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**THE INFLUENCE OF THE DESCRIBING PICTURE STRATEGY ON BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS' ENGLISH ORAL FLUENCY.**

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y
Evaluación de Inglés.

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	4
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	5
ABSTRACT.....	6
RESUMEN	7
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	9
1.2 AIMS.....	10
1.2.1 <i>General objective</i>	10
1.2.2 <i>Specific Objectives</i>	10
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	11
2.1 THE SPEAKING SKILL.....	12
2.1.1 <i>The Importance of speaking</i>	12
2.2 GOALS AND PROBLEMS IN TEACHING SPEAKING IN THE EFL CLASSROOM.....	13
2.2.1 <i>Developing Communicative Competence</i>	13
2.2.2 <i>Enhancing Speaking Fluency</i>	14
2.2.3 <i>Promoting Speaking Accuracy</i>	15
2.2.4 <i>Addressing Anxiety and Speaking Inhibition</i>	15
2.2.5 <i>Providing Authentic Speaking Opportunities</i>	16
2.3 THE SPEAKING SKILL IN THE CHILEAN CONTEXT	17
2.3.1 <i>Language Policy and Curriculum in Chile</i>	17
2.3.3 <i>Pedagogical Approaches</i>	18
2.3.4 <i>Technology Integration</i>	18
2.3.5 <i>Assessment of Speaking Skills</i>	19
2.4 SPEAKING FLUENCY	19
2.4.1 <i>Elements in Speaking Fluency</i>	20
2.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF USING STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.....	21
2.6 THE DESCRIBING PICTURE STRATEGY TO TEACH SPEAKING	23
2.6.1 <i>Advantages of using pictures in teaching speaking</i>	23
2.6.2 <i>Studies about the Describing Picture Strategy</i>	24
CHAPTER III: METHOD.....	26
3.1 TYPE OF RESEARCH.....	27
3.2 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS	27
3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES	28
3.3.1 <i>Research question</i>	28
3.3.2 <i>General Objective</i>	28
3.3.3 <i>Specific objectives</i>	28
3.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM	28
3.5 STAGES OF THE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY	28
3.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES	29
3.6.1.1 <i>Pre and Post intervention speaking assessment</i>	30

3.6.1.2 <i>An analytic rubric to assess oral fluency</i>	30
3.6.2 <i>Focus group</i>	30
3.6.3 <i>Validation of instruments</i>	31
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES	31
3.7.1 <i>Pre and Post interventions speaking rubric</i>	31
3.7.2 <i>Focus group</i>	32
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS	33
4.1 SO1: TO ANALYSE PARTICIPANTS' RESULTS ON THEIR ORAL FLUENCY INDICATORS OF SPEECH RATE, HESITATION, PAUSES AND REPAIRS BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTERVENTION BASED ON THE USE OF THE DESCRIBING PICTURE STRATEGY	34
4.1.1 <i>Analysis of participant's fluency level: speech rate.</i>	35
4.1.2 <i>Analysis of participant's level of hesitation</i>	37
4.1.3 <i>Analysis of participant's level of pauses</i>	39
4.1.4 <i>Analysis of participant's level of repairs</i>	41
4.2 SO2: TO DESCRIBE THE PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE DPS APPLIED DURING THE INTERVENTION IN THE ENGLISH LESSONS	42
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	48
5.1 SO1: TO ANALYZE PARTICIPANT'S PERFORMANCE IN REGARDS TO THEIR ORAL FLUENCY INDICATORS OF SPEECH RATE, BREAKDOWNS AND REPAIRS, BEFORE AND AFTER USING THE DESCRIBING PICTURE STRATEGY.....	49
5.2 SO2: TO DESCRIBE THE PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE DESCRIBING PICTURE STRATEGY APPLIED DURING THE INTERVENTION IN THE ENGLISH LESSONS	50
5.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS	51
5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	52
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION	53
6.1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS	54
6.2 PERSONAL REFLECTION	55
6.3 FURTHER RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS	55
REFERENCES	57
APPENDIX	64
APPENDIX A: LESSON PLAN.....	64
APPENDIX B: ANALYTIC RUBRIC	66
APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP	67
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT.....	68

List of tables and figures

List of tables

Table 1: Action Plan.....	29
Table 2: Participant's global scores in the Pre and Post intervention test.	34
Table 3: Speech Rate Levels.....	35
Table 4: Participants' Speech rate (Words Per Minute: WPM)	36
Table 5: Hesitation levels.....	37
Table 6: Participants' levels of hesitation	38
Table 7: Pauses levels.....	39
Table 8: Participants' level of Pauses.....	40
Table 9: Repair levels.....	41
Table 10: Thematic Analysis on the participant's perception towards the Describing Picture Strategy.	43

List of figures

Figure 1: Houson's fluency sub-dimensions.....	20
Figure 2: Strategy Conditions for Being useful.....	21
Figure 3: Chamot's model.....	22
Figure 4: Participants' speech rate (words per minute).....	36
Figure 5: Participants' level of hesitation	38
Figure 6: Participants' level of Pauses.....	40
Figure 7: Participants' level of Repair	42

List of Acronyms

DPS - Describing Picture Strategy

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

ESL – English as a Second Language

WPM - Words Per Minute

CLT - Communicative Language Teaching

SO1 & SO2 - Specific Objectives 1 and 2

Abstract

This action research study investigated the efficacy of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) in boosting English oral fluency among Business Administration students in Chile. The study's goal was to evaluate DPS's influence on critical fluency indicators: speech rate, hesitation, pauses, and repairs. A mixed-method data collection technique was utilized, integrating pre- and post-intervention assessments with focus group discussions for data triangulation, providing insights into both the quantitative and qualitative influence of DPS. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical techniques to measure changes in fluency metrics, while qualitative analysis of focus group narratives provided deeper insights into students' perceptions. Findings revealed notable enhancements in speech rate and a decrease in hesitation, pauses, and repairs after implementing DPS, affirming its effectiveness in fostering oral fluency. Participants' positive feedback further corroborated DPS's relevance and effectiveness in the EFL context. Although the study was conducted within a specific cultural framework, its outcomes underscore the potential of interactive, learner-centered strategies like DPS in language education. This research paves the way for future investigations into DPS's broader applicability across various educational contexts.

Key words: Describing Picture Strategy (DPS), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Higher Education, Oral Fluency

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación-acción exploró la efectividad de la Estrategia de Descripción de Imágenes (DPS, por sus siglas en inglés) en la mejora de indicadores de fluidez oral en inglés entre estudiantes de Administración de Empresas de una institución de educación superior, Chile. El objetivo fue evaluar el impacto de DPS en componentes clave de la fluidez: tasa de habla, hesitación, pausas y correcciones. Empleando un enfoque de método mixto, el estudio combinó pruebas pre y post-intervención con discusiones de grupos focales para la triangulación de datos, proporcionando perspectivas tanto de los efectos cuantitativos como cualitativos de DPS.

Los resultados indicaron mejoras significativas en la tasa de habla y reducciones en la hesitación, pausas y correcciones después de la intervención, demostrando la efectividad de DPS en la mejora de la fluidez oral. La retroalimentación positiva de los participantes validó aún más la utilidad y el atractivo de DPS en un contexto de EFL (Inglés como Lengua Extranjera). Sin embargo, limitaciones como el contexto cultural específico del estudio y la falta de un grupo de control sugieren la necesidad de más investigaciones con grupos de participantes más diversos y períodos de intervención más prolongados.

Concluyentemente, el estudio resalta el potencial de estrategias de enseñanza interactivas y atractivas como DPS en la educación lingüística. Destaca la necesidad de enfoques centrados en el aprendiz, dinámicos y sensibles al contexto en la enseñanza del EFL, abriendo el camino para futuras investigaciones que amplíen estos hallazgos y exploren la aplicabilidad de DPS en contextos educativos más amplios.

Palabras claves: Estrategia de Descripción de Imágenes (DPS), Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL), Fluidez Oral

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Introduction

In today's globalized and competitive landscape, proficiency in English is essential for academic and professional advancement, underscored by its significant influence on students' career opportunities and global mobility (Perry, 2021; Rao, 2019). This study examines a diverse cohort of 15 Business Administration students, aged 20 to 45, at a Chilean higher education institution in Los Angeles, Chile. Despite aiming for a B2 proficiency level as per the Common European Framework of Reference, these students face pronounced challenges in oral fluency, particularly during interviews for their final sustainability projects, marked by slow speech, hesitations, and difficulties in sentence completion.

Addressing these challenges, the study focuses on the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS), a learner-centered approach that has shown effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills and fluency (Namaziandost et al., 2020; Ur, 2008). This method is adaptable across various proficiency levels and offers benefits such as alleviating student anxiety and improving fluency (Ho, 2018), while fostering differentiation and scaffolding, thereby motivating students (Kano & Fardiansyah, 2015). The current research, framed as action research as defined by Mills (2007), Song & Gui-xia (2016) and Banegas & Consoli (2019), systematically explores the impact of DPS in the teaching-learning process, engaging teachers and students in a reflective and participative approach.

Spanning eight sessions, the study begins with an introduction to the action research framework, followed by a pre-intervention oral evaluation using a custom rubric assessing speech rate, breakdowns, and repairs. The core of the research involves the application of DPS across five sessions, meticulously integrated into the curriculum, with teacher observations recorded in a diary. The study concludes with a post-intervention assessment and a focus group discussion to capture students' perceptions of DPS's effectiveness in enhancing their English fluency.

The overarching objective of this research is to rigorously examine the influence of DPS on English oral fluency indicators among Business Administration students. It aims to analyze changes in speech rate, hesitation, pauses, and repairs, both before and after implementing DPS, and to describe the students' perceptions of DPS in their English language learning journey. The guiding research question is: What is the influence of the DPS on the speaking fluency of Business Administration students in a Chilean higher educational context?

1.2 Aims

1.2.1 General objective

To examine the influence of the describing picture strategy on a group of Business Administration Student's English oral fluency indicators.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

SO1: To analyze participant's performance in regards to their oral fluency indicators of speech rate, hesitation, pauses and repairs before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy.

SO2: To describe the participants' perceptions towards the Describing Picture Strategy applied during the intervention in the English lessons.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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2.1 The Speaking skill

Communication, as an integral facet of human interaction, serves as the conduit through which individuals convey messages, express emotions, disseminate information, and foster relationships. However, the essence of effective communication extends beyond the mere act of exchanging words. It necessitates the ability to convey thoughts and ideas with clarity, precision, and conviction, underscoring the pivotal role of speaking skills. (Luoma, 2004)

Speaking is not merely the articulation of words; it is the embodiment of one's thoughts and ideas, delivered with confidence and fluency in a manner comprehensible to the listener. This skill is paramount in various contexts, be it face-to-face interactions, group discussions, public addresses, or other communicative scenarios. Furthermore, the mastery of speaking skills can usher in a plethora of opportunities. In our globalized world, fluency in communication can facilitate interactions with diverse cultural and linguistic groups, and in the professional sphere, it is often a sought-after trait, with employers valuing candidates possessing exemplary communication skills. (Harmer, 2007)

Luoma (2004) offers a nuanced perspective on speaking, characterizing it as both spontaneous and predictable. This duality underscores the dynamic nature of speaking, where the content is influenced by the context, participants, and overarching purpose. Everyday scenarios, from informal chats to structured discussions, necessitate tailored speech to ensure effective interaction and mitigate potential misunderstandings.

The realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) presents amplified challenges in speaking. Among the four cardinal language skills, speaking is frequently perceived as the most intricate. This complexity stems from the dual challenges of formulating coherent thoughts and subsequently encoding these thoughts using the appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures of the English language. De Bot (1992) provides a comprehensive exploration of this encoding process, emphasizing its multifaceted nature and the requisite depth of understanding of linguistic nuances.

Building on this, Harmer (2007) accentuates the intricacies of achieving fluency in EFL speaking. He posits that true fluency transcends mere comprehension of linguistic structures. It demands rapid assimilation of new linguistic elements, often necessitating on-the-spot adjustments without extensive preparation. Complementing this perspective, Thornbury (2007) broadens the scope of speaking to encompass paralinguistic features. He contends that speaking is a multisensory endeavor, where non-verbal cues, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body language, interplay with verbal elements. Additionally, the rhythm, pauses, voice modulation, and pitch variations contribute to the overall efficacy of spoken communication.

In light of these insights, it becomes evident that speaking, particularly in an EFL context, is a confluence of various elements. Each conversation is a dynamic interplay of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processes, and socio-cultural factors, making speaking a skill that is both intricate and profoundly impactful.

2.1.1 The Importance of speaking

Speaking, as a fundamental aspect of human communication, holds a pivotal role in myriad contexts. It serves as the primary medium through which individuals

express thoughts, emotions, and intentions. Bygate (1987) elucidates that speaking is not just the articulation of words; it is the expression of ideas, beliefs, and desires, often serving as the primary channel through which we connect with others.

The significance of speaking skills transcends mere verbal exchanges. They are instrumental in building relationships, fostering mutual understanding, and facilitating effective communication. Nunan (2003) underscores the value of speaking skills, emphasizing their role in promoting self-confidence and facilitating cultural exchanges. In personal and professional spheres, the ability to articulate thoughts clearly and effectively is often seen as a marker of competence and confidence.

