



**A Comparative Study on the Effects of Discussions and Debate in Developing Speaking
Confidence in Learners of English**

Bryan Patricio García Zambrano

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Autores:

Bryan Patricio García Zambrano
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Estudiante de la Maestría en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Mención Inglés
Chone – Ecuador
bryan.garcia@pg.uleam.edu.ec
<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7013-3937>

Victor Efren Alcivar Calderon
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Docente de la Maestría en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Mención Inglés
Chone – Ecuador
efren.alcivar@uleam.edu.ec
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1814-5657>

ABSTRACT

Oral communication in English presents a challenge for many students due to a lack of language practice and a lack of awareness of strategies that maximize their oral expression skills. This research aims to compare students' communicative performance and confidence levels during oral activities in English, specifically through discussions and debates used as teaching strategies. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating interviews and observation checklists. The sample consisted of 65 students and two English teachers, selected through non-probability sampling, from a university located in the city of Chone. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, while quantitative data were processed using the SPSS statistical software. The results presented similar levels of oral communicative performance in debates ($M = 4.34$) and discussions ($M = 4.33$). Neither discussion nor debate showed significant differences in their effectiveness in developing students' confidence in oral production. Discussions are also considered a way for teachers to foster a trusting environment where the sole objective is oral interaction, unlike debates, which require students to have a significant command of the language to support coherent ideas. This research aims to provide updated data that will permit teachers to identify when it is necessary to apply each strategy in order to improve students' communicative competence.

Keywords: oral communication; discussions; debates; English language; self-confidence

RESUMEN

La comunicación oral en inglés representa un problema para muchos estudiantes, debido a la falta de práctica del idioma y al desconocimiento de estrategias que maximizan su capacidad de expresión oral. Por fin, la presente investigación tiene como objetivo comparar el desempeño comunicativo de los estudiantes y su nivel de confianza durante el desarrollo de actividades orales en inglés, a través de discusiones y debates como estrategias de enseñanza. Para este fin, se optó por un enfoque de método mixto que integra el uso de entrevistas y fichas de observación, para la muestra se incluyeron a 65 estudiantes y dos docentes de inglés, seleccionados mediante un muestreo no probabilístico, pertenecientes a una universidad localizada en la ciudad de Chone. Los datos cualitativos fueron analizados mediante un enfoque temático, mientras que los cuantitativos se procesaron con el programa estadístico SPSS. Los resultados evidenciaron niveles similares de desempeño comunicativo oral en debates ($M = 4.34$) y discusiones ($M = 4.33$) tanto las discusiones como los debates no presentan diferencias significativas en cuanto a su utilidad para desarrollar la confianza en la producción oral de los estudiantes. También se consideran que las discusiones son empleadas por los docentes para generar un ambiente de confianza, en donde el único objetivo es la interacción oral, a diferencia de los debates, que requieren que los estudiantes posean un dominio significativo del idioma para sustentar ideas congruentes. La investigación pretende aportar datos actualizados que permitan a los docentes identificar cuándo es necesario aplicar cada estrategia, con la finalidad de mejorar la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: comunicación oral; discusiones; debates; idioma inglés; autoconfianza

INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is widely considered to be the most demanding skill to develop in the English learning process as it requires students to integrate both linguistic knowledge and cognitive processing that are regulated by emotional factors such as anxiety and self-esteem.

The EF English Proficiency Index in 2025 reported that Ecuador ranks 83th out of 126 countries evaluated with a low level of proficiency, where speaking ability is one of the lowest, even below listening comprehension and writing. At the local level, a study conducted with 142 third-year high school students in rural public institutions found that the level of proficiency in English was unsatisfactory with speaking scores ranging from 20.4% to 69.1% depending on the institution evaluated (Alvarez et al., 2024).

In other words, a good part of Ecuadorian students graduates from secondary education without reaching the B1 level required by the Ministry of Education, taking into account that oral expression is one of the most lagging skills within the teaching-learning process of the language as it is the one that gives way to oral communication.

Despite decades of pedagogical innovation, linguistic competence does not reliably translate into communicative performance because students have limited lexical knowledge of the language that does not allow them to interact orally using the target language, a factor that from a pedagogical perspective is due to the fact that students do not develop the language as it is appropriate. by not having enough confidence to communicate.

According to Vidal (2026), confidence in speaking is related to students' willingness to communicate, a construct that goes beyond linguistic ability and encompasses the psychological willingness to participate in spontaneous interaction.

