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**MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS
MENCIÓN INGLÉS**

TITLE

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EFL STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES
ABOUT SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SPEAKING
SKILLS IN AN ECUADORIAN UNIVERSITY

A Master Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Maestría en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros: Mención Inglés

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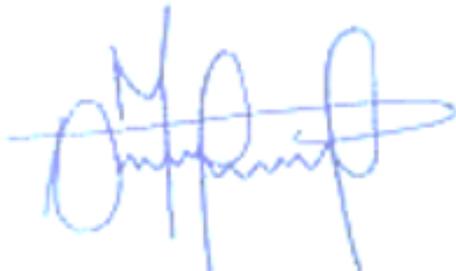
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The main purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study to inquire university EFL students' perceptions about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom in a private university in Ecuador. The specific objectives were (a) to explain the meaning university EFL students attribute to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom, (b) to describe what self-regulated learning strategies university EFL learners use to improve speaking skills out of the classroom, (c) to elucidate what areas of speaking university EFL students focus more on through their self-regulated learning strategies to increase speaking skills out of the classroom, and (d) to classify the sources from which university EFL students obtain self-regulated learning strategies to grow speaking skills out of the classroom.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to God for giving me the strength and guidance to never give up. To my parents, for their support and words of encouragement to continue working toward my desired goals. To my students who have inspired me to become a better teacher by making me believe that the work I chose is right for me.

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RESUMEN

ESTUDIO FENOMENOLÓGICO DE LAS EXPERIENCIAS DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA SOBRE LAS ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE AUTORREGULADO PARA DESARROLLAR HABILIDADES DE EXPRESIÓN ORAL EN UNA UNIVERSIDAD ECUATORIANA

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El objetivo de este estudio cualitativo fenomenológico fue indagar las experiencias de los estudiantes que aprenden Inglés como lengua extranjera sobre las estrategias de aprendizaje autorregulado que usan para desarrollar habilidades de expresión oral fuera del aula de Inglés. La revisión de la teoría reveló que este tema necesita más investigación debido a que el rol de la autorregulación en el desarrollo de las habilidades de expresión oral no está determinado en la educación Ecuatoriana. Las estrategias de repetición, traducción, la lectura en voz alta y hablar en inglés con otras personas permiten el rápido desarrollo de las habilidades de expresión oral. El grupo de estudiantes autónomos practica vocabulario, pronunciación, gramática hablada y fluidez para transmitir ideas comprensibles en sus diálogos. Para llevar a cabo este estudio, se utilizó el muestreo intencional para seleccionar a seis estudiantes universitarios de Ecuador con nivel B1 de Inglés. Los resultados demostraron que la autorregulación para los participantes de este estudio es una fuente de conocimiento que ha tenido un impacto positivo en su rendimiento académico y en su confianza para aprender y hablar Inglés. Además, los participantes reconocieron que los maestros y los compañeros de clase les proporcionaban información sobre estrategias, actividades y herramientas tecnológicas para desarrollar sus habilidades de expresión oral de manera autónoma. Este estudio contribuirá a una comprensión más detallada del desarrollo de la autorregulación para mejorar las habilidades de expresión oral y las fuentes de las cuales los estudiantes autónomos adquieren sus estrategias. Las implicaciones pedagógicas de este estudio podrían ayudar a los maestros y estudiantes a implementar la autorregulación en sus prácticas educativas debido al impacto positivo de este proceso en el rendimiento académico.

Palabras clave: Estrategias de aprendizaje autorreguladas para desarrollar habilidades para la expresión oral, la expresión oral en el aula de inglés, estudio independiente.

ABSTRACT

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EFL STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES ABOUT SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS IN AN ECUADORIAN UNIVERSITY

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This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to understand EFL students' lived experiences about self-regulated learning strategies on the implementation of speaking skills out of the EFL classroom. The existing literature revealed that this topic needs further research since the role of self-regulation in developing speaking skills is still not determined in the Ecuadorian education. To conduct this study, I used a purposeful sampling strategy to select six EFL Ecuadorian university students who had a B1 English level. Findings revealed that self-regulation for the participants of this study is a source of knowledge that has had a positive impact on their academic performance as well as in their confidence to learn English. Strategies concerning drilling, translation, reading aloud, and speaking English with conversation partners were associated quick spoken language development. It was found that the group of learners practiced more vocabulary, pronunciation, spoken grammar and fluency to convey intelligible ideas in their speech. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that teachers and classmates provided them with information about strategies, activities and technology tools to grow their speaking skills on their own. This study will contribute to a more detailed understanding of the development of self-regulation to improve speaking skills and the sources from which autonomous learners acquire their strategies. Based on the findings, this study presents some pedagogical implications that show that this could help EFL teachers and learners to implement self-regulation in their educational practices given its positive impact on academic achievement.

Keywords: Self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills, speaking in the EFL classroom, independent study.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In Ecuador, the importance of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has arisen since 1980. In this context, EFL learning is understood as the learning process that an Ecuadorian student performs in a country which English is neither the official language nor the mother tongue for everyday communication. English has to some extent become a requirement at elementary school, secondary and higher education. The Ministry of Education and the SENESCYT who are the agents in charge of proposing policies and standards to improve the curriculum of Ecuadorian universities have drafted the following policies. The goal of high schools is to ensure that their students obtain a B1 intermediate English level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). In regard to higher education, Ecuadorian universities provide their students with the basics to reach at least a B1 level. Additionally, it is expected that students who graduate university majoring in English achieve an English certificate above B2. Based on the existing literature, this reality is different. According to Fabre, Boroto, and Soto (2015), Ecuadorian learners have encountered some difficulties in reaching the CEFR standards because learning English is still grammar-based and the curriculum does not take into account the background and social aspects of students.

This research focuses on another way to learn English as a Foreign Language that emphasizes more on the students' role in learning on their own. An autonomous learner is understood as an individual who takes responsibility for controlling his behavior and actions to achieve a learning objective (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999). This research addresses EFL students' insights about how they self-regulate their learning outside the classroom setting and how their learning depends more on their own efforts than on teachers.

It is not part of the scope of this investigation to analyze how students learn English inside the classroom, but to provide consistent information about the students' role in their independent study known as self-regulated learning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This research focuses on learning English as a foreign language; however, it emphasizes on the strategies or practices that a self-regulated learner uses to develop speaking skills outside the classroom. According to the existing body of literature, the learning process that takes place in the EFL classes does not necessarily respond to students' learning needs. Some learners decide to take initiative and learn to develop their English speaking skills by themselves. According to the existing body of literature, some regular students became autonomous learners, since they did not find academic instruction at educational institutions useful. That is, centered classroom learning is grammar-based and focuses more on theory than real language practice (Murray, Gao, & Lamb, 2011). They consider that the traditional classroom environment does not provide them with sufficient opportunities to speak a foreign language.

From another perspective, Garzon (2018) mentioned that large classes, insufficient hours in the English curriculum and unqualified teachers reduce the opportunities for practicing speaking skills (p.2). From personal experience, I would say that I had a similar process as a self-regulated learner. Right after I started studying my university degree as an English teacher, I realized that my English level was limited in contrast to my peers. Therefore, one of the ways I tried to learn English and develop my speaking skills was studying on my own because in the classroom I felt the limitations of insufficient time, a large number of students, and a teacher-centered class which impede me from practicing the language. Therefore, I decided to be responsible for my own English learning. I saw my part-time job as a Spanish teacher as an opportunity to find language exchange partners to spend time talking

with them in English as well in Spanish. Being engaged in real conversations with native speakers helped me to use the correct pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar because I received immediate feedback about my mistakes. Another, strategy that helped me to develop my speaking was recording my voice to notice common mistakes concerning pronunciation and accuracy.

Self-regulated learning has profound benefits for language learning. Unlike their passive classmates, independent learners have a more active role in their own learning since they look for alternatives to succeed (Pintrich, 2000). In other words, they are aware of their strengths and limitations and uses a high cognitive process that involves planning, monitor and assessing to optimize their learning.

A similar situation may be taking place in other universities or with other EFL learners in Ecuador. It is significant to know whether Ecuadorian EFL learners rely on teachers' formal instruction in the classroom to develop their speaking skills or like other autonomous learners, they have experienced the process of self-regulation. It would be remarkable for the field of EFL education to know what strategies they use or whether their methods vary from individual to individual.

According to Chien (2019) who conducted a study about self-regulation in a different scenario from Ecuador found that some learners experienced the same process to achieve self-regulation readiness. Consequently, in order to continue the understanding of how Ecuadorian EFL learners construct their autonomous learning process to develop speaking skills, it was important that a qualitative phenomenological study described the live experiences of a group of EFL learners.

1.2 Justification

Pursuing this further, self-regulated learning needs to cover topics of interest to understand the individual experiences of learners to develop their speaking skills. There is a need to deepen the study about EFL learning and the phenomenon of autonomous learning in Ecuadorian university students. Findings from existing body of literature and my personal experience as an EFL learner suggest that researchers need to conduct more studies to understand SRL as a paradigm to improve English learning with emphasis on oral production.

In this section, I also present the gaps in the literature which call for more research regarding EFL learners' autonomy to improve their speaking skills. According to Choez and Tenelema (2017), "self-regulation is considered a very important aspect to attain goals; however, its role seems to be not precisely determined, hence it is rather unknown by a lot of professionals working on the educational field" (p.70). I consider that as EFL learners and EFL teachers we cannot expect that learners develop a high degree of competence in their speaking skills with only what is taught in their regular classes. I think that this process can also be reinforced outside the classroom with the correct guidance.

Even though self-regulated learning provides students with opportunities to improve their learning performance, there is only a reduced number of learners who are able to start this process on their own at home due to the lack of instruction about SRL in the classes (Ormrod, 2012). In other words, the paradigm of self-regulation has not yet received enough attention. For this reason, students may be unaware of how to self-regulate their learning. They may lack of knowledge about what types of strategies they should use to succeed in this process.

Based on the literature review, the studies done to investigate this issue have concentrated on SRL oriented to develop reading, writing and listening skills and how self-efficacy influences this process. However, in Ecuador, studies about self-regulated practices to

develop speaking skills are nonexistent. Most of the articles found in Google Scholar refer to the use of self-regulated learning strategies in formal academic settings in which students rely on academic guidance and counselling from teachers and tutors. From a different perspective, this study encompasses self-regulation by incorporating EFL student's learning experiences outside the EFL classroom. The exploration of the self-regulatory process in informal learning environments may lead to understand and describe the students' voluntary experiences to build knowledge independently.

Based on the information above, this qualitative phenomenological study will pursue the following general research objective and four specific objectives to have a broad understanding of how Ecuadorian EFL students use SRL strategies to improve their speaking skills outside the EFL classrooms.

1.3 Research Objectives

The following research objectives inform the accomplishments to achieve through the research and provides direction in conducting the study.

1.3.1 General objective.

To inquire university EFL students' perceptions about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom in a private university in Ecuador.

1.3.2 Specific objectives.

- To explain the meaning university EFL students attribute to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom.
- To describe what self-regulated learning strategies university EFL learners use to improve speaking skills out of the classroom.

- To elucidate what areas of speaking university EFL students focus more on through their self-regulated learning strategies to increase speaking skills out of the classroom.
- To classify the sources from which university EFL students obtain self-regulated learning strategies to grow speaking skills out of the classroom.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will be used to inform the proposed general objective and specific objectives.

1.4.1 General research question.

What are the perceptions of university EFL students about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom in a private university in Ecuador?

1.4.2 Sub-research question.

- What meaning do university EFL students attribute to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom?
- What self-regulated learning strategies do university EFL learners use to improve speaking skills out of the classroom?
- What areas of speaking do university EFL learners give more attention to through their self-regulated learning strategies to increase speaking skills out of the classroom?
- What are the sources from which university EFL students obtain self-regulated learning strategies to grow speaking skills out of the classroom?

1.5 Significance

As EFL teachers and learners we must be aware of the importance of how we can make this knowledge much more effective to help future learners by taking into consideration that SRL provides significant benefits of learning across the curriculum. First, it is an advantage for students, faculty members, and curricular designers. Numerous investigations emphasize that high achievers reported an extensive use of self-regulation than low-achieving students (Pintrich, 1995). Therefore, students who self-regulated their behavior, environment, and cognition will eventually become better learners. Findings from this research would meaningfully provide the educational field with a noticeable description of the application of SRL strategies to improve English learning, especially in how students become controllers of their own learning outside the classroom.

People who take part in the field of EFL education may benefit. First, the informants of this study would understand that their own way of learning is efficient and they can cause a positive impact on other students. Second, new students who are learning English would have a different learning approach to achieve this objective. That is, they would realize that learning English not only takes place in the classroom but also it can be learned in a self-regulated manner at home. Third, it would help EFL learners to guide and inform other students about this autonomous learning process. Fourth, universities and the Ministry of Education may consider including SRL in their English curriculum to understand that learning outside the classroom has a valuable contribution to the classroom and might help learners who struggle to learn and speak English.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms provide a definition of the cornerstone words of the research to enhance reader's understanding of it.

English as a foreign language (EFL). The learning of English in a place where English is not the official language.

Self-regulated learning (SRL). In this research, SRL refers to the learning that an Ecuadorian university student performs on his own to improve his English speaking skills. It involves activities, strategies, techniques and actions that the learner manages outside the classroom without regard to the source of information from which he obtains those strategies or whether he creates these activities independently.

Self-regulated learning strategies. “Refer to actions and processes directed at acquisition of information or skills that involve agency, purpose, and instrumentality perceptions by learners” (Zimmerman, 1990b, p.5). Unlike all learners, self-regulated learners are recognized by their capability to control their cognition, metacognition, behavior, motivation and environment to achieve academic goals.

Speaking skills. They refer to the ability a person has to convey meaningful and understandable ideas to a listener who is able to comprehend, process and answer back the message. Oral competent learners realize the audience to whom they are talking and adapt their language production to cultural and social contexts with the aim of negotiating verbal interaction.

Autonomous learning. It is the process by which a student holds responsibility for his/her actions to pursue an academic objective, by selecting efficient strategies and methods according to his/her learning preferences, monitoring his/her progress, evaluating his/her performance, and asking for tutoring to consolidate his/her knowledge on a certain subject matter. A self-regulated learner is aware of his/her abilities and limitations and looks for available resources to control strategic planning and motivation beliefs to determine the most appropriate strategies to achieve goals.

Cognitive strategies. Mental processes that “enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally” (Oxford, 2001, p.3). Cognitive strategies are employed with specific learning tasks.

Metacognitive strategies. It is understood as the conscious mental process through which learners plan, monitor and evaluate their learning objectives. It basically refers to one’s own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success, and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy (Oxford, 2001). Metacognitive strategies are applicable with a variety of learning tasks.

Personal agency. “One’s capability to originate and direct actions for given purposes. It is influenced by the belief in one’s effectiveness in performing specific tasks“ (Zimmerman & Timothy, 2006, p.45). It is also known as self-efficacy, a process by which a learner is completely engaged and responsible for initiating their learning.

Enactive learning. Learning is experienced by one doing things and making mistakes. This type of learning is reinforced from the positive or negative outcomes of our own actions.

Vicarious learning. Learning is produced by observing other learner’s actions, and based on that people adjust their behavior to avoid making similar mistakes and start focusing on improving.

Self-control. It is understood as the power to regulate one’s actions, emotions, and stimuli in order not to deviate from our desired goals.

Self-efficacy. Learners' persistent beliefs about their skills to succeed in the accomplishment of a task.

Readiness. In this research, this term is interpreted as the state of a person to be ready to produce the language after enough comprehensible input.

Situated learning. This concept refers to the process by which students are more motivated to learn when they experiment the knowledge by themselves within social practices rather than in the classes or with books.

1.7 Delimitations

- This study was delimited to six EFL students who learn English in a private university of Ecuador. Interviews were delimited to learners who used self-regulation strategies to develop oral skills out of the EFL classroom. Other themes related to EFL teaching or self-regulation in other fields were not studied in this research.

1.8 Limitations

- Participants' answers might be influenced by their personal beliefs related to EFL self-regulation.
- The sample I chose may not represent the reality of all the students of the private university where I gathered the information.
- A triangulation of data sources would have been more convenient to understand better the results of the investigation; however, the nature of the phenomenon by which participants develop SRL at home represented a difficulty to apply more data collecting methods like an observation or focus groups.

The next section contains a critical analysis of the sources of information that guide this study about self-regulated learning strategies to develop English speaking skills. It also summarizes the gaps in the literature review.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The purpose of this review was to explore the body of literature in the field of EFL learning that informs the strategies that autonomous learners use to develop speaking skills out of the classroom. This chapter consists of seven sections. First, I introduce a description of language learning theories that support self-regulation. Second, I analyze language learning approaches and methods of self-regulated learning. In the third section, I present a definition of self-regulated learning and how it works. Fourth, national and international SRL practices are examined to know how they influence learning English as a foreign language. Fifth, I explore polyglots' experiences about SRL and how it has helped them to learn new languages. Sixth, I describe the gaps or areas that are under-explored. In the seventh section, I explain the parts of the theory in the literature review that informs this research. This chapter concludes with a synthesis of the main points concerning self-regulation to develop EFL speaking. All of the topics provide a better understanding of the research questions, objectives, and their relationship with the phenomenon.

The literature review starts with the analysis of learning theories that lay the ground for the construction of self-regulation.

2.1 Language Learning Theories and Self-Regulated Learning

This next section will cover the main learning theories related to self-regulated learning. I provide foundation of knowledge on behaviorism, cognitivism, the monitor model, constructivism, and social constructivism.

2.1.1 Behaviorism

This section analysis behaviorism in relation to self-regulated learning. Behaviorist conceives self-regulation as a process by which a learner is able to self-control his behavior, design strategies, and modify his environment in attempt to fulfill a goal. That is, actions that produce positive results are repeated; however, if learners experience failure, those behaviors are less likely to occur (Zimmerman, 1990a).

According to a study performed to undergraduate students at a southeastern university in the United States, students with intrinsic goals see failure as an opportunity to make an extra effort to obtain objectives (Edens, 2008). In fact, this study discusses gender differences in academic achievement through self-regulation. It concludes that males, on the one hand, regulate their behavior depending more on their extrinsic orientation than intrinsic objectives. On the other hand, females rely more on intrinsic goals.

Furthermore, the participants also demonstrated that females have higher verbal abilities than men. Another gender difference is that women have a preference for objectives that they are sure they will succeed meanwhile men are willing to take academic risks. Men who experiment failure consider that it is a result of their lack of effort; however, women are more conscious and attribute their failure to their lack of responsibility and practice. This research found that gender is also aligned to self-regulation in the way individuals control their behavior.

As stated in Wolters (1998), the self-regulation of behavior is associated with high academic achievement. He posits that learners adjust their physical environment to facilitate learning. Controlling behavior increases students' efforts and intentions to fulfill objectives. This process is known as goal orientation which is the ability and motivation to focus on a task to maintain higher performance over time. (Pintrich, 2000). According to this author, the majority of learners who set goals have a have extrinsic motivation. The findings of this study

suggest that more research is needed to examine the outcomes of self-regulation through extrinsic motivation and how it affects learners' performance.

Concerning language learning, some researches state that self-monitoring, self-instruction, self-reinforcement, and self-evaluation are sub-processes of self-regulation which help learners to establish strategies (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989). First, self-monitoring refers to the process of observing one's behavior while completing an assigned schedule, and some of the strategies use in this stage are narrations, duration measures, and rating records that reflect real facts about one's performance (Zimmerman, 1990b). In other words, self-monitoring is the ability to analyze one's achievements and thoughts during and after a task.

Second, self-instruction permits one to discriminate environment stimuli to achieve a goal through reinforcement plans. For instance, students encourage themselves to use self-instruction techniques, such as reminders about the topics of a lesson or self-talk to guide their apprenticeship. These strategies are chosen according to students' learning style, preference or necessity.

Third, in the self-reinforcement sub-process, one is able to control one's behavior by rewarding oneself when a certain performance has been accomplished. Operant theories allure that self-regulated reactions are determined by external rewards or punishment that depend on academic or social approval or to gain a prize (Mace, Belfiore, & Shea, 1989). According to constructivism, learners seek challenges to achieve academic objectives by controlling their behavior and environment. In the following section, a synthesis of the empirical evidence of how self-regulation and cognition function regarding learners' experiences is presented.

