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**Título:**

Effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Improving  
the Acquisition of English Language Skills

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Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**

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**Riobamba, Ecuador, 2026**

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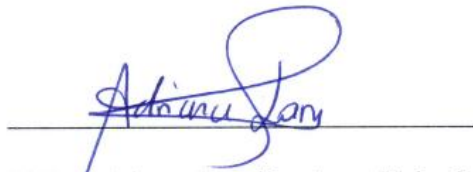
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We, the undersigned, the professors designated as members of the Degree Examination Committee for the evaluation of the research work title “Effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Improving the Acquisition of English Language Skills”, presented by Jacqueline Dayana Coba Estrada, with ID number 0605738913, under the tutorship of PhD. Adriana Carolina Lara Velarde; hereby certify that we recommend the APPROVAL of this degree for graduation purposes. The research work has been previously evaluated, and the author’s defense has been heard. We have no further observations to make.

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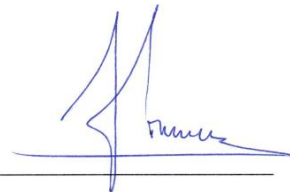
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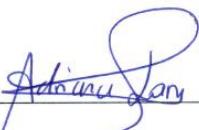
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## **DEDICATION**

*To God and my family*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank God for all the love and blessings showered upon on me. He has walked by my side at every moment and has illuminated my entire life.

With special affection, to my cherished parents, Graciela and Angel, you mean everything to me. Thank you for always being by my side. Your love, support and motivation have been the fuel that guides me on this path. You are my greatest inspiration in life, and you have no idea how much I admire you. Endless gratitude for everything. Eternal love and respect.

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*Jacqueline*

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## RESUMEN

En el actual contexto educativo, las metodologías de enseñanza del idioma inglés han evolucionado significativamente para todos los niveles. Una de las más trascendentales ha sido la denominada AICLE, una excepcional alternativa que garantiza un aprendizaje sustancial de asignaturas teóricas y el mejoramiento de destrezas de una lengua extranjera, simultáneamente. Por consiguiente, la presente investigación tiene por objeto analizar la efectividad de Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE) en el mejoramiento de la destreza oral del idioma inglés, en estudiantes de la Carrera de Ingeniería Forestal de la Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo. Para concretar dicho propósito, el estudio adoptó un enfoque cualitativo, mismo que permitió recolectar la información mediante una revisión de literatura, una observación áulica y una entrevista. La población estuvo conformada por los estudiantes de quinto semestre de la carrera anteriormente mencionada. Los hallazgos evidencian que la aplicación sistemática de la metodología en cuestión, permite a los estudiantes mejorar progresivamente su destreza oral en el idioma inglés. Además, factores como motivación, confianza y compromiso académico incrementaron notablemente. Esto como resultado de la continua práctica oral mediante actividades contextualizadas, especialmente aquellas desarrolladas en parejas y en trabajos colaborativos. En definitiva, la metodología AICLE es una propuesta innovadora que transforma por completo la experiencia de aprendizaje en la educación superior, construyendo conocimiento conceptual y desarrollando al mismo tiempo la destreza oral del idioma inglés.

**Palabras clave:** AICLE, Metodología innovadora, Enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés, Destreza oral, Educación superior.

## ABSTRACT

In the current educational context, English language teaching methodologies have evolved significantly for all levels. One of the most influential has been the so-called CLIL, an exceptional alternative that guarantees substantial learning of theoretical subjects and improvement of foreign language skills, simultaneously. Therefore, the following research aims to analyze the effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the improvement of English speaking skills in students of the Forestry Engineering Major at Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo. To achieve that purpose, the study adopted a qualitative approach which allowed the information to be collected through literature review, classroom observation, and an interview. The population consisted of fifth-semester students enrolled in the aforementioned major. The findings show that the systematic application of the methodology in question, allows students to progressively improve their oral skills in the English language. In addition, factors such as motivation, confidence, and academic engagement increased noticeably. This resulted from oral practice through contextualized activities, especially those carried out in pairs and in collaborative work. Ultimately, CLIL methodology is an innovative proposal that completely transforms the learning experience in higher education, building conceptual knowledge while developing English language speaking skill.

**Key words:** CLIL, Innovative methodology, Teaching and learning English, Speaking skill, Higher education.

Reviewed by:



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## CHAPTER I. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. Introduction

In today's world, learning English as a foreign language has become not only an extracurricular activity, but a globalized requirement that allows students to find a wider range of academic, professional, and even social opportunities. Traditional education ensures grammatical and vocabulary memorization, but communicative competence is far from being achieved within this framework. Mainly because of the passive and receptive role of students.

Therefore, conventional approaches and methodologies for learning the foreign language have evolved over time, resulting in several captivating and innovative proposals. One of the most representative is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), an engaging approach that has revolutionized the way foreign languages, like English, are taught and learned. This learner-centered methodology makes languages not only the goal, but also the means of learning by combining subject content knowledge with language skills improvement.

The present research aims to analyze the effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in improving English speaking skill in higher education. Toward this end, the study followed a qualitative approach, bibliographic (literature review) as well as field (observation sheet) modality to collect information, and an exploratory level. The latter because the aforementioned methodology has not been commonly applied and studied within the researcher's local context, specifically at ESPOCH, the selected university institution.

Along these lines, the study is expected to provide empirical evidence about CLIL implementation to enhance speaking skill, among university students in the central Andean region. In this manner, it is intended to fill a gap in local literature and to promote the pedagogical innovation of English language teaching in the rest of university majors in Ecuador.

Lastly, the present research is organized into five chapters, presented below:

**Chapter I:** Referential framework where introduction, research problem, problem statement, problem formulation, justification, and objectives are presented to contextualize the study. **Chapter II:** Theoretical framework addresses prior research and essential theory that helps to better understand CLIL methodology implications and its contribution to improving speaking skill. **Chapter III:** Methodology used to carry out the study, it includes the approach, modality, level, and population. Equally, it details the techniques and instruments employed for collecting data. **Chapter IV:** Results obtained per each specific objective are presented and subsequently the discussion of those findings compared with other studies. **Chapter V:** Conclusions consolidates the results achieved and recommendations for future applications.

