A Didactic Strategy to Favor the Development of Oral Expression in Students at UEES and ECOTEC Universities

Fabricio Ayala-Pazmino
Universidad Tecnológica Empresarial de Guayaquil (UTEG), Ecuador

Yeimer Prieto-Lopez
The Espiritu Santo University, Ecuador; ECOTEC University, Ecuador

Beatriz Loor-Avila
The Espiritu Santo University, Ecuador; ECOTEC University, Ecuador

Abstract—The research attempts to solve some of the limitations students present in their oral expression in the university context, which causes scientific and academic production difficulties. An exhaustive bibliography related to the subject was consulted for its realization, and different instruments were applied. The use of theoretical methods and methodological background support the research. Furthermore, interviews and surveys were used to diagnose the current state of the development of oral expression in university students from UEES and ECOTEC. The results allowed the development of a set of activities to promote the development of the oral expression of these students. Additionally, based on the criteria offered by the discussion groups and experts, it was possible to verify the proposed strategies’ effectiveness in educational practice. Oral communication appears as a necessary instrument for establishing relationships between man and the environment where he lives. Thus, it plays an essential role in forming and developing people's academic lives.

Index Terms—linguistics, oral communication, research, teaching-learning processes

I. INTRODUCTION

As a result of oral expression, students can make assessments and present their points of view. In addition, it is evidence of the cultural level that the individual possesses. Those arguments lead researchers to ensure oral expression could be developed as one of the teaching skills to be addressed in universities. However, from the didactic point of view, oral expression becomes one of the components of the language that needs more attention and, given its level of complexity, there are difficulties in its development on the part of the students.

One of the main aspirations of educational work in Ecuador is to form individuals who possess communicative competence, capable of transmitting their ideas appropriately, unambiguous, and concise. These arguments indicate the fundamental place that oral expression skills occupy in a Research Methodology class at the university level.

This research focuses its study in the Faculty of Marketing and Communication at ECOTEC University and the Master’s Degree in Educational Management at UEES. From a population of 2000 students, we selected 200 students from the two universities who are enrolled in the Research Methodology subject.

There are still severe contradictions between the level of integration demanded by education and the actual preparation that students receive since they cannot always incorporate and systematize linguistic and research knowledge in practice.

The bibliographic inquiry and the theoretical systematization carried out by this research lead us to affirm that the ability of oral expression constitutes an object of study that has not been sufficiently studied from the didactic, pedagogical, and methodological point of view. However, the contributions of García-Alzola (1975), Romé-Escobar (2012), Cassany et al. (1994), Ruiz-Iglesias (1999), Ferrer-Díaz (2003), who have developed theoretical-practical proposals aimed at developing the skill, were found and assumed. Furthermore, these authors have presented critical analyses related to the theoretical assumptions supporting the studied process.

At present, the teaching of oral expression is an essential link to achieve the levels of knowledge required by the university of the XXI century. However, through observations, surveys, and interviews with students in the field of Research Methodology, we found inadequacies in teaching this skill, which leads to limitations in developing students’ logical thinking and other skills they must possess for academic and scientific production.
Teaching the oral language is subject to didactic requirements for its development; therefore, the teacher has to teach the students to be increasingly competent in their communication without prioritizing accuracy over fluency. Sometimes, students only manage to reproduce information without orally giving their points of view.

After applying different research instruments (surveys, interviews, analysis of normative documents, observations, among others), and the experience as teachers at UEES and ECOTEC, we can state that there are insufficiencies in the treatment of the oral communication skill. The most significant limitations are:
- Students show limited expressiveness and fluency when exposing their ideas, given by their lack of vocabulary.
- They show insecurity in presenting their ideas.
- The subject Research Methodology does not systematically prepare students to develop oral expression skills.
- Teachers do not take sufficient advantage of the scientific material developed at the university to develop oral expression in students. The spaces used to develop oral expression are limited in both curricular and extracurricular.
- Insufficient activities in which conversation, oral presentations of research papers, dialogue, and debate among students are promoted.

