ACTIVE METHODOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPING ORAL FLUENCY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Metodologías activas para el desarrollo de la fluidez oral en el aprendizaje del inglés en la educación superior

Metodologias ativas para o desenvolvimento da fluência oral na aprendizagem do inglês no ensino superior

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The development of oral fluency in English is an essential communicative competence in higher education, but it is often hindered by affective factors and traditional methodologies. This study aimed to analyze the influence of active methodologies on the development of oral fluency in English language learning at a public university in Ecuador. Materials and methods: A mixed-methods design with a descriptive scope was used. The sample consisted of 41 first-year students in the Language Pedagogy program and 3 teachers with more than 10 years of experience. Classroom observation forms (in 5 sessions) and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers. Results: The observations revealed a consistent implementation of active methodologies (project-based learning, gamification, flipped classroom, role-playing, and cooperative learning) in 100% of the sessions, along with the use of technological resources that fostered participation. The interviews indicated that teachers perceive these methodologies as beneficial for stimulating spontaneous speech, increasing communicative confidence, and reducing anxiety. Challenges such as fear of making mistakes and vocabulary limitations were identified. Discussion: The findings confirm that the integration of active methodologies, supported by technological resources and specific feedback, creates dynamic environments that promote continuous oral practice and the development of fluency, aligning with the specialized literature. Conclusions: It is concluded that active methodologies constitute an effective pedagogical approach for strengthening oral fluency in English in higher education. Future research that includes students' perceptions is recommended.
Keywords: active methodologies, oral fluency, English language learning, higher education, communicative competence.

RESUMEN

Introducción: El desarrollo de la fluidez oral en inglés es una competencia comunicativa esencial en la educación superior, pero a menudo se ve obstaculizado por factores afectivos y metodologías tradicionales. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar la influencia de las metodologías activas en el desarrollo de la fluidez oral en el aprendizaje del inglés en una universidad pública ecuatoriana. Materiales y métodos: Se empleó un diseño mixto con alcance descriptivo. La muestra consistió en 41 estudiantes de primer nivel de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas y 3 docentes con más de 10 años de experiencia. Se aplicaron fichas de observación de clases (en 5 sesiones) y entrevistas semiestructuradas a los docentes. Resultados: Las observaciones revelaron una implementación consistente de metodologías activas (aprendizaje basado en proyectos, gamificación, aula invertida, juego de roles y aprendizaje cooperativo) en el 100% de las sesiones, junto

con el uso de recursos tecnológicos que fomentaron la participación. Las entrevistas indicaron que los docentes perciben estas metodologías como beneficiosas para estimular el habla espontánea, aumentar la confianza comunicativa y reducir la ansiedad. Se identificaron desafíos como el miedo al error y las limitaciones de vocabulario. Discusión: Los hallazgos confirman que la integración de metodologías activas, apoyadas en recursos tecnológicos y retroalimentación específica, crea entornos dinámicos que favorecen la práctica oral continua y el desarrollo de la fluidez, alineándose con la literatura especializada. Conclusiones: Se concluye que las metodologías activas constituyen un enfoque pedagógico efectivo para fortalecer la fluidez oral en inglés en educación superior, recomendándose futuras investigaciones que incluyan la percepción de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: metodologías activas, fluidez oral, aprendizaje del inglés, educación superior, competencia comunicativa.

