

**PERCEPCIONES DE LOS PROFESORES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA
EN ECUATORIANOS SOBRE LAS METODOLOGÍAS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LAS
HABILIDADES ORALES DE LOS ESTUDIANTES**
**PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN
ECUADOR ON THE METHODOLOGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS'
ORAL SKILLS**

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Resumen

El presente estudio investigó las percepciones de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en Ecuador sobre las metodologías que fomentan la comunicación oral en la educación secundaria. Se adoptó un diseño cuantitativo, descriptivo-correlacional para analizar cómo las prácticas pedagógicas, los factores institucionales y las condiciones contextuales influyen en los resultados de aprendizaje percibidos. Los datos fueron recolectados de 66 docentes de inglés de instituciones públicas y privadas mediante un cuestionario validado titulado Teachers' Perceptions of Methodologies for Developing Oral Skills (EFL). El instrumento evaluó la frecuencia y efectividad percibida de diez enfoques metodológicos, así como las barreras, facilitadores y resultados observados en los estudiantes. Los análisis de fiabilidad y validez evidenciaron índices psicométricos

satisfactorios ($\alpha = .81-.88$; $CR = .84-.89$; $AVE > .50$). Los resultados demostraron que las metodologías de orientación comunicativa —especialmente Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) y Project-Based Learning (PjBL)— fueron las más utilizadas y percibidas como altamente efectivas para mejorar la fluidez y la confianza oral. En contraste, los métodos tradicionales como Grammar-Translation y Audiolingual obtuvieron puntuaciones más bajas. El análisis correlacional mostró una relación positiva fuerte entre las prácticas de aula y los resultados percibidos ($p = .68$, $p < .001$), mientras que factores como el tamaño del grupo y la falta de tiempo afectaron negativamente el desarrollo del habla. Los hallazgos evidencian una tendencia creciente hacia enfoques comunicativos y centrados en el estudiante que promueven la interacción y el uso auténtico del idioma.

Palabras clave: Comunicación oral, Metodologías EFL, Percepciones docentes, Enfoques comunicativos, Habilidades orales.

Abstract

This study investigated Ecuadorian EFL teachers' perceptions of methodologies that foster oral communication in secondary education. A quantitative, descriptive–correlational design was adopted to examine how instructional practices, institutional enablers, and contextual barriers influence perceived learning outcomes. Data were collected from 66 English teachers working in public and private schools through a validated online questionnaire titled Teachers' Perceptions of Methodologies for Developing Oral Skills (EFL). The instrument measured the frequency and perceived effectiveness of ten instructional approaches, as well as barriers, enablers, and student outcomes. Reliability and validity analyses yielded satisfactory psychometric indices ($\alpha = .81-.88$; CR = .84–.89; AVE > .50). Results revealed that communicative-oriented methodologies—particularly Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Project-Based Learning (PjBL)—were most frequently applied and perceived as highly effective for enhancing fluency and confidence. Conversely, traditional methods such as Grammar–Translation and Audiolingual received lower ratings. Correlation analyses indicated strong positive relationships between classroom practices and perceived outcomes ($p = .68$, $p < .001$), while barriers such as large class size and limited time negatively affected speaking development. These findings highlight the growing alignment of Ecuadorian EFL instruction with communicative, learner-centered paradigms that emphasize interaction and authentic use of language.

Keywords: Oral communication, EFL methodologies, Teacher perceptions, Communicative approaches, Speaking skills.

