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EXTRANJEROS**

**The Influence of Teachers' Use of English on Students' Exposure to the
Language in English Classes**

**Trabajo de Titulación para optar al título de Licenciatura en
Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**

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Riobamba, Ecuador. 2026

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DEDICATORY

This research is dedicated, first and foremost, to God, who has been my constant guide and source of strength throughout my life. As it is written in Isaiah 41:10, “Do not fear, for I am with you,” His presence has illuminated my path, given meaning to my efforts, and reminded me that every achievement is possible through faith, perseverance, and trust in His plan.

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Finally, this research is dedicated to myself for the determination, resilience, and commitment I have demonstrated throughout this process. For every long night, every obstacle overcome, and every moment of doubt transformed into motivation. This accomplishment represents not only an academic milestone but also a personal triumph.

Anahi Vilema

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RESUMEN

En contextos de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), la instrucción en el aula es la principal fuente de exposición a la lengua meta, y por tanto, el uso de la lengua dentro del aula es un elemento fundamental en el desarrollo de la comprensión auditiva por parte de los estudiantes. Sin embargo, dentro del sistema educativo público y a nivel de educación media se caracteriza por una exposición limitada e inconsciente al inglés dentro de la clase, y esto influye directamente en la capacidad de los estudiantes para entender el lenguaje hablado y experimentar actividades significativas en la comprensión auditiva. La presente investigación busca explorar en que medida la exposición al inglés en el aula de clase influye en el desarrollo de la comprensión auditiva en los estudiantes de décimo año de la “Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín”. Para alcanzar el objetivo tratado se realizó una investigación con diseño descriptivo de carácter cualitativo que busque identificar las prácticas de aula en la enseñanza del inglés y su efecto en los estudiantes dentro del aula, para esto, se obtuvieron datos a través de la metodología de observación estructurada aplicada en el aula de clase y entrevistas semiestructuradas a los docentes y estudiantes dentro del área de inglés. Una vez recopilada la información se la analizó con el fin de determinar patrones pedagógicos recurrentes en la clase de inglés por parte del maestro y las respuestas emocionales y cognitivas que se reflejan en los estudiantes, así como las dificultades que esto ocasiona en el plano de la comprensión auditiva. Los resultados de la investigación apuntan a un uso limitado del inglés por parte del maestro, únicamente en saludos, instrucciones y algunas actividades, cambiando frecuentemente al español para asegurar la comprensión del estudiante; si bien los docentes reconocen la importancia de la exposición continua al inglés para su comprensión auditiva, están conscientes de las limitaciones de tiempo, dominio de competencias y factores afectivos, lo que provoca en el estudiante una percepción del inglés frecuente pero desafiante y llena de dificultades relacionadas con la pronunciación, la velocidad del habla, el vocabulario limitado y la falta de repetición. Se observó que respuestas emocionales como la confusión, la frustración y la ansiedad median sus experiencias auditivas.

Palabras claves: Comprensión auditiva; Exposición al inglés; Percepciones de los estudiantes; Percepciones de los docentes; Aula de inglés como lengua extranjera

ABSTRACT

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, classroom instruction is the primary source of exposure to the target language. Therefore, language use within the classroom is fundamental to the development of students' listening comprehension. However, within the public education system, particularly at the secondary level, exposure to English in the classroom is often limited and often unconscious. This directly impacts students' ability to understand spoken language and engage in meaningful listening comprehension activities. This research explores the extent to which classroom exposure to English influences the development of listening comprehension in tenth-grade students at the "Isabel de Godín Educational Unit." To achieve this objective, a descriptive, qualitative study was conducted to identify classroom practices in English language teaching and their impact on students. Data was collected through structured observation in the classroom and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students in the English department. Once the information was collected, it was analyzed to determine recurring pedagogical patterns in the English class, both on the part of the teacher and the emotional and cognitive responses reflected in the students, as well as the difficulties this causes in terms of listening comprehension. The research results point to a limited use of English by the teacher, only in greetings, instructions, and some activities, frequently switching to Spanish to ensure student comprehension. While the teachers recognize the importance of continuous exposure to English for listening comprehension, they are aware of time constraints, proficiency levels, and affective factors, which leads students to perceive English as frequent but challenging and full of difficulties related to pronunciation, speaking speed, limited vocabulary, and lack of repetition.

Keywords: Listening comprehension; English language exposure; Students' perceptions; Teachers' perceptions; EFL classroom

1. CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, the classroom is the primary source of exposure to the target language, particularly for developing receptive skills, such as listening comprehension. Students' opportunities to process spoken English depend largely on teachers' language use, instructional practices, and pedagogical decisions during lessons. Nevertheless, in many public secondary schools, students' access to English is very limited or irregular, which could make it difficult for them to catch spoken language and develop good listening strategies. At “Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín” the tenth-grade students had trouble with listening comprehension, more so when the teachers spoke English instead of Spanish. The challenges were attributed to aspects such as speech rate, enunciation, insufficient vocabulary and psychological factors (stress, nervousness). Existing research indicated that insufficient and unguided exposure to English hinder students' listening development and their engagement in the listening class (Harmer, 2021; Goh & Aryadoust, 2020). This calls for attention, to seeing in what ways teachers' use of English in the classroom contributes to students' exposure to the language and to their opportunities to listen to it.

