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**The usage of problem-solving activities applied to improve
students' speaking skill.**

**Trabajo de Titulación para optar al título de
Licenciado/a en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés**

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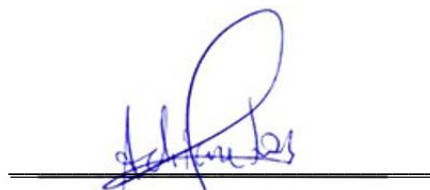
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DEDICATORY

I dedicate this work to God, who gave me the necessary wisdom to complete this project with success; to my two older siblings Katherine and Jefferson who encouraged me to keep on going every day; likewise, to my loving parents Mayra and Fausto who showed that with determination and effort everything is possible; and finally, to my loyal pets for their unconditional love and companionship.

Yajaira Lema Guamán

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INDEX

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP.....	
FAVORABLE OPINION OF THE TUTOR PROFESSOR	
CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT MEMBERS.....	
ANTIPLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE	
DEDICATORY	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
RESUMEN	
ABSTRACT.....	
CHAPTER I.....	14
1. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK	14
1.1 Introduction.....	14
1.2 Problem Statement	15
1.3 Problem Formulation.....	17
1.4 Justification	17
1.5 Objectives	18
1.5.1 General Objective.....	18
1.5.2 Specific Objectives	18
CHAPTER II.....	19
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	19
2.1 Theoretical Background.....	19
2.2 Theoretical Foundation.....	20
2.2.1 Speaking Proficiency	20
2.2.2 Constructivism in Problem-solving.....	20
2.2.3 Problem-solving	21
2.2.4 Type of Problem-solving Activities	21
CHAPTER III.....	23
3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	23

3.1	Research Approach	23
3.2	Research Modality	23
3.3	Level or Type of Research	24
3.4	Study Population.....	24
3.5	Sample Size.....	24
3.6	Data Collection Technique and Instruments	24
CHAPTER IV.		26
4.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	26
4.1	Results	26
4.1.1	Observation Guide.....	26
4.1.2	Observation Guide.....	28
4.2	INTERVIEW	30
CHAPTER V.....		35
5.1	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	35
5.1.1	Conclusions	35
5.1.2	Recommendations	36
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		37
ANNEXES.....		41

RESUMEN

El uso de la estrategia del problem-solving es una herramienta novedosa en la enseñanza de idiomas, particularmente para mejorar la habilidad de speaking, puesto que este enfoque va más allá de la práctica repetitiva de vocabulario y gramática, proporcionando a los estudiantes un contexto real y significativo en el cual utilizar el idioma. Además, al enfrentarse a problemas reales, los estudiantes no solo practican la producción oral, sino que también desarrollan habilidades de pensamiento crítico y toma de decisiones. De esta manera, el uso del problem-solving exige que los estudiantes negocien, expliquen y defiendan sus ideas, lo que enriquece su capacidad de comunicación y les permite practicar el speaking de una manera dinámica y relevante. En base a esto surge el proyecto de investigación titulado “El uso de actividades de problem-solving aplicadas para mejorar la habilidad oral de los estudiantes” la cual se realizó con el objetivo general de describir el uso de actividades de problem-solving aplicadas como estrategia para mejorar el desarrollo de la habilidad oral en estudiantes de nivel Intermedio de Chicago English School Academy. Por consiguiente, se adoptó un enfoque de investigación cualitativo de nivel descriptivo con dos modalidades de investigación: bibliográfica documental e investigación de campo. Así mismo, se optó por el uso de la entrevista y la guía de observación como herramientas para recolectar la información relevante de la población estimada, la cual estuvo conformada por la docente de inglés y 15 estudiantes de nivel intermedio de Chicago English School Academy, institución en la cual se ha evidenciado el uso de la estrategia para la enseñanza de la habilidad oral. Los resultados obtenidos indican que para un efectivo desarrollo de las lecciones orientadas a desarrollar la habilidad oral de los estudiantes es fundamental implementar de manera coherente las tres etapas de pre-speaking, while-speaking, y post-speaking. Además, el uso combinado de actividades de problem-solving controladas y libres,

así como también la aplicación de técnicas participativas y recursos diversos, permiten a los estudiantes sentirse motivados a practicar el idioma con confianza. Por otra parte, el proceso metodológico empleado en la aplicación de actividades de problem-solving está conformado por pasos estructurados que incluyen generalmente: introducción del problema, exploración y planificación de soluciones, presentación de soluciones, reflexión y retroalimentación.

