Waluyo and Rofiah (2021), confidence has always been linked to oral performance as well as all of the tasks that learners are expected to perform well.

The lack of English proficiency becomes the main cause of a lack of self-confidence. Learners feel that they lack proficiency in English, so they are reluctant to speak and doubt their speaking skills. Bani and Albalawi (2016) argue that this factor prevents learners from developing their speaking skills because they hesitate to make an effort to attain proficiency in the target language.

Nijat et al. (2019) express that teachers don't provide enough confidence to students, so they are self-doubting about their abilities and unmotivated to speak in English; therefore, supporting and encouraging students is fundamental to enhancing the students' confidence.

Willingness

Willingness to speak English is the disposition students have to speak English freely. Being willing to speak is the key to improving their communication skills. In this sense, MacEntire (2017) says that one of the main elements that helps to use the language is the desire to start communication in L2.

According to Baran-ucarz (2014), the principal factor that influences willingness to communicate is self-confidence, which includes anxiety and self-perfection of L2 competence. Hence, students are unwilling to speak when their anxiety and negative perceptions about their speaking proficiency are more dominant than their desires to speak the target language.

According to Peng (2007), motivation is a factor that is related to L2 WTC. In other words, positive attitudes toward learning a language are an influential factor that makes learners willing to communicate.

Motivation

Motivation plays an important role due to its influence on students' success. In other words, according to Amoah and Yeboah (2021), motivation is a force that empowers learners to look for intellectual and experiential novelty. On the contrary, lack of motivation will affect the learners' learning and the development of their capacities.

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation deals with the desire to achieve autonomy, so learners tend to have a disposition to learn, which increases their English learning success. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation occurs when an external factor or source encourages someone to do something.

Even though speaking is a complex activity compared with other skills, there are many factors that can promote extrinsic motivation in order to develop the skill, such as rewards for doing the task, interesting topics and materials, fun class activities, and many others. According to Purnama et al. (2019), it is necessary that teachers encourage learners to increase their motivation and develop their own motivational processes.

Additionally, Riyanti (2019), argued that identifying the source of the problem in students' lack of motivation is indispensable in order to design ways to increase motivation.

In the following lines some studies related to the influence of linguistic and emotional factors that influence oral communication skills are described.

Alrasheedy (2020) conducted a qualitative investigation to examine the psychological factors that affect learners' progress in developing their speaking skills at Majmaah University in Saudi Arabia, so this investigation seeks to answer two specific questions: What are some psychological factors affecting the speaking skills of students? Why do learners find speaking English so difficult? In this study, 100 women and 100 men undergraduate students from various disciplines participated, and to collect data, the researcher used a questionnaire, which was divided into three sections. The first one was about strategies to teach speaking skills and covered items like the teacher's design and use of activities in the classroom, encouragement, correction, feedback, and clarifying pronunciation. The second section discusses external and internal factors such as time to perform, preparation tasks, motivation, confidence, students' practice, and shyness, among others. The third section was about difficulties and needs such as anxiety, pressure, opportunities to practice, making mistakes, etc. The findings of this study showed that students are not attentive to class discussions and are unable to identify their own strengths and limitations, which makes it very challenging for them to reach the desired competency. Besides, students believe that teachers do not provide them with enough motivation or do not spend enough time clarifying pronunciation points. Additionally, students believe that teachers frequently disturb and make corrections to their performances.

Amoah and Yeboah (2021) conducted research to explore which factors affect the speaking performances of Chinese EFL learners. This study attempted to respond to three research questions: What factors affect the speaking performance of Chinese EFL learners? What are Chinese EFL learners' levels of motivation towards speaking the English language? In what ways can the Chinese EFL learner be motivated to improve their English-

speaking proficiency? This was a descriptive study in which 75 non-English major students in the first language department of Nanjing Tech University were sampled and responded to two questionnaires, and 10 out of the 75 students made an interview. To gather all the information, three instruments were used: the Speaking Difficulty Scale for Chinese EFL Learners, the Speaking Motivational Scale for English, and an interview session. The items measured in the study were shyness, anxiety, lack of motivation, self-confidence, limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, poor knowledge of grammar rules, difficulties in constructing sentences, and mother tongue interferences. The results show that the EFL student's performance was affected more by physiological factors than linguistic factors. Anxiety appears to be a factor that causes difficulties. During the interview, participants showed a solid vocabulary, despite the influence of the Chinese accent on their pronunciation; they lacked consistency and coherence. For that reason, the authors conclude that student's speaking problems should not be attributed only to linguistic factors.

Khudhair (2019) carried out an investigation that aimed to emphasize the value of speaking ability and the reasons for training it. Also, it discusses some of the main speaking issues that EFL students have as well as their root causes. This was qualitative research in which 80 students at Al Zaiton High School in Irak participated. The instrument used in this research was anonymous feedback, and the students used their mother tongue to express their responses to the questions. The items measured in this research were poor grammar, lack of fluency, the use of the native tongue, and poor accent, among others. The researchers have found four major speaking problems that EFL students face inside the classroom: poor grammar, lack of fluency, the use of the native tongue, and a poor accent. The investigation showed that students know what they want to say, but it's difficult for them to put it in a correct sentence because of their poor grammar. Also, the research mentioned that lack of fluency is an obstacle that stops people from speaking freely. Additionally, the students tend to shift the ideas into their mother tongue in order to complete the message

they want to deliver. The poor accent they face is another factor that affects oral production; in fact, they avoid speaking because they do not speak with a perfect accent.

