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“English Contents of the Curriculum for developing Speaking Skill in the English Teaching and Learning Process, the case of students of Noveno Año de Educación General Básica “D” At Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”, in the City of Riobamba, Chimborazo Province, during the Academic Period September 2021- February 2022”

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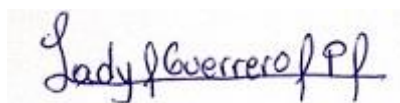
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**"ENGLISH CONTENTS OF THE CURRICULUM FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL IN THE ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS, THE CASE OF STUDENTS OF NOVENO AÑO DE EDUCACIÓN GENERAL BÁSICA "D" AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "PEDRO VICENTE MALDONADO", IN THE CITY OF RIOBAMBA, CHIMBORAZO PROVINCE, DURING THE ACADEMIC PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2021- FEBRUARY 2022"**

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The undersigned, nominated teachers, Tutor, and Committee Members for the evaluation of the research work **“English contents of the curriculum for developing speaking skill in the English teaching and learning process, the case of students of Noveno año de Educación General Básica “D” at Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”, in the city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic period September 2021- February 2022”**, presented by Lady Silvana Guerrero Paredes, with identity card number 0605164524; we certify and recommend the APPROVAL of this work with degree purposes. Previously, the written research work has been advised during the development, reviewed, and evaluated; and the author’s dissertation has been listened to; having nothing else to observe.

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## **DEDICATORY**

I dedicate this project to my dear parents Agustìn and Cecilia who have given me the best advice to fight for my dreams. Despite the circumstances, they believe in my capacity and help me all the time.

To my lovely sons David and Alejandro who are the most precious gift that God gave me and also, they are one more reason to get ahead.

I would like to dedicate part of this work to myself because, despite the economic, emotional, and academic problems that I have gone through in this stage, I am proud of myself for the effort and perseverance, I have had in fulfilling this dream.

Lady Silvana Guerrero Paredes

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## INDEX

COVER.....	1
AUTHORSHIP.....	2
CERTIFICATE OF THESIS TUTOR.....	3
COMMITTEE MEMBERS CERTIFICATION.....	4
ANTI-PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE .....	5
DEDICATORY .....	6
ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....	7
INDEX.....	8
FIGURE INDEX .....	10
ABSTRACT .....	12
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION .....	14
1.2.    PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	16
1.3.    PROBLEM FORMULATION .....	18
1.4.    JUSTIFICATION .....	18
1.5.    OBJECTIVE.....	19
General: .....	19
Specific:.....	19
CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL.....	20
2.1.    RESEARCH BACKGROUND .....	20
2.2.    THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.....	27
Curriculum Definition .....	27
Types of Curricula.....	28
Foreign Language Teaching Theories .....	29
Foreign Language Teaching Methodologies .....	31
The Role of the Curriculum in Education .....	33
The Principals of the Ecuadorian English Curriculum.....	34
Speaking Skill.....	38
Advantages for Speaking Skill .....	39



Components of Speaking Skill .....	39
English Activities proposed in the English curriculum .....	40
Activities that are not proposed in the English curriculum .....	41
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY .....	43
3.1.    APPROACH .....	43
3.2.    RESEARCH MODALITY .....	43
3.3.    RESEARCH LEVEL .....	44
3.4.    POPULATION .....	44
3.5.    SAMPLE .....	44
3.6.    DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS .....	44
3.7.    ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS TECHNIQUES .....	46
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....	47
4.1. PRETEST AND POSTTEST .....	47
Speaking contents and activities; the epistemology behind them .....	47
Speaking contents and activities, an analysis of their interconnection from the teacher`s view .....	51
Speaking practice, an inner approach .....	56
4.2. DISCUSSION .....	58
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS .....	60
5.1. CONCLUSIONS .....	60
5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	62
ANNEXES.....	67
BIBLIOGRAPHIC FILE .....	67
INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	68
OBSERVATION GUIDE.....	70

## FIGURE INDEX

<b>Figure 1:</b> Levels of proficiency: Branching Approach.....	37
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## RESUMEN

Después de varias observaciones empíricas, se ha evidenciado que algunos contenidos y actividades propuestos en torno a la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras no están alineados con los entornos socio-educativos de los estudiantes. Este escenario es considerado como una de las causas que limita a los estudiantes a adquirir la habilidad de hablar en inglés; ya que, se asume que los alumnos trabajan mejor y aprenden más cuando el proceso académico se basa en sus contextos. En otras palabras, ellos se sienten más atraídos y confiados cuando situaciones de la vida cotidiana son propuestos en clases. En este contexto, se propuso el estudio titulado “English contents of the curriculum for developing speaking skill in the English teaching and learning process, the case of students of Noveno año de Educación General Básica “D” at Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”, in the city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic period September 2021- February 2022”. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar cómo se están desarrollando los contenidos en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés, a partir de las Directrices Curriculares. Sobre esta base, se adoptó un enfoque cualitativo y un nivel descriptivo de la investigación científica; además, para el análisis e interpretación de los datos se aplicó la categorización y triangulación. Para todas las actividades antes descritas, una ficha bibliográfica, una entrevista semiestructurada y una guía de observación fueron desarrolladas y aplicadas al docente de inglés y estudiantes de la institución mencionada. Los resultados revelan que el currículo de inglés y el libro estudiado son flexibles y facilitan la incorporación de múltiples actividades para el desarrollo de la comunicación oral; todo esto, adscritos a los cinco ejes curriculares. Además, en los contenidos identificados, se refleja intereses por mostrar tanto la cultura ecuatoriana como la de países de habla inglesa, pero a la vez existe una tendencia a privilegiar la extranjera. Por este motivo, la práctica contextualizada no fue desarrollada por completo. En consecuencia, los estudiantes pierden la oportunidad de estar expuestos a situaciones auténticas. Por lo tanto, se sugiere aumentar la práctica del idioma utilizando temáticas relacionados con la procedencia de los alumnos. Estos entornos ayudarían a los estudiantes a desarrollar no solo su competencia comunicativa sino su comprensión, reconocimiento y respeto a sus realidades sociales, culturales y educativas.

**Palabras clave:** Habilidad de Hablar, Proceso de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés, Currículo de Inglés, Cultura Ecuatoriana.

## ABSTRACT

After some empirical observations, it was noticed that some speaking contents and activities proposed around foreign language teaching and learning are not aligned to the students' social-educational backgrounds. This scenario is pondered to be one of the causes for students' limitations in the English-speaking skill; since it is assumed that students work better and learn more when the academic process is based on their contexts. In other words, they feel more attracted and confident when daily life situations are proposed in class. In this context, it was proposed the research entitled "English contents of the curriculum for developing speaking skill in the English teaching and learning process, the case of students of Noveno año de Educación General Básica "D" at Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado", in the city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic period September 2021- February 2022". Based on the Curricular Guidelines, this study aimed to analyze how English-speaking content is being developed in the teaching and learning process. On this basis, the qualitative approach and the descriptive level of scientific research were adopted; furthermore, for the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data, categorization and triangulation were applied. For the activities before mentioned, a bibliographic file, a semi-structured interview, and an observation guide were developed and applied with the English teacher and students of the institutions beforementioned. The results reveal that the English curriculum and the studied workbook are flexible and facilitate the inclusion of a variety of activities for developing oral communication; all of these, immersed in the five curricular threads. In addition, in the identified contents, interests to show both Ecuadorian cultures and the one from English-speaking countries are evidenced but at the same time, there is a tendency to privilege the foreign one. In consequence, the contextualized practice was not fully developed. As a result, students lost the opportunity to be immersed in authentic situations. Therefore, it is suggested to increase the language rehearsal by using thematic related to students' backgrounds. It would help students develop not only their communicative competence but their understanding, recognition, and respect to their social, cultural, and educational realities.

**Keywords:** Speaking Skill, English Teaching and Learning Process, English Curriculum, Ecuadorian Culture.

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

English has become one of the most widely spoken languages in the world; thus nowadays, for people who can communicate in English, lots of opportunities within the educational and professional fields are opened. In this way, learning English results interesting and necessary. Clavijo (2016) highlights some reasons for learning this language: English is the current lingua franca; it has become the most common language used in books, electronic devices, guides, and of course the internet; finally, it enables the opportunities to study worldwide.

The mentioned global conditions made English a compulsory area in the educational systems. (Chávez, Saltos, & Salto, 2017). This reality made the Ecuadorian educational system adopt different political and academic strategies to face these global challenges and then to improve the students' English proficiency. Thus, in 2016 the Ministry of Education made important changes in the area of foreign language teaching and learning, one of them being the implementation of a new curriculum. However, these changes might not be effective, since the level of English proficiency in Ecuador continues being low, as stated in a study by Education First (2020).

Ecuador appears to be a cosmopolitan country with many ethnic groups speaking a range of languages and levels of bilingualism and from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. It implies that the students in the country must face specific challenges in learning and comprehending the English language. Conscious of this fact, since 2016 the Ministry of Education has been developing different curricular strategies, guidelines, and resources. Unfortunately, the materials developed for most of the themes are not stressed in national backgrounds, causing some unfavorable aspects to acquire the L2.

In this respect, McKay (2002) highlights that there must be a relationship between the contents and the teaching of a language; in which, the contents are included according to the real needs and interests of English learners and the particularities of their social-educational contexts. For instance, exposing students to our traditions, clothing, museums, theaters, sports, and tourist places, increase their interest in the target language and language acquisition. Nazara (2011) believes that students who participate in genuine learning settings both within and outside of the classroom understand English more swiftly. Since, acquiring

the four fundamental skills, particularly the capacity to communicate, requires dedication and hard work on the part of all participants in the educational system. This fact, nevertheless, has become a major issue not only for Ecuador, as well as for the rest of the globe.

On this basis, this research focuses on analyzing the interrelationship between English-speaking contents and activities proposed in the curriculum with the Ecuadorian social-educational context. For this, the qualitative approach is adopted; furthermore, the level of the study is descriptive, in which the ethnographic method will be applied to gather the information required for the study. For the activities before mentioned, a bibliographic file, a semi-structured interview, and an observation guide will be developed and applied with the teacher and students at Noveno Año de Educación General Básica “D” of the Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”.

The following research work has been organized into five chapters, which are then exposed:

**Chapter I:** The referential framework contains general data, introduction, problem statement, and the objectives of the research.

**Chapter II:** The theoretical framework is included historical and theoretical background data regarding the topic and the epistemological foundations of the study variables.

**Chapter III:** The Methodological framework presents the research paradigm, approach, level, techniques, and instruments. In addition, it explains in detail how the research study is developed.

