



UTMACH

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y
EXTRANJEROS**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING
ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS.**

**FLORES MACIAS ADRIANA MARIA
LICENCIADA EN PEDAGOGIA DEL IDIOMA INGLES**

**ANALUISA ZUMBA NICOLE MAITE
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INTERVENCIÓN**

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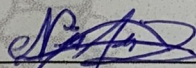
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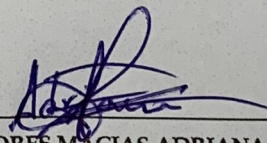
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this degree work to God, for providing me with a healthy and fulfilling life, which has led me to pursue this major and complete this final step to achieve my goal of becoming a teacher.

To my parents, sisters and Miguel Orellana for the unconditional support and love they have given me during the process of this project, which allowed me to trust in myself.

Finally, to my whole family because they never failed to remind me that I can achieve everything I set my mind to.

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First and foremost, this work is dedicated to my dear parents whose unconditional love and support, have been a constant source of inspiration. Although my father is no longer of this world, his memory continues to push me to be the better version of myself. Next to my siblings for always encouraging me throughout this process. I also dedicate this work to my closest friends: Sara, and María for always believing in me and showing me that you don't need to be related to be family. And last but not least, to Franziska for helping find my footing when I started writing this research work, your ideas helped me find a theme for this thesis.

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RESUMEN

En la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, en este caso la correcta adquisición de la habilidad de la expresión oral, es de suma importancia ya que permite el desenvolvimiento competente de los estudiantes en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje. El presente trabajo de investigación se realizó con el fin de mejorar la expresión oral en inglés por medio de la implementación de un sistema de actividades didácticas de métodos activos luego de evidenciar las falencias presentadas en los estudiantes. La investigación responde a un paradigma cualitativo con un diseño descriptivo en el que se analiza el uso del sistema de actividades didácticas de métodos activos para el mejoramiento de la expresión oral en inglés. Para la construcción de marco teórico se recurrió a la documentación bibliográfica la misma que fundamenta la validez y fiabilidad de la investigación. Adicionalmente, con la ayuda de los métodos empíricos como la observación participante, test de diagnóstico, y entrevista al docente, permitieron diagnosticar el estado inicial de la población en estudio conformado por los estudiantes de primer nivel del paralelo "H" del Centro de Educación Continua de la Universidad Técnica de Machala dejando de lado la selección de la muestra. Es así que considerando las necesidades existentes en el alumnado se aporta con un sistema de actividades didácticas de métodos activos, para el aprendizaje significativo de los estudiantes. Finalmente se sugiere seguir abordando el tema haciendo uso de diferentes actividades innovativas alineadas al constructivismo, para así cumplir con el objetivo de la competencia comunicativa en estudio.

Palabras clave: expresión oral, sistema, actividades didácticas, métodos activos.

ABSTRACT

In the teaching of English as a foreign language, in this case the correct acquisition of speaking skills, it is of utmost importance for the learners since it allows their competent development in the teaching-learning process. The current research work was carried out with the purpose of improving the learning of speaking skills in English. By implementing a didactic activities system based on active learning methods after evidencing the absence of didactic activities in class. The research responds to a qualitative paradigm with a descriptive design in which the use of a didactic activities system based on active learning methods for the improvement in English-speaking skills is analyzed. For the theoretical framework construction, the bibliographical documentation was used to support the validity and reliability of the research. Additionally, with the help of empirical methods such as participant observation, diagnostic test, and teacher interview, it was possible to diagnose the initial state of the population under study made up of first level "H" students from Centro de Educación Continua de la Universidad Técnica de Machala leaving aside the selection of the sample. Thus, considering the existing student's needs, a didactic activities system based on active learning methods is proposed for the achievement of meaningful learning of the pupils. Finally, it is suggested to continue researching the topic using a variety of innovative activities aligned to constructivism, in order to fulfill the communicative competence, aim in speaking skills.

Keywords: speaking skills, system, didactic activities, active learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout Ecuadorian history, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) specifically the speaking skills, has always been relegated to the background, despite being one of the macro skills. This is most clearly perceived in the learning gaps that students exhibited at the time they were evaluated.

As is common knowledge, learning English as a Foreign Language in a Spanish-speaking country becomes a challenging task because there are not enough opportunities to practice it outside the classroom. “La ejercitación oral es un paso indispensable que no puede obviarse para poder llegar al objetivo final en la enseñanza del habla, es decir, lograr una expresión oral espontánea en los educandos” (González et al., 2010, p. 24). Moreover, to be able to get the learner to reach the necessary proficiency while putting this skill into practice with the use of appropriate didactic activities, will represent a professional and personal challenge for the teacher.

To help them achieve the necessary proficiency it is important to recognize that teaching speaking is not solely a matter of repetition as it happens with other skills. For this reason, the didactic activities system aims to develop activities based on the needs identified in the student, in order to facilitate the interaction between the learner and the knowledge to subsequently achieve meaningful learning (Guapisaca & Fabrizzio, 2019, p. 41), this will allow the improvement of the speaking skill through a didactic activities system based on active learning methods. Mainly through of the use of exercises based on everyday life since “oral language interactions and the opportunity to produce the language in meaningful tasks provide the practice that is very important to internalizing the language” (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017, p. 35).

It is therefore important to emphasize that “cuando se realizan actividades encaminadas a fortalecer la expresión oral de forma constante, se evidencia resultados favorables en la habilidad comunicativa” (Bohórquez & Alba, 2018, p. 109). That is why, practice must be based in a real context, to encourage social interaction so that learners will acquire firsthand experience in order to achieve meaningful learning. “Experience must be filtered through the learner's own personal knowledge constructs, to be assimilated into their conceptual frameworks in a process that enables the individual to find meaning in the world” (Fulton, 2015, pp. 38-39).

Subsequently, it has been identified that the teaching of the English-speaking skills tends to be theoretical and monotonous resulting in a lack of motivation in the classroom. And so, the pupils not having the possibility of a constant practice, at the moment of expressing themselves, they constantly produce full pauses, silent pauses and repetitions which in turn affect the prosody of their speech demonstrating the low proficiency of the skill and the absence of naturalness. Despite the changes made to the national curriculum the lack of practicing in a context based on real interactions the learner's speech seems affected. Due to this, the learners cannot express themselves in an intelligible way. At present, external manifestations have been observed:

- Lack of motivation or fear when performing the speaking exercises.
- Lack of practice based on real conversations.
- Little or no use of didactic activities.
- Students have varying levels of English, for this reason the learners with a higher proficiency participate more, relegating the ones with a lower one.

In accordance with the external manifestations mentioned above, the following **research question** is proposed: How to improve the English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from “Centro de Educación Continua de la Universidad Técnica de Machala” in the year 2021?

Having as **object of study** the teaching-learning process of English as a Foreign Language of the first level “H” from “Centro de Educación Continua de la Universidad Técnica de Machala”.

The **general objective** of the research is: to apply a didactic activities system based on the use of active learning method to improve the English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from “Centro de Educación Continua de la Universidad Técnica de Machala” in the year 2021.

This objective is delimited in the **field of action**, the method of active learning. Therefore, the scientific questions taken into account for the development of this research work are:

1. What is the current stage of the English-speaking skills in first level students?
2. How the active learning method influences the improvement of English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from “CEC-UTMACH” in the year 2021?
3. How effective is the active learning method implemented for improving the English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from “CEC-UTMACH” in the year 2021?

Accordingly, the present research work raises the following **specific objectives**:

1. To provide a theoretical basis for the use of active learning method in teaching English-speaking skills.
2. To make a diagnosis of the English-speaking skills level of proficiency in students of the first level "H" from "CEC-UTMACH" in the year 2021.
3. To implement a didactic activities system based on active learning method, for improving the English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from "CEC-UTMACH" in the year 2021.
4. To analyze the results on the implementation of a didactic activities system based on active learning method, for improving the English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from "CEC-UTMACH" in the year 2021.

Consequently, in accordance with the aforementioned and the needs identified in this study, the researchers propose qualitative research with a descriptive design, while using techniques such as interviews, participant observation, and tests to support measuring the scope of the process.

The **importance** of the present research is that, by using a didactic activities system based on active learning method in the classroom, will enable improvement by means of a more immersive learning setting for students. Since these activities promote their active participation as well as spontaneous interactions. In this manner, favoring learning through meaningful experiences as well as enhancing the learner's metacognitive processes according to the contents of the curricula in the English language.

The **practical contribution** of this research is the implementation of a didactic activities system based on active learning methods for the improvement of the English-speaking skills. The **innovative aspect** is that by taking real and authentic experiences, pupils can learn to express themselves in a natural and confident way in the target language (L2).

This research consists of an introduction where its theoretical design is presented, followed by four chapters. The first chapter provides the theoretical foundations that support the research; the second chapter displays the methodological design used: type of research, population, sample, data collection techniques and instruments. In the third chapter, the intervention proposal is delineated, with its due rationale and the form of implementation. Finally, the study concludes with the representation of the proposal's results, as well as the conclusions and recommendations supported by a relevant bibliography.

CHAPTER I

1. Implementation of a didactic strategy based on the active learning method for teaching English-speaking skills.

The purpose of this section is to provide a theoretical basis for the active learning method in the teaching of English-speaking skills, thus allowing us to define the key concepts and the role they have played in the field of education since their inception.

After defining the concepts, a series of didactic activities oriented to improve the students' learning are presented in accordance to the objective of this research. Finally, the contextual characteristics and their effectiveness in improving the English-speaking skills are detailed.

1.1. Historical background of the use of active learning method in the English-speaking teaching and learning process.

Historically, a variety of methods and approaches have been used to teach English as a foreign language in order to achieve effective English language learning. One of them is the active learning method. The method of Active Learning “is based on a learning theory called constructivism, which asserts that learners construct their own understanding of a topic by building upon their prior knowledge” (Ramli, 2018, p. 1).

The basis of student-centered learning is not a new concept; indeed, it can be said that Socrates was one of the precursors of constructivism as well as active learning. Since he expressed that “el alumno era el agente real de su propia educación y el método socrático de interrogar era un recurso que lo demostraba” (Beales, 1956, p. 254).

