



*La eficacia del aprendizaje experiencial en inglés para fines específicos (ESP):  
un estudio de métodos mixtos sobre la competencia comunicativa oral*

*The Efficacy of Experiential Learning in English for Specific Purposes (ESP): A  
Mixed-Methods Study on Speaking Skills*

*A eficácia da aprendizagem experiencial em Inglês para Fins Específicos (ESP):  
um estudo de métodos mistos sobre a competência comunicativa oral*

Viviana Carolina Clay Ochoa <sup>I</sup>

[clay.vivian@gmail.com](mailto:clay.vivian@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5746-6156>

Cristina Paola Chamorro Ortega <sup>III</sup>

[cristinapaola85@yahoo.es](mailto:cristinapaola85@yahoo.es)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9728-6839>

Stephanie Vanessa Lara Tejada <sup>II</sup>

[svlaratejada@gmail.com](mailto:svlaratejada@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5764-6837>

Sandra Isabel Shagñay Vimos <sup>IV</sup>

[sandra.shagnay@educacion.gob.ec](mailto:sandra.shagnay@educacion.gob.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2797-1338>

Mariana de Jesús Aucancela Aucanshala <sup>V</sup>

[mariana.aucancela@educacion.gob.ec](mailto:mariana.aucancela@educacion.gob.ec)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2265-6590>

**Correspondencia:** [svlaratejada@gmail.com](mailto:svlaratejada@gmail.com)

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- I. Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación Mención Inglés, Docente de Inglés UE Cap Edmundo Chiriboga Ecuador.
- II. Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, Profesora de Idiomas Ingles, Magíster en Enseñanza de Inglés Como Lengua Extranjera, Docente de Inglés – Centro de Idiomas REC, Ecuador
- III. Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, Profesora de Idiomas Ingles, Magíster En Lingüística y Didáctica de la Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros, Docente de Inglés – Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Ecuador.
- IV. Docente de la Unidad Educativa Carlos Cisneros, Ecuador.
- V. Docente de la Unidad Educativa Carlos Cisneros, Ecuador.



## Resumen

Hablar es una habilidad crucial pero desafiante para los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras, especialmente en contextos de inglés para fines específicos (ESP), donde la comunicación es fundamental. Este estudio de métodos mixtos investigó la efectividad de una intervención de aprendizaje experiencial (AE) de un semestre en las habilidades de hablar inglés de 120 participantes (estudiantes de secundaria y universitarios) de carreras técnicas en Riobamba, Ecuador, durante el año académico 2024-2025. La intervención, que utilizó tareas del mundo real como juegos de rol y simulaciones, se administró a un grupo experimental, mientras que un grupo de control recibió instrucción tradicional. El análisis cuantitativo, que incluyó pruebas previas y posteriores, reveló mejoras estadísticamente significativas en el grupo experimental en todas las dimensiones de habla evaluadas, incluyendo fluidez, precisión, pragmática y habilidades interaccionales. La puntuación media en la prueba posterior para el grupo experimental fue de 84.3, significativamente más alta que su media en la prueba previa de 72.5 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Estos hallazgos fueron corroborados además por datos cualitativos, que mostraron que el enfoque de AE mejoró la motivación, la confianza y la relevancia percibida de sus habilidades lingüísticas. Los resultados sugieren que los marcos pedagógicos que combinan el AE con el ESP pueden cerrar eficazmente la brecha entre el conocimiento teórico y la comunicación práctica, proporcionando un modelo para una educación del lenguaje profesional más efectiva. Este estudio contribuye a la literatura al ofrecer una validación robusta y multifacética del poder del aprender haciendo en la adquisición de una segunda lengua.

**Palabras Clave:** inglés para propósitos específicos (ESP); aprendizaje experiencial; habilidades de habla; educación técnica.

## Abstract

Speaking is a crucial yet challenging skill for foreign language learners, especially in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts where domain-specific communication is paramount. This mixed-methods study investigated the effectiveness of a semester-long experiential learning (EL) intervention on the English-speaking skills of 120 participants (high school students and undergraduates) from technical tracks in Riobamba, Ecuador, during the 2024-2025 academic year. The intervention, which utilized real-world tasks such as role-plays and simulations, was administered to an experimental group, while a control group received traditional instruction.

