El uso de la Enseñanza Comunicativa del Lenguaje para mejorar la habilidad de hablar de los estudiantes en la escuela secundaria

The use of Communicative Language Teaching to improve students' speaking skill in Secondary school

O uso do Ensino de Línguas Comunicativas para melhorar a habilidade de falar de alunos do ensino médio

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Resumen

Durante el desarrollo de este estudio se planteó poner en práctica el enfoque de Enseñanza Comunicativa del Lenguaje mediante la aplicación de actividades blended y gap para mejorar las habilidades orales en un grupo de estudiantes de secundaria de la ciudad de Manta, Ecuador. Los datos fueron recolectados a partir de la participación de cuarenta y cinco personas entre docentes y estudiantes quienes respondieron cuestionarios de entrevista y encuesta, también se realizaron observaciones directas, ya través de los datos obtenidos se pudo dar respuesta a las preguntas de investigación. Los alumnos trabajaron en algunas actividades propias de este enfoque, como el diálogo, el juego de roles, la opinión o la entrevista. Las actividades blended learning y information gap se basaron en el enfoque comunicativo. Los estudiantes estaban inmersos en un contexto multicultural y su nivel de habla inglesa oscila entre A1 y A2 en una escuela secundaria pública de la ciudad de Manta, Ecuador. La técnica se aplicó durante la clase por un período de diez semanas. En este estudio se aplicó el enfoque cualitativo, y se realizó una investigación experimental, docentes y estudiantes constataron al inicio del estudio el poco uso de la oralidad en el idioma inglés en el aula. En cambio, en las observaciones se demuestra que los estudiantes pueden mejorar la habilidad de hablar, y los resultados sugieren una práctica continua con la aplicación de actividades que promuevan la comunicación y mejoren la habilidad de fluidez oral y una percepción positiva de la técnica utilizada durante la intervención.

Palabras Clave: Comunicación Enseñanza de Lenguas; aprendizaje combinado; Brecha de actividades; Habilidad de hablar

Abstract

During the development of this study, it was proposed to put into practice the Communicative Language Teaching approach through the application of blended and gap activities to improve oral skills in a group of secondary school students from the city of Manta, Ecuador. The data was collected from the participation of forty-five people between teachers and students who answered interview and survey questionnaires, direct observations were also made, and through the data obtained it was possible to answer the research questions. The students worked on some activities typical of this approach, such as dialogue, role-playing, giving opinions, or interviewing. The blended learning and information gap activities were based on the communicative approach. The students were immersed in a multicultural context and their English-speaking level ranges from A1 to A2 in a public secondary school in the city of Manta, Ecuador. The technique was applied during the class for a period of ten weeks. In this study, the qualitative approach was implemented, and experimental research was conducted, teachers and students confirmed at the beginning of the study the little use of orality in the English language in the classroom. In contrast, in the observations, it is shown that the students can improve the ability to speak, and the results suggest continuous practice with the application of activities that promote communication and improve the ability of oral fluency and a positive perception of the technique used during the intervention.

Key Words: Communication Language Teaching; Blended learning; Gap activities; Speaking skill

Resumo

Durante o desenvolvimento deste estudo, propôs-se colocar em prática a abordagem de Ensino de Línguas Comunicativas através da aplicação de atividades combinadas e mistas para melhorar as habilidades orais em um grupo de alunos do ensino médio da cidade de Manta, Equador. Os dados foram recolhidos a partir da participação de quarenta e cinco pessoas entre professores e alunos que responderam a questionários de entrevista e inquérito, também foram feitas observações diretas, e através dos dados obtidos foi possível responder às questões de investigação. Os alunos trabalharam em algumas atividades típicas dessa abordagem, como diálogo, dramatização, opinião ou entrevista. As atividades de blended learning e information gap foram baseadas na abordagem comunicativa. Os alunos foram imersos em um contexto multicultural e seu nível de inglês variou de A1 a A2 em uma escola pública de ensino médio na cidade de Manta, Equador. A técnica foi aplicada durante a aula por um período de dez semanas. Neste estudo, a abordagem qualitativa foi aplicada, e uma investigação experimental foi realizada, professores e alunos verificaram no início do estudo o pouco uso da oralidade na língua inglesa em sala de aula. Por outro lado, nas observações é mostrado que os alunos podem melhorar a capacidade de falar, e os resultados sugerem uma prática contínua com a aplicação de atividades que promovam a comunicação e melhorem a capacidade de fluência oral e uma percepção positiva da técnica utilizada durante a intervenção.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de línguas para comunicação; aprendizado híbrido; Lacuna de atividade; capacidade de falar