The research is focused to identify how the lack of exposure to English can affect the listening ability of the tenth-grade General Basic Education "A" and "B" students of “Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín.” Using a qualitative methodology, this inquiry seeks to explore classroom practices and participant perceptions in situ. This study is descriptive and interpretive in design and conducts classroom observation and semi-structured interviews as the primary data gathering methods.

The data were gathered via a structured observation protocol in two classes (two different instructors) and through semi-structured interviews with students and teachers of English. The data were thematically analyzed for emergent patterns regarding language use by teachers, students' perceptions of exposure to English, and challenges in listening comprehension. The results expand upon our knowledge of how teaching methodologies can affect E in L2 listening within public EFL classrooms. They offer perspectives that could be utilized to enhance teaching that is both more effective and empathetic.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tenth-grade students at “Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín”, a public institution located in Riobamba, Chimborazo province, face persistent challenges in the development of their English listening comprehension. Despite the school having adequate infrastructure and qualified English teachers, students show limited progress in understanding spoken English during classroom activities. One possible factor contributing to this issue is the limited exposure to the English language during class, which restricts students’ opportunities to receive meaningful and continuous auditory input.

When learners are not immersed in the target language they learn passively and they translate or memorize which are learning strategies with a low cognitive level. The absence of real input impairs their ability to understand spoken Chinese, restricts their lexical growth, and makes it impossible for them to listen to natural speech, including the aspects of pronunciation, rhythm and intonation.

It was observed during classroom observation and pre-professional teaching practice that the use of Spanish was quite frequent when providing explanations, instructions and communicating in general. English use tends to be limited to isolated phrases or basic greetings, which does not allow students to experience the language in its natural use.

As a result, the limited use of English in the classroom decreases the students’ exposure to the language through oral input, and consequently it has a negative impact on their listening comprehension. This has resulted in a disparity between what is taught and what is learned. From the aspect of the learner, insufficient listening may eventually cause frustration and demotivation, which will be turn to inferior achievement in English. Therefore, understanding how teachers’ use of English influences students’ exposure to spoken language is essential to improving listening comprehension and enhancing English teaching practices.

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

How does teachers’ use of English influence tenth-grade students’ exposure to the language and the development of their listening comprehension in tenth-grade students in General Basic Education parallel “A” and “B” at “Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín”?

1.3 JUSTIFICATION

This study is relevant because it seeks to understand how tenth-grade students experience exposure to English in the classroom, providing insights that can help teachers create more effective and engaging learning environments. The research focuses on examining how teachers’ use of English impacts students’ improvement of listening skills, and hinders students’ ability to understand spoken English.

The purpose of this research is to explore the influence of teachers' English usage on students' exposure to oral input and its impact on listening comprehension in tenth-grade classes at "Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín", in Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic year 2025–2026.

The study is relevant because it highlights the perspective of the learners, which is rarely considered in educational research. The results are anticipated to give useful advice to teachers regarding how to give more meaningful input of spoken English, how to create a more immersive experience in the classroom, and how to develop better listeners. Moreover, the findings could help school leaders to try out measures that contribute to strengthening the learning of English in public schools and are in accordance with national educational directives.

Among the recipients will be the students of the 10th grade H2 General Basic Education parallel "A" and "B" and the English teachers teaching these classes. The study will be conducted in academic year 2025-2026 with the cooperation of school officials and teachers.

The feasibility of this investigation is strengthened by its modest cost, the collaboration of subjects and school personnel, and institutional resources. It is also feasible with respect to time, size, and access to students and teachers.

1.4 OBJECTIVES: GENERAL AND SPECIFIC

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze how the limited exposure to the English language in the classroom affects the development of listening skill in tenth-grade students in General Basic Education parallel "A" and "B" at "Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín".

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To describe the situations in which teachers use the English language during lessons.
- To analyze teachers' practices and perspectives regarding the use of English in the classroom.
- To identify the difficulties students, face in developing listening skills in English.

2. CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INVESTIGATIVE BACKGROUND

Recent research in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has emphasized the crucial role of teachers' language use in shaping students' exposure to English and their opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom. Several studies conducted in different educational contexts have examined both the positive and negative effects of teacher talk, classroom interaction patterns, and students' perceptions of English use during instruction.

One relevant study was conducted by Yuli (2025) carried out a qualitative case study exploring students' perceptions of teacher talk in an Indonesian senior high school. Data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with eleventh-grade students. The results showed that although students generally valued the use of English by their teacher, they also reported difficulties in comprehension and increased anxiety when English was used extensively without adequate scaffolding. This research shows that access to English can help but also hinder learners, as language use is negotiated between teachers and students. These results highlight the need to look at the amount of exposure to English and the students' experience and perception of that exposure to English within the classroom. Another global research study examined the influence of exposure to different types of English on EFL learners' listening experiences in the classroom.