In educational contexts, especially in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, the emphasis on speaking is paramount. It bridges the gap between structured classroom learning and real-world communication. Crystal (2003) posits that with English emerging as a global lingua franca, the ability to speak it proficiently has become more crucial than ever. This underscores the significance of speaking skills, empowering individuals to engage in diverse communicative contexts, from casual conversations to formal discussions.

Feedback and continuous practice play crucial roles in honing speaking skills. Lyster and Ranta (1997) champion the efficacy of corrective feedback in refining speaking proficiency. Such feedback, when constructive, can guide learners in making real-time adjustments, fostering more natural and effective speech patterns.

In essence, the act of speaking stands at the forefront of human communication. It serves as a reflection of one's thoughts, emotions, and intentions. In our interconnected world, where effective communication is key to personal and professional success, the importance of speaking cannot be overstated.

2.2 Goals and problems in teaching speaking in the EFL classroom

Teaching speaking skills in EFL classrooms encompasses various goals and challenges. This section shows some of them with emphasis on the development of communicative competence, enhancement of speaking fluency, promotion of speaking accuracy, addressing anxiety and speaking inhibition, and providing authentic speaking opportunities, which might be helpful for educators and practitioners to design effective instructional strategies.

2.2.1 Developing Communicative Competence

The pursuit of language proficiency is intricately tied to the development of communicative competence, a concept that delves deeper than mere linguistic knowledge. Hymes (1972) was instrumental in introducing this notion, emphasizing that true language mastery transcends grammatical correctness. It encapsulates the ability to use language effectively, appropriately, and adaptively across diverse social contexts.

Building on Hymes' foundational concept, Canale and Swain (1980) provided a more granular breakdown of communicative competence, segmenting it into four core components. The first, grammatical competence, pertains to the understanding and application of linguistic elements, from syntax to phonology. Sociolinguistic competence, in contrast, delves into the realm of context-driven

language use, highlighting the importance of adjusting one's language based on the social setting and the audience. Discourse competence, as they describe, is the cohesive thread that binds individual utterances into a coherent, meaningful narrative. Strategic competence, the final component, focuses on the adaptive strategies that speakers employ to bridge gaps in their linguistic knowledge or to navigate communication challenges.

Expanding on Bachman's seminal work in 1990, the concept of communicative competence now includes both organizational and pragmatic aspects. Organizational competence pertains to the structural aspects of language, focusing on grammar and text construction, as highlighted by Hameed and Jawad (2023). Pragmatic competence, on the other hand, is about the application of language in practical situations, emphasizing its functional use in diverse real-life scenarios, as noted by Yan (2022). This comprehensive approach ensures that learners are adept in the mechanics of language and its effective use in context. The importance of these competencies extends beyond theory, playing a vital role in shaping language education, as they are integral to the development of language course content and pedagogical strategies, as discussed by Pinchuk (2020) and Sarzhanova et al. (2022).

In the realm of language education, the emphasis on developing communicative competence is paramount. It ensures that learners move beyond rote memorization or isolated linguistic exercises. Instead, they are groomed to view language as a dynamic tool, adaptable to various social scenarios and communicative needs. Lightbown and Spada (2006) encapsulate this sentiment aptly, asserting that the end goal of language instruction is not mere linguistic precision. It is, more importantly, the cultivation of the ability to engage in meaningful, effective, and contextually appropriate communication.

2.2.2 Enhancing Speaking Fluency

Speaking fluency, a cornerstone of language proficiency, extends beyond mere speech speed. It encapsulates the fluidity, rhythm, and organic progression of spoken discourse. De Jong and Perfetti (2011) provide an insightful definition of speaking fluency, emphasizing the significance of seamless expression and the reduction of disruptions like pauses and hesitations. Their perspective resonates with the overarching notion of fluency as the spontaneous production of language without excessive effort.

Derwing et al. (2008) accentuate the centrality of fluency within language pedagogy, suggesting that it acts as a conduit connecting formal classroom instruction with genuine communication. Attaining fluency equips learners to shift from practiced speech constructs to genuine, unscripted dialogues, amplifying their communicative efficacy.

Expanding on this, Segalowitz (2010) posits that the evolution of fluency is inherently tied to consistent exposure and repeated practice. He champions the integration of fluency-centric exercises in language teaching, such as constrained time speaking drills, role enactments, and extemporaneous discourses. These methodologies not only offer students avenues to hone speaking without the burden of precision but also fortify their self-assurance.

Feedback remains instrumental in augmenting speaking fluency. Lyster and Ranta (1997) assert that constructive feedback can profoundly influence the development of fluency. They advocate for real-time feedback on aspects like pronunciation, tonality, and cadence, enabling learners to adapt instantaneously,

fostering a more authentic speech rhythm.

The digital revolution has significantly impacted fluency enhancement. Contemporary learners can tap into a vast reservoir of digital resources to refine their speaking. Golonka et al. (2014) underscore the efficacy of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools in bolstering fluency. For instance, applications equipped with speech recognition proffer immediate feedback on pronunciation, facilitating prompt rectifications by learners.

In the quest for speaking fluency, it is pivotal to comprehend that fluency and precision are complementary, not contradictory. Skehan (2009) elucidates that while activities centered on fluency accentuate speech flow, they should not neglect linguistic accuracy. Balancing both dimensions ensures that learners articulate smoothly while transmitting their thoughts with clarity and coherence.

2.2.3 Promoting Speaking Accuracy

In the domain of language instruction, the emphasis on speaking accuracy is paramount. While fluency pertains to the fluidity and ease of speech, accuracy ensures that the content conveyed is linguistically precise and correct. Achieving speaking accuracy is a nuanced endeavor, necessitating targeted strategies and methods. As Gass and Varonis (1994) posit, accuracy in speaking is a reflection of a learner's internalized linguistic system, and it plays a crucial role in ensuring effective communication.

Focused drills and exercises stand as foundational methods to promote speaking accuracy. These drills, often structured and repetitive, allow learners to practice specific linguistic structures until they become ingrained. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), such exercises offer learners the platform to refine their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage in controlled environments, ensuring that they internalize correct language patterns.

Feedback plays a pivotal role in bolstering speaking accuracy. Constructive feedback, especially when rendered immediately post a speaking activity, can guide learners in pinpointing and rectifying their errors. Lyster and Ranta (1997) emphasize the efficacy of corrective feedback in refining learners' linguistic precision. This real-time correction reinforces accurate language production and curtails the perpetuation of errors.

Moreover, the context in which speaking activities are conducted can significantly influence accuracy. Engaging learners in scenarios that mirror authentic real-life situations compels them to focus on the precision of their utterances. Ellis (2008) underscores the importance of accuracy for effective communication, suggesting that authentic speaking contexts challenge learners to produce language that is both accurate and appropriate.

2.2.4 Addressing Anxiety and Speaking Inhibition

Language learning, while rewarding, is often accompanied by challenges, notably the anxiety associated with speaking. Millatina et al. (2020) delve into the complexities of this issue in their study on the experiential learning method, emphasizing how anxiety can significantly hinder fluency and erode learners' confidence. This anxiety often translates into speaking inhibition, where learners, apprehensive about judgment or errors, opt for silence, thereby forgoing crucial speaking experiences.

Loan (2020) further dissects the multifaceted nature of language anxiety. They

suggest that it's not merely the fear of negative evaluation but also encompasses learners' self-perceptions and beliefs about their language capabilities. When learners harbor doubts about their linguistic abilities, they are more susceptible to heightened anxiety, culminating in speaking inhibition.

Speaking inhibition has ramifications beyond individual struggles. Ismail and Wiemer-Hastings (2022) highlight that active engagement in speaking tasks is pivotal for language development. When learners refrain from participating due to inhibitions, they lose out on practice opportunities, feedback, and the chance to hone their speaking skills, potentially stalling their linguistic progress.

Combatting the adverse effects of anxiety and speaking inhibition necessitates a proactive pedagogical approach. Ghaith (2020) underscores the significance of cultivating a classroom ambiance characterized by support, inclusivity, and acceptance. By engendering a sense of community, educators can alleviate learners' apprehensions, diminishing the dread of negative evaluations.

Positive reinforcement plays a vital role in language learning. Bhatti et al. (2021) highlight that the use of positive reinforcement in language classrooms can significantly enhance students' motivation to learn. This approach, involving affirmations and encouragement, can amplify learners' self-efficacy, making them more resilient in facing linguistic challenges. Through positive feedback and recognition of achievements, educators can cultivate a sense of accomplishment in learners, inspiring them to overcome their limitations. Additionally, the research by Babajani et al. (2022) supports the idea that a positive perception of classroom structure and emotional self-regulation, mediated by academic self-efficacy, can lead to greater academic engagement, further underscoring the importance of positive reinforcement in educational settings.

Additionally, integrating collaborative endeavors, such as group dialogues and peer assessments, can assuage speaking apprehensions. Dong et al. (2022) advocate for peer engagements, asserting that they offer learners a conducive environment for speaking practice, devoid of the strains of formal scrutiny. Such collaborative endeavors also promote camaraderie, enabling learners to derive encouragement from their contemporaries.

In the expansive realm of language pedagogy, addressing speaking anxiety and inhibition transcends mere fluency enhancement. It is about enabling learners to discover their voice, articulate authentically, and partake in enriching dialogues with assurance and grace.

2.2.5 Providing Authentic Speaking Opportunities

While traditional classroom settings offer structured learning environments, they sometimes fall short in replicating the dynamism of real-world communication. Van den Branden (2006) highlights this discrepancy, emphasizing the imperative to integrate authentic speaking scenarios within the curriculum. He posits that genuine speaking opportunities are pivotal in refining learners' communicative competencies, equipping them for real-life interactions.

The essence of authenticity in language instruction transcends mere replication of real-world contexts. It entails immersing learners in environments that echo the intricacies of genuine communication. Breen (1985) delves into the facets of authentic language engagement, underscoring the elements of spontaneity, unpredictability, and adaptability. He advocates for tasks like debates, simulations, and real-world problem-solving activities, which challenge learners to adapt their linguistic responses in real-time.

The digital age offers innovative avenues to bolster the authenticity of speaking opportunities. Kern et al. (2015) explore the potential of digital communication tools in language pedagogy. Platforms like video calls, online discussion groups, and language exchange portals enable interactions with native speakers and peers from varied linguistic backgrounds. Such digital engagements, they argue, offer a harmonious blend of structured learning and spontaneous communication. Multimedia resources emerge as potent tools in providing authentic linguistic exposure. Guichon and McLornan (2008) emphasize the pedagogical value of movies, podcasts, and online broadcasts in acquainting learners with genuine language use. These mediums not only serve as rich linguistic repositories but also offer cultural context, acquainting learners with the socio-cultural nuances that influence language.

Cultural immersion stands out as a transformative strategy in amplifying speaking authenticity. Coleman (2015) champions study abroad programs and cultural immersion experiences as invaluable in language learning. Being ensconced in a native-speaking milieu compels learners to employ the language in everyday scenarios, from casual conversations to formal interactions. Such immersive endeavors, Coleman suggests, expedite linguistic acquisition and bolster speaking prowess.

In the expansive realm of language pedagogy, the emphasis on authenticity signifies a profound appreciation of language learning as a comprehensive journey. It is not merely about linguistic mastery but encompasses understanding the cultural, pragmatic, and social dimensions of communication. By curating authentic speaking opportunities, educators pave the way for learners to partake in enriching interactions, nurturing their evolution as adept and self-assured communicators.

2.3 The Speaking skill in the Chilean Context

This section presents pertinent literature and official documents, as well as a thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with teaching speaking in the Chilean context. The main points highlighted emerged after examining language policies, cultural factors, pedagogical approaches, technology integration, and assessment practices.

2.3.1 Language Policy and Curriculum in Chile

The Chilean language policy places significant emphasis on the development of oral communication skills, including speaking, in EFL instruction (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2019). The national curriculum framework, Marco Curricular de la Enseñanza Obligatoria, highlights the importance of promoting speaking proficiency as an essential goal in EFL classrooms (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2018). These policy guidelines underscore the significance of speaking skill development in the Chilean EFL context.

Another important factor for policy makers is the cultural one, which significantly influences speaking instruction in diverse educational contexts, such as in Chile. Chilean culture, with its distinctive communication styles, necessitates a specialized approach to language teaching. An emphasis on indirect communication and politeness within Chilean higher education institutions requires educators to be mindful of these aspects to foster an effective language learning environment.

For instance, Veliz and Smith (2021) discusses the perceptions of English teachers towards the teachability of metaphorical language in Chilean EFL classrooms, highlighting the cultural nuances in language teaching. This study underscores the importance of understanding the unique cultural characteristics of language in the Chilean context, such as the use of metaphors and idiomatic expressions. Additionally, Veliz and Smith (2021) emphasize the need for explicit preparation in teacher education programs to address the cultural aspects of language teaching in Chile, including the use of figurative language.

Moreover, Duggan et al. (2018) provide insights into cultural neuropsychology assessment in Chile, which can be reflective of broader educational practices in understanding and integrating cultural dimensions. Their work indicates the significance of considering cultural factors when assessing and teaching language skills.

Therefore, it is essential for language educators in Chile to integrate these cultural aspects into their teaching methodologies. Recognizing and incorporating the unique communication values and styles prevalent in Chilean culture, such as indirectness and politeness, can enhance the effectiveness of language instruction and development strategies.

2.3.3 Pedagogical Approaches

The Communicative Approach is widely employed in the Chilean EFL context, emphasizing meaningful and authentic communication (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2019). This approach promotes active participation and engagement in real-world speaking tasks, facilitating language acquisition. Additionally, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is gaining popularity in Chile, integrating subject content with language instruction, thereby providing meaningful contexts for speaking practice (Coyle, et, al 2010).

