

The effect of using Padlet on the development of english speaking skills in foreign language contexts

El efecto del uso de Padlet en el desarrollo de las habilidades orales en contextos de inglés como lengua extranjera

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Abstract

This study critically synthesizes peer-reviewed literature on the use of Padlet as a pedagogical tool for developing EFL speaking skills, with particular attention to underrepresented South American contexts. A qualitative narrative review, following the adapted PRISMA 2020 guidelines, was conducted using Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and regional repositories, covering the period 2014–2026. A total of 39 studies were selected after systematic screening. Padlet is theoretically grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Computer-Assisted Language Learning frameworks. The most consistently documented effects are a reduction in foreign-language speaking anxiety and an increase in learner confidence. Evidence for direct effects on fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and pronunciation remains indirect and methodologically constrained. While preliminary studies exist in Ecuador, empirically rigorous research on Padlet's specific impact on speaking sub-skills is virtually absent from the Latin American context, underscoring the need for quasi-experimental studies in this region.

Resumen

El presente estudio sintetiza críticamente la literatura revisada por pares sobre el uso de Padlet como herramienta pedagógica para desarrollar las habilidades orales en inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), con especial atención a los contextos sudamericanos subrepresentados. Se aplicó una revisión narrativa cualitativa siguiendo los lineamientos adaptados del protocolo PRISMA 2020, consultando Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, ScienceDirect y repositorios regionales en el período 2014–2026, de donde se seleccionaron 39 estudios tras un proceso sistemático de cribado. Padlet se sustenta teóricamente en la Teoría Sociocultural de Vygotsky y en los marcos de enseñanza asistida por computadora. El efecto más consistentemente documentado es la reducción de la ansiedad al hablar en lengua extranjera y el incremento en la confianza del estudiante. La evidencia sobre efectos directos en fluidez, precisión, vocabulario y pronunciación sigue siendo predominantemente indirecta y metodológicamente limitada. A pesar de algunos estudios preliminares en Ecuador, la investigación empíricamente rigurosa sobre el impacto específico de Padlet en los componentes de la expresión oral es prácticamente inexistente en el contexto

latinoamericano, lo que subraya la necesidad de estudios cuasiexperimentales en la región.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology integration has become a crucial component of contemporary teaching and learning methods in the twenty-first century, radically changing instructional strategies in all subject areas, especially English language instruction. By giving students more flexibility, access to worldwide resources, and genuine, interactive learning experiences, digital tools have drastically changed the field. Pedagogical practices in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have been permanently redefined by the rapid adoption of these tools during and after the pandemic. Increased learner engagement, better academic performance, and individualized learning experiences are just a few of the many benefits of using technology in EFL instruction (Zhang, 2019; Giyazova, 2026). However, for it to be implemented successfully, issues with student-teacher interaction, instructor preparation, and the alignment of technological advances with educational objectives must be carefully considered.

In response to digital technology, however, the teaching practices of English language instruction have undergone significant change with the aim of providing more autonomy and engagement and facilitating global connectivity (Qizi & Giyazova, 2026). In the line of studies by Felcida and Parameswaran (2024), technology-mediated learning signifies a substantial shift in educational practice toward more adaptable, interactive learning environments. Digital literacy has been consistently linked to measurable outcomes across a variety of language-related tasks, like speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and vocabulary skills. Digital tools in language education have been associated with significant improvements in these abilities, with specific tools such as Quizlet, Google Docs, Padlet, YouTube, and Grammarly often used to personalize learning experiences and enhance communicative competence (Liu, 2025).

Despite these technological advances, fostering oral communication skills remains one of the most persistent challenges in EFL instruction. In this context, instructors and students alike face a host of obstacles, which together hinder spoken expression development: educational barriers, comprising teacher-centered teaching strategies and large student bodies; linguistic barriers, including errors in speaking the language and over-reliance on the native tongue; affective causes such as fears and lower motivation especially toward speaking a foreign language; and environment, in terms of limited opportunities for interactions and resources. These overlapping obstacles form an urgent deficiency in non-academic communicative practice, a key limitation on oral competence development of those who learn EFL, since more effective means of communication are not available beyond the classroom. (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

The impact of Padlet on the development of EFL speaking abilities has not been sufficiently synthesized, particularly in South American settings, despite ongoing research on technology-enhanced language learning. Although obstacles to oral communication competence among Ecuadorian EFL learners have been well identified, research on the use of Padlet to improve speaking abilities in Ecuador is essentially absent from the available

literature (Lara Zambrano & López, 2023). Therefore, the body of research on the effect of Padlet use on the development of speaking skills in EFL situations is critically evaluated and synthesized in this theoretical review. The main study question is: What gaps exist in the current body of evidence, particularly in South America and Ecuador, and how does the use of Padlet as a digital educational tool encourage the development of speaking skills in EFL contexts?

