



**Promoting Inclusive Voices: Combining Differentiation Strategies for Active Oral
Participation in Mixed-Level EFL Classrooms.**

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Seminar Director: Arantxa Irizar

Informants: Tamara Cortes and Victor Birkner

Author: Damaris Machuca

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Abstract

This investigation aimed to explore strategies for promoting inclusive oral participation in mixed-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Chile. The problem addressed is the disparity in engagement caused by proficiency differences, where advanced students often feel under-challenged, and less proficient learners avoid participation due to fear of mistakes. These dynamics result in unequal opportunities, hindering motivation and oral skill development for all students. Guided by the question of How do teachers and students perceive and experience inclusive oral participation? the study focused on identifying influential factors, analysing teacher strategies, and understanding student perceptions. A qualitative case study was conducted in a subsidized high school in Santiago. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a teacher and a focus group with four 10th-grade students, selected based on proficiency levels and participation tendencies. Using thematic analysis, four themes emerged: opportunities and challenges in mixed-level classrooms, anxiety and confidence, effective participation strategies, and unequal participation dynamics. Findings revealed that peer collaboration, differentiated instruction, and technology fostered inclusion, yet advanced students expressed frustration with overburdened roles. Emotional barriers like fear of judgment persisted, emphasizing the need for trust-building and motivational strategies. The pedagogical contribution of this study lies in providing a framework for addressing proficiency gaps, highlighting the importance of scaffolding, tailored instruction, and leveraging technology in resource-limited EFL contexts. Future studies should investigate the lasting impacts of different strategies in diverse environments to improve fair involvement.

Keywords: Mixed-level classrooms, oral participation, EFL, differentiation strategies

INTRODUCTION

Active participation in spoken English is crucial for successful language acquisition and overall linguistic development. However, in mixed-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where learners of varying proficiencies coexist, fostering inclusive oral participation presents distinct challenges. Differentiation strategies, which involve tailoring instruction to accommodate the diverse needs of learners, are essential for creating an environment in which all students can actively engage. Without the application of these strategies, higher-level students may not encounter sufficient intellectual stimulation, potentially leading to disengagement and demotivation, while lower-level learners may struggle to keep pace, often avoiding participation due to fear of making mistakes or feeling inadequate.

This lack of inclusive participation has detrimental consequences for all students. Research consistently shows that in mixed-level classrooms, students often feel marginalized during oral activities, which negatively impacts their motivation, oral skill development, and overall sense of belonging (Cohen et al., 2017). Engaging and level-appropriate activities are therefore critical for stimulating student involvement and preventing the decline of motivation across varying proficiency levels (Alshenqeti, 2018). Moreover, without consistent opportunities to practice speaking, learners of all abilities are hindered in reaching their full potential, resulting in a stagnation of oral language development (Harmer, 2009; Ur, 2012).

This scenario fosters an uneven learning environment where certain students dominate discussions, while others feel neglected or overlooked, ultimately leading to frustration and decreased motivation. Both under-challenged and under-supported students face barriers to their language development, creating a classroom atmosphere that is neither conducive to equitable learning nor reflective of best teaching practices (Abdalla, 2018; Kalyan, 2007). In this context,

implementing effective differentiation strategies is paramount, as it ensures that all students are equally engaged, appropriately challenged, and supported in their language acquisition journey. Tailored instruction not only promotes greater participation but also enhances the overall efficacy of oral language learning, empowering learners to thrive regardless of their starting proficiency levels.

By addressing the individual needs of students, differentiation fosters a more inclusive and dynamic classroom environment, wherein each learner can actively contribute to and benefit from the language learning process. Consequently, it becomes clear that differentiated instruction is not merely an option but a necessity for achieving meaningful, sustainable progress in mixed-level EFL classrooms.

This investigation is organized into the following chapters: Chapter 1 explores the state of the art, reviewing previous studies on mixed-level classrooms, oral participation, and differentiation strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework, discussing key concepts such as differentiation strategies, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and second language acquisition theories. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological design, detailing the qualitative approach, participant selection criteria, data collection methods (interviews and focus groups), and thematic analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results, organized into themes such as peer learning dynamics, emotional barriers, and effective participation strategies. Chapter 5 offers a discussion, linking the findings to the research objectives, theoretical framework, and pedagogical implications. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the study, summarizing its contributions, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

State of the Art

Extensive research underscores the critical role of active oral participation in language acquisition (Harmer, 2009; Ur, 2012). Participating in spoken English activities allows learners to practice essential skills like pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary use in a dynamic context. This practice fosters communication confidence and facilitates the internalization of language structures (Long, 1981). However, achieving inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms, particularly in contexts like Chile where English exposure outside the classroom is limited, presents significant challenges (Carrasquillo, 2014).

In Chile, English is taught as a foreign language, with limited opportunities for students to practice outside the classroom. Carrasquillo (2014) notes that achieving inclusive oral participation is particularly difficult in this context but does not fully explore the effectiveness of the proposed solutions, such as task-based language learning, in overcoming these challenges. The lack of exposure to English and insufficient classroom resources complicates the implementation of dynamic, interactive language-learning tasks.

Research indicates that learners with diverse abilities are often excluded from active participation in such environments (Cohen et al., 2017). This exclusion can have detrimental effects, including disengagement for gifted students who are under-challenged (Abdalla, 2018) and reluctance to participate among those who struggle (MacIntyre, 2007). These findings align with Inostroza Araos's (2015) work on Chilean classrooms, which highlights the impact of inadequate planning time and insufficient parental involvement. While these issues are acknowledged, there is little discussion on how to practically address them, especially in resource-limited settings.

Vega-Abarzúa et al. (2022) demonstrate that collaborative learning enhances engagement, particularly behavioural engagement. However, the feasibility of this approach in large Chilean classrooms, where resources are scarce and teachers are overburdened, remains uncertain. Bulling and Guzmán (2020) also identify low levels of oral participation in public EFL classrooms, suggesting that differentiation strategies are needed to enhance engagement. Yet, differentiation strategies themselves pose challenges, as teachers struggle to cater to a wide range of abilities within a single classroom (Tomlinson, 2017).

While differentiation and inclusive practices are well-studied, a gap remains regarding how these strategies can be effectively combined in Chilean EFL classrooms. This gap likely arises due to a mismatch between educational policy and classroom reality (Inostroza Araos, 2015) and the lack of teacher preparation for implementing differentiated instruction (Masterson et al., 2018). Future research must explore how collaborative and differentiated strategies can be adapted to Chile's unique context, focusing on strategies that ensure both engagement and individual language development.

Problem Statement

In Chilean EFL classrooms, ensuring that all students are equally engaged in oral activities is a persistent challenge due to the wide range of skill levels and learning styles.

Teachers often struggle to create an inclusive environment where every student feels motivated to participate and express their ideas. Students with higher proficiency may find traditional activities too easy, leading to boredom, disinterest, and even a decline in academic performance. Meanwhile, students who need more support may hesitate to join in for fear of making mistakes or receiving negative feedback, further exacerbating their sense of exclusion.

This disparity in engagement creates an unequal learning environment, with some students dominating the conversation while others remain on the sidelines.

This unequal participation can lead to frustration, a loss of motivation, and a slower rate of development for both advanced and struggling students. High-achieving students may lose interest because they are not sufficiently challenged, while students who need help might avoid participation altogether, fearing embarrassment. As a result, some students end up speaking more frequently while others feel left out, creating an imbalanced classroom dynamic.

This issue was evident during my professional practice. I observed that students with high proficiency levels often became disengaged, which negatively impacted their grades as they did not find the activities stimulating enough to put forth effort. In contrast, students who struggled with English tended to form collaborative learning groups to support each other. While this self-organized collaboration fostered some participation, it also underscored the need for structured differentiation strategies that engage and challenge all students, regardless of their skill level.

In the context of EFL versus ESL (English as a Second Language) learning environments, it is important to recognize the unique challenges that Chilean students face. ESL learners are often immersed in an English-speaking environment where they can practice the language in daily life. In contrast, EFL learners, such as those in Chile, have limited exposure to English outside the classroom (Hernández-Méndez et al. 2021). This makes it essential for teachers to maximize opportunities for spoken English within the classroom and adopt differentiation strategies that cater to diverse proficiency levels, ensuring that every student benefit from the learning experience.

Research Question

How do teachers and students perceive and experience inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile, and what strategies and factors influence these experiences?

How do students perceive their self motivation in oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile?

Objectives

To explore the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers regarding inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile.

Specific objectives

Objective 1. To identify the factors that influence inclusive oral participation of students in mixed-level EFL classrooms.

Objective 2. To analyse the strategies used by teachers to promote inclusive oral participation and their impact on students.

Objective 3. To understand student's perceptions of the opportunities and challenges related to oral participation in the classroom.

Justification

This research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how to foster inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms, particularly within the Chilean context. The findings were expected to have broader implications for EFL settings in other countries facing similar challenges. In Chile, as in many other nations, students often had limited opportunities to practice English outside the classroom, making in-class spoken interaction essential. The diverse

range of student abilities in mixed-level classrooms further complicated this challenge, as more proficient students often felt under-challenged, while less proficient learners hesitated to participate due to fear of making mistakes or receiving negative feedback.

Similar challenges had been identified in other EFL settings across the globe. For example, Brazil faced issues with large class sizes and limited resources in public schools, which hindered teachers' ability to implement differentiated strategies effectively (Carrasquillo, 2014). In Brazilian EFL classrooms, where English was taught as a foreign language, students often lacked opportunities to engage with the language beyond school hours. This scarcity of real-world exposure mirrored the situation in Chile and highlighted the need for classroom-based strategies to maximize oral participation opportunities (Castillo-Rodríguez, 2022).

In Argentina, learners faced motivational challenges due to the minimal use of English outside academic contexts. A study by Jaramillo-Yanquepe (2022) emphasized the importance of creating more interactive speaking tasks in Argentinean EFL classrooms to overcome student disengagement, which was often caused by the lack of everyday English exposure. Dörnyei (2001) also discussed the role of motivation in language learning, emphasizing that tailored motivational strategies were crucial to re-engaging learners in speaking tasks in such contexts.

In Thailand, another country with resource-limited EFL contexts, mixed-level classrooms presented significant barriers to equitable participation. Alshenqeeti (2018) observed that Thai students often hesitated to participate in oral activities due to fear of embarrassment and making mistakes, especially in classrooms where peers had more advanced proficiency levels. In these cases, targeted strategies such as Task-Based Learning (TBL) and cooperative learning had proven effective in promoting inclusive engagement, much like what was proposed for the Chilean context (Alshenqeeti, 2018).