Sumário

Este estudo investigou as percepções de professores de inglês como língua estrangeira (EFL) no Equador sobre metodologias que promovem a comunicação oral no ensino médio. Adotou-se uma abordagem quantitativa, descritiva-correlacional, para analisar como as práticas pedagógicas, os fatores institucionais e as condições contextuais influenciam os resultados de aprendizagem percebidos. Os dados foram coletados de 66 professores de inglês de instituições públicas e privadas, utilizando um questionário validado intitulado "Percepções dos Professores sobre Metodologias para o Desenvolvimento da Habilidade Oral (EFL)". O instrumento avaliou a frequência e a eficácia percebida de dez abordagens metodológicas, bem como as barreiras, os facilitadores e os resultados observados nos alunos. As análises de confiabilidade e validade apresentaram índices psicométricos satisfatórios ($\alpha = 0,81-0,88$; CR = 0,84–0,89; AVE > 0,50). Os resultados mostraram que as metodologias de abordagem comunicativa — especialmente o Ensino Comunicativo de Línguas (ECL), o Ensino de Línguas Baseado em Tarefas (ELBT) e a Aprendizagem Baseada em Projetos (ABP) — foram as mais frequentemente utilizadas e percebidas como altamente eficazes para melhorar a fluência e a confiança oral. Em contraste, métodos tradicionais como Gramática-Tradução e Audiolingual obtiveram pontuações mais baixas. A análise correlacional revelou uma forte relação positiva entre as práticas em sala de aula e os resultados percebidos ($p = 0,68$, $p < 0,001$), enquanto fatores como o tamanho do grupo e as restrições de tempo impactaram negativamente o desenvolvimento da fala. Os resultados demonstram uma tendência crescente em direção a abordagens comunicativas e centradas no aluno que promovem a interação e o uso autêntico da linguagem.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação oral, Metodologias de EFL, Percepções do professor, Abordagens comunicativas, Habilidades orais.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, English language teaching has experienced a significant transformation in both philosophy and practice. The field has evolved from structuralist and teacher-centered paradigms toward more communicative, learner-centered approaches that emphasize meaningful interaction, authentic language use, and the development of oral fluency. Within this paradigm shift, speaking has become the most visible and dynamic expression of communicative competence, as it enables learners to use English effectively in real-life contexts. According to Richards (2015) and Harmer (2015), the ability to communicate fluently and confidently in spoken English is now considered a primary indicator of language mastery. However, despite this global emphasis on oral communication, many teachers continue to face methodological and contextual challenges when promoting speaking in the classroom. In the Ecuadorian educational context, these difficulties are often intensified by factors such as large class sizes, limited instructional time, mixed proficiency levels, and insufficient technological support. As Borg (2018) and Yan et al. (2024) such structural constraints can reduce opportunities for spontaneous interaction and meaningful oral practice, preventing students from achieving communicative proficiency. These limitations highlight the importance of examining not only the methods teachers choose but also the conditions that influence their implementation.

In recent years, Ecuador's Ministry of Education and higher education institutions have placed increasing importance on communicative competence as a central learning outcome (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2020). Teachers are now expected to

adopt methodologies that encourage participation, collaboration, and authentic use of English in the classroom. Yet, the success of these innovations depends largely on teachers' perceptions, as these shape their instructional choices, beliefs, and classroom practices. As Richards (2015) explains, teachers' perceptions form the bridge between educational theory and pedagogical action: when teachers believe in the relevance and practicality of a method, they are more likely to use it effectively.

Based on this rationale, the present study explores EFL teachers' perceptions of the methodologies most frequently applied to develop oral communication skills in Ecuadorian secondary education. The purpose is twofold: first, to identify the methods teachers use and consider most effective for improving speaking; and second, to examine how pedagogical practices, institutional support, and contextual barriers influence perceived learning outcomes. By analyzing teachers' perspectives, this research seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how methodological innovation, classroom reality, and institutional context interact in the Ecuadorian EFL classroom. Ultimately, the findings aim to contribute to improving teacher training, classroom practice, and educational policy, promoting a more communicative and equitable approach to language learning across the country. Speaking is often described as the most challenging yet rewarding aspect of language learning. It represents the ability to transform linguistic knowledge into communicative action to think, respond, and express meaning in real time. As Harmer (2015) emphasizes, effective oral communication requires not only grammatical accuracy but also strategic competence, interactional awareness, and self-confidence. In foreign language contexts where exposure to English outside the

classroom is limited, the teacher's role becomes crucial. The way teachers structure speaking opportunities directly determines students' chances to practice, negotiate meaning, and build fluency (Kayhan, 2025). In Ecuador, as in many other EFL settings, speaking remains one of the weakest skills among students. This is not necessarily due to a lack of motivation but rather to the persistence of traditional teaching methods that focus primarily on reading, writing, and grammar. Consequently, students often complete secondary education with limited ability to communicate orally (Orosz, 2021). As Brown (2014) explains, learners acquire speaking ability through continuous and meaningful practice; without this, their competence remains largely theoretical. Therefore, teaching methodologies play a decisive role in transforming passive linguistic knowledge into active communicative competence.