Speaking Skills in EFL: Definition and Components

Literature Review

Speaking Skills in EFL Contexts: Definition and Components

Speaking proficiency is generally viewed as an essential aspect of language competence (Richards & Renandya, 2002). It is the most challenging productive skill in EFL pedagogy, in that it requires the simultaneous juggling of various linguistic, cognitive, and affective processes, in other words, to produce and comprehend spoken language. It is, however, by far the hardest and most complex skill to learn, even though it is vital for communication. The domain of oral communication involves many interrelated components, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, which must be mastered in order for an individual to communicate effectively and successfully with others. The chart shows multiple subskills related to oral communication:

Taken from Canale & Swain (1980), Celce-Murcia (2007), Levelt (1989), Thornbury (2005)

Speaking is a communication skill that involves two essential elements that, despite their close relationship, tend to become tense. On the one hand, accuracy refers to the extent to which language use conforms to established norms, including aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax (Yuan & Ellis, 2003). On the contrary, fluency is defined as the ability to produce oral language constantly without pauses or unnecessary delays (Skehan, 1996). The challenge for learners is that focusing exclusively on linguistic correction may limit fluency, whereas an emphasis on fluency often masks the message's formal precision (Skehan & Foster, 1997). Because of this, effective oral expression instruction must balance these two factors while integrating vocabulary development, formal accuracy, and communication confidence (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

This skill is the most challenging productive skill in EFL training and requires simultaneous coordination of multiple linguistic and cognitive processes. The five components of effective oral communication include fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and communicative confidence. Fluency is about being able to speak with minimum pauses and at a reasonable rate and accuracy is being able to use grammar and syntactic conventions correctly. A strong vocabulary enables learners to convey meaning accurately; also, pronunciation ensures that their spoken communication is intelligible to listeners. The extent to which learners engage in spoken interaction is intrinsically linked to communicative confidence, which is also related to willingness to communicate (WTC) (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Some of the linguistic difficulties that EFL learners face in speaking include limited vocabulary, grammar issues, and pronunciation difficulties. Also, barriers such as low self-confidence and fear of speaking incorrectly are among the most commonly reported challenges to oral participation in EFL classrooms. For this reason, the affective dimension of

speaking development is theorized through Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1985), which posits that emotional and motivational variables, such as anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation, act as psychological filters that either facilitate or hinder language acquisition. When the emotional filter is raised, intelligible input cannot reach the language-learning device; conversely, when the filter is lowered in supportive, low-anxiety contexts, acquisition is more successful.

The importance of speaking instruction in the acquisition process is compelling educators and researchers to consider technology for supporting oral proficiency, confidence, and communicative competence, regardless of the student population. One of the key affordances of collaborative digital tools is the possibility of peer noticing, which is especially salient when learners interact with a shared digital board; for instance, they are inevitably met with another's linguistic perspective, provoking impromptu metalinguistic reflection and communicative negotiation.

Technology-mediated language learning began in the 1960s with the birth of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), which introduced drill-based computer-assisted exercises (Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Bax, 2003). The latter developed rapidly with the rise of personal computers in the 1980s, the internet in the 1990s, and high-level multimedia and web infrastructure subsequently accelerating it (Sánchez, 2015; Torsani, 2016).

Based on this the widespread use of mobile technologies, particularly smartphones and tablets, in the early 21st century provided the seedbed for Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) (Al-Kadi, 2018). MALL is a recently emerging area that develops CALL for specific applications and digital resources, including blogs, wikis, and social networks, complemented by immersive learning environments in virtual worlds (Gabarrón Pérez et al., 2015). The fundamental value of MALL in language teaching lies in its ability to make learning more accessible, flexible, and far-reaching. Both MALL and CALL have become essential pillars of oral language instruction. MALL, in particular, fosters self-directed and collaborative learning and demonstrates great adaptability across formal, non-formal, and informal educational contexts. Among its main benefits are increased student engagement, accessibility, and the ability to personalize learning. However, it also presents significant challenges, including digital equity, concerns about screen time, and the reliability of content (Hwang, Rahimi & Fathi, 2024).

