

# **APLICACIÓN DE TALLERES DE COMERCIO PARA MEJORAR LAS HABILIDADES ORALES EN EL IDIOMA INGLÉS PARA EL ECOTURISMO EN LA AMAZONÍA**

## **APPLYING TRADING WORKSHOPS FOR IMPROVING THE ORAL SKILL IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR THE AMAZON ECOTOURISM**

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## Resumen

Esta investigación abordó las barreras lingüísticas enfrentadas por los proveedores de ecoturismo en Cascales, Sucumbíos, con un enfoque en mejorar sus habilidades de comunicación en inglés. El estudio evaluó si talleres específicos podrían mejorar estas habilidades, aumentando la satisfacción de los turistas y generando mayores beneficios económicos y educativos. Se utilizó una metodología cuasi-experimental, que incluyó encuestas antes y después de los talleres, entrevistas y discusiones en grupos focales con una muestra de 14 proveedores locales seleccionados por su dominio básico del inglés. Los resultados revelaron que, aunque algunos proveedores mostraron confianza en sus habilidades de comunicación en inglés, hubo una variabilidad considerable en su eficacia. Específicamente, el 21% de los participantes informaron dificultades para comunicarse efectivamente con los turistas, y muchos enfrentaron desafíos significativos relacionados con la entonación, pronunciación y fluidez. Aunque los participantes mostraron un alto nivel de interés en los talleres de formación y demostraron disposición para buscar retroalimentación, su atención inconsistente a la mejora de las habilidades orales limitó el impacto general de la formación. El estudio concluyó que los programas de formación existentes no abordaron completamente las necesidades específicas del sector de ecoturismo de la región. Se recomienda que futuras investigaciones exploren los impactos longitudinales de las intervenciones de formación, consideren factores culturales y contextuales que influyen en el aprendizaje de idiomas y examinen métodos alternativos para la mejora del lenguaje. Esto contribuiría a un modelo de ecoturismo más exitoso y sostenible en Cascales.

**Palabras clave:** Ecoturismo, Habilidades de Comunicación, Talleres de Capacitación.

## Abstract

This research addressed the linguistic barriers faced by ecotourism providers in Cascales, Sucumbíos, with a focus on improving their English communication skills. The study evaluated whether specific workshops could improve these skills, thereby increasing tourist satisfaction and generating greater economic and educational benefits. A quasi-experimental methodology was used, which included pre- and post-workshop surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with a sample of 14 local providers selected for their basic proficiency in English. The results revealed that, while some providers showed confidence in their English communication skills, there was considerable variability in their effectiveness. Specifically, 21% of participants reported difficulties in effectively communicating with tourists, and many-faced significant challenges related to intonation, pronunciation, and fluency. Although participants showed a high level of interest in the training workshops and were willing to seek feedback, their inconsistent focus on improving oral skills limited the overall impact of the training. The study concluded that existing training programs did not fully address the specific needs of the region's ecotourism sector. It is recommended that future research explore the longitudinal impacts of training interventions, consider cultural and contextual factors that influence language learning, and examine alternative methods for improving language skills. This would contribute to a more successful and sustainable ecotourism model in Cascales.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism. Communication Skills. Training Workshops

## Introduction

This research arises from the need to address a critical issue in the ecotourism sector in the canton of Cascales, province of Sucumbíos. This region is known for its extraordinary biodiversity and unique ecotourism opportunities that attract tourists from all over the world. However, despite the enormous tourism potential, local ecotourism providers face a significant challenge: the language barrier. According to Lapo (2023), the lack of oral communication skills in English has become an obstacle that prevents guides, tour operators, and other local providers from effectively communicating with international tourists. This not only affects the quality of the tourist experience but also limits the economic benefits these activities could generate for local communities. The language barrier creates misunderstandings, reduces visitor satisfaction, and decreases the potential to attract tourists from broader and more diverse markets.

Moreover, the ability to communicate in English is crucial for conveying knowledge about local biodiversity, sustainable practices, and the importance of environmental conservation. Without effective communication, tourists cannot gain a complete understanding of the ecological and cultural value of the region, which in turn diminishes their appreciation and support for conservation initiatives. The central question addressed by this research is whether the implementation of training workshops focused on improving oral communication skills in English can enhance the communication abilities of local ecotourism providers. This improvement is expected to increase tourist satisfaction, generate economic benefits for local communities, and facilitate more effective environmental education.

