Influencia de recursos impresos auténticos en el desarrollo de la destreza del habla

Influence of authentic printed resources in learners' speaking skills development

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Resumen: El objetivo de este documento académico es presentar los resultados obtenidos en un estudio llevado a cabo en la Universidad Técnica de Ambato para determinar la influencia de los "recursos impresos auténticos" en el desarrollo de la destreza del habla. La destreza del habla en una lengua extranjera es considerada como un reto que los estudiantes en diferentes etapas en el sistema educativo ecuatoriano deben lidiar. Al inicio del estudio dos grupos fueron seleccionados: grupo experimental y de control. Una pre-prueba seleccionada de acuerdo con el nivel de inglés de los participantes, fue aplicada en los grupos designados para determinar su desarrollo en la destreza del habla. Al final del experimento los participantes de ambos grupos tomaron una post-prueba para verificar su avance. Después de la validación de los resultados la verificación de la hipótesis fue llevada a cabo a través vez de la prueba t- de estudiante. Los datos recolectados y los logros alcanzados fueron presentados en figuras y tablas, para demostrar que los materiales auténticos impresos influyen y promueven el desarrollo de la destreza del habla. Además, los estudiantes participaron activamente, incrementando el nivel de interacción en el aula de clase usando palabras en inglés aprendidas durante las clases experimentales.

Palabras clave: Materiales impresos auténticos, destreza del habla, interacción.

Abstract: The aim of this paper was to present the results obtained in a study carried out to determine the influence of "authentic printed resources" on the development of speaking skills at the Universidad Técnica de Ambato. The speaking skills in a foreign language is considered as a challenge that students in different stages in Ecuadorian educational system must deal. At the beginning of the study two groups were chosen: experimental and control group. A targeted pre-test in accordance with participants' English level, was applied in the designated groups to ascertain their speaking skills development. At the end of the experiment the participants of both groups took a post-test to verify their advance. After the validation of the results the verification of the hypothesis was carried out through the student t-test. The data collected and the achievements made were presented in figures and tables, to demonstrate that authentic printed materials influence and promote the development of speaking skills. Furthermore, the students participated actively, increasing the interaction level in the classroom using English words learned during the experimental classes.

Keywords: Authentic printed materials, speaking skills, interaction.

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of a foreign language presents diversity difficulties in educational institutions, especially in countries with curricula that are adapted from other countries. This is the usual situation in Ecuador. During the last decades, the dependencies in charge of the education system at different levels have imposed a variety of changes to facilitate the learning process. Nevertheless, the changes have not been enough giving as result learners with limited vocabulary and unable to communicate fluently.

The number of hour class has always been a controversial topic, around ten years ago students in public institutions completed 1500 hours, this notable number would ensure that students have developed the underlying skills in English before starting their superior studies. However, some learners only got started levels with a limited vocabulary, which includes simple isolated words that preclude fluid communication.

This situation is still latent, and it can be checked with the results of previous studies. Education First ranking 2016 published a report entitled Ecuador presents a low English level (2015, February 11), in which Ecuador is in number 35th among all the countries in Latin America with a deficient level of English. At the same line, another article entitled Scholarship opportunity abroad for Ecuadorians (2016, January 31), verified the data.

The Ministry of Education regulates the school system at the pre-school and high school level. It has established that students must complete the pre-intermediate English level when learners conclude their studies, but most of them only reached started and elementary levels. In higher education, the regulations are established in the Reglamento de Régimen Académico, which demands that learners achieve B1 Intermediate English level to meet graduation requirements. Unfortunately, students do not complete the regulation because they start their language studies at basic levels.

This condition prevents that students developed the fundamental skills in English and disengaged them in the learning process. Many academics discuss what skills are harder to develop.

In this sense, Walker (2014), of Manchester Metropolitan University, stated the most difficult skills to develop are listening and speaking because both receptive skills incorporate distinct tones, accents, and pronunciation than vary remarkably from the way that the expressions are printed. Speaking skill also includes additional components related to information decoding, comprehension, critical thinking, and criteria.

Reinforcing this perception, the website *Ecuador Inmediato.com* stated that the main problem among students in higher public educational institutions is speaking, because the context inside and outside classrooms prevents oral production and interaction. Traditional teaching process, unsuccessfully textbooks adapted to our educational environment, outdated and repetitive strategies, methodologies, and supplies have been mentioned as causes of the weak outcomes.

This situation implies that students lose interest in learning. Although they have completed the required levels, they suffer a setback in the development of communicative skills. The labor demands are greater and strict, so it is impossible to contemplate a reduction in English levels of study. On the other hand, the domain of foreign languages is essential for getting raking jobs, getting scholarships to study abroad, and promotions in work; this contributes to improving the economic situation and social development.