In the first decade of the twentieth century Piaget stated that “el sujeto interactúa con la realidad, construyendo su conocimiento y, al mismo tiempo, su propia mente. El conocimiento nunca es copia de la realidad, siempre es una construcción” (Serulnikov & Rodrigo, 2001, p. 126). While for Vygotsky “el conocimiento es un proceso de interacción entre el sujeto y el medio, pero el medio entendido como algo social y cultural” (Parica, Bruno, & Abancin, 2005, p. 2). That is, it is of utmost importance to consider the essential role of the sociocultural environment in the shaping of language learning. Finally, Ausubel, influenced by Piaget, wrote “*The Meaningful Learning Theory*” in which he stated that “el individuo aprende recibiendo información verbal, relacionándolos con los conocimientos previos que todo individuo lleva consigo y de esta forma da al nuevo conocimiento significado especial” (Silva, 2009, p. 22).

Thereby, establishing the basis of constructivism and active learning which favor learning through didactic activities that involve the class as a whole, allowing collective learning by real experiences.

The renowned pedagogue De Alcántara García (1891) in one of his best works entitled *El método activo en la enseñanza*, stated the creation of a new didactic principle based on innovative activities in which he asserted that the objective of his pedagogical proposal was: “desterrar la rutina de la enseñanza para que ésta sea genuinamente educadora y el niño la asimile y la viva” (p. 6) he further stated that:

El método activo no es, ciertamente, invención de nuestros días, pues que está como encarnado en la reforma de la enseñanza iniciada en el siglo XVI, de la que constituye el *desideratum*, y se halla latente en las formas llamadas «de investigación», «de

invención» y señaladamente en la dicha «socrática», la que, en puridad, y tomada en su genuino y más amplio sentido, no es más que un procedimiento activo. (p. 8)

Paraphrasing John Dewey based on his 1916 work *Democracy and Education*, the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2012), states:

Dewey believed that people come to understand themselves and the world through their interactions with other people and things in the world, and that the purpose of education is to produce an environment in which useful interactions could be developed and sustained.

From this perspective, the use of active methods in the teaching of English as a foreign language has only been relevant for several decades, even though it has a long history, its application in the teaching of English is quite recent. As such, in 1985 Long and Porter (quoted in Gholami, 2014) in their work *Group work, interlanguage talk and second language acquisition* found that “when second language learners worked in groups, they were more motivated, took more initiative, and were less anxious concerning their learning” (p. 190), proving that active learning allows the creativity of both teachers and students to flow during the course of the class, making use of interactive didactic activities necessary to keep pupils motivated in their learning.

That is, the active learning method in teaching EFL “provides opportunities in the classroom for learners to talk and to listen, to read, to write and to reflect as they engage in a variety of learning activities” (Meyers & Jones, 1993, p. 192) to achieve better teaching, hence transforming the development of the teaching-learning process and the learners' experiences, which are the goal of education.

With regard to the teaching of English speaking, Hughes (2002) expresses that:

A task may be carried out to help the student gain awareness of, or to practise, some aspect of linguistic knowledge (whether a grammatical rule, or application of a phonemic regularity to which they have been introduced), or to develop productive skills (for example rhythm, intonation or vowel-to-vowel linking), or to raise awareness of some socio-linguistic or pragmatic point (for instance how to interrupt politely, respond to a compliment appropriately, or show that one has understood). (p. 6)

For this reason, “Active Learning strategies are considered appropriate to give students the same amount of chance in practicing their speaking skill and to pay attention in creating a learning situation” (Rochmahwati, 2013, p. 31). Similarly, the Ecuadorian curriculum for the teaching of English as a foreign language, states that “the teacher should be a guide in the classroom, and learners should be allowed to work from their own interests, able to explore topics and language that arise naturally” (Mineduc, 2016, p. 48).

1.2. Conceptual basis of teaching English speaking skills through the use of active learning.

The teaching method is the pathway through which effective learning takes place, thus fulfilling the purpose of having the students demonstrate the skills developed through the learning process. It is there where the close relationship between this concept and active learning can be established. Since they work together according to the constructivist approach which, as previously mentioned, seeks to foster students’ independence in the production of their own learning. Due to the aforementioned, it is paramount to select the appropriate didactic activities to achieve the teaching objective.

The purpose of active learning is to develop students' skills through practice. “Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, p. 5). For that reason, Bonwell & Eison (1991), proposed that didactic activities “promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing” (p. 5), that is to say, that the primary goal is the active participation of students in a constructivist context in order to achieve meaningful learning.

Several authors define active learning in the context of teaching speaking skills in an EFL classroom in the following way: According to Askia et al. (2016) “Active learning stimulates the students to be accustomed to use English expression at their speaking in appropriate contexts (p. 3). Furthermore, Zilberman (2017) states that active learning triggers “multi-sensory learning, we read, listen, and speak at the same time, using all our senses. This activates more areas of your brain, so you retain more of what you learn”. In other words, the use of active methods gives students more opportunities to show their level of competence in the classroom through the improvisations required by the didactic activities and encourages them to have longer conversations (Badroeni, 2018). Thus, demonstrating an increase in the use of speaking skills as teachers and students interact in the carrying out of the proposed didactic activities.

1.2.1. Didactic characteristics of active methods in the English teaching-learning process.

Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning (quoted in Harrison & McDonald, 2018) proposes 5 characteristics that a well-designed active learning system of didactic activities should have, which are as follows:

- Every student is acting on the material either individually or with others.
- The timeframe is clear and relatively short.
- The goal of the activity is clear, meaningful, and uncomplicated.
- The task of the activity itself is clear, feasible, and uncomplicated.
- The nature of the end product—be it a list, an answer, a choice, or a structure—is described unambiguously. (p. 122)

This allows the activity to be carried out in a more natural way so that learners can understand the directions and clearly comprehend the objective for which the activity is to be carried out. Additionally, since these are didactic activities with a specific objective, the pupils will actively participate.

Learning itself is inevitably linked to language actions. This means that through the constant communication provided by active learning during the didactic activity, learners will be able to express their ideas and concerns employing the L2. Thus, empowering the active learning process.

It is imperative to emphasize that “in active learning the ability to think in English is formed subconsciously while the innate habit of cross-translation is turned off automatically” (Zilberman, 2017). Enabling learners to speak English fluently in a shorter time compared to the passive teaching method. Contributing significantly in the English-speaking skills teaching-learning process by encouraging a better practice implementing different didactic activities related to the development of autonomous work and independence of the learner.

In line with the above Cambridge Assessment International Education (2020) explains that the implementation of active learning method in the classroom promotes the use of new

knowledge immediately by making students think more often in the target language to develop comprehension and long-term memory. This, in turn, favors the improvement of social and collaborative competences through the practice of speaking skills, creating concrete experiences in the students' immediate environment, developing inclusion and respect for other people beliefs. This is all part of meaningful learning, thereby manifesting greater freedom and spontaneity in the learner when performing different tasks inside and outside the classroom.

1.2.2. Conceptual foundations of active methods for the teaching of English-speaking skills.

UNESCO in its report *International Standard Classification of Education (2012)* defines didactic activities as “deliberate activities involving some form of communication intended to bring about learning” (p. 7).

The active learning method allows the use of a wide variety of didactic activities to facilitate students' learning in an innovative and fun way, generating motivation and engagement. In fact, “Active Learning makes learning more significant because it connects learning and language to real situations” (ITTT, n.d.). The didactic activities to be used for the improvement of the English-speaking skills according to AalSaud (2019) are: “role-playing, games, hands-on activities, debates, academic service learning, experimental learning, and discovery learning” (p. 53).

Based on the aforementioned concepts and the needs that teaching in the Ecuadorian context requires, it was decided that the didactic activities to be carried out should not generate any extra cost for teachers and students alike. In addition, they should be able to be used individually, in small groups or large groups in the classroom, facilitating the implementation of

these activities for students at all socioeconomic levels. Therefore, in this analysis, three techniques based on active learning method for teaching English as a foreign language have been taken into consideration and will be used.

- **Buzz Groups:** involves creating groups of students to work in teams in which they must answer questions based on topics seen in class. “The discussion is informal. Students do not need to arrive at a consensus because the goal is the exchange of ideas” (Barkley et al., 2014).
- **Role Play:** is one of the most widely used didactic activities nowadays for speaking skills practice in which students articulately perform the dramatization of a problem on a specific topic. “Representing different perspectives (e.g., a mock interview) to meet learning outcomes related to empathy or to expose participants to a scenario in which they will have to take part ‘for real’ in the near future” (Fry et al., 2009, pág. 509).
- **Quescussion:** It focuses on formulating questions rather than answers. To perform this activity, the teacher begins by proposing a question on a particular topic and the students must propose answers in the form of questions. “In getting students to ask questions, you’re inviting them to generate a variety of thoughts about the topic without them directly stating their own views. Additionally, with each question students will likely think of answers to the proposed question” (Queen's University, n.d.).

These teaching techniques are geared towards improving speaking skills by way of continuous practice of the English language as described by Al-Shihri (2019), “active learning will encourage students’ engagement in EFL classrooms and can contribute to the increase in students’ motivation, confidence, and participation” (p. 310). In other words, in order to improve the speaking skills in EFL learners, it is necessary to involve in the teaching, all the actions concerning the communicational competence. For this reason, the active learning method is oriented to understanding the learning process as an action, which simultaneously responds to the student's innate metacognition and motivation in learning.

In a study conducted with university students, it was shown that the implementation of active learning guarantees the motivation and interest of students to practice to improve their English-speaking skills. As stated by Orosz et al. (2018) “dentro del aspecto emocional los alumnos presentaron resultados positivos ya que se involucraron en su aprendizaje buscando formas más dinámicas para comunicarse” (p. 4). Regarding the academic aspects, the study students with whom an active methodology was applied were able to demonstrate an improvement in English-speaking skills in the English language.

Demonstrating that, by focusing on the academic needs of the student, the teacher has the opportunity to implement various didactic activities for speech practice utilizing topics or situations of their interest and liking. Offering the teaching-learning process the best opportunity to encourage students to practice the English-speaking skills. Challenging the reality, where many times the objective is not achieved due to lack of practice and disinterest in the students, the main reason why it is of great benefit to innovate through the use of didactic activities for the improvement of the communicative ability under study.

1.3. Contextual characteristics of active learning in teaching English speaking skills.

In 2012 the Ministry of Education established *The English Language Learning Standards*, which, “are developed taking into consideration the communicative language components and the language skills as a core part of the program” (Mineduc, 2012, p. 8), one of them being the teaching of speaking skills. Despite these changes, Ecuador continues to drop in the world ranking of the EF English Proficiency Index (2020), currently occupying 93rd place out of a total of 100 countries evaluated and the last place in Latin America, which is considered as very low according to this index.