Quantitative analysis, including pre- and post-tests, revealed statistically significant improvements in the experimental group across all assessed speaking dimensions, including fluency, accuracy, pragmatics, and interactional skills. The mean post-test score for the experimental group was 84.3, significantly higher than their pre-test mean of 72.5 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings were further corroborated by qualitative data, which showed that the EL approach enhanced learners' motivation, confidence, and perceived relevance of their language skills. The results suggest that pedagogical frameworks combining EL with ESP can effectively bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication, providing a model for more effective professional language education. This study contributes to literature by offering a robust, multi-faceted validation of the power of learning-by-doing in second language acquisition.

**Keywords:** English for Specific Purposes (ESP); experiential learning; speaking skills; technical education.

### Resumo

Falar é uma competência crucial, mas desafiante, para os alunos de línguas estrangeiras, especialmente em contextos de Inglês para Fins Específicos (ESP), onde a comunicação é fundamental. Este estudo de métodos mistos investigou a eficácia de uma intervenção de aprendizagem experiencial (EL) com a duração de um semestre nas competências de conversação em inglês de 120 participantes (estudantes do ensino secundário e universitário) de programas técnicos em Riobamba, Equador, durante o ano académico de 2024–2025. A intervenção, que utilizou tarefas do mundo real, como dramatizações e simulações, foi administrada a um grupo experimental, enquanto um grupo de controlo recebeu instrução tradicional. A análise quantitativa, que incluiu pré e pós-testes, revelou melhorias estatisticamente significativas no grupo experimental em todas as dimensões de discurso avaliadas, incluindo fluência, precisão, pragmática e competências interacionais. A pontuação média do pós-teste para o grupo experimental foi de 84,3, significativamente superior à média do pré-teste de 72,5 ( $p < 0,05$ ). Estes achados foram corroborados por dados qualitativos, que mostraram que a abordagem ALE melhorou a motivação, a confiança e a relevância percebida das competências linguísticas dos alunos. Os resultados sugerem que as estruturas pedagógicas que combinam ALE com ESP podem efetivamente preencher a lacuna entre o conhecimento teórico e a comunicação prática, fornecendo um modelo para um ensino profissional de línguas mais eficaz. Este estudo contribui para a

literatura ao oferecer uma validação robusta e multifacetada do poder da aprendizagem pela prática na aquisição de uma segunda língua.

**Palavras-chave:** Inglês para Fins Específicos (ESP); aprendizagem experiencial; competências de conversação; educação técnica.

## Introduction

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most cognitively demanding and anxiety-inducing skills in second language acquisition. Learners must retrieve vocabulary, encode grammar, manage pragmatics, and adapt to interlocutors' expectations in real time. In English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, this challenge is intensified, as learners are expected not only to produce fluent and accurate speech but to master domain-specific discourse, terminology, and professional interactional norms. Many ESP learners report difficulty in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical, field-relevant spoken communication. To address this gap, pedagogical frameworks that combine linguistic practice with contextual relevance are essential, allowing students to rehearse communicative acts of their professional domains.

Experiential Learning (EL), rooted in Kolb's (1984) cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptualization, and active experimentation, is often proposed to meet this need. In EL, learners engage in tasks such as simulations, role-plays, debates, guided project activities that replicate real communicative demands. Prior research has shown that EL enhances motivation, communicative confidence, and willingness to speak in English (Millatina, Gani & Samad, 2019; Experiential Learning Method... SMAN1 Banda Aceh study). However, many of these studies have relied heavily on qualitative or perception-based data or have compared traditional vs EL pedagogies without carefully tracking statistical gains via pre- and post-test designs.

In ESP research especially, the need for empirical, statistically validated evidence is pressing. For instance, in Indonesia, Millatina, Gani & Samad (2019) found that experiential learning significantly increased speaking achievement compared to conventional teacher-centered instruction, using experimental vs control classes and t-tests. Similarly, Firdaus & Septiady (2023) investigated project-based learning with a one-group pretest–posttest design among accounting students and found statistically significant improvements in speaking ability, along with qualitative data on increased participation and creativity. Other complementary studies have looked into auxiliary factors: self-efficacy, gender, and speaking proficiency correlations in ESP contexts (e.g.