## **1.1 Research problem**

Nowadays, in English learning, one of the most difficult skills for students to master is speaking. Regardless of their educational level, the majority of learners face this problem in general. There is very limited and precarious development that does not allow students to communicate effectively in English as a foreign language. Of course, lack of practice in the classrooms exacerbates the situation and leads to a setback in language learning. This problem reflects the inefficiency of traditional methodologies to teach and learn English. Objectively, even when the curriculum promotes the development of communicative competence over theoretical mastery, the reality is quite different. During primary and secondary level, students focus on studying to pass a theoretical exam, and the actual development of their language skills is sidelined. Therefore, in higher education, students are still unable to communicate ideas with acceptable oral proficiency.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Currently, learning English has become a necessity, not only in academic terms, but also in trade, mobilization and communication around the world. As a result, since it is considered as a lingua franca, more people are trying to learn and achieve an acceptable level of proficiency in the language. There are different types of international opportunities for students and professionals who seek further advancement. Thus, being able to communicate in English is an essential requirement for everyone (Khan et al., 2017).

In developing continents like Europe, people follow the aim of becoming multilingual by being able to communicate in at least two more languages other than the mother tongue. Undoubtedly, English is one of the mandatory languages that citizens are expected to master. To achieve this goal, the education system in those countries implements various methodologies and innovations that contribute significantly to the learning process of students (Giannakouloupoulos et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, in Latin America countries the reality is different. Although the governments are interested in implementing English language in the school system, the results in terms of proficiency are very low. Factors such as poor-quality curricula, inadequate teacher training, insufficient class hours, and lack of resources, contribute to the deficient English level in the region (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).

In Ecuador, the situation is even worse. According to data provided by the EF – EPI (Educational First-English Proficiency Index), in 2024 Ecuador ranked 82<sup>nd</sup> out of 116 countries worldwide, and 19<sup>th</sup> out of 21 countries evaluated in Latin America, demonstrating that it is among the nations with the lowest level of English proficiency not only in the continent, but in the world (First, 2024). Even though authorities and general population recognize the importance of English in today's world, there are many factors that hinder educational progress in language, such as ineffective application of methodologies, teachers with insufficient current pedagogical training, excessive number of students in classrooms, lack of resources, poor motivation, and above all, the predominant use of L1 (Spanish) during English classes (Sevy-Biloon et al., 2020).

Now, it is well known that the ultimate goal of learning a language is to be able to communicate through it. Hence, the productive skill known as speaking takes on significant relevance, especially because the four skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening) are interconnected. Therefore, focusing on one skill such as speaking, will inevitably lead to improvement in the others. To achieve the goal, it is essential to implement active methodologies that allow to learn through real communicative activities (Fenuku, 2024).

On the other hand, after completing primary and secondary education, university students still face difficulties in managing English as a foreign language, with a greater challenge in speaking skill. Firstly, it occurs because students come from diverse educational backgrounds. Their prior training differs significantly, as most students studied high school in public institutions and only a minority in private ones; then differences about class hours, available resources, and the usage of varied methodologies during secondary education, are noticeable among learners. In addition, students come from different parts of the country, further accentuating inequalities in prior knowledge of English as a foreign language.

Moreover, once established within the university context, the difficulty that arises is about the hours allocated to language learning. They are limited because priority is supposed to be given to professional subjects in each of the semesters that students take. No matter the major, English hours are generally part of the study plan during the first four semesters, but with only a few hours per week in the semester schedule. In this way, students focus on mastering degree subjects, and English learning takes a back seat.

Likewise, another important factor to consider refers to student motivation. Most of the students do not feel interested in improving English learning beyond the classroom. The reasons can vary from personal preferences to academic issues. The latter could be understood as the result of past negative experiences with language classes or possibly with a particular teacher. In this sense, English becomes usually a subject that students take for obligation and not because they truly want to learn it for any specific purpose.

Lastly, even when some students wish to continue improving their language skills at higher education, lack of practice causes them to forget things they already knew, and this may occur either temporarily or permanently. The main reason is that university students do not have enough time to develop a wide variety of activities that they want to do. The overload of academic assignments and the demanding nature of studying a degree, prevent students from dedicating exclusive time to practicing English.

Considering these problems, this research aims to demonstrate whether the recent application of CLIL methodology is effective in helping university students to improve their English language learning, specifically, speaking.

### **1.3 Problem Formulation**

In what ways Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is perceived as effective in Improving the Acquisition of English Language Skills, specifically speaking, in students of Forestry Engineering Major at Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo?

## 1.4 Justification

As is widely known, today English language is not only important, but truly necessary. However, given that traditional methodologies do not effectively develop students' communicative competence, research for inventive methodologies to teach and learn languages, has emerged as response to the current necessities of the education field. This is how CLIL methodology arises as a very innovative way of learning English while studying a subject matter at the same time.

With the aforementioned, the present research seeks to explore the implications of applying CLIL methodology to improve English teaching and learning, specifically speaking skill. Thus, in addition to being important, it is also pertinent since the methodology has been applied in recent years, at a prestigious local institution of higher education, and this study is ideally suited to demonstrate the significant advancements that have been occurring. Furthermore, it is viable because the necessary human, technological, bibliographical, and economic resources are available to carry out the research.

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of mixing subject and language content. Besides, the conventional pedagogy of learning to speak is changed to speak while learning, in an uncommon but successful way. In current education, English proficiency is viewed as a necessity, but the strategies used do not seem to be not enough, yet teachers lack of proved options to prosperously foster speaking progress. CLIL promises not only to be one of those means, but also a learner-centered methodology that gives the opportunity to improve speaking skills through controlled and independent practices.

The methodological relevance lies in its exploratory scope, since it has been possible to gather concrete and explicit information as a result of the integration of CLIL methodology into the teaching of professional subjects. In a certain sense, the originality of the work is attributed to the reason that the analysis of CLIL methodology was carried out in an engineering major where students' initial English level was not the expected. Hence, the results allowed to verify if this "double challenge learning" is advantageous for university students.

In this way, this study will benefit primarily the university community of Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo (ESPOCH), and then also may be a contribution to higher education institutions, university professors, and even intern students who are expected to support CLIL classes in university contexts. Moreover, the theoretical contributions of this research are linked to the fact that most of the investigations are done with children or adolescents, but not many with adult people currently attending university, especially in an engineering major. Beyond, as this is a novel methodology recently implemented in the city, the study also becomes captivating.

The findings will provide to the institution, first documented evidence of CLIL effectiveness within the university context. Finally, the research is feasible as classes schedule is accessible for the application of instruments, and above all, the involvement of participants is informed, free and voluntary.

## **1.5 Objectives**

### **1.5.1 General Objective**

To analyze the Effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Improving the Acquisition of English Language Skills, in students of Forestry Engineering Major at Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo.

### **1.5.2 Specific Objectives**

- To conduct a literature review about CLIL methodology and its role in supporting English language skills focusing on speaking development.
- To describe, through classroom observation, how CLIL implementation improves specifically the speaking skill development among university students.
- To explore university professor's perspective about the implementation of CLIL to foster speaking skill.

## CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2. Research background

In the Hellenic Air Force Academy in Greece, a study with similar characteristics was carried out. The topic was “*Developing the Speaking Skills of Students through CLIL*” authored by Anastasia Delliou and Makrina Zafiri (2016). The objective of this research was to explore how the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) helps to improve the speaking skills in military students that are learning English. The study embraced a qualitative and descriptive approach by using classroom observations, oral presentations and tools for collecting data for four months. The main result was that CLIL created a significant learning context that fostered subject and language knowledge. Learners improved aspects such as pronunciation, fluency, and content accuracy. In addition, learners’ motivation and confidence also increased (Delliou & Zafiri, 2016).

Another study was executed at Universidad de Córdoba, in Spain. The topic was “*Measuring the Impact of CLIL on Language Skills: A CEFR-Based Approach for Higher Education*” and it was conducted by Antonio José Jiménez Muñoz (2014), the objective was to examine the impact of CLIL on the development of language skills, particularly in speaking. The research adopted a mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative). The main result revealed that there was a remarkable improvement in students’ speaking skills, not only in language aspects like fluency, but also in self-confidence. This, as a result of implementing accurate academic content in English (Jiménez, 2014).

Likewise, in the Ecuadorian context, at Universidad Técnica de Manabí, a study titled “*The implementation of CLIL to improve oral communication skills in undergraduate students of an Ecuadorian public university*” was conducted by Diana Verónica Terán Molina and Francis Javier Villalta Alarcón (2024). The research aimed to show how the implementation of CLIL helps university students to enhance oral communication in English language. It was focused on fluency, use of vocabulary, time management, and confidence. The study was carried out with a quasi-experimental approach where 25 students from a selected semester participated. The main result showed that there was a significant improvement in oral production since learners’ fluency and confidence in using academic vocabulary in speaking was good (Terán & Villalta, 2024).

### 3. Theoretical background

#### 3.1 THE CLIL APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

##### 3.1.1 What is CLIL?

The word CLIL is the acronym used to designate the term known as Content and Language Integrated Language. It is considered a bifocal educational approach where the learning process is focused on improving a foreign language, at the time that academic subjects are taught. It is flexible and adaptable to diverse situations since it arises from the interdisciplinarity demanded by the current educational context. In this manner, CLIL aims to achieve an innovative integration of knowledge that transforms the traditional system of teaching and learning practices. This approach arises from the need to enhance the academic experience in students and make it more significant but, above all, effective and successfully (Coyle et al., 2010).

##### 3.1.2 Core of CLIL: Language and Content Integration

In CLIL, the learning process occurs in a simultaneous way. During every single class, students acquire theoretical concepts of a certain subject while a foreign language is being reinforced. The academic subjects are those normally established in the curriculum. The fusion of a target language with any mandatory subject for students in their study program, is considered as a notable advantage in terms of time and resources needed. Moreover, language is viewed as a kind of “vehicle” that makes a revolution in transforming the function of a foreign language, since it is used to learn new content, and not only for communicative purposes. In addition, English proficiency is not needed in students, their foreign language level does not necessarily have to be high. Teachers are the ones who play the key role in facilitating the learning process by implementing, for example, tasks that can be not only individual but also collaborative (Barboráková, 2012).

##### 3.1.3 The 4Cs in CLIL: Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture

Coyle et al (2010) as cited in Gabillon (2020), established the following definition for each component of CLIL approach:

- **Content:** The disciplinary knowledge that students are supposed to learn in any specific subject area.
- **Communication:** Final purpose of language. It aims to be used in a personal, social and cultural way.
- **Cognition:** The process of learning (both language and subject) and the development of lower/higher order skills through which critical thinking appears.
- **Culture:** The awareness and understanding of the surroundings that learners must acquire as social actors.

### **3.1.4 Cognitive benefits of CLIL**

Beyond the theoretical expertise of content of subjects matters and language skills, CLIL approach also offers an underestimated advantage in terms of mental development. As stated by Zakharevych (2025), CLIL helps students to improve cognitive capacities. Because of the unification of subject and target language learning, students must carefully focus their attention to process and analyze the information received. Likewise, this type of learning leads students to integrate theoretical and linguistic comprehension “while also fostering critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to evaluate information”. In doing so, learners gain autonomy, and they will be able to manage their own comprehensive system in the learning process.

### **3.1.5 Relevance of CLIL in university contexts**

The application of CLIL in university students is a successful learning experience as long as proper implementation process is ensured. The procedure must be carried out with the utmost thoroughness. For achieving that, it is necessary to take into account diverse pedagogical aspects, such as teachers training, curricula adaptations, materials needed and a continuous assessment of knowledge that students are acquiring in both, subject and target language. Along these lines, the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Content (CLIL) will contribute to the growth of professional competences that train students for future work opportunities worldwide (Tashmatova, 2024).

Academically, this approach brings various benefits to higher education students. To begin with, as Lee (2024) states, CLIL methodology provides the possibility to further deepen subject knowledge, compared to traditional teaching methods. Likewise, target language skills are improved significantly. The reason why this occurs is linked to the increased level of students’ motivation since CLIL is learner-centered and it causes a positive attitude towards the learning environment.

Moreover, Hallasi-Ancori (2025) affirms that students reinforce communicative competence which will be the tool for opening the chance to get involved in international relationships. Thanks to the proficiency that students can achieve in the foreign language, they are more likely to participate in superior programs offered even in other countries. In agreement, Fajardo Dack et al., (2020), point out that students will be able to take part in different programs such as internationalization. Considering these advantages, an increasing number of universities are implementing this mode of study.

## **3.2 SPEAKING SKILL**

### **3.2.1 Speaking as a key productive skill**

Along with writing, speaking is considered as a productive or active skill because it is used to generate a message that will be communicated through speech. For that to happen, it is essential to pronounce words that will result in the production of language in an oral way. In this manner, speaking skill is vitally needed because after receiving language receptively through listening or reading, it is crucial to be able to respond with what the

individual wishes to express. In other words, it is a further step that is totally required (Bashrin, 2013).

### **3.2.2 Importance of speaking in learning English as foreign language**

At present, English language is considered as an international channel of communication. Therefore, improving speaking skill is of utmost relevance. Training this skill in classrooms prepares students to face real-life events. Additionally, teachers can measure students' learning in some way when they perform productive skills such as speaking or writing. Unquestionably, speaking is used more often and possibly it is the skill that students aim to enhance since it is needed all the time, regardless of the place or occasion, formal/informal. (Segoian & Sagoyan, 2020).