**Chapter IV:** Analysis and interpretation of results carried out in research.

**Chapter V:** This chapter focuses on conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.2.PROBLEM STATEMENT

English is one of the most spoken foreign languages in the world. Lingoda (2021) reports that this language is recognized as an official language in 67 different countries, also this language is the third most-widely-spoken native language after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. It also stands out for being the second most learned language on the planet. For this reason, most of the countries have decided to introduce English as a compulsory subject in high school, with the principal focus on practicing speaking in the classroom, these nations consider that the ability to speak is the key component in the development of effective communication. Given this, the curricular contents go according to the context, interests, and needs of each country.

These phenomena are also appreciated in some countries in Latin America. In this sense, Porto (2014) manifests that “countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Colombia are increasing interest in revisiting how languages are being taught at different levels in their systems”. To support the aforementioned, Figueiredo, Fernades, & Leite (2019) highlights that the increasing diversity of students’ characteristics and their different social and cultural backgrounds demand that schools and teachers’ curricular practices account for this diversity. The no consideration of the aforementioned facts has led to many problems at the educational level and students are not involved in authentic language learning situations outside and inside the classroom (Oseno, 2015).

In the case of Ecuador, aware of the reality and contemporary demands of teaching and learning foreign languages, a new curriculum was proposed in 2016 whose main objective is to develop communicative competencies. After 5 years of being, this curriculum, in force, the results were not the expected. The level of English proficiency in Ecuador continues being low; the last report of Education First in 2020 indicated that Ecuador was ranked 19th in Latin America and 93rd globally. On this basis, it can be said that the students’ communicative abilities were not fully developed in the classroom.

The facts aforementioned could be evidenced while the researcher performed her pre-professional practices in the UE. Pedro Vicente Maldonado, where it was identified some factors that would affect the optimum development of the speaking skill. For example, some speaking contents and activities did not cover the real needs and interests of the students; it was applied only to the activities that the workbook proposed, emphasizing the teaching of



grammatical rules. This fact has hindered the opportunity for students to practice the language for communicative purposes. In other words, students did not have a chance to practice the L2 in other real-life contexts for expressing their ideas, learning about their customs, traditions, gastronomy, and associating the vocabulary with their cultural knowledge.

For this reason, this study aimed to analyze how English-speaking contents are being developed in the teaching and learning process with students at 9th EGB class “D” of the Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”, based on the Curricular Guidelines; in that sense, it is pretended to be the starting point of multiples studies that could be the solution to the found problem.

### **1.3.PROBLEM FORMULATION**

Regarding the Ecuadorian Curricular Guidelines How are the English-speaking contents developed in the teaching and learning process with students of Noveno Año de Educación General Básica “D” at Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”, in the city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic period September 2021 - February 2022?

### **1.4.JUSTIFICATION**

English educators must dawn on that the world, and hence education, is changing. Beyond a doubt, studying a foreign language has become a vital aspect of our life because it offers several chances to lead up in several sectors. That is why worldwide English is being considered as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education. Ecuador is no exception; the Ministry of Education aware of the contemporary demands in the area of teaching and learning foreign languages has proposed a new curriculum that is being applied from 2016. Theoretically, the curricular proposal is based on national facts and attempt to foster the development of communicative and linguistics competencies.

The globalized phenomenon that the teaching of foreign languages is experiencing has led the Ecuadorian educational system to adopt international standards. In this context, the English national curriculum was constructed considering mainly the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) principles. Consequently, most of the contents and activities established in the micro curriculum reflect other social-cultural realities. This fact goes on the contrary of what Figueiredo, Fernades, & Leite (2019) stated. The authors argue that for making students communicatively competent, the contents integrating the micro curriculum should be related to their social diversity, in terms of traditions, culture, religion, sports, tourist places, and others.

In this framework, it is pretended to highlight the importance of considering the students` background and contextual factors when teaching and learning foreign languages, English in the case of Ecuador. When students are identified with the context to be learned, automatically be engaged and motivated to practice the target language; therefore, improving their communication capabilities. This fact evidenced the importance and pertinence of the study. Additionally, this research became a significant theoretical source, because it provided

information regarding some important aspects, like the relationship between speaking contents and activities established in the workbook of 9th EGB, as well as the curricular guidelines; and the other is, how the ability to speak is being developed in the teaching and learning process to acquire the English language appropriately.

Most significantly, the students and teachers of Noveno Año de Educación General Básica “D” at Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado” were the primary beneficiaries of this research, as they were aware of the relevance and advantages of contextualized contents when learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, this study is feasible for the extended availability of bibliographic, technological, economic, and most crucially, human resources.

For the development of the study, the ethnographic method was used. Considering the objectives proposed, a bibliographic file, a semi-structured interview, and an observation guide were applied to the participants for obtaining real and meaningful information that led us to analyze how English-speaking contents are being developed in the teaching and learning process based on the Curricular Guidelines.

## **1.5.OBJECTIVE**

### **General:**

To analyze how English-speaking contents are being developed in the teaching and learning process with students of Noveno Año de Educación General Básica “D” at Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado”, in the city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic period September 2021 - February 2022, based on the Curricular Guidelines.

### **Specific:**

- To describe the epistemology of speaking contents and activities planned in the 9th EGB workbook and the curriculum.
- To determine the correlation between speaking contents and activities proposed in the 9th EGB workbook and the curricular guidelines from the teacher's perspective.
- To observe, from practice, how the speaking contents and activities are being developed in the teaching and learning process based on the curricular guidelines.

## CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL

### 2.1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Throughout history, the curriculum has played an important role in the educational field. Therefore, some events have contributed significantly to the current education in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language. For example, the curriculum was introduced in the educational system as a tool to help the actors of education; the English language was implemented as a compulsory subject (Ministry of Education), and the importance to show local realities in the English curriculum. Besides, important reforms have been carried out by the governments in 1992, 2010, and the last one in 2016, all these are described as follows.

The starting point was in 1918 when Franklin Bobbitt proposed “The curriculum” and introduced this model in education; Stenhouse (1979) supports that curriculum is a powerful transforming element of teaching, for which, the role of teachers and students is crucial, becoming researchers of their own experience. Whereby, Bobbitt (1918) claimed that new education has to develop wisdom out of the living experience and prepare students for learning specified knowledge and skills to face future social reality. In that way, the design of a curriculum is a continuous process, where the actors of the teaching and learning process help its development and at the same, assume certain roles; the learners discover knowledge on their own and the teachers must investigate their practice and address critical situation according to the context, (Stenhouse, 1975). Freire and Macedo (1987) maintain that being critical implies knowing the realities to interpret the world since education forms human beings with valuable characteristics, like being critical, reflexive, responsible, and so on. The contents of critical training must be based on the selection of authentic materials that promote reflection and debate on the cultures they represent, (Brown, 2001).

In 1949, Ralph Tyler introduced a new model based on teaching objectives. This model is focused on a behaviorist, which it does not take into account the interests of the student since this curriculum is founded on what the "objectives" achieve in the student. It means that this model does not take into consideration the students' needs or interests; since it is emphasized in three essential things, like students, society, and content requirements. This model is the opposite of the others. So that, based on Tyler's model, Taba (1962) builds a new type of curriculum, but she argues that the objectives have to reflect both the content

and the type of activity because memorization can be exercised on content, analysis, criticism, etc. and a mental activity varies according to the content to which it is applied.

Taba adds that it is important to incorporate in the academic process learning, culture and the content join with theory and practice. In this way, this curricular model prepares people to participate within the culture to which they belong and adapt to the context. Taba proposes “Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice” in 1962. In the same lead, Lawrence Stenhouse developed a similar model of Taba. Stenhouse (1979) argued that the research of action should add in the main process at the same time theory and practice. For this, by linking theory and practice, the classroom constitutes a place where knowledge is designed for the betterment of society.

The evolution of the curriculum was gaining more importance in the education system; in this way, the Ministry of Education of Ecuador decided to implement English as one of the subjects that are part of the curriculum. For this, the Ministry of Education in 1992 adopts English as a compulsory area in secondary institutions. In this framework, the actors of the process adopted methodologies that at that time they knew. However, this curricular reform has not shown real performance as the main process.

After two decades, the government promoted a new reform in the English curriculum, which occurred in 2010. Afterward, observing the imbalances in its elements (theories, methods, techniques, contents and so on), the Ministry of Education exchanges the mentioned sections for performance criteria, learning axes, objectives and contents for the school year.

Thereby, establishing a two-exit profile, one for the Elementary General Education and the other for High School, so in 2016 the Ministry of Education adopt different political and academic strategies to face these global challenges. For instance, new things are incorporated. The educational goals are based on justice, innovation, and solidarity; the core principles (Communicative language approach, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), International standards, thinking skills, and learner-centered) and the Curricular Threads has been organized into five sections, which are Communication and Cultural Awareness, Oral Communication: (Listening and Speaking), Reading, Writing and Language through the Arts. All of these mentioned help students to develop thinking, social, and creative skills to be successful in the 21st century.

This new curriculum is also based on the Common European Framework of Linguistic Reference (CEFR). This model is recognized worldwide because it tries those learners to acquire specific skills according to the level, at which they are and achieve proficiency. Based on the above fact, CEFR presents contents according to other settings and does not take into consideration that each country has a different history, traditions, religion, and so on. That is why, Ecuador being a multiethnic, is multicultural, and the socio-cultural country needs to appreciate the local reality for learning the foreign language.

In this regard, the Ecuadorian culture has monolingual and multilingual learners, which implies that the students in the country must face specific challenges in learning and comprehending the English language. For this, the contents integrating the micro curriculum should be related to their social diversity, in terms of traditions, culture, religion, sports, tourist places, and others; to what extent all mentioned shows Ecuadorian reality since textbooks illustrate standardized contents. So that, Oliva & Cavieres (2016) criticize standardization because it seeks to have control and dominate the academic process by providing information about Western culture and others.

As stated before, Gramsci (1929) highlights three significant details. One of them is that all societies have their ways to learn, maintain their traditions, communicate in their language; these things characterize their roots and culture. It is important to underline those citizens need to conserve and understand their settings first and then the world. In the same way, just as culture is transmitted from generation to generation, the contents must be immersed with the reality of the society in which they are found. As a final point, Gramsci emphasizes that teachers must be aware of the real needs of the learners for guiding in their learning, they should take into account, what students need, how to teach, and combine culture with local practice to obtain better results in the process.

Considering the mentioned fact, El Universo (2020) suggests improving the English area; it can occur if the educational system complement methodologies with introducing local content in textbooks; it allows that books expose activities about native reality, like tourism places, important dates, legends, gastronomy, personal interests, and routine contexts. In this manner, learners can use the language for communicative purposes. Ortega & Minchala (2019) consider the mentioned fact; they suggest that teachers are the key in the process because they should incorporate new topics based on real-life contexts, interests, and needs. It

permits those educators not only to guide the official curriculum but also, they include hidden curriculum. As stated before, it is necessary to take into account some elements such as culture, content and reflect the social, economic, political reality of Ecuador for the good development of speaking skills.