Introduction

The employed methods used by teachers to teach English as a foreign language are different in the same country and even in the same city, many times even in the same school; therefore, the selection and choosing, and application of the methods help to reach the communicative targets. The methods are different considering that the Ministry of Education in its curriculum suggests to the teacher some different methods and/or strategies that the teacher can use according to the topic or work group (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

The results of a study carried out on the teaching practice of teachers in the city of Cuenca the authors mention the results obtained reveal the low performance of secondary school students in English negatively affects due to the use of traditional teaching strategies, such as teacher-centered learning, lack of interaction between students in the target language (Calle et al., 2012). The Ecuadorian curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education establishes that for "snivel de

básica elemental" (2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades) and for the "subnivel de básica media" (5th, 6th, and 7th grades), students receive 3 hours of English lessons during the week; for the subnivel de básica superior (8th, 9th, and 10th grades), students receive 5 hours of English lessons per week. Regarding "Bachillerato General Unificado," students from 1st and 2nd grades receive 5 hours of English lessons per week while the students from 3rd grade receive 3 hours of lessons per week (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

In 2021 it was reported that a low level of proficiency in the English language is maintained in Ecuador, the figures were released by the EF EPI (English Proficiency Index) and published by the main newspapers in our country, the score was 440 out of 1000 and gives us the category of very low, in Latin America we are in position 18 of 20 countries (Ef Education First Ltd, 2021). The cause of this low-level point is the lack of capacity of their teachers and the little knowledge of the language that their students have (Machado, 2019).

Students must go through all four language skills. One of the problems with second language learners is that they are not naturally exposed to the language they want or need to acquire. This natural process occurs unconsciously and allows effective communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This process has not been promoted correctly in the study group, so the ability to speak is the one that students have the greatest difficulty with. Learners must be in constant interaction with the target language, therefore, to meet the requirement that it be acquired and not taught.

For this reason and to improve the speaking ability in the selected students, the authors of this study began to get closer, to get involved promoting interaction among themselves and individually using games, role-playing games, spelling bees, among other activities to encourage the ability to speak with real topics that allow a development more attached to the reality of its context. Teaching of the English language probably needs more commitment from students and

teachers in addition to applying the appropriate tools that allow the student to put into practice what he is learning in class. Some studies have been carried out in relation to the reasons why students do not participate orally in English, these premises are cited and in addition to the psychological factors that prevent students from speaking, they are mentioned in this article, for example: fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence (Nakhalah, 2016).

Review of related literature

Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is also called the Communicative Approach. This approach is used from its beginnings in the seventies to the present. CLT encourages the students to master communicative competence. CLT puts the focus on the learner. The CLT programme is learner-centered so it provides opportunity to the learners to use language in a social context and fulfill the communicative needs (More, 2019). CLT indicates that the principal function of language use is communication. This principle indicates that students will be participating in meaningful communication and at the same time achieving fluency.

CLT aims broadly to apply the theoretical perspective of the Communicative Approach by making communicative competence the goal of language teaching and by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication. (Freeman, 2000). Teaching a foreign language through the communicative approach has gained strength. Under this approach and the use of CLT are recognized when teachers initiate the acquisition of speaking skills in learners, therefore this constitutes their greatest achievement.

Under this approach, language teaching is based on a real-life situation (Ezema, 2010). CLT uses real life activities to develop a communicative scenery. That is, the learners interact with each other or with their instructor, and exchange information learning about the culture of others

(Rhalmi, 2010). Therefore, the activities that students can conduct in this communicative context are diverse and one of its objectives lies in involving students in acquiring communicative skills.

Wherever you live, you need to speak to communicate within the community. There are no communities who have no language as this is their communication tool. Even among us who can imagine writing while listening to a discussion about the language, the language is the speech or utterance. In schools, for their part, teachers play an important role as motivators, facilitators, counselors, and mediators in the learning activities of the students, they play a role as a center for teaching and learning activities, and it creates learning experiences that accommodate the needs of the students (Patiung et al., 2015).

