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Use of Open Educational Resources for the Development of English as a Foreign Language Communication Skills in A1-Level Students

Uso de Recursos Educativos Abiertos para el desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas en inglés como lengua extranjera en estudiantes A1

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Abstract: The present study aimed to describe the use of specific Open Educational Resources (OER) for developing oral English proficiency among A1-level students at InnovaEducativa. The theoretical foundation was based on the need for pedagogical innovation in virtual learning environments, using a mixed-methods approach with an experimental design and a descriptive scope. The methodology employed observation, focus groups, and surveys administered to a sample of 28 students. The results showed that integrating tools such as Vocaroo, Voki, Flipgrid, and TED-Ed significantly improved participants' fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. It is concluded that implementing OER aligned with the curriculum constitutes an effective strategy for overcoming the limitations of oral practice in online learning environments while promoting learner autonomy and educational inclusion.

Keywords: oral proficiency, open educational Resources, language teaching, virtual learning environments, pedagogical innovation.

Resumen: *La presente investigación tuvo como objetivo describir el uso de Recursos Educativos Abiertos (REA) específicos para el desarrollo de la competencia oral en inglés en estudiantes de nivel A1 de InnovaEducativa. La fundamentación teórica se sustentó en la necesidad de innovación pedagógica en entornos virtuales, utilizando un enfoque mixto con diseño experimental y nivel descriptivo. La metodología empleó técnicas de observación, grupos focales y encuestas aplicadas a una muestra de 28 estudiantes. Los resultados evidenciaron que la integración de herramientas como Vocaroo, Voki, Flipgrid y TED-Ed mejoró significativamente la fluidez, pronunciación y confianza de los participantes. Se concluye que la implementación de REA, alineada con el currículo, constituye una estrategia eficaz para superar las limitaciones de la práctica oral en modalidad en línea, promoviendo la autonomía y la inclusión educativa.*

Palabras clave: *competencia oral, recursos educativos Abiertos, Enseñanza de idiomas, Entornos virtuales, Innovación pedagógica.*

INTRODUCTION

Developing oral English proficiency represents one of the greatest challenges in contemporary higher education, especially in online modalities where synchronous interaction is limited. In this context, Open Educational Resources (OER) have emerged as a viable pedagogical alternative to facilitate oral practice outside the classroom. Several recent studies indicate that incorporating open technologies into language teaching fosters student motivation and active participation. However, the literature reveals a significant gap regarding the application of specific OER for developing oral expression at beginner levels (A1) within fully online environments. Therefore, this research aims to describe the use of specific Open Educational Resources for developing oral English proficiency in A1-level students at InnovaEducativa , in order to generate empirical evidence to guide teaching practices and the curricular integration of these tools.

The significance of this study lies in the need to transform traditional pedagogical practices into more dynamic and accessible models. Oral competence entails not only lexical and grammatical mastery but also the ability to produce utterances appropriate to the social context and to interact effectively in real communicative situations (Huang, 2022). In this sense, OERs offer a variety of multimedia resources that allow students to practice pronunciation and fluency independently and asynchronously. Despite the documented benefits, institutional and teacher resistance to their adoption persists, attributed mainly to a lack of technical knowledge and clear implementation policies. This study seeks to overcome these barriers by systematizing a specific application experience, demonstrating that the integration of OERs is feasible and effective even among populations with basic digital skills.

To achieve the stated objective, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. The research was conducted at the InnovaEducativa institution with a sample of 28 A1-level students, who participated in activities designed using four specific OERs: Vocaroo , Voki, Flipgrid , and TED-Ed. These resources were selected based on criteria of accessibility, interactivity, and alignment with the institution's curriculum.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Open Educational Resources (OER) are defined as digital materials freely available for use, reuse, and adaptation for educational purposes (Bhatt & Bunkar, 2019). These resources include complete courses, modules, textbooks, videos, software, and interactive tools that facilitate the teaching and learning process. The open nature of these materials allows educators to personalize content according to the specific needs of their students, thus promoting a more inclusive and equitable education (Wiley & Hilton, 2018). In the context of language teaching, OER offer unique opportunities for practicing productive skills, especially oral expression, by providing interactive and authentic learning environments.