Vilchez and Corvetto (2025) add that anxiety reflected in the fear of making mistakes actively suppresses oral production even when linguistic resources are available; that is, confidence functions as a regulatory variable of communicative performance; therefore, discussions and debates are presented as two of the useful interactive strategies to incite oral participation among students.

Discussions, by several authors, are understood as exchanges of ideas that can be both structured and semi-structured, used by teachers to reduce affective barriers by distributing communicative pressure within a collaborative format (Sandoval & Salomón, 2026).

In the words of Iskandar et al. (2024), debates, instead, focuses on the pressure of the individual speaker, who must defend a position to respond to counterarguments under time constraints. Accordingly, both strategies are recommended for the same pedagogical objective, the development of confidence which in turn reduces anxiety in language students.

Most of the studies published to date treat discussions and debates as isolated interventions, without comparing them with each other under similar conditions, where it is not clear which strategy is most effective in developing confidence in speaking. This situation is evident in the city of Chone, where university professors choose between one strategy or another out of habit, rather than because of evidence about which best responds to the needs of their students.

Consequently, in order to address the problems, present in university classrooms where the English language is taught, we intend to answer the following question: Are there significant differences in the communicative performance and the level of confidence of students depending on whether they use discussions or debates as a teaching strategy in oral English activities? For this reason, the general objective is to compare the communicative performance of students and their level of confidence during the development of oral activities in English through discussions and debates as teaching strategies.

By generating direct comparative evidence, this research seeks to inform pedagogical decision-making that, until now, has been largely based on assumptions rather than data, a situation that can put students at a disadvantage, since it is not guaranteed that the strategies that teachers use in classes are the most appropriate to strengthen their oral performance in English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language

English is very important for communication because many people use it, either as their first or second language (Novela & Hastini, 2023).

Speaking is often considered a crucial skill in foreign or second language learning due to its role in real-time communication, speaking skill is widely regarded as the most important skill in foreign or second language learning, as it is considered the most essential for effective communication among the four core language skills (Rao, 2019).

Learning to speak a language needs regular practice. If students do not practice, their learning will not improve properly. Teachers should encourage speaking both inside and outside the classroom. Old materials, low skills, and lack of motivation can make it harder for students to learn a foreign language (Salamea & Fajardo, 2023). It is clear to see how in some classrooms, teachers foster speaking in their classes and do not support the practice of it outside.

Debates in education

Debates in education help students learn and express ideas. Schools or universities usually organize them. In academic settings, professionals discuss topics to share knowledge or raise awareness about important issues, making debates useful for learning and communication (Ban, Pang, & Em, 2023).

Building on this idea, Werdiningsih (2018) explains that debate, which is based on argumentation, helps students create their own opinions, support them with reasons and evidence, respond to different viewpoints, and participate more confidently in the debate process.

“Debates offer a real setting where students can use the target language in meaningful and practical ways. The competitive nature of debates encourages students to engage in detailed and extended discussions” (El Majidi, et al. 2024, p. 2434).

Yang (2024) explains that studies on learning to argue focus on how students’ reason, make claims, and support their ideas, while studies on arguing to learn explore how taking part in English debates helps students gain knowledge and understand content more deeply.

In the educational field, the use of active strategies is important to develop students’ skills. In this sense, Chicaiza (2026) states that debate, as a pedagogical strategy, helps improve critical thinking through argumentation and active participation, while also supporting students’ communication skills.

Discussion as a learning strategy

“Classroom discussions support creativity, and debate helps students advocate for their ideas and express themselves in competitive settings”; (Ghafar, 2024, p. 125)

In classroom discussions, clear structure increases participation. Researchers suggest setting expectations, giving feedback, using engaging questions, and organizing small groups. These strategies help guide students and make them more active in the learning process (Smith, R. 2025)

According to, (Kotlyarova, et. al. 2023), there are different ways to understand what discussion means. From a philosophical point of view, it is described as a Socratic method in which people talk together without fixed answers and try to find the truth through dialogue.

In studies about group discussions in education, Lilja et al. (2023) explain that participating in discussions helps students develop ethical understanding and improve their thinking skills. They highlight that sharing ideas and reflecting with others supports deeper learning and better communication.

In addition, Karam and Abdulla (2021) point out that discussion groups are very important in learning English as a foreign language because they give students the opportunity to talk with their teacher during lessons and with classmates while working in groups.