2.3.4 Technology Integration

In addition to interactive whiteboards, data projectors are also widely used in EFL classrooms, contributing significantly to the integration of technology in language teaching. Wiyati and Marlina (2021) discussed the positive perceptions of teachers towards the use of visual learning aids, including projectors, in EFL classrooms. They found that projectors assist teachers in delivering content effectively and managing their time efficiently during lessons. The use of projectors enables the presentation of visual materials, which aids in comprehension and engagement, especially for visual learners.

Furthermore, Hammou (2021) explored the most frequently used ICT tools in Moroccan secondary school EFL classrooms and found that computers, laptops, and projectors are among the preferred tools. The use of projectors was particularly noted for their role in enhancing the teaching of speaking and listening skills, as well as language components. This aligns with the broader view on technology in language use, teaching, and learning presented by Chun, et. al (2016), who emphasized the impact of technological media on language communication and expression.

Chile's Ministry of Education (Mineduc), through its Center for Education and Technologies (Enlaces), has developed an important policy addressing access in schools (Mineduc, 2011), recognizing the significance of technology integration in the learning process.

Incorporating projectors in EFL classrooms offers a dynamic and interactive way of teaching, allowing for the integration of multimedia resources, which can enrich the learning experience and aid in the acquisition of language skills. This approach is in line with contemporary teaching methods that leverage technology for more effective language instruction and learner engagement.

2.3.5 Assessment of Speaking Skills

In Chile, the national assessment system, known as the Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Desempeño (SNED), plays a pivotal role in evaluating students' proficiency in various subjects. One of the key components of this system is the assessment of students' oral proficiency. As per the Agencia de Calidad de la Educación (2021), the SNED includes speaking assessments designed to measure students' oral proficiency. These assessments typically utilize performance-based tasks and oral presentations as evaluation tools, as highlighted by Bravo (2013). Such authentic assessment methods are crucial as they ensure that speaking proficiency is evaluated accurately, allowing educators to gauge learners' progress and subsequently tailor instruction to meet individual needs.

However, it is worth noting that while the SNED emphasizes the importance of speaking assessments, the Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación (SIMCE), another prominent assessment system in Chile, has historically focused on assessing only listening and reading skills. As a result, speaking has not been a component of the national measurement through the SIMCE tests.

2.4 Speaking Fluency

Fluency is an important aspect of language learning, particularly in oral communication, and is defined as the ability to speak fluently and smoothly without undue pauses or hesitation (Skehan, 1998). Oral fluency indicators include speech rate, hesitation, self-correction, grammar accuracy, and the use of fillers. In the context of language learning, oral fluency is not just about the ability to speak quickly but also the ability to use language accurately and coherently (Bygate, 2001).

Speaking fluency refers to the ability to speak a language easily and with natural flow without pausing or making errors that disrupt the conversation. It is an essential component of effective communication, particularly in social, academic, and professional settings. Being fluent in a language requires not only a solid grasp of its grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to link units of speech together with ease and without strain. Speaking fluency can be improved through regular practice, exposure to language input, and the use of various fluency activities that provide opportunities for learners to speak and engage in conversation. In language instruction, speaking fluency is often assessed through speaking tests or simulations, which evaluate the learner's ability to produce language in real-time and communicate effectively with others. (Ngoc, et. al., 2020)

Speaking fluency is difficult to be described due to the number of features it has (Foster, 2020). According to Fulcher (2003), fluency is usually misinterpreted since it is seen to be tied to the ability to talk quickly; hence, when students learn a language and speak fast, they assume they are fluent in that language. According to Dos Santos and Ramirez-Villa (2022), fluency is related to speed,

although this is not the only aspect to consider. It is also related to rate, pauses, repetitions, and corrections.

2.4.1 Elements in Speaking Fluency

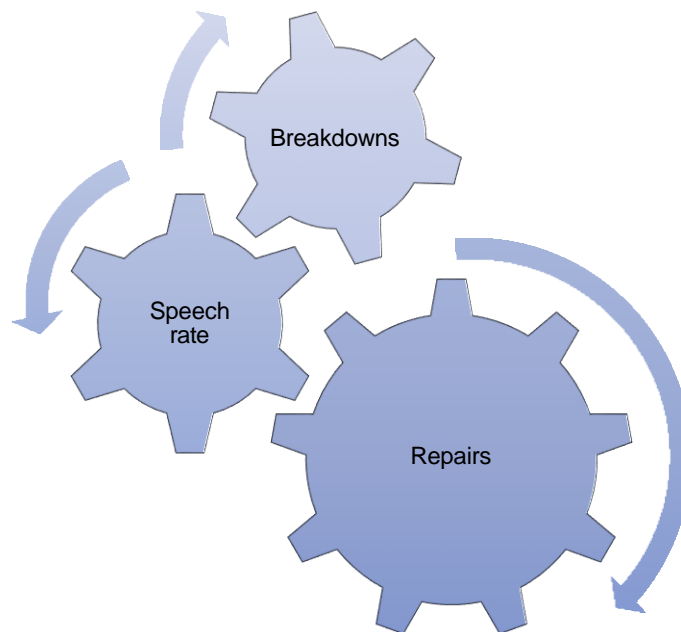
Fluency of utterances was the subject of study for this action research. Speaking a language naturally and effectively without a lot of pauses and fillers is known as fluency.

Bosker et al. (2013) state that utterance fluency measures (e.g., number and duration of filled and silent pauses, speech rate, number of repetitions and corrections, etc.) can be classified into three fluency aspects: breakdown fluency, speed fluency, and repair fluency. Breakdown fluency is concerned with the extent to which a continuous speech signal is interrupted; speed fluency is defined as the rate and density of speech delivery; and repair fluency is concerned with the number of corrections and repetitions present in speech.

Housen (2012) agrees that fluency can be separated into at least three subdimensions: speed, breakdown, and repair, which is observed in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Houson's fluency sub-dimensions.



Source: Own elaboration.

1. Speed is defined as the rate and density of linguistic units produced.
2. Breakdown refers to the number, length, and location of pauses.
3. Repair addresses false starts, missed formulations, self-corrections, and repetitions.

Likewise, the three aspects of fluency were distinguished by Segalowitz (2010) speed, breakdown, and repair are three visible aspects of fluency related to *utterance* fluency. The breakdown is calculated as the number of silent pauses, filled pauses, and the average length of silent pauses. The repair is calculated as

the number of repeats and corrections. The listener's response to the speaker's linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects is referred to as *perceived fluency*. Fluency of utterances was the subject of study for this action research.

Suzuki et al. (2023) mention that cognitive fluency refers to the underlying linguistic knowledge and temporal characteristics of speech that contribute to overall fluency. The Describing Picture Strategy may help learners develop the linguistic knowledge necessary for smoother and more accurate speech production, thereby improving cognitive fluency. Additionally, by guiding learners to describe the details and features of a picture, the strategy may promote more fluid and continuous speech production, improving utterance fluency.

2.5 The importance of using strategies in the teaching-learning process.

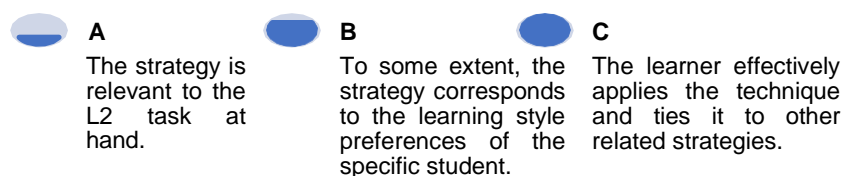
The term strategy comes from the ancient Greek word “strategia”, which signified the processes or actions taken to win a war. Strategia's warlike connotation has happily gone, but control and goal-directedness remain in the modern understanding of the word (Oxford, 1990).

Teaching and learning English require the use of effective and proper strategies. Various theories and empirical studies provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the various strategies, approaches, and techniques that can be employed to ensure successful teaching and learning of the English language. The following theories and perspectives from the fields of education, language learning, psychology, and socio-cultural studies provide the fields for effective strategies for teaching and learning English.

In education, strategies are seen as the process the teacher and the students purposefully go through to guarantee successful goal achievement. Oxford (1990) suggests that a strategy is useful under some conditions, as seen in Figure 2:

Figure 2

Strategy Conditions for Being useful.



Source: Own elaboration.

Strategies that fulfill these conditions “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Furthermore, by incorporating strategies into the teaching-learning process, students become more aware of their significance; they become more independent, autonomous, and lifelong learners. (Allwright, 1990; Little, 1991). Even more, Brown (2001) considers that language is probably the most complex set of skills one could ever seek to acquire; therefore, an investment is necessary in the form of developing multiple layers of strategies for getting that language into somebody’s brain.

Chamot's model (2005) incorporates strategy learning into content-based and academic activities, which represents language learning and teaching philosophy. His Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach model is cyclical rather than linear, so teachers and students can always return to previous instructional phases as needed. It has been taken into account as a guide for implementing EFL classroom programs, among others. This model is composed of six steps:

Figure 3

Chamot's model



Chamot's model Own elaboration

- (1) The preparation: The teacher determines the pupils' current learning techniques in this phase for routine activities, such as reviewing prior information and previewing the essential language and topics that will be introduced in the session;
- (2) Display: At this point, the instructor illustrates, describes, and asks students to employ new tactics like note-taking, self-monitoring, inference, elaboration, and selective attention.
- (3) Exercise: The students practice the new strategy in this stage, while in future strategy practice, the teacher fades reminders to encourage independent strategy use by having the students assess their language production, plan to create an oral or written report, or categorize concepts;
- (4) Assessment: Students evaluate their own strategy use immediately after practice in this phase, determining the effectiveness of their own learning by summarizing or giving a self-talk, either cooperatively or individually;
- (5) Expansion activities: During this stage, students apply their strategies to new tasks, group them into clusters, build a repertoire of preferred strategies, and integrate them into their existing knowledge frameworks.
- (6) Evaluation: At this stage, the teacher evaluates the students' use of strategies and their impact on performance.

For the purpose of this action research Chamot's model was used in the planning of the sessions with the describing picture strategy.

2.6 The describing picture strategy to teach speaking

The Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) is a dynamic language teaching technique that leverages visual aids or pictures to spur learners to describe what they observe, thereby enhancing their English language proficiency. This method, based on the concept that visual stimuli significantly bolster language acquisition, has demonstrated efficacy in boosting English language learners' speaking skills. DPS involves presenting learners with a picture, followed by encouraging them to engage in discussions or presentations about it, fostering vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency development.

This strategy aligns with micro-skill activities identified by Brown (2001), aimed at refining specific aspects of oral communication. By breaking down the speaking skill into manageable components, DPS offers a structured environment for learners to practice key elements of oral production.

Further emphasizing the importance of teaching methodologies, DPS integrates into the broader context of educational strategies, affecting both teacher and student actions, and ultimately shaping the teaching process and the perceived nature of knowledge and learning (Fauziati, 2011). Solahudin (2009), referenced by Fera et al. (2022), and Ismail (2008), as cited in Pratiwi et al. (2020), outline structured approaches to employing DPS, including preparation of relevant pictures, grouping students, vocabulary extraction, sentence formation, and active presentation in front of the class, emphasizing the importance of a well-defined procedure for effective implementation.

In the realm of descriptive texts, Wright (1983) suggests a detailed procedure involving pair activities, distinct pictures, and reciprocal description and drawing tasks, enhancing comprehension and retention. Similarly, Wahyudin (2017) advocates for the strategic use of picture description as a means to stimulate student activity and prevent classroom monotony. This approach not only improves speaking skills but also fosters genuine communication beyond rote memorization.

The effectiveness of DPS in language teaching, as highlighted in studies by Pratiwi and Ayu (2020), Murni (2018), Ajunge (2020), and Lase (2023), illustrates its role as a pivotal tool in modern EFL classrooms. These studies underscore the strategy's capacity to engage learners actively and enhance various facets of language fluency, making it a valuable asset for educators seeking innovative and effective teaching methodologies.

2.6.1 Advantages of using pictures in teaching speaking

Huebner (1991) defines picture as one of the visual aids in any sort of pictorial presentation. Images can be created and used in instructional materials to express personal identification text. The media will make it easier for students and teachers to master the speaking skill. Students can practice speaking properly in front of the class by explaining the content of photos with appropriate fluency and accuracy. The learning process is actually dependent on how teachers assist pupils and make the teaching-learning process more comfortable. Ganguly (2016) stated that the advantages of using flat pictures are that they are

easily available and easy to use. They are affordable and can be stored and reused. Pictures can arouse interest and imagination. They provide a common experience for the audience to stimulate imagination and start a conversation.

Multiple other studies explore the advantages of using pictures in teaching speaking as well as frameworks that incorporate the use of pictures in language teaching. Goh et al. (2012) present a framework for teaching speaking that integrates the use of pictures with other techniques and strategies. They argue that pictures can be a powerful tool for developing speaking abilities, as they can help learners visualize and organize their thoughts and provide them with a context for discussion and expression. Arnó-Macià (2017) explored the use of picture prompts as a way to teach speaking skills in EFL classrooms. The author argued that pictures can provide a rich source of language input and serve as a stimulus for meaningful communication.

