



Ciencia Latina Revista Científica Multidisciplinar, Ciudad de México, México.
ISSN 2707-2207 / ISSN 2707-2215 (en línea), julio-agosto 2026,
Volumen 10, Número 4.

https://doi.org/10.37811/cl_rcm.v10i4

COLLABORATIVE WORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL PROFICIENCY: EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

**TRABAJO COLABORATIVO PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LA
COMPETENCIA ORAL: EXPERIENCIAS EN EL SERVICIO
COMUNITARIO**

Vinicio David Silva Alava
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí

Cintya Maribel Zambrano Zambrano
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí

Collaborative work for the development of oral proficiency: experiences in community service

Vinicio David Silva Alava¹

davisa2004@hotmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7729-933X>

Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Ecuador

Cintya Maribel Zambrano Zambrano

cintya.zambrano@uleam.edu.ec

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0129-9134>

Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Ecuador

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze how collaborative work activities develop the oral proficiency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners within a university community service context. A mixed-methods approach was applied, involving a sample of 48 students. For data collection, we applied the Cambridge A2 Key for Schools speaking rubric during both pre-test and post-test phases. Additionally, we conducted a focus group where sixteen teachers and facilitators finished a Likert-scale survey. Upon running the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, the figures indicated a distinct, statistically significant enhancement. Fluency and grammatical accuracy each demonstrated a large effect size ($r = .62$). Qualitatively, the findings showed that peer support effectively lowers the affective filter, making students much more eager to communicate. While logistical challenges such as time and resource constraints persist, the results confirm that collaborative work successfully breaks down hierarchical barriers. This dynamic naturally promotes spontaneous oral production, provided that teachers structure the sessions rigorously.

Keywords: collaborative work; oral proficiency; English as a Foreign Language; community service; affective filter.

¹ Autor principal
Correspondencia: davisa2004@hotmail.com

Trabajo colaborativo para el desarrollo de la competencia oral: experiencias en el servicio comunitario

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar cómo las actividades de trabajo colaborativo desarrollan la competencia oral de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en el servicio comunitario universitario. Se aplicó un enfoque mixto que incluyó una muestra de 48 estudiantes. La recolección de datos integró la rúbrica de expresión oral A2 Key for Schools de Cambridge (pre-test y post-test), un cuestionario de Likert administrado a 16 profesores y facilitadores, y un grupo focal. Al aplicar la prueba de Wilcoxon, se evidenció un avance significativo en la fluidez y la precisión gramatical de los alumnos, alcanzando un tamaño del efecto grande ($r = .62$). Por su parte, la fase cualitativa dejó ver que el respaldo entre compañeros ayuda a bajar el filtro afectivo, lo que anima a los jóvenes a participar más. Si bien nos topamos con obstáculos logísticos por falta de tiempo y recursos, se indica que trabajar colaborativamente derriba las barreras tradicionales del aula. Esta dinámica fomenta que los estudiantes hablen de forma natural, siempre y cuando el docente planifique las sesiones con mucho rigor. Se concluye que el trabajo colaborativo es altamente eficaz para promover la producción oral espontánea, requiriendo una estructura pedagógica rigurosa.

Palabras clave: trabajo colaborativo; competencia oral; inglés como lengua extranjera; servicio comunitario; filtro afectivo.

*Artículo recibido 20 mayo 2026
Aceptado para publicación: 20 junio 2026*



INTRODUCTION

One of the principal goals of foreign language learning is the development of communicative competence. However, developing speaking skills remains a major challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Traditional classes tend to emphasize structural linguistic knowledge; students need opportunities to practice oral communication. One of the main barriers to oral production in EFL classrooms is the limited opportunity for authentic peer interaction. In many classrooms, teacher-centered instruction reduces the amount of time students spend actively using English. To address this challenge, collaborative work has emerged as an effective pedagogical approach. By moving attention toward learner-to-learner contact, collaborative learning builds a supportive setting where learners can negotiate meaning, solve problems, and practice the target language.

Although speaking skills are crucial, EFL students often face limited opportunities for authentic oral interaction within traditional classrooms. Consequently, there is a pedagogical necessity to implement approaches that facilitate oral interaction and explore alternative environments that promote oral production. This research provides empirical evidence on how student-centered collaborative tasks can be effectively integrated within university community service frameworks to support language acquisition, offering a scalable model for similar educational contexts.