RESUMO

Introdução: O desenvolvimento da fluência oral em inglês é uma competência comunicativa essencial no ensino superior, mas frequentemente é dificultado por fatores afetivos e metodologias tradicionais. Este estudo teve como objetivo analisar a influência de metodologias ativas no desenvolvimento da fluência oral no aprendizado da língua inglesa em uma universidade pública do Equador. Materiais e métodos: Foi utilizado um delineamento de métodos mistos com abordagem descritiva. A amostra foi composta por 41 alunos do primeiro ano do curso de Pedagogia da Língua e 3 professores com mais de 10 anos de experiência. Foram aplicados formulários de observação em sala de aula (em 5 sessões) e entrevistas semiestruturadas com os professores. Resultados: As observações revelaram uma implementação consistente de metodologias ativas (aprendizagem baseada em projetos, gamificação, sala de aula invertida, dramatização e aprendizagem cooperativa) em 100% das sessões, juntamente com o uso de recursos tecnológicos que promoveram a participação. As entrevistas indicaram que os professores percebem essas metodologias como benéficas para estimular a fala espontânea, aumentar a confiança comunicativa e reduzir a ansiedade. Desafios como o medo de errar e as limitações de vocabulário foram identificados. Discussão: Os resultados confirmam que a integração de metodologias ativas, apoiadas por recursos tecnológicos e feedback específico, cria ambientes dinâmicos que promovem a prática oral contínua e o desenvolvimento da fluência, em consonância com a literatura especializada. Conclusões: Conclui-se que as metodologias ativas constituem uma abordagem pedagógica eficaz para o fortalecimento da fluência oral em inglês no ensino superior. Recomenda-se a realização de pesquisas futuras que incluam a percepção dos alunos.

Palavras-chave: metodologias ativas, fluência oral, aprendizagem da língua inglesa, ensino superior, competência comunicativa.

INTRODUCTION

The development of oral fluency in English as a foreign language constitutes an essential communicative competence for university students, particularly in academic and professional contexts where English serves as an international medium of interaction. Oral fluency entails the ability to produce speech that is spontaneous, coherent, and intelligible, while maintaining a natural rhythm and continuity. However, many higher education students encounter challenges in developing fluency due to affective, cognitive, and methodological factors, such as limited exposure to authentic communication, low self-confidence, anxiety, and traditional teacher-centered instruction.

In response to these challenges, active methodologies have gained prominence as student-centered pedagogical approaches that prioritize participation, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and the use of technological resources. Within English language education, such methodologies promote meaningful communication by engaging learners in authentic or simulated interactional tasks that stimulate the use of linguistic structures in context. Research has indicated that active methodologies contribute to increased motivation, enhanced learner autonomy, and improved oral production in foreign language environments.

Despite the increasing incorporation of active methodologies in English instruction, questions remain regarding their practical impact on oral fluency, their consistent implementation across higher education settings, and the challenges faced by both educators and learners during communicative tasks. Consequently, empirical studies that document teaching practices and analyze their pedagogical outcomes are necessary to generate evidence-based recommendations.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the influence of active methodologies on the development of oral fluency in English language learning in higher education. Specifically, it seeks to (a) identify the methodological strategies used by instructors, (b) observe their application in real classroom contexts, and (c) determine

their perceived impact on oral fluency development. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of instructional practices in Ecuadorian higher education and provide insights for improving communicative language teaching.

Active Methodologies

Active methodologies are didactic approaches aimed at directly involving learners in their learning process (García, 2024). They are based on a student-centered teaching model, whose purpose is to develop specific competencies, considering learning as a process of active construction rather than a simple passive reception of information (López et al., 2022). In this way, active methodologies are configured as a strategy that transforms and adapts educational processes, generating a greater degree of commitment, interest, and responsibility in students (Buenaño et al., 2021). In other words, by integrating active methodologies, the student assumes an active role in the generation of their knowledge and the improvement of their skills, while the educator provides accompaniment.

Active methodologies integrate resources such as play, technology, innovation, and creativity, among others, to generate enriching learning experiences, which contribute to the improvement of communication and the comprehensive development of knowledge, skills, and competencies, promoting the creation of positive environments that encourage meaningful learning (Asunción, 2019). Thus, active methodologies seek to improve the acquisition of knowledge and transform the traditional relationship between the student and the teacher, representing an important advance in pedagogy.

Active Methodologies in the Teaching-Learning Process of English

Active methodologies promote dynamic and participatory learning by actively involving students in their process, which, when applied in the teaching of English, gives them the opportunity to practice the language in real situations, improve their motivation and interest, and generate deep learning (Guayanlema et al., 2023). Active methodologies are important in the teaching of English because they promote a change in the skills of the teacher and students, making them reflective and with a solid theoretical and practical base, capable of learning continuously (Zambrano, 2021). Hence, active methodologies have the function of promoting the development of linguistic skills in both the expression and use of the language.