The researchers implemented a listening instruction program that included varied spoken English materials and analyzed learners' records and reflections using inductive qualitative techniques. Results showed that exposure to diverse English inputs enhanced students' awareness of different speech patterns and encouraged adaptive listening strategies, indicating the importance of varied exposure for improving listening comprehension in EFL classrooms (Kusumaningputri, 2020)

A study was carried out at the Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo (ESPOCH) to determine the frequency level of anxiety in the process of learning English as a foreign language in the case of Ecuadorian learners. This research-using a structured questionnaire, revealed that anxiety had a significant impact on students' self-confidence, class participation, and engagement in English learning activities. Even though the following result is not focused on listening as a skill, it confirms anxiety's barrier role in the EFL classroom indicating that emotional issues seem to have an indirect effect on other receptive skills such as listening. (Larrea et al., 2024)

Similarly, a recent study conducted at the Technical University of Cotopaxi investigated the impact of English music on students' listening comprehension and motivation. Using a structured quantitative approach, the research found that exposure to authentic English input through music significantly enhanced students' motivation, vocabulary recognition, and listening engagement. Additionally, learners reported positive

perceptions toward listening tasks that involved meaningful and enjoyable exposure to English, indicating that increased exposure through engaging materials can improve attitudes toward listening comprehension in EFL contexts (Mantilla, 2025)

As a whole, the studies under review show that classroom EAL exposure is of paramount importance in developing learners' listening skills. International and national evidence suggests that teacher language, affective factors, and the provision of input within the classroom have a powerful influence on students' experiences of listening. However, these factors have been treated separately by the previous literature and there is scarce research on how the use of English by teachers impacts on students' exposure to the language and development of their listening skills in the context of public secondary education in Ecuador.

2.2 Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) refers to the educational process of teaching English in contexts where the language is not commonly used outside the classroom and learners have limited exposure to it in their daily lives. In EFL settings, English language learning relies heavily on formal instruction, making the classroom the primary environment for language acquisition and practice. According to Richards and Rodgers (2022), EFL teaching requires carefully planned pedagogical approaches, as learners rely heavily on teachers for access to linguistic models, structured information, and opportunities to develop language skills, particularly receptive skills such as listening comprehension. Unlike English as a second language (ESL) contexts, where learners are immersed in English-speaking environments and benefit from constant exposure, English as a foreign language learners rely almost entirely on the classroom for meaningful language input (Peng Si, 2019).

Effective English as a foreign language teaching practices should prioritize meaningful communication, appropriate scaffolding, and exposure to comprehensible input in order to compensate for the lack of natural interaction with English. Harmer (2021) explains that, in English as a foreign language classroom, the teacher often becomes the main source of authentic linguistic information and, therefore, pedagogical decisions regarding language use, classroom discourse, and interaction patterns have a direct impact on students' comprehension and skill development. The over-reliance on the first language and teacher-centred instruction may turn students off to English, while communicative and student-centred approaches facilitate sustained exposure and foster the development of listening comprehension (Ur, 2023).

Continuous research conducted in Latin American EFL classrooms stresses the need to incorporate interactive and student-centred approaches, and make use of technological advances in order to provide learners with an opportunity to meaningful exposure and interaction in English (Stanton & Fiszbein, 2019). The classroom thus becomes the central site for language input, where teachers' pedagogical choices directly shape learners' opportunities to process the language and develop essential skills.

2.3 Language Exposure in the Classroom

Exposure to language in EFL contexts refers to the quantity and quality of linguistic input to which students are exposed in the classroom, which is particularly relevant for developing skills such as listening. Linguistic input must be comprehensible and meaningful to facilitate its processing and eventual acquisition; this approach is supported by principles that hold that learning is best achieved when input is adapted to the learner's level and promoted through authentic communicative interactions. A review of the literature indicates that regular and meaningful exposure to English in the classroom contributes to the development of listening comprehension, as it allows learners to become familiar with pronunciation patterns and discourse structures in real-life contexts of language use (Arley & Brizuela 2020).

2.3.1 The Effects of Limited Exposure on Learners

Students of English as a foreign language often struggle with listening comprehension when they are not sufficiently exposed to English in meaningful contexts. Exposure to different features of the language, such as connected speech, idiomatic expressions, and varied accents, is essential for developing effective listening strategies. This is reflected in the statement that “exposure to varied linguistic features is essential for students to understand natural spoken English and develop effective listening skills” (Ibarra-Balarezo & Guaman-Luna, 2025).

In order for students to efficiently develop their listening skills, the information they receive must be meaningful and suitable for their listening proficiency level. Real-life language-based listening materials enable learners to listen to language in context and to listen for understanding, rather than as text-to-be decoded or as for understanding spoken English more naturally. As the authors point out, “meaningful and comprehensible information, aligned with students' proficiency levels, facilitates the development of listening comprehension” (Muhammad & Rosalina, 2021).

2.4 Nature and Importance of Classroom Input

Input in the classroom refers to all the language that students receive through teaching, interaction, and materials during English classes, and plays a fundamental role in language acquisition processes in contexts where English is a foreign language. Theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition emphasize that students must receive information that they can understand and process in order to develop receptive skills such as listening comprehension. On the one hand, meaningful and well-organized information enables learners to integrate the phonological, lexical and syntactic components of English incrementally on the other hand, their understanding is enhanced over time (Kasimo et al., 2024).

