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OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL

FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES-ENGLISH

TITLE OF PAPER

Analysis of EFL teaching strategies for the development of speaking skills applied to a student with neurodivergence: a case study.

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SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR OBTAINING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN EFL PEDAGOGY

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Guayaquil, Ecuador
27th of February of 2026

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this research project was presented by **Orellana Villacís, Nahomi Nikole** y **Lockerman Rodríguez, Edwin George** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Bachelor's Degree in EFL Pedagogy.**

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We, **Orellana Villacís, Nahomi Nikole**
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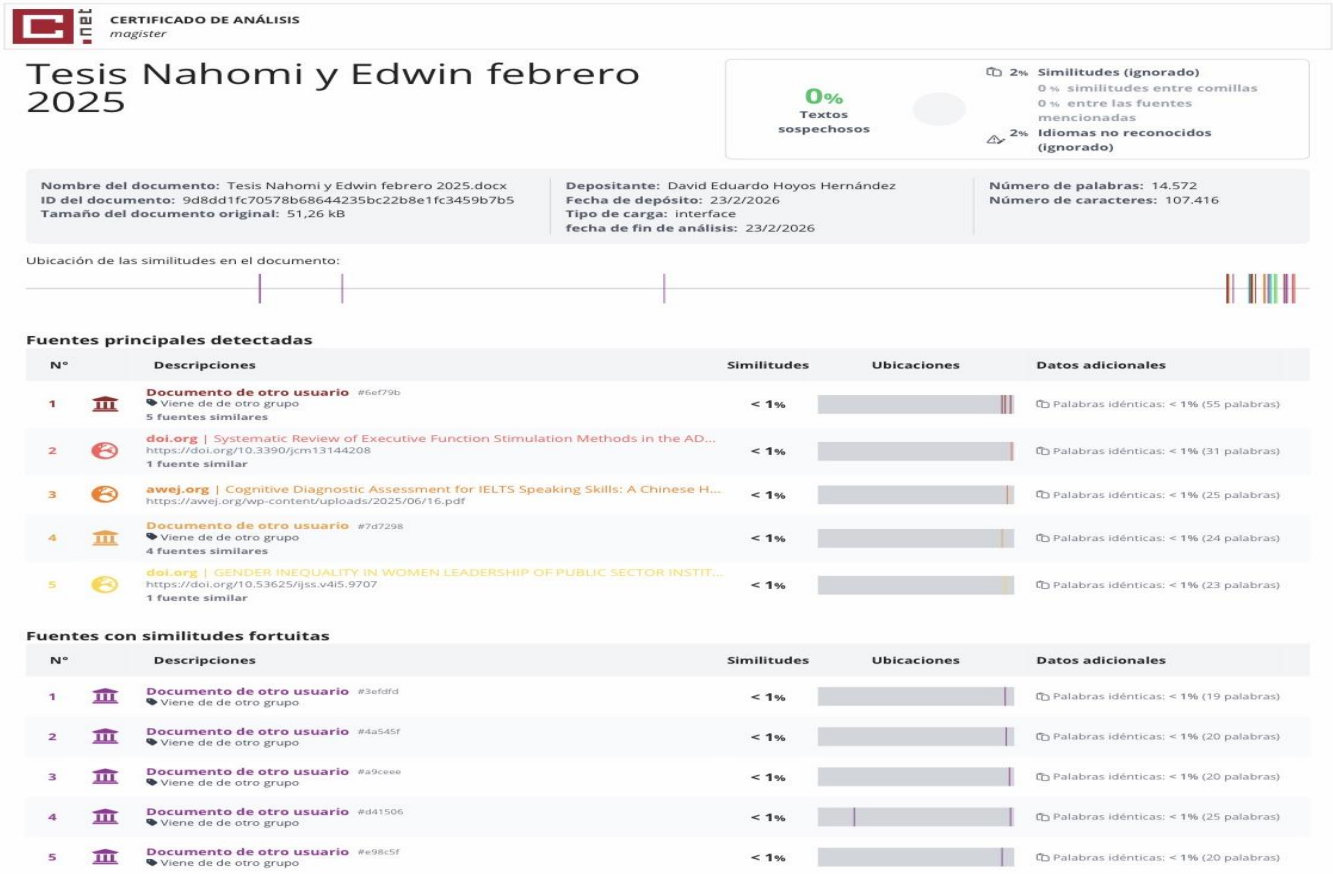

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Tamaño del documento original: 51,26 kB

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the teachers who have supported us throughout this journey. We are especially thankful to our advisor, Professor David Hoyos, for his invaluable guidance, encouragement, and expertise. We also wish to thank our families for their unwavering support, as well as our friends and peers, who have been a constant source of motivation and inspiration. Without all of you, we would not have reached this important milestone.

DEDICATION

We dedicate this achievement to our families for their unconditional support, and encouragement throughout our career. Their patience and love have been essential in helping us overcome every challenge we faced.

We also dedicate this work to our classmates and teachers who shared this important stage of our lives with us, making this experience meaningful and memorable. Their understanding and companionship will always be appreciated.