### **3.2.3 Process to teach speaking**

The final aim of teaching speaking is to develop communicative competence adequately. For this end, the teaching process is primarily based on the application of language input activities, which may include "teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class". Once students have acquired the information, they will be able to construct their own language output. In this manner, the next step will be to put into practice that knowledge through interactive activities that allow learners to handle the language, for instance, through role plays and discussions tasks. Apart from this, the role of teachers is to guide the oral practice, as it must fall within the parameters of correct grammar usage, coherent sentences, and proper or at least acceptable pronunciation (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012).

### **3.2.4 Assessment of speaking skills**

When teachers evaluate students' speaking skills, it is important to consider some relevant aspects regardless of the activity being carried out for assessment purposes. Standowicks (2007, as cited in Usma et al., 2013) points out that these components are fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and intonation. Additionally, the author argues that learners usually may focus more attention on one of these elements above the others.

## **3.3 CLIL AND SPEAKING SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.3.1 Speaking within the CLIL Framework**

CLIL approach does not intend to omit essential aspects of normal speaking instruction. Rather, it aims to teach them in an adjusted manner instead of a conventional one. For instance, grammar. It is viewed from a broader and more comprehensive perspective. In other words, it is a holistic idea that seeks to persuade students to put their language skills into practice in different situations where grammar is used. For doing that, contextualized activities are designed for practicing speaking skill through CLIL in classrooms (Kovacikova, 2019).

### **3.3.2 Benefits of promoting speaking skills through CLIL**

As Mattheoudakis & Alexiou (2017) state, there are both linguistic and motivational benefits. To begin with, students will be able to acquire academic language as well as progress in speaking skills and oral fluency. Moreover, learners develop cognitive and metacognitive improvements since students' critical thinking, inference, and willingness to participate, are notable. Going a step further, the authors also mention that engagement, confidence, personal organization, and self-worth increase among students. This, as a result of the implementation of CLIL as an innovative methodology in classrooms.

### **3.3.3 Pedagogical Strategies to Foster Speaking through CLIL**

There are many strategies to be used in the classroom to help students to improve their speaking skills in CLIL contexts. Ranging from simple activities to slightly more elaborate ones, even involving the use of technological tools. In the first instance, as Clegg (2014) suggests, teachers must support learners by modifying complexity of questions. At the beginning, for example, the questions do not necessarily have to be easy, they can be relatively complex, but their expected answers should not be too long. In addition, when group activities are set, the teacher may provide a list of key words that students will need to perform the task. Moreover, if students face problems by building sentences, the teacher may design "talking frames, sentence starters or substitution tables; or they ask students to use their L1 when discussing but their L2 when reporting".

On the other hand, a more intricate strategy includes the application of Project Based Learning techniques. Speaking activity is a fundamental part when applying this method and students' oral production will be performed inherently. In the pursuit of this goal, it is possible to work with digital tools for permanent audio/video recording during the project implementation process, for instance, *Flipgrid*. In this manner, students work collaboratively in a subject project and improve their speaking skills in an educational and interesting way (Alvarado, 2020).

### **3.3.4 Process to follow when applying CLIL in the classroom**

According to Alisoy (2025), a CLIL class should be organized into four stages:

#### *1. Warm-up:*

The session must start with the activation of prior knowledge and the presentation of unknown concepts to the students. For doing that, activities like brainstorming exercises or short conversations about current surroundings affaires, can be held.

#### *2. Presentation:*

The teacher introduces the new topic by using understandable and structured explanations with visual illustrations. The material presented should include captivating resources according to the subject.

#### *3. Practice:*

Supply activities that strengthen goals of content and language learning, such as role-plays, discussions in pairs, and collaborative problem solving. These kinds of tasks

are appropriate to practice, in real contexts, the vocabulary and concepts learned. This practice is guided and leads to developing the scaffolding process.

#### 4. *Production*:

To conclude, students carry out an activity in which they put into practice what they have learned in a more independent way, for instance through group projects, written reports, or oral presentations. The aim is to encourage learners to create content that can merge the subject matter with the target language.

### **3.4. PERCEPTIONS/ATTITUDES IN CLIL IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.4.1 Teachers' attitudes**

In a search conducted by Štefková & Danihelova (2023) at the university of Zvolen in Slovakia, it was found that subject teachers that started to apply this methodology changed their way of thinking about English language, it was not something terrifying anymore, but it became in a useful tool to teach in a simultaneous and practical way. Moreover, the activities carried out have contributed to meaningful learning and better management of digital resources when it was necessary to use them. Last but not least, social interaction between teachers – students, and students – students, improved.

With regard to the development of speaking skills specifically, Mattheoudakis & Alexiou (2017) have found in their study that teachers like to motivate students to find the way of transmitting what they want to communicate. Likewise, they emphasized the comment of a teacher who stated that the progress her students were achieving, motivated her at work: “I had students whose competency in English, and especially in spoken English, actually improved; this helped me and encouraged me even more”. Complementary, in reference to the attitude, in a study conducted by Hashmi (2019), the teacher Alaa highlighted the importance of motivation over mastery of skills. He pointed out that:

Attitude is more important than aptitude. Learners may not have the required skills to complete a task, but if they are motivated, they will certainly do well. For CLIL, I strongly believe that you need to have stronger and highly motivated students who could benefit from exposure to advance linguistic and cultural complexities of the target language.

#### **3.4.2 Students' attitudes**

In a study carried out in Finland by Roiha et al., in 2024, students referred to have acquired gains in their learning process after the implementation of CLIL. Certainly, they expressed having faced difficulties at the beginning because of the lack of academic vocabulary, but then it became easier:

Well, at first it made me a bit nervous [to speak English], because I have not studied in English before. So I wondered if I'll know enough vocabulary in mathematics or other subjects like that. I had this sense of security with my English skills, that I know [English] and understand it really well, but I did not know if I could use it, and how

much of so called academic vocabulary I know. And in the beginning it took a while to get used to, but once I got the hang of it, now it feels natural to use.

In other responses, students confessed they had felt afraid of this way of learning, but in the process, they figured out that it is not actually as complex as it may seem, also a student emphasized the importance of support from classmates and teachers:

The first period was a terrible experience. I was so scared of coming here. I was afraid I wouldn't know anything. But then being here makes me realise that it's not that bad. You get used to it and there are nice people around you who are willing to help out. So when at first it felt awful now it's really nice.

With regard to improvement in speaking, learners reported feeling much more confident when speaking in the target language and, as a result, a significant progress in their oral production was noted:

I feel more confident using English, and it doesn't take as long to find the words. And I usually also had to search for the correct pronunciation, because I want to say those words the right way, but I don't need to do that [search for the correct pronunciation] so much anymore now that I have learned how to speak better.