The quality of the information that the teachers deliver in the classroom is not determined by the quantity of English that they speak, but rather on how well it is pitched to

their students' level of proficiency. Complex information can confuse learners, while simplified information may restrict their linguistic development. Therefore, meaningful and level-appropriate information helps learners process spoken language while gradually expanding their listening proficiency (Nation & Macalister, 2022).

2.4.1 Comprehensible Input in EFL Classrooms

Comprehensible input refers to language that learners can understand despite containing new elements, as long as it is supported by contextual clues, simplified structures, or familiar vocabulary. In the context of listening skill development, comprehensible input is essential because it allows learners to focus on extracting meaning from acoustic signals without excessive cognitive overload. A systematic review of research on comprehensible input in high school EFL contexts found that strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, using visual supports, and incorporating natural spoken language significantly contribute to learners' listening comprehension when the input is made accessible to them (Ibarra-Balarezo & Guaman-Luna, 2025).

In addition, it also influences learners' confidence and willingness to engage with spoken language. When teachers offer inputs that learners are able to act on, even if these inputs are somewhat ambiguous, they tend to result in the development of better listening strategies and deeper processing. In addition, it is stated in this literature that not only comprehensible input contributes to accurate comprehension, but phonological, syntactic and semantic information integration is promoted by it and this is very important for advanced language acquisition in EFL environment.

2.4.2 Teacher Talk as a Source of Input

The presence of the teacher's input is one of the most predictable forms of input in the English as a foreign language classroom. By

way of explanations, instructions, questions and comments they form the linguistic setting and set the amount of exposure to English with some sense of the extent to which learners are exposed to English meaningfully. Comprehensible input The function of how a teacher organizes the intervention based on the rate of utterances, clarifying meaning and repeating utterances so that students can better understand the classroom discourse and create more listening opportunities. In addition, information from native or near-native models improves students' understanding of spoken English and promotes the internalization of linguistic patterns (Panggua et al., 2023)

When the teacher's speech is intentional and structured, it promotes the development of listening comprehension by providing repeated exposure to key structures, vocabulary, and discourse patterns. Conversely, limited or inconsistent use of English can reduce students' opportunities to process authentic spoken language. Therefore, maintaining English as the primary medium of instruction, while providing adequate support, improves students'

listening comprehension and their overall engagement with the language (Sato & Loewen, 2019).

2.4.3 Input Quality and Listening Skill Development

The quality of input in the classroom refers to the nature and characteristics of the language learners are exposed to, including clarity, coherence, variety, and contextualization; these aspects directly influence how effectively students process the information they receive. It is not enough to expose students to large amounts of input; high-quality input, such as clearly articulated language, meaningful context, and communicative relevance, enables better understanding and assimilation of linguistic patterns relevant to receptive skills such as listening (Qasserras, 2025).

Likewise, quality input should provide variety and linguistic richness that reflects natural uses of the language, exposing students to different accents, speech rhythms, and conversational contexts. This diversity facilitates students' adaptation to the real characteristics of spoken English and promotes the construction of more robust listening strategies.

2.5 Forms of Exposure in Classroom Environments

In classroom contexts, the forms of language exposure are determined largely by the choices teachers make regarding the use of English and the learners' first language (L1). When English is consistently used as the medium of instruction, students have greater opportunities to process authentic linguistic input, whereas predominant use of the L1 may limit exposure to target language features. Studies on translanguaging stress that the thoughtful use of learners' L1 in the classroom can be empowering and enable students to make sense of content and engage with it meaningfully, all the while receiving relevant access to the target language, English in this case (Bouguerra, 2024).

Teacher talk is the dominant source of input in the classroom (Walsh, 2006). The language of instruction and the teachers' way of giving instructions, explanations, and feedback determine the number and quality of input students receive. Classroom discourse provides levers through which learning opportunities are shaped – the language teachers use dictates how much meaningful input students receive and how they engage with it (Amanah, 2024). Clarity, scaffolding and adaptation of teacher talk to students' proficiency levels promote understanding while following authentic language models.

In fact, the application of audio-visual material in the listening classroom has been effective in the development of listening comprehension, since visual and sound stimuli enable listeners to locate what they hear and to work on recognition of accents and intonation. Integrating audio-visual media in language classrooms has transformed instructional practices, offering dynamic ways to enhance learners' engagement and comprehension (Daulay, 2025).

2.6 Students' Perceptions of English Use in the Classroom

Student perception in educational contexts refers to how students interpret, evaluate, and respond emotionally to teaching practices, learning environments, and pedagogical decisions. Perception is not limited to what objectively occurs in the classroom, but rather to how students make sense of their experiences and how these interpretations influence their engagement and learning processes. According to Jaramillo & Ortiz (2023).

In this regard, perception is considered a mediating variable between teaching and learning results and is manifested in students' attitudes, motivation, and degree of involvement in learning tasks. From the teaching perspective, a student's perception is strongly related to meaningful learning, since students are more likely to be actively involved when they think that the educational practices are relevant to them, the instruction is clear and they feel supported. In EFL learning, students' ideas concerning instruction, use of language, and teacher assistance may empower or disempower them in the process of learning. When students perceive teaching as clear and in line with their needs, they are more likely to invest cognitive effort and maintain sustained attention during language activities (Jiménez & Franco, 2023).