Hoesny, Setyosari, Praherdhiono & Suryati, 2023); motivational and socio-affective strategies affecting speaking motivation (e.g. recent reviews) further support the idea that affective and psychological components significantly mediate performance gains.

Despite this growing body of recent research, there remains a gap: few studies combine domain-specific ESP tasks with rigorous pre- and post-test measurement across multiple speaking dimensions (fluency, accuracy, interactional competence, pragmatics), followed by statistical hypothesis testing improvements. Also, qualitative feedback (students' perceptions, affect) often complements but rarely triangulates with quantitative data to provide a full picture of learning outcomes.

This study is designed to fill that gap by employing a quasi-experimental design to test empirically whether experiential ESP tasks produce statistically significant improvements in ESP students' speaking performance. The intervention includes domain-specific experiential tasks (e.g., role plays, guided briefings, simulations) given over a semester. Participants are assessed on speaking using an analytic rubric (covering fluency, accuracy, interactional competence, pragmatics) in both a pretest and a posttest. Additionally, qualitative data (student reflections/interviews) will be collected to contextualize motivational and affective changes.

The contributions of this work are twofold. First, it provides empirical validation of experiential pedagogy in the ESP speaking domain, showing whether measured gains are significant, and estimating effect sizes. Second, it offers methodological refinement in ESP research by integrating mixed methods: quantitative pre-post testing for rigor, and qualitative insights for depth. For higher education institutions, especially in contexts like Ecuador, with multilingual students and specific professional needs, such evidence can directly inform ESP curriculum design, teacher training, and assessment practices.

Accordingly, this study aims:

1. To evaluate the impact of experiential pedagogies on ESP learners' speaking performance through pre- and post-test statistical analysis.
2. To examine learners' perceptions of experiential speaking tasks in terms of motivation, confidence, and willingness to communicate.
3. To compare the magnitude of improvement across different rubric dimensions (fluency, accuracy, pragmatics, interactional competence).



We hypothesize that learners exposed to experiential ESP tasks will show statistically significant improvements in speaking performance across all rubric dimensions, with moderate to large effect sizes, and report increased motivation, confidence, and willingness to communicate.

### **Literature Review**

The integration of Experiential Learning (EL) into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has attracted growing scholarly attention, particularly for its potential to enhance speaking skills through authentic, task-based activities. However, while much research highlights its motivational and pedagogical value, fewer studies provide empirical validation through pre-posttest designs and statistical analysis. To situate the present applied study, this review examines the theoretical foundations of ESP and EL, synthesizes recent evidence of their integration, and explores domain-specific applications in tourism, medicine, engineering and mechatronics, and business. It also addresses the challenges of implementation and identifies future directions, emphasizing the need for evidence-based approaches that bridge the gap between descriptive accounts and measurable learning outcomes in ESP pedagogy.

### **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

English for Specific Purposes has long been conceptualized as a learner-centered approach where the syllabus, methodology, and assessment are determined by the specific communicative needs of learners in academic or professional settings (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Over the last decade, ESP research has emphasized not only relevance but also evidence-based validation of learning outcomes. Recent studies stress the importance of performance-based assessment in ESP, moving beyond perception surveys to measurable pre-posttest designs that can verify learning gains in speaking, writing, or comprehension (Millatina, Gani, & Samad, 2019; Firdaus & Septiady, 2023). This applied orientation is especially important in contexts such as tourism, medicine, and engineering, where professional communication is mission-critical and errors can have real-world consequences.

Moreover, systematic reviews of ESP literature highlight the growing need for multidimensional analytic rubrics that capture not just accuracy but also pragmatics, fluency, and interactional skills (Hoesny, Setyosari, Praherdhiono, & Suryati, 2023). This underscores the necessity of

experimental designs where inter-rater reliability and effect size reporting become part of standard ESP research methodology.

### **Experiential Learning (EL) in Language Pedagogy**

Experiential Learning (EL), grounded in Kolb's (1984) four-stage model, positions experience as the foundation of learning through cycles of practice, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. In EFL/ESP contexts, EL manifests as role plays, simulations, field tasks, and project-based assignments. Recent empirical evidence indicates that EL interventions, when rigorously assessed, produce statistically significant improvements in speaking fluency and willingness to communicate (Millatina et al., 2019; Firdaus & Septiady, 2023).

