



Teaching and Learning Oral Communication in Schools: An Approach Based on Research Published in the Web of Science Database (2020–2022)

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Citation: Susan Sanhueza Henríquez, et al (2025), Teaching and Learning Oral Communication in Schools: An Approach Based on Research Published in the Web of Science Database (2020–2022). Educational Administration: Theory and Practice. 31(01), 594-608
DOI: 10.53555/kuey.v31i1.9672

ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Oral communication is regarded as a means for interacting with others and learning. However, current scientific production on its teaching and learning processes remains scarce. This research agenda aims to describe the main objects of study and methodologies used in studies published in the Web of Science database between 2020 and 2022 on the teaching of oral communication. The objective is to identify knowledge gaps that may inform future research. Using a qualitative approach and a descriptive documentary design, 24 articles were analyzed. The results identify five research agendas: beliefs and emotions of teachers and students, teaching tools, factors influencing the development of oral communication, teaching objectives, and assessment.

Keywords: Oral Communication, Communicative Competence, School, Agenda.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to establish a research agenda on the teaching and learning process of oral communication in schools, based on studies published in the Web of Science (WoS) database from 2020 to May 2022. For this work, we adopt Llinares' (2008) definition of a research agenda, understood as a collection of studies within a specific discipline that address problems from various theoretical and methodological perspectives. According to Sumonte and Sanhueza (2017), research agendas allow the characterization of research trends to group studies by specific theoretical fields and communicate new knowledge.

From this perspective, bibliometric analyses of academic journals can provide important indicators for measuring, validating, and assessing the scientific activity disseminated in journals at the international level, facilitating comparisons and identifying knowledge gaps (Flores & Aguilera, 2019). The timeliness criterion is also significant, as a research agenda offers an up-to-date overview of the distribution of knowledge and advances in topics consolidated as research problems.

Specifically, studying the teaching and learning process of oral communication in schools is necessary, as its main focus is the development of oral communicative competence—a skill that enables individuals to engage in dialogue within diverse discursive practices, thereby fostering social participation (Tusón, 2017).

Several studies (Cassany, 1994; Manghi & Crespo, 2005; Pose & Trincheri, 2014) define oral communication as a process involving both speaking and listening, which are conceived as skills that can be developed and improved over time through teaching. However, research on oral communication as a process remains scarce. Nevertheless, two models can be distinguished as theoretical and graphical representations of this process: 1) the oral comprehension and production model by Cassany (1994) and 2) the oral comprehension model by Crespo and Manghi (2005).

Both models conceptualize oral communication as a meaning-construction process in which the speaker and listener strive for mutual understanding. In this context, meaning negotiation is constructed and driven—

cognitively—by the intentions of both interlocutors in a communicative situation. This process involves three main components:

1. A social component related to the context.
2. A cognitive component including short- and long-term memory. Short-term memory encompasses skills such as identifying, relating, anticipating, summarizing, retaining, interpreting, planning, evaluating, hypothesizing, and producing. Long-term memory involves knowledge such as theory of mind, topic knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, world knowledge, genre knowledge, sociolinguistic knowledge, grammatical knowledge, lexical knowledge, and phonological knowledge. It also includes governing mechanisms and levels of representation (implicatures and explicatures) associated with oral comprehension and production.
3. A linguistic component related to verbal, non-verbal, and paraverbal information involved in the process. While these models represent theoretical expectations of what occurs in a person's mind during oral communication, they diverge significantly from students' actual performance in schools. For decades, linguistic inequality has been evident in schools (Zavala, 2019). Regarding oral communication, this inequality manifests in students' verbal, non-verbal, and paraverbal repertoires, which often appear insufficient for active participation in various communities through dialogue and meaning negotiation (Tusón, 2017). Current research (Becerra & Traver, 2017; Collado et al., 2019; Fallarino, Leite & Cremades, 2020) indicates that students' oral discourse lacks fluency and confidence during classroom interactions. This issue has likely been exacerbated by school closures during the pandemic (Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2020).

In Chile, the potential causes of this problem—oral communicative inequality—are diverse. First, Cisternas, Henríquez, and Osorio (2017) argue that schools are expected to teach oral communication, yet it is unclear whether teacher training institutions adequately prepare future educators with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to teach this competency. Indeed, Jover (2014) highlights that universities do not systematically provide knowledge on how to understand and teach oral communication in various educational contexts. Consequently, if future teachers do not develop expertise in the discipline, its didactics, and assessment during their initial training, systematic teaching of oral communication in schools is unlikely.

Second, public policies seem to prioritize reading and writing as the only systematically addressed and assessed competencies in schools, primarily through standardized tests such as SIMCE (Ministerio de Educación, 2012a). Furthermore, as Cisternas, Henríquez, and Osorio (2017) note, the National Curricular Guidelines (2012) reveal an imbalance in the importance given to language components (reading, writing, and oral communication), with oral communication receiving less emphasis than reading and writing. Consequently, teachers have limited time to systematically teach oral communication, as most instructional hours are devoted to reading and writing (Ministerio de Educación, 2012a).