Research objective

The general objective of this study is to analyze how collaborative work activities help EFL learners develop their oral proficiency during community service.

Research questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

R.Q.1. How does the implementation of collaborative work activities affect the oral fluency and accuracy of EFL learners in a speaking club setting?

R.Q.2. How do collaborative activities foster peer interaction and support the overall development of students' speaking skills?

R.Q.3. What are the teachers' and facilitators' perspectives regarding the implementation and outcomes of collaborative speaking clubs in secondary and higher education contexts?



Collaborative work and communicative strategies

Collaborative work in language education is deeply rooted in Sociocultural Theory, which posits that cognitive development and language acquisition are inherently social processes where knowledge is co-constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). In modern English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, collaborative work has become a highly valuable pedagogical strategy to generate meaningful learning and reduce educational inequalities (Durand Guillen et al., 2024). Current literature strongly links peer-based methodologies with direct improvements in oral production, as engaging students in meaningful social interactions fosters peer support and reduces isolation (Alzubi et al., 2024). Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, collaborative activities in language classrooms maximize Student Talking Time (STT), moving learners away from passive reception to active linguistic experimentation (Rao, 2019). Studies confirm that students who participate in frequent interactive methodologies exhibit significantly higher levels of oral fluency than those exposed to passive instruction (Serena & Lorenz, 2020).

Furthermore, collaborative projects require learners to solve problems collectively, forcing effective communication and critical thinking in the target language (Morales Bueno, 2018). This peer interaction acts as a primary catalyst for student motivation (Romero et al., 2020) and fosters harmonious coexistence within the classroom (Pinos et al., 2020), which is particularly crucial when establishing group dynamics among learners across different developmental stages. By shifting the instructional focus from individual structural perfection to successful group communication, learners can utilize their linguistic resources more effectively (Suwarni & Natsir, 2024). During these interactions, the use of compensatory communicative strategies—such as paraphrasing, gestures, and reformulation—allows students to overcome linguistic limitations and maintain discourse continuity without breaking the communicative flow (Rivadeneira Caguazango, 2025).

Oral proficiency, interaction, and confidence

Speaking abilities involve complex cognitive and physical mechanisms, requiring students to process and produce speech simultaneously (Richards, 2008). An essential part of these skills is fluency, defined as the capacity to mobilize linguistic knowledge in real-time under the pressures of communication (Thornbury, 2005). International standards, including those set by the Council of Europe (2001) and specific frameworks like the Cambridge Assessment English (2020) rubrics, highlight that speaking



must be assessed through grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication. Recent perspectives in language assessment argue that speaking is not merely an individual cognitive skill, but a social interactional ability where meaning is co-constructed by the participants involved (De Jong, 2023). Consequently, successful communication in real-world demands requires the ability to engage in interaction with multiple, rotating interlocutors (Galaczi & Taylor, 2018). During these dialogues, interlocutors tend to align their messages by repeating expressions, which significantly reduces the cognitive load and simplifies language processing (Pickering & Garrod, 2013).

Developing this proficiency requires overcoming psychological barriers. According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, language acquisition requires the student to be confident and open to receiving input (Krashen, 1982). This directly influences the learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC), defined as their readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Collaborative learning environments allow students to actively practice within a mutually supportive space, significantly increasing their confidence in oral communication (Lorduy et al., 2012). To maintain this confidence and communicative flow, learners frequently rely on lexicalized phrases, which require significantly less cognitive processing power than constructing new sentences from scratch (Skehan, 1998). Ultimately, this safe environment enables students to transition from memorized responses to spontaneous oral production, significantly improving their overall communicative competence (Carriel Carmigniani, 2025).

Community service and service-learning in EFL

The integration of academic instruction with community needs is formally framed within University Social Responsibility (RSU). Through these targeted community interventions, students not only improve their communication skills but also develop a strong sense of civic engagement and critical awareness of their local contexts (Avineri, 2015). Community service, therefore, is defined as the application of scientific, technical, and humanistic knowledge acquired during academic training for the direct benefit of the community (Pelekais & Aguirre, 2010). Modern frameworks demand moving beyond simple philanthropy towards "project-based social learning," where students learn by executing socially useful projects (Vallaey & Carrizo, 2006).



