

Technology-Enhanced Tools Using Video and Audio Recording for English Speaking Fluency in Pre-A1 Language Learners

Herramientas tecnológicas que utilizan grabación de vídeo y audio para mejorar la fluidez en el habla inglesa en estudiantes de nivel Pre-A1

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Abstract

This intervention aimed to examine how video and audio recording tools can enhance the English fluency of Pre-A1 learners in Ecuador. Although technology has become an integral component of language classrooms, its actual impact on very young children aged 5 to 6 years in Ecuadorian bilingual preschools remains underexplored. Most previous studies have focused on older learners or on the general use of educational technology, providing limited evidence regarding early childhood EFL learners who are just beginning their journey in acquiring a new language. A quasi-experimental research design was employed. Twenty-one students from a private school in Guayaquil participated in pre- and post-intervention assessments, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)-based rubrics, Likert-scale questionnaires, and systematic observation checklists. The intervention consisted of self-recording tasks using both video and audio to support improvements in pronunciation, coherence, and speaking confidence. Quantitative analysis was conducted using diagnostic and summative assessments, with paired-samples t-tests to determine significant differences between pre- and post-intervention scores, evaluate gains in oral fluency, and complement the findings with qualitative data that provided

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additional contextual insights. The results indicate that technology-based recording tools can effectively support young EFL learners in improving their oral communication skills. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on early childhood language education and provide empirical support for the integration of technology into EFL classrooms in Ecuador. The study also discusses the implications of these findings for teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators.

Resumen

Esta intervención se propuso descubrir cómo las herramientas de grabación de video y audio pueden transformar la fluidez en inglés de estudiantes Pre-A1 en Ecuador. Aunque la tecnología ya es parte del aula de idiomas, su verdadero impacto en niños muy pequeños, de 5 a 6 años, en preescolares bilingües ecuatorianos, sigue siendo poco explorado. La mayoría de los estudios anteriores se ha enfocado en estudiantes mayores o en el uso general de la tecnología, dejando escasa evidencia sobre los aprendices de EFL en la primera infancia que apenas inician su camino en un nuevo idioma. En el estudio se utilizó un diseño cuasiexperimental. Veintiún estudiantes de una escuela privada en Guayaquil participaron en pruebas antes y después de la intervención, en rúbricas basadas en el MCER, en encuestas con escala de Likert y en listas de cotejo para la observación sistemática. La intervención incluyó tareas de autograbación en video y en audio para ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar su pronunciación, coherencia y confianza. El análisis cuantitativo, mediante pruebas diagnósticas y sumativas (test t) de muestras emparejadas, permitió evaluar diferencias significativas entre las puntuaciones preintervención y posintervención, medir mejoras en la fluidez y complementar los hallazgos con datos cualitativos que aportaron contexto adicional. Los resultados muestran que las herramientas tecnológicas pueden ayudar a los jóvenes aprendices de EFL a mejorar sus habilidades de expresión oral. Estos hallazgos contribuyen al conocimiento sobre la educación lingüística en el preescolar y respaldan el uso de la tecnología en las aulas de EFL en Ecuador. El estudio también analiza las implicaciones de estos resultados para los docentes, los planificadores curriculares y los directivos escolares.

Keywords: Intervention, video recording, audio recording, speaking fluency, Pre-A1 level, technology-enhanced learning

Palabras clave: intervención, grabación de video, grabación de audio, fluidez oral, aprendizaje con apoyo tecnológico en el nivel pre-a1

Introduction

Digital technologies have changed the way English is taught, especially in speaking skills. Video and audio recording tools allow students to practice speaking outside of class, track their progress, and get more opportunities to practice (Belmekki, 2023; Golonka et al., 2014). Recording answers instead of speaking live gives students extra practice, helps reduce anxiety, and allows teachers to give personal feedback (Sanako, 2025). Dewi (2019), as cited in Iberahim et al. (2023), describes Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) for speaking as using digital tools such as software, devices, and online platforms to support speaking practice, feedback, and interaction. These changes reflect a move toward more student-centered, technology-based language learning. While there's a lot of research on TELL, little is known about using video and audio recording tools with very young Pre-A1 learners. Most studies on self-recording and speaking focus on teenagers or adults, such as Belmekki (2023) with college students, Pham (2025) with Vietnamese university students, and Le (2022) with adult learners in Vietnam. Shadiev and Yang (2020) also reviewed technology-based language learning with older learners. In Ecuador, research by Encalada and Sarmiento (2018) and Moncayo (2023) focused on university students or phonics teaching, not on preschoolers at the Pre-A1 level. These studies found that self-recording helps fluency, pronunciation, and confidence, but none looked at children under 10. The truth is, the CEFR companion volume (Council of Europe, 2020) describes pre-A1 spoken fluency as making “very short, isolated, rehearsed utterances” and using gestures and requests for help. At this stage, learners use single words and memorized phrases instead of full sentences (Pinter, 2011; De Jong et al., 2013). Most TELL research does not focus on this early stage.