2.1.2 Cognitivism

In this section, I present cognitivism and how cognitivism examines self-regulated learning. While behaviorism suggests that one controls one's behavior depending on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, metacognition (thinking about thinking) accompanies this process but does not influence it. Conversely, the consequences of one's behavior motivates actions to goal setting. In this sense, learning occurs from enactive and vicarious experiences. The first term refers to individuals experiencing a learning process by themselves and learning from mistakes or positive outcomes. Meanwhile, vicarious learning happens when individuals observe others demonstrating the application of some principles, such as teachers, news, or peers. Based on those beliefs, cognition in self-regulation combines enactive and vicarious learning that enhance students changing behavior or habits to achieve more goals (Zimmerman, 2005).

Cognition is run by self-efficacy beliefs that make people persevere to achieve academic goals. If learners experience progress, they continue learning and performing well in their tasks. An empirical study by Pintrich and De Groot (1990) to seventh-grade English and science students at a school in Michigan, USA showed that self-efficacy is associated with the use of cognitive strategies that lead students to succeed in their classrooms because they have a high sense of self-efficacy to cope with difficult tasks. Consequently, this study suggest that teachers should consider instructing their classes about self-regulation since it makes individuals aware of the value of their academic work.

Additionally, students who are more motivated to learn rather than earn good grades use more cognitive strategies because they are interested in understanding new information. Most importantly, autonomous students who use the following cognitive strategies, such as (1) memorization, (2) organizing, (3) rehearsing, (4) monitoring, (5) goal setting, (6) skimming, and (7) scanning can foster their aptitude to perform well on future tasks.

According to the social cognitivist theory, SRL is carried out by the learners' observation, judgment, and reaction. This is known as discrepancy production since each individual sets more challenging goals than his/her first attempts to improve their standard performances. That is, learners engage in more cognitive activities because they are encouraged to learn behaviors that they believe will lead them to achieve rewarding outcomes. Cognitivism states that self-regulated learners must have self-efficacy beliefs that refer to the individuals' perceptions about their capabilities to deal with difficult tasks that may arise while achieving goals. The next paragraphs encompass the principles of the Monitor model to develop language learning abilities based on self-regulated learners' lived experiences.

2.1.3 The Monitor Model

In this section, I introduce the monitor model in regard to second language acquisition and self-regulated learning. This model proposes that language learning can be done the same unconscious way children acquire a language. Children learn a language by listening to their relatives' utterances since they are in the womb. Therefore, when they are born, they start mumbling words unconsciously to imitate their parents' talking. In this sense, this model suggests that learning a foreign language undergoes the same process as acquisition in which language fluency is the result of a comprehensible or meaningful input (Liu, 2015).

Based on Krashen's findings (1983), language acquisition takes time and that is the reason why speaking skills appear after comprehensible listening input. During language production, it is normal that there may occur errors which do not affect the speaker's intention. Furthermore, the amount of time a learner spends listening or reading in a target language makes him more competent to develop speaking skills. Further studies also suggest that engaging in a conversation is one effective way to enhance language acquisition (Liu, 2015). In other words, acquisition requires input and interaction with the target language.

According to Rivers (1986), to effectively produce oral skills, it is necessary that learners are subjected to social pressure in which they need to practice the language they are learning. Therefore, the classroom scenario does provide enough opportunities for each student to speak the language. Another study related to the Monitor Model applied to beginning and intermediate level ESL students found that learning serves as a way to monitor mistakes, but it may limit language production. That is why the major contribution of a classroom is to consolidate knowledge about grammar and vocabulary through listening and reading; however, advanced students need to obtain input from real social contexts.

According to Krashen's (1981) theory of language acquisition, the main reasons why classrooms do not contribute successfully to language production is due to the infrequent use of strategies that promote students continuous practice of the target language. According to this author, learning strategies practiced in the classroom can be replicated in an acquisition environment outside the classroom. Thus, if SRL strategies are taught in class, they can be transferred into an out-of-class context. Next, I discuss existing literature regarding a constructivist approach based of self-regulated learners outside the EFL classroom.

2.1.4 Constructivism

In this section, I present constructivism and how it sees self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning from a constructivist viewpoint is understood as a conscious and continuous process in which learners are in control of their cognitive and metacognitive skills (Pintrich, 2000). Cognitive skills are used to attain a goal while metacognitive skills support this attempt with a higher order cognitive process that involves identifying strategic planning and practical resources to ensure that the goal is achieved.

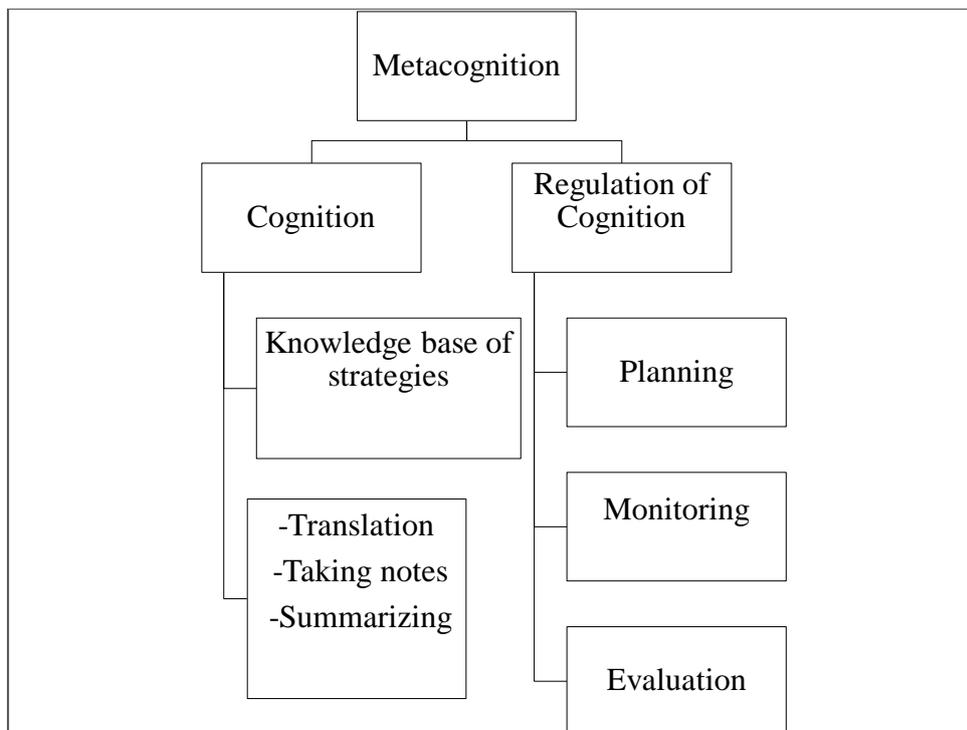


Figure 1. Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies

Once students become aware of how to use metacognition, they also realize about their strengths and weaknesses to make changes in their learning practices. Self-regulated learning is a complex process that demands high responsibility that is why different learners may struggle to develop it. Studies also mentioned that motivation is a key factor to use SRL (Vrieling, Stijnen, & Bastiaens, 2018a). In other words, the more motivated a student is, the more competent he/she is to design metacognitive strategies.

Constructivist models mention that SRL and situated learning appeals to students' real social context; therefore, they learn more efficiently with hands-on activities. In an experimental about learning in an out-of-school setting in Sri Lanka, it was found that participants used observation, inquiry, and dialogue to perform high order thinking and reflection on the contents they have learned on their own (Wanniarachchi, 2016). This group was capable of developing their problem-solving skills, monitoring their progress, and scaffolding the information to construct knowledge.

In this sense, this study supports the notion that real life situations motivate students to become responsible for their own learning. The study went on to suggest that individuals learn better when they set their own goals according to their needs and to what they are interested in knowing. In other words, constructivism is a model that not only supports students self-centered classes but also self-regulation out of school since it provides learners with the opportunity to be more creative and curious about their capabilities that lead them to succeed in academia. In the next paragraph, I present self-regulation from a social constructivist perspective and how learners develop a foreign language through independent learning.

2.1.5 Social Constructivism

This section explains self-regulated learning from a social cognitive theoretical perspective. It highlights that learning occurs as a result of interaction within a societal and cultural context. From this view, every encounter among people represents an opportunity to obtain new knowledge since there is a continuous exchange of ideas in a collaborative environment. According to this approach, the real world is a source of authentic material by which learners receive input and produce a positive response through communicative skills (Järvelä & Järvenoja, 2011).

An important principle of constructivism is that learners are capable of developing top-level skills, such as problem solving through critical thinking, inferring and synthesizing information more successfully in interaction with society. More importantly, the work of Bay, Bagececi, and Cetin (2012) in a semi experimental design in Turkey supported this idea that learning should be performed in real contexts through the use of interaction with other individuals.

Regarding the social constructivist perspective related to SRL, there is no one-size-fits-all method to learn a language. Therefore, learners select their own way of learning according

to their preferences, objectives, and environments. Next, I discuss the existing literature regarding the languages learning approaches and self-regulated learning in EFL education.

2.2 Language Learning Approaches and Self-Regulated Learning

In the next paragraphs the (1) communicative approach, (2) competency-based EFL instruction, (3) task-based instruction, (4) project-based instruction, (5) community-based learning, and (6) the four strands approach are described to highlight their views on self-regulated learners and language learning.

2.2.1 Audio-Lingual Method

This section presents a theoretical work regarding the contribution of self-regulation to the understanding of learning English as a foreign language. The purpose of this method was to help students develop their communicative oral skills through dialogues or repetition drills by which intonation, pronunciation, and grammar are strengthened during the production of spoken language (Chien, 2016). If students practice these patterns every day, they will acquire new and grammatically accurate language forms to improve fluency in the illocutionary act. Therefore, teaching must be aligned to authentic oral interaction. According to Wang (2017), the main goal of English teaching is to “train students’ comprehensive ability in English learning, especially in the practical use of language. At the same time, it can also make good use of oral communication and clerical communication for students’ future work and social life” (p.1). Said differently, the teaching process must complement social and educative demands that require people to be able to speak more than one language to achieve success in different areas.

Students being passive learners with poor motivation or interaction in their classes do not develop themselves efficiently; that is why the classroom atmosphere according to the

audiolingual method plays a key factor in helping individuals to modify their behaviors through habit formation. This method, for instance, uses an inductive process to make students discover and notice language functions through the observation and inference of examples. The most common strategies to achieve this process rely on (a) the memorization of dialogues (b) scrambling sentences backwards, (c) the repetition of a given expression, (d) asking questions, (e) substituting vocabulary in sentences, (f) sentence transformation, (g) distinguishing minimal pairs, and finally, (h) completing dialogues.

In other words, the audiolingual method focuses on changing someone's behavior using these methods while focusing on various linguistic forms. The role of the audiolingual method on the self-regulation of oral skills is to make learners practice the language through the repetition of patterns and feedback about their mistakes (Chien, 2016). In the following section, I present an analysis of the relationship between the communicative approach and self-regulated learning.

2.2.2 Communicative Approach

This section tackles the communicative approach to self-regulated learning that focuses on communicative purposes. Unlike the audio-lingual method in which language form is memorized, the communicative approach deems that language must be learned with an authentic interaction with individuals in real life situations. According to Jabeen (2014), many of the studies in India indicate that English is no longer considered as an L2; instead, it is an official language alongside Hindi because it is used as a means for expanding other learning areas: textbooks about different subjects must encompass a communicative approach. From this view, language learning is more effective when it is used with a functional communicative purpose within some social and cultural contexts.

Studies by Goldman (2018) show that communication is a result of a social need to express ourselves. Therefore, communicative functions help learners to expand their ability to self-instruct, monitor performance, and regulate their behavior to reach desired goals. In this sense, meaningful communication is effective when there is interaction among people. That is, learners' brain needs a purpose for communication like requesting information, arguing, defending our point of view, or transmitting emotions.

The results of these studies also suggested further exploration of students' perceptions of the communicative approach and self-regulation. Additionally, this study acknowledges that the implementation of a communicative approach in education is not common because EFL educational programs still prioritize the development of linguistic and grammar competence rather than communicative skills. In the subsequent section, I present current theoretical accounts of Competency Based EFL Instruction to develop EFL independent learners.

2.2.3 Competency Based EFL Instruction

The competency based approach from the perspective of self-regulation focuses on the production of the language. Contrary to other methods, it puts emphasis on the product rather than in the process. That is, grammar and lexicon are predicted from language usage in real contexts. That is why this method is associated more with oral and written language production. The purpose of this method from the perspective of Benadla (2012) is to develop independent and competent learners able to manage cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In other words, they are in charge of putting into practice the knowledge from their educational institutions into their daily lives.

One of the findings concerning competency based EFL instruction showed learning cannot occur if people do not have extrinsic or intrinsic reasons to learn. In this sense, Wong (2008) suggests that further exploration of students' attitudes towards English learning is

necessary to understand their perceptions about this process. For instance, learners who acknowledge that English is meaningful for them have no objections to improve their English level. In the following part, I explain the Task-Based Instruction that offers an alternative perspective about self-regulated learning.

2.2.4 Task-Based Instruction

In this section, I explain how the Task-Based Instruction model operates to develop self-regulated learning skills. The importance of language learning has shifted enormously from traditional educational to task-based instruction (TBI) in which the classes are student-centered and learning occurs as a result of peers' interaction, and collaborative work. The main goal TBI is to help students develop their English skills by using authentic English language to imitate real-life scenarios. An article on task-based instruction presented in Halici and Mede (2018) suggests that TBI improves vocabulary learning, students' motivations, and speaking skills because it enables students to apply the knowledge from their classes in meaningful tasks using the target language.

The Task-Based Instruction model increases students' engagement in the tasks because they see that their personal experiences like going to the doctor, asking for help or ordering food are displayed in the EFL classes. Consequently, the more exposure students have to authentic language, the more motivated and confident they will feel to use it. The next section encompasses the conceptions of the Project-Based Instruction to enhance self-regulated learning.

2.2.5 Project-Based Instruction

This approach claims that self-regulated learners gain knowledge about the target language by working on problem solving projects for an extended period of time. While doing

the projects, the students apply their problem solving skills, critical thinking, and communicative skills to be responsible for their own learning (Astawa, Artini, & Nitiasih, 2017). Students show initiative by giving opinions, inquiring and answering questions, monitoring tasks, sharing information, and assessing peers. In this sense, classroom activities have the purpose of maximizing independent and self-directed learning.

The philosophy of this approach is summarized in the following quote by the Chinese philosopher Confucius: (551 B.C. to 479 B.C.) “I hear; I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand.” Through the exposure of authentic projects that demand critical skills, students are able to self-regulated their learning by using metacognitive strategies like planning ahead, setting goals, self-monitor and self-reflection on performance. In the following section, I outline the context of Community-Based Learning and its relationship between independent study and EFL learning.

2.2.6 Community-Based Learning

It refers to a variety of instructional teaching practices that encourage self-regulated students to be involved with their communities through workshops, internships, interviews, language interpretation, prevention programs, and mentoring. Being involved in different activities with their communities makes the acquisition of a foreign language more meaningful. For instance, students getting internships in different organizations or enterprises become familiar with real experiences that are connected to social and cultural contexts (Ibrahim, 2010). Through this, learners gain a better understanding of the concepts and the practical use of the subject matter. As a result of this exposure to the language, students self-regulate their behaviors while increasing their motivation and confidence to develop their speaking skills. Next, I discuss existing literature regarding the four strands of language and self-regulated learning to develop speaking skills in English.

2.2.7 The Four Strands

In this section, I analyze self-regulated learning from the perspective of the four strands which see EFL learning as a continuous process that incorporate opportunities to acquire knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation which are the basics for oral production. The following charts shows the four main components of this process.

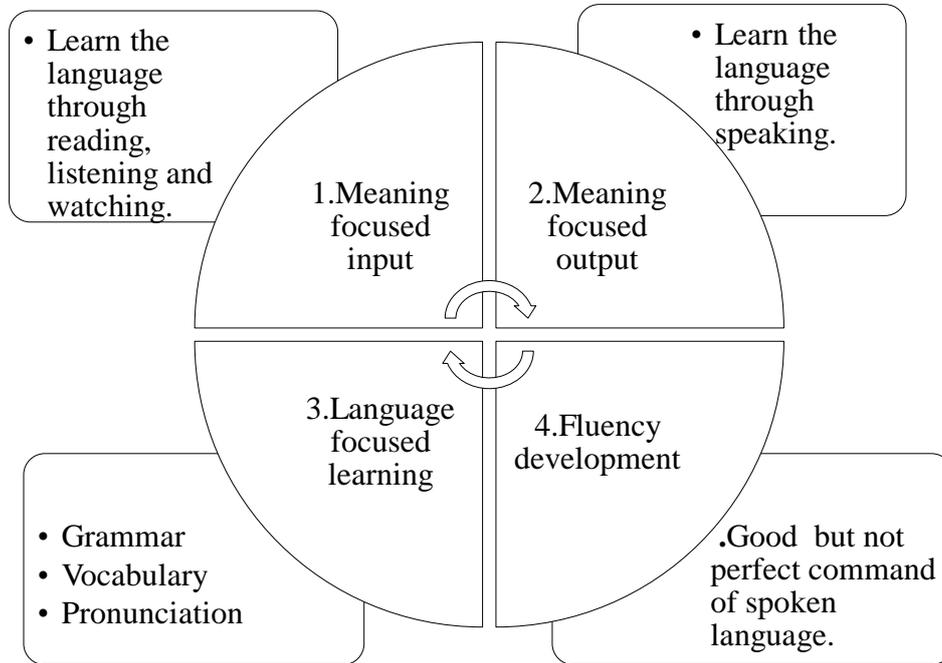


Figure 2. Four Strands Approach

A self-regulated learner who uses the four strands approach spends equal time practicing their language skills. First, extensive listening and reading-through TV programs, radios, music, and graded readers expose learners to authentic language material known as input. Second, input refers to learners speaking the language even though they have a basic knowledge of its components. This process helps them to identify knowledge gaps to uncover new self-regulated ways to convey the intended message in their conversations. Third, language form about grammar rules, vocabulary and pronunciation helps learners to make understandable sentences. Finally, to achieve fluency learners should speak the language by using the knowledge they have obtained from the previous strands. According to Nation and Yamamoto (2010), learners use self-regulation to become independent from teachers. In other words, SRL is a deliberate

act to take responsibility for students' own learning. In the next section, I explain the processes and components involved in self-regulation.

2.3 What is Self-Regulated Learning and How Does It Work?

According to Panadero and Tapia (2014) , “self-regulation is the control that students have over their cognition, behavior, emotions and motivation through the use of personal strategies to achieve the goals they have established” (p. 450). That is, the use of appropriate regulatory strategies improves students' knowledge and academic performance in school and out-of-school classrooms. Diverse models have been designed to demonstrate the factors which influence self-regulated learning. For example, Zimmerman and Cleary's (2016) model viewed these factors as three distinct stages: (a) forethought, (b) performance, (c) and self-reflection.