Niyat et al. (2019) conducted an investigation whose purpose was to examine the psychological issues that Malaysian primary school students encounter as barriers to speaking English and to offer potential solutions from the viewpoints of the students to overcome such barriers. The investigation tried to answer the following questions: What are the psychological factors that affect speaking performance among Malaysian primary school students? How to identify possible solutions to improve speaking performance among primary school pupils? The participants were sixty pupils in the upper primary level in Johor Bahru city. The research used quantitative methods, and survey research was used to collect information. Items such as pupils' interest in speaking English in class, pupils' feelings when they speak with partners in English, pupils' confidence in speaking English, their preferred topic to talk about in English, and others were measured by the survey research. The study concluded that the primary psychological barriers to students speaking in class were fear, shyness, and worry. Due to their anxiety about speaking English, the majority of students lacked speaking confidence. Also, students did not like it when the teacher interrupted them during a speaking activity since it could make them afraid to speak. Finally, the results showed that the majority of the students indicated that they have a fear of speaking in class with the teacher, while the students feel less anxious when they speak English with their partners. Fitriani and Apriliaswati (2015) investigate the English-speaking problems in speaking performance that the third-semester English Education Study Program students at Tanjungpura University Pontianak are facing. The research used the descriptive method, and to collect information, the investigator used a questionnaire and video recording. The participants of this study were 30 third-semester students who take speaking for academic presentations. The items measured in the questionnaire were grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and linguistic aspects like lack of self-confidence, anxiety, and nervousness.

According to the results of the research, psychological problems are the most prevalent, with a mean rate of 20.70%, compared to linguistic problems (19.53%). Besides, grammar issues continue to be the major problem that hinders the learners speaking skills. While anxiety (a psychological issue) is the second issue that may impact learners' speaking skills, that means that students' anxiety has a significant impact on their speaking performance. Even though they appear to be prepared to talk and have a lot of ideas, if they feel worried, they will not be able to express their ideas and opinions as well as they would like. The students' vocabulary issue (linguistics issue) comes in third place for their speaking issues.

Souisa and Gaité (2020) conducted a study whose purpose was to explore more about students' speaking issues and the psychological aspects that students at SMA Kristen Aru District encountered when speaking in order to respond to four research questions: What are the students' common problems and psychological factors in Speaking English at SMA Kristen Dobo? Which problems and psychological factors have the students most encountered in Speaking English at SMA Kristen Dobo? In what ways do the students at SMA Kristen Dobo try to minimize their problems and psychological factors in speaking English? What are the new insights proposed by the students of SMK Kristen Dobo for their English teachers? The place of the study is at SMA Kristen Aru District, where 70 students participated in the study, and six students out of those 70 were selected to participate in the interview to support the data. To examine the results, descriptive quantitative and qualitative methods were used, and the primary research tool in this study was a questionnaire, which included two main sections: one dealing with students' speaking skill issues and the other with psychological aspects affecting students' speaking abilities. The study's conclusions showed that a lack of vocabulary, a lack of practice, a lack of mastery of grammar, and a tendency to only talk in their native tongue were the most prevalent issues students had with speaking. The psychological elements that had the greatest impact on the students' speaking difficulties were their lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, tension and

nervousness, lack of confidence in their speaking delivery, and confusion about their own thinking.

Chapter two

Method

Setting and Participants

The present study was conducted in face-to-face classes in a private and bilingual educational institution in Daule-Guayas. The participants were 40 EFL students and an English teacher. The average age of the participants was 15–16, they were in their first year of bachillerato and their English level was A 2.2 according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR).

Procedure

This investigation begins with the collection and selection of information about the problem to be investigated which have been obtained from reliable sources of investigation, such as articles, journals, and books; this information constitutes the scientific bases for the construction of the theoretical framework.

This investigation has a mixed approach and the instruments to collect information were a student and teacher's questionnaire, an interview for both students and the teacher plus a three observation of listening and speaking classes.

The student's questionnaire was answered by 40 students in the first year of bachillerato, it consisted of 12 statements about linguistic factors and 14 statements about emotional factors, where the students must express their agreement or disagreement level about each question proposed using a Likert scale with the following parameters: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to measure those factors, both linguistic and emotional, that students believed to be most influential at the moment of speaking English. The linguistic factors measured in the questionnaire were vocabulary, grammar, fluency, accuracy, and error pronunciation, while the emotional factors were fear, pressure, nervousness, lack of confidence, and anxiety, among others.

On the other hand, the teacher's questionnaire was designed to analyze, from the teacher's point of view, which linguistic and emotional factors are the most influential in developing oral communication skills in the students. The statements of the questionnaire were the same as in the student's questionnaire, and the teacher had to answer the questionnaire under the same measurement parameters used in the student's questionnaire.

Another instrument that was part of the first-hand collection of information was the semi-structured interview, which was administered to five out of the 40 students that participated in the study. With this interview, it was possible to know more closely what the opinions of these five students were about those linguistic and emotional factors that they perceived as influential in developing their English oral communication skills. The interview included 10 statements about linguistic factors and 14 statements that mentioned emotional factors.

Additionally, the investigator observed three listening and speaking classes in which it was possible to collect information precisely to then be compared and contrasted with the information obtained from the questionnaires and the interview in order to draw the conclusions and the recommendations of the research.

Chapter three

Description, analysis and interpretation of results

This chapter shows the description, analysis, and interpretation of the results of the study. It illustrates, by percentage tables the answers obtained through the questionnaires, which linguistic and emotional factors mainly influence participants' English oral communication skills in face-to-face learning environments. Finally, it draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

Which linguistic factors influence high school students' English oral communication skills in face-to-face learning environments?