Within TESOL, this method is known as Service-Learning. Second-generation research sees the classroom as active and linked, moving attention from simple communication ability to intercultural communication skill (Wurr & Perren, 2015). Data shows EFL learners doing service-learning tasks gain language abilities much quicker—roughly three times faster—compared with standard courses (Askildson, Kelly & Mick, 2013). This environment helps language learners overcome insecurity, gaining the communicative competence and confidence necessary to speak successfully in real-world scenarios (Bippus & Eslami, 2013). Furthermore, community engagement promotes empowerment, collaborative work, and civic responsibility among participants (Perren, Grove & Thornton, 2013). Particularly when the target demographic encompasses a mixed-age cohort ranging from young adolescents to young adults, establishing a secure, community-based environment through speaking clubs bridges the gap between formal education and authentic language use. Finally, the implementation of these projects by pre-service teachers allows university students to connect pedagogical theory with practice, transforming them into more conscious educators and advocates for their learners (Moore, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

Study design

Approach: This study used a mixed-methods strategy, blending quantitative metrics for measuring shifts in oral ability with qualitative evidence to explore peer engagement and teamwork patterns.

Type of research: Descriptive and applicative action research focused on finding a concrete teaching issue and testing one particular fix within an actual classroom context.

Design: Non-experimental and cross-sectional for the qualitative component, paired with a pre-test/post-test design to objectively assess speaking abilities.

Population and sample: Forty-eight EFL learners participated in a community service program located in Manta, Ecuador. Chosen via convenience sampling, the participants were distributed across three distinct speaking clubs encompassing different age cohorts: preadolescents (10-13 years old), high school students (14-17 years old), and early-semester university students (18-22 years old). Structuring the participants into these specific clubs facilitated the observation of collaborative work across different cognitive levels and developmental stages, while ensuring all groups received the same pedagogical



intervention. Ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality were followed, and the names of the participating schools were kept anonymous. Written informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians (for minors), and direct consent was obtained from adult participants prior to their involvement.

Data collection instruments

Cambridge A2 Key for Schools speaking rubric: A standardized instrument administered by the researchers to objectively assess language proficiency. It evaluated three areas: Grammar and Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Interactive Communication. This rubric was applied in both the diagnostic pre-test and the evaluation post-test.

Post-intervention perception questionnaire (Likert scale): An 18-item, five-point Likert scale survey was administered to teachers and facilitators at the conclusion of the speaking clubs. To ensure strict methodological rigor and avoid the need for an independent validation phase, all items were extracted directly from the validated scales developed by Shakir and Jabeen (2025). The instrument measures teachers' perceptions across three dimensions: Effects on Oral Proficiency, Collaborative Learning Practices, and Challenges in Implementing Strategies.

Focus group interview: A semi-structured interview conducted at the end of the project to capture qualitative data. The researcher utilized this space to identify patterns regarding student behavior, peer interaction, and the classroom dynamics of the speaking clubs.

Pedagogical intervention and procedures

The pedagogical intervention was structured into three sequential stages, with each collaborative session designed to last exactly one hour, operating outside of the students' regular academic schedules:

Phase 1: Diagnostic (pre-test). To establish a baseline, the pre-test was integrated into interactive communicative activities. In early phases, facilitators applied the Cambridge A2 Key for Schools Speaking Rubric (Cambridge Assessment English, 2020) to evaluate work, observing that learners showed little spoken engagement and depended mostly on fixed phrases instead of free exchange.

Phase 2: Sessions. The core intervention consisted of two weekly one-hour collaborative speaking sessions. The teaching approach changed fully from instructor-led to learner-led, seeking to boost

Student Talking Time (STT). The researcher implemented a variety of collaborative tasks designed to force the negotiation of meaning among peers. These activities included:

Information-gap activities (e.g., Desert Island Survival): Students worked in small groups to agree on essential survival items, requiring them to justify their choices and debate alternatives in the target language (Richards, 2008).

Running dictation: A highly interactive collaborative task where learners had to memorize short texts, run to their groups, and dictate the information, fostering listening, speaking, and teamwork under time constraints (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Onion ring interviews: Students made two concentric circles and turned around to practice brief, spontaneous talks with many peers, increasing how often they interacted (Harmer, 2015).