The results obtained in this diagnostic study indicated the relevance of investigating this matter. There is a need to pay special attention to developing oral communication skills. Therefore, the following scientific problem is presented: How to favor the development of oral expression in the teaching-learning process of the UEES and ECOTEC Research Methodology class?

This research aims to elaborate didactic strategies to favor the development of oral expression in the Research Methodology classes at UEES and ECOTEC. The current situation led to the formulation of the following scientific questions:
1. What theoretical assumptions support the development of oral expression skills?
2. What potential does the Research Methodology program offer for developing oral expression?
3. What is the current situation of oral expression with the Research Methodology students?
4. What didactic strategies can be designed to contribute to the development of oral expression in university students of the Research Methodology class?

The following scientific tasks were drawn to meet the objective of the research:
1. Systematization of the theoretical foundations that support the development of oral expression in the university context.
2. Diagnosis of the current state of oral expression in students studying Research Methodology at UEES and ECOTEC.
3. Elaboration of didactic strategies to contribute to the development of oral expression in university students from Research Methodology.

The methods and techniques used in this research were the analytical-synthetic, which was used to analyze the diagnosis, and the processing of data to systematize the necessary theoretical foundations about the development of oral expression. The historical-logical analysis was used to reveal the background of the teaching of oral communication and systematize the theoretical foundations that support it, which made it possible to reach meaningful conclusions. Observations were used to specify the diagnosis of the mode of action of teachers and students in the development of oral expression. Interviews and surveys of students and teachers contributed to knowing the conception of oral expression. The analysis of documents encourages the revision of the methodological orientations of the subject. Descriptive statistics were used to present the information collected concerning the development of oral expression, and inferential statistics were used to interpret the results obtained from the diagnosis and its assessment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations that Support the Development of Oral Expression as a Skill

This scientific article analyzes the theoretical and methodological foundations that support oral expression as a skill from the bibliography consulted.

B. Communication Skills: Speaking.

Communication reflects people’s need for association and cooperation. It is also a condition for developing individuality, originality, and integrity. Several authors advocate that the teacher possesses skills for the communicative process: Petrovsky (1985) proposes skills related to information, mobilization, orientation, and development. In addition, he refers to skills to organize and direct communication between students. Those competencies are related to the development of oral and written communication of students. Ortiz (2020) proposes the skills for expression, observation, and empathic relationships between teachers and students.

It is expected that the student learns to take notes, to elaborate content sheets, concept maps, summarize information, express their ideas orally, and present reports; as well as make oral presentations about the knowledge acquired in their Research Methodology subject so that it can also be linked to the development of research skills. The class aims to stimulate oral and written communication; this involves producing and receiving information. Production is done by speaking and writing, and reception by listening and reading. These skills should not be treated separately.
According to Rodríguez (2006), to achieve the development of communicative skills, speaking and writing must go through three stages that cannot be altered:
- Acquisition of ways of expression (Knowledge of operations).
- Understanding of the ways of expression (Mastery of operations).
- Sufficient, varied, and creative expression. (Systematization).

These stages are critical, but they are not exclusive because they are necessary to achieve motivation, efficient understanding of expression, and frequent practice. Oral and written expressions have been the subject of multiple studies from different perspectives. When directing the teaching-learning process, students must receive adequate didactic treatment, independently, according to their needs, taking into account the relationship between expression and communication.

C. Oral Expression as a Skill in Teaching Activity

The purpose of a university is to help students express their ideas and knowledge. On the other hand, the skills correspond to the know-how and are achieved by powerfully expressing themselves. This can lead to the transformation of their environment, from the classroom and the rest of the activities in the institution or outside.

To refer to oral expression, it is first necessary to specify what is meant by skill. Many authors have defined the term. González (2001) states that "skills constitute the domain of operations that allow a rational regulation of activity." Álvarez (1999) defines skill "as the dimension of content that shows people's behavior in a branch of knowledge proper to the culture of humanity. It is the system of actions and operations dominated by the subject responding to a goal." For Zilberstein (2005), skill implies mastery of cognitive, practical, and evaluative forms; that is, the knowledge in action. Salazar (2002), Chernousova (2008), Núñez (2013), Hidalgo (2013), and Ortiz (2020); all these works are evidence of how much progress has been made in this field. The theoretical positions provided allow us to assume the dialectical unity between thought and language, among other vital issues.

