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**THE TEACHING OF ORALITY IN BRAZIL: A REFLECTION ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF ORALITY  
THROUGH THE LENS OF TEACHERS TRAINED AT UFPE**

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# THE TEACHING OF ORALITY IN BRAZIL: A REFLECTION ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF ORALITY THROUGH THE LENS OF TEACHERS TRAINED AT UFPE

Ana Carolina Miguel da Silva<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

In the Brazilian context, the teaching of oral proficiency in a foreign language is often seen as secondary, as Portuguese is the dominant language used nationwide. Whilst national exams focus more on reading, the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) indicates the importance of practicing oral skills for students to develop both speaking and writing abilities in alignment with their educational experiences. However, teaching English in Brazil does encounter several challenges, particularly in fostering students' speaking skills. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the teaching of oral skills in English language education in Brazil. To reflect on how oral skills are taught, this work examines the PCN and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) to understand the government's guidelines and recommendations for teaching oral skills in foreign languages. It also explores how teachers can implement effective oral language instruction following these guidelines. Nunan (1999) offers valuable insights into the challenges and practical strategies for teaching speaking in real classroom settings while Larsen-Freeman (2000) contributes a theoretical perspective on effective oral language instruction. Additionally, Thornbury (2005) supplies practical approaches for fostering active communication and managing classroom dynamics and Savignon (1983) underscores the importance of communicative competence through dynamic, social-interactional methods. To provide a classroom perspective, a survey was conducted with current English teachers, who are also students at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), to understand how they incorporate oral skills into their lessons and the challenges they face, such as the adequacy of materials and institutional support. Finally, the findings suggest that most teaching materials are designed with active methodologies that promote a social-interactional approach to language use. However, these materials often overlook common classroom challenges, such as students' varying proficiency levels and large class sizes, leaving teachers to manage these factors creatively to ensure effective oral skills.

**Keywords:** Oral skills; Teaching; Brazil; PCN; BNCC.

## RESUMO

No contexto brasileiro, o ensino da proficiência oral em uma língua estrangeira é frequentemente visto como secundário, uma vez que o português é a língua dominante usada em todo o país. Embora os exames nacionais se concentrem mais na leitura, os Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN) indicam a importância da prática de habilidades orais para que os alunos desenvolvam as habilidades de fala e escrita em alinhamento com suas experiências educacionais. No entanto, o ensino de inglês no Brasil enfrenta vários desafios, principalmente no que se refere à promoção das habilidades de fala dos alunos. Portanto, este artigo tem como objetivo analisar o ensino de habilidades orais no ensino da língua inglesa no

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Brasil. Para refletir sobre como as habilidades orais são ensinadas, este trabalho examina os PCN e a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) para entender as diretrizes e recomendações do governo para o ensino de habilidades orais em línguas estrangeiras. Ele também explora como os professores podem implementar um ensino eficaz da linguagem oral seguindo essas diretrizes. Nunan (1999) oferece insights valiosos sobre os desafios e as estratégias práticas para o ensino da fala em ambientes de sala de aula reais, enquanto Larsen-Freeman (2000) contribui com uma perspectiva teórica sobre a instrução oral eficaz. Adicionalmente, Thornbury (2005) apresenta abordagens práticas para fomentar a comunicação ativa e gerenciar a dinâmica da sala de aula, e Savignon (1983) ressalta a importância da competência comunicativa por meio de métodos dinâmicos e de interação social. Para oferecer uma perspectiva da sala de aula, foi realizada uma pesquisa com os atuais professores de inglês, que também são alunos da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE), para entender como eles incorporam as habilidades orais em suas aulas e os desafios que enfrentam, como a adequação dos materiais e o apoio institucional. Por fim, os resultados sugerem que a maioria dos materiais didáticos é projetada com metodologias ativas que promovem uma interação social. No entanto, esses materiais geralmente ignoram os desafios comuns em sala de aula, como os diferentes níveis de proficiência dos alunos e o grande número de alunos em sala de aula, fazendo com que os professores tenham que gerenciar esses fatores de forma criativa para garantir habilidades orais eficazes.