Similarly, (Vetoshkin, et. al, 2022) mention that discussion is a learning activity where students share ideas about a topic. It helps them express their thoughts, support their opinions, and listen to others.

Yoshida, et al. (2025) explain that AI in discussion forums supports learning by providing feedback, guiding interaction, and helping students become more independent and active in the learning process.

Finally, (Syafrizal & Pahamzah, 2020) highlight that discussion provides several benefits. It helps students think more deeply, become more aware of themselves, respect different viewpoints, and take action based on what they have learned.

Confidence and motivation in oral expression

González Reséndez (2024) explains that the affective filter includes motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, which influence students' language learning and can affect their performance and ability to learn effectively.

These findings indicate Kiruthiga and Christopher (2022), confidence is the main factor that helps students speak better. Because of this, helping students feel surer of themselves can improve their communication. Additionally, these authors found that motivation is another key element that leads to great speaking talents.

Similarly, Ayu, et al. (2022) explain that self-confidence begins at birth and develops gradually over time. They note that it is closely linked to students' academic performance and, in particular, to their ability to express their opinions orally.

In contrast Azimova, M. (2020), self-confidence allows learners to reduce fear and connect more easily with others during communication. It is a kind of trust in yourself that helps you lose fear and start to connect with other people.

In addition, according to Acevedo (2025), self-confidence helps students trust their ability to learn and use English, which improves their oral skills and participation. In short, self-confidence is a key factor in learning English as a foreign language. When students believe in themselves, they feel more comfortable speaking and sharing their ideas.

Comparative perspectives (debate vs discussion)

Debating is a type of speaking where students exchange ideas and try to convince others. In contrast, classroom discussions focus more on interaction, where students listen carefully, take turns, and share their ideas to understand each other better (Reséndez, 2024).

Debate is a formal and organized activity with clear rules, where students need to prepare and give reasons to support their ideas. It helps them improve their speaking and argument skills. On the other hand, discussions are more relaxed and can happen in a natural way. They help students share opinions, listen to others, think more deeply, and understand topics better. They also allow learners to create new ideas or improve their previous ones (Asakavičiūtė et al., 2024).

Debates and discussions help students understand the connection between different areas of knowledge. This improves both their academic learning and their personal perspective. By participating in these activities, students develop a more complete view of their education and learn to value both scientific and human aspects (Giménez & Viñado, 2025).

Debating helps students improve their speaking skills and feel more confident when using English in real situations. It also encourages them to express their ideas clearly and participate actively in discussion. Through debating and public speaking, learners can develop better communication skills and become more independent when sharing their opinions (Valero Redondo, 2023).

Debate is not merely a discussion between two sides, rather, it is a structured argumentative activity in which participants present evidence-based arguments and critically challenge opposing viewpoints (Iman, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This study follows a mixed-method and comparative design to explore how discussions and debates affect students' speaking confidence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It is considered quasi-experimental because the participants were already part of established classes rather than being randomly assigned, which is the standard approach in educational research.

The research uses a sequential mixed-methods design. This means the research was carried out step-by-step. The process began with quantitative data collection to establish a baseline, followed by a qualitative phase to dig deeper into the results. By following this sequence, the initial data from observations and surveys could be better explained through the professional perspectives shared by teachers during their interviews.

The investigation uses a deductive approach. This means it starts with existing theories regarding teaching strategies specifically debates and discussions and speaking confidence, using these frameworks to guide the investigation and test the core research ideas.

The study involved 267 university students from the English program at a public university in Manabí (Chone, Ecuador). From this group, a sample of 65 students was chosen through convenience sampling, based on their availability. All students shared similar academic conditions. Additionally, two experienced English teachers, both holding Master's degrees and with over 10 years in the field, were interviewed to provide expert insights.

The examination was carried out in a public university in Manabí during regular English classes, where the learning conditions are supported by several key factors. First, the institution provides modern

infrastructure, which creates a comfortable and suitable academic environment for students. In addition, classrooms are equipped with digital screens instead of traditional blackboards, allowing more interactive teaching. Moreover, there is strong technological support, including projectors and accessible power outlets so students can easily connect their laptops. As a result, these resources ensure that both teachers and students have the necessary tools to work with modern teaching strategies effectively.