There's limited research on early childhood English learning in Latin America, especially in Ecuador, even though bilingual education and mixed learning methods are becoming more

common (The Dialogue, 2017). This is important because many English teachers in Ecuador's public schools have limited skills, and teaching young children requires different methods than teaching older students (Cumsille & Fiszbein, 2015). It's still unclear how helpful feedback on recorded speech is for young learners. While doing tasks at different times can reduce anxiety and provide more practice (Sanako, 2025), it isn't certain how well this works for children who need a lot of support, visual aids, and examples to copy. Cameron (2001) and Pinter (2017) point out that young children's speech development is very individual and depends on adult support. It's still not clear if digital tools can provide or add to this support at the Pre-A1 level.

This study looked at how video and audio recording tools affect English-speaking fluency in Pre-A1 learners aged 5 to 6 at a bilingual preschool in Ecuador. At Unidad Educativa Bilingue Javier, a Jesuit school in Guayaquil, Pre-Kinder students have 14 hours of English lessons each week and use the Vista Higher Learning (VHL) platform (Vista Higher Learning, 2026), which offers organized Pre-A1 content and recording tools. The school has reliable Wi-Fi, smart boards, and projectors, but no research has yet measured how well these tools help young children's speaking skills. Early tests showed that students did better on planned speaking tasks than on spontaneous ones, suggesting they need more support to move from understanding to fluent speaking.

The research answered these questions: (1) How do video and voice recordings help Pre-A1 EFL learners at UE Javier develop speaking skills? (2) How much do video and voice recordings improve their speaking fluency? (3) How do these young learners describe their experiences using video and audio recordings for speaking practice? (4) How does feedback on their recordings affect their speaking development?

This study focused on recording tools for Pre-A1 learners, a group that isn't often studied in TELL research. The results provided teachers, curriculum planners, and school leaders with useful information about the benefits and limits of using asynchronous digital recording with young learners, especially regarding the balance between independent technology use and adult support. By studying a well-equipped bilingual preschool in Ecuador, the research offered practical advice for early childhood language education in Latin America, where technology use is growing but research-based guidance is still limited.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a mixed-methods approach, following Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), to collect both number-based and descriptive data at the same time. Each type of data was analyzed separately, then combined for the final analysis. This method gave a clear view of how video and audio recordings help early language learning in a technology-rich classroom. The number-based part measured changes in speaking fluency, vocabulary accuracy, and pronunciation before and after the study. The descriptive part looked at students' experiences, participation, and the classroom environment using observation checklists, teacher notes, and student recordings. The research focused on how video and audio technology affected the development of speaking skills in Pre-A1 EFL learners.

Table 1: Synthesized Research Questions by Variable and Methodological Approach

Independent Variable	How do video and voice recordings contribute to the speaking skill development of Pre-A1 EFL learners at UE Javier?
	To what extent do video and voice recordings improve Pre-A1 EFL learners' speaking fluency at UE Javier?
	How do Pre-A1 EFL learners describe their experiences using video and audio recordings to develop speaking skills?
	How does multimodal recording feedback influence Pre-A1 EFL students' speaking development at UE Javier?
Dependent Variable	To what extent does multimodal recording feedback improve Pre-A1 EFL students' speaking skills at UE Javier?
	How do Pre-A1 EFL students experience speaking development through multimodal recording feedback at UE Javier?
	How do Pre-A1 EFL students experience speaking development through multimodal recording feedback at UE Javier?

Context Participants and Sampling

The study was conducted at Unidad Educativa Bilingue Javier, a Jesuit school in Guayaquil, Ecuador, with more than seventy years of teaching experience. The school serves students from middle- and upper-middle-class families and comprises four sections: Maternal, Kinder, Primary, and High School. Its strong technological resources, including campus-wide Wi-Fi, computer labs, smart boards, and projectors, enabled the use of the VHL platform in the English-bilingual program, which offers 14 hours of instruction each week. The school also focuses on complete development, with support from the DECE (Departamento de Consejería Estudiantil) and the pastoral teams, in line with the Jesuit educational philosophy.