These parallels demonstrated the potential global relevance of the research. By examining differentiation strategies in Chilean classrooms, this study aimed not only to fill a gap in the local empirical research but also to offer valuable insights that could be adapted to other EFL settings where similar resource constraints and proficiency disparities existed. The findings were expected to inform best practices in Brazil, Argentina, Thailand, and other countries that shared these educational challenges, providing a framework for more equitable and effective EFL teaching worldwide.

Theoretical framework

Definition of inclusive education

First, we must define what we consider inclusive in this research. One of the conceptualizations that receives the greatest acceptance in the current educational policies of several national States is that carried out by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2009), which defines inclusive education as that which favours the participation of all without exclusions and that aspires to achieve quality learning. Several authors ascribe to this definition, such as Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) and Booth and Ainscow (2011).

Differentiation Strategies

To address the challenge of fostering inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms, teachers must implement a range of strategies that cater to the diverse needs of learners. Drawing from Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles (2011), these strategies emphasize providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to ensure all students have equal opportunities to participate meaningfully in oral activities. While UDL offers a strong theoretical framework, its practical implementation in resource-limited environments, like many Chilean classrooms, remains challenging. For instance, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teacher support, and a lack of teaching materials create significant barriers to the consistent application of customized learning strategies. To better understand how these challenges can be addressed, it is essential to critically engage with the realities of mixed-level classrooms and provide contextually relevant adaptations. Three key strategies include adapting instruction, promoting collaborative learning, and integrating digital technology.

Customizing lessons and tasks is critical for addressing the varied proficiency levels within the classroom. This involves adjusting the level of support provided to learners, offering a

variety of task choices, and utilizing multiple evaluation methods. UDL's principle of multiple means of engagement stresses the importance of varying instructional methods to keep all learners motivated. By adapting lessons and tasks to suit individual needs, teachers can cater to the diverse proficiency levels present in a mixed-level classroom. For instance, beginners may benefit from scaffolded tasks like sentence starters or vocabulary prompts, while advanced students are challenged with more open-ended, complex questions. This differentiation alleviates the anxiety that often accompanies oral participation for less proficient learners, allowing them to contribute confidently within their skill level. Meanwhile, it simultaneously challenges more advanced students, ensuring they remain engaged (Tomlinson, 2017; Zarei and Mohammadi, 2023).

However, while theoretically sound, customizing lessons to such a degree in real-world classrooms, particularly in resource-limited settings like many Chilean schools, is difficult due to large class sizes, limited instructional time, and inadequate teacher support. Teachers in many EFL contexts, particularly in underfunded public schools, frequently encounter structural barriers such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient planning time, and a shortage of teaching materials, all of which significantly hinder the effective implementation of differentiated instruction (Inostroza Araos, 2015). Without adequate resources or institutional support, the UDL principle of multiple means of engagement may remain an aspirational goal rather than a practical solution.

Collaborative learning is another strategy that aligns with UDL's principles by offering multiple means of representation. In this approach, students can access content through peer interactions, with group activities like discussions or role-plays fostering an inclusive environment. For example, in a resource-constrained classroom, more proficient students might

take leadership roles, modeling language use for less proficient learners, who in turn contribute in simpler ways, such as by answering basic questions. This method, while potentially effective, also presents challenges. The literature often overlooks the nuanced difficulties of collaborative learning in mixed-level classrooms. Studies like Richards & Rodgers (2001) tend to emphasize the benefits without critically engaging with potential drawbacks such as unequal participation, where more proficient students dominate discussions, leaving lower-level learners passive. This issue is especially pronounced in large, under-resourced classrooms, where teachers may struggle to manage group dynamics and ensure that all students actively engage (Vega-Abarzúa et al., 2022).

Practical examples of differentiation strategies can help mitigate these challenges. For instance, instead of relying solely on peer-to-peer interactions, teachers can use tiered tasks: simpler versions of the same activity for lower-level students and more complex versions for advanced learners. For example, in a speaking activity, beginners might be asked to describe a picture using basic vocabulary, while advanced students could debate a topic or give a brief presentation on the same theme. This approach ensures that each student is working within their zone of proximal development (ZPD), without being overwhelmed or under-challenged (Tomlinson, 2017).

Digital tools, while offering promising ways to promote inclusive participation, also need to be considered critically. The framework may overestimate the accessibility and impact of digital tools, particularly in contexts where socio-economic disparities exist. In Chile, many students, especially from rural or lower-income areas, lack access to reliable internet or digital devices. While tools like voice recording apps or online discussion platforms can theoretically help students practice their speaking skills without the immediate pressure of a live audience,

these solutions are not viable for all learners. To address this, teachers in resource-limited settings might employ low-tech alternatives such as using mobile phones for offline voice recording, or organizing in-class collaborative exercises that simulate digital tools (Bulling & Guzmán, 2020). These practical adaptations bridge the gap between the theoretical advantages of digital technology and the logistical realities faced by many Chilean classrooms.

Finally, scaffolding is an essential technique in fostering inclusive oral participation. Scaffolding allows teachers to provide temporary support that gradually leads students toward independent task completion. However, as with differentiation and collaborative learning, the practical implementation of scaffolding in large, mixed-level classrooms is constrained by time and resources. The literature often fails to critically engage with these limitations, focusing instead on the theoretical benefits of scaffolding without addressing the practical barriers. In a Chilean context, for example, effective scaffolding might involve the use of formative assessments where students receive immediate, task-specific feedback, but this requires substantial teacher time and individualized attention, which are often lacking in overcrowded classrooms (Zarei & Mohammadi, 2023).

By employing a combination of customized instruction, collaborative learning, digital tools, and scaffolding, teachers can theoretically foster inclusive oral participation. However, successful implementation depends heavily on the context in which these strategies are applied. For UDL principles to be practical in mixed-level EFL classrooms, particularly in resource-limited settings like many in Chile, there must be a critical evaluation of the feasibility of these strategies. Adaptations that take into account structural limitations—such as teacher training, the integration of low-tech alternatives, and manageable scaffolding practices—are key to ensuring that these strategies can be effectively implemented. Furthermore, professional development is

crucial in equipping teachers with the tools and techniques to apply differentiation, scaffolding, and collaborative learning effectively, especially in challenging environments

Oral Production

Oral production, as defined by Brown & Yule (1983), encompasses the linguistic skill related to the production of oral discourse, emphasizing a learner's ability to express themselves verbally in a foreign language with fluency, precision, and coherence. This skill is essential in language learning because it enables students to interact authentically and effectively in a variety of communicative situations. Brown and Yule (1983) also highlight that oral production in second language learning goes beyond simply articulating sounds and words. It includes the ability to construct and organize coherent thoughts, as well as the competence to interact appropriately in social contexts (p. 27).

In mixed-level EFL classrooms, the challenges of achieving fluency, precision, and coherence in oral production vary depending on the learner's proficiency level. For example, advanced students may struggle more with maintaining coherence during extended speaking tasks like delivering a public speech, while beginners often face difficulties with basic articulation and fluency. This highlights the need to recognize the multidimensional nature of oral communication in second language acquisition. Oral production also involves elements such as intonation, gesture, pragmatics, and cultural competence, which are equally critical for effective communication. Intonation helps convey emotions and questions, gestures can support verbal communication, pragmatics guide appropriate language use in various contexts, and cultural competence ensures that language is used respectfully and accurately in line with social norms. Including these elements provides a more holistic understanding of oral production,

moving beyond the mechanical aspects of speech to encompass the full range of communicative competencies that learners need to develop.

It is also important to acknowledge that for many learners; oral production is considered the most difficult language skill to master. Even native speakers sometimes struggle with maintaining coherence and fluency in extended speech. For EFL learners, especially in mixed-level classrooms, these challenges are even more pronounced. Beginners may feel overwhelmed by oral tasks due to limited vocabulary or confidence, while advanced students may find such tasks too simplistic, leading to disengagement and boredom. This underscores the importance of tailoring oral activities to the diverse needs of learners in a way that keeps all students engaged and progressing.

Digital tools like voice recording apps offer a promising solution to these challenges, as they can be used differentially across proficiency levels. Beginners, for instance, can use recording apps to practice basic sentence structures, focusing on building fluency and articulation without the immediate pressure of a live audience. These recordings can be replayed, providing opportunities for learners to self-assess their pronunciation, intonation, and coherence. Meanwhile, advanced students can use the same tools for more complex language tasks, such as practicing impromptu speaking or discussing abstract topics. By refining their responses and receiving feedback in a more controlled environment, students at different proficiency levels can work at their own pace to enhance their oral production skills. Moreover, this flexibility allows for personalized learning experiences, ensuring that all learners are appropriately challenged based on their current abilities.

However, while digital tools offer significant advantages, it is important to consider issues of accessibility and equity. Not all learners may have access to the necessary technology,

such as smartphones, reliable internet, or suitable learning environments at home. This digital divide can exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly in contexts like Chile, where socio-economic disparities affect students' access to educational resources. Teachers need to be mindful of these limitations and, where possible, provide alternatives for learners without access to digital tools. For example, oral production tasks can be practiced in class through structured pair or group work, or by using low-tech options like audio recorders, which do not require internet connectivity. Additionally, schools and policymakers should work to ensure more equitable access to technology, so that all learners can benefit from these tools regardless of their socio-economic background.

In summarise, oral production is a multifaceted skill that requires learners to develop not only fluency, precision, and coherence but also competencies related to intonation, gesture, pragmatics, and cultural awareness. Differentiated instruction, through scaffolding, collaborative learning, and the integration of digital tools, can significantly enhance oral production in mixed-level EFL classrooms. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on ensuring that all learners have equitable access to the necessary resources, and that instruction is adapted to meet the unique challenges faced by learners at varying proficiency levels. By acknowledging these complexities and addressing them with a flexible, inclusive approach, teachers can better support their students in developing robust oral production skills across a range of communicative contexts.

Mixed-level classrooms

To fully understand the dynamics of a mixed-level classroom, we must first define it. A mixed-level classroom consists of a group of students who present a wide range of skills, levels of knowledge, and competencies in a particular subject. In the context of teaching English as a

foreign language (EFL), a mixed-level class includes learners with varying degrees of English proficiency, ranging from beginners to advanced students. Prodomou (1992) outlines key characteristics of mixed-level classrooms, which include differences in language competence, cultural backgrounds, learning styles, intelligence, motivation, and experience. Additionally, some students may know more than one language, while others may only speak their mother tongue, and there are often variations in age, personality, attitudes, self-esteem, and interests.