This issue—oral communicative inequality—has become increasingly visible in light of Chile's recent social, cultural, and political developments (e.g., social protests, the pandemic, and the drafting of a new constitution), which have underscored the country's inequalities. Understanding the theoretical and practical principles of updated research on teaching oral communication in schools is crucial, as it could help reduce social and communicative inequality in Chile (Sánchez, Schilling & Maldonado, 2020). According to Tusón (2017), oral communication serves as a medium for dialogue and learning across communities, potentially fostering democracy-building within schools.

Addressing this issue requires research. Updated evidence on what has been studied about the teaching and learning of oral communication in schools is lacking. Thus, this study seeks to fill that gap.

This research agenda aims to answer the following question: What are the main objects of study and methodologies in research published in WoS between 2020 and 2022 on the teaching of oral communication? To address this question, the specific objectives are: 1) to describe the objects of study and 2) to describe the research approaches and designs in studies on oral communication teaching published between 2020 and 2022 in WoS.

Addressing these issues could greatly benefit future researchers interested in exploring the teaching of oral communication. This research agenda will identify the aspects studied about oral communication teaching in schools and highlight knowledge gaps.

METHODOLOGY

The following sections outline the methodological decisions underpinning this research: 1) approach, design, and type of study, 2) sample selection, 3) sample characterization, and 4) analysis protocol.

Approach, Design, and Type of Study

This research agenda adopts a primarily qualitative approach with a quantitative component, integrating content analysis and bibliometric analysis techniques. This mixed-methods approach enables the triangulation of data of different natures, providing a more holistic perspective (Sánchez-Gómez & Martín García, 2017). A descriptive documentary research design is employed, as it facilitates the understanding of events in a specific field of study—in this case, the didactics of oral communication—through a bibliographic review of academic articles published in journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database.

Sample Selection

Given the limited global research on the teaching process of oral communication in schools, an inductive search process was employed. First, academic articles on the topic were identified, and subsequently, the scientific journals to which they belonged were determined. The search was conducted in the WoS database.

WoS, an online database managed by Clarivate Analytics, provides access to approximately 10,000 scientific journals across sciences, arts, and humanities. It is considered one of the most prestigious databases globally, as its indexed publications undergo rigorous evaluation processes. Additionally, WoS serves as a scientometric tool, enabling bibliometric analysis of searches through access to graphs that organize and synthesize data from the retrieved sources, categorizing them by journal, university, or country of origin, among other criteria.

To meet the study's objectives, a purposive non-probabilistic sampling method was employed (Otzen & Manterola, 2017) to select the articles that constitute the corpus of this research agenda, based on the criteria described in Table 1. This type of sampling is designed to analyze a limited number of cases in depth (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011).

Table 1: Selection Criteria for the Academic Articles Included in This Research Agenda.

Selection Criteria
1) Published between 2020 and 2022.
2) Written in Spanish or English.
3) Open-access articles.
4) Articles studying the teaching process of oral communication in schools and/or factors associated with this process, such as beliefs or attitudes toward oral communication, in any subject and educational level.

More specifically, a multi-stage sampling process was carried out in two stages (Mandeville, 2010), primarily because it offers flexibility in the research process, allowing for a careful selection of the sample by creating subsets until the desired group is reached. In each stage, various filters were applied according to the research objectives.

The sample selection process involved a search using the following keywords: teaching oral communication and school within the fields of Social Sciences, Philosophy, and Humanities.

In the first stage, WoS automatic filters were applied based on criteria 1 and 2 outlined in Table 1, resulting in 51 articles. In the second stage, the titles and abstracts of each article were reviewed, applying selection criterion 3 described in Table 1. As a result, of the 51 articles, only 24 were ultimately selected for analysis. Table 2 summarizes the collected sample.

Table 2: Articles Comprising the Sample of This Research Agenda.

Nº	Article Title	Journal Information	Country	year
1	Competencias de comunicación oral en la educación primaria	<i>Profesional de la información</i> , 30(6), 1-12	Spain	2021
2	Collaborative counselling: influence on the teaching professionals' conceptions as promoters of children's communication and language	<i>Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools</i> , 30, 227-245	United Kingdom	2020
3	Foreign Language Teachers' Emotion Recognition in College Oral English Classroom Teaching	<i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> , 12, 1-7	Switzerland	2021