Ortega & Auccahuallpa, (2017), claim that some of the factors for which students do not reach the desired level of communicative competence are: on one hand, the lack of replicable practice outside the classroom when students live in a Spanish-speaking context; on the other hand, behaviorist teaching and the confusion that teachers tend to have when trying to implement communicative strategies. All these factors should therefore be considered by teachers before planning the class. The application of appropriate strategies by using didactic activities tailored to facilitate students' learning in an innovative and fun way, eliciting motivation and interest.

In a study conducted by the British Council (2015) , 81% of the respondents who expressed having a high-level proficiency in speaking skills stated that it was due to sociocultural and self-taught factors rather than to classroom learning, only 5% reported that it was because of their English teachers.

The Ecuadorian classrooms have traditionally given preference to the grammar translation method, which has been shown to prevent students from generating their own knowledge in a meaningful way, as the teaching is based on a behaviorist approach. Naranjo y

Naranjo (2017) explains “the Ecuadorian English teaching system is working theoretically under the communicative approach; however, it requires teachers to apply these principles and take effective pedagogical practices to develop communicative competences in the EFL classroom” (p. 274). Therefore, to achieve the goal of attaining communicative competencies, teachers must not only be familiar with new teaching approaches and methods, but also put them into practice in their classrooms. For the teaching of grammatical structures to be effective, it must be complemented with methods that help the student to immerse themselves in the learning of the L2.

Several authors agree with this statement after having conducted research in Ecuadorian classrooms. For Ortega (2017) “una instrucción basada en este tipo de metodologías permitirá que los estudiantes adquieran componentes importantes de la lengua inglés, tales como estructuras gramaticales y vocabulario, dentro de un contexto significativo y auténtico y no de manera inconsistente y aislada” (p. 220). Likewise, Fuertes et al. (2018) pointed out that the teaching-learning of grammatical structures in conjunction with the application of active learning method leads to an effective result in the improvement of speaking skills by giving them a purpose to practice it.

According to Acosta et al. (2019) the importance of the use of active methods in teaching English speaking skills lies in the fact that:

These strategies have been designed to help teachers plan their lessons in a more engaging, creative, and dynamic way that aims to improve EFL students’ productive skills. They are simple, but effective activities that can be applied in Ecuadorian public schools even with limited resources. (p. 18)

Which is beneficial for low-income students as Román (2021) claims it helps them understand the critical necessity of practice by having less constrictive conversations and they also feel empowered by the realization that they can understand their peers in more natural settings.

For these reasons, the use of active learning in the teaching of English as a foreign language has begun to be implemented gradually by teachers in Ecuadorian classrooms. By taking into account active learning and applying it to the practice of productive skills, not only the pupils' motivation will be achieved, but also the development of self-confidence will be enhanced so that they can take control of their learning and teachers can correct the student's weaknesses in time. Thus, achieving the correct acquisition of this language.

In synthesis, it is evident the need for starting to apply new approaches that will enable the transformation of the teaching of English in the Ecuadorian context so that the learner can generate their own knowledge. Taking into consideration that traditional methods are obsolete and prevent the achievement of the desired level of proficiency. One of the duties of teachers is to keep themselves in constant preparation, since new teaching methods and techniques are introduced every day to achieve the correct acquisition of this language. Consequently, they should not remain only in theory and must be put into practice to achieve the objective of capturing the learner's attention and motivating them to hold conversations in real time about everyday situations of their immediate environment.

1.3.1. Evaluation of the current level of English-speaking skills in the English language.

This research work takes place at the Centro de Educación Continua in the city of Machala, created on May 2, 2014 under Resolución del H. Consejo Universitario N° 121/2014.

This institution works as an administrative dependency of the Universidad Técnica de Machala, which maintains a permanent offer of intensive English courses for students, professionals and society in general.

Currently, the institution has approximately 2,025 students, 16 permanent teachers and 13 student teachers focused on the teaching of English as a foreign language. The present research was carried out in the first level "H", which is made up of 44 students. For the data collection, three types of instruments were used: a participant observation guide (APPENDIX 1), a diagnostic test (APPENDIX 2), and a semi-structured survey (APPENDIX 3), followed by a detailed description of the situation.

As a first step, participant observation was carried out during the induction classes prior to the implementation of the didactic activities system. Thus, by means of this empirical method during speaking practice, the student's general characteristics were evidenced and the following results were obtained.

- A mix-up of basic verb tenses was perceived when making speaking descriptions in English.
- Student usage of fillers and long pauses, which caused a time lag in their answers.
- In spite of demonstrating a positive attitude, a low level of participation was noted due to nervousness when speaking in English.
- As well as an inadequate intonation was noticed due to the interference of the mother tongue (L1), causing a lack of cohesion in their sentences.

According to the above mentioned, it was possible to confirm through the results obtained from the diagnostic test the difficulties showed by the students when putting into

practice the speaking skills. A large group exhibits difficulties when expressing their feelings, emotions and opinions in the English language, because when describing, expressing, narrating and arguing different aspects of their personal and academic environment, students tend to hesitate, causing long pauses, limiting the communicative interaction. That is to say, the management of their nervousness has repercussions in the development of the practice, hindering the improvement of the communicative competence.

In addition, the results of the observation guide also show that the students have a passive vocabulary based on the knowledge they have previously acquired. However, when performing the speaking practice, they use false cognates, fillers, and regarding pronunciation, it is often observed mispronunciation in dialogues not allowing intelligibility of the speech.

These results were rated based on the following table, where the following values are assigned:

Levels	Values
Very High	10
High	9 - 8
Medium	7 - 6
Low	< 5

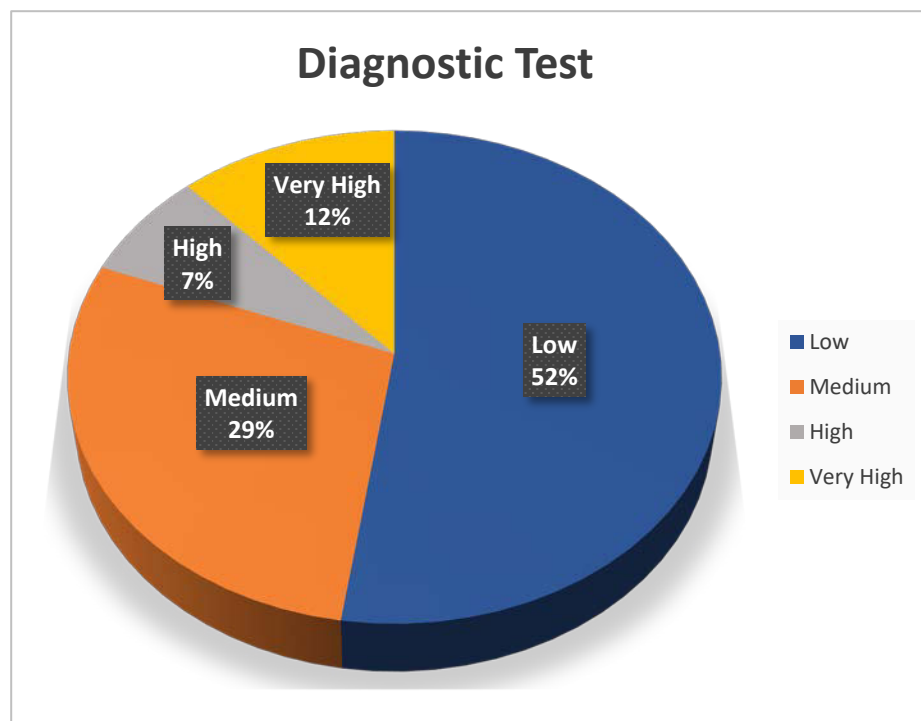


Figure 1. Diagnostic test results.

Source: Own Elaboration

Finally, to obtain an unbiased perspective of the situation, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the teacher, in which the following was stated:

Unit of Analysis 1: Speaking skills.

Category 1: Description of feelings, reactions and opinions.

- The students often confuse the use of verb tense structures demonstrating poor grammatical control.
- Students rarely self-correct for the lack of knowledge on the appropriate vocabulary to use when speaking in English resulting in the use of false cognates.

Category 2: Narration of feelings, reactions and opinions.

- Occasionally the students respond appropriately to what is being asked causing long pauses in their speech as well as unnecessary repetition.
- Students often use a basic vocabulary that leads to limited transmission of information.

Category 3: Argues feelings, reactions and opinions.

- Students with a higher level of knowledge always demonstrate motivation to help their peers and even encourage them to participate.
- A minority group of students are able to ask questions and answer them according to what is asked of them, while most of the pupils have gaps in the use of verb tenses.

Category 4: Explanation of feelings, reactions and opinions.

- The main obstacle faced by the students is nervousness, which in turn causes the use of fillers, repetitions and interference of L1 becoming a determinant that limits intelligibility.
- Generally, the intonation in English is not adequate and when encountering new words, they use an accented pronunciation that does not correspond to the L2.

After the application of these instruments, it is evident that students often presented gaps in the learning of speaking skills in aspects such as: the correct use of verb tenses, mastery of the lexical and pragmatic component, as well as the incidence of factors related to motivation, participation, and behavior when expressing their emotions in English. That is to say, the presence of these deficiencies generates limitations in the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process of the learner, which is why many times demotivation and disinterest in this particular skill arises. Therefore, according to the difficulties encountered in teaching the skill of English-speaking skills, which were externalized through the results obtained in the instruments applied, it is necessary to implement a didactic activities system based on active learning. Accordingly, the following chapter outlines the methodology applied in the research work.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter describes the methodological aspects used in the development of this research, such as the paradigm and type of research, the design, the methods at both theoretical and empirical levels, as well as the chosen population. Subsequently, the techniques and instruments applied to the subjects studied are detailed, followed by the procedure for collecting, processing and analyzing the information.

2.1. Type of research.

The current research is framed within the qualitative research paradigm, given the study is based on the behavior and narration of the subjects investigated according to their experience within their sociocultural setting. Thus, it can be said that “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Hence, it will allow to deepen the understanding of social phenomena in their natural context. Based on the direct experiences of people as significant factors in their daily lives (University of Texas Arlington, 2018).

