



DESARROLLO DE LA COMPETENCIA COMUNICATIVA A TRAVÉS DE LA APLICACIÓN NEARPOD EN LA EDUCACION SUPERIOR

Development of Communicative Skills Through the Nearpod Application in Higher Education

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Resumen

El desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa es una de las habilidades más importantes ya que es la única que permite comunicarse de forma rápida y espontánea desde cualquier lugar. Considerando también que las habilidades de comunicación empoderan a los estudiantes para convertirse en pensadores críticos y líderes empáticos. Este estudio tiene como objetivo determinar la importancia de desarrollar las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés en los estudiantes de la Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo, permitiéndoles comunicarse de manera efectiva





con quienes los rodean. A través de la aplicación Nearpod en la educación superior se pretende potenciar las habilidades orales, la cual ha sido objeto de estudio en esta investigación. La metodología utilizada es descriptiva con el fin de detallar todo el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje a través de Nearpod, con análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo de los datos recolectados a través de una encuesta aplicada. Los resultados revelaron que el 47% de los estudiantes encuestados indicaron que la aplicación sí contribuyó a mejorar sus habilidades de expresión oral. Los hallazgos sugieren que Nearpod ha sido eficaz para mejorar no sólo las habilidades de expresión oral sino también las de comprensión auditiva y lectura. En conclusión, este estudio destaca el potencial de la aplicación Nearpod como una de las herramientas valiosas para mejorar las habilidades de lectura, comprensión auditiva, vocabulario y expresión oral en la educación superior.

Palabras clave: Destreza del habla; educación superior; Nearpod; aprendizaje virtual.

Abstract

The development of communicative competence is one of the most important skills since it is the only one that allows you to communicate quickly and spontaneously from anywhere. Considering also that communication skills empower students to become critical thinkers and empathetic leaders. This study aims to determine the importance of developing English language speaking skills in students of the Technical University of Babahoyo, enabling them to communicate effectively with those around them. Through the Nearpod application in higher education is intended to enhance oral skills due to it will increase the effectiveness of English communication because students can engage in meaningful dialogues, challenge assumptions, and foster mutual understanding. The methodology used is descriptive





to detail the entire teaching-learning process through Nearpod, with qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected through an applied survey to students of higher education. The results revealed that 47% of the students surveyed denoted that the application did contribute to improving their oral expression skills. The findings suggest that Nearpod has been effective in improving not only speaking skills but also listening and reading comprehension skills. In conclusion, this study highlights the potential of using the Nearpod application to develop communication skills as one of the valuable tools to improve reading, listening comprehension, vocabulary and speaking skills through the linking of Flipgrid in higher education. With a good performance of communication in English language also students cultivate inclusive environments where everyone's voices are heard and respected.

Keyword. Speaking skills; higher education; Nearpod; virtual learning.

Introduction

The most important in this research is to look for the way how students can learn to develop the communicative skills of the English language in higher education. It has transformed lives because English is the universal language in this globalized world and is increasingly gaining strength in the world of technology, commerce, travel, science among others. Highly trained citizens with the universal language (English) choose to seek improvements in jobs and salaries. In the research study by Santana (2016) he points out that all Latin America such as: Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Peru have implemented new public policies aimed at promoting the teaching of English from the primary and secondary education.





As higher education teachers and committed to the continuous improvement of the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language at the Language Center, Technical University of Babahoyo, the following research is presented focused on the development of oral ability through the technological application such as Nearpod in Higher Education. That is why stipulates that the panorama in higher education begins at the initial, basic and high school levels in the region or country. Furthermore, she indicates that the challenges facing higher education are due to rethinking action strategies for the future to impact and transform society through education, in particular, higher education (Gazzola, 2021)

On the other hand, Gazzola also said that it is extremely necessary for the region to promote educational innovation, in the case of higher education institutions, since they are responsible for fulfilling missions of professional training, research in all areas of knowledge and the extension of social and cultural impact, since the English language has become the generic language around the world (Gazzola,2021). Therefore, students with good communication skills in the Second language manage to be very competitive in a globalized world, meaning that the more skills a person has, the better job opportunities they will have in the future.

