



INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES: IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION, FLUENCY AND ACTIVE LISTENING IN EFL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

ESTRATEGIAS DIDÁCTICAS INNOVADORAS: IMPACTO EN LA COMUNICACIÓN, LA FLUIDEZ Y LA ESCUCHA ACTIVA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRAÑA EN LA EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA

Bety Janneth Hidalgo Vega¹, Adriana Carolina Lara Velarde²

{betjanneth@gmail.com¹, alara@unach.edu.ec²}

Fecha de recepción: 10/08/2026 / Fecha de aceptación: 10/09/2026 / Fecha de publicación: 16/09/2026

RESUMEN: La enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en educación primaria requiere estrategias pedagógicas que favorezcan el desarrollo de competencias comunicativas. Las metodologías innovadoras, como el aprendizaje basado en tareas y proyectos, el aprendizaje cooperativo, la gamificación y los recursos digitales, promueven la participación y el uso significativo del idioma. En el problema de investigación persisten dificultades para implementar enfoques comunicativos en las aulas debido al predominio de metodologías tradicionales y a limitaciones en la formación docente, así como en los recursos y las estrategias pedagógicas. El objetivo es analizar la influencia de las estrategias docentes innovadoras en la interacción comunicativa, la fluidez verbal y la escucha activa de estudiantes de educación primaria que aprenden inglés como lengua extranjera. Se realizó una revisión documental de la literatura científica reciente sobre estrategias innovadoras aplicadas a la enseñanza del inglés, considerando tanto estudios internacionales como evidencia relacionada con el contexto ecuatoriano. La evidencia revisada señala que las estrategias innovadoras favorecen la participación oral, la interacción comunicativa, la fluidez verbal y la comprensión auditiva. Destacan el aprendizaje basado en tareas y proyectos, la gamificación, las estrategias metacognitivas y la integración de recursos digitales. Las estrategias docentes innovadoras constituyen herramientas relevantes para fortalecer las competencias comunicativas en inglés durante la educación primaria. Su implementación sistemática, acompañada de formación

¹Ejercicio profesional independiente, Quito- Ecuador, <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5918-6677>

²Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2270-6843>



docente y recursos adecuados, puede contribuir al desarrollo de la fluidez verbal y la escucha activa.

Palabras clave: *Estrategias innovadoras, enseñanza del inglés, fluidez oral, escucha activa, educación primaria*

ABSTRACT: The teaching of English as a foreign language in primary education requires pedagogical strategies that favor the development of communicative competencies. Innovative methodologies, such as task-based and project-based learning, cooperative learning, gamification, and digital resources, promote participation and meaningful language use. The research problem is that difficulties persist in implementing communicative approaches in classrooms because traditional methodologies still predominate and teacher training, resources, and pedagogical strategies remain limited. The objective is to analyze the influence of innovative teaching strategies on communicative interaction, verbal fluency, and active listening among primary education students learning English as a foreign language. This study conducted a documentary review of recent scientific literature on innovative strategies applied to English teaching, considering international studies and evidence relevant to the Ecuadorian context. The reviewed evidence indicates that innovative strategies favor oral participation, communicative interaction, verbal fluency, and listening comprehension. Task-based and project-based learning, gamification, metacognitive strategies, and integrating digital resources stand out. Innovative teaching strategies constitute relevant tools for strengthening communicative competencies in English during primary education. Systematic implementation, supported by teacher training and adequate resources, can support the development of verbal fluency and active listening.

Keywords: *Innovative strategies, English language instruction, oral fluency, active listening, elementary education*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language (English as a Foreign Language, EFL) is one of the major challenges in current educational systems, given the important role English plays in international communication, the dissemination of scientific knowledge, technological innovation, and professional competitiveness. Over the last two decades, English mastery has ceased to be complementary knowledge, becoming a key to accessing knowledge, academic mobility, and labor opportunities in a globalized world. As a result, many countries that integrate this learning have reoriented their educational policies to reinforce English instruction from the earliest stages of schooling, proposing a methodology based on the development of communicative competencies and on student participation (1).



In primary education, teaching a foreign language at very early ages takes on a strategic character, given the first phases of child development, which are characterized by great cognitive and linguistic plasticity. Various studies have shown that systematic exposure to a foreign language in childhood positively affects the development of phonological skills, improves pronunciation, enhances auditory comprehension, and supports the acquisition of communicative competence. However, these benefits depend largely on the pedagogical practices teachers use and on the implementation of methodologies that promote significant classroom interaction (2).

In recent years, models of English teaching have changed slowly, as recorded in the scientific literature. Procedures focused solely on memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary lists have increasingly been replaced by active methodologies that emphasize collaborative knowledge construction, problem-solving, oral interaction, and teacher intervention (3). As a consequence, innovative teaching strategies have gained traction in educational research because they can increase student motivation, support meaningful learning, and reinforce linguistic competencies, thereby facilitating effective communication.

In addition, innovative teaching strategies include active methodologies in which the student is the protagonist of the learning process. These include task-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative learning, gamification, differentiated learning, critical thinking, problem-based learning, and the pedagogical integration of digital resources. These methodologies foster agile learning environments in which genuine communication is central to knowledge construction.