Overall, these studies suggest that using pictures can be a valuable strategy for teaching speaking skills, as it can help learners develop their fluency and accuracy, visualize and organize their thoughts, and create a context for discussion and expression. Additionally, incorporating pictures into language teaching frameworks can provide teachers with a structured and pedagogically sound approach to using this technique.

Based on the reviewed research, it can be said that some potential advantages of using the DPS to teach English are:

1. It improves speaking skills as it can help learners improve their speaking skills by providing them with opportunities to practice using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in a controlled environment.
 2. It encourages critical thinking because it encourages learners to observe, analyze, and interpret visual information, which can develop their cognitive and analytical skills.
 3. It increases interaction as it promotes interaction and communication between learners, which in turn can enhance their social and emotional skills.
 4. It fosters creativity because it can also stimulate learners' creativity and imagination by providing an open-ended prompt for description, which can generate a range of responses.
 5. It accommodates different learning styles as it can accommodate various learning styles as it can be adapted to suit the needs and preferences of learners.
- Overall, the DPS can be an effective tool to teach English, as it not only enhances learners' speaking skills but also fosters cognitive, social, emotional, and creative growth.

2.6.2 Studies about the Describing Picture Strategy

The DPS has been recognized as a valuable approach for promoting speaking fluency in language learning contexts (Goh, 2008), since through engaging in picture description tasks, learners practice generating and expressing language spontaneously, leading to increased speaking fluency (Goh and Taib, 2006).

Oral fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly, coherently, and without undue pauses or hesitations (Segalowitz, 2010). Therefore, engaging in picture description activities provides learners with ample opportunities to develop their oral fluency by encouraging continuous speech production and reducing anxiety-induced interruptions (Goh, 2015). Fluency factors, such as speech rate, pausing patterns, and lexical and grammatical complexity, are important dimensions in

assessing speaking fluency (Skehan, 2009). Studies have shown that learners' fluency improves as they engage in picture description tasks, with increased speech rate, reduced hesitations, and enhanced use of varied vocabulary and grammatical structures (Goh and Taib, 2006, Sarina, 2018).

Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015) investigated the effect of using DPS in high school students' speaking ability in Oman. The study found that using DPS, which involves learners describing a picture in detail, had a positive impact on students' speaking fluency in English. The researchers concluded that the use of DPS could be an effective strategy for teachers to promote speaking proficiency in their language learners. While this study focuses specifically on the use of DPS in Omani high schools, it provides some evidence for the potential effectiveness of DPS on speaking fluency.

Several other studies have investigated the effect of the DPS on English language learners' oral fluency indicators as well (Chen and Lin, 2018; Leon, 2022). These studies have found that the DPS approach can enhance learners' fluency by providing a structured and visually stimulating environment for language practice. The DPS approach encourages learners to engage in speaking activities that are interesting, relevant, and meaningful to them.

Studies have also shown that providing interactional feedback during picture description tasks can contribute to the development of speaking fluency (Goh and Zhang, 2019). Feedback that focuses on fluency-related aspects, such as encouraging smoother speech flow or providing guidance on appropriate pausing, can positively impact learners' speaking fluency development (Goh, 2008).

CHAPTER III: METHOD

CHAPTER III: METHOD

3.1 Type of research

The ideas of reflective practice and the teacher as a researcher, are tightly related to action research; where the teacher in charge of the class is involved in a reflective, critical and systematic approach to explore his/her own teaching context. It is a cycle where four stages take place, which are, planning a potential solution for the problem identified; making an intervention in the context with the planned solutions within a time frame; observing the effects of the intervention through a range of data collections tools and, finally, reflecting, evaluating and describing the effects of the intervention to understand in depth the issue being explored, as well as deciding whether to start with the cycle again or to share the findings as part of the professional development (Burns, 2010).

According to Mills (2007) action research is “any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn” (p.5).

The following study was identified as action research since the teacher-researcher identified the problem, which was related with the situation a group of students in her class were not doing well in terms of their speaking fluency. They showed problems in aspects like speech rate, breakdowns and repairs, in their oral presentations where they had to describe pictures. Then, in order to find a solution to this problem, the researcher proposed to use the describing picture strategy in her lessons during five sessions to observe its effect on the participant's fluency specific indicators already mentioned, to finally reflect and understand the explored issue clearly enough to share the main findings with other professionals.

3.2 Description of Participants

The sample size comprised 15 students, whose age ranged between 20 to 45 years old, all of them enrolled in the same program, which is the 3rd year of the Business Administration program from a Chilean higher education institution located in Chile. These students are undertaking the Advanced English II mandatory course that lasts 72 hours and takes 14 weeks to be implemented into 2 80-minute sessions per week during the evenings. As the course's syllabus (FGL-018) is tightly related to the Common European Framework of Reference, states that the lessons must emphasize the communicative approach to reach the B2 level, since students have passed the A1 level course. (Universidad Santo Tomás, 2021)

The sample for this action research corresponds to a convenience type, since it was selected using a criterion that was considered relevant for the researcher and it was the teacher's pre-existing group of students (Nikolopoulou, 2022). This type of sample is described by Creswell (2012) as ready and available to be studied. In this case the participants were all the students from the Advanced English II mandatory course, which was assigned to the teacher researcher by the institution.

3.3 Research question and objectives

3.3.1 Research question

What is the influence of the describing picture strategy on the speaking fluency indicators of a group of students from the Business Administration Program in a Chilean higher educational Institution?

3.3.2 General Objective

To examine the influence of the describing picture strategy upon a group of Business Administration Students' English oral fluency indicators.

3.3.3 Specific objectives

SO1: To analyze participant's performance in regards to their oral fluency indicators of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs, before and after using the describing picture strategy.

SO2: To describe the participants' perceptions towards the Describing Picture Strategy applied during the intervention in the English lessons.

3.4 Research problem

English speaking skills are very important for students to sustain in this globally competitive world (Rao, 2019). This is the case of a group of students who study at a higher education institution and are enrolled in a mandatory Advanced English II course that lasts 72 hours and is implemented in two sessions of 80 minutes each per week during the evenings that is being taken by 15 students who are all enrolled in the same program. The classes must place a strong emphasis on the communicative method, according to the course syllabus, which is closely tied to the Common European Framework of Reference. However, when describing visuals in front of the class, as required by the course's program, students find it difficult to convey meaning fluently, as it should be according to the CEFR.

Therefore, the main problem to be tackled in this context, is the fact that this group of students are unable to complete oral sentences fluently when describing pictures in front of the class, since the number of words they produce differs from the level of proficiency they should have; their pace is slow, they make pauses of more than two seconds constantly and use excessive amounts of fillers that show hesitation during these kinds of tasks.

To tackle this issue, the teacher-researcher decided to use the describing picture strategy in her lessons. Ur (2008) suggests that this strategy helps to develop speaking skills and fluency through discussion activities that are appropriate at various levels. Among the benefits of this teaching strategy, it is possible to recognize the fact that it reduces student's anxiety, consequently students are able to speak more fluently (Ho, 2018), there is ease of access adaptation to context, class stages and proficiency levels, thus, making differentiation and scaffolding during lessons, it motivates students to learn English (Kano and Fardyansyah, 2015).

3.5 Stages of the action research study

For the action plan intervention, eight sessions were considered. The first session was devoted to explaining the AR with the describing picture strategy to students.

In the second, students took a pre-intervention oral test that was assessed with the analytic rubric of my own elaboration that considered speech rate, fillers that show hesitation, pauses and repairs where they had to describe a picture in front of the class for one minute.

Throughout sessions 3 to 7, the picture description strategy suggested was applied during the sessions. students were trained with the describing picture strategy, where the pictures were taken from the textbook, however, for extended practice some pictures were chosen from the internet based on the programme and textbook guidelines, which suggest vocabulary based on sustainability. These sessions were conducted by following Chamot's model (2005) that contains the following stages: Preparation, Display, Exercise, Assessment, Expansion activities and Evaluation steps. (See Appendix A)

During the last session, students took a post-intervention oral test, which was assessed with the same analytic rubric from the pre-intervention oral test and also were part of a focus group to describe their perception towards the DPS and its effect on their speaking fluency specific indicators. Table 1 shows the details of the action plan.

Table 1

Action plan

Date	Activities & Procedures	Time	Objective
May 17th	- Vocabulary introduction - Picture description & feedback - Expansion & evaluation	80'	SO1: Analyze oral fluency aspects before and after the describing picture strategy intervention.
May 23rd	- Vocabulary elicitation - Picture description with focus on vocabulary & hesitation - Evaluation	80'	
May 24th	- Vocabulary elicitation - Picture description with focus on vocabulary & pauses - Evaluation	80'	
May 30th	- Vocabulary elicitation - Picture description with focus on vocabulary & pauses - Evaluation	80'	
May 31st	- Vocabulary elicitation. - Picture description with focus on vocabulary & repairs. - Evaluation	80'	

Source: Own elaboration.

3.6 Data collection techniques

The data collection techniques are tightly related to the specific objectives set for this action research. They include a pre and a post intervention test which assess the students' oral fluency specific indicators, an analytic rubric to assess students' performance and a focus group to assess student's perception regarding the DPS

used during the intervention.

3.6.1.1 Pre and Post intervention speaking assessment

Before the intervention took place, a pre-intervention oral assessment was taken where the participants were asked to describe what they saw on a picture orally and produced as many ideas as possible in the time allotted (1 min -1,5 min); with the aim of analyzing the participants' results in terms of their oral fluency indicators of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs (SO1) before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy.

The teacher-researcher assessed the students' oral performance in the pre-test following the guidelines of the DPS according to the teacher's guidelines.

For the post-intervention assessment, the same speaking task was used by the teacher to assess the students' oral fluency after using the describing picture strategy. However, a different picture was used this time to avoid memorization and put emphasis on speaking fluency based on speech rate, fillers that show hesitation, pauses and repairs. Here, the participants were asked to describe orally what they saw in the picture and produce as many ideas as possible. the same as in the pre-intervention assessment, but with a different picture this time. The students' performance in both the pre-test and the post test was recorded and assessed with an analytic rubric.

3.6.1.2 An analytic rubric to assess oral fluency

An analytic rubric is considered to be suitable for this stage, since Brookhart (2018) states this kind of instrument is more useful during the learning process, due to having multiple characteristics or groups are listed individually for the rater to rank in this kind of instrument. Brown (2018) specifies that the learner can receive specific feedback about the areas for improvement regarding the learning process. Also, analytic rubrics allow teachers to assess one skill or sub skills from different perspectives or criteria individually.

The analytic rubric was created by the teacher-researcher. It had four categories for rating, which were excellent, good, satisfactory and needs improvement and the scores ranged from 4 to 1 respectively. It is based on 4 criteria: speech rate, pauses, hesitation and repairs the being the number of words, fillers, pauses and repairs uttered per minute, the corresponding descriptors of the rubric. Therefore, the ideal score of the instrument is 16 points. (See appendix B)

3.6.2 Focus group

Gill, et al. (2008), suggest that focus groups are used for gathering information on prevailing viewpoints and the meanings that underlie them. For this action research, after the intervention, it was relevant to gather information about the student's perceptions towards the intervention which included the DPS used in the English lessons (SO2), and have a broader view of the effect of this strategy in context. Therefore, a focus group was conducted with twelve (out of fifteen) participants from the course who interacted orally, based on their perception regarding the DPS and its effect on with their oral fluency indicators during their oral presentations. The teacher played the role of a facilitator who encouraged the discussion, rather than being an interviewer asking questions. The instrument, which was validated by a group of experts, had two dimensions that guided the questions from the teacher-researcher to the students; one was the

instances to use the DPS and its sub-dimension was “Classroom opportunities to use the describing picture strategy”. The second dimension was the “Effectiveness of the DPS with the students’ speaking fluency”, being its three sub-dimensions: Factors that could affect the speaking fluency in the English language, Usefulness of the describing picture strategy on students’ speaking fluency and Teaching methodology with DPS.

According to Beyea and Nicoll (2000), the effectiveness of focus groups is dependent on careful consideration and planning for each phase of the process. Thus, for this focus group to take place, some procedures were considered:

1. It was carried out in the same classroom.
2. The purpose for this focus group was clearly defined and informed to participants.
3. Confidentiality was considered and informed to participants.
4. Students were informed about the length of the session.
5. Permission to record the session was required.
6. Agreements were established in terms of the use of Spanish.
8. There were no “right” or “wrong” answers, however, questions for clarification could be asked.
9. One person could talk at a time, so everyone was able to express his/her opinion and be listened to.
10. Acknowledgement was informed to students for their time and valuable participation. (See appendix C)

3.6.3 Validation of instruments

Since the teacher researcher created the rubric for assessing the oral speaking fluency in academic speaking context and used a focus group layout, both instruments were sent through e-mail to some professors and colleagues to be validated. They analyzed the instruments after reading the research objectives and provided feedback through a chart that was included in the validation letter for the specialists to select whether they suggested to keep, delete or modify aspects from the instruments and their observations too. Their comments and suggestions were considered, and further modifications were made before applying the instruments to the participants (See Appendix D)

3.7 Data analysis techniques

The teacher researcher decided to use the quantitative method to collect and analyze data in this action research to address the first specific objective, which was to analyze participant results on their oral fluency indicators of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs, before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy. The mean, mode, and standard deviation, all measures of central tendency, were used for this purpose.

Also, the qualitative method was chosen to collect and analyze the data gathered. Hereupon, a thematic analysis was used to describe the participants' perceptions towards the DPS applied in the intervention in the English lessons.