In the canton of Cascales, ecotourism is a primary source of income and a key strategy for promoting environmental conservation. However, the effectiveness of this sector is compromised by the language barrier. Many tourists who visit the region speak English, which presents a considerable challenge for local providers who often lack solid oral communication skills in this language. This situation can diminish the quality of the tourist experience and limit the economic income derived from tourism. Ecotourism in Cascales has the potential to be a powerful tool for sustainable development. By offering authentic experiences in a unique natural setting, it can generate income that not only supports local communities but also funds conservation and environmental protection efforts. However, the language barrier significantly limits these opportunities. Tour guides, lodging operators, and other service providers who cannot communicate effectively in English face difficulties in conveying crucial information about local flora, fauna, and sustainability practices (Montoya, 2022).

Luna et al. (2022) state that this lack of fluent communication not only affects tourist satisfaction, as they may feel frustrated by not being able to fully interact with their hosts but also prevents these visitors from fully understanding and appreciating the ecological and cultural value of the region. The inability to adequately explain the importance of conservation and the specifics of the Amazonian ecosystem can lead to lower tourist valuation and support for conservation initiatives. Additionally, tourists who do not have a positive experience due to communication barriers are less likely to recommend the destination to others or return in the future, which negatively affects sector growth. This dynamic creates a cycle where development and conservation opportunities are reduced by the lack of linguistic skills among local providers.

Furthermore, competition with other global ecotourism destinations, where providers can communicate in multiple languages, puts the canton of Cascales at a disadvantage. Tourists may choose destinations where they feel more comfortable and understood, diverting potential income to other areas. Addressing this language barrier is essential to maximizing the benefits of ecotourism in Cascales. Implementing English training programs for local tourism service providers can significantly improve the quality of the visitor experience and, consequently, increase tourism-

derived income. Training should not only focus on basic language skills but also on terminology specific to ecology, conservation, and the cultural particularities of the region.

This study is crucial because it addresses a significant gap in current ecotourism practices. Improving communication skills in English will not only benefit the tourist experience and economic income but also empower local communities with transferable skills to other sectors. Moreover, effective communication is fundamental for promoting education and environmental advocacy. Local guides play a vital role in raising awareness about conservation efforts and the ecological importance of Cascales. The ability to communicate in English will enable them to convey critical environmental messages more clearly and persuasively to a global audience. By doing so, they can more effectively explain the region's unique biodiversity, the threats it faces, and the necessary actions for its preservation.

Improving English proficiency will also allow local providers to access more resources and international training opportunities, collaborations, and professional networks. This will contribute to their continuous professional development and the improvement of the quality of services offered. Additionally, better English communication will facilitate participation in international conferences, seminars, and workshops, where they can share experiences and learn from successful practices in other parts of the world. This approach will not only increase the competitiveness of ecotourism in the canton of Cascales but also promote greater inclusion and equity by providing local community members with the opportunity to interact with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Exposure to different perspectives and knowledge can enrich understanding of environmental issues and foster a sense of global solidarity in the fight for Amazonian conservation.

Finally, based on the above, the objective of this research is that training workshops in oral communication skills in English will significantly improve the ability of local ecotourism providers to interact with tourists. This, in turn, will increase tourist satisfaction, generate greater economic benefits, and strengthen environmental education and advocacy efforts. This will be achieved by evaluating the improvement in oral communication skills in English among local ecotourism providers as a result of the training workshops, analyzing the impact of these improved skills on tourist satisfaction and the overall visitor experience in the canton of Cascales, and identifying and addressing the specific difficulties faced by local ecotourism providers in acquiring and applying these skills.

## Method

This study is classified as applied and quasi-experimental. It is considered applied because it seeks to provide practical solutions to a specific issue within the ecotourism sector in the canton of Cascales, located in the Sucumbíos province, by implementing English training workshops aimed at strengthening oral communication skills among local service providers. At the same time, the research employs a quasi-experimental design, as it includes a structured intervention and measures its effects on variables such as communicative competence in English, tourist satisfaction, and economic benefits, but without the presence of a randomized control group. This methodological approach aligns with the perspectives of Flores et al. (2020) and Hernández and Rodríguez (2020), who describe quasi-experimental research as a means to evaluate interventions in real-world settings where randomization is not feasible.