Active Methodologies and the Use of Technological Resources

Moreira and Pazmiño (2022) assert that the implementation of active methodologies in the learning of the English language, combined with the use of technological resources, promotes the participation of students in the construction of their knowledge through collaborative work, developing critical and reflective thinking to face the challenges of the educational context (Cárdenas et al., 2023). Active methodologies, used with technological tools and resources, are a key alternative to achieve meaningful learning, promoting creativity, autonomy, and students' interest in learning. For this reason, active methodologies and the use of technological resources are conceived as complementary paradigms that enrich the teaching-learning process, by promoting the participation of English learners with access to interactive tools that enhance language learning.

Oral fluency

Oral fluency is the ability to express oneself clearly, continuously and coherently in a language, maintaining a natural conversation and without difficulty in being understood (Bohórquez & Rincón, 2018). It is defined as a characteristic of verbal expression, reflected in the student's ability to speak spontaneously, without unnecessary pauses, using an appropriate vocabulary and correct syntax (Alonso et al., 2021). Oral fluency also allows transmitting ideas and information effectively transmit ideas and information about past experiences or future events (Meneses, 2022). In short, oral fluency is speaking continuously and logically, without interruptions or obstacles when engaging in a combination.

Oral fluency in learning English

Oral fluency is oriented to the mastery of a foreign language, as it ensures effective communication and interaction in real contexts (Grasso, 2024). Oral fluency is essential in learning English because it enables effective communication with native and non-native speakers, by integrating key components such as pronunciation, vocabulary, expression, and grammar (Rivera et al., 2023). Oral fluency in learning English helps language learners express themselves and communicate effectively in real-world contexts, practicing the vocabulary, grammar, and linguistic structures learned to convey clear ideas, engage in interactions, and

respond appropriately to oral messages (Villavicencio et al., 2023).

Concisely, oral fluency in learning English involves the ability of students to communicate their ideas clearly and consistently, without noticeable pauses, using correct pronunciation and appropriate grammatical structure.

Challenges in the development of oral fluency

Some researchers such as Olaya and Ahumada (2023) argue that anxiety when communicating in a foreign language is an emotional factor that hinders progress in English learners' oral fluency. Calva (2022) highlights that the lack of practice in listening and oral expression skills is closely linked to the deficiency in students' oral fluency, which makes it difficult for them to hold conversations in English.

In addition, Islam and Roy (2024) identify several significant obstacles that learners and teachers face in fostering oral fluency, for example, low self-confidence, limited practice opportunities, insufficient motivation, an unsupportive learning environment, fear of criticism and negative judgment, as well as the lack of access to language laboratories. In many cases, these challenges can limit the effective development of fluency in students, which is why it is important to implement active methodologies to eliminate any type of obstacle that may arise in the acquisition of the English language.

Active methodologies to improve oral fluency

The active methodologies applied in the teaching of English in higher education, as outlined by Hernández et al. (2020), Bravo and Vigueras (2021), Buenaño et al. (2021), Guayanlema et al. (2023), are Project-Based Learning, Gamification, the Flipped Classroom, Role Plays and Cooperative Learning, etc., provide diverse benefits in the teaching-learning process of the English language.

Project-Based Learning. Project-Based Learning is a methodology that involves students in creating practical projects, applying knowledge and collaborating in a real learning context (Guayanlema et al., 2023). Costa and Goicochea (2023) explain that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is presented as a fundamental method for education in the 21st century, since it takes as its central axis the development of action plans or projects, as it is successful in two important areas of education: school achievement through conscious learning and the creation of inclusive spaces within the school environment. The development of oral fluency when using project-based learning is particularly benefited by the constant interaction between students during the planning, execution and presentation of projects.