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Abstract

This qualitative single-case study explores the instructional interplay between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching strategies and the development of speaking skills in a 10th-grade student diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The research addresses the gap between the student's linguistic potential and his oral production, which is often hindered by executive function deficits such as inattention, impulsivity, and working memory limitations. This study employed a methodological triangulation, including structured observation checklists and a semi-structured teacher interview, to characterize current pedagogical practices while also relating the information to Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory and Fredricks' Engagement Theory. Then, the research findings showed that while the teacher employed environmental modifications and task-chunking successfully to reduce cognitive load, these strategies were still teacher-dependent through a strong co-regulation.

The observations revealed a need for individualized "Wait Time" that conflicts with classroom momentum, creating a "Pacing Paradox". However, it was also observed that cognitive engagement intensified when the lesson content was aligned with the personal interests of the student. Consequently, the study proposes the SCOPE Framework (Space, Content, Organization, Pacing, and Evaluation). This is a toolkit that provides structured scaffolds, such as visual timers and lexical anchors, which are designed to help the student transition from teacher-dependency toward autonomous self-regulation.

Keywords: ADHD, EFL Speaking Skills, Scaffolding, Student Engagement, SCOPE Framework, Self

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) requires consistent exposure and active practice, particularly in developing the productive skill of speaking. When a student has an ADHD profile, their unique cognitive profile presents a distinct scenario for the EFL teacher regarding their participation and skill development. It is crucial for English teachers to understand how to adapt lesson plans and instruction in order to support the specific learning needs for a neur0divergent student and guarantee a successful language development.

This case study focuses on Alex (pseudonym), a 13-year-old in 10th grade with an ADHD profile. Within the EFL environment and specifically during speaking activities, Alex shows inconsistency when trying to follow verbal instructions or trying to follow language-based routines, and struggles with maintaining participation in group and individual tasks, which disrupts the routine and task completion necessary for effective language acquisition.

The teaching process carried out for the development of Alex´s speaking skills is an element that remains undocumented in this particular context. Understanding these dynamics is essential for the schools´ EFL teaching community to characterize the practical adjustments that are currently being made. This situation highlights a practical need to describe in detail the current EFL teaching process applied for the development of speaking skills of a 10th grade student with ADHD.

Therefore, the aim of this qualitative research is to describe the teaching process of EFL speaking in Alex's case. The study will provide a clear and objective account of the actual teaching scenario by systematically documenting the current teaching strategies applied in the classroom and also characterizing the student's verbal engagement and participation.

Justification

Understanding how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking is taught to a student with ADHD characteristics, is an essential yet underexplored area of research. In such cases, teachers face unique challenges in maintaining instructional routines and facilitating participation within the classroom. This study is justified by the need to document and describe the actual teaching process that unfolds in this context. By focusing on the observable instructional practices and classroom interactions surrounding speaking activities, the research aims to provide a clear, objective account of how the teaching process of EFL speaking is carried out with an ADHD student like Alex. Such descriptive insights are fundamental to broaden the understanding of current EFL pedagogical practices in atypical and demanding teaching scenarios. The benefits that this research project can provide are details regarding the adaptation of instruction for an ADHD student, during EFL speaking practices. The research findings of this investigation can also help the school authorities understand how the teaching process is carried out for Alex. The results of this research can also help other researchers investigating similar cases in the field of EFL teaching.

Research Questions

1. What specific EFL teaching strategies are currently employed during the speaking activities with Alex during the 2025-2026 school period?
2. How can Alex's verbal engagement and participation be characterized during the use of these EFL speaking strategies?
3. What specific challenges are reported by the EFL teacher when applying speaking strategies to support Alex's classroom participation?

Objectives

Main Objective:

To analyze EFL teaching strategies for the development of speaking skills applied to a 10th grader with ADHD, in the 2025-2026 school year, for the purpose of proposing a pedagogical guide that addresses the identified classroom challenges.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the specific EFL teaching strategies currently implemented during the speaking activities with Alex during the 2025-2026 school period.
2. To describe Alex's characteristics of verbal engagement and participation in response to these strategies during speaking lessons.
3. To propose a pedagogical guide that addresses the challenges reported by the teacher when applying the current speaking strategies in the classroom.

Literature Review

1. The Neuropsychology of ADHD in the Adolescent Learner

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a chronic neurodevelopmental condition that affects cognitive processing, attentional control, and executive functions throughout development.

While often diagnosed in childhood, ADHD persists into adolescence and adulthood for many individuals—and the **neuropsychological profile during adolescence is uniquely complex** due to ongoing brain maturation and evolving cognitive demands (Ramos-Galarza et al., 2024).

This period of development encompasses significant neural reorganization, particularly in **executive networks and functional connectivity**, which is central to understanding ADHD in adolescent learners.

Neurodevelopmental Changes and Brain Networks in Adolescent ADHD

Neuropsychology focuses on the relationship between brain structure and cognitive behavior. Adolescence is marked by dynamic brain maturation—particularly in the **prefrontal cortex**, **executive control networks**, and connectivity patterns essential to attention and self-regulation.

Structural and Functional Brain Differences

Recent neuroimaging research reveals functional and structural differences in the brains of adolescents with ADHD compared with typically developing peers. A meta-analytic study investigating resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging (rs-fMRI) found that **spontaneous brain activity patterns differ in adolescents with ADHD**, with *increases in activity* in frontal and paracentral regions and *decreases in activity* in cerebellar and frontal areas (Shu et al., 2025). These patterns likely reflect **developmentally distinct neural mechanisms underlying ADHD symptoms and behaviors** (Shu et al., 2025).