Table 1

Linguistic Factors

Nº	Statements Linguistic factors	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total %
1	I get stuck with vocabulary when speaking English.	30%	30%	20%	20%	100
2	I avoid using difficult words when speaking English	22.5%	35%	32.5	10%	100
3	I get stuck with grammar when I speak in English.	15%	57.5%	20%	7.5%	100
4	I use complex structures when speaking English.	5%	22.5%	42.5%	30%	100
5	I have difficulties structuring sentences when in speaking.	17.5%	37.5%	42.5%	2.5%	100
6	I feel difficulty attending fluency when speaking English.	10%	42.5%	35%	12.5%	100
7	I felt difficulty attending accuracy when speaking English.	17.5%	42.5%	35%	5%	100
8	I speak without many pauses.	7.5%	52.5%	32.5%	7.5%	100
9	I speak in English spontaneously.	15%	47.5%	27.5%	10%	100
10	I make pronunciation errors when I speak in English.	15%	42.5%	35%	7.5%	100
11	I thought first in Spanish when I had to speak in English.	17.5%	27.5%	35%	20%	100
12	I struggled to communicate effectively in English.	10%	27.5%	50%	12.5%	100

Note: The table depicts the results of the students' perceptions related to the linguistic factors that influence oral communication skills

The first statement refers to whether the students get stuck with vocabulary while speaking English. As shown in the table, 30% of the participants agreed, and the other 30% strongly agreed. This can be due to the fact that learning vocabulary in isolation and without making connections with the real meaning of the words is difficult, and above all, applying it in the speaking context.

The results were confirmed by the opinions of the students during the interview, where they argue that they know vocabulary but it's difficult because it's not just to utter words fluently; rather, it's to form a discourse with meaning using the vocabulary they already know. In the same way, the teacher claimed that the students know a lot of vocabulary, but unfortunately, they have difficulties articulating sentences, and that was confirmed during the observation, where students had difficulties forming sentences with the vocabulary they had already learned. According to Keong et al. (2015), the students' limited vocabulary knowledge prevented them from using language to express their ideas or even to debate any subject.

Concerning statement 2, which refers to whether students avoid using difficult words when speaking English, 35% of participants agreed and 32.5% disagreed with the statement. The causes of these problems may be that these words are difficult to write and pronounce, making it difficult to acquire them and use them in spoken discourse. These opinions were corroborated through the observations, where the students preferred to use simple words and avoid the use of difficult ones, and this was also confirmed by the teacher, who said that students used simple words in their daily English conversation. When the students were asked why they preferred using simple words rather than complex words, they affirmed that it's difficult to write them, to pronounce them, and even more difficult to remember them.

In the third statement, the table shows that 57.5% of students are stuck with grammar when they speak English, plus 15% of students strongly agree. These problems may arise due to the amount of grammar rules students have to learn, the great difference

that exists between the grammatical structure of the mother tongue and the target language, and the few practices that students do to consolidate those grammar structures and improve their linguistic awareness. These results also agree with the teacher's opinion, which says that students are stuck with grammar because they are not competent with its use. In addition, it was possible to identify during the observations that many students expressed themselves in English with grammatical errors such as "she go to the theater", or "they have eat pizza in the morning". Beside, these results are confirmed not only by the students, who said that they are confused with many grammar rules, but also by what Belmekki and Kebiri (2014) express: Grammar is a linguistic component that significantly affects the development of oral competence because students are confused due to the large number of grammar rules such as prepositions, articles, and tenses, which they must use when formulating phrases or sentences.

With respect to the fourth statement, which refers to whether the students use complex structures when speaking English, the result shows that only 22.5% of the participants use complex structures when they speak English and 42.5% do not, followed by 30% who strongly disagree. This shows us that most participants can't express themselves in English or find it difficult because of the struggle they have with using complex structures due to a lack of knowledge and practice. These results are consistent not only with the students, who affirm that they do not use complex structures in their oral interactions in English despite having a lot of vocabulary, but with what the teacher said; she claims that students preferred to use the same basic structures to have to use more complex ones. On the other hand, during class observation, the participants confirmed these results: the majority of the students preferred to express themselves in English at a low level rather than have to use other structures that are more difficult, either because of a lack of knowledge of them or because of the difficulty of consolidating and applying them in frequent conversations in English.

Regarding the fifth statement that asked if the students face difficulties structuring sentences when they speak English, 42.5% disagreed and 32.5% agreed, which means that the difference between those who agreed and those who disagreed is very small. Therefore, despite the fact that the opinion of participants is divided between those who do not have difficulty structuring sentences when speaking and those who do, it continues to be a factor affecting speaking performance in students, and this may be due to the complex structures the English language has and the differences between Spanish and English. However, the teacher disagrees that students have difficulty structuring sentences while speaking English, and the majority of the students interviewed also expressed that they had no problem structuring sentences when speaking despite the fact that they do not speak fluently. These results were confirmed during the observations, where students could structure not-so-complex sentences with small pauses.

The sixth statement, "I feel difficulties attending fluency when speaking in English, is closely linked to the previous one. The results showed that 42.5% of participants agreed that they have difficulties speaking fluent English, but 10% strongly agreed, 35% disagreed, and 12.5% strongly disagreed. These results reveal that being fluent in English is a very complex process, and not everyone achieves that fluency at the same time. The results obtained from the student's interviews demonstrated that most of the students do not speak fluently in English because it's difficult to express orally what they have in mind due to a lack of grammar knowledge, vocabulary, and practice. On the other hand, the teacher's opinion was similar to what the majority of students expressed. In addition, in the observations of the classes, it was possible to verify that many of the students spoke slowly, thinking about what they were going to say and how they had to say it. It was also possible to observe that they gave more importance to listening activities and less time to speaking activities. In view of these results, Elbashir (2022) concludes in his research that there are a number of issues that restrict students' ability to learn English fluently in colleges, including underqualified teachers, inappropriate teaching materials, and inadequate teaching strategies.