The researcher conducted non-participatory observations, which means I remained in the background and did not interfere with the lessons. Over a period of five weeks, a total of 11 observations was completed, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. This allowed carefully to follow the student's behavior and participation in a natural classroom setting without influencing their performance.

The observation sheet was organized into four main categories that were applied to both debates and discussions: oral participation and communication, confidence and expression, comprehension and preparation, and interaction. These categories helped to structure the data collection and ensured that all relevant aspects of students' speaking performance were considered.

Within these categories, the research focused on two types of indicators. On the one hand, quantitative and behavioral indicators included aspects such as students' willingness to participate, the frequency and length of their contributions, their use of Spanish, and the presence of hesitation or fillers. On the other hand, affective and qualitative indicators were used to observe non-verbal communication and to evaluate whether students were willing to take linguistic risks while speaking.

In addition, teacher interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format in order to gather professional opinions about the strategies implemented during the lessons. This approach provided more detailed insights, as it allowed teachers to share their experiences and perspectives while still following a general set of guiding questions.

To ensure the study was reliable, the instruments were validated by six experts in English language teaching, some of whom hold a master's degree in the field. Their detailed feedback was used to refine the tools and improve the overall quality of the data collection.

The investigation followed a clear path: preparing materials, implementing five weeks of debates and discussions, and then collecting and analyzing the data. Quantitative data were handled with basic statistics, while the interviews were analyzed by identifying recurring themes and key ideas.

Quantitative data were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics, while interview data were analyzed by identifying common ideas and themes.

RESULTS

Interview results

The following section presents the qualitative results obtained from the interviews applied to the teachers, which are divided into four dimensions.

Confidence in oral communication

According to the teachers, confidence to speak is one of the main factors that students present since it is composed of the emotional conditions of the learning environment where linguistic development depends on the strategies used to stimulate oral participation, due to reducing the cognitive difficulties associated with the formulation of ideas in English.

Teacher 1 stressed that students with greater command of the language participate more confidently, but Teacher 2 mentioned that confidence is also conditioned by other factors, such as anxiety that arises from the fear of making mistakes when speaking in English. According to the perception of educators, students participate when they feel confident that the classroom is a space where communication has greater value than linguistic perfection.

From the teachers' point of view, oral confidence does not depend on the level of English, but on the interaction between linguistic preparation and pedagogical environments, in order for there to be a progressive improvement in communication, activities must be integrated that allow students to interact using the language where there is confidence and anxiety is mitigated.

Discussions as a strategy in oral communication

For educators, discussion activities are a useful strategy to develop initial confidence in speaking English because they generate opportunities for participation with less communicative pressure; In fact, teachers think that collaborative interaction encourages students to express ideas

focused on practicing oral production without the immediate requirement of defending complex arguments.

Group discussions, in the words of teacher 1, provide greater opportunities for communicative practice for students with limited language proficiency; for her part, Teacher 2 mentioned that the formation of heterogeneous groups favors the participation of students who have less security by benefiting from the linguistic modeling of their classmates.

In particular, class discussions function as a pedagogical scaffolding mechanism because they can be used as a nucleus to reduce cognitive barriers that are important to stimulate students' disposition in oral communication of the English language.

Debates as a strategy in oral communication

Debates, according to teachers, are more complex communicative experiences that consolidate the development of advanced oral skills when students have enough linguistic resources to participate. Debates are used to construct arguments, as well as to respond to opposing perspectives under greater communicative pressure.

The interviewees pointed out that students, in debate activities, experience initial insecurity due to vocabulary limitations and difficulties in expressing complex ideas spontaneously, but they also state that progressive participation in debates strengthens confidence by increasing students' ability to defend their opinions.

Teacher 2 explained that she uses debates so that her students learn to organize ideas and communicate even when they have linguistic limitations, since they are activities that function as spaces of communicative challenge where confidence is developed through gradual exposure to more demanding oral situations.

Relationship of discussions and debates

The interviewed teachers stated that there is a complementary relationship between discussions and debates, rather than an absolute superiority of one strategy over the other. Teachers believe that discussions are more suitable for building the initial foundations of oral confidence because they provide flexible spaces that reduce the fear of making mistakes in front of classmates.

In contrast, the debates were associated with later stages of communicative development; that is, when students have a high linguistic level of the language that allows them to develop cognitive processes to participate in activities such as argumentation and sustained communication.

