

How to Cite:

Zevallos de las Casas, L. I., Rodríguez Barboza, J. R., Castañeda Sánchez, M. I., & Venegas Mejía, V. L. (2022). E-learning in communicative competence: English oral production in times of pandemic in university students. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S4), 7508–7517. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS4.10655>

E-learning in communicative competence: English oral production in times of pandemic in university students

Zevallos de las Casas, Luisa Inés

Universidad César Vallejo, Perú

Corresponding author email: lzevallosca18@ucvvirtual.edu.pe

Rodríguez Barboza, Jhonny Richard

Universidad César Vallejo, Perú

Email: jrodriguez13@ucvvirtual.edu.pe

Castañeda Sánchez, Magda Isabel

Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal, Perú

Email: mcastaneda@unfv.edu.pe

Venegas Mejía, Valia Luz

Universidad Norbert Wiener, Perú

Email: valia.venegas@uwiener.edu.pe

Abstract---Background: Oral expression as a linguistic skill is part of the communicative approach, being necessary the implementation of communicative activities. In terms of its linguistic manifestation, the nature of oral expression has three components: phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic. Objective: To know the levels of communicative competence in English oral production in university students in times of pandemic using E-learning. Methodology: The study was conducted under the quantitative approach, positivist paradigm, non-experimental cross-sectional design, descriptive method; the sample consisted of 155 students of a private university of intermediate level of English language. Results: In the levels of communicative competence in oral production of English, 74.2% of the 155 respondents were found at the low level; 25.2% presented an average level and 0.5%, an excellent level; in each of the dimensions, the low level was the predominant one. This research provides useful and timely information about the design and inclusion of a proposal of communicative strategies -as a methodological resource- to facilitate the learning of English as a second language in students.

Keywords---verbal communication, competence development, English language teaching, specific didactics, foreign language.

Introduction

Worldwide, the covid 19 pandemic has had an impact in all fields, especially in the education sector. As a preventive measure to avoid contagion, this situation led to the decision in more than 190 countries to close educational institutions at all levels, which led to the suspension of face-to-face classes and the introduction of new distance learning modalities, including e-learning¹. As a result, educational institutions in different countries used information and communication technology tools to enable teachers to teach their classes, which also had implications in generating new forms of evaluation. Consequently, in most cases, this context generated an opportunity to integrate the various technological and digital tools in the teaching-learning process in higher education institutions¹.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to guarantee the continuity of studies in the distance modality, different strategies have been used: online learning tools, online learning and offline learning, highlighting E-learning as one of the most attractive forms for the incorporation of ICTs in learning. For this reason, E-learning has allowed classes to be taught using digital resources such as platforms that have facilitated synchronous and asynchronous teaching for complementary activities².

One of the fundamental actors of E-learning is the virtual classroom, which is defined as a space or environment that has been created virtually for the purpose of student learning through experiences using resources and materials for their training, all under the careful supervision of the teacher and with the intervention of technological equipment³. Another essential element is the teacher, who is the guide and facilitator of this learning process; he/she is the one who monitors the student's progress; therefore, he/she must have the skills to be able to improve the student's training capabilities⁴. On the contrary, a teacher who does not have the competencies will hinder the student's learning, harming his or her cognitive development⁵. Another element involved in e-learning is the content developers, i.e. the designers. On the other hand, there are the accreditation bodies. There are also the educational institutions and, finally, there is the *raison d'être* of this system, which is the student. In this group, there are also the technology providers⁶.

Since the emergence of information technologies, there has been an attempt to investigate their use in the teaching-learning process. Thus, in 2005, some factors that should be taken into account for the implementation of E-learning in public and private institutions to contribute to the conversion of traditional teaching approaches to electronic formats were proposed, and eight dimensions in the framework of E-learning related to the institutional, pedagogical, technological, interface design, evaluation, management, resource support and ethics, which became requirements for its implementation⁷.