These diverse characteristics have a profound impact on oral participation. Higher proficiency students may dominate class discussions, while those with lower proficiency could feel hesitant, fearing mistakes or embarrassment. This disparity can hinder active participation and engagement, particularly among less confident learners. Differentiation strategies, therefore, become essential in addressing these challenges. San Martín et al. (2021) emphasize that teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy play a critical role in promoting inclusive practices. Teachers who are confident and well-prepared are more likely to employ effective strategies like differentiated tasks and personalized feedback to engage students at all proficiency levels. Similarly, Rodríguez Arias (2020) found that structured group activities, where advanced students take on leadership roles and beginners contribute in simpler ways, foster greater participation. This approach not only bridges proficiency gaps, but ensures that every student is involved meaningfully in discussions.

However, a deeper exploration of cultural and motivational factors is crucial for understanding their specific impact on oral participation. Students from different cultural backgrounds may approach public speaking with varying degrees of comfort. For instance, certain cultures may prioritize collective harmony and view making mistakes in public as a source of shame, which could inhibit willingness to speak up in class. On the other hand,

students from cultures that encourage individual expression might be more inclined to take risks in oral tasks. Understanding these cultural norms is vital for teachers when designing activities that foster oral participation across different cultural contexts. Additionally, motivational factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic, also significantly impact how students engage in oral activities. The inclusion of motivational theories, such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985), can offer valuable insights. According to this theory, students are more likely to engage in tasks when they feel a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In mixed-level classrooms, fostering intrinsic motivation—where students participate because they find the task enjoyable or fulfilling—could be key to encouraging consistent oral participation. Providing opportunities for students to experience success and giving them a degree of control over their learning process may further enhance their willingness to engage.

To ensure that differentiation strategies are implemented effectively, it is essential to consider the preparation and training of teachers. While this framework emphasizes teacher self-efficacy, more explicit discussion of the specific skills and competencies teachers need to develop would strengthen the argument. For instance, teachers should be trained in creating tiered tasks that cater to varying proficiency levels, designing scaffolding techniques to support students who need more assistance, and facilitating collaborative learning environments. Professional development programs should also equip teachers with strategies for managing diverse classrooms, such as understanding cultural influences on learning and using technology effectively for personalized instruction.

Systemic barriers, however, can pose significant challenges to the implementation of these strategies. Large class sizes, limited resources, and rigid curriculum requirements often restrict teachers' ability to provide individualized attention. For example, in a classroom of 40

students with varying proficiency levels, it can be difficult for a teacher to offer personalized feedback or tailor tasks to meet each student's needs. Furthermore, limited access to technology, particularly in resource-poor settings, can hinder the integration of digital tools that have been shown to reduce anxiety and enhance participation. Addressing these barriers requires systemic support, including smaller class sizes, increased funding for educational resources, and professional development opportunities that empower teachers to use differentiation strategies effectively within their specific contexts.

Incorporating these strategies can create a more inclusive learning environment that accommodates the diverse needs of students in mixed-level EFL classrooms. Teachers must balance the complexities of language proficiency, cultural background, and motivation to ensure that all learners feel valued and confident in their oral contributions. By understanding and addressing these factors, educators can promote greater participation and support the overall language development of all students, regardless of their starting point.

Importance of Motivation in Oral Participation in EFL mixed-level Classrooms

According to Deci & Ryan (2000) motivation is a powerful driver of sustained engagement, effort, and enjoyment. This means that motivation plays a crucial role in driving effective learning, particularly in the context of oral participation.

In mixed-level EFL classrooms, fostering intrinsic motivation is particularly important for both high-ability and struggling learners. We understand that Intrinsic motivation stems from an internal desire to learn and engage in the activity for its own sake. For high-ability learners, intrinsic motivation can help them find personal meaning and satisfaction in the learning process, even when tasks are not always challenging. For struggling learners, intrinsic motivation can encourage them to persevere despite challenges and develop a positive attitude towards learning.

Recognizing the importance of motivation leads us to understand the broader significance of oral participation in EFL classrooms. Active participation in speaking activities is vital for ESL and EFL students, regardless of their learning setting. Engaging in verbal tasks helps learners improve their pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary skills in a real-world setting. Additionally, it helps boost their confidence in communication and enables them to internalize language structures effectively. (Harmer, 2009; Ur, 2012) “Oral participation is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition, particularly in EFL settings” (Brown, 2007). It allows students to practice essential skills such as pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary use in a dynamic context.

This practice fosters communication confidence and facilitates the internalization of language structures (Brown, 2007). Speaking skills are highly important, good communication through speaking is crucial, bearing in mind that spoken words cannot be revised or checked like written words. A strong command of speaking abilities is necessary for effectively conveying information on the spot.

Differentiation strategies to foster oral participation

While a growing body of research addresses differentiation strategies and inclusive practices in general education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these concepts can be effectively applied to promote inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical research in Chilean EFL contexts to assess the effectiveness of targeted strategies in fostering inclusive oral participation for students at varying proficiency levels. Addressing this gap is crucial, as strategies that work in other educational contexts may not necessarily translate well into EFL environments, especially where students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom.

Achieving inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms is a complex task that requires a multifaceted approach. Differentiation strategies such as scaffolded instruction, task-based learning, and flexible grouping can help accommodate the varying skill levels within the classroom. For instance, scaffolded instruction allows students with lower proficiency to build confidence and gradually participate in oral activities, while task-based learning challenges advanced students with more complex, open-ended tasks that push their language skills further. Flexible grouping, where students work in varied group configurations based on ability or interest, ensures that learners can engage in peer-supported learning without feeling overwhelmed or under-stimulated.

In addition to these approaches, cooperative learning strategies—such as think-pair-share and group discussions—can facilitate a more inclusive environment by promoting peer collaboration and reducing the pressure of speaking in front of large groups. Integrating technology tools like language-learning apps and online forums can also offer diverse ways for students to practice speaking, allowing for individualized pacing and participation outside of the classroom setting. Lastly, fostering teacher awareness through ongoing professional development is critical, as teachers must be able to recognize and respond to the specific oral participation challenges faced by students in mixed-level EFL settings.

By implementing these strategies, educators can create more inclusive learning environments that actively promote effective oral participation for all students, regardless of their language proficiency. However, further research is needed to explore and refine these methods, particularly in the context of Chilean EFL classrooms. Understanding which strategies are most effective in this setting could have significant implications for practitioners, offering them concrete tools to improve classroom dynamics, boost student motivation, and enhance overall

language acquisition. Filling this gap in the literature would not only lead to more effective teaching practices but also support the development of more equitable learning environments in EFL classrooms.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories

Although it is crucial to consider various theories in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), it is equally important to critically evaluate their applicability in real-world classroom settings. The Interaction Hypothesis, proposed by Long (1981), underscores the significance of meaningful interaction in language acquisition, suggesting that learners develop fluency and accuracy through engagement in spoken activities that challenge them beyond their current competence levels. Mixed-level classrooms inherently offer rich opportunities for such interactions. However, these opportunities may not benefit all learners equally. For instance, advanced students may dominate discussions, leaving less proficient students hesitant to participate due to fear of making mistakes or being overshadowed. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the Interaction Hypothesis in fostering equitable participation across diverse proficiency levels.

To mitigate the risks of unequal participation, teachers can implement structured activities that promote inclusive dialogue. Techniques such as assigning specific roles within group discussions can ensure that all students have opportunities to contribute. For example, teachers might designate a "facilitator" role for more proficient learners, while assigning "questioner" roles to less proficient students to encourage their input without placing undue pressure on them. Additionally, creating a classroom culture that celebrates effort and growth—rather than just correctness—can empower students to take risks and participate more actively.

The Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, articulated by Krashen (1985), posits that learners acquire language best when they comprehend input that is slightly above their current level of understanding. This theory necessitates the provision of activities with differentiated levels of complexity, particularly in mixed-level classrooms. However, ensuring that all learners receive appropriate comprehensible input can be a formidable challenge. Teachers must be adept at assessing the varying proficiency levels within their classrooms and adjusting tasks accordingly. While differentiation strategies can help make input both challenging and accessible, the practical implementation of these strategies requires careful planning and continuous assessment to avoid overwhelming or under-challenging students.

Moreover, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasize the role of social interaction and collaboration in learning. The ZPD is defined as the gap between a learner's current capabilities and their potential development with guidance or collaboration from more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Mixed-level classrooms can effectively leverage this theory by facilitating peer learning opportunities. However, it is essential to recognize that not all students may feel comfortable or be willing to engage in collaborative learning. To enhance the effectiveness of this approach, teachers should foster a supportive classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves and take risks. This can be achieved through team-building activities that promote trust and rapport among classmates, encouraging students to support one another's learning.

In summary, while the Interaction Hypothesis, Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory provide valuable frameworks for understanding language acquisition in mixed-level classrooms, it is essential to critically assess their limitations in practice. Teachers must proactively address the potential for unequal participation, ensuring that

all learners can engage meaningfully. By incorporating structured interactions, differentiated input, and a supportive classroom culture, educators can create an inclusive environment that capitalizes on the strengths of these theories while addressing the unique challenges of mixed-level EFL classrooms.

Task based Learning to enhance oral production

Another key approach that can support a mixed-level EFL class is Task-Based Learning (TBL). As a highly student-centered method, TBL involves engaging learners in real-world tasks that contextualize language use. This is particularly beneficial in mixed-level EFL classrooms, as it allows students to participate in tasks according to their individual abilities. TBL encourages communication and collaboration, both essential components for promoting active oral participation across varying proficiency levels. While my primary focus is on differentiation strategies, TBL complements these efforts by offering opportunities for learners to engage in speaking tasks within an environment of support and mutual learning, ultimately helping less confident students improve their speaking skills.

TBL specifically accommodates varied proficiency levels by allowing for flexible task differentiation. For example, a role-playing activity might involve advanced students taking on more complex roles that require higher-level language skills, while less proficient students can participate in simpler, more structured roles. Another activity could involve problem-solving tasks, where groups of students collaborate to find solutions to real-world scenarios. Advanced learners can lead discussions or present more detailed responses, while beginners can contribute through guided, scaffolded input. By incorporating these types of tasks, TBL ensures that all students are meaningfully involved, regardless of their language level, and have opportunities to practice oral communication in a supportive and dynamic setting.

Methodological Design

In this section, I will discuss the main choices made in designing the research to explore ways of encouraging equitable involvement in oral activities within EFL classrooms that consist of students at different proficiency levels in Chile. The key decisions in designing the research to explore how to encourage inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile will be outlined.

Research Approach

This research employed a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of teachers and students regarding inclusive oral participation. Through interviews, I will explore the dynamics of participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms, focusing on how various strategies impact student engagement.

A qualitative approach is well-suited for this study since “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.6). This means it allows for the collection of rich and detailed data.