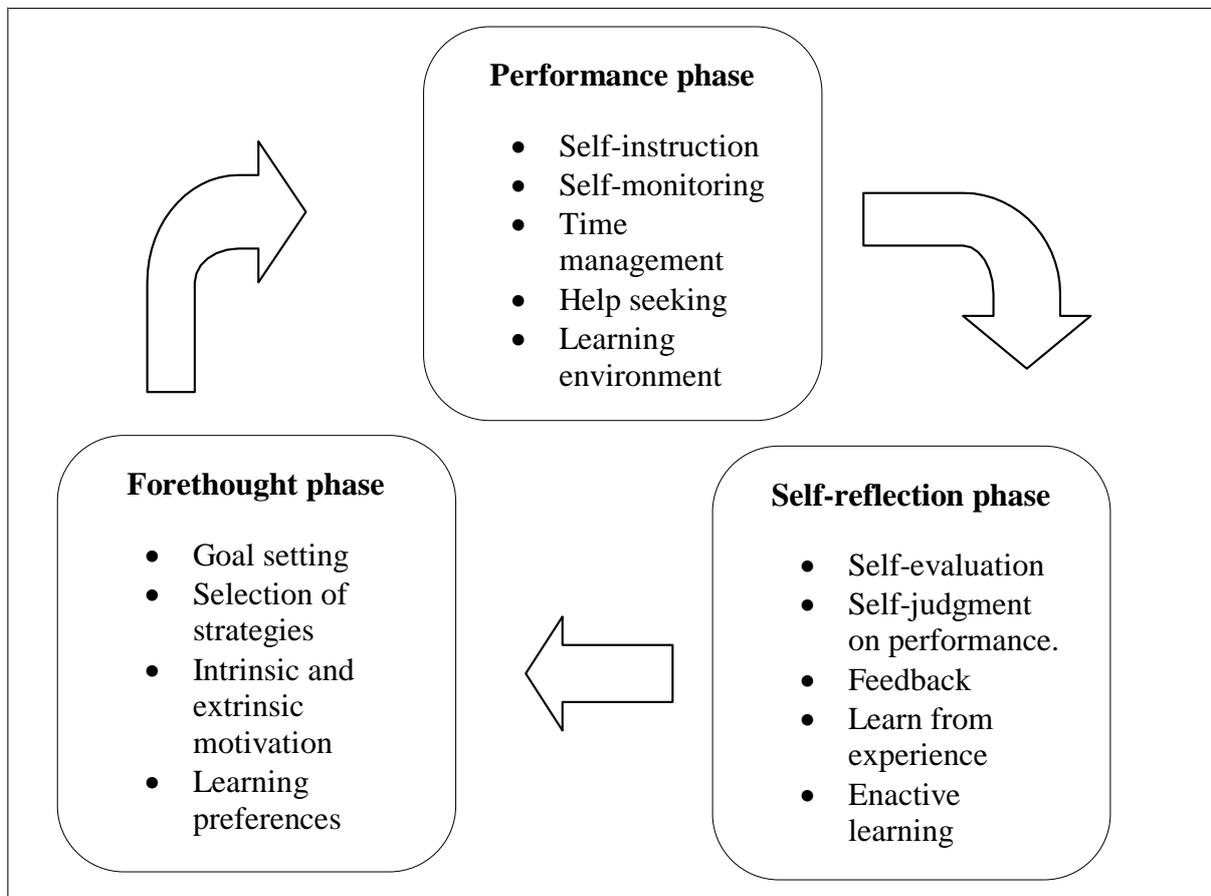


Figure 3. Phases of Self-Regulation, adapted from (Zimmerman, 2002)

In the forethought phase, learners plan strategies based on their motivational beliefs and learning styles to approach a task. In the performance phase, learners are conscious of implementing self-regulatory strategies like self-instruction, self-monitoring, environmental structuring, help-seeking, and time management to facilitate the development of a task. (Panadero & Tapia, 2014). The third phase, learners compare their outcomes with their initial objectives. That is, they evaluate their performance about the effectiveness of the strategies to identify which strategies were efficient to influence their future experiences in self-regulation practices.

2.4 EFL Self-Regulated Learning Practices

In the next paragraphs, I explore an overview about common self-regulated studies that refer to the use of self-regulated learning practices to learn languages.

2.4.1 EFL Self-Regulated Learning Practices Internationally

I describe international studies that support the use of self-regulation concerning (a) writing, (b) reading, (c) listening, and (d) speaking skills. Furthermore, I analyzed studies that emphasize the (e) role of SRL in assessment and (f) the use technology to obtain SRL strategies.

2.4.1.1 SRL international practices in writing. There are broad studies on the role of autonomous learning to develop reading, listening and writing skills in English. However, research concerning speaking skills is limited. Fifty percent of the studies related to self-regulated learning focuses more on writing strategies since it is considered to be one of the most difficult skills because it not only depends on grammar and vocabulary but also it involves self-reflection, planning, and proofreading stages (Harris, Santangelo, & Graham, 2008).

Students who use planning strategies when they write have more self-efficacy beliefs. That is, learners are more responsible for self-monitoring and controlling their cognitive skills to achieve success in writing tasks. A study comparing skilled undergraduate students with children in the fourth, sixth, and eighth grades demonstrated that the first group was more conscious of the use of self-regulatory strategies in their writing because they know that writing skills prepare them for the real world like in the workplace, research projects or further academic and professional careers. According to this study, skilled writers use more self-regulated learning strategies and have more knowledge about mechanics of writing than students with poor writing skills (Graham & Harris, 2000). That is, they planned the writing process ahead by generating outlines or brainstorming.

Furthermore, this study suggests that age is a factor that determines differences in self-regulatory behaviors and the extent to what a person generates SRL strategies; however, developing writers can increase self-regulation once they become mature and experience the need of planning and setting objectives to improve academic success.

2.4.1.2 SRL International practices in reading. An experimental study that viewed 70 English learners on the effects of self-regulation in reading comprehension found that critical thinking and self-regulation are the main factors to develop reading skills. That is, autonomous learners are able to understand readings in context due to the fact that they develop predicting skills. Regrettably, professors still overlook the process of teaching students how to think and find solutions on their own (Kamgar & Jadidi, 2016). To solve this situation, this study suggests that educators must be well-prepared and trained to teach self-regulatory strategies that increase students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to develop their autonomy.

2.4.1.3 SRL International practices on listening. Research based on self-regulation and its impact on developing listening skills between a group of high and low EFL achievers

show that cognitive and metacognitive strategies benefit learners who experience problems at understanding listening (Zeng & Goh, 2018). These participants were engaged in a SRL program for six months in which they applied planning, self-evaluation, and problems solving strategies to cope with listening difficulties. The results showed that high achievers set more demanding goals since they chose extra and more demanding materials to practice listening on their own, such as textbooks, songs, clips, videos. High achievers listened for specific information and paid attention to body language to get an overall understanding of listening. They also put more emphasis on pronunciation and intonations by drilling chunks of paragraphs on their own. They experimented the positive effects of autonomous learning when they felt more confident to speak in English in their EFL classrooms.

Low and high learners in this study were able to focus their attention, reduce distractions, take notes and relieve stress and anxiety during English listening activities after the SRL program. This research also stresses the importance of teachers focusing more on low achievers to accomplish the same proficiency level as high ones.

2.4.1.4 SRL International practices on speaking. Another study performed in an Islamic university was aimed to explain the relationship between self-regulation and oral skills. The results showed that high levels of self-efficacy and self-regulation were associated with successful oral communication (Abbasi & Nosratinia, 2018). This study came to the following conclusions. First, self-regulated learning depends on learners' self-efficacy beliefs to control behavior, motivation, time management and study environment to practice the language. Second, self-regulated learning is an active and constructive process that involves learners seeking for help from peers, friends or teachers to obtain new perspectives to approach a task. Third, autonomous learners use top-down and bottom-up processes to plan strategies to develop speaking skills. Fourth, personal beliefs about their skills allow autonomous learners to self-

judge their performance, reflect on their failures, and develop action plans to tackle demanding tasks. Lastly, another crucial factor to develop communicative skills relies on time management. In sum, self-regulatory strategies allow autonomous learners to plan activities, reduce procrastination, and do quality work.

2.4.1.5 SRL International practices in formative assessment. Formative assessment is considered as a key part of learning due to the fact that it serves as a means for evaluating students' performance during the entire instruction process. Findings from empirical research on the correlation between formative assessment and feedback to develop self-regulated learners toward EFL contexts have reported that self-regulation practices can be enhanced in classes through formative assessment since teachers have the power to provide students with continuous activities to construct knowledge individually, such as inviting students to build their own quizzes, interact in group discussions and give peer feedback (Xiao & Yang, 2019).

This study revealed the following advantages of using SRL in formative classrooms concerning different language skills. First, providing students with information about how to set goals before oral presentations makes them aware of their strengths and resources to accomplish their academic objectives. Second, group discussion after making a quiz strengthens examination and entrance tests. Third, comparing different samples of writing compositions with their own makes students aware of writing mechanism, coherence, cohesion, and accuracy standards. Fourth, asking students to rewrite a similar composition based on their previous performance helps them to correct mistakes. Finally, teacher-student dialogues provide learners with individual feedback about their learning process. On the whole, teachers must create a resourceful class environment with opportunities to support students' autonomous learning practices through formative assessment.

2.4.1.6 SRL through the use technology. Concerning the use of technology for self-regulation, researchers found that online resources provide students with sufficient opportunities to practice language outside the classroom (Chien, 2016). However, this method is not as efficient as teachers' instructional strategies. Taiwanese students declared that they prefer that teachers first instruct them about the use of technology, apps, and strategies to practice SRL outside the classroom because teachers' can guide them through this process. Furthermore, good instruction plus online resources motivated learners to achieve their academic goals because they activities were appropriate and funny to produce the language (Chien, 2016). In the field of oral production, this study revealed that students who had access to online platforms showed significant improvement in their speaking skills, especially in lexicon, pronunciation and intonation. Even though the ninety percent of the students mentioned that technology cannot replace the teacher's instruction, there is still a lack of knowledge from teachers about appropriate technology and self-regulation development. In general, it is known that with or without technology, students are able to display SRL strategies to plan goals, monitor their progress and self-reflect on their development.

Another study emphasizes the use of technology on self-regulation out of the school classroom because it promotes lifelong learning without attending to traditional classes. Nowadays, the focus of EFL education is "shifting from teaching to learning" (Carneiro, Lefrere, Steffens, & Underwood, 2011, p.21). Autonomous learners enhance language learning with powerful online resources through which they set goals, select activities, and plan skills. Some of the technologies self-regulated learners use are portfolios, blogs, wikis, virtual environments, and web resources.

2.4.2 EFL Self-Regulated Learning Practices in Ecuador

Ecuadorian self-regulated learning practices about learning English as a foreign language deserves more attention since the studies about EFL education are scarce. The findings suggested further exploration of students' perceptions of autonomous learning to develop speaking skills.

A study performed in the Province of Manabí in Ecuador on a group of undergraduate students showed that the most common self-regulated practices in EFL are directed by the development of correct pronunciation, listening practice of songs, and idioms recognition (Bravo, Intriago, Holguin, Garzon, & Arcia, 2017). Even though, the study shows positive results in EFL learning by using self-regulation, it showed that students who have intrinsic motivation to pursue a goal are able to retain information in the long term. That is, learners who are highly motivated can fulfill their goals successfully, but the ones who experienced failure tended to lose interest in studying English.

On the other hand, this study mentions that EFL learning in Ecuadorian contexts still depends on formal instruction from teachers since students have a hard time enrolling themselves into virtual platforms. That is why it is important that teachers be prepared to show students how to self-regulate their learning by establishing their own strategies.

A second study performed at a public university in Guayaquil in Ecuador about the current trends in self-regulation and their impact on A2 English learning revealed the next findings: First, learners considered that they needed the motivation and assistance from teachers to start a self-regulation process. Second, when students set goals, they had difficulties reaching them effectively. For instance, a high priority for other subjects and lack of commitment were the main reasons not to fulfill their goals. Other students mentioned that they had had more efficient results at attaining short-term goals rather than long-term goals. Third,

the majority of students were not familiar with strategic goal planning. Only a small number of students' mentioned that organizing and planning were the main parameters to attain a goal. In fact, the majority of them mentioned family support, responsibility, and effort as the main features to achieve academic objectives. Fourth, learners are still dependent on external regulation which relies on the teacher who works as a tutor to give them guidelines about SRL. Fifth, there is little initiative from learners to use extra resources to practice English on their own (Choez & Tenelema, 2017).

Another study about students using self-recording videos out of the EFL classroom showed that it helps students to improve their academic performance because they are able to control self-regulatory and cognitive strategies (Encalada & Sarmiento, 2019). Self-recording videos provide students with more opportunities to practice the language on their own. Furthermore, self-recording videos allow learners to interact with more knowledgeable classmates to develop their speaking skills. In other words, trends in technology motivate learners to practice speaking skills with authentic material which help them become less anxious and more confident to speak in English.

2.5 What do Polyglots say about Self-Regulation and Language Learning?

In the area of second language acquisition, self-regulation has helped polyglots to develop their own specific methods and strategies to learn several languages. In the subsequent paragraphs, a further explanation about the lived experiences of polyglots learning languages is revealed.

First, Kato Lomb is a documented case of a polyglot who communicates fluently in 17 languages; it was found that grammar was the cornerstone of Kato's learning because it appeals to her interests and needs. Even though this method worked fine for her, she does not recommend starters to focus only on grammar because it may hinder people from speaking.

According to Krashen and Kiss (1996), “comprehensible input is central, grammar is peripheral” (p.210). That is why autonomous learning must be oriented towards morphology and language use in real contexts.

Kato Lomb is an example of using self-regulation to learn different languages. Since she did not have teachers or native speakers who helped her to do this process, she applied her own methods in regard to obtain input about grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. She uses technical documents, dictionaries, radio programs, romance novels and grammar textbooks to obtain sufficient input. She recommends that the material must be selected according to the learners’ styles and preferences since genuine interest is an open door that facilitates learning (Lomb, 2008). Furthermore, she acknowledges that language use is the key to master it. For instance, her translation job allowed her to learn different languages by interpreting and translating diverse texts. Similarly, she recommends reading for gist and looking up for words that only affect the understandability of the text as a way to increase lexis.

Additional studies reveal that polyglots have become self-taught because they consider that most language instruction in a traditional classroom environment is not efficient enough to develop speaking skills. After not achieving the expected results with the traditional learning system, they decided to be responsible for her own learning process (Noprival, Rafli, & Nuruddin, 2019).

Polyglots agreed that personality is a factor that determines the selection of methods. For instance, introverted individuals would prefer self-talk rather than a conversation exchange with native speakers. That is why some polyglots use online chats, apps for vocabulary and grammar, music charts, broadcast, and tutorials as sources from which they obtain self-regulated learning strategies (Rodda, 2011). After analyzing different sources from google

scholar, I found that polyglots choose strategies that appeal to their interests and learning styles which make the process of learning a language easy and entertaining.

The literature review about how polyglots learn languages also shows that they are not born with a talent to speak many languages as it is stated by Chomsky (1986) who claims that humans have innate skills to acquire languages since language form is already encoded in the brain. Instead, polyglots self-regulate their behavior to plan appropriate learning systems and methods. For example, the gold list is a method to improve long-term memory that lets learners store information in the long term memory. It works by writing lists of 25 words or expressions in the target language with their corresponding translation in the mother tongue in a notebook every day. After two weeks from the first day, learners revise the lists again and test their knowledge by distilling the list in shorter chunks which make people unconsciously recall 30% of the words. The rest of the words are written again to identify difficult words to work over. People repeat this process until they get a third notebook which shows the actual progress of learners' efforts (Cartaginense, 2010). On the whole, polyglots are not naturally gifted at languages, instead they decide to self-regulate their learning by establishing strategies, setting up routines, and planning specific activities to personalized language learning.

Researchers have called the attention that more research is needed to continue to explore the field of how polyglots learn languages. Therefore, I consider that polyglots' practices could significantly help low achieving students to learn English. Pursuing this further, Rodda (2011) outlines the following common aspects about polyglots.

First, innate aptitude to learn languages is not a factor for polyglots. In fact, the majority of them mention that languages acquisition depends on self-study, time management, and authentic sources to practice the language. Second, learning a language takes time, effort, and self-determination. In the book *How I Learn Languages* (Lomb, 2008) emphasizes that she

spent a lot of time revising literature, dictionaries, and textbooks to master different languages. Third, polyglots are in control of their own learning that is why they self-direct their methods to approach this process. This includes, in some specific cases, hiring special tutors to train skills like writing or speaking. Fourth, even though grammar structures are necessary to learn a language, polyglots suggest learning these patterns in context. For example, they recommend meeting proficient learners or using the shadowing technique develop speaking skills. (Cartaginese, 2010).

Other personal accounts from polyglots revealed that they use direct contact with foreigners to practice vocabulary and grammar structures. They found this method very effective because they received immediate feedback from native speakers to improve their speaking skills. However, some polyglots say that total immersion in the target language is not required to speak a language fluently (Rodda, 2011). Polyglots recommend that in order for immersion to be useful, learners must have a basic or intermediate level of knowledge about the target language to have an appropriate communicative practice by encouraging themselves to use the language in real life contexts.

On the other hand, most polyglots benefit from learning different languages in their home countries by controlling the frequency of study (Arguelles, 2011). They suggest that this process must be done in short periods of time in order not to lose focus while studying. For instance, Alexander Arguelles, a noticeable polyglot in second languages, practices his language skills two hours every day and changes activities every 15 minutes. In sum, polyglots' success at learning a language depends on their capabilities to regulate their behavior and plan actions to approach languages.

Lastly, according to some studies about how polyglots learn language, age is a factor that influences language learning. Adult polyglots are able to learn languages as quickly and

easily as youngsters. In fact, age represents an advantage for polyglots since they are conscious of their learning process, intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, and skills. Additionally, adult polyglots are capable of acquiring a native accent as simple as youngsters as a result of their motivation to consciously find native speakers and authentic material to practice the target language (Keeley, 2016). In the experiences of polyglots, age is not a factor that determines language learning success since acquisition of languages depends more on motivation orientations rather than possessing special innate aptitudes or critical periods for learning languages.

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

In this section, I analyzed the gaps in the literature review concerning the use of self-regulated learning strategies to develop English speaking skills out of the EFL classroom.

First, knowing a language means that individuals are able to use it in real-life situations like asking for help, buying products in a shop, asking for directions, ordering food, or going on a trip. To achieve this process, it is necessary that teachers promote communicative skills in class; however, this process is hard to achieve in regular classes. For instance, EFL teachers in Ecuador may not have the time or energy to apply this process in their every classes. A cross-check of the outcomes of a communicative approach analysis supports this view by stating that “studies to measure teachers’ classroom behavior indicate that the implementation of communicative approach in the classroom is rare” (Jabeen, 2014).

Second, further exploration of international practices of SRL also found that traditional education does not contribute to the development of autonomous students since classroom instruction focuses more on teaching students what to think instead of guiding them to think on their own (Schafersman, 1991). Therefore, these studies suggest that the role of educators in promoting self-regulated in the class needs further research.

Third, studies have found that autonomous learners use technology to learn languages, however, they lack knowledge about what appropriate online resources facilitate learning (Lai & Gu, 2011). Researchers have proposed that teachers must enlighten pupils about how to appropriately use TED Talks, novels, NETFLIX, blogs, social network, YouTube tutorials, self-recording, TV, radio, magazines, internet, and chats (Bravo et al., 2017; Nation & Yamamoto, 2010; Ton, Karl, & Maureen, 2014). All of these activities represent a source of enjoyment and learning simultaneously in order for students to motivate themselves to achieve their EFL goals. That is why further research about the sources from which autonomous learners obtain self-regulated learning strategies is needed.

Fourth, according to Rodda (2011) “polyglots, with their mastery of 10, 20 or sometimes more languages, may provide insight into the language learning process, bringing benefit to many other learners, whether those learners wish to master one language or many” (p.70). Therefore, this researcher has called the attention that more research is needed to continue to explore the methods and strategies that polyglots use to learn different languages to help low achieving students to learn English.

Fourth, in Ecuador, there are not sufficient studies that support the use of self-regulation in EFL contexts, especially in promoting communicative skills. I found three studies that presented evidence of a traditional educational structure with teacher-centered instruction that hinders the execution of autonomous learning on early childhood, basic education, high-school, and higher education on Ecuador’s educational system (Bravo et al., 2017). That is why the gaps in the literature review suggest that self-regulation needs further exploration and research of how autonomous students learn a language out of the EFL classroom with an emphasis on their practices and sources to build SRL strategies.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Diverse theories have emerged to support the processes about how students apply strategies to achieve academic goals. Because of this, it is difficult to mention just one theory as a foundation of SRL. Different parts identified in the literature review represented the nature of SRL as a process related to EFL learning. To guide this study, I refer to Zimmerman and Schunk's (2008) description of SRL theories to inform this research.

2.7.1 Operant Theory

Operant oriented theorists stress that students' self-regulation and their behavior depends mainly on external rewards. Students who appeal to this theory use more self-monitoring, self-instruction, self-evaluation, self-correction, and self-reinforcement principles to self-control their actions and achieve their academic objectives (Mace et al., 1989). Self-rewarding oneself after completing tasks is highly motivating. In this sense, self-regulated behavior is more likely to happen when learners receive positive feedback or reinforcement from peers and educators.

2.7.2 Social Cognitive Theory

According to Zimmerman and Schunk (2008), not all learners can achieve the same mastery of self-regulation. One of the reasons is because learning is modified according to enactive experiences. That is, learning is more effective when learners observe their own behavior, judge their performance, and take actions to change their study habits. Another relevant aspect of this theory is that failure is a prerequisite for success. If learners are aware of this fact, they will use self-efficacy beliefs to improve their academic performance. In other words, people who truly believe in their abilities would try hard and persist until they pursue their objectives because they see obstacles as opportunities to improve language learning.