The methodology follows a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative strategies to gather and analyze data. This combination allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the intervention, balancing measurable indicators with contextual insights, as supported by Creswell and Plano Clark's work on mixed methods research. The study population consists of ecotourism service providers from Cascales, including tour guides, lodge personnel, and local artisans. A sample of 14 participants will be selected in coordination with the

Tsampi Etze Muyu Artisans Association. Participants will be chosen based on their active role in ecotourism and a basic level of English proficiency (A1 according to the CEFR), identifying them as beneficiaries in need of language development.

The intervention will take place at the Tsampi Etze Muyu Cultural Center, which serves as a representative location for cultural tourism and community-based initiatives. The training will be structured around the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which prioritizes real-life interaction and language use in authentic contexts. This approach is particularly effective in tourism-related scenarios, as demonstrated in studies such as those by Hong et al. (2022), Islam and Stapa (2021), and Montoya (2022), which highlight the value of communicative and task-based strategies for improving speaking skills in learners of English as a foreign language.

Quantitative data will be collected through pre- and post-intervention surveys designed to assess the development of oral English skills. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, as well as comparative methods, including non-parametric tests like the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which is appropriate for small, non-randomized samples. In addition, qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with service providers, tourists, and members of the local community, as well as through focus groups with workshop participants. This information will be analyzed thematically using coding techniques aligned with Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework, enabling the identification of recurring perceptions and experiences related to the training process.

The training sessions will be supported by various pedagogical and technological materials. These include English learning resources tailored to the A1 level and contextualized to tourism scenarios, bilingual study guides with listening and speaking exercises, and audiovisual materials that simulate real tourism interactions. Digital tools such as language learning platforms (e.g., Duolingo for Schools and British Council beginner resources) will also be used to support autonomous learning. Furthermore, equipment like speakers, recorders, and projectors will facilitate interactive activities, feedback sessions, and performance evaluation. The integration of these tools is consistent with recent findings on the role of mobile and digital technologies in enhancing communicative competence, as discussed by Ngu et al. (2021) and Lapo (2023), who emphasize the relevance of such tools in language acquisition for professional purposes.

Finally, the research acknowledges the contribution of ecotourism to the economic development of Amazonian communities. Strengthening English language skills among service providers is viewed as a key strategy for improving visitor experience and fostering inclusive local development, as highlighted by Luna, Pilataxi, and Jiménez (2022), whose research supports the link between ecotourism and sustainable economic growth.

## Findings

In the context of the ongoing efforts to enhance English communication skills among local ecotourism providers in the canton of Cascales, Sucumbíos, it is crucial to assess both the challenges faced and the effectiveness of recent training initiatives. The following survey results shed light on key aspects related to English language use in the Amazon ecotourism setting, focusing specifically on providers' experiences and perceptions.

The survey includes a series of questions designed to explore various dimensions of communication challenges and the impact of training workshops on improving English proficiency. We seek to understand how frequently providers feel nervous during English conversations, how often they miss opportunities to practice their English skills, their commitment to improving fluency, their hesitation in engaging with native speakers, and their overall confidence in speaking English within the ecotourism context.

These questions are aimed at capturing a comprehensive view of the current state of English communication among local providers. By analyzing responses to these questions, we can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of the training workshops and identify areas where additional support may be needed. The results will provide a clearer understanding of how well the training programs are addressing the language barriers and contributing to the enhancement of communication skills crucial for delivering high-quality ecotourism experiences.

In the subsequent sections, we will present the detailed findings from the survey, highlighting the key trends and implications for improving English communication skills among ecotourism providers.

**Table 1.**  
Results of Perception and Attitudes Towards English Communication in Trading Workshops

Aspect	Frequency				
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Self-perceived confidence in oral English communication skills	64,29%	21%	14%	-	-
Taking advantage of opportunities to improve one's English-speaking skills	21%	21%	57%	-	-
Effort to improve one's fluency in English	14%	14%	36%	7%	29%
Confidence to interact with natives	64%	-	14%	21%	-
Interest in workshops to improve English skills	57%	14%	7%	-	21%

The majority of respondents (64.29%) perceive themselves as highly confident in their oral English communication skills, especially in the context of ecotourism. However, this positive perception contrasts with the low percentage of participants who always take advantage of opportunities to improve their English (21%) and the minimal constant effort to enhance fluency (14%). The lack of active effort, with 29% never making an effort to improve, suggests a discrepancy between self-perceived confidence and actual action. Despite feeling confident interacting with native speakers (64% Always), some participants still do not feel completely comfortable (21% Rarely). Interest in English training workshops is high, with 57% showing consistent interest, although 21% are not interested, which could impact the effectiveness of training programs if they are not tailored to meet the needs of all participants. This analysis reveals that while confidence in English communication is high, the lack of ongoing effort and uneven interest in training may limit the actual development of English skills among local ecotourism providers.