The seventh statement refers to whether students feel difficulty attending accuracy. As shown in Table 1, 42.5% of the participants agree that students feel difficulty attending accuracy when they speak in English, and 35% disagree. These results could be due to the use of complex words and sentences, a lack of pronunciation practice, and a low proficiency level in English. These results are almost the same as the results of Statement 6, which mean that both fluency and accuracy are related, so having fluency means speaking correctly and accurately. Regarding the observation classes, students showed a lack of attention to accuracy when speaking, committing errors related to grammar and pronunciation. In addition, in the interview, the students mostly expressed that they did not speak and did not pronounce the language correctly due to a lack of practice, and the teacher also confirmed this.

Following the analysis of statement 8, as shown in the table, 57% agreed that students speak with many pauses, and 32.5% disagreed. These results can be due to many factors, such as poor grammar knowledge, ideas that do not flow because of a lack of vocabulary, and nothing to say about the topic, among others. However, the results of the observations show something slightly different. It was observed that students actually spoke without many pauses but always stopped to think and connect one sentence with the other, so this made students have poor oral performance. These agree with the teacher's opinion, which says that students talk while making pauses, but they do not get stuck in the conversation; instead, they are able to slowly follow the line of dialogue.

The ninth statement refers to whether students speak English spontaneously. As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants agree that students speak English spontaneously (47.5% agree; 15% strongly agree). These results contradict the previous results, which indicated that the participants have difficulty speaking fluently and accurately in English. However, there is a remarkable number of participants who believe they do not speak spontaneously in English (27.5% agree; 10% strongly disagree), and this agrees with what the teachers said: that students do not speak spontaneously in English because they

are not as proficient in English as their level requires. On the other hand, during the interview with the students, most of them affirmed that they do not speak spontaneously, and this can be due to a lack of practice or a lack of confidence, so they are not capable of simultaneously coordinating the grammar with the vocabulary, thus their speech lost fluency.

As the table shows in statement 10, 42.5% of the participants recognize that he makes errors of pronunciation. This was confirmed during the class observations; the majority of the students made errors in pronouncing the wrong end of the verbs in the past. Another error that was frequently observed was the wrong pronunciation of homographic words such as wind or tear, as well as the mispronunciation pattern of certain words. In addition, the teacher agreed with this statement and argued that it is due to the interference of the mother tongue and the lack of use of words that have the same writing but different pronunciation. These results can also be due to students are not familiar with the stress and intonation patterns that English uses, as well as the sound-spelling relationship of the language. In fact, Noviyenty (2021) confirms these arguments by stating that the phonemes and phonetic system of the mother tongue differ from those of the preceding language, so pronunciation is the main challenge that students face in their oral performance due to the fact that they are still influenced by their phonemes and phonetic sounds in their oral speech.

The statement 11 refers to whether students think first in Spanish when they have to speak in English. The results say that the majority of the participants do not think first in Spanish when they speak English (35% disagree, 20% strongly disagree); however, 27.5% agree and 17.5% strongly agree that they do think first in Spanish when they speak in English. This can be because of low proficiency in English, a lack of spontaneity in English, poor vocabulary, and, as a consequence, mother-tongue interference affects their oral performance. However, the teacher believes that the students do not think in English before speaking. Unlike these opinions, it was observed that participants prepared their dialogues before their oral presentations, and in many cases, they used apps to translate everything

they had thought in Spanish to English, sometimes mixing the two languages in their oral performances. Taking into account these observations, it is concluded that although students say they do not think in Spanish during their oral presentations, some of them do so when preparing their dialogues. In this line, Alkhudiry (2020) considers that, according to the literature, EFL students make mistakes because they have a propensity to think in their first language and translate their opinions and feelings into the second language.

Finally, the results of statement 12 indicate that half of the participants argue that they had no problems expressing themselves effectively in English despite the difficulties they admitted to having (50% disagree; 12.5% strongly disagree). These results agree not only with the teacher, who admits that students do not have problems communicating effectively in English; although they are not fluent, they can make themselves understand, but also with the students, who express that they do not struggle to communicate in English despite having low fluency. Meanwhile, in the observations, it was possible to verify that they actually attempted to communicate in English, but not in a proficient way. Another aspect that was observed was that the teacher motivated and gave time to students to prepare their oral performance, no matter if they could do it well or not. This made students more confident and greatly improved their speaking performance. In conclusion, these results show that the struggle to communicate effectively in English is a factor that influences the development of oral communication skills in English, and students may face these difficulties because they are not competent in English or because of some emotional factors such as a lack of confidence.

Which emotional factors affect high school students' English oral communication skills in face-to-face learning environments?

Table 2

Emotional Factors

Nº	Statements Emotional factors	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total %

1	I am afraid of making mistakes when I speak English.	25%	40%	27.5%	7.5%	100
2	I feel peer pressure when I speak English.	2.5%	47.5%	42.5%	7.5%	100
3	I am nervous when speaking English.	15%	42.5%	37.5%	5%	100
4	I keep silent in class because of a lack of confidence when speaking English.	17.5%	55%	17.5%	10%	100
5	I worry about using grammar correctly when speaking English.	15%	45%	35%	5%	100
6	I stutter when I speak in English.	15%	30%	35%	20%	100
7	I am not confident to speak English outside class.	17.5%	43%	37%	2.5%	100
8	I am worried about not being understood when I speak English.	17.5%	42.5%	32.5%	7.5%	100
9	I am willing to speak English.	10%	22.5%	62.5	5.5%	100
10	I feel that I am forced to speak English.	15%	40%	30%	15%	100
11	I feel blocked, so there is a lack of things to say when speaking English.	15%	42.5%	35%	7.5%	100
12	I am afraid someone will laugh at me when I speak English.	20%	45%	22.5%	12.5%	100
13	I feel more tense in English lessons than in other lessons.	7.5%	50%	35%	7.5 %	100
14	When I speak in English, I feel anxious thinking about how to respond correctly.	20%	45%	22.5%	12,5%	100

Note. The table depicts the results of the students' perceptions related to the emotional factors that influence oral communication skills.

