



The development of oral competence in the teaching and learning of english as a foreign language through the use of information and communication technologies

Kennya Ortiz Abud

Research Professor, Regional University Center of Carazo,
UNAN-Managua

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4925-5587>

luisa.ortiz@unan.edu.ni

Submitted on October 18th, 2023 / Accepted on May 23th, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.5377/rtu.v13i37.18182>

Keywords: Communicative Competencies, Strategies, Teaching, English Learning, ICT.

ABSTRACT

The acquisition of oral competence in learning English lies in the difficulty of a series of complex skills that go beyond the memorization of vocabulary and grammar of students who must be able to understand and process the language in real-time, improvise answers, maintain fluency, pronounce, develop security and confidence when expressing themselves orally, Challenges are exacerbated by factors such as limited exposure to English outside of the classroom, anxiety, and lack of opportunities to practice oral communication in a meaningful and contextualized way. This research aims to analyze the impact of the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) on the development of oral competence within the teaching-learning process of the English language and was carried out with students in the third year of the English degree of different learning levels, using a mixed approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, surveys, interviews, focus group, and classroom observations were also carried out, about the use of ICTs, obtaining results that show that the use of new educational multimedia applications has been effective

in improving phonetics and pronunciation of English, in addition, teachers reported greater motivation and participation of students in oral activities. From the findings, it is concluded that the integration of ICT has a positive impact on the development of students' oral competence, due to the interactive, dynamic, and motivating nature of technological tools, which allow them to practice and improve their communication skills more effectively.

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of oral competence in the learning of English as a foreign language has historically been one of the greatest challenges for students, despite the constant efforts of teachers to implement effective pedagogical strategies. The development of oral competence in the teaching-learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) has been a topic of increasing interest in educational research. This work has been carried out to explore and evaluate the impact of the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) on the improvement of the oral skills of students of English as a foreign language.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze how ICT can be used effectively to promote the development of oral competence in English learners. Through this analysis, it seeks to identify specific methods and tools that can be integrated into the educational curriculum to improve phonetics, pronunciation, and communication skills in real contexts.

The importance of this work lies in the need to improve the quality of teaching English as a foreign language, especially in an increasingly globalized world where communicative competence in English is essential. In addition, ICT offers a wide range of possibilities to create more interactive and personalized learning environments, which can motivate students and facilitate more effective learning.

This study aims to provide empirical evidence on the concrete benefits of the use of these technologies in the teaching of English, thus providing a solid basis for future pedagogical practices. In addition, the incorporation of ICT in the teaching-learning of English can represent an innovative and motivating strategy for students, which could result in better performance and greater involvement in oral activities.

Current knowledge on the use of ICT in language teaching suggests that these tools can have a significant positive impact on foreign language learning. Studies have shown that ICT can improve student motivation, provide opportunities for interactive practice, and provide access to authentic resources that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Previous studies have looked at the challenges and pedagogical strategies used to strengthen oral competence in English language learning. Therefore, this research seeks to provide evidence that contributes to a greater understanding of how technological tools can be

effectively integrated to improve the development of oral communicative skills in the context of learning English as a foreign language, especially in the improvement of English pronunciation and phonetics.

In summary, this study not only seeks to understand the impact of ICT on the oral competence of English learners but also to provide practical guidance for educators and educational policymakers on how to integrate these technologies into the teaching-learning process effectively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

(Rodriguez, 2022) said that every movement of the knowledge that It's about general to the particular, is understood as any conclusion we reach after reasoning. In a stricter and more specific sense, the deduction is understood as the demonstration or certain derivation of the affirmation or consequence of one or more affirmations or premises based on the laws of Logic.

Based on this statement, the present research is directed by this method, since it starts from the general knowledge that the student possesses to the particular and essential knowledge involved in the application of the strategy for the improvement of the communicative skills of English.

This research aimed to analyze the impact of the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) on the development of students' oral competence during the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language, and also employed a mixed methodological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon studied.

In addition, it had a non-experimental, observational design, the scope for it is descriptive, with a type of research according to its cross-sectional temporality, the research paradigm is the critical partner, the research approach is mixed, it decisively influences the learning of its students, not only through their competence but also thanks to its ability to raise motivation, encourage communication and stimulate participation and is based on exchange processes (of knowledge, experiences, experiences, feelings, etc.).

The study was carried out during the year 2023. The study was carried out with students of the career of Education Sciences with a major in English of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua UNAN CUR Carazo with a population of 200 students of which a sample of 38 students of the third year was taken, being them, the core part of the career and it is considered that they already have a certain command of the English language.

The following instruments were used for data collection:

Surveys: Questionnaires were applied to students to assess their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences about the use of ICT in the development of oral competence in English.