Ultimately, in another study conducted in Ireland, Bower et al., (2024) collected some insights in which positive attitudes towards CLIL predominated. A student stated: "I don't really think that there is anything I don't like. It's just learning a language, but you just feel more in depth with it I guess, like you get more absorbed."

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### 4. Design

#### 4.1 Research approach

Given the nature of the study and in order to better address the objectives set out, this research adopted a qualitative approach as it seeks to obtain a deep understanding of the bibliographic information, observation and answers derived from the application of interviews. As Patton (2002) states, in qualitative search findings are derived from three data collection sources that are: “(1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents”.

#### 4.2 Research modality

The search was conducted in bibliographic and field modality. On the one hand, as Boussif (2021) mentions, the process of a bibliographic search of a topic consists of gathering relevant data in diverse sources of literature. Likewise, it permits the analysis of findings collected in other studies and their comparison with own data. In this sense, the present study tries to present the most relevant information that bibliographic resources offer from the internet about CLIL. On the other hand, field modality is the one in which the researcher intentionally spends so much time in the context to be observed, and naturally occurs and immersion of participation, or at least direct exposure, to the subject matter of inquiry (Philipsen, 1982, as cited in Wulff & Nyquist, 1988). Thus, the data collected through the classroom observation where CLIL is implemented, served to compare the theory found with the results direct obtained by the researcher, and it helped to determine the effectiveness of CLIL to improve speaking skills.

#### 4.3 Level or type of research

The investigation embraced an exploratory level since as Hernandez Sampieri et al., (1997) state, this permits the researcher to examine a topic or search problem that has been little studied, such is the case of CLIL implementation at the selected institution. In addition, it was used because as Sabino (1992) points out, exploratory level is useful when the topic of search has not been widely recognized, and especially when the resources available for the research are insufficient to carry out the project.

#### 4.4 Study population

The population selected for this study was Fifth-Semester students in Forestry Engineering Major at ESPOCH, in Riobamba – Ecuador. This group of students was chosen because CLIL approach has been implemented in some professional subjects of that degree program, particularly in Silviculture I. Additionally, the teacher in charge of the semester selected also formed part of the population because an interview was applied to her.

#### **4.5 Sample size**

Since the population was small, sampling was not necessary.

#### **4.6 Techniques and instruments for collecting data**

For data collection, the following techniques and instruments were used:

##### **4.6.1 Literature review**

To accomplish the first objective, the technique used was a literature review through which several bibliographic sources were reviewed by using key words such as “CLIL foundations”, “CLIL & speaking”, “attitudes towards CLIL”, and more. The instrument was a bibliographic matrix where around n=100 documents were collected and checked. Then, based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, the documents selected were those aligned with the research topic.

##### **4.6.2 Observation**

To carry out the observation that enabled the second objective to be achieved, the instrument used was an observation sheet, structured based on the stages proposed to follow when implementing CLIL. This allowed to observe and collect contextual information directly from the study site. The aim was to verify whether the application of CLIL in university contexts is effective in improving speaking skills. To do so, the researcher requested to attend classes where CLIL methodology was being applied to improve English language competency in students. Classes were held twice a week and lasted two hours each. All the observation process took place in four weeks.

##### **4.6.3 Semi-structured interview**

To accomplish the third specific objective, the technique used was a semi-structured interview and the instrument a questionnaire that included eight questions. This was applied with the goal of gathering the professor’s perception and determining what she considered to be the effects of CLIL implementation on students’ speaking skills. To act in this manner, the interview was carried out online via zoom platform, the duration of the meeting was about 20 minutes, and it was conducted in English as the teacher possess an adequate level of language proficiency.

## CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following pages of this section, the results obtained throughout this research are presented. They were derived from the information obtained through the application of three different instruments for each specific objective. Therefore, results are narrated based on each of them. After that, the discussion of those results is also presented.

### 5. Results

#### **First specific objective**

To begin with, according to the first specific objective, “To conduct a literature review about CLIL methodology and its role in supporting English language learning and speaking development”, the most relevant information was collected into a bibliographical matrix, and the findings highlighted the benefits of applying CLIL methodology in university classrooms.

Initially, the methodology itself is striking as an alternative option for learning English in a flexible, adaptable and integrated way, alongside a different subject. The most notable advantage of this dual learning is the optimization of time and resources. Moreover, English language takes a very important role since it will not serve only for communicative purposes, but also as the revolutionary tool for transmitting subject knowledge (Barboráková, 2012).

Furthermore, as CLIL is a student-centered methodology, the learning traditional perspective takes a turn and enhances the educational experience. As Lee (2024) points out, students show a favorable attitude towards the implementation of the methodology and, as a result, their motivation to learn the foreign language increases. The remarkable proof is reflected in the gains achieved by the students and in the considerable improvement of their language skills.

In relation to the development of speaking skills, it is fundamental to mention that as it is a productive skill, it can be measured to determine the students’ progress in learning. As such, CLIL methodology offers the opportunity to propose contextualized activities that will serve as the favorable scenario that allows students to practice speaking skills.

To do so, CLIL focuses on meaningful communication rather than only perfect use of language forms. Fluency and accuracy are improved over time, but the most important aim is encouraging students to speak, from free topics to the ones related to the professional subject.

As Bahrani & Soltani (2012) suggest, speaking production initiates from the acquisition of input through teacher talks, listening activities, reading passages, and all the listening and reading practice that students may acquire in or out of the class. Then, with the performance of interactive and contextualized oral activities, students will be able to build up the language output that will help them to internalize knowledge and improve English speaking skill. The pedagogical strategies that CLIL suggests for fostering speaking skill according to Clegg (2014) are adaptability of tasks (from the easiest to the most difficult ones), modification of complex questions to ensure students’ participation in class, and provision of key words that will be needed in the activities. If students’ level is low, CLIL

promotes the use of L1 first and then L2 until students can gradually adapt to using English exclusively. In a later scenario, or if students already show a strong level, Project Based Learning can be used to strength collaboratively work and speaking skill improvement (Alvarado, 2020).

Beyond the linguistic advance, Mattheoudakis & Alexiou (2017) state, there are also many other benefits, such as the enhancement of cognitive and metacognitive skills. This is because aspects such as critical thinking and inference are activated while students perform activities they are required to complete during class. Additionally, the innovation of the methodology gives as a result a significant increase of important and needed elements like engagement, confidence, personal organization, and self-worth.

Complementary to the information reviewed and what was previously stated by authors, Alisoy (2025) affirms that once that the theoretical class has been given in English, the professor is expected to involve students in two stages. The first one corresponds to the “practice part” where real contexts activities such as role-plays, discussion in pairs, and collaborative problem solving can be carried out to connect the input of subject knowledge with English. In this phase, students start trying to talk with the knowledge they already possess in the foreign language, and teacher’s support and guidance are constantly present. Intentionally scaffolding process is controlled by the teacher, and the level of difficulty can vary from class to class.