The following section is an analysis of the results obtained in the questionnaire that was administered to students about the emotional factors affecting the development of oral communication skills in English in order to answer the second research question.

Statement 1 refers to whether students are afraid of making mistakes when they speak in English. As shown in Table 2, most of the participants argue that they are afraid of making errors when they speak in English (40% agree; 25% strongly agree); on the other hand, 27.5% and 7.5% disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. These results show that the fear of making mistakes is a factor that affects the development of oral skills, and this can be a consequence of their low level of English proficiency, lack of confidence, and fear of being laughed at. These results were confirmed during the interviews; students said they were afraid of making mistakes and preferred not to participate in speaking activities due to

a lack of English knowledge and confidence. Based on these opinions, it can be inferred that the fear of making mistakes is associated with a deficiency of English knowledge, which therefore inhibits the development of linguistic skills. Regarding the teacher's opinion, he agreed that sometimes students are afraid and don't want to speak in English because they feel that they are not able to use the language well and will block in front of everyone, generating anxiety in the students. Furthermore, during class observations, the students participation was not spontaneous, and they preferred to keep silent.

Statement 2 refers to whether students feel peer pressure when they speak in English. The results in Table 2 show that 47.5% of the participants said they did not feel peer pressure when speaking in English, and 42.5% claimed the opposite. According to these results, peer pressure may increase when students do not have confidence and are not competent in English; however, this peer pressure may decrease if students do not feel judged by their partners or by the professor; instead, a proficient student in English can help another student who is not very proficient. These results were confirmed during the interview, where those students who didn't feel pressure said it was because they like to learn the language and work in groups even though they recognize they don't know much English, while others explained that they can't speak very well in English, so they feel peer pressure and are afraid of making mistakes and being criticized by their partners. In the observation classes, the students showed less pressure when they spoke in pairs than when they had to do it in front of the class, and this was confirmed by the teacher, who said that students show more security and less pressure when working in groups.

Continuing with statement 3, 42.5% of participants agree that they feel nervous when speaking in English, and 15% strongly agree. This student's tendency to be nervous when they speak English can be attributed to a lack of confidence in their own capabilities, the fear of negative evaluation, and the fear of making mistakes; hence, these results determine that feeling nervous can result in deficient oral performance, and as a consequence, students are unable to develop their oral communication skills. The teacher also expressed that if fear

prevails among students, it is due to the same factors mentioned before, and the students also expressed during the interview that they feel nervous because they doubt their English knowledge. In addition, during the interviews, it was found that a large part of the students felt nervous when they were supposed to speak English due to the fear of forgetting what they had to say.

Statement 4 refers to whether students keep silent in English because of a lack of confidence when speaking in English. The majority of the students agree that they remain silent in class due to a lack of confidence (55% agree; 17.5% strongly agree). These results were confirmed not only by the teacher, who said that students prefer not to speak in English because they lack confidence, but also by the students, who affirmed that they feel insecure because of the lack of English knowledge or vocabulary or the fear of negative evaluation. The observations also show that many students remained silent in class. All these problems about lack of confidence may be related to those factors that the teacher and students have mentioned before and may influence the development of speaking skills, as Waluyo and Rofiah (2021) state that a lack of confidence diminishes the ability to master speaking ability due to the fact that self-confidence is always connected with the development of all the skills that students are supposed to perform.

According to the result that shows in Table 2 in Statement 5, 45% of the participants agreed, followed by 15% strongly agreeing; that is, the students are stressed by using grammar correctly; for them, the use of grammar is one of the factors that causes them more stress and concern due to how complex it is. Also, the students argued during the interview that they prefer not to study grammar because it causes them confusion, including the use of verbal times in English. Additionally, most of the errors observed in participants when speaking English were related to the use of grammar. On the other hand, the teacher also confirmed that grammar always causes confusion in students, and they do not like to learn grammar since it stresses them and worries them about not knowing how to use it in their oral performance. Instead, those who thought differently argued that it is easy for them to

understand grammar and therefore have no problems using it correctly. Ratnasari (2020) concludes in his study that grammar is one of the challenges that students face. It is a common problem that occurs when students want to learn English, and many of them have the tendency to see the use of grammar before they speak to make sure if they are using the grammar correctly.

The data from statement 6 shows that 35% of participants disagreed that they stutter when they speak in English, but 20% denied it roughly, which means that half of the participants stated that they normally speak in English without stuttering. However, 30% of the students stated that they were trapped by speaking, followed by 15% who affirmed it outright. Class observations showed that there are actually students who can speak almost fluently and others who have difficulty doing so; instead, they stay longer thinking about what they want to say. These opinions are also shared not only by the teacher, who confirmed that students speak slowly, thinking about what they will say without getting blocked, but also by the students, who express that they do not have difficulty speaking without stumbling, and they alluded to the fact that preparation before the oral performance helped them to have fluency. While those who had difficulty said that the words did not flow easily due to a lack of vocabulary or the nervousness they felt when speaking in front of the class, In conclusion, the stutter is an emotional factor that hinders learners from speaking proficiency and that can be caused by other factors such as a lack of vocabulary, nervousness, and a lack of preparation before the speaking performance, among others.