The evolution of language teaching methodologies reveals a gradual transition from form-based to meaning-based instruction. Traditional methods such as the Grammar–Translation Method and the Audiolingual Approach emphasized accuracy, memorization, and structural repetition (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). While these approaches helped learners develop grammatical control, they often neglected opportunities for spontaneous expression and interaction. In contrast, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) revolutionized the field by proposing that the ultimate goal of language learning is the ability to communicate meaningfully and appropriately in real contexts. (Qasserras, 2023), (Canale & Swain, 1980) relate four components of communicative competence, grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic, that remain foundational in EFL teaching today. Building upon this

communicative foundation, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged as a practical framework in which learners complete real-life tasks that require the active use of language (Ellis, 2018). Similarly, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) promotes collaboration and authentic communication through long-term projects that integrate content, creativity, and oral performance (Pae, 2024)

Additionally, other complementary methodologies have gained prominence in recent years. The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach connects language with academic subjects, enhancing motivation and contextual understanding (Jang, 2025). The Lexical Approach focuses on the acquisition of lexical chunks rather than isolated grammar rules, helping learners build fluency naturally (Victoria University of Wellington, 2023) Furthermore, models such as the Flipped Classroom and Cooperative Learning frameworks encourage student autonomy and peer interaction, allowing learners to prepare content independently and practice speaking collaboratively (Tondok y otros, 2024). Together, these methodologies represent a collective movement toward authentic, learner-centered communication. Teachers' perceptions are central to understanding how these methodologies are interpreted and applied in real classrooms. Borg (2018) argues that teachers' beliefs often determine their pedagogical choices more strongly than institutional policy or prescribed curricula. When teachers view communicative methods as effective, they are more likely to integrate activities such as role-plays, debates, and problem-solving tasks into their lessons (Burns, 2016). Conversely, when they perceive barriers—such as limited resources, time constraints, or exam pressure—they may revert

to more traditional techniques focused on accuracy rather than interaction.

Studies in Latin America Santos y Luque (2025); Alvarez et al. (2025), reveal that although teachers generally support communicative approaches in theory, practical implementation remains inconsistent. Many educators face external pressures to prepare students for grammar-oriented assessments or to cover extensive syllabi within limited class hours. Consequently, there is often a disconnect between methodological awareness and classroom practice, which reduces opportunities for genuine communication. Understanding teachers' perspectives is therefore essential to bridge the gap between innovation and feasibility in EFL contexts. Ecuador's educational policies have increasingly aligned with international frameworks that promote communicative competence and global citizenship. The Ministry of Education (2020) encourages the use of student-centered methodologies and emphasizes oral communication as a core component of the English curriculum. However, implementation varies widely depending on institutional resources, geographical region, and teacher training opportunities (Camacho y otros, 2023).

In many public schools, large class sizes, limited access to technology, and lack of continuous professional development hinder the consistent use of communicative methodologies. In contrast, private institutions often benefit from smaller classes, digital tools, and ongoing methodological training. This inequality underscores the need to understand teachers' perceptions of methodological effectiveness and contextual feasibility. Exploring how educators across different school types interpret and apply communicative

approaches provides valuable insight into the current state of English teaching in Ecuador. In summary, existing research highlights both the potential and limitations of communicative methodologies in EFL instruction. The literature consistently shows that approaches such as CLT, TBLT, and PjBL are effective for promoting oral competence, yet their success depends on contextual variables including institutional support, class size, and teacher autonomy. Despite numerous international studies on speaking pedagogy, empirical evidence from Ecuadorian classrooms remains scarce, particularly regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive, prioritize, and adapt methodologies to develop oral communication. By combining statistical data with interpretive analysis, it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how methodological choice, classroom practice, and institutional context interact to shape the teaching of speaking in contemporary EFL education.