2.2. Research design.

Regarding the proposed research, its design is of a non-experimental cross-sectional type, since there is no deliberate manipulation of variables in which data are collected in a single period of time to describe their interaction during that period.

A non-experimental cross-sectional study is concerned with observing situations already existing at a given time in order to analyze the state of one or more variables without creating manipulable situations (INTEP, 2017). That is, the study will not involve an experiment to be manipulated and it is based on past experiences of the subjects under investigation.

2.3. Population and study sample.

The selected population is constituted by the total of 44 students of the first level "H" from the intensive English course at CEC in the city of Machala and the EFL teacher in charge of the course.

2.4. Research methods.

Research methods are defined as the way, by which the structure for achieving the research objective is established (Cobas et al., 2010). In this research work the empirical and theoretical level methods were used. On the one hand, empirical methods allow the discovery and compilation of facts. On the other hand, theoretical methods enable the conceptual interpretation of empirical data (Jordán et al., 2015). These methods were used to collect information and answer the research questions after being systematically analyzed in the following chapter. The methods and their concepts are described below.

2.4.1. Theoretical methods.

Are those that approach the knowledge of the object through deduction, analysis and synthesis. They are used to systematize, analyze, explain the results obtained and thus acquire new knowledge.

- **Analytic-synthetic**

This method was used to summarize the bibliographic review because it can be used to synthesize the information based on the results obtained from the analysis through the synthesis of the properties and characteristics of each part of the whole (Rodríguez & Pérez, 2017).

- **Inductive-deductive**

This method was used to establish generalizations by means of induction, starting from what is common and then deducting logical conclusions that allow inferring enriched generalizations, thus forming a dialectic unity (Rodríguez & Pérez, 2017).

- **Historical-logical**

The application of this method helped us to recognize the value of the social context in which the research was carried out, focusing on the practice of teaching and thoroughly analyzing the didactic activities that are implemented to optimize the learning of English-speaking skills in English. (Torres, 2020)

2.4.2. Empirical methods.

Empirical methods facilitate the collection of data focused on the object of study, including research resources and instruments, such as interviews, questionnaires, etc. They are considered of key importance because the reliability and certainty of the research results are generated on the basis of the evidence captured by the instruments applied.

The empirical methods used are: participant observation, diagnostic test, and teacher interview. These instruments play a fundamental role in the development of the research since their purpose consists in being in contact with the reality of the selected sample and identifying the factors that influence it, a process that is carried out through the analysis of the problem

under study. The following is a definition of each of the techniques used and how they contribute to this research.

- **Participant observation**

Participant observation is one of the most important techniques used in scientific research that serves to understand the behavior of the subject under study as well as the influence that the context could have on their behavior (Dahlke et al., 2015).

This technique is characterized by the participation of the researcher in the context in which the research takes place. For this reason, it was decided to opt for participant observation as the technique to gather information from the natural environment where the problem is experienced. As it allows for the interaction between the population and the researchers, promoting the relationship with the didactic activities that are carried out in it, thereby evidencing the possible causes that generate this reality. “The rationale for participant observation is embedded in the belief that natural behaviors are more likely to be representative of certain traits within the group, such as shared perceptions or beliefs” (Qaddo, 2019).

- **Diagnostic Test**

Diagnostic tests are a very important pedagogical tool through which teachers can be aware of the learning gaps of their students. In other words, they allow to identify the weaknesses and academic needs of the student in a certain skill or subject.

The application of this tool fulfills the objective of knowing the students' level of proficiency in speaking English. For this purpose, a set of 10 questions is applied, which involves personal information, as well as the respective exercise of argumentative and explanatory competencies. In order to determine the students' knowledge based on the prior

learning acquired to identify the academic needs to be reinforced and plan the appropriate didactic activities to be implemented during the classes.

- **Teacher Interview**

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how the teaching-learning process of students' English-speaking skills takes place, a semi-structured interview was conducted to the teacher. It consisted of open-ended questions asking for information about the general assessment of English teaching, the teacher's access to pedagogical resources, and the material barriers that hinder teaching in their classrooms. The interview includes key and objective questions to obtain concrete and accurate information.

2.5. Data processing techniques.

2.5.1. Content Analysis.

Moving forward with the examination of the information obtained through the empirical methods described above, the content analysis technique is used to process the data found at the end of the data collection phase. Since “content analysis constitutes a method of data analysis of content collected by means of other methods” (Mayer, 2016, p. 61), in order to formulate inferences about social phenomena by examining the communication patterns in a non-invasive way in their natural context and to replicate them systematically for analysis.

2.6. Work with the variables under study in the research.

For the adequate development of this research, it is of fundamental importance to identify the variables with which to work. Since achieving the objectives of the research will depend on these variables. Thus, the first variable to be identified was variable 1: the English-speaking skills, and then variable 2: didactic activities system based on active learning.

For this research, the variable under study will be defined by the researchers as follows:

The English-speaking skills “involves a great part of communication allowing speakers to have two-way interaction in order to describe, narrate, argue and explain their feeling, reactions, opinions and knowledge with one or many listeners” (Escudero et al., 2020, p. 30).

2.7. Work with the variable English-speaking skills.

Table 1. Work with the variable English-speaking skills

English-speaking skills. Speaking skills “involves a great part of communication allowing speakers to have two-way interaction in order to describe, narrate, argue and explain their feeling, reactions, opinions and knowledge with one or many listeners” (Escudero et al., 2020, p. 30).			
Analysis Units	Categories	Definitions	Items
English-speaking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes feelings, reactions, and opinions. 	Ability to describe by means of basic concepts and conscious correction of frequently used structures in predictable situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes in simple terms aspects of their environment. • Self-corrects when noticing errors in the frequent use of structures.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrates feelings, reactions and opinions. 	Effectiveness in communicating using structures, expressions and basic vocabulary in order to make known their personal history, their immediate environment and topics of immediate need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to understand and convey basic personal information. • Uses appropriate expressions and vocabulary.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argues feelings, reactions and opinions. 	Engages in dialogue and responds to basic questions. Actively participating in discussions encouraging peers to join in the practice of speaking skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions using spoken English during class. • Practices speaking in English in their academic and personal environment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains feelings, reactions and opinions. 	Produces intelligible speech at an appropriate rate when enunciating their ideas and thoughts during classroom speaking practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates clear ideas without hesitation when answering questions. • Uses accurate intonation in most cases.

Source: Own Elaboration

CHAPTER III

INTERVENTION PROPOSAL

This chapter shows the didactic activities system based on active methods conformation, created as an intervention proposal in this research, to contribute to the improvement of English-speaking skills. Which was applied at CEC, first level "H". Furthermore, it highlights the theoretical and methodological foundations that give validity and reliability to the activities to be developed, taking into account the established contents and skill.

3.1. Theoretical foundation of the didactic activities system based on active methods.

The main purpose of this research is to generate a didactic activities system based on active learning methods to be implemented in the teaching of English-speaking skills. This system is based on Bertalanffy's (1969) General Systems Theory, who defined a system as the existing interaction of a set of elements that are open to exchange with one another and their environment. And they are capable of acquiring qualitatively new properties, as well as self-regulating through feedback.

Taking into consideration the need for learning focused on the fluent development of the practice, Jiménez et al. (2020) , explain that by applying a system of activities, bearing in mind the logic behind them, the construction of coherent knowledge will be achieved. Bringing us closer to the L2 naturality in learning speaking skills. Therefore, the planned didactic activities will work in accordance with the pre-established activities from the Empower book. Through the didactic activities system application, experiential learning will be fostered. Learners will develop self-awareness when speaking in English, by correcting themselves, forming new mental connections, which will be put into practice every time they need to communicate in the L2.

3.1.1. Didactic basis of the didactic activities system based on active learning.

Didactic activities are one of the teaching tools that through history have proven to promote the development of cognitive processes, as well as the student's personality (Gasim, 2020). Using them, will make it possible to encourage active participation by putting into practice what has been learned in class in order to generate a better learning. The planned activities will depend on the learning content to be studied and the academic objectives to be met, responding to the needs identified by the teacher in the student.

The pedagogical instruments and resources used should take into account learners when planning the activities. Not only to motivate them to participate interactively in the development of the classes, but also to achieve the objectives and satisfy their personal academic needs. Consequently, the system implemented can be used in conjunction with the pre-established activities of the book to make the didactic activities work in accordance with them.

3.1.2. Pedagogical basis of the didactic activities system based on active learning.

The system of didactic activities proposed in this research is carried out under the postulates of the constructivist approach. Enabling the student to have more control over the activity, favoring the learner's autonomy, making possible to self-correct and adapt the dialogue during the L2 practice. In the same way, it supplies the teacher with key information to provide adequate feedback for learners to achieve metacognition. Because of this, it is paramount that teachers plan didactic activities aligned to the learning level that will effectively engage the learners' attention and achieve the desired communicative competence.

3.1.3. Psychological basis of the didactic activities system based on active learning.

The psychological aspects of the didactic activities system are based on the postulates of Leontiev's psychological theory of activity (1978), whose notion was that in every activity there is an interaction between subject-object in which the subject discovers its limits and transcends them. It also draws elements from cognitive psychology since “Active learning was found to produce higher cognitive learning as well as better problem solving and communication skills” (Harris & Welch, 2019, p. 141), from this criteria, has been considered that the didactic activities system is designed as a set of tasks proposed to improve the learners language learning, incorporating the use of active methods, from which emerges the practice optimization in the English speaking skill.

3.2. Functional structure of the didactic activities system based on active learning for the improvement of English-speaking skills.

In this section, key concepts that make up the functional structure of the didactic activities system aimed at fulfilling the objective of the problem under study are presented. The terms conceptualization such as, active methods and didactic activities are provided. Likewise, the teacher and student roles during the educational practice process are determined.

The aspects that the researchers have taken into consideration for the development of the didactic activities system are centered on its objective, as well as its respective phases. This means, by determining the actions to be carried out during the lessons. The first step is to apply the diagnostic test to identify the students' academic weaknesses in order to proceed to the selection of didactic activities based on the results. To enhance the development of the lessons contents that ultimately leads to the formative evaluation where the students' learning is verified.