Regarding statement 7, 43% of participants are not confident enough to speak outside the class, but 17.5% strongly agree. These results ensure that many participants are not confident enough to use the language outside the classroom. This could be due to several factors: they are not very competent in the use of the language, are not exposed to the target language in their daily lives or think they do not need to use it. During the interviews, participants commented on the reasons for their lack of confidence in using the language outside of class, and they affirmed that the lack of confidence they face prevents

them from speaking English outside of class. Some students think that they do not need to use the language outside of class and minimize its use. These opinions reveal that the confidence you have in using the language outside the classroom depends on how competent you feel, the motivation you have to learn it, and the need to use it.

Regarding statement 8, which refers to whether students are worried about not being understood when they speak English, as shown in Table 2, 42% of participants worry about not being understood when they speak English, and 17.5% worry even more. This can be due to the fact that students want to communicate their ideas, and their concern is that everyone understands the message; hence, the worry about not being understood increases if they face many gaps in English or if the teacher will evaluate their oral performance. These results were also confirmed by the teacher and the students. For his part, the teacher indicated that students are worried about not being understood because of the fear of negative evaluation and being ridiculed by their partners. On the other hand, students confirmed that they are worried because of negative evaluations by the teacher and their partners. The observation also shows what the teacher and students have confirmed. Thus, this factor can affect oral communication as students become filled with insecurity, feel nervous when speaking, get blocked, and, as a result, have poor oral performance.

Statement 9 refers to whether students are willing to speak English. The results show that the majority of the participants are unwilling to speak English (65% disagree; 5% strongly disagree). Also, the teacher's opinion is in agreement with the majority of the students' opinions, and he said that they are unwilling to speak English due to their low competence. Regarding the opinion of the participants interviewed, they commented that they are unwilling to speak because they do not feel sure if they are going to express themselves well in English, and this is because they are not masters in English, so they can't establish proper dialogues in English. On the other hand, through the class observations, it was possible to determine that there is almost no spontaneous participation by students in speaking activities. In this sense, MacEntire (2007) says that one of the main

elements that helps students use the language is the desire to start communicating in the target language. In other words, If students are reluctant to speak English, they will have no opportunities to develop their speaking skills.

Statement 10 refers to whether students feel forced to speak English. The majority of the students feel that they are forced to speak English (40% agree; 15% strongly agree). The reason why they feel forced can be for two main reasons: they do not master English, and they have nothing to say about the subject, i.e., many topics are not interesting to students. According to the teacher's opinion, students feel forced to speak, and one of the causes, in the teacher's words, is the lack of mastery of the language and the fear of making mistakes. During the observations, one part of the participants tended to participate during conversations in English, but the other part preferred not to do so while the teacher did not ask them to talk, and as a result, the development of speaking skills is very low, unlike those who do participate. Malihah, N. (2010) claims that teachers' responses to students' thoughts and opinions matter since they shouldn't be forced to speak or put through anxiety; instead, teachers should be able to set up settings where students are engaged in productive activities that will advance their speaking skills.

Statement 11 refers to whether students feel blocked when they speak in English. The findings show that 42.5% of students feel blocked when speaking English, so they can't fully express themselves. 15% were strongly convinced of this reality, 37% disagreed, and 7.5% totally disagreed. This was confirmed during the observation classes, where the students expressed themselves very little, limiting themselves to saying what was necessary. The teacher fully agreed that students feel blocked when they speak in English, preventing the development of language, especially speaking skills. and the students also express that it's difficult to order sentences in their minds in a grammatically well-structured way to utter them, so they get blocked. These results show that students' linguistic difficulties, such as a lack of vocabulary, poor grammatical mastery, and pronunciation errors, as well as emotional difficulties such as anxiety, a lack of security, and the fear of

making errors, block the articulation of spoken utterances, and consequently, students remain silent in classes, which hinders their learning.

The results of statement 12 reveal that 45% of the participants agree that they are afraid someone will laugh at them when they speak in English, and 20% strongly agree. This means that the fear of being laughed at is a serious problem that makes students refuse to actively participate in the speaking activities. The teacher's opinion about these results is the same; he said that students are sensitive and intolerant to ridicule, and for this reason, they prefer to avoid situations that expose them to being criticized by others. Also, during the interview, students explained that they are concerned that others will laugh at them if they make any errors during their oral performance, causing anxiety and inhibition in them. Moreover, during the observation, what the students had said it was confirmed: more than half of the participants were nervous and afraid before their performances, and when they finished, they felt more relaxed.

Statement 13 refers to whether students feel tense in English lessons than in other lessons. The majority of the students agree that they feel more tensed in English lessons than in other subjects (50% agree; 7.5% strongly agree). In the students' opinion, learning English is more complicated than other subjects because they have to deal with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and many other things in order to be able to use the language correctly. These factors make them feel tense, and the tension increases, especially when they are evaluated. With regard to these results, the teacher agreed that students feel tense, and she added that this tension also causes boredom because they prefer to study other subjects and avoid learning English.

Regarding statement 14, 45% of participants agree that they feel anxious thinking about how to respond correctly when they speak in English. These results were confirmed during the interview, where students showed anxiety, especially when they interacted with peers in front of the teacher. In addition, the teacher claimed that students feel more confident and less anxious when they are competent and have something to say. Many

students feel anxiety about not knowing what to respond to or how to overcome the dialogue fluently, and on occasion this dialogue is therefore interrupted, and those students who lack confidence feel more anxious than those who trust themselves. According to Umisara and Faridini (2021), anxiety becomes a main factor in psychological problems when speaking English.