The origin of this research is due to the problems presented with the poor performance of higher education students in speaking skills such as: students cannot answer short and specific questions, they do not maintain a short conversation, other students participate, but with limited interventions. Here, the need arises to carry out an investigative study to determine if, using the Nearpod technological application, students improve their speaking skills in the second language and, in turn, how motivated they are when making their contributions through it. For that reason, some theories relevant to speaking skills, communication skills, teaching-learning methods and technological application are mentioned below.





Talking about speaking skills is speaking confidently and fluently when students and educators are in class or outside there. Some students feel rejected when their teachers correct them every moment during their interventions, this causes demotivation in the students to continue speaking. However, this barrier must be eliminated, according to Karpovich et.al, (2021) highlights in their study that speaking skills need to be worked on in class based on many teaching-learning techniques, among them, making students handle basic elements of the language system such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, intonation, etc. This is achieved only through a lot of practice and exercise to be improved.

Karpovich et.al, (2021) also mentions something very important about what ways the teacher can work on speaking skills: dialogue and monologue forms. Through the dialogue form, students in groups engage in a conversation where they alternately express their ideas, affections and emotions. While through the monologue form, only one student generates a speech directed at his/her teacher. By monologue form, student describes or narrates situations according to the teacher's assignment specifying time, and finally, the student delivers the oral production.

In line with Jeremy Harmer's theory, it is important to describe what the elements of speaking skills are, so speaking not only involves pronouncing words well but also having the ability to maintain a conversation, that is, being able to process information and make correct use of language. Among the elements of Harmer's theory, we have connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, negotiation language. (Apasraphon and Siriprapha, 2022).

According to Apasraphon and Siriprapha (2022):





About connected speech, is to have the ability to maintain continuous spoken language through connected words and sounds that are transmitted from one word to the next. Referring to the second element, expressive devices, it is making use of the tone, accent, volume and speed of the words used in a conversation, it also involves the interpretation of physical and non-verbal language. Lexis ad grammar is also another crucial element because having the ability to select appropriate words and use different phrases depending on the context we are referring to makes for easy understanding and interaction in a conversation. Finally, negotiation language is having mastery of the language to provide clarifications when something has not been understood by the listeners (p.5).

Another important theory on the development of foreign language communication is the Communicative Language Teaching Approach. Adem and Berkessa (2022) indicate in their research that this theory was introduced due to the lack of appropriate methods that allow students to not communicate correctly in a second language. For this reason, this study aims to highlight the communication medium as the most important survival resource of human beings in this globalized world.

Abdelmageed and Omer (2015) emphasize something about how important communicative approach is, who declare that having a balance between fluency and precision are very helpful elements for effective communication to emerge naturally. For this reason, some teachers and students consider speaking skills as one of the most complex skills of the English language because developing communication requires simultaneously integrating the two reception skills and the two production skills, as Harmer (2015) highlights the following: “While listening and reading involve the ability to receive messages correctly and are therefore referred to as receptive





skills, speaking and writing, on the other hand, involve language production and are referred to as productive skills.” (Harmer, 2015, p.6).

Otajonova (2022) points out that:

Hand in hand with the above detailed, CLT is a holistic approach because it works completely integrating the four basic skills of the English language and both grammatical and sociolinguistic competencies with the sole purpose of preparing students in the communicative environment with different contexts of real-life. This is achieved with oral practice, discussion and cooperation between students and student-teacher through role play and pairs or groups work. CLT Approach can be worked on in a physical classroom and in response to technological evolution it can also be worked on in virtual classroom classes (p.2).

Virtual teaching involves making use of different technological applications that the web offers us to enhance knowledge and develop English language skills such as speaking. According to Basantes et al. (2021) mentions something very assertive that was experienced during the pandemic, which was not easy at all to reinvent methods, techniques, and exercises for teaching the English language in the virtual modality. As a result of this, virtual platforms that have been a collaborative and very effective tool in learning foreign languages, provide an endless number of active methodologies that promote the development of skills and competencies that support the efficiency of future professionals who graduate from the different higher education institutions.