Additionally, some studies propose that ADHD may involve a **delayed maturation of functional connectivity between subcortical regions (e.g., striatum) and cortical networks** (Hong, 2024). This hypothesized developmental sequence suggests that patterns of connectivity evolve uniquely in adolescence and may contribute to attentional and cognitive irregularities commonly observed in ADHD learners. This **atypical connectivity profile** has implications for processes such as inhibitory control, working memory, and sustained attention that are essential for academic success.

Prefrontal Cortex and Executive Control Networks

The **prefrontal cortex (PFC)** is central to executive functions—working memory, inhibition, cognitive flexibility, and planning—and is among the last brain regions to fully mature. ADHD is often characterized by **developmental delays or dysregulation in PFC maturation**, which can impair cognitive control and emotional regulation. For example, studies indicate that individuals with ADHD show **structural abnormalities in the PFC**, including reduced gray matter and delayed developmental trajectories, which are associated with ongoing difficulties in attention and self-regulation (Bian et al., 2025).

Such PFC abnormalities are not isolated but interact with **broader brain networks**, including fronto-striatal and fronto-parietal circuits. These networks support efficient cognitive control and complex goal-directed behavior, both of which are critical for academic tasks that require sustained mental effort and self-management—skills often compromised in ADHD learners.

Neuropsychological Profiles: Executive Function, Attention, and Cognitive Patterning

Central to the neuropsychology of adolescent ADHD are **executive function (EF) deficits**—a cluster of cognitive processes that orchestrate attention, inhibition, working memory, and planning. These functions are vital for successful learning and academic achievement.

Executive Function Deficits in ADHD

Executive function impairments are among the most consistent neuropsychological findings in ADHD research. Recent systematic reviews highlight that EF deficits in ADHD include **working memory challenges, inhibitory control problems, and difficulties with cognitive flexibility** (Ramos-Galarza et al., 2024). These deficits manifest in behaviors such as procrastination, difficulty following multi-step instructions, distractibility, and impulsive decision-making—behaviors that directly impact academic performance and learning efficiency.

A growing body of evidence shows that **working memory deficits are among the most robust cognitive hallmarks of ADHD**, contributing to difficulties in classroom activities that require holding information in mind while processing new information or performing complex tasks. In learning environments, adolescents with ADHD may struggle to keep track of lecture content, organize written work, or complete assignments that require sustained mental effort.

Attention Regulation and Processing Variability

Attention regulation is another core component of ADHD neuropsychology. Intrinsic variability in attentional engagement—often conceptualized as **reaction time variability**—is a consistent neurocognitive marker of ADHD and may reflect fluctuating engagement of attentional networks. Adolescents with ADHD tend to exhibit **greater inconsistency in attentional performance**, which can adversely affect tasks requiring sustained focus (Ramos-Galarza et al., 2024).

Additionally, research suggests that adolescents with ADHD may experience **emotional dysregulation** that interacts with attentional processes. One brain connectivity study found that ADHD was associated with reduced connectivity in the **salience network**, which is involved in integrating emotional and cognitive information. This disrupted connectivity correlated with symptom severity, suggesting that emotional mechanisms are intertwined with cognitive control networks in ADHD (Jadad et al., 2024).

Learning Implications and Academic Functioning

The neuropsychological characteristics of ADHD—especially executive function and attention regulation deficits—translate into significant educational challenges for adolescent learners.

Academic Performance and Cognitive Skills

Adolescents with ADHD often perform within the *normal range* on standardized measures, but they tend to score lower than peers without ADHD on tasks requiring complex cognitive control (Ramos-Galarza et al., 2024). Tasks such as comprehension, organization tasks, and multi-step problem solving are frequently impaired, hindering academic achievement and independent learning.

Working memory deficits, for example, complicate the maintenance of information across time, which affects note-taking, comprehension of extended textual passages, and problem solving in mathematics. Furthermore, **inhibition deficits** mean that learners may struggle to suppress distractions, adhere to classroom rules, or plan and sequence academic tasks effectively.

Emotion and Behavior in the Learning Context

In addition to cognitive impairments, ADHD is often associated with emotion regulation difficulties that may disrupt classroom engagement and social interactions. A comprehensive perspective argues that emotional dysregulation contributes to the observable difficulties in academic persistence, frustration tolerance, and relationship building, all of which are relevant to successful learning outcomes.

The interplay between cognitive control, emotional processing, and academic engagement suggests that ADHD cannot be understood as a purely attentional disorder, but rather as a multidimensional neuropsychological condition with cascading effects on multiple aspects of the adolescent learner’s life.

Neuropsychological Assessment and Intervention

Accurate assessment of neuropsychological functioning in adolescents with ADHD is critical for effective intervention planning.

Assessment Tools and Interpretation

Neuropsychological evaluation typically includes standardized tests of attention, working memory, inhibitory control, and processing speed. These assessments help identify specific cognitive profiles, strengths, and weaknesses, allowing educators, clinicians, and families to tailor interventions.