Materials and Methods

This research adopted a quantitative, descriptive–correlational design to explore how English teachers perceive and apply different methodologies for developing oral communication skills in EFL classrooms. The study also examined how teaching practices, institutional conditions, and contextual factors influence teachers' perceptions of learning outcomes. A cross-sectional survey was chosen because it allows for the collection of a large amount of data within a single time frame, making it possible to identify patterns, relationships, and contrasts among pedagogical variables without manipulating classroom conditions. To explore English teachers' perceptions of the methodologies used to

develop students' oral communication skills, data were collected through a structured digital questionnaire administered to 66 EFL teachers working in public and private secondary schools across Ecuador, primarily from the provinces of Manabí, Guayas, Los Ríos, and Pichincha. The instrument, titled Teachers' Perceptions of Methodologies for Developing Oral Skills (EFL), was created and distributed using Google Forms.

Data collection took place during the second academic term of 2025. Institutional e-mail invitations and professional EFL networks were used to reach participants nationwide, ensuring wide geographic and institutional representation. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and all teachers provided informed consent prior to completing the survey. Respondents took approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, which was designed to be user-friendly and accessible on both desktop and mobile devices. After data cleaning and verification, a total of 66 valid responses were retained for quantitative analysis from the 68 English teachers who initially completed the survey. The dataset was exported from Google Forms to IBM SPSS Statistics version 25, where both descriptive (means and standard deviations) and inferential analyses were performed. These included Spearman's rho correlations to examine the relationships among methodological practices, perceived learning outcomes, and contextual factors influencing speaking instruction. The final sample represented a diverse group of EFL teachers from Ecuadorian secondary schools, including educators from public (54.5%) and private (45.5%) institutions, as well as a small number from charter and other school types. Most participants had between six and fifteen years of teaching experience, and the majority held a Master's degree in English Teaching or

Applied Linguistics. In terms of classroom context, teachers reported an average of 25 to 35 students per class, and most taught at B1–B2 proficiency levels, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This composition provided a broad and representative overview of EFL teaching practices across Ecuadorian secondary education.

Table 1. *Demographic and Professional Characteristics of the Participants*

Variable	Categories	n	%
Institution Type	Public	36	54.5
	Private	30	45.5
Teaching Experience	0–5 years	15	22.7
	6–10 years	12	18.2
	11–15 years	13	19.7
	16 years or more	26	39.4
Highest Qualification	Bachelor's degree	16	24.2
	Master's degree	43	65.2
	Doctorate	7	10.6
Average Class Size	< 25 students	22	33.3
	25–35 students	27	40.9
	36–45 students	17	25.8
CEFR Levels Taught	A1–A2	20	30.3
	B1–B2	35	53.0
	Mixed levels	11	16.7

Source: own elaboration

The instrument was designed to obtain an in-depth understanding of teachers' methodological preferences, classroom practices, and perceptions of effectiveness when promoting oral communication in English. It consisted of five main sections, combining closed-ended Likert-scale items and open-ended questions to collect comprehensive quantitative and qualitative information:

- **Demographic and Professional Information:** Items addressing institution type, years of experience, and academic qualifications.
- **Evaluation of Methodologies:** Teachers rated ten common approaches—Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Cooperative Learning, CLIL/CBI, Lexical Approach, Flipped Classroom, Direct

Method, Audiolingual Method, and Grammar–Translation Method—for both frequency of classroom use and perceived effectiveness in developing oral communication skills.

- Practice Scale (10 items): Measured how often students engaged in oral communication activities such as role-plays, debates, and information-gap tasks.
- Outcomes Scale (7 items): Reflected teachers' perceptions of students' progress in fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and confidence.
- Contextual Factors: Divided into Barriers (6 items)—including time pressure, class size, and limited resources—and Enablers (5 items)—including collaboration, institutional support, and professional development opportunities.