Palabras claves: resolución de problemas, estrategia, expresión oral, dominio del idioma.

ABSTRACT

The usage of the problem-solving strategy is an innovative tool in language teaching, particularly to improve speaking skills, since this approach goes beyond the repetitive practice of vocabulary and grammar, providing students with a real and meaningful context in which to use the language. Furthermore, by facing real problems, students not only practice oral production, but also develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. In this way, the use of problem-solving requires students to negotiate, explain and defend their ideas, which enriches their communication skills and allows them to practice speaking in a dynamic and relevant way. Based on this, the research project entitled “The usage of problem-solving activities applied to improve students’ speaking skill” emerged, which was carried out with the general objective of describing the usage of problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve the speaking skill development in students of Intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy. Therefore, a descriptive-level qualitative research approach was adopted using bibliographic documentary and field research modality. Likewise, the use of the interview and the observation guide was chosen as tools to collect relevant information from the estimated population, which was made up of the English teacher and 15 intermediate-level students from the Chicago English School Academy, an institution in which the use of the strategy for teaching oral skills has been demonstrated. The results indicate that for the effective development of lessons aimed at developing students' oral skills, it is essential to coherently implement the three stages of pre-speaking, while-speaking, and post-speaking. Furthermore, the combined use of controlled and free problem-solving activities, as well as the application of participatory techniques and various resources, allow students to feel motivated to practice the language with confidence. On the other hand, the methodological process used in the application of

problem-solving activities is made up of structured steps that generally include: the introduction of the problem, exploration and planning of solutions, presentation of solutions, reflection and feedback.

Palabras claves: problem-solving, strategy, speaking skill, language proficiency.

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CHAPTER I.

1. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

Nowadays, having English language proficiency is increasingly crucial for professional success, on account the English language has become widely used all over the world, therefore, it constitutes the main foreign language taught as a means of communication between people from different nationalities. On this point, within the context of foreign language learning, the mastery of the English-speaking skill is the most relevant among the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). In fact, the cognitive capacity required to formulate deliberated verbal phrases that convey meaning is learned by speech, likewise, the knowledge of the language and the ability to use it can be reflected based on this skill (Richards, 2006).

To reach success in spoken language proficiency, Canale and Swain (1980) mention that, it is needed to become communicative competent. That is to say, using the language appropriately to accomplish communication goals in authentic social environments. From this perspective, different Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategies are applied to improve the English-speaking learning process, however, the usage of problem-solving activities stands out for its characteristic of being skill development-oriented, since it forces learners to use functional language in collective discussions for finding didactic problem solutions (Syam, 2020). Thus, speaking sub-skills (fluency, self-correction, accuracy, chunks of language, etc.) are strengthened, and idea transmission is facilitated.

Numerous studies grant positive results about problem-solving activities as a strategy used in English classrooms. Amidst these results, it is identified that problem-solving promotes higher motivation and participation because the acquisition of the English foreign

language is over meaningful activities that are relevant to the learner's life. Hence, this strategy guarantees the improvement of speaking skills development since all the individual intellectual capacity is involved in authentic individual knowledge production.

Based on the aforementioned, this research will focus on describing the usage of problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve speaking skill development in students of Intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy, in the city of Riobamba during the academic period 2023-2024. For this, a qualitative approach will be adopted; besides the level or type of research will be descriptive to which the field research and bibliographic research methods will be applied to understand the reality of the research population. Likewise, this research will be developed in support of the interview and the observation guide to comprehend the current practices surrounding the topic studied.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is no doubt that in a society of constant evolution, the presence of lingua franca has allowed human beings to become active participants in global communication. Nowadays, the English language has become the lingua franca that connects people even when they speak different languages. On this basis, it is evident that English-speaking skill development is an essential aspect that allows people to become good communicators.

However, for most EFL learners spoken language proficiency remains difficult to achieve. In fact, in Latin American countries the use of the English language is not optimal, since a study carried out by the International Education Company EF in 2014, showed that only the Argentine population mastered a good command of the language, the common reason was the good training teachers received to improve in their performance in the classroom; unlike other Latin American countries where English subject is given from secondary level with a very insufficient small number of hours.

On the other hand, while it is true that educators continually seek effective strategies to enhance language proficiency, conventional ways of learning are used in the learning process. Thus, the use of learning activities that are too monotonous, where students are forced to carry out dialogues that have been determined by textbooks, causes lack of opportunity to improve speaking skill. Furthermore, while structured exercises provide a clear framework for learning, students might not always reflect real-life communicative situations, leading students to struggle in applying their skills on spontaneous and unscripted conversations.