Within this range of technologies, Web 2.0 collaborative tools like Padlet have emerged as pedagogically advantageous tools, combining CALL with the accessibility and social features of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning. Cooperative learning theory, based on elements from Vygotskian and constructivist theory, identifies joint inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and extensive peer involvement as the most productive processes of knowledge development.

Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning Padlet Use in EFL

Padlet (formerly Wallwisher) was founded by Nitesh Goel and Pranav Piyush in 2008. It was formally incorporated in 2012. By 2013, its user base had grown significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, with educators and students around the world welcoming remote learning platforms. It's a visually appealing, user-friendly platform. Furthermore, because Padlet can be used on internet-connected devices, students do not need to download software (Tran et al., 2024).

Padlet is a complementary online collaboration platform that acts as a virtual interactive wall where users can instantaneously create, share, and organize multimodal

content. It is also referred to as a digital whiteboard for communication between teachers and students to share information in real time via text, images, or videos, and is a synchronous online learning format that allows all participants to engage together (Mehta et al., 2021; Shuker & Burton, 2021). It has been used in various educational settings at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Furthermore, its intuitive, social media-like design requires minimal technical training, making it suitable for learners at any level of education and in all situations.

Padlet is a pedagogical tool that brings students into the EFL classroom by enhancing a sense of belonging and helping them communicate better, not just as another technical tool. It is based on Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes how knowledge is actively constructed through cooperative and social interaction, with participants who engage in social situations gaining awareness of it (Vygotsky, 1978). From a sociocultural perspective, learning and development are interactive processes in which social interaction mediates language acquisition. Piaget's constructivist perspective builds upon Vygotsky's social theory by emphasizing that knowledge is actively constructed among learners through personal experiences and interactions with their environment. Language learning is an active process of meaning construction rather than a passive absorption of information; meaning learning occurs through collaboration with others.

Collaborative learning theory (CLT), which draws on both Vygotskian and constructivist principles, suggests that the most effective ways to build knowledge are engaging in cooperative inquiry, solving problems together, and spending extended stretches with peers (McLeod, 2025). CLT is an authentic communicative practice in EFL speaking education that encourages negotiating the meaning of speech, developing conversation in co-creation, and developing interactional skills through dialogue with peers, thus benefiting speaking ability (Butarbutar, 2025). Padlet was initially adopted in education primarily for writing and collaborative tasks; its multimodal features gradually positioned it as a tool with significant potential for oral language development. This collaborative dynamic is critical to understanding why this platform, expressly designed for shared, interactive participation, is becoming increasingly popular as a tool for EFL speaking development.

Padlet is an asynchronous, communicative learning platform that enables student interaction, fostering interactive, collaborative, and student-centered education (Alabbad, Abbad, & Huwamel, 2020). They talk, share ideas, offer feedback, and support each other, creating an inclusive social learning environment rooted in sociocultural theory. By fostering student autonomy in the use of various forms of expressions such as text, video, audio, and images, this approach directly contributes to the development of communicative competence and the strengthening of peer interaction (Villarama, Pilien, & Villamar, 2025). This student-centered approach aligns with the principles of constructivism, which emphasize autonomy, experiential learning, and the active role of students in constructing their own knowledge (Yakar et al., 2020). Through its interactive features, Padlet promotes student discourse, as well as collaborative idea development, making their education more meaningful and relevant. Furthermore, it facilitates student engagement in an active, reflective learning process, which promotes motivation (Chan & Chung, 2024).

RQ2: To what extent does the use of Padlet contribute to the development of speaking skills?

The current section responds to RQ2 by analysing the data about Padlet and its role in EFL speaking development. It is important to remember right off the bat that there is a scarcity of empirical research examining Padlet's own and isolated effect on the speaking components of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and learner confidence. Most studies focus on

how Padlet would impact the development of writing, collaborative learning, and communication more broadly. Nonetheless, a theoretically rooted assessment of Padlet's potential to influence each of the speech ingredients is enabled by a combination of the existing Padlet literature and research on similar digital tools.