The sample consisted of 20 students (12 boys, 61.90%; 8 girls, 38.10%), ages 5 to 6, from the Pre-Kinder level. All students in the class were included since they share the same classroom and have a Pre-A1 English level, according to the distribution of English Levels. The researchers used a convenience sample, defined by Dornyei (2007) as a non-probability sampling method that includes members of the target population who meet practical criteria such as accessibility, proximity, availability, or willingness to participate. Stratton (2021) notes that convenience sampling, though less generalizable, is often the most practical approach in school settings where random assignment isn't feasible.

Table 2. Synthesized Sample of Study

Gender	Count	Percentage
Boys	12	61.90%
Girls	8	38.10%
Total	20	100%

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Ethical Considerations

Because the participants were Pre-A1 learners, parents were permitted after the study goals were explained and signed consent forms ([Appendix C](#)). Students also agreed verbally in language suitable for their age. Participation was voluntary; all data were kept private, anonymous, and used only for research. Data collection was planned during class time to avoid disruption and keep children comfortable and safe (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). Before starting, the authors sent a letter asking permission to do research at Unidad Educativa Bilingue Javier ([Appendix A](#)). The school principal gave formal approval for the study ([Appendix B](#)), allowing data collection with Pre-A1 EFL learners.

Materials and Intervention

The intervention used the school's VHL platform, Vista Higher Learning, 2026, a learning system for the English bilingual program. The platform offered organized content by grade and skill level, with special Pre-A1 sections for early language skills. Students used the platform's video and voice recording tools to do self-recorded speaking tasks, get teacher feedback at different times, and practice checking their own work. The platform's design for Pre-A1 learners includes visual menus, icon-based instructions, and simple upload steps that young children can use.

Instruction followed the institution's Pre-A1 teacher's digital book (Vista Higher Learning, Inc., 2022), consistent with CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) Pre-A1 descriptors (Council of Europe, 2020). The curriculum emphasizes emergent speaking through imitation, naming familiar objects, basic greetings, and repetitive contextual practice. The teacher's book specifies unit-based vocabulary sets (colors, animals, numbers, classroom objects), phonological awareness activities, and scaffolded question-response frames. Recording tasks were designed to match the teacher's book's spiraled vocabulary presentation, ensuring video and audio activities reinforced rather than replaced the existing curriculum.

The four-week intervention comprised two integrated components. First, weekly classroom tasks incorporated video and audio recordings and observations, using smart boards and projectors for

in-class recording activities. During the first two units, School is Fun and Our Bodies, Our Clothes, students covered topics such as adapting to school, introductions, making friends, body parts, and clothing. Subjects such as math, reading, social studies, science, language, music, and art were incorporated into the material. Second, VHL platform homework assignments required self-recorded video or audio responses to structured speaking prompts, including phonics activities, which students completed using either home devices or school laboratory equipment. The VHL platform's recording tools allowed students to practice oral production, review their own performances, and receive asynchronous teacher feedback. Weekly homework assignments were distributed via the platform.

To ensure consistent implementation, teachers used a weekly checklist to verify that all steps and activities were completed as planned. They received training before the intervention to standardize procedures for platform activities, feedback, and assessment. Researchers provided ongoing feedback on participants' recordings to support speaking practice and fluency, which are considered essential for developing speaking skills in technology-mediated learning (Klimova et al., 2023). The data collection tools were organized by study timeline: before, during, and after the four-week intervention. All tools were designed to suit young learners.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection tools were organized according to the study timeline: before, during the four-week period, and after the intervention. All tools were designed to be appropriate for young learners.

Pre-Test Diagnostic Exam (Number-based). A CEFR Pre-A1 Starters-style test lasting 20 to 30 minutes was given to set a number baseline for later comparison (Phakiti, 2015). The test had three parts: Listening (10 points), including coloring objects and matching pictures to words; Writing (10 points), involving circling the right word and tracing letters; and Speaking (10 points), naming five pictures and counting from 1 to 10. The speaking part focused on early speaking skills that match CEFR Pre-A1 standards, like counting from 1 to 40, following spoken instructions to color and place stickers, recognizing vocabulary by first-letter sounds, and answering simple questions about their name, days of the week, and weather. Only speaking

scores were used for the main analysis ([Appendix 1](#)). Tests were given individually or in small groups.