Scenario-based roleplays: Learners were assigned real-life scenarios and needed to agree on parts and talk together without using written scripts, closely mimicking actual world communication needs (Goh & Burns, 2012).

Instead of fixing errors right away, the researcher pushed for peer correction, urging students to help one another and build understanding socially.

Phase 3: Evaluation (Post-test). The post-test required students to design and execute a collaborative group roleplay presentation. That performance was graded by the Cambridge rubric (Cambridge Assessment English, 2020). At the same time, teachers and facilitators completed the single-use post-study Likert survey, and the researcher held the focus group meeting to collect detailed opinions.

Data analysis

Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Before testing the hypotheses, we conducted a Shapiro-Wilk test to check for normality. Since the data did not follow a normal distribution, we chose the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test to compare the paired results. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the focus group was transcribed and analyzed using a categorical matrix. This allowed the researchers to identify recurring behavioral patterns and triangulate the statistical findings with the teachers' perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis revealed significant changes in the students' oral performance following the collaborative pedagogical intervention. As established in the methodology, the initial assessment of the paired differences confirmed a non-normal distribution across both evaluated dimensions.

Table 1
Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Paired Differences

Variable	W	p
Fluency	.951	.042
Accuracy	.946	.029

Fluency and peer interaction

The pre-test data revealed that students initially struggled to maintain spontaneous communicative exchanges. The baseline mean for Fluency was 5.92. During this diagnostic phase, learners frequently required additional prompting and support, exhibiting a reliance on isolated phrases rather than maintaining a communicative flow. However, following the implementation of collaborative tasks such as Information-Gap activities and Running Dictation, the final test average for Fluency rose to 8.41.

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test found this gain (+2.49) was statistically significant ($W = 0$, $Z = -6.03$, $p < .001$). Remarkably, every one of the 48 subjects showed positive change, with zero drops seen. This steady upward pattern might stem from the fairly low starting marks noted in the diagnostic stage, where the students' initial reluctance to speak was overcome by the peer-supported environment. By encouraging students to negotiate meaning collaboratively, the learning process provided a platform for continuous practice. As noted by Rao (2019), collaborative activities maximize students' talking time (STT). The findings suggest that when students engage in peer-supported environments, they develop the ability to sustain spontaneous exchanges with much less reliance on external prompting (Alzubi et al., 2024).



Accuracy and linguistic resource utilization

Regarding the structural aspects of the language, the pre-test indicated that students showed sufficient but limited control of grammatical forms, scoring an initial mean of 6.36 in Accuracy. Following the collaborative intervention, the post-test scores demonstrated a solid upward trend, reaching 8.72.

Similarly, the Wilcoxon test indicated that this quantitative growth (+2.35) in grammatical accuracy was statistically significant ($W = 0$, $Z = -6.03$, $p < .001$), with all 48 students exhibiting improvement and zero negative ranks. The results suggest that collaborative tasks helped shift learners' focus from individual structural perfection to successful group communication (Suwarni & Natsir, 2024). The peer correction promoted during the speaking sessions allowed students to construct knowledge socially, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory.

Table 2

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Oral Proficiency (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)

Assessment	Pre-test	Post-test	Growth	<i>W</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	Effect
Criteria	M	M	(+/-)				size (<i>r</i>)
Fluency	5.92	8.41	+2.49	0	-6.03	< 0.001	.62
Accuracy	6.36	8.72	+2.35	0	-6.03	< 0.001	.62

Note. N = 48. A Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed non-normal distribution of paired differences ($p < .05$). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed statistically significant differences ($p < .001$). All 48 participants showed positive ranks (improvement). According to standard conventions, an effect size (r) $\geq .50$ represents a large effect.

Teachers' and facilitators' perceptions on collaborative learning

To address the third research question, an 18-item Likert scale questionnaire, adapted from the validated instrument by Shakir and Jabeen (2025), was administered to the 16 teachers and facilitators involved in the speaking clubs. The findings are presented and discussed according to the three structural dimensions of the instrument.

Effects on oral proficiency

The first dimension evaluated the pedagogical impact of the collaborative intervention on the students' language skills.