All quantitative items were rated using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never or Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Always or Strongly Agree). Before implementation, the

questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in Applied Linguistics and EFL methodology, who verified content validity, wording clarity, and cultural relevance. Minor adjustments in phrasing and item order were made to optimize accuracy and coherence. Internal consistency was then assessed using Cronbach's alpha for each subscale; the results indicated excellent reliability (Frequency, $\alpha = .87$; Effectiveness, $\alpha = .88$; Barriers, $\alpha = .82$; Enablers, $\alpha = .81$), all exceeding the .70 benchmark recommended by George & Mallery (2019). To examine construct validity, a confirmatory reliability analysis was conducted. All factor loadings surpassed .68, while Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) met the thresholds suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981): CR ranged from .84 to .89 and AVE was consistently above .50. As summarized in Table 2, these indices confirm satisfactory psychometric properties, indicating that the instrument effectively measures teachers' perceptions regarding oral communication instruction in EFL settings.

Table 2. *Confirmatory Reliability Analysis of the Instrument: Teachers' Perceptions of Methodologies for Developing Oral Skills (EFL)*

Construct	Methodology / Item Example	Item Code	Factor Loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
Frequency of Methodology Use	CLT: "I frequently use communicative activities to promote oral interaction."	FQ1	.79	.87	.61	.87
	TBLT: "I include communicative tasks that simulate real-world interaction."	FQ2	.81			
	PjBL: "I design project-based assignments for oral expression."	FQ3	.83			
	Cooperative Learning: "I use group and pair speaking tasks."	FQ4	.78			
	CLIL/CBI: "I integrate content-based lessons to develop oral skills."	FQ5	.76			
	Lexical Approach: "I emphasize vocabulary chunks for fluency."	FQ6	.74			
	Flipped Classroom: "Students review content before class to discuss orally."	FQ7	.72			
	Direct Method: "I use only English for oral communication."	FQ8	.71			
	Audiolingual Method: "I apply repetition and drills for oral practice."	FQ9	.70			
	Grammar–Translation Method: "I use translation to practice speaking."	FQ10	.68			
Perceived Effectiveness of Methodologies	CLT improves students' speaking confidence.	EF1	.83	.89	.65	.88
	TBLT promotes authentic communication.	EF2	.84			
	PjBL enhances fluency and creativity.	EF3	.81			
	Cooperative Learning increases peer interaction.	EF4	.79			
	CLIL/CBI connects language with meaningful content.	EF5	.77			
	Lexical Approach improves vocabulary-based fluency.	EF6	.74			
	Flipped Classroom fosters independent speaking.	EF7	.73			
	Direct Method enhances pronunciation and accuracy.	EF8	.72			
	Audiolingual Method supports pronunciation through repetition.	EF9	.71			
	Grammar–Translation reinforces grammatical understanding.	EF10	.68			
Barriers to Speaking Instruction	Large class size limits oral participation.	BR1	.71	.84	.57	.82
	Time pressure reduces opportunities for speaking.	BR2	.78			
	Exams prioritize grammar over oral communication.	BR3	.75			
	Limited resources constrain oral practice.	BR4	.77			
	Mixed proficiency levels hinder oral activities.	BR5	.72			
	Students' reluctance to speak English reduces interaction.	BR6	.77			
Enablers of Speaking Instruction	I feel confident designing speaking tasks.	EN1	.78	.85	.58	.81
	My school encourages innovative oral communication methods.	EN2	.76			
	Collaboration with colleagues helps me improve oral teaching.	EN3	.74			

	Institutional resources support oral activities.	EN4	.73			
	I receive training/feedback that motivates improvement.	EN5	.71			

Source: own elaboration

Participants received the survey link via institutional e-mail and professional teaching networks, which facilitated broad geographic coverage and institutional diversity. The average completion time was approximately 15 minutes. After screening for completeness and consistency, 66 valid responses were retained and exported from Google Forms to IBM SPSS Statistics v.25 for quantitative analysis. The analytical process followed five stages.