These findings align with some studies in the field but also diverge in important ways. For instance, research by Luna et al. (2022) highlights a similar gap between perceived and actual communication abilities, indicating that while individuals may feel confident, their actual communication practices and skills often fall short. Montoya (2022) supports the notion that language barriers impact the effectiveness of ecotourism providers, yet the current study reveals a more nuanced issue where the lack of ongoing effort to improve language skills significantly affects actual performance.



Future research should focus on several key areas. Firstly, it would be beneficial to explore the specific barriers that prevent ecotourism providers from actively engaging in language improvement efforts. Understanding these barriers could lead to more targeted and effective training interventions. Secondly, longitudinal studies could examine how sustained training impacts both confidence and actual communication skills over time. Additionally, investigating the role of cultural and contextual factors in shaping language learning experiences would offer valuable insights into how to better support local providers in diverse ecotourism settings.

In a broader context, these findings underscore the importance of aligning self-perception with actual language skills and efforts. They highlight a critical need for practical, ongoing support and training that addresses not only language acquisition but also the motivation and strategies necessary for effective communication. This research prompts a call to action for designing more effective language programs and exploring innovative approaches to language learning in ecotourism and similar fields. By addressing these gaps, future studies can contribute to enhancing the overall quality of communication in ecotourism and fostering better interactions between local providers and international tourists.

**Table 2.**  
Results of Key Aspects in Oral English Skills

Aspect	Frequency				
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Ability to communicate effectively with tourists	36%	14%	21%	7%	21%
Attention to oral English skills	-	43%	21%	-	36%
Difficulty in managing the correct intonation in English	43%	7%	7%	7%	36%
Challenges in pronunciation and fluency	86%	14%	-	-	-
Tendency to seek feedback on their oral English skills	36%	14%	50%	-	-

The results presented in Table 2 offer a complex view of oral English skills among ecotourism providers in the Amazon. Although 36% of participants report that they can always communicate effectively with tourists, 21% indicate that they never achieve this, revealing notable variability in communication competence. This disparity contrasts with Hernández & Rodríguez, (2020), who argue that ongoing, specialized training can lead to more uniform communication competence. This finding suggests that current training may not be adequately tailored to the specific needs of ecotourism in the region. The most critical issue appears in the area of pronunciation and fluency, where 86% of participants report constant challenges. This supports Hong et al. (2022), who emphasize the difficulty of achieving proper pronunciation and fluency without explicit phonological training. On a more positive note, 86% of participants actively seek feedback (36% always, 50% sometimes), indicating a strong foundation for continuous improvement through reflective practice.

Regarding attention to oral skills, 43% of participants report that they usually pay attention, while 36% never do. This pattern reflects a lack of consistency in focusing on language skill



improvement, something Ngu et al, (2021) considers essential for effective second language development. The lack of ongoing attention may limit participants' ability to improve their oral skills, directly impacting their ability to communicate with tourists. For intonation, 43% of participants face significant difficulties in managing it correctly, while 36% never experience this issue. This aligns with Islam & Stapa, (2021), who notes that intonation is one of the most challenging aspects to master in a second language. The high difficulty in this area highlights the need for more specialized training approaches that specifically address these challenges.

Additionally, 86% of participants report persistent issues with pronunciation and fluency. This result supports Hong et al, (2022), who states that pronunciation and fluency are particularly difficult areas to achieve in second language learning. The high proportion of difficulties in these areas indicates that educational interventions should focus intensely on improving pronunciation and fluency to support effective communication in the ecotourism context. On the other hand, 50% of participants show a strong tendency to seek feedback on their oral skills, while 36% always seek feedback. This behavior is consistent with Lapo, (2023), who highlight that feedback is crucial for learning and skill improvement. The willingness to receive feedback may be a key factor in the continuous improvement of oral skills.