**Palavras-chave:** habilidades orais; ensino; Brasil; PCN; BNCC.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language, being used as a second language by more than seventy countries and prioritized in many educational systems, such as in Brazil. According to the National Common Curricular Base – BNCC (Brasil, 2018) –, English is the only required foreign language in basic education, beginning from lower secondary school. The law mandates that English classes are a basic practice in all public and private schools across the nation. However, teaching English in Brazil does encounter several challenges, particularly in fostering students' speaking skills. The National Curriculum Parameters – PCN (Brasil, 2000) – indicate that oral communication is not a priority for Brazilian students, but it does not dismiss the importance of practicing this skill. While national exams focus more on reading comprehension and interpretation, the parameters determine that it is still essential for students to develop their speaking and writing abilities in alignment with their educational experiences. According to the PCN, oral tasks should aid students in grasping sounds and the social norms of interaction. Therefore, educators are encouraged to incorporate activities such as listening exercises and real-life conversations to improve students' speaking and interaction skills in English as well as to prepare students for real-world communication (Crystal, 2003).

conversation partner says. Beyond just knowing words and grammar, effective speaking involves understanding social interactions – knowing when and how to respond appropriately in a conversation. In other words, speaking is not merely about adhering to linguistic rules; it's about engaging in meaningful communication within a social context. To communicate effectively, a person needs to choose the right vocabulary, sentence structure, and level of formality, all guided by a mental framework that changes depending on the type of conversation – like casual chats, debates, or descriptive talks – each with its own format (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Thus, in the classroom environment, teachers should first focus on expanding students' vocabulary through exercises that promote word learning and only then help them organize this vocabulary by teaching grammar, including pronouns, verb tenses, and how to form sentences.

Moreover, understanding the speaker's communicative intent is crucial, as it influences what they want to convey and how the listener will react. By emphasizing these aspects – vocabulary, structure, and intent – teachers lay a strong foundation for students' speaking skills, allowing them to communicate naturally with appropriate pauses and adjustments. Savignon (1983) describes communicative competence as the ability to engage in dynamic exchanges by using linguistic skills and adapting to both verbal and non-verbal cues. For second language learners, it is essential to differentiate between planned and spontaneous speaking, as many tend to rely on familiar phrases during unprepared conversations. Allowing time for planning can improve fluency and accuracy, especially in oral presentations, indicating that a balanced approach to both speaking styles is important for effective language development.

As a consequence, in English language classes, grasping the difference between transactional and interactional talk is key to promoting effective speaking skills (Thornbury, 2005). Transactional talk focuses mainly on achieving specific goals or completing tasks, such as making requests or sharing information. On the other hand, interactional language serves social functions, helping to build connections and relationships among speakers. Understanding these two types of communication can help educators design lessons that combine information routines – structured ways of sharing facts – and interactional routines that encourage spontaneous social interaction. By integrating these components, teachers can create a more engaging learning atmosphere that meets the diverse needs of students.

However, many students come into the classroom with quite a limited grasp of what language learning involves, often seeing it as a passive process focused on listening to lectures or completing written tasks. This perspective can make them hesitant to take part in

Nevertheless, the actual classroom environment often complicates this process. A study conducted by the British Council in 2021 revealed the context of English teachers in Brazil. In the realm of public and private education, there are 172,030 English educators, predominantly female, with a significant majority aged between 30 and 49 years. Teachers typically manage an average of 12 classes per day, with those in state schools experiencing the highest workload. Furthermore, when we narrow it down to the teaching of oral skills specifically, it becomes clear it also faces considerable challenges. Educators often have to deal with large class sizes and scarce resources, especially in public schools where students might not have access to devices for practicing their speaking skills outside of class. As a result, there tends to be a stronger emphasis on grammar and reading, leaving oral proficiency less developed. This generates the domino effect that leads to merely 5% of Brazilians being able to communicate in English, with only 1% achieving fluency (British Council, 2021). In order to overcome these obstacles, it will be essential to reassess teaching methods and resources to enhance the quality of English language instruction in Brazil.

Therefore, this article intends to investigate the challenges and limitations faced by English language teachers when approaching orality in the classroom, based on the Brazilian historical and educational context. The aim is to understand the trials of this practice and suggest improvements to the teaching of orality in line with the BNCC guidelines. Further on, descriptive study aims to analyze both educational documents and students' perceptions of learning how to speak English, so, in order to do this, we applied a qualitative questionnaire to UFPE students, containing seven questions and obtaining 17 answers. As it will be developed shortly, the theoretical framework is mainly based on David Nunan and Scott Thornbury, with Nunan contributing to the reflections on the development of lessons and activities focused on orality while Thornbury provides strategies for developing speech from a sociocultural perspective. Finally, the article is structured in two parts: the first analyzes how orality is approached in English teaching in Brazil based on the BNCC and the PCN and the second part discusses pedagogical practices for teaching orality, based on theory and analysis of the data collected.