Gamification. Gamification improves the development of communication skills by facilitating the assimilation of knowledge in a fun and entertaining way (Molina et al., 2021). Rellán and Sáez (2022) maintain that the use of gamification seeks to transform the traditional paradigms of education, not simply by incorporating technology to apply active methodologies that reinforce the active role of the student, with the aim of promoting deep learning. That is, by using gratification, the student is aware of his or her own process, through activities designed by the teacher that are aligned with the competencies that must be acquired and that represent a challenge for the language learner.

Flipped classroom. Rodríguez (2023) states that the flipped classroom promotes active and collaborative learning, enhancing language students' competencies by combining English educators' guidance with innovative, platform-based instruction. Moreover, it is considered a blended or blended learning and teaching model, since it combines a face-to-face phase with a virtual distance phase, supported by information and communication technologies, it can cover various educational needs effectively (Guamán & Ávila, 2021). It can be concluded that the flipped classroom is an effective active methodology for enhancing oral fluency, as it promotes active and collaborative interaction between students, innovatively integrating face-to-face instruction with digital tools.

Role Playing. Martínez (2022) emphasizes that role-playing in English teaching improves oral skills by allowing students to experience the language in real-life situations, promoting fluent communication, and using different registers while developing their socialization and critical thinking. Role-playing technique has proven to be effective in teaching English, as learners experience increased enthusiasm, confidence, and empathy, while developing critical thinking and communication skills (Lirola, 2021). Certainly, role playing is a highly effective pedagogical methodology for establishing a participatory and realistic learning environment, which provides language learners with the opportunity to practice the language in authentic situations, helping them improve their oral skills.

Cooperative Learning. Cooperative Learning is an active methodology that fosters student autonomy by focusing the teaching-learning process on their ability to build knowledge by themselves, displacing the traditional role of the teacher as the sole source of knowledge (Ruiz, 2022). Brito and Vaca (2021) suggest that Cooperative Learning is important in the teaching of English, because it establishes a positive bond between teachers and students. The application of cooperative work is crucial in the development of oral fluency, since it favors the acquisition of more significant knowledge for all participants in the process.

Activities to improve oral fluency

The activities proposed when introducing the active methodologies include the elaboration of brochures, thematic events, creation of blogs, word games, contests, challenges, memory games, educational videos, readings and summaries, listening activities, debates, exhibitions, monologues, role-playing adventures, dramatizations, video or podcast production, peer tutoring and cascade learning (Guayanlema et al., 2023). These types of activities are accompanied by the application of active methodologies, as they are mainly used as a complement for the effective development of oral fluency in English.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive method with qualitative and quantitative approaches with different data collection techniques such as 1) an observation sheet that had two parts, the first part of the observation sheet had five (5) aspects that were from the variable "Active methodologies", the second part was typed considering the second variable "Oral Fluency" with 14 indicators. This observation sheet was applied in five (5) different sessions, in periods of 40 minutes, where students received classes of "English Language". There were 41 students in the class, 18 males and 23 females, the 85.36% of them were mestizos, the rest 14.64%) were distributed between Afro Ecuadorian and indigenous, They belonged to two social classes, the 73.17% (30) medium class and the 26.83% (11) belonged to the low class, their ages varied from 20 to 26 years old, but the majority of them 65.85% (27) were 25 years old.

The observation sheets were applied during four (4) weeks, observing five (5) different classes during evening sessions, It was important to mention that normal periods of classes were of 60 minutes, but due to the electrical crisis the Ecuador was facing with, however because of the emergency, the authorities reduced the class time to continue with the development of the classes. A semi-structure interview with ten (10) questions that covered the two variables that were applied to three (3) English teachers who worked at Higher Education, the interviewees were English professors with more than ten (10) years of experience working in higher education with their master´s degree in English Language teaching. Both instruments were validated by three (3) different experts who gave their points of view to improve the approach not only of the observation sheet but also of the interview, the study was performed in a Public University, the data collection was collected in five weeks to 41 students of the first level of English majoring

The study took place in Chone Canton of the province of Manabí, where a total of 41 students and three (3) English professors. The context was suggested from teachers´ meetings where different problems have been reported by the professors. The idea was that research could contribute to study the current situation of English majoring at Higher Education so that teachers could analyze the results and call for different actions to address the issues and propose remedial actions.