Therefore, the usefulness of the studies carried out is recognized; however, it is considered that they are not sufficient to conceive the work with oral expression aimed at enhancing its development in students. For the authors of this scientific article, teachers must know the actions and operations that the student must perform to comply with the scientific direction of the teaching-learning process. Therefore, Zilberstein's (2005) conception is assumed where skill is seen as the student's ability to express their ideas and criteria orally in social and academic life.

Oral expression is a socio-linguistic process to transmit information and is highly dependent on the situational context. It is based on other significant means: inflections, modulations of the voice, face and body expressions, which allow the transmission and reception of the message (Ferrer-Díaz, 2003). García-Alzola (1975) refers to the general aspects of oral expression, emphasizing its structural aspect. Roméu-Escobar (2012) talks about developing coherent language as a school task. These works are sources of obligatory consultation when it is intended to develop communicative skills in oral expression.

Oral expression is one of the most frequent problems in Research Methodology classes. For years, inadequacies in pedagogical research have led teachers to employ their intuition or professional experience to promote and develop oral skills in Research Methodology classes. Precisely, the limitations in the studies on the subject impose the need for its deepening, given the difficulties that the deficient use of the language produces in the students who daily are involved in fundamental interactions in a given social or academic environment. Nevertheless, according to Ferrer-Díaz (2003), "... it has not yet been possible to reach results that allow scientific support for the didactic procedures that promote the development of this skill."

Báez (2006) assumes that "in oral expression, thought and word are aimed at achieving one or more objectives, which vary according to the nature of the subject and the circumstances in which they occur, with a predominance of referential and persuasive functions." Thus, it consists of a series of micro-skills, such as knowing how to provide information and opinions, show agreement or disagreement, resolve conversational failures or know in which circumstances it is pertinent to speak and in which it is not. It integrates the formal aspects of the language, that is, the linguistic resources that facilitate communication, with pragmatic and socio-cultural factors, which have a lot to do with the universe of the speaker's knowledge, with their culture, which allows a better adaptation to the context of interaction according to the intention and communicative purpose.

To be good communicators, speakers and listeners must decode gestures, mimicry, intonation, the use of hyperboles, unfinished phrases, repetitions, onomatopoeias, among others. Numerous activities can be carried out to give a didactic treatment to this type of communication in the Research Methodology class, but the most used are the didactic conversation and the formulation of questions and answers. It is necessary to ensure that the student dominates the subject thoroughly. The questions must be formulated with precision. Real communication situations could be more motivating for students and favor the development of this critical skill.

Another aspect is the ability to listen carefully. It is crucial to train the student in listening to understand what is being said and respond or intervene better. According to Roméu-Escobar (2012), the oral language must have a "priority character" since it supports written communication. Therefore, it is necessary to devote special attention to oral language exercises since this allows the student to become familiar with the subject, organize their ideas, and enrich subject concepts. For these reasons, teaching oral expression requires teachers to create meaningful contexts for learning by placing students in complex situations that lead them to produce texts.
The receiver must patiently wait for the speakers to present their ideas without showing impatience for proper
communication. In this case, the teachers of Research Methodology must consider that each student communicates
their ideas by sharing their experiences, beliefs, and other factors related to their socio-cultural context. Thus, current studies
in discourse and pragmatics allow students to become efficient, creative, and critical language users and develop a
linguistic awareness that allows them to express themselves coherently and transparently.

When the oral language is taught, according to García-Alzola (1975), three general aspects of oral expression must be
taken into care: phonic, lexical, and structural. Phonic comprises the pronunciation, intonation, and intensity of the
voice. Lexicon refers to words; the activities aim to enrich students' active vocabulary. Among the errors made in this
sense is accentuation, grammatical, and idiomatic. Finally, the structural aspect refers both to the organization of
thought and to the general structure of its expression. Among the most frequent errors are twisted, incomplete,
imprecise sentences, verb concordance with a subject, incorrect use of prepositions, and some forms of personal
pronouns.