Observation Checklist

Each week, during a 40-minute class, a checklist tracked ten key skills: repeating words after the teacher, naming simple words, answering basic questions, using single words, using short phrases, joining songs or chants, copying word sounds, responding with gestures and words, showing willingness to speak, and speaking with teacher help. These skills show basic speaking abilities important for tracking early language growth. The 3-point scale (Yes, Sometimes, Not yet) was chosen for its clarity and simplicity, helping track student progress in detail ([Appendix 2](#)).

The data collection instruments for the classroom recordings included a criterion-referenced 4-point rubric designed to evaluate weekly video and audio recordings across three dimensions: Clarity/Pronunciation (4 = clear, native-like to 1 = unintelligible); Vocabulary Use (4 = 5+ target words accurate to 1 = none); and Fluency/Engagement (4 = speaks full phrases confidently to 1 = silent/refuses). This instrument was applied to all platform-generated recordings and in-class speaking activities. The weekly criterion checklist was initiated from week three of the school year in Guayaquil and continued for a period of four consecutive weeks, allowing for systematic tracking of learner progress in speaking fluency throughout the 40-minute intervention period. This instrument was applied to all platform-generated recordings and in-class speaking activities [Appendix 3](#).

Pictorial Likert-Scale Survey

Once a week, students completed a picture-based survey using smiley faces (excellent, very good, good, with help) to rate three statements: “Videos help me say words,” “Recording my speech is fun,” and “I speak more now.” This scale suits young learners who may not be able to read yet, making sure all students can join and share their feelings. The statements show students’ views of the program’s main activities and their speaking progress, giving direct feedback that matches research goals. This method lets students share their feelings without needing to read or write ([Appendix 4](#)).

Post-Test Speaking Assessment

A parallel-form CEFR Pre-A1 speaking post-test assessed progress in personal information (short answers), numbers and counting (1 to 50), vocabulary (8 to 10 flashcards with colors and noun pairs), and simple sentences such as “What is it?” or “What color is it?” After two units, from June 29 to July 3, 2026, students were rated in five areas: vocabulary use, pronunciation and clarity, answering questions, sentence building, and participation and confidence. Each area was designated as Achieved, Developing, or Emerging ([Appendix 5](#)). Only the speaking section exam was used for data collection to align with the main research focus on speaking skills.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection followed a structured seven-step process to measure the development of speaking fluency among Pre-A1 EFL learners. This method aligns with established action research practices in technology-based language learning studies (Klimova et al., 2023; Talandis & Stout, 2014).

Step 1: Pre-Test. On April 20, 2026, students took a speaking fluency pre-test using a CEFR Pre-A1 rubric (Council of Europe, 2020; Cambridge Assessment English, 2023). Their initial oral performances were recorded to set a baseline for proficiency.

Step 2: Platform Orientation. On May 4, 2026, students learned how to use the electronic platforms, including how to complete activities and upload their video and audio recordings.

Step 3: In-Class Practice. On May 18, 2026, students worked in pairs on video and audio speaking tasks to practice speaking during class.

Step 4: Intervention Launch. The four-week intervention started on June 2, 2026. Each week, students received homework assignments on the VHL platform.

Step 5: Ongoing Feedback. Between June 5 and June 29, 2026, researchers gave regular comments on students’ recordings to help them practice speaking and improve fluency. Students participated in guided classroom activities and recordings for 14 hours each week, with teachers monitoring, observing, and providing feedback.

Step 6: Post-Test. On June 29, 2026, after the intervention ended, students took a speaking fluency post-test using the same CEFR Pre-A1 rubric. Their final oral performances were recorded to measure improvement.

Step 7: Data Analysis. On July 8, 2026, all data were collected and analyzed. Quantitative results were examined using descriptive statistics and paired-samples t-tests (Gerbing, 2021) to identify considerable improvements. Qualitative data from weekly checklists and classroom observations described learners' experiences, engagement, and behavior changes during the intervention (Pham, 2025).