In this respect, language and culture are closely intertwined, (Brown, 2001). Whereby, cultural identity is an important part of the formation of society and language, (Lacerda, 2021). To understand in a better way, Coracini (2003) claims that renewing a repressed feeling of lacking that prevents them from valuing their own culture; can occur because of the implantation of other cultures and ways of learning. However, the English curriculum raises to develop future global citizens aware of their national and personal identity; but to what extent this fact is true because the micro curriculum shows other surroundings, EFL (2016). Mackay (2002) and Lacerda (2021) argue by teaching content that reflects other realities, they seek to impose their ideologies, power and colonize the weakest nations; in this sense, the countries lose their identity.

So, in the analysis of the research, textbooks can influence the loss of identity because it reflects history, customs, traditions of other places; in this way, Grigoletto (2003) supports that it is central to recognize how the discourses of textbooks work and what implications they have in the construction of learner's identities. In the same lead, Yumarnamto, Yuni & Luluk (2020) propose that textbooks can be the best carrier to introduce not only knowledge but also values and cultural identity while learners learn English. In this sense, it is fundamental to show real contexts in that textbook when teaching a foreign language, because it is part of their roots and it can influence personal, professional, and educational development.

Apple (2016) highlights those textbooks should relate to cultural, social, and economic policies that pretend it is incorporated in the classroom. In this way, it will be a suitable environment to build up effective and cognitive outcomes. He has contributed with important ideas regarding curriculum and education since he proposed a model based on the achievement of skills during the teaching and learning process. To support Apple's idea, EFL (2016) holds that the Ecuadorian curriculum emphasizes the development of the four communicative skills rather than linguistic content learning. It is the main goal that students use the language for a communicative purpose.

All mentioned above is essential in the English teaching and learning process, because exposing students to our culture, traditions, clothing, museums, theaters, sports, and tourist places, increases their interest in the target language and language acquisition. For this reason, acquiring the four fundamental skills, particularly the capacity to communicate requires effort, compromise, and perseverance. Whereby, Iman (2017) considers the teaching of speaking skills has become increasingly important in the English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) context. That is why, the curriculum proposes certain activities to improve the spoken production and spoken interaction, among the most important and useful for the acquisition of this skill, has projects, brainstorming, discussions, speeches, songs, describe pictures and experiences, and role-plays. These activities help students not only with the development of the skill but also with motivation, increase self-confidence, speak about their experiences, use their context and create a contextualized practice. All of these activities engage students in learning and develop a curiosity to find out new things about the language and its backgrounds. Therefore, students will achieve communicative competence through interaction with real contexts.

For the same reason, debates and interviews have caused the greatest impact on the acquisition of the speaking skill, since students use these activities and improve all the elements of communicating, like vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar rules, specific functions, and so on. That is why, Krieger (2005) explains that debates are a wonderful activity for students to express their ideas, thoughts and discuss relevant content related to the culture and then the world. In this sense, it engages students in a variety of processes, like cognitive, critical, thinking, and linguistic. In a way, the use of debate has been an effective technique for strengthening my students' speaking and critical thinking abilities, Ebata (2009). In addition, interviews have become a good tool to increase speaking skills. It can be motivating, especially if they involve personal experience or opinion sharing, interact with each other and show interest. These activities allow students to take advantage of the language. For instance, improve their fluency, pronunciation, and knowledge, enrich their spoken English and make confident users of language in different settings.

All the facts presented, require that in the foremost process, teachers use appropriate methodologies for helping students achieve the exit profile. For instance, communicative language teaching (CLT), is one of the most effective in getting students to develop communicative competence (Ortega & Minchala, 2019) because it promotes those learners



use the language in “authentic contexts”, in which they can communicate appropriately the different functions and interact each other according to the situation. Another important method is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). This approach allows learners can develop social, thinking, and cognitive skills, and it helps to reinforce other areas of knowledge. Marsh, Maljers & Hartiala (2001) explain that there are wonderful reasons to implement CLIL in schools. One of them is that it is related to the context, content, language, learning, and culture, which is essential to carry out the process. Another is that by implementing the method, students will be prepared to face global conditions, have real access to the information within different areas of knowledge, and can improve their communication skills, acquire self-confidence and understand cultural differences (McKay, 2002).

Based on these two methodologies (CLIL and CLT) Ortega & Minchala developed research in 2019. They explain that these methods in the teaching and learning process are more helpful for the acquisition of the main abilities (reading, listening, writing, and speaking); since students acquire the language in communication, collaborative and easy ways. As a result, Ortega & Minchala (2019) highlight that the ability to speak is developed more effectively than the others are.

Another method that is included in the curriculum and becomes important in teaching a foreign language is Project-Based Learning (PBL). It has become an extraordinary tool in education today because it implies a cooperative group, in which students have a chance to produce purposeful communication and interact with authentic activities, (Dewi, 2016). To state the author’s view the PBL is considered a way for students to use the language and acquire the abilities in a useful manner. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a product or presentation for a real audience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills.

Considering the mentioned methods, these have been considered assertive in the teaching and learning process, because they show a lot of advantages for the acquisition of the four linguistic skills. In addition, CLIL, PBL, and CLT are meaningful and useful in educational practice because it implies using the language for communicative purposes when

students practice the L2 in daily - life situation, (Priyanti, 2019). That is why; the actors (teachers and students) should make use of these methodologies in the process.

In this context, Frida Díaz Barriga proposes to join methodologies, contents, and planning for the teaching and learning process will be effective, didactic, creative, and flexible for students who are motivated, and interested in learning the language. For this, Díaz (2016) suggests activities and contents should be used in authentic educational practices depending on the degree of the cultural relevance, in which, the student participates. To support this point of view, Tobón (2014) proposes that educational practice should be adopted according to the challenges, needs, and interests of society. These contributions in the 21st century have been an innovator and good proposal for the curriculum and promote authentic educational practices in different areas of knowledge. Therefore, learners become communicatively competent.

Considering all the aforementioned facts, the curriculum has become a necessary tool within the educational system. Thanks to the changes done in certain moments, the English curriculum provides great characteristics that could help students to achieve communicative competence. However, to what extent our context is being taught in the teaching and learning process; since the design of the curriculum needs to focus on our settings and show cultural identity in their textbooks to obtain wonderful results in the future. It is necessary to be clear that Ecuador is considered a multiethnic, multicultural and socio-cultural country. On this basis, students need to immerse themselves in real-life situations and environments, whereby the English-speaking contents will develop in a natural, fun, and interesting way. For this reason, it is essential to learn our cultural contexts through English and make students aware of cultural differences in the world, what Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) call a “sphere of interculturality”, it means that it is important to encourage learners about cultural environments through reflection on one’s own culture. To sum up, learning our roots has become an important part of the teaching and learning process, it implies helping in the peoples’ development and growth. It means that citizens will recognize their culture and identity are part of their backgrounds and they will share their origins with others.

## **2.2.THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### **Curriculum Definition**

The curriculum is defined as a guide that helps teachers and students in the teaching and learning process for achieving educational goals. In this way, it is a didactic tool that plays an essential part in the educational field, which is included the procedures, methodologies, contents, objectives, and so on. Thereby, most of the educational curriculums are organized into five principal stages, the objectives to be achieved, the competencies to be acquired, the contents of the process, the methodology that will be used, and the evaluation criteria, all these aspects are put into practice. Also, it is important to highlight that the curriculum aims to guarantee students a quality education and comprehensive training for the service of society and the world. (Gonzalez , 2014).

In addition, the curriculum can be defined as a set of knowledge and contents to be taught and learned in the teaching and learning experiences, as a fundamental part of the development process of the students and try to understand how people grow up in their personal and professional life, (Figueiredo, Fernades, & Leite, 2019). For this purpose, EFL (2016) states that the curriculum in Ecuador established its own educational goals; for instance, it focuses on justice, innovation and solidarity by developing thinking, social and creative skills during the main process.

### **Rationalities and Curricular Interests**

The curriculum is not universal but changes according to historical, social, economic, and political circumstances, it depends on the personal and group interests that elaborate the curricula, (Grundy, 1987). Moreover, this author emphasizes that the curriculum should emphasize social, cultural construction that helps students in the educational practices. In this sense, Stenhouse (1975) support that “the curriculum is a powerful transforming element of teaching” because it has developed a variety of significant changes within the academic environment, whereby it has become a didactic tool that pretends to respond to current interests and needs to face the society`s changes.

The contemporary curricular theory distinguishes three curricular rationales:

**Technical curricular rationality:** it is focused on the training processes to achieve necessary knowledge because cultural and territorial contexts are not taken into account of the students, however, the contents have imposed them as learning.

**Practical curricular rationality:** is focused on looking for mechanisms that allow understanding the contents and at the same time the learners` interaction. In addition, it emphasizes understanding some aspects, for example, the educational process, the reflection of the formative practice, its context, and the conditions that give way to the teacher as the central axis. That is why, the teaching process promotes moral, intellectual, and affective autonomy through the collaboration of students and teachers.

**Critical curricular rationality:** this is interested in pedagogical-formative practices that intend to the emancipation of students; in this way, they have a greater possibility of thinking critically and free to achieve learning through reflection between practice and theory.

### **Types of Curricula**

**Formal:** The formal curriculum contains the planning that will be carried out in the teaching and learning process including its purposes, specific goals, and academic conditions such as content, abilities to be developed by the student within the classrooms.

**Real:** It refers to the activities that are developed and organized within the classroom to achieve the learning of competencies in the student, it is also the implementation of everything (task, activities, games, projects) related to the formal curriculum, (Lang, 2016).

**Null:** The null curriculum is not taught as content or procedures that the institutions do not consider due to different circumstances such as lack of time, ignorance of the subject, or ideologies of the institution, but in the end, they are important for the learning process.

**Hidden:** The hidden curriculum refers to the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs within the classroom; they are learning experiences for daily life that are not written formally but each teacher carries it out in their way.

**Extra:** refers to the educational contexts and activities that take place outside the school environment, allowing children to develop their creativity, imagination, and other skills, as well as have fun and learn more about what they have learned in school.

## **Foreign Language Teaching Theories**

### **Behaviorist Theory:**

According to Skinner (1976), learning is a process of adjustment to adaptation through has simulation and accommodation between the basic units of cognition stimulation with someone. In other words, when learners need to learn another language, they should adopt a way of habits that acquire by imitation, practice, and repetition. Another important point, is the habits that students are being developed to depend on stimulus, response, reinforcement, and reward, these factors allow learners to achieve the objective according to behavior and then learn the foreign language. In the begging, they perceive a stimulus for obtaining at the end response, it depends on the people that find around them. In the same lead, Richards & Rogers (1986) identify the stimulus as what is taught of the foreign language, the response as the learner's reaction to the stimulus, and the reinforcement as the approval and praise of the teacher or fellow students or the self-satisfaction of target language use. To contrast this fact, people must be considered the positive and negative situations to engage in as a result of the learning process.