The foundation of OER is based on the 5Rs framework proposed by David Wiley: reuse, revise, redistribute, remix, and retain. These freedoms allow teachers to adapt materials to their specific contexts, fostering pedagogical innovation and peer collaboration (Elias *et al.,* 2020). Furthermore, the quality of OER is evaluated using criteria of accessibility, usability, interactivity, and curricular relevance. According to Singh *et al.* (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of these resources, demonstrating their potential to maintain educational continuity in virtual environments. However, their effective implementation requires not only technological infrastructure but also robust teacher training and institutional policies that promote their sustainable use.

Oral Competence

Oral competence is defined as the ability to communicate effectively in speech, integrating linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural aspects (Cantón & Pérez, 2017). This productive skill involves not only correct pronunciation and appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar, but also fluency and the ability to adapt discourse to the communicative context (Thornbury, 2005). In foreign language learning, oral competence is fundamental for social interaction and professional development, as it allows for the clear and effective expression of ideas, feelings, and needs.

Several authors emphasize that developing oral competence requires consistent practice and meaningful feedback (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). In virtual environments, the lack of face-to-face interaction can hinder this process, highlighting the importance of using technological tools that facilitate both asynchronous and synchronous oral practice. Open Educational Resources (OER), in particular, offer platforms such as Vocaroo and Flipgrid that allow students to record their voices, self-assess, and receive feedback from peers and instructors, thus promoting more autonomous and collaborative learning (Aktas, 2023). Therefore, integrating these resources into the curriculum represents an innovative pedagogical strategy for overcoming the limitations of traditional language teaching.

Pronunciation

According to Gilbert (2012), pronunciation refers to the way in which the sounds of a word or language are articulated and produced. However, its importance in communication goes beyond simply reproducing these sounds correctly, as it also encompasses elements such as rhythm, intonation, and cultural nuances. These components are interrelated and contribute to the clear and effective understanding of the message.

In this context, Open Educational Resources (OER) offer possibilities that expand upon traditional methods of learning pronunciation. Their dynamic nature allows for the incorporation of authentic audiovisual materials, communicative situations, and examples related to everyday life contexts, fostering learning that is closer to students' real-life experiences. In this way, OER not only complement the content found in textbooks but also contribute to developing a broader understanding of pronunciation and the elements

involved in oral communication. Therefore, they can become a valuable resource for promoting more practical, contextualized, and immersive learning experiences.

Vocabulary

plays a fundamental role in the development of communicative competence, since having a broad lexical repertoire allows one to express ideas more precisely and to navigate different interaction situations more easily. In this sense, Uchihara & Clenton (2023) found a significant relationship between knowledge of spoken vocabulary and various components of oral competence in a second language, which highlights the importance of strengthening not only the quantity of words known, but also the ability to use them appropriately during communication.

From this perspective, Open Educational Resources (OER) can be an alternative for promoting learning and vocabulary expansion through accessible and diverse materials. The use of audiovisual content, readings, audio, and other digital resources allows students to engage with words within specific communicative contexts, facilitating their comprehension and subsequent incorporation into their linguistic repertoire. Along these lines, Dang *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that open access academic materials can promote incidental vocabulary learning and that the way information is presented influences learning outcomes.

Therefore, incorporating OER into vocabulary teaching can contribute to more flexible and contextualized learning experiences. In addition to expanding vocabulary, these resources offer opportunities to connect words to real-life situations, facilitating their application in oral communication activities. In this way, independent learning and exposure to diverse content can help students develop greater confidence in using vocabulary in different communicative scenarios.

Fluency in communication

Fluency is an essential component of oral communication, as it allows for the continuous, comprehensible, and appropriate expression of ideas in different communicative situations. Foster (2020) points out that fluency in a second language should not be understood solely as the ability to speak quickly, but rather as a construct related to aspects such as ease of discourse production, coherence, vocabulary, and the ability to mobilize linguistic knowledge during communication.