Communicative Language Teaching and Ecuadorian EFL Curriculum

The Ecuadorian curriculum for teaching English as a second language to secondary school students (first to third) is designed for a culturally diverse population. One of the approaches mentioned in this curriculum is CLT, this approach seeks to expose students to the language and achieve with them a greater development of students in this area, for this reason in this document it is suggested that teachers use this method. (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

Speaking

Speaking is an ability to orally construct intelligible phrases and sentences in conveying messages: ideas, self-expressions, identity to another person, when asking and responding questions giving statements in forms of conversations upon topic (s) (Royani, 2020). That is, having the ability to express their own ideas or send messages, understand what is being asked to give an appropriate response in a correct way using the appropriate structures. Speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others (Fulcher, 2014)

Learning to speak a second is a different kind of learning compared to learning the first. In the first place, being surrounded by the language you want to learn eases this learning, be it the first or other languages. We know that for some learners it is easier than for others, much will depend on the circumstances of each one, on the amount of practice they do, especially if the practice is in a real context. There are many theories about why this is so. One suggests that after a certain age we no longer have access to the innate 'language acquisition device ' that makes primary languages seem so easy to acquire. (Fulcher, 2014).

In this context, the ability to speak can happen in some contexts which can be used to design activities in which students can develop in real situations to improve their speaking skills, among them are the following: speaking is face to face, speaking is interactive, speaking happens in real time (Torky, 2006). For example:

Blended learning

In this path of teaching there are new ways of teaching that are being incorporated with the arrival of technology and its coupling to society, these forms are gradually accommodated and are accumulating acceptance. In this study three definitions of Blended Learning are presented: the first says that BL is the mixture of ICT with attendance (Aiello & Willem, 2004). The second defines it as a way of learning that combines face-to-face teaching with non-face-to-face technology and whose key idea is the selection of appropriate media for each educational need (Bartolomé, 2004). The third says that it is the incorporation of distance or virtual elements supported in multiple pedagogical modalities typical of the first generation of distance education (Rama, 2007).

Blended Learning was a useful tool in the teaching of the English language by implementing CLT because, as it was going through the COVID 19 pandemic, it was necessary to attend this

combination of activities in person and online. The virtual activities to promote CLT using a virtual communication platform were:

- Teaching tools: audio, video, text chat, whiteboard, polls (external and instructor created) and breakout rooms

- Audio: (i.e., only one person can speak at a time)

- Video images (via webcam): large picture of speaker and small thumbnail images of all participants.

- Simultaneous screen sharing (selected or gallery view)

- Joint creation of text and images (whiteboard)

- Parallel use of audio, video, text chat and whiteboard possible

- Showing of slides and videos

- Automatic recording of sessions (allowing participants to review) (Hong & Ng, 2020)

Gap activities

An information gap activity is an activity where learners are missing the information, they need to complete a task and need to talk to each other to find it (British Council, 2022). Information gap refers to activities that promote communication between two or more students, it implies that they have an opportunity to generate an exchange of information between them to complete activities. The information gap seems greatly beneficial for those who try to practice interaction in their classroom. One of the principal tenets of the communicative approach to language teaching is that the learners are involved in actual interaction in the classroom (Jondeya, 2011). A key to the enhancement of communicative purpose and the desire to communicate is the information gap (Harmer, 2000).

Communicative classroom (culture)

It is essential learners improve their abilities to speak starting with a well implemented communicative classroom. Teachers could count with resources to teach and to give feedback, apply active methodologies that involve learners and promote speaking skills. The benefits received by the learners are fundamental to increase what they will learn, and they can use all material and resources to practice in a real context, the single most influential factor in the development of speaking skills is probably the classroom culture. (Thornbury, 2005).

Some classroom activities and tasks for practicing speaking skills are the following (Hussain, 2017):

- Dialogue

- Role Play

- Opinions/Ideas

- Problems

- Surveys and Interviews

- Visual Comprehension

- Dreams or Ambitions

- Rhymes and Tongue Twisters

- Songs

CLT Activities

Communicative speaking activities have a significant prominence in communicative purposes, interaction between learners is one of the activities that favor improving orality. (Wiese, 2019). There are many activities that can be carried out to practice speaking and improve this skill,

those that have been presented are just an example of the several that can be used. We can consider the next activities:

- •   Picture Strip Story

- •   Information-gap activity

- •   Role-play activity

- •   Conversation activity

- •   Gaming activity

- •   Dialogue Memorization

- •   Repair and Repetition

- •   Presentations

- •   Discussions

It is essential to highlight the importance of using appropriate activities to improve speaking skills, (García, 2019) in his research work on "Communicative Language Teaching Activities (CLT) to develop English speaking skills" tells us that the problem found is the limited use of CLT activities to improve the skills to speak English, which is why it emphasizes as a solution that communicative language teaching activities are a precise tool to enhance the communicative competence of students.