2.6.1 Students' Perception of Exposure to English in EFL Classroom

In English as a foreign language teaching environment, students' perceptions of their exposure to English play a key role in shaping their learning experience. Exposure is determined not only by the amount of English used in the classroom, but also by how students perceive its clarity, purpose, and usefulness. Students are more likely to appreciate their exposure to English if they are made to see it as useful, within a context, and if it is connected with real communication, as opposed to the presentation of language in isolated forms, or pattern drills (Afiyanti et al., 2022).

In addition, students are less motivated to participate in class when they have negative views about using English as the medium of instruction. Students can potentially be confused and frustrated if they feel the use of English is too raucous or too strict, which can lead to negative impact on their understanding. On the other hand, perceived fair and supportive treatment during exposure resulted in students' perceptions of greater class confidence and attentiveness. These attitudes underscore the need for deliberate and pedagogically sound utilization of English in the EFL classroom (Tiffany & Zainil, 2023).

2.6.2 Relationship Between Perception, Affective Factors, and Listening Development

Students' perceptions of listening are closely related to such affective factors as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence, which have impact on the listening comprehension

development. Attention is necessary and listening is an active cognitive process, and perception of students regarding difficulty and easiness of oral input have effects on these cognitive processes. If listeners have the perception that listening tasks are too difficult or they are not communicated clearly, impact barriers may reduce their capacity to listen effectively (Goh & Aryadoust, 2020).

Recent models of listening comprehension have highlighted a dynamic interplay between affective and cognitive processes when listeners engage in listening. Students who perceive the information they receive in the classroom as supportive and appropriately challenging are more likely to remain engaged and successfully apply listening strategies. Positive perceptions of exposure to English can reduce anxiety levels and facilitate deeper processing of spoken language, contributing to more effective development of listening comprehension in English as a foreign language context (Tuncay and Karalık, 2025).

2.6.3 Role of Perception in Engagement with Classroom Input

Student perception also plays a crucial role in determining levels of engagement with classroom content. Engagement involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, all of which are influenced by how students perceive teaching practices. When students perceive the use of English as meaningful and relevant, they are more likely to focus on the content, follow explanations attentively, and strive to understand the spoken language (Brandmiller et al., 2024).

In addition, perception of teacher's methods by students can impact their desire to engage in activities for listening comprehension. Supportive teaching (ST) and clear language use positively influence the participants' perception which lactates an increased level of participation and concentration. Perceptions of classroom interaction and teaching clarity were also significant predictors of participation for students (André et al., 2023).

2.7 Difficulties in Listening Comprehension in EFL Contexts

2.7.1 Listening as a Receptive Skill in EFL

Listening is considered a receptive skill that involves the active process of interpreting spoken language, recognizing vocabulary, and constructing meaning in real time. In English as a foreign language (EFL) context, listening plays a critical role, as learners often have limited opportunities to interact with English outside the classroom, making the information they receive in class their primary source of auditory exposure. In addition, the way students perceive teachers' practices may affect their motivation to engage in practice in listening comprehension. Supportive teaching behavior and the clear use of language is associated with positive perceptions and that in turn leads to greater levels of participation and concentration. Perceptions of interaction and clarity of teaching within the classroom are significant predictors of participation (André et al., 2023).

In contrast to English as a second language (ESL) contexts where learners have the target language around them, EFL learners have to depend on didactic listening tasks to train this ability (Guliyeva,2024).

Listening comprehension is vital also for the overall development of the language learning as it fosters vocabulary development, awareness of pronunciation and language rules (Rott, 1999). As learners are presented with substantive oral input, they develop greater processing efficiency. However, in EFL settings, the development of listening skills is often slower due to less exposure to authentic spoken English, highlighting the importance of systematic and sustained listening practice in the classroom (Alzamil, 2021).

2.7.2 Common Listening Difficulties in EFL Learners

Students of English as a foreign language often face multiple challenges when developing listening comprehension skills. One of the most common challenges is the speed of spoken English, as students struggle to process information in real time. Natural speech is subject to various reductions, word connections, and intonation types that diverge from those in written language, leading students who are not well-exposed to such difficulties (Jyoti, 2020). X-Rated But the speaking pace, unfamiliar words and pronunciations are heavy barriers. Students' reading comprehension is influenced when they are exposed to unknown words or if they are unable to identify familiar words due to dialectal differences in pronunciation. Accents and intonation patterns further complicate comprehension, especially when students are primarily exposed to modified speech by the teacher rather than a variety of auditory stimuli. These difficulties can lead to frustration, decreased confidence, and avoidance of listening tasks in English as a foreign language classroom (Chacon & Argudo, 2024).

2.7.3 Relationship Between Limited Exposure and Listening Difficulties

Limited exposure to spoken English has been identified as a key factor contributing to listening comprehension difficulties in the English as a foreign language context. Due to little exposure to English, learners have no chance to become automatized in processing English, such as in identifying word boundaries, stress patterns and formulaic sequences. Consequently, listening is turned into an effortful activity rather than a flowing one (García, 2025).