For example, diagnostic assessments such as continuous performance tests (CPTs) or structured EF batteries can quantify sustained attention, response inhibition, and working memory capacity—constructs that align directly with the neural circuits implicated in ADHD.

Interventions Based on Neuropsychology

Interventions that target executive functions—such as cognitive training, behavior modification strategies, and environmental accommodations—have been explored to support adolescents with ADHD. The systematic review by Ramos-Galarza et al. (2024) reports that psychological training and pharmacological treatments are among the most commonly investigated approaches to bolster executive function performance (Ramos-Galarza et al., 2024).

Behavioral interventions, structured teaching techniques, and classroom accommodations (e.g., breaking tasks into smaller segments, providing multimodal instructions) can mitigate the impact of EF deficits on academic tasks. Additionally, instructional strategies that emphasize organization, self-monitoring, and metacognition may augment learning outcomes.

2. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Neurodiversity

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has traditionally been grounded in cognitive, psycholinguistic, and sociocultural frameworks. However, in recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on **neurodiversity**—the recognition that neurological differences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other cognitive profiles represent natural variations in human functioning rather than deficits. This paradigm shift has significant implications for language learning and pedagogy

Neurodiversity reframes language learning differences as part of human variability rather than pathology.

This reconceptualization directly impacts SLA, which has often relied on standardized assumptions about processing speed, working memory, and attention regulation.

The intersection of SLA and neurodiversity is explored through an examination of cognition processing differences, classroom implications, affective factors, Universal Design Learning (UDL), and inclusive pedagogical frameworks.

Neurodiversity: Conceptual Foundations in Language Learning

The term *neurodiversity* refers to the view that neurological differences are part of normal human diversity. In educational contexts, this perspective emphasizes strengths-based approaches. As Botha and Gillespie-Lynch (2022) state, “the neurodiversity paradigm positions autism as a natural variation in human neurology rather than a disorder to be cured” (p. 3).

Within SLA, adopting a neurodiversity framework requires reconsidering traditional measures of “successful acquisition,” which often prioritize speed, fluency, and standardized grammar production. Learners with ADHD, dyslexia, or autism may exhibit different—but equally valid—language processing trajectories.

Cognitive Processing and SLA in Neurodivergent Learners

Working Memory and Attention

Working memory plays a central role in SLA, particularly in grammar processing and vocabulary retention. However, neurodivergent learners may process linguistic input differently.

A 2021 open-access review by Kormos (2021) notes that “individual differences in working memory and attention significantly affect second language learning outcomes” (p. 6). This is particularly relevant for learners with ADHD or dyslexia, whose executive functioning profiles may differ from neurotypical peers.

Learners with ADHD may demonstrate strong oral communication skills yet struggle with sustained focus during grammar drills. Conversely, autistic learners may excel in rule-based grammatical systems but experience challenges in pragmatic language use.

Autism and Pragmatic Competence in SLA

Pragmatic competence—understanding implied meaning, sarcasm, or contextual cues—is central to communicative competence in SLA. Autistic learners may interpret language more literally.

In a 2022 open-access study, Lei and Ventola observed that “autistic language users may display strengths in formal linguistic structures while experiencing challenges in pragmatic inference” (p. 9).

In SLA classrooms, this suggests that neurodivergent learners may benefit from explicit instruction in pragmatic conventions rather than implicit exposure-based approaches.

Affective Factors and Language Anxiety

Affective variables—such as anxiety, motivation, and identity—strongly influence SLA outcomes. Neurodivergent learners may experience heightened language anxiety due to sensory sensitivity, social communication differences, or processing speed variations.

A recent study by Botes et al. (2022) found that “language anxiety is significantly associated with perceived communicative competence” (p. 5). For neurodivergent learners, repeated experiences of misunderstanding or correction may intensify this anxiety.

Inclusive SLA classrooms must therefore address emotional regulation and psychological safety alongside linguistic instruction.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in SLA

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a practical framework for supporting neurodiverse learners. UDL emphasizes multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) serves as a core foundation for inclusive pedagogy, focusing on transforming the learning environment itself to reduce barriers rather than attempting to "fix" the learner (Kearns, K. K.,2023).

In SLA contexts, UDL may include:

Multimodal and Multisensory Input: To support learners with processing or attention difficulties, instruction should engage several areas of the brain simultaneously through visual tools, auditory cues, and kinesthetic experiences (Palacios Delgado, R. A., Prado León, Á. G., & Venegas Alvarez, G. S., 2025)

Explicit Pragmatic Instruction: For students who struggle with the social use of language, educators should provide systematic and concrete instruction on pragmatics, explicitly explaining non-literal language like metaphors, sarcasm, and social cues (Kearns, K. K.,2023).

Structured Social Interaction Supports: Inclusive SLA environments utilize structured peer collaboration and clear social communication norms, which provide the essential scaffolding needed for students to navigate the social demands of real-time interaction (Butarbutar, R., 2025)

These strategies align with neurodiversity principles by normalizing variation rather than isolating difference.

Dyslexia and Second Language Literacy

Dyslexia presents distinct challenges in SLA, particularly in orthographic processing and phonological awareness. However, strengths in global processing and creativity may enhance communicative competence.

This suggests that SLA instruction should integrate structured phonics, explicit morphology instruction, and extended reading time to support dyslexic learners.