Table 3. Synthesized methodology and procedure of data collection

No.	PROCEDURE	DATE
1	Administer speaking fluency pre-test using CEFR Pre-A1 rubric and record baseline oral performances.	04/20/2026
2	Introduce students to digital platforms: Activities, and uploading video/audio recordings.	05/04/2026
3	Students complete video and audio speaking tasks in pairs to practice oral production in class.	05/18/2026
4	Begin 4-week intervention period: VHL platform homework assignments (once a week). Provide feedback on student recordings to support speaking practice and improve fluency.	06/02/2026
5	Students continue guided classroom activities and recordings throughout the 14 hours per week. Teacher monitoring, observation, and feedback.	06/05/2026
6	Students continue using the platforms for 4 weeks per week, applying all language skills through digital activities.	06/8/2026
7	Administer the speaking fluency post-test CEFR Pre-A1 rubric and record final oral performances.	06/29/2026
8	Compile and analyze quantitative results using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests, and qualitative data from checklists and observations.	07/8/2026

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Data Analysis

We used simple number summaries and paired-sample t-tests to measure changes in speaking fluency, vocabulary accuracy, and pronunciation before and after the study, both in class and in weekly homework. For descriptive data, we reviewed observation checklists, teacher notes, and student recordings to find patterns in engagement and gain deeper insights. Using a convergent parallel design, we combined number-based and descriptive results to better understand how video and audio recordings support early English learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). We

kept high data quality by using pre- and post-tests matching CEFR standards, standard scoring guides, organized observation checklists, and consistent feedback methods. Each recording was evaluated using the same criteria and checked regularly for consistency.

Recordings were linked to specific VHL tasks, letting us track student performance, feedback, and progress throughout the study. We aimed to find learners' starting level before the video and audio recording intervention. Twenty Pre-A1 EFL learners took a diagnostic test assessing four basic speaking skills: naming colors and shapes, counting from 1 to 40, and joining guided speaking activities. All tasks required spoken answers. Colors, shapes, and counting involved planned, repeated naming, while speaking involved open, spontaneous talking. Data were collected using a structured observation rubric based on CEFR Pre-A1 descriptions (Council of Europe, 2020), with performance rated in four levels: Excellent (4 points), Very Good (3 points), Good (2 points), and With help (1 point). Students tried all four oral tasks. Yet, performance quality varied widely across skills and individuals, matching earlier research showing uneven oral development in early childhood EFL settings (Pinter, 2017; Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2011) (see Table 4).

Results

Pre-Intervention Findings

The pre-intervention assessment was conducted to establish learners' baseline performance before the implementation of the video and voice-audio recording intervention. A total of 20 Pre-A1 EFL learners participated in the diagnostic evaluation, which assessed four foundational oral competencies: identifying colors and shapes, counting from 1 to 40, and participating in guided speaking activities. All tasks required spoken production. Colors, shapes, and counting involved structured, rote oral naming; speaking involved open-ended, spontaneous oral production. Data were collected using a structured observation rubric aligned with CEFR Pre-A1 descriptors (Council of Europe, 2020), with performance rated across four levels: Excellent (4 points), Very Good (3 points), Good (2 points), and With help (1 point).

Initial findings indicated that all participants attempted all four oral tasks. However, performance quality varied substantially across skills and individuals, consistent with previous research documenting uneven oral development in early childhood EFL contexts (Pinter, 2017; Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2011) (see Table 4).

Table 4. Pre-Intervention Oral Performance (N = 20)

Skill	Excellent	Very Good	Good	With help	Average
Colors	13 (65.0%)	6 (30.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3.60 % (0.60)
Shapes	12 (60.0%)	3 (15.0%)	4 (20.0%)	1 (5.0%)	3.30 % (0.98)
Counts 1–40	14 (70.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (25.0%)	3.20 % (1.32)
Speaking	8 (40.0%)	4 (20.0%)	2 (10.0%)	6 (30.0%)	2.70 % (1.30)

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As shown in Table 4, students scored higher on planned speaking tasks than on open-ended speaking, matching findings that young learners usually do better with planned, formula-based speaking than spontaneous talking (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). While 65% of learners received Excellent ratings in naming colors and 70% in counting, only 40% reached Excellent in spontaneous speaking. Notably, 30% of learners (6 students) needed teacher help during the speaking test, compared to 0% for colors, 5% for shapes (1 student), and 25% for counting (5 students). The need for teacher support in spontaneous speaking is common among new language learners, who often rely on visual and verbal help to speak more (Cameron, 2001; Bland, 2015).