The effectiveness of debates and discussions as strategies depends on their correspondence with the student's level of communicative preparation; therefore, educators propose a pedagogical progression in which discussions function as an entry point to strengthen oral participation and debates expand students' ability to communicate in tones that demand linguistic complexity and precision.

Results of the observations

Complementing the interview findings, this section presents qualitative evidence from classroom observations to examine how debates and discussions were enacted in practice and how they influenced students' oral participation and confidence level.

Table 1

Oral Communicative Performance: Descriptive Statistics by Strategy

Indicator	Discussion			Debate		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>DS</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>DS</i>
Vocabulary and expressions	11	4.82	0.41	11	4.82	0.41
Spontaneous interaction	11	4.00	0.00	11	4.00	0.00
Confidence in the face of errors	11	4.55	0.52	11	4.45	0.52
Participation despite limitations	11	4.09	0.30	10	4.10	0.32
Understanding instructions	11	4.82	0.41	10	4.80	0.42
Complete in allotted time	11	4.18	0.41	10	4.40	0.52
Organization of ideas	11	4.00	0.00	11	4.09	0.30
Respectful interaction	11	4.18	0.75	11	4.09	0.70
Overall average	11	4.33	0.20	11	4.34	0.22

Note. *M* = Average and *SD* = Standard deviation.

Table 1 presents a high oral communicative performance in both strategies, on the one hand, in Discussion, the indicators with the highest scores were Vocabulary and Expressions and Comprehension of Instructions ($M = 4.82$); in contrast, the lowest indicators are both Spontaneous Interaction and Organization of Ideas ($M = 4.00$).

Thus, the unplanned oral production on which the Discussion strategy is based does not require further practice. On the other hand, a similar pattern is observed in the Debate, Vocabulary and expressions reached the highest mean ($M = 4.82$), unlike Spontaneous Interaction, which records a lower value ($M = 4.00$).

Table 2

Comparison of Oral Communicative Performance Using the Wilcoxon Test

Indicator	Z	p	r
Vocabulary and expressions	0.000	1.000	0.00
Spontaneous interaction	0.000	1.000	0.00
Confidence in the face of errors	-1.000	.317	0.30
Participation despite limitations	0.000	1.000	0.00
Understanding Instructions	0.000	1.000	0.00
Complete in allotted time	-1.414	.157	0.43
Organization of ideas	-1.000	.317	0.30
Respectful interaction	-1.000	.317	0.30

Note. Wilcoxon's sign range test. $r = \text{effect size}$ ($r = Z/\sqrt{N}$). $r \geq 0.10$ small effect; $r \geq 0.30$ medium effect; $r \geq 0.50$ large effect.

Table 2 highlights that Wilcoxon's test does not reveal statistically significant differences between Discussion and Debate in any of the eight indicators evaluated ($p > .05$), in particular, the effect size is null in five indicators ($r = 0.00$) and median in Confidence in the face of errors, Organization of ideas and Respectful interaction ($r = 0.30$), in contrast Complete in allotted time underscores the effect closest to large ($r = 0.43$), although without reaching statistical significance.

Discussion and debate are presented as equally effective strategies for the development of oral communication in English. Therefore, no statistically significant differences were found between discussion and debate regarding oral communicative performance

Table 3

Confidence level: descriptive statistics and comparison using the Mann-Whitney U

Indicator	<i>Discussion</i>		<i>Debate</i>		<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Magnitude</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>OF</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>OF</i>				
Eye contact	3.27	0.47	3.45	0.52	49.5	.408	.176	Small
Body posture	3.18	0.40	3.36	0.50	49.5	.372	.190	Small
Restlessness	2.18	0.60	2.09	0.54	66.0	.581	.118	Small
Facial expressions	3.36	0.50	3.55	0.52	49.5	.425	.170	Small
Willingness to Guess	4.18	0.40	4.36	0.50	49.5	.372	.190	Small
Vocabulary management	3.55	0.52	3.91	0.30	38.5	.068	.390	Medium
Reaction to mistakes	3.27	0.47	3.73	0.47	33.0	.041*	.436	Medium

Note. $p < .05$. $N = 11$ per group. U = Mann-Whitney statistic. r = effect size (Rosenthal): $r \geq .10$ small; $r \geq .30$ medium; $r \geq .50$ large.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and results of the Mann-Whitney U test for the seven confidence indicators evaluated. The results establish that the reaction to errors presented a statistically significant difference between both strategies ($U = 33.0$, $p = .041$, $r = .436$), with a median effect size favorable to debate ($M = 3.73$) over Discussion ($M = 3.27$).

