



**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO**  
**VICERRECTORADO DE POSGRADO E INVESTIGACIÓN**  
**INSTITUTO DE POSGRADO**

**TRABAJO DE GRADUACIÓN PREVIO A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL GRADO DE**  
**MAGÍSTER EN ENSEÑANZA DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS COMO LENGUA**  
**EXTRANJERA**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH WORK:**

**COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**  
**SPEAKING SKILLS IMPROVEMENT**

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**Modality:**

**Quasi-experimental research**

**PRESENTED AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF**  
**"Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language"**

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Adj.-

- Resultado del análisis de similitud

## **DEDICATION**

With my heart, I dedicate this research to my beloved ones, my family,  
who are my source of inspiration to achieve goals.

With love,  
Gaby

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful with Nacional de Chimborazo university and their kind professors for their support to succeed in this research. I would like to say a special acknowledgement to PhD. Magdalena Ullauri, my tutor, for her kindness and for being my guide in this process.

Best,  
Gabriela.



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## RESUMEN

Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo aplicar estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo para mejorar las habilidades orales en la Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. Esta investigación fue cuantitativa con diseño cuasi-experimental. En este proceso participaron cuarenta y cinco alumnos de noveno grado. Veintitrés de ellos pertenecían al grupo control y veintidós formaron el experimental. Al principio, toda la población realizó una prueba previa. El investigador desarrollo un test para evaluar el speaking según el nivel de los estudiantes. Este examen proporcionó datos confiables para tomar decisiones referentes a sus necesidades. Luego, se creó una guía metodológica sobre estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo para mejorar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes para ser utilizada en la Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. Se aplicó durante un proceso de intervención dentro del contexto del aula con el grupo experimental únicamente. Después de este período, los estudiantes realizaron la prueba posterior. Se compararon datos numéricos entre grupos; en este contexto, los estudiantes del grupo experimental obtuvieron una puntuación más alta que los estudiantes del grupo de control. Así, se concluyó que la aplicación de estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo contribuyó a mejorar las habilidades orales de los educandos; por lo que se recomienda utilizarlos para contribuir con la educación secundaria.

**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje cooperativo, estrategias, enseñanza, lenguaje, habilidades

## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to apply cooperative learning strategies to improve the speaking skills at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. This research was a quantitative with quasi-experimental design research. Forty-five ninth graders participated in this process. Twenty-three of them belonged to the control group and twenty-two formed the experimental one. The researcher developed a Test for Speaking according to the level of the students. This exam provided reliable data to take decisions referring to the students' needs. Then, a methodological guide about cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills to be used in the Unidad Educativa Yaruquies was created. It was applied during an intervention process within the classroom context with the experimental group only. After this period, students took the post-test. Numerical data was compared between groups; in this context, students from the experimental group obtained a higher score than the students from the control group. Hence, it was concluded that the application of cooperative learning strategies contributed to improve the learners' speaking skills; therefore, it is recommended to use them to contribute with secondary education.

**Keywords:** cooperative learning, strategies, teaching, language, skills

## **CHAPTER I**

### **1. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

English is considered as the global language worldwide. It is the means of communication for all people in different human fields such as business, science, education, sports, mass media, among others (Northrup, 2013). Therefore, it is important that students learn it to communicate and interact with people from other cultures. On the other hand, some multiple criteria and interpretations appear in the pedagogical literature about cooperative learning (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018; Ghufron & Ermawati, 2018; and Kagan, 1985). Authors agree that this type of learning favors the active and simultaneous participation of the entire group of students in the tasks since they can compare their results at the end of any activity. Additionally, the tasks are rehearsed in class for later use in real communication outside the classroom.

The current research aims to determine the effectiveness of using cooperative learning strategies to improve the learners' speaking skills. Therefore, it is divided into some chapters as detailed below.

Chapter 1: There is a reference framework where the problem to be investigated is described from a global perspective to the particular one. Afterwards, there is a bibliographic review, the research problem is contextualized and justified, and its objectives are outlined.

Chapter 2: It has a theoretical framework. This chapter provides a brief analysis of the state of the art with which a research base is obtained and the topic is based on several aspects. In the theoretical foundation, the main exponents of active methodology and reading comprehension are reviewed. These key concepts serve as the basis for making the intervention proposal.

Chapter 3: There is the methodological framework. This research proposes a quantitative method with descriptive type and quasi-experimental design.

Chapter 4: there is an analysis and interpretation of results.

Chapter 5: Based on the entire process carried out, conclusions are stated according to the objectives and recommendations for future research.

## 1.2 Problem contextualization

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the communicative competence entails learning to manage the language skills. However, in Ecuadorian real educational settings, speaking has not been enough developed (Council of Europe, 2001).

A significant number of pupils undergoing English language instruction encounter challenges within the classroom setting. They demonstrate a limited skill in their speaking abilities, as they exhibit hesitancy and anxiety while communicating verbally, resulting in a reluctance to express themselves clearly. Likewise, students employ their native language as a means of conveying messages, hence impeding oral communication and productivity. In contrast, educators employ conventional instructional approaches that fail to foster students' desire, resulting in their reluctance to engage in oral communication due to perceived deficiencies in pronouncing skills (Adem, 2021; Adnan, 2019; Remache, 2018).

At a meso level, English learners are struggling with their speaking skills and show a low level of English performance. Most of the Latin American countries are in the lowest levels of English performance in comparison with European countries. This enterprise asserts that most of the students are not competent at the end of the high school studies (Education First 2022)

English is a language universally used in different countries worldwide, not only as a mother tongue but also as a foreign language. However, in certain countries such as Ecuador, the study of this language only concludes with internationally low standards.

The magnitude of the event or problematic situation was evidenced in the diagnostic test posed at the beginning to the academic period at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. Furthermore, students are afraid of speaking, they are in their zone of comfort when they repeat words; however, they show anxiety when a question is asked. Also the lack of appropriate vocabulary and use of mother tongue are the major causes of speaking difficulties. The research problem is based on a deficient classroom methodology that influences a low level of speaking skills. It has four causes and their effects.

First, students have shown poor pronunciation. Students do not produce utterances correctly; they pronounce words the same way as they write. This is a big problem because

they are not aware about the differences in spelling and pronunciation of words in English. Consequently, they do not understand themselves and others. In this case, the classroom environment has merely a passive teaching-learning process which do not motivate students to improve the target language.

Moreover, there is not an effective oral interaction among students. The English classes are teacher-centered and the students copy and repeat words only. They do not communicate to each other or develop their own ideas. Therefore, there is a high affective filter which stops learning because students do not use the language in a meaningful way.

Another cause for the problem is the ineffective vocabulary and grammar management among students. They do not practice the target language; therefore, their vocabulary is shortened. Likewise, students develop grammar exercises like filling gaps or completing, as a result, they do not use the language in the real life. These facts cause lack of fluency and accuracy among students. In other words, they do not use the language for communication.

In addition, students do not develop a good social interaction. Pair and group work is really difficult to promote in the classroom because students use their mother tongue to communicate. Communication in English is very hard; consequently, there is a deficient cooperative work among students. Group and pair tasks are done by some of the students while the rest of them are doing anything else.

### **1.3. Problem statement**

How do Cooperative learning strategies improve the speaking skills at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies?

### **1.4. Research questions**

1. What are the most common cooperative learning strategies applied to improve students' speaking skills?
2. What are the most appropriate cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills in the Unidad Educativa Yaruquies?



3. It is useful the creation of a methodological guide about cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills in the Unidad Educativa Yaruquies?

### **1.5. Justification**

Being a topic of interest in education, this research is widely justified because of some reasons.