This is the case of many senior high school students, which according to the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum, it is expected that students on Bachillerato General Unificado must be effective speakers, who can respond appropriately in a range of social interactions as well as to be critical and creative thinkers. However, as was stated in the last report of Education First in 2020, the level of English proficiency in the country continues to be low, because Ecuador was ranked 19th in Latin America and 93rd globally.

According to Encalada (2022) one notable way to improve one's language acquisition is by giving learners the chance to critically analyze and interact in their environment, in such a way that students boost confidence and adapt to unexpected situations. In this sense, although the potential benefits of incorporating problem-solving activities in the improvement of language proficiency are recognized, it remains a distinct lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the precise didactic application of the strategy in the classroom. Therefore, this research aims to theoretically improve the current gap in pedagogical knowledge of the usage of problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve speaking skill.

1.3 Problem Formulation

How are problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve the speaking skill development in students of Intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy, in the city of Riobamba during the academic period 2023-2024?

1.4 Justification

In the area of language learning, the usage of problem-solving activities as a strategy to improve speaking skill is based on widely-accepted pedagogical and psychological principles. In fact, this strategy has active learning as the basic principle that sets the path to an active instructional teaching methodology. Thus the learning process is higher since students are directly involved through practical and relevant activities that promote critical thinking and creativity (Nata and Tungsirivat, 2017), skills that are essential both for language proficiency and for student's personal and professional development

Additionally, the usage of problem-solving activities turns out the classroom into an environment conducive to speaking practice. This is because interaction and communication among students are facilitated by activities that force students to work together to find solutions, negotiate meanings, and express their ideas clearly and coherently (Care, 2015). In this manner, collaboration promotes more authentic and spontaneous use of the language as students must adapt their peers' responses in real time.

In the city of Riobamba, Chicago English School Academy has been for many years a recognized institution for English language learning, many people go to this institution to train their English learning abilities, but English-speaking skills are given more attention since many young students and even adults aim to look for new opportunities traveling abroad. When delving into their methodologies to teach English, a notable use of problem-solving as a strategy to develop students' speaking skill was found. In this sense, this study

will contribute valuable information regarding the usage of problem-solving activities in the educational field.

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

To describe the usage of problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve the speaking skill development in students of Intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy, in Riobamba city during the academic period 2023-2024.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

To recognize the stages followed in the lesson for teaching the speaking part.

To identify the type of activities, techniques, and resources used when working with problem-solving activities for developing the speaking skill.

To determine the methodological process employed when applying problem-solving activities as a strategy to develop the speaking skill.

CHAPTER II.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theoretical Background

When it comes to practicing the speaking skill, the usage of solving-problem activities has evolved to become a significant strategy that contributes to the development of the foreign language ability. This has allowed to carry out various research regarding the topic in question, in this sense, diverse investigations were found useful for developing this research, since each one holds important information to contribute.

According to Fadilah in her quantitative study carried out in Indonesia, which is titled “Teaching speaking skills using problem solving activities”, the success of teaching is not only dependent on the lesson programs, but also important to know how teachers present the lessons and use various techniques to make the class more enjoyable. In this way, throughout her research performed in 2015, she aimed to analyze if problem-solving activities actually improved students’ speaking skills at the first semester of IAIN Salatiga. After applying a pretest and posttest to an experiment group and a control group, she concluded that teaching speaking skill using problem-solving activities improved the students’ speaking skills, due to the results of the posttest scores being significantly higher than prior to the use of problem-solving activities. In addition, the characteristics of the activities encouraged the interaction among them, giving as result that their attitude towards the strategy was rated as good. As well as that, problem-solving activities can provide students with experience using the language for real communication.

Furthermore, in the mixed method research titled “Teachers and students’ perceptions of the use of the problem-solving strategy to improve English speaking skills in EFL learners”, Aguirre (2021) mentions that problem-solving activities are important for

developing students' oral competence by putting their experience and knowledge into practice. In this sense, the study shares findings collected from the perceptions of 77 EFL students and 10 EFL teachers in the third year of senior public high school in the city of Loja, regarding the use of problem-solving activities to improve English-Speaking skill, as well as the most common problem-solving activities that teachers use. Thence, it was concluded that both EFL learners and EFL teachers have positive views towards the use of the problem-solving strategy. Besides, she found that it is useful for the development of students' speaking skills and has a positive impact on students' attitudes.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

2.2.1 Speaking Proficiency

In language learning, speaking proficiency is a key indicator of an individual's ability to function in real-life communication situations, which involves the capacity to communicate fluently, accurately, and coherently in verbal interactions. Since, according to Manan (2022) proficiency in the English language alludes to the capability of learners to manage interpersonal interactions in all four English language skills. In this context, teaching speaking in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) as a critical skill is important for developing effective communication in the target language (Moreano, 2023).