2.7.3 Social Constructivism

Self-regulated learning encompasses a constructivist view in which one can become an independent learner by receiving scaffolding from teachers. Students consider their teachers as a source of knowledge that can guide learner' self-regulation (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989). In a constructivist view, learners put into practice cognitive strategies that emerged as a result of effective school, high school or university instruction. That is why several findings show that high academic achievers use more self-regulated cognitive strategies as compared to students who do not. What previous cognitive researches have mentioned is that not all individuals have the ability to self-regulate since it is a complex process that demands responsibility, persistence, and motivation (Vrieling, Stijnen, & Bastiaens, 2018b). In this sense, self-regulation from a constructivist point of view supports students learning autonomously by a trial and error method that can be promoted by a teacher at school and be refined at home with authentic language exposure.

2.7.4 Views of the Monitor Model in regard to Polyglots

This model from the perspective of polyglots revealed that classroom scenario does not provide enough opportunities for learners to practice the target language (Rivers, 1986). Traditional instruction is focus more on learning grammar rather than developing speaking skills. Additionally, the uncommon use of SRL strategies contributes to the poor performance on language learning. Therefore, Rivers (1986) states that if more SRL strategies are practiced at regular classes with the guidance of the teachers, learners eventually will find themselves practicing the language outside the classroom.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study about self-regulated learning (SRL) and its impact on learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to develop speaking skills out of the EFL classroom was situated in a post-positivist paradigm following a qualitative interpretative methodology. Under this paradigm, I acknowledge that the research processes are not free of subjectivity as McGregor & Murnane (2010) state that due to the nature of the qualitative research it should not remain unbiased.

I addressed this phenomenon from the three foundations of qualitative research. From an ontological perspective, I considered the perceptions of the lived experiences of the participants about self-regulated as a significant source of information to support this study. From an epistemological view, I attempted to construct knowledge from the research participants' perceptions of the phenomenon and the interpretation of those opinions would serve as a means to deepen understanding of EFL learning. From an axiological position, I encompassed ethical values to give voice to the participants' role in the research.

3.2 Research Method

I used an interpretative phenomenological approach to gain a deeper understanding of how EFL learners experience and perceive the phenomenon of using self-regulation to develop speaking skills outside the EFL classroom. In the same line of phenomenology, Creswell (2007) mentions that there some principles that should be taken into consideration. First, knowledge should start with a description of the lived experiences of EFL participants who use self-regulated learning strategies. Second, the methodological attitude of this discipline

refrained me as an investigator from judging the reality of the phenomenon until it was in-depth. Furthermore, knowledge in this research did not remain at a general level as experiences, instead it creates something significant, a meaning in peoples' lives (Van Manen, 2016).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover and understand the beliefs of EFL learners about the role of self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills. To investigate this the phenomenon, the next questions were developed to help guide this research:

- What are the perceptions of university EFL students about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the EFL classroom in a private university in Ecuador?
- What meaning do university EFL students attribute to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom?
- What self-regulated learning strategies do university EFL learners use to improve speaking skills out of the classroom?
- What areas of speaking do university EFL learners give more attention to through their self-regulated learning strategies to increase speaking skills out of the classroom?
- What are the sources from which university EFL students obtain self-regulated learning strategies to grow speaking skills out of the classroom?

3.3 Population and Sample

This study was carried out in a private university located in the northern part of Ecuador, South America. For the sample, six participants with a B1 English level were selected for the

study. I used a purposeful sampling to choose the group of individuals that provided insights about the self-regulation process to develop speaking skills outside the EFL context. According to Lichtman (2014), a purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator selects a sample which in his or her opinion represents the experiences of a population.

3.4 Tools and Techniques

In this study, two instruments were used to collect data from the participants. On the one hand, an interview data collection technique was applied to inquire participants about the process of self-regulation to develop speaking skills outside the classroom setting. A 60-minute semi-structured interview with a protocol of nineteen open questions was designed to inform the sub-research questions and the principal objective in this research. On the other hand, the investigator was considered as the main tool of data collection. According to Creswell (2007), the quality of the information depends on the researcher's skills and knowledge to access the thoughts and feelings of the researched to understand why and how they perform self-regulated learning practices to develop speaking skills.

The process of validating the interview was developed in two steps. First, an expert audit who had a general domain knowledge about the research field and self-regulation reviewed and approved the instrument. Second, a pilot testing was necessary to apply a trial of the interview to two examinees who had the same characteristics of the sample concerning a B1 English level and self-regulation practices. I did this pilot test to identify problems with unclear instructions or questionable items before conducting the interview to the six participants of this study.

To collect data from the sample, I interviewed the first participant and I transcribed the open responses. Later, I moved to the other participants and I apply the same transcription

process to learn what I could improve concerning the items. Then, I showed those changes in next interviews until I was done with the all the participants.

3.5 Data Analysis

For the data analysis, I use the interactive model of qualitative data analysis that encompasses four phases: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

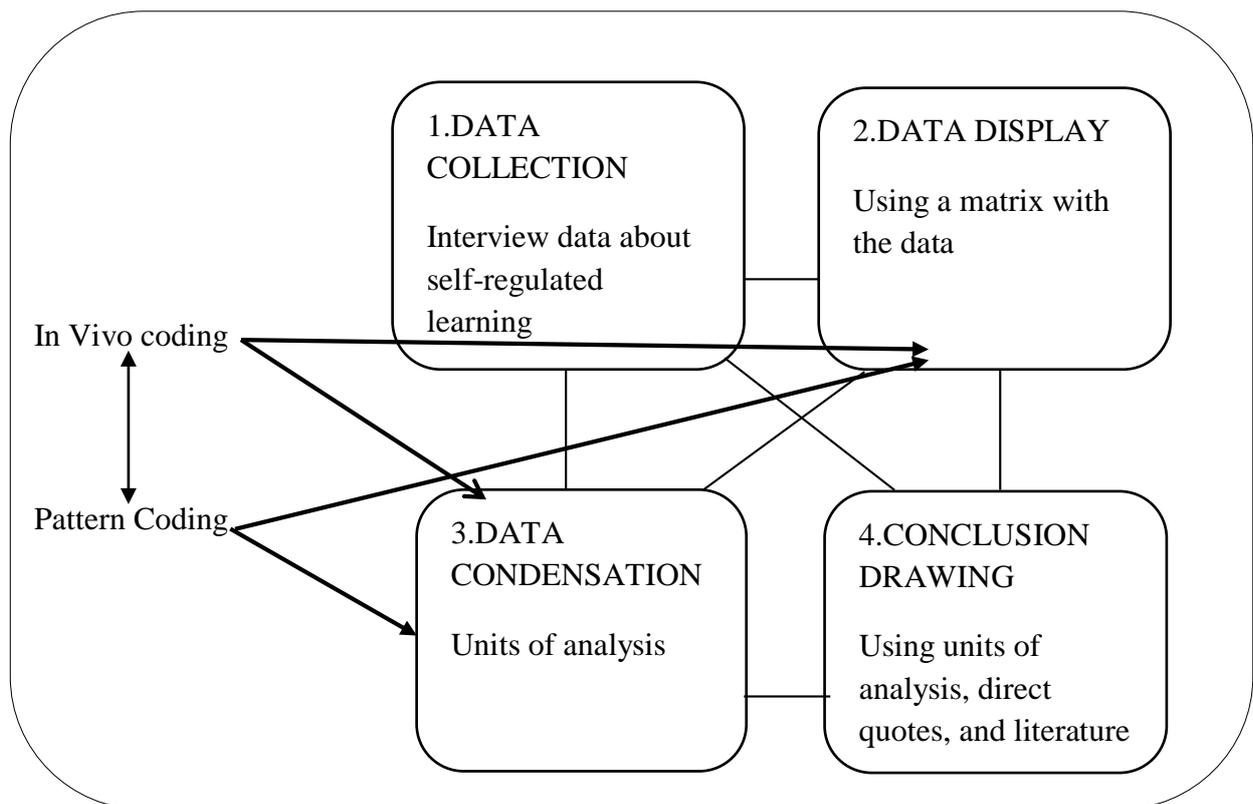


Figure 4. Process of Data Analysis, adapted from (Miles et al., 2014)

After gathering data from participants, I created a matrix to display the transcripts of the participants’ responses. I used this approach as it was applied by (Dávila & Espinoza, 2020). This type of coding allowed the researcher to extract statements from the transcript using participants’ language. Dávila and Espinoza (2020) suggested using In Vivo coding and pattern coding in two stages of Miles' et al. (2014) model , data display and data condensation. Third, I clustered them into categories or themes that became units of analysis. I applied data

condensation through pattern coding at this point. Fourth, I drew conclusions from the findings of the phenomenon. These conclusions were supported with direct quotes from the data. They were further discussed with the researcher interpretation and supported with the existent literature.

3.6 Strategies for Validating Findings

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were the four criteria I tried to conduct to deepen the trustworthiness of this study. For credibility, I took direct quotations from the participants and member check to validate the findings (Creswell, 2014).

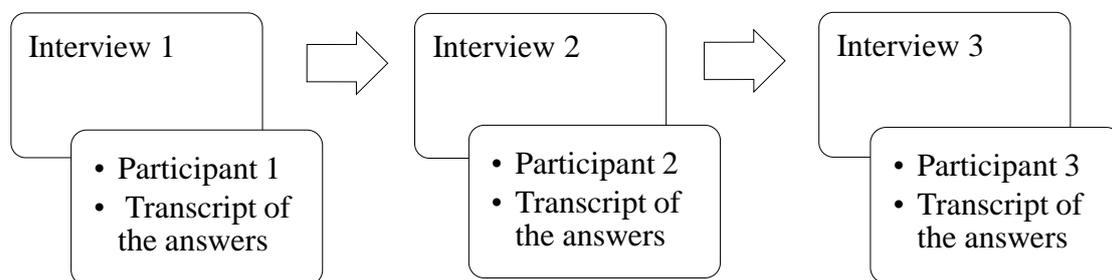


Figure 5. Member Check Process

First, I used member check to increase credibility. That is, (1) I interviewed one participant, (2) I transcribed his answers, (3) I returned to the participant the transcripts of his responses, so he could verify that the information he provided regarding his experiences as an autonomous learner was reported exactly as he conveyed during the interview, (4) I repeated the same steps with the other five participants in the interview. This validation technique allowed me to check for accuracy by using the participants' direct quotes to support the findings. Second, to guarantee transferability, I used thick description with direct quotes from the sample and citations from the existing body of literature review to support the findings. Then, dependability and confirmability were addressed by using a careful examination and description of the phenomenon (Rolfe, 2006).

In the next paragraph, I describe the ethical considerations to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants of this study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

To conduct this study, I considered six ethical considerations. First, I granted the permission of the principal of the university to collect data from the sample. Second, I used a consent form to inform the purpose of my study. In this document, I also specified that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any stage. Third, I informed the participants about the nineteen questions and the length of the interview. Fourth, I explained to them that the data collection would be used for two purposes: (a) as a requirement to complete the master's degree program and (b) for future published papers. Fifth, they were told that their identity would remain anonymous and pseudonyms were used to refer to the sample. Finally, I asked permission to audiotape their answers.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussion of Findings

In this section, I present and discuss the findings of this qualitative phenomenological study that was conducted with six university students that learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a private Ecuadorian university. The following table outlines the general demographic information for the university EFL students who were considered for this research:

Table 1
Demographics of the Participants

Participants	Major	English level	Age	Gender
Jessy	Accounting	B1	34	Female
Sammy	Psychology	B1	20	Female
Valery	Psychology	B1	19	Female
Alexis	Philosophy	B1	24	Male
Sebas	Mechanic engineering	B1	20	Male
Leo	Philosophy	B1	20	Male

The main purpose of this study was to inquire students' perceptions about using self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies to develop speaking skills out of the EFL classroom. Five research questions supported this study: a main research question: What are the perceptions of university EFL students about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom in a private university in Ecuador? and three sub-research questions: (1) what meaning do university EFL students attribute to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom? (2) what self-regulated learning strategies do university EFL learners use to improve speaking skills out of the classroom? (3) what areas of speaking do university EFL learners give more attention to

through their self-regulated learning strategies to increase speaking skills out of the classroom? and (4) what are the sources from which university EFL students obtain self-regulated learning strategies to grow speaking skills out of the classroom? To collect data to inform the proposed research questions, I utilized a semi-structured protocol which contained nineteen items.

This chapter consists of four main themes taken from the sub-research questions that answer the central research question. The four themes are organized in four essays with their corresponding units of analysis that resulted from the participants' responses in semi-structured interviews. I described and discussed the main findings of the participants' perceptions about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills in regard to the four sub-research questions.

The description of evidence for theme one, as well as for themes two, three, and four were presented in this chapter as a thick description as a way to respect the voiced of the researched. (For more information about thick description, see 3.6 *Strategies for Validating Findings*). I presented the findings using the "TSS" narration model proposed by Dávila (2018) in his doctoral dissertation. This model consists of three steps: (1) the "T" stands for tell; (2) the first "S" stands for show; and (3) the last "S" stands for support. In step one, I presented the findings of the research. In step two, I used direct quotes from the participants' answers in the interview to support findings and make central the voice in the study. To protect the respondents' anonymity, I used pseudonyms. In step three, I supported the findings with information from the literature review that other authors have found about self-regulated learning. Then, I summarize the results from each sub-research question.

Regarding the direct quotes that would be presented in this study, I acknowledge that some of them may have grammatical errors and even vocabulary inconsistencies. However, I decided not to change or correct them because those are direct quotes to place the voice of their

experiences. It is also an indication that their B1 English level is still in a developmental stage. As I researcher, my interpretation of the findings would come after the direct quotes.

Meaning Attributed to the Experience Using Self-Regulated Learning Strategies to Develop Speaking Skills out of the EFL Classroom

This section presents the analyzed data corresponding to research question one. The data came from the interview items one to eight. The responses of participants were clustered in eight units of analysis. Therefore, this section would be divided into eight sub-sections. Table 2 summarizes the eight units of analysis that would be discussed in this section.

Table 2
Units of Analysis that Inform the Sub-Research Question 1

Sub-Research Question	Units of Analysis from the Data
Meaning attributed to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills.	A. Importance of autonomous learning to develop speaking skills.
	B. Reasons to become a self-regulated learner.
	C. Students' perspectives on the meaning of independent learning.
	D. Importance of independent study to develop speaking skills.
	E. Difficulties with developing speaking skills outside the classroom.
	F. Characteristics of a learner with good speaking skills.
	G. Recommendations for beginners English learners to improve their speaking skills.
	H. Recommendations for teachers to help learners improve their speaking skills.

Speaking is considered a challenging skill over writing, reading or listening because it involves using different languages components to convey understandable ideas to the audience. EFL learners in this study have found that self-regulation is an effective way to improve their

speaking language skills outside the EFL classroom. In the subsequent paragraphs, the information that supports the meaning that participants attribute to the experience of using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills is explained in detail.

A. Importance of autonomous learning in developing speaking skills.

This study showed that autonomous learning plays an important role in helping students to (a) develop their academic performance in the English classes and (b) use the target language in real life situations. The results of this study showed that self-regulation or autonomous learning has helped learners to enhance their speaking English skills in their classroom. According to them, SRL has contributed to the development of their speaking skills in regard to classroom participation and academic performance. After applying SRL, they notice that they participate more in the English class and understand better what the teacher explains. On the other hand, self-regulation has been a factor of vital importance that has influenced students using of English for social interaction in real-life situations.

The following direct quotations provided more support to the findings I presented above. Concerning the importance of SRL in academic performance, Valery mentioned, “it is easy to explain my ideas in the English class because I review and understand the information in advance at home.” In the same line of thought, Leo said, “...it helps me to overcome my fear of speaking”. Sebas added, “...it affects my grades because most of the research I do is in English and it is better for me to read the information in English than in Spanish.” Similarly, Jessy added,

One hundred percent. It is very important because of the results that I have had according to the methodology that I have used since I started the course. When I was in first level, I didn't get grades over seventy-three and I didn't understand the English

teachers when they spoke. A partner used to translate what the teacher said, but now I can understand and speak English not as I would like, but I have improved.

Concerning the importance of SRL in developing speaking skills to use English in authentic contexts, participants mentioned that learning a language is based on the ideas of communicate real meaning in real situations. For instance, Jessy expressed, "...I use English to communicate. For example, in a trip or in my job." Furthermore, Sabastian added, "... when I meet people I the gym that are from the United States or from other countries I can talk to them in English." Studies by Goldman (2018) show that communication is a result of a social need to express ourselves. The communicative approach, for instance, establishes that speaking a language is based on the idea of using it in real contexts. That is, our brain needs a purpose for communication like requesting information, arguing, defending our point of view, or transmitting emotions. According to this author, having a communicative purpose expand learners' ability to self-regulated their behavior to speak a language faster because they are aware that English is desired and even required in jobs and academic fields.

B. Reasons to become a self-regulated learner.

The findings reveal that learners became self-regulated learners due to the following reasons (a) they were uninterested learning in English, (b) the methodology used in the class did not meet their needs and interests, (c) insufficient hours of English classes to practice the language. The following direct quotations from the interview data provided support to this finding. Jessy mentioned, "when I was a student in first level I was very bad at English... I don't like English because the methodology of the teacher wasn't adequate and I wasn't interested in the subject, but I wanted to improve by myself."

Alexis added:

It's very important for me to develop my speaking skills, but the time in the class is very limited because the teacher has to teach not only to one student but a lot of students in the class. You don't have enough time with the teacher to focus only on you.

The findings I presented are related to the reasons why individuals become a self-regulated learner after facing failures or deficiencies in the traditional classes. Based on my own experienced as an EFL student and now as an EFL teacher, I recognized that instruction itself is not enough to learn a language. Some students need individualized learning to strengthen their speaking skills. The existing research supported these findings. For instance, individuals become self-regulated learners because they consider that language instruction in a traditional classroom environment is not effective enough to learn a language (Lomb, 2008). According to this author, some students find difficult to achieve their academic expectations in the regular classes that is why they decide to be responsible for their own learning by stating their own strategies.

C. Student's perspectives on the meaning of independent learning.

Students consider independent learning as a way to take a) responsibility for their own learning that involves controlling behavior and actions to attain an objective like time management and organization of a study plan. Similarly, they see self-regulation as the process of stop being overly dependent students and become masters of their own learning. That is, b) educate themselves to expand knowledge without the assistance of a teacher.

The following direct quotations provided more support to the findings presented above in regard to responsibility for SRL, for example, Alexis stated, "...you need to be responsible. First, you need to make a routine. You have to be consistent. You have to find the ways to be an independent learner." Similarly, Jessy added, "it means responsibility because self-

education isn't easy. Independence because we need to be able to do things alone. Invest time because these activities require time. Planning for people who in my case don't like English." These findings support the fact that SRL is a process that involves self-awareness and self-motivation to plan a schedule, set realistic goals, and choose strategies that are adapted to each individual's needs. In addition, it requires a monitor stage and assessment stage in which students put their plans into action and evaluate their performance. Panadero and Tapia (2014) consider that managing self-regulation involves three processes: forethought, performance, and self-reflection phases. In the initial stage, learners visualize the task and how to approach it. They also plan their time and resources to be interested in the task. In the second stage, learners apply the strategies and keep a track of their progress by observing and registering their performance. Finally, during the reflection phase, students analyze if they fulfilled their initial objectives.

Concerning the second perspective about how students see independent learners, I found that they describe SRL as a self-taught process through which they use their own strategies to learn English. They take care of their goals and achievements because they have self-motivation to use their resources to approach challenging tasks. Sebas, for instance said, "It means that you don't need a person like a teacher to stay there checking if you are studying or learning. I think that it means to be self-sufficient." Leo added, "it means to be self-taught and study and learn more on my own." In the same line of thought, Sammy said, "it is important to reinforce knowledge and learn more about other things. To learn more than what the teacher teaches in the class." Similarly, Alexis expressed:

There will always be doubts and there are some things or topics that teachers forget to teach, but you have to practice and learn at home because teachers in the class teach a summary of the subject and students have to expand their knowledge.

Even though SRL is a self-discovering process through which learners use spontaneously resources and strategies, it cannot happen with the help of others that can be technological or human resources. This process is known as zone of proximal development through which learners ask for guidance if the tasks are too challenging. (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Encalada & Sarmiento, 2019).