First, nowadays, the English language is considered as the global language. Second, the implementation of Cooperative learning strategies in the teaching-learning process is essential for students to develop social interaction and be ready to face the globalized world (Johnson et al., 1994).

For this reason, this research will be carried out to strengthen the educational practices in the English language field at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies and to contribute to the development of spoken production and interaction. Therefore, this investigation is pertinent because it will clarify the route that teachers must use to support students in their language learning. It will propose a way of solution for students who are struggling in speaking skills. Likewise, this project has the pertinent bibliographic information that will be of great support in its development. The information will be obtained from physical and digital materials such as: books, web pages, scientific articles and master's degree theses that will support the research.

Additionally, this research is transcendent and feasible. The experience of applying Cooperative Learning in a research context has never been carried out at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. Hence, it will be a good opportunity for both teachers and students to develop new ways of working in the teaching and learning processes and strengthen not only speaking skills but other abilities. Moreover, this project is feasible. It has human resources such as the support and permission of authorities. Besides, teachers, parents, and students have shown their commitment to help and participate. Furthermore, there are enough infrastructure and technological devices.

In addition, there are some benefits form this study. It has social and economic relevance because it will be developed in a public school where parents do not have enough

financial incomes to afford private courses for their children. This study will be also socialized among teachers at the place of research and will be spread to other classes. Furthermore, it will have professional relevance due to the researcher will learn and grow in her teaching skills. Moreover, it will have practical implications because Cooperative learning strategies will be applied to solve the students' low level of speaking and will help in their improvement. The theoretical contribution of the project will be the written memory that will be published in the library and digital repository of the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo.

Finally, this study is justified because it responds to the line of research proposed by Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo. It deals with Educational Sciences and professional/non-professional training line of research.

## **1.6. Objectives**

### **1.6.1. General objective**

- To apply cooperative learning strategies to improve the speaking skills at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies.

### **1.6.2 Specific objectives**

- To identify the most common cooperative learning strategies applied to improve students' speaking skills through literature review analysis.
- To select the appropriate cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills in the Unidad Educativa Yaruquies.
- To create a methodological guide about cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills to be used in the Unidad Educativa Yaruquies.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **2. THERORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.2. Cooperative learning**

##### **2.2.1. Constructivism approach**

Constructivism indicates that human beings actively create their knowledge and their experiences determine reality. In education, constructivism focuses on the student's construction of meaning through experience since it is influenced by the interaction between prior knowledge and new events. The central idea of constructivism is that human learning is built; and that students build new knowledge based on their background knowledge. It influences the new knowledge that an individual will make from new learning experiences (Elliot et al., 2000).

The concept that learning must be adapted to the level of the individual for education to be effective is a recurring theme in educational psychology. In the 1960s, Piaget's constructivism laid the foundation of progressive education. According to the principles of constructivism, students should be allowed to explore and discover how the world works for themselves. Therefore, direct instruction could inhibit learning if it interferes with this exploratory process (Piaget, 1972). However, it was also emphasized that these educational experiences would be compelling if they were appropriately adjusted to the students' level of knowledge and understanding. Therefore, teachers must be sensitive to the needs of their students and be prepared to be flexible in how they work.

While the value of individual inquiry and discovery learning should not be denied, teachers must be aware that there will be times when more instruction is required, which leads to other educational processes. However, there are different ways to instruct, some more enlightening for students than others. Contemporary research based on Vygotsky's social constructivist approach provides valuable guidance for effective classroom instruction (Ortiz, 2015).

For example, how teachers guide their students' learning through classroom discussions has been investigated. According to Piaget (1972), the most effective instructional techniques encourage students to contribute what they already know about a

topic, thus developing a body of information based on student-teacher cooperation. Through this co-construction of knowledge, teachers allow students some ownership of learning, even within the confines of an established curriculum. In this scenario, a form of education appears that goes beyond early social-constructivist research, defended by Vygotsky (1978), which focuses on the unidirectional transmission of knowledge from the expert (the teacher) to the novice (the student).

Research from social constructivist perspectives has highlighted the importance of group work for children's learning. Several studies applied a Piagetian philosophy to interactions between peers. According to these authors, by collaborating on a task, partners can facilitate each other's learning in a way that would not be achieved by working alone. However, for peer facilitation to be effective, it is essential that learners work with a peer of different abilities but similar tasks (Johnson et al., 1994).

The above ensures that students initially provide different solutions to problems. Confronting contradictory ideas about a task causes a cognitive imbalance, which can only be resolved by analyzing the problem, assimilating information, and generating a solution. As such, it often happens that the student with the lowest ability is the one who is most aware in terms of cognitive gain of this socio-cognitive conflict (Richards. 2001).

### **2.2.2. Cooperative learning**

Collaborative learning is a social process where the construction of knowledge is generated through joint work and the establishment of common goals. There is reciprocity between a group of individuals who know how to differentiate and contrast their points of view in such a way that they come to forge a process of knowledge construction. Furthermore, it is a process in which each individual learns more than he would learn on his own as a result of the interaction of the team members. In the development of a group, interaction becomes a key element if it is considered that the essential process is to bring together the participants' contributions in the co-creation of knowledge. Guitert and Giménez (2000)

Collaborative learning occurs from intersubjectivity by sharing space and time with others and generating contributed knowledge. This simultaneity is the essence of intersubjectivity. It means that the field of subjectivity of the alter ego is simultaneously

experienced in one's flow of consciousness, and this simultaneous capture of the other and the reciprocal capture of the self-make of joint being in the world possible. Ritzer (2004).

The cooperative learning team is a structure that allows the interaction of its members and is ideal for achieving short-term objectives, the result of the participants' work, each of which leaves new learning. The socio-psychological climate that fosters collaborative learning is established through articulation and the need to explain one's ideas to the group in a concrete and precise way. In this way, students can also listen to various concerns, points of view, and reflections (Araya et al., 2007).

Furthermore, Kagan (1985) states that group work allows students to develop transversal skills necessary for professional development, such as time planning, communication, problem solving and decision making. In addition, they can foster innovative and creative capacity, ultimately promoting greater depth in learning. Likewise, Johnson et al (1994), claim that cooperative learning is a carefully designed system of interactions that organizes and induces reciprocal influence among members of a team. It is developed through a gradual process in which each of the members feel committed to others' learning, which creates a positive interdependence that does not imply competition among them, and is acquired through the use of group work methods. This is characterized by the interaction of its members and the contribution of everyone in the generation of knowledge, where authority is shared and responsibility is accepted, respecting the point of view of the other to together promote new knowledge.

The cooperative learning approach is part of a socio-constructivist epistemology knowledge is defined as a negotiation or joint construction of meanings, and it is applied to the entire teaching-learning process. Although the weight of the concept is placed on the recognition of the value of cognitive interaction among peers, collaborative learning also involves the teacher, the entire teaching context, and the learning community (Bruffee, 1993).

The main objective of cooperative learning is to provide students with deep learning, thanks to each member's contributions and differences that make up the small group. Thus, through cooperative learning the aim is for students to be able to solve the tasks proposed to them as a group and to be able to deepen their learning. On the other hand, in cooperative learning there are a series of learning situations where the objectives of the group members

are related; that is, individual objectives end up being group objectives (Dillenbourg et al., 1996).

### **2.2.3. Advantages and disadvantages of Cooperative learning**

According to Ghufron and Ermawati (2018), Cooperative learning has greatly contributed in the language education; however, there are some weaknesses as well.