Projecting Confidence

In English students show they can give opinions, express thoughts, and feelings, as well as interact, make descriptions and others. This must be done fluently and adhering to the naturalness of the language. Through daily work and as we will demonstrate later, we have an identified difficulty in the students and that is that they do not participate in class orally. The reasons that the teachers in this study have stated may range from shyness, insecurity, teasing from peers,

ignorance, among others. Expressing themselves orally for them can become the biggest challenge, making mistakes can make them look bad in front of other classmates. Peer support can be a powerful motivator for shy, insecure, or even uninterested learners (Zhou, 2011)

Arthur Koch and Jason Schmitt in their book Speaking with a Purpose mention some tips to project confidence when speaking. Physically there are several especially important things you can do to build self-confidence: First, be sure that you do not form the habit of holding your breath or breathing very shallowly. Posture is also particularly important in developing self-confidence. Psychologically there are several very important steps you can take to develop greater self-confidence: can practice positive self-talk, substitute other less loaded words when you talk of your concerns, to change your focus from concern for yourself to concern for the audience (Koch & Schmitt, 2007).

Methodology

Within the methodology used in the development of this study, it can be said that it is oriented to the qualitative approach. Since it is desired to establish in the first instance the impressions of the students in relation to how CLT can be useful to improve speaking ability in secondary school students from the city of Manta, Ecuador, and the interest to know if the blended learning and gap activities has been advantageous in improving the ability to speak. A non-probabilistic sample was taken since it was obtained based on the characteristics of the selected group since it was required that the target group meet certain specifications for the study. An interview was conducted with the teachers and a survey with the students and finally, four observations were made. Also under the same approach, the relationship between the use of CLT and the improvement of speech in students is finally known. The researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants (Creswell, 2009).

The study prioritizes the theoretical and empirical method. The theoretical it is based on the presentation according to the theories of the different authors that are required to support the study. Analysis and synthesis of the information that is collected was conducted. Observation of the different contexts and environments that arise during the study are taken as special and careful cases. Therefore, this observation is in situ. As far as the Empirical Method is concerned, the data generated from the application of the Approach proposed in this study was acquired. The information must adhere to reality, and they are compared with the theoretical information obtained. Empiricism involves the collection of verifiable evidence of objective reality, as support for hypotheses and theories (Ruiz Bolivar, 2013).

It is important to mention that interviews have been conducted through interview guides, in addition to field sheets for direct observation. This being a study on the daily work of people or small groups in this type of research, what can be considered, think, feel or do is interested in (Lema Gonzalez, 2009). An experimental investigation was performed out because the problem could be identified, the data and relevant information were collected to proceed to analyze, from there the conclusions of the data obtained became the results of this research.

The instruments were validated through the intervention of English teachers who made the necessary suggestions to refine the questionnaires. The implementation of the procedures, as well as the data collection, were organized by the principal author of the study.

Table 1
Population Matrix

Observation Units	Quantity
Teachers	5
Students	45
Total:	50

Note: Secretary of the Institution

Based on Table 1: The information found is: Among the classes of the second year of BGU of secondary school who study in the morning session there are 133 students; one of them with forty-five students was selected. This class was chosen due to have an appropriate number of students; another reason is that in this class all students have the internet at home; also, there is a low level of absence from classes. Five teachers from the English area also participated in this activity who were the ones who validated the questions for the questionnaires and the observation sheets, they were the ones who made correction suggestions.

Three data collection instruments were designed to collect qualitative data for this study. Both tests were adapted with the validation from the teachers who participated in this study. The questions of the Interview were made using a questionnaire of four open questions and one closed, these questions were asked in English and whose answers were tabulated to obtain the required results. The present investigation required the use of the following techniques and instruments:

Technique: Interview with teachers

Instrument: Interview guide

Technique: Students' Survey

Instrument: Survey guide

Technique: Observation

Instrument: Checklist

First, the guides for the interviews were designed with care, in addition to the checklist for observation during the synchronous meetings and face-to-face lessons. Subsequently, this material was used with teachers and students to finally analyze them and present their results.