Which factors, linguistic or emotional, mostly influence high school students' English oral communication skills in face-to-face learning environments?

According to the results described in Table 1, grammar (57% agree; 15% strongly disagree) and the use of complex structure (42.5% disagree; 30% strongly disagree) are the main factors that most influence high school students' oral communication skills. This result is consistent with what was investigated by Khudhair (2019), who investigated the main problems facing adult English students and found that grammar is one of the biggest speaking problems students face in classrooms. Without a doubt, proficiency in grammar and the use of complex sentences are factors that positively influence the development of oral communication skills, and above all, they give students confidence at the time of speaking. If students know how to produce sentences in a coherent way, they are able to express them without much difficulty.

Then, another factor that most influences oral communication is getting stuck with vocabulary; according to the data, 30% of respondents agree with this statement, and 30% strongly agree. There is also the difficulty of speaking accurately. As a result, students remain silent in class even if they want to participate in the speaking activities. The lack of vocabulary hinders students from speaking accurately, and in the end, they develop deficient oral communication skills. Along with this, Souisa and Gaité (2020) conducted research about the problems students have in speaking and found that the first problem is a lack of vocabulary, followed by a lack of grammatical understanding.

The third linguistic factor that influences the development of oral communication skills is the difficulty of attending to accuracy because of the lack of practice and the grammar

errors that they commit: 47.5% of the participants agree, and 17.5% strongly agree.

Consequently, the students are reluctant to speak since their dialogue is not perfect.

On the other hand, the emotional factor that primarily affects the development of spoken language, according to the results, is lack of confidence; 55% say that a lack of confidence affects their oral performance, followed by 17.5% who strongly agreed. Based on the participants' opinions, a lack of vocabulary and English proficiency are the main reasons why students lack confidence when speaking. Therefore, the lack of confidence in students results in a deficient development of oral English skills, even if students are familiar with vocabulary or grammar. Jaya et al. (2022) identified that the most difficult problem facing English students is self-confidence and anxiety when they investigated the speaking issues of EFL learners.

Otherwise, other emotional factors that inhibit the development of speaking are the fear of making mistakes and anxiety because of the low proficiency in English. Regarding to the fear of making mistakes, 40% of participants said they refused to speak English due to fear of making errors, and 25% strongly agree. In line with this, Al Nakhalah, A. M. M. (2016), in his research found that students were still incapable of speaking fluent English, and the major cause contributing to speaking difficulties was because students were timid, afraid of making mistakes, or fearful of criticism.

On the other hand, the third emotional factor that prevents students from speaking English is the fear of being laughed at by other students; in total, 65% of participants were afraid that they would laugh at them and look foolish in front of their classmates and consequently stop participating in speaking activities.

In conclusion, emotional factors tend to be more influential than linguistic factors, according to the data obtained in the research. However, teachers tend to pay more attention to linguistic factors than to seek learning strategies to overcome those emotional difficulties that prevent an adequate development of the oral skill in English. This is consistent with what Amoah and Yeboah (2021) concluded in their research, which revealed

that psychological factors are more influential on oral communication skills in Chinese EFL learners than linguistic factors.

Conclusions

Low proficiency in grammar and the use of complex structures are the main linguistic factors affecting the development of English oral communication skills in high school students. Students remain silent in class because of the lack of grammar and the difficulty of forming complex sentences. These difficulties block the articulation of spoken utterances, and consequently, their oral performance is deficient.

Limited vocabulary and the difficulty to speak accurately also stand out as factors affecting the development of oral communication in English. Most students have difficulty developing speaking skills because they do not have enough vocabulary to facilitate the production of oral speech.

Within emotional factors, lack of confidence is another factor that influences the development of oral communication in English. One of the main causes for this lack of security is the low competence in English that students face. Hence, students refuse to speak English because they think they are not competent in it and cannot speak it correctly.

Fear of making mistakes and anxiety appear together as factors affecting the development of oral communication skills. Students; refuse to actively participate in speaking activities because of the fear of being judged or criticized if they make any mistake, causing anxieties and insecurity at the time of speaking.

Fear of not being laughed another factor of greater importance that affects the development of oral communication due to the low English proficiency and this fear makes students refuse to participate in the speaking activities.

Emotional factors were the ones that most negatively affected the development of English oral communication skills in comparison with the linguistic factors.

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers teach grammar in an effective way, focusing on integral, comprehensible, and clear delivery. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop methodological strategies to enhance students' understanding, application, and oral usage.

Teachers also need to teach vocabulary interactively. For an interactive and effective English vocabulary learning experience, it is necessary to encourage students to learn a set number of new words daily and use them in the different activities they are faced with.

It is recommended that teachers build confidence in speaking. To achieve this, it is necessary to prioritize regular and consistent speaking practices that are not solely tied to evaluations but also encourage habitual and ongoing speaking exercises for students.

It is indispensable that students understand that making mistakes is not a form of failure but rather a form of learning. To achieve this, it is necessary that teachers and students create a climate of respect and understanding for others and for their own learning processes.

It is recommended that students develop and enhance their capacities without fear of being overcorrected or judged. To get this, it is necessary that teachers be a support for students during speaking activities, avoiding overcorrection in students but also clarifying respectfully those errors that students may commit.

Finally, to overcome the linguistic problems, it is necessary that teachers be concerned about these problems and not only design pedagogical strategies with a view to improving but also create learning environments where students feel motivated to demonstrate their abilities while supporting their weaknesses.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to collect data to identify the linguistic and emotional factors that influence high school students' English oral communication skills in Ecuadorian face-to-face learning environments. The information obtained will be kept confidential and may only be used for improving EFL learning.