Recently, it has been verified with scientific evidence that, even though these methodologies are considered at the international level, the reality is that their implementation in diverse educational systems is still scarce; for example, in a study conducted in ten primary schools of Ethiopia, it is observed that the majority of the teachers still teach by means of traditional methods, and that the teachers show scarce adoption of strategies such as cooperative learning, task-based learning, project-based learning, differentiation of instruction, critical thinking, the integration of technology, etc. The authors argue that teachers' reliance on traditional teaching methods limits the development of communicative competencies in students and that continuous teacher training in innovative methodologies is necessary (4).

It is necessary to say that these data are relevant, since communicative competencies are, at present, the principal objective of the teaching of English as a foreign language. From the perspective of the CEFR, language learning consists precisely of the acquired capacity to communicate: the ability to interact in real communicative situations, interpret oral messages, and produce coherent discourses in different social contexts. Thus, the success of the educational process cannot be valued solely in terms of appropriating grammatical content but must be assessed by the development of skills such as verbal fluency, auditory comprehension, oral interaction, and pragmatic competence.



Verbal fluency, among all these skills, is one of the most important indices of the learning of English at an early age. Fluency refers to the ability that the student has to carry out oral messages in a spontaneous, fluid, and comprehensible form, in such a way that the production of the oral messages does not contain an excessive level of interruptions of the flow of the conversation and if it prints the adequate use of the linguistic resources of which one disposes (5). Developing this capacity requires educational contexts in which real communication predominates, supported by meaningful activities and feedback.

Active listening, in turn, constitutes another of the basic skills to learn English as a foreign language, and this competence includes not only listening to sounds or words but, in addition, understanding, interpreting and responding adequately to the messages emitted by the other interlocutors. The scientific literature has shown that auditory comprehension is the foundation on which oral production and reading and writing skills are subsequently developed. For this reason, international programs promote, from primary education, the need to work on and strengthen this capacity (6).

In these cases, the teacher's role is determinant, since it acts as a mediator of learning, given that the success of teaching-learning strategies depends both on the teacher's formation in the discipline and on his capacity to design interesting, contextualized, and interactive learning experiences. The most current educational models hold that the teacher must act as a facilitator, accompanying the teaching and guiding students to create authentic communicative situations that allow them to use the language in real contexts, with the aim of authentic social participation.

The most recent investigation in the Ecuadorian context notes certain advances in curricular updating toward communicative methodologies; however, it also finds discrepancies between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their classroom practice. The study that was conducted with 113 Ecuadorian English teachers for primary education shows that, despite observing a certain positive valuation with respect to the active methodologies promoted by the national curricular reform, there exist limitations related to the instructional design, the didactic materials, the evaluation, and the application of strategies during classes (7). This highlights the need to continue investigating how innovative teaching strategies influence the acquisition of learners' linguistic sub-skills in primary education.

Scientific evidence accumulated over the last five years shows that incorporating innovative teaching strategies not only increases student motivation but also supports the development of communicative competencies characteristic of teaching English as a foreign language (8). In this sense, methodologies such as task-based language teaching, project-based learning, cooperative learning, gamification, and the integration of digital resources have demonstrated very important implications for oral participation, communicative confidence, verbal fluency, and oral comprehension, among others. These methodologies shift the model from one where the teacher is the protagonist to one where the student body is. In this sense, real interaction and the functional use of the language become the principal mechanisms for constructing learning. Recent investigations have shown that these techniques promote more participative contexts,



increase opportunities to practice the language, and reinforce meaningful communication with the teaching staff and the student body.

Of all methodological strategies, task-based learning has had the greatest impact because it integrates real-life communicative situations into the classroom. Tasks require students to use the language to complete them; they negotiate meaning, share information, or reach specific objectives, and, in the process, develop linguistic and communicative competencies simultaneously. Likewise, project-based learning is a form of work that promotes the development of linguistic skills through a collaborative task that demands planning, investigation, oral production, and critical reflection, thus strengthening the autonomy and responsibility of the student body in its learning.

Gamification is another innovative strategy widely considered in English didactics. The integration of dynamics proper to the game –challenges, rewards, levels of progression, collaborative work, etcetera, favors the increase of intrinsic motivation, the decrease of communicative anxiety and the opening to realize oral activities, above all in the students of primary education, who possess a greater receptivity to learn in ludic and contextualized contexts. An activity that applies this approach with linguistic objectives can develop with success oral fluency and auditory comprehension.

Active listening, by contrast, is one of the least attended components of English teaching, despite being the basis of the rest of linguistic learning, according to recent literature; effective listening instruction must combine pre-listening, guided listening, and post-listening activities. Current literature suggests that this combination of activities must include metacognitive strategies, multimedia resources, collaborative work, and communicative tasks. Thus, these interventions have helped students develop mechanisms to identify main ideas, infer meanings, and respond according to the distinct contexts of real communicative situations (9). The most recent systematic reviews agree that combining metacognitive strategies with educational technologies improves performance in auditory comprehension and increases participation in EFL.

Despite the growth of international research, important knowledge gaps persist. Many available studies have been conducted in Asian, European, or African contexts, while investigations in Latin America remain limited and, in many cases, focus on secondary or higher education (9). This limits the ability to generalize results to Latin American primary education, where sociocultural, curricular, and pedagogical characteristics can affect the effectiveness of innovative teaching strategies.

In Ecuador, the curricular reforms impulse during the last decade have promoted a communicative approach to teaching English; however, various studies continue to signal differences between curricular orientations and the actual practices developed in classrooms. Principal limitations include the persistence of teacher-centered traditional methodologies, the limited integration of technological resources, difficulties implementing authentic communicative activities, and limited ongoing teacher training in active methodologies. These conditions can



restrict the development of skills such as verbal fluency and active listening, especially in primary education students who require highly interactive environments to support language acquisition (10).