Some advantages lie on motivation and interactions increase. Students collaborate and learn from each other, balancing the pace of work in a general environment of self-improvement. They are also motivated to give their best to contribute to the successes of others or, where appropriate, the team. Furthermore, it promotes self-learning since students select the information and create content. Moreover, it helps improve attention, empathy, and assertiveness when the teacher carries out adequate monitoring. In addition, it produces educational environments that promote interest and involvement.

Among the ones cited above, cooperative learning provides other advantages. Oxford (1990) considers the following to be most relevant due to their importance:

**Reduces anxiety:** For Rebecca Oxford (1990) language anxiety is among the main factors that impact learning, whether in an informal or academic environment. Furthermore, students have time to think with opportunities to rehearse and receive feedback, and the greater probability of success reduce anxiety and produce an increase in participation and language learning. Additionally, cooperative learning is one of the few existing methods that reduce anxiety in the language classroom since it allows students to relax and work in a calm and non-threatening environment that favors the use of the language.

**Encourages interaction:** It is one of the most significant advantages of cooperative learning. It helps the shyest students to be more confident in their oral interventions, as they receive constant support from their teammates. Araya et al., (2007) points out that in cooperative classrooms, students learn to count on others and also have the security of knowing that they will have several opportunities to rehearse their contributions before they are asked to share them with the entire class. Bayraktar (2021) suggests that the teacher must create a safe and relaxed physical environment in which students can speak comfortably. It is also assured that the placement of classroom furniture in rows of immovable desks can cause disturbing

situations in some students because they immediately associate it with oral presentations in front of everyone, making them uncomfortable and, therefore, harming the learning process.

**Increases self-confidence and self-esteem:** Ghufron and Ermawati (2018) discovered that if they worked on cooperative activities integrating different skills such as oral language, reading, and writing, students developed greater self-confidence to speak in public and participate in classroom discussions. Guitert and Giménez (2000) point out that increasing self-esteem favors language learning: An increase in self-confidence and self-esteem produces an increase in the student's efforts in language learning and a greater willingness to take risks or continue trying to understand their opinions.

On the other hand, Cooperative learning has some disadvantages such as:

1. It has a significant disadvantage compared to other systems encouraging group work. For example, students must come with the content visualized and prepared in the Flipped Classroom, which promotes greater involvement and concentration. What happens in cooperative work (and even more so in collaborative work) is that the stages prior to setting objectives and developing a clear work scheme can be prolonged with discussions, disagreements, etc.
2. Contrary to what is usually stated, practice shows that a single teacher cannot attend to the different groups quickly. This means that a good part of the work is done in the absence of a teacher or facilitator: the children feel lost, doubts take time to be resolved, the class environment worsens, etc. For that reason, classroom management is crucial.
3. The groups present internal imbalances that are difficult to compensate. Subgroups and "leader effect" occur.
4. It is easy for the feeling of "waste of time" to occur, which is very demotivating.
5. Groups are pigeonholed into roles and work systems, even when they are inefficient.

In conclusion, cooperative learning works well when the environment is properly prepared. It is highly recommended that there are large spaces, that students can move away and get closer as they prefer, and that two or, better yet, three teachers be involved to attend to and guide the groups.

Some other benefits of cooperative learning, compared to other types of learning, are as follows. On the one hand, students may be more motivated to solve tasks, since they have the support of others and work in groups. Furthermore, cooperative learning fosters attitudes of showing initiative and involvement. The quality of the work or tasks can increase compared to if they worked individually, and the degree of mastery of the concepts and knowledge acquired can also increase. Least but not last, socialization can also be beneficial to student learning, not only academically, but also personally and emotionally (Johnson et al., 1994).

#### **2.2.4. Principles of Cooperative learning**

Cooperative learning is a teaching method that involves forming small, heterogeneous groups of learners to work together to achieve a common goal (Kagan, 1985). Learners encourage each other, support each other, work together to learn, are responsible for their successes and failures, acquire communication skills, and use them to make teams work better. These strategies form an essential component of what has been called positive interdependence. Furthermore, all activities have to be carried out in class in teams of few students because it is based on who do not know how to work as a team and, therefore, must be trained. Therefore, the teacher must teach social skills so that students can work in teams. These skills include dialogue, listening to others, reading, and negotiating agreements.

Developing these social skills within the cooperative group helps to facilitate teamwork, create trust, improve communication, solve problems, and make decisions in group interaction.

In addition to developing social skills, other principles must be considered when creating cooperative teams. Among the most significant are:

- **Heterogeneity:** Not only in terms of academic level but also in terms of interests, family and professional situation, mother tongue, age, etc. The idea is to form support groups where the "best" help the "weak" so that the groups progress as a team (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018).
- **Positive interdependence:** Teams learn that their successes are based on the team's success. They all share the same goal, and each member plays an essential role that leads them to achieve that goal; therefore, everyone is motivated to help each other. For example, the willingness to help is a clear example of a collaborative strategy (Kagan, 1985).
- **Individual and group responsibility:** According to Robert Slavin (1995), this method insists on personal responsibility. That is, a group member cannot be successful based on the



success of the others; instead, all the components have to participate, and each one demonstrates what one has learned. Therefore, each member is assigned one or more specific tasks and is held responsible for the success of each of the other group members.

- **Equal participation:** This is achieved by using speaking turns, assigning different roles, such as secretary, spokesperson, moderator, and task observer, and dividing the work so that each student is responsible for part of the task.

- **Group interaction:** It is the key characteristic distinguishing cooperative situations from others. In addition, social interaction is the origin and driving force of learning and intellectual development, thanks to the internalization process that makes it possible. Therefore, this is the most significant characteristic of cooperative learning since it emphasizes small-group interaction (Dillenbourg et al., 1996).

- **Reflections on group processes:** The teacher must convince his students to reflect on their experiences within the group, how they interacted when carrying out the task, and the type and number of contributions they made, and the difficulties they had when contrary positions occurred. Bayraktar (2021) assures that through this process, students acquire meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies, learn from others, and share ideas and turns. Furthermore, in this reflection they use language that is not generally encouraged in traditional language activities.

### **2.2.5. Cooperative learning strategies**

Cooperative learning is based on a series of aspects. Some of the most important are:

#### **1. Increased academic performance**

One of the objectives of this type of learning is to increase the student's academic performance. This is achieved through the help of the different members of the group. Each person contributes what they know, want, or can, which is what cooperative learning, cooperation, and mutual help are based on (Kagan, 1985).

#### **2. Group work**

Group work involves increasing the student's academic performance and obtaining deep learning. It is achieved thanks to group support and cooperative work. That is why socialization and interpersonal relationships enrich this type of learning. Thus, depending on

what topics or aspects must be taught, more will be learned working in a group than individually (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018).

### 3. Value of interpersonal relationships

Social or interpersonal relationships are important to enhance student learning. That is to say, these constitute important educational potentials, and are achieved through the constitution of groups (Kadri et al., 2016).

### 4. Socialization and integration

Cooperative learning considers socialization and integration processes as key tools in the educational process of children and adolescents. These processes provide very relevant values for students, such as the importance of cooperation and teamwork (Kerlinger, 1990).

In this context, there are some cooperative learning strategies.

When talking about cooperative learning strategies, **pair and group work** are included. It is where students cooperate and work together to achieve common or shared goals. All members benefit when the goal is achieved. Team members have support, encouragement, and help along the way. Cooperation constitutes the basis of practical communication construction. Cooperative learning uses small groups of students which are formed by three (the best) or four students maximum. Moreover, learners should choose their own groups; however, the teacher can also make groups at random and change members often enough to avoid problems among difficult students. Consequently, students work together to help each other and maximize their own and others' knowledge, optimally using their critical thinking (Bloom, 1986).