With the aim of analyzing all the data gathered from the two instruments applied, the following data analysis techniques were used and described.

3.7.1 Pre and Post interventions speaking rubric

The results obtained in these two tests were analyzed by using the descriptive

statistics where quantitative data from the student's performance, considering fluency indicators, speech rate, fillers that show hesitation pauses and repairs; were collected, organized and summarized. Yellapu (2018), states that descriptive statistics are used to summarize data in an organized manner by describing the relationship between variables in a sample or population.

According to Creswell (2012) the variables in quantitative research are the characteristics of the matter in study, they are categorized, counted and measured; with regard to this study, the oral fluency indicators: speech rate, fillers that show hesitation pauses and repairs in the rubric are set as variables. This quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as, calculating the mean mode and average from the scores obtained by the participants during their oral performance with the describing picture strategy.

Therefore, the quantitative variables considered for the descriptive analysis of this action research are discrete, since entire numbers represent the ranges of performance (Excellent= 4; Good= 3; Satisfactory= 2; Needs improvement= 1) related to each indicator in the rubric for oral fluency, which are speech rate, fillers that show hesitation pauses and repairs.

Begun (2018), states that in educational intervention research, variables may include the intervention's features (strength, frequency, duration), as well as the intervention's results. With this instrument the general scores obtained by the students will be provided, as a result, a straightforward calculation was used with interval scale, here the specific figures can be added together and then divided (Dawson, 2009). So, the standard deviation, mean and mode were considered during the analysis of the average results, aiming to analyze them before and after the intervention with the DPS.

Descriptive analysis of the data provided a thorough comparison of the results obtained by the participants before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy.

3.7.2 Focus group

To analyze the input obtained from this instrument, it will be necessary to, first of all, transcribe the conversation held by the teacher-researcher and the students. After that, content analysis will proceed, where the teacher-researcher can quantify the replies, themes, and subthemes that emerge from the conversation. By using this methodology, it is possible to go through each transcript in detail and assign codes—which may be words or numbers—to certain aspects within the text (Dawson, 2009). Additionally, other procedures necessary for focus groups include establishing clear objectives for the discussion, ensuring a conducive environment for open dialogue, employing appropriate facilitation techniques to encourage participation, and considering ethical considerations such as consent and confidentiality. These steps help to ensure that the focus group generates valuable insights and meaningful data for the research study.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The research findings from the pre- and post-intervention speaking fluency rubric used to rate the participants' description of pictures are presented in this chapter. The teacher researcher analyzed the results of both speaking presentations in order to analyze the results in the assessment of the participant's speaking fluency. The results analysis is presented according to the specific objective stated in this study.

4.1 SO1: To analyses participants' results on their oral fluency indicators of speech rate, hesitation, pauses and repairs before and after the intervention based on the use of the describing picture strategy.

It is relevant to mention that the results of eleven participants out of the fifteen were considered for this action research, since two students did not take the pre-intervention test; one student dropped his career and the last participant just attended two sessions and dropped the course. To analyze the participant's performance regarding the indicators of their oral fluency (speech rate, breakdowns and repairs) before and after the intervention with the DPS, it was used the mean, mode, and standard deviation, all measures of central tendency. The maximum score in the analytic rubric used to assess students' fluency was 16 points here excellent corresponded to 4 points; good (3 points), satisfactory (2 points) and needs improvement (1 points). The participants' scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant's global scores in the Pre and Post intervention test.

PARTICIPANTS' FLUENCY LEVEL				
Participants	Pre-intervention test Total score: 16		Post-intervention test Total score: 16	
	Total Score	Percentage of Achievement	Total Score	Percentage of Achievement
1	8	50%	11	69%
2	9	56%	11	69%
3	6	38%	9	56%
4	7	44%	10	63%
5	8	50%	9	56%
6	8	50%	8	50%
7	7	44%	9	56%
8	6	38%	9	56%
9	8	50%	10	63%
10	7	44%	11	69%
11	7	44%	11	69%
Mean	7	46%	10	61%
Mode	8	50%	11	69%
Standard Deviation	0.92		1.07	

Source: Own elaboration

Upon scrutinizing the data in Table 1, there is a discernible enhancement in participants' speaking fluency following the intervention. In the pre-intervention assessment, none of the participants reached the minimum passing score of 10, signifying a universal need for fluency augmentation. Scores during this phase oscillated between 6 and 9, translating to achievement percentages from 38% to 56%. In contrast, post-intervention, 55% of the participants achieved scores of 10 or higher, with scores ranging from 8 to 11 and achievement percentages between 50% and 69%.

The mean of the scores ascended from 7 (46% achievement) pre-intervention to 10 (61% achievement) in the post-intervention, accentuating the intervention's potency. The mode remained steadfast at 8 for both phases, but the corresponding achievement percentage leaped from 50% to 69%.

Delving into the standard deviation, the pre-intervention test registered a value of 0.92, indicating a relatively tight cluster of scores around the mean. This suggests that most participants had similar fluency levels before the intervention. Post-intervention, the standard deviation increased slightly to 1.07, indicating a broader spread of scores. This could be interpreted as participants experiencing varied levels of improvement, with some benefiting more than others from the intervention.

The data underscores the positive impact of the DPS on participants' oral fluency. While the overall fluency levels have been bolstered, the nuanced change in standard deviation post-intervention suggests a diverse range of individual improvements. This highlights the importance of personalized approaches and further investigations into specific fluency indicators for a more comprehensive understanding.

4.1.1 Analysis of participant's fluency level: speech rate.

An analytical rubric was used to evaluate the group of participants' observed speech rate, accounting for the four degrees of expertise listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Speech Rate Levels.

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
	4	3	2	1
Speech rate	Produces from 150 words per minute up	Produces between 126-149 words per minute	Produces between 100 and 125 words per minute	Produces less than 99 words per minute

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on Table 2, it can be said that according to this criterion results students were required to produce 150 words per minute while describing the picture related to sustainability that was assigned randomly, however, there was not a significant difference in terms of points assigned with the rubric, as it can be seen in Table 4 and Figure 1.

Table 4

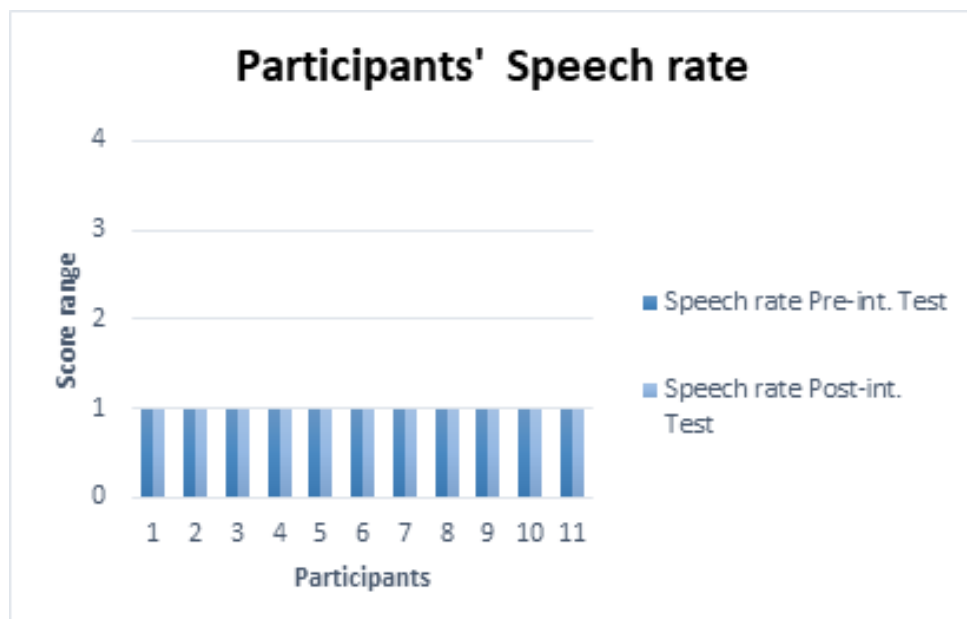
Participants' Speech rate (Words Per Minute: WPM)

Participants	Words per minute		
	Pre-Test	Post Test	Difference
1	43	45	2
2	38	55	17
3	33	37	4
4	20	31	11
5	70	86	16
6	33	37	4
7	23	17	-6
8	42	45	3
9	32	30	-2
10	24	38	14
11	34	65	31
		Average	9

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 4

Participants' speech rate (words per minute)



Source: Own elaboration.

With the aim of having a thorough analysis of this criterion, the number of words participants produced per minute was considered. Consequently, the findings demonstrated a relation between implementation of the DPS and the changes in

participants' speaking fluency, highlighting the importance of considering individual differences and the effectiveness of the intervention.

The analysis indicates an overall improvement in speaking fluency from pre- to post-intervention. The average Words Per Minute (WPM) during the pre-intervention test was 35.9, while the average WPM in the post test increased to 44.9. This indicates an average improvement of 9 words per minute, demonstrating the change participants had in their speaking fluency.

Examining the individual performance revealed varying outcomes among the participants. Five participants (45%) demonstrated a substantial improvement in their WPM, while speaking ranging from 14 to 31 words. On the other hand, two participants (18%) experienced a decrease in WPM by -6 and -2, respectively. There were 4 participants (36%) who showed slight improvements in their WPM, ranging from 2 to 4 words. These individual differences highlight the complexity of speaking fluency development and the need to consider diverse learning profiles.

The action research's core objective, which is to gauge the efficacy of the describing picture strategy, finds robust evidence in the depicted data. The comparative analysis of pre- and post-intervention scores, as presented, underscores a marked improvement in speech rate, validating the intervention's positive impact.

However, the granularity of the data, particularly the individual variances, serves as a poignant reminder of the complexities inherent in language acquisition. While the overarching trend is undeniably positive, the individual trajectories, ranging from important leaps to minor regressions, emphasize the diverse learning curves of the participants.

4.1.2 Analysis of participant's level of hesitation.

To compare results in the participant's level of hesitation, the analytic rubric was used during the pre- and post-intervention test, taking into account four levels of mastery, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Hesitation levels.

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
	4	3	2	1
Hesitation	The speaker speaks confidently and naturally with no distracting hesitations or fillers that show hesitation.	The speaker hesitates or uses fillers that show hesitation from 3 to 5 times.	The speaker has hesitations or use of fillers that show hesitation from 6 times up.	The speaker is uncertain and hesitates or uses fillers that show hesitation more than 6 times.

Source: Own elaboration.

The pre-test scores obtained by the participants ranged from 1 to 2, with 4 being

the maximum score. The distribution of participants' scores revealed that most participants (10 out of 11= 91%) achieved a score of 2 (Satisfactory), representing a moderate level of hesitation while one participant achieved a score of 1 (9%), indicating a higher level of hesitation. No participants achieved the maximum score of 4.

The scores obtained in the post-test also ranged from 1 to 3. The analysis showed improvements in hesitation levels after the intervention. Most participants (82%) achieved a score of 3, indicating a reduction in hesitation. Two participants (18%) worsened their scores from range 2 to range 1, reflecting a significant increase in hesitation. One participant maintained a score of 2. Again, no participants achieved the maximum score of 4, Table 6 and graph 2 show the participants results in both tests.

Table 6

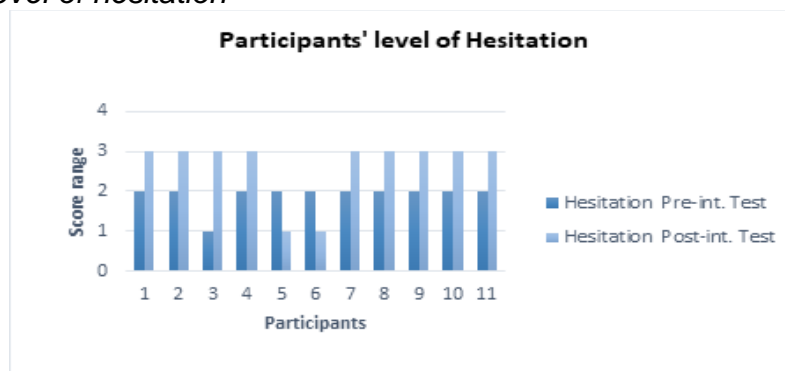
Participants' levels of hesitation

Participants	Participant's level of Hesitation		
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
1	2	3	1
2	2	3	1
3	1	3	2
4	2	3	1
5	2	1	1
6	2	1	1
7	2	3	1
8	2	3	1
9	2	3	1
10	2	3	1
11	2	3	1
		Average	1

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 5

Participants' level of hesitation



Source: Own elaboration

The analysis of hesitation in both tests results demonstrated improvements in speaking fluency among participants. The majority achieved higher scores in the post-intervention test, indicating reduced hesitation levels.

Another indicator of the rubric to assess fluency, were the pauses, where the participants were required to speak confidently and naturally with pauses of no longer than 2 seconds during the performance.

Among the pre-intervention test scores, the lowest score achieved was 1, indicating a low number of pauses, while the highest score achieved was 3, representing a higher number of pauses. The post-intervention test scores obtained by the participants ranged from 1 to 3, with 4 being the maximum score. The distribution of scores revealed that five participants (45%) achieved a score of 1, indicating a low number of pauses during speech. Five participants (45%) achieved a score of 2, indicating a moderate level of pauses. One participant (10%) achieved a score of 3, representing a higher number of pauses. No participants achieved the maximum score of 4.