The purpose of this study was to analyze how active methodologies influence on the development of oral fluency in English language learning. A convenience sampling method was used. This was a non-probabilistic sampling method in which the items were chosen for enclosure in the sample because they were the easiest to approach for the researcher. This was due to geographic closeness, accessibility at a given time, or willingness to contribute in the research. For the researchers, it was more convenient to carry out the research based on their easy access not only to the university classrooms but also to the professors who participated as interviewees and subjects of observation.

RESULTS

Having applied, gathered, and analyzed the results of the observation sheets and the interviews, the main results are presented in two sections, the first one report the results of the interviews, and the second one show the findings of the observation sheets. The results are reported as follow:

Results of interviews with English teachers on active methodologies in the development of oral fluency in English students at higher education.

Table 1 Active Methodologies in the English Language Teaching and Learning Process

Indicators	Main finding(s)
Implementation of active methodologies in the teaching-learning process.	-Promotes direct student interaction with the content. -It can be used for the construction of relevant and applicable knowledge in problem solving. -It stimulates students' creativity and critical thinking.
Relationship between active methodologies and the use of technological resources.	-Technological tools strengthen students' participation and motivation for learning. -With the integration of technological resources, it is possible to provide personalized educational experiences that fit the needs of students.
Benefits of active methodologies in lesson planning.	-It encourages participation by connecting concepts to real situations, which improves understanding and motivation. -Develop transversal skills, such as critical thinking, creativity and collaborative work.
Adaptation of active methodologies according to the level of the students.	-Adjust activities to align with students' level of language proficiency using tasks and exercises appropriate to their level of comprehension. -Vary teaching strategies for beginning students.
Necessary requirements to implement active methodologies.	-Teachers must have specific training in active methodologies. -Design a formative assessment system that allows students to monitor their progress and adjust activities according to their needs.
Differences between active methodologies and traditional methodologies.	-Active methodologies are student-centered, while traditional methodologies focus on the teacher. -Active methodologies promote practical and collaborative activities, unlike traditional methodologies are based on classes with theory.

Table 1 indicates that active methodologies enhance the teaching and learning of the English language, by focusing on the needs of students, as reported by Guayanlema et al. (2023), active methodologies make language learning more dynamic and participatory. In addition, the interviewed English teachers agree that active methodologies improve the understanding of the content and enhance the development of communication skills.

Table 2 The Development of Oral Fluency in Higher Education Students

Indicators	Main finding(s)
Oral fluency in the context of English language learning.	-Oral fluency in English involves the ability to speak spontaneously, clearly, and coherently, without excessive pauses. -It refers to the ability to hold natural conversations, using proper vocabulary and correct grammatical structures.
Criteria for assessing oral fluency in students.	-Assess whether students can organize their ideas clearly and logically, connecting sentences appropriately to express thoughts. -Observe clarity in the pronunciation of words and correct intonation. -Assess whether students maintain a fluent speech rhythm and whether they can interact spontaneously.
Benefits of developing oral fluency in students.	-The development of oral fluency increases students' confidence in communicating in the English language. -It improves students' ability to engage in conversations, responding quickly and appropriately. -It enhances speaking and listening to comprehension, to help language learners become familiar with different accents, rhythms, and variations of English in real-life situations.
Techniques and activities to improve students' oral fluency.	-Group debates and discussions. -Storytelling activities. -Speed speaking. -Simulation of interviews.
Challenges students face in developing oral fluency.	-Many students fear making mistakes when speaking, which can affect their willingness to participate in oral activities. -The limited ability to use a wide range of vocabulary or grammatical structures can make it difficult for students to express themselves naturally. -Students often face challenges when listening to and understanding different accents.
Active methodologies to improve oral fluency.	-Project-based learning. -Role-playing. -Cooperative learning. -Gamification. -Task-based learning. -Flipped classroom.