As a result of the Corona Virus pandemic and technological advances, education has had many positive changes in the teaching-learning process.





Consequently, in response to this new technological demand, Nearpod application is considered one of the best choices to practice speaking skills either through face-to-face classes or online classes. By way of face-to-face classes, learners can use their devices such as cell phones and tablets. And about online classes, nearpod allows to be synchronized by virtual classrooms which is achieved through a link and code generated by each teaching lesson designed by the teacher. Additionally, Nearpod apps offers free 100Mb storage and can hold forty students in the same room. (Musa and Al Momani,2022, p.2.)

Nearpod has a resource named Slide, the teacher can upload in Power Point and then edit in the application to add interactive activities. On the other hand, in the video resource, the teacher can incorporate audiovisual material from YouTube, computer, or from repositories such as Dropbox, google drive, box, and one drive. That material can be played directly in the audience either at the teacher's or the student's own pace. Through the collaborate board resource, teacher can incorporate audio material and create questions in relation to it, according to the topic of discussion in the class. Collaborate board also acts as an interactive brainstorming panel where students can participate by sending their participation in text or audio. It all depends on the use and skill that the teacher requires to practice. (Kalsum, 2021, p.3).

Furthermore Kalsum (2021) describes that open-ended question is another useful resource to work on speaking skills. Because this allows incorporating open questions so that the participants can respond, once this is recorded by them, the teacher can show some responses from the participants in synchronous class to give feedback. The Poll alternative incorporates surveys to probe audience perceptions and once the responses are entered, the application displays a graph that summarizes the results. Here learners can describe these graphs based on





results obtained. Furthermore, it may help to create a test with several multiple-choice questions where the teacher can give feedback once the results are obtained.

Additionally, it is worth highlighting another and no less important Flipgrid activity in Nearpod application. Fernández (2022) in her research prioritize that Flipgrid enables students to create videos, discuss or present a particular topic. Students can directly record a response from this resource and upload the assignment to later be reviewed by the teacher. The teacher can give feedback to each recording task by his/her learners, as well as their classmates can use social networks to comment or give suggestions to their classmates' videos. Additionally, in the videos, students can use images or presentations for a maximum of 10 minutes provided by the application, but the teacher can configure the time between seconds or 1 or 2 minutes depending on the objective of the task. (p.9).

This research study aims to stress that technology is a challenge for teachers and students nevertheless, this is not a limitation to developing speaking skills through the different contents and activities that Nearpod possesses. The objective of frequently working on speaking skills involves enhancing communicative competence through the technological application of Nearpod. It offers many advantages for students such as stimulating learning, increasing oral participation, classes are interactive and fun, and therefore there will be significant academic performance in communication skills.

Among the possible limitations to carrying out this research, it is known that not all fourth-level students take the survey because they live in rural areas and do not frequently check the emails where the information was transmitted. Also due to frequent power outages, students give up taking the survey. Another barrier to not taking the survey is that it only allows students to enter institutional and non-personal





emails, a requirement to take the survey. Some students tend to constantly manage their personal emails more than those of the institution where they study.

Finally, not being able to communicate in synchronous or in-person classes that they had to carry out the survey is also considered limiting, because that week the country went through difficult political, social, and cultural moments, and the government minister suspended classes for a week throughout the country. It was an opportune moment for the authors of this research to be able to move forward with the development of this research, for this reason, it was communicated by email so that the students could complete the survey in a certain period.

Regarding the scope of this research, it is that although some students were reluctant to use the Nearpod application because they had not used it before and presented discomfort, lack of confidence in themselves, and following traditional teachings, despite these situations of negativity at the beginning, these were reduced with constant use in virtual classes and finally, everyone managed to get involved in carrying out the exercises of different activities and videos easily and adequately.