From a broader perspective, Feng and Guo (2022) argue that fluency in a second language encompasses different dimensions, including fluency of oral production, cognitive fluency, and the interlocutors' perception of the speaker's performance. Consequently, speaking fluently does not simply mean pronouncing words continuously, but rather ensuring that discourse flows naturally and that ideas can be organized and expressed coherently.

In this sense, fluency relates to the ability to use available linguistic resources appropriately during an interaction. Mastery of vocabulary and grammatical structures facilitates message construction, while aspects such as rhythm, pauses, and continuity of speech contribute to more natural communication. Therefore, fluency development

should be geared toward real-life communicative situations, in which students have opportunities to express their ideas, interact with others, and use the language spontaneously and meaningfully.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach with an experimental design and a descriptive level, with the purpose of analyzing the impact of OER on the development of oral competence. The quantitative component focused on measuring students' perceptions through a structured survey, while the qualitative component explored participants' experiences and attitudes through focus groups and classroom observation. This methodological triangulation allowed for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon studied, ensuring the validity and reliability of the results (Creswell, 2014).

The study population consisted of approximately 150 English students at levels A1 to B1 from InnovaEducativa . Using purposive non-probability sampling, a sample of 28 A1-level students was selected, representing 18.70% of the total population. Participant selection was based on specific inclusion criteria: having a basic level of English (A1), not having previously used OER for language learning, and being enrolled in the institution's online English course. All participants signed an informed consent form, thus ensuring compliance with the ethical principles of the research.

Three main instruments were used for data collection. First, a 15-item Likert scale survey (Always, Sometimes, Almost Never, Never) was administered to measure students' perceptions of the usefulness, interactivity, and relevance of OER. Second, focus groups were conducted with 10 volunteer students to explore their experiences and opinions regarding the use of these resources. Finally, a checklist was used to observe classes, recording students' levels of participation, interaction, and mastery of the tools during both synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The instruments were validated through expert review, ensuring their relevance and clarity.

The research was conducted over a 13-week period, from May 8 to August 9. Initially, students were trained in the use of the four selected OERs: Vocaroo , Voki, Flipgrid , and TED-Ed. Subsequently, activities aligned with the institution's curriculum (Evolve Level 1) were designed and implemented during online classes via Microsoft Teams. Students completed tasks involving voice recordings, avatar creation, and participation in video forums, which were assessed using an oral presentation rubric. At the end of the intervention period, a survey was administered, and focus groups were conducted to gather participants' perceptions. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were processed using content analysis.

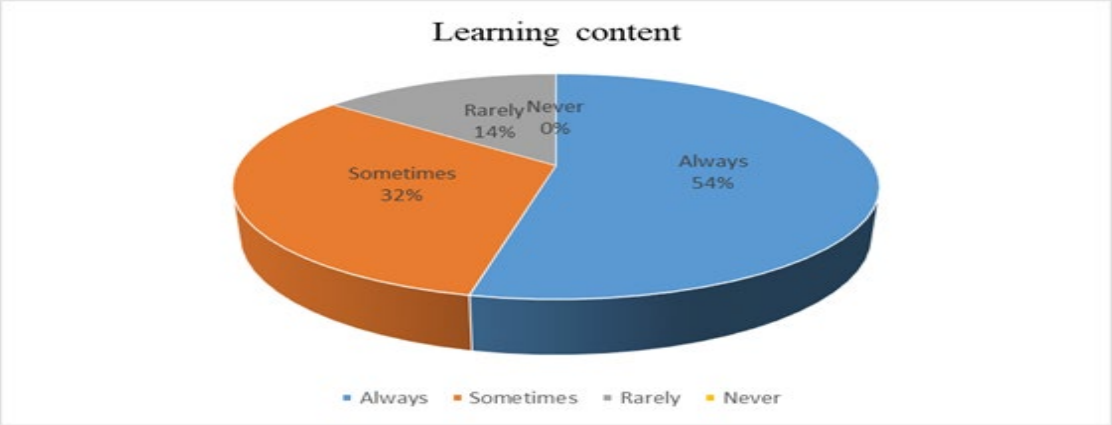
RESULTS

Perception of Learning Content

The results revealed a positive perception of the relevance of the learning content provided by the OER. As shown in Figure 1, 54% of participants indicated that the content is "always" relevant to their studies, while 32% indicated that it is "sometimes" relevant.