Currently, there is minimal empirical data from the literature investigating the effect of Padlet on speaking fluency. However, studies of technology-mediated oral output in general are very useful for exploring how Padlet's design contributes to fluency development. Research on technology-mediated task-based language teaching shows notable improvements in EFL learners' speech rate and accuracy (Fathi, Rahimi, and Derakhshan, 2024) after extended participation in digital oral tasks. Results demonstrate that fluency features are closely related to other speaking dimensions, such as accuracy and lexical diversity.

Padlet has proven effective in increasing collaborative knowledge generation and strengthening communication skills in language-learning classrooms. It encourages flexible learning and educational management, which could accelerate speaking by facilitating active participation and engagement. Posting films and podcasts and commenting on others' work on Padlet has been found to facilitate oral competence and to raise awareness of speaking challenges (Kobayashi, 2024; Cuadros Puertas, 2025).

The speaking elements in which Padlet's positive effects were clearest and longest-lasting were learner confidence and reduced anxiety. According to a thematic analysis, they found that the key benefits of Padlet for language-learning contexts include ease of use, collaborative interaction, and reduced social anxiety. Studies consistently show that students feel much freer to express their thoughts on Padlet than in a traditional classroom. — findings that directly reflect what Krashen (1982) recognized as the prerequisite conditions for successful language acquisition, whereby collaborative and interactive features create a relaxed environment where students are able to overcome speaking anxiety and experience increased self-confidence. High motivation and increased willingness to communicate have been found to correlate with positive interactions within Padlet in cross-cultural environments. Active interaction and conversational opportunities promote flexible learning and better learning management, thereby enhancing speaking abilities (Ali, Saleem, Anwar, Alharbi, and Hanif, 2024; Kobayashi, S., 2024).

Generally speaking, the evidence reviewed in this section underscores a glaring asymmetry in the literature: the positive impact of Padlet on learner engagement, confidence, and overall communicative participation is well-established, but many studies that do an objective and comprehensive measure of its specific effect on specific components of speaking – especially, fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and pronunciation – remain astonishingly underresearched. Rather than relying on oral assessment instruments developed specifically for each component, most existing work relies on learner perception surveys or broad assessments of communicative competencies. Further experimental or quasi-experimental exploration is necessary to address this methodological gap, especially in underrepresented EFL settings, such as Ecuador and South America, where there is currently no Padlet-specific speaking research.

The existing literature on utilizing Padlet for improving speaking skills in EFL contexts, which in turn has implications for Ecuador and South America. The review analyses the interrelated components of the gap: methodological, geographical, and contextual, and finishes with calls for new research. The first problem is the methodological limitations of Padlet and Speaking Research. The main limitation in the current literature is methodological. There is notably limited research evaluating the discrete effect of Padlet on each speaking element.

Studies on Padlet's effects on speech outcomes at the component level are rare in the current literature. This constraint illustrates a general trend in CALL research: the handful of studies focusing on technology-enhanced speaking research emphasize one or two specific sub-skills, such as pronunciation and fluency, rather than evaluating all speaking sub-skills simultaneously. However, most relevant Padlet research has relied primarily on general communicative competence measures or learner impression surveys rather than established, component-specific instruments for evaluating performance. These instruments cannot, therefore, isolate the effects of Padlet on fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, or confidence (Bi, L., 2023).

While research on technology-mediated speaking has risen substantially from 2020 to 2024, the field remains dominated by studies conducted in East Asian and Middle Eastern contexts, with Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa among the most underrepresented regions worldwide. This spatially asymmetrical structure limits the generalizability of current work to culturally diverse contexts with distinct sociolinguistic features. The second dimension of the disparity is geographical. Current studies of Padlet and EFL speaking have largely centered on the Middle East and Southeast Asia, resulting in substantial underrepresentation of Latin America, especially Ecuador, in this evidence set, thereby casting doubt on the generalizability of these studies to contexts with varied sociolinguistic, educational, and infrastructural characteristics.

The most common institutional obstacles appear in public schools in Ecuador, where the majority of EFL learners are taught (Guerrero Rodriguez & Moreira Baquerizo, 2025). Despite this challenging environment, emerging evidence suggests that digital devices have a positive effect on speaking in the practices of Ecuadorian EFL teachers who use digital tools effectively. Recent work in Ecuador shows that technology-enhanced methods can be effective. The specific challenges faced by students of English as a foreign language in Ecuador closely align with the pedagogical possibilities offered by Padlet. This convergence makes the country particularly fertile ground for further exploration of this tool in developing oral expression. Recent research has already begun to highlight Padlet's value in the language classroom, particularly as an effective resource for vocabulary teaching. According to Mina Vásquez et al. (2025), the platform facilitates collaborative work and resource sharing in an interactive environment, contributing to more dynamic and participatory learning. Further, Ortiz et al. (2025) found that interactivity, visualization, immediate feedback, and gamification significantly boost student engagement. This research suggests Padlet may be a valuable tool for facilitating vocabulary development in schools.