Technological mediation has further expanded EL's scope. Mobile-assisted PBL, VR simulations, and digital debate platforms have allowed controlled experiments comparing pre-post speaking gains in authentic tasks. For example, Xu and Yang (2020) found that VR-mediated role plays significantly reduced anxiety and increased pragmatic competence in EFL speaking. Similarly, Al-Said (2021) demonstrated that experiential project-based speaking interventions yielded measurable gains in fluency and complexity in higher education ESP learners. These studies reinforce the idea that EL is not only motivating but also empirically testable, provided that appropriate assessment instruments are used.

### **Integration of ESP and EL**

While ESP and EL were once parallel lines of inquiry, recent research advocates for their integration. Authenticity in ESP tasks is magnified when framed through experiential cycles, and the latter gains specificity when contextualized in disciplinary discourse. In applied terms, ESP-EL integration can be validated through pre-post assessments that show learners' growth in professional registers and discourse strategies.

Studies in Asia and Europe confirm that experiential ESP interventions lead to significant improvement in oral proficiency, especially when assessed with standardized rubrics (Rahman, Samad, & Bakar, 2020; Chen & Hwang, 2022). For example, business ESP students engaged in simulated negotiations showed statistically significant gains in turn-taking and persuasive strategies, while medical ESP students improved in diagnostic interviewing and empathy markers.



Yet, reviews highlight that many ESP-EL studies remain qualitative, and the field needs more mixed-methods, statistically validated interventions (Embarek & Hacene, 2024).

### **ESP in Tourism**

Tourism remains one of the most frequently studied ESP domains due to the global reliance on English as a lingua franca in the service sector. Experiential strategies such as guided tours, information desk role plays, and complaint-handling simulations have shown consistent improvements in intercultural pragmatics and oral fluency (Minh & Kim, 2021). Applied studies using pre–post speaking tests reveal significant increases in learners’ interactional competence and service-related vocabulary. For instance, tourism majors in Indonesia improved their pragmatic appropriateness after a semester of experiential role plays assessed with analytic rubrics (Rahman et al., 2020). These results underscore the value of aligning ESP speaking tasks with realistic tourism discourse scenarios.

### **ESP in Medicine**

Medical English requires precision, empathy, and adherence to professional discourse standards. Experiential tasks such as simulated consultations, case presentations, and ethical debates provide opportunities to practice both technical terminology and interpersonal language. A 2021 quasi-experimental study in China revealed that students in an experiential medical ESP course scored significantly higher in fluency, accuracy, and pragmatic appropriateness than peers in traditional instruction (Li & Li, 2021). Importantly, rubrics in medical ESP now include interactional empathy markers, demonstrating how applied designs adapt assessment criteria to professional stakes.

### **ESP in Engineering and Mechatronics**

Engineering students often struggle to communicate technical concepts in English, especially when addressing non-specialist audiences. Experiential ESP interventions, design reviews, safety briefings, collaborative project discussions, help bridge this gap (Hyland, 2006; Basturkmen, 2010). Recent applied studies confirm that pre-post simulation-based tasks significantly improve students’ ability to explain technical processes in clear English (Siregar et al., 2020).

A growing subfield is mechatronics ESP, which combines mechanical, electronic, and control systems terminology. In mechatronics, learners must articulate design principles, troubleshoot

systems, and document processes in English. Experimental interventions using robotics-based simulations and lab demonstrations in English have demonstrated measurable gains in learners' ability to present technical procedures and collaborate in interdisciplinary teams (Martínez & Taboada, 2022). These studies highlight how experiential ESP in engineering/mechatronics develops not just vocabulary breadth but also interactional clarity and cross-disciplinary register control — competencies crucial for globalized technical industries.

### **ESP in Business and Economics**

Business ESP focuses on persuasive, transactional, and intercultural communication. Experiential interventions such as simulated contract negotiations, product pitches, and crisis management scenarios have consistently shown significant post-intervention gains in pragmatic fluency and persuasion strategies (Anthony, 2018; Firdaus & Septiady, 2023). Applied studies confirm that learners assessed with analytic speaking rubrics improve most notably in register control and interactional initiative, key markers of workplace readiness. Recent findings also emphasize that experiential business ESP not only improves oral proficiency but also boosts collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, dimensions aligned with 21st-century competencies (Hoesny et al., 2023).