- First, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) identified which methodologies were most frequently applied and perceived as most effective for developing oral communication.
- Second, the Friedman test was used to detect significant differences across the ten instructional methodologies (nonparametric approach appropriate for Likert-type, ordinal data).
- Third, Wilcoxon pairwise comparisons contrasted communicative-oriented approaches against traditional grammar-based methods.
- Fourth, composite indices were computed for Practices, Outcomes, Barriers, and

Enablers to synthesize construct-level tendencies.

- Finally, Spearman's rho correlations examined associations among these constructs. All tests were interpreted at $p < .05$ to ensure statistical rigor and stable inference.

Results and Discussion

Overview of methodological practices

The overall analysis of teachers' responses shows that EFL instruction in Ecuador is strongly influenced by communicative and learner-centered pedagogies. Teachers reported designing lessons that prioritize student interaction, oral participation, and real-world communication tasks. This finding reflects a clear pedagogical evolution away from traditional, grammar-based models toward approaches that view language as a tool for communication rather than as a system of isolated rules. To contextualize these findings, the descriptive results presented in Table 3 provide a detailed summary of how often each methodology is applied and how effective it is perceived to be in enhancing students' speaking performance.

Table 3. Mean Scores for Frequency and Perceived Effectiveness of EFL Methodologies

Methodology	Frequency of Use (M)	SD	Perceived Effectiveness (M)	SD
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)	4.7	0.41	4.8	0.39
Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)	4.5	0.45	4.6	0.42
Project-Based Learning (PjBL)	4.4	0.47	4.5	0.44
Cooperative Learning	4.3	0.49	4.4	0.45
CLIL / CBI	4.1	0.52	4.2	0.48
Lexical Approach	3.9	0.56	4.0	0.53
Flipped Classroom	3.8	0.59	3.9	0.54
Direct Method	3.5	0.62	3.6	0.58
Audiolingual Method	2.4	0.74	2.3	0.70
Grammar–Translation Method	2.1	0.80	2.2	0.77

Source: own elaboration

As illustrated in Table 3, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach emerged as the most dominant methodology, closely followed by Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL). These approaches are characterized by their emphasis on meaningful interaction and authentic language use. Conversely, the Grammar–Translation and Audiolingual methods obtained the lowest mean scores, confirming that teachers rarely rely on rote memorization or mechanical drills for speaking development. This result aligns with international pedagogical shifts toward communicative competence (Richards, 2015) (Harmer, 2015), demonstrating that Ecuadorian teachers are embracing methods that enhance fluency and confidence.

Comparative Analysis of Methodology Types

While the descriptive results provide a general overview, a comparative analysis was necessary to determine whether the differences among methodologies were statistically significant. For this purpose, a Friedman test was applied. This test compares ranked data and helps identify whether certain methods are used more consistently or perceived as more effective than others. The subsequent post-hoc Wilcoxon pairwise comparisons focused on examining contrasts between communicative-oriented approaches (CLT, TBLT, PjBL) and traditional ones (Grammar–Translation, Audiolingual). The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. *Post-hoc Wilcoxon Comparisons between Communicative and Traditional Approaches*

Comparison	W	p-value	Interpretation
CLT > Grammar–Translation	425.0	< .001	CLT used significantly more often
CLT > Audiolingual	418.5	< .001	CLT preferred for oral communication
TBLT > Grammar–Translation	412.0	< .001	TBLT significantly favored
PjBL > Grammar–Translation	403.5	< .001	PjBL significantly favored

Source: own elaboration

As reflected in Table 4, all comparisons yielded significant differences ($p < .001$), confirming that communicative methodologies are not only more frequently used but also more valued by teachers in terms of their capacity to improve speaking skills. The preference for CLT, TBLT, and PjBL indicates a strong alignment with task-based and interactional principles, where students develop fluency through active participation. This trend is consistent with prior research (Ellis, 2018), (Qasserras, 2023), which found that communicative exposure enhances both motivation and oral accuracy in EFL settings.