Dos Santos and Luque-Agulló (2025) have claimed that technology increases student motivation and engagement in oral skill practice by enabling participation in the learning process. In addition to group projects, students can engage in open sharing, with digital tools offering instantaneous feedback – all fundamental for improving speaking skills (Dos Santos & Luque-Agulló, 2025). This means that platforms for real-time communication and collaboration, like Padlet, may be feasible in EFL contexts in Ecuador. In communication skill acquisition, Lara Zambrano et al. (2023) found that the Padlet platform significantly increased peer communication, idea exchange, dialogue establishment, comprehension, and responses in conversations, demonstrating its effectiveness as a teaching aid for enhancing communication skills in foreign language learning.

Padlet offers a low-pressure environment for oral practice, helping to reduce common problems in traditional classrooms, such as limited opportunities to speak or fear of making mistakes. The platform allows students to record audio responses, comment on classmates' posts, and hold asynchronous conversations. Incorporating this tool into teacher training programs in Ecuador could provide future educators with new ways to promote oral

expression in their classes, preparing them to use it effectively in developing this skill. The overall contribution and the most critical implication of the current review are the existence of evident speaking proficiency difficulties that the nation has, the theoretical alignment and low-anxiety design of Padlet, and the particular barriers with which Ecuadorian EFL learners have to overcome when speaking, and the absence of any empirical studies that have tested this alignment. Filling this gap with thoughtfully planned empirical research would be a major contribution to the CALL literature and to the advancement of EFL speaking instruction across South America.

A quasi-experimental design that extends beyond blanket feelings and tests the actual impact of Padlet on speaking skills would be of tremendous value to future research. Using validated rubrics, the researchers could explore the impact of this tool on fluency, accuracy, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and students' communicative confidence. In addition, administering assessment testing (e.g., adapted versions of the Oral Proficiency Interview OPI or descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)) of oral proficiency could facilitate useful comparison between Padlet-based instruction and traditional teaching methods implemented in Ecuadorian EFL classes. Alongside test outcomes, it would be beneficial to learn from students' and teachers' perceptions of component-specific oral evaluation tools to develop a fuller understanding of Padlet's role in shaping speaking. These kinds of studies would not only overcome the methodological obstacles identified in this study but also provide teachers in Ecuadorian schools with realistic, context-relevant information.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To ensure transparency in source selection and analytical rigor, a qualitative narrative review approach was used, adapted from the PRISMA 2020 framework (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA was originally developed for systematic reviews, but to improve reliability, its structured approach is increasingly used for narrative theoretical reviews (Sukhera, 2022). This review investigated, synthesized, and critically examined prior studies on the use of Padlet for the development of oral expression in EFL contexts, rather than collecting primary data from human subjects.

The review's scope is both descriptive and exploratory; it maps the current state of theoretical and empirical knowledge on the subject and examines a topic that has received little attention: the use of Padlet to teach speaking skills in Ecuador and, more broadly, South America (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A theme narrative synthesis technique was used for data analysis (Popay et al., 2006), organizing and analyzing the chosen literature in accordance with the main research topic.

Search Strategy and Databases

A comprehensive search was carried out using regional repositories such Ciencia Latina, Polo del Conocimiento, and UNESUM Ciencias in addition to Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and ResearchGate. Given the geographic focus of this research, the inclusion of Latin American repositories was a purposeful methodological choice. The following search terms were used both separately and in conjunction with the AND and OR Boolean operators:

- "Padlet AND EFL AND speaking"
- "Padlet AND oral skills AND language learning"
- "digital tools AND speaking development AND EFL"

"CALL AND speaking AND EFL"
 "Vygotsky AND ZPD AND EFL AND digital tools"
 "Krashen AND affective filter AND EFL speaking"
 "EFL AND speaking AND Ecuador"
 "EFL AND speaking AND South America"
 "technology AND English language teaching AND Ecuador"

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

In accordance with the PRISMA 2020 transparency requirements, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the search (Page et al., 2021). Except for basic theoretical articles (Vygotsky, 1978; Krashen, 1985; Richards & Renandya, 2002), the chosen period was 2014 to 2026. As shown in Table 1, all criteria were applied consistently throughout the selection process.