The authors of this research propose new indicators that the teachers of Research Methodology should take into
account and consider to evaluate oral expression.

1. Adequacy of ideas: Oral interventions will consider adjusting to the topic in question and the ideas' sufficiency and
quality.
2. Pronunciation: the correct articulation of the different phonemes and the accentuation of the words when
pronouncing them (diction, articulation, intonation, speed) will be measured.
3. Lexical precision: The correctness and precision, that is, that the precise words are used according to their meaning
to express the ideas.
4. Coherence and cohesion: Coherence is fundamentally semantic. A text is coherent when each of the units that
make it up can be interpreted concerning the meaning of the whole text. Cohesion is the correct use of conjunctions,
prepositions, and contextual references.
5. Fluency: Pauses, silences, repetitions, and clarity, avoiding imprecision and ambiguity.

García-Alzola (1975) alludes to two dimensions to be taken into account in oral expression: content and form.

Content indicators:
- Mastery of the theme
- Correspondence between speech and topic
- Quality of ideas
- Parts of the discourse: introduction, development, conclusions
- Communicative intention

Indicators of the form:
- Phonic
- Morphosyntactic
- Semantic

In the teaching activity, difficulties are frequently presented that threaten students' adequate development of oral
expression. Among the causes is the low participation of students in the programmed activities, insufficient feedback
from teachers, and lack of the accurate diagnosis of the students to draw strategies from their difficulties.

The essential qualities, which should not be missing in the elocution or the style of each one when speaking are:
- Clarity, by which we communicate our thoughts to others
- The use of our voices to express our ideas
- Naturalness
- Expressiveness to give words and phrases the strength and intonation appropriate to the content
- To properly communicate ideas, people must be careful with the transmitted content. Listening is also critical to
comprehend the speaker's message. The word listening means hearing with attention and paying attention to what
another person says. Hearing refers to the physical reception of sound waves through the ear. On the other hand,
listening includes receiving and using the information captured through the ear canal.

Listening comprehension and oral language are closely related as they have many aspects in common. Therefore, it is
necessary to develop listening to achieve an adequate development of oral expression. Indeed, attentional listening is
used very frequently in the classroom to listen to orders, instructions, and messages. On the other hand, analytical
listening is when the listener analyzes the message to answer or solve some questions. Therefore, teachers in the
Research Methodology classes must teach their students the following:
- Keep silent.
- Respect the words and ideas of others.
- Analyze what others say.
- Know how to ask questions.
- If they want to say something, they should wait for their turn.
- Do not shout.
- Do not make exaggerated gestures while others speak.
Those elements become essential guidelines for modeling activities to develop oral expression in the teaching-learning process in the Research Methodology classes.

D. Forms of Oral Expression

Today's life demands a very high level of oral communication. Roméu-Escobar (2012) presents two forms of oral expression: spontaneous and directed. The first favors the rapid exchange of ideas between people to attract attention, narrate events, argue, and express feelings, desires, moods, or problems. On the other hand, the directed is conscious and must have exceptional attention from educational institutions.

The oral expression reflects geographical and social varieties, which reveal the origin and culture of the speaker. Sometimes discourse is poorly elaborated, for instance:

1. Momentary interruptions, repetitions, inconsistencies, and ramblings.
2. The generic use of certain verbs.
3. Words that are repeated by habit: well, eh, right?, do you know what I mean?
4. Exclamative and interrogative expressions.
5. Linguistic inaccuracies, such as eliminating certain sounds or words.
6. Unfinished sentences.
7. Colloquial metaphors.
8. Diminutive or augmentative suffixes.
9. Expressions to show conformity, disagreement, and anger.

On the other hand, the discussion develops students' analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, and generalization skills. It requires learning to listen carefully to what each one raises, not to be exalted in the heat of the discussion, and not to interrupt others.

E. Reflective or Directed Speaking

The primary function of thoughtful oral expression is to persuade the listener. Its structure is more elaborated than spontaneous oral expression. The vocabulary is broader and varied. Efforts are made to avoid linguistic inaccuracies. Multiple activities can be carried out to give a didactic treatment to this type of communication in the class, but the most used are the didactic conversation and the formulation of questions and answers. Students' responses to well-formulated questions are the most widespread form of speaking. Nevertheless, students must learn to lead the interlocutor towards the desired path.