Identity, Inclusion, and Language Learning

Language learning is deeply tied to identity formation. For neurodivergent learners, identity negotiation may intersect with linguistic identity.

Inclusive SLA must therefore consider not only cognition but also social belonging and self-perception.

Pedagogical Implications

Integrating neurodiversity into SLA requires:

- Explicit instruction in pragmatic conventions
- Flexible pacing and assessment
- Multimodal materials
- Strength-based evaluation
- Emotional regulation support

Rather than measuring learners against uniform standards, SLA pedagogy should embrace variability as inherent to language acquisition.

As Botha and Gillespie-Lynch (2022) emphasize, the neurodiversity paradigm "encourages systems to adapt to people, rather than forcing people to adapt to systems" (p. 4). This principle is foundational for inclusive SLA.

3. The Construct of Speaking Skills in EFL

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most complex and demanding skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires real-time processing, lexical retrieval, grammatical encoding, pronunciation control, and pragmatic competence.

In recent years, the construct of speaking has been reconceptualized beyond fluency and accuracy to include interactional competence, sociocultural awareness, and multimodal communication.

This broader conceptualization highlights the multidimensional nature of oral proficiency in EFL contexts.

Linguistic Competence in EFL Speaking

Linguistic competence remains a foundational component of speaking ability. It includes grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax. However, contemporary scholars emphasize that linguistic competence alone does not constitute speaking proficiency because it encompasses a process that connects with time requirements.

Oral communication functions as a reciprocal process constrained by immediate time requirements, demanding that speakers utilize language seamlessly and without the need for prolonged internal deliberation (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017)

This suggests that mastery of grammar and vocabulary does not automatically translate into communicative effectiveness.

Pronunciation also plays a critical role. Recent studies emphasize factors like intelligibility, vocabulary knowledge, phonological accuracy and others, rather than native-like accuracy.

Proficiency in oral English is a complex undertaking due to the speaker's need to integrate multiple essential linguistic pillars, such as phonological accuracy, grammatical precision, a broad vocabulary, conversational smoothness, and interpretive understanding (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017)

English speaking is not an easy task because speakers should know many significant components like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension

Thus, linguistic competence in EFL speaking is increasingly framed in functional and communicative terms rather than purely structural ones.

Fluency and Automaticity

Fluency is often equated with speaking ability, but it represents only one dimension of the construct. Fluency involves speed, smoothness, and automatic processing.

Fluency can be understood in two ways: as a general term for overall oral proficiency characterized by effortless language use, or more narrowly as the physical fluidity of speech measured by rate, hesitation, and pausing (Ghasemi & Mozaheb, 2021).

These processes include lexical retrieval, syntactic encoding, and articulation.

Fluency development is closely linked to practice and task repetition. Research suggests that repeated speaking tasks can significantly enhance automaticity and reduce cognitive load.

Therefore, fluency should be viewed as a dynamic, trainable component rather than a fixed trait. Inside fluency, there is automaticity. The state of automaticity involves the ability to generate language spontaneously and without conscious internal reflection. (Lăpădat et al., 2024) It is about a quick response on behalf of the speaker without thinking too much.

Fluent speech is often supported by a dual-mode system where the speaker utilizes "ready-made exemplars" that demand very little mental processing power during the act of communication. (Ghasemi & Mozaheb, 2021)

Interactional Competence

Modern SLA research emphasizes that speaking is not merely monologic performance but interactional co-construction. Interactional competence refers to the ability to manage turn-taking, repair breakdowns, and negotiate meaning.

Engaging in social interaction is considered the most effective way to learn a language, as it offers students the chance to use the target language in genuine communicative scenarios rather than through isolated exercises (Lăpădat et al., 2024)

This reconceptualization shifts speaking from individual performance to socially situated practice. In EFL classrooms, this implies that pair work, role plays, and collaborative tasks are central to developing speaking skills.

A concept that deserves consideration, when discussing speaking skills, is “Negotiating of meaning”. This allows speakers to play with words and phrases letting them adapt to any speech.

A key component of interactional competence is the "negotiation of meaning," where learners use strategies such as rephrasing, clarifying, and confirming to adjust their speech based on the feedback they receive from their conversation partners (Lăpădat et al., 2024).

Another element that is underscored by scholars and that supports interactional competence is “Indirect Instructional Focus” which prioritizes creating the right conditions for oral interaction and authentic communicative exchanges (Adem & Berkessa, 2022).

Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in context. It includes politeness strategies, speech acts, and sociocultural norms. Creativity for adapting ones´ language for a specific situation, is also important.

The demands of genuine, real-world communication require students to be versatile and creative in their language use, a process that simultaneously fosters oral fluency and pragmatic competence (Lăpădat et al., 2024).

In EFL contexts, learners often struggle with indirectness, politeness conventions, and culturally embedded expressions. Therefore, pragmatic instruction must be explicit rather than assumed.

Within the field of interlanguage pragmatics, providing students with clear, explicit metapragmatic information during repeated tasks has been shown to be a highly effective way to improve their pragmatic competence and their performance of specific speech acts (Ghasemi & Mozaheb, 2021).