3.2.1. System components.

The didactic activities system elements for the improvement of English-speaking skills are organized into two categories: non-personal and personal elements, which are described in more detail below.

a) Non - personal Components

For the application of the pedagogical proposal, the following elements are key to this study:

- **Content**

It encompasses the academic subjects to be taught during the lessons, based on the curricular planning of the Ministry of Education, through which the objectives of each session are determined. As well as the organization of school time and the activities to be developed with the students so that they can effectively understand how the lessons will be carried out and the responsibilities they will have to assume in the teaching-learning process. This is all oriented to fulfill the purpose of education primarily focused on the learner's meaningful learning.

- **Objective**

It represents the main goal that the researchers aspire to achieve through the didactic activities system implementation. This being the improvement of the English-speaking skills. On the other hand, the specific objectives are considered as a set of steps to be followed to reach that aim. Therefore, the specific objectives of the didactic activities system are:

- ❖ To apply a diagnostic test to assess the knowledge of the students.
- ❖ To implement didactic activities during the development of the classes.
- ❖ To evaluate the students' English-speaking skills at the end of each class.

- **Method**

According to the context in which this research is developed, the pedagogical model is applied under the regulations granted by the Ministry of Education, this being the constructivist model. However, teachers can always plan their classes according to the level of their students and have the final decision on how to develop the lessons as long as the educational objective set by the relevant authorities is maintained.

That being said the method being part of the model, contains a range of didactic techniques to be used for teaching the different lessons. In this area, the researchers decided to apply active methods because “Learning is ‘active’ when students are obliged to think critically in order to complete tasks, take responsibility for their own learning, engage personally in their work, and maintain accountability for their participation in class” (Pusey, 2016, p. 1). Thus, active methods allow the improvement of English-speaking skills based on authentic experiences, helping to develop cognitive skills through a didactic activities system.

- **Resources**

It refers to the tools that are implemented for the development of the content of the classes; they are the materials available to the teacher to carry out the planned didactic activities system. In the context of the case study, the resources that stand out are: the Empower A2 book, the Cambridge Learning Management System and the online platform EVEA CEC.

- **Evaluation**

It is the action that allows to verify the students' learning progress; the purpose of the evaluation is to identify the academic needs that require immediate attention. It can take several forms, formative or summative evaluation; objective or subjective. Each of them has the function of guiding the teacher to design activities that are engaging and motivating for the students.

Table 2. Didactic components' systematization of the intervention proposal

	OBJECTIVE	CONTENT	METHOD	RESOURCES	EVALUATION
Implementation of didactic activities for teaching English speaking skills.	To apply a set of didactic activities based on the use of active learning method to improve the English-speaking skills in students of the first level "H" from "Centro de Educación Continua de la Universidad Técnica de Machala" in the year 2021.	"I'm from France"	Active learning method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer • Book Empower A2. • Electronic book. • Cambridge Learning Management System. • Eveja CEC. • Zoom • Slides 	The student is able to relate countries with nationalities using a lexical set of words and present tense of verb "BE" to talk about where people are from.
		"She's a lovely person"			The student is able to produce a spoken description about people they know from other countries using a lexical set of personality adjectives and present simple questions form of verb "BE" correctly.
		"Every day English: What's your surname?"			The student is able to produce short dialogues using the useful expressions and conversation skills in order to ask for and give information in a gym.

Source: Own Elaboration

b) Personal Components

According to the pedagogical model used, the personal components fall on two elements that play key roles in the teaching and learning process. The roles establish the development and participation of both in the course of the lessons, being the teacher and the students.

- **Student**

Thanks to the model being implemented, the student becomes the main actor in the construction of his knowledge and has the opportunity to make his criteria known and to have them taken into account in the planning of the classes. Normally, when the traditional model was applied, the pupil did not have the right to express his opinions or give his thoughts about the teacher because it was taken as incorrect behavior. In addition, the learning experience was "forced" by the student's role, which technically consisted of following the teacher's instructions and "obeying". Currently, by applying an appropriate model, students participate actively, develop their metacognitive, psychological and social skills, and what is more important, their opinions are taken into account when making decisions about the educational process.

- **Teacher**

The teacher plays a role of monitoring the students' performance and furthermore the educators' goal is to guide and mentor students in the acquisition of their own learning. Leaving aside their former role, which was often seen as authoritarian and uncompromising. Nowadays, the reality is that even the teacher learns from his students and through the bond that is created between them, possible solutions to respond to the student's needs become apparent.

Consequently, the role of the teacher is to ensure meaningful learning for his students and to guarantee the objective of education is fulfilled.

c) Implementation Plan

- **Time**

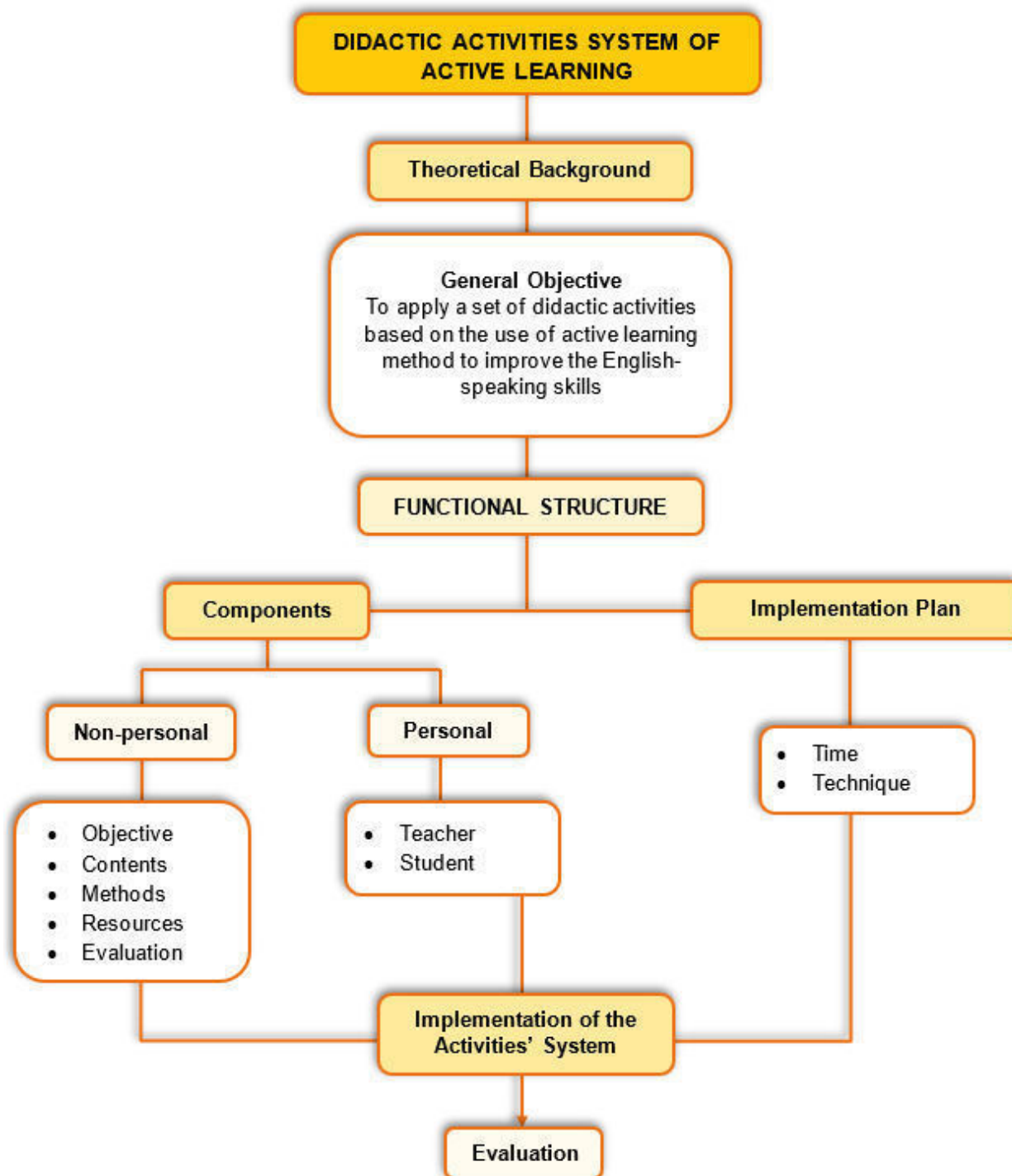
School time is a fundamental factor in the students' learning, in order to carry out actions in accordance with the hygienic-biological environment. School time must be organized in conjunction with the didactic activities to be implemented by the teacher (Martinic, 2015). This is governed by the guidelines established in the curriculum plan established by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador and is aimed at ensuring quality time to generate skills for collaborative work in students.

- **Technique**

The technique is the way by which the objectives established in the proposal are to be accomplished. They will be used in order to promote the active participation of the learners and will be adapted in the didactic activities system according to the learning content established in unit 1 of the Cambridge Empower A2 book. For the case under study the techniques to be applied are: buzz groups, role play and quescussion.

3.3. Functional structure of the didactic activities system.

Figure 2. Functional structure of the didactic activities system



Source: Own Elaboration

3.3.1. Description of the didactic activities system.

This section details the organization of the teaching content within the didactic activities system described in lesson plan 1 (APPENDIX 4), lesson plan 2 (APPENDIX 5) and lesson plan 3 (APPENDIX 6). Which were implemented in unit 1 of the Empower A2 book in the intensive English course at the Centro de Educación Continua carried out with the students in the first level "H", which took place on April 9, 12 and 13, 2021.

CLASS 1

Content: “I’m from France”.

Objective: The student will be able to relate countries with nationalities using a lexical set of words and present tense of verb “BE” to talk about where people are from.

During the lesson

Time: 3:30 hours.

- **Introduction:** 30 minutes.

Presentation of the new topic.

- **Development:** 2 hours.

Didactic activities system related to the topic.

Activity 1: Students participate interactively by naming countries and nationalities.

(APPENDIX 7)

Activity 2: Through the implementation of Buzz Groups didactic technique, students are organized in pairs to analyze selected images and answer the established questions.

Activity 3: Students listen to a conversation then put the content into practice by introducing themselves to a partner.

Activity 4: Students introduce themselves to a partner using the verb to be and the nationalities learned in class. (APPENDIX 8)

- **Conclusion:** 1 hour.

Explanation of the tasks to be completed in the Cambridge and Eveja platform.

Evaluation

Students are able to relate countries to nationalities using a lexical set of words and the present tense of the verb Be to talk about where people are from.