D. Importance of independent study to develop speaking skills.

Self-regulation is a process that allows students to (a) improve English fluency, (b) evaluate one's actions towards learning and (c) developing individual communication styles. After applying their own methods to approach speaking, learners are able to identify strengths and weaknesses in their processes and keep the ones that contribute to improving the English language components.

According to Sammy, fluency is aspect that demands a lot of time and effort to achieve that is why she considers that the English class itself does not provide enough opportunities to achieve fluency. For example, she stated, "in the English class, we don't have all the information or time to speak fluently." Additionally, Alexis affirmed, "...the English class does not offer enough time to practice the speaking because the teacher has to teach grammar, vocabulary, writing, listening, and speaking." These results found support in the existing literature which mention that polyglots have become self-taught because they consider that most language instruction in a traditional classroom environment is not effective. Some students find difficult to achieve their academic expectations in the regular classes because there is lack of time to practice the language, or they find lectures boring due to lack of interaction. Therefore, learners decide to be responsible for their own learning by planning their own methods (Noprival et al., 2019).

Learners see self-regulation as a way to self-assess their performance to see if they are achieving their goals. With enough practice, they have learned to objectively evaluate their progress, identify gaps in the knowledge and design strategies to improve. This can be seen in the direct quotation of Valery who added that “autonomous learning is very important because I can check where I fail, so for this reason I can practice and study more.” Assessing oneself in self-regulation reinforces academic competence because learners can eliminate weaknesses that may impede their growth. Some researchers agreed with these findings because they said that teaching students how to self-assess increase students’ awareness of the processes they need to change to improve their performance (Xiao & Yang, 2019). According to this author, formative assessment and feedback through rubrics helps students to develop their understanding of how to evaluate peers and then apply the same procedure to their own tasks.

Finding revealed that independent study is necessary to develop individual communication styles. In the English classes, educators normally teach a formal language. However, the findings state that when learners study the language on their own, they develop a personalized way to interact and exchange information with other speakers. As Sebas expressed:

In the class the teacher tells you to say words a specific form, but when you study by yourself, you find the way or specific style to communicate with other people. It’s like your signature. It’s only for you. You only speak like this in English.

Each communicative style depends on the personality and preferences of the individuals. As said by Jarvela and Jarvenoja (2011) people adapt their communicative style according to type of audience they speak to that may be bosses, friends or colleagues. These relationships make learners to use a formal, casual, aggressive or passive language. To summarize the importance of self-regulation for self-regulated learners, I would like to

highlight that it is necessary to show students different ways to communicate the language because real communication uses formal and informal language. Students need to know how language works in different scenarios and develop their personal style to communicate fluently their ideas.

E. Difficulties with developing speaking skills outside the classroom.

Learning outside the classroom is beneficial for students who need a deeper understanding of different areas of knowledge. However, in this study I found that independent learners encountered language difficulties with (a) pronunciation, (b) word order and (c) vocabulary. Similarly, (d) finding language partners in their environment and (e) lack of time to practice English are main challenges which face learners when developing their speaking skills on their own. Each one of these aspects are analyzed in the subsequent paragraphs.

The findings revealed that pronunciation is one of the main difficulties of speaking English. According to Jessy, even though she practices this language at the university and on her own, she feels that she needs to improve pronunciation. For example, she stated, “pronunciation because I have a lot of complications. I don’t know if I get my tongue-tied but I need to repeat and repeat the words. There are words that I cannot pronounce until today.” In the same line of thought, Sebas mentioned that his pronunciation mistakes do not affect the understanding of the language when he speaks with English speakers. Despite the fact that native speakers notice his mistakes, they do not correct his ideas or give him feedback. The conversation simply flows. For example, he stated, “sometimes, I don’t have the correct pronunciation. I mispronounced some words or some letters, but these aspects don’t affect too much the understanding of the language. For a person who really knows the language only says ahhhh he meant this.” Based on the B1 Cambridge Qualifications, learners at this level are able to produce complete ideas in English with some hesitation by using different connectors; they

can easily engage themselves in a conversation by asking and answering questions. However, in regard to pronunciation, B1 learner's must have a neat and comprehensible pronunciation. (Cambridge, 2020). Based on my experience as a teacher, I consider that pronunciation is a demanding aspect of language because learners try to pronounce words as they are written that is why teachers may include phonetics in their lessons to make students aware of this feature.

Findings showed that EFL learners have difficulties with word order specially with collocations or compound nouns. For instance, Sammy expressed, "it's difficult for me to put the words in order. Sometimes, I say the words backwards. For example, star rock instead of rock star." The sequence of words is key factor when communicating in English. The basic pattern for English to make understandable statements is subject, verb and complement. When these elements are inverted, they can communicate different ideas. According to Krashen (1981), mother tongue affects learners making word and sentence order mistakes while producing the target language. For instance, English learners encounter difficulties with placing the adjectives before nouns as in black bird. Similarly, it occurs with collocations as in rock star because in Spanish these patterns are inverted and sometimes extra words are necessary to make legible speech.

Low vocabulary knowledge is another difficulty presented in conversation classes and expressing their ideas and feelings in speaking skill. For instance, Sebas expressed, "I don't find the accurate words to express my ideas. I feel like I need to learn more words." Additionally, EFL learners find it difficult to distinguish words that sound the same but have different meanings. Valery said:

...some words have other meanings. They are not only verbs sometimes are nouns. It is confusing for me, so I practice these words with examples. I try to use these words in a sentence to have an idea of how to use them when I speak.

Limited vocabulary knowledge can impact the development of students' speaking skills. Findings also revealed that self-regulated learners overcome these difficulties by using these words in sentences. I would like to highlight that this strategy can be useful to implement in EFL classes to teach students how to use context clues to understand the meaning of specific words. Even though a word can have multiple meanings, the rest of the sentence gives a clear idea of what is discussed. These findings are inconsistent with a previous study on the role of vocabulary knowledge in speaking development in which low vocabulary knowledge and inadequate lexis are repetitive factors that impede students to achieve English fluency (Khan, Radzuan, Shahbaz, Ibrahim, & Mustafa, 2018).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that practicing English in a non-English speaking country is challenging because it is difficult to find conversation partners that have the same purpose. Therefore, the participants in this study have to practice English on their own out of the classroom setting which impedes them to know whether they are speaking properly or making mistakes. For instance, Alexis mentioned:

I think that it is difficult to find a person to practice speaking. I do this process alone in my house, But I don't know if I do well or badly. I need to know if the other person understands what I am saying.

To meet who are interested in developing their speaking skills is a convenient way to improve English outside the classroom because learners can receive immediate feedback from the audience about their speaking performance. However, learners come across with difficulties to find partners with the same purpose. Even though the process of self-regulation of communication skills involves setting goals, using effective strategies, managing time and environment on their own, the scheme of SRL also requires learners to find study partners to improve their speaking competence (Goldman, 2018). In my experience as an EFL teacher I

recommend students to join to language learning platforms, language exchange programs and conversation clubs in their cities to practice English in an informal and relaxed environment.

Lastly, due to students 'academic assignments and work, they find it difficult to devote more time to self-regulate speaking skills as they would like to. Despite these issues, learners spend a specific amount of time to practice English regularly. As evidence of these findings, take, for example, the following quotes from the interviews. Leo said, "my time to practice English is short because I have other activities to do and I don't have time to practice my skills or my language...10 or 15 minutes at most to practice speaking every day." Jessy added, "lack of time because I work and I need to study English a lot. I have to get up very early in the morning to study English if I can't do it in the afternoon or at night." Sticking to a rigid routine to develop their speaking skills specially for the ones who work and study is hard. That is why developing a strong sense of self-efficacy and being interested in speaking English is what influences learners to believe in their own abilities to attain a goal. These motivational beliefs have an impact on learners managing their time, behavior and environment to stayed focused and avoid distractions. Pintrich (2000b) supported these findings as he states that time management plays a major role in success in all professions and occupations. As part of time management, students learn to prioritize tasks by planning a study timetable to complete desired goals.

F. Characteristics of a learner with good speaking skills.

The findings show that the characteristics of learners with good speaking skills involves (a) pronouncing words correctly, (b) organizing ideas to have logical conversations, (c) using of vocabulary and (d) managing voice modulation. Each characteristic is explained as follows:

One of the characteristics of a learner with a good speaking skills is proper pronunciation. That is, clear and correct pronunciation allows the speaker and listener to

communicate. For example, Jessy stated, "...when someone transmits the message properly. The pronunciation is understood. The person who listens understands the message well." Furthermore, Sebas added, "if you pronounce correctly, the other person can understand better. If you don't speak correctly the listener asks you again what did you say." In the same line of thought, Alexis expressed, "...when a person speaks using the forms of the verbs in present, past, and past participle. When he or she knows how to use verbs, contractions." Ahmed (2017) agreed on that correct pronunciation helps language learners to have comprehensible communication that is why it is advisable that they train themselves to practice the basic elements of pronunciation such as rhythm, intonation and words and sentence stress. According to this author, when students focus their efforts on the readability of pronunciation, they become better English listeners and speakers.

The second characteristic of a learner with good speaking skills is logical order of ideas for speech production. Explaining ideas that are connected to each other make the conversation flow naturally. To illustrate, see the following excerpt from the interview in which Sammy expressed, "...it means to explain very well my ideas in order for the conversation to make sense." Leo added, "...you don't have difficulties speaking in English. You express your ideas quickly, fluently and in a correct form." In this sense, the parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and articles helps learners organize their language to be better communicators. Based on the existing research, effective communication refers to the ability of building sentences to communicate with the audience. (Al Hosni, 2014). According to this author, verbal communication happens when the speaker knows sufficient grammar, vocabulary and structures to produce sentence formation which make the message clear to the audience.

According to the participants' responses, the more vocabulary they know, the more they are able to interact with different audiences. The following direct quotations from the interview data provided support to this finding. Sebas mentioned, "the words that he uses must make the other person understands what he is saying. If he is talking to a friend, in the work or in an interview, he has to speak in different ways and use technical words." Likewise, Alexis added:

When he or she knows how to use verbs, contractions. When he knows a lot of vocabulary. When he speaks using the forms of the verbs in present, past, and past participle. When the person doesn't repeat and say the same sentences or verbs. He changes and use different structures.

I agree with these findings because lexis is the central part of expressing oneself verbally and without sufficient vocabulary language cannot be understood by others. Based on the existing body of literature, even though grammar helps put together ideas, the communication process cannot occur without sufficient knowledge of vocabulary to convey the message to the audience (Lessard-Clouston, 1969). According to this author, vocabulary is the cornerstone of language that allows communication between individuals whose common pattern is speaking the same language.

The four characteristic of a learner with good speaking skills according to the findings is voice modulation. That is, adjusting speakers' voice according to the type of audience and setting where the conversation occurs. Findings demonstrated that speakers' voice goes up or goes down according the situations and the person who they are speaking to. For instance, talking to a boss requires to use a more formal language contrary to communicate with peers or friends. As evidence of these findings, take, for example, the following quotes from the interviews. For instance, when Alexis was inquired about how he knows when a person has

good English speaking skills he expressed, "...when a person doesn't speak slowly or fast. When a person speaks with a normal speed like a native person." Furthermore, Sebas added:

If a person knows English, he speaks loud or soft. He doesn't need to stop and think about the words. He only continues speaking. He is fluent and uses body language because it is another way to make the other person understand when you make expressions with your hands and face.

More support to these findings came from the literature review in which it is stated that voice modulation permits the speaker to express his emotions to the audience by controlling pitch, pace, pause, tone and even body language. Without voice modulation, speech sounds flat and does not engage the listeners (O'Connor, 2012).

G. Recommendations for beginners English speakers to improve their speaking skills.

Learning English as a foreign language can be difficult and learning on your own may seem more challenging; however, independent learners have found alternative ways to ease this process. For instance, (a) creating a study plan, (b) using media tools, and (c) finding conversation are some suggestions that participants of this study apply to improve speaking skills outside the classroom.

The findings revealed that autonomous learners design a study plan that helps them to know exactly what topics to study, the exact amount of time to invest and resources to approach a specific task. According to the findings, a study plan helps individuals to organize work and activities and avoid procrastination. To illustrate, take the following direct quote by Jessy. She said,

Responsibility, dedication and discipline. These three factors are fundamental because they help to plan a study routine. For example, in my routine I have a notebook to take notes. I also use the book because I need to check the lesson that the teacher will give me the next day. I try to pronounce the new words when they send us an exercise. I check the grammar, I read, I memorize and finally practice a lot pronunciation. I do this routine every day even Saturdays and Sundays.

Responsibility and dedication demand self-regulated learners to create a study plan to organize their activities according to the objectives they have set. The portfolio and the diary are planning strategies to record learners' progress or reflections. Both tools enable learners to write the time spent on each task, number of attempts and general notes about vocabulary and grammar. The planning stage self-direct learners to know how to approach a task (Zeng & Goh, 2018). As said by this author, learners using a study timetable are able to focus more on tasks and avoid careless attitude.

Media has become a central part of the lifestyle of students. Appealing to their interests in music, movies and books is a more engaging experience of learning English as foreign language on their own. More support for these results can be seen in the following quotations taken from the interviews data. Sebas mentioned, "I recommend watching movies or series that they have already seen before in Spanish, so they can watch them in English with subtitles." Sammy said,

... watch movies and listen to music in English. It's important to listen and translate to know what they are saying. These tools help me a lot because you learn words you didn't know or phrases you didn't understand before. Also, I read books because they have new words that you never listen or see in other parts.

Valery added,

Search in YouTube songs of any band. You can repeat again and again the songs with the lyrics to understand what the song tries to say to you. See movies with subtitles because if you listen to the movies and read the subtitles you practice more vocabulary and pronunciation.

These results found support in the existing literature. Undergraduate self-regulated learners in Taiwan mention that YouTube, videos and music give them provide them with opportunities to practice their English speaking skills concerning pronunciation and word stress. In addition, learners improved their general knowledge regarding information about culture, society, and current social and political issues (Chien, 2019).

Finding conversation partners is the third recommendation, interviewees consider necessary to practice speaking. Meeting a friend or a classmate that shows the same interest in speaking English facilitates the process of using grammar rules, vocabulary and structure that has been learned in the class. For instance, Alexis recommends that beginners learners “find a person. Maybe a classmate who also wants to learn English, so they can practice together and develop their speaking skills.” From my experience as an EFL learner, I consider that finding a language exchange partner or a friend who has the same or better English command is one way to speak a language fast because learners can copy accent and structures from their partners. In addition, learners can realize about their mistakes and receive immediate feedback from listeners (Cartaginense, 2010).

H. Recommendations for teachers to help students to improve their speaking skills outside the classroom.

According to the findings, EFL participants in this study consider that teachers are an important part of their SRL practices because educators know about activities that may help

learners to develop their speaking skills outside the classroom with and without the use of technology, such (a) learning platforms, (b) conversation clubs, and (c) media tools. More support for these findings came from the interviews. For example, take the direct quotations by Jessy and Sammy. Jessy said, “teachers should explain to us what kind of activities outside the class we can do. For example, a teacher showed us applications like Kahoot, Wlingua to practice vocabulary and grammar.” Sammy expressed, “teachers should tell us to listen to songs and learn the lyrics because it is more easy to understand English.” Leo added, “they can recommend us virtual platforms on which you can interact with the computer and with other people.” Furthermore, Alexis expressed, “teachers must recommend to join speaking groups like conversation clubs. Listen to music. See interesting movies or videos, YouTube, tutorials because part of speaking is listening. If you listen, you know how to pronounce the words and contractions.”

In the same line of thought Valery added:

Teachers should motivate students to go to the conversation clubs because they can practice with other friends or vocabulary and pronunciation. Practice speaking in front of the mirror because you can see yourself and practice your vocabulary and intonation. Use of flash cards to practice vocabulary of difficult words.

Sebas went on to say:

Teachers should teach students ways they can learn by themselves. For example, if you like music, learn and sing a song in English. Watch a movie in the class and ask them to finish it at home and say the summary of it. The teacher can make a questionnaire to check if student’s understood the movie.

These findings were supported by the existing body of research which recognized the value of educators in helping learners to become masters of their own learning. To achieve this

objective, teachers are required to have the knowledge about how self-regulation works and strategies to show students how to focus on academic and personal goals (Nejabati, 2015). Research has suggested that self-regulation should be included in curriculum and teachers' lesson plans. Similarly, coordinators should provide teachers with handbooks that contain guidelines to teach SRL strategies. To sum up, formal learning inside the classroom must contribute to developing students' lifelong learning.

In conclusion, findings demonstrated the research participants acknowledged that self-regulation is an important element to develop their speaking skills because it has helped them improve their academic performance in their classes and used English in real scenarios outside the classroom context. With self-regulation they have become responsible for their own learning. That is, they have been able to create study plans, use media tools, and find conversation partners to facilitate the process of practicing speaking. They use sources like music, videos and books to get input and practice speaking through drilling and repetition of chunks of sentences. I also found that independent learning does not mean working on your own. In fact, participants of in this study recognized that they needed the help of teachers to start self-regulation because educators provided them with guidelines about activities and strategies to foster their English speaking skills.

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies Participants Use to Develop Speaking Skills out of the EFL classroom

This section presents the analyzed data corresponding to research question two. The data came from the interview items nine to twelve. The responses of participants were clustered in four units of analysis. Therefore, this section would be divided into four sub-sections. Table 3 summarizes the four units of analysis that would be discussed in this section.

Table 3
Units of Analysis that Inform the Sub-Research Question 2

Sub-Research Question	Units of Analysis from the Data
Self-regulated learning strategies used to improve speaking skills.	A. Strategies to improve speaking skills.
	B. Effectiveness of SRL strategies for speaking production.
	C. Amount of time devoted to practicing speaking skills outside the classroom.
	D. Course of action to reinforce speaking.

Learning styles vary from one individual to another. Even though teachers or friends recommend that they use specific strategies to build autonomy, they make choices that benefit them considering their needs and interests. The strategy selection criteria are dependents on a trial and error process and the learners' preferences. In the subsequent paragraphs, I inform the findings about the strategies that SRL learners use more to develop their speaking skills on their own.

A. Strategies to improve speaking skills.

All six participants had different strategies to approach English speaking skills outside the classroom. They accommodate their strategies according to their learning styles and preferences. The participants mention (a) making notes, (b) learning platforms, (c) mass media, (d) conversation partners and (e) reading books as the cornerstone of their autonomous learning to improve English speaking skills.

The findings reveal that note taking enhances English pronunciation because it helps learners to comprehend and remember new lexis. One of the six participants mentioned that if

she finds difficult to utter a specific word while reading a text aloud, she looks it up in a dictionary to be sure about the accurate pronunciation. She also writes the new vocabulary with their corresponding pronunciation in a notebook to go back to their notes when she has doubts about the correct articulation of new vocabulary. The following direct quotation from Jessy provided more support to the finding presented above. She said:

First, I need the English book because I need to check vocabulary while reading it. Also, I need to have a notebook because I have to take notes because the notes help me with the memory while writing. I try to pronounce the words while reading. When I am reading, I am speaking and If I don't understand one word I look for it in the dictionary and when I listen funny my pronunciation, I practice it. In my daily planning, there is always speaking.

I think we could learn a lot from Jessy's experience. If teachers encourage students to use note taking, the progress on speaking a language may improve because lexical knowledge helps people express themselves more about different topics. Likewise, using online dictionaries allows language learners to imitate the models of American or British pronunciation. For instance, Cambridge dictionary permits students to see the meaning of words, hear the articulation and model the given patterns. In this respect, the existing body of literature mentions that note taking allows learners to store information from different sources by keeping a record of new vocabulary and grammar structures (Roy, Brine, & Murasawa, 2016).

Two participants reported that they use different learning platforms to improve their speaking skills in English. They explained that Duolingo, Glossika, Pimsleur and lyricstraining have drilling and repetition activities that help them improve writing, listening and speaking skills. They emphasize that the repetition strategy encourages them to improve vocabulary

acquisition, sentence formation, grammar use and pronunciation. Alexis reflected on how her extensive use of learning platforms to improve speaking by using the drill technique that involves listening to a pre-recorded audio by native English speaker and repeating it with the same intonation, pronunciation and accent. For instance, Alexis said:

I use some Apps like Duolingo, Glossika, and Pimsleur. They make you speak. These Apps improve your speaking skills. You improve how to write, how to speak and you learn some vocabulary. Pimsleur and Glossika are Apps where you have to only listen. They have audios of 30 minutes. They tell you to repeat after them. After that, you can make a large sentence or have conversation.