Table 2 underlines the importance of oral fluency as an indispensable skill in learning the English language. Through clear criteria for their evaluation, practical activities and the implementation of active methodologies, from of point of view of English teachers, the oral fluency of learners can be improved. However, it is also necessary to recognize and address the challenges that students face, such as fear of error and vocabulary limitations, with the aim of enhancing language learning.

Results of the observation sheets on active methodologies in the development of oral fluency in English students at higher education level.

Table 3 English Language Teaching-Learning Process

Items	Assessment	
	Yes	No
Innovative didactic strategies, such as project-based learning, are implemented.	83.33%	16.67%
The class begins with a motivating activity.	83.33%	16.67%
The activities to be conducted in a didactic way are specified.	100%	0%
Opportunities are provided for learners to participate in class and engage in the language.	100%	0%

Table 3 presents the results obtained from the observation cards conducted in a group of 20 higher education students. The data show that in 83.33% of the time observed, the teacher used innovative teaching strategies, such as project-based learning and activities that integrate the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing). The strategies that the teacher used were student-centered included the use of guiding questions and the promotion of collaborative work, aspects that favored the dynamics of learning. However, in the remaining 16.67% of the cases, these strategies were not implemented, due to time constraints and the need to integrate other pedagogical activities. This situation caused students to become demotivated and their performance in later activities was reduced.

Similarly, 83.33% of the observations show that at the beginning of classes the teacher uses motivating activities, such as games, reflective questions and listening exercises, while in 16.67% of the cases these strategies were not used. The activities that the teacher introduced in the class generated enthusiasm and facilitated the connection between previous and new learning, promoting the immediate interaction of students with the content. Motivation is the essential impulse of learning, acting as the element that initiates and stimulates the development of learning, becoming an important part of student participation (Choquehuanca et al., 2022). To clarify, it is essential that teachers always start the class with a motivating activity, to encourage students to actively participate in learning.

On the other hand, 100% of the observations highlight the clarity with which the teacher specified the activities to be carried out and provided opportunities for the participation of all students. The teacher used clear instructions, examples and evaluation strategies, activities such as debates, role-playing and interactive games, promoted active learning in which all students participated. The level of participation that was evidenced, especially in the listening activities, motivated the university students to practice the language authentically, promoting the development of their communication skills.

Table 4 Active Methodologies in the English Teaching-Learning Process

Items	Assessment	
	Yes	No
Verbal expression is appropriate to the level of development of the students.	100%	0%
Learning resources are used: technological, concrete material, audiovisual media.	100%	0%
Active methodologies are applied to students with difficulties and/or barriers to learning achievement.	100%	0%
It is promoted that all criteria are accepted for an effective solution when facing a problem.	100%	0%

The results presented in Table 4 indicate a consistent implementation of active methodologies that favor inclusive and accessible learning for all students. The verbal expression used by the teacher, 100% of the time, is appropriate for the level of development of the students, which guarantees clear and understandable communication between the teacher and the students. González (2024) states that the use of basic language expressions helps students, regardless of their level, to follow the content of the classes, promoting teaching adapted to their cognitive and linguistic needs. Accordingly, the adaptation of the vocabulary and grammatical complexity used by the teacher in the classes optimizes the learning process and ensures that all students can keep up with the pace of the content taught by the educator.

In addition, in 100% of the classes observed, the teacher used various learning resources, such as technology (projector, speakers, videos, recordings), to enrich the educational experience and provide multiple means for students to connect with the content. As described by Párraga (2022), the use of learning resources reinforces language understanding and allows students to approach learning in a more dynamic and engaging way. The technological resources used by the teacher favored visual and auditory learning and stimulated the interest and participation of the students.

The teacher, in 100% of the classes observed, applied active methodologies, such as cooperative learning and gamification, especially with students who present difficulties or barriers to learning. Active methodologies, as pointed out by Guayanlema et al. (2023), promote participatory learning by engaging students in a dynamic way, encouraging them to practice English in real contexts, increasing their motivation and interest, and consolidating their knowledge effectively.