Scope of Research

The initial phase of the research was exploratory, utilizing qualitative data to examine the current state of inclusive oral participation practices in Chilean EFL classrooms. I started by analyzing teaching methods in mixed-level settings, which informed specific research questions regarding the dynamics of participation.

Qualitative data was particularly useful in understanding student motivation and anxiety. Through interviews, students expressed their feelings about speaking in English, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the factors influencing their oral participation.

Type of Design

A qualitative case study design was employed to capture the complexities of the selected classrooms. This design facilitated an understanding of the internal dynamics that influence oral participation without manipulating variables. As it is an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.37), the case study design facilitates the collection of detailed qualitative data through observations, interviews, and document analysis, providing a holistic view of the phenomenon under investigation since it is a “process of conducting a case study is conflated with both the unit of the study (the case) and the product of this type investigation” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.37).

Participants

10TH Grade students around 15 to 16 years old, of a mix level classroom, part of a subsidized private school with technical vocational tracks. is research employed both purposive and criterion-based sampling to ensure the selection of participants who align with the study's specific objectives. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on predetermined characteristics that are most relevant to the research question, facilitating a targeted examination of complex contexts (Patton, 2015). In this study, purposive sampling was used to select one EFL classroom based on factors such as diversity in English proficiency, teacher experience, grade level, and class size, ensuring a representative mix of classroom dynamics that impact language learning and participation.

Criterion-based sampling further refined participant selection within one classroom, focusing on students with specific English proficiency levels—two with higher proficiency and two with lower proficiency—and generally low classroom participation. Exclusion criteria were also applied to avoid confounding variables, specifically excluding students on the autism

spectrum, those with language disorders, and those from Mapuche communities, thereby isolating English proficiency and participation as the primary focus. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), combining purposive and criterion-based sampling enhances the relevance and specificity of a sample by aligning participant characteristics directly with the research aims. Thus, this dual-sampling approach was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of teaching strategies and student engagement across proficiency levels in EFL contexts.

Material and procedure

The intervention was carried out over the course of three classes, following the start of the second half of Unit 2. By this point, students were already familiar with the structures of the second conditional and the characteristics of moral dilemmas.

In Class 8, students worked in pairs, with the main activity requiring them to read their moral dilemmas and debate the best solutions. To support students who faced more difficulties, differentiated instructions were provided, allowing them to use the Cambridge Dictionary app on their mobile devices to translate individual words if necessary, as well as the provision of sentence starters to aid in the construction of sentences. At the end of the activity, pairs volunteered to present their solutions in front of the class. As an incentive, students who participated in the oral presentation of their sentences earned a 'reverse joker,' which permitted them to bypass any future question posed by the teacher during class, whether they were unsure of the answer or simply did not wish to participate.

The second intervention took place two classes later. In this session, the teachers formed groups, each consisting of two high-proficiency students and two low-proficiency students. The activity required students to collaboratively create a survey in English using moral dilemmas and second conditional questions of their choice. The students then conducted the survey with their

classmates in English, responding with explanations where necessary, as all answers would later be presented. This class prioritized group interaction, first to decide on the dilemmas to include in their survey and later to engage with classmates during the survey process. Students were also encouraged to use technology to record their classmates' answers on their mobile phones if desired.

For the final intervention, the same teacher-assigned groups were given a randomly assigned topic, and each group was tasked with taking a position (for or against) and writing arguments to support their stance. This activity utilized the VoiceThread application, where students recorded their arguments and counterarguments. Groups were required to assign specific roles:

1. The Speaker introduced the topic and presented the group's position, supported by APA citations.
2. The Supporter provided specific examples and details to strengthen the argument.
3. The Questioner posed questions to the opposing group.
4. The Responder addressed the questions posed by the opposing team.

All group members collaborated to close their argument in VoiceThread by reaffirming their stance. Students rehearsed their arguments in English, focusing on pronunciation and clarity before recording. They could choose to record using only audio or video, depending on their comfort level. This session not only allowed students to practice structuring and presenting their arguments in preparation for a real debate but also encouraged peer feedback, as students helped each other refine their pronunciation and delivery.

For more information about the conducted classes, the planning of the classes can be found in Appendix C.

Data Collection Methods

In the case of this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teacher and a focus group was held with the students. These types of interviews were chosen because they provide the flexibility to explore individual experiences while ensuring that key research objectives are addressed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, each interview was expected to last approximately 20 minutes, maximizing time efficiency without compromising data quality. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for thorough analysis. To mitigate potential power dynamics between the researcher and participants, I fostered a collaborative atmosphere during interviews to ensure that students felt comfortable and encouraged to share their experiences openly.

The structure of the instrument was meticulously developed to align with the research objectives, focusing on open-ended questions that encourage participants to provide detailed and insightful answers (Patton, 2015). Care was taken to formulate questions that avoid leading the participants, resulting in them sharing their perspectives freely and ensuring the collection of rich qualitative data. In addition, these questions were reviewed and corrected by expert academics in the areas related to this investigation.

Interviews were conducted using a face-to-face modality approach. An in-person interview allows researchers to observe non-verbal expressions or body language to obtain detailed answers (Janghorban et al., 2014). This depth is often assigned to the trust and connection fostered in face-to-face settings, making participants feel more comfortable sharing

openly (Irvine et al., 2013). Otherwise, online interviews, while practical for overcoming geographic or time barriers, may lack this depth. Seitz (2015) observed that online interviews may produce shorter, less elaborate responses, as the lack of physical presence can make participants less engaged in the interview process. Based on this, it was decided to use the face-to-face approach. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated. The interviews were conducted in Spanish to avoid complicating the process due to varying English proficiency levels among participants, thereby reducing interaction-related stress and facilitating clear communication of ideas.

A purposive sample was employed, with the four selected students chosen by the lead English teacher at the school, who had prior knowledge of their participation and classroom behavior. The practicum supervising teacher was chosen as the participant for the individual interview, as they were responsible for teaching all sophomore-level English classes.

Data Analysis

The information from this research was analyzed using a thematic approach based on color coding the keywords of the interview answers. Thematic analysis is a flexible and interpretive approach that facilitates the analysis of qualitative research according to different patterns and themes involved in the data set. Through its theoretical freedom, “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in “rich” detail” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.79). In addition, the reflexive approach of TA (thematic analysis) emphasizes the essential and active role of the research in terms of knowledge production (Byrne, 2022).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79), the phases of thematic analysis are the following:

1. Familiarization with the data: recording and transcription of the interview.
2. Generating initial codes: analyze contextual information and identify patterns.
3. Coding: categorizing information according to patterns and themes.
4. Reviewing themes: grouping codes coherently to represent the data.
5. Defining and naming themes: exhaustive analysis to generate clear definitions
6. Producing the report: development of the final report and last analysis of the selected data, and relating the research questions and objectives with the final results

Ethical considerations

At the beginning of each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence (Bryman, 2016). Consent forms were provided to ensure informed participation, adhering to ethical standards, and respecting the participants' autonomy.

To protect anonymity, identifying information was masked in all interview transcripts and findings, ensuring that individuals participating cannot be traced back to their statements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, confidentiality was maintained by securely storing the interview data in encrypted digital formats and limiting access to the research team only. The collected data was used solely for the purposes of this study, and participants were informed that their contributions would not be shared with third parties or used in any way that could compromise their privacy.

Results

The following section presents the data collected in this research, organized into key themes that emerged from the analysis of both student and teacher interviews. These results highlight the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of 10th-grade EFL students and their teacher in a mixed-level classroom setting. The findings are structured around four central themes: Experiences in Mixed-Level Classrooms, Participation in Oral Activities, Feelings of Inclusion and Exclusion, and Activity Preferences and Comfort Levels. Each theme is supported by direct quotes from participants, offering a nuanced understanding of how classroom dynamics, instructional strategies, and individual differences influence oral participation. These insights aim to inform strategies for fostering inclusive and effective EFL learning environments.

Mixed-Level Classrooms: Opportunities and Challenges

Students perceived mixed-level classrooms as both beneficial and challenging. They valued the opportunity to learn from more advanced peers, as asking for help often made difficult tasks more manageable. For example, one student said, “Good, that way you can learn, and if not, if you miss something, I ask the classmate next to me who understands more than I do” (Student 1). Another noted, “I feel more comfortable because maybe if I don't understand something, I can ask someone who knows more than I do” (Student 4). However, advanced students expressed frustration with having to repeatedly assist less proficient classmates, with one explaining, “It’s stressful... it’s like 'I already told you!’” (Student 2). The teacher emphasized that peer tutoring was a key strategy for fostering participation but acknowledged the need to balance the dynamics to avoid overburdening advanced students. In conclusion, mixed-level classrooms offer significant opportunities for peer learning, allowing less proficient students to benefit from the guidance of advanced peers, which fosters understanding and

confidence. However, this dynamic can create challenges, as advanced students may feel overburdened by the repeated responsibility of assisting others. Effective implementation of strategies like structured peer tutoring and balanced role distribution is crucial to maximizing the benefits of mixed-level interactions while addressing the frustrations of more advanced learners.

Opportunities for Peer Learning

Students with lower English proficiency frequently acknowledged the value of learning from their more advanced peers. They described how informal interactions with classmates helped them understand tasks and build their confidence to participate in oral activities. For example, Student 1 remarked, "Good, that way you can learn, and if not, if you miss something, I ask the classmate next to me who understands more than I do." Similarly, Student 4 explained, "I feel more comfortable because maybe if I don't understand something, I can ask someone who knows more than I do."

The teacher echoed this perspective, emphasizing that peer learning could reduce anxiety and build confidence: "Peer work often encourages students to expose themselves more willingly compared to working with a teacher."

In conclusion, peer learning in mixed-level classrooms provides valuable support for less proficient students, helping them build confidence and reduce anxiety through informal interactions with more advanced classmates. This dynamic fosters a collaborative environment where students feel more comfortable participating, highlighting the importance of leveraging peer relationships to enhance learning and engagement.

Challenges for Advanced Students

While peer learning was beneficial for less proficient students, more advanced learners often reported frustration at the perceived inequity of responsibility in these interactions. They felt that their own learning opportunities were compromised by the constant need to support their peers. For example, Student 1 noted, "For those with a lower level of English, it's easier, but maybe for those with a higher level, it's a bit complicated because they have to constantly explain to the other person." Similarly, Student 2 expressed frustration, stating, "More than anything, it's like they ask you all the time, and it's stressful... it's like 'I already told you!' "

These dynamics highlight a tension in mixed-level classrooms: while advanced students can act as valuable resources for their peers, over-reliance on them can lead to disengagement and a sense of inequity. In conclusion, while advanced students play a crucial role in supporting their peers, the over-reliance on them in mixed-level classrooms can create feelings of frustration and inequity, potentially hindering their own learning opportunities. Addressing this tension requires implementing strategies such as role rotation or teacher-led scaffolding to distribute responsibilities more evenly and maintain engagement for all learners.