4.1.3 Analysis of participant's level of pauses

To compare results in the participant's level of pauses, the analytic rubric was used during the pre- and post-intervention test, taking into account four levels of mastery, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Pauses leves.

	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs improvement (1)
Pauses	The speaker speaks confidently and naturally with pauses of no longer than 2 seconds during the performance.	The speaker produces from 3 to 5 pauses of more than two seconds during the performance.	The speaker produces from 6 to 9 pauses of more than two seconds during the performance.	The speaker makes more than 10 pauses of more than two seconds during the performance.

Source: Own elaboration.

In the post intervention test, the analysis demonstrated improvements in participants' pause levels after the intervention. Three participants (27%) achieved a score of 1, indicating a decrease in the number of pauses. One participant (10%) scored 2, suggesting a consistent level of pauses. Seven participants (64%) achieved a score of 3, indicating a higher number of pauses. Again, no participants achieved the maximum score of 4. Table 6 and Figure 3 showed the participant's performance regarding pauses.

The data gathered reveal key insights into the participants' speech patterns. There's a discernible impact of the intervention, with many participants exhibiting

reduced hesitations post-intervention. However, individual variations underscore the intricate nature of speech hesitation. While the overarching trend suggests improvement, the nuances in individual outcomes emphasize the multifaceted challenges in achieving consistent oral fluency. These findings validate the action research's objective to address and potentially mitigate speech hesitations through targeted interventions, as seen in Table 8 and Figure

Table 8

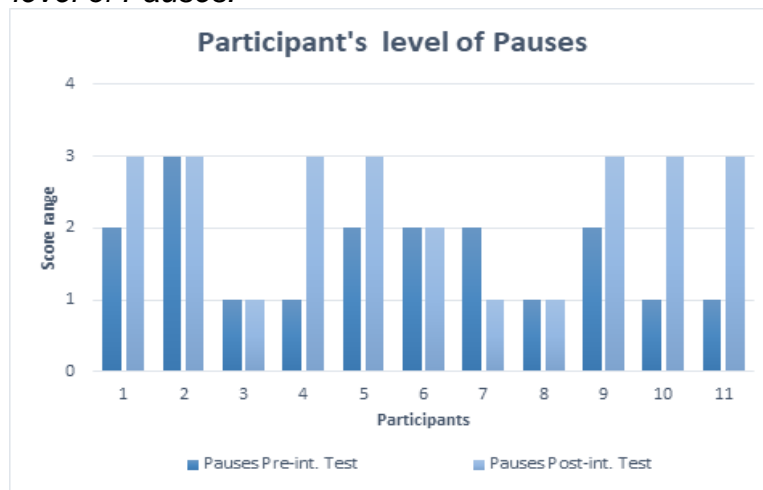
Participants' level of Pauses.

Participants	Participant's level of Pauses		
	Pre-Test	Post Test	Difference
1	2	3	1
2	3	3	0
3	1	1	0
4	1	3	2
5	2	3	1
6	2	2	0
7	2	1	1
8	1	1	0
9	2	3	1
10	1	3	2
11	1	3	2
		Average	-1

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 6

Participants' level of Pauses.



Source: Own elaboration.

The analysis of pre-intervention and post-intervention test results revealed the participants' performance and improvements in pause levels. While some participants showed a decrease in the number of pauses after the intervention,

others maintained consistent or increased levels. This suggests the complexity of addressing pause levels in speaking fluency development. Further research and instructional approaches can focus on targeted strategies to reduce pauses and promote fluent and continuous speech.

4.1.4 Analysis of participant’s level of repairs

Finally, the indicator of “repairs” had an interesting behavior; the analysis focused on the participants’ repair levels in the pre-intervention and post-intervention tests in a speaking fluency intervention. The pre-intervention test scores ranged from 3 to 4, with 4 being the maximum score. The distribution of scores revealed that all participants (100%) achieved a repair level of 3 in the pre-intervention test. No participant achieved the maximum score of 4. This suggests a consistent moderate level of repair skills among the participants. The post-intervention test scores also ranged from 3 to 4, with 4 being the maximum score. The analysis demonstrated improvements in repair levels after the intervention. All participants (100%) achieved a repair level of 4 in the post-intervention test, indicating an increase in repair skills.

Among the pre-intervention test scores, the lowest score achieved was 2, indicating a moderate level of repair skills, while the highest score achieved was 3. In the post-intervention test, the lowest score achieved was 3, indicating an improvement in repair skills, while the highest score achieved was 4.

The analysis of pre-intervention and post-intervention repair test results reveals an increase in repair skills among participants. Most of the participants achieved a higher repair level of 4 after the intervention, indicating improvement. The findings emphasize the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing repair skills and promoting speaking fluency. Table 9 and figure 4 showed the participant’s performance regarding repairs.

Table 9

Repair levels

	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs improvement (1)
Repair	Speaker’s ideas flow efficiently with no repairs.	Speaker makes 3 to 5 repairs during the performance.	Speaker makes 6 to 9 repairs during the performance.	Speaker makes more than 10 repairs during the performance.

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 10

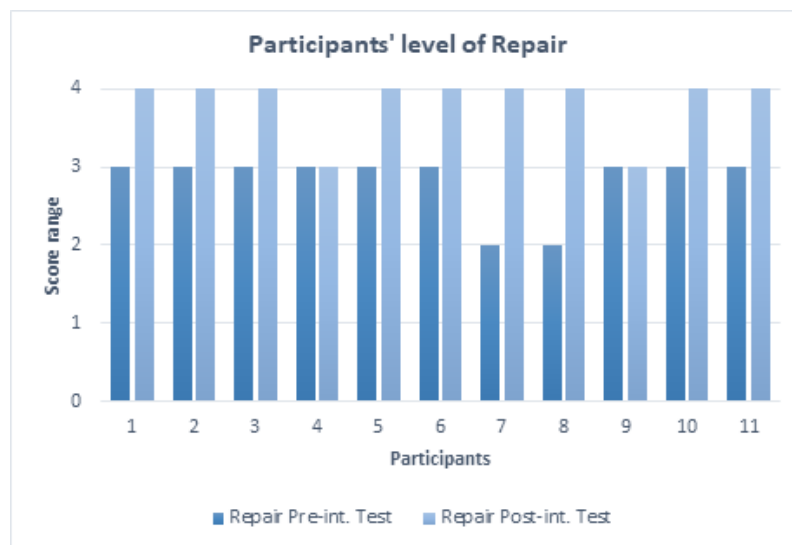
Repair levels.

Participants	Participant's level of repairs		
	Pre-Test	Post Test	Difference
1	3	4	1
2	3	4	1
3	3	4	1
4	3	3	0
5	3	4	1
6	3	4	1
7	2	4	2
8	2	4	2
9	3	3	0
10	3	4	1
11	3	4	1
		Average	1

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 7

Participants' level of Repair.



Source: Own elaboration.

4.2 SO2: To describe the participants' perceptions towards the DPS applied during the intervention in the English lessons.

A focus group in the participants' mother tongue was held to examine their perceptions of the describing picture method used during the intervention in the

English sessions, their thoughts and perspectives on the subject were examined using a thematic analysis. 11 students took part in this activity. The thematic breakdown of the perceptions of the students that was gleaned from the focus group is depicted in Table 10.

Table 11

Thematic Analysis on the participant's perception towards the Describing Picture Strategy.

Theme	Sub-theme	Frequency	Example
1. Utility of the DPS	1.1 Starting Point for Description:	5	Participant 4: "Trabajar todos los días con imágenes distintas y no sé, pues traduciendo qué es lo que no sabía..." Participant 6: "el tema de describir las imágenes, de estar constantemente hablando, ..." Participant 10: "...pararnos en frente de todos nosotros hablar, aunque sea 1 minuto" Participant 9: "...antes veía una imagen y quedaba en blanco, una porque no tenía mucho manejo de los conectores entonces yo veía, no se po, un árbol, pero no sabía cómo conectarlo..."
	1.2 Improvement in Fluency:	5	Participant 5: "En todas clases y se habló bastante más" Participant 8: "Pero si en el hecho de estar toda clase constantemente hablando..." Participant 9: "...entonces la metodología que usted utilizó, para mí fue buena. Ya no es resolver tanto ejercicios del libro y googlearlo, que es lo que hacíamos la gran mayoría, sino que ya uno se incentiva y como le decía yo, ahora ya me gusta el inglés, antes no."

			<p>Osea, quería aprenderlo, pero ahora ya tiene más sentido porque puedo comunicarme sin tantas pausas”</p> <p>Participant 7: “Yo creo que igual nos sirvió bastante porque prácticamente el estar como obligado, como al hablar en inglés...”</p>
2. Suggestions for Improvement	2.1 Change in Teaching Methodology:	6	<p>Participant 10: “Igual cambia la mecánica que al final ha sido siempre la misma. Yo creo que todos, desde la carrera anterior que tenemos hasta lo que llevamos haciendo ahora, esto fue diferente”</p> <p>Participant 3: “Yo creo que las pautas profe, porque si usted se dio cuenta cuando hay al menos ahí, cuando estuve aquí yo, no se po antes la pausa podría haber sido de 10 segundos, mientras estábamos viendo la imagen y viendo que decimos. Yo me di cuenta que, no voy a decir que llegamos a 0, pero si el tiempo se redujo, entonces ahí se produjo un avance.”</p> <p>Participant 9: “Me hubiera gustado que se hubieran planteado como más circunstancias de la vida, no sé cómo una persona que habla inglés y necesita una dirección...”</p> <p>Participant 11: “Mas interrogaciones orales, que sea todo oral o sea, como por ejemplo al azar, cosa que uno venga ya preparado o que si, por</p>

			ejemplo, la imagen no siempre decía donde leen que la imagen veo tal cosa, entonces era como algo y ya repetitivo."
	2.2 Earlier Introduction of the Strategy:	4	Participant 3: "...lo que usted hizo ahora quizá podría ser al inicio de la primera carrera..." Participant 8: "Yo aplicaría el método desde el inicio... desde el inicio de la carrera aplicaría este método lo llevaría a un comienzo porque en el paso del tiempo se va haciendo mucho más fácil. Porque de verdad que fue bueno el método y cambio mucho el cómo uno viene acostumbrado a lo que decía Alfonso a hacerlo de forma textual, traducir... y si se hace desde un inicio yo creo va a ser mucho más efectivo."
3 Comparative Feedback	3.1 Effectiveness of the Strategy:	4	Participant 4: "Sí, yo comparto mi compañero, que en realidad yo siento que con este curso aprendimos mucho más que todos los otros años anteriores, osea, además está el tema de pararse adelante, exponer y ya cambió. Porque nunca habíamos tenido como el... o si habíamos expuesto, pero jamás con la fluidez que ahora siento que tenemos." Participant 11: "las clases fueron como precisas, exactas y es como lo que más por lo menos se me va a quedar a mi..." Participant 9: "...los

			nervios me jugaban en contra, pero ... ahora ya me voy con esa confianza de que ya puedo hacer una oración y no necesito googlearla, si una palabra en específico, pero no la oración completa...”
4. Challenges faced	4.1 Nervousness and Insecurity:	5	Participant 3: “Muchas veces no nos entendemos y tenemos esa vergüenza o miedo de decir una palabra y equivocarnos” Participant 4: “Los nervios yo creo como dice Camila, pero es como cosa personal de cada 1, quizá nerviosismo, vergüenza...” Participant 6: “...hay un poco de nerviosismo de hablar frente a todos...” Participant 9: “...los nervios me jugaban en contra, pero ... ahora ya me voy con esa confianza de que ya puedo hacer una oración y no necesito googlearla, si una palabra en específico, pero no la oración completa...”

Source: Own elaboration.

The thematic analysis of the participants' perceptions towards the DPS in English lessons revealed several key insights. These insights were categorized into four main themes: Utility of the Describing Picture Strategy, Suggestions for Improvement, Comparative Feedback, and Challenges Faced. Each theme had subthemes that provided a nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and suggestions.

The subtheme with the highest frequency, and thus the highest percentage of supportive statements (SS), was "Change in Teaching Methodology," mentioned six times. This indicates that the most positive aspect of the Picture Description strategy was its ability to introduce a new, engaging form of teaching that deviated from traditional methods. Participants appreciated the shift from textbook exercises to a more interactive and communicative approach.

The first theme was the utility of the DPS and one of the subthemes was the Starting Point for Description which had 5 supportive sentences. The strategy served as a useful starting point for participants to engage in English conversations. It helped them translate their thoughts into spoken English.

The second theme was the Improvement in Fluency with 5 supportive sentences as well. The participants noted that the strategy helped improve their fluency. They felt more comfortable speaking in English and believed that the strategy encouraged constant practice.

The second theme was the “Suggestions for improvement” and the first subtheme was the “Change in Teaching Methodology” which obtained 6 supportive sentences. The participants suggested that the strategy could be further improved by incorporating more real-life scenarios and oral interrogations. They also mentioned that the strategy could become repetitive and suggested diversifying the methods used.

The second subtheme for this theme was “Earlier Introduction of the Strategy” which had 4 SS. There was a consensus that introducing this strategy earlier in their educational journey would be beneficial. They felt that starting with this method from the beginning of their courses would make the learning process easier over time.

The third theme was “Comparative Feedback” where the subtheme was the “Effectiveness of the Strategy” and had 4 SS. The participants felt that the strategy was more effective than previous methods they had encountered. They felt they had learned more and had become more fluent as a result of this strategy.