Afterwards, the “production part” is set and students must prepare a little more complex activities such as group project, written reports, or presentations, but in a more independent way. This final stage seeks to motivate students to create their own content and then report it orally. In this way, the fusion of theory and target language reaches its climactic point, but above all, speaking skill is developed through the performance of original and relevant content for students. Careful implementation of the two stages in each class will allow learners to gradually improve their speaking skills.

### **Second specific objective**

In accordance with the second specific objective, “To describe, through classroom observation, how CLIL implementation improves speaking skill development among university students”. The instrument applied was an observation sheet with five indicators to be checked with yes/no options for every class, and also a blank space available to document extra possible findings. Thus, it was evidenced that in Forestry Engineering Major, CLIL classes accomplished in totality with most stages. It was only a variation in the first and last step, as presented hereafter.

*First item:* “The class starts with a warm-up to activate prior knowledge and to present unknown concepts”.

Before starting the class, the teacher started with the warm-up. However, it was done “properly” in 4 of 6 observed sessions. The explanation is that CLIL classes model proposes that this activity should activate prior knowledge and present unknown concepts. Nevertheless, although this was done with that objective in mind on some days, a different type of warm-up was chosen on other days with the intention of encouraging students in a more playful way. This was especially the case when classes started early in morning. Consequently, it was found that the warm-up may be flexible and selected according to

context needs. Hence, students' attention was activated better with free warm-ups rather than the ones that only focus on remembering concepts of previous classes. Above all, even when answering non-content related questions, students were already trying to communicate ideas in English, regardless the their level of proficiency.

Second item: "The material presented includes captivating resources that are used to present the new topic".

The second stage was accomplished in all classes, the teacher used to prepare audio visual material that enabled students to anticipate the topic even before it was formally introduced. Then, slides presentations were also fundamental because new vocabulary words were strategically presented to generate curiosity. It helped to engage students to ask verbally about the meaning of new terms. By doing so, learners felt motivated to speak in a spontaneous way, just like in a normal class taught in their first language.

Third item: "The explanation of the class is clear, understandable and structured".

The stage mentioned in the previous section helped subsequently to fulfill the third item that was also was accomplished continuously in every single session. In this part, students also felt motivated to ask questions about the topic, and speaking skills continued being trained when the teacher asked questions following the strategies that CLIL methodology proposes to foster participation. To act accordingly, the nature of the questions was modified, with complex questions being set aside in favor of simple ones that students could answer easily. A complementary strategy that helped was the list of key words related to the new topic. In this way, students mixed basic vocabulary that they already known with the technical words that they were learning during every class. Accordingly, oral responses were generated based on the input received and subsequently used in the performance of the activities.

Four item: "Guided activities for practicing real-life contexts are used (role-plays, discussions in pairs, and collaborative problem solving)".

After the three stages mentioned above, the practical part allowed students to start developing their speaking skills in connection with the subject topic in a more extensive way. This space was mandatory in every single class giving learners the opportunity to practice through the proposed activities. Discussions in pairs were the students' favorite activity, even when pairs were not formed based on affinity. The formation of these groups was deliberately established by the teacher, pairing a student with an adequate level of proficiency with a student who struggled to speak. The aim was to reduce the affective filter and promote feedback between pairs. Therefore, the complexity of questions increased, and students were given the necessary time to accomplish the task. The first two classes, it was permitted to discuss in Spanish and report their answers in English, but from the third class onwards, the complete use of English was required for discussion and oral reports.

It is important to mention that the teacher's guidance was present at all times, and it was possible to notice that students felt comfortable by asking the meaning, translation, and pronunciation of unknown words to carry out the tasks in the best possible way. This

provided solid support, helping students feel more confident and minimizing errors during oral practice.

*Fifth item:* “Students perform independent practice to create content that combines subject matter and target language through a group project, a written report, or a presentation”.

Ultimately, the fifth stage was accomplished in 5 of 6 classes observed, in the one missing class the time was not enough due to the complexity of the topic. Nevertheless, it was possible to evidence that students felt truly encouraged to work on the activities presented. As it was a more independent practice, students also started to use technological resources that straighten their abilities to go beyond the content and help provided in the classroom, that was a very positive point, considering that as Zakharevych (2025) states, CLIL helps students to improve cognitive capacities, foster critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to evaluate information. Hence, speaking skills reached their peak in this section since learners had an established time to prepare the activities. Then the teacher decided if they had to present it in a kind of stands around the classroom or in front of the class, what helped them to enhance fluency, tone voice, but most importantly, to overcome the fear of public speaking.

### **Third specific objective**

With regard to the third specific objective, “To explore university professor’s perspective about the implementation of CLIL to foster speaking skill”, two interviews were carried out. The first one was applied to the university professor who has been implementing CLIL methodology in her subject classes in the last two years. It is important to mention that this occurs in a collaboratively way with future English teachers, as a response of an interinstitutional alliance that allows interns cooperate as part of their professional formation. Thus, the second interview was applied to the intern assigned during that period to further enrich perceptions. In this sense, the contributions collected in the interviews are presented in the following lines.

*Question 1: What is your opinion about implementing an innovative methodology like CLIL in higher education?*

The teacher’s opinion was optimistic because she stated that CLIL is a very positive innovation for higher education since it connects language learning with real academic and professional content. In this manner, she believes that students do not only learn English as a subject, but they use it as a tool to communicate ideas from their field. For his part, the intern student considered that it is very important to implement CLIL in higher education because it helps to expand students' learning as they acquire the professional subject and English knowledge at the same time.

*Question 2: What do you consider are the main benefits of applying CLIL in university classrooms?*

In relation to this question, the university professor pointed out that students show better motivation, there is more authentic communication, and a stronger gaining of academic vocabulary related to students' majors. She mentioned that CLIL also improves confidence because students can practice English while they are talking about the content that they already learn in the subject. Equally, the intern affirmed that the main benefit is motivation because students learn vocabulary that they are going to use for real life contexts during their careers.

Question 3: *Why is it important to emphasize improving speaking skill in students' English learning?*

The university professor claimed that speaking is essential because it is the skill that students need the most for real life academic and professional context, for instance, for presentations, meetings, reports, and when they have to work in teams. Echoing this view, the intern asserted that because of the current globalized world, English is the most important language nowadays. People use it for most activities, and it is the language that most companies need. Consequently, managing speaking skills will be helpful to get a job easier. Thus, as Tashmatova (2024) points out, CLIL implementation will contribute to the growth of professional competences that train students for future work opportunities worldwide.