### **Cognitive Theory**

The cognitive theory is also called Transformational Generative Grammar. It was proposed by Chomsky. Ellis (1985) considers this theory in which learners need to have control of the language rules to be able to generate their language in new situations. This theory of learning views second language acquisition as a conscious and reasoned thought process, which involves following a process and applying certain learning strategies to acquire L2. Learning strategies are fundamental to this process because in this way learners learn the system of rules in which the information is processed and generates its retention that allows them to build up a finite number of sentences and use the vocabulary depending on their purposes. Tsvetkova (2017) claims that it facilitates the comparison between the familiar and the new knowledge, grammatical rules comprehension, memorization, and use of language. In simple words, learners link the prior knowledge with the new and develop and improve logical thinking, and then encourage imagination in its interaction depending on contexts.

## **Constructivists Learning Theory**

Constructivism is “an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner” Elliott et al (2000) p. 256). The Constructivists Learning Theory has become essential for education in which determine that students generate their knowledge, be autonomous and independent when developing their performance and reflect in their learning. On this basis, Torres (2017) highlights that this construction process depends on the learner’s prior knowledge and the internal and external activity that a student does regarding new information or activity. Learners use their previous knowledge as a foundation and build on it with new things that they learn, in this sense, try to promote critical thinking skills based on their experiences. In addition, students learn new things every day.

## **The Monitor Model- Second Language Acquisition Theory**

The Monitor Model hypothesis was proposed by Stephen Krashen. He describes five main hypotheses:

**The acquisition-learning hypothesis:** in this stage, Krashen distinguishes two mental processes: **acquisition** and **learning**. The acquisition is referred to as unconscious learning, while learning is a conscious process that happens in the classroom when learners learn the language (L2).

**The monitor hypothesis:** Information that the acquisition center produces will be monitored. When learners produce the language, they should monitor their performance. This action can occur before or after the utterance is made. If it doesn’t match the correct information changes will be made. Krashen gives three conditions for the use of the monitor: sufficient time, the focus must be on form and not on meaning and the user must know the rule.

**The natural order hypothesis:** There is a natural order to grammatical features of learning the language. In some cases, teachers teach the topic in a different order, because learners have different ways of learning the language.

**The input hypothesis:** Students receive comprehensible inputs or inputs that are easily understood, students’ learning will increase. It means that the input should be a little beyond the current level of the learner’s competence, which Krashen denominates  $i + 1$ .

**The affective filter hypothesis:** The last hypothesis of Krashen's theory is the affective filter hypothesis which explains that a learner must be open and willing to receive information in a new, targeted language for it to reach one's language acquisition device and result in acquiring the information completely. In other words, when students have high motivation and self-confidence, they have low filters, whereas learners with low motivation, also have high filters.

**Adapted from:** (Priyanti, 2019)

## **Foreign Language Teaching Methodologies**

### **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

The communicative language teaching approach emphasizes the communication process; therefore, significant aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching. Its main goal is to develop the ability to communicate effectively in the target language Dornyei (2009). CLT emphasizes learning a language through genuine communication since learning a new language is sometimes difficult, so this new approach emphasizes interaction with one another person or teacher in "authentic contexts". When learners use the language, they can communicate and interact with each other, express their ideas through the different functions according to the situation or people who are speaking. In simple words, learners need to be able to use the language appropriately in any social context.

By the same token, the communicative language teaching approach is focused on the development and integration of the four macro skills speaking, listening, reading, and writing to the L2. Also, in the classroom, teachers select topics or contents regarding age, needs, level, and students' interest that is important, because in this way learners acquire the new language easier. The last thing, the role of the teacher is fundamental in this process, can be a guide, a facilitator, or an instructor, they assume some roles depending on the activities that develop their students.

### **Task-Based Learning (TBL)**

Task-Based Learning is a good way to get students engaged and using English. It involves an authentic use of language in sequences of the tasks to get a better result. Task-based learning is focused on the completion of specific tasks or activities through which language is taught and learned. Language learners use the language that they know to

complete a variety of assignments, acquiring new structures, forms, and vocabulary as necessary. Students learn about a specific topic, step-by-step, using a variety of resources. In this method is important to establish three stages in the lesson, according to Willis (1996) and Richards & Rogers (2001):

**Pre-task:** At this stage, teachers create a good condition for students to pay attention, introduce the topic, vocabulary, give clear instructions and engage learners to try to develop the activities.

**Task:** During this stage, learners perform the task proposed. In some cases, the teacher organizes the task in small groups or pairs depending on the activity. In this phase, Janes Willis proposed a “Task Cycle” that is formed by four parts: Task, Planning, Report, and Analysis.

**Post-task:** Students are who evaluate their performance. It can also involve feedback provided by the teacher and subsequent practice of language Then, the teacher selects language areas to practice based on the needs of the learners.

### **Text-Based Learning (TBL)**

The use of text-based learning (TBL) is considered an important method that the curriculum takes into account in teaching a second language. It offers benefits for the teaching and learning process. Some reasons support it, first, it requires an explicit explanation about the structure of the text and why it is written, this can help students understand how the structural and linguistic characteristics of texts can contribute to the creation of meaning. Second, it can help teachers match the social purpose of the text to the needs of students, where the forms of language are used in a particular context, Ragawanti (2018).

### **Project-Based Learning (PBL)**

By Dewi (2016) Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a technique that allows learners to engage in purposeful communication to complete authentic activities (project-work), so it means that students have the opportunity to use this kind of activities to find out their creativity, interaction, knowledge in real contexts, in this way, they can explore the topic and construct their way to share the final product, also they have a chance to work in pairs or groups and at the same time combine their skills and styles of learning.



Project-based learning is a dynamic classroom approach in which students actively explore real-world problems and challenges and acquire deeper knowledge. In other words, PBL tries to motivate students and help them develop skills to solve problems and interact in groups.

### **Problem Solving**

According to Ormond (2006) problem solving is used for students to give a solution to an unanswered question where they should use acquired knowledge and skills, thus generating an answer. In other terms, it is considered an ability to overcome independently the language problems arising in the process of communication. Moreover, it has become an excellent method that allows students to develop their way of thinking critically and reflectively. On other hand, the teacher provides them with real-life situations for students to observe, understand, analyze, interpret and find solutions.

### **Blended Learning**

Nowadays, Blended Learning has been implemented in the educational field. It combines e-learning (asynchronous) with face-to-face (synchronous), taking advantage of both types of learning. This type of education or training implies using new elements of technology or communication and new pedagogical models. According to Hoic (2009), BL also incorporates other elements, such as traditional and online learning, environments, technology and media for the learning content delivered, different teaching and learning methods (both online and traditional), group and individual learning activities, and synchronous and asynchronous interactions. In simple words, this learning is more comfortable, flexible, interactive, and attractive. It allows interaction between students and teachers. Finally, this model develops skills for autonomous learning.

### **The Role of the Curriculum in Education**

The curriculum is considered the fundamental axis and the heart of the education system in the process of formation of society. In this way, the cultural realities of the context are promoted and favored in the practice. Over the years, the curriculum has become a plan that guides educational institutions, in which a fundamental role is played in teaching practice, and that allows to carry out an organization, control of activities to conduct or carry out school actions to reach objects and train new generations that are useful in society. The

transformation is reflected in the curriculum, so if there is no transformation there is no education, we need an education that contributes to changing the world and that we can achieve from the different schools.

### **The Principals of the Ecuadorian English Curriculum**

These principles are a fundamental part of the curriculum, all of them complement the need for having a higher education. Each of them contributes to the teaching and learning process and allows students to achieve their goals. Also, the 5 main principles of the Ecuadorian curriculum will be mentioned:

#### **a) The Communicative Language Approach**

EFL curriculum's focus is communication through the use of language. This approach allows students to gain the second language and develop the main skills, receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing), without neglecting the learning of linguistic content. In this way, learners will be able to develop competencies in the use of a second language for communication.

In this context, linguistic competence is defined as the use and understanding of a language through the expression and interpretation of concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts, and opinions. Therefore, the variety of activities awakens the awareness and abilities of the students and creates a positive and motivating commitment when they learn to learn English. This is not only built on the grammatical and lexical part but engaging students with different ways of learning this second language.

#### **b) Content And Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

CLIL has become an important method for teaching English. For this reason, the curriculum has included. In addition, it allows to develop cognitive, social skills and reinforce content covered not only in English but also in other areas. The EFL curriculum considers this method as access for learning English in an authentic and meaningful context. Through CLIL, learners will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their critical thinking skills.

The principles of cross-curricular teaching can be found in the 4Cs curriculum such that the 4Cs framework becomes a "conceptualization of CLIL" (Coyle, 2007) which stated that a successful CLIL lesson should combine the following principles:

**Content:** it is referred to the knowledge, skills, and understanding related to specific activities of a defined curriculum.

**Communication:** it is involved the use of language to learn whilst learning to use language.

**Cognition:** Developing thinking skills which link concept formation (abstract and concrete), understanding, and language.

**Culture:** Experience to some perspectives and shared understandings, customs, lifestyles in which deepen awareness.

This curriculum conceives of the 4Cs through the integration of five curricular threads:

### **Communication and Cultural Awareness:**

Ecuador is a multicultural and multiethnic country so it has designed a curriculum according to the needs of cultures. It facilitates the educational inclusion of learners regardless of their L1, including those who speak Spanish and Quechua, and tries those citizens can communicate effectively and be aware of their culture and context.

The Communication and Cultural Awareness thread is comprised of two aspects:

1) Intercultural Awareness and Identity: this part is essential for each individual to take into account and practice because it is an important issue for society. “Communicating internationally inevitably implies communicating interculturally as well” (Çakir, 2006, p. 1). By learning a foreign language, students have many opportunities to communicate in this globalized world. Through activities that promote intercultural awareness, students can become aware of their own culture and others. In this way, students will have a broader perspective of reality.

2) Social Competence and Values: nowadays, it is important to have linguistic competence, for them, it is necessary to develop social skills in the classroom, learn to work cooperatively (couples or small groups), accept different points of view, and learn styles. It is essential to highlight the role that each person assumes so that the group can move forward and everyone learns at the same time. It is appropriate to highlight that in a group they learn many values such as respect, discipline, honesty, tolerance, etc.

**Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking):** In this trend, both productive skills of listening and speaking should be integrated into the classroom to produce meaningful and communicative context. The EFL curriculum recognizes the importance of these two macro-skills because are essential in the communicative competence of English language learning.

The Oral Communication thread is divided into three sub-threads:

1) **Listening Skills:** the ability to listen to texts that relate to their age, interests, background, and language needs and comprehend a variety of authentic listening texts, songs, short dialogues, and informative texts. Also, they can develop pronunciation such as stress, rhythm, and intonation.