Finally, the last theme was the “Challenges Faced” and its subtheme was “Nervousness and Insecurity” with 5 SS). While the strategy was generally well-received, participants did mention feeling nervous or insecure, especially when speaking in front of others. However, some noted that these feelings decreased over time as they became more comfortable with the strategy.

In summary, the DPS was largely viewed positively, especially for its innovative approach to teaching and its effectiveness in improving fluency. Participants did offer constructive suggestions for improvement, indicating a strong engagement with the teaching method. The challenges faced were seen as surmountable and part of the learning process.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

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In this discussion, we examine the influence of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) on English oral fluency indicators among Business Administration students. Our primary aim was to assess the effectiveness of DPS in improving aspects like speech rate, hesitation, pauses, and repairs (SO1), alongside understanding students' perceptions of the strategy (SO2). This section will delve into the outcomes related to these objectives, analyze how they align with existing EFL teaching theories, discuss the strengths and limitations of our methodological approach, and consider the cultural context of the study. We will conclude with recommendations for future research, drawing from our findings. In discussing the general objective of our study, which focused on examining the effect of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) on English oral fluency indicators in Business Administration students, we found key results that align with previous research. Our study revealed that DPS significantly improved speech rate, hesitation, pauses, and repairs, indicating its effectiveness in enhancing oral fluency.

Interpreting these findings, it is evident that DPS facilitates an interactive and engaging learning environment, crucial for improving fluency in spoken English. This aligns with Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015), who found that DPS had a positive impact on students' speaking fluency in Oman by involving them in detailed picture descriptions. Similarly, Chen & Lin (2018) and Leon (2022) observed that DPS enhances fluency by providing a structured and visually stimulating environment for language practice.

These comparisons suggest that our study's findings are consistent with existing literature, reinforcing the idea that DPS is an effective method for improving oral fluency in EFL learners. The structured yet interactive nature of DPS, as seen in various educational contexts, appears to be a key factor in its success. This not only validates our study's outcomes but also contributes to the broader understanding of effective language teaching strategies.

5.1 SO1: To analyze participant's performance in regards to their oral fluency indicators of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs, before and after using the describing picture strategy.

Addressing Specific Objective 1 (SO1) of our research aimed to analyze the changes in oral fluency indicators—namely speech rate, hesitation, pauses, and repairs—before and after the implementation of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS). Our findings revealed a substantial improvement across these indicators. We observed that the average words per minute (WPM) increased to 44.9 in the post-test, showing an average enhancement of 9 words per minute. This improvement in speech rate is a vital aspect of fluency in EFL settings. Notably, five participants (45%) exhibited significant increases in WPM, with ranges between 14 to 31 words, underscoring the effectiveness of DPS. However, the variability in outcomes, with two participants (18%) experiencing a decrease in WPM and four participants (36%) showing modest improvements, highlights the complexity of speaking fluency development and accentuates the need for individualized learning approaches.

Theoretically, these results resonate with communicative language teaching theories that prioritize interactive and practical language use. This is corroborated by similar studies, such as those by Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015) and Chen & Lin (2018), which also underscored the benefits of DPS in enhancing oral fluency.

From a practical standpoint, these improvements in fluency indicators suggest that DPS is a highly effective tool for language teachers, capable of catering to diverse learner profiles and fostering improvements in oral fluency. This is especially significant given the varying outcomes among participants, which point to the necessity of tailoring language instruction to meet individual needs and learning styles.

In addition to speech rate, the intervention led to a notable decrease in hesitations post-intervention. This reduction is pivotal for smoother, more coherent speech, which is essential for effective communication. While DPS generally reduces hesitation, the individual differences among participants indicate that the strategy's impact is influenced by personal factors. Furthermore, the marked reduction in the number and duration of pauses post-intervention demonstrates DPS's role in enabling students to better manage pauses, facilitating a more natural speech flow. This indicates DPS's adaptability to various cultural and educational contexts.

Regarding repairs, all participants showed an improvement post-intervention, suggesting that DPS not only enhances specific fluency aspects but also contributes to overall linguistic competence. This improvement in repairs points to growing language confidence among learners. The study's findings within the Chilean context played a significant role in illustrating DPS's effectiveness, underscoring the need for contextually relevant teaching strategies.

In conclusion, our expanded analysis and discussion provide comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of DPS in enhancing all four aspects of oral fluency. These findings advocate for the integration of DPS into EFL curricula, emphasizing dynamic and engaging language teaching approaches. Moreover, they contribute to a more nuanced understanding of fluency development in EFL learners, supporting the adaptation of teaching methodologies to diverse learner needs and cultural contexts. Future research directions should consider diverse cultural settings, longer intervention periods, and varied participant profiles to further validate these findings.

5.2 SO2: To describe the participants' perceptions towards the describing picture strategy applied during the intervention in the English lessons.

Addressing Specific Objective 2 (SO2) of our study, we sought to describe the participants' perceptions towards the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) applied in English lessons. Our thematic analysis unearthed multifaceted insights, categorizing them into themes like Utility of DPS, Suggestions for Improvement, Comparative Feedback, and Challenges Faced. The participants' experiences and suggestions offered a layered understanding of DPS's impact.

Notably, the subtheme "Change in Teaching Methodology" emerged as the most frequently discussed topic. This underscores DPS's role in fostering an engaging, non-traditional form of teaching, aligning with contemporary pedagogical theories advocating interactive, learner-centered approaches (Pratiwi and Ayu, 2020; Murni, 2018). These theoretical perspectives support the idea that active engagement and novel teaching strategies significantly enhance language learning experiences.

Participants' favorable perceptions of DPS underscore its potential as an effective tool in modern EFL classrooms. The emphasis on changing teaching methodology echoes the need for dynamic, engaging language instruction, resonating with Ajunge (2020) and Lase (2023). These findings are crucial for

educators seeking innovative strategies to enhance language teaching effectiveness and cater to diverse learner preferences.

In delving deeper into each theme and sub-theme, our analysis gains richness. Under "Utility of DPS," participants perceived the strategy as an effective starting point for engaging in English conversation. Direct quotes from participants added personal depth, making the findings more relatable and vivid. For instance, the comparative analysis with traditional methods, such as the grammar translation method, highlighted DPS's unique benefits.

Acknowledging the limitations of our study, such as its focus on a specific student group in Chile, we recognize the need for broader applicability. The study's insights could significantly influence language teaching practices beyond its context. Future research directions should explore DPS's implementation in different cultural settings and with varied participant profiles, enriching our understanding of its effectiveness across diverse demographics.

In conclusion, integrating these expanded discussions with our general study objectives reveals DPS's effectiveness in improving all aspects of oral fluency. The study not only supports the integration of DPS into EFL curricula but also emphasizes the need for adaptable, engaging, and contextually relevant teaching strategies in language education.

5.3 Research limitations

Our research on the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) in a Chilean educational context faced several limitations that are important to acknowledge. Firstly, the scarcity of existing research on DPS within this specific context limited our ability to compare and contextualize our findings more broadly within the Chilean educational landscape. This gap highlights the need for more comprehensive studies in diverse cultural settings.

Time constraints posed a significant limitation. With only five sessions implemented using DPS, the duration was insufficient to fully assess the long-term effectiveness of the strategy or its impact on sustained language development. This short implementation period may not have allowed students to fully adapt to and benefit from the DPS approach.

The dropout of four students from the course also impacted our study. Their withdrawal could have influenced the overall results and insights, potentially skewing the data towards those who might have been more receptive or adaptable to the DPS method.

Additionally, the program's strict curriculum, which mandated the description of specific pictures related to the sustainability unit, restricted the variety of vocabulary and scenarios that could be explored. Students expressed a desire to engage with more authentic, real-world, or professionally relevant contexts. However, the program's limitations confined them to a predetermined set of topics and vocabulary, possibly affecting their engagement and the practical applicability of the skills learned.

These limitations underscore the necessity for future research to consider longer implementation periods, broader curricular flexibility, and more diverse participant groups. Such expansions would enable a more comprehensive understanding of DPS's effectiveness and its adaptability to various real-life and professional scenarios, thereby enriching its practical utility in language education.

5.4 Implications for further research

The exploration of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) in our study within the Chilean educational context, as reflected in the works of Ismail D. & Wiemer-Hastings P. (2022), Murni A. (2018), and Pratiwi Z. F. & Ayu M. (2020), offers significant implications not only for further research but also for the professional growth of teacher researchers. The study's limited scope in the Chilean context underscores a notable gap in the literature and invites more extensive research in diverse cultural settings, which is essential for understanding DPS's broader applicability and effectiveness in different educational landscapes.

The challenges encountered, such as time constraints with only five sessions of DPS implementation and the dropout of four students, highlight crucial areas for future research. These include the need for longer intervention periods to fully assess DPS's long-term effectiveness and its impact on sustained language development. Such considerations are critical for policy-making and practical application, determining how DPS could be integrated into longer-term educational programs.

Furthermore, the restrictions imposed by the program's curriculum, which limited the variety of vocabulary and scenarios, point towards the necessity of curricular flexibility. Allowing a broader range of topics and vocabulary, especially those pertinent to real-world or professional contexts, would likely enhance student engagement and the practical utility of the skills learned. This insight is vital for educational practice, advocating for the development of dynamic and relevant language curricula.

From a professional development perspective, the study provided the teacher researcher with an invaluable opportunity to refine her skills in identifying pedagogical needs and implementing appropriate solutions. This process was crucial in making the teaching and learning experience mutually beneficial for both teachers and students. As the teacher researcher embraced the role of a facilitator, a significant shift occurred in the classroom dynamics. Although students were initially unaccustomed to this approach, it had a positive impact on their learning. They began to understand the importance of taking a more active role in acquiring English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

This transition from a traditional teacher-led model to a facilitator role highlights the evolving nature of teaching methodologies in modern educational settings. The teacher researcher's experience underscores the importance of adaptability and responsiveness to pedagogical challenges, enhancing their ability to create more engaging and effective learning environments.

In summary, the implications of our research extend beyond the immediate findings on DPS's effectiveness. They encompass broader aspects of educational research, policy, curricular design, and teacher professional development. By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of language teaching methodologies, benefitting diverse learner populations and enhancing the professional competencies of educators.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS

As we reach the conclusion of this thesis, it is imperative to revisit the primary objectives that guided this research. This study embarked on a scholarly journey to assess the effectiveness of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) in enhancing English oral fluency indicators among Business Administration students at the higher education institution, Chile. The central aim was to evaluate how DPS, as an innovative teaching methodology, impacts various facets of oral fluency, including speech rate, hesitation pauses, and repairs, within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

The research was motivated by the increasing global significance of English fluency, particularly in the business sector where clear and effective communication is paramount. In a Chilean educational setting, where English is not the primary language, there exists a pronounced challenge in achieving proficiency in English-speaking skills. This study was thus conceived with the intention to address this challenge, exploring the potential of DPS as a novel teaching strategy to enhance oral fluency among students who are non-native speakers of English.

In the following sections, we will summarize the key findings of the study, discuss their theoretical and practical implications, reflect on the methodological approach, and consider future research directions. This comprehensive conclusion aims to encapsulate the essence of the research, its contributions to the field of EFL teaching, and its significance in the broader landscape of language education.

6.1 Summary of the main Findings

The investigation into the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) yielded several key findings, which are instrumental in understanding its impact on English oral fluency among Business Administration students.

One of the most significant outcomes of this study was the notable improvement in the speech rate of participants. The use of DPS facilitated a faster rate of speech, indicating an enhancement in oral fluency. This finding aligns with the central objective of the study and demonstrates the effectiveness of DPS in fostering more fluent speech among EFL learners.

The study also observed a marked reduction in hesitation pauses and repairs during speech. This suggests that DPS not only improved the fluency of students but also contributed to their confidence and comfort in using the English language. The decrease in hesitation and pauses is particularly noteworthy as it points to a lower level of speech anxiety and a smoother flow of communication. Beyond the quantitative improvements, the study revealed that DPS contributes to a holistic development of oral fluency. This encompasses not just the mechanical aspects of speech but also the confidence and ability to use English in real-time, spontaneous communication. This holistic approach to fluency development addresses various learner profiles, emphasizing motivational aspects through differentiation and scaffolding.

The findings underscore the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors in language teaching. The Chilean cultural context, with its unique communication norms, played a significant role in the effectiveness of DPS. This highlights the need for culturally sensitive teaching strategies in language education.

feedback and engagement levels indicated a positive reception towards DPS.

The strategy was found to be motivating and engaging, contributing to a more interactive and dynamic learning environment. This aspect of DPS underscores its potential as a valuable tool in language education, particularly in contexts where traditional methods may not fully engage students.

These findings collectively indicate that the Describing Picture Strategy is an effective tool for enhancing oral fluency in an EFL setting. Its impact goes beyond improving specific speech indicators to fostering a more comprehensive and confidence-driven command of the English language among learners.

6.2 Personal reflection

Reflecting on the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) study in the Chilean educational context, we observe multifaceted impacts on English oral fluency indicators among Business Administration students. The study's focus on DPS's effectiveness in improving speech rate, hesitation, pauses, and repairs aligns with communicative language teaching theories. Findings from Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015), Chen & Lin (2018), and Leon (2022) support DPS's role in creating interactive learning environments that enhance oral fluency. The study's methodology, though effective, reveals the need for broader participant diversity and longer intervention durations for more comprehensive assessments.