Strategic Competence

Strategic competence is the ability of a speaker to adapt both their spoken and non-verbal communication to manage hurdles caused by a lack of linguistic

resources or an incomplete understanding of social protocols (Rayati, M., Abedi, H., & Aghazadeh, S., 2022)

It refers to the use of communication strategies to overcome breakdowns. These include paraphrasing, clarification requests, and fillers.

Strategic competence highlights learners' agency. Even when linguistic resources are limited, effective strategies can sustain interaction and enhance communicative success.

An element encompassed by strategic competence is "Maintaining Conversational Flow". This enables second-language learners to adjust their verbal output to address disruptions stemming from insufficient grammatical mastery or limited familiarity with the target culture's communication standards (Rayati, M., Abedi, H., & Aghazadeh, S., 2022)

Sociocultural and Multimodal Dimensions

Speaking in EFL increasingly includes multimodal elements such as gestures, facial expressions, and digital communication tools. This points out the development of EFL speaking skills as a social process.

Knowledge and skills are fundamentally acquired through a support system and social interaction, serving as temporary scaffolding until a learner reaches individual mastery (Butarbutar, 2025)

Social engagement is viewed as the most effective catalyst for language acquisition, as it allows students to practice the target language in authentic communicative contexts rather than through isolated drills (Lăpădat et al., 2024)

When discussing socialcultural factors in the teaching and learning process, it is necessary to underline its multimodal nature.

In the context of EFL speaking skills development, multimodality involves the integration of various semiotic modes—such as language, image, intonation, and gesture—to enable learners to experience language through multiple senses simultaneously (Aridasarie & Rohmah, 2024)

Technology also has an important role in this context. Modern English instruction is most robust when educators combine digital platforms with multimodal elements like text, audio, and visual images to create creative and engaging storytelling (Yuniarti et al., 2022)

Engaging several areas of the brain through visual tools, auditory cues, and kinesthetic experiences improves information processing and memory retention, which is particularly beneficial for students with attention difficulties (Palacios Delgado et al., 2025)

This expanded view acknowledges that speaking extends beyond oral production to include embodied and digital communication practices.

Assessment of Speaking in EFL

Assessing speaking remains one of the most challenging aspects of language evaluation. Traditional rating scales focus heavily on grammar and pronunciation.

However, recent frameworks incorporate interactional and pragmatic dimensions.

Construct validity requires that assessments reflect the multidimensional nature of speaking, including fluency, interactional competence, and strategic use.

Evaluating oral proficiency is uniquely difficult because it requires markers to account for diverse and subjective factors, including pronunciation, intonation, sentence structure, and pitch (Kafipour & Khoshnood, 2023).

Effective speaking assessment should prioritize authentic methods—such as oral interviews, portfolios, and projects—to ensure that the evaluation aligns with real-world communicative needs (Maysuroh et al., 2023).

4. Specialized Pedagogical Strategies for ADHD in EFL

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) presents distinctive challenges in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly in areas requiring sustained attention, working memory, executive functioning, and behavioral regulation.

The core symptoms of ADHD—including inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity—create significant obstacles that hinder a student's ability to regulate behavior, manage time, and maintain the focus necessary for language acquisition (Banahed, 2025).

In foreign language contexts, where cognitive load is already elevated due to linguistic processing demands, ADHD-related differences can significantly influence engagement and performance.

Scholars highlight that ADHD should be addressed through inclusive and adaptive pedagogical frameworks rather than deficit-based remediation.

Utilizing teaching methods that simultaneously engage several areas of the brain through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile pathways improves the processing and memory retention of new information for EFL learners with ADHD (Palacios Delgado et al., 2025)

Managing Cognitive Load in EFL Instruction

EFL learning requires simultaneous processing of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and meaning. For learners with ADHD, increased cognitive demands may overwhelm working memory systems.

These students find language learning particularly exhausting because it forces them to engage in sustained concentration and sequential processing, two cognitive areas where they are most susceptible to mental fatigue (Banahed, 2025)

To alleviate the mental burden ADHD-students go through, research suggests that instructors should segment tasks into small, achievable steps and limit the duration of any single classroom activity to ten minutes or less (Banahed, 2025).

Some pedagogical strategies are:

- Break tasks into shorter segments
- Use step-by-step written and visual instructions
- Pre-teach key vocabulary before communicative tasks

Chunking content reduces working memory load and supports task completion.

To prevent cognitive fatigue, especially in learners with attention difficulties, educators should utilize task segmentation and chunking techniques, ensuring that individual classroom activities remain brief—ideally under ten minutes (Banahed, 2025).

Instruction that integrates visual, auditory, and kinesthetic pathways is highly effective at stimulating multiple brain regions, which enhances the way learners with processing difficulties retain and manage new information (Al Yatim, M.,2025).

Executive Function Scaffolding

Executive functions (EF) include planning, inhibition, organization, and time management. EF deficits are central in ADHD and directly affect EFL tasks such as essay writing, oral presentations, and project-based learning.

Executive function is defined as a set of neurobiological processes responsible for attention regulation, impulse control, and organizational skills (Banahed, 2025).