Source: Kagan (1985)

With group work, lessons are structured so students need each other to complete assigned tasks. A culture/spirit of cooperation is established in the classroom, and a wide

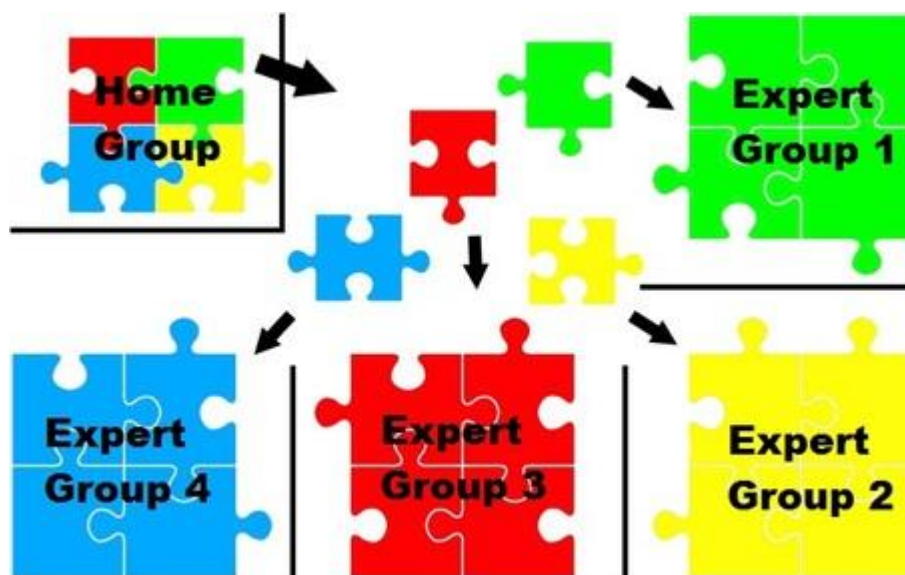
range of techniques and activities are developed to develop it leading to significant improvements in achievement, behavior, self-esteem, and attendance (Kagan, 1985).

Cooperative learning is student-centered and includes achieving educational goals beyond the transfer of information, such as developing critical thinking, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. The teacher must plan the grouping of students based on the scheduled school activities. Several ways of executing group work as cooperative learning strategies can be mentioned, for example, Jigsaw (Kadry & Safieddine, 2016).

**Jigsaw** was developed by Elliot Aronson and his colleagues in 1978. It emphasizes building a classroom as a community of learners where everyone is valued. Students work together in small groups where they must depend on each other. Each group member specializes in an assigned topic and has critical information to contribute and socialize with classmates. Cooperation and mutual trust are valuable and necessary for academic achievement. Its primary purpose is for each team member to become responsible for specific learning and then share it with their partners.

**Figure 1**

*Jigsaw in the classroom practice*



Source: Bayraktar (2021)

Jigsaw, in the classroom practice, presents five steps. First, each student is assigned a partner with a similar topic from another team. Then, the fellow “partners” get together to master the material. Third, the pair of partners become groups of “experts” to discuss the

material, checking for completeness and agreement. Later, the partners meet again to prepare and practice the presentation they will make to their teams. Fifth, the groups meet, and the members make their presentations (Yuhananik, 2018).

### **Role playing**

Role-playing is a cooperative strategy that allows students to explore realistic situations by interacting with others in a controlled way to develop experience and try different designs in a supported environment. Depending on the role students play, role-playing provides the possibility of meaningful learning; since it allows learners to gain experience and encourages them to develop understanding of any situation from a dynamic and enriching point of view (Carrillo et al., 2018).



Source: Bownel & Eison (1991)

There are several role-playing activities (Melgarejo, 2018) such as:

**Interview:** Students develop the roles of the interviewer and interviewee.

**Debate:** Teachers have students briefly prepare arguments for and against positions based on a controversial issue.

**Marketing:** Students play the role of a salesman and sell a product to clients.

**Professions:** Students represent all types of professions. For instance, students can represent the teacher and the student, the administrator and the student, or the teacher and a parent role.

**Projects:** Teaching project delivery is a cooperative strategy where students learn by actively participating in real-world, personally meaningful projects. Teachers, for their part, make learning come alive for students, who work on a project for a period, in which they actively participate in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question through pair and group work. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience (Fernandes et al., 2014).

As a result, learners develop deep knowledge of the content, as well as critical thinking, cooperation, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills (Bloom, 1986). Educational activities focused on project execution unleash creative and contagious energy among students.

### **Think-pair-share**

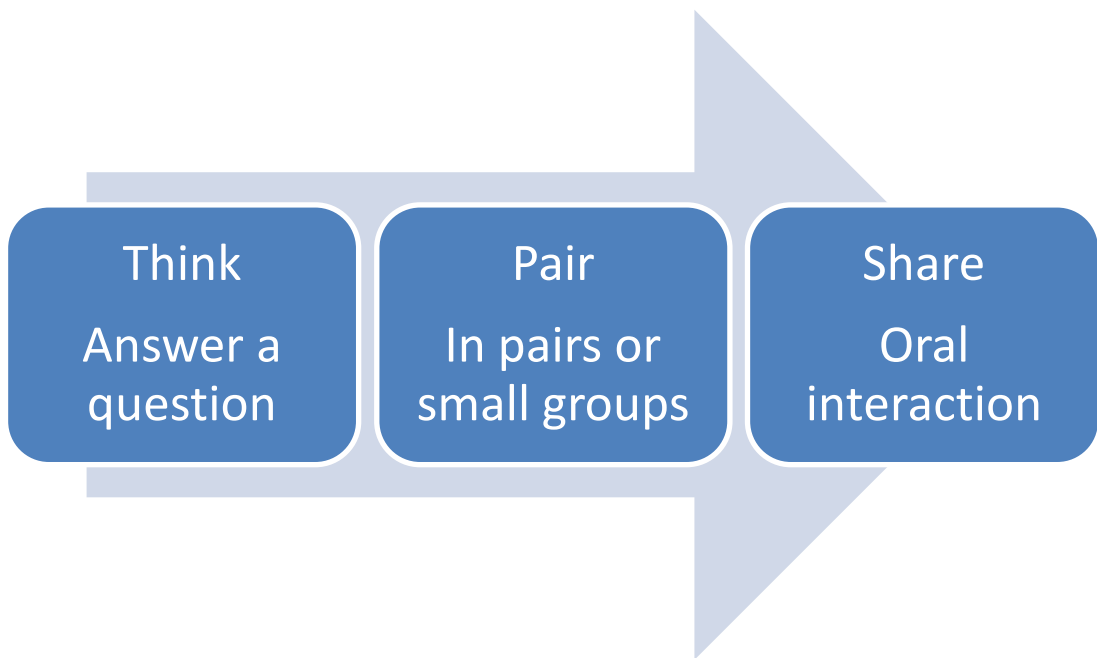
It is a cooperative learning activity that promotes the participation of all group members to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned task (Supraba, 2018). Students are required to think individually about a topic or respond to a question. From this, they must share ideas with classmates. Then, they discuss with a partner to maximize participation. In this way, they become involved in understanding the written or aural material of the assigned task. Among many other advantages that this cooperative learning technique offers are that it helps to think individually about a topic or answer a question. It teaches to share ideas with classmates, develops oral communication skills, and helps to focus attention on understanding and processing information Lascano (2021)

To develop Think-pair-share strategy, the teacher must follow two steps. First, once the written or aural text is defined, the teacher must present a generating question or set of questions focusing on key content concepts. Then, he or she describes the purpose of the strategy and provide instructions for the development of activities according to the procedure (Aeni, 2020). Think-pair-share is developed according to the next diagram:

**Figure 2**

*Think-pair-share diagram*





Source: Aeni (2020)

### **Write-pair-switch**

This cooperative learning technique is used to promote communication and group work. In this case, each learner writes a response to the proposed question. Then, they pair and talk about responses. Afterwards, students switch their partners and make a new pair. The new pair discuss about the previous partner's response (Jacorbs et al., 2002).