## **2. SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT IN REGULAR ENGLISH CLASSES**

Speaking a certain language is much more than just putting together grammatically correct sentences. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), it's a lively, real-time process where the speaker builds language word by word, response by response, based on what their

speaking activities, so, to address this issue, it's crucial to implement learner training that highlights the significance of active involvement in speaking (Nunan, 1999). When teachers foster an environment where students feel confident to share their thoughts and practice both transactional and interactional language, they can assist learners in building the confidence and skills needed for effective communication in English. This proactive strategy not only improves their speaking skills, but also enhances their overall language learning experience.

In this sense, Nunan (1999) states that learners often struggle with motivation due to a variety of interconnected factors. When they experience a lack of success over time, it can lead to feelings of stagnation, and uninspired teaching methods may not engage them effectively. Boredom can arise from materials that seem irrelevant to their lives, and not understanding the instructional goals can leave students feeling lost. Additionally, the lack of appropriate feedback can further undermine their confidence and motivation, creating a cycle of disengagement. Still according to Nunan (1999), educators can adopt several strategies in order to address these challenges, such as clearly outlining instructional goals. This helps learners grasp the purpose behind their activities, while breaking down learning into manageable steps fosters a sense of achievement. Furthermore, relating lessons to students' needs and interests allows them to recognize the relevance of what they are studying, as well as encouraging learners to contribute with their own knowledge during discussions promotes a sense of ownership over their education. Also, nurturing creative language use and assisting students in identifying effective learning strategies can enhance engagement. Lastly, providing opportunities for learners to track their progress empowers them to take control of their development, reinforcing their motivation and commitment to the learning journey.

Moreover, to effectively develop speaking skills in English classes, it's essential to emphasize the concepts of clustering and redundancy. According to Thornbury (2005), fluent speech often arises from the ability to group – or to cluster – words into meaningful phrases, enabling learners to express their thoughts more cohesively. This cognitive organization also aids in managing breath groups, which results in a more natural speech. On the other hand, redundancy is crucial for improving clarity; by reiterating or rephrasing concepts, learners can strengthen their messages, which helps with both understanding and memory retention. Therefore, incorporating these elements into speaking practice can greatly enhance learners' confidence and fluency.

Another important aspect is the use of reduced forms and performance variables in spoken language (Thornbury, 2005). Students frequently find contractions and informal speech patterns challenging, resulting in a stiff speaking style that may not connect well in

everyday conversations. Teaching learners to adopt reduced forms can help them sound more genuine. Additionally, grasping the dynamics of performance variables – such as hesitation and the use of fillers – allows learners to handle spontaneous speech more effectively. By recognizing and practicing these components, instructors can steer students toward a more natural and engaging speaking style, ultimately enhancing their communicative skills.

From the reflections gathered thus far, it can be concluded that to develop oral skills in the classroom, it is vital to pinpoint the specific challenges students encounter and tackle them directly, understanding that topics which resonate with their experiences can boost engagement. While learning a second language can be tough, there are numerous strategies teachers can use – and must be trained for – that can simplify the process and make it more enjoyable, promoting a dynamic and relevant approach.

### **3. ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING**

When we examine the training of English language teachers in Brazil (British Council, 2021), we discover that 83% of educators possess a degree or higher qualifications, with specialization being the most prevalent credential at 36.75%, although it is concerning that the proportion of master's and doctoral degree holders is below 3%. Even more so, a notable 16.70% of teachers have only completed high school, which raises significant concerns about the quality of education and the readiness of these professionals.

Most Language and Literature programs in Brazil provide dual degrees in English and Portuguese. At UFPE, however, the English degree is specifically tailored to prepare English teachers, employing a bilingual system that enables students to learn and be instructed in English (Almeida & Santos, 2010). While this bilingual training may seem ideal for language instruction, it is crucial to recognize that other competencies are also vital when considering Brazil's social context. Teacher training should, then, extend beyond just linguistic skills and adopt a holistic approach that addresses the needs of both students and society. For instance, according to Costa and Oliveira (2015), outlining effective teaching practices and fostering empathy towards students' realities are equally important to guarantee that graduates will offer quality education once they complete the course.

When these learners become teachers, they must follow the guidelines laid down by the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). Although the PCN does not classify the teaching of oral skills in English as the most relevant one, the BNCC adopts a more inclusive perspective, highlighting the importance of

using the language in all its forms and placing greater emphasis on social interaction rather than solely on grammar. Moreover, it also acknowledges English as a global lingua franca, guiding teachers to foster all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – in the classroom, rather than confining instruction to reading and exam-taking alone.