4	High school EFL students' beliefs about oral corrective feedback: The role of gender, motivation and extraversion	<i>Studies in second language learning and teaching</i> , 2, 235-264	Poland	2021
5	Research on Network Oral English Teaching System Based on Machine Learning	<i>Security and communication networks</i> , 1-8	United Kingdom	2022
6	The effects of task types on L2 oral production and learner engagement	<i>International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching</i> ,	Canada	2020
7	Evaluation of an explicit vocabulary teaching intervention for children learning English as an additional language in primary school	<i>Child language teaching & therapy</i> , 36(2), 91-108	United Kingdom	2020
8	The effects of a multi-tiered system of language support on oral narrative language, writing, and reading comprehension in India	<i>Language and Education</i> , 36	United Kingdom	2022
9	Fostering meaning in a trilingual mathematics classroom by connecting everyday and school mathematical ways of talking: a design approach	<i>ZDM-Mathematics Education</i> , 53, 405-417	Germany	2021
10	Exploring a refined model of home literacy activities and associations with children's emergent literacy skills	<i>Reading and writing</i> , 33, 207-238	Switzerland	2020
11	Who would have thought that I'd ever know that!': subject-specific vocabulary in CLIL student interactions	<i>International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism</i> , 1-16	United Kingdom	2021
12	Examining the Effects of Multitiered Oral Narrative Language Instruction on Reading Comprehension and Writing A Feasibility Study	<i>Top Lang Disorders</i> , 40(4), 25-39	United States	2020
13	Using speech comprehension to qualify communication in classrooms: Influence of listening condition, task complexity and students age and linguistic abilities	<i>Applied Acoustics</i> , 182, 1-16	United Kingdom	2021
14	Task-based Pedagogies in Iran: The Relationship between Oracy and Literacy	REL C JOURNAL 51 (3) , pp.412-426	United Kingdom	2020
15	The Development of L2 (Basque) Oracy Skills Through Dialogic Literary Gatherings	<i>SAGE Open</i> , 12 (1), 1-12	United States	2022
16	Delivering language intervention at scale: promises and pitfalls	<i>Journal of research in reading</i> , 2-25	United Kingdom	2022
17	Peer mentoring experience on	<i>BMC Medical Education</i> , 20	United	202

	becoming a good doctor: student perspectives	(494), 2-9	Kingdom	0
18	Testing the effects of a pilot listening comprehension and vocabulary intervention for individuals with autism	<i>Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> , 71, 1-13	Netherlands	2020
19	Debate as a pedagogical tool for developing speaking skills in second language education	<i>Language teaching research</i> , 1-22	United Kingdom	2021
20	Pedagogical Strategies to Foster Target Language Use: A Nexus Analysis	<i>Canadian modern language review-revue canadienne des langues vivants</i> , 78(1), 75-90	Canada	2021
21	Scoping academic oracy in higher education: knotting together forgotten connections to equity and academic literacies	<i>Higher education research & development</i> , 1-17	United Kingdom	2022
22	Fluency in Dialogue: Turn-Taking Behavior Shapes Perceived Fluency in Native and Nonnative Speech	<i>Language learning</i> , 70(4), 1183-1217	United Kingdom	2020
23	The Educational Function of English Children's Movies From the Perspective of Multiculturalism Under Deep Learning and Artificial Intelligence	<i>Frontiers in psychology</i> , 12, 1-14	Switzerland	2022
24	The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability	<i>Studies in higher education</i> , 1-18	United Kingdom	2020

Sample Characterization

Of the total sample (n=24), 83% of the articles are published in European journals, specifically in the United Kingdom (n=13), Switzerland (n=3), the Netherlands (n=1), Poland (n=1), and Germany (n=1). The remaining 17% are published in North American journals, specifically in Canada (n=2) and the United States (n=2), as shown in Figure 1.

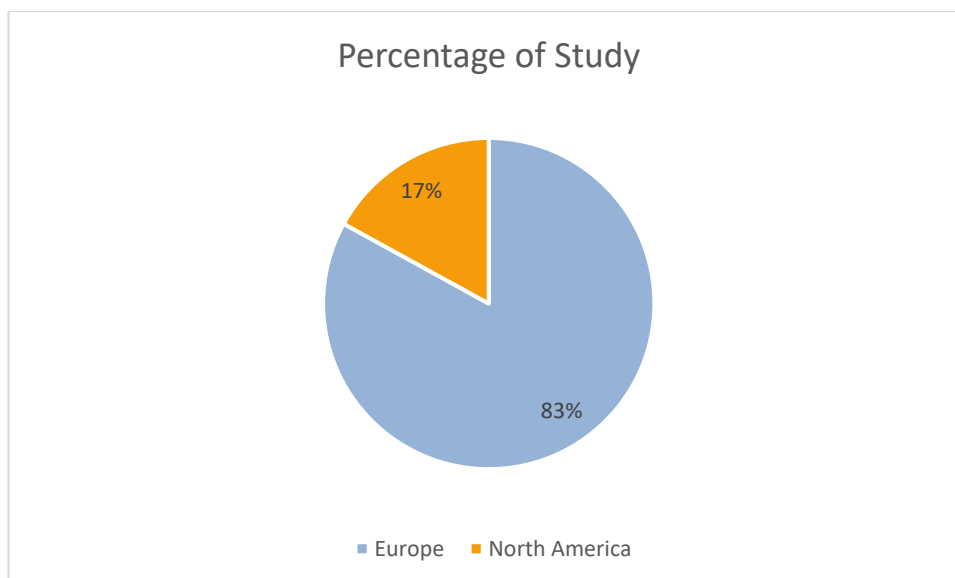


Figure 1: Continent of Publication for Studies Included in This Research Agenda

Regarding language, only 4% (n=1) of the articles are written in Spanish, while 96% (n=23) are written in English. In terms of impact, 88% (n=21) of the articles are published in journals belonging to quartile 1, 8% (n=2) in quartile 2 journals, and 4% (n=1) in quartile 3 journals.