Table 1

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in the literature selection process

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Source type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, official curriculum documents;	Blogs, non-academic websites, unpublished theses, grey literature
Time period	2014 to 2026; theoretical classics (Vygotsky, 1978; Krashen, 1985; Richards & Renandya, 2002)	published before 2014, except in the foundational theoretical works.
Language	English and Spanish;	Language: other languages
Topic	Padlet in EFL, speech skills, digital tools, and oral production (EFL in Ecuador/South America), CALL/MALL frameworks, none related to speaking or oral production;	Padlet studies solely on writing or reading.
Geographic scope	International studies with a focus on EFL studies within the domain of Ecuador/South America that focus on RQ3	studies with a different focus, because of cultural identity and language in Spanish, and communication, which are unique to the EFL context.
Accessibility	Open-access or institutional libraries accessible for reading or writing papers (open access only), where whole texts are no longer available, are not relevant to the topic of learning and writing.	Any references and full texts were unavailable (e.g., the reference papers in their books or lectures, which are available in EFL, or study papers that have been translated into English).

After looking through the databases for titles and abstracts, they were researched and evaluated for relevance to the three research questions we were interested in. The sources that met the inclusion criteria that provided the reference literature were subsequently retrieved and researched. According to PRISMA 2020 reporting processes, the four stages of selection were identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

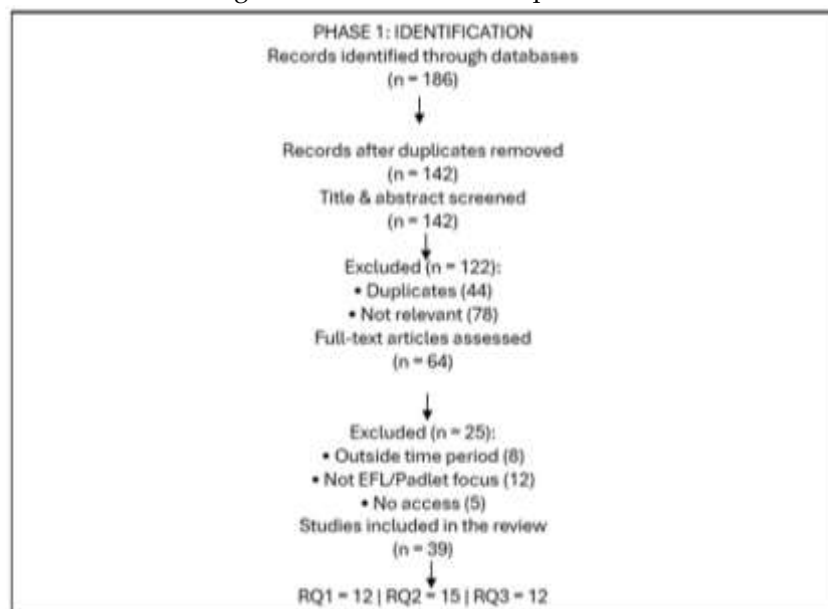
From there, the retrieved literature was organized thematically according to the research questions. The first field of inquiry focused on the development of Padlet's theoretical models and on pedagogical aspects, drawing on authors such as Vygotsky (1978), Krashen (1985), Sukhera (2022), and on the analysis of CALL and MALL (Al-Kadi, 2018; Hwang et al., 2024). The second field of inquiry focused on studying literature on the effects of Padlet on various aspects of oral and communication competence, like Kobayashi (2024), Villarama et al. (2025), and Cuadros Puertas (2025). The third field of exploration would be Ecuadorian or South American knowledge of English as a foreign language, based on the

work of Guerrero Rodríguez & Moreira Baquerizo (2025), Dos Santos & Luque-Agulló (2025), and Lara Zambrano & López López (2023).

The analysis was conducted using a framework of thematic narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006), which enables critical and integrative analysis rather than a mere assessment of the literature.

Figure 1 illustrates the article selection process we used for this revision in accordance with PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

Figure 1
PRISMA Flow Diagram for article selection process



Procedure for Selection and Source Organization

The four PRISMA 2020 stages – identification, screening, eligibility, and acceptance – were used in the selection procedure. At first, 186 records were found; 64 full-text publications were evaluated for eligibility after duplicates were eliminated and titles and abstracts were reviewed. Twelve of them did not concentrate on EFL or Padlet, five did not have accessible complete text, and eight were outside the time period, thus a total of twenty-five were discarded. There were 39 studies in the final sample.