2.2.2 Constructivism in Problem-solving

According Büyükduman & Şirin (2010), constructivism emphasizes the significance of the learner in constructing students' knowledge rather than delivering on the teacher to do so. In addition, it states that knowledge is shaped by human experience, making mistakes, interacting with the environment, and chasing answers. In constructivist, students focus on learning in the appropriate environment rather than directly teaching specific skills. It means

that the learning process centers on engaging students actively in expressing their ideas within a supportive learning environment that fosters positive emotions. This, in turn, enhances their enthusiasm for the learning process.

2.2.3 Problem-solving

Problem-solving refers to the cognitive process of identifying, analyzing, and developing effective strategies to overcome challenges, obstacles, or uncertainties in order to reach a desired goal or outcome. It involves a systematic and logical approach to finding solutions, often requiring creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making skills (Wang & Chiew, 201). It means that problem-solving can be applied to various domains, including everyday life, academic pursuits, professional settings, and complex situations requiring innovative solutions. According to Dostál (2015) Key elements of problem-solving include defining the problem, generating potential solutions, evaluating alternatives, and implementing the most suitable course of action. Besides, successful problem-solving often involves a combination of analytical reasoning, practical considerations, and adaptability.

2.2.4 Type of Problem-solving Activities

To begin with, the usage of problem-solving activities offers learners with specific information to be analyzed or investigated, and in particular, it aims to find answers to the problems assigned through dynamic performance and creative thinking (Fadilah, 2015). By the same, it allows learners to express their ideas while collaborating and learning from each other which results in less fear toward making mistakes when speaking (Aguirre, 2021). Furthermore, according to Uktamjonova (2021), problem-solving activities can be categorized according to how structured it is, whereby well-structured problem-solving activities are referred to when students have a clear idea of the answer, and ill-structured problem-solving activities when there is relatively little guidance or structure to find out the answer.

In this sense, Jonassen (2011) proposes a list of problem-solving activities on a continuum from well-structured to ill-structured nature as follows:

Decision-making: It requires individuals or social groups to decide which solution, issue, or course of action to pursue. These problem-solving activities have a limited number of solutions, since rational choice arises from models of decision-making, comparing, contrasting, and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of alternate solutions. More naturalistic theories of decision-making emphasize the role of prior experiences and stories as the main conductors to solve the problem.

Dilemmas: These are considered the most ill-structured type of problem-solving activity because there typically is no solution that will ever be acceptable to a significant portion of the people affected by the problem. In fact, the situation is so complex and unpredictable, that a single best solution can never be known, so it needs different answers. Generally, dilemmas are often social situations with conflicting perspectives.

Story problems: It typically presents a set of values embedded within a shallow story context. Story problems are normally solved when learners identify key values in the short scenario and select the appropriate information to generate an answer (Sherrill, 1983). These are the most common type of problem-solving activities used in formal education settings.

CHAPTER III.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Research Approach

This research has a qualitative approach since the main objective was to describe the usage of problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve the speaking skill development. Thus, the qualitative approach allows deepening in the implementation of the strategy in the educational context due to its characteristic of gaining a comprehensive understanding of phenomena in the natural environment (Sampieri, 2018). Besides, in the qualitative approach, the perspectives of the teacher and students of the Intermediate level at Chicago English School Academy regarding the usage of the strategy can be perceived, since the approach grants a better understanding of the individual's perceptions and experiences of their surroundings (Wilson & Shraples, 2015).