The active methodologies that the teacher used fostered collaboration, teamwork, and motivation in students. These elements are important to overcome cognitive and emotional obstacles in the classroom. Finally, the teacher always encouraged that all criteria be accepted for an effective solution when facing a problem, it was evident that the teacher generates an environment of respect, in which different perspectives are valued all the time and constructive debate is encouraged that leads to a collaborative resolution of problems.

Table 5 Oral Fluency in the Development of Communicative Competencies

Items	Assessment	
	Yes	No
The effort of students to improve their oral fluency is rewarded and recognized.	100%	0%
Activities are promoted that challenge students to speak continuously and without interruptions.	100%	0%
Participation in oral activities is encouraged to improve fluency in oral expression.	100%	0%
Students receive specific feedback on their pace, coherence, and vocabulary to improve their speaking skills.	100%	0%
Connectors and transitional phrases are used that allow continuity in the discourse.	100%	0%
Students can rephrase or clarify ideas when they are not understood, without losing the essence of the conversation.	100%	0%

Table 5 shows that, during 100% of the time of observations, the teacher implemented a comprehensive approach to improve the students' oral fluency. Student effort is recognized and rewarded through positive feedback, symbolic awards, and individual achievements, which motivates and strengthens student confidence. In addition, activities that challenged students to speak continuously were promoted, such as discussions in pairs, unscripted presentations, interviews and storytelling. Involvement in oral communicative activities contributes to the development of fluency in verbal expression. Consequently, the activities that the teacher introduced in classes allowed students to practice oral fluency consistently and without interruptions. (Castillo, 2019)

At all times, the teacher created a safe and trusting environment that favored the participation of students in oral activities, such as games, debates, and presentations. During 100% of the time observed, it was ensured that all students had the opportunity to speak, without fear of making mistakes, always acknowledging effort, and encouraging constant practice. This inclusive and participatory strategy motivates students to improve their oral fluency and develop communication skills, without focusing exclusively on perfection.

Specific feedback on rhythm, coherence and vocabulary was constant during the observations, contributing significantly to the improvement of the students' oral expression. The use of connectors and transition phrases, which the teacher used, for example, "in addition", "therefore" and "however", facilitated the continuity of the class. In addition, students, when they were not understood, were able to effectively rephrase or clarify their ideas, maintaining the essence of the conversation. All this was carried out during 100% of the time observed, which indicates the mastery of active methodologies by the teacher, which was reflected in the improvement of the students' oral fluency.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative results obtained from the observation sheets and interviews presents an outstanding implementation of active methodologies at the higher education level to develop oral fluency in students. The qualitative results of the interviews suggest that active methodologies favor the active interaction of students and enhance critical skills such as creative thinking and problem solving. The active methodologies used by the interviewed teachers are Project-based Learning, Role-playing, Cooperative

Learning, Gamification, Task-Based Learning, and Flipped Classroom, which align with those identified by several researchers (Hernández et al., 2020; Bravo & Vigueras 2021; Guayanlema et al., 2023).

Based on the results of the observation sheets, it is evident that the active methodologies were used by the teacher in 100% of the classes observed. The teacher used strategies such as project-based learning, gamification, and cooperative learning, etc. In relation to these results, Guayanlema et al. (2023) underline that active methodologies promote dynamic and participatory learning by involving students directly with the content, which coincides with the positive assessment of the interviewed teachers on their effectiveness.

The data from the observations and interviews show a constant use of technological resources as evidenced in 100% of the classes observed. The teacher used technological tools such as projectors, videos and recordings that contributed to both the visual and auditory learning of the students. The teachers interviewed suggested that, by integrating technological resources, innovative educational experiences can be offered specifically adapted to the individual needs of students and to the strengthening of communicative skills.