Participants' positive perceptions towards DPS, as illustrated in themes like Utility, Suggestions for Improvement, Comparative Feedback, and Challenges Faced, highlight its potential as an innovative EFL teaching tool. The subtheme "Change in Teaching Methodology" was particularly prominent, resonating with the need for dynamic, learner-centered approaches in language education. This thematic analysis, enriched with participant quotes and comparative analyses, underscores the necessity of adaptable teaching methods in diverse cultural contexts.

The study's limitations, including the limited Chilean research context, the short intervention period, and curriculum restrictions, emphasize the importance of further research. These insights advocate for DPS's integration into curricula and the development of flexible, relevant language programs.

Crucially, the study offered profound professional growth opportunities for the teacher researcher. By transitioning from a traditional teacher-led model to a facilitator role, the teacher researcher could better understand and address pedagogical needs, enhancing both teaching and learning experiences. This role shift significantly influenced classroom dynamics, encouraging students to adopt more active roles in their language acquisition journey.

In conclusion, this research extends beyond DPS's effectiveness, touching upon broader aspects of language education, policy, curricular design, and professional development. Future research should focus on diverse cultural settings, long-term interventions, and varied participant profiles to enrich our understanding of effective language teaching methodologies. This comprehensive approach will not only benefit diverse learner populations but also contribute to the evolving landscape of educational practices.

6.3 Further research and recommendations

Reflecting on the cultural and contextual aspects, our study on the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) presents vital pointers for future research in the EFL domain. To begin with, investigations involving a broader participant spectrum

are necessary. Future studies should delve into DPS effectiveness across diverse cultural backgrounds, academic disciplines, and age groups, enhancing the applicability of findings across various educational contexts. Such comprehensive studies would enrich our comprehension of DPS's adaptability and effectiveness in varied settings. Moreover, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the sustained impact of DPS on oral fluency. Exploring how students retain and utilize DPS-honed skills over time would yield invaluable insights into the longevity of its benefits. Furthermore, given the escalating integration of technology in education, research should explore how digital tools and online platforms can complement DPS. This exploration may unveil new facets of DPS, potentially amplifying its effectiveness, especially among tech-savvy learners. Lastly, investigating DPS's adaptability to different learner profiles and teaching settings, including those with limited technological access, would validate our findings and expand DPS's reach in diverse educational landscapes. In essence, these recommendations underscore the imperative of continual innovation and exploration in EFL teaching methodologies, paving the way for future studies to build upon the foundations established in this research, thereby enriching language education.

Zooming out to encompass the entirety of our study on the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) in the EFL context, it's clear that our research has charted a path that illuminates the evolving landscape of language education. From conceptualization to observing tangible impacts on students' oral fluency, this journey underscores the potency of innovative teaching strategies in reshaping language learning experiences. The study's insights into DPS's effectiveness, particularly within a specific cultural and educational milieu, emphasize the need for adaptable teaching approaches that cater to diverse learner needs. It also accentuates educators' role as adaptable innovators, perpetually refining their pedagogical approaches to meet evolving student requirements. Furthermore, the exploration of DPS within the Chilean context offers a profound understanding of the interplay among culture, language, and education, stressing the significance of culturally attuned teaching methods in a globalized world teeming with diverse learners.

In essence, our study culminates not just as an academic contribution but as a catalyst for ongoing innovation and exploration in language teaching. The findings from this research foster a forward-thinking approach in EFL education, advocating for student engagement, cultural inclusivity, and methodological flexibility. This exploration of DPS serves as both a culmination of our research endeavors and a launchpad for further investigations in the dynamic sphere of language education. It beckons us to keep evolving, adapting, and innovating, ensuring that our teaching strategies remain as diverse and dynamic as the learners we endeavor to educate.

As we bring this study to a close, the exploration of the Describing Picture Strategy (DPS) within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) domain has not only unveiled new insights but also highlighted the transformative potential of innovative teaching methodologies. This research amplifies the efficacy of DPS in enhancing oral fluency while reaffirming the pivotal role of contextual and cultural dynamics in language education. Ultimately, this study champions the ongoing pursuit of discovery and adaptation in education, urging us to embrace change and innovation for the betterment of language teaching and learning globally.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Lesson Plan

Date	Activities and Procedures	Time	R Objective
May 17th	<p>Preparation: Vocabulary for describing pictures and global sustainability was presented.</p> <p>Display: Previous knowledge is compared against the model shown. Stages for describing pictures are analyzed and inferred by the students.</p> <p>Exercise/Assessment: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates. Students gave Peer feedback on the vocabulary used and speech rate.</p> <p>Expansion: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates based on the previous feedback.</p> <p>Evaluation: Metacognition took place and students received general feedback from the teacher.</p>	80'	SO1: To analyze participants' results on their oral fluency aspects of speech rate, hesitation, pauses and repairs; before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy.
May 23rd	<p>Preparation/Display: Vocabulary for describing pictures and global sustainability was elicited.</p> <p>Exercise/Assessment: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates. Students gave Peer feedback on the vocabulary used and hesitation.</p> <p>Expansion: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates based on the previous feedback.</p> <p>Evaluation: Metacognition took place and students received general feedback from the teacher.</p>	80'	
May 24th	<p>Preparation/Display: Vocabulary for describing pictures and global sustainability was elicited.</p> <p>Exercise/Assessment: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates. Students gave Peer feedback on the vocabulary used and pauses.</p> <p>Expansion: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates based on the previous feedback.</p> <p>Evaluation: Metacognition took place and students</p>	80'	

	received general feedback from the teacher.	
May 30th	<p>Preparation/Display: Vocabulary for describing pictures and global sustainability was elicited.</p> <p>Exercise/Assessment: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates. Students gave Peer feedback on the vocabulary used and pauses.</p> <p>Expansion: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates based on the previous feedback.</p> <p>Evaluation: Metacognition took place and students received general feedback from the teacher.</p>	80'
May 31st	<p>Preparation/Display: Vocabulary for describing pictures and global sustainability was elicited.</p> <p>Exercise/Assessment: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates. Students gave Peer feedback on the vocabulary used and repairs.</p> <p>Expansion: Descriptions of pictures were prepared and presented to classmates based on the previous feedback.</p> <p>Evaluation: Metacognition took place and students received general feedback from the teacher.</p>	80'

Appendix B: Analytic Rubric

Pre and Post interventions speaking assessment

SO1: To compare the results before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy on the oral fluency of a group of students from the Business Administration Program in a Chilean Higher Educational Institution.

Description of the activity: Students receive the instruction of standing up, in front of the class and describe the picture that is assigned during one minute. The purpose is to convey as many ideas as they can during the time devoted to the task.

Rubric for oral fluency in academic contexts

	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs improvement (1)
Speech rate	Produces from 150 words per minute up	Produces between 126-149 words per minute	Produces between 100 and 125 words per minute	Produces less than 99 words per minute
Hesitation	The speaker speaks confidently and naturally with no distracting hesitations or fillers that show hesitation.	The speaker hesitates or uses fillers that show hesitation from 3 to 5 times.	The speaker has hesitations or use of fillers that show hesitation from 6 times up.	The speaker is uncertain and hesitates or uses fillers that show hesitation more than 6 times.
Pauses	The speaker speaks confidently and naturally with pauses of no longer than 2 seconds during the performance.	The speaker produces from 3 to 5 pauses of more than two seconds during the performance.	The speaker produces from 6 to 9 pauses of more than two seconds during the performance.	The speaker makes more than 10 pauses of more than two seconds during the performance.
Repair	Speaker's ideas flow efficiently with no repairs.	Speaker makes 3 to 5 repairs during the performance.	Speaker makes 6 to 9 repairs during the performance.	Speaker makes more than 10 repairs during the performance.

Appendix C: Focus Group

Focus group

SO2: To describe the student's perceptions towards the describing picture strategy applied during the intervention in the English lessons.

Dimensions	Sub-dimension	Questions
1. Instances to use the describing picture strategy	1.1 Classroom opportunities to use the describing picture strategy.	<p>¿Creen que las oportunidades para usar la estrategia de descripción de imágenes fueron las adecuadas? ¿Porqué?</p> <p>¿Pueden describir una situación en la que hayan utilizado la estrategia de descripción de imágenes para practicar la fluidez oral en el aula? ¿Cómo evaluarían el resultado de dicha estrategia?</p>
2. Effectiveness of the describing picture strategy with the students' speaking fluency.	<p>2.1 Factors that could affect the speaking fluency in the English language.</p> <p>2.2 Usefulness of the describing picture strategy on students' speaking fluency.</p> <p>2.3 Teaching methodology with describing Picture Strategy.</p>	<p>¿Qué factores creen que afectaron positivamente la fluidez en la clase de inglés durante la intervención?</p> <p>¿Qué factores creen que afectaron negativamente la fluidez en la clase de inglés durante la intervención?</p> <p>¿Creen que les resultó útil la estrategia de describir imágenes para mejorar la fluidez al hablar inglés? ¿Por qué?</p> <p>¿Cómo les ayudó a mejorar la fluidez al hablar inglés? Mencione un aspecto en particular</p> <p>¿Qué aspecto o aspectos de esta estrategia en particular les ayudó a mejorar la fluidez?</p> <p>¿Te resulta más fácil recordar y utilizar nuevas palabras y frases después de utilizar esta estrategia?</p> <p>¿Qué les pareció el feedback entregado por sus compañeros?</p> <p>¿Qué les pareció la experiencia de entregar feedback?</p> <p>¿Tienen alguna sugerencia sobre cómo se podría mejorar o utilizar de manera diferente la estrategia de describir imágenes en clase?</p> <p>¿Qué otra estrategia utilizaría para mejorar la fluidez oral en inglés?</p>

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo, _____ expreso mi acuerdo para participar en el proyecto de investigación-acción denominado **The effect of the describing picture strategy on Commercial Engineering students' English oral fluency aspects of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs**, cuya investigadora responsable es la señora Nicoll Castillo Torres, profesora de Inglés y tesista de magíster de la Facultad de Educación, Universidad de Concepción, bajo la supervisión de Dra. Angie Quintanilla académica de la Universidad de Concepción, Facultad de Educación.

Este proyecto corresponde al programa Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés de la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad de Concepción.

El objetivo general de este estudio es: Examinar el efecto de la estrategia de descripción de imágenes en los aspectos de la fluidez oral en inglés de los estudiantes de Ingeniería Comercial en cuanto a la velocidad del habla, las rupturas en el habla y sus reparaciones. *To examine the effect of the describing picture strategy on Commercial Engineering students' English oral fluency aspects of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs*

Los objetivos específicos de este estudio son:

1-. Comparar los resultados de los participantes en los aspectos de fluidez oral de velocidad del habla, rupturas y reparaciones; antes y después de la intervención con la estrategia de descripción de imágenes. *To compare participants' results on their oral fluency aspects of speech rate, breakdowns and repairs; before and after the intervention with the describing picture strategy.*

2-. Describir las percepciones de los participantes hacia la estrategia de descripción de imágenes aplicada durante la intervención en las clases de inglés. *To describe the participant's perceptions towards the describing picture strategy applied during the intervention in the English lessons.*

Se prevé que los componentes de este estudio de investigación-acción en el que usted da su consentimiento para participar, duren un máximo de 8 sesiones (con una duración máxima de 90 minutos cada una), y estos componentes se conforman de elementos previos, durante y posteriores a una intervención. La intervención consiste en la enseñanza explícita de la estrategia de descripción de imágenes, y las sesiones pre y post intervención están destinadas a examinar, comparar y describir sus resultados en relación con la fluidez en el uso del inglés durante una presentación oral.

Los datos para este estudio se recopilarán de las sesiones previas, durante y posteriores a la intervención. Los instrumentos de recopilación de datos para este estudio son la grabación y transcripción de videos, los protocolos retrospectivos de pensamiento en voz alta, y una entrevista de grupo focal. El uso de cualquier metraje de video obtenido durante este proyecto de investigación-acción es estrictamente limitado a la ejecución y análisis de los datos de este estudio. Al aceptar participar en este proyecto de investigación-

acción, acepta el uso de estos instrumentos de recopilación de datos, da su autorización para ser grabado, y acepta de participar con estos instrumentos.

Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria y anónima y me puedo retirar o rechazar mi participación en cualquier momento sin razón alguna y consecuencias de ningún tipo.

La información recogida a través de este proyecto podría aparecer en artículos de revistas académicas y/o en un libro, tanto como en presentaciones públicas de los resultados de investigación. En tales circunstancias, mi nombre podrá ser señalado **sólo** si autorizo expresamente a la investigadora responsable para ello. De lo contrario, toda mi información es **confidencial**.

Los datos recopilados serán guardados por la investigadora responsable Nicoll Castillo Torres en formato virtual y almacenados en carpetas con claves secretas, manejadas sólo por la Investigadora Responsable. Los datos serán utilizados exclusivamente en la presente investigación.

Si se desea conocer los resultados y/o procedimientos de la investigación comunicarse, directamente, con Nicoll Castillo Torres. Esta investigación no conlleva ningún tipo de riesgo o costo para las participantes, resguardando los aspectos de confidencialidad acordados.

Entiendo que, por mi firma en este formulario, señalo la aceptación.

Conuerdo con participar en el proyecto de investigación-acción:

Sí_____ No_____

Nombre de participante

Firma

Fecha: _____

Fono: _____ Dirección: _____

Se solicita firmar dos copias de este formulario, una copia para la investigadora responsable y otra para su archivo personal.

Investigadora Responsable

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