The selected journals address topics related to education across various disciplines, including arts and humanities, clinical psychology, educational psychology, computer science, physics and astronomy, education, linguistics, medicine, mathematics, and neuropsychology, spanning from early childhood education to university teaching.

Analysis Protocol

To analyze the collected corpus, bibliometric analysis techniques were employed. These included extracting numerical data from the scientometric tools in WoS and synthesizing the corpus's characteristics, such as the average features of the sample and the objects of study. Additionally, grounded theory methodology (Raymond, 2005) was applied, utilizing qualitative content analysis techniques (Díaz, 2018), specifically thematic analysis. The analysis categories emerged from the content of the articles in the corpus rather than being predefined, in order to minimize researcher bias. These categories were subsequently grouped to interpret and synthesize thematic trends identified in the corpus.

Specifically, the following steps were undertaken:

1. Reading titles, abstracts, and keywords to select studies according to inclusion criteria before reviewing the full texts.
2. Coding and analyzing the objectives, methods, and results of the selected corpus.
3. Conducting an open coding thematic analysis to extract relevant information associated with identifying methodology and results.
4. Creating reading sheets to summarize the most relevant aspects of the selected sources (title, authors, year, journal title, country, themes addressed, object, objective, approach, design, study type, participants, instruments, and results).
5. Interpreting the data through the construction and organization of categories.

RESULTS

The following section describes the main research trends identified regarding the teaching and learning process of oral communication in schools. These research agendas are characterized based on their objects of study, methodologies, and results.

Research Agendas

An analysis of the 24 studies in the corpus on the teaching and learning process of oral communication in schools identified five thematic areas that serve as research agendas for this study, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Agenda 1: Beliefs and emotions of teachers and students, representing 17% (n=4) of the studies.

Agenda 2: Teaching tools, representing 46% (n=11) of the studies.

Agenda 3: Factors influencing the development of oral communication, representing 17% (n=4) of the publications.

Agenda 4: Teaching objects of oral communication, representing 13% (n=3).

Agenda 5: Assessment, representing 8% (n=2).

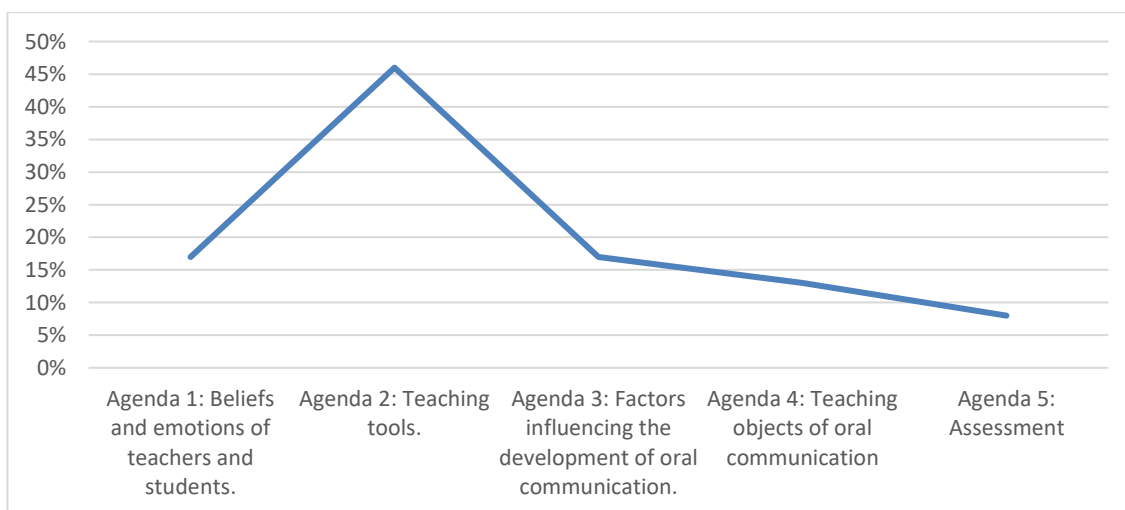


Figure 2: Research Agendas on the Teaching and Learning Process of Oral Communication in Schools.

The first agenda focuses on beliefs and emotions, addressing studies on the experiences of teachers and students in primary education in Spain, special education in the United Kingdom, and secondary and higher education English teachers in Vietnam and China, respectively. These studies employ quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches. The findings of the research within this agenda (Table 3) highlight that teachers believe the teaching of oral communication should receive greater emphasis in both the curriculum and the school environment. Additionally, the studies reveal positive attitudes among students toward oral activities and assessments.