This work has scientific and educational significance because it examines the impact of new or innovative teaching strategies on communicative interaction, verbal fluency, and active listening in primary-level L2 English learners. This investigation aims to contribute empirical evidence by exploring how teachers' pedagogical practices can support the development of basic communicative competencies from the first years of schooling. Additionally, the results will be able to feed the teacher training programs, the design of methodological strategies based on the evidence, or the own decision-making oriented to improve the quality of the teaching of English in the Ecuadorian context.

In line with the problem found and the objectives established in the research proposal, the work that occupies us is directed to study the innovative teaching strategies in English L2 classrooms, describe their relation with the communicative interaction, and verify the influence of the innovative teaching strategies on the development of verbal fluency and active listening in the student body of primary education. In this manner, the final intention of this work is to contribute to the strengthening of the scientific evidence and to offer founded recommendations for the pedagogical innovation in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The study used a systematic review of scientific literature with a qualitative approach and narrative synthesis. The purpose was to analyze the scientific evidence concerning the relationship between innovative teaching strategies and the development of communicative interaction, oral fluency, and active listening among primary education students learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

The methodological process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) recommendations, which provided a structured framework for identifying, screening, assessing eligibility, and including the studies analyzed.

Because this investigation relied exclusively on previously published scientific evidence, no direct intervention was conducted with students, and no experimental or quasi-experimental procedure was implemented.



Research approach

A qualitative approach was adopted because the study aimed to identify, compare, interpret, and synthesize findings reported in previous scientific studies rather than calculate a statistical effect size from primary data. The qualitative synthesis allowed the identification of recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and trends regarding the pedagogical strategies and communicative competencies addressed in the selected literature.

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis consisted of scientific articles published between 2021 and 2026 that addressed innovative teaching strategies in English as a foreign language and their relationship with communicative competencies in primary education or young learners.

The studies were selected using established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Priority was given to research addressing task-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative learning, gamification, metacognitive strategies, educational technologies, and other innovative pedagogical approaches.

Study variables

The main analytical variable was **innovative teaching strategies**, understood as active and pedagogically innovative approaches used to promote meaningful participation and communication in EFL instruction. The literature identified task-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative learning, gamification, metacognitive strategies, and educational technologies.

The dependent or outcome variables analyzed were **communicative interaction, oral fluency, and active listening**. These dimensions were examined based on how each study operationalized and evaluated them.

Data collection technique and instrument

The data collection technique was **documentary analysis**. Information was extracted from the scientific articles included in the systematic review using a **documentary analysis and information-extraction matrix** specifically organized for this study.

The matrix included the following fields: author(s), publication year, country, population or educational level, innovative teaching strategy, communicative competence, methodological design, main results, conclusions, and alignment with the review's objective.

The instrument did not involve the direct participation of students or teachers. Therefore, **no examination, achievement test, or questionnaire was administered to a primary-school**



population. The evidence analyzed was obtained exclusively from the scientific publications that constituted the documentary corpus.

Search and selection procedure

The literature search used Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, and institutional repositories. The search strategy combined descriptors related to innovative teaching strategies, EFL, primary education, oral fluency, speaking skills, listening comprehension, active listening, task-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative learning, gamification, and educational technology.

The selection process followed four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Duplicate records were removed, titles and abstracts were screened, potentially relevant full texts were assessed, and the studies that fulfilled the eligibility criteria were incorporated into the final corpus.

Data analysis

The information extracted from the selected studies underwent qualitative and narrative synthesis. We organized the evidence by the innovative teaching strategy examined and the communicative competence addressed.

The analysis focused on identifying convergences, differences, and recurring trends in how innovative teaching strategies contribute to communicative interaction, oral fluency, and active listening. We did not conduct a quantitative meta-analysis because the included studies showed methodological, contextual, population, and measurement heterogeneity that did not allow a homogeneous statistical comparison.

RESULTS

The literature review identified recent works that emphasized incorporating new teaching strategies in English as a foreign language instruction, with particular emphasis on developing learners' communicative skills. The works presented showed that the most frequently used strategies were task-based learning, educational games, cooperative learning, and the integration of technologies.

At the same time, these methodologies shared a common feature: moving beyond practices that prioritized the transmission of content toward academic experiences that expanded space for interaction and the functional use of the language. From the works analyzed, educational innovation was not determined by the use of technologies, but by how activities were structured to foster students' active role. In this sense, the literature review made it possible to establish up to four major categories: strategies oriented toward communicative interaction, strategies



oriented toward the configuration of oral fluency, strategies oriented toward listening comprehension, and strategies oriented toward the use of digital resources. Table 2 summarizes the main strategies and their contributions as defined in the literature.