Meanwhile, inadequate exposure affected the students' exposure to various speech styles and communicative situations, which in turn have negative effects on their aptitude in determining meaning correctly. Constant exposure to spoken English is necessary for students to develop listening strategies and improve comprehension efficiency. Without adequate exposure, students continue to rely on translation and have difficulty following spoken discourse, reinforcing persistent listening difficulties in English as a foreign language classroom (Jyoti, 2020)

2.8 Pedagogical Factors that Limit or Promote English Exposure

Pedagogical factors are key decisions made by teachers and educational settings that influence the quantity and quality of exposure to the English language that students receive in the classroom. In English as a foreign language setting, where English is not widely used outside of school, pedagogical decisions can improve students' opportunities to interact with the target language.

2.8.1 Teacher Language Choices

Teacher language decisions refer to the decisions educators make about when and how to use the target language (L2) and students' native language (L1) during instruction. These decisions shape the linguistic environment of the classroom and influence students' opportunities to receive meaningful input in English. Overuse of L1 in L2 classes may prevent exposure to and acquisition of the target language, however, certain degree of use of L1 in specific teaching situations like complex grammar and vocabulary explanations might support comprehension without replacing the message with L1 (Taner & Balıkçı, 2022).

The language used in the classroom is also affected by the teachers' beliefs, backgrounds, and perception of their students' needs. Experienced teachers may adopt more flexible language policies in the classroom, balancing the use of L2 with strategic support from L1, while less experienced teachers tend to support a more rigid "English only" approach, sometimes at the expense of student comprehension and participation.

2.8.2 Classroom Management and English Use

Classroom management practices play a key role in the use and maintenance of English as the medium of instruction. Good classroom (re)organization, expectation setting, and interaction structuring help ensure that target language use is maximized in a way that does not confuse and/or demotivate the students. The associated language for classroom routines, transitions, and behavior management can serve as natural reinforcements that allow for continual exposure to English during daily activities (Teo & Chai, 2023).

The way teachers orchestrate interactions with students also shapes the classroom climate and how much target language use is possible there. When classroom discourse is well managed and articulated primarily in English, students receive more consistent exposure, while frequent use of L1 to control the classroom or clarify concepts can unintentionally reduce the amount of time students are exposed to comprehensible English.

3. CHAPTER III. METODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study adopted a qualitative research approach aimed at interpreting and understanding how teachers' use of English influenced students' exposure to the language during classroom interactions. Qualitative research focuses on exploring participants' experiences, behaviors, and meanings within their natural context. Therefore, this approach prioritized depth of understanding over numerical measurement, emphasizing how English was used, perceived, and experienced by teachers and students in real classroom situations.

3.2 RESEARCH MODALITY

The research followed an interpretive and field-based modality. It was interpretive in nature because it sought to understand how the use of English in the classroom acquired meaning for teachers and students, focusing on their subjective perspectives and lived experiences. Interpretive research examines social interactions to reveal how individuals construct and negotiate meaning. In addition, the study was field-based because all data were collected in a natural school environment, allowing for the observation of authentic teaching practices and direct interaction with the educational setting.

3.3 LEVEL OR TYPE OF RESEARCH

The research was conducted as a qualitative case study. Case studies allow for an in-depth examination of specific educational realities within their real-life context. In this case, the study examined English language practices in tenth-grade classrooms at "Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín". The case study design provided a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of how and why English was used during classroom instruction.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION

The study population consisted of tenth-grade students in General Basic Education, parallel "A" and "B," as well as the English teachers from "Unidad Educativa Isabel de Godín". From this population, a purposive sample was selected, including two English teachers and three students from each section: one student with high academic performance, one with average performance, and one with low performance. The inclusion of two parallel classes ensured broader representation of classroom dynamics, teaching styles, and levels of English exposure across the grade, thereby strengthening the depth and richness of the qualitative analysis.

3.5 TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR COLLECTING DATA

Two qualitative techniques were used to collect the data required to achieve the research objectives: structured classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.

A structured classroom observation guide was employed to analyze the frequency, purpose, and conditions under which teachers used English during instruction. The observation guide included indicators related to teacher talk, classroom instructions, feedback, code-switching, and students' exposure to English through listening activities. This method made it possible to capture real language use and teacher actions in the ordinary English lessons. Three lessons per teacher were observed, which was enough to establish stable patterns of English use and, at the same time, to capture variation in terms of lesson types and instructional moments within 40-minute lessons.

What's more, semi-structured interviews with English teachers and students were carried out to examine their attitudes, experiences, and understandings of English use in the classroom. The teachers were interviewed about how they made instructional decisions, the challenges to keep English as the language of instruction, and their beliefs about students' exposure to English. Interviews with students were conducted with three from each course, with the selection based on academic performance so as to capture a range of viewpoints. The interviews also concerned students' listening comprehension experiences, their listening problems, and their views on the use of English in the lessons. The semi-structured format provided flexibility while maintaining focus on key topics, allowing participants to express their views naturally and reflectively.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCESSING -

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This process involved organizing the information through coding and categorizing recurring ideas to identify meaningful patterns related to teachers' use of English and students' exposure to the language. Data triangulation was applied by comparing findings from classroom observations and interviews, which enhanced the trustworthiness of the analysis by ensuring that interpretations were supported by multiple sources of evidence.

4. CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in the following table are the product of methodological triangulation. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students. The convergence of these sources allowed a deeper understanding of teachers' language use, students' perceptions of English exposure, and the listening difficulties identified in the classroom context. Triangulation enhanced the credibility and validity of the findings by contrasting perspectives and classroom evidence.

Table 1
Results and discussion

Objective	Results	Discussion
To describe the situations in which teachers use the English language during lessons.	The classroom observations revealed that teachers used English mainly in specific and predictable moments of the lesson. English was consistently employed during greetings, opening routines, and when giving short and simple instructions. Even so, teachers switched frequently to Spanish when explaining content, managing the class, or when students appeared to have difficulty understanding. The observation also indicated that English was more dominant in the context of listening on video or audio material, and the extent to which interaction spontaneously occurred in English was rather limited. Also, the teachers' transcripts sometimes fast, which influenced students' understanding, and they answered in Spanish for them to know the meaning. When	These results support the idea that students' access to English is determined by the patterns of instruction rather than by opportunities for extended Communicative Practice. Harmer (2021) posits the teacher as the most source of input in the EFL setting and as such, by confining the use of English to practical instances, it deprives learners of the chance to engagingly listen. Consonant with the perceived dependency on Spanish, Richards & Rodgers (2022) state that teachers tend to modify language to facilitate understanding. However, excessive code-switching may unintentionally reduce exposure to authentic input, supporting Arley & Brizuela's (2020) view that limited classroom exposure negatively affects listening skill development.

	students or teachers were not understanding each other, Spanish was used more frequently to explain meanings.	
To analyze teachers' practices and perspectives regarding the use of English in the classroom.	The interviews with teachers revealed that their language practices are strongly influenced by students' perceived proficiency and comprehension levels. They had an English-only attitude when giving directions, doing listening activities, or basic communication, but would revert to Spanish when students were overwhelmed or panicked. Rather than seeing code-switching as a lack of advocacy for English use, they saw it as a pedagogical tool within that language. Teachers also said they were challenged in holding onto English as the primary language of instruction with the time constraints, proficiency disparities in the classroom, and students' feelings. In the face of such obstacles, it was encouraging to hear that teacher were able to acknowledge that somehow greater access to English was helping students' listening comprehension in the long run.	These attitudes represent a compromise between the educational ideal and the reality of the environment. Harmer (2021) highlights that the beliefs and experiences of the teachers have a great impact on language used in the classroom. The results correspond with Yuli (2025) which indicate that although learners appreciate the opportunity to get more exposure to English, too much or unsupported exposure could result in heightened anxiety. Teachers' awareness of emotional factors corresponds with Larrea et al. (2024), highlighting anxiety as a barrier in EFL learning. The results also support Panggua et al. (2023), who state that teacher talk is a crucial source of comprehensible input when appropriately scaffolded. Thus, teachers' practices both promote and limit exposure depending on how language use is managed.
To identify the difficulties students face in developing listening skills in English.	The interviews with students showed that the main difficulties in listening comprehension were related to the speed of spoken English, unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation, and limited exposure to authentic input. Students reported feeling anxious and insecure when English was used continuously without sufficient support. Many expressed difficulty recognizing words they had learned in written form when hearing them in spoken English. Many students said that listening exercises with	These findings strengthen theoretical claims of listening as a demanding cognitive activity for receptive skills in EFL contexts. According to Goh and Aryadoust (2020), two negative factors of listening, anxiety and cognitive overload, were reflected in students' response that listening processes were being disrupted. The difficulty mentioned is parallel with (2022), where they state that input that is meaningful and appropriate for the level of the student is needed in order to develop listening.

	<p>videos were more easy to follow because they could guess the meaning of what they were saying with the help of the pictures. In general, students blamed too little practice and too fast teacher talk for their problems in listening.</p>	<p>Therefore, this is added by the fact that materials used were perceived positively by the students, which coincide with findings of Daulay (2025) who mentioned that multimedia has an important role to play in developing listening skills. The identified cause of limited exposure and lack of a variety of input such as were observed also attest to the finding that listening problems are strongly associated with limited exposure to the classroom (Ibarra-Balarezo & Guaman-Luna, 2025).</p>
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Author: The researcher

5. CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- The analysis of classroom practices revealed that English is primarily used during specific moments of the lesson, such as greetings, instructions, and listening activities. However, this use is often interrupted by switches to Spanish because of students' limited comprehension and the need to manage the class effectively. Consequently, students' exposure to spoken English is inconsistent, which reduces their opportunities to develop sustained listening skills.
- Teachers' pedagogy and attitudes reflect a persistent balancing act in between insisting on English as the medium of instruction and attending to students' needs of comprehension and emotional responses to language. Although teachers are aware of the importance of working in English to foster listening skills, the presence of Spanish is a constant in their practice, as a manifestation of the difficulties posed by the context of mixed levels of competence, short time spans, and the anxiety of the learners. Such practices demonstrate that language choices in the classroom are determined not only by pedagogical considerations but also by emotional and situational factors that shape teaching practices.
- The results also indicated that students have considerable difficulty with listening comprehension, primarily due to pronunciation, speech rate, unfamiliar vocabulary, and limited repetition. These difficulties are closely connected to reduced and uneven exposure to English. This prevents students from developing effective listening strategies and confidence in understanding spoken language.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Although students appreciated the consistency that would arise from a greater use of English throughout the lesson by the teacher needed to be balanced against the accessibility of the language. The application of clear instructions, the use of repetition and some visual support may offer some help in mediating exposure and comprehension.
- Teachers are advised to choose teaching approaches which strike a balance between exposing students to English and addressing their emotional needs. Building a positive, less anxiety-provoking classroom atmosphere by means of offering positive comments, a slow but steady rise of English use, and clear instructions can contribute in strengthening students' confidence and motivation to participate in listening activities.
- It is suggested that institutions of higher learning foster teaching strategies that would entertain students' emotive reactions to exposure to English. The development of a conducive learning environment, as well as a gradual increase in listening demand, may foster a more positive attitude among study participants when listening to spoken English.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Guide observation for the first objective.



CARRERA DE
 PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS
 IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y
 EXTRANJEROS



OBSERVATION GUIDE

FRECUENCY SCALE


Scale	Descriptor	Observational Criterion
1	Never (0)	Not observed
2	Rarely (1)	Very limited use
3	Sometimes (2)	Limited but observable
4	Often (3)	Frequently, but not constantly
5	Always (4)	Consistently throughout the lesson

A. Classroom Management and Routines


Indicator	1	2	3	4	5
1. The teacher greets students in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The teacher uses English to give classroom instructions (e.g., start, stop, open books).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The teacher uses English to manage classroom behavior (e.g., attention, silence, transitions).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Uses English to model listening tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Language of Instruction

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5
5. The teacher explains lesson content mainly in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The teacher switches to Spanish only when necessary for clarification.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The teacher models correct English use through examples and explanations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Teacher repeats, paraphrases in English to aid comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



CARRERA DE
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C. Interaction and Student Engagement

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5
9. The teacher asks questions in English to involve students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The teacher encourages students to respond in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The teacher reacts to student responses using English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



D. Feedback and Support

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5
12. The teacher provides feedback in English (praise, correction, clarification).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The teacher uses simple and comprehensible English adapted to students' level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Use of audio, video, or recorded listening materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Photography register



Annex 2: Semi-Structured Interview for Students

	CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS	Semi-Structured Interview Guide-Students	
<p>Objective: To determine student's perceptions of their exposure to English in the classroom and the difficulties they experience in listening comprehension.</p>			
<p>Preliminary Greeting</p>			
<p>Hi, you are part of a research project about learning English at school. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers are confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. Please answer honestly based on your experience.</p>			
<p>Icebreaker Question</p>			
<p>1. Do you like learning English? Why or why not?</p>			
<p>Introductory Questions</p>			
<p>2. How do you feel when your teacher speaks English in class?</p>			
<p>Comfortable/Nervous/Confused/Motivated</p>			
<p>3. How often does your teacher speak English in class?</p>			
<p>(Always / Sometimes / Rarely)</p>			
<p>Focus Questions</p>			
<p>4. In which moments does your teacher speak English more? (Instructions, explanations, listening activities, greetings)</p>			
<p>5. Do you understand your teacher when he/she speaks English? Why or why not?</p>			
<p>6. What makes listening to English difficult for you in class? (Fast speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, no repetition)</p>			
<p>7. Do you think you listen to enough English during English classes? Why?</p>			
<p>8. What helps you understand spoken English better in class? (Teacher repetition, examples, videos, gestures, Spanish help)</p>			
<p>Closing Questions</p>			
<p>9. What would help you improve your listening in English classes?</p>			
<p>10. Is there anything else you want to say about learning English in your class?</p>			

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Annex 3: Semi-Structured Interview for Teachers

FACULTAD DE
 PEDAGOGIA DE LOS
 IDIOMAS INDIANOS Y
 EXTRANJEROS

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers

Objective: To explore teachers' perceptions, practices, and decision-making regarding the use of English during classroom instruction in 10th grade at Unidad Educativa "Isabel de Godin," and how these practices influence students' exposure to the target language.

Preliminary Greeting
 Hello, thank you for participating in this academic research project. This interview aims to understand your perceptions and experiences regarding the use of English during classroom instruction. Your perspectives are extremely valuable, as they will help improve teaching practices and support students' exposure to the English language. All information will remain confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Introductory Questions
 1. How would you describe your general experience teaching English at Unidad Educativa "Isabel de Godin"?

Focus Questions
 2. In which moments of the lesson do you usually use English the most (e.g., instructions, explanations, listening activities)?
 3. What factors influence your decision to switch from English to Spanish in class?
 4. How do you perceive students' reactions when English is used consistently during instruction?
 5. How do you think your use of English affects students' listening comprehension in the classroom?
 6. What difficulties do you face when trying to maintain English as the main language of instruction?
 7. How do you adapt your language use for students with different proficiency levels?

Projection Questions
 8. In which moments of the lesson do you usually use English the most (e.g., instructions, explanations, listening activities)?
 9. What strategies do you think could help increase students' exposure to English in the classroom?

Closing Question
 10. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding language use in your English classes

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