Statements		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Linguistic factors					
1	I get stuck with vocabulary when speaking English.				
2	I avoid using difficult words when speaking English.				
3	I get stuck with grammar when I speak in English.				
4	I use complex structures when speaking in English.				
5	I have difficulties structuring sentences when speaking in English.				
6	I feel difficulty attending fluency when speaking in English.				
7	I felt difficulty attending accuracy when speaking in English.				
8	I speak without many pauses.				
9	I speak in English spontaneously.				
10	I make pronunciation errors when I speak in English.				
11	I think first in Spanish when I have to speak in English.				
12	I struggle to communicate effectively in English.				

Statements		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Emotional factors					
1	I am afraid of making mistakes when I speak in English.				
2	I feel peer pressure when I speak in English.				
3	I am nervous when speaking in English.				
4	I keep silent in class because of lack of confidence when speaking in English.				

5	I worry about using grammar correctly when speaking in English.				
6	I stutter when I speak in English.				
7	I am not confident to speak in English outside class.				
8	I am worried about not being understood when I speak in English.				
9	I am willing to speak in English.				
10	I feel that I am forced to speak in English.				
11	I feel blocked, so there is lack of things to say when speaking in English.				
12	I am afraid someone will laugh at me when I speak in English.				
13	I feel tense in English lessons than in other lessons.				
14	When I speak in English, I feel anxious thinking about how to respond correctly.				

Appendix B

Teachers' Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to collect data to identify the linguistic and emotional factors that influence high school students' English oral communication skills in Ecuadorian face-to-face learning environments. The information obtained will be kept confidential and may only be used for improving EFL teaching and learning.

Statements		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Linguistic factors					
1	Students get stuck with vocabulary when speaking English.				
2	Students avoid using difficult words when speaking English				
3	Students get stuck with grammar when speaking in English.				
4	Students use complex structures when speaking English.				
5	Students have difficulties structuring sentences when speaking.				
6	Students feel difficulty attending fluency when speaking English.				
7	Students felt difficulty attending accuracy when speaking English.				
8	Students speak without many pauses.				
9	Students speak in English spontaneously.				
10	Students make pronunciation errors when speaking in English.				
11	Students think first in Spanish when they have to speak in English.				
12	Students struggle to communicate effectively in English.				

Statements		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Emotional factors					
1	Students are afraid of making mistakes when speaking English.				
2	Students feel peer pressure when they speak English.				
3	Students are nervous when speaking English.				
4	Students keep silent in class because of lack of confidence when speaking English.				
5	Students worry about using grammar correctly when speaking English.				

6	Students stutter when speaking English.				
7	Students feel not confident to speak English outside class.				
8	Students are worried about not being understood when speaking English.				
9	Students are willing to speak English.				
10	Students feel that they are forced to speak English.				
11	Students feel blocked, so there is lack of things to say when speaking English.				
12	Students are afraid someone will laugh at them when speak English.				
13	Students feel tenser in English lessons than in other lessons.				
14	Students feel anxious thinking about how to respond correctly when speaking English.				

Appendix C

Observation sheet: EFL listening and speaking classes.

Items observed	Yes	No	Comments
Linguistic factors			
Students have difficulties using vocabulary to express their ideas.			
Students know expressions in English.			
Students use advanced vocabulary words when speaking in English.			
Students have problems using grammar correctly when they speak.			
Students can use complex structures when speaking English.			
Students have pronunciation problems when they speak in English.			
Students speak fluently in English.			
Students can speak spontaneously.			
Students mix their mother tongue and the target language when they speak.			
Students can speak accurately.			

Items observed	Yes	No	Comments
Emotional factors			
Students look afraid of making mistakes when speaking in the English lessons.			
Students feel peer pressure when speaking English.			
Students look nervous when speaking English.			
Students are silent in class when they do not feel confident.			
Students seem worried about having enough linguistic knowledge when speaking in English.			
Students speak stuttering.			
Students look reluctant to speak in English			
Students seem worried about not being understood when speaking in English.			
Students are willing to speak in English.			

Students look uncomfortable when asked to speak in English.			
Students look speechless when speaking in English.			
Students are afraid that someone may laugh at them when they speak in English.			
When students speak in English, they look anxious thinking about how to respond correctly.			

Appendix D

Semi-structured interview

Items observed	Yes	No	Comments
Linguistic factors			
Do you have difficulties using vocabulary to express your ideas?			
Do you know expressions when speaking in English?			
Do you think that you have appropriate vocabulary knowledge for the English level you are studying?			
Do you have problems using grammar correctly when you speak?			
Can you use complex structures when speaking in English?			
Do you have pronunciation problems when you speak in English?			
Do you speak fluently in English?			
Can you speak spontaneously?			
In your English classes, do you use a combination of Spanish and English when speaking?			
Can you speak accurately?			

Items observed	Yes	No	Comments
Emotional factors			
Are you afraid of making mistakes when speaking in English?			
Do you feel peer pressure when speaking in English?			
Are you nervous when speaking English?			
Are you silent in class when you do not feel confident?			
Are you worried about having enough linguistic knowledge when speaking in English?			
Do you speak stuttering?			
Are you reluctant to speak in English?			
Are you worried about not being understood when speaking in English?			
Are you willing to speak in English?			
Are you uncomfortable when asked to speak in English?			
Are you speechless when speaking in English?			

Are you afraid of someone laughing at you when speaking in English?			
Are you anxious thinking about how to respond correctly when speaking in English?			