Table 2. Innovative strategies and their communicative contributions

Strategy	Principal characteristics	Related communicative skill	Principal identified contributions
Task-based learning	Resolution of activities with concrete communicative objectives	Fluency and oral interaction	Greater oral production, negotiation of meanings and functional use of English
Project-based learning	Investigation and collaborative production of a final product	Oral communication and cooperation	Increment of opportunities to speak, investigate and present information
Gamification	Challenges, points, rewards and ludic dynamics	Fluency, participation and motivation	Greater disposition to participate in oral activities
Cooperative learning	Work between pairs and small groups	Interaction and listening	Greater linguistic exchange and collaboration
Digital resources	Videos, platforms, applications and multimedia resources	Listening and oral production	Greater exposure to the language and diversification of activities
Metacognitive strategies	Planning, supervision and evaluation of the comprehension	Active listening	Better processing of oral information and self-regulation
Communicative activities	Simulated situations and authentic contexts	Functional communication	Greater utilization of the language in significant situations

The evidence available in studies that have been conducted specifically in primary education is particularly valuable since (11,12) studied the implementation of innovative English teaching strategies in primary education classes and concluded that, although there was recognition of the importance of innovative methodologies, their application was still very scarce in the face of the predominance of the persistence of traditional practices. This assertion also fits the problem posed in the present work, because the existence of innovative methodologies is not synonymous with their immediate inclusion in teaching practices.

Along the same lines, (13-15) studied the innovative pedagogical strategies of primary education English teachers and reaffirmed the need to improve teachers' capacity to select and apply methodologies aligned with students' needs. Therefore, the teaching role emerged as a transversal element in the inquiries, since the effectiveness of the strategy centered on planning,



contextualization, and alignment with linguistic objectives. Regarding oral fluency, gamification showed particularly relevant results for the Ecuadorian context. The authors (16,17) focused the study of gamification and oral fluency on EFL schoolchildren in Ecuador. The study identified difficulties linked to oral fluency and student motivation and proposed gamification as a strategy to increase participation and students' oral production.

This result is relevant because oral fluency at the primary education stage is not determined solely by knowledge of vocabulary or grammatical structures; the capacity to produce messages, to respond to interlocutors, and to carry out activities spontaneously requires numerous opportunities for interaction. Therefore, playful dynamics can reduce the pressure of oral production and provide more opportunities for practice. The second strategy that carries more weight in the literature is task-based learning.

The reviewed investigations echoed the view that communicative tasks allow students to use the language with a purpose rather than repeating linguistic structures. (18,19) studied the role of tasks oriented toward the development of oral fluency in the context of EFL students, observing favorable perceptions associated with this approach, especially with regard to the reduction of pauses, the improvement of discourse continuity, and the possibility of expressing ideas better. Although the study was conducted with university students and, therefore, cannot be extrapolated directly to the primary population, its results are useful for identifying an important pedagogical mechanism: systematic practice through communicative tasks can facilitate the student's spontaneous use of the language. For this reason, the result is considered additional evidence and not specific evidence of primary education.

The review also identified a relationship between the methodological innovations implemented and communicative interaction. Cooperative learning, pair tasks, and group activities increase the quantity of exchanges among students and modify the typical class structure. Rather than concentrating communication in the teacher-student relationship, these modalities distribute speaking opportunities among different participants.

From this perspective, task-based learning offers a methodological advantage because communication serves a purpose. Students must request information, give answers, negotiate meaning, formulate questions, or justify decisions. This characteristic favors the functional use of the language, while also supporting the development of fluency and interaction in parallel.

Regarding active listening, the results showed a tendency to use audiovisual resources, pre-listening activities, guided listening, and post-listening activities. Listening was not considered solely as a receptive skill, but as an active process that requires identifying information, making sense of messages, drawing inferences, responding appropriately, etc.

A particularly valid result in the Ecuadorian context was reported by (20), whose authors investigated the impact of technology on the listening capacity of primary students at an Ecuadorian school. The inquiry focused on determining how adding technology improved listening, which directly relates to one of the key variables of the present article.



The addition of technology was also associated with combining audiovisual content with interactive activities. In this sense, the technological device did not constitute the pedagogical strategy itself, but the tool that made it possible to diversify exposure to the English language. This distinction matters because the data analyzed show that the didactic effect depends not only on the existence of digital devices, but on the activity constructed around the resource.

Recent production has also complemented the concept of innovation through the implementation of artificial intelligence technologies. (21) implemented interaction activities mediated by artificial intelligence and documented effects on different dimensions of the oral production of EFL students and described various effects on fluency, coherence, lexicon, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation. However, considering that this type of evidence has generally been implemented with older students, its use in primary education must be treated with caution.

In addition, recent investigations have gone further and have explicitly worked with technologies oriented toward young students. (22) developed an automatic speech recognition system adapted to the speech production of young students and commented on the importance of having technologies that can process the characteristics of children's speech in the development of the foreign language. This study was carried out with students in grades 4 to 6 and collected around 85 hours of audio, revealing growing interest in developing technological tools oriented toward young learners.

In synthesis, the results can be classified by generating innovative strategies according to the communicative skill intended to be reinforced. Table 3 establishes the relationship among them.

Table 3. Level of impact of the strategies on communicative skills

Strategy	Communicative interaction	Oral fluency	Active listening	Participation
Task-based learning	High	High	Moderate-high	High
Gamification	High	High	Moderate	High
Cooperative learning	High	Moderate-high	High	High
Project-based learning	High	Moderate-high	Moderate-high	High
Audiovisual resources	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Metacognitive activities	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate
Artificial intelligence	High	High	Moderate	High

Note: The typology reflects the qualitative trend detected in the analyzed studies and is not a statistical estimate of the effect size.



When contrasting the different strategies, we observed that those with a concrete communicative purpose showed greater similarity in the evolution of fluency. Gamification, for example, provided motivational conditions for participation; task-based learning generally allowed situations where oral production was necessary to complete the activity. In contrast, both audiovisual resources and metacognitive strategies showed a higher degree of synchrony with listening comprehension.