Table 3
Effects of Collaborative Learning Strategies on English Proficiency

Item	M	SD
Increased student confidence in using English	4.56	0.51
Improvement in students' speaking skills	4.50	0.73
Improvement in language production skills	4.44	0.73
Effectiveness in improving listening skills	4.25	1.00
Peer feedback effectively supports linguistic development	4.19	0.98
Increased student responsibility for their own learning	4.12	0.96

Note. $N = 16$. Overall Dimension Mean = 4.34.

The results demonstrated an overwhelming consensus regarding the psychological and linguistic benefits of the intervention. The highest-rated item indicated that collaborative activities significantly increased students' confidence in using English ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.51$). Furthermore, facilitators strongly agreed that these strategies directly improved speaking ($M = 4.50$) and overall language production skills ($M = 4.44$). These findings strictly align with the original study by Shakir and Jabeen (2025), who also found that collaborative environments foster self-expression. In connection with the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), the data confirms that a mutually supportive peer environment increases the students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC), bridging the gap between memorized phrases and spontaneous fluency.

Collaborative learning practices

The second dimension explored how teachers managed and implemented these strategies within the speaking clubs.



Table 4
Teachers' Practices in Collaborative Learning

Item	M	SD
Provision of structured guidelines for participation	4.69	0.60
Incorporation of regular communication group tasks	4.62	0.50
Effectiveness of the collaborative approach	4.56	0.63
Frequent use of collaborative learning strategies	4.38	0.72
Observed improvements in English language skills	4.38	0.72
Use of assessment methods to measure improvements	4.00	1.15

Note. N = 16. Overall Dimension Mean = 4.44.

The data revealed that successful implementation relies heavily on pedagogical structure. The highest mean across the entire survey was the provision of structured guidelines to help students participate effectively ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.60$). Similarly, the incorporation of tasks requiring regular communication yielded high agreement ($M = 4.62$). These results mirror the conclusions of Shakir and Jabeen (2025), validating that student-centered interaction does not imply a lack of teacher guidance. As noted by Rao (2019), maximizing Student Talking Time (STT) requires meticulous task design—such as Information-Gaps and Running Dictation—to ensure that learners successfully negotiate meaning collectively rather than relying on teacher-directed input.

Challenges in implementing strategies

The final dimension identified the practical obstacles faced by the educators during the community service project.

Table 5
Challenges in Implementing Collaborative Learning Strategies

Item	M	SD
Time constraints restrict the use of collaborative activities	4.31	0.95
Lack of resources (materials, digital tools)	4.12	0.96
Difficulties caused by large group sizes	4.06	1.06
Challenges in evaluating individual contributions	4.06	0.85
Complications due to varying proficiency levels	3.94	1.12
Student resistance to participating in group activities	3.62	1.36

Note. N = 16. Overall Dimension Mean = 4.02.

Despite the positive outcomes, facilitators identified significant logistical barriers. The most prominent obstacle was time constraints ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.95$), indicating that setting up and executing collaborative tasks requires considerably more time than traditional lectures. Additionally, a lack of resources ($M = 4.12$) and the inherent difficulty of evaluating individual contributions within a group setting ($M = 4.06$) were highlighted as critical barriers. Shakir and Jabeen (2025) similarly reported that time constraints and resource limitations are the primary detractors of collaborative pedagogy in modern classrooms. Interestingly, student resistance to group work scored the lowest mean ($M = 3.62$), although its high standard deviation ($SD = 1.36$) implies that while the majority of the preadolescent, adolescent, and young adult cohorts embraced the methodology, a small segment of students still struggled to adapt to the collaborative dynamic.

Qualitative analysis of teachers' perceptions

To triangulate the quantitative findings and the Likert scale results, a categorical analysis matrix was employed to examine the transcripts from the focus group. It is important to note that the focus group was conducted in the participants' native language (Spanish) to ensure complete expressive freedom. The excerpts presented in the matrices below have been translated into English by the researchers for publication purposes. The analysis identified recurring patterns across three main categories: Speaking Skills, Collaborative Learning, and Psychological Factors.