Over the years, English as a foreign language has a relevant importance in the academic and professional levels of higher education students. After several years of teaching in undergraduate programs, it has been observed that a considerable number of students lack previous knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures when entering the university world, generating marked difficulties in terms of teaching with limited performance in English language skills. For this reason, by means of this information research, we seek to strengthen the student's knowledge about the use of the language, increase personal motivation indexes with a view to learning, favor personalized learning, collaboration and interaction between the teacher and the student. This goes beyond a class session and the norms that the university has and in which it can be highlighted in the reinforcement of capacities which achieve the improvement together with the use of different means. Based on this problem, the difficulty of those students who do not have knowledge about the communicative ability in the English language that they need to obtain is added. Faced with this reality, it is prudent to generate improvements in the ability of oral expression or production called Speaking in students. This skill, in words, is considered in the application of a foreign language when speaking about different topics with the purpose of transmitting and interpreting concepts, ideas, sensations, daily situations and opinions, through oral discourse in different cultural and social contexts⁸. Similarly, the dimensions or characteristics of oral expression such as pronunciation, lexical units and grammatical structure of the English language are taken into account. Related to the national background having as a basis promoting organizations, the British Consulate, in 2015, is an organization in charge of promoting English culture in countries that do not speak English as a native language. It gives references based on statistics on communicative competence (Speaking) in Latin America. A survey was conducted to 5004 Peruvian citizens to assess their level of English and information is obtained that most of them (53%) had an elementary or basic knowledge of English.

In order to support this research, various communicational activities in English language teaching will be included as background information that were applied to various everyday situations to refer to a group of pedagogical, meaningful and motivating alternatives such as the implementation of various activities in foreign language teaching, which will include a series of meaningful strategies and will require the application of authentic material related to the field of the chosen professional career. For this, emphasis is placed on the learning and teaching of the English foreign language, in the adequate management of the communicative competence, which can be expressed in oral or written form⁹. With respect to the applied grammar, it was demonstrated that, statistically, in the results, there is a positive significance in the verb tenses of the experimental group; reinforcing the idea that the creation of an educational intervention program is ideal to improve the ability of oral production of the English language¹⁰. Likewise, the University of Cambridge is an organization that specializes in English language issues, which certifies users in three learning levels and classifies them based on their performance in the four skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading¹¹.

The communicative approach supports the development of competencies in the area of English as a foreign language. It incorporates the social practices of language and the sociocultural perspective. It is an official document of the

Ministry of Education that provides guidelines on communicative competence; it focuses on the use of spoken language and not only on vocabulary knowledge or the mechanical use of grammatical rules in simple sentences¹². When the practice in the learning process of communicative strategies is carried out in the improvement of oral expression or production, it is achieved that they can express themselves with sufficiency in the use of grammatical structures, as well as lexical precision, when expressing their opinions, experiences, thoughts and emotions. In the same way, they will be able to elaborate ethical and critical judgments, generating ideas creatively and developing the capacity for dialogue, by making use of diverse competencies that are of marked relevance in a given professional field¹³. The application of specialized didactics of the English language with the help of communicative activities can achieve the use of idiomatic expressions, metaphors and idioms that are immersed in activities with high significant value and can be taken to an everyday use when the student performs his professional activity¹⁴. Under this perspective, the present research will demonstrate that, within the framework of the communicative approach, the communicative activities are part of a successful application of the specialized didactics of the English language and empower the users of the language to improve their oral communication skills and the possibility of having a more motivating and dynamic session, which generates a marked level of confidence for the interlocutor user by expressing themselves with better property and precision both at a lexical and grammatical level. With respect to communicative activities, as part of the communicative approach, it is defined as the communication strategy of a given language in which different communicative strategies can be applied in such a way that the conversation is interactive¹⁵. In other words, learners interact as receivers and senders. Regarding communicative activities as part of the communicative approach, two important objectives pursued by the communicative approach are stated: pragmatic, specific and linguistic. Thus, the linguistic objective seeks to achieve that the user can develop an effective communication; while the specific objective seeks to achieve that the communication takes place in a real context and the pragmatic objective is met by acquiring communicative skills, vocabulary acquisition and grammatical competence.