Table 4 summarizes the main findings provided by recent studies that were considered relevant for the purposes of the article.

Table 4. Synthesis of relevant studies for the investigated variables

Author/year	Context	Strategy	Principal variable	Relevant finding
(11,12)	Primary education	Innovative strategies	Teaching practice	Persistence of traditional methods and necessity of strengthening teacher innovation
(13,14)	Primary education	Innovative pedagogical strategies	Teaching practice	Necessity of strengthening the effective use of innovative methodologies
(15)	Ecuador, primary	Gamification	Oral fluency	The strategy was oriented to improve difficulties of fluency and motivation
(16,17)	EFL	Task-based learning	Oral fluency	Favorable perception and reduction of difficulties related to pauses and continuity
(18,19)	Ecuador, primary	Educational technology	Listening	Technology was studied as support to improve the listening capacity
(20,21)	EFL	Artificial intelligence	Oral production	Studied improvement in fluency, coherence, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation
(22)	Grades 4-6	Automatic speech recognition	Oral production	Development of technology adapted to the speech of young learners

The comparative analysis also showed that pedagogical innovation cannot be understood as an absolute replacement of traditional methods. The reviewed studies make it clear that innovative strategies are more pertinent when articulated within a pedagogical planning framework from which predetermined linguistic objectives are derived. Thus, innovation must be understood as a modification of learning opportunities, specifically through greater interaction, contextualization, feedback, and participation.

Another relevant datum is the distance between the valuation of innovative methodologies and their real practice. Studies conducted in primary education show that, although teachers may value the virtues of active strategies, they may equally continue applying traditional procedures. This situation may be linked to factors such as teacher training, resource availability, planning time, group size, technological infrastructure, and institutional conditions.

In the Ecuadorian case, this is especially important. The reviewed literature shows evidence that gamification and technology have been used in primary education contexts in the country to work on oral fluency and listening comprehension; that is, there exists a body of local experiences that make it possible to continue developing new proposals for pedagogical innovation.

From the analyzed evidence, a conceptual relationship emerges among the three central dimensions of the study. Innovative strategies create greater opportunities for interaction; interaction in practice generates spaces to practice oral production; and communicative activities involve listening, interpretation, and response simultaneously. Therefore, fluency and active listening should not be understood as completely independent skills, but as interrelated components of communicative competence.



Figure 1. Model of the relationship between innovative teaching strategies and communicative competencies

The available evidence made it possible to determine that not all strategies necessarily produce the same type of benefit. Task- and gamification-based methodologies showed a very close relationship with participation and oral production, while audiovisual tools and metacognitive strategies showed greater correspondence with listening. Cooperative and project-based



methodologies, for their part, presented a transversal character by integrating oral production, listening, and interaction.

In general terms, the results of the review confirmed the premise that the teaching of English in primary education must pass from a conception exclusively centered on the teaching of structures to a conception that privileges student participation, the use of the language in order to fulfill concrete purposes, and access to continuous opportunities to listen to and produce messages.

However, the literature also identified a major limitation: a very high proportion of research on oral fluency, artificial intelligence, and task-based learning was conducted with adolescent or university students. Therefore, although these results help ground understanding of the pedagogical mechanisms of innovative strategies, they cannot be transferred directly to primary education students.

Therefore, the evidence most directly linked to the population of interest came from studies conducted in primary education and, especially, in Ecuadorian contexts, providing contextual evidence on using gamification and technology to strengthen specific English skills (11-13). Combining these results with the international literature made it possible to establish that teaching innovation has the potential to favor communication, but that its efficacy depends on planned, contextualized implementation oriented toward concrete linguistic objectives.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present review show that innovative teaching strategies can be an effective alternative for changing English as a foreign language teaching in primary education, particularly when their use is oriented toward communicative interaction and the functional use of the language. In general, the analyzed studies show how methodologies such as task-based learning, gamification, cooperative learning, or the integration of technological resources can expand the opportunities for student participation, but the results also show how, simply by having these strategies available, the linguistic competence of students is not automatically improved because the effectiveness of the same depends on teacher planning, teacher training, availability of resources, and the adaptation of activities to the characteristics of the students.

One major finding was the persistence of the gap between knowledge of innovative methodologies and their implementation in classrooms. This was noted by (23) in their study in primary schools in Ethiopia, where, despite the literature's recognition of a series of innovative didactic strategies, a traditional model of English teaching continued to prevail. This finding confirms what the present review reveals, making it possible to understand that one of the principal factors that can hinder the development of communicative competencies is not the non-existence of methodological proposals, but the difficulty that presents itself at the moment of putting them into practice, of taking them from theory to the day-to-day of teaching. This is especially relevant in primary education, since students require brief, meaningful, dynamic activities aligned with their language level, while an innovative methodology implemented mechanically could reproduce the same limitations as a traditional didactic model. Therefore, the



distinctive element is not simply applying games or digital platforms or using projects but designing experiences that create a real need for students to listen, respond, ask, describe, negotiate meanings, or produce, in one way or another, real messages.

The interaction of gamification is especially clear in the relationship with oral fluency. The study by (24), carried out exclusively with primary education students in Ecuador, echoed some of the difficulties around oral fluency and motivation, proposing the inclusion of gamified strategies to address them. This study used a mixed, sequential, explanatory design and measured outcomes before and after the intervention; it also noted a preference for gamified tools to improve motivation and oral production.