3.2 Research Modality

The modalities under which the research was carried out are field research and bibliographical-documental investigation. To begin with, field investigation allows the researcher to work with individuals in their natural settings. Additionally, according to Myers (2000), field research consists of collecting data directly from the investigated population or from the reality where the events occur without controlling or manipulating any variable. This allowed to carry out the description research about how problem-solving activities are applied to improve the speaking ability of students of Intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy, in the city of Riobamba during the academic period 2023-2024. In addition, the bibliographical-documental research modality is the analysis of information about a topic being studied. This has supported the development of this

investigation regarding the usage of problem-solving in improving speaking skills by revising the most relevant information in different databases

3.3 Level or Type of Research

The level of this study is descriptive, as it is mentioned by Sandelowski (2000) it consists in characterizing a particular phenomenon or situation, and pointing out the most peculiar or distinguishing features. It is closely related to the purpose of describing how the problem-solving activities are used with the students of the Intermediate level, at the Chicago English School Academy by the English Teacher and how it helps to improve the students' speaking skill considering the process, characteristics, and dynamics involved in it.

3.4 Study Population

The population in this study consisted of an English teacher and 15 students of Intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy, in Riobamba City during the academic period 2023-2024. This institution was selected since the English teacher applies problem-solving activities during the teaching and speaking process.

3.5 Sample Size

Because the population is small, selecting a sample size was no necessary.

3.6 Data Collection Technique and Instruments

Given that this research has a qualitative approach, it was necessary to use techniques and instruments that addressed qualitative data focusing mainly on obtaining ideas, reasoning, and motivations (Velázquez, 2022). In this way, the first data collection technique used in this research was the interview, which along with the interview guide composed of six questions as the data collection instrument was applied to the Intermediate Level English Teacher at Chicago English School. Whereby, it was granted the information regarding what activities, strategies, and resources are used in the classroom when using problem-solving

activities as a strategy to improve speaking skill development, considering that the interview technique is a planned verbal conversation that seats a series of questions to one or more interviewees in order to obtain specific information (Díaz & Ortiz, 2005).

Additionally, the second data collection technique was the observation technique. This along with the usage of two observation guides granted the collection of systematic data to recognize the stages followed in the lesson for teaching the speaking part, as well as data to determine the methodological process employed along the lesson when applying problem-solving activities to develop the speaking part. Since according to Arias (2006) this technique consists of capturing through sight any event that occurs in nature or society based on the established objectives for subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER IV.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Observation Guide

This research aims to describe the usage of problem-solving activities applied as a strategy to improve the speaking skill, therefore two observation guides were executed. Each one was designed according to the first and third specific objectives set at the beginning of the research study, in this sense the following are the results obtained concerning the first specific objective.

Specific objective: To recognize the stages followed in the lesson for teaching the speaking part.

To begin with, it is necessary to recall that in the Ecuadorian context, English is taught as a foreign language since it is a multilingual country with 14 different languages where a large part of the population has Spanish, Kichwa, or Shuar as their native language, which makes it more difficult to develop English-speaking skills. Whereby, according to Wang (2014) to develop an effective speaking lesson it is essential to consider three fundamental stages: the pre-speaking stage, the while-speaking stage, and the post-speaking stage.

Regarding the pre-speaking stage, it was possible to recognize that activating students' prior knowledge was consistently practiced, as the existing knowledge was evoked with activities like brainstorming, recognizing the picture, and have you ever...? Similarly, warm-up activities like Pictionary, miming, and singing were used in order to boost students' interest, expectations, and mental focus. Additionally, activities such as answering questions

were utilized to introduce the main themes of the classes, with a focus on developing the speaking skill through problem-solving activities.

In the while-speaking stage, it was observed that the lessons consistently provided opportunities for students to practice their knowledge and skills through pair and group activities, such as debating, event planning, or what if. Students were guided with clear instructions and examples to effectively enhance their listening and speaking skills. When it came to using phrases and sentences, they incorporated new vocabulary and structured sentences to communicate coherently in conversations. The problem-solving activities made students feel comfortable speaking, as they could interact and express their opinions in a more relaxed and engaged manner. Lastly, any mistakes made by students during speaking activities were promptly corrected, helping them to identify their progress.

Finally, concerning post-stage, the students' reflection about what they performed was remarked, since the teacher took time at the end of the lessons for students to reflect on the main themes discussed during conversations, such as: endangered species, water crisis, and forest fires. Likewise, students' doubts were consistently addressed and reinforced through positive statements like: thank you for the question, good question! and nonverbal communication such as nodding, and smiling, which enabled them to grasp complex aspects of communication and encouraged students' participation. Additionally, feedback was provided to help students clarify and synthesize the information taught, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure. Lastly, the objectives of the oral activities were met due to the usage of problem-solving activities, which enhanced students' confidence when discussing familiar problems.