Questionnaire for Teachers interview

Regarding the interviews with the teachers to know their opinion about the oral participation of the students. The questions of the Interview were made using a questionnaire of four open questions and one closed, to obtain the teachers' perceptions regarding the oral participation of the students in class, these questions were made in English and whose answers were tabulated to obtain the required results.

Questions:

1. Do your students use the English language to communicate orally in the classroom mostly?

2. Do you consider oral participation as a relevant factor when knowing the skills that a student possesses?

3. How often do students participate voluntarily and orally in English in the lessons' classes?

4. Which of the following CLT strategies promote speech mostly with your group of students? If you do not use them, do not mark any.

a) Picture Strip Story ☐

b) Role plays ☐

c) Dialogue Memorization ☐

d) Repair and Repetition ☐

e) Presentations ☐

f) Discussions ☐

5. Are you satisfied with the oral interaction of your students during the English lessons?

Questionnaire for students survey

The questions of the survey addressed to the students, were based on a draft that was prepared for this study and with the collaboration of the teachers involved in this study it was

possible to correct and finally a questionnaire model was left whose objective is to know about the

participation of students in classes on a voluntary basis through the execution of activities proposed

by the teacher under the CLT profile.

1. Have you used a computer or a laptop/notebook outside school (i.e., At home, at friends'

    or family member's home, in a public library, an internet café.)?

Tick one box only.

	Yes	No
No in the last 3 months	○	○
In the last 12 months	○	○

2. Do you have a laptop, pc, tablet, or notebook in your English class?

    Yes ○   No ○   Sometimes ○

3. In your English lessons, does your teacher speak in English mostly?

    Yes ○   No ○   A little ○

4. In your English lessons, does your teacher used blended learning?

Yes ○   No ○   Sometimes ○

5. Do you practice role play activities?

    Yes ○   No ○   Sometimes ○

6. How many times in the week do have oral activities?

Once a Week ○ Twice a Week ○   More ○

7. Can you explain your thoughts in English?

Yes ○   No ○   A little ○

8. Can you explain some of your culture in English?

Yes ○   No ○   A little ○

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the use of CLT by applying blended learning and gap activities to improve speaking ability in a group of secondary school students. The research questions in this study were:

- How can CLT be useful to improve speaking ability in secondary school students?

- Have the blended learning and gap activities been advantageous in improving the ability to speak?

Results of the usefulness of the CLT to improve speaking ability in secondary school students

Interview with teachers

In this study, teachers (five) were interviewed who gave us their perceptions about what they experience in the classrooms with the students in relation to the ability to speak in their English classes. They mentioned that their students do not express themselves orally (80%) and sometimes they participate orally (40%) in other cases they never participate (60%). The teachers consider that the participation of the students orally is relevant (100%) for this reason they state that they are not satisfied with the interaction of the students in the classes (80%). Teachers apply role play as CLT strategies to promote speech in students (60%) and apply oral presentations on a specific topic (40%).

Table 2

Interview with teachers

Question	Yes	No	Sometimes	Never
Use the English language to communicate orally in the classroom	20%	80%		
Class participation			40%	60%
Relevance of orally	100%			
Satisfaction of oral participation	20%	80%		
Roleplay	60%			
Presentation	40%			

Student survey

In this study, a survey was conducted to students before the application of the study, the results that were found were the following: students if they have a device such as laptop, computer, tablet (73%), in addition, the majority of students they use the devices in class (57%), other students do not use them (24.44%) and others sometimes (17.77%). Also, majority of students stated that the teachers do not use English in the classes (51%), another group of students indicated that the teachers speak a little using the English language in the classes (37.77%), only a small group of students indicated that teachers do speak English in class (11.11%). When the students were questioned about the use of gap, blended and roleplay activities in the classroom, the students said that this does not happen (77.11%), but another group of students said that it does (11.11%) and another group said that it does not happen. times they practice these activities (11.11%). It is also necessary to know the frequency with which students practice activities that involve orality and they stated that they do it once a week (77.77%) and others that they do it twice a week (22.22%). They were asked if the students could express their thoughts or talk about the culture of their country, they indicated that they do not (82%) and another group of students said that they can (11.11%), the last group said only a little (11.11%).