Resources

- Computer
- Book Empower A2.
- Electronic book.
- Cambridge Learning Management System.
- Eveja CEC.
- Zoom
- Slides

CLASS 2

Content: “She’s a lovely person”.

Objective: The student will be able to produce a spoken description about people they know from other countries using a lexical set of personality adjectives and present simple questions form of verb “BE” correctly.

During the lesson

Time: 3:30 hours.

- **Introduction:** 30 minutes.

Presentation of the new topic.

- **Development:** 2 hours.

Didactic activities system related to the topic.

Activity 1: Reinforcement of previous knowledge about countries and nationalities by developing an activity in Kahoot. (APPENDIX 9)

Activity 2: The teacher poses the following question: How do you describe these people? While showing different images and students describe orally using personality adjectives.

Activity 3: The teacher presents the Quescussion technique: students work in pairs answering a question using only questions. (APPENDIX 10)

Activity 4: Students work by writing a description of a person they know well and then record their voice making the description.

- **Conclusion:** 1 hour.

Explanation of the tasks to be completed in the Cambridge and Eves platform.

Evaluation

Students are to be able to produce a spoken description about people they know from other countries using a lexical set of personality adjectives and present simple questions form of verb “BE” correctly.

Resources

- Computer
- Book Empower A2.
- Electronic book.
- Cambridge Learning Management System.
- Eves CEC.
- Zoom
- Slides

CLASS 3

Content: “Everyday English: what's your surname?”.

Objective: The student will be able to produce short dialogues using the useful expressions and conversation skills in order to ask for and give information in a gym.

During the lesson

Time: 3:30 hours.

- **Introduction:** 30 minutes.

Presentation of the new topic

- **Development:** 2 hours.

Didactic activities system related to the topic

Activity 1: Watch a video and respond with the correct information in a participatory manner.

(APPENDIX 11)

Activity 2: Listen to the pronunciation of the time. Observe how the marked consonant clusters are pronounced, then practice telling time.

Activity 3: Role Play: Students work in pairs using their own information to recreate the interaction seen in the video. "Asking for and giving information" (APPENDIX 12).

- **Conclusion:** 1 hour.

Explanation of the tasks to be completed in the Cambridge and Eves platform.

Evaluation

Students are able to produce short dialogues using the useful expressions and conversation skills in order to ask for and give information in a gym.

Resources

- Computer
- Book Empower A2.
- Electronic book.
- Cambridge Learning Management System.
- Eves CEC.
- Zoom
- Slides

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS REVIEW

Based on the results obtained after the implementation of the intervention proposal, it is of fundamental importance to carry out an analysis on the improvement of English-speaking skills. In this chapter the effectiveness of the didactic activities system implemented in the students of the first level "H" of the CEC will be analyzed by contrasting the results with those of authors who have worked in the same field.

4.1. Description of the practical implementation of the didactic activities system.

In the initial diagnosis conducted, it was observed that the ability of English-speaking skills in most students was at a low level. Consequently, some of the difficulties recognized were confusion of verb tenses, the use of fillers and interference of the L1. In order to solve these difficulties, the didactic activities system based on active learning methods was elaborated to improve the aforementioned skill.

Andrade (2017) agrees with the research, expressing that the use of active methods during practice favors students by using not only the content learned in class but also structures that are already part of their previous knowledge, giving them a wider range to express themselves. That is to say, that during practice, English-speaking skills will develop more naturally by providing students with additional opportunities to express their opinions with critical thinking.

Moreover, Maithri & Suresh (2020) state that, by adapting a system of didactic activities based on active learning methods that address the needs of the students, constant participation is

achieved, effectively improving the spoken skill. Therefore, before designing a didactic activities system, it is relevant to take into account the content to be taught so that there are no gaps between the activities and accomplish the desired participatory intervention by the students.

The system implementation was as follows:

According to plan the system was applied on the dates April 9,12 and 13, 2021. Before applying the didactic activities system, the results of the intervention proposal were analyzed. Upon applying it in our condition as researchers immersed in the investigation, the participant observation evidenced improvement in the aforementioned shortcomings, as can be seen in the description of the following lessons.

Lesson 1

To begin with, the teacher introduced the topic: *I'm from France*. Through the expository method and the use of slides, then developed the class explaining the formula of the present simple of the verb to be in its three conjugations. Following, she asked the students key questions to verify the state of comprehension. Once the basic forms of the verb TO BE were understood, the teacher proceeded to implement the didactic activities designed in the system. To carry out this stage of the class, participation was promoted through the Buzz groups technique, facilitating collaborative work in the development of speaking skills. To put into practice the content studied, students engaged in a conversation in pairs and after a set time they introduced their partner to the rest of the group. At the end of the class, the exercises in the student's book were carried out.

Lesson 2

To start the new lesson: *She's a lovely person*, which deals with personality adjectives, the teacher chose to use images to describe them orally. In this way, it was possible to relate the knowledge of the L1 with the learning of the L2. Afterwards, the planned didactic activities were carried out in order for the students to put the acquired knowledge into practice. Working with the whole group, the pupils participated using the Quesdiscussion technique. This activity consisted of answering the question posed by means of another question using the vocabulary and grammar learned. Once the didactic activity was concluded, the teacher gave the corresponding feedback to the learners explaining the moments in which they made mistakes, allowing them to identify those mistakes on their own in future interventions to help them self-correct.

Lesson 3

For the development of the new class Every day English, which focused on learning how to ask for and give information in a particular situation. First, the students watched a video and completed the exercise proposed in the book. Then the teacher taught the pronunciation of a group of consonants /t/ /k/ /k/ to be able to tell the time in English. Once this information was understood, the practice continued by means of didactic activities of speaking skill. Secondly, an activity was carried out with the whole group practicing how to tell the time so that the teacher could make specific corrections in pronunciation. After this, the students were asked to organize themselves in pairs to perform a role play using as an example the video previously seen in which they had to use their personal information. During this exercise, the teacher took an objective position as an observer to allow for a fluid interaction. At the end of the exercise, the teacher gave feedback to each pair.

4.2. Analysis and presentation of results.

The results were obtained through an interview with the teacher (APPENDIX 13) in order to acquire objective information about the application of the didactic activities system with respect to the improvement of English-speaking skills.

According to the interview it was found that despite the fact that the online classes generate some difficulties for the interaction between teacher - student. The didactic activities system allowed a better control by working with the whole group and if necessary, with teams of no more than 4 members. This way, the active participation of all learners was achieved.

Regarding the question of whether the students' participation showed an improvement when implementing the didactic activities system, the teacher expressed that: in fact, most of the students began to participate more actively when working in groups in a collaborative manner.

When asked if the didactic activities system based on active methods influenced the improvement of the students' English-speaking skills. The teacher stated that, due to the immersive practice, the students showed greater motivation to participate. As a result, they improved their ability to express themselves in English and exhibited that they lost their fear of speaking in English.

The subsequent question asked for the teacher's perspective on what she observed in terms of the development of the students' self-awareness when applying the didactic activities system in the practice of English-speaking skills. To which her response was that the students began to notice their mistakes more frequently and corrected themselves on their own. Therefore, students were able to noticeably improve their English-speaking skills by showing conviction when giving answers.

Finally, the interview was closed by requesting the teacher's opinion on whether she considered that active methods should be implemented more often in English speaking lessons. According to the teacher's criteria, the answer was yes, because it allows for greater autonomy and freedom in practice when expressing oneself in English, making interactions more dynamic.

In conclusion, the difficulties identified in the problem under study were successfully overcome. As previously stated, based on the results observed, the didactic activities system based on active learning methods proved to be effective for the improvement of English-speaking skills. As Rajendran & Yunus (2021), declare active methods make it possible to improve English-speaking skills by providing greater control through authentic, learner-centered instruction, providing students with sufficient opportunities to develop the skill in an exploratory manner. Thus, demonstrating an increase in participation by motivating learners to express themselves with critical thinking using all their active vocabulary in English.

CONCLUSION

- The implementation of active methods in the process of teaching and learning English for the development of speaking skills was theoretically supported as a component that promotes the use of new knowledge immediately by making students think more often in the target language to develop comprehension and long-term memory. This in turn, favors the improvement of social and collaborative skills through the practice of English-speaking skills by creating concrete experiences in the students' environment, developing inclusion, respect for the thinking of others and ultimately improving language learning.
- The initial diagnostic of the students in the first level "H" of the Centro de Educación Continua helped identify the problems present in the English-speaking skill determining the need for a didactic activities system using active methods to be implemented in the lessons, contributing to the improvement of the skill.
- A didactic activities system was designed using active methods that promote the use not only of the content learned in class but also of structures that are already part of their prior knowledge, giving them a wider range to express themselves, promoting student interaction with their peers and as well as with the teacher.
- The results of the research confirmed that the implementation of the didactic activities system methods improved English speaking skills, all of which took place in a more natural and dynamic context.

RECOMENDATIONS

- The frequent use of active methods is recommended because they allow learning by not requiring material resources on the part of the students and the feasibility of being applied in large, small and individual groups, facilitating teacher-student interaction.
- It is suggested to carry out further research focusing on English-speaking skills and specifically on the use of methods aimed at its intelligibility.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participant Observation Guide

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION GUIDE

Scale

Levels	Observation
Good	Always
Regular	Sometimes
Poor	Rarely

UNIT OF ANALYSIS: English Speaking skills.	
Category: Describes feelings, reactions, and opinions.	
The student <i>always</i> uses basic verb tenses correctly when making descriptions in spoken English.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> uses basic verb tenses correctly when making descriptions in spoken English.	
The student <i>rarely</i> uses basic verb tenses correctly when making descriptions in spoken English.	
The student <i>always</i> makes self-corrections to their utterances when using the English language.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> makes self-corrections to their utterances when using the English language.	
The student <i>rarely</i> makes self-corrections to their utterances when using the English language.	
Category: Narrates feelings, reactions and opinions.	
The student is <i>always</i> able to respond accordingly to what is asked of them during practice of English-speaking skills.	
The student is <i>sometimes</i> able to respond accordingly to what is asked of them during practice of English-speaking skills.	
The student is <i>rarely</i> able to respond accordingly to what is asked of them during practice of English-speaking skills.	
The student <i>always</i> utilizes appropriate vocabulary during the practice of English	

language speaking skills.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> utilizes appropriate vocabulary during the practice of English language speaking skills.	
The student <i>rarely</i> utilizes appropriate vocabulary during the practice of English language speaking skills.	
Category: Discusses feelings, reactions and opinions.	
The student <i>always</i> demonstrates motivation to support their peers in practicing speaking activities in English.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> demonstrates motivation to support their peers in practicing speaking activities in English.	
The student <i>rarely</i> demonstrates motivation to support their peers in practicing speaking activities in English.	
Category: Explains feelings, reactions and opinions.	
The student <i>always</i> engages by asking questions in English about the topics developed in the class.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> engages by asking questions in English about the topics developed in the class.	
The student <i>rarely</i> engages by asking questions in English about the topics developed in the class.	
Category: Expresses themselves in an intelligible manner during the English-speaking practice activities.	
The student <i>always</i> expresses themselves in an intelligible manner during the English-speaking practice activities.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> expresses themselves in an intelligible manner during the English-speaking practice activities.	
The student <i>rarely</i> expresses themselves in an intelligible manner during the English-speaking practice activities.	
Category: Enunciates their ideas with appropriate intonation during English speaking practice.	
The student <i>always</i> enunciates their ideas with appropriate intonation during English speaking practice.	
The student <i>sometimes</i> enunciates their ideas with appropriate intonation during English speaking practice.	
The student <i>rarely</i> enunciates their ideas with appropriate intonation during English speaking practice.	