These results show a clear gap between planned speaking tasks (colors: average = 3.60, shapes: average = 3.30, counting: average = 3.20) and open-ended speaking (average = 2.70), with a difference of 0.67 points. The CEFR Companion Volume describes Pre-A1 spoken fluency as the ability to say very short, separate, practiced phrases, using gestures and asking for help when

needed (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 129), matching the performance seen in this study. This suggests that while learners could say practiced, vocabulary-based phrases in planned settings, their spontaneous speaking was still underdeveloped at the Pre-A1 level.

Classroom observations also showed important differences in performance, matching accepted methods for watching young language learners (Copland & Garton, 2014). Differences were seen in learners' pronunciation accuracy, speech clarity, and response

fluency, confidence, and level of independence during speaking, showing the wide individual differences typical of early childhood language growth (Murphy, 2014). Some students needed visual help, repetition, or teacher prompts before speaking, while others showed more spontaneity and confidence in their speaking attempts.

These differences suggested that although basic skills were present, the quality and consistency of speaking varied widely among participants. The pre-study rubric mainly measured if target language behaviors were present, not performance quality, a common limit in initial assessments of new language learners (McKay, 2006). Later improvement was judged not only by task completion but also by experience- and numbers-based signs, including pronunciation accuracy, fluency, response speed, confidence, and less need for teacher help during speaking tasks, following advice for full speaking assessment in young learners (Gass et al., 2020). This approach provided a more sensitive way to measure progress over the four-week study.

These baseline findings supported the implementation of the multimedia intervention, which used video and voice recording tasks integrated into both the VHL platform and classroom instruction, drawing on established practices in Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) for speaking development. The pronounced gap between structured oral production and spontaneous speaking at baseline provided a clear rationale for targeting oral fluency through repeated self-recording, reflective practice, and asynchronous teacher feedback, approaches that have shown promise for developing speaking fluency in young learners (Belmekki, 2023).

Analysis of Weekly Recording Rubric Performance

The criterion-referenced rubric ([Appendix 6](#)), applied to the weekly video and audio recordings, revealed different patterns of development across the five assessed oral dimensions over the four-week intervention period. Table 5 presents the distribution of student performance markers, categorized into Independent Performance (Score = 3) and Support Needed (Scores = 1 or 2), organized chronologically by task complexity.

Table 5 Distribution of Student Support Needs and Descriptive Performance Trends Across Speaking Tasks (N = 20)

Criterion	Week 1 “What is it?”	Week 2 “What color is it?”	Week 3 What’s your name?”	Week 4 “What do you see?”
Pronunciation	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fluency	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Vocabulary Use	14.3%	19.0%	19.0%	19.0%
Confidence	19.0%	23.8%	23.8%	38.1%
Comprehension	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%

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The rubric results showed that pronunciation had the greatest improvement. The proportion of students needing assistance dropped from 9.5% in Week 1 to 0% by Week 2 and stayed at 0% for the rest of the intervention. These findings suggest repeated self-recording helped participants independently acquire letter sounds. Pronunciation is often the first skill to improve through repetition and self-monitoring in recording tasks.

The other four areas showed little or no improvement. Fluency help needed stayed at 14.3% across all four weeks, vocabulary help averaged about 3.8 students per week, and understanding

help stayed at 28.6%. These steady numbers suggest that recording tasks, while good for pronunciation, did not improve deeper language skills during the four weeks.

A clear link appeared between task difficulty and student confidence. When tasks changed from simple naming (e.g., “What is it?”) to open-ended description (e.g., “What do you see?”), The number of students needing confidence help almost doubled, rising from 19.0% to 38.1%. This shows that making up language is harder than naming familiar things, especially for young learners. While recording, let students practice at their own speed and improve pronunciation, but it did not fully replace the support and examples teachers give when students struggle with words.

Post-Test Results

The Post-test Speaking Assessment ([Appendix 7](#)) was administered from June 29 to July 3, 2026, using a parallel-form CEFR Pre-A1 speaking test aligned with the intervention curriculum. The test evaluated six skill domains: Same and Different, School Objects, Number and Quantity, Body Parts, Senses, and Clothes. Each domain was scored on a 1 0 point scale, yielding a maximum total score of 60 points. Performance was categorized according to CEFR Pre-A1 achievement levels: Achieved (score of 9/10 or above, 90% or above), Developing (score = 8/10, 80 89%), and Emerging (score of 7/10 or below, below 80%). A total of 21 Pre-A1 EFL learners completed the post-test ([Appendix 8](#))