No participant considered the content to be "never" relevant, demonstrating a high level of acceptance of the materials. These findings suggest that the selected OER effectively aligned with the students' academic needs, facilitating the acquisition of oral proficiency.

Figure 1. Relevance of learning content



Interactivity and Authenticity

The interactivity of the OERs was highly valued by the participants. According to the data presented in Table 1, 57% of the students stated that the resources used in class "always" offer interactive activities that foster active learning. Furthermore, 54% indicated that the OERs "always" incorporate authentic, real-life materials, such as videos and audio recordings. These results demonstrate that tools like Flipgrid and TED-Ed not only captured students' interest but also provided a realistic context for language practice, overcoming the limitations of traditional materials.

Table 1. Perception of interactivity and authenticity

Category	Always	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Interactivity	57%	32%	11%	0%
Authenticity	54%	36%	11%	0%

Development of Oral Skills

Regarding the specific impact on oral skills, the results showed significant improvements in fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Table 2 shows that 43% of students "always" used fluency-focused resources, while 46% did so "sometimes." With respect to pronunciation, 50% of participants reported receiving feedback "sometimes" on this aspect, indicating an area for improvement in practice. However, the qualitative data obtained from the focus groups revealed that most students perceived an improvement in their grammatical accuracy and speaking confidence, attributing these gains to the ability to record and listen to themselves.

Table 2. Frequency of OER use by oral ability

Ability	Always	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Fluency	43%	43%	11%	4%
Vocabulary	36%	46%	18%	0%
Grammar	43%	46%	11%	0%
Pronunciation	32%	50%	14%	4%

Data Triangulation

Triangulation of data from the survey, focus groups, and classroom observations confirmed the effectiveness of OER. Table 3 summarizes the main findings, demonstrating that the integration of these resources not only improved language skills but also fostered autonomy and peer collaboration. Students highlighted that tools like Vocaroo and Voki allowed them to practice pronunciation without the pressure of the traditional classroom, while Flipgrid promoted asynchronous interaction and constructive feedback.

Table 3. Data triangulation by category

Category	Survey	Focus Group	Checklist Observation
Use of OER	Satisfaction with platforms; integration into activities.	Open access; student participation.	Teacher-student interaction; curriculum alignment.
Oral Competence	Participation in discussions; trust.	Ability to express ideas; improvement in pronunciation.	Peer interactions; use of interactive tools.
Interactivity	Effectiveness of interactive platforms Perception of the benefits of collaborative learning Preference for specific interactive tools	Active participation in learning activities Use of interactive tools and software Interaction between teacher and student	Peer interactions and collaboration Promoting debates among students Multimedia presentations for interactivity
Pronunciation	Improved confidence in pronunciation Greater confidence when speaking in public thanks to improved pronunciation. Satisfaction with the pronunciation feedback methods	Correct pronunciation of phonemes Effective pronunciation instruction Emotional expression in speech	Independent practice sessions Collaborative peer practice Coherence in pronunciation activities

Grammar	Confidence in the oral application of grammatical rules	Application of grammar in speech Application of grammar in conversations	Interaction between teacher and student during grammar sessions with open educational resources (OER)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research confirm that the application of Open Educational Resources (OER) significantly contributes to the development of oral English proficiency in A1-level students. The high value placed on the interactivity and authenticity of the resources aligns with the findings of Aktas (2023), who notes that tools such as Voki and Flipgrid encourage active participation and reduce speaking anxiety. Furthermore, the improvement in students' fluency and confidence supports the theory that asynchronous practice using voice recordings allows for more effective self-assessment and more personalized feedback (Butarbutar, 2021).

Regarding fluency improvement, the results of this research are consistent with the findings of Toleuzhan *et al.* (2024), who, after applying self-developed OERs to 302 students of English as a foreign language in Kazakhstan, demonstrated that the real-life context, simplified language, and engaging features of the resources significantly increased participants' fluency and confidence when speaking. These authors emphasize that the consistent use of OERs enabled students to become more independent learners, taking responsibility for their own learning. This agreement reinforces the validity of the findings of the present study and suggests that the positive effects of OERs on fluency transcend specific geographical and educational contexts, establishing themselves as a pedagogical strategy with potential for international replication.