Because ADHD is characterized by significant impairments in executive functioning—specifically regarding attention regulation and organizational skills—educators must provide highly predictable and supportive classroom settings to bridge these cognitive gaps (Barkley & Murphy, 2020, as cited in Palacios Delgado et al., 2025)

EFL Applications:

- Provide graphic organizers for speaking tasks
- Use structured dialogue templates
- Offer visual timelines for writing assignments
- Incorporate checklists for task completion

Scaffolding EF demands enhances learner autonomy while reducing frustration.

Effective executive function scaffolding involves breaking down complex language assignments into small, sequential components and providing visual modeling, which allows students to achieve mastery within their zone of proximal development (Al Yatim, 2025).

Utilizing thinking maps acts as a critical scaffolding mechanism for learners with executive function deficits, as these tools assist them in organizing mental associations and disregarding extraneous information during complex problem-solving activities (Mashal & Kasirer, 2011, as cited in Kearns, 2023).

Multimodal Instruction and Engagement

Multisensory instruction is particularly effective for learners with ADHD. Combining auditory, visual, and kinesthetic input increases engagement and retention.

Multimodal instruction is defined as an approach that combines diverse modes of communication—such as visual imagery, auditory cues, and kinesthetic activities—to allow students to experience language through multiple senses and accommodate various learning styles (Aridasarie, Z., & Rohmah, Z., 2024)

Here are some examples in EFL contexts:

- Use visual vocabulary maps
- Integrate movement-based grammar activities
- Employ digital interactive tools
- Include gamified language practice

Multimodal instruction sustains attention and reduces monotony, putting multiple senses to work and stimulating the brain during the learning process.

Multisensory instruction is particularly effective for learners with attention difficulties, as it stimulates multiple brain regions, thereby improving the way information is processed and remembered (Palacios Delgado et al., 2025)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Adaptations

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can be highly effective for ADHD learners when tasks are structured and time-bound.

The following are some examples of ADHD-Sensitive Task Modifications:

- **Clear, explicit outcome goals**

  Instructional clarity is a vital component of support; providing simplified, step-by-step instructions is widely recognized by educators as a primary technique for maintaining the engagement of ADHD learners (Banahed, 2025).

- **Timed micro-tasks**

  To prevent cognitive overload and sustain focus, classroom activities should be segmented into small, achievable steps, with the duration of any single task ideally not exceeding ten minutes (Banahed, 2025).
- **Built-in movement breaks (Provided breaks based on physical activity)**

  Given the kinetic learning style common among students with ADHD, incorporating frequent movement-based breaks and organized physical activity supports better attention regulation and reduces classroom stress (Palacios Delgado et al., 2025).

These adaptations maintain engagement while promoting fluency development.

Behavioral Supports and Positive Reinforcement

Behavioral interventions remain among the most evidence-supported strategies for ADHD in classrooms.

EFL Applications:

- Token systems for participation & Immediate positive feedback

  Learning activities are most impactful when students are motivated by reward systems, such as points or tokens, which encourage them to engage with materials and finish tasks promptly. When it comes feedback, to foster academic success, educators should prioritize positive reinforcement and constructive feedback systems over negative evaluations or public criticism (Banahed, 2025).
- Structured turn-taking routines

  Implementing well-organized classroom environments with distinct visual indicators and predictable routines is essential for helping ADHD learners regulate their behavior and manage environmental stress (Palacios Delgado et al., 2025).

Consistency and clarity reduce behavioral disruptions and anxiety.

Reducing Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety may be heightened in learners with ADHD due to fear of public error or impulsive speech production.

A way to decrease fear among ADHD learners is by letting them work on small speaking tasks for practice in groups, so that they can prepare themselves for a live presentation in front of the class.
To mitigate the cognitive burden of anxiety, instructors should allow students to practice in small groups or through low-stakes speaking tasks before requiring them to present in front of the whole class (Kearns, 2023; Lăpădat et al., 2024)

Technology-Enhanced Instruction

Digital tools provide individualized pacing and interactive engagement—beneficial for ADHD learners.

Examples:

- **Externalizing Executive Functions**
  Integrating digital games and interactive tools into structured lessons can help externalize executive functions, thereby enhancing sustained attention and minimizing behavioral disruptions (Palacios Delgado et al., 2025).
- **Individualized Pacing**
  Digital platforms allow for a personalized approach that can accommodate various learning styles and cognitive preferences, which is critical for building learner confidence (Lăpădat et al., 2024).
- **Management Tools**
  Utilizing adaptive tools, such as lesson timers to mark the beginning and end of activities, assists students with ADHD in managing their time and focusing on specific task segments (Banahed, 2025).

Technology can externalize executive functions and sustain attention.

5. The Teacher’s Perspective: Challenges and Inclusive Practices

A core factor in current educational practice is inclusive education. However, while inclusion is widely endorsed at the policy level, its implementation depends largely on teachers.

Inclusive education has become a defining principle of modern language teaching and is closely aligned with the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes equitable and inclusive quality education for all learners (Al Yatim, 2025).

Many teachers agree on inclusiveness in the classroom but feel unsupported by school authorities when it comes to real life application.

A sizable majority of teachers acknowledge that it is their duty to modify their lessons for students with ADHD, many of them express a lack of institutional support and formal training" (Banahed, 2025).

From classroom management to differentiated instruction, teachers carry the responsibility of translating inclusive principles into everyday pedagogical decisions. Consequently, understanding inclusive education from the teacher’s perspective is critical.