Appendix 2: Diagnostic Test



EDUCACIÓN
CONTINUA

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE MACHALA

Calidad. Permanencia y Calidad

CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA
CENTRO DE IDIOMAS



Diagnostic Test - Speaking Test

Level A2: (KET)

Name:

Date:

Class:

Score

Questions for the students.

1. Hello. How are you today?
2. What's your name?
3. Can you spell it for me?
4. How old are you?
5. Where are you from?
6. Do you work or study?
7. What are you studying? Why? / What is your job? Why?
8. Do you like it there? Why (not)?
9. What do you normally do at the weekend?
10. Tell me something about you?

Appendix 3: Semi structured Interview with the Teacher.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER.

Objective: To know the teacher's perspective on the students' proficiency and use of English-speaking skills.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS: English Speaking skills.

Category 1: Describes feelings, reactions, and opinions.

- a. Do you think that your students know how to correctly state in simple terms what they know about their environment?
- b. Do your students demonstrate cognitive ability in rectifying their statements according to what they have learned in class?

Category 2: Narrates feelings, reactions and opinions.

- c. Do your students respond accordingly to what is asked of them during class activities to provide basic information about their personal history?
- d. In your opinion, do your students use the appropriate vocabulary in class during the speaking practice?



Category 3: Discusses feelings, reactions and opinions.

- e. How do you consider the performance of your students during speaking practice?
- f. Do you deem your students capable of asking and answering questions about elementary situations when practicing speaking skills?



Category 4: Explains feelings, reactions and opinions.

- g. What difficulties in their speech your students encounter when stating their feelings, reactions, and opinions during lessons?
- h. From your perspective, do your students feel comfortable exchanging opinions during speaking activities in English?



Appendix 4: Class Plan 1

 EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA		UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE MACHALA <i>"Calidad, Pertinencia y Calidez"</i> CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA CENTRO DE IDIOMAS Lesson Plan No. 1			
CENTRO DE IDIOMAS		LANGUAGE: English		LEVEL: 1IN	
UNIT No.: 1. PEOPLE. (pg. 9-18)		TOPIC: Lesson "1A" I'm from France" (pp. 9-11)		APPROACH: Communicative METHODS: Suggestopedia, Sheltered Instruction, Socratic Method, Active Method LESSON TIME: 3:30 Hrs.	
TEACHER: Nicole Analuisa, Adriana Flores		PROBLEM: The students need ability to express possessions.			
OBJECTIVE: SWBAT relate countries with nationalities using a lexical set of words and present tense of verb "Be" to talk about where people are from.					
PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE: Subject pronouns. Differentiate singular and plural subjects			DATE: Friday, April 9th 2021		WEEK ONE
SYSTEM OF CONTENTS	STAGES	ACTIVITIES	METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	ON LINE TEACHING RESOURCES	ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS
KNOWLEDGE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary. Countries and nationalities. Grammar. Present simple of verb Be. SKILLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking and writing VALUES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the different cultures and nationalities. 	INTRODUCTION (0:30 hour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings Check the list Present the topic Warm up. Elicit information about nationalities of famous people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generation of ideas Share opinions Expositive Technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal computer Power point slides presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' Participation and attention.
	DEVELOPMENT (2 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing grammar. Simple present of verb BE. Conceptualize the uses of AM/IS/ARE Negative forms. ISN'T/ AREN'T Complete a crossword of countries and nationalities. Buzz Groups: In groups, look at the picture and answer the questions. What different countries are the people from? Listen to a conversation and then introduce yourself to a classmate. Introduce your classmate to the class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active method with the whole class participation. Buzz Groups technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Meet. Digital empower presentation plus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the sentences with verb BE grammatically correct.
	CONCLUSIONS (1 hour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematize the class Develop exercises in the notebooks Develop grammar exercises on page 129/132 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in groups Compare answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply: Students carry out a speaking activity. Fluency and accuracy. EVA Forum. Write sentences using countries and nationalities.

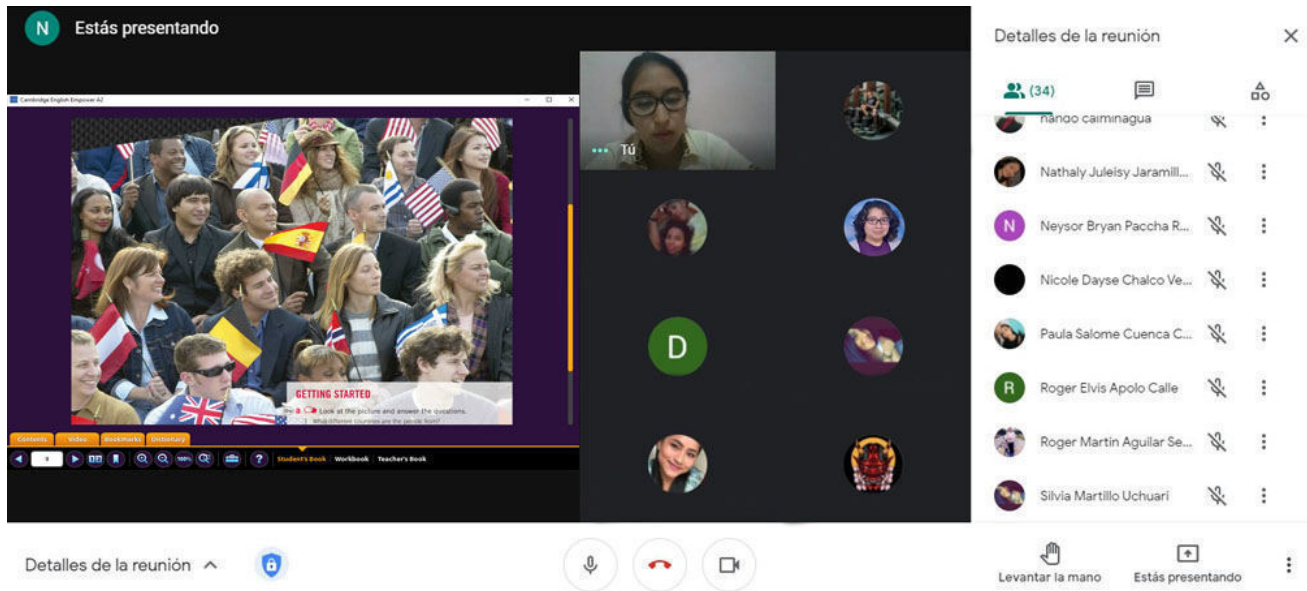
Appendix 5: Class Plan 2

 EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA		UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE MACHALA <i>"Calidad, Pertinencia y Calidez"</i> CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA CENTRO DE IDIOMAS Lesson Plan No. 2				
CENTRO DE IDIOMAS		LANGUAGE: English		LEVEL: 1IN		
UNIT No.: 1. PEOPLE. (pg. 9-18)		TOPIC: Lesson "1B" She's a lovely person" (pp. 12-13)		APPROACH: Communicative METHODS: Suggestopedia, Sheltered Instruction, Socratic Method, Active Method. LESSON TIME: 3:30 Hrs.		
TEACHER: Nicole Analuisa, Adriana Flores.		PROBLEM: The students need to learn the correct position of the adjectives.				
OBJECTIVE: SWBAT produce a spoken description about people they know from other countries using a lexical set of personality adjectives and Present simple question form of verb "BE" correctly.						
PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE: Uses of Present tense of BE in affirmative and negative form.			DATE: Monday, April 12th 2021		WEEK TWO	
SYSTEM OF CONTENTS	STAGES	ACTIVITIES	METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	ON LINE TEACHING RESOURCES	ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS	
KNOWLEDGE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary. Personality adjectives. Grammar. Present simple of verb Be. Affirmative and negative forms. SKILLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about countries and nationalities. Use the correct forms of verb Be. In affirmative and negative statements expression accordingly. VALUES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the different cultures and nationalities. 	INTRODUCTION (0:30 hour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings. Check the list. Present the topic Warm up. Play Kahoot. With countries and nationalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generation of ideas. Share opinions. Expositive Technique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal computer. Zoom meeting. Power point slides presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write vocabulary related with personality adjectives. 	
	DEVELOPMENT (2 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using pictures form sentences using the correct personality adjectives. How would you describe these people? Students answer using personality adjectives. Quescussion: Work only using questions to give answers. What is he/she like? Discuss the question as a class and write student's ideas on the zoom chat. Write a short description using pictures of friends then record yourself talking about the people you know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active method with the whole participation. Quescussion technique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Meet. Digital empower presentation plus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the sentences using the correct form of verb Be. 	
	CONCLUSIONS (1 hour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematize the class Develop exercises in the notebooks Practice grammar focus pág. 136. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in groups. Compare answers. Perform a short dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a short Dialogue using adjectives speaking fluently. Complete a questionnaire in EVA platform. 	