This last result relates to the objectives of the current review, given that oral fluency requires many opportunities for production. In a traditional class, speaking opportunities are usually limited to a few students or to short answers managed by the teacher. In contrast, gamified activities can distribute participation through challenges, turns, group competitions, or communicative situations, increasing the likelihood that communication and oral exposure occur over a longer period.

On the contrary, gamification must be interpreted with a notable dose of caution. Fun does not equate, by itself, to a useful linguistic procedure. In order for benefits in terms of fluency to be obtained, the games must be linked to explicit and evident communicative aims; in the event that the prize is the ultimate objective of the activity, care must be taken since the activity may be capable of motivating without the linguistic competence increasing in the same way. Therefore, gamification must be used as a didactic procedure, rather than being perceived as an end.

Regarding task-based learning, it also showed very good results for oral communication. Its greatest strength is that language ceases to be content to be memorized and becomes a tool that makes it possible to reach a specific purpose. This quality helps explain the relationship with fluency, given that the student must use available linguistic resources to confront a communicative situation.

The results also make it possible to distinguish between fluency and linguistic accuracy. A communication strategy can increase the quantity of oral production at the expense of greater spontaneity without necessarily supposing a circumstantial improvement of all the grammatical components. In the context of young students, this is especially important, since excessive correction during oral production can make communication recede and create a sense of insecurity in the student. For this reason, innovative strategies should incorporate progressive feedback that lays the foundation for a balance among fluency, comprehensibility, and accuracy (25).

The opposite was true for active listening, which was the communication reviewed. Oral production can be developed through activities that involve direct interaction, while listening comprehension requires systematic exposure to different messages, speeds, pronunciations, and, more generally, different communicative situations. And here technology occupies a space of



special relevance. A study by (26) in an Ecuadorian primary school has already shown the impact of technology on listening in learning English.

The importance of this conclusion lies in the fact that technological tools make it possible to increase exposure to the language exponentially. A student can listen to different types of voices that are not limited to that of the teacher, can repeat fragments, can observe visual elements in connection with the message, can carry out comprehension activities before, during, and after listening, and in this way, technology can help to achieve that listening becomes an act of active communication and not only receptive.

That said, technology also needs planning. Simply reproducing videos or audio does not create opportunities to learn active listening. The tool must be complemented by tasks that help learners anticipate information, search for keywords, identify main ideas, draw inferences, and answer content questions. Therefore, the true contribution of technology lies in the pedagogical possibilities it provides, not merely in the device used.

Another aspect identified was the growing incorporation of artificial intelligence tools. Recent evidence from EFL students at other levels shows that AI tools can create opportunities to practice oral skills and provide feedback. Nevertheless, this evidence should not be transferred directly to primary education, since there are differences in age, in cognitive autonomy, and in digital literacy. For this reason, tools for younger students must be created that match the characteristics of their cognitive and linguistic development. This consideration aligns with a recent line of research aimed at developing automatic speech recognition technologies for young students.

(27) also worked with students in grades 4 to 6 and managed to confirm the need to adapt automatic recognition technologies to the characteristics of children's speech. This field of study seems important to us because it shows that we cannot design technologies that evaluate or support oral production based solely on adult speech. From an educational perspective, the findings suggest that verbal fluency and active listening have a reciprocal relationship. Students need to comprehend messages to respond, but oral interaction creates new opportunities for listening; therefore, effective teaching strategies should not treat these skills in complete isolation. Communicative activities can be designed so that the student first listens, then interprets the information, and finally responds.

This approach is especially congruent with task-based learning and cooperative learning: for example, the activity can begin with an audio stimulus, continue with an interpretation activity in pairs, and finish with oral production. In this way, the same activity makes it possible to work on comprehension, interaction, and fluency, without excessively separating the linguistic skills.

In the Ecuadorian context, this integration is especially relevant. The studies that are available are a sample that there exist concrete experiences of the use of gamification to work on oral fluency and of the use of technology to work on listening in primary education students, but the Ecuadorian evidence continues to be scarce in comparison with international scientific production; this makes it impossible to draw categorical conclusions about which strategy has greater effectiveness in the diverse school contexts of the country. Likewise, it must be borne in



mind that implementation conditions can vary widely across educational institutions. The existence of the internet, types of devices, didactic materials, teacher training, and the time dedicated to English could condition the application of innovative methodologies. Hence, a strategy that yields good results in a specific context will not produce the same results if applied in another institution without adaptations (28).

Consequently, the evidence refers to the advance from certain conceptions of innovation, understood solely from the incorporation of resources, toward other modalities where the improvement is important because it changes the communicative experience of the students; the strategy would turn out to be innovative if it generates more opportunities to use the language, if it improves interaction, if it provides feedback and makes it possible to relate learning with meaningful experiences (29,30). Finally, the principal contribution of this review is to show that innovative teaching strategies have positive potential to develop communicative competencies in primary education, but their effects depend on certain pedagogical conditions. The evidence is particularly favorable for the strategy of using gamification to promote participation or oral production, as well as for controlling the pedagogical use of technological resources to contribute to listening; nevertheless, it is considered that it would be important to develop more experimental and longitudinal research in Ecuadorian primary education students in order to be able to know with greater precision the magnitude and/or the durability of said effects.