Methodology

The research was conducted under a quantitative approach, descriptive method, non-experimental cross-sectional design. The instrument used was the Outcomes Placement Test of National Geographic Learning, which consists of four dimensions that were evaluated in oral production at the intermediate level. The study sample consisted of 155 English students from a private university in Metropolitan Lima, who voluntarily participated in the study by signing the informed consent form.

Results

Descriptive analysis of results

Table 1
Levels of the variable oral production

	Frequency	Percentage
Under		74,2
Medium		25,2
Excellent	1	,6
Total		100,0

In Table 1, of the 155 respondents, 74.2% presented a low level; 25.2%, an average level and 0.5%, an excellent level with respect to the variable oral production.

Table 2
Levels of oral production in appearance & character

	Frequency	Percentage
Valid		
Under		79,4
Medium		20,0
Excellent	1	,6
Total		100,0

In Table 2, of the 155 respondents, 79.4% presented a low level; 20%, an average level; and 0.5%, an excellent level with respect to oral production in appearance & character.

Table 3
Levels of oral production in weather

	Frequency	Percentage
Valid		
Under		79,4
Medium		18,7
Excellent		1,9
Total		100,0

In Table 3, of the 155 respondents, 79.4% presented a low level; 18.7%, an average level and 1.9%, an excellent level with respect to oral production in weather.

Table 4
Levels of oral production in shopping

	Frequency	Percentage
Valid		
Under		80,6
Medium		18,7

High	1	,6
Total		100,0

In Table 4, of the 155 respondents, 80.6% presented a low level; 18.7%, an average level and 1.9%, an excellent level with respect to oral production in shopping.

Table 5
Levels of oral production in sports & exercise

	Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Under	89,0
	Medium	11,0
	Total	100,0

In Table 5, of the 155 respondents, 89% presented a low level; 18.7%, a medium level with respect to oral production in shopping.

Discussion

Oral expression as a linguistic skill is part of the communicative approach, being necessary the implementation of communicative activities. As for its linguistic manifestation, the nature of oral expression has three components: phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic. In relation to the various characteristics, the following can be mentioned: extralinguistic elements (communication strategies, gestures and proximity), psycholinguistic constraints (memory and anxiety) and interactive discourses. Likewise, oral expression can be conceived as interactive communication.

According to the results of the study, the oral production of the English language is at a low level; two important objectives or dimensions pursued by the communicative approach are argued: the pragmatic dimension and the linguistic dimension. A proposal for teaching the subjunctive mood in the Spanish language is presented, which can be applied in the same way in English¹⁵. In general terms, a communicative activity is a strategy of comprehension and expression that is constantly manifested throughout a conversation. There are collaborative and cognitive strategies, called cooperative and discourse strategies, which serve to dose the times when the interlocutors collaborate and their interaction through specific actions, for example, asking for a turn to express oneself and giving it up, proposing a topic, proposing and evaluating solutions, and summarizing everything that has been said. Other situations for an interaction activity include spontaneous conversations, debates, informal or formal discussion, negotiations, planning and interviews. Strategies to employ this communicative approach are a resource applied by the student through different activities to achieve different procedures and skills. The adequate use of communicative strategies is considered as the use of metacognitive principles: planning, monitoring of the different communicative activities and their execution, such as comprehension, expression, mediation and interaction. This research will take into account the communicative activities of oral production and interaction, where the participant acts in two very specific roles: as listener and speaker with a single person or

several interlocutors in order to collaboratively create a conversation or role-play through the use of specific vocabulary, based on the principle of joint collaboration.