In the same line of thought, Leo added:

I use online virtual platforms that grade grammar, speaking and pronunciation. With Lyricstraining you learn English with music. It has the audio in English and you have the lyrics. While you sing, you learn the lyrics. You listen to the lyrics and complete the blanks. With Duolingo, I have learned a lot because it makes me speak into the microphone and also grades my speaking.

Learning platforms help learners become more independent from teachers and work at their own pace. They also can regulate when to learn depending on their time to practice speaking skills with technology related sources. These findings found support in the literature review that mentions that any form of learning that utilizes electronic technology is known as E-learning. This type of learning promotes learners' autonomy because learners can find different sources to improve English skills without the instruction of teachers (Nurul, Yasmin, & Noor, 2015). According to this author, students using E-learning are considered self-regulated learners because they look for alternative ways to improve their English knowledge on their own.

I found that eighty percent of the research participants asserted that they obtain input to speak English from watching and listening entertainment content on mass media. Music, movies and social networking in general has helped them to acquire vocabulary, understand grammar structure and improve pronunciation. Participants select the resources to learn English according to their preferences and interests. Furthermore, two of the participants mentioned that they prefer to listen to British singers because they speak English more slowly and the pronunciation is understandable. For example, Leo said, “I listen to music of British singers because it is very fun and British singers speak English slowly, so I understand the lyrics, the pronunciation, and the words. It’s very easy to understand.”

In the same line of thought, Valery expressed:

My favorite British band is Little mix. I listen to the lyrics, pause, read and try to learn the lyrics to practice pronunciation. I use social networking like Instagram or I follow pages that post pictures with lyrics of songs in English. So they help me to practice my pronunciation and my vocabulary.

In the same vein of thought, Jessy added:

I listen to music in British English. I like a French girl who sings in English very beautifully. It is different when I listen to Madonna. Madonna sings very well but I don’t understand the words she says. For that reason, I like the British English.

Pursuing this further, songs and movies are chosen by learners because these activities are aligned with their tastes and preferences. For instance, Sebas mentioned that he prefers listening to singers whose songs have slang words. He mentions that even though he acknowledges that it is difficult to understand the accent of black people, he challenges himself to learn more lexis and structures. He said, “I learn songs in English specially rap because I

like nigga. It sounds good for me, but it is difficult. I was practicing one song and I spent two hours only learning two verses”.

Sammy expressed:

I listen to music in English. I listen to songs twice or three times. I translate the paragraphs of the song for me to understand. I watch interesting movies. For example, action and science fiction. If I don't like the movies and don't pay attention to them. With the movies, I watch them first in Spanish next in English to understand and relate the movie in Spanish.

In addition, participants mentioned that mass media is a source of knowledge from which they can learn about general facts and fields. They refer to tutorials and YouTube videos as influential sources to broaden their minds.

For example, Alexis said:

I see Ted Talks and tutorials. They are videos about important and interesting information. You can increase your knowledge about different topics. I see English movies with subtitles in Netflix. When you listen to English, you can repeat and your brain assimilates how to pronounce, how to speak, and how to use contractions.

Watching has allowed learners to be engaged with entertaining content that presents language use in real life contexts, such as asking for help, ordering food in a restaurant, complaining for a service, etc. For example, Alexis added, “I watch movies because when you listen you learn how native speakers use English.”

According to the existing body of literature review, watching movies helps learners to understand English unconsciously because body language on movies gives learners a clue of what the conversation is about. It helps them to relate the vocabulary with its meaning and

function (Bravo et al., 2017). More support for these findings came from the literature review that states that listening to music helps language learners to embrace the speaker's accent, syntax and vocabulary. Due to the fact that lyrics consists of formal and informal expressions, it increases learners' memorization of vocabulary (Bravo et al., 2017). Through music learners can assimilate unconsciously the elements of the language because part of the lyrics is stuck in learner's long term memory which can be easily retrieved and used during the speech act. Boekaerts and Minnaert (1999) also supported these findings as they said that informal learning from mass media, such as TV, internet, radio had added value to autonomous learning because it facilitate learning English more spontaneously and effortlessly.

Finding conversation partners is another strategy that two of the participants have identified as an efficient way to improve their speaking skills. By practicing English regularly, they can encourage and help each other to apply the knowledge they have acquired by themselves or in the English classes. The following direct quotations provided more support to the findings presented above. Alexis said, "...I think in English and talk with someone. It's a good strategy because my brain assimilates and gets used to speaking in English." In the same line thought, Sammy mentioned that she watches movies and later discusses with her mother about the movie in English. She sees her mother as an opportunity to practice the language. She said,

After I watched movies, I talked to my mom about the movies in English because my mom knows a little of English. In my career, I read books for the vocabulary because they introduce new words that I never see in another part. Later, I talk to my friends about the book and I use the new words I have learned. I almost always speak with my daughter in English.

Likewise, Sebas added,

I watch movies, videos, or series. Some of the new series are only in English with subtitles in English and some in Spanish. You hear the correct pronunciation of the words and you can practice and learn more. I sometimes apply the vocabulary I hear when I meet new people from other countries in the gym. It's useful because I express myself in the way I like.

Based on the literature review and personal experiences of polyglots, finding a conversation partner is an effective way to practice a target language because learners put into practice what they have learned in class or by themselves. By using this strategy, learners can receive immediate feedback from people who have the same or more advanced English level. Finding a classmate or person who has the same interests in learning a language facilitates the process of speaking it because learners can lose the fear of making mistakes or giving feedback to each other (Noprival et al., 2019). Finding peers of people interested in practicing the language in a non-speaking country as Ecuador is hard. However, using media tools and joining to conversation clubs and online platforms provide independent learners with opportunities to set goals, control their performance and reflect on their results.

Lastly, three of the six participants asserted that reading books is an effective strategy to acquire vocabulary and grammar to build accurate and meaningful sentences while developing their speaking skills. For more support to these findings came from the direct quotations of Jessy and Sammy. For instance, Jessy said, "I read articles in English. I read the vocabulary and memorize it." For instance, Sammy said, "...I really like reading books. For example, the picture of Dorian Grey. The books that are originally written in English help me to learn how to write and to speak with other people. Books expand vocabulary." Valery

added, “when you read books. You can practice more your grammar which is an important part to express your ideas in English because you know how to structure paragraphs.”

Reading comprehension involves a decoding process through which learners understand the meaning of new lexis, grammar, morphology and morph syntax. It serves as an example of how to use the target language in different speaking scenarios. According to the findings. When learners read, they internalized the language structures that can be applied in the speaking process. The studies of Lomb (2008) revealed that the most effective ways to acquire vocabulary to produce the language is through reading and looking up for new lexis. Translation and comparative reading between the mother tongue and the target language has helped polyglots to speak many languages. In sum, reading is an advantage to develop speaking skills because it helps learners to expand and store the language components in the long term memory.

B. Effectiveness of SRL strategies for speaking production.

The results point to learners’ speaking skills progress because (a) they have improved their grades in the learning platforms as well as in their classes and now (b) they are able to understand and produce the language in face-to-face conversation. They have noticed that their grades have improved in contrast to past experiences in which their English classroom performance was low. In addition, they mentioned that they have improved their comprehension of input while conversing with teachers, peers or native English speakers. They are also able to communicate their ideas fluently without the uninterrupted thought of translation or long pauses.

According to the participants achieving academic success involves time investment and determination to stick to their goals. As a result of self-regulation, they have improved their grades in their English exams as well as in the scores of the learning platforms. More support

for these findings came from the interviews. For example, take the direct quotations by Leo and Johana. For instance, Leo said, “I have improved in my tests of the platforms and the tests of the teacher.”

Similarly, Jessy added:

For the results I have had. Everything I have done has helped me to improve my grades because when I was a student in first level and I didn't apply this methodology, I studied but I couldn't get grades over 7/10 but today I have an average of 9/10, but it is an investment of time and there isn't a day that I don't study English.

Based on the findings, learners' autonomy allows them to improve their academic grades and their performance in and outside the English classroom because they are able to set goals, choose their strategies to attain those goals, self-reflect on their progress and be responsible for their learning (Dundon & Chadwick, 2012). That is why self-regulation should be included as part of teachers' lesson plans because it significantly improves students' academic performance in the class and also prepares them to be self-sufficient for the real world.

Another way in that the participants of this study acknowledged that their self-regulatory strategies work is because they have noticed that they are able to understand and produce the language more naturally. They said that SRL has helped them to improve their speech clarity and intelligibility when they express themselves in the classroom and in real-life communication with foreigners. According to Valery, Alexis and Jessy, and Sebas, intelligibly and fluency has improved when they learn English on her own. Valery said, “when I am in the class and the teacher asks for something I can answer automatically. I realized that my English speaking skills are better than in the past.” Alexis expressed, “I began to think and speak in English more easily like I do in Spanish. When I talk to my classmates, I can see their mistakes.

They speak a little slowly. I haven't had problems in the English class." Likewise, Jessy added, "now, I understand the teacher. Before I didn't understand nothing. Now, I can speak more fluently. In the past, I reviewed and reviewed but I only memorized and when I forgot some words it was very complicated to speak."

Sebas went on to add:

When I talk to people from America or England in my gym and I know how to talk to them. I always make mistakes but they are not big mistakes. We talk in English because they don't speak correctly Spanish. It's a way to practice my English. When they see that I don't understand something, they help me to make me understand.

SRL represents an advantage for learners since they have been able to become more fluent in the language by gaining confidence in their skills. They are able to express their ideas spontaneously and coherently (Malley, Chamot, Stewbner, Kupper, & Russo, 2006). According to this author, self-regulated learners become more aware of the speaking components like intonation, register, and pronunciation when they have more exposure to use English in formal and informal contexts.

C. Amount of time devoted to practicing speaking skills outside the classroom.

The amount of hours that participants invest in producing their speaking skills varies from person to person. One hundred percent of the interviews asserted that they estimate a number of minutes or hours a week to develop their speaking skills with emphasis on pronunciation and listening input. For instance, Jessy said, "I spend 30 minutes practicing speaking because I practice pronunciation more. I use the translator and Wlingua because I listen and listen and I repeat." Sammy mentioned, "I think 1 hour no more. I try to practice in the weekdays two or three times." Alexis added, "I think 5 minutes per day. Two hours a week. It depends sometimes I forget to practice." Sebas mentioned, "I think 20 minutes 3 days per

week.” Leo added, “20 minutes per day. I sing, read, and listen to music.” In the same vein, Valery expressed:

I practice 2 hours every day. In my journey to my house I listen to music because I have my playlist in English. I listen to new vocabulary or I revise the vocabulary from the English class and I practice it aloud. I correct myself when I speak.

SRL is a challenging approach that demands time and responsibility from learners. It requires learners to take priority over other aspects of their lives and set aside a specific time to study and produce English (O’Connor, 2012). Even though time management requires a sense of discipline and self-efficacy, learners who are able to deal with it have experienced progress in speaking a language. They have improved confidence, increased vocabulary and enhanced communication skills in different educational and social contexts.

D. Course of action to reinforce speaking.

Findings showed that learners have a plan B or a course of action when they notice that specific strategies are not useful to project their academic or personal goals. They suggest (a) choosing strategies that appeal to one’s interests and preferences and (b) seeking help from teachers or peers when one finds difficulties in learning on their own.

One hundred percent of the participants mention that they always select strategies that keep them engaged in learning and producing English, otherwise they look for other ones that help them fulfill the expected results. For instance, Valery said, “If I don’t like a strategy, I don’t do that anymore. If I don’t feel motivated with a strategy, I don’t learn anything.” Sebas mentioned that the strategies he chooses must be entertaining and engaging for him, otherwise he quit these activities and look for other ones that appeal to his personal interests. For example, he said, “if it doesn’t work is because it is boring because I feel like it is a class

activity. Something that isn't my own decision or the teachers wants me to do. I try to find a new activity." In the same vein, Sammy added, "if the activities are not helping me is because they are not interesting for me, so I don't continue with these activities." Every student has an individual learning style that adjusts to his needs and interests. There is a noticeable improvement in students' academic and speaking performance when they select their own strategies. Existing research supported these findings as it has been highlighted that the more learning experiences students have accumulated with their engagement of technology outside the classroom, the more they self-initiate their autonomous learning with the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies that make their learning more attractive and favorable (Lai & Gu, 2011). According to this author, students analyze how to approach a task and choose strategies according to their learning styles and interests. Learners generally feel a bond with music, technology, movies, video games that is why they select strategies that are aligned with their interests.

Participants of this study acknowledged that is important to ask for help from teachers, tutors or peers about what self-regulatory strategies are effective to develop speaking skills. In this sense, Alexis expressed:

I try to find other strategies, but If I don't find a strategy I have to find someone, an English teacher because he knows vocabulary, grammar, and knows how to speak in English. I will search a teacher or I will join speaking groups because I need someone to help me.

According to the existing research, self-regulated learners are aware of the factors and limitations that influence their learning. That is why if they notice that the strategies that they chose are not ineffective, they ask for guidelines from teachers (Tsuda & Nakata, 2013). That

is, autonomous learners consider that teachers have the necessary experience to show them how to access to resources from which they can obtain strategies.

In conclusion, findings demonstrated that the research participants select their self-regulated learning strategies according to their learning preferences and interests. That is why each learner has different activities that are efficient to develop their speaking skills at their own pace. The results revealed that making notes, learning platforms, movies, music, conversation partners and reading texts are considered to be the most effective sources to enhance speaking by drilling models provided by native speakers. One hundred percent of the learners concurred that technology facilitates language production because it provides them with different sources to get input to produce the language.

Speaking Areas Stressed through Self-Regulated Learning Strategies to Increase Speaking

This section presents the analyzed data corresponding to research question three. The data came from the interview items fourteen to sixteen. The responses of participants were clustered in two units of analysis. Therefore, this section would be divided into two sub-sections. Table 4 summarizes the two units of analysis that would be discussed in this section.

Table 4
Units of Analysis that Inform the Sub-research Question 3

Sub-Research Question	Units of Analysis from the Data
Speaking areas stressed through self-regulated learning strategies to increase speaking.	A. Language components to develop speaking skills. B. Amount of time practicing speaking components.

Findings informed that speaking English as a foreign language and holding understandable conversations involves investing a considerable amount of time to practice

pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, spoken grammar, fluency, accuracy, communication strategies, and accent. However, the results shown that learners put emphasis on only five of these components because they consider that effective language production is associated with them. The information concerning these five elements is detailed on the subsequent paragraphs.

A. Language components participants focus more when developing their speaking skills.

I found that the speaking language components that the participants stress more while practicing their speaking skills are: (1) spoken grammar, (2) word order, (3) pronunciation, (4) vocabulary, (5) fluency and (6) accuracy. Participants give emphasis to these components because all of them work together to create meaningful and understandable speeches between the speaker and the receiver in the communication process.

Based on the results, twenty percent of participants in this study mentioned that spoken grammar is the basics of developing speaking skills. They mentioned that grammar is necessary to put together the parts of the speech as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, articles, prepositions or conjunctions and make meaningful ideas. These patterns allow eloquent communication among speakers who use the English as the common channel of communication. For example, Jessy said:

Grammar for me is the main component that helps me with the speech and the memory. Grammar has many rules and makes the pronunciation easy. For me, grammar is everything. It is like a mathematical formula. If I forget grammar, I can't speak. I can't pronounce.

Building sentences for EFL learners is a demanding task that is why grammar is necessary to recognize language patterns that are different from the mother tongue. Every language has its own grammatical structure that cannot be switched or altered. Even though

grammar is unquestionable necessary for speaking a language, learners do not have to limit the production of the language to this component unless they are assessed (Krashen & Kiss, 1996).

The second component that participants focus on when they develop their speaking skills is word order. The arrangement of ideas affects the understandability of a language. For instance, Sammy said, "...sometimes ordering the words is difficult for me. I have problems organizing ideas. I say for example star rock instead of rock star. Sometimes, I don't mention the subject." The proper sequence of words is another essential component in the study of grammar because it influences the comprehension of the message for the audience (Nation & Yamamoto, 2010). According to this author, EFL learners in the initial stages of learning a language tend to use translation to fasten the process of understanding vocabulary and grammar structures. Even though this process is not worthless, learners must look for other strategies to achieve their academic goals that involve the use of more cognitive and metacognitive skills.

The findings reveal that the third component that EFL learners focus more when they develop their speaking skills is pronunciation because they consider that if they mispronounce the words, the audience would not understand the message and the communication does not flow. For more support for these finding came from the interview. For example, take the direct quotations by Sammy, Valery and Sebas.

For instance, Sammy expressed, "pronunciation is so complicated for me because I always forget to pronounce the past or past participle forms of verbs when I am speaking." In the same line of thought, Valery added, "if I don't have a good pronunciation when I explain my ideas, the other person doesn't understand me. The conversation doesn't flow." Sebas also mentioned, "pronunciation because English needs to sound good to make myself understand better to other people when I am speaking." Similarly, Alexis added:

I usually practice pronouncing verbs endings. When I want to put a verb in past, present, or present perfect and also in the contractions of the sentences. Native people always use contractions and a teacher told me in the past that If I know all the forms of verbs, my speaking skills will be very good.

According to the existing body of literature, correct pronunciation is the basics of an effective communication in a target language. Learners stress the importance of being understood by enunciating every word of their speech correctly and passing the message to the audience in order to have an interactive communication (Bravo et al., 2017).

The fourth component of speaking that learners give special attention is vocabulary. Participants mention that they need to learn more vocabulary because they still have difficulties in finding the correct lexis to express themselves in different contexts and audiences. For instance, Valery said, "...vocabulary. If I don't know the right the word or verb is difficult to explain my ideas." Sebas added, "...vocabulary because I can use easier words or combine them and use them in different ways, but they mean the same." According to the participants knowing dynamic and rich vocabulary expands communication and knowledge in different fields. Real communication is a result of adequate vocabulary which is acquired from different input sources such as reading, listening or be involved in real English conversations (Halici & Mede, 2018). Vocabulary as well as the language components mentioned above play a crucial role in oral communication because they allow learners to link chunks of words or phrases to develop comprehensible and interactive communication.

Fluency is the fifth component of speaking that leaners emphasize while practicing their speaking skills on their own. According to the participants, an EFL learner must be fluent as native speakers. That is, speaking coherently with a normal speed to avoid unnecessary pauses that interrupt communication. For instance, Alexis said, "...fluency because native people

speak fluently and if I speak very slowly is boring for the other person and we waste much time.” Likewise, Sebas added, “fluency, if you talk constantly you don’t misspelled words or make mistakes.” These finding found support in the existing body of literature that states that fluency is the result of a comprehensible input. If students practice spoken grammar, word order, pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy every day, they will acquire new language forms which will improve their fluency while they communicate their ideas the illocutionary act (Chien, 2016; Liu, 2015). To improve speaking fluency, learners must spend sufficient and equal time practicing input and output skills (Nation, 2007). That is, good EFL speakers are the ones who are able to communicate their ideas fluently. However, being fluent for the participants of this study means to make oneself understood to the audience even though in that attempt they may make minor mistakes.

Accuracy is the last component that learners focus when they develop their speaking skills. It refers to the ability that learners have to produce grammatically correct sentences. Findings revealed that word order and grammar structure are key factors to make oneself understood. For example, Valery said, “accuracy is the logical order of words. If I don’t organize my ideas or I use grammar incorrectly, the person who listens to me never understands me.” Similarly, Leo asserted, “...accuracy is really necessary because the logical order of words helps me to express my ideas correctly.” In this respect, it seems that students care about transmitting a clear message to the audience that is why they acknowledge that accuracy needs to be strengthen through the correct use of grammar in their speech. I found that listening and reading input benefits the oral production of a language because they provide students with the basics of how to build sentences in English (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2016).