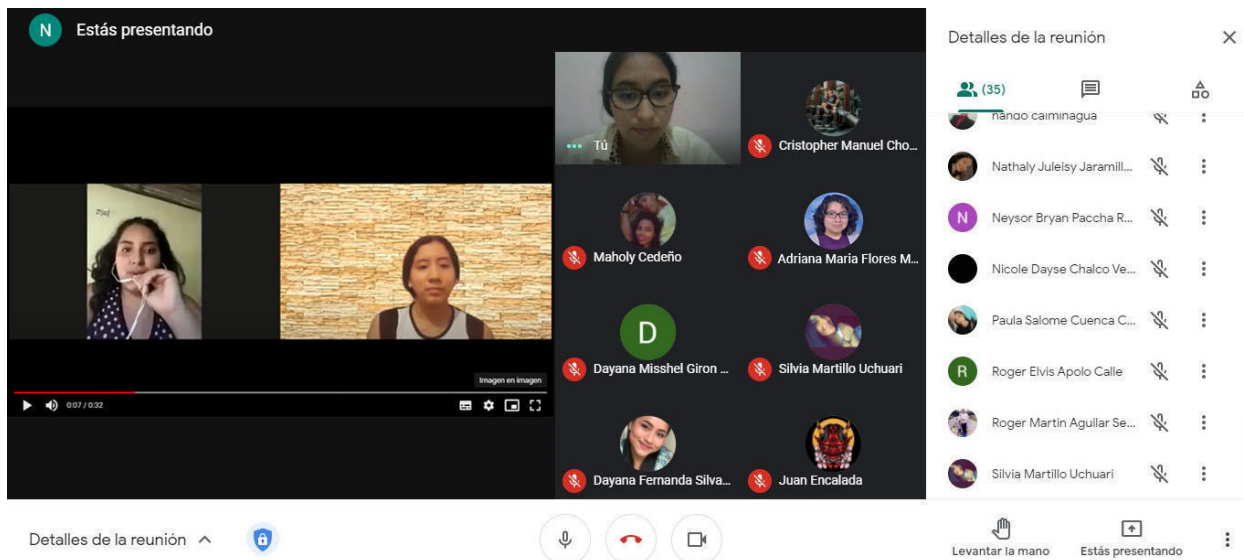
Appendix 6: Class Plan 3

 EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA		UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE MACHALA <i>"Calidad, Pertinencia y Calidez"</i> CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA CENTRO DE IDIOMAS Lesson Plan No. 3			
CENTRO DE IDIOMAS		LANGUAGE: English		LEVEL: 1IN	
UNIT No.: 1- PEOPLE (pag. 9-18)		TOPIC: Lesson 1C. "Every day English" (pp. 14-15)		APPROACH: Communicative METHODS: Suggestopedia, Sheltered Instruction, Socratic Method, Active Method. LESSON TIME: 3:30 Hrs.	
TEACHER: Nicole Analuisa, Adriana Flores		PROBLEM: The students need to learn how to ask for and give information in a particular situation.			
OBJECTIVE: SWBAT produce short dialogues using the useful expressions and conversation skills in order to ask for and give information in a gym.					
PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE: Present tense of verb Be and personality adjectives.			DATE: Tuesday, April 13 th 2021		WEEK TWO
SYSTEM OF CONTENTS	STAGES	ACTIVITIES	METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	ON LINE TEACHING RESOURCES	ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS
KNOWLEDGE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary. Useful expressions. Pronunciation. Consonant group sound. /t/ /k/ /k/	INTRODUCTION (0:30 hour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings. Check the list. Present the new topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generation of ideas. Share opinions. Expositive technique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower presentation plus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct pronunciation of the expressions given.
	DEVELOPMENT (2 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students. Watch a video and complete the exercises with the information required. Listen to the time. Notice how the marked consonant groups are pronounced. Practice telling the time to a partner. Role play: In pairs, practice the conversation in 2d. Use your own surname. Take turns being A and B. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active method with the whole participation. Role play technique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Meet. Slide's presentation. Digital Empower presentation plus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and complete the conversation.
	CONCLUSIONS (1 hour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking understanding. Practice Cambridge platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare answers. Perform a short dialogue in pairs using your personal information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EVA platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Useful Language.
SKILLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking. Perform a conversation in a gym. 					
VALUES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal opinions about people. Shows interest for other cultures. 					

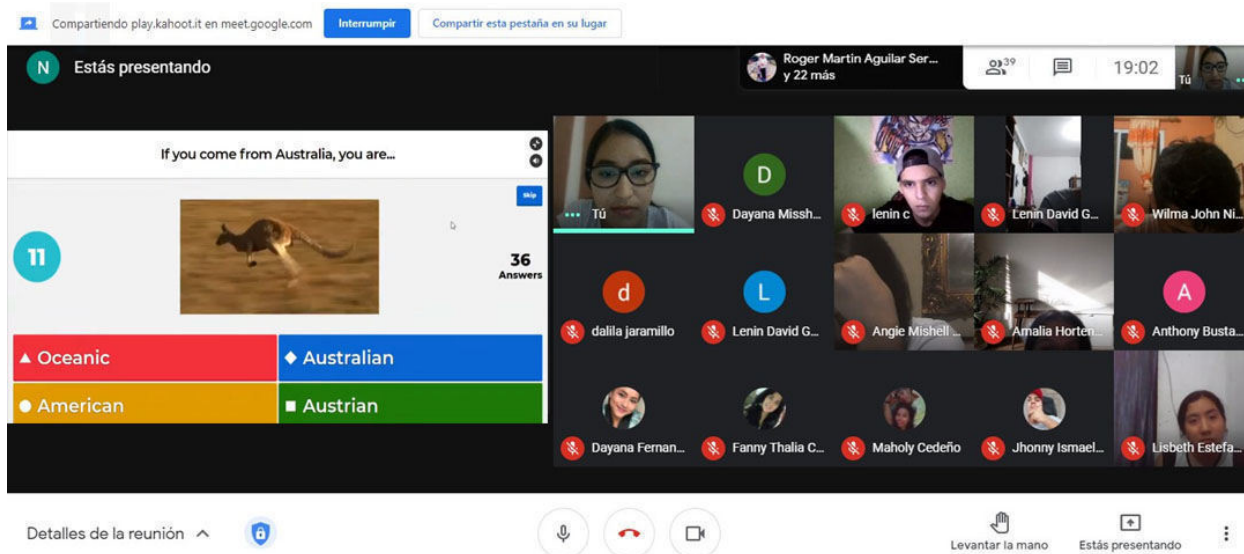
Appendix 7



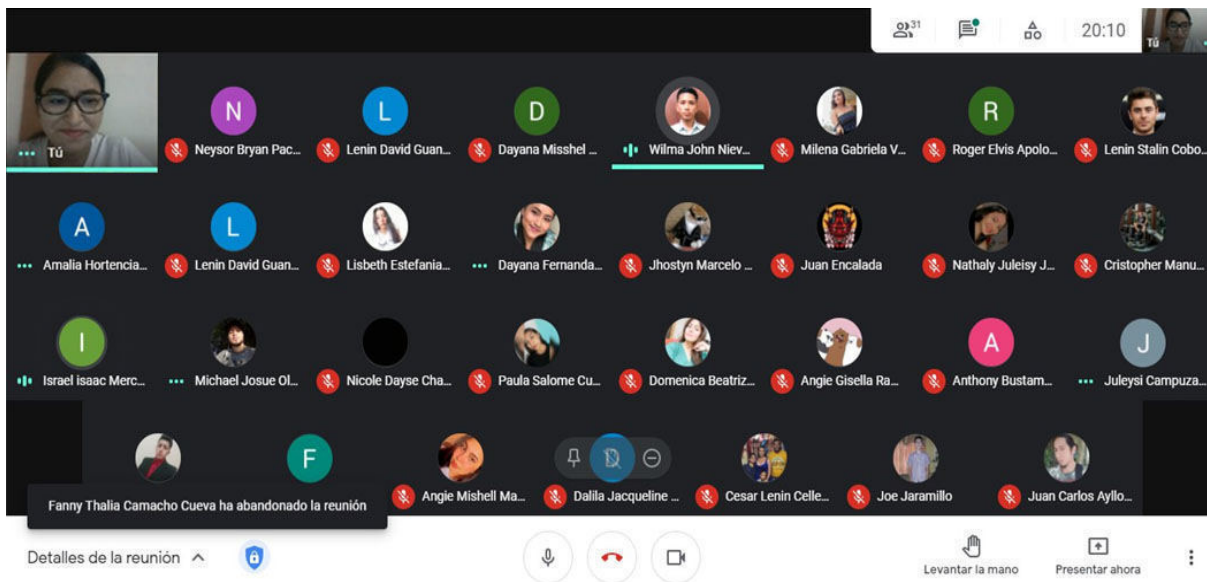
Appendix 8



Appendix 9



Appendix 10



Appendix 11

Estás presentando

Domenica Beatriz Figueroa T... y 11 más

33 19:20 TÚ

USEFUL LANGUAGE
Asking for and giving information

Who says sentences 1-7 at a gym: the receptionist (R) or a visitor (V)?

1. What time's the next class? a. Seymour.
2. And what's your address? b. You're welcome.
3. How can I help? c. S-E-Y-M-O-U-R
4. Thanks for your help. d. It's at twenty past seven.
5. Can you spell that, please? e. It's in Studio 1.
6. And where's the class? f. I'd like to do a fitness class.
7. What's your surname? g. 18 New Street.

Match 1-7 with a-g. Listen and check.

Underline the correct answers.

1. It's in ten past four / Room 6.
2. It's at eight o'clock / Studio 4.

In pairs, practise the conversation in 2d. Use your own surname. Take turns being A and B.

Detalles de la reunión

Levantar la mano Estás presentando

Appendix 12

Estás presentando

Israel Isaac Merchan contr... y 22 más

39 21:04 TÚ

Detalles de la reunión

Levantar la mano Estás presentando

Appendix 13: Interview with the teacher after the application of the system.

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS.

Objective: To provide validity to the didactic activities system implemented in class from the teacher's perspective.

- ❖ What difficulties did you encounter when implementing the didactic activities system based on active methods through the online modality during the English classes?
- ❖ Do you think that the planned activities allowed for greater student participation?
- ❖ In your opinion, did the active methods system influence the improvement of English-speaking skills?
- ❖ According to your perspective, did the didactic activities system contribute to the development of self-awareness of your students when they exchanged opinions during the English-speaking practice?
- ❖ Do you think that active methods should be implemented more often in English speaking classes?