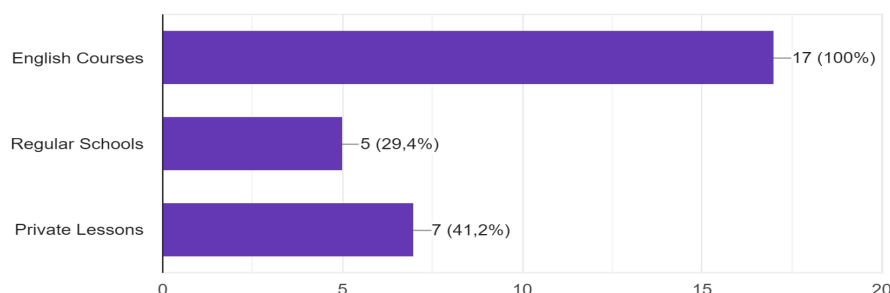
In this context, the BNCC recommends developing oral skills through various genres, including interviews, debates, conversations, and dialogues. The aim is for students to engage with the language in real-life contexts, taking on the roles of both speakers and listeners. This method enhances their listening comprehension and oral production. During these oral activities, which involve creating specific genres, interaction happens face-to-face. At this stage, teachers should pay attention to the distinct ways each student communicates verbally, as their cultural identities significantly influence their expression. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that the students are not native speakers, and English is used differently in various countries. The focus is on encouraging students to practice speaking without strictly adhering to a linguistic standard or attempting to imitate native speakers, although it remains important for them to use correct grammatical structures to ensure their speech is clear and understandable.

The document also recommends that, alongside face-to-face oral practice, teachers should use visual resources like shows and films since these materials enable students to see language structures, themes, and usage in context. This kind of practice provides learners with direct exposure to authentic language inputs, enhancing their own oral production. While face-to-face interaction encourages students to take risks, face their insecurities, allow others to speak, and clarify misunderstandings, this dynamic setting promotes a deeper engagement with the language and helps develop effective communication skills.

Further on, the BNCC outlines various strategies for teaching oral skills across different grades, highlighting the importance of social interaction and effective communication in English. In sixth grade, the focus is on building emotional connections and practical uses of English, motivating students to engage in oral comprehension through cognates and contextual clues. In seventh grade, on the other hand, the focus shifts to discursive interaction and the role of the English language in fostering collaboration. They should identify the context, purpose, subject, and interlocutors in oral texts from various media – EF07LI04 (Brasil, 2018) – and create oral narratives about important events and figures – EF07LI05 (Brasil, 2018). Afterwards, the eighth grade centers on negotiating meaning, which includes addressing misunderstandings and differing opinions. Students are expected to solve misunderstandings, articulate their opinions, and clarify information

1. Where have you taught English? (Select all that apply)

17 respostas



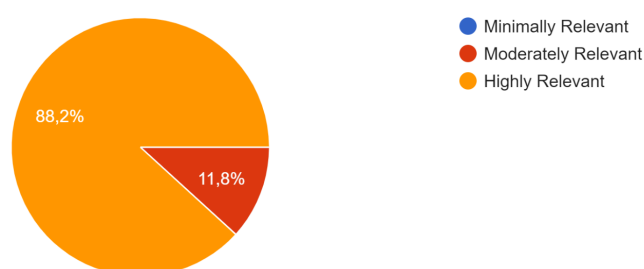
Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)<sup>2</sup>

As seen here, all respondents confirmed to have worked at English courses at some point, even though private lessons amount to a notable 41.2% of teaching opportunities and/or choices. Considering most regular schools in Brazil – apart from bilingual ones – do not give a specific focus to English lessons, this suggests that most teachers operate in places whose settings place a high value on English and aim for complete fluency in the language.

**Figure 2 – Question 2**

2. How relevant is oral skill in this environment?

17 respostas



Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

Further on, 88.2% of respondents expressed that oral skills are extremely important, underscoring the high demand for spoken communication. Interestingly, none of the respondents selected the option for "minimally relevant," suggesting that attaining a good level of proficiency or even basic understanding necessitates the enhancement of all language skills. These findings reinforce the BNCC's (Brasil, 2018) inclusive perspective, which

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<sup>2</sup> Closed questionnaire elaborated through the platform Google Forms, receiving answers during the month of September, 2024.

through paraphrasing – EF08LI01 (Brasil, 2018). They also learn to discuss future events, including making plans and predictions – EF08LI04 (Brasil, 2018). Finally, in ninth grade, the curriculum shifts to emphasizing the persuasive aspects of the English language, focusing on understanding argumentative texts. Students are encouraged to present their viewpoints and counterarguments while analyzing various positions on socially relevant issues – EF09LI01; EF09LI03 (Brasil, 2018). Overall, the BNCC advocates for a progressive approach to developing oral skills, enhancing students' confidence and effectiveness in communication.