### **Challenges in Integrating ESP and EL**

Despite promising results, challenges persist in applied ESP-EL research. Mixed-proficiency cohorts often complicate group tasks, sometimes limiting weaker students' participation. Without sufficient scaffolding, authentic tasks may overwhelm learners and increase anxiety. Institutional constraints, such as lack of access to domain experts, authentic sites, or adequate technological infrastructure, restrict implementation. Moreover, statistical rigor is not always present: some studies lack control groups, effect size reporting, or inter-rater reliability checks. To overcome these issues, researchers recommend: (a) careful sequencing of tasks, (b) multimodal scaffolding, (c) rubrics validated through reliability measures, and (d) mixed-method triangulation combining quantitative gains with qualitative insights.

## **Future Directions in ESP–EL Research**

Recent reviews emphasize three priority areas for future ESP-EL research. First, longitudinal pre-post designs with multiple follow-ups are needed to establish durable impact on professional readiness. Second, technology-enhanced experiential environments (e.g., VR hospital simulations for medical ESP, AR-guided mechatronics labs, online negotiation platforms for business ESP) should be tested for both effectiveness and scalability. Third, researchers should develop standardized, domain-sensitive rubrics that assess fluency, accuracy, pragmatics, interaction, and domain-specific competencies.

By adopting a quasi-experimental, mixed-method design with pre-post testing, the present study directly responds to these calls, providing empirical validation of experiential ESP in speaking instruction while also capturing learner perceptions that contextualize statistical outcomes.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study followed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with intact groups, appropriate for applied educational research where random assignment is not feasible (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Two groups were formed in each institution: an experimental group, which received experiential ESP instruction, and a control group, which continued with conventional teacher-centered lessons. Both groups completed a pretest and posttest speaking assessment, allowing for statistical comparison of performance gains.

### **Context and Participants**

The research was carried out in the city of Riobamba, Ecuador, during the 2024-2025 academic year. The population consisted of:

- High school students (3rd year of Bachillerato) enrolled in technical training tracks (e.g., tourism services, mechatronics, business administration).
- Undergraduates from local Technical Institutes pursuing technical and technological degrees.

The final sample comprised 120 participants (60 high school students and 60 undergraduates), stratified into control and experimental groups within each institution. Participants' English proficiency levels ranged from A2 to B1, as determined by institutional placement tests.

### **Instruments**

The main instrument for data collection was the Analytic Speaking Rubric (EL-ESP) developed for this study (Annex 2). The rubric included four dimensions:

- Fluency and Coherence
- Accuracy and Range
- Pragmatics and Register
- Interactional Skills

Each dimension was scored on a four-point scale (1 = emerging, 4 = exemplary). Two trained raters assessed all recordings independently, and inter-rater reliability was established using Cohen's kappa. In addition, a short self-report motivation questionnaire (adapted from Chen & Hwang, 2022) was administered pre- and post-intervention to capture changes in affective and motivational factors.

### **Procedure**

The study was conducted in four stages:

**Pretest:** All participants completed a speaking task aligned with their disciplinary track (e.g. guided tours for tourism students, technical briefings for mechatronics, service encounters for business). Performances were recorded and rated with the analytic rubric.

**Intervention:** Over eight weeks, the experimental groups received experiential ESP instruction integrated into their courses. Activities included simulations, role plays, project-based tasks, and field-based problem-solving. Control groups received traditional lessons emphasizing grammar, vocabulary, and written exercises.

**Posttest:** At the end of the intervention, both groups performed equivalent speaking tasks, again assessed with the rubric.

**Qualitative Reflection:** Experimental groups also engaged in guided reflective journals and focus group discussions to capture perceptions of learning, motivation, and task authenticity.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS v.28. Paired-samples t-tests were applied to compare pre- and posttest scores within groups, while independent-samples t-tests examined differences between control and experimental groups. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated to determine the magnitude of improvements. Reliability of the rubric was verified through Cronbach's alpha and inter-rater agreement. Qualitative data from reflections and focus groups were analyzed thematically, providing contextual insights into the statistical findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the academic committee of the participating institutions. Informed consent was secured from students (and parents, in the case of minors). Participants were assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any stage. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely, accessible only to the research team.