Table 6
Qualitative Analysis Matrix: Speaking Skills Development

Excerpt from Focus Group (Facilitator)	Subcategory	Impact (+/=/-)
"We did a pre-test. The truth is they were very good, they communicated well, but there were certain flaws in their grammar. Their speaking was fluent, but not as precise."	Fluency	+
	Grammatical Accuracy	-
"As time passed, they did manage to acquire much more fluency. It wasn't perfect either, they lacked a lot of vocabulary... but that part of fluency did improve a bit."	Fluency	+
	Vocabulary Development	-
"At the beginning, they struggled a lot to maintain a fluent conversation, but at the end of the club they did a presentation where they spoke for a long time, which showed a lot of progress."	Fluency	+
	Oral Performance	+
"The way I corrected them was by asking their classmates 'are you sure?' and that way we corrected each other without directly saying 'that's wrong'."	Grammatical Accuracy	+
	Interactional Comm.	+

Note. Impact symbols represent perceived positive advancement (+), neutral effect (=), or limitation/challenge (-).

As shown in Table 6, facilitators observed a strong positive impact on fluency, aligning with the quantitative results from the Cambridge rubric. However, accuracy and vocabulary acquisition remained persistent challenges during the initial stages. To address these grammatical flaws without breaking the communicative flow, facilitators successfully employed peer-correction strategies, which fostered interactional communication and reduced the negative stigma associated with making mistakes.

Table 7*Qualitative Analysis Matrix: Collaborative Learning Dynamics*

Excerpt from Focus Group	Subcategory	Impact (+/=/-)
(Facilitator)		
"We did fill-gap information activities... they worked in pairs or trios and had to develop and	Collaborative Tasks	+
debate what things they would take [to a desert island] to survive."	Peer Interaction	+
"We divided the students into two groups and they had to compete. Since they were a	Group Participation	+
group, they had to collaborate with each other, and they cheered each other on."	Social Support	+
"There were times when the students didn't show up, and we always got stuck in the same	Group Participation	-
session and couldn't progress."	Team Communication	-
"The students stayed on Fridays after their PPE [school] projects; they were already tired	Group Participation	-
[...] and when they didn't attend, there was a delay and we had to repeat what was explained."	Active Learning Env.	-

Note. Impact symbols represent perceived positive advancement (+), neutral effect (=), or limitation/challenge (-).



The data in Table 7 highlights the dual nature of collaborative learning in community service settings. On one hand, well-organized collaborative tasks (such as scenario-based debates and group competitions) naturally forced peer interaction and created a strong system of mutual social support. On the other hand, facilitators faced significant challenges regarding group participation. Since the clubs operated outside regular academic hours, student fatigue and the voluntary nature of the program occasionally hindered the creation of a consistent active learning environment.

Table 8

Qualitative Analysis Matrix: Confidence and Psychological Factors

Excerpt from Focus Group (Facilitator)	Subcategory	Impact (+/=/-)
"As we progressed, we did collaborative activities; all of this helped them build confidence and not have problems speaking with each other."	Confidence	+
	Reduction of Insecurity	+
"They used Spanish a lot in the clubs... out of fear of being judged or saying something wrong, they didn't use [English] all the time, although as time passed they used it more."	Fear of Making Mistakes	-
	Willingness to Comm.	+
"They had prior knowledge of the language, but they had the shyness factor when speaking because they didn't know each other... we tried to foster an environment of trust, like friends."	Reduction of Insecurity	+
	Social Support	+
"I started to feel that desire to push them to learn... I felt proud every time I saw they grasped what they were learning and the next day they spoke more."	Motivation to Participate	+
	Self-esteem	+

Note. Impact symbols represent perceived positive advancement (+), neutral effect (=), or limitation/challenge (-).

Table 8 shows the key role that psychological factors play in oral production, which agrees with rules from the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). At first, learners felt great worry and fear about errors, frequently using their L1 (Spanish) to dodge being judged. However, by intentionally breaking down traditional hierarchical barriers and establishing an environment of trust ("like friends"),



facilitators effectively lowered this affective filter. Ultimately, this social support increased the learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and generated a positive cycle of motivation for both the students and the pre-service teachers.