Analysis

The structure of an effective speaking lesson requires the careful implementation of three key stages such as: pre-speaking, while speaking, and post-speaking. During the pre-

speaking stage, the activation of prior knowledge is essential to establish a solid foundation on which to build new linguistic skills (Saricoban, 2005). In this sense, activities provided in class like brainstorming, recognizing the picture, and have you ever...? were suitable to boost students' oral performance, since students could understand and function orally better by taking advantage of their prior language learning knowledge and linking it with new capturing learning experiences. Furthermore, in the while-speaking stage, providing opportunities for practicing class discussions through pair and group activities, such as debating, event planning, or what if was appropriate since classroom discussions are essential for students' overall development, as they foster critical thinking, argumentation skills, and respect for different perspectives (Dawes, 2013). That is to say, the students learn to articulate their ideas clearly and to listen to the opinions of their peers, which enriches their speaking and listening skills. On the other hand, in the post-speaking stage, the time taken in class to reflect on the information learned and to clarify doubts was relevant, since it not only consolidates their learning speaking-skill but also allows them to face future activities with greater confidence (Zhai and Gao, 2018). The problem-solving strategy, present throughout all stages, proved to be a crucial element in achieving the objectives of the oral activities, increasing both the motivation and confidence of the students when speaking.

4.1.2 Observation Guide

According to the third objective, the following are the results obtained in the second observation guide instrument:

Specific objective: To determine the methodological process employed when applying problem-solving activities as a strategy to develop the speaking skill.

First of all, the usage of problem-solving activities as a strategy to teach speaking skill entails an important systematic planning that generally includes four main steps: the

introduction of the problem, exploring and planning solutions, presentation of solutions, feedback and reflection.

In the first step, the introduction of the problem, the teacher was able to effectively capture the interest and attention of the students by presenting problems that were contextually relevant and linked to real-life situations such as endangered species, water crisis, and forest fires. Likewise, the teacher used engaging questions and specific examples to stimulate curiosity and prepare students for active, engaged learning. As result, students were more motivated and willing to participate in the activities that followed.

In the solution exploration and planning step, the teacher fostered a collaborative environment grouping students in groups of three where students shared equal responsibility and opportunity to develop possible problem solutions using their critical thinking skills. Thus, by facilitating group discussions and guiding with guiding questions, the teacher helped students analyze and evaluate various options to solve the problems posed. This stage not only promoted collaboration and the exchange of ideas among students, but also provided them with the necessary tools to develop coherent solutions.

During the presentation of solutions, the teacher created a safe and supportive environment for students to practice their speaking skills by making students form a circle, in such a manner that students could perform their presentations in a different way than usual. Therefore, the students demonstrated greater fluency and coherence in the communication of their ideas, integrating new vocabulary and grammatical structures learned. In addition, the teacher provided clear examples and presentation models that helped students structure their presentations effectively and confidently.

In the feedback and reflection step, the teacher's role was crucial in providing constructive and specific feedback on students' performance. This helped students identify their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering greater self-awareness about their

progress with a positive attitude. The teacher dedicated time for reflection at the end of the lessons, allowing students to evaluate their own experiences. In addition, students' doubts were consistently addressed, which facilitated the understanding of more complex aspects of communication.

Analysis

The notable division of the methodological process that follows the application of problem-solving activities highlights the effectiveness of the strategy as an aid to improve students' speaking skills. This is because effective communication can be achieved through the systematic application of the problem-solving four steps, ensuring that all key aspects of verbal expression are addressed, from problem introduction to feedback and reflection. Besides, this well-defined process enables individuals to identify and overcome their weaknesses, improve their pronunciation, intonation, and fluency, and adapt their language to different contexts and audiences (Danesh, 2017). Furthermore, constant constructive feedback and self-assessment facilitate sustained progress, fostering confidence and competence in oral communication.

4.2 INTERVIEW

Specific objective: To identify the type of activities, techniques, and resources used when working with problem-solving activities for developing the speaking skill.

According to the specific objective number two, an interview was done face-to-face with the English teacher of the intermediate level, at Chicago English School Academy, She answered six questions in the interview whose purpose was to identify the type of activities, techniques, and resources used when working with problem-solving activities for developing the speaking part.

Teacher's interview

1. What specific activities do you employ to integrate problem-solving into your speaking lessons?

Teacher's answer: As it is about giving students the opportunity to talk and talk, the activities that I use the most are group discussions, simulations, and debates. You know, for them to express their feelings and thoughts. But especially because these are activities that can suit their personalities.