Materials and Methods

A convenience sample of 64 students from the Language Center was used, the students belong to the fourth level and range between 20 to 50 years of age, but with the largest audience between 20 to 30 years old. The students come from different cities and town in Los Ríos province. However, the city of Quevedo, where the extension of the Technical University of Babahoyo is located, is the most popular. The study is supported by two variables, independent and dependent.





The dependent variable is called communicative competence, and the independent variable is called Nearpod technological application. To develop this research, descriptive research was applied since it allows us to obtain a clear and broad perspective on the effectiveness of using Nearpod apps in teaching communicative competence in the English language, belonging to the academic period November 2023 to March 2024.

Regarding the research methodology, mixed research was implemented since it allows collecting information on the two variables of this research, and then processing said data with a quantitative and qualitative approach, the purpose of it is to obtain results and reach satisfactory conclusions for the development of speaking skills in the university's classroom. As an instrument, a survey of 9 questions with very specific closed-type questions and 1 of open-ended question was used, making a total of 10 interrogations. This survey was validated by three teachers from the higher education where the research was carried out.

The questionnaire was designed with nine statements characterized with multiple choice options tailored to gather diverse insights. Some questions used binary responses such as yes or no, while others included variations like yes, maybe, and no or. Or a like scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Certain items employed frequency-based options, such as rarely, occasionally, frequently, and always. Additionally, some questions specifically focused on Nearpod activities to identify which were most engaging for students. The survey concluded with an open-ended question to determine whether students would like to continue using the Nearpod application, enabling an inference about its acceptance in English classes. The questionnaire link, generated via Google Forms, was distributed to all fourth-level students through email.





Next, the closed-type questions that are considered for the analysis of qualitative and quantitative results are described. The following statements are focused on the independent variable such as the intervention of Nearpod in English classes, these are: have you used Nearpod before, what device do you use to connect, how often do you use Nearpod for communication activities, what activities does Nearpod offer, you engage more and which of the following are limitations of using Nearpod. Therefore, the dependent variable has statements focused on communicative competence, such as whether you believe that using Nearpod has a positive impact on communicative competence, how satisfied are you when using Nearpod, and if you would recommend using Nearpod for communication activities in higher education.

Results

The 10-question survey was administered to 64 students of fourth level at the Babahoyo Technical University. The questionnaire was created using a Google Form and the link was shared via email to the students. Below, the results of the most outstanding questions of the variables communicative competence and Nearpod application are analyzed with the presentation of tables.

According to the result of Table 1, it can be observed that the highest percentage of whether the students had worked before with the Nearpod application falls on the No option with 61% and on the Yes, option falls 39%. This result indicates that a majority of the students surveyed (over half) were unfamiliar with the Nearpod application before the study. It may also be that few teachers know about this application.





Table 1

Nearpod application was used before

Scale	Number of student	Percentage
Yes	25	39%
No	39	61%
Total	64	100%

Note. Table 1 indicates the statistics of the participants who indicate whether the Nearpod application was used before in their learning.

The Table 2 exhibits the frequency of using the Nearpod application in English classes for communicative activities which results show the highest percentage in the occasionally choice with 42%, frequently choice is 39%. While 13% belong to always choice and 6% to rarely choice. These results show a generally negative pattern of usage, it might influence further motivation or better integration of the tool into their learning routines.

Table 2.

Frequency to use Nearpod for communicational activities during the class

Scale	Number of student	Percentage
rarely	4	6
occasionally	27	42
frequently	25	39
always	8	13
Total	64	100

Note. Table 2 represents how often students used Nearpod for communicational activities during their classes.

According to the results of Table 3, it manifests which are the three activities most attractive to students, among them are: open question with 48%, interactive





presentation 46% and quiz 39%. With a low percentage: games 28%, videos 21% and another 20%. And among the lowest percentages, that image shows that collaborate board is 12%, polls and Flipgrid are 3%. The data shows that Open Question, Interactive Presentations, Quizizz, and Games activities are the most engaging for students. On the other hand, tools like Flipgrid, Polls, and Collaborate Board received minimal engagement, indicating a need for re-evaluation or redesign to better suit student preferences, especially for developing speaking skills.