Regarding the levels of oral production in appearance & character, low levels were evidenced predominantly in the students. In this regard, reference was made to vocabulary as a fundamental part of the language in the interaction of different interlocutors. Methodological guidelines for teaching vocabulary in different contexts of language learning as an L2 indicate that part of the selection of the target vocabulary, the role played by vocabulary and the teaching-learning strategies that are linked to vocabulary¹⁶. Under this approach, the lexical component combines linguistic, psycholinguistic and pedagogical perspectives. It is of great importance that the lexical component be revalued in language teaching since, with a reduced vocabulary, the language user will not be able to communicate in a timely manner or will use expressions or words that are not easily understood. This happens to beginner students when they try to integrate into a new communicative situation where they need phrases, grammatical categories or idiomatic expressions to express their ideas and be understood.

The levels of oral production in weather of the university students were low; therefore, the student needs to know the cultural component. A real context in which he/she can express him/herself freely according to what he/she wants to communicate. Oral production is one of the most complex skills in the English language. It requires a series of lexical and grammatical ingredients to communicate meaningfully and appropriately¹⁷. Along the same lines, language learning and application are based on various pre-communicative activities and communicative activities. A pre-communicative activity has a subordinate function to the activities that will lead to communication. The development of communicative activities such as interaction activities and language games will have different objectives, in addition, it requires the controlled implementation and the appropriate use of language with creativity. The students' difficulties are diagnosed and through these activities they can identify their opportunities for growth by being able to identify their mistakes and make amends. After a diagnosis, the linguistic forms are controlled in a practical way. The initial activity allows to reflect the objectives and to prepare the interaction. This can be achieved by having a planned schedule and knowledge of their needs. This whole process is aimed at producing certain grammatical structures according to their level of studies, transmitting complete ideas and being able to understand them, in other words, the achievement of a communicative situation will depend on the quality, effectiveness and fluency that is produced in the communication of the interlocutors¹⁵.

The descriptive results regarding the levels of oral production in shopping were low; therefore, we must recognize that oral expression is a purely communicative skill with the objective of transmitting meanings; in this way, it is performed through active interaction in conjunction with other social agents for an oral emission of a message depending on the needs and knowledge of each individual¹⁸. In the particular case of some students, oral expression can become the most complicated skill in learning the target language. Under this scheme, speaking involves interacting, listening and exchanging information, and

expressing ideas with marked or understandable fluency using creativity. In the application of learning sessions, it is essential to define specific objectives, generate communicative situations, take into account the needs of the participants, safeguard the principles of cooperation, plan the discourse, take into account non-verbal systems, creativity, among others.

The results showed that the levels of oral production in sports & exercise were low; in other words, the linguistic skill of oral expression is linked to listening comprehension, in other words, when speaking and interacting in a natural way, an input is received¹⁵. In addition, speaking comes from listening attentively to the interlocutor's message. He also states that when teaching a second language, a series of aspects must be taken into account; in this way, language can be broken down into three levels: syntactic, phonological and morphological. This proposal reflects on whether grammar should be taught implicitly or explicitly and on the use of the corpus that served as the basis for the selection of the lexicon and grammatical structures that can be included in a given level of linguistic competence¹⁹.

Conclusions

The communicative activities are part of a successful application of the specialized didactics of the English language and enable the users of the language to improve their oral communication skills and the possibility of having a more motivating and dynamic session, which generates a marked level of confidence for the interlocutor user by expressing themselves with better accuracy and precision both at a lexical and grammatical level. Oral expression is a communicative skill that originates in the processes of social interaction, which starts from the oral expression of a message that seeks to externalize and transfer meanings from the particularity of each person according to what he/she knows and requires.

The process of acquiring lexical units is a task of much practice and commitment, which is strengthened with the passage of time, a constant practice together with the understanding of the context. The conceptual content is associated with the linguistic form of the lexicon; it is learned gradually, enriching and/or specifying the meanings and their relationships through a series of cognitive processes. The specialized didactics of the oral component takes into account a methodological sequence to provide models, complete mechanical exercises with a view to a formal application of various elements indispensable for communication: phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical. It is important to carry out a series of motivational activities in order to improve the specific functions involved in speech acts necessary for the intended object of communication, to assign meaningful tasks and to carry out proposed activities.