Table 3: Agenda 1: Beliefs and Emotions of Teachers and Students.

Article Title	Journal Information	Country	year
Competencias de comunicación oral en la educación primaria	<i>Profesional de la información</i> , 30(6), 1-12	Spain	2021
Collaborative counselling: influence on the teaching professionals' conceptions as promoters of children's communication and language	<i>Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools</i> , 30, 227-245	United Kingdom	2020
Foreign Language Teachers' Emotion Recognition in College Oral English Classroom Teaching	<i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> , 12, 1-7	Switzerland	2021
High school EFL students' beliefs about oral corrective feedback: The role of gender, motivation and extraversion	<i>Studies in second language learning and teaching</i> , 2, 235-264	Poland	2021

The second research agenda focuses on teaching tools for oral communication and encompasses studies, using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches, on the experiences of higher education teachers in China and Malaysia; secondary school teachers in Iran and the Netherlands; and primary school teachers in China, the United Kingdom, India, Canada, and the United States. The findings of the research within this agenda (Table 4) highlight the use of computerized methods, explicit vocabulary instruction, oral storytelling, films, debates, task-based pedagogy, dialogic literary gatherings, peer tutoring, and neurolinguistic strategies as tools that enhance students' cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development. Furthermore, these studies emphasize that promoting oral language learning also supports the development of other areas such as reading and writing.

Table 4: Agenda 2: Teaching Tools

Article Title	Journal Information	Country	year
Research on Network Oral English Teaching System Based on Machine Learning	<i>Security and communication networks</i> , 2022, 1-8	United Kingdom	2022
Evaluation of an explicit vocabulary teaching intervention for children learning English as an additional language in primary school	<i>Child language teaching & therapy</i> , 36(2), 91-108	United Kingdom	2020
The effects of a multi-tiered system of language support on oral narrative language, writing, and reading comprehension in India	<i>Language and Education</i> , 36	United Kingdom	2022
Who would have thought that I'd ever know that!': subject-specific vocabulary in CLIL student interactions	<i>International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism</i> , 1-16	United Kingdom	2021
Examining the Effects of Multitiered	<i>Top Lang Disorders</i> , 40(4), 25-	United	2020

Oral Narrative Language Instruction on Reading Comprehension and Writing A Feasibility Study	39	States	
Task-based Pedagogies in Iran: The Relationship between Oracy and Literacy	RELC JOURNAL 51 (3) , pp.412-426	United Kingdom	2020
The Development of L2 (Basque) Oracy Skills Through Dialogic Literary Gatherings	<i>SAGE Open</i> , 12 (1), 1-12	United States	2022
Peer mentoring experience on becoming a good doctor: student perspectives	<i>BMC Medical Education</i> , 20 (494), 2-9	United Kingdom	2020
Debate as a pedagogical tool for developing speaking skills in second language education	<i>Language teaching research</i> , 1-22	United Kingdom	2021
Pedagogical Strategies to Foster Target Language Use: A Nexus Analysis	<i>Canadian modern language review-revue canadienne des langues vivants</i> , 78(1), 75-90	Canada	2021
The Educational Function of English Children's Movies From the Perspective of Multiculturalism Under Deep Learning and Artificial Intelligence	<i>Frontiers in psychology</i> , 12, 1-14	Switzerland	2022

The third research agenda focuses on factors influencing the development of oral communication, encompassing studies, using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches, on the experiences of higher education teachers in China; primary school teachers in India; Dutch students in the emergent literacy stage; and a systematic review on public speaking in higher education. The findings of the research within this agenda (Table 5) highlight the following:

1. The family context influences the development of oral language skills.
2. Tasks based on collaborative oral storytelling foster skills such as meaning negotiation and turn-taking.
3. The connection between everyday speech and classroom discourse promotes meaning-making in the classroom.
4. A consensus is needed on the definition and characteristics of public speaking.
5. Pedagogical support is essential in the learning process of oral practices, regardless of students' educational and linguistic levels, as the comprehension and production of oral discourse depend on the specific characteristics of each communicative situation.

Table 5: Agenda 3: Factors Influencing the Development of Oral Communication.

Article Title	Journal Information	Country	year
The effects of task types on L2 oral production and learner engagement	<i>International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching,</i>	Canada	2020
Fostering meaning in a trilingual mathematics classroom by connecting every day and school mathematical ways of talking: a design approach	<i>ZDM-Mathematics Education,</i> 53, 405–417	Germany	2021
Exploring a refined model of home literacy activities and associations with children's emergent literacy skills	<i>Reading and writing,</i> 33, 207–238	Switzerland	2020
Scoping academic oracy in higher education: knotting together forgotten connections to equity and academic literacies	<i>Higher education research & development,</i> 1-17	United Kingdom	2022

The fourth research agenda focuses on oral communication as a teaching object, encompassing qualitative and mixed-methods studies on the experiences of primary school teachers in the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as native Dutch speakers aged 18 to 30. The findings of the research within this agenda (Table 6) highlight that the teaching of oral communication is not a priority in educational institutions. However, when teaching students with atypical development, phonological awareness is often prioritized as a predictor of early literacy, as well as auditory comprehension and vocabulary skills. Simultaneously, emphasis is placed on the need to teach oral fluency during dialogue to students with typical development, as this aspect has not been adequately addressed so far.