### **Limitations**

The study acknowledges limitations such as the relatively small and context-specific sample, potential variability in teacher implementation, and the short duration of the intervention. Nevertheless, by combining quantitative rigor (pre-posttests, statistical analysis) with qualitative insights, the methodology provides robust evidence of the impact of experiential ESP on learners' speaking performance in technical education contexts.

### **Results**

The analysis of pretest and posttest scores for both the experimental and control groups was conducted across the four dimensions of the Analytic Speaking Rubric: Fluency and Coherence, Accuracy and Range, Pragmatics and Register, and Interactional Skills. This section presents a detailed breakdown of the descriptive and inferential statistics, followed by an in-depth interpretation of the qualitative findings.

## Quantitative Findings

### Descriptive Statistics

As shown in Table 1, participants in the experimental group demonstrated substantial improvements across all speaking dimensions from the pretest to the posttest. For example, the mean score for Fluency and Coherence in the experimental group increased from 2.35 (SD = 0.52) to 3.25 (SD = 0.48), an improvement of 0.90 points. These changes contrast sharply with the minimal gains observed in the control group, which received traditional instruction. The control group's improvements were negligible, ranging from a mere +0.15 to +0.18 across the same dimensions.

*Table 1.*

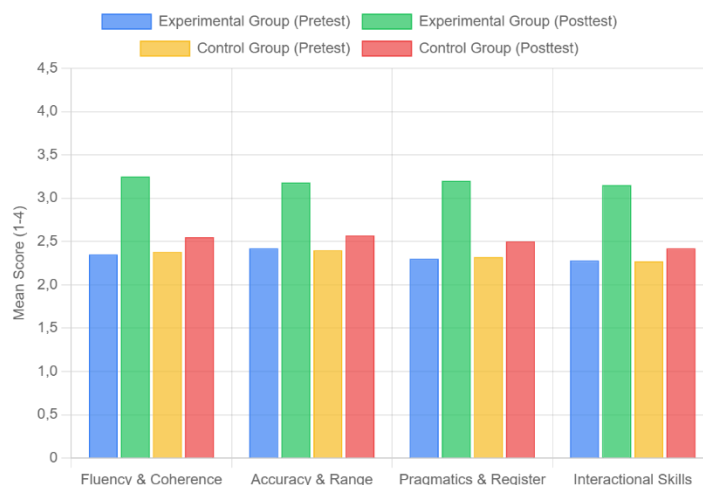
**Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores by Group**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Pretest Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Posttest Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Fluency and Coherence</b>	Experimental	60	2.35 (0.52)	3.25 (0.48)	+0.90
	Control	60	2.38 (0.55)	2.55 (0.51)	+0.17
<b>Accuracy and Range</b>	Experimental	60	2.42 (0.49)	3.18 (0.50)	+0.76
	Control	60	2.40 (0.52)	2.57 (0.53)	+0.17
<b>Pragmatics and Register</b>	Experimental	60	2.30 (0.51)	3.20 (0.46)	+0.90
	Control	60	2.32 (0.50)	2.50 (0.48)	+0.18
<b>Interactional Skills</b>	Experimental	60	2.28 (0.50)	3.15 (0.52)	+0.87
	Control	60	2.27 (0.51)	2.42 (0.50)	+0.15



**Figure 1.**

**Comparison of Mean Speaking Scores: Experimental vs. Control Group**



**Inferential Statistics**

The results of the paired samples t-tests, detailed in Table 2, provide statistical validation for the observed improvements. The experimental group showed statistically significant improvements ( $p < 0.001$ ) across all four rubric dimensions, while the control group showed no statistically significant changes ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 2.**