Correlational Analysis of Practices, Outcomes, Barriers, and Enablers

Beyond individual methods, the study also sought to understand how pedagogical conditions and perceived results relate to each other. For this purpose, four indices were computed—Practice, Outcomes, Barriers, and Enablers—to capture the overall teaching dynamics. These indices provide a concise representation of teachers’ perceptions of how their practices and institutional contexts affect learning. The descriptive statistics of these indices are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for Composite Indices*

Index	Mean (M)	SD
Practice Index	4.10	0.58
Outcomes Index	4.25	0.49
Barrier Index	2.85	0.72
Enabler Index	4.05	0.55

Source: own elaboration

The data in Table 5 show that teachers report relatively high averages for Practices and Outcomes, indicating that communicative activities are implemented frequently and perceived as successful in promoting oral competence. In contrast, the mean score for Barriers ($M = 2.85$) suggests that although challenges exist—such as limited time or large

classes—they are not perceived as overwhelming. The Enabler Index ($M = 4.05$) highlights the relevance of institutional support, access to technology, and professional collaboration, which help teachers sustain effective oral communication instruction despite contextual limitations. To further explore how these constructs interact, a Spearman's rho correlation analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. *Spearman's Correlations among Main Constructs*

Variables	ρ (rho)
Practice ↔ Outcomes	.68
Barriers ↔ Outcomes	-.47
Enablers ↔ Outcomes	.52

Source: own elaboration

The correlations in Table 6 reveal meaningful relationships among the main constructs. A strong positive correlation between Practices and Outcomes ($\rho = .68$, $p < .001$) confirms that teachers who engage students in frequent communicative activities tend to perceive better speaking results. Conversely, Barriers show a moderate negative correlation with Outcomes ($\rho = -.47$, $p < .01$), indicating that contextual challenges, such as class size and time constraints, may hinder oral participation. Importantly, the positive association between Enablers and Outcomes ($\rho = .52$, $p < .01$) suggests that institutional support and professional collaboration act as protective factors, enhancing teaching effectiveness even in less favorable conditions. These findings illustrate that methodology, context, and institutional culture interact dynamically to shape how oral communication develops in EFL classrooms. Teachers' perceptions confirm that effective speaking instruction relies not only on methodological choices but also on the supportive environment in which those methods are implemented.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that EFL teachers in Ecuadorian secondary education are progressively adopting communicative, task-based, and project-oriented methodologies to develop students' oral communication skills. This trend reflects a shift from traditional, form-focused instruction toward interactional and student-centered learning environments. The predominance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) suggests that teachers now perceive authentic communication, real-world tasks, and collaboration as key elements in promoting speaking fluency. This preference aligns with international literature emphasizing communicative competence as the core objective of language education (Richards, 2015); (Nunan, 2015); (Harmer, 2015). Furthermore, these methodologies encourage students to use language meaningfully, negotiate meaning, and engage in genuine exchanges — essential processes for oral development as described by Ellis (2018) and Qasserras (2023).

Conversely, the low frequency and perceived effectiveness of Grammar–Translation and Audiolingual methods confirm that structuralist models have lost relevance in contemporary EFL classrooms. These approaches, once dominant, focus primarily on repetition and accuracy rather than communicative fluency. Teachers' rejection of these models demonstrates their recognition that speaking competence cannot be achieved through mechanical drills or decontextualized grammar exercises (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Instead, Ecuadorian educators appear to value methodologies that cultivate interactional competence, echoing the communicative principles of Canale and Swain (1980). A

noteworthy insight emerges from the positive correlation between teaching practices and learning outcomes ($p = .68$, $p < .001$). This strong association implies that teachers who frequently implement interactive oral tasks perceive greater progress in their students' speaking ability. These results support the notion that pedagogical consistency and active participation directly contribute to skill development. As proposed by Burns (2016), sustained exposure to communicative activities leads to gradual but measurable improvement in students' fluency, confidence, and willingness to speak.