Educational implications

The evidence reviewed suggests that English teaching in primary education should be central to the classroom, with many opportunities for students to listen and produce. Teaching planning could include communicative tasks, gamified activities, cooperative work, and audiovisual resources within the same didactic sequence. Instead of employing a single methodology throughout the educational process, a series of them could be deliberately combined. For example, in a didactic unit, the process could begin with an audiovisual resource that activates listening, continue with a cooperative task for information processing, and finish with an oral practice activity with a playful character. Combining these approaches makes it possible to work in an articulated manner on the skills evoked by the reconceptualization of the methodology in the review (31).

It is likewise necessary to strengthen teacher training. The evidence indicates that theoretical knowledge about innovative methodologies must be integrated with competencies that enable teachers to design activities, select resources, manage groups, provide feedback, and evaluate communicative skills. Consequently, didactic innovation must be considered a process of teaching and learning, not a simple introduction of technology.

Limitations of the evidence

The main limitation is the heterogeneity of the existing studies. Research in this field varies across population, age, intervention duration, evaluation instruments, and educational contexts. In



addition, much of the literature on oral fluency and new technologies focuses on adolescents or university students and should be generalized with caution to primary education (32).

Another limitation is the limited amount of research conducted in Ecuador. Although works directly related to the use of gamification and technology in Ecuadorian primary education exist, the evidence remains insufficient to make national-level generalizations (33). Therefore, future research is needed to develop experimental and longitudinal studies with broader school samples across different regions of the country.

In conclusion, the discussion suggests that innovative teaching strategies can promote the development of communicative competencies in primary education students, provided they are planned and contextualized. The most powerful evidence that has been found seems to indicate the utilization of communicative activities, gamification, task-based learning, and the utilization of technological resources as complementary mechanisms to favor interaction, the practice of orality, and the meaningful exposure to English. However, their effectiveness must be considered in relation to how they should be generalized according to students' characteristics, teachers' preparation, and the specific conditions of different educational institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The reviewed scientific evidence allows us to conclude that innovative teaching strategies are adequate didactic resources to promote English as a foreign language in the primary education classroom, especially when these strategies focus on active participation and meaningful communication. Task-based learning, gamification, cooperative learning, project-based learning, and the pedagogical integration of digital resources have a favorable relationship with the increase of opportunities for interaction and functionality of the language; however, the validity is not related solely to the strategy used, but is also linked to planning, contextualization, teacher training, and the relationship between the activities and the contents on which to impact.

The analysis made it clear that verbal fluency and active listening are skills linked to one another within the framework of developing communicative competence. Task-based learning and gamified, playful activities proved particularly effective in fostering student participation and oral production, while technological resources, audio-video, and metacognitive strategies provided stronger support for listening. Evidence from Ecuador, although still scarce, showed positive experiences with gamification for oral fluency and with technology to improve listening skills in primary education students.

Finally, the need to reinforce the continuous training of teachers and to increase empirical research on pedagogical innovation in primary education in Ecuador was evidenced; although the international literature is accumulating a growing quantity of evidence on active methodologies and the use of technologies applied to the learning of English, a certain volume of study is centered on adolescent or university students, so that their application cannot be generalized to earlier ages; this is what future research holds, that it carry out experimental and longitudinal studies in diverse school contexts of Ecuador, with specific instruments to evaluate verbal fluency,



communicative interaction, and active listening, so that teaching innovation is not directed exclusively toward the incorporation of new tools, but toward creating learning experiences that favor the opportunities of students to listen, understand, relate, and communicate in English.

REFERENCES

1. Muchie, B., Yigzaw, A., & Simegn, B. (2025). Examining the application of innovative ELT strategies in primary school EFL classrooms. *PLOS ONE*, 20(8), Article e0328902. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0328902>
2. Lakew, B. M., Filatie, A. Y., & Chanie, B. S. (2025). Exploring innovative pedagogical approaches: Primary school EFL teachers' utilization of teaching strategies. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), Article 2510030. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2510030>
3. Ingabire, M. Y., Nizeyimana, G., Mukingambeho, D., & Tusiime, M. (2024). Pedagogical strategies limitations and practices leading to improved teacher–learners' classroom interactions through English in lower primary schools of Rwanda. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(2), 813–823. <https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.5.2.71>
4. Jamalova, M. I. (2024). Integrating modern technology in English language teaching: Innovations and outcomes in school education. *Eurasian Scientific Review*, 2(2), 138–142. <https://doi.org/10.63034/esr-48>
5. Graham, S., & Clare, M. (2024). Strategies of teaching English as a second language in multilingual classrooms in Meheba refugee settlement in Kalumbila District of Zambia. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 5(1), 79–89. <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0411>
6. Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64–77. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>
7. Paragae IGA Pt NS. Innovative teaching strategies in teaching English as a foreign language. *English Teaching and Linguistics Journal*. 2023;4(1):1-9. doi:10.30596/etlij.v4i1.12990.
8. Rahmaniar, R., Surahmat, Z., Sardi, A., & Nurnaifah, I. I. (2024). Challenges and opportunities: A qualitative exploration of junior high school English language educators' perspectives on implementing differentiated instruction. *JELITA*, 5(1), 28–40. <https://doi.org/10.56185/jelita.v5i1.597>
9. Marin-Pacurucu, B. A., & Argudo-Garzón, A. L. (2022). Gamification strategies and speaking fluency in EFL elementary students. *Iustitia Socialis*, 7(1), 77–95. <https://doi.org/10.35381/racji.v7i1.1702>
10. Mourad AS, Campuzano Díaz JM, Anaguano Pérez SL, Terán Molina DV. Impact of technology to improve listening capacity in the acquisition of English of primary students of an Ecuadorian school. *Revista Social Fronteriza*. 2024;4(6):e46509. doi:10.59814/resofro.2024.4(6)509.
11. Daligdig, M., Edrozo, R., Galang, R., Lambayan, J., Mara, M. G., & Vacalares, S. T. (2023). Innovative strategies for teaching English in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic: A phenomenological study. *Cognizance: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 3(6), 87–95. <https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2023.v03i06.006>