References

1. Affouneh S, Salha S, Khlaif Z. Designing Quality E-Learning Environments for Emergency Remote Teaching in Coronavirus Crisis. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Virtual Learning in Medical Sciences*. 2020;11(2), 135-137.
2. Bawaningtyas, B. B., Perizade, B., Zunaidah, Z., & Soebyakto, B. B. (2021). Effect of e-learning and organizational commitment on nurse performance:

- (case study for intensive and outstanding nurses at Siloam Sriwijaya Hospital Palembang). *International Journal of Health & Medical Sciences*, 4(1), 169-181. <https://doi.org/10.31295/ijhms.v4n1.1675>
3. Bordón T. *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Language Teaching: methodologies, contexts and resources for teaching Spanish L2*. Routledge Cavendish. 2018.
 4. Cabanillas J, Luengo R, Carvalho J. Analysis of learning objects and teaching perception of the virtual campus of the University of Extremadura. *International Journal of Information and Software Engineering for Big Companies*. 2019; 6 (2). 41-61. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7218461>.
 5. Cambridge University Press & Assessment. B2 First is one of Cambridge English's most popular certifications. Cambridge Assessment English. 2022. <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/latinamerica/exams-and-tests/first/>.
 6. Choudhury S, Pattnaik S. Emerging themes in e-learning: A review from the stakeholders' perspective. *Computers & Education*. 2020; 144, 103657. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131519302106>.
 7. Curricular Program of Education. Ministry of Education. 2016. <http://www.minedu>.
 8. Duque E. Review of The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Language Teaching by Muñoz-Basols, Gironzetti and Lacorte (eds.) *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación*. 2020; 81, 339-350, <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/clac>.
 9. ECLAC and UNESCO. Education in times of covid-19. 2020. https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45904/1/S2000510_en.pdf.
 10. García V. English language speaking and listening skills in high school students, Ecuador. *Sembrador*. 2017; 12 (2), 203-211.
 11. Jackson F. Contributions of teaching strategies in the development of communicative competence. *Journal of Education*. 2019; 20, 183-202.
 12. Mamani M. Oral communication in the English language: the construction of a theoretical review. *Revista de Investigación En Ciencias de La Educación*. 2020; doi:10.52936/p.v2i1.24.
 13. Navarro M. Assessment of English communicative competence: a case study in the Faculty of Geography. *RedCA Journal*. 2018; 1(19), 11-35.
 14. Neto H, Alajo V. *Methodological strategies in English language teaching for the development of oral expression in higher level students at the technical university of Cotopaxi (Ambato-Ecuador)*. de Cotopaxi (Ambato-Ecuador). 2019.
 15. Polack A. *Application of the communicative approach in English for the learning of verb tenses in students of the third year of high school of the Daniel Alcides Carrión Educational Institution, Chosica*. 2018. Doctoral thesis in Educational Sciences. Universidad César Vallejo, Lima - Perú. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.une.edu.pe/handle/UNE/2734>.
 16. Rufat A, Calderón F. Vocabulario: (Vocabulary). In *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Language Teaching*. 2018; 229-242. Routledge.
 17. Saleh E. Using E-Learning Platform for Enhancing Teaching and Learning in the Field of Social Work at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. *E-Learning and Digital Education in the Twenty-First Century*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.94301>.

18. Sánchez J, Pérez O. Communicative Approach in the English Language Teaching Process. *Consciencia*. 2020; 5(2),1-14.
19. Unesco. Policy report: Education during covid-19 and beyond. 2020. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_education_during_ch.pdf
20. Vialart M, Medina I. Use of virtual teaching-learning environments by teachers in the encounter courses of the Nursing career. *Journal of Higher Medical Education*. 2018; 32 (3). <http://ems.sld.cu/index.php/ems/article/view/1481/688>.
21. Widana, I.K., Sumetri, N.W., Sutapa, I.K., Suryasa, W. (2021). Anthropometric measures for better cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health. *Computer Applications in Engineering Education*, 29(3), 550–561. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cae.22202>