Table 6: Agenda 4: Oral Communication as a Teaching Object.

Article Title	Journal Information	Country	year
Delivering language intervention at scale: promises and pitfalls	<i>Journal of research in reading,</i> 2–25	United Kingdom	2022
Testing the effects of a pilot listening comprehension and vocabulary intervention for individuals with autism	<i>Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders,</i> 71, 1-13	Netherlands	2020
Fluency in Dialogue: Turn-Taking Behavior Shapes Perceived Fluency in Native and Nonnative Speech	<i>Language learning,</i> 70(4), 1183--1217	United Kingdom	2020

Lastly, the fifth research agenda focuses on the evaluation of oral communication as a teaching object, encompassing mixed-methods studies on the experiences of secondary school teachers in Italy and university instructors in Australia. The findings of the research within this agenda (Table 7) highlight that the closer evaluations are to real-world contexts, the more successful students' academic performance tends to be. Additionally, this type of evaluation not only promotes the development of linguistic skills but also helps future professionals build their identity and professional awareness, consequently enhancing employability. Furthermore, the findings reveal that when assessing oral communication, the most influential factors are the syntactic complexity of sentences, the age of the listener, and their linguistic skills.

Table 7: Agenda 5: Evaluation.

Article Title	Journal Information	Country	year
Using speech comprehension to qualify communication in classrooms: Influence of listening condition, task complexity and students age and linguistic abilities	<i>Applied Acoustics</i> , 182, 1-16	United Kingdom	2021
The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability	<i>Studies in higher education</i> , 1-18	United Kingdom	2020

Approaches and Designs of the Reviewed Studies

Among the 24 analyzed studies, the mixed-methods approach predominates, accounting for 54.2%, as shown in Figure 3.

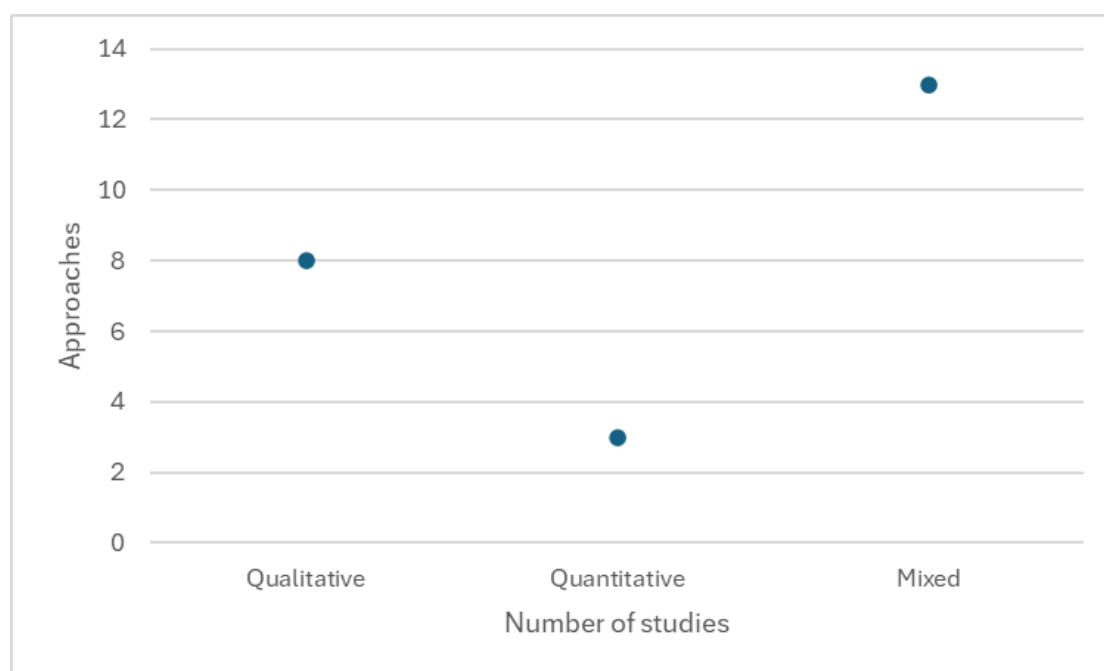


Figure 3: Approaches of the Studies in This Research Agenda.