Synthesizing quantitative and qualitative perspectives

It is noteworthy to address an apparent divergence between the quantitative data and the qualitative observations. While inferential statistics showed an absolute positive rank trend ($W = 0$) and a large effect size, the facilitators' lived experiences offer a more cautious, realistic perspective of the educational process. As evidenced by the focus group, the day-to-day implementation presented challenges; facilitators noted that students still struggled with vocabulary gaps and frequently reverted to their L1 (Spanish) due to lingering insecurities. Furthermore, logistical issues such as student fatigue and absenteeism occasionally stalled the groups' progress. However, this contrast does not invalidate the statistical outcomes. Instead, it clearly differentiates between the learners' peak performance during the post-test evaluation and the gradual, often uneven reality of language acquisition. Ultimately, this comprehensive triangulation strengthens the study's validity, showing that while collaborative settings break initial emotional barriers, sustained lexical precision and spontaneous fluency require ongoing, long-term pedagogical support.

Limitations of the study

While the findings demonstrate significant improvements in oral proficiency, this action research is not without limitations. The voluntary nature of the community service program resulted in fluctuating attendance and occasional absenteeism, which stalled consistent progress in certain sessions. Furthermore, the intervention faced practical constraints, including limited access to technological resources and restricted timeframes that often overlapped with the students' external academic fatigue. Future studies should consider applying this collaborative framework within mandatory, resource-supported institutional curricula to isolate the pedagogical effectiveness from these logistical variables.

CONCLUSION

The use of collaborative learning tasks within community service speaking clubs substantially enhances the oral proficiency of English language learners, effectively addressing the limitations of traditional, teacher-centered classrooms. Regarding the first research question (R.Q.1), the empirical evidence



demonstrates that forcing the negotiation of meaning through interactive tasks produces a substantial, statistically significant improvement in both oral fluency and grammatical accuracy. By shifting the instructional focus from individual structural perfection to successful group communication, learners are able to utilize their linguistic resources more effectively in real-time scenarios.

Addressing the second research question (R.Q.2), this study concludes that the primary catalyst for this linguistic growth is the reduction of the affective filter. Collaborative environments transform the classroom dynamic by breaking down hierarchical barriers, allowing students to interact in a safe, peer-supported space. This social support directly combats the initial fear of making mistakes and the reliance on the learners' native language, fundamentally increasing their Willingness to Communicate (WTC). Consequently, students transition from passive receptors to active participants, developing the autonomy necessary to sustain spontaneous communicative exchanges.

Finally, in response to the third research question (R.Q.3), the perspectives of the pre-service teachers and facilitators validate the pedagogical effectiveness of this approach but highlight critical logistical dependencies. The success of collaborative speaking clubs relies heavily on meticulous lesson planning and the provision of highly structured guidelines by the facilitators. Furthermore, while the methodology is highly effective, its application in voluntary community service contexts presents distinct challenges, particularly regarding time constraints, limited material resources, and fluctuating attendance driven by student fatigue from external academic obligations.

Despite the highly positive outcomes observed in fluency and accuracy, the qualitative analysis revealed that vocabulary retention and lexical expansion remained partial challenges for the learners during spontaneous interactions. Therefore, as a pending task for the academic community, future research should explore the integration of specific, collaborative vocabulary-building frameworks within these speaking clubs. Additionally, subsequent studies could replicate this intervention within mandatory, larger-scale institutional curricula to determine if the logistical challenges identified in this voluntary community service context persist or are mitigated.



REFERENCES

- Alzubi, A. A., Nazim, M., & Ahamad, J. (2024). Examining the effect of a collaborative learning intervention on EFL students' English learning and social interaction. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 8(2), 26-46. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202425541>
- Askildson, L. R., Kelly, A. C., & Mick, C. S. (2013). Developing multiple literacies in academic English through service-learning and community engagement. *TESOL Journal*, 4(3), 402-438. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.91>
- Avineri, N. (2015). Nested interculturality, multiple knowledges, and situated identities through service-learning in language education. In J. M. Perren & A. J. Wurr (Eds.), *Learning the language of global citizenship: Strengthening service-learning in TESOL* (pp. 197–222). Common Ground Publishing.
- Bippus, S. L., & Eslami, Z. R. (2013). Adult ESOL students and service-learning: Voices, experiences, and perspectives. *TESOL Journal*, 4(4), 587-597. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.89>
- Cambridge Assessment English. (2020). *A2 Key for Schools: Assessing speaking performance*. Cambridge University Press & Assessment.
- Carriel Carmigniani, M. M. (2025). *Using collaborative learning as a strategy to improve speaking performance in EFL learners* [Undergraduate thesis, Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo]. Repositorio Institucional UTEQ. <https://repositorio.uteq.edu.ec/items/0e9a5ca4-1c7f-4017-8be7-52ba760265c3>
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- De Jong, N. H. (2023). Assessing second language speaking proficiency. *Annual Review of Linguistics*, 9, 541-560. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-linguistics-030521-052114>
- Durand Guillen, B. M., Yarasca Quispe, V. C., & Pucuhuayla Revatta, F. R. (2024). Trabajo colaborativo: Estrategia de enseñanza del inglés en estudiantes peruanos. *Revista Científica UISRAEL*, 11(3), 141-157. <https://doi.org/10.35290/rcui.v11n3.2024.1107>