Many values can be attributed to the conversation as a procedure for learning the oral language:

- It enriches the student's vocabulary.
- It allows deepening in the subject of the class.
- It stimulates students' abilities to observe and think while offering the teacher the possibility of guiding students in the methods and techniques of research and reasoning so that students can discover the answers to their questions and the problems posed by the class.
- It forces students to direct their thoughts to the general progress of the conversation.
- It allows for correcting the defective forms of expression, either by the students themselves or by the careful observations of teachers.

Teachers must be prudent when correcting the student and adapt to each individual's characteristics. In addition, teachers must master the speaker's behavior to evaluate the level of competence shown by their students.

Another of the most educational forms of oral expression is debate. It develops the capacity for analysis and synthesis, forces us to listen very carefully and to respect the criteria of others. It also requires the organization of thought to refute, persuade and convince. Also, panels, interviews, summaries, among others, constitute forms of oral expression that have to be worked on in the Research Methodology classes. The use of them would facilitate students to acquire necessary skills in the use of the oral language.

III. Analysis of the Results of the Surveys Applied to 89 Students from UEEs and ECOTEC Universities Who Currently Undertake the Research Methodology Course:
1- ¿Se siente motivado a la hora de expresarse de forma oral?
89 respuestas

- Sí: 82% (34)
- No: 18% (17)

2- ¿Qué vías utiliza para elevar su vocabulario?
89 respuestas

- El ejemplo y exigencia de mis profesores: 34 (38,2%)
- El ejemplo y exigencia en mi hogar: 21 (23,6%)
- Por contagio del colectivo con que me reúna: 18 (20,2%)
- El hábito de lectura: 50 (55,2%)

3- ¿Con qué frecuencia lee?
89 respuestas

- Siempre: 17 (19,1%)
- Casi siempre: 35 (39,3%)
- A veces: 35 (39,3%)
- Casi nunca: 2 (2,2%)
- Nunca: 0 (0%)
After analyzing the surveys, the researchers can state the following:

1- In the first question about motivation when expressing themselves orally in classes, 82% said they feel stimulated by adequate and correct oral expression, and 18% do not. Considering the results, we conclude that Research Methodology teachers must design various activities, tasks, and presentations that motivate students to participate and use their research and communicative skills.

2- In the second question, students could select several options for improving their vocabulary and oral expression. In addition, 38.2% of respondents expressed motivation from teachers to achieve a higher level of communicative production; 23.6% referred to their relatives; 20.2% to their peers. Finally, 56.2% stated that reading habits are a fundamental and decisive aspect to improve their vocabulary and stimulate oral and written expression as communicative skills.

3- The third question was related to the frequency of reading. The results were as follows: 19.1% expressed that they always read; 39.3% almost always; 39.3% sometimes; 2.2% hardly ever; and 0% never. The results in this question show that we must encourage students to read, especially in the Research Methodology classes.

4- In the fourth question, students could select several options about their reading taste to achieve adequate oral expression skills. They are interested in novels (30.3%), poems (15.7%), adventures (16.9%), randomly selected topics (51.7%). In Research Methodology, readings related to research and scientific works should increase.
In question 5, which was about ways to communicate with peers, most stated that they do it passive or indirectly. They prefer to communicate with each other through social networking sites.

**Results of the Analysis to the Criteria of Experts**

The expert criterion method was applied to corroborate the relevance of the Methodological Strategy for the stimulation of oral expression as a communicative skill aimed at UEES and ECOTEC students studying the subject Research Methodology. Procedures proposed by Prieto (2010) were used through the use of the tables of the Delphosoft program elaborated in Excel. There are two critical moments in applying the method: the selection and consultation of experts. The applied criteria were the following:

- Work experience in communication, research, and literary production and stimulation of oral expression.
- Academic experience and research.
- Scientific publications.

The experts selected showed a broad willingness to collaborate with the investigation.