Studies using the mixed-methods approach account for 54.2% (n=13) of the research on the teaching and learning process of oral communication. These studies focus on the following topics:

1. Students' beliefs about English as a foreign language in relation to oral feedback (A4).
2. The effect of task types on student learning (A6).
3. A multilevel linguistic support system as a tool for teaching oral and written comprehension and written production (A8).
4. The connection between everyday and academic language as a tool for learning mathematics (A9).
5. The relationship between home literacy activities and children's emergent literacy skills (A11).
6. A Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach for teaching non-language subjects in the target language (A12).
7. The effects of oral narrative language on reading comprehension and writing (A13).
8. The impact of speech comprehension on learning in students with SLI (A14 and A19).
9. The development of public speaking skills through dialogic literary gatherings (A16).
10. Peer oral tutoring to become a competent physician (A18).
11. Debate as a pedagogical tool for developing oral expression in second language teaching (A20).
12. Authentic assessments as tools for workplace preparation (A26).

Studies using the qualitative approach represent 33.3% (n=8) of the research, addressing the following topics:

- Teachers' beliefs about oral communication and its teaching (A2).
- Teachers' emotions and their influence on teaching (A3).
- Task-based pedagogies in foreign language contexts (A15).
- Benefits of oral language interventions for children with reading difficulties (A17).
- Neurolinguistic strategies to promote greater use of the target language (A21).
- Conception and role of oral communication in the academic context (A22).
- Fluency in dialogic interaction (A23).
- Film-assisted English teaching (A24).

Studies using the quantitative approach represent 12.5% (n=3) of the research, focusing on the following topics:

- Primary school teachers' beliefs about oral competence (A1).
- Computer-assisted language learning (A5).
- Explicit vocabulary instruction as a tool for teaching languages (A7).

In terms of research design, non-experimental exploratory designs predominate, accounting for 54.2% (n=13) and being associated with qualitative and mixed approaches. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs occur at a frequency of 45.8% (n=11), primarily associated with mixed methods, as shown in Figure 4.

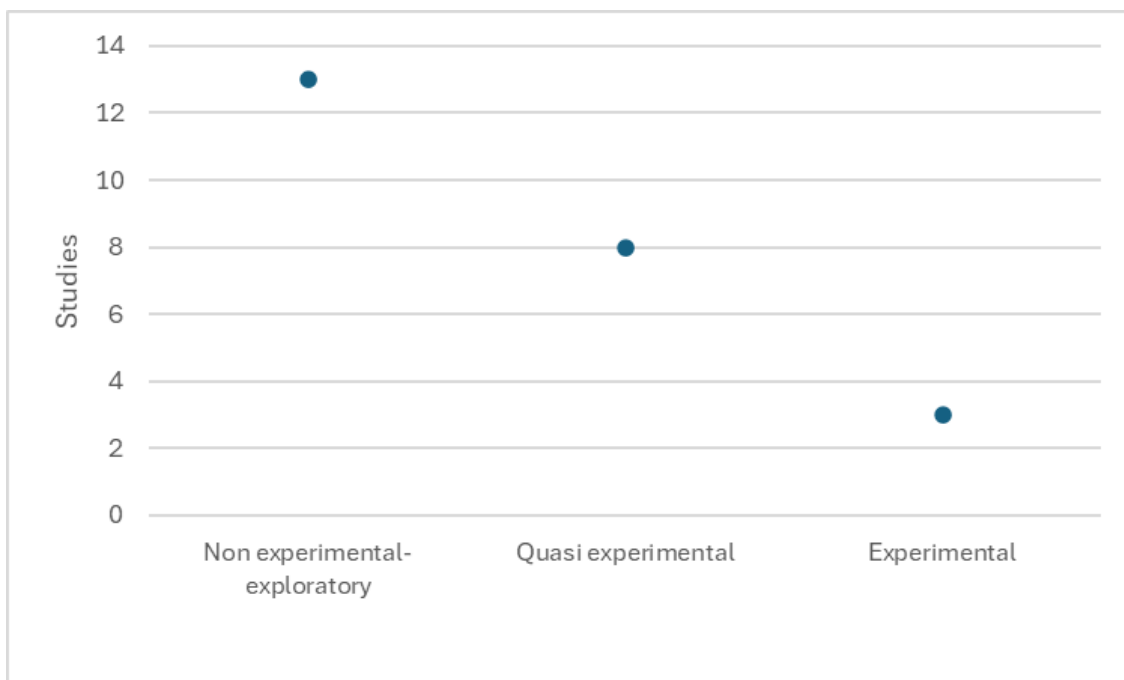


Figure 4: Research Design in the Present Research Agenda.

Non-experimental studies are typically case studies, action research, and evaluative research, focusing on teaching tools for oral communication, teachers' and students' beliefs, and factors influencing oral communication instruction, such as studies A15, A16, A18, and A21.

Meanwhile, experimental and quasi-experimental studies are usually case studies that focus on teaching tools for oral communication, with examples including studies A5, A8, A20, and A23.

Instruments Used in the Reviewed Studies

Tests are the most frequently used technique in experimental and quasi-experimental studies with a predominantly mixed-methods approach. Their purpose is to design, implement, and evaluate interventions aimed at teaching specific oral language content through various pedagogical tools, as exemplified by study A7.

Conversely, in non-experimental exploratory studies, questionnaires are the predominant data collection strategy, employed across quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research. Specifically, they are mainly used to investigate teachers' beliefs (A1) or to assess the effectiveness of specific evaluative tasks (A26).