Anxiety and Confidence in Oral Participation

Anxiety emerged as a significant factor affecting students' willingness to participate in oral activities. Fear of judgment and making mistakes often inhibited participation, particularly for less confident learners. One student admitted, "Hesitant, yes, because you think, at least I think I'll make a mistake, and it will come out wrong" (Student 3), while another noted, "Not excluded, but hesitant, because I don't speak much English, the accent doesn't come out" (Student 4). The teacher identified fear of public speaking and peer reactions as major

challenges, explaining, “Students are often more worried about their peers’ reactions—like being recorded or judged—than their actual language ability.” However, students highlighted the importance of a supportive environment where mistakes were normalized, with one commenting, “Yes, and also because no one makes fun of a classmate who said something wrong” (Student 2).

In conclusion, anxiety significantly hinders students' participation in oral activities, with fear of judgment and mistakes being key barriers for less confident learners. However, fostering a supportive environment where mistakes are normalized and peer reactions are positive can help alleviate these fears, encouraging greater participation and building confidence in hesitant students.

Fear of Mistakes and Judgment

Many students described how anxiety surrounding oral activities prevented them from fully engaging in class discussions. For example, Student 3 admitted, "Hesitant, yes, because you think, at least I think I'll make a mistake, and it will come out wrong." Another student, Student 4, shared, "Not excluded, but hesitant, because I don't speak much English, the accent doesn't come out."

The teacher provided further context, stating: “The biggest challenge is overcoming fear and shame. Students are often more worried about their peers’ reactions—like being recorded or judged—than their actual language ability.”

This anxiety reflects broader social and cultural pressures that can exacerbate fear of failure. In the Chilean context, where public performance is often highly scrutinized, such pressures may be particularly acute. In other words, anxiety about oral activities, rooted in fear of mistakes and peer judgment, limits student engagement, particularly in culturally sensitive

contexts like Chile, where public performance is closely scrutinized. Addressing these challenges requires creating a classroom culture that minimizes fear of failure and prioritizes psychological safety to encourage active participation.

Role of a Supportive Environment

Conversely, students reported feeling more comfortable participating in classrooms where mistakes were normalized and the environment was supportive. For example, Student 2 explained, "Yes, and also because no one makes fun of a classmate who said something wrong." This sense of safety was instrumental in reducing anxiety and encouraging students to take risks in oral tasks. Overall, a supportive environment where mistakes are normalized plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety and fostering participation. By promoting respect and understanding among peers, such an environment encourages students to take risks and engage more confidently in oral activities.

Effective Strategies for Inclusive Participation

Students and the teacher identified various strategies that fostered inclusive engagement. Collaborative activities, such as debates and group projects, were seen as motivating and effective, particularly when topics were familiar and relatable. A student explained, “The debate can help when you go to work or need to debate to express yourself more and give your opinion” (Student 4). Students also appreciated the use of technology, such as audio recordings, which allowed them to practice without the immediate pressure of speaking in front of others. One said, “The recordings, I don't feel so exposed and, as my classmate said, I can delete them if I make a mistake” (Student 3). The teacher noted that competitive activities and personalized tasks increased engagement, particularly for students interested in music or video games, remarking, “Music engages them a lot, like when you work on recording themselves, which can seem funny at first but then interesting and fun.” These approaches helped create a more inclusive and stimulating classroom dynamic.

To summarize, the combination of collaborative activities, personalized tasks, and technology fosters a more inclusive and engaging classroom environment. Debates and group projects motivate students by connecting to real-life applications, while tools like audio recordings reduce performance pressure and build confidence. Additionally, tailoring activities to student interests, such as music or video games, enhances participation and promotes a dynamic learning atmosphere.

Competitive and Collaborative Activities

Students expressed a preference for competitive and collaborative activities, which they felt motivated them to participate more actively. For instance, Student 1 suggested, "I think they could be more competitive activities because the class is very competitive. For example, in the spelling bee, they could have done a championship within the class, and that way more classmates would have participated." Another student, Student 4, highlighted the benefits of debates, explaining, "The debate can help when you go to work or need to debate to express yourself more and give your opinion." The teacher emphasized this by referring to a similar method being used by the school. "At this school, we also do a lot of extracurricular activities, so we don't just stick to English class. We are always organizing or participating in contests to maintain motivation, which also reflects in the classroom."

In essence, competitive and collaborative activities, such as debates and class championships, effectively motivate students by tapping into their competitive spirit and real-life applicability. These methods not only foster active participation but also align with extracurricular practices that enhance classroom engagement and maintain student interest.

Use of Technology

The integration of digital tools, particularly audio recordings, was highlighted as an inclusive strategy that allowed students to participate without the immediate pressure of public exposure. Student 2 explained, "The audios, because no one else hears them," while Student 3 noted, "The recordings, I don't feel so exposed and, as my classmate said, I can delete them if I make a mistake." The teacher emphasizes how technology benefits the classroom, mentioning,

“ Music engages them a lot, like when you work on recording themselves, which can seem funny at first but then interesting and fun. Using technology is a great advantage nowadays.” The use of technology, particularly audio recordings, proves to be a valuable tool for fostering inclusion by reducing the pressure of public speaking. Students gain confidence through private practice and self-editing, while engaging activities like music recordings further enhance motivation, making technology an effective and adaptable strategy for participation.

Familiar and Relevant Content

Activities based on familiar or personally meaningful topics were also found to enhance participation. Student 1 shared, "For example, when there are classes on a theme that I know... I talk more with my friends about that in English because I know the topic." Another student added, "I feel that the classes are fun when they are more or less like what my classmate said." The teacher shared a similar observation: “It doesn't relate to whether they do well or not in the subject, but rather to their interest in it, especially those who like music and video games.”

Activities centred around familiar or personally meaningful topics significantly enhance student participation. When topics resonate with students' interests, such as music or video games, they feel more motivated to engage in discussions, demonstrating how aligning class content with students' personal interests can foster greater involvement and enjoyment in the learning process.

Unequal Participation Dynamics

Despite efforts to foster inclusivity, unequal participation dynamics persisted in the classroom. These dynamics often reflected the dominance of confident students and the marginalization of quieter or newer classmates. Participation in oral activities varied significantly among students, with more confident and outgoing individuals dominating discussions. Students

observed that newer or quieter classmates participated less due to shyness or lack of confidence, with one explaining, “Those of us who were here last year have more confidence than, for example, the classmate who arrived this year and only talks with his friends” (Student 1). Despite efforts to encourage inclusivity, unequal participation dynamics persisted, with more confident and outgoing students dominating oral activities. Quieter or newer students, often struggling with shyness or lack of confidence, participated less, highlighting the need for strategies to ensure equitable opportunities for all students to engage.

Dominance of Confident Students

Students with higher confidence or longer tenure in the class were more likely to participate actively, often overshadowing their quieter peers. Student 1 observed, “Those of us who were here last year have more confidence than, for example, the classmate who arrived this year and only talks with his friends.” Similarly, Student 2 noted, “I think there are people in the class who are more embarrassed to say something and make mistakes, to be judged, and so on.” The teacher points out that trust is also crucial for involvement “some students do participate more than others, which is related to personality and confidence”. Overall, students with higher confidence or longer tenure in the class tend to dominate participation, overshadowing quieter peers. This imbalance highlights the importance of fostering trust and creating an environment where all students feel comfortable contributing, regardless of their confidence levels or time in the class.

Directed Questions as an Equalizer

Directed questioning by teachers was identified as an effective strategy for encouraging broader participation. Student 1 explained, "Sometimes the questions they have are directed, so they have more chances to speak," while Student 3 added, "When questions are directed, there are more answers than when they are more open-ended." The teacher used strategies like directed questioning and structured turn-taking to encourage quiet students to contribute, ensuring a more balanced distribution of participation. These efforts were generally effective in fostering greater inclusion, although challenges remained in maintaining equal engagement for all students. Ultimately, directed questioning proved to be an effective strategy for promoting broader participation, particularly for quieter students. By using structured turn-taking and targeted questions, teachers were able to create a more balanced environment where all students had the opportunity to contribute. However, despite these efforts, challenges remained in ensuring consistent engagement from all students, highlighting the need for continued strategies to maintain equitable participation.

According to the thematic analysis, students and teachers perceive oral inclusion as a dynamic process influenced by collaborative activities, structured tasks, emotional support, and motivational tools. Collaborative activities, such as debates, group projects, and peer tutoring, were seen as key to fostering inclusion by allowing students of varying proficiency levels to contribute based on their abilities, ensuring participation from even quieter or less confident individuals. Structured and directed tasks, like recording exercises and targeted questions, were highlighted as effective in creating a low-pressure environment that encouraged broader participation. However, both students and the teacher acknowledged that fear of judgment,

embarrassment, and self-consciousness about language proficiency were significant barriers to inclusion, often requiring trust-building strategies such as mindfulness exercises and low-stakes presentations to overcome. Motivational tools, such as “jokers” and competitive activities like spelling bees, were noted for their ability to enhance participation by reducing fear of failure and making oral tasks more engaging. Additionally, familiarity with topics and classmates was identified as a factor that increased comfort and confidence, with the teacher emphasizing the importance of building relationships and tailoring activities to student interests. Together, these elements illustrate that oral inclusion relies on a combination of supportive strategies and a classroom environment that values and encourages the contributions of all students.

The full transcripts of the conducted interviews are located in Appendix A (Teacher) and Appendix B (Students) for detailed consultation.

Discussion

The results of this study provide a detailed response to the two research questions: How do teachers and students perceive and experience inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile, and what strategies and factors influence these experiences? These findings reflect the intricate interplay of instructional strategies, peer collaboration, motivational factors, and emotional barriers in fostering inclusive oral participation, aligning closely with differentiation theories, motivational frameworks, and sociocultural principles.

Both teachers and students perceive inclusive oral participation as a challenging yet attainable process requiring intentional and tailored interventions. Teachers view differentiation as an essential tool to manage diverse learner needs, particularly in classrooms with wide proficiency gaps. This aligns with Tomlinson's (2017) differentiation model and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocate for adapting instructional methods to provide equitable opportunities for all learners. Students reported mixed experiences regarding oral inclusion. On the one hand, less proficient students emphasized the value of peer collaboration, noting that working with more advanced classmates helped them gain confidence and better understand oral tasks. For example, one student explained that they could ask someone who knew more if they did not understand something. This dynamic reflects Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which highlights the role of peer support in helping students achieve tasks they could not complete independently. The teacher echoed this perspective, describing peer tutoring as a critical strategy for fostering participation, stating that tutoring encourages students to expose themselves more willingly compared to working with a teacher.