2. What specific technique do you use to encourage active participation during student's participation in the problem-solving activities?

Teacher's answer: The technique I use to encourage active participation is to balance the activities development from something structured to a kind of free activity. Because it is necessary both to pave a direction, something concrete to go towards, but also give that freedom to apply the knowledge that students previously have, whether they have thought about it at home or talked to their classmates.

3. How do you select the problems or situations that students must solve during speaking activities?

Teacher's answer: the most important here is to select the problem based on everyday situations, selecting relevant problems, relevant to students, and even thinking in dilemmas of their professional life.

4. What resources do you usually use to support the speaking problem-solving activities development?

Teacher's answer: Well, it depends on the activity that we are developing, but I usually try to vary among using videos, articles, pictures, and even online applications. Because to teach a language you have to be very dynamic even if you don't work with young children.

5. How do you evaluate student's speaking progress through the usage of problem-solving activities?

Teacher's answer: Here in the academy, they request us to constantly evaluate students, thus I am continually doing specific rubrics, working with formative assessments, to provide continuous feedback. Because unlike a public institution where they have a large number of students, as you see here in our classes we work with small groups, so the objective is to provide more personalized teaching.

6. How do you ensure that all students, regardless of skill level, benefit from the problem-solving activity?

Teacher's answer: Even when they are tested to be located, the speaking skill level can vary from one student to another, so I like to work with heterogeneous groups. But if the difference is very fragmented, we help the student with additional support, or differentiated adaptations.

Analysis

When analyzing the teacher's responses, a strong inclination towards the use of dynamic and participatory activities in teaching speaking through problem-solving is perceived. Furthermore, the choice of activities such as debates, role-playing games and simulations reflects a practical and realistic approach, which seeks to actively involve students in situations they may encounter outside the classroom. This hands-on approach done in the strategy not only keeps students interested and motivated, but also provides them with a meaningful context to practice and improve their speaking skills (Guss, 2017).

Besides, by choosing relevant and contextual problems, the teacher demonstrates a deep understanding of the importance of contextualization in language learning. Additionally, techniques used to encourage active participation, such as small group work and the use of interactive tools, indicate a commitment to creating a collaborative and

motivating learning environment. In this sense, the careful selection of problems or situations to solve during the activities makes the problem-solving strategy a well-thought-out strategy that adapts to the needs and contexts of the students (Rocha, 2024).

In terms of resources, the initiative of using a variety of materials and tools to support the speaking practice is suitable since, diversifying resources, such as manipulatives, educational games, interactive software, and real-life situations, allows people to approach problems from multiple angles and apply diverse solution methods (Canhan, 2012). Besides, the continuous assessment and differentiated strategies to serve all students reflect an inclusive and student-centered strategy. Overall, through the teacher's responses, it is possible to know the effectiveness of using problem-solving activities as a strategy to develop speaking skills in students with the support of teaching resources and innovative activities.

4.2. Discussion

The structure of an effective speaking lesson is based on meticulous implementation of three key stages: pre-speaking, while speaking, and post-speaking. Therefore, for the problem-solving strategy, it is essential to be integrated with all these stages, in order to achieve the objectives of oral activities, increase motivation and confidence when speaking.

The use of dynamic and participatory activities in teaching speaking through problem-solving activities such as debates, role-playing and simulations keeps students engaged. Furthermore, the careful selection of relevant and contextualized problems in combination with the use of techniques such as small group work and interactive technology reinforces a collaborative learning environment.

The implementation of the four main steps in the methodological process such as problem introduction, solution exploration and planning, solution presentation, and feedback and reflection, underlines the effectiveness of this strategy in improving students' oral

expression skills, which demonstrates a notable increase in the motivation and active participation of the students, as well as their ability to work as a team and develop fluid and coherent solutions.

CHAPTER V.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 Conclusions

The three fundamental stages pre-speaking, while-speaking, and post-speaking, are crucial for the effective development of oral communication skills in students. The pre-speaking stage prepares students by providing context and activating prior knowledge, while the while-speaking stage focuses on active practice and application of skills in a controlled, realistic environment. Finally, the post-speaking stage allows for reflection, feedback, and consolidation of what has been learned, facilitating a deeper and more lasting understanding of speaking skills. When implemented coherently and structured, these stages create a comprehensive and effective learning environment that significantly improves students' oral proficiency.