Semi-structured interviews: A selected sample of 20 students and 10 teachers was interviewed, to deepen their perspectives on the challenges, strategies, and opportunities offered by the integration of technologies in the strengthening of oral communication skills.

Classroom observations: Systematic observations of English classes were carried out, to analyze the pedagogical practices implemented by teachers about the use of ICT and their impact on the development of students' oral competence.

Focus groups: 8 focus groups were formed, each with 6-8 students, to discuss in a more in-depth way their experiences and opinions about the use of technologies in English learning, especially regarding oral expression.

Initially, the surveys were applied to all participating students. Then, a random sample was selected to conduct individual interviews and form the focus groups. In parallel, the observations were carried out in the classroom over a period of 8 weeks. All the data collected through the different instruments were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques, to triangulate the information and obtain a comprehensive view of the findings.

For the implementation of this research, the following resources were available:

Access to the facilities and classrooms of the university where the study was carried out.

Support from the authorities and teachers of the English career to facilitate student participation. Technological equipment (computers, projectors, etc.) and internet connection to carry out ICT activities.

Software and digital tools (New educational multimedia application ELEP,) used during the teaching-learning process.

Material resources for the application of data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, etc.).

For the validation of the instrument to be applied in the study, it was decided given the type of study by validation by expert criteria.

For this, the experts were defined according to the following characteristics:

- Research experience in the line of research under study.
- Have a doctorate in education or a doctorate related to a line of research.
- Have a mastery of the English language and the theories related to the study.

- Be willing to contribute to the validation process of the instruments.

Once the criteria for the selection of the experts were defined, the instrument was sent to each expert and complying with what is described by the Delphi method, in which each expert gives his opinions on the instruments independently and without having any knowledge of the opinions of the other experts (blind judges) and then evaluates and triangulates the individual observations and suggestions of each expert. to then make the pertinent decisions and make these changes to the instruments.

For the above, a validation protocol was designed which was shared individually and independently with each expert.

Each expert was asked to assess the following aspects of the instrument

- The content is sufficient, that is if the number of questions is adequate for the study if there are no gaps in the content to be addressed in the instrument.
- Relevance and wording of the questions, they are clear and understandable.

The quantitative data obtained through the surveys were processed and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. On the other hand, the qualitative data collected in the interviews, observations, and focus groups were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using content analysis and thematic coding techniques.

The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative information allowed us to obtain a comprehensive view of the results and to understand more deeply the impact of the use of ICT on the

development of students' oral competence in the learning of English as a foreign language.

Inclusion Criteria:

Students:

- ✓ Be in the third year of the English degree at the selected university.
- ✓ Have different levels of language proficiency: beginner, intermediate and advanced.
- ✓ Have attended at least 80% of the classes during the data collection period.
- ✓ Voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Teachers:

- ✓ Be English teachers at the same university where the study is carried out.
- ✓ Have at least 2 years of experience teaching English.

- ✓ Teach classes to the students included in the sample.
- ✓ Voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria:

Students:

- ✓ Students who are not in the third year of the English degree.
- ✓ Students who do not regularly attend classes (less than 80% attendance).
- ✓ Students who do not agree to voluntarily participate in the study.

Teachers:

- ✓ Teachers who do not teach English at the university where the study is being conducted.
- ✓ Teachers with less than 2 years of experience in teaching English.
- ✓ Teachers who do not teach classes to the students included in the sample.

Teachers who do not agree to participate voluntarily in the study.

These inclusion and exclusion criteria will allow the selection of an appropriate and relevant sample for the objectives of the research on the development of oral competence in the learning of English through the use of ICTs.

RESULTS

These results reflect that the student is motivated and learns dynamically, this allows learning in a way that activates the essential and primordial sub-skills such as the pronunciation and phonetics of English through new teaching strategies supported by information and communication technology, it is the case of this research where a new educational multimedia application was used to develop communicative competencies in the pronunciation and phonetics of English oriented to its educational use when accompanied by a didactic proposal.