Yataco et al. (2023), in their results, express a similar opinion, emphasizing that the incorporation of digital tools in pedagogical practices constitutes a valuable resource to achieve objectives focused on enhancing various dimensions of language learning, such as communication skills, motivation, and interaction. Bravo and Vigueras (2021) also add that the use of active methodologies in conjunction with technological resources motivates students and teachers by transforming traditional teaching into authentic teaching, fostering interest and confidence in learning a second language through real communicative contexts. Therefore, the use of active methodologies with technological resources can enhance the teaching-learning process of the English language around the effective development of oral fluency of university students.

A relevant aspect identified in both the qualitative and quantitative results was the promotion of activities and strategies to improve the oral fluency of university students. In 100% of the classes observed, strategies such as debates and storytelling, Speed talking and Interview Simulation were implemented, which are designed to encourage student participation and develop communication skills in real contexts. These results are supported by researchers such as Sabori et al. (2022), who state that communicative activities to develop oral expression in the academic field require the participation of the student in learning contexts that promote the development of their language skills. Thus, it is essential that teachers use activities that encourage students to practice the language.

The interviewed teachers also emphasized the importance of providing specific feedback on rhythm, coherence, and vocabulary. This practice was consistent with the observations, where students received detailed feedback that strengthened their confidence and improved their performance. Feedback, as suggested by the results of Campuzano et al. (2021), is an essential tool that should be a constant part of the educational process, since it contributes to the achievement of learning objectives and fosters metacognition in students, serving them to reflect on what they have learned and recognize areas that require reinforcement.

However, although the results of both instruments present a positive outlook, the observations and interviews also show important challenges in the implementation of active methodologies to improve oral fluency in higher education students. Among the main obstacles are students' fear of making mistakes and their limitations in vocabulary, which reduce their willingness to participate in oral activities. Morales and Vázquez (2022), in their research, also state that the lack of English practice in the classroom hinders students' preparation to express themselves orally, since they are affected by emotional barriers such as nervousness, embarrassment, and anxiety that affect their communicative ability. For this reason, teachers should implement activities that address both language difficulties and emotional aspects.

This research emphasizes the relevance of the use of active methodologies in the development of oral fluency of higher education students, since the introduction of this type of methodology in lesson plans can enrich English language learning by providing and dynamizing pedagogical strategies and activities that transform the way in which students develop their communication skills.

CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the findings of the literature review, active methodologies are important for the development of oral fluency in English learning, because they encourage the direct participation of learners in language acquisition. Through active methodologies, students could practice the language in authentic situations, and therefore, improve their ability to communicate spontaneously and in a fluent way. Besides,

by integrating technological tools and interactive activities, active methodologies provide dynamic contexts where students reinforce their oral fluency through constant practice.

Active methodologies promote the effective development of oral fluency of English learners at the higher education level. The interviewed teachers highlighted that these methodologies, such as project-based learning, role-playing, and cooperative learning, encourage dynamic interaction and constant practice of the English language. As dictated by the results obtained from the interviews, active methodologies motivate students to actively participate in activities that require the spontaneous use of language, which is of utmost importance to develop oral fluency. Consequently, the implementation of active methodologies improves both students' confidence and their ability to communicate in a second language.

The presence of active methodologies in the observed classes was evident and consistent, since the application of strategies such as debates, storytelling, and role-playing activities was evidenced, which favored the constant practice of oral fluency. In addition, the teacher used technological resources and audiovisual materials to enrich the teaching-learning process of the English language. In this context, the constant and adequate incorporation of active methodologies in lesson plans encourages students to face oral challenges that favor their fluency development, not focusing exclusively on correcting errors, but on the continuous improvement of communication. Consequently, the results obtained from the present research can be expanded and compared through new lines of research that include analysis from the language learners' perspective or are complemented with data supported by the application of new observations.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of responsibility of authorship

We, the authors of the aforementioned manuscript, DECLARE that we have directly contributed to its intellectual content, as well as to the genesis and analysis of its data; therefore, we are able to take public responsibility for it and accept that their names appear on the list of authors in the order indicated. Furthermore, we have complied with the ethical requirements of the aforementioned publication, having consulted the Declaration of Ethics and Publication Malpractice.

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