Question 4: *What pedagogical strategies do you use in CLIL classes?*

Concerning this question, the teacher stated that one of her most common strategies she uses is structured speaking tasks with clear support. For example, short-guided discussions, and peer work group presentations related to the course content. Correspondingly, the intern argued that it is important to use collaborative learning because in some situations, probably a student does not know how to use a word that they require to complete an activity, but when they work in pairs or in groups, they are able to support and complement their knowledge. These two answers therefore confirmed what was said by Barboráková (2012) when he stated that teachers are the ones who play the key role in facilitating the learning process by implementing not only individual but also collaborative tasks.

Question 5: *What kind of materials or resources do you use to promote speaking skills in CLIL lessons?*

The professor commented that the materials or resources that she mainly uses to promote speaking skills in CLIL lessons are vocabulary sheets and speaking prompts, but especially a lot of visual material such as photos of nursery activities, tools and species. Moreover, a rubric is used in every work that they perform. She also uses slides with key phrases instead of long text to help students to focus on active listening skills as well. This matches with the intern's answer because he expressed that he uses visual stuff, videos, images, and if it is needed, presentations. At this juncture, it is essential to highlight two key aspects. The first one, as Segoian & Sagoyan (2020) suggest, speaking is a productive skill, so it can be measured, and the university professor tries to do it through the application of rubrics in students' performance. In this way, she can evidence the progress of students regarding speaking improvements along the time. Then, as Alvarado (2020) mentions, it is

essential to use digital tools, especially to work collaboratively because this helps in a significant way to make the speaking progress more meaningful. Hence, these essential aspects are seriously taken into account by the professor and the intern student.

Question 6: *In what ways have you observed improvements in students' oral performance after implementing CLIL?*

In a different vein, respects to this question the professor ensured that students increased “confidence, fluency, and they are beginning to use technical vocabulary because it is not the same to speak in a normal conversation than in a structured activity using technical vocabulary”.

Moreover, students' oral participation is constant, and their responses become more elaborate and voluntary as classes advance. Likewise, speech errors improved significantly as a result of peer and teacher feedback. The most surprising progress was achieved with students who did not want to participate in the beginning of the semester, either because of fear, shyness, or lack of sufficient knowledge in English. However, as they were involved in collaborative activities, their mood changed. Consequently, at the end of the academic period, they were able to speak in English on their own about the practical and theoretical topics learned in the subject, albeit with minor mistakes that can be corrected later, for instance, in a second phase of CLIL implementation. For his part, the intern expressed that according to his experience students just felt more confident when talking. Learners are not only improving how they communicate ideas, but also the way they use the vocabulary learnt. Thus, they start using words that they were not able to use before and how they can apply them in specific contexts of the subject and in general, the major.

Question 7: *In your experience, how have your students reacted to the implementation of CLIL compared to the use of traditional learning methodologies?*

About this regard, the teacher stated that at first, some students felt nervous because speaking English is a great challenge. Nevertheless, as they practiced more, their attitude became more positive too, compared to traditional methods. CLIL feels more useful for them because it is connected to the real field and not only with grammar exercises. The intern for his part, mentioned that “it was very confusing and complicated for students at the beginning, but with time they started to flow better, and it started to become easier for them. At some point, it was just another class”. In alignment of this Mattheoudakis & Alexiou (2017) assert that engagement, confidence, personal organization, and self-worth in students increased.

Question 8: *What recommendation would you give to teachers who are beginning to use CLIL to enhance speaking skills?*

Lastly, the professor confessed that it is a complete challenge for teachers in the beginning, so she recommended starting with small work and being consistent to choose one unit or one topic, design a short speaking task with a strong scaffolding, for instance, vocabulary, sentences, frames, clear examples, so that students can focus on communication, not on perfection. Moreover, teamwork and rehearsal opportunities as possible, and the use of rubrics. In a complementary and very concise way, the intern student emphasized that

working with CLIL methodology is definitely a good experience for teachers and students because of its numerous advantages.

## 6. Discussion

To begin with, the results obtained through the literature review clearly show that CLIL is a positive bifocal methodology to learn and improve English language, especially speaking skill. Its flexibility, adaptability, and the innovative nature of using this methodology, stand out from the outset. As Coyle et al., (2010) state, the goal of CLIL is to integrate subject and language knowledge, but in such a dynamic way that it can become a reliable alternative to stop using traditional teaching and learning methodologies. That is what is needed to transform academic experience, to build a meaningful process, and to ensure effective results to enable students to achieve success. To do so, contextualized activities constitute the core and focal point of CLIL classes that allow students to improve interdisciplinary content and speaking skill pragmatically. The more learners try to talk in activities proposed in every class, the more they can internalize new vocabulary related to their majors while elements of speech are improved. Llinares & Pastrana (2013) substantiate this claim by saying that communicative activities in CLIL classes have a direct impact on the oral gains that students gradually build up.

Then English is not only the aim, but the “medium” to consolidate knowledge in diverse areas at the time that language skills like speaking, are enhanced, saving time and resources, something that can be described as studying in a more intelligent way, instead of in a harder one. As Lee (2024) suggests, it has been proof in much previous research around the world that students’ motivation grows and speaking skills are significantly refined. This is the case of a study carried out by Delliou & Zafiri in Greece, at an Air Force Academy in 2016, where it was presented that students’ motivation was positive, and with time and thanks to contextualized activities, they improved pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy.

Thus, the relationship between theory and real-life application of CLIL methodology is indeed in complete harmony and consistency. CLIL strongly seems to guarantee results in speaking skill improvements expected after its implementation. Given these circumstances, the methodology then is not only an idealization of an approach that contrasts with the traditional ones, but is a reliable alternative to be applied in higher education.

Moreover, the results regarding the application of the observation sheet revealed that students’ speaking skill improvements occur following a structured sequence of stages that must be fulfilled in every single class. Therefore, it is important to stand out that every stage has a functional value and each one shapes how students enhance speaking skill. Starting from the warm-up, it was observed that even the selected type of this activity will determine the activation of students’ attention at the beginning, and that also will ensure spontaneous oral participation from then on. Likewise, on the connected second and three stage, it was demonstrated that if students receive the input in an appropriate manner during the theoretical class time, then they will be able to express and internalize knowledge through the performance of the activities. The most important finding showed that CLIL strategies such as modification of complex questions, and the provision of key words lists truly help to improve speaking skill. This occurs by seeking learners’ genuine verbal participation in

every moment of the class, when asking questions during the topic presentation, and when contextualized activities are set. The fusion of basic and technical vocabulary recently acquired gives students the opportunity to start constructing oral answers.