According to these applied instruments, they show that most consider that they do not have virtual resources and media that contribute to the development of English communicative skills and that it is necessary to have new teaching strategies that can help them improve the aforementioned difficulties.

comes to support this new proposal that will solve these problems to the extent that all teachers begin to use technological tools because even today there are some resistant to change, this also affirms that, if new technologies allow the creation of new learning scenarios,

educational institutions should not be left on the sidelines, they must know and use these new languages and forms of communication. (Garcia, 2010)

On the other hand, it stands out for the success of communication, it is essential to have such knowledge and pronunciation is a factor of phonetics that is frequently talked about, but in the classroom, it is easily ignored by teachers. On the other hand, (Nieto, 2006) supposes that the first factor that influences teachers not to incorporate ICT into the teaching-learning process is because “the speed of its development is dizzying and the novelty it brings with it also raises fears, resistance, and struggles between its members and its detractors”.(Backhouse, 2014)

Therefore, in this study, the difficulties that students have in terms of pronunciation and phonetics are identified and the use of a didactic strategy where ICT is incorporated is proposed as an alternative solution, specifically as part of the research an application was developed, which was named ELEP, (Enjoy Learning English Pronunciation) this was carried out in a C# (C Sharp) programming language on the Windows platform using Microsoft’s Visual Studio. NET.

Having versatility as its main strength, this means that the application is scalable and adaptable which indicates that it can be used by a greater number of students, and these contextualized activities that contain effective, safe, and interoperable tools for the difficulties of the group under study, in addition, ELEP is designed to be efficient and usable, Secure because it includes several security features, which helps protect the app from attacks because it supports a wide range of technologies, making it easy to integrate this app with others.

Based on the results obtained and on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the different collection instruments applied (interview, focus group and observation guide, questionnaire, and survey) the following is obtained:

1. The student lacks knowledge and practice in terms of phonetics of the English language.
2. They have problems with the pronunciation and distinction of sounds in the words TH, SH, and CH, which tend to confuse the student when expressing it orally.
3. They do not have technological resources contextualized to their educational needs, such as this new app that helped them improve and develop the communicative skills of the English language through the use of this new app.
4. The problem of pronunciation in English students generates insecurity, shame, and fear when expressing themselves orally.

5. Even though teachers are willing to use technologies, there is very little integration of these by teachers in their learning activities oriented in their class.
6. In the observation guide, it is evident that there is not good access to network systems and to have internet connectivity and to be able to use it during the class.
7. It is evident that both teachers and students are willing to integrate ICT into the teaching and learning processes of the language, in the same way, both express that the use of technology motivates them and facilitates their learning.
8. In the interviews of both teachers and students, it is evident that there are difficulties in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge of the sub-skill of English phonetics and that this didactic proposal comes to strengthen and develop this problem so deeply rooted in students of the English career, the strategy is valued very positively by those involved in this study, that is, teachers and students.
9. In the survey of teachers and students, both agree that it is important to apply new didactic strategies that improve the communicative skills of English, mainly in the sub-skills of pronunciation and phonetics, which is where students have the greatest problems.

In all the instruments is expressed that the main difficulty in learning the English language is pronunciation and phonetics, as well as that pronunciation and phonetics imply c(Anderson, 2011)True difficulties of the language and these can be Receptive or Expressive, as he pointed out in his (Herman, 2016)research that there are difficulties in pronunciation and phonetics of English, taking them as one of the main difficulties that students have in learning English because they must learn the various sounds, remember the acoustic qualities of those sounds, in addition to learning the proper use and knowing the Details Necessary As for longitude, accent and tone. On the other hand, both teachers and students in the different instruments applied expressed that pronunciation arouses insecurity and fear, so in the dialogues they claim to feel ashamed.

What does not allow for a good development of learning, is also manifested by the fact that it is necessary to have the responsibility to use that provide a motivational level that urges students to break down the barriers that interfere with oral expression and thus be able to improve fluency and pronunciation of the foreign language. (Melendez, 2016)

On the other hand, both teachers and students in the different instruments applied expressed that pronunciation arouses insecurity and fear, so in the dialogues, they claim to feel ashamed, which does not allow them to obtain good development of learning, this is also manifested (that they must have the responsibility to use active methodologies that provide a

motivational level that urge students to break the barriers that interfere with oral expression and thus to be able to improve fluency and pronunciation of the foreign language, (Melendez, 2016)

From the qualitative analysis, it was possible to show that students have a great attraction to technologies and that the use of these motivates them to achieve learning more easily, coinciding with what has been expressed by the results of this study, which is why face-to-face classes will need new spaces that complement knowledge through the use of and the appearance of ICT fits easily into this process. (Hernández, 2017)

Prospective analyses of educational technology, based on the didactic use of ICTs, constitute one of the most frequent lines of work and research, knowing that the most important changes in the field of ICT are the most important changes in the field of education.

In education, they tend to be produced by pressures outside the academic environment. While the “information revolution” has come to transform, all this shows that information and communication technologies are very efficient didactic tools to achieve learning as well as motivating agents and that their use in the development of a second language is indispensable today.