Regarding the promotion of autonomy and motivation, the qualitative data obtained from the focus groups revealed that students positively valued the possibility of practicing oral expression anytime, anywhere, without the pressure of the traditional classroom. This finding echoes that reported by Rico Yate *et al.* (2022), who, in a qualitative study with English students in a blended learning environment in Colombia, found that the use of OER such as SpeakApps allowed students to practice oral skills both synchronously and asynchronously, expanding the possibilities for interaction and production in the language. One student participating in that study stated that the platform allowed them to "actively interact in English, outside the classroom, in a practical way that suited our schedules or free time." This convergence of results underscores that the inherent flexibility of OER is a determining factor in promoting learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation toward oral practice.

Regarding the relationship between pronunciation and self-assessment, the findings of this study showed that, while most students used resources to practice this aspect, only half reported receiving frequent feedback. This limitation aligns with the findings of Pham *et al.* (2025), who, in a study with 150 English language learners in Vietnam, identified the main challenges of using OER for self-directed oral practice as including difficulties with self-regulation, confusion in selecting content appropriate to their proficiency level, and a lack of detailed feedback. These authors emphasize that, despite these limitations, the use of OER helped students improve various aspects of their oral skills, such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. These findings suggest that, while OER offer valuable opportunities for pronunciation practice, more systematic teacher mediation is needed to compensate for the lack of immediate feedback and ensure effective formative assessment.

Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations and challenges associated with implementing OER in real-world educational contexts. Recent literature indicates that, despite growing institutional support, the adoption of OER in language teaching remains limited due to several factors. These include the difficulty in finding resources appropriate for students' language levels, inconsistencies in repository structures, a lack of uniformity in metadata, and uncertainty regarding licensing (Perifanov & Economides, 2022, as cited in Panday-Shukla, 2024). Similarly, Pham and Tran (2024) identified three types of challenges hindering the use of OER in course design: (a) technological and infrastructure problems, (b) pedagogical concerns, and (c) legal restrictions. These findings coincide with the logistical and training difficulties observed in the present research, which reinforces the need for educational institutions to invest not only in technological infrastructure, but also in teacher professional development programs that address contextual adaptation, linguistic localization, and pedagogical alignment of OER with curricular objectives.

In terms of practical implications, the research demonstrates that integrating OER into virtual environments is feasible and beneficial, even for populations with basic digital skills. Prior training and teacher support were key factors for the intervention's success, which aligns with Bhatt and Bunkar (2019) recommendations on the importance of teacher training for the effective adoption of these resources. Furthermore, aligning the activities with the institutional curriculum ensured that students perceived OER as valuable complements rather than additional tasks. These findings have direct implications for the design of online language teaching programs, suggesting that incorporating OER can be an effective strategy for improving educational quality and promoting digital inclusion.

CONCLUSIONS

This research describes the use of specific Open Educational Resources (OER) for developing oral English proficiency in A1-level students at InnovaEducativa. The results indicate that integrating tools such as Vocaroo, Voki, Flipgrid, and TED-Ed significantly improves students' fluency, pronunciation, and confidence, while also fostering their autonomy and active participation. Aligning these resources with the institutional

curriculum and providing teachers with prior training were identified as critical factors for successful implementation.

Furthermore, it was shown that OERs offer a viable solution to overcome the limitations of oral practice in virtual environments, providing opportunities for asynchronous interaction and personalized feedback. However, challenges remain related to the systematic assessment of pronunciation and the need for institutional policies that promote the sustainability of these practices. It is therefore recommended that future research explore the long-term impact of OERs on the development of oral competence and analyze their effectiveness at different levels of language proficiency.

Finally, it is suggested that educational institutions invest in teacher training and the creation of institutional repositories of OER to facilitate access and promote widespread use. Incorporating these resources not only contributes to improving language skills but also prepares students for a constantly evolving digital environment, developing essential transversal skills for their academic and professional development.

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