Source: Jacobs et al (2020)

### **2.2.6 Teacher's role**

In the classroom, the teacher always seeks coherence between what he or she plans and what he or she does. Applying cooperative activities is a challenging task, it requires the teacher to condition a practical structure that ensures quality and success for each student. The teacher must think about how to teach because involving students in cooperative activities requires careful planning. During the performance of cooperative tasks in class, the teacher is the fundamental instrument to facilitate the students' interactive process. He or she allows them to give and reinforce their confidence in solving their learning problems (Harmer, 2007).

Furthermore, the teacher fosters an appropriate environment to facilitate cooperation between group members. It is also known that the surrounding setting in a class's development dramatically impacts learning. The teacher plays a vital role since he or she is considered another partner who actively acts throughout the process. The teacher is the one who pays attention to all details and points out the precise goals, intellectual challenge, independence, control, and participation for the student's learning with their respective feedback to serve as support so that academic results are achieved as expected (Johnson et al., 1999).

### **2.2.7 Students' role**

The Cooperative learning brings a conception of pedagogical renewal that also proposes a predominant role for the student. This methodology is student-centered because learner must develop active participation to exchange knowledge and ideas within a group or pair of partners. Furthermore, the students are cooperative and collaborative entities in constructing knowledge which is reflected in efficient teamwork. Students are involved in a cognitive process based on permanent communication with the teacher and other classmates; in this way, the desired autonomy is developed to efficiently face problems. Crisol (2017).

Moreover, students work cooperatively and autonomously to achieve objectives and answer questions proposed by the teacher as active entities in developing skills and competencies through meaningful learning. They build their creativity and reflection to analyze, interact, and respond questions to achieve a group goal (Alvarez, 2000). Students will always be willing to improve their communication skills and attitudes since they are active participants in the process.

### **2.2.8. Assessment**

When talking about evaluation methods in cooperative learning, there are three which are: peer assessment, self-assessment, and the teacher's observation (Keeler & Anson, 1995).

#### Peer assessment

It allows the student who evaluates to reflect on the indicators or rubrics necessary in a cooperative evaluation. These rubrics contain criteria required according the task to be developed. Furthermore, the student who evaluates another, unconsciously, also evaluates himself and this allows him to be more aware of his own contribution in group work (Azarnoosh, 2013).

#### Self-assessment

It allows the student to be aware of their own strengths and worth, and to do so without becoming excessive self-confidence and superiority over the rest of classmates. It is necessary to be able to help and lead teams while being aware of the work to be done and the role and action that each one does. In fact, that is the main advantage of this learning method, ensuring that no student feels inferior to others or has difficulty expressing their doubts or concerns about any topic. In addition, self-assessment helps students to be aware of their skills and the skills of others. Therefore, it can serve as feedback among group members and an essential development of individual responsibility. It is also helpful to overcome obstacles when achieving objectives and advancing on the learning path (Cuesta et al., 2021).

#### Teacher's observation

The eye of the teacher or teacher's observation is always vital since it guides the students' behavior who seek to work under the modality of cooperative learning. The teacher must know which dynamics work better than others to control and manage their groups constantly (Cuesta et al., 2021).

### **2.3. Speaking skills**

Speaking constitutes one of the language skills which deals with oral interaction and oral production. Speaking is an exchange in which at least two individuals alternately participate in an activity of both verbal expression and comprehension. The interlocutors are



forced to speak, understand, respect speaking turns, analyze the speaker's message, and think about their response simultaneously; it is assumed that interacting orally goes beyond comprehension and expression. (Council of Europe, 2001)

Speaking skills require; therefore, agility, speed, spontaneity, and direct presentation. The student can prepare his or her speech in advance (oral presentation, conference, etc.), or can develop oral comprehension, in which the message can be heard and the language production is relatively spontaneous activity in which the speaker does not have much time to think and prepare his response. In an authentic communicative situation, the context is unpredictable. After listening, the language learner must organize the response, that is, know when and how to speak and make the communication fluid. The language learner must also manage with conversation, when and how to end it. Additionally, negotiation of meaning is also important to avoid misunderstandings on both sides. (Harmer, 2007).

In addition, speaking skills involve the collaboration of the interlocutors and respect for a series of linguistic and social norms. They go beyond a mere transmission and reception of information and requires a high level of mastery of the sociocultural dimension (Duranti, 1997). Indeed, speaking skills are governed by linguistic knowledge (form, rule, structure, etc.) and sociolinguistic knowledge (treatment, word turns, registers, etc.) (Council of Europe, 2001).

### **2.3.1. Speaking subskills**

To carry out oral production and interaction, the student needs various extralinguistic knowledge. Aleksandrak (2011) states that, among the predominant difficulties of speaking skills, the most common is finding or remembering vocabulary, fluency, reacting and responding quickly, the speed of speech of native interlocutors, and the fear of making mistakes. Therefore, these subskills are needed to be strengthened in the speaking class.

#### **Phonological awareness**

Phonemic awareness is the ability to detect individual speech sounds within words. It is required to develop accurate decoding skills (Pisanie, 2020).

#### **Pronunciation**

Pronunciation is the support for the transmission of oral information and, therefore, the element that conditions the intelligibility of the message. Pronunciation conveys the

verbal message in a way that can make it easier or more difficult for the listener to recognize the words (Remache, 2018).

### **Fluency**

Fluency is vital for understanding. A fluent speaker identifies words quickly and accurately with little effort and can therefore focus on meaning. The language user also has the ability to interpret while listening to respond with appropriate phrasing and expressions (Ho Pham, 2021).

### **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is important for speaking skills. Knowledge of vocabulary becomes essential to understand increasingly difficult materials and situations. Students not only need to learn new words but also deepen their knowledge of those they already know. Vocabulary instruction should include direct instruction and context-based approaches (Council of Europe, 2001).

### **2.3.2. The importance of learning English**

English is the universal language (Crystal, 2003). It is the language of international communication, commerce and finance. English is a *lingua franca* in many corners of the planet and the official language of many International Organizations such as the European Union, United Nations or UNESCO (Northrup, 2013).

Learning English is crucial for many reasons such as for work, for education purposes, for leisure activities, to interact with other cultures, to travel, for personal growth, and to learn about literature.

Perhaps the fundamental reason why studying English is so important is because English is essential when finding a job. English gives access to a better education and therefore the possibility of a better job. Indeed, job opportunities will increase as soon as the language learners master the language. Both in government areas and in multinational companies, regardless of fields of work, English will always give advantages when it comes to promotion or access to another job, helping language users improve their current work situation (Council of Europe, 2001).

Another important reason to learn English is that language users will be able to access a better education, without limiting themselves to universities or training centers in their own country. It will also give access to more current and complete information. Students will

learn about the latest advances and they will be able to access the majority of scientific, academic and technological texts, written in English (Northrup, 2013).

On the other hand, studying English is the best excuse to spend a great vacation. A language trip abroad is the best way to learn English, get to know a new culture and interesting people, visit incredible places and generally enjoy an unforgettable vacation.