In summary, while there is notable effort by participants to seek feedback and pay attention to oral skills, the results indicate persistent challenges in critical areas such as pronunciation, fluency, and intonation. Addressing these issues requires providing training tailored to the specific needs of ecotourism and fostering a culture of continuous feedback. This approach will not only enhance communication with tourists but also potentially increase economic and educational benefits for local communities, thus supporting a more effective and sustainable ecotourism model. These findings directly respond to the initial objectives of the study. Regarding the assessment of current English communication skills, the data reveal a noticeable gap between participants' confidence and their actual language performance, which underscores the need for more structured and context-specific training. In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of training workshops, although there is evident interest and a certain level of participation, the results indicate that existing programs are not effectively addressing crucial areas such as pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Finally, when examining the factors that influence English learning among ecotourism providers, the study identifies key issues like the lack of sustained effort, inconsistent engagement with practice opportunities, and limited motivation, all of which significantly affect learning outcomes. Concerning the assessment of current English communication skills, the findings point to a discrepancy between participants' self-confidence and their actual performance, highlighting the need for more structured and context-relevant training. Regarding the effectiveness of training workshops, although there is evident interest and a certain degree of participation, the data suggest that existing programs fall short in adequately addressing essential areas such as pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Lastly, in identifying the factors that affect English learning among ecotourism providers, the study reveals several influential elements, including a lack of consistent effort, irregular practice habits, and low levels of motivation, all of which significantly impact learning outcomes.

## Conclusions

The research reveals important insights into the state of English communication skills among ecotourism providers in Cascales, Sucumbíos. While some providers express confidence in their ability to interact with tourists, the findings show a notable disparity in actual communicative competence, with 21% of participants struggling to communicate effectively. This inconsistency suggests that existing training initiatives are not sufficiently tailored to the specific linguistic and professional demands of the region's ecotourism industry.

A closer look at language habits reveals that attention to developing oral communication skills remains uneven. Although 43% of respondents report paying regular attention to improving these skills, a significant 36% admit to doing so only rarely. This mismatch between perceived effort and consistent practice limits progress and reflects the need for more structured and engaging training approaches. Moreover, persistent challenges with pronunciation and fluency—reported by 86% of participants—and difficulties with intonation noted by 43% further reinforce the urgency of targeted pedagogical interventions. These patterns are consistent with broader research in language acquisition, which emphasizes the need for focused instruction in these key areas to achieve communicative competence. Encouragingly, many participants demonstrate a proactive attitude toward improvement, with a large number actively seeking feedback on their performance. This openness presents a valuable opportunity: integrating systematic and constructive feedback mechanisms into future training programs could significantly enhance learning outcomes.

Ultimately, addressing these communication barriers through well-designed, context-specific training programs is essential. Doing so not only has the potential to elevate the quality of service provided to international tourists but also to strengthen the local economy, promote environmental awareness, and reinforce conservation efforts. By empowering ecotourism providers with the language skills necessary to fully engage with visitors, Cascales can develop a more sustainable, impactful, and competitive ecotourism mod

## Recommendations

Future research should focus on several key areas. First, longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate the long-term impacts of English language training on ecotourism providers. These studies would help determine if improved communication skills result in sustained benefits for tourist satisfaction, economic growth, and environmental advocacy. Additionally, exploring how cultural and contextual factors influence the acquisition and application of English skills could lead to more culturally tailored training programs. Comparative research between providers in Cascales and those in other ecotourism destinations could identify successful strategies and practices that might be adapted to improve communication skills across different regions.

Investigating the role of technology in language learning, such as through apps, virtual reality, and online platforms, could offer innovative solutions to overcoming language barriers. It would also be valuable to examine how involvement in professional networks and international collaborations affects language skill development, as global connections might facilitate the exchange of best practices and enhance skill acquisition. Furthermore, studying the effectiveness of different feedback mechanisms, whether peer reviews, expert evaluations, or self-assessments—could provide insights into the most effective methods for improving language proficiency.

Alternative approaches to tackling the problem might include developing community-based training programs that engage both local providers and tourists, creating immersive learning experiences directly related to ecotourism needs. Incorporating ecotourism-specific content into English courses would make training more relevant and practical. Collaborating with language experts and educational institutions to design specialized training programs could also bring valuable resources and innovative teaching methods to address specific communication challenges.

Overall, this research underscores the critical role of effective communication in ecotourism. Addressing language barriers can significantly enhance tourist experiences, boost local economies, and support conservation efforts. Continued exploration in this field promises to improve training programs, foster international collaboration, and advance best practices in ecotourism. Engaging with these recommendations will deepen the understanding of how communication skills influence tourism and conservation, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable practices in the industry.

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