However, advanced students expressed frustration at the perceived imbalance in responsibilities when working with less proficient peers. One student mentioned it was stressful

and frustrating to have to constantly explain things. This highlights a significant tension in mixed-level classrooms, where peer-supported learning benefits some students but may hinder others if the roles and dynamics are not carefully managed. These findings resonate with critiques of unstructured peer learning models (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), which warn that unequal participation dynamics can reinforce hierarchies rather than promote equitable collaboration.

The findings highlight the dual impact of peer-supported learning, showing both its benefits and limitations. While Vygotsky's ZPD (1978) validates the role of collaboration in helping less proficient learners, Richards and Rodgers' (2001) critique underscores the importance of structured frameworks to avoid overburdening advanced students. This suggests that theories alone are insufficient; their application must be contextualized to address classroom dynamics effectively.

Mixed-level classrooms were found to offer both growth opportunities and equity challenges. Peer-supported learning, while beneficial, often risks overburdening advanced students. Strategies such as role rotation, teacher-led scaffolding, and incorporating collaborative platforms could better balance these interactions. For example, role rotation ensures that all students take turns in various functions, such as facilitator, questioner, or responder, preventing advanced learners from being overburdened while encouraging less proficient students to take on leadership roles in a supportive environment (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Scaffolding, on the other hand, offers temporary support through sentence starters, guided questions, or visual aids, which are gradually removed as students gain confidence and independence (Vygotsky, 1978). For instance, while beginners might rely on sentence frames during discussions, advanced learners could handle open-ended prompts that require deeper critical thinking.

These strategies not only promote equitable participation but also foster collaboration and individual growth within diverse classrooms (Tomlinson, 2017). Also, digital tools, where accessible, enable self-paced support without over-relying on peers. The study also highlighted the importance of trust-building, as social bonds among students significantly enhanced participation. This finding reinforces Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on the sociocultural dimension of learning, where belonging and emotional safety drive engagement. While the sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of trust and social connections, the study shows that achieving these elements requires intentional strategies. The role of digital tools highlights a practical adaptation of the theory, yet their reliance on resource availability raises equity concerns, especially in underfunded contexts like Chile.

Cultural context played a critical role. Students' reluctance to participate often stemmed from fear of judgment, amplified by Chilean norms that closely scrutinize public performance, particularly regarding public performance and peer interactions. A notable cultural aspect is the tendency to make jokes or give nicknames often based on physical characteristics, which, while perceived as humorous, can create anxiety or self-consciousness among students during oral activities. This practice may discourage less confident learners from participating, fearing ridicule or judgment from peers.

However, Chileans are also known for their sociability and adaptability, traits that facilitate quick integration into diverse cultural contexts and have contributed to the country's unintentional interculturalism. These characteristics can be leveraged in the classroom by promoting collaborative activities that build trust and mutual respect, helping students feel more comfortable expressing themselves while reducing the fear of public exposure. Strategies that normalize mistakes and emphasize respect, such as mindfulness exercises and group agreements,

can counteract the potential negative effects of teasing, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for oral participation (Harmer, 2009).

To address these dynamics, the teacher emphasized the importance of trust-building and familiarity among students. As the research was conducted in a relatively new classroom setting, the teacher noted that initial reluctance to participate stemmed from students' lack of confidence and unfamiliarity with their peers. Over time, as students developed stronger social bonds, their participation improved. This underscores the sociocultural dimension of learning, as highlighted by Vygotsky (1978), where social connections and a sense of belonging play critical roles in fostering engagement. The influence of cultural norms on participation highlights the importance of context-specific approaches. Harmer's emphasis on reducing anxiety through alternative formats proves effective, but the findings suggest that this alone may not fully address cultural pressures. A more nuanced integration of local values and expectations into teaching strategies is needed, implementing technology-driven strategies in resource-limited settings like Chile can be challenging, particularly in schools with limited access to devices and reliable internet connections. This highlights the need for adaptable, low-cost solutions that can be scaled to meet the needs of under-resourced classrooms, as noted by Bulling and Guzmán (2020).

The findings identified several strategies and factors that influence inclusive oral participation. Anxiety and fear of judgment were significant barriers, particularly for less confident students. Normalizing mistakes and fostering a supportive environment were crucial in reducing this hesitation. Students reported greater motivation when activities were culturally relevant, competitive, or offered autonomy, consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Tools like "jokers" and technology further supported participation by mitigating performance pressure. Furthermore, it reflects Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles,

which advocate for providing multiple means of engagement and expression to accommodate diverse learner needs (CAST, 2018).

While differentiated instruction and the use of technology-driven strategies play a crucial role in addressing diverse learner needs, collaborative and competitive activities were identified as key strategies for fostering participation and engagement. Students expressed a preference for tasks that required teamwork, such as debates and group projects, as these activities provided opportunities to share ideas and learn from one another. They mentioned that debates helped them express themselves and give their opinions. Similarly, competitive activities, such as spelling bees, were found to motivate students by tapping into their extrinsic motivation. The teacher reinforced the importance of these activities, noting that they aligned with students' interests and helped maintain engagement, with extracurricular contests reflecting positively in classroom participation. These findings align with Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which highlights the importance of relatedness and competence in fostering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Moreover, they support Dörnyei's (2001) emphasis on creating meaningful, real-world tasks to sustain student engagement. Both collaborative and competitive activities, as well as the relevance and familiarity of the content, are essential for fostering student participation and engagement, as they align tasks with students' personal interests and values.

Students' motivation to participate was closely linked to the relevance and familiarity of the content. Topics that resonated with students' interests, such as music or video games, were found to enhance their willingness to engage in oral tasks. One student mentioned that classes on themes they knew helped them talk more because they were familiar with the topics. The teacher observed a similar pattern, stating that students who were personally invested in the subject matter were more likely to participate actively. This finding underscores the importance of

culturally and personally relevant materials in fostering motivation, as highlighted in Deci & Ryan's (2000) framework. By aligning tasks with students' values and interests, teachers can create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment. When teachers connect tasks to students' values and interests, they can foster a more engaging and welcoming classroom. Technology was key in enhancing inclusion by offering students different ways to participate. Specifically, audio recording tools were noted as helpful in lowering anxiety and giving students a sense of control. Students appreciated the ability to self-edit their responses and practice at their own pace, which helped build their confidence. The teacher emphasized the flexibility of technology, noting its potential to engage students through creative and interactive tasks, particularly music, which initially seemed funny to students but became engaging and fun.

Despite the strategies employed, significant barriers to participation persisted, particularly for less confident students. Fear of mistakes, embarrassment, and self-consciousness about language proficiency were recurring themes. Students admitted feeling hesitant because of a fear of making mistakes or being judged by peers. The teacher explained that such fears were often amplified by social and cultural pressures, where public performance is highly scrutinized. However, these barriers were mitigated through scaffolding and trust-building strategies. Mindfulness exercises, low-stakes presentations, and peer support helped create a safer environment where students felt more comfortable taking risks. Students noted that classrooms where mistakes were normalized, and judgment was minimized were more conducive to participation. Addressing anxiety through trust-building strategies demonstrates a practical application of motivational and sociocultural theories. However, the persistent barriers faced by less confident students suggest that more comprehensive interventions, including ongoing emotional support and tailored feedback, are necessary to achieve true inclusion.

Motivation was another critical factor influencing participation. Students perceived their self-motivation as tied to tasks that offered autonomy, relatedness, and a sense of achievement. Competitive activities, incentives like “jokers,” and the opportunity to work on familiar topics were particularly effective in sustaining motivation. These findings align with Deci and Ryan’s (2000) framework, which emphasizes the importance of meeting students’ psychological needs to foster intrinsic motivation.

The results of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how teachers and students perceive and experience inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile. While challenges such as proficiency disparities, anxiety, and resource limitations persist, tailored strategies—such as differentiated instruction, collaborative and competitive activities, and the integration of technology—offer promising pathways for fostering inclusion. These findings emphasize the importance of creating supportive and engaging learning environments that address the diverse needs of students. By leveraging motivation, scaffolding, and culturally relevant content, teachers can promote equitable participation and empower all learners to contribute meaningfully in oral tasks. These insights offer valuable implications for improving teaching practices in EFL classrooms and addressing barriers to inclusion in resource-constrained contexts.

Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions and experiences of inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms in Chile, focusing on both student and teacher perspectives. The key findings reveal that both teachers and students acknowledge the challenges inherent in facilitating inclusive oral participation but agree that it is an attainable goal through tailored instructional strategies. Differentiated instruction, peer collaboration, the use of technology, and task relevance emerged as pivotal strategies for fostering engagement. While students with lower proficiency levels benefited from peer support and differentiated tasks, advanced students expressed frustration with unequal participation dynamics. Despite these tensions, scaffolding, trust-building, and the use of technology (such as audio recordings) helped create a more inclusive environment. Motivation played a significant role, with students more engaged when tasks were personally relevant and offered autonomy.

The findings contribute to the field of EFL pedagogy by highlighting the importance of differentiated instruction, collaborative activities, and motivational strategies in promoting inclusive oral participation in classrooms with mixed proficiency levels. These results support the work of Tomlinson (2017), who advocates for differentiated approaches to meet the diverse needs of students, as well as Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the value of peer collaboration in fostering learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Furthermore, the use of technology aligns with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, as it provides diverse means of engagement and expression (CAST, 2018).

However, the findings also highlight the tensions between students at different proficiency levels, which echoes Richards & Rodgers' (2001) critique of peer-supported learning models. While some students benefit from peer collaboration, others feel burdened by it. This

suggests that without proper structuring and guidance, mixed-level classrooms may inadvertently reinforce hierarchies rather than promoting equitable collaboration.

The study underscores the importance of trust-building, peer support, and low-stakes participation, especially for students with lower confidence. These findings align with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes the role of relatedness and competence in fostering motivation. The use of technology, particularly audio recordings, proves to be an effective tool in reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of control, confirming Harmer's (2009) argument that alternative formats can ease the pressures of live oral tasks. These insights have important pedagogical implications for mixed-level EFL classrooms, where differentiated instruction, scaffolded support, and culturally relevant content can significantly enhance engagement and participation. Incorporating collaborative tasks and addressing emotional barriers should be prioritized in teacher training and classroom practices to create a more inclusive and motivating learning environment.

In addition, the results have important pedagogical implications for mixed-level EFL classrooms. Teachers can apply differentiated instruction and scaffolded support to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate meaningfully. Additionally, incorporating technology, when possible, can provide a flexible and inclusive means of engagement. The findings suggest that a focus on culturally relevant content and the use of collaborative tasks, both competitive and cooperative, can enhance motivation and participation. Moreover, addressing the emotional barriers to participation, such as anxiety and fear of mistakes, should be prioritized in teacher training and classroom practices.