According to Glas (2008), English is the most useful language for doing business around the world. However, being out of the native context makes learning difficult, so the appropriate academic setting will give learners the opportunity to use the language in real situations and develop the speaking skills respecting their natural pacing.

A research conducted by English First (EF) English Proficiency Index (EPI) tested 132.493 students in public institutions and located Ecuador in the last places at the level of Latin Americana with 49 points over 100 (2017, November 8). The lowest outcomes confirmed that students have problems asking and answering questions in simple conversations. To engage learners to use English, it is fundamental to design and apply new elements and

strategies, create opportunities and spaces to increase students' speaking skill development.

Some preliminary works contributed to this study with valuable information and certain lineaments. A research implemented by Gilmore (2011) with the title: *I prefer not text: developing Japanese learners' communicative competence with authentic materials*. The data gathered during the study contributed to the determination of the impact of authentic printed supplies in the development of speaking skills at the University of Tokyo. Students were exposed to real situations, in which they must communicate with others giving their opinion about different topics.

The academics concluded that the authentic resources applied during the experimental classes facilitated the development of extra-linguistic skills through speaking strategies in the learning process. Also, the study demonstrates the feasibility of the application of materials designed for native speakers.

Another significant contribution was the study done in the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador entitled: *How can reading authentic material such as short stories, articles and magazines successfully help to teach English in young adult EFL classrooms* by Loaiza (2011). The research highlighted the positive effect that new printed materials had over young adult learners and their predisposition to work in class. The content of the articles caught students' attention, encouraging them to participate in debates after each reading. The author claimed that it is possible to increase communication in class through meaningful readings.

There are several studies around the world that confirm the advantages of authentic papers. Rogers and Medley (1988), with their work entitled *Language with purpose: Using Authentic Materials in the Foreign Language Classroom,* determined the correlation between instructional processes carried out in classes and authentic supplies. The author concluded that real context could expand students' knowledge about native countries and allow them to express criteria about diverse topics, including proper examples and compare different situations.

The conclusions of the study dictate that learners can develop speaking skills through authentic printed materials and, at the same time, increase their knowledge about different cultural aspects. The participants in the study did not present

issues to use original sources. On the contrary, they demonstrated a high degree of disposition because the information applied was not included in their textbooks.

Cano (2013) examined the advantages and disadvantages of authentic sources. The study established some pros such as original resources are easy to get, the teacher can apply innovative activities, learners are included as an essential part in the learning procedure, and students are exposed to real vocabulary. Among the most notable cons: sometimes teachers require modifying the material to adapt it to the learners' aims, students can disengage if the material is extensive, teachers need extra time to revise the content and prepare the activities.

Moral (2010), examined the application of authentic written materials in English foreign language classrooms to find out the benefits in the learning procedure. The most relevant conclusions pointed by the author were related to the student's participation and creativity because, during his study, learners modified the endings, summarize the information, identify the main ideas, guess the meaning of new words in context and increase their communicative skills. Also, the study presented a list of the main types of authentic supplies that can be used in class, the same ones that include some activities designed and suggested by the author. At the end of the study, an overall evaluation was carried out to identify the most important advantages and disadvantages during the application of these elements.

The study confirmed that the application of authentic sources presents more advantages than disadvantages in the teaching-learning process. Learners can increase their creativity and apply different reading strategies to identify the main points.

METHODOLOGY

BASIC METHOD RESEARCH

The quasi-experimental method was applied in the study to select the groups avoiding randomness. The application of this research permitted to gather relevant information considering different perspectives; the facts collected were used to establish some factors that influence the issue. The information gathered was measured through numerical data, which proved the relationship between the variables and

allowed the manipulation of the independent variable while the dependent was measured.

The comparison between the experimental and control group's results was feasible. It helped to get reliable evidence to verify the level of influence of authentic printed supplies on speaking skills development.

Documentary research

Briggs, Coleman, and Morrison (2012) mentioned that documentary research permits to know information produced in the past about the variables so academics can make a comparison between the past effects and results with the updated information about the problem.

The application of this method allowed the examination of scientific facts, which give the study a broad perspective, considering the point of view of well-known researchers in the teaching-learning process. Taking into consideration the authors' perspective, a critical evaluation was done to verify the accuracy of the information and data, which gave a high level of guarantee in a certain way of the quality of the theoretical foundation based on a structured and sequential analysis of empirical material.

Field research

Burgess (1990), stated that field research is considered a pragmatist method because it requires the application of inquiry strategies. Those strategies for consultation facilitate to obtain direct answers from the participants in a study. In this regard, the author suggests continuous monitoring through the observational process and the application of formal and informal interviews.