Table 6. Post-Test Speaking Performance

Skill Domain	M	SD	Achieved n (%)	Developing n (%)	Emerging n (%)
Same & Different 0 (0.0%)	9.24	0.77	17 (81.0%)	3 (19.0%)	
School Objects (4.8%)	9.33	0.73	19 (95.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1
Body Parts 0 (0.0%)	9.00	0.71	16 (76.2%)	4 (23.8%)	
Senses 0 (0.0%)	8.90	0.62	16 (76.2%)	4 (23.8%)	

Clothes (4.8%)	9.00	0.84	16 (76.2%)	3 (19.0%)	1
Number & Quantity 0 (0.0%)	9.05	0.86	13 (66.7%)	7 (33.3%)	
Total (/60)	54.52	3.34	—	—	—

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The post-test results are broadly positive. Ninety-five percent of students scored at or above the Developing threshold across all domains, and 81% achieved the highest level in Same and Different, the most linguistically demanding category. School Objects had the highest achievement rate at 95.2%, likely because the VHL activities for this topic included clear visual cues and repeated practice opportunities.

You know what? Number and quantity, at 66.7% achievement, was the weakest area. This is consistent with research showing that number words place unique cognitive demands on young learners, requiring both linguistic knowledge and abstract thinking (Clegg et al., 2014). One student still

needed teacher assistance, and 33.3% were in the Developing range, suggesting that counting and number vocabulary may need more time or different instructional approaches.

Vhl Platform Speaking Recording Activities - Results

The VHL platform intervention comprised seven speaking activities completed by all 20 Pre-A1 EFL learners between May and June 2026. Here's what I found: each activity was evaluated using a 5-point criterion-referenced [VHL](#) rubric across five dimensions: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and comprehension. Activities included both asynchronous self-recorded tasks (allowing rehearsal and re-recording) and one interactive AI chat task (“Talk with Anna”) requiring real-time responses.

Table 7. VHL Platform Speaking Activity Performance (N = 20)

Activity	Month	Type	Focus	M	SD	n (%) ≥ 4
What are you wearing?	May	Standard recording	Clothes vocabulary	4.62	0.67	(81.0%)
Five Senses – Body parts to senses	May	Asynchronous	Body parts + senses	4.81	0.40	(90.5%)
Name the items/clothing	June	Standard recording	Clothes review	4.90	0.30	(95.2%)
What is this? Say the body part	June	Asynchronous	Body part naming	5.00	0.00	(100.0%)
Chat: Talk with Anna	June	Interactive chat	Conversational practice	4.71	0.72	(85.7%)
Who does this belong to?	June	Asynchronous	Connecting + clothes	5.00	0.00	(100.0%)
Blending 1 Phonics – Letter A	July	Standard recording	Phonetic awareness	5.00	0.00	(100.0%)

Prepared by Ortuno L. & García P. (2026)

The highest-performing activities, where all students scored 4 or above, shared two features: students could record at their own speed and re-record as needed, and the tasks used clear visual clues matching the lessons. These findings agree with earlier TELL research, which shows digital tools work best when matched to students' development and learning needs (Golonka et al., 2014; Hasumi & Chiu, 2024). The results also suggest that real-time conversation is especially hard for Pre-A1 learners, who benefit more from chances to pause, practice, and re-record than from live talks. Dewi (2019) also stresses the need to match digital tools to learners' levels,

recommending structured, repeatable tasks for very young students instead of spontaneous interaction.

4. Discussion

This intervention shows that using the VHL platform for video and audio recording can help Pre-A1 learners in Guayaquil become more independent in speaking English. Before the intervention, 30% of students needed teacher help during speaking tasks; during the VHL activities, that dropped to 9.5%, and by the post-test, only 4.8% still needed help. The discussion below looks at these results in the context of TELL research, explores possible reasons, and highlights key points and limits.

Asynchronous Recording and Structured Production

The VHL activities with 100% pass rates, Body Parts, Possessive constructions, and Phonics, shared two features: students could record themselves at their own pace and re-record as needed, and the tasks used clear visual cues matching the activities. This aligns with Belmekki (2023), who found self-video recording helped college students improve pronunciation and confidence through repeated practice, and with Sanako (2025), who showed tasks done at different times reduce anxiety and allow personal feedback. Our results suggest these benefits also apply to young Pre-A1 learners, especially with visual supports.