- Galaczi, E., & Taylor, L. (2018). Interactional competence: Conceptualisations, operationalisations, and outstanding questions. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 15(3), 219–236. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2018.1453816>
- Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Lorduy, D., Jerez, S., & Herazo, J. (2012). Estándares de competencias e integración de habilidades en la enseñanza del inglés: ¿Es posible? *Zona Próxima*, 17, 108-131. <https://doi.org/10.14482/zp.17.297.852>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545-562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x>
- Moore, J. (2013). Preparing advocates: Service-learning in TESOL for future mainstream educators. *TESOL Journal*, 4(3), 555-570. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.97>
- Morales Bueno, P. (2018). Aprendizaje basado en problemas (ABP) y habilidades de pensamiento crítico: ¿Una relación vinculante? *Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, 21(2), 91–108. <https://doi.org/10.6018/reifop.21.2.323371>
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.
- Pelekais, C., & Aguirre, R. (2010). Gestión universitaria socialmente responsable: Un camino efectivo hacia el servicio comunitario. *REDHECS*, 8(5), 90-101.
- Perren, J., Grove, N., & Thornton, J. (2013). Three empowering curricular innovations for service-learning in ESL programs. *TESOL Journal*, 4(3), 463-486. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.95>
- Pickering, M. J., & Garrod, S. (2013). An integrated theory of language production and comprehension. *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36(4), 329–347. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X12001495>



- Pinos, K., García, D., Cárdenas, N., & Erazo, J. (2020). Aprendizaje colaborativo como estrategia para fomentar la convivencia armónica. *Revista Arbitrada Interdisciplinaria Koinonía*, 5(1), 635-653. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7610743>
- Rao, P. S. (2019). Collaborative learning in English language classrooms. *Academicia: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 9(2), 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7137.2019.00020.X>
- Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rivadeneira Caguazango, S. C. (2025). Estrategias comunicativas para desarrollar la fluidez oral en el aprendizaje del inglés. *Revista Multidisciplinaria Unnival*, 3(4), 84-101. <https://doi.org/10.70577/unnival.v3i4.82>
- Romero, L., García, D., Ávila, C., & Erazo, J. (2020). Aprendizaje colaborativo para la motivación del aprendizaje de inglés. *Episteme Koinonia*, 3(6), 273-290.
- Serena, F., & Lorenz, M. (2020). *Pronunciación y enfoque oral en lenguas extranjeras*. Ediciones Octaedro.
- Shakir, M. S., & Jabeen, M. (2025). Teachers' perceptions about collaborative learning strategies for improving English language proficiency skills in higher education institutions. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL*, 8(4), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.63878/jalt1413>
- Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Suwarni, A., & Natsir, N. (2024). The effectiveness of project-based collaborative learning in improving English speaking skills of high school students. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 1(4), 87–101. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijer.v1i4.283>
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Pearson Education.
- Vallaey, F., & Carrizo, L. (2006). *Responsabilidad social universitaria: Marco conceptual, antecedentes y herramientas*. Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID).
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Soubberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4>



Wurr, A. J., & Perren, J. M. (2015). Introduction. In J. M. Perren & A. J. Wurr (Eds.), *Learning the language of global citizenship: Strengthening service-learning in TESOL* (pp. 1–27). Common Ground Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.18848/978-1-61229-815-3/CGP>