B. Amount of time practicing speaking components.

Based on the findings, each individual invests different amount of time practicing spoken grammar, pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary. The study sessions are contingent on students' free time that sometimes is reduced due to personal or academic duties. For instance, 90% of the participants consider that 30 minutes a day is enough to study and practice speaking. On the other hand, 10% of the participants have a strict routine to spend at least one hour developing their speaking skills every day. The following direct quotations from the interview provided support to this finding. Jessy mentioned, "I spend 30 minutes in grammar. In pronunciation 15 minutes. I practice them every day even it is Saturday or Sunday." Sammy added, "vocabulary:15 minutes, accuracy:30 minutes. I don't have a specific time with pronunciation. I think 10 minutes." Valery added, "... pronunciation: 30 minutes. Vocabulary: 45 minutes. Intonation: 30 minutes. Accuracy: 30 minutes." Alexis, expressed, "I don't practice these components separately. When I see a movie I practice the three of them. Maybe 30 minutes for spoken grammar, vocabulary and fluency. I have routine but not a specific one." Sebas mentioned, "vocabulary: 20 minutes. Fluency: 20 minutes. Pronunciation: 20 minutes. It could be that in one hour I practice the three elements. It could be once, twice or three times a week. It depends of how busy I am." In the same line of thought, Leo went on to say, "I practice accent, fluency, vocabulary and accuracy. It depends on my free time. Sometimes, I practice all these elements in 10 or 5 minutes per day. Sometimes, I practice pronunciation when I'm walking on the street. I try to find free time to practice English."

Each participant in this study spends a different amount of time practicing these components. According to the findings, success in learning a language depends more the selection of appropriate strategies rather than on the length of time practicing the components of the language. These findings echoes the results of the study of Schunk and Zimmerman

(1989) as they said that learners must self-regulate their behavior, motivation, and cognition by managing their time and learning environment.

In conclusion, EFL self-regulated learners practice speaking language components to communicate a clear message to the audience. Spoken grammar is the basics to produce the language because it shows learners appropriate ways to structure sentences. Similarly, being knowledgeable about formal and informal vocabulary has helped participants to match language register with the type of audience they are talking to. Furthermore, being fluent for participants means to express themselves as naturally as possible ignoring minor mistakes that do not necessary affect the comprehension of their ideas. This study also revealed that the participants give special attention to pronunciation because poor pronunciation cause misunderstandings in the illocutionary act. In general, users of the spoken language need to practice these components regularly and give them equal importance in order to develop intelligible communication in real-life situations.

Sources from which Learners Obtain Self-Regulated Learning Strategies to Grow Speaking Skills

This section presents the analyzed data corresponding to research question four. The data came from the interview items seventeen to nineteen. The responses of participants were clustered in three units of analysis. Therefore, this section would be divided into three sub-sections. Table 5 summarizes the three units of analysis that would be discussed in this section.

Table 5
Units of Analysis that Inform the Sub-research Question 4

Sub-Research Question	Units of Analysis from the Data
Sources from which self-regulated learning strategies are obtained to grow speaking skills.	A. Criteria for selecting self-regulated learning strategies.
	B. Main sources from which learners obtain SRL strategies.
	C. Sources to find SRL strategies.

According to the personal experience of each participant in this study, being a self-regulated involves a self-reflection process to explore one’s learning preferences to make the right choices about strategies that would keep one motivated to grow speaking skills. The criteria to select accurate strategies and the main sources from which learners obtain their strategies are summarized in the next paragraphs.

A. Criteria for selecting self-regulated learning strategies.

The self-regulation process requires that learners choose their strategies carefully to improve their speaking skills. The participants of this study asserted that the three criteria to select these appropriate means depends on the (1) analysis of task difficulty and (2) learning preferences. Learners work strategically to decide materials, time and actions to achieve goals. The following paragraphs give a more detailed explanation on the principles for selecting SRL strategies.

According to the findings, before learners achieve an academic objective in regard to developing speaking skills, they design a strategic plan. They analyze a task and decide convenient ways to approach it. Similarly, they identify possible difficulties that may occur during the process and choose strategies considering their self-motivation beliefs to learn and speak English as a second language. For example, take the direct quotation of Jessy. She said:

First, I analyze the subject in the first day of classes and identify the possible difficulties I may have. Later, I revise the student's book because it has all contents that the teacher explains in the class. Finally, I apply the strategies. I use a notebook, book, I prepare the class. I try to pronounce the new words. Finally, I write a summary of all the subject. If the results are good, I carry on with the same strategies, otherwise I change them. Until now all the strategies I have applied in English, have had good results.

This means that SRL learners apply trial and error strategies with the aim of succeeding in developing their speaking skills. If they see real progress, they continue using them, otherwise they look for other ones that suit their learning styles. Based on the literature review, cognitive and metacognitive strategies benefit learners who experience problems at understanding and producing English (Zeng & Goh, 2018). This author considers that before completing a task in regard to the language spoken production, autonomous learners make decisions about the best strategies to achieve learning outcomes. This primary process is known as forethought phases in which learners analyze a task, set goals, and design a strategic planning.

Findings showed that learning styles are the second criteria that learners consider to select the strategies that would encourage them to accomplish academic goals. 100% of the participants have their own methods and preferred style to practice their speaking skills. For example, in this study visual and auditory participants mentioned that they select activities that catch their attention and interests such as music, videos, tutorials and books. In this respect, Sebas mentioned, "I choose things that I don't feel like they are school activities or homework and I choose things that I like." In the same line of thought, Valery mentioned:

It depends of my tastes. If there is something that draws my attention. For example, in YouTube I search for makeup tutorials or songs. I try to find videos about my career or the English class. I search for books that are interesting for me like Harry Potter and

Narnia. These elements help me a lot when I talk to other people because they make me feel good and give my confidence to speak.

Based on the findings, I can say that students develop their language skills when they take responsibility of their own learning and are able to choose the best methods and resources that fit their needs and interests. When they are autonomous, they are aware of their strengths and limitations and look for alternatives to achieve goals. Studies about learning practices in Ecuador state that self-efficacy and motivation are current trends in SRL that encourage EFL learners to use self-recording videos to develop speaking skills (Bravo et al., 2017; Choez & Tenelema, 2017; Encalada & Sarmiento, 2019). In sum, self-awareness of one's strengths and interests gives learners the possibility to become masters of their own learning in which they select their own methods and strategies to approach a task.

B. Main sources from which learners obtain SRL strategies.

Fifty percent of the autonomous learners mentioned that teachers are the first source of knowledge from which they obtain self-regulated learning strategies. According to the researched, teachers have the knowledge to give learners instructional support about SRL. They can obtain strategies, techniques and methods for encouraging their self-regulation process. For instance, Sebas said, "teachers from the university and my former English institute gave me ideas about the activities that I could do, but I chose by myself." Alexis added, "...recommendations of from my teachers. Once, an English teacher recommended me listening to music and watch videos or movies on internet."

Similarly, Jessy said:

Teachers because they have the experience in teaching. For example, a very methodological teacher helped with some guidelines such as organize myself in my house in the way that I would like to study. He told me that I can use a notebook. The

teacher gave me some activities. He told me to take notes and listen in music in English with headphones. All teachers have different methodologies but I don't change my study methodology.

Pursuing this further, studies about the role of self-regulation in EFL learning concurred that SRL still depends on teachers. There is also the misconception that students self-regulating their learning through online sites may not have the same quality or effectiveness as face-to-face classes (Bravo et al., 2017). In other words, it is believed that learners still rely on extrinsic motivation from teachers to start a self-regulation process. Based on the results, I may say that in the Ecuadorian educational context, teachers must be prepared about how to instruct students about SRL strategies.

The second source from which learners obtained their strategies is the internet. Students consider internet as a resourceful tool in and out the EFL classroom because it allows them to be engaged in activities that appeal to their interests like music or movies that facilitate English oral production. For instance, Sammy mentioned, "internet because you can find all the activities to practice English, specially speaking; for example, songs, books, movies." Furthermore, internet is a learning tool that enhances tutorials with native speakers or people who have a high command of English and teach useful tips to understand grammar, contractions, pronunciation, intonation and slang. In this sense, 20% of the participants mentioned that they follow polyglots on YouTube because they explain tips of how to become fluent in English by applying the same tips that have worked for them. For example, Alexis mentioned watching videos of polyglots who give unconventional tips to speak English. He expressed:

In internet you find whatever you want about English. Tutorials, web pages about grammar and also you can speak with other people that are in other countries by video

calling. For example, in YouTube, you have many videos where there are people who teach you how to speak in English, how to use grammar, and contractions. In one video they said if you want to say I am going to, you can say I am gonna and the verb. Maybe some of them are teachers but the other ones are regular people but native English speakers. People who were born in USA or in Britain. There are people in the videos who can speak more than one language maybe 2,3,4 or 8 languages. They are polyglots and they help me with advice and motivate me to learn English.

Internet provides learners with opportunities to access to entertaining and educational content in regard to learning English on their own. Internet is a convenient way to approach language learning apart from the traditional teacher-centered class. These findings found support in the literature review that stated that SRL learners seek for opportunities on the internet to develop their speaking skills outside the classroom. They feel free to make their own decisions about the choice of activities and the time to invest in accomplishing them (Murray et al., 2011). Students are able to find materials for extra practice of their speaking skills like listening, radio, dictionaries, recordings to compare their accent and pronunciation with native speakers.

The third source of knowledge from which learners obtain self-regulated learning strategies are friends or classmates who know English and recommend using the same activities that have been useful for them. For instance, Leo said, "I have learned how to use Duolingo and Lyricstraining from my classmates and friends that recommended using these platforms to practice English." Sebas added, "I use methods that my friends have used before. A friend of mine recommended me to listen to music and try to understand the meaning of the lyrics." In the same line of thought, Valery expressed:

My sister has helped me doing this because she is also interested in learning English, so we both try to watch videos, sing songs, see movies in English. Those activities are interesting for me and have helped me to understand more some difficult words or expressions.

Pursuing these further, self-regulated learners have more advantages than regular learners in terms of academic achievement and command of the English language. According to Panadero and Tapia (2014), self-regulated learners are able to exert control over their metacognitive and behavioral skills to seek for alternatives to achieve their academic goals. Self-regulated learners are self-motivated to engage themselves in activities that they consider effective to reach a goal. They learn English better than their peers because of their readiness and continuous practice of their speaking skill on their own. Based on the results, I would say that regular students become autonomous learners when they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and look for help from individuals who have already experienced the process of learning a language on their own.

C. Sources to find SRL strategies.

Findings revealed that learners consider that (1) teachers are an efficient source of knowledge to obtain guidance about the use of self-regulated strategies. I also found that (2) media tools provide learners with opportunities and activities to practice the language on their own at their own pace.

Individuals from this study suggest that beginners English learners who are interested in improving their speaking skills must ask advice from English teachers about possible strategies that they can apply to start learning this language on their own. For instance, Sammy said, “talk to your teachers because they can help you to study and learn much more in English.

They can recommend other things where you can find more information about learning English.” Similarly, Jessy said,

The teacher because he has experience. For example, in third level I had problems with reading because I didn’t understand the vocabulary or que questions in the reading. I got 6/10. He recommended reading articles in Cambridge. For example, he told me that on the Internet you can find articles, tips, apps, and movies.

According to the findings, 50% of the learners asserted that teacher can support their learning and their objective to become self-regulated learners because they consider that educators’ background and experience have prepared them to show students how to develop their cognitive skills in and outside the classrooms. The existing body of literature provided support to the findings presented above. For instance, some researchers said that SRL is gaining attention in teachers’ programs because there is a need to prepare educators to impact students’ learning skills (Vrieling et al., 2018b). That is, self-regulation plays an important role in the contemporary education since educators need to prepare students with skills that would be useful and significant for the world outside the classroom.

As I explained in previous sections in this study, 80% of the participants asserted that media tools provide them with enough resources, tips, and activities in order for them to practice their speaking English skills according to their learning styles and interests. That is why they highly recommend beginners English learners to try the following activities. For instance, Valery said, “I usually watch dynamic and entertaining videos in YouTube because it is funny. You don’t need one hour, just a few minutes to practice when you have free time.” Alexis added,

I would recommend videos in YouTube because they have different activities. If you want to play the guitar, learn about philosophy or cooking you can watch videos or

tutorials. I like to see TED Talks because they are academic talks that increase your knowledge about different things, so you can study and learn something important not only for entertainment.

Sebas added:

Find songs that are stuck in your head. You continue practicing and you learn unconsciously. See movies or series that you have already seen. Watch them in English with subtitles. They help because you see how the actors pronounce the words, how they use contractions and you can repeat. The songs have the same effect.

Media tools offer different opportunities for individuals to access to diverse content to increase their knowledge in different fields. English, for example, is a language that every person is able to learn with free web resources. However, some researchers have proposed that teachers must enlighten pupils about how to appropriately use videos, novels, movies, blogs, social network, YouTube tutorials, self-recording, TV, radio, magazines, internet, and chats (Bravo et al., 2017; Nation & Yamamoto, 2010; Ton et al., 2014). All of these activities represent a source of enjoyment and learning at once in order for students to motivate themselves to achieve their EFL goals. These researchers have called the attention that more research is needed to continue to explore the role of teachers as facilitators of resources that promote autonomous learning in and outside the classroom context.

The third source of knowledge from which learners obtain self-regulatory strategies are EFL friends or classmates because they have applied activities or strategies that have been efficient to improve their language performance. For example, Leo, added:

I choose these strategies like Duolingo and Lyricstraining because in my first semester of English, my classmates told me that they have practiced English with these platforms, so they recommended doing the same because they have got excellent result. In

addition, when I was in my high school I used to have a teacher that gave us to complete songs in English in our test, so I liked this method.

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrated that the target research participants recognized that the main sources of knowledge from which they obtain self-regulated learning strategies are teachers, media tools and classmates. It was found that the teachers' role was fundamental to provide students with suggestions about self-regulatory strategies to develop their speaking skills. In addition, media tools like internet, YouTube, and apps offer a vast amount of resources and authentic material about how to develop English language skills. Influential videos of polyglots or EFL learners with innovative strategies to speak a new a language were role models for the learners of this study. Lastly, asking for help from peers who know English allowed self-regulatory learners to be familiar with learning platforms and media tools that present input and output exercises to practice and speak a language on their own.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

As a result of the analysis of the data of this study, I came to the following conclusions:

First, the meaning that participants attribute to the experience of using SRL strategies indicates that self-study not only requires responsibility and self-motivation but also this process entails identifying preferred learning styles and strategies according to learners' interests. Participants also see SRL as a source of knowledge that has had a positive impact on their academic performance. They have improved their confidence to express themselves in the class in contrast to their classmates who do not use self-regulated learning strategies.

Second, learning strategies are different for each participant who accommodate them according to their individual tastes in music, movies or reading material. For instance, taking notes, reading aloud, listening and translating the lyrics from songs, watching videos with transcripts, using shadowing and drilling techniques, and practicing English with conversation partners were identified as effective strategies to develop their speaking skills.

Third, according to the researched, spoken grammar, vocabulary, accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation are the language components that participants focus more when they develop their speaking skills. Grammar and vocabulary are they basics to speak a language because they help learners to develop logical ideas to convey their messages. By practicing these two components, learners become accurate when using the language. Furthermore, autonomous learners practice pronunciation to clearly communicate their message to the audience. Fluency is the last component that learners practice. For them, being fluent means to make oneself understood to others even though minor mistakes may arise; they do not affect the intelligibility of the message.

Fourth, this study concluded that the sources from which university EFL students obtain self-regulated learning strategies to grow speaking skills out of the classroom are teachers, tutorials, technology related tools and classmates. The first source is recommendations from teachers because they considered that their educators have the knowledge, skills, and experience to show their students strategies and tips about how to become autonomous learners. The second source is watching tutorials about polyglots on YouTube or people who speak English as a second language. Free tutorials covering the parts of speech have provided them with ideas and activities about applications and websites that have helped them to develop their language skills on their own. Lastly, asking advice from friends who know English has allowed them to apply the same strategies and methods that have worked for their partners on developing their speaking skills. Finally, it was concluded that self-regulation represents a meaningful path of self-improvement for participants that are able to control their behavior and cognition to accomplish academic or personal goals as EFL learners.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study provide pedagogical implications that can be used to improve the current EFL teaching and learning process in Ecuador and other countries as well. First, EFL teachers need to develop awareness of the importance of including self-regulatory strategies in their instructional practices to provide unsuccessful language learners with self-regulated strategies to overcome learning difficulties about English oral production.

Second, according to the findings, there is a close relation between input and productive speaking skills. Listening to music, watching movies, and reading texts aloud have allowed learners to store lexis, grammar structure, and pronunciation patterns in their brains that are necessary to produce meaningful sentences in the illocutionary act. Self-regulated learners in this study have identified that listening to songs with lyrics has the same positive effect as watching movies with subtitles in English because learners are more receptive to recall words that have been used in different contexts.

Third, participants mentioned that listening to short audios provided by native English speakers and repeating the same sentences aloud are effective strategies to improve pronunciation, intonation, accent, accuracy, spoken grammar, and fluency at once. Another strategy, involves writing and translating what learners hear on audios to obtain language input that would be helpful to produce clear and understandable speeches. The sources from which they obtain these activities are free online learning platforms, applications, and websites that help them to start imitating how speakers sound in real-life conversations.

Fourth, self-regulated learners develop their speaking skills when they practice English with conversation partners. When they interact with other speakers, they put into practice what they have learned in the classroom or by themselves in sources like books, movies, or songs. They see conversation partners as an opportunity to gain confidence to produce the language.

Similarly, they can apply peer correction to identify and fix vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation mistakes.

Lastly, the findings of this study suggest some pedagogical implications for EFL teachers. They need to understand that self-regulation is a process that has long-term benefits for students and the EFL current education system. If possible EFL teachers should try to develop a well-designed self-regulated instruction that encompasses forethought, performance and self-reflection processes that contribute to developing more independent and high-achieving students. That way, if all EFL learners are offered the opportunity to know the main guidelines about how to start self-regulation, the process of learning and producing English as a second language would be much easier and more effective. Without these strategies, teachers would be limiting the opportunity of students to discover new ways to approach language learning beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Recommendations

According to the findings of this study and the existing body of literature, self-regulation is a process that not all students can develop successfully. On the one hand, it demands from learners to be self-disciplined and self-motivated to plan, monitor and evaluate their progress. On the other hand, there is lack of instructional strategies in the regular English classes to promote autonomous learning for EFL learners (Ormrod, 2012). Consequently, based on the findings and conclusions of this qualitative phenomenological study, here I make some recommendations to different audiences of this study.

Curriculum designers.

It would be interesting and beneficial for the field of the Ecuadorian education, especially for language learning that curricular designers take into consideration self-regulation

in their EFL courses and programs. Those curricula could be informed by research-based findings in the existing literature review as well in the findings of this study. As an EFL teacher, I think that it is time that universities take the first step to create curriculums devoted to the instruction of self-regulation in the English classes. It would be an answer to achieve academic success and that EFL learners produce the language.

University Coordinators.

Since instructional plans for teaching self-regulation for EFL education are non-existent in Ecuadorian universities, a partial solution to obtain more independent and qualified learners able to produce the language would be that universities expose university EFL teachers to the existing literature about how regular students can become self-regulated learners. Additionally, universities should give more importance to SRL in their language programs by providing EFL teachers with training courses in order for them to know how to incorporate SRL in their lesson plans. Furthermore, university language EFL programs should encourage EFL teachers to conduct research about the role they do to help regular learners to become self-regulated learners. Research on EFL teachers could give valuable insights to universities and language coordinators to make decisions either on how to improve their existing language curriculum and how to create instructional plans to prepare EFL teachers to guide students to become responsible for their own learning with special emphasis on language production.

EFL teachers.

I would recommend to Ecuadorian EFL teachers to start building knowledge about how to teach self-regulation to their students. It is important that they conduct more research about SRL methods and strategies to guide students in the process of finding their appropriate learning style to develop English language skills. Teachers could also learn how to use movies,

songs, reading material and technology related sources to provide students with authentic material to self-regulate their English learning in and outside the classroom.

EFL learners.

Pursuing this further, I recommend that learners become aware of the benefits of self-regulation to improve their English communicative skills. They need to understand that their responsibility as a student goes beyond the class setting. That is, they may encourage themselves to find different ways of working with authentic materials to learn to speak English on their own.

Directions for Future Research.

Based on the findings, I acknowledge that this a preliminary study had some limitations, such as the instruments and the small sample chosen. Increasing the number of participants and selecting a sample with a more advanced English level may reveal different self-regulated strategies and sources from which learners obtain activities to practice their speaking skills. That is why based on the literature review that mentions that the role of autonomous learning is still not defined in the EFL education in Ecuador, I suggest further qualitative and quantitative research about this topic. Since I see that self-regulated strategies are really useful from the perspective of EFL teachers and a EFL learners, I recommend investigating how other independent learners develop productive and receptive skills. Findings from such studies may contribute with guidelines to improve EFL teaching and learning practices in Ecuador.