The use of vocabulary shows a tendency close to significance ($U = 38.5$, $p = .068$, $r = .390$) also favorable to debate ($M = 3.91$ vs. $M = 3.55$). The remaining five indicators did not display significant differences ($p > .05$); consequently, both strategies produce comparable levels of confidence in most of the dimensions evaluated.

DISCUSSION

The comparison between the discussions and the debates states that methodological differences that characterize both strategies were not reflected in relevant differences in the students' communicative performance. That is, although each activity poses different communicative demands, both reached comparable levels of oral performance, a greater structural complexity did not imply a better communicative performance.

This result provides an important nuance to the literature, since Asakavičiūtė et al. (2024) differentiate both strategies by the way they organize interaction, while Giménez and Viñado (2025) mention that the strategies favor communication through different dynamics.

The findings broaden the authors' perspectives by showing that these methodological differences did not produce different communicative performances because the effectiveness of both strategies depends more on the opportunities for interaction, they generate than on the communicative format that distinguishes them.

The interviewed teachers described the discussions as spaces that reduce communicative pressure and described the debates as activities that demand a more structured defense of the arguments, but the pedagogical differences are not consolidated in a better communicative performance for any of the strategies.

The convergence of the results indicates that both strategies promote oral communication through different interaction processes that lead to comparable results, a position that coincides with Naeem et al., (2023), who conceive of discussion as an opportunity for the collaborative construction of learning, and Iman (2017), who define debate as a structured argumentative activity. The differences characterize the students' communicative experience, but did not determine differences in their oral performance.

The behavior of the level of confidence presented a different pattern from that observed in communicative performance, in which most of the indicators did not show significant differences between both strategies, the reaction to errors favored debate, but the use of vocabulary resulted in a trend in the same direction without reaching statistical significance.

The influence of the debate did not extend to the set of dimensions that make up trust, but focused on a specific aspect of oral participation; In fact, the interviews support this evidence, since the teachers pointed out that students experience insecurity at the beginning of the debates due to the demands of argumentation, but they perceive that progressive participation strengthens their confidence.

The perception of the educators found support in the reaction to errors, so the evidence does not support the argument that the debate favors the development of trust in a general way.

Werdiningsih (2018), in his research, has a similar position by relating debate as a source of security

to sustain argumentative processes. For their part, Vargas and Tovar (2022) state that trust responds to the interaction of multiple factors that are not linked to the didactic strategy used by educators.

The differences between discussions and debates lie in the nature of the communicative experiences they generate and not in a high level of effectiveness in developing oral performance; therefore, teachers assign different pedagogical functions to both strategies, the statistical comparison indicates that these differences were only evident in the students' reaction to errors and not in the overall communicative performance.

The main contribution of this research is to provide evidence that two strategies with different communicative dynamics can produce comparable results in the development of oral communication, while influencing differently a dimension of trust as an emotional factor present in oral communication.

Consequently, discussions and debates as strategies in oral communication should not be understood as exclusive pedagogical activities because they are complementary pedagogical resources whose selection can respond to the communicative objectives that the teacher intends to develop at each stage of learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Discussions and debates are pedagogical strategies grounded in communicative approaches to language learning, placing learners in situations where the use of English acquires a real purpose: the exchange of ideas. These strategies transcend isolated linguistic practice, as they involve cognitive and affective processes related to constructing arguments, negotiating meaning, and developing confidence to participate orally. Their pedagogical value lies in creating conditions where communication becomes the central focus of learning, strengthening linguistic production in communication.

Regarding student performance when observing the implementation of activities based on discussions and debates, it is affirmed that both strategies are indispensable for developing oral communication in English, despite no substantial differences being found in the evaluated indicators. The effectiveness of debates and discussions does not depend on the exclusive application of one strategy, but rather on

the correspondence between the communicative purpose and the students' level of linguistic preparation. On the one hand, discussions offer spaces for participation with less communicative pressure, while on the other hand, debates present demands related to complex cognitive processes. The perceptions of education experts regarding discussions and debates as complementary strategies within the oral development process are presented with different approaches. Discussions represent an initial way to strengthen confidence, while debates allow progress toward forms of communication in which well-founded ideas are presented orally. Therefore, it is advisable to implement both strategies progressively, taking into account the linguistic and emotional characteristics of the students.

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