From a theoretical perspective, the research helps in grasping how motivational theories like Self-Determination Theory and Vygotskian sociocultural theory can be utilized in real-life

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments. Nonetheless, the study faces limitations such as a small number of participants, being conducted in just one classroom, and issues like limited technology access, emphasizing the need to be careful when interpreting its results. These limitations highlight the necessity of modifying theoretical approaches to fit the varied and low-resource conditions of mixed-level classrooms, while also indicating that more extensive and long-term research is required to thoroughly investigate their practical use.

This study has several limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results. First, the sample size was small, consisting of only four students and one teacher, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Given the time constraints faced by the researcher, a larger and more diverse sample would have provided a broader perspective on the topic. Furthermore, the research was conducted in a single classroom, which may not fully capture the complexities and variations across different educational contexts in Chile. The study also encountered challenges related to the limited availability of technology in certain schools, which may have impacted the effectiveness of tech-based strategies. Furthermore, the brief period of the research restricted the chance to see long-term shifts in participation and motivation. Upcoming studies should aim for a longer timeframe and include a broader variety of schools, especially those with different resources available. Considering the constraints of this study, future research should target larger and more varied samples to better understand how inclusive oral participation works in classrooms with mixed levels. Additionally, exploring the impact of specific types of technology, such as video-based tasks or interactive platforms, could provide valuable insights into how digital tools can support inclusive practices. Further research should also consider the long-term effects of peer collaboration and differentiated instruction on students' language proficiency and self-confidence. Moreover, studies that investigate the role of cultural relevance

and the integration of local knowledge in motivating students would be valuable in tailoring strategies to the specific needs of Chilean classrooms.

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive exploration of inclusive oral participation in mixed-level EFL classrooms, revealing the critical role of differentiated instruction, peer collaboration, and motivational strategies in fostering engagement. Despite the challenges posed by proficiency gaps and emotional barriers, the use of inclusive strategies, such as scaffolding and technology, can create a more supportive learning environment. The findings offer valuable insights for improving EFL teaching practices and contribute to the broader understanding of how motivational and sociocultural theories can be applied in mixed-level classrooms. Ultimately, this study highlights the need for adaptable and equitable teaching strategies to ensure that all students, regardless of their proficiency level, can participate meaningfully in language learning activities.

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Appendix A Teacher interview transcription

teacher transcription:

What are the biggest challenges and strengths you have faced when trying to engage all students in speaking activities?

I believe the challenge is overcoming fear and shame. I feel there is a lot of dysregulation; the kids are very anxious and anticipate the most tragic scenarios. More than whether I can pronounce well or not, it's the embarrassment of standing in front of the class, projecting their voice, and worrying about what their peers will say, that they'll make a meme about them, they'll record them... Just standing in front of everyone is the most challenging part.

Did perception change? Or is it still the same?

I think they participate more now. I think the activities you've proposed have been much more dynamic, putting them in different scenarios. I feel they now see oral production differently, beyond presentations or role-playing. They feel more secure and normalize it more, too. They start to worry more about pronunciation than fear or embarrassment.

How do you perceive the participation of students in oral activities? Do some students participate more than others?

I feel that the course in which you're conducting your research is a new course in the school that only started last year. So, for the first-year students, it was super difficult to produce oral presentations because they felt embarrassed about everything. They didn't know each other, so it was even less likely to stand up front or talk to the teacher. Now they are more confident; they know what to do, they know how their classmates are. So, yes, but I do feel they prefer interrogations to presentations. That is, one-on-one with the teacher instead of facing an audience. Some students do participate more than others, which is related to personality and confidence—often the students who participate the most are those who are active in many extracurricular activities and also have a liking

for the subject. It doesn't relate to whether they do well or not in the subject but rather to their interest in it, especially those who like music and video games.

Why do you think that happens?

I think it relates to that, like the students with more personality, combined with a liking for the subject, makes them want to try and participate more, regardless of grades. I think it also ties in with the motivation that we, as teachers, provide regarding parity and the diversification of activities.

Do you use any specific strategies to encourage less proficient students to participate in oral activities?

It's mainly work done in the first year of high school. At least in the first year, we go in baby steps. The school has also helped by working on mindfulness and having certain rituals before presentations, like shouting a bit to break the ice. Not setting time limits often helps to let things flow naturally; it doesn't have to mean they have to last 2 minutes or 10 minutes. There isn't a single strategy; it's more about day-to-day connection with the students, asking how they are, keeping them calm, thinking about it... The more we connect with them, the more comfortable they feel with us. At this school, we also do a lot of extracurricular activities, so we don't just stick to English class. We are always organizing or participating in contests to maintain motivation, which also reflects in the classroom.

How do you ensure that the most proficient students remain engaged and challenged during speaking tasks?

Tutoring, I believe, is key. Peer work often encourages students to expose themselves more willingly compared to working with a teacher. Assigning roles to more advanced students to help based on affinity and performance, rewarding both, can help.

How do you manage different skill levels during speaking activities, especially when some students dominate the conversation?

Firstly, it's important to know the course, knowing each student individually, even if there are 40 students, and understanding the general context regarding their interests, especially considering the

class schedules. We should choose topics that we can work on without mixing languages. Jumping straight into English doesn't engage them as much, so varying and understanding why we're doing what we're doing, and explaining that speaking is fundamental to developing English skills, is crucial. Music engages them a lot, like when you work on recording themselves, which can seem funny at first but then interesting and fun. Using technology is a great advantage nowadays.

Appendix B Transcription focus group

Question 1: How do you feel being in a mixed-level class with students of different language levels?

Student 1: Good, that way you can learn, and if not, if you miss something, I ask the classmate next to me who understands more than I do.

Student 2: Generally good, I mean, sometimes it's also good for people who don't... have the confidence to speak with the English teachers. For example, with a classmate and practising with classmates.

Student 4: I feel more comfortable because maybe if I don't understand something, I can ask someone who knows more than I do.

Question 2: Is it difficult or easy for you to work with students who are at different levels than you?

Student 2: It depends. Sometimes they are more advanced than you, it's easier for you, but if they are less advanced than you, it's more difficult.

Student 1: It also depends on the level, for example, the classmate says that for those with a lower level of English, it's easier, but maybe for those with a higher level it's a bit complicated because they have to constantly explain to the other person.

Question 3: Do you feel that everyone in your class has the opportunity to speak and participate in oral activities? And why?

Student 2: I think yes, because it is constantly asked if they bring the activities and also when they take you to the board... that way you can go out and learn.

Student 4: Yes, that can also reinforce participation in English.

Student 2: Yes. And also because no one makes fun of a classmate who said something wrong.

Student 4: Maybe you can learn more when you go to the board because you will remember it.

Question 4: Do you think your classmates participate equally or some participate more than others?

Student 1 and Student 2: Some participate more than others.

Student 2: I think there are people in the class who are more embarrassed to say something and make mistakes, to be judged, and so on.

Student 3: Or have more confidence with the class.

Student 1: Those of us who were here last year have more confidence than, for example, the classmate who arrived this year and only talks with his friends.

Question 4: Can you share a situation where you felt included or excluded during classes?

Student 3: Mostly in the PowerPoint topics.

Student 1: Yes, there were many differences in the topics.

Student 3: I felt more included when we did the survey on moral dilemmas and we could choose the topics and how to present them.

Student 1: No, neither included nor excluded because I'm really just there and go with the flow.

Student 4: For my part, I don't like to participate, but sometimes I want to participate because I want to learn.

Student 2: I feel the same as the classmate, I felt included when we could decide what to present.

Question 5 : How do you think oral activities in classes could be more inclusive? How could we include everyone so that everyone speaks in English?

Student 2: The only way to apply it is with grades.

Student 1: I think they could be more competitive activities because the class is very competitive. For example, in the spelling bee, they could have done a championship within the class, and that way more classmates would have participated.

Student 3: For example, the activities where we recorded were also inclusive.

Question 6: Okay, of the activities we did in class, which one seemed the most inclusive?

Student 1: For example, the debate activities because recording practically forces you to speak to reach an agreement.

Student 4: Also, the debate can help when you go to work or need to debate to express yourself more and give your opinion.

Question 7: What does inclusive participation mean to you?

Student 3: Something essential, I think, because thanks to the participation of others, you can also understand others' opinions and have different points of view.

Student 2: Oh, you can also learn because if you don't understand the teacher, some classmates answer the question, and then you say, Oh, it was like that, so it becomes clearer.

Student 4: That everyone can answer. Even the quietest one can also answer.

Question 7: Have there been times when you felt excluded or hesitant to participate in conversation activities? What were the reasons?

Student 3: Hesitant, yes, because you think, at least I think I'll make a mistake, and it will come out wrong.

Student 2: I think when they take you to the board and you don't have the answer, it's like oh!

Student 1: No, not usually. The English class is very dynamic, for example, you ask something, and you get an answer almost immediately, sometimes it's harder, but it doesn't make me feel excluded. For example, if you ask me something, and I answer.

Student 4: Not excluded, but hesitant, because I don't speak much English, the accent doesn't come out.

Question 8: How do you feel when you work with classmates who have different levels of English proficiency during conversation activities?

Student 3: At least I know less, and it's difficult... I mean, no. I think for those who know more, it's difficult to work with people who know less because, as the classmate said, you have to constantly explain to others.

Question 9: Did you feel bad when you had to ask those who knew more, or not?

Student 2: More than anything, it's like they ask you all the time, and it's stressful.. it's like "I already told you!"

Student 4: For my part, I also feel a little bad because I have to ask people who know English, and it must be annoying for them to be asked all the time because sometimes I forget things.

Student 1: I don't know, sometimes, for example, in my team, it's a bit difficult because I'm in the team. For example, a classmate doesn't participate much. So, as the other classmate doesn't talk much with others, I have to be involved to get the team together, so to speak.

Question 9: Now that you have been in groups with non-friends, how do you feel about speaking and sharing in English classes?

Student 3: The truth is, I've spoken with them before, sometimes it's stressful, I mean more than anything the debate itself, not the people, but okay.

Student 1: But the issue of constantly checking the document to make sure everyone is working and involved, for example, searching for information... I'm sorry for the term, but it's very tedious, having to look for the year, the date... that matches.

Student 4: Especially the year because sometimes dates appear much earlier than required.

Student 3: And on top of that, one teacher says it's fine, and the other says it's wrong, and then you have English and language together.

Student 1: For example, we have two documents, one in English and the other in Spanish, one in Spanish above and then in Spanish below because the other day we showed a document to

the language teacher, she said it had to be in Spanish, and the English teacher told us it had to be in English, and that creates a conflict between the two subjects.