CHAPTER VI

Proposal

6.1 Title

Pedagogical and Didactic Guide for Self-Regulated English Learning.

6.2 Rationale

English has been considered a necessary language for global communication. That is why the Ministry of Education and universities work hard to teach English in schools, high schools, and universities. However, learning and teaching English has been a challenge in this setting due to teacher-centered classes and overly dependent students. Therefore, based on the results of this research thesis and the information from the literature review, I concluded that there is a need to direct independent learning to improve students' experiences in learning English as a foreign language. The findings adopt a communicative approach to enhance speaking skills since Ecuadorian learners find it difficult to practice speaking in a non-English speaking country. That is why the purpose of this guide is to provide teachers and students with some guidelines to integrate self-regulation in their learning and teaching programs. I present a compilation of self-regulated strategies to improve English speaking skills that can be used by teachers to increase the quality of their classes or for students who want to become self-regulated learners and take responsibility for their own learning.

6.3 Objectives

This guide was designed with the purpose of helping EFL students to become masters of their own learning by being self-independent learners. It also approaches teachers who want to improve their instructional process and promote autonomous learning in their EFL classes.

6.3.1 General objective

To provide teachers and learners with a compilation of self-regulatory strategies to develop speaking skills.

6.3.2 Specific objectives

- To present a self-regulated guide for easier identification and management of self-regulatory strategies.
- To show a compilation of activities that adjust to different students' English levels and learning styles.
- To provide a compressive review of the main sources to obtain learning strategies to improve speaking skills.

6.4 Beneficiaries

This guide represents a significant support for students, teachers and curriculum designers. First, students can reflect on their own experiences and metacognitive skills to improve their English speaking skills and their academic performance. Second, teachers may benefit from this guide because they would have the basis to guide learners to start self-regulation in and outside the EFL classroom. Third, curriculum designers would have a model in this guide to strengthen their curriculums and meet educational standards in EFL education.

6.5 Impacts

This guide will call attention to the role of self-regulation in the EFL educational and its positive impact on students' academic performance and teachers' practices to build effective language systems. First, it will allow teachers to improve their strategies and place importance on the functional use of English through the development of speaking skills. Second, the guide will also impact on learners' lives since they can use the information contained in this document

to enhance their language learning trajectory. The most influenced areas by this guide are access to knowledge, new strategies, and resources from which learners and teachers can enhance English speaking components. Third, it will also have a positive impact on EFL education to help teachers or headmasters to meet the educational standards of the Ministry of Education.

6.6 Development

This self-regulated learning guide introduces EFL teachers and learners to the basics of self-regulation. This guide offers a practical variety of strategies with clear explanations and functional steps to develop speaking skills. The principles of these strategies can be applied in or outside the EFL classrooms to improve students' motivation to start self-regulation. All the strategies would be categorized based on how the skills related to speaking were approached in my research, such as pronunciation, intonation, accent, spoken grammar, vocabulary and fluency and accuracy. This self-regulated learning guide would have these language components organized into the following categories: (a) strategies to learn vocabulary, (b) strategies to improve pronunciation, (c) miscellaneous strategies, and (d) technology-related sources to practice speaking skills. These activities have been suggested for specific English levels; however, they can be adapted according to the individuals' objectives, time, and learning preferences.

Section1: Strategies to learn vocabulary.

The following strategies would be related to the type of activities in which you do not have to follow certain steps or a specific time to execute them to obtain the results about learning vocabulary to improve your speaking skills.

1.1. Contextualizing your learning environment.

- A. Target level of students: A1
- B. Purpose: To learn vocabulary by automatically visualizing the object when the label appears.
- C. Steps to follow:
 1. Look for the meaning in English of the objects you have in your house.
 2. Use cardboards or sticky notes to write the new vocabulary.
 3. Label all the objects of your setting.
 4. Repeat the lexis from memory.

1.2 Change the language settings on electronic devices.

- A. Target level of students: A1
- B. Purpose: To assimilate new lexis in day-to-day life while performing repetitive tasks with the use of technology like sending messages, opening social networking, setting the alarm, searching browsers, uploading music, and so forth.
- C. Steps to follow:
 1. Select settings and change the language of your technological devices into English.
 2. Be aware of new vocabulary that appears on the screens.
 3. Make notes about the new words. Switch the language into Spanish once in a while to be sure about the meaning of the lexis.

4. Utilize the new vocabulary in your speech.

1.3 Listening to songs with two subtitles.

- A. Target level of students: A1, A2, B1
- B. Purpose: To understand the meaning of songs by looking at the subtitles in Spanish and English at once. It saves time and effort to learn the English equivalents.
 1. Select on a song whose lyrics are in Spanish and English at the same time.
 2. Listen to the audio to understand the context of the song.
 3. Play the audio again and compare the lyrics and their translation in Spanish and English.
 4. Pause the video when it is necessary to revise difficult lexis.
 5. Make notes about the new lexis and try to utilize it in your speech.

1.4 Listening to songs and filling the blanks.

- A. Target level of students: A2, B1
- B. Purpose: To learn new vocabulary that correlates to the meaning of the song.
- C. Steps to follow:
 1. Download a free printable worksheet with a song to fill in the gaps.
 2. Play the song to analyze the lyrics and create context about the meaning of the song.
 3. Listen to the song twice or three times to complete the blanks.
 4. Make notes about the new vocabulary by writing an example of how to use new words in context.

Section 2: Strategies to improve pronunciation.

Pronunciation is a language component that is necessary to make yourself understood to the audience when you convey a message. These strategies are related to the type of learning

in which you do not have to follow a precise amount of minutes to practice them. The results would depend on the continuous use of these activities in your study sessions.

2.1 Tongue twisters.

- A. Target level of students: A1, A2, B1
- B. Purpose: To improve your English pronunciation.
- C. Steps to follow:
 - 1. Start reading the tongue twister slowly.
 - 2. Look for the pronunciation of difficult words in a free online audio dictionary.
 - 3. Repeat the difficult words with the right pronunciation several times.
 - 4. Say the words or sentences faster and faster, but with clear and correct pronunciation.

2.2 Memorizing and singing songs.

- A. Target level of students: A2, B1, B2
- B. Purpose: To build connections between the written and spoken words to know how to pronounce them correctly. Many of the sounds and patters within a song are repetitive which are easy to remember.
- C. Steps to follow:
 - 1. Use real emotions like happiness or excitement to choose songs that you really like.
 - 2. Listen and understand the message or general idea of the song.
 - 3. Visualize the story and create a story movie in your mind that relates to the lyrics.
 - 4. Look for the song in karaoke version and sing along with the lyrics.
 - 5. Memorize one line at a time.

6. Sing yourself.
7. Create a playlist with your favorite music, so you can listen to it anytime.

2.3 Reading aloud.

A. Target level of students: B1

B. Steps to follow:

1. Select books that you are interested in reading.
2. Read each paragraph aloud.
3. Stop when you have doubts about the correct pronunciation of a word.
4. Check the pronunciation of difficult words on online dictionaries with free audio pronunciation.

2.4 Repeating sentences with different structure.

A. Target level of students: A1, A2

B. Steps to follow:

1. Say a sentence aloud in simple present.
2. Report the same sentence by changing it into affirmative, negative, or interrogative form.
3. Use different Wh-questions to make this process more challenging while saying the sentence aloud.
4. Try to change the tense or use more compound sentences to practice other structures.

2.5 Note taking.

A. Target level of students: A1, A2, B1

B. Steps to follow:

1. Watch a video or read a text.

2. Write it down the new vocabulary in a notebook or in the notes of your cellphone.
3. Encourage yourself to include this lexis in your speech.

Section 3: Miscellaneous strategies.

In addition to these more specific strategies, there are some that that can be used in different scenarios. If learners want to practice more than one skill at a time, they can utilize these strategies. In most of them, learners would practice pronunciation, intonation, accent, vocabulary, pronunciation, spoken grammar, accuracy and fluency.

3.1 Building stories from pictures.

A. Target level of students: A2, B1

B. Steps to follow:

1. Choose some pictures at random.
2. Place them on a table.
3. Start making up a story using all the pictures.
4. Tell the story aloud as a sequence of events or actions.
5. Use the following connectors or include other linkers to organize the plot of the story.

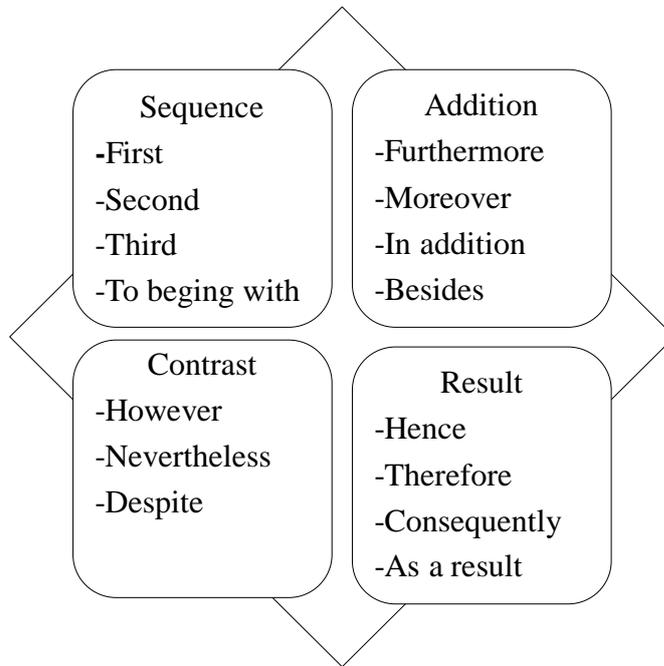


Figure 6. Sentence Connectors

3.2 Retelling a summary from a text.

A. Target level of students: A2, B1

B. Steps to follow:

1. Read a book, article or text of your interest.
2. Retell the summary of the text by adding details about the setting, characters, supporting ideas, and so forth.
3. Record your speech and listen it again to identify mistakes in the language production.
4. Record it again and correct those mistakes.

3.3 Spontaneity and improvisation.

A. Target level of students: B1, B2

B. Steps to follow:

1. Decide on a topic to speak.
2. Set a timer from 1 to 2 minutes.

3. Make one-minute improvised speech on a random topic.
4. Speak about a specific topic without pausing or stopping during this period of time.
5. Listen to your recording and identify mistakes.
6. Repeat again the recording to correct previous mistakes with the first audio.

3.4 Shadowing.

A. Target level of students: B1, B2

B. Steps to follow:

1. Select a video with transcripts.
2. Listen to the video a couple of times until you are confident with the content.
3. Listen up and read the transcripts aloud at the same time as the native speaker.
4. Make sure to match the accent, intonation, and the pronunciation of the speaker by keeping up with the same speed.
5. Start speaking just after the recording without seeing the transcripts to challenge yourself to learn the transcript by heart.
6. Record and compare your audio with the original video.
7. Repeat and correct mistakes until the audio is understandable.

3.5 Talking in front of the mirror.

A. Target level of students: B1, B2

B. Steps to follow:

1. Select a topic that you have to rehearse for a formal presentation in your job or in the university.
2. Make an outline about vocabulary and grammar you want to include in your speech.

3. Stand in front of the mirror.
4. Set a timer.
5. Record your speech.
6. Listen up and identify mistakes concerning vocabulary, grammar or intelligibility of your speech.
7. Record it again and correct those mistakes.

3.6 Retelling.

A. Target level of students: B1, B2

B. Steps to follow:

1. Think about an interesting movie, book or event.
2. Stand in front of the mirror.
3. Set a timer for 1-2 minutes.
4. Turn on the recorder.
5. Start speaking about what happened in that specific situation that you chose without making pauses.
6. Listen up to your recording and try to identify errors or mistakes made in terms of vocabulary or grammar.
7. Try to record it again and fix those mistakes.

3.7 Replacing information in an interview.

A. Target level of students: B1, B2

B. Time to execute the strategy:

C. Steps to follow:

1. Select a video that has an interview.
2. Listen to the interview to become familiar with the content of the video.

3. Pause the video after the interviewee answers the first question.
4. Assume the role of the interviewee and answer the same question in your own words.
5. Continue repeating steps 3 and 4 until you answer all the questions.

3.8 Find a conversation partner.

A. Target level of students: A1, A2, B1, B2

B. Steps to follow:

1. Find a friend who is interested in practicing speaking.
2. Download or make a list of though provoking questions.
3. Start answering the questions by using the vocabulary and grammar stored in your brain.
4. Use peer correction to promote error awareness during or at the end of the speaking practice.

Section 4: Technology related sources to practice speaking.

In this action, there is a compilation of technology related sources such as applications, learning platforms, training materials, websites with audio spoken by native speakers from which self-regulated learners obtain activities to develop their speaking skills. Some of the free online sources that provide learners with opportunities to listen to audio files are: Duolingo, Memrise, Wlingua, Lyricstraining, and Italki.

4.1 Listening and repeating sentences.

A. Target level of students: A1, A2

B. To improve listening comprehension to pronounce English as native speakers.

C. Steps to follow:

1. Play the audio and listen to the native speaker saying a sentence in English.
2. Listen up to the audio again and pronounce the sentence on your own.
3. Write or unscramble the sentences that you heard.

4.2 Translating sentences.

- A. Target level of students: A1, A2
- B. Purpose: To learn how the words function in meaning, grammar and pronunciation.
- C. Steps to follow:
1. Read a sentence that is written in Spanish.
 2. Rewrite the same sentence by using its equivalents in English.
 3. Play the audio to listen to the sentence and repeat it several times until your pronunciation, intonation and accent is similar to the native speaker.

4.3 Drilling.

- A. Target level of students: A1, A2, B1
- B. Purpose: To train your ear to imitate an audio with the same degree of accuracy, accent and intonation as the native speaker.
- C. Steps to follow:
1. Listen to a sentence.
 2. Turn on the voice recorder.
 3. Repeat the sentence with the same pronunciation, intonation and accent.
 4. Compare your sentence with the original audio.
 5. Check your answer on the learning platforms. They usually underline the words that are mispronounced, so you can practice them again.

4.4 Watching movies in English.

- A. Target level of students: B1, B2
- B. Purpose: To improve your listening and speaking skills by hearing how English is used in real life by native speakers.
- C. Steps to follow:
 - 1. Watch a video or movie in your mother tongue.
 - 2. Watch the same video with the audio and subtitles in English.
 - 3. If you find difficult to understand an expression or word, activate the subtitles in Spanish and English at once.
 - 4. Make notes about the new vocabulary.
 - 5. Use your notes to practice the new vocabulary when you speak in English.

4.5 Talk to yourself inside your head.

- A. Target level of students: A1, A2, B1
- B. Purpose: To improve your confidence to speak in English.
- C. Steps to follow:
 - 1. Speak your thoughts out loud.
 - 2. Describe your thoughts in your head pretending that you are telling them to another person.
 - 3. Make a routine of five minutes a day to start describing similar situations in your mind.

4.6 Make a video tutorial.

- A. Target level of students: B1, B2
- B. Purpose: To practice pronunciation, spoken grammar, fluency by visualizing your acting in front of an audience

C. Time to execute the strategy: 3 to 5 minutes

D. Steps to follow:

1. Start with a plan about the topic and the audience to approach in the video.
2. Create a storyboard to know what information you will show in the video.
3. Rehearse a couple of times.
4. Make sure to speak slowly and clearly.
5. Record the audio narration.
6. Watch the video to identify mistakes.
7. Record the video again and correct those mistakes.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Instruments for Data Collection

Interview protocol.

Dear participant,

This is *Paola Alexandra Ramírez Román*. I am a graduate student in the Master's program entitled "Maestría En Pedagogía de Los Idiomas Nacionales Y Extranjeros Mención: Inglés" offered at Universidad Técnica del Norte, Ibarra, Ecuador. Thank you for volunteering to participate in my study. My Master thesis is titled "A Phenomenological Study of EFL Students' Lived Experiences about self-regulated learning strategies to Develop Speaking Skills in an Ecuadorian University". I would like to inform you that you may withdraw from my study at any time you want. The purpose of this research is to inquire university EFL students' perceptions about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the EFL classroom.

This interview will consist of five parts. First, I will ask you some demographic questions. Second, I will ask you about the meaning you attribute to your experience of acquiring speaking skills alone. Third, I will ask you about the strategies you use to develop speaking skills outside the classroom. Fourth, I will ask you about language elements related to speaking that you practice more. Finally, I will ask you about the sources from where you find strategies to develop speaking skills out of the classroom. This interview will last from 50 to 60 minutes.

PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What major are you studying?
2. What is your English level?
3. How many years have you studied English?
4. Why are you studying English?
5. What is your age?
6. What is your gender?
 - a) Female

- b) Male
- c) Other

PART TWO: MEANING ATTRIBUTED TO THE EXPERIENCE OF USING SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS

1. How important has it been for you to develop speaking skills on your own?
2. Why did you decide to look for ways outside the classroom to develop your speaking skills?
3. From your perspective, what does it mean to be an independent learner?
4. How important do you think it is independent study when developing speaking skills?
5. What types of difficulties have you found when learning speaking skills outside the classroom?
6. What does it mean for your speaking English well? How would you describe a learner with good English speaking skills?
7. What would you recommend beginners English learners to improve their speaking skills outside the classroom?
8. What would you recommend English teachers to help their students improve their speaking skills outside the classroom?

PART THREE: SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES USED TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS

9. What type of activities or strategies do you use to improve your speaking skills outside the classroom? Please, first name them, and then one by one describe them.
10. How do you know if a certain learning activity or strategy works to help you improve your speaking skills outside the classroom?
11. How long do you spend practicing your speaking skills outside the classroom?
12. What do you do when you think a certain learning activity or strategy is not helping you improve your speaking skills outside the classroom?
13. What would you say are the activities or strategies that have been more effective to develop your speaking skills?

**PART FOUR: SPEAKING AREAS STRESSED THROUGH SELF-REGULATED
LEARNING STRATEGIES TO INCREASE SPEAKING**

14. What language components do you focus on when practicing or developing speaking skills? Why?
15. Which of the following language elements do you practice more, for example, pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, spoken grammar, fluency, accuracy, communication strategies, or accent?
16. How much time do you develop to practicing each of the following language components, for example, pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, spoken grammar, fluency, accuracy, communication strategies, or accent?

**PART FIVE: SOURCES FROM WHICH SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES
ARE OBTAINED TO GROW SPEAKING SKILLS**

17. How do you choose learning strategies to improve your speaking skills outside the classroom?
18. What would you say are the main sources from which you obtain learning strategies to improve your speaking skills outside the classroom?
19. What sources would you recommend beginners English learners to find learning strategies to develop speaking skills outside the classroom?

CONCLUSION

Thank you very much for participating in my study. I really appreciate your time and information.

Appendix B

Letter of Consent Form for Participants

Dear participant,

This is *Paola Alexandra Ramírez Román*. I am a graduate student in the Master's program entitled "Maestría En Pedagogía de Los Idiomas Nacionales Y Extranjeros: Mención Inglés" offered at Universidad Técnica del Norte. You are being invited to participate in a research study that is a requirement for my master's program. The purpose of this research is to inquire university EFL students' perceptions about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the EFL classroom.

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the proposed procedures.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This study entails a semi-structured interview that will last from 15 to 50 minutes. The interview will be tape-recorded and transcribed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time you want without any penalty.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

All information that identifies you will be kept confidential, stored and locked in a secure place that only the study personnel will have access to. Your identity will remain anonymous in any report on the results of this research.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

The results of this research study will be presented as a requirement to complete this master's degree program. Anonymized data will be kept for future research such as published papers, dissertations, conference presentations, reports or journal articles develop as a result of this research.

Participant's name Signature Date

Investigator's name Signature Date

Appendix C

Member Check

I hereby certify that I voluntarily participated in this study of an interview on the topic “A Phenomenological Study of EFL Students’ Lived Experiences about Self-Regulated Learning Strategies to Develop Speaking Skills in an Ecuadorian University”. The purpose of this research was to inquire university EFL students’ perceptions about using self-regulated learning strategies to develop speaking skills out of the EFL classroom. I confirm that the researcher Paola Ramírez shared with me the interview transcript and that all of the information provided by me is true, complete and accurate.

Participant’s name	Signature	Date
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Investigator’s name	Signature	Date
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