Table 3
Student survey

Questions	No	Yes	Do not use	Sometimes / a little	Once a Week	Twice a week
Have computer, tablet, laptop	13%	73%	13%			
Devises in class	24,44%	57%		17,77%		
Teachers speak English in class	51%	11,11%		37,77%		
Teachers use blended/gap activities/role play	77,77%	11,11%		11,11%		
Practice of oral activities					77,77%	22,22%
Express thoughts and culture in English	82%	6,67%		11,11%		

Results of the advantages of using blended and gap activities to improve the ability to speak

Observation Report Sheets

At the end of the CLT activities application exercise, the students showed the following results through Direct Observation Sheets. In Oral Comprehension 33 of the forty-five students in the first week showed to be excellent and in the last observation 36 showed improvement. In the Fear parameter in the first week seven students were registered while in the last week only five. Among the students who need to improve in the first week are five students and in the last week only two students improved.

Table 4
Comprehension

	Observation Report Sheet 1	Observation Report Sheet 2	Observation Report Sheet 3	Observation Report Sheet 4
Excellent	33	32	32	36
Fear	7	8	6	5
Needs to improve	5	5	7	4
Total of Students	45	45	45	45

In Pronunciation, 21 of the 45 students were excellent in the first week and in the last observation they rose to 25. Regarding the Fear parameter, 11 students were registered and in the last week only seven. Regarding the students who need improvement, they remained 13 students.

Table 5
Pronunciation

	Observation Report Sheet 1	Observation Report Sheet 2	Observation Report Sheet 3	Observation Report Sheet 4
Excellent	21	24	25	25
Fear	11	13	8	7
Needs to improve	13	7	12	13
Total of Students	45	45	45	45

In reference to the parameter of Grammatical Structure in the first week of observation twenty-three students showed to be excellent and in the last observation thirty-two. And related to Fear in the first week fifteen students were registered while in the last they were five. As for the

students that need improvement in the first observation there are seven students and in the last one there were eight registered.

Table 6
Grammatical Structure

	Observation Report Sheet 1	Observation Report Sheet 2	Observation Report Sheet 3	Observation Report Sheet 4
Excellent	23	27	30	32
Fear	15	9	7	5
Needs to improve	7	9	8	8
Total of Students	45	45	45	45

In relation to the approach of the time that the students use to intervene, the following results presented in the four observations made. Thirty-two students registered as excellent in the first observation and forty-two in the last. Eleven students registered in the Fear parameter and in the end only one. Of the students who need improvement, two are registered, but it is necessary to mention that in the second observation four students did not use adequate time to express their ideas orally and in the third 3 students to finally register again 2 students.

Table 7
Time

	Observation Report Sheet 1	Observation Report Sheet 2	Observation Report Sheet 3	Observation Report Sheet 4
Excellent	32	32	38	42
Fear	11	9	4	1
Needs to improve	2	4	3	2
Total of Students	45	45	45	45

After presenting the results of this study on the communicative method for the development of speaking skills in a second language, it is relevant to mention the following: Firstly, we have the appreciations that the teachers at the beginning of the study make known through interviews. where they reveal the little oral participation of the students and suddenly their lack of interest in carrying out interventions that involve the ability to speak, almost always the students participate to obtain a grade.

Secondly, what the students state in the survey is undoubtedly relevant to the study, they recognize that they cannot express themselves autonomously about their culture or communicate their thoughts and ideas in the way they should, but they also state that they do not they use the strategies that are required and the use of the language within the classroom must start from the teachers.

Finally, observations were made which showed that there was an increase in oral interventions by the students. Some activities that were carried out, were also considered with the topic that was dealt with each of them, suddenly the students showed more sympathy for one topic rather than for another, this also could influence the moment of wishing to participate, since they can show greater interest.

Conclusions

The present study demonstrated that students could improve their speaking ability using CLT through blended learning and gap activities. Furthermore, the results suggest that the activities, approaches, and techniques be applied for a longer time so that the results are more effective. The study demonstrates the scope of CLT in improving the speaking ability of high school students from the city of Manta, Ecuador.

CLT is an approach to teaching a second language that focuses primarily on the development of communicative competence. Finally, the communicative approach is one of the most important methods when teaching a second language; This approach helps both students and teachers to communicate with each other by implementing techniques that help them enrich the discourse. This approach has diverse techniques that help us to motivate students to communicate, so that they are not afraid to speak, they are not afraid of making mistakes and they gain confidence. The application of CLT proved to have advantages, understanding the advantages offered by the

communicative approach when putting it into practice will allow it to be put to beneficial use in the teaching-learning process, since increasing communication skills in students is the main situation in this approach. Analyzing the disadvantages so as not to make mistakes and give the correct use to the communicative approach using its techniques correctly.

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