**Master in Education - Wilson Cardoza:** more than 30 years of experience teaching high school students scientific methods and academic writing. He is the current Director of the English Department at Torremar High School in Guayaquil – Ecuador.

**Ph.D. in Pedagogical Sciences - Francisca Marrero Salazar:** more than 30 years of expertise in Higher Education teaching the subjects of Research Methodology and Academic Writing. She has published scientific articles in indexed journals, such as Redalyc, Scopus, Scielo, Latindex, and Dialnet. In addition, she has tutored several graduate theses in education, didactics, and methodology.

**Indicators to be evaluated:**

1. Didactic strategies to stimulate oral expression in the Research Methodology classes at UEES and ECOTEC Universities.
2. Methodological actions for the stimulation of oral expression skills.

Experts were given the possibility to issue their criteria for the refinement of the proposal. These were as follows:

1. The theoretical-methodological conception constitutes an excellent way to enhance the stimulation of oral expression in university students who study Research Methodology.
2. They evaluate as successful the methodological actions to achieve the stimulation of oral expression in the subject of Research Methodology.
3. The experts' responses showed an increase in the coincidence of the opinions expressed.
### Table 1

**RESULTS OF THE LEVEL OF COMPETENCE OF POTENTIAL EXPERTS**

*PRIETO & AYALA (2021)*

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### Table 2

**TABULATION OF THE PROCESSING OF EXPERT ASSESSMENTS FOR THE STIMULATION OF ORAL EXPRESSION IN UES AND ECOTEC STUDENTS FROM THE SUBJECT OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.**

*PRIETO & AYALA (2021)*

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IV. CONCLUSIONS

It was found that the methods and ways from the educational process for the development of the oral expression of the students in the university context selected are still insufficient. Communicative competence must follow a sequenced path in which the student in the Research Methodology classes participates in significant communicative activities such as oral presentations and debates. The oral expression must allow students to formulate ideas, solve problems, propose hypotheses, answer academic questions, show agreement or disagreement, and establish contacts with experts and specialists. This research offers possibilities to develop oral communication by enriching students' vocabulary and increasing their scientific and academic production. Research Methodology classes should be a space for developing oral communication strategies that prepare students to be better interlocutors and make them aware of their possibilities as possible researchers. Teachers must promote the analysis of the factors that affect oral expression and seek activities or tasks to improve it.

REFERENCES

Fabricio Ayala-Pazmino has degrees in Computer Science, Business Administration, Education Sciences and received his Ph.D. in Education from the University of Melbourne in Australia, in 2018, with his highest concentration of study in foreign language teaching and learning, pedagogy, educational management, and higher education. He is an educator and has experience as an Academic Coordinator. His previous experience also includes working as head of Humanities and Community and Service departments. He was a professor at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, at Universidad de las Americas in Quito, and at Universidad de Guayaquil. Dr. Ayala is a member of the Monash University Hispanic Studies Teachers Association, Australia.

Email: mfayala@uees.edu.ec

Yeimer Prieto-Lopez. Doctor of Educational Sciences. Bachelor of Education. Associate Professor. Professor at UEES in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and the Master of Educational Management. Professor at ECOTEC University in the Faculty of Marketing and Communication. Teacher and Academic Auditor at Torremar Bilingual School. He has participated in various national and international events. He has more than twenty publications in Indexed Magazines, such as Latindex and Scielo. Doctoral Thesis Tutor at the Universidad del Rosario, Argentina, and the University of Holguín, Cuba. He has received more than one hundred hours of education and pedagogy training in 2021.

Email: yeimerpl@uees.edu.ec; yprietol@ecotec.edu.ec

Beatriz Loor-Avila. Doctor in Social Communication Sciences. Bachelor's Degree in Languages and Linguistics and Master in Higher Education. Professor at the ECOTEC University in the Faculty of Marketing and Communication. Teacher in the Master of Educational Management at UEES. She has participated in several national and international events. She has publications in Indexed Magazines, such as Latindex and Scopus. Thesis Tutor at ECOTEC and UNEMI.

Email: bloora@ecotec.edu.ec