After what has been presented thus far, it is clear that, in the realm of regular education, the BNCC highlights the significance of oral skills and provides a broader perspective on the competencies that should be nurtured in English language instruction, acknowledging the importance of all linguistic abilities. Therefore, EFL teachers educated and trained in Brazil should be able to access these guidelines and follow them towards a teaching approach that not only values the development of speaking abilities, but also takes into consideration the difficulties faced by students in Brazil.

### **3.1. QUESTIONNAIRE**

In order to gain insights into the training and experiences of novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), a form was developed and distributed to undergraduate and recently graduated students of the Languages program through the Google Forms platform. This form targeted individuals with less than five years of teaching experience and aimed to collect data on their practices regarding oral communication in the classroom. Seventeen English teachers, all of whom were educated through a bilingual program and are fluent in English, participated in the survey. The responses offer valuable perspectives on how emerging educators navigate and implement oral communication strategies in their teaching, providing a window into the preparation they receive and the challenges they encounter in the classroom.

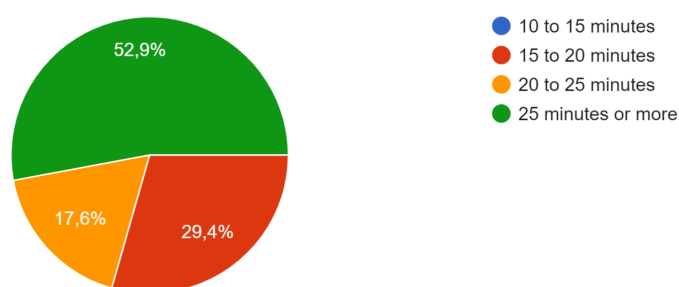
**Figure 1 – Question 1**

advocates for a balanced approach to teaching that integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing rather than confining instruction to exam-oriented reading and grammar. Moreover, the strong valuation of oral skills reflects Nunan's (1999) argument that fostering active learner involvement is essential for overcoming students' passive perceptions of language learning and echoes Savignon's (1983) emphasis on the importance of engaging in dynamic exchanges, where both planned and spontaneous speaking are crucial for authentic communication. In essence, the data not only confirm the high priority placed on speaking but also support the need for teaching practices that are both socially interactive and dynamically structured to meet the evolving demands of language proficiency.