The chosen literature was arranged thematically in accordance with the guiding study question: the Ecuadorian and South American EFL setting (12 sources); the theoretical frameworks supporting Padlet (12 sources); and the impact of Padlet on speaking sub-skills (15 sources). Table 2 lists important sources.

Table 2

Key Sources Included in the Review, Organized by Theme

Theme	Author(s)	Focus	Source
Theoretical Frameworks	Vygotsky (1978)	Sociocultural Theory & ZPD	Mind in Society. Harvard UP.
	Krashen (1985)	Affective Filter Hypothesis	The Input Hypothesis. Longman.
	Al-Kadi (2018)	CALL to MALL evolution	Language Teaching & Educational Research

	Hwang et al. (2024)	MALL app & speaking skills	Computers & Education, 214
	Butarbutar (2025)	Sociocultural collaborative learning EFL	LatIA, 3
Padlet & Speaking	Kobayashi (2024)	Padlet, WTC & speaking proficiency	Technology in Language Teaching & Learning, 6(2)
	Villarama et al. (2025)	Padlet in L2 teaching	LLT Journal, 28(1)
	Ali et al. (2024)	Padlet & EFL speaking competence	Revista Amazonia Investiga, 13(82)
Ecuador / S. America	Guerrero Rodriguez & Moreira Baquerizo (2025)	EFL speaking skills Ecuador	UNESUM-Ciencias, 9(2)
	Dos Santos & Luque-Agulló (2025)	Ecuadorian EFL teachers & oral expression	Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 27(2)
	Lara Zambrano & López López (2023)	Padlet & communicative competence Ecuador	PENTACIENCIAS, 5(4)

DISCUSSION

There are three theoretical perspectives that can explain the success of using Padlet to enhance oral language production in the classroom. From a theoretical perspective, Padlet's value can be understood through the lenses of Vygotsky and Krashen. On the one hand, the platform serves as a shared learning space where students, with the support of their peers and teachers, can produce a more complex oral output than they could achieve on their own, thus placing themselves within what Vygotsky calls the Zone of Proximal Development. On the other hand, the asynchronous nature of interaction on Padlet reduces the immediate pressure that often generates anxiety when speaking in another language. This dynamic, in line with Krashen's hypothesis, helps maintain a low – almost nonexistent – affective filter, creating more conducive conditions for learning.

Finally, Constructivism encourages students to take an active role in their own learning by producing and sharing knowledge rather than simply repeating it. These theories, framed within the evolution of technology-assisted language learning, not only justify the use of Padlet but also clearly explain why this platform effectively develops real, meaningful, and context-based communication skills, laying the groundwork for future research on adapting it to the realities of Ecuadorian classrooms.

Interesting though still incomplete results are presented in studies using Padlet. On the one hand, the tool is empirically proven to lower anxiety and increase students' confidence when speaking English – the “affective filter” Krashen talked about, as it turns out, really drops to almost zero when students become a part of an online life away from their 'here and now' pressure. Students like the flexibility of recording themselves, hearing their own voices, getting feedback from peers, and experimenting (Fathi et al., 2024; Hwang et al., 2024). But the evidence regarding actual gains on pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary and grammatical accuracy is more indirect: we already know that tech-mediated collaborative learning works and Padlet provides the ideal conditions (consistent interaction, peer models, repeated practice) for these to occur, but we do not currently have research on how much each of these one increases with the help of Padlet (Kim & Sim, 2024). In other words, Padlet appears to be an ideal platform for speaking to flourish. What needs to be ascertained with precise data, though, is not only how much each individual flower grows, but also how much in total.

In the review on Padlet with respect to speaking instruction, we identified three shortfalls that deserve further research in Ecuador: the absence of studies that measure fluency, pronunciation, or vocabulary independently; the available evidence mainly relates to

Asia and the Middle East — contexts very different from ours; while the pandemic provided schools with some access to technology, we have not yet translated that opportunity into local. As teachers and students are gaining digital fluency right now, it is a good opportunity to run a study in Ecuadorian classrooms to examine the real impact of Padlet across all aspects of speaking. For teachers, this means Padlet, then, isn't just a one-off, exploratory experience — it should be an ongoing practice partner, someone who gets students used to recording themselves and then listening to and receiving feedback, since, of course, their confidence with speaking grows along with their ability to record themselves, listen to themselves, and receive feedback — the same thing that they get with a computer — when it is practiced over and over.