During the study, all the available data from different sources was gathered directly from the participants where the issue took place. The author's perspective helped to maintain the control of the variables without any influence to have an extensive range of information, which facilitated the work made on the theoretical framework.

Also, it is essential to mention that the application of this method supported the study with a genuine perspective about the issue, participants' perception of the problem,

consequences, and potential solutions. The study included participants' observation, design and application of surveys, and information analysis.

Explanatory research

To provide theory-based justification, explanatory research was applied during the study. Hedstrom (2004) cites that this type of research is based on experimental data using a variety type of questions to get an accurate description of the issue.

Applying this type of method was uncomplicated to explain the relationship between variables, the explanation described contents and phenomena, and how the hypothesis was verified at the end of the study, which gave a response to the natural, contextual, and community causes. The full gather of data related to the issue revealed the reason that produces the presence of the insufficient development of speaking skills.

Level of type of research

Explaining level

Rousseau (1985), cited that explaining level considers pragmatic factors that intervene in a study that other methods do not include.

This method includes the analysis of the conditions between the variables and evident explanations for different inquiries. Moreover, the author stated that the preferences in the explanations are not accepted in this method.

This type of research facilitated the explanation of the behavior of variables in certain situations and their performance in determining contexts; it reinforced the analysis of the cause of the effect of the problem.

Application level

The application level is centered to evaluate, analyze, and solve collective and practical problems that influence real-life environments (Guthrie, 2010). The author also mentioned that this method intervenes straight on the issue and measure the efficiency of the independent variable during the study. The study aimed to provide a solution to the issue, so this method was applied. Sometimes, it intervened directly on the

issue, which results from the point to assess the degree of efficiency of the independent variable, through the processes used.

Correlational level

The correlational level permits academics to compare, analyze, and differentiate the data collected of two groups. It provides a significant explanation of the findings obtained (Rosenthal, Rosnow, & Rubin, 2000).

The method was applied in the study because it consents the measurement of the hypothesis in a wide range of techniques to obtain the correct level of significance, it provides substantial results to accept or reject the hypothesis established.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Some techniques were applied during the study to gather full information that contributed to the validation and verification of the results. Some steps were taken, which include: the selection of the population and measurement instruments, design, validation, and application of a survey.

Survey technique

The Likert scale was used in the survey design, facilitating the verification of the application of authentic printed resources among the population selected. During the survey, participants did not feel pressured and answer the questions honestly. The study was employed to learners and teachers to identify the practicability of using original papers made to native speakers in class. Previously, the survey was reviewed, approved, and validated by the person in charge of academic coordination.

Observation

To monitor the students' progress, an observational scheme was designed previously; it helped to detect difficulties and worries during the study. Observational classes made it possible to maintain immediate contact with the participants to have a broad vision of the materials over the dependent variable.

Experimental classes

To demonstrate the effect of original printed papers on students' speaking skills development, some experimental classes were put into practice in the experimental group. The classes were based on the communicative activities designed in a handbook. To determine the learners' speaking English level, a pre-test was applied at the beginning of the study and a post-test at the end. In control, the experimental classes were not applied because it was used only to compare results.

ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED

Once the data and information gathering stage was completed, the following steps were carried out:

- A critical examination of the information gathered to reject contradictory and outdated data.

- The information verified was organized through a template.

- Statistical procedures were applied to tabulate the results.

- Finally, the results obtained were plotted.

RESULTS

The results of the surveys revealed participants' perceptions about the application of original printed materials activities in class and its level of influence on students' speaking skills advancement.

Two surveys were applied, one for teachers and another one for students. Each survey contained six statements, estimating the variables established. The responses were evaluated through the Likert scale. The results obtained established the respondents' tendency about original supplies.

Figure 1: *Percentage of influence of authentic written material on speaking skills development.*
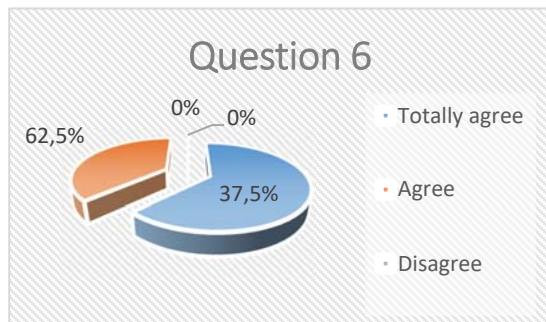
Source: Data compiled by authors based on Orbea (2018).