2) **Spoken Production:** in this part, learners develop fluency and accuracy when they use the language. In addition, they can create short dialogues, role plays, and speeches. For instance, imitation, using songs, rhymes, tongue twisters, and chants.

3) **Spoken Interaction:** it is referred to when teachers organize in groups and students have a chance to interact with each other and also obtain self-confidence, motivation, participation in risk-taking, and encouragement of linguistic creativity and expression. Tasks involving spoken interaction must be carefully scaffolded and the language graded to meet the production needs of the learners.

**Reading:** it is another necessary trend and skill, through reading, learners will improve their critical thinking skills, learn to communicate, increase vocabulary, improve study skills, and use reading texts as sources of information. The texts present a variety of readings about environment, culture, transportation, family, and try those students are interested. For example: skimming for gist, scanning for specific information, reading for detail, and making inferences.

**Writing:** in this skill, learners use the language to express their ideas in a written way. Written expression for EFL learners can be conceptualized in a variety of manners. They focus on formal/informal, tone, lexis, and content according to work that develops. Learners are allowed opportunities to develop their intentions as authors. For example, sentences, paragraphs, and essays.

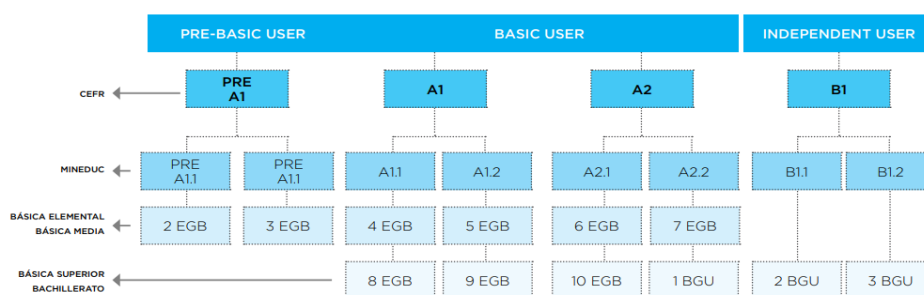
**Language through the Arts:** the arts are one of the creative ways to learn another language. Learners find out their talent or potential when they build up to something and also develop thinking skills, imagination, and creativity such as music, art, dance, and poetry, students will be stimulated and motivated to integrate multiple modes of communication and expression through the use of language.

### c) International Standards

The curriculum is based on internationally recognized levels and processes of teaching and learning languages. The purposes of these standards are to assess language ability. For Centre of Study for Policies and Practices in Education (2013) “Standards can be understood as definitions of what someone should know and be able to do to be considered competent in a particular (professional or educational) domain”. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. The international standards have been implemented in the Ecuadorian curriculum for some reasons. One of them, students need to achieve learning outcomes as the primary goal of educational policies. Another, making the student meet the same level of learning, whether local or international. The last, it allows students have a lot of opportunities in their life.

The following chart has illustrated the Levels of Proficiency according to the CEFER, how the Ministry of Education has divided into the different levels of education:

**Figure 1:** Levels of proficiency: Branching Approach



*Note: By EFL curriculum, 2016, Levels of proficiency that Ecuadorian Education applies in its system according to the CEFR.*

### d) Thinking Skills

It is considered a cognitive and complete process that learners develop when having a meaningful interaction in the L2. Also, it involves solving problems, making decisions, and organizing events or processing information. Thinking skills enable all of us to process

information, recall facts and apply knowledge to various situations is useful for education. Moreover, it includes other sub-skill like analytical, critical, and creative. In short, this ability is related to Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives, through the use of descriptive learning objectives created with verbs classified as representative of specific domains: Remembering, Understanding, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and Creation.

#### **e) Learner-Centered Approach**

The curriculum is fundamental to highlight the role of learners because all the things are proposed for their goals, in which students have an active role in education. They will be encouraged to recognize that their learners are individuals, with different learning styles, personalities, and interests, as well as differing levels of motivation and ability (Nunan, 1998). This approach emphasizes a variety of roles in the academic process which implies teachers and students.

The key features of this learner-centered curriculum are as follows, for ELF (2016):

- Teachers are focused on what and how the students are learning
- Teachers identify those students who learn in different styles.
- A positive learner attitude is the key to successful learning
- Learners develop their personality in English.
- Learning is an active, dynamic process.
- Assessment is considered more formative.
- There is an emphasis on interdisciplinary knowledge, namely on skills that transfer across subjects.
- Creating motivated and independent learners is a key goal of the curriculum.

#### **Speaking Skill**

This research is fundamental to highlight the speaking ability. It is considered an interactive process that involves using of receptive and productive skills at the same time to produce communication, (Brown, 2001).” In other words, it is the ability to speak in which people create different sounds and use the language appropriately. Given this, Samanhudi (2013) states that students can speak fluently, allows them to unite knowledge and skills while creating a language acquisition environment. In this way, students develop communicative competence within the teaching and learning process. Given this, they can express their opinions, intentions, hopes, and points of view in any situation presented. To

conclude, this ability requires effort and practice of the language either inside or outside the classroom; Without a doubt, developing this ability becomes complex and difficult, but the English curriculum offers resources for its acquisition.

### **Advantages for Speaking Skill**

Speaking is one of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), all of them are integrated when using the language. In the present global world, communication has become very important. Brown and Yuke (1983) say, “Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations”. In others words, speaking skills are the most essential skills for all the earners who wish to learn English.

#### **The main advantages of speaking skills are:**

- ✓ To participate actively in personal and professional life.
- ✓ To pursue higher studies in foreign countries.
- ✓ To interact with other people around the world
- ✓ To travel to a foreign country.
- ✓ To communicate effectively with others.
- ✓ To know the different cultures of the world.
- ✓ To get better employment opportunities all over the world.
- ✓ To increase the ability of problem-solving and critical thinking.

For this reason, the activities are various depending on all components involved that support the teaching and learning activities.

### **Components of Speaking Skill**

When learners develop this ability, it involves acquiring and using the language correctly. According to Harris (1974), there are five components of speaking skill concerned with comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency.

**Comprehension:** For oral communication, certainly requires a subject to respond, to speech as well as to initiate it.

**Grammar:** For good communication, it is important that students organize sentences correctly, create expressions, and distinguish the appropriate grammatical forms for different purposes.

**Vocabulary:** To use the language it is necessary to have enough vocabulary, in this way we can communicate ideas, thoughts, and opinions effectively or express both orally and in writing. On the other hand, having a limited vocabulary becomes a barrier that prevents students from learning a language.

**Pronunciation:** it is the way for students to produce language that is clearer and easier to understand. This is about the phonological process that refers to the component of grammar made up of the elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and the pattern in a language. Two fundamental characteristics are segmental and suprasegmental features.

**Fluency:** Fluency is the ability to read, speak, or write with ease, fluency, and expressiveness. This means that the student will be able to use the language clearly and concisely by relating meaning and context.

### **English Activities proposed in the English curriculum**

**Drills:** it is essential and easy to apply in the teaching and learning process in which the speaking skill is improved. Shahlo (2019) argues that drills are a traditional technique that provides students to engage in “real” communication in which find different types of drills.

**Describe Pictures:** it is an excellent visual aid in the teaching and learning process that motivates students to learn English and makes learners interested and enjoy speaking, Yahya & Fardyansyah (2015). In others words, learners can describe what they saw, compare the similarities and differences, and then do a critical-reflective analysis.

**Role Plays:** the use of role plays (RP), by Rojas & Villafuerte (2018) and Kusnierek (2015) define RP as a recreational activity that develops language fluency, promotes student interaction, and acquire new knowledge. Also, RP gives the opportunity that learners to take a role and interact between them to characterize any person. Indeed, the types of roles plays also is important, like based on situations and based on dialogues.

**Songs:** songs are a valuable pedagogical tool in the teaching and learning process for different reasons. For example, improving their listening and speaking skills, are fun and can engage young English language learners, provide authentic, meaningful context to introduce the target language, and are enjoyable, easy, and relaxing tools to improve their abilities.



**Projects:** they are a good tool to work in-group and build a great product. It implies that all members of the group support each other with knowledge, skills, and ideas, in the end, they have better results. In addition, when this technique is used in the process, it provides some components, like learner-centered environment, authentic tasks, curriculum content, multiple presentation modes, time management, and innovative assessments, (Dewi, 2016).

**Tongue Twisters:** it is a great way to practice and improve pronunciation and fluency through the repetition of sounds. In addition, it is a sequence of words or sounds that are usually alliterative; the challenge is to pronounce quickly and correctly. This type of activity involves the coordination of the brain that helps in pronunciation and speaking.

**Story Telling:** The usage of storytelling as a technique that helps to improve speaking skills. Zuhriyah (2019) claims that storytelling implemented in teaching speaking could improve “the students’ fluency, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and content”. It is an interesting activity that promotes learners’ imagination, interaction, and construction of stories based on experiences or contexts that teachers provide.

**Speeches:** they are considered as an ability to express one's thoughts and emotions by speech sounds. It emphasizes using the language according to the topic, situation, giving an opinion, answer a question, and so on. In addition, this activity is developed individually or in pairs.

**Brainstorms:** it is a popular group interaction, where students use their brains to bring out their ideas to discuss the topic freely, think and give opinions about the topic. Through this activity, learners can think more spontaneously and they suggest new ideas and thoughts, (Octarina, Rizal, & Zasrianita, 2021).

**Interviews:** they are a cooperative activity that aims to ask and answer, creating a context or situation, where students exchange information on the proposed topic, also generates their ideas immediately, (Maca, 2020).

### **Activities that are not proposed in the English curriculum**

**Videos:** it is a very helpful tool that provides a ready-made context for the exposure to new vocabulary, structures, and functions to stimulate the use of language.

**Information Gaps:** it is a great pair activity in which students are supposed to be working in couples. One student will have the information that the other partner does not have and the partner will share information.

**Board Games:** the usage of communicative and board games helps learners to understand and learn easily and at the same time develop the ability to speak. It makes students interested in communication and content, (Sari , Kultsum, & Armadi, 2016).

**Debates:** they are a task in which students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways based on the topic, defend two perspectives, it also helps to foster critical thinking and quick decision making, (Alasmari & Salahuddin, 2012).

## CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1.APPROACH

The following research fits within the interpretative paradigm. This paradigm is focused on the observation and interpretation of situations and attempts to comprehend the phenomena understudied via the experiences of participants. Thus, the personal contributions of the participants come to be of extreme important for the study. Furthermore, the study fulfills the characteristics of the qualitative research approach since it emphasized the significance of evaluating meanings, interpretations, processes, and interactions in their natural environment, attempting to make sense of the specific conditions of the phenomena assigned by the participants. Additionally, the research had a descriptive level, in which the features of the phenomena under investigation were explained and detailed. Since the researcher must get involved herself with the people to grasp the problem, the ethnographic method was used. It also aided in the analysis of the relationship between English-speaking contents and activities specified in the curriculum and hence the Ecuadorian social-educational setting. In addition, the techniques for the analysis and interpretation of the data were the categorization and triangulation used. This study included a bibliographic review, an observation, and an interview, which allowed the researcher to obtain the necessary information to effectively develop the research. Eventually, to collect suitable data for the study aims, the researcher applied instruments such as a bibliographic file, observation guide, and semi-structured interview guide.

### 3.2.RESEARCH MODALITY

**Qualitative research.** - It entails an interpretive and naturalistic approach where actions, behavior, experiences, and events are studied in their natural environment, in an attempt to comprehend the peculiarities in classroom practice; in the case of this study, regarding how English-speaking contents were established throughout the teaching and learning process centered on the Curricular Guidelines in which the teacher and students participated. Thereby, qualitative research seeks to make sense of circumstances to comprehend the meanings that individuals assign to them. Likewise, Sampieri, Collado, and Baptista (2015) assert that this sort of study "serves as a link between the researcher and the participants." Therefore, it enabled to gathering of required information and constructing meaningful interpretations for the inquiry.

### **3.3.RESEARCH LEVEL**

**Descriptive research.** – The purpose of this study was to describe and explained the phenomena and their characteristics. Throughout this sense, it implied that the researcher sought to know (who, how, when, and where) situations occur about the topic to have been investigated ( Lambert & Lambert, 2012). In this whole scenario, the descriptive approach was vital in this study because it aided to identify the main characteristics of the teaching and learning process for developing speaking skills, as well as the correlations between speaking contents and activities proposed in the 9th EGB workbook and the curricular guidelines. As aforementioned, data was gathered from a variety for understanding the viewpoints and experiences of participants.

### **3.4.POPULATION**

The investigation was carried out in the Unidad Educativa “Pedro Vicente Maldonado” in the city of Riobamba. The students and the English teacher of Noveno Año de Educación General Básica “D” integrated the population. This educative institution was chosen for the following reasons; first, the researcher had performed the pre-professional practices in this high school and had the opportunity to carry out her observation practices in this course. Second, in this academic context, the teacher mainly used the activities proposed in the workbook and focused only on the receptive skills relegating the productive ones, especially the ability to speak. Finally, even though the text offered some English contents related to the Ecuadorian context, they are not emphasized.

### **3.5.SAMPLE**

Due to the population being small, taking a sample is not necessary. The research was carried out with all the participants.

### **3.6.DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS**

#### **TECHNIQUES:**

**The bibliographic review** refers to the collection, organization, interpretation, and dissemination of bibliographic data. Thereby, the major goal was to employ texts and documents as source materials, as with books, websites, and countless other written materials to support the perspective or arguments about this academic work (Fleming, 2018).

Still, further, it facilitated finding information regarding this study straightforward for the researcher. In a broad sense, the basic principle was to gather clues, key points, and important knowledge about the epistemology of speaking materials and activities scheduled in the 9th EGB workbook and curriculum.

In qualitative research, the most frequent technique of data gathering is the **interview**. It is a dynamic technique to create qualitative data (Jamshed, 2014). Besides that, through this interview, information about the issue under study was obtained, still, further, it was possible to explore the teacher's experiences, points of view, beliefs, and perspective on how the English contents are applied in the teaching and learning process, particularly in the speaking skill.

**Direct observation** is a technique required to fully acquire the data required to complete the objectives of this research. Therefore, it is asserted that it aids in comprehending the context in which the issue under consideration functions or exists (Kawulich, 2012). Furthermore, by observing regular classes, the researcher had information that helped her to comprehend the actions that participants undertake as part of their academic performance.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

**A bibliographic file** was used to discover information sources that aided in academic research. It was an extremely valuable tool to manage bibliographic resources such as books, newspaper articles, digital papers, theses, audiovisual sources, and so on. Thereby, it was being used to make notes on certain important points regarding contents and activities of the speaking skill proposed in the 9th EGB workbook and the curriculum.

**A semi-structured interview guide** was also used to lead the discussion between the researcher and the interviewee. This interview was applied to the English teacher participating in the study forasmuch as the researcher needed to understand the relationship between the speaking topics and exercises suggested in the 9th EGB workbook as well as the curricular guidelines from the teacher's point of view.

**An observation guide** is a tool used to acquire relevant, trustworthy, and legitimate data for this research, in which the information obtained from the observation was used to contrast with the other objectives. Thereby, it was included certain components that contributed to the attainment of the main goal, is to observe, through practice, how the speaking themes and activities are being developed in the teaching and learning process following the curriculum standards. The observations were carried out in four classes.

### **3.7.ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS TECHNIQUES**

For the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data, the “Categorization” was applied. In a general sense, this technique constitutes a thorough review from all topics: contextual (reality), theoretical and interpretative. It permitted grouping data that have similar meanings, according to thematic criteria referred to in the search. Inductively, the researcher previously organized the information according to the level of relevance, that is, dividing the research problem into segments that were studied individually and then globally.

Likewise, the “Triangulation” technique was used which helped to associate the empirical information with the theoretical contributions of different authors. It allowed increasing its validity and quality in the study due to its complexity that there was. These two techniques helped to cover the research successfully.

## CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. PRETEST AND POSTTEST

This research focuses on analyzing how the English-speaking contents and the activities proposed in the curriculum are related to the Ecuadorian social-educational context. Speaking is one of the most dynamic skills since it involves producing oral language usually in response to oral or written input. This ability requires continuing practice focused on achieving communicative competence, which implies, students, being able to share their experiences, realities, and cultural contexts (Samanhudi, 2013). In this framework, it is supposed that contents, tasks, and activities, proposed in the national English curriculum, should be aligned with our Ecuadorian reality, and at the same time, have the potential to be included, adapted, or redefined according to students' real needs, social-educational contexts, and interests, as suggested by McKay (2002).

Considering the mentioned aspect, three specific objectives were proposed; the first attempting to elicit the epistemology supporting speaking contents and activities proposed in the students' workbook and the curriculum. Then, based on the teacher's perspective, the researcher focused on describing the relationship between the study variables. Lastly, to thoroughly understand the phenomenon, a series of observations were planned.

The results obtained in each of the stages are presented as follows:

#### **Speaking contents and activities; the epistemology behind them**

The speaking-based activities identified in the 9<sup>th</sup> EGB students' workbook are interviews, describing pictures, projects, role plays (based on situations and dialogues), brainstorming, songs, speeches, discussions, and questions-answers.

The first activity as beforementioned is interviewing. For Maca (2020) an interview is a useful technique for improving speaking in terms of pronunciation and interaction since it allows students to use oral language in pairs or groups, a factor that benefits students' potential for authentic communication. Its importance is substantiated in the different formal and informal scenarios; for instance, in the CEFER, speaking constitutes a pillar for increasing the foremost abilities and of course, communication capabilities.

In the workbook, it was noticed that there are two interviews per unit. Unfortunately, the proposed interview exercises do not offer the advantages stated by Maca (2020), since the thematic, questions, and contexts offered in the textbook do not have an explicit relationship among them and even more with students' social-educational-cultural facts. For example, in unit one, the interview is built with four questions regarding sports and music *1. What do you think about studying while music is playing? 2. Who is your favorite singer or band? Why? 3. How often do you play sports? 4. Do you think sports are important to relieve stress?* From our view, these questions are not directly related to each other, it seems isolated interrogations; therefore, the communication activities may be affected. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that there are themes like recycling, tourism, legends, in which students can practice English talking about Ecuadorian culture. Furthermore, students are fostered to learn, recognize, and respect our social and cultural roots while acquiring the foreign language.

Describing pictures is another activity found in the students' workbooks. This activity results very usefully to work on speaking since it motivates students to develop their imagination, creativity, and improvising skills (Pratiwi & Ayu, 2020). However, something to criticize about this activity is that most of the illustrations in the textbook displayed features about other social and cultural contexts. For example, blond and white-skinned people, international beaches, buildings, and places. In addition, the pictures suggested content like hobbies and festivals about other surroundings. From our perspective, these types of topics do not help to understand our origins; however, it is relevant to underline that recycling and typical food are topics that are immersed in our reality and were aligned with the first thread that corresponds with the communication and cultural awareness.

Nowadays, projects have turned into a good tool to work on teaching and learning English. Due to the pandemic, the Ministry of Education established a curricular version where the principal academic strategy adopted is interdisciplinary projects. In other words, the target language is integrated with other subjects. This not only helps students to use the target language authentically but to work on their capabilities to solve social and educational problems as well as be conscious of their strengths and limitations as stated by Dewi (2016). In the textbook, two projects in each unit are identified. In this case, most of the proposed topics are aimed to highlight our backgrounds. Examples of the project-based thematic are *Your traditional festivals; All you need is cleanliness, Rain, sun, snow; All you need is taking*



*care of the environment; All you need is imagination, let's make a video, let's talk about an icon! and Sharing recipes*".

Continuing with the activity's description, it is time to talk about Roleplaying. This activity consists in making students take a specific role to act on the diverse situations, (Krebt, 2017). Also, it helps learners increase their communicative skills and use the language through acting. Observing the advantages derived from role plays, the textbook incorporates contents such as "*Buying gifts; Let's travel to Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas; Old traditions; She/he did what?*" It can be demonstrated that these thematic fosters exposure to Ecuadorian culture and give learners the chance to, meaningfully, practice the foreign language. Another interesting recognized fact is that in the workbook, two types of role-plays are proposed, one based on situations and the other based on dialogues. This permits learners to utilize the context similar to real-life settings and it involves using their imagination, knowledge, and vocabulary while acting as argued by Rojas & Villafuerte (2018)

The workbook also offers Brainstorming activities, which is one of the strategies that allow learners to communicate and create a good group interaction where each participant shares their ideas as soon as they come to mind; centered on this description, the textbook established a variety of contents for this activity, the most important are: *Galo Arellano*, a famous Ecuadorian character and *Dumpster diving and honesty*. Contents considered in the Communication and cultural awareness principle (First tread of the curriculum). In this way, using this kind of content lets students elicit intercultural awareness, identity, social competence, and values (Octarina, Rizal, & Zasrianita, 2021) and through this activity, they can express their ideas and opinions more freely and spontaneously. On other hand, there were contents like *Shopping in China; Clash of clans; Ernest Hemingway*; and others that seem to be interesting but not related to our context.