DISCUSSION

This research agenda presents a synthesis of the main objects of study and methodologies published in the Web of Science (WoS) database between 2020 and 2022 on the teaching and learning process of oral communication in schools.

Regarding the objects of study, the most frequently addressed topic is teaching tools. These publications collect teaching experiences from different educational levels across various countries with vastly different educational realities (Asia, Europe, and North America). Additionally, it should be noted that the other part of the American continent—South America—is entirely absent from the scientific production published in WoS. While the reviewed studies are valuable in their respective contexts, they do not necessarily invite the direct application of their findings in historically different contexts such as Latin America.

Conversely, the least explored research topic is the evaluation of oral communication. This finding indicates a current lack of updated theory on this subject, which has hindered the development of formal proposals for evaluating oral communication in schools. Consequently, the limited scientific production on assessment makes it challenging to create teaching proposals that effectively address students' learning needs. Without a solid theoretical foundation, both pre-service and in-service teachers have been left to develop knowledge about this area based on their own experiences, which can sometimes lead to the formation of inaccurate understandings (Nuñez, 2003).

In terms of methodologies used in the analyzed publications, the predominant method for investigating the teaching and learning process of oral communication in schools is the mixed-methods approach (54.2%), with the aim not only of describing but also of analyzing/evaluating and even proposing solutions. The selection of an integrative methodology through a mixed-methods approach is appropriate given the nature of the topics studied within each research agenda, particularly in cases where large datasets are analyzed, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the educational phenomenon (Bagur-Pons *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, Creswell (2015) asserts that mixed-methods approaches help reveal the limitations of individual methods while also demonstrating their complementarity. For example, he suggests that interpreting quantitative data through a qualitative lens enriches and clarifies analysis by providing explanations that are crucial for understanding study results.

Although combining approaches can enrich educational research, several factors prevent these findings from having a broader impact beyond the original study contexts. One reason for this may lie in the data collection instruments used, which primarily consist of tests and questionnaires. It would be beneficial to advance research that incorporates empirical evidence through classroom observations—both participant and non-participant—to better understand teaching proposals, analyze teacher-student interactions, and assess whether they can be replicated in other contexts. This consideration is especially relevant given that the majority of the analyzed publications (83%) are case studies conducted in Europe. Therefore, the findings are not necessarily generalizable to social, cultural, and linguistic contexts as distinct as Latin America, a region largely absent from the WoS platform. Rekalde, Vizcarra, and Macazaga (2014) emphasize the importance of observation as a data collection technique, arguing that it helps rethink the dialogic resources employed in each learning context by enabling a thorough analysis of each element (p. 215).

Indeed, Kelchtermans (2021) argues that one of the key characteristics of research relevant to practice is the presence of sufficient empirical evidence through strong practical examples. Specifically, studies should transparently detail both their methodologies and results to facilitate comprehension and self-reflection among educators, allowing them to critically evaluate their own practices in light of the study findings. In other words, the generalizability and transferability of research depend on the methodological rigor of the studies. Considering these aspects allows researchers to engage in an egalitarian dialogue with fellow educators and professionals.

Moreover, it would be valuable to include more research involving teachers as active participants rather than mere subjects of study. Hordem (2020) points out that education and teaching are characterized by structural vulnerability—a tension between educators' contextual knowledge and their critique of the methodological adjustments imposed by measurement paradigms. Thus, the challenges faced are not only moral and ethical but also instrumental in nature. Kelchtermans (2021) suggests that research should be conducted through negotiation and collaboration between researchers and teachers, emphasizing that teaching and researching are distinct but highly complementary practices.

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that future research agendas should expand their search to include other databases, particularly those that contain studies conducted in Latin America. Additionally, this study did not utilize software tools for data analysis, so it is recommended that future research incorporates such tools to perform, for example, co-occurrence analyses, which could be useful for presenting results.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis conducted, three key conclusions of substantial relevance have been derived. First, the scientific production in this field reveals significant imbalances both geographically and thematically. Specifically, a marked discrepancy is observed in the number of studies related to the teaching and assessment of oral communication, with the latter being notably underexplored in the academic literature. Second, there is a clear lack of research related to Latin America in the WoS database, which represents a significant limitation in understanding this topic within the region's specific educational contexts. Third, the predominance of mixed-methods research in the reviewed studies reflects a tendency towards a holistic and complementary understanding in knowledge generation. Finally, in line with the importance of actively involving teachers in research, the findings highlight the need to foster collaboration between researchers and education professionals. Recognizing the richness of teachers' contextual experiences contributes to a more comprehensive and enriching approach to educational research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was supported by the following grants: Fondecyt N° 1240863 'Educación intercultural. Identificación y puesta en valor del patrimonio cultural inmaterial "translocal" portado a las escuelas por la migración de niños, niñas y familias de las regiones de Antofagasta, Metropolitana y del Bío-Bío'. ANID Chile."

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