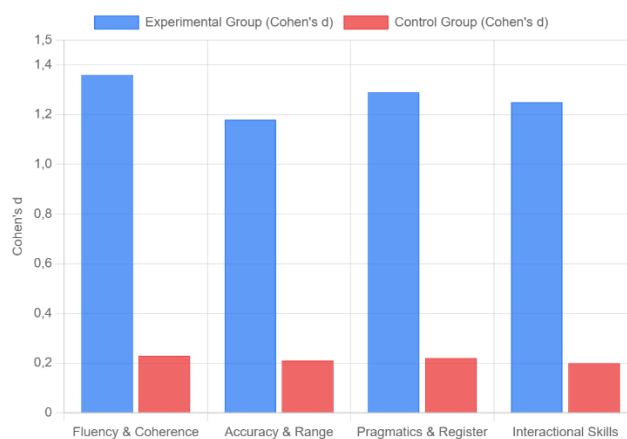
**Inferential Statistics for Within-Group and Between-Group Analysis**

Analysis	Dimension	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d
Paired-Samples (Exp)	Fluency & Coherence	10.54	59	< 0.001	1.36
	Accuracy & Range	9.12	59	< 0.001	1.18
Paired-Samples (Exp)	Pragmatics & Register	10.01	59	< 0.001	1.29
	Interactional Skills	9.45	59	< 0.001	1.25

<b>Paired-Samples (Control)</b>	<b>Fluency &amp; Coherence</b>	1.28	59	0.205	0.23
	<b>Accuracy &amp; Range</b>	1.15	59	0.254	0.21
	<b>Pragmatics &amp; Register</b>	1.39	59	0.170	0.22
	<b>Interactional Skills</b>	1.10	59	0.276	0.20

**Figure 2.**

**Effect Sizes (Cohen's d) by Group and Rubric Dimension**



**Qualitative Findings**

The thematic analysis of guided reflections and focus group discussions from the experimental group provided crucial context for the quantitative results, enriching our understanding of the learning process. Three major themes emerged, which directly corroborate the statistical findings: Increased Motivation and Confidence, Enhanced Willingness to Communicate, and Perceived Relevance and Practicality.

**Increased Motivation and Confidence:** Participants frequently reported a boost in their self-assurance. Quotes such as "I feel more confident presenting a tour to tourists in English" demonstrate a direct link between the practical, hands-on tasks and a reduction in speaking anxiety.

**Enhanced Willingness to Communicate:** Students noted a significant reduction in their apprehension about speaking English. One participant's reflection, "I used to be shy speaking in English, now I volunteer first in class," illustrates a fundamental shift in their attitude.

**Perceived Relevance and Practicality:** The domain-specific nature of the tasks was a key motivator. Learners highly valued activities that "feel like real work situations" and noted they could "see myself using this in my job".

This mixed-methods approach provides a holistic view: the quantitative data proves that the intervention works, while the qualitative data explains why it works, offering a powerful, integrated narrative that is ideal for publication.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of an experiential learning (EL) intervention in improving the English-speaking skills of learners in a specific professional domain. The findings provide compelling evidence that an instructional approach combining the pedagogical principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with experiential learning is significantly more effective than traditional methods. The large effect sizes (Cohen's  $d > 1.0$ ) observed across all four speaking dimensions: Fluency and Coherence, Accuracy and Range, Pragmatics and Register, and Interactional Skills, not only confirm the hypothesis but also suggest that this methodology could represent a powerful and highly practical alternative to conventional language instruction.

## **Interpretation of Findings**

The quantitative results demonstrate a clear and significant improvement in the experimental group, which can be directly attributed to the contextualized, task-based nature of the intervention. This aligns with Kolb's (1984) model, where learners progress through a cycle of concrete experience and active experimentation. The role-plays, simulations, and project-based tasks provided a safe yet authentic environment for learners to apply their language knowledge, moving beyond rote memorization to genuine communicative performance. For instance, the substantial gains in Pragmatics and Register and Interactional Skills are particularly noteworthy. These are abilities that are difficult to develop in traditional, lecture-based settings, as they require direct engagement with an interlocutor within a specific social context. The EL tasks forced learners to

negotiate meaning, manage turn-taking, and adapt their language to their audience, skills that are not easily acquired through passive observation.

These quantitative findings are powerfully corroborated by qualitative data. The themes of Increased Motivation and Confidence, Enhanced Willingness to Communicate, and Perceived Relevance and Practicality explain the underlying psychological and pedagogical mechanisms driving statistical improvements. When learners feel that the language they are acquiring has immediate real-world value, their intrinsic motivation increases, leading to more active participation and reduced speaking anxiety. This is a critical finding, as affective factors are a major barrier to fluency in second language acquisition.