Table 3.
Nearpod’ activities that engage Students

Nearpod’ activities	Number of student	Percentage
Videos	13	21
Collaborate board	8	12
Flipgrid	2	3
Games	18	28
Open question	31	48
Polls	2	3
Quizizz	25	39
Interactive Presentations	29	46
Other	13	20

Note. Table 3 represents what the different activities are most engaged in students.

Table 4 shows the positive impact that communication competence has through the Nearpod application. Based on the results, the highest percentage is 47% which is equivalent to the agree option. Then, low average percentages are displayed in the neutral option with 27% and strongly agree with 22%. Finally, among the lowest percentages are disagree with 3% and strongly disagree with 1%. This means that students acknowledge developing stronger communication skills through





the application. However, some may require additional support or alternative methods to fully leverage Nearpod's features for enhancing their communicative competence.

Table 4.
Nearpod has positively impacted in communication competence

Scale	Number of student	Percentage
Strongly disagree	1	1
Disagree	2	3
Neutral	17	27
Agree	30	47
Strongly agree	14	22
Total	64	100

Note. Table 4 evidence that Nearpod application creates a positive impact on communicative competence.

Results from Table 5 indicate that there is a high percentage in the choice Yes, it means that students recommend continuing to work with the Nearpod application for the development of communication in the English language of higher education, the result of it was 53%. Additionally, there was also a medium high percentage with the choice *maybe* 41%, indicating that while they recognize its potential, they may have reservations or require more evidence of its benefits. Only a small minority (6%) do not recommend the platform, suggesting limited dissatisfaction. It means that Nearpod's overall suitability for enhancing communication skills, but they also reveal an opportunity to address uncertainties and improve student confidence in its use through better integration, clearer benefits, and additional support or training.



Table 5.
Recommend Nearpod apps for communication activities in Higher Education

Scale	Number of student	Percentage
Yes	34	53
Maybe	26	41
No	4	6
Total	64	100

Note. Table 5 shows that students recommend using Nearpod apps for communicative skills.

Table 6 shows statements by the participants about the open question used in the survey, whose options are classified into three criteria such as personal, academic and technological. Finally, negative statements are also highlighted in this research.

Table 6.
Positive and Negative impact of using Nearpod application

Impact	Criteria	Statements
	Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearpod allows to learn better. • Students can have better communication through the collaborate board activity. • Nearpod makes class work feasible. • Student think it is a very versatile tool. • Some students are interested in learning more about the application.

Positive

- students think it's good to work with Nearpod because it allows you to experience other ways of working.
- Some students have helped their coworkers learn and work with Nearpod.
- Students feel that they have direct contact with their teacher.

Academic

- It helps reinforce and better understand content.
- It allows me to see the participation of my classmates and also listen, this way students learn more.
- Some students also develop listening skills by listening to the participation of my classmates.
- Nearpod facilitates access to descriptive activities.
- Students learn more from each other.
- Some students said that they receive instant feedback which it helps improve.

Technological

- Nearpod is a dynamic application.
- It is a tool with many advantages of learning due to the different activities it provides.
- It is an excellent application because some students have more confidence at the moment to interact with their teacher.
- It seems to me that it is a broad application with different activities.

Negative	Technological problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very attractive and interactive work tool • Currently, there have been power outages and therefore some students have not been able to work in classes with Nearpod. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is a bit complicated to use due to the internet problems. • From my cell phone, the application seems slow to work and doesn't permit me to advance. • A few students said that they don't like working with Nearpod because they don't have a good internet connection and a stable device. • Some students can't send audio. • Some students cannot work from their cell phones. It limits us from doing some nice activities in class. • Some students can work from their laptops instead of their cell phones.
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Note. Table 6 exhibits both positive and negative student views of using Nearpod.

Discussion.