Furthermore, studying English is important because it will show the language learner other cultures, lifestyles, and different ways of thinking. They will be able to meet new and interesting people and understand their customs. In addition, this will give the opportunity to see the world through different eyes, and perhaps the language user will discover aspects of themselves or their culture that they had not thought about before.

Likewise, speaking English will allow the learners to travel around the world and make themselves understood. In this context, they will be able to fully enjoy trips since English is spoken on all five continents, and it will avoid stressful situations caused by the language barrier. In addition to being the lingua franca in almost the entire planet, English is the official language of numerous countries such as England, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Malta, Australia, New Zealand, as well as some countries in the Caribbean, Asia and Africa (Crystal, 2003).

In addition, learning English will allow enjoying humor, Anglo-Saxon literature, cinema and theatre, and culture in English in general. With English, the language user will be able to better appreciate word games, jokes, metaphors and all the nuances that are lost in translations. People will be able to watch movies in their original version, understand the lyrics of English-speaking songs or appreciate the stories and entanglements of favorite video games. When the language level of proficiency is higher, people can even try Shakespeare's work.

Moreover, learning English means being able to express oneself fluently and smoothly, exposing ideas with order and clarity to a native audience. In this context, it also means understanding and assimilating the ideas and answers that other people, radio, television, as well as the texts provide. According to scientific research, studying English or

learning a language in general produces certain stimuli in the brain that help us improve skills in other areas such as creativity, problem solving, reasoning or mental ability.

### **2.3.2 Communicative foreign language teaching**

Language is the vehicle used to communicate. For this reason, English teaching could not use the same method as other subject matters. The key is to use a functional and non-formal model, that is, a usage-based model. The meaning becomes the final cause of the form, and not the other way around, as happened in the generativist and in classical cognitivism since Noam Chomsky, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky (Nunan, 1991). They speak about the need to distinguish between *learning* and *knowing*, that is, being aware of the existing difference between knowing various grammar rules and being able to use them effectively and appropriately when they communicate (Harmer, 2007).

Therefore, the communicative approach, as Nunan (1991) states, involves the learners in comprehension, manipulation, production or interaction in the L2 while their attention is concentrated primarily in the meaning rather than in the form. To achieve this goal, Harmer (2007) points out the need of teaching an L2 through communicative tasks that promote a real communication situation, providing the communicative approach with a plausible way to achieve the students' communicative competence. The tasks provoke in the student a need to communicate and create meanings, an essential condition that allows them, through an internal process, acquire the language.

In this way, the student focuses on solving the task and forgets that he or she is in the foreign language class. Therefore, he or she learns by playing, thinking and/or creating (Bownel & Eison, 1991). With the communicative approach, the figure of the passive student whose role was limited to receive all the information and knowledge from the teacher disappears. On the contrary, the student is the center of the class and the teacher has a role of facilitator-stimulator of experiences.

In this context, the characteristics of communicative approach are:

1. The topics and subjects are integrated into a global approach.
2. The learner actively learns from group work, projects, etc.
3. The learner discovers, deduces, analyzes, synthesizes, etc.

4. The teacher guides and facilitates the learner's work.
5. Emphasis on intrinsic motivation (understanding, curiosity, exploration, without motivational sanctions).
6. Emphasis on collaboration between colleagues in teamwork.
7. Emphasis on the individual's development.
9. Emphasis on skills development.
10. Facilitates interaction between learners (groups work).

### **2.3.3. Communicative competence and speaking skills: comprehension, expression, and interaction.**

To understand the importance of speaking skills when learning English, especially in the first phases, teachers must start from the distinction that Fitri (2020) makes about the development of conversational and academic skills. The terms BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) aim to clarify the temporal distance between developing interpersonal and academic language in students. She states that BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes.

However, for learners to develop academic language in the first stage of primary education, they must acquire the conversational or interpersonal language on which the academic language will be based; the complexity of both languages will always be by their level. Therefore, English teachers must work in coordination with teachers of non-linguistic disciplines, for students to face tasks that pose a considerable cognitive challenge using an acceptable level of language. To do this, the use of language in the classroom should go beyond the regulatory function, that is, understanding the teacher's orders and guidelines (Fitri, 2020).

Moreover, teachers must also develop strategies to relate these structures to their communicative functions in situations and real-time (Harmer, 2007). In these real situations, and following the circular model, to carry out communication, it is not enough for the sender to express his intention in a message that produces an effect on the receiver. This must also

be an active part of a conscious process of interpretation, that is, it must be involved in this entire process so that the message reaches its conclusion.

The Common Framework of Reference for Languages, in this sense, establishes that in interaction, at least two individuals participate in an oral or written exchange in which expression and comprehension alternate and may, in fact, overlap in oral communication (Council of Europe, 2001). Not only can two interlocutors speak and listen to each other simultaneously, but even when turn-taking is strictly adhered to, the listener is usually already predicting the rest of the speaker's message and preparing a response. Learning to interact, therefore, involves more than learning to understand and produce spoken expressions.

Hence, receptive and productive skills are important in the oral field, and strategic competence is needed. The latter should not be seen simply from a perspective of incapacity as a way to compensate for poor communication. Communication strategies can be used as the application of metacognitive principles: planning, execution, control, and repair of the different types of communicative activities such as comprehension, expression, interaction, and mediation (Council of Europe, 2001).

In addition, interaction plays a vital role in teaching a second or foreign language, not only the input that the learner receives is important, but also the significant output that learners produce. Interaction hypothesis proposes that a person learns a second language by using it in interactions (Araya et al, 2007). In this sense, language is not internalized through generalizations about its structure. Still, rather it is internalized unconsciously due to an internal process, triggered by wanting to resolve a communication need (Harmer, 2007).

#### **2.3.4. Cooperative learning in the English language classroom**

Cooperative learning opposes the idea that “strong” and “weak” students should be trained separately. In a cooperative work group, students tend to help each other rather than compete. In the English classroom, cooperative learning promotes pair and group work interaction, facilitating language learning. Cooperation also encourages a flexible learning atmosphere, which is positive for language learning because it reduces anxiety. One possible problem with teamwork in English class is that students tend to use their native language when the teacher is not around to hear them. They may also pay less attention to language

structures when trying to complete an activity. However, English teachers can counteract these situations, for example, with monitoring strategies (Kagan, 1985).

At the same time, there are some forms of cooperative learning in the foreign language classroom such as:

*Informal groups:* They are temporary and formed at that moment. This generally works during a class period. It pursues the objective that the student learns and understands the material that will be taught in the class so that, in the end, the student concludes it (Aleksandrak, 2011).

*Formal groups:* are more durable than informal ones. Each member pursues two objectives: to improve their own learning and that of their group mates (Oxford, 1990).

*Base cooperative groups:* Heterogeneous groups that work together for a long period of time, such as the entire school year. Each member does their part to help the others in order to obtain a good final result (Kagan, 1985).

### **2.3.5. Classroom activities to improve the speaking skills**

To better develop speaking skills, it is proposed to use class activities that provoke interaction between students and, at the same time, develop communicative habits necessary to communicate effectively and coherently (Harmer, 2007). These types of activities generally include communication tasks; for example: roleplays, dramatizations, questions and answers, transpositions, descriptions of pictures, objects, etc., work with cards, games, oral report, among others.

It is worth mentioning that these types of activities also favor the relationship between the teacher and the students, and this is because both of them are active participants of the English language teaching-learning process.

In order to meet the communicative objective of teaching the English language, several tasks help gradually develop speaking skills. Some of them are specifically applied to low-performing students. Therefore, the teacher must evaluate the characteristics of each group and depending on that, apply the different types of activities to develop speaking skills and then measure the progress and advancement of the same in the students.