Showing other realities can result in a little difficulty in teaching English because students need to acquire the L2 through the interaction between the language and the culture that is immersed; for this reason, songs can be the way to expose the Ecuadorian environment since this country has a variety of types of music like *San Juanito, Bomba, Marimba, Tonada, Alvazo, El Pasillo, Capishca*, among other musical genres that can be incorporated in the teaching and learning process. This activity results funny for young learners and enhances their interest and participation. In addition, it shows a variety of benefits, for

example, providing authentic, meaningful context to introduce the target language, helps to create a suitable environment for learners to practice the language, finally, songs have become a good didactic and pedagogical tool for developing the ability to speak, (Shin, 2017). However, the workbook presented only two songs “*What would you do if you could turn back time?*” and *Stand by me*” that have nothing to do with our national genders.

Discussions are another activity that is incorporated in the workbook. The topics covered by the means of this activity are *Community-based tourists* and *Who doesn't like seafood?* These thematic allow learners to share their ideas, opinions to practice the foreign language and further develop their critical thinking, reflective capacities, and other cognitive skills. This activity is considered a very effective tool for teaching English and making progress in the ability to speak, (Hayes & Devitt, 2008).

Speeches and question-answers are the last speaking-based activities included in the curriculum and workbook. Both try to develop critical thinking, use the language according to the topic, give an opinion, and reflect on situations. In this case, there are few activities regarding speeches in the units, as an example “***German in Ecuador; Hallo from Germany; How is the weather? Artists and four seasons; Are you afraid of the dark; La Rotonda; Testing your honesty.*** The topics in bold give the chance for practicing and learning our settings; for using English to talk about the Ecuadorian context.

All the activities mentioned are included in the Oral communication Tread, which allows students to achieve the ability to speak through spoken production and interaction. Furthermore, the workbook offers contents related to the other treads (Communication and cultural awareness / Language through Arts). To a large extent, the contents of some activities are not isolated from our reality; however, most of them try to give examples, information, and context regarding other cultures. To sum up, the workbook and the curriculum should focus to expose our Ecuadorian roots first and bring out examples according to the context in which students are, this helps to relate language to real-life backgrounds.

## **Speaking contents and activities, an analysis of their interconnection from the teacher`s view**

The curricular organization plays a fundamental role in education since therein guidelines and the fundamentals for the teaching and learning process are established along with its three levels of concretion (macro, meso, micro). The area of foreign languages teaching and learning is not the exception. The national curriculum in this field, for instance, determines English as a mandatory subject, and its teaching is structured considering, respecting, and valuing the needs and interests of educational communities, (Cochancela & Herrera, 2020).

This fact has triggered many interrogations; one of them is knowing to what extent, the curriculum considers the social, educational, economic, cultural, political, characteristics of Ecuadorian students. This study pretended to cover this inquiry in the speaking staff. For this target, an interview was applied to the 9<sup>th</sup> EGB English teacher of the UE. Pedro Vicente Maldonado.

In this regard, the teacher was questioned about her views on how the new curricular proposal responds to the socio-educational and sociolinguistic needs of the Ecuadorian students, to what she stated that:

“For me, the curricular proposal developed in 2016 has been improved in all its areas, showed interest in the development of four macro skills of the language, (...). I think that these curricular guidelines help to develop in the best way the acquisition of the language, where students can participate in class (...). The thing is that students have to use the language for speaking and practicing English all the time”

From what is indicated by the interviewee, it could be understood that the 2016 curricular guidelines offer flexibility for educational institutions to incorporate contextualized elements that they consider necessary in the foreign languages teaching and learning process. This is possible since in the curriculum five threads for the acquisition of receptive and productive skills are proposed. Communication and cultural awareness, Oral communication, Reading, Writing, and Language through Arts. These contributions help teachers and students use the language in communicative interactions and develop thinking, social, and creative skills. These sub-skills are essential and complement the four capabilities.

The data gathered in the first specific objective evidenced important aspects; some contents are not directly related to the real needs and interests of Ecuadorian students the contrary to what is underlined in the curriculum. On this basis, the teacher highlighted some positive and negative aspects concerning others and our settings:

“I consider that teaching other contexts allow to know all about the world, students have to get knowledge about the different cultures. Showing other settings allow learners can travel around the world to practice the language while enjoying the place (...). On other hand, teaching our real-life contexts permits students to appreciate our roots and location, for this reason, it is important to know our culture first and then the others for comparing, selecting which have the best traditions, costumes, food (...). In my case, if the workbook does not propose any activity about Ecuador culture, I give real examples.”

As mentioned above, to perceive both contexts mean taking into consideration the “sphere of interculturality” (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996). The teacher’s answer exposes that is important to get students involved with our backgrounds as well as with others. However, when people are in contact with a foreign language, they need to be closely interconnected with the language and culture, as stated by Brown (2001). Considering the mentioned fact Gramsci (1929) supported that each society is different from the others so that is significant to encourage learners to talk about cultural atmospheres through reflection on one’s own. That is why, the micro curriculum should integrate content related to our social diversity, in terms of, culture, religion, sports, tourist places, and other contexts for students to comprehend and conserve their settings first and then the world. For this, lots of emphasis to join local content with interactive activities for speaking, both will help to acquire the language; in this regard, the interviewee was asked about the activities she uses for enriching the ability to speak in her students, the teacher argued:

“I try to use the best activities according to the contents. For example, Role-plays, tongue twisters, discussions, describing pictures, and questions-answers. The book presents a variety of activities for speaking and other skills; games are a clear example for trying those students to feel motivated. In my case, I try to engage my dear students with new activities, as an example, research information about any topic is good for students to develop their critical thinking and participate in class. It is fundamental to underline that the thing is that students talk and prepare in advance.”

What is stated by the teacher fits what is established in the curriculum and the workbook. Within these curricular tools a variety of activities for speaking are proposed; among the most prominent are interviews, role-plays, tongue twisters, discussions, games, describing pictures, projects, brainstorming, and so on. These activities support students in the acquisition of the skill, increase self-confidence for communicating, and increase their critical thinking; as the interviewee mentioned, research information and preparing in advance is a good idea since they can practice not only in the class but outside.

Learning and acquiring a language is a process that demands perseverance, discipline, and effort by students; but teachers also perform a vital role in the teaching and learning process, because they are those who will put into practice the different curricular establishments. In this context, being conscious of the relationship among the three levels of curricular concreteness (macro, meso, and micro) is fundamental for the success of the academic process; in this regard, the teacher mentioned the following:

“I consider that the teaching and learning process involves a lot of processes. I think that the macro, meso, and micro-English curricula join themselves, we have to start from the little to go to the big things. As a teacher, I prepare all the class in advance, planning to do in the best way, (...). The curriculum is only a guide that helps in the process, but I add more material, activities, contents in each class according to the topic. For example, I love a lot the “Live worksheets”, because students can practice many times and this platform.”

As stated before, the curriculum is considered as a guide that helps teachers and students to accomplish the teaching and learning goals (Gonzalez , 2014). From what is argued by the interviewee, it can be assumed that the macro, meso, and micro curricular levels are interrelated and that their organization enables the potentials to integrate activities related to students’ daily life and meaningful tasks that give them the chance to practice the oral language, (Singh, 2016). It means that the new proposal admits this type of flexibility in the process depending on the students’ context.

To better understand the levels of the curriculum, a brief explanation is offered as follows. The macro is developed nationally, that is, through the educational policies generated by the government; the meso is carried out in each institution and the micro is referred to how the process takes place in the classroom. In this way, these three levels of

concreteness play a fundamental role in the educational field because all of them are important in the teaching and learning process since based on these, teachers plan the different contents and activities considering the level, age, needs, and interest of their students.

Questions regarding the incorporation, in the curriculum, of thematic related to our culture and their usefulness on speaking development were posted; in addition, it was asked to identify the activities and contents that mostly benefit the teaching and learning process in the study context. In this sense, the teacher added:

“I think is very important to introduce different topics about our country, it allows to know and explore the Ecuadorian culture, (...). For example, the weather, typical food, clothes, traditions, and costumes, all of the topics mentioned help students to compare and contrast information between each region and then understand each context.”

Based on what is stated, to a certain extent, the English curriculum is not isolated from our reality; however, as evidenced in the first part of the research, for oral communication, the curriculum limits its focus to abroad realities. If considered the Ecuadorian culture, oral communication activities would allow students to raise awareness and cultural identity that can be transmitted from generation to generation while the foreign language is acquired. The topics mentioned by the teacher are excellent for incorporating in the teaching and learning process because exposing students to our culture, traditions, clothing, religion, sports, legends, and history increases their interest in the target language; thus, language acquisition is accomplished (McKay, 2002).

Proficiency, in terms of oral production, is a complex and difficult target, but if the academic process includes English-speaking content in a natural, fun, and interesting way, it becomes easier to accomplish. In this respect, the interviewee explained:

“...improving speaking skills require a lot of effort and working hard in the classroom, (...). Another thing is that the acquisition of the main abilities depends the most on the students because we only guide them, help them to speak, and teach according to the level they are. In some cases, students have the opportunity to develop receptive skills, but I incorporate activities for students to practice productive skills at the same time.”

In the answer, it is highlighted the importance and complexity of speaking. It is one of the most complicated to use and acquire productive skills since it requires students to use their thinking, knowledge, creativity, improvising, among other micro-skills simultaneously (Singh, 2016). It means, for meaningful speaking practice, students need to integrate all the issues they have learned and put them into real rehearsal. Furthermore, it is necessary to have students in contact with the target language every day. All these facts can be accomplished only with the predisposition of learners.

Even though the multiple political-educational decisions taken in Ecuador, in the English Proficiency Index by Education First (2020), it is affirmed that the level of proficiency in the country is “Very low” in this regard, a final question was proposed; it inquired about the reasons why students nationwide do not increase their oral communicative competence. The professor underlined:

“There are a lot of reasons for the low level of English in Ecuador, one of them is that students do not have the opportunity to practice the language with native speakers and are not immersed in real-life situations. Also, nowadays students are immersed in the teaching and learning process one hour a week, it is not enough to acquire the language. Lastly, the way of learning is different, days in a face-to-face modality way and others virtually, the process is delayed. However, habits of learning appear; actually, people have a chance to surf the internet, they can find a lot of activities for training.”

A fact that was not planned when this study was proposed is the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. This phenomenon disturbed all the areas of human interaction but probably, the most affected one was education. Schools had to close, virtuality was adopted for continuing with the academic process, methodologies, approaches, and other issues linked to education suffer paradigmatical shifts. These, from the teachers’ view, are some of the reasons for the low level of English, but it is important to manifest that the pandemic appeared in 2020 and the low level of English in the country is historic. A positive factor resulting from the pandemic is the re-significance of the Internet, today it is considered an excellent tool to find, share, and practice English with native, non-native, English-speakers without the conventional hindrances of time and place (El Universo, 2020).

## Speaking practice, an inner approach

Due to the global health emergency and the facts previously explained, the observation process was carried out virtually as well as through face-to-face encounters. It was applied along four classes aiming to identify details about contents, activities, and the contextualized practice to foster speaking.