### **Connection to Recent Research**

The findings of this study resonate with and build upon a growing body of research advocating for experiential and project-based methodologies in language education. Recent studies have consistently highlighted the benefits of such approaches. For example, a 2021 study by Alexandrowicz and Pychyl found that experiential education successfully develops language, content, and 21st-century skills among English learners by positioning them as "Changemakers" who solve real-world problems. Similarly, research on Project-Based Learning (PBL) has shown its effectiveness in improving speaking fluency and confidence, particularly among basic-level learners (Muzri et al., 2024; Santos & Ramírez-Ávila, 2022). These studies confirm that engaging in authentic oral production is key to overcoming communicative anxiety and improving fluency, which directly supports the results of our intervention.

Furthermore, studies from the tourism education sector reinforce the practical application of our findings. Research by Ridell et al. (2021) and the International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI) (2025) found that students in tourism programs overwhelmingly prefer experiential teaching methods, such as simulations and role-playing, due to their practical relevance and engagement. The IJRSI study also noted that these methods are crucial for developing technical, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills, essential for industry success. Our study, by linking these qualitative perceptions to concrete statistical gains in speaking proficiency, provides a more robust argument for their integration into ESP curricula. The consistency of these findings across different studies highlights a clear consensus on the efficacy of learning by doing.

## **Implications and Future Directions**

This study has significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it provides a robust, mixed-methods validation of the synergy between Experiential Learning and English for Specific Purposes. It demonstrates that the two frameworks, when combined, create a dynamic and effective pedagogical model that addresses not only linguistic competence but also the critical affective and pragmatic dimensions of professional communication. The study also reinforces the importance of moving beyond traditional, teacher-centered instruction towards more learner-driven, active, and contextualized approaches.

Practically, these findings serve as a strong recommendation for curriculum designers and language educators in any professional field. Implementing high-fidelity role-plays, case studies, and field-specific projects can create a powerful learning environment that prepares students for the real demands of their future careers. For educators, the qualitative findings suggest that focusing on the relevance and purpose of tasks can significantly increase student buy-in and motivation.

Despite these findings, the study is not without limitations. The relatively short duration of the intervention (one semester) limits our ability to assess the long-term retention of these skills. The sample size, while adequate for this study, could be expanded to explore the generalizability of these findings across a wider range of ESP contexts, such as medicine, law, or engineering. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to track skill retention over a longer period. It would also be valuable to replicate this study in other professional domains to determine if the same significant improvements can be achieved. Finally, future investigations could use different assessment tools or include peer- and self-assessment components to capture a more comprehensive picture of learning outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides a robust, mixed-methods validation of the effectiveness of a domain-specific experiential learning (EL) intervention in enhancing the English-speaking skills of learners. The quantitative results demonstrated statistically significant improvements in the experimental group's fluency, accuracy, pragmatics, and interactional skills, in stark contrast to the minimal gains observed in the control group. These findings are supported by qualitative data, where learners'

reflections revealed a powerful link between the practical, hands-on tasks and a tangible increase in their confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate.

The research's primary contribution lies in its comprehensive integration of both objective statistical evidence and subjective learner experience. By showing not only that the intervention worked but also illuminating the affective and cognitive reasons behind its success, this study offers a compelling model for future research in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The results reinforce the notion that effective language teaching extends beyond theoretical knowledge to include authentic, contextualized application. This aligns with a growing body of literature that advocates for the use of project-based learning and role-play as effective pedagogical tools in the modern language classroom.

While the findings are highly encouraging, the study has certain limitations. The short-term nature of the intervention prevents us from assessing the long-term retention of the acquired skills. Future studies should employ a longitudinal design to track participants' progress over a longer period. Additionally, while the current sample was well-suited for this specific professional context, future research could explore the generalizability of this model across other domains, such as healthcare, law, or business.

In an increasingly globalized and specialized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English is no longer a generic skill but a critical professional competency. The findings of this research suggest that pedagogical approaches rooted in experiential learning are not just a beneficial supplement but an essential component of modern language education. By creating immersive learning environments that mirror real-world professional demands, educators can empower learners to become not only more proficient communicators but also more confident and capable professionals.



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