According to Aeni (2020), some of these activities include:

- Creating sentences with previously given communicative expressions.
- Answering questions from classmates based on experiences acquired in the classroom and outside of it.
- Asking questions to other students, based on a predetermined text or common experiences.
- Discussing about a story that all students know or a personal experience in their own words.
- Talking about a previously prepared summary of a topic and be prepared to answer questions about it.
- Making simulations.
- Taking part in games that have a communicative focus.
- Debating, discussing, as long as students are based on cultural, professional or topics of interest to students so that they have the opportunity to give their opinions and debate.
- Participating in telephone conversations where students can look at and listen to each other.
- Role-playing exercise using given situations.

Moreover, teachers must not forget that it is important to apply communicative activities to develop and improve the students' speaking skills and here a variety of them is proposed that not only favors the improvement of oral expression but also benefits the ties of personal relationships between teachers and students.



## CHAPTER III

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the research methodology applied to the current study. Firstly, it applied the quantitative method because numerical data were gathered. In this context, this research applied the scientific method because a series of logical and experimental procedures that allowed a hypothesis to be tested through controlled, replicable and precise experiences were carried out (Hernandez et al., 2014). The last method was Deductive hypothetical method. It was applied because the study started from an initial hypothesis to obtain conclusions from it, which were verified experimentally (Creswell, 2015).

Responding to the purpose of this research: to determine the effectiveness of using cooperative learning strategies for speaking skills improvement, research methodology involves aspects to achieve the main goal at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies with students from Ninth year of basic education. Therefore, it developed quantitative research with quasi-experimental design.

#### 3.1. Research design

The current research had quasi-experimental design. A quasi-experimental design is, by definition, devoid of random distribution. Quasi-experimental designs identify a comparison group as close as possible to the treatment group in terms of baseline (pre-intervention) characteristics (Cohen et al., 2007).

To achieve the main purpose of the current research, since it is to determine the effectiveness of the application of cooperative learning strategies to improve the speaking skill at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies; there was a route to do it. First, a theoretical review has been done to look for the most common cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills in the context of the Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. After that, a proposal focused on the application of cooperative learning strategies has been designed and implemented with the aim of improving students' speaking skills. Afterwards, assessment has been done to compare results before and after the classroom treatment. Finally, with gathered data, a statistical analysis has been done to obtain conclusions.

### 3.2. Population and sample

Because it is a relatively small population, the entire population participated, which is 45 ninth graders from Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. It corresponds to the accidental or for convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling refers to grab, incidental, or opportunity sampling; it is a non-probability sampling technique in which the sample is taken from the closest-located segment of the population. In other words, it consists of taking a sample from the population that is available and within reach, instead of determining and obtaining it through a more careful calculation (Cohen et al., 2007).

They have been divided into two groups of study. First, the control group with 23 learners and the experimental group with 22. The following table illustrates this fact better. The students are between 13 and 14 years old because they attend to ninth grade of basic education. In addition, before starting this research, a low level of English has been noticed in the target population.

**Table 1.**

*Population*

Population						
CLASS	GROUP OF STUDY	MALE		FEMALE		T
		fr	%	fr	%	
<b>Ninth A</b>	Control group	13	29%	10	22%	23
<b>Ninth B</b>	Experimental group	11	24%	11	24%	22
	TOTAL	24	53%	21	47%	45

**Note: Data come from Unidad Educativa Yaruquies secretariat's office.**

Table 1 shows the distribution of students per group. It is also visible that the population is mostly formed by male students.

### 3.3. Data collection techniques and instruments

Data collection included an English test with a questionnaire.

**Technique: Pre and post-test:** To achieve goals, students took two exams. First, the pre-test at the beginning of the process. Then the post-test at the end of the classroom intervention. Moreover, the researcher directed observed the research object. Observation let know reality through the perception. Scientific observation as a method consists of the direct perception of the object of research. Investigative observation is the universal

instrument of the scientist. Observation lets us know reality through the direct perception of objects and phenomena.

**The instrument:** The questionnaire has been elaborated by the researcher for the students to evaluate their speaking skills (See Annex 1). This instrument was also suitable for the level of English performance that students who form the target population must have according to the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2016), level A1.2. It contained five questions that students orally answered. It lasted for about five minutes.

### **3.4. Procedure techniques for analysis**

The procedure technique for data analysis is coherent between the theme and the objectives.

The technique has been the pre-test and post-test to determine the Cooperative learning strategies' effectiveness in improving speaking skills. A speaking test elaborated by the researcher was used.

First, students took the pre-test. Both groups took this pre-test: the control and experimental groups.

Then, the researcher designed a proposal focused on applying Cooperative learning strategies for improving English language speaking. This proposal consisted of class plans to be applied to the experimental group.

Afterward, the classroom intervention has been carried out. It consisted of 10 weeks in which 22 students from the experimental group have been taught under the cooperative learning approach combined with the material provided by the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, 23 students from the control group continued with their regular classes based on textbooks.

After the intervention, both groups took the post-test to compare the means from the control and the experimental groups.

After applying the same instrument, results were compared to measure the level of speaking performance between the group who participated in the treatment (Experimental group) and the one who has not received it (control group).

To obtain numerical data, a rubric has been used. It contained some criteria such as grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication. This rubric had five bands which made a desired score of 15.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics has been done through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to compare means before and after the classroom intervention. Finally, some ethical considerations are placed. According to Hernandez et al. (2014), ethics in research requires that the practice of science be carried out in accordance with ethical principles that ensure the advancement of knowledge, the understanding and improvement of the human condition and the progress of society. Therefore, this research had: value, it means that research seeks to improve English language knowledge; and, scientific validity because it is methodologically coherent, so that the research participants do not waste their time on the contrary there was a contribution for them.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

After obtaining pre-test and post-test results, those data were consensed and analyze; therefore, this section presents them according to when they were obtained.

#### 4.1. Pre-test results

Pre-test results were obtained at the beginning of the study. Students answered the teacher's questions taking turns in pairs. Additionally, the teacher used a rubric to obtain numerical data; therefore, the results are presented according to its criteria.

**Table 2**

*Pre-test*

<b>PRE-TEST</b>			
CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	
Grammar and vocabulary	1.22	Grammar and vocabulary	1.23
Pronunciation	1.17	Pronunciation	1.14
Interactive communication	1.3	Interactive communication	1.05
Total	3.7	Total	3.41
Desired average	15		

As it is stated in Table two, the control group obtained 3.7 as their average while the experimental group obtained 3.41. In addition, it can be observed that the students did not achieve the desired score. The results were located in the second band of the rubric. It meant that they showed limited control of vocabulary and grammar. There were no complete sentences and they produced only a few words. Regarding pronunciation, students did not pronounce in a clear way, therefore, their uttering was unintelligible. Furthermore, students did not manage a simple conversation. They needed a lot of support.

**Table 3**

*Group statistics*

<b>Group Statistics</b>					
<b>Group</b>		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Pre-test</b>	Control group	23	3.70	2.976	.621
	Experimental group	22	3.41	1.869	.398

**Table 4***Pre-test. T-test*

		<b>Independent Samples Test</b>								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
<b>Pre - test</b>	Equal variances assumed	3.285	0.077	0.385	43	0.702	0.287	0.745	-1.215	1.789
	Equal variances not assumed			0.389	37.242	0.7	0.287	0.737	-1.207	1.78

Table four shows the comparison of means. With 95% of confidence, this table displays the two tailed significance. This significance was 0.702 which meant that both the control group and the experimental group were similar. There was no significant difference between their means. Therefore, the level of students was low in both groups.