Delacruz (2014), in his research study with Nearpod as a technological tool for the development of Reading skills in students in Elementary groups, states that Nearpod can be used by any user, students, and even at any level because it can be incorporated with little effort. and without prior application training. Furthermore, this significantly increases student participation in virtual classes without obligation or pressure for them to work. Among the resources most used by this author are quizzes, polls, and draws, which point out that a high percentage of interaction and



motivation is achieved between teacher and students if the teacher guides and provides clear instruction for each activity. Similar to the limitations of having a good internet signal, both investigations point out that it is one of the barriers that students can face during the development of activities.

In the same way, the research study on "The influence of Nearpod to improve Student's vocabulary in learning English" whose author details how the students in the experimental group show a progress of 35.67 when incorporating Nearpod for vocabulary teaching, unlike the control group who had a progress of only 18.66. Results reflect that there is a high percentage of improvement and involvement of the experimental group, this is because Nearpod helps to learn, increases student motivation, and thanks to the creativity and initiative that teachers take by involving technology in the process. teaching-learning (Herwawan, and Panjaitan, 2022). It is concluded that Nearpod is one of the best tools to learn a foreign language in an enchanting method and learning meaningful outcomes.

Eventually, this research work determines that previous research on the use of Nearpod in virtual classes is chosen as one of the technological tools in "Top-rated online educational platforms" (Mirzaev, 2022, p.2) because apart from creating a comfortable and charming work environment Nearpod allows connecting two ways of principal learning through theory and practice where students build new knowledge in real life environment. In addition, Nearpod is among the top-rated online educational platforms because it improves metacognition in students and increases their critical thinking and in teachers, it supports management of formative and summative assessment. That is, until now it is one of the complete educational tools for learning the English language.

A research study has been presented on whether the technological application of Nearpod contributes to the development of English language speaking





skills with higher education students. The overall data analysis says that 47% of those surveyed agree that the Nearpod application does have a positive impact on the development of communicative competence; 27% are neutral; and only 22% of respondents strongly agree. This means that most respondents affirm that Nearpod helps students develop speaking skills through different activities that it provides.

According to the first specific objective, this study began by establishing a strong theoretical foundation for communicative competence, highlighting key frameworks and approaches, such as Hymes' model and CLT (Communicative Language Teaching). These theories guided the study, emphasizing the importance of interactive and learner-centered methods in language learning. This foundation served as a crucial reference to design strategies for improving communication skills using digital tools like Nearpod.

The research identified that the primary challenges students face in communication include a lack of consistent practice, low confidence, and limited opportunities for speaking. By integrating activities within Nearpod, such as Flipgrid for asynchronous speaking, video-based tasks for interactive learning, and open-ended questions for real-time feedback, the study provided students with a supportive and engaging environment to overcome these challenges. This approach directly addressed the root causes of communication difficulties, fostering increased participation and practice.

The evaluation of the implemented strategies showed a significant positive impact on students' communicative competence. According to the data, nearly half of the students agreed that their communication skills improved through the application. While smaller percentages remained neutral or strongly agreed, only minimal disagreement was observed. These results suggest that most students recognize the effectiveness of Nearpod's interactive tools in improving their speaking





skills. However, the study also recognizes that some students may need personalized support or alternative methods to maximize the benefits of this platform based solely on improving communicative competence.

Among the observations and needs of the students when using Nearpod, they consider that it would be fascinating if Nearpod could incorporate other alternatives such as working together with the reader on the pronunciation and intonation of words, a speed meter to measure fluency, since this is the basis for developing ideas and communicating correctly. Other resources such as a dictionary, a grammar and spelling checker while they speak.

It is recommended that English language teachers involve this technological tool more with a focus on the development of speaking as a production skill instead of just grammar and vocabulary. Likewise, it is necessary to awaken the interest of teachers and students in using Nearpod as a tool for educational innovation. On the other hand, this research also aims to encourage new research or use comparisons to identify common or different indicators to improve the teaching and learning of communication in order to increase fluency and confidence when speaking in the English language.

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