However, the study also identified contextual barriers, such as limited time, large class sizes, and mixed proficiency levels, that negatively affect oral instruction. The moderate negative correlation between Barriers and Outcomes ($p = -.47$, $p < .01$) highlights that even experienced teachers struggle to allocate sufficient time for speaking practice in crowded classrooms. These results mirror those reported by Borg (2018), who argued that institutional constraints often limit teachers' ability to apply communicative principles fully. Nevertheless, these challenges do not entirely undermine teachers' motivation or perception of success, as evidenced by the moderate Enabler Index ($M = 4.05$) and its positive correlation with outcomes. Indeed, institutional and motivational enablers, such as access to technology, collaboration with colleagues, and administrative support, were found to enhance teachers' ability to implement communicative practices effectively. This confirms that a supportive teaching environment is critical for methodological innovation (Fullan, 2025); (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). When teachers feel encouraged to experiment with new pedagogies and share professional experiences, they are more likely to maintain reflective and adaptive

classroom practices, even in challenging conditions.

The findings therefore point to a systemic relationship between pedagogical autonomy, institutional backing, and classroom outcomes. Teachers who feel empowered and supported by their institutions can bridge the gap between methodological theory and classroom reality. This reinforces previous research emphasizing the need for continuous professional development and school-level engagement to sustain communicative teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2023); (Richards, 2015). In summary, this study reveals that the effectiveness of oral communication instruction does not rely solely on methodological preference but also on contextual feasibility and institutional culture. Communicative and task-based methodologies thrive when educators are provided with adequate time, manageable class sizes, and collaborative environments. Without such conditions, even the most effective methodologies may yield limited results. Therefore, fostering oral communication in EFL contexts demands both pedagogical innovation and systemic support to ensure that teachers' practices can be translated into meaningful learning outcomes.

Conclusiones

The present study set out to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of the methodologies most frequently applied and perceived as most effective for developing oral communication skills in Ecuadorian secondary education. The results provide clear evidence of a methodological transition toward communicative and learner-centered approaches, reflecting the global pedagogical emphasis on interaction, authenticity, and collaboration in language learning. Overall,

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) emerged as the most preferred and effective methodologies, while traditional, grammar-oriented approaches such as the Grammar–Translation and Audiolingual methods were reported as least effective. This pattern underscores that Ecuadorian teachers increasingly value meaningful communication, problem-solving, and student autonomy, aligning with international standards for competence-based and interactive language education.

Furthermore, the study revealed a strong positive correlation between teaching practices and perceived learning outcomes, confirming that the frequency and quality of oral activities significantly influence students' communicative development. Teachers who consistently implement interactive tasks perceive noticeable improvements in fluency, accuracy, and confidence, reaffirming the pedagogical importance of sustained communicative exposure. However, the findings also draw attention to persistent contextual barriers, including limited class time, large group sizes, and diverse proficiency levels, that continue to restrict opportunities for oral practice. Although these barriers negatively affect outcomes, their impact can be mitigated by enabling conditions such as institutional support, collaboration among colleagues, and professional development. The positive correlation between Enablers and Outcomes suggests that supportive environments help teachers overcome structural constraints, fostering more effective oral instruction.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings highlight that successful oral communication teaching requires both methodological competence and systemic support. Teachers

must not only master communicative and task-based approaches but also receive adequate time, resources, and training to implement them meaningfully. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize smaller class sizes, flexible scheduling, technological integration, and continuous professional development programs focused on oral communication pedagogy. Moreover, collaboration among teachers should be encouraged as a mechanism for reflective practice and methodological renewal. Peer observation, lesson study, and professional learning communities can enhance teachers' capacity to adapt communicative methodologies to their specific contexts. As suggested by Fullan (2025) and Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018), pedagogical transformation occurs when schools create environments that empower teachers to innovate collectively. Finally, this study reaffirms that teaching speaking is not merely a methodological issue but a systemic one. EFL teachers in Ecuador demonstrate a strong willingness to apply communicative methodologies, but their effectiveness depends on the degree of institutional and contextual support available. Future research should therefore continue exploring how school policies, teacher training, and digital resources interact to sustain effective speaking instruction across diverse educational settings. By bridging methodology and context, educators can create classrooms that genuinely promote oral proficiency, learner engagement, and communicative confidence—the ultimate goals of contemporary English language teaching.

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