In contrast, the “Chat with Anna” interactive task had the lowest success rate (85.7%) and the most differences among students. This suggests real-time interaction is too hard for Pre-A1 learners. Dewi (2019) also says digital tools should match the learner’s development level. For these young students, being able to pause and record again is more important than live conversations. This challenges the idea that live practice is always superior, and raises the question of whether interactive AI tools need to be redesigned for very young users.

The Structured-Spontaneous Gap

Before the intervention, students performed better on simple naming tasks than on open-ended speaking. This supports Pinter’s (2011, 2017) findings that young learners do better with set

phrases and Cameron's (2001) view that early speech depends on adult help. After the intervention, 95.2% scored at least 50 out of 60, but the tasks were still planned rather than spontaneous. The CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020) distinguishes between "rehearsed utterances" and "spontaneous interaction" at Pre-A1, and this study focused on the former.

What remains unclear is whether practicing planned tasks over time leads to improvements in open-ended speaking. This is an important question for future research, especially in contexts where children are just beginning to learn English and may need months of structured practice before they can speak spontaneously.

Filling the Age Gap in TELL Research

By focusing on children aged 5 to 6, this study fills an important gap. Earlier research by Pham (2025), Le (2022), and Encalada and Sarmiento (2018) examined older students and found that self-recording improves fluency, pronunciation, and confidence, but none of these studies examined children under 10. Our results suggest repeated practice, self-checking, and feedback given later help learners of all ages. Though young children need more support than adults, like icon-based navigation and visual aids, instead of the independence stressed for older students.

Golonka et al.'s (2014) detailed review supports this observation, noting that the success of digital tools depends on matching learner traits and teaching context. The VHL platform's alignment with the school's existing curriculum, supporting rather than replacing classroom teaching, demonstrates this principle and avoids the common TELL problem of technology becoming disconnected from learning goals. Hasumi and Chiu (2024) similarly argue that the effectiveness of TELL depends on how well tools are integrated into the broader instructional framework.

Continual Challenges

Number and Quantity was still the hardest area after the test, with only 66.7% of students reaching the target level. This matches Clegg et al. The truth is, (2014), who found that knowing number words is linked to thinking skills at age 6. Understanding number concepts needs both

language and thinking skills, which may be hard for Pre-A1 learners. Future programs could use hands-on materials for number tasks before moving to digital recording.

Individual differences also persisted: 38.1% of students were still in the “Developing” range, and one needed extra help. Murphy (2014) similarly found that early language development varies widely among children. While the VHL platform’s standard tasks worked for most students, they may not be suitable for slower learners. Future versions could include adaptive tasks that adjust to each student’s level or provide more individualized feedback.

Limitations, Validity, And Reliability

This intervention highlights methodological issues that may affect how the results are understood and used. The study involved 21 Pre-A1 learners from a private Jesuit classroom in Guayaquil, chosen for convenience. This limits how much the findings apply to others. Since most students came from middle- to upper-middle-class families with good access to technology, the results may not represent students from lower-income families, public schools, or areas with limited access to technology. The small sample size and no comparison group also limit the ability to draw strong cause-and-effect conclusions.

Instruments. The CEFR Pre-A1 rubrics and checklists measured students’ language use, but not their thoughts or feelings. The smiley-face survey might have led to biased responses to subtle emotions. The study focused only on speaking and may have missed how listening skills affect speaking fluency. Although raters tried to be consistent, their personal opinions on pronunciation, fluency, and participation could have varied.

Scope and Duration. The four-week program showed short-term improvements but did not look at long-term language growth or memory. Actually, because the study used only the VHL platform, the results may not apply to other learning systems. The findings are specific to an Ecuadorian Jesuit bilingual preschool and should be used with caution in other settings.

Validity and Reliability Measures. The study followed mixed-methods guidelines (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) to ensure the data were trustworthy. Internal validity was supported by using CEFR-based pre- and post-tests, standard rubrics, and consistent feedback. Recordings were

linked to specific VHL tasks for accurate tracking. The truth is, reliability improved through regular rater training. The findings were stronger when combining test scores and rubric ratings with observations from checklists and teacher notes. Because the students were very young, it wasn't possible to check the findings with them, but longer classroom observations and detailed notes helped increase trust in the results. Since the study was conducted at one school with a small group, this should be kept in mind when considering how the results might apply elsewhere.

APPENDIXES

[Appendix A](#)

[Appendix B](#)

[Appendix C](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

[Appendix 3](#)

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