A combination of dynamic activities, participatory techniques and diverse resources is essential to develop speaking skills through problem-solving activities. Thus, activities such as debates, role-playing games and simulations allow students to practice speaking in meaningful and realistic contexts. On the other hand, techniques that encourage active participation, such as small group work and the use of interactive technologies, create a collaborative learning environment. Furthermore, the use of a variety of material and technological resources enriches the learning experience, ensuring that students are engaged and motivated.

The methodological process for developing the speaking skill through the usage of problem-solving activities is built by systematic implementation of four main steps such as problem introduction, solution exploration and planning, solution presentation, and feedback and reflection, which proves to be an effective strategy for enhancing students' oral expression skills, since it not only significantly boosts students' motivation and active

participation but also strengthens their ability to collaborate as a team and develop fluid and coherent solutions.

5.1.2 Recommendations

To maximize the effectiveness of speaking teaching, it is recommended to rigorously follow the three stages of pre-speaking, while-speaking and post-speaking in each lesson. In the pre-speaking stage, it is essential to use activities that stimulate the interest and cognitive preparation of students, such as initial debates or discussions on the topic. During the speaking phase, interactive and participatory techniques should be incorporated, allowing students to practice in simulated or real situations. Finally, in the post-speaking stage, constructive feedback and reflection activities must be ensured that help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

To optimize the development of speaking skills through problem solving, it is recommended to implement a greater variety of activities combined with culture, so that it is possible to provide students with a better approach to real-life situations. In addition, it is recommended to include the use of more technological tools, so that students develop in more real and updated contexts.

To maximize the benefits of this methodological process, it is recommended that educators consistently integrate these steps into their teaching practices. Additionally, providing varied and engaging problem scenarios can further stimulate students' interest and encourage deeper learning, while regular and constructive feedback can help them refine their oral communication skills continuously.

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ANNEXES

ANNEXE N^a1

- Observation guide



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PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Objective: To recognize the stages followed in the lesson for teaching the speaking part.

Date of observation: _____

N°	Indicator	Yes	No	Observation
01	Pre-speaking The teacher activates students' prior knowledge			
02	The teacher makes a warm-up to set students' interest in the lesson			
03	The main theme is introduced			
04	Students reflect on the speaking purpose			
05	While-speaking			

	Students can put into practice their knowledge			
06	Students can practice their speaking skill by interacting with each other.			
07	The teacher guides students to complete the activities effectively			
08	Students can construct coherent sentences			
10	Students can calmly express their feelings and opinions			
11	The teacher pays careful attention to students' mistakes			
12	Post-speaking Students reflect on the topics performed			
13	Students' doubts are addressed			
14	Feedback is provided			
15	The objectives of the lesson are met			

ANNEXE N°2

- Interview guide



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PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Objective: To identify the activities, strategies, and resources used when working with problem-solving activities for developing the speaking skill.

Date of interview: _____

1. What specific activities do you employ to integrate problem-solving into your speaking lessons?
2. What specific technique do you use to encourage active participation during student's participation in the problem-solving activities?
3. How do you select the problems or situations that students must solve during the application of problem-solving speaking activities?
4. What resources do you usually use to support the speaking problem-solving activities development?
5. How do you evaluate student's speaking progress through the usage of problem-solving activities?
6. How do you ensure that all students, regardless of skill level, benefit from the problem-solving activity?

ANNEXE N°3

- Observation guide



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PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Objective: To determine the methodological process employed when applying problem-solving activities as a strategy to develop the speaking skill.

Date of observation: _____

N°	Indicator	Yes	No	Observation
01	The introduction of the problem The problems presented are relevant and capture the students attention			
02	The teacher provides specific examples to stimulate an active learning.			
03	Exploring and planning solutions The teacher uses collaborative activities			

04	The teacher uses activities that foster students' critical thinking			
05	Guided-type problem-solving speaking activities are used			
06	Free-type problem-solving speaking activities are used			
07	Presentation of solutions The teacher fosters a motivating environment to encourage student participation			
08	Students can calmly express their feelings and opinions			
09	Students construct coherent sentences			
10	Students reproduce creative ideas			
11	Students articulate his speech rhythmically and without interruptions			
12	The teacher models a clear example to set the fluency of presentations			

12	Feedback and reflection The teacher provides timely and constructive feedback for students to identify their strengths and weakness			
13	Students' doubts are addressed			
14	Students reflect on the topics performed			
15	The teacher provides closure to the lesson, summarizing key takeaways			
16	The teacher empowers students to express their thoughts and expectations regarding the usage of the activity			
17	The objectives of the lesson are met			