Question 10 : Did speaking in English or searching for information in English bother you?

(All): No, it didn't bother us.

Question 11 : Do you feel that everyone in the class has the opportunity to speak?

Student 4: Yes. Also, they always ask when they understood or not.

Student 1: And sometimes the questions they have are directed, so they have more chances to speak.

Student 3: When questions are directed, there are more answers than when they are more open-ended. The same people always respond.

Question 11: What kind of conversational activities or moments in class make you feel more comfortable participating?

Student 2: The audios, because no one else hears them.

Because no one else hear them?

Student 2: Of course, if one makes a mistake, they can delete them.

Student 1: For example, when there are classes on a theme that I know, for example the last class, well, it hadn't happened for a long time, he did a class on a mobile game. I talk more with my friends about that in English because I know the topic.

Student 4: I don't know, the same. Yes, I feel comfortable and I feel that the classes are fun when they are more or less like what my classmate said.

Q: And you?

Student 3: The recordings, I don't feel so exposed and as my classmate said, I can delete them if I make a mistake.

How often did you participate in oral expression activities during the classes that took place?

Student 1: I did participate. **Student 2:** I did too. **Student 3:** More or less. **Student 4:** Just a little.

How motivated do you feel to speak English in front of your classmates after the activities carried out in class?

Student 3: But are there alternatives? Motivated, yes, the classes were fun.

On a scale of 1 to 7, how motivated did you feel?

Student 2: Yes, I also think a 7.

Student 4: Not so much because I don't speak much English.

Student 3: With technology, instead of writing, I feel more comfortable. Instead of presenting in front, I get nervous and shy, but not like this.

Of the following elements, which one made you feel most motivated to speak English: teamwork, the teacher's instructions, the use of wild cards, or the use of technologies in class? And why?

Student 2: With technology and the jokers, because you can use them to translate, search for information, and the jokers make me feel more secure in case I don't know.

Student 4: The jokers were also good. If you don't know the answer, you feel less pressured by being able to wait for someone else to respond.

Student 3: I think teamwork and technology make it easier and more comfortable.

Student 1: Yes, it is more comfortable. I feel it's easier than writing.

Question: but that was already from before?

Student 1: Yes, from before.

Student 4: More or less, but not so much because I don't speak much English, so it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable. I feel that writing is easier.

What strategies or changes do you think could have been implemented during classes to encourage your participation more effectively?

Student 3: A 7, haha, just kidding. Prizes, I think, like the jokers.

Student 4: Maybe more games, like a Kahoot.

Appendix C Lesson Plan

English Version

Grade Level: 10th grade
Name and type of Unit:2 , Body mind and spirit
OA (MINEDUC): OA 6 Participar en interacciones y exposiciones, recurriendo a las siguientes estrategias para expresarse con claridad y fluidez: > Antes de hablar: practicar presentación, organizar la información clave en diagramas, hacer conexiones o establecer relaciones.
Function: Justifying decisions and providing reasoning
Main Objective: students will analyze moral dilemmas, present their decisions, and use the second conditional to express their reasoning.
Subsidiary objective/aim: Develop students' fluency and confidence in speaking by engaging in group discussions and presentations using the second conditional.
Cross curricular objective: Manifiestar una actitud positiva frente a sí mismo y sus capacidades para aprender y usar el idioma, valorando, a la vez, los logros de los demás. (OA A)
Contents

<p>Lexis or Vocabulary</p> <p>Moral dilemma, hypothetical, decision, consequence, choice, ethical, right, wrong, conflict, justify, perspective.</p>	<p>Grammar</p> <p>Second Conditional for hypothetical situations.</p>	<p>Pronunciation and Intonation</p> <p>Pronunciation of key phrases like "If I were," "would," and "because" to ensure clarity in the second conditional.</p>	<p>Sequence and Time</p> <p>90 minutes</p>
Stages	Interaction	Materials/Timing	Assessment/Evaluation
<p>Engage/ Warm-up</p>	<p>The students will be asked, 'If you found a wallet on the street, would you return it or keep it?' The students can respond in Spanish about what they would do. The teacher will ask : What kind of question is this? Expected response: hypothetical, imaginative, unreal... They will be asked if they remember what</p>	<p>5 min</p> <p>Whiteboard, markers.</p>	<p>formative</p>

	we used to answer, this type of question.		
Study / Presentation/Pre- listening-pre-reading	The student will review the structure of the second conditional with a few example sentences: <i>If I had to choose between... I would...</i>	20 min ppt presentation, examples on the board.	formative
Practice/guided practice/while- listening-while-reading	Students will individually work on a guide for 15 minutes and then spend the next 10 minutes collaboratively correcting it, providing reasons for their answers	25 min Worksheet with modal verbs.	formative
Activate/ Production/P ost-listening-post- reading	The students will be divided into groups of 2-3. They will read different moral dilemmas and must choose only one dilemma. In groups, they should discuss the reasons and choose what the solution would be for them using the second conditional. They should write in their notebooks	30 min Worksheet with prompts.	formative

	<p>to later present the following: 1. What is the dilemma? 2. The group's reasoning. 3. What was the final decision. Each group presents their dilemma and explains their decision using the second conditional. After each presentation, the rest of the class can ask questions or share their thoughts: <i>What would you have done differently?</i></p>		
Closure/ Wrap-up	<p>The students will answer in a post it what was the most difficult thing for them about today's class, and they will stick it on the board.</p>	10min	Exit ticket

Lesson Plan

English Version

Grade Level: 10th grade
Name and type of Unit: 2 , Body mind and spirit

OA (MINEDUC): OA 05 Presentar información en forma oral, usando recursos multimodales que refuercen el mensaje en forma creativa, acerca de temas variados (como experiencias personales, temas de otras asignaturas, otras culturas, problemas globales y textos leídos o escuchados), demostrando:

Conocimiento del contenido y coherencia al organizar ideas.

Uso apropiado de las funciones del lenguaje y vocabulario del nivel.

Uso apropiado de sonidos del idioma, como los sonidos iniciales /t/ (to), /d/ (do), las combinaciones iniciales /sp/ (special), /st/ (student), sonido /S/ (usually), y cualidades de la voz (acentuación en palabras de dos o más sílabas y en palabras compuestas).

Tener conciencia de audiencia, contexto y propósito.

Function: discussing hypothetical situations

Main Objective: Students will create a survey on moral dilemmas and present them using the second conditional in their explanations.

Subsidiary objective/aim: Students will be able to formulate and respond to hypothetical scenarios using the second conditional structure.

Cross curricular objective: Usar de manera responsable y efectiva las tecnologías de la comunicación en la obtención de información y la creación de textos, dando crédito al trabajo de otros y respetando la propiedad y la privacidad de las personas. (OA E)

Contents			
Lexis or Vocabulary if should would	Grammar second conditional past simple	Pronunciation and Intonation	Sequence and Time 90 minutes
Stages	Interaction	Materials/Timing	Assessment/Evaluation
Engage/ Warm-up	Students collectively review a second conditional activity with the teacher that was assigned in the previous class.	5 min Whiteboard, markers.	formative
Study / Presentation/Pre- listening-pre-reading	The students will view the basic rules of the second conditional, such as forming sentences with "if" and "would." They will understand the difference between hypothetical situations and real possibilities.	20 min ppt presentation, examples on the board.	formative

Practice/guided practice/while-listening-while-reading	The students will have 10 minutes to complete a guide on the use of the second conditional, which includes a fill-in-the-blanks section and another section where they must complete the sentence with the appropriate response.	25 min	formative
Activate/ Production/Post-listening-post-reading	Students will have to create 5 moral dilemmas of their choice using the structure of the second conditional. Then, they must select at least 6 classmates to ask what they would choose in each situation, collecting the data to present in the next class on a Canva.	30 min	formative
Closure/ Wrap-up	The students will answer on the board which dilemma they liked the most.	10min markers	Exit ticket

Lesson Plan

English Version

Grade Level: 10th grade			
Name and type of Unit:2 , Body mind and spirit			
OA (MINEDUC): OA 6 Participar en interacciones y exposiciones, recurriendo a las siguientes estrategias para expresarse con claridad y fluidez: > Antes de hablar: practicar presentación, organizar la información clave en diagramas, hacer conexiones o establecer relaciones.			
Function: express and defend supported opinions			
Main Objective: Students will apply APA citations to develop and support an argument in English in a Voicethread debate, improving their speaking skills.			
Subsidiary objective/aim:Students will improve their listening skills, responding to opposing arguments, and organizing their speech in English in a debating context.			
Cross curricular objective: Usar de manera responsable y efectiva las tecnologías de la comunicación en la obtención de información y la creación de textos, dando crédito al trabajo de otros y respetando la propiedad y la privacidad de las personas. (OA E)			
Contents			
Lexis or Vocabulary	Grammar	Pronunciation and Intonation	Sequence and Time 90 minutes

<i>Author</i> (Autor)	present simple		
<i>Year</i> (Año)			
<i>Title</i> (Título)			
<i>Source</i> (Fuente)			
<i>Publisher</i> (Editorial)			
<i>Website</i> (Página web)			
<i>Book</i> (Libro)			
<i>Cite</i> (Citar)			
<i>Reference</i> (Referencia)			
Stages	Interaction	Materials/Timing	Assessment/Evaluation
Engage/ Warm-up	The students will be asked, Why do we need to use references in a debate? The students can respond in Spanish. Expected response: Show that you can back up your argument with evidence	5 min Whiteboard, markers.	formative
Study / Presentation/Pre- listening-pre-reading	Students will be introduced to the different roles: main arguer,	20 min	formative

	supporter, questioner, responder. and the parts of the debate.	ppt presentation, examples on the board.	
Practice/guided practice/while-listening-while-reading	The Speaker gives a brief introduction to the topic and explains the position (for or against). The Speaker presents the main argument, supported by APA citations. The Supporter adds specific examples or details that reinforce the argument. The Questioner of each group poses questions to the opposing team, and the Responder answers these questions. All members of each group can collaborate to close the group's argument in Voicethread, reaffirming the position. Students rehearse how to say their arguments in English. Each student records their part to review	25 min	formative

	pronunciation and clarity in Voicethread.		
Activate/ Production/Post-listening-post-reading	<p>Students will need to take the following steps:</p> <p>Voicethread recording: Each group records their initial presentation, arguments, and responses in their Voicethread, following the parts and roles of the discussion.</p> <p>Group Interactions: Groups can listen to and respond to presentations from the opposing team.</p>	30 min	formative
Closure/ Wrap-up	The students will answer in a post it what was the most difficult thing for them about today's class, and they will stick it on the board.	10min post its papers	Exit ticket