In the first observation contents were the focus. The first identified topic was “Imaginary situations” which served as a platform to teach the second conditional. The teacher introduced the thematic by the means of a tongue twister “*If two witches would watch, two watches which witch, would watch which watch?*”

Mainly, through the example, learners implicitly learn the grammatical structure, knew the new vocabulary through drawings made by the teacher, and use the L2 for practicing. Tongue twisters are one of the activities immersed in the Oral Communication thread since it enables students to recognize, understand and practice the foreign language (Shahlo, 2019).

Continuing with the description, something to underline from this content is that made possible for the professor to give examples regarding both backgrounds, it means our contexts and the others, for instance: “*If I were president, I would give internet to all educational institutions / If I were the minister of education, I would give a laptop to every low-income student / If I lived in the Coast Region, I would like to visit the beaches every week*”. This kind of illustration made students use the language for talking about the particularities in our nation, as well as other countries. What was observed in the class also evidenced that students did not have a chance to expose their own examples, the educator did not offer extra activities for speaking and the process was carried out in a very short time. This is probably because of the emergency humankind is experiencing due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The second observation was oriented to discern how the activities help students to rehearse the target language. In this case, the teaching and learning process was executed virtually. In this context, the teacher planned two activities for developing oral communication. One of them was a song carried out at the beginning of the classes, its name



was “*Yellow submarine*”. This activity lasted about 12 minutes, with lots of emphasis on listening to the lyrics, singing, and finding new vocabulary. Given this, the students practice the song twice, first the ladies and then the boys.

For Shin (2016), introducing songs in the academic process offers great advantages, improve students’ pronunciation, increase motivation to speak, and acquire the language that can turn funny. Presenting songs when teaching English can have a lot of benefits as evidenced previously, however proposing Ecuadorian musical genres, would be better.

Subsequently, the teacher exposed an E-mail about Education in Ecuador and pointed out the situation that is experiencing nowadays. A discussion was proposed on this basis. Theoretically, discussions are considered an excellent tool for practicing L2, and learners develop their critical and reflective capabilities, (Hayes & Devitt, 2008).

The thematic was “*If you had the opportunity to change something in Education in Ecuador, what would you do?*”, it was a chance for students to expose their real experience, but only two learners contributed with their view. In addition, some aspects were reflected, the proposed theme was useful and meaningful because it showed the content already learned and allowed students to analyze the Ecuadorian educational facts.

The contextualized practice was the aim of the third observation. In the development of the class, the teacher presented a well-known song in teaching English, “*Lemon tree*”, this activity was divided into three moments; learners listened to the song, then the teacher demonstrated through body movements what the song means and in the last time, the professor related some phrases of the songs with real situations. For instance: “*Isolation is not good for me / I'd like to change my point of view/everything will happen*”. In this sense, the presented example may be related to what is exposed by Giroux (2009); presenting the real problems will be one of the strategies that motivate learners to associate the knowledge with our context, helping them to develop their critical reflection as well as understand reality.

Something to highlight from the three observations is that mainly the teacher developed the proposed topic “*Comment adverbs*” and presented activities like song, questions-answers, and brainstorming, but in most of the processes, the contextualized

practice was not fully developed. As a result, the students lost the opportunity to be immersed in authentic situations and not relate our culture with the new knowledge.

## **4.2. DISCUSSION**

The results collected from the three instruments showed relevant facts. The Curricular organization proposed in 2016 has had a great impact on the educational field, the English subject no is exception, this new proposal takes into consideration the needs and interests of Ecuadorian students also offers flexibility for educational institutions to incorporate contextualized elements in teaching and learning process.

The English curriculum is built up over five threads aimed at the development of the four macro and sub-skills. Besides, for reaching purposeful communicative interaction with the target language, the core principles consider innovative methodologies such as the Communicative approach, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), International standards, Thinking skills, and Learner-centered approach.

The results showed that what the teacher is doing for speaking practice fits what is established in the curriculum and the workbook. Among the identified activities are brainstorming, songs, speeches, discussions, tongue twisters, interviews, projects, and so on. These kinds of activities help students to increases their communicative competence and acquire the foreign language funnily and interestingly.

Even though, the teacher fosters students' learning through the usage of activities and contents according to the level, age, interests, and needs; some thematic are isolated and not directly related to our cultural and social reality. In this context, it could be affirmed that to accomplish better results; speaking topics should include aspects like religion, sports, tourist places, history, legends, typical food, and other contexts for students to relate to their cultural atmospheres, understand, and appreciate their origins, in other words, let learners associate the world they learn as a sphere of interculturality.

Considering the mentioned facts, creating contextualized practice is fundamental. Students must associate what they are learning with their real-life staff. In this context, the teacher should relate the students' culture, situations, daily life, and other aspects for fostering this type of practice in and outside the classroom.

To sum up, it could be said that the three levels of curricular concreteness (macro, meso, and micro) should have a closer relationship, in the way that their organization permit the integration of contents to students' daily life and give students the chance to practice the oral language and express themselves in a more free and spontaneous way. Finally, even though this was not part of this study, it is important to mention that, due to the Pandemic, the UE. Pedro Vicente Maldonado adopted the blended learning approach, this modality, to an extent, has affected the acquisition of the language, this was stated by the teacher.

## **CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1. CONCLUSIONS**

The workbook, as well as the curriculum, present a variety of activities for developing oral communication, among the most relevant are interviews, describing pictures, projects, role plays, brainstorming, songs, speeches, and discussions. All of these are immersed in the five curricular threads, Communication and cultural awareness, Oral communication, Reading, Writing, and Language through Arts. In addition, in the identified contents, interests to show both Ecuadorian cultures and the one from English-speaking countries are evidenced but at the same time, there is a tendency to privilege the foreign one.

The flexibility, offered in the National English curriculum, allows to incorporation of contextualized elements that teachers consider necessary in the foreign languages teaching and learning process. These contributions help, both teachers and students, use the language in communicative interactions and develop also thinking, social, and creative sub-skills. This fact evidences the correlation existing among the macro, meso, and micro curriculum proposals.

Even though, the national curriculum facilitates the linking of contents and activities to students' realities; the contextualized practice was not fully developed. As a result, students lost the opportunity to be immersed in authentic situations.

## **5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The proposed contents in the English curriculum as well as the workbook for the development of speaking skills should take an equitable value of both Ecuadorian culture and English-speaking countries, emphasizing our contexts as foreground in the teaching and learning process.

It is recommendable for the teachers to take advantage of the flexibility offered in the English National Curriculum and propose authentic situations in their teaching practice incorporating activities such as brainstorming, songs, discussions, debates, and projects which would contribute to the improvement of students' oral communication capabilities as well as in the development of their thinking, social and creative skills.

It is suggested to increase the language rehearsal by the means of contextualization. A good option is by introducing thematic like weather, typical food, clothes, musical genres, tourist places, legends, anecdotes, traditions, costumes, and others related to students' backgrounds. It would help students develop not only their communicative competence but their understanding, recognition, and respect to their social, cultural, and educational realities.

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## ANNEXES



### UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN, HUMANAS Y TECNOLOGÍAS

#### CARRERA DE IDIOMAS

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC FILE

**Description:** The instrument is developed in accordance with the Theoretical Framework. It is focus on three main aspects, speaking contents and activities, the epistemology of the activity and activity/content regarding the curriculum that take into account the first specific objective established for the investigation.

**Objective:** To describe the epistemology of speaking contents and activities planned in the 9th EGB workbook and in the curriculum.

Speaking contents and activities	Activity:
	Contents:
Epistemology of the activity:	
Activity/content regarding the curriculum:	
Bibliography:	



**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO**  
**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN, HUMANAS Y TECNOLOGÍAS**

**CARRERA DE IDIOMAS**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**Description:** The instrument is developed in accordance to the Theoretical Framework. It contains three segments (informative, development and prospective). These are directly related with the second specific objective.

**Objective:** To determine the correlation between speaking contents and activities proposed in the 9th EGB workbook and the curricular guidelines from the teacher's perspective.

**Instruction:** Answer the following questions according to your experience.

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS**

**FIRST PHASES (Informative):**

a) How many years of experience do you have as an English teacher?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) How long have you worked in this institution?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) What is your highest academic degree?

\_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND PHASES (Development of the topic):**

**1. Which are the epistemological principles that define the English curriculum in Ecuador?**

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**2. How efficiently does the new curricular proposal respond to the socio-educational and sociolinguistic needs of the Ecuadorian students?**

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**3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of teaching English contents from other cultures?**

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**4. What extent does the workbook respond to the macro-curricular proposal and to the socio-educational and sociolinguistic needs of the students?**

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**5. What are the speaking activities proposed in the curriculum and in workbook?**

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**6. According to your criteria, is there a coherent relationship between what is proposed in the macro, meso and micro-English curriculum? Why?**

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**THREE PHASES (Prospective):**

**As an English teacher, do you think that is important to teach topics and contents from our country to improve the level of English?**

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**From your experience, what is it needed to improve the contents and activities for speaking skill?**

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**CARRERA DE IDIOMAS**  
**OBSERVATION GUIDE**

**Description:** The instrument is established in accordance with the Theoretical Framework. It is made up for four components to observe in the main process. This is related with the third objective from the research.

**Objective 3:** To observe, from practice, how the speaking contents and activities are being developed in teaching and learning process based on the curricular guidelines.

**Instruction:** Observe the teaching and learning process and complete the observation guide according the following components.

**GENERAL DATA:**

**High school:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Objective 3:** To observe how the contents and activities are developed in teaching and learning process of the speaking skill regarding the curricular guidelines.

**COMPONENTS OF THE OBSERVATION GUIDE**

- **The first observation is regarding the contents proposed in the workbook are related with the curriculum proposal :**
- The contents show cultural relevance:
- The contents illustrate real contexts:
- The contents are aligned with the core threads:
- Students are interested to learn:
- The workbook offers extra activities to practice the speaking skill:

**2) The second observation is about how the activities are developed in the teaching and learning process:**

- Activity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Type of activity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Time that the activity takes to develop:
- How the activity is developed?
- How learners work:
- Materials that are used:
- The proposed activity help students to practice the L2 in real-life:
- Teacher involves the Ecuadorian cultural in the main process:

**3) The third observation is related the Contextualized practice:**

- Topic: \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Teacher uses examples from local reality to teach:
- Students are engaged to talk about their culture:
- Students have the opportunity to relate the new knowledge with their backgrounds:
- There are variety of activities for students to acquire the language in authentic situations:

**4) The fourth observation is aimed at observing again the process related to the three aforementioned components.**

## EVIDENCE

### TEACHER'S INTERVIEW



### FROM THE PRACTICE, OBSERVATIONS