**Figure 3 – Question 3**

3. How much time is dedicated to oral practices in the classroom?

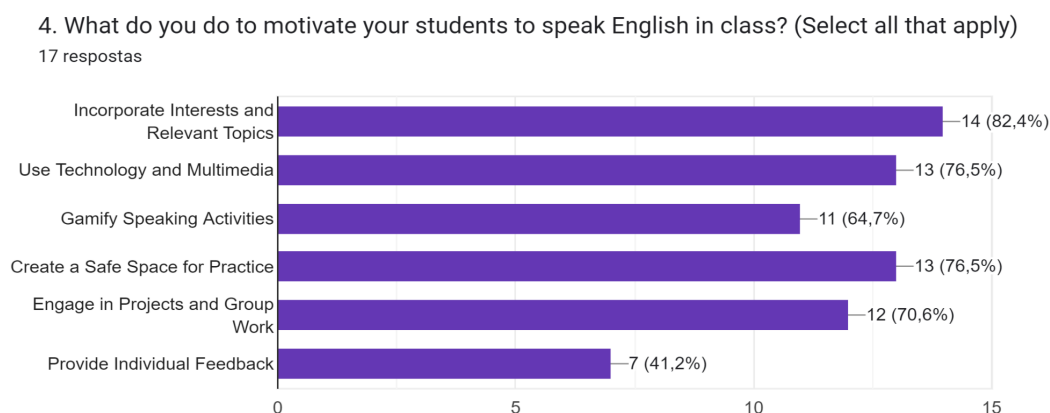
17 respostas



Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

In this area, a significant 52.9% of respondents stated they spend over 25 minutes of class time on speaking practice, which is considered here an appropriate length for engaging in such activities. With 25 minutes or more, teachers can effectively give instructions, allow students to form groups or pairs and facilitate dialogues or conversations. Conversely, 29.4% opted to allocate 15 to 20 minutes for oral practice. Although this may not be enough time, it might be the only chance for those respondents to concentrate on speaking in their teaching settings, so, it is prudent to recognize their effort of doing it at all. Notably, no respondents indicated they spend only 10 to 15 minutes on speaking activities, which reinforces the BNCC's emphasis on the importance of dedicating sufficient class time to oral communication. By choosing longer periods for the practice of orality, teachers are aligning with the document's directive to promote social interaction and ensure that students have ample opportunities to engage in meaningful spoken practice, ultimately supporting more comprehensive language development.

**Figure 4 – Question 4**



Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

By the time we reach Question 4, we find that 82.4% of respondents recognize the significance of incorporating relevant and engaging topics into lessons. People are more inclined to participate when they engage with subjects they find enjoyable, as it is easier to discuss familiar and interesting topics compared to those that fail to capture their attention (Nunan, 1999).

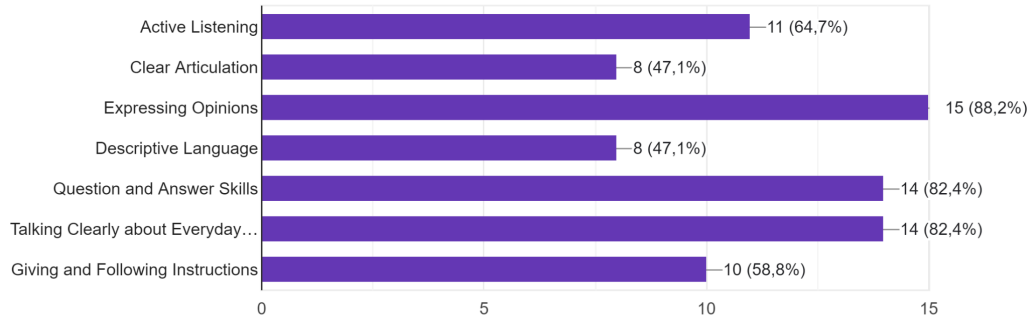
On another note, a considerable majority of over 70% of respondents identified the use of technology, the establishment of a safe space and participation in group projects as effective methods for encouraging students to practice English in the classroom. Similarly to what has been discussed by Thornbury (2005), it can be inferred that creating a safe environment is vital for helping students feel comfortable with making mistakes, which is essential for developing their speaking skills. This concept is relevant across all forms of learning, including language acquisition. Additionally, as Nunan (1999) states, group projects and the use of technology and multimedia can enhance lesson engagement and introduce fresh elements into the classroom routine.

However, these approaches may not be practical in every situation; in larger classes, teachers may find it challenging to manage group activities effectively and not all educational settings have the necessary technology available. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to apply these tools when possible and to navigate lessons with other materials when digital gadgets/activities are not available for all students, so as to not let this aspect affect their teaching objectives.

**Figure 5 – Question 5**

5. What is most important to develop in oral skills to achieve fluency in communication?(Select all that apply)

17 respostas



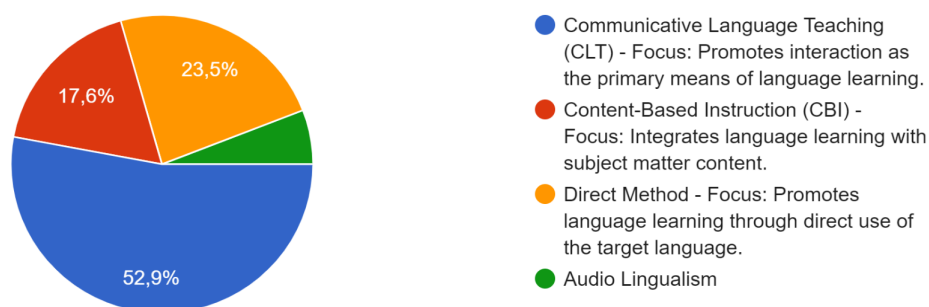
Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

Approximately 80% of respondents indicated that expressing opinions, discussing daily life clearly, and developing question-and-answer skills are crucial for enhancing fluency in communication. This is likely because these practices are part of everyday interactions and form the foundation for effective communication. From a young age, individuals express their preferences to convey likes and dislikes. When learning to speak English, phrases such as "I like" and "I don't like" are commonly used to share preferences. Question words (why, who, where, etc) are also employed to seek and provide basic information. In essence, the most frequently selected skills are those used from the earliest stages of language learning, as they provide the essential building blocks for developing language proficiency.