For educators, the recommended approach is reconsidering assessment: using technologies such as Padlet to deliver oral assignments — without the pressure of a face-to-face exam — is a valid and fair supplement to teacher professional development, as it allows teachers to assess progress. The challenge for schools and governments is to establish the conditions for success, with training and infrastructure that ensure no one gets left behind. The potential of Padlet can only be gained when students overcome their fear of speaking English.

CONCLUSIONS

It shows that the use of Padlet in classroom settings for speaking in EFL is well-grounded in a solid, comprehensive theoretical foundation. Vygotsky justifies the use of the tool as digital scaffolding for collaborative oral practice; Piaget adds to that constructivist perspective by considering students as agents who actively construct knowledge through multimodal content; and Krashen provides the affective key, showing how Padlet's low-pressure environment reduces anxiety and facilitates the right conditions for acquisition. This theoretical convergence provides a strong basis for future research, but it is worth noting that theoretical soundness does not directly translate into efficacy; it relies on systematic application and sufficient pedagogical scaffolding. It shows that the use of Padlet in classroom settings for speaking in EFL is well-grounded in a solid, comprehensive theoretical foundation.

Vygotsky justifies the use of the tool as digital scaffolding for collaborative oral practice; Piaget builds on that constructivist perspective by positioning students as agents who actively construct knowledge through multimodal content; and Krashen provides the affective key, showing how Padlet's low-pressure environment reduces anxiety and creates the right conditions for acquisition. This theoretical convergence lays a solid foundation for future research, although it is important to remember that conceptual rigor does not, in itself, guarantee pedagogical effectiveness; this ultimately depends on systematic implementation and appropriate instructional scaffolding.

Based on this review, three interrelated gaps are identified. Methodologically, available studies tend to rely on perception surveys rather than validated instruments, and frequently lack control groups. Geographically, research has focused primarily on the Middle East and Asia, leaving Ecuador virtually absent from the map. This exclusion is particularly striking considering two factors: first, the gaps in the development of oral expression faced by Ecuadorian students; and second, the significant advancement of digital infrastructure in the post-pandemic era, which opens the door to a nationwide study. Nevertheless, any educational initiative must pay attention to the marked inequalities in access to technology between urban and rural areas, as well as between public and private institutions.

From a pedagogical perspective, it is suggested that Padlet not be used as an isolated activity, but as an ongoing space for oral practice. Ideally, students should record, share, and receive feedback regularly, integrating the tool into the daily classroom routine. For curriculum planners: Oral assessment should include digital work using tools such as Padlet as a suitable supplement to in-person assessments, particularly among learners who are anxious. For Entities and Governments: The investment is necessary in three segments: Educators should receive training opportunities on the use of digital technology, access to digital infrastructure in public schools, and access to nationally approved oral assessment techniques for digital settings.

When interpreting the findings of this review, it is important to consider certain limitations. First, this is a narrative, rather than a systematic, review, so some relevant studies may have been omitted from the analysis. Furthermore, existing research on the use of Padlet for oral expression is still limited. In some cases, this situation necessitated drawing conclusions from indirect evidence obtained from studies of similar digital tools. While this was a necessary step, it also entails epistemological limitations that should not be overlooked. To a limited extent, because few local publications cover Ecuador, our focus is constrained by the scarcity of such publications.

Lastly, since the majority of studies were conducted in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, their generalizability needs to be empirically verified, particularly given the region's unequal access to technological infrastructure and resources. Filling these gaps through well-conducted studies in Ecuador represents an enormous and pressing avenue for future research that can significantly contribute to both CALL research in the broader sense and the improvement of EFL speaking education in South America. However, in order to ensure that all students may benefit from Padlet, any future initiative must continue to pay attention to the significant differences in technology availability between public and private institutions as well as between urban and rural areas.

The methodological and geographic gaps found in this review would be directly addressed by a quasi-experimental design evaluating the effect of Padlet on particular linguistic speaking sub-skills using validated rubrics, modified Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) protocols, or CEFR-aligned descriptors. This would give professionals working in Ecuadorian schools realistic, context-relevant evidence for instructional decision-making.

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