Regarding the fourth stage, simple but useful activities, such as discussions in pairs promote speaking improvement through the strategic formation of groups that allows learners to receive feedback from a student with a higher level of proficiency.

Furthermore, L1 slight use in first classes can help to scale in complexity of future questions and, therefore, spoken answers. In addition, the comfort shown by students when asking for meaning, translation, and pronunciation of new words to avoid making mistakes, is the proof that students are fully involved in the learning process. That is because they consciously try to assimilate it in a correct way. At this point, it is also vital to note the teacher's role as guide and facilitator is the essential support during every step to clear up any doubts and provide feedback. In alignment with Barboráková (2012), teachers play a key role in facilitating the learning process. In a distinct but related vein, the most noticeable result on fifth stage was that the performance of activities gives students the ideal opportunity to present their final products orally. Their verbal production is manifested entirely either in stands or in front of the class, and students also keep working on their fluency, tone voice, but also in emotional filters when speaking in public. In a complementary way, it is essential to remark that for carrying out this part, students' natural engagement when working collaboratively is helpful in these contextualized activities. According to Štefková & Danihelova (2023), the interaction among students and with the teacher, also shows improvements after CLIL implementation. This coincides with the results obtained by Pistorio in 2010, after conducting a study in Argentine that aimed to demonstrate how CLIL fosters positive cooperative environment. The main findings corroborated that given that students take a more leading role in the development of activities, they feel more inclined to communicate and establish good relationships with their classmates. Undoubtedly, it is also noteworthy one more time that the teacher's guidance is essential even when students work collaboratively, to keep constructing knowledge.

In a consistent manner, the process of carefully following the stages of CLIL methodology not only ensures subject and speaking skill enhancement, but also substantial improvements of soft skills when students work in teams, thereby fostering more robust interpersonal abilities. Accordingly, students acquire subject concepts, English speaking skill, and social aptitude at the same time.

On the other hand, the insights of the university professor and the intern student reveal that indeed, it is challenging for teachers to start implementing CLIL methodology in classrooms. In the same way, learners may feel nervous and confused because they are not accustomed to receiving the target language in that manner, and less to expect to perform activities focused on improving speaking skill. Nevertheless, over time it becomes easier, positive, and more manageable for both teachers and students. Similar results were reported in a study conducted by López-Medina & Casado Casado in 2024, at a university in Spain, where before CLIL implementation students indicated that they felt anxious about the scenario of taking a normal subject in English, they even manifested that speaking skill, in particular, was something that they truly struggled with, especially at time of perform it in public. Notwithstanding, at the end anxiety decreased noticeably and their participation

increased. Surprisingly, the most plausible finding was that the research demonstrated the effectiveness of CLIL methodology in enhancing foreign language learning because students not only improved speaking, but the whole four language skills, as they are interconnected.

Broadly speaking, it is not an easy path to integrate CLIL methodology in classrooms because this requires a strong predisposition of teachers and students. As a matter of fact, emotional factors will be present at every single stage, but it has been verified the simplicity of passing from fear to active participation, from being nervous to gain confidence, and especially, to being able to improve speaking skills in the process.

## CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7. Conclusions

- CLIL is a groundbreaking methodology that plays an exceptional role in supporting English language learning and speaking development in university students. Traditional perspective of learning a foreign language and improving its skills is completely outdated. Given that CLIL is classified as center-learner approach, learners are able to construct and internalize language knowledge in a distinct way than students were commonly accustomed to, giving as result, a structured path that leads to the improvement of speaking skill.
- Furthermore, the study confirms that CLIL methodology creates a more meaningful learning environment in higher education contexts. This is attributed to the strict adherence to the proposed stages that engage students to work on their speaking skills step by step. In addition, the teacher's guidance is a key factor during the explanation of the topic, the performance of activities, and the support that students need to solve doubts. In this way, learners can improve their speaking skills effectively.
- It is denoted that CLIL implementation to foster speaking skill is notably positive because improvements observed in students are satisfactory and they truly progress over time. Besides, learners' confidence increases as they practice, and it is confirmed that students' motivation is the driving force that promotes knowledge construction. Moreover, collaborative work is indeed an excellent strategy to carry out the activities in a guided and independent manner. This was corroborated by the intern student who was an important support in the development of classes.

## **8. Recommendations**

- CLIL methodology promises a variety of advantages that benefit university students since they can learn content subject while reinforcing English language knowledge, especially speaking skills. For this reason, it is suggested to start implementing this innovative methodology in the other majors at ESPOCH and in higher education institutions in general, as it will contribute to the development of more sophisticated professional competencies in students.
- The stages of CLIL lessons must be followed meticulously during the implementation of CLIL methodology to improve skills development sequentially. Flexibility is in fact, a characteristic that permits to adapt the format to current situations, but maintaining close alignment with the established order of steps will ensure an effective learning process. Besides, although the methodology is focused on developing autonomy in students, teachers play a crucial role when helping students to overcome limitations in language when practicing speaking skill.
- It is recommended to apply CLIL methodology to foster language skills, especially speaking, as it is considered favorable and beneficial for learners. In the same way, collaborative work has to continue being implemented as one of the strategies that students take advantage of the most, to increase confidence while practicing with classmates. If it is accomplished, students' advancement will be substantial.

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## ANNEXES

**Objective 2:** To describe, through classroom observation, how CLIL implementation improves speaking skill development among university students.

### Observation sheet



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 CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Indicators/Stages	Yes	No	Observations
The class starts with a warm-up to activate prior knowledge and to present unknown concepts.			
The material presented includes captivating resources that are used to present the new topic.			
The explanation of the class is clear, understandable and structured.			
Guided activities for practicing real-life contexts are used (role-plays, discussions in pairs, and collaborative problem solving).			
Students perform independent practice to create content that combines subject matter and target language through a group project, a written report, or a presentation.			

**Objective 3:** To explore university professor's perspective about the implementation of CLIL to foster speaking skill.

### Questionnaire



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#### Questions:

1. What is your opinion about implementing an innovative methodology like CLIL in higher education?
2. What do you consider are the main benefits of applying CLIL in university classrooms?
3. Why is it important to emphasize improving speaking skill in students' English learning?
4. What pedagogical strategies do you use in CLIL classes?
5. What kind of materials or resources do you use to promote speaking skills in CLIL lessons?
6. In what ways have you observed improvements in students' oral performance after implementing CLIL?
7. In your experience, how have your students reacted to the implementation of CLIL compared to the use of traditional learning methodologies?
8. What recommendation would you give to teachers who are beginning to use CLIL to enhance speaking skills?