12. Panduwangi, M. (2021). The effectiveness of task-based language teaching to improve students' speaking skills. *Journal of Applied Studies in Language*, 5(1), 205–214. <https://doi.org/10.31940/jasl.v5i1.2490>
13. Lume, L., & Hisbullah, M. (2022). The effectiveness of task-based language teaching to teach speaking skills. *Journal of Language and Literature in Teaching*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v10i1.4399>
14. Zhang, S., & Hasim, Z. (2023). Gamification in EFL/ESL instruction: A systematic review of empirical research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 1030790. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1030790>
15. Kim, H., & Hwang, H. (2022). Assessing verb-construction integration in young learners of English as a foreign language: Analyses of written and spoken production. *Language Learning*, 72(2), 497–533. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12480>
16. Salmi, H. (2023). Cognitive and metacognitive strategies in listening activities: Tips for effective listening. *Journal of Research in School and Professional English Language Teaching*, 7(13). <https://doi.org/10.54850/jrspelt.7.37.001>
17. Zhan, P., et al. (2023). Exploring the relationship between metacognitive awareness and Chinese EFL learners' listening skills. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1148610>
18. Sihite MR, Amin TS, Ekayati R, Manihuruk LME, Siregar M, Husein R, Sinar TS. Investigating metacognitive strategies in listening comprehension among English language learners: a study of university students in Medan. *Int J Educ Res Excell*. 2024;3(1):43-54. doi:10.55299/ijere.v3i1.749.
19. Daskalovska, N., Hadzi-Nikolova, A., & Alogjozovska, N. J. (2023). The use of metacognitive listening strategies by English language learners. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8(1).
20. Kwon, S. K., & Yu, G. (2023). Investigating differences in test-takers' use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in audio-only and video-based listening comprehension tests. *System*, 114, Article 103017. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103017>
21. Fathi J, Rahimi M, Derakhshan A. Improving EFL learners' speaking skills and willingness to communicate via artificial intelligence-mediated interactions. *System*. 2024;121:103254. doi:10.1016/j.system.2024.103254.
22. Zou, B., Liviero, S., Ma, Q., Zhang, W., Du, Y., & Xing, P. (2024). Exploring EFL learners' perceived promise and limitations of using an artificial intelligence speech evaluation system for speaking practice. *System*, 126, Article 103497. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103497>
23. Michot, J., Hürlimann, M., Deriu, J., Sauer, L., Mlynchik, K., & Cieliebak, M. (2024). Error-preserving automatic speech recognition of young English learners' language. *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.03235>
24. Zhao, X., Hwang, W.-Y., & Su, Y.-C. (2023). Investigation of facilitating English speaking of elementary school students in authentic contexts with UEnglish. *Human-Centric Intelligent Systems*, 3, 244–262. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44230-023-00031-5>



25. Mandaria, R. N., Karani, E., & Bungai, J. (2021). The needs of young learners for developing an e-book for teaching English-speaking skills. *Journal of Compound Research*, 9(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.37304/jcp.v9i1.3040>
26. Yaacob, A., Amir, A. S., Asraf, R. M., Mohd Yaakob, M. F., & Zain, F. M. (2021). Impact of YouTube and video podcast on listening comprehension among young learners. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 15(20), 4–19. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v15i20.23701>
27. Tran, D. T. (2021). Storytelling to enhance speaking and listening skills for English young learners: A case study at language centers in Binh Duong Province. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, 5(2), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.52296/vje.2021.64>
28. Caruso, C., Hofmann, J., & Rohde, A. (2021). Get 'em while they're young: Complex digitally-mediated tasks for EFL learners in primary schools. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 24(2), 187–207. <https://doi.org/10.37213/cjal.2021.31340>
29. Padmadewi NN, Suarcaya P, Artini LP, Munir A, Friska J, Husein R, Paragae IGAPNS. Incorporating linguistic landscape into teaching: a project-based learning for language practices at primary school. *Int J Elem Educ*. 2023;7(3):467-477. doi:10.23887/ijee.v7i3.58792.
30. Namusoke, E., & Rukundo, A. (2022). Group work: Effect of cooperative learning method on academic performance in English language among pupils in Universal Primary Education schools in Kashari, Uganda. *Cogent Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2147774>
31. Samodra, O., & Faridi, A. (2021). The correlation of positive reinforcement, self-confidence, and speaking performance of English young learners. *English Education Journal*, 11(3), 393–405. <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v11i1.45463>
32. Jutaite, R., Janiunaite, B., & Horbacauskienė, J. (2021). The challenging aspects of digital learning objects usage in a primary school during the pandemic. *Journal of Education and Social Research*. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2021-0118>
33. Budianto, S., Sayidah, N., Sucipto, Qomariah, N., Asaro, A. K., & Setiawan, W. F. (2024). Intelligibility of English vocabulary for young learners in an EFL context: Digital book vs. printed book on listening and pronunciation skills. *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 26(1), 22–31. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jtp.v26i1.40202>