As part of the evidence of the improvement of the problem in pronunciation and phonetics with the development of the didactic proposal, a comparative analysis is established between the level of pronunciation and phonetics of English before and after the proposal, which shows the improvement, below are presented two graphs in the first the students did not answer anything, this due to a lack of theoretical and practical knowledge of the forms of articulation of the sounds that is most difficult for the student and at the end of the application of the didactic proposal the same test was carried out and this time they immediately responded, and identified the correct way of intonation, articulation and pronunciation.

DISCUSSION

The development of oral competence in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is a topic of great relevance in today’s educational field. ICT has revolutionized the way the English language is taught and learned, offering a wide range of tools and resources that can significantly improve pedagogical practice and student performance in communication skills, especially in oral expression.

One of the main benefits of using ICT in the teaching of oral English is the opportunity to provide a more interactive and contextualized learning environment. Tools such as video conferencing, chat rooms, online forums, and virtual learning platforms allow students to

practice oral communication in authentic and meaningful situations, both inside and outside the classroom. This helps to develop the student's confidence in expressing themselves in English and to improve their communicative fluency and accuracy.

In addition, ICTs offer a variety of multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts, audiobooks, and interactive applications, which can enrich the teaching-learning process of oral English. These resources can be adapted to different learning styles and individual needs, providing students with the opportunity to practice listening, pronunciation, and speaking in a variety of communicative contexts and situations.

Another important aspect is the ability of ICT to facilitate feedback and assessment of student progress in developing oral proficiency in English. By using automated feedback tools, such as speech recognition and pronunciation analysis, students can receive immediate feedback on their oral performance and receive personalized guidance to improve their communication skills.

However, it is important to recognize that the effective use of ICT in the teaching of oral English also poses important challenges and considerations. These include accessibility and availability of appropriate technology, teacher training in the effective use of technological tools, selection and adaptation of appropriate digital resources, and attention to equity and inclusion in access to digital learning opportunities.

In summary, the use of Information and Communication Technologies in the teaching of oral English offers significant potential to improve the quality and effectiveness of the learning process, allowing students to develop solid and relevant communication skills in today's globalized and digitized world.

However, it is critical to critically address the challenges and ethical considerations associated with its implementation, to ensure that all students have equitable access to effective and meaningful learning opportunities. pronunciation, students can receive immediate feedback on their oral performance and receive personalized guidance to improve their communication skills.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it is essential to return to the initial idea that we are currently living with the technological revolution, the most profound socio-cultural change that has ever taken place. In this context, the Nicaraguan university, involved in the transformations of the teaching-learning process, has opted for educational innovation, betting on virtual education based on the use of new technologies, flexible operating structures, and highly efficient pedagogical methods.

Considering how these changes influence the teaching-learning process, it is pointed out that the speed of its development is dizzying and the novelty it brings with it also raises fears and resistance, which is probably due to ignorance or even prejudices around ICTs.

Due to the demands of the new millennium, the mastery and learning of English is important and this must be dynamically and innovatively to promote quality education; Therefore, it is necessary to propose more viable alternatives to reach students, attracting interest and capturing their interest and willingness to learn and actively participate in their learning process, which is why it is important to provide initial and continuous training for teachers who

has to face the so-called by referring to the generation that was born with new technologies and social networks, unlike those who are migrants, such as teachers. (Serres, 2013)

In addition, it assumes that new technologies create new languages and means of communication and, consequently, new learning scenarios; Therefore, the proposal is inspired by a series of existing applications, the design of a new application in which the student is the direct protagonist within the teaching-learning process to achieve a correct pronunciation of English and know how to distinguish sounds, making use of participatory methodologies, in the particular case, Research-action.

Finally, it is concluded that the fundamental basis of the teaching-learning process is the opportunity that should be given to the student to show the skills and abilities that they may have in terms of wanting to innovate and improve a methodological strategy for teaching the English language in a timely innovation for the development of communicative competencies of the English language.

WORKS CITED

- Anderson. (2011). The importance of learning a second language. Mexico: Mexico. Mexico Magazine. Mexico Magazine, Mexico City.
- Backhouse. (2014). The main phonetic and phonological problems in teaching. Hogskolan Dalarna.
- Garcia. (2010). Pedagogical use of ICT educational materials and resources: Revista Mèxico.
- Herman. (2016). Difficulties in pronouncing the English labiodental sounds. Revista Mèxico,, Mèxico.
- Hernández. (2017). Technological media among students and teachers. Revista de Educación, Editorial Universidad, Ciudad, Mèxico.
- Meléndez. (2016). Stimulation of motivation and its influence on learning. UNAN Managua Magazine, 45-60.

Rodriguez. (2022). The method of scientific research. Universidad Libre and at the Universidad Santiago de Cali.

Serres. (2013). "Thumbelina Generation". Fondo de Cultura Económica: Tezontle, Ecuador.