**Post-test results**

After a period of classroom intervention based on the use of the Cooperative learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills, students took the post-test which was the same exam as the pre-test.

**Table 5***Post-test results*

<b>POST-TEST</b>			
<b>CONTROL GROUP</b>		<b>EXPERIMENTAL GROUP</b>	
Grammar and vocabulary	170	Grammar and vocabulary	2.82
Pronunciation	1.57	Pronunciation	2.23
Interactive communication	1.57	Interactive communication	2.33
Total	4.83	Total	7.36
Desired average	15		

Students from the control group obtained a total score of 4.83 in the post-test; however, the experimental group got 7.36. It was clearly stated that students from the control group remained the same level of speaking performance; on the other hand, students from the experimental group positioned themselves on the second and band of the rubric. It meant that they showed enough control of simple grammar structures and their vocabulary was appropriate to produce the language in simple situations. Their pronunciation was intelligible with some phonological errors; and, they could maintain simple exchanges with teacher's support.

**Table 6**

*Post-test: general statistics*

<b>Group Statistics</b>					
<b>Group</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Post-test	Control group	23	4.83	2.348	.490
	Experimental group	22	7.36	1.432	.305

**Table 7**

*Post-test: T-test*

<b>Independent Samples Test</b>										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
<b>Post-test</b>	Equal variances assumed	3.863	0.056	-4.352	43	0.000	-2.538	0.583	-3.713	-1.362
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.397	36.639	0.000	-2.538	0.577	-3.707	-1.368

Table seven shows 0.000 in the two-tailed significance column. This result is < lower than .05 which means that there is a significant difference between the groups averages. In

this case, students from the experimental group obtained a higher score. It was the result of the classroom intervention. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a high effectiveness of using Cooperative learning strategies in the students' speaking skills.

## **Discussion**

This study focused on the application of Cooperative learning strategies to improve the speaking skills at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies. In this context, a classroom intervention which focused on the use of strategies like Think-pair-share was planned and put into action with ninth graders.

There were positive results after the intervention which were evidenced in the post-test. Students from the experimental group obtained better results than their partners who participated in the control group. These results are similar to a number of previous studies like those performed by Supraba (2018) and Lascano (2021) who concluded that the application of Think-pair-share as a Cooperative learning strategy was beneficial for students' speaking skills improvement.

During the intervention, students had to develop some oral presentations. Students felt motivated in each classroom and they clearly noticed that their knowledge improved and their speaking was developed. Similar results were obtained compared with Lascano (2021) because students had to think to answer a question; then, they talk to a partner to compare; and, they share their response with the rest of the class or their group. Therefore, this strategy contributed a lot with learners' speaking performance. In addition, the class plans contributed to use the language for communication. This fact is pretty similar to research proposed by Aeni (2020).

Another important Cooperative learning strategy used in this study was Jigsaw. This strategy was combined with reading material which captured the students' attention. This strategy makes students work cooperatively and motivates them to actively participate; therefore, it was a good chance to promote oral communication with good results. They are similar to those obtained by Nurhasanah & Suwartono (2019).



## CHAPTER V

### 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Conclusions

Having concluded a research process that was a good opportunity to contribute with my school and students' development, some conclusions came up.

- The effectiveness of applying Cooperative learning strategies was widely proved at Unidad Educativa Yaruquies through a T- student test. In this case, a classroom intervention was planned and executed in the context of a quasi-experimental research design. This was a valuable opportunity for students and the teacher to apply a new way of teaching-learning process which put apart the traditional one.
- Through a conceptual review and analysis, some common cooperative learning strategies applied to improve students' speaking skills were found. This review helped to found Jigsaw, Think-pair-share, Storytelling, and role play as the most common Cooperative learning strategies. The researcher had a clear overview about what to do and how to help students to improve their speaking skills through them.
- A methodological guide which constituted the proposal for the current research was created. It focused on the application of Cooperative learning strategies for the students' speaking skills improvement. This methodological guide was created to motivate ninth graders to improve their language competences. It can be used for other teachers for further research.

#### 5.2.Recomendations

- Cooperative learning can be applied according to the students' level and preferences. Therefore, it is suggested to plan a methodological guide with Ecuadorian topics since the target population prefers their own to other cultures.
- Cooperative learning strategies must be applied by following the exact procedure as the authors suggest to obtain similar results.
- Appropriateness can be tested by implementing a test during the process. Therefore, it is highly recommended that teachers can do it in further research.
- It is encouraged to use the methodological guide produced in this study because it contains material to be put into practice according to the level of the students.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1

 <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; text-align: center;"> <p><b>UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO</b>  <b>VICERCETORADO DE POSGRADO E INVESTIGACION</b>  <b>VINCULACION Y POSGRADO</b></p> </div>
<p><b>MAESTRIA EN ENSEÑANZA DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA</b></p>
<p><b>TEMA:</b> Cooperative Learning Strategies in the English Language speaking skills improvement.</p>
<p>Dear student, the following test will be applied with the objective of carrying out an investigative work about the influence of cooperative strategies in the development of speaking skills in learning the English language. It will allow better development in the teaching- learning process</p>
<p><b>Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher will ask the student to answer some questions orally. The teacher will choose 5 questions from a questionnaire.</li> <li>The student should ask in a determined time (5 minutes)</li> </ul>

<b>Questions</b>	
<p>1. What is your name?</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p style="font-size: small;">Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/KT9hhN4rJQQvZBxVA">https://images.app.goo.gl/KT9hhN4rJQQvZBxVA</a></p>	<p>2. Where do you live? Could you describe your city?</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p style="font-size: small;">Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/jYnk5R1sydKzfhV98">https://images.app.goo.gl/jYnk5R1sydKzfhV98</a></p>
<p>3. Could you describe your family?</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p style="font-size: small;">Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/t3gRpGTBUtpczjWJ6">https://images.app.goo.gl/t3gRpGTBUtpczjWJ6</a></p>	<p>4. What subject do you like best? Why?</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p style="font-size: small;">Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/vK9QrGKpq2JTxxeP6">https://images.app.goo.gl/vK9QrGKpq2JTxxeP6</a></p>

<p>5. What do you usually eat for breakfast?</p>  <p>Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/TGEjPd3k9692YVv8">https://images.app.goo.gl/TGEjPd3k9692YVv8</a></p>	<p>6. What is your favorite hobby? Why?</p>  <p>Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/vHunFZi7pHzD6H2c6">https://images.app.goo.gl/vHunFZi7pHzD6H2c6</a></p>
<p>7. What is your favorite sport? How often do you practice it?</p> <p>What's your favorite sport?</p>  <p>Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/F929EUEZ7u3BZi8D7">https://images.app.goo.gl/F929EUEZ7u3BZi8D7</a></p>	<p>8. What are you going to do on this weekend?</p>  <p>Source: <a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/Hifx5box2UnkeLkk8">https://images.app.goo.gl/Hifx5box2UnkeLkk8</a></p>

**Annex 2**

**Assessment rubric for speaking skill**

A2 Key for Schools Speaking Examiners use a more detailed version of the following assessment scales, extracted from the overall Speaking scales on the following page.

A2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations.	Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	Maintains simple exchanges. Requires very little prompting and support.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>		
3	Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms. Uses appropriate vocabulary to talk about everyday situations.	Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features.	Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty. Requires prompting and support.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>		
1	Shows only limited control of a few grammatical forms. Uses a vocabulary of isolated words and phrases.	Has very limited control of phonological features and is often unintelligible.	Has considerable difficulty maintaining simple exchanges. Requires additional prompting and support.
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		

Source: Cambridge Assessment (2022)