The statement was related to the level of influence on skills development. The findings in question 6 demonstrated that respondents completely agree that original printed resources can influence the speaking skills development

Table 1: *Comparison between pre-test and post-test results in the experimental group.*
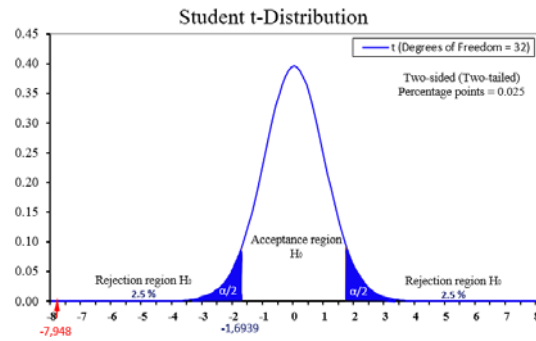
Paired sample statistics

		Mean	N°	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Par 1	Total Pre-test	7,85	33	2,906	,506
	Total Post-test	12,88	33	2,233	,389

Source: Compiled by authors on data based on Orbea (2018).

Through the analysis of the results of the pre-test and a post-test before and after the application of the experimental lessons, it was possible to establish the relationship between

the variables through a statistical hypothesis test, which reflects an increase in the results obtained in the post-test applied.

Figure 2: *Level of influence of authentic written supplies in experimental group.*

Source: Compiled by authors based on Orbea (2018).

The distribution level indicates an increase in speaking skills development, which allows confirming the positive influence on the experimental group.

Table 2: *Comparison between pre-test and post-test outturn in the control group.*

Paired sample statistics

		Mean	N°	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Par 1	Total Pre-test	8,10	29	3,384	,628
	Total Post-test	9,59	29	2,758	,512

Source: Data compiled by authors based on Orbea (2028).

The outcomes showed the control group had a low increase in comparison between pre-test and the post-test.

Figure 3: *Percentage of influence of authentic written supplies in the control group.*
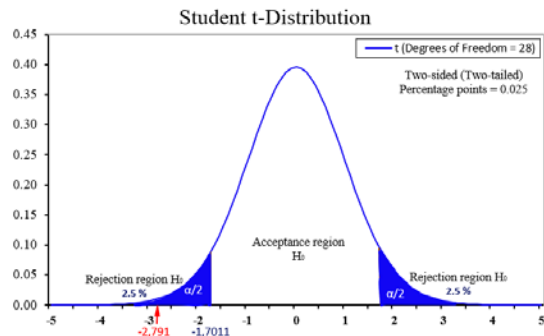
Source: Compiled data by authors based on Orbea (2018).

After examining the outcomes obtained, through the submission of the student t-test between experimental and control groups, it was possible to accomplish that there was a substantial level of influence of authentic printed supplies over the development in speaking skills put into practice in the experimental classes designed with different activities planned. It confirms that the tools mentioned encouraged interaction among students. The objectives established at the beginning of the study were accomplished, so the null hypothesis was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained build on existing evidence of the influence of authentic printed resources on the students' speaking skills development in higher education if the materials applied contained different information that leaves the traditional educational context to which the learners are accustomed.

The results were similar to those found in the study conducted by Gilmore (2011), in the University of Tokyo about developing Japanese learners' communicative competence with authentic papers, in which the experimental group outperformed the control group, suggesting that authentic written materials were more

operative in developing a broader type of communicative competences.

The experiment provides new insights into the relationship between language-learning and real contents, without neglecting the students' books. To expand the use of these resources in regular classes, teachers must be aware of the responsibility of applying new teaching techniques and materials to facilitate the learning and use of a foreign language.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the outcomes obtained and the entire process carried out during the study, the following findings were established:

- Teachers and students believed that the textbook applied in their English classes is not enough in the teaching-learning process to acquire a foreign language. The answers of the respondents demonstrated their predisposition to be exposed to real materials to achieve the outlying skills.

- Unfortunately, the application of real printed materials is not common in the Ecuadorian educational context. However, the teachers requested are already aware that it is essential to design innovative teaching strategies and adopt new resources to promote real and fluid conversations.

- The respondents recognized the advantages that original papers offer to apprentices: increase students' terminology, promote communication in the classroom, and learners are exposed to real information. Also, some disadvantages were identified, such as time pressure to complete the content of the textbooks, difficulties to download original papers from the internet, and rejection to design new activities.

- According to the results obtained with the application of student t-test, the experimental group showed an exceptional level of increase in its speaking skills development, compared to the control group. Besides, those results established,

the real printed resources promote communication in the classrooms.

The participants in the study were exposed the first time to original papers. However, they did not present any inconvenience with the lexicon; on the contrary, they practiced how to guess the meaning in context.

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