**Figure 6 – Question 6**

## 6. Whats is the school methodology in which you teach / have taught?

17 respostas



Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

Moving on, when asked about the methodology applied in their classroom, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) was chosen by 23.6% of respondents. This approach emphasizes teaching language through specific subjects – for example, students might explore a science topic and engage in discussions or writing in English – and is thought to make language use more relatable for learners.

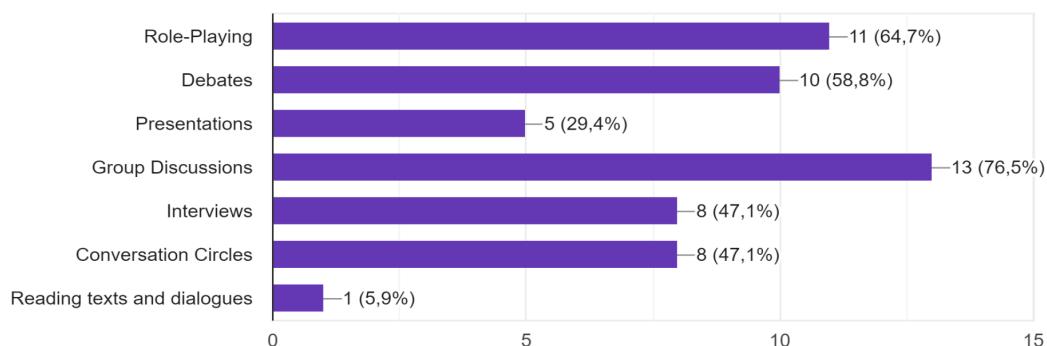
Also selected by 23.6% of respondents, the Direct Method focuses on the immediate and structured use of the target language. This technique can work well in larger classes, where the teacher might ask straightforward questions like "Is she tall?" while pointing to a student, encouraging the rest of the class to answer together with "Yes, she is" or "No, she isn't." Drawing on what has been said by Larsen-Freeman (2000), while Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) fosters practical language use and is especially effective in smaller classes or with students who have a higher proficiency level, the Direct Method may be more suitable for larger groups with learners who are at a lower proficiency level.

Lastly, Audiolingualism was chosen by just one respondent, suggesting it is not among the more favored methodologies. This is likely because it focuses on listening and repeating vocabulary and on question-and-answer drills, therefore, it does not promote student interaction. Still, it can be easily practiced individually, making it a good choice for learners who prefer to work on their pronunciation alone due to shyness or difficulty concentrating in a group environment (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

**Figure 7 – Question 7**

7. What oral activities do the materials or books you work with most suggest for developing oral skills? (Select all that apply)

17 respostas



Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

With a percentage of 76.5%, group activities were identified as the most commonly used resources in the materials and books that participants utilize in the classroom. This is not surprising since about half of the participants adopt the CLT approach, which encourages collaborative efforts and focuses on language acquisition through social interactions. Role-plays came in second place, providing excellent practice for beginner students by promoting speaking through structured roles and dialogues. On the other hand, group discussions are better suited for learners with a more developed linguistic repertoire, otherwise, the conversation may simply turn into a discussion in their native language about a topic in English. Lastly, reading texts and dialogues were mentioned only once, indicating that this practice is not widely favored, possibly due to the fact it often results in rote repetition, where students struggle to connect words with their meanings and only memorize pronunciation.

Finally, at the end of the questionnaire, an open-ended question was included to give participants the opportunity to discuss the limitations and challenges of the oral exercises presented in their materials. Many responses pointed out issues such as time constraints and activities that focus exclusively on repeating pre-established questions and answers, which often leads to students merely imitating structures rather than creating their own sentences. However, two particularly detailed comments stood out and warrant further analysis:

**Figure 8** - Answer A to Question 8

Taking into consideration my responses according to the experiences I've had teaching in a language school, the material did not offer much difficulty to oral practices. The only issue I would point out would be the distance in realities presented in the book, making "everyday situations" not as easy to associate with, but that was also not a huge issue as the book did try to use diverse cultural experiences and realities. On the other hand, I would like to comment on my experiences teaching in regular schools, which were totally opposed to those in a language school environment. In regular schools, there is minimal importance to oral skill practice and major focus on reading abilities, also not very much focused on the understanding of the texts but in the students' abilities to connect questions and the information provided in the texts. That is: the skills in practice are not related to language, but to reading techniques. Grammar and vocabulary are also exercised in class, but oral skills are barely ever put to use.

Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

The participant begins by pointing out that the materials used in the classroom fail to help students link everyday practices with the dialogues in the activities, but this is not the main issue Answer A highlights. What is particularly notable about oral practice in this participant's experience is the fact that regular schools place little emphasis on it. Following the more exam-oriented approach somewhat defended by the PCN (Brasil, 2000), the usual focus is primarily on reading activities where students are encouraged to connect questions and answers rather than genuinely understand the text.

From personal experiences, it is clear that regular schools pose significant challenges for promoting oral communication, mainly due to the high student-to-teacher ratio. Although many materials suggest group activities for practicing speaking, it often leads to the teacher losing control of the classroom, resulting in chaos where students engage in discussions on unrelated topics in Portuguese instead of communicating in English. In Brazil, where this language is not typically used in daily communication, regular school teachers often see little need to emphasize oral practice in settings that are not supportive of such activities. Thus, the questionnaire's Answer A reflects a broader reality regarding the practice of oral English – or any foreign language – in the classroom.

**Figure 9 - Answer B to Question 8**

I often have to adapt activities for my students because important rules of conversation - active listening and turn taking - are not explicitly prescribed to students. I am as of now orchestrating a communication workshop where I teach my students turn-taking and active communications skills, since they struggle to speak with one another. I notice that they do not listen to each other and expect the teacher to be the interested one. I often need to remind them to listen and ask questions to each other as it is the polite thing to do in conversation. The books rarely approach the topic of socio-communication skills and it's often up to me to bring it to the classroom.

Source: Teacher's Oral Skills Questionnaire (SILVA, 2024)

Moving forward, the following comment was vital because it not only points out the common issues teachers face, but also stresses the significance of active listening and the ability to take turns in conversations. Many students find it challenging to respond appropriately because they don't listen carefully, so it is important to highlight that effective communication involves adjusting one's speech to match the level of formality and selecting the right words for the situation/partner so that the conversation can be held (Thornbury, 2005). Also, resolving conflicts that arise from misunderstandings is a vital skill when interacting socially, so alternating speaking turns is essential for building fluency. Still according to Thornbury (2005), this requires careful listening so that students can create more structured responses using connectors and grammatical elements that improve clarity and flow. So, by practicing turn taking, students enhance their speech clarity and learn to reduce pauses, as attentive listening enables them to determine the best way to structure their replies. In this manner, they cultivate more effective and meaningful communication skills.

In summary, the results reinforce the importance of providing ample speaking opportunities, selecting engaging topics and adopting methodologies that encourage active participation. While challenges such as time constraints and lack of institutional support remain prevalent, the findings suggest that teachers recognize the necessity of fostering a communicative environment. Ultimately, these insights contribute to a broader discussion on the effectiveness of speaking strategies in language learning, underscoring the need for continued support and resource development to help educators navigate the complexities of teaching speaking skills in diverse educational contexts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

After examining the current state of English language teaching in Brazil, it becomes evident that oral proficiency is often overlooked, especially since the PCN does not acknowledge its vital importance. In contrast, the BNCC provides clear guidelines for developing the four language skills in the later years of elementary education. This suggests that, even though there may not be an immediate demand for speaking English in Brazil, the BNCC offers valuable directives for incorporating oral proficiency instruction in both public and private schools.

Furthermore, a positive aspect revealed by the survey is that half of the respondents utilize the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology, considering that this method aligns well with the BNCC's focus on the practical use of language through social-interactional practices. The reflections from the survey and the information collected highlight that enhancing oral proficiency hinges on expanding vocabulary, structuring grammar and ultimately improving speech production. By focusing on these three elements, we can establish effective language teaching practices.

Nevertheless, one significant challenge teachers encounter in promoting oral proficiency goes beyond students' pauses, errors, intonation or mispronunciations; it relates to the overall educational framework. The initial step in fostering effective English language instruction and enhancing oral proficiency is to advocate for public policies that prepare professionals for this endeavor. It is equally important to educate children, parents and the entire community about the necessity of acquiring all the skills needed to communicate effectively in another language. Finally, while enhancing oral proficiency in the classroom can be challenging, there are numerous strategies to adapt and make this practice achievable. If English teachers focus on these elements now, it is likely that oral practice and fluency will become a standard part of the learning experience for all students in the future.

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