Recent research underscores that teachers play a decisive role in inclusive success.

Teachers’ capacity to adapt instruction, foster inclusion, and support students with ADHD is central to both educational equity and effective language learning outcomes" (Banahed, 2025).

Their perceptions shape how accommodations are implemented and how students with diverse needs experience schooling.

In the inclusive classroom, decisions are being made not solely on the basis of teachers' knowledge and competencies, but also as a reflection of their values and beliefs about the inherent worth of including all students by being responsive to their individual differences" (Kearns, 2023).

6. Sociocultural and Engagement Frameworks in ADHD Education

While neuropsychological approaches focus on internal cognitive mechanics, the development of EFL speaking skills is ultimately a social and behavioral process. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT) claims that cognitive development, including language acquisition, is mediated by social interaction and the use of cultural resources. Central to this approach is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with supervision.

Complementing this social approach is Fredricks' Engagement Theory, which characterizes engagement as a multifaceted construct consisting of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components (Fredericks et al., 2004). In the context of ADHD, engagement is often the "missing link" between a student's potential and their performance. Behavioral engagement involves obedience to classroom norms and involvement in tasks; emotional engagement relates to the student's sense of belonging and interest; and cognitive engagement involves the investment in learning and the application of self-regulatory mechanisms.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology, using a case study research design to analyze the EFL teaching process applied to Alex, a 10th-grade student with ADHD. As a research design, qualitative descriptive research is recognized as a valuable approach in its own right, primarily aimed at providing a comprehensive and straightforward summary of specific experiences using everyday language (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Furthermore, a qualitative framework is centered on investigating and interpreting the meanings that people or groups attribute to human or social challenges. This approach prioritizes the depth and intricate nature of human experiences, emphasizing the participant's perspective and the specific situational context rather than focusing on statistical evidence or broad generalizability (Mulisa 2021).

Unlike broader studies, this design allows for an in-depth, holistic description of the specific instructional strategies employed by the teacher, the nature of student verbal engagement, and the practical challenges encountered within a real-life classroom context. By focusing on a single case, the research provides the necessary depth to document the complex interplay between neurodivergent characteristics and language acquisition.

Research Design: Descriptive Single-Case Study

This study employs a Descriptive Single-Case Study design to provide an in-depth analysis of a unique context: the application of EFL teaching strategies for the development of speaking skills in a student diagnosed with ADHD. A descriptive study aims to produce a structured and objective overview of the data, focusing on the specific traits, behaviors, and connections within the subject of study. By investigating human patterns, environmental conditions, or conceptual frameworks, it provides a comprehensive and factual account of the research phenomenon (Furidha, 2023).

Unit of Analysis: The Unit of Analysis for this study is the interactional dynamics of the EFL speaking classroom. This means the interplay between two specific elements was closely examined: the instructional strategies used

by the EFL teacher and the verbal and non-verbal participation (behavior) of the focal student, Alex, during speaking tasks. The interplay between the teacher and the student is a complex dynamic, and it profoundly influences the academic, emotional, and psychological layers of the learning process According to Maleki et al. (2022). Furthermore, it is considered the most significant and influential element of the classroom environment since this interaction sets up the primary social framework in which the education process takes place. The study shows how pedagogical shifts directly shape the engagement patterns of a neurodiverse student by focusing on this reciprocal relationship.

According to Blank and Wolgemuth (2017), a case study design is the most suitable approach when a researcher intends to investigate an individual who represents a larger group or phenomenon within a specific, time-bound context. This methodology is distinguished by its reliance on a wide array of detailed data sources (including interviews, observations, and documentary evidence) to achieve a thorough and holistic understanding of the subject.

Given the highly individualized nature of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and its specific impact on the productive skill of speaking, a single-case study provides the necessary depth to document the instructional adjustments and the student's unique patterns of engagement. This design moves beyond general quantitative data to describe how and why specific strategies are applied and experienced.

Participants and Setting

The Case (Alex)

The focal participant in this study is Alex (pseudonym), a 10th-grade male student aged 13. The case profile is defined by one specific neurodivergent profile.

Diagnosis: Alex has a formal medical diagnosis of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), predominantly inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive presentation, which significantly impacts his sustained attention, task completion, and impulsivity in the classroom.

The Teacher

The second participant is the EFL teacher, Ms. A (pseudonym). She was selected based on her instructional responsibility for Alex's 10th-grade English class and her experience teaching communicative EFL lessons. Her role is central to the study, as the focus is on her choice and execution of teaching strategies and the challenges she faces.

Setting

The study took place in a private high school in Guayaquil, Guayas. The participants were part of a 10th-grade EFL class of approximately 25 students. The EFL curriculum follows a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, emphasizing interaction, fluency development, and task-based learning. The class met four times per week for 45 minutes. The specific observations were confined to activities designated for developing speaking proficiency.

Role of the Researchers

In this qualitative case study, the researchers serve as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The researchers act as inquirers who are committed to studying a phenomenon in its natural state without pre-selecting factors or manipulating the variables, based on research of Lambert and Lambert (2012). In this specific study, the researchers' role was to be non-participant observers; the classroom dynamics were recorded without intervening in the instructional process or modifying Alex's activities. However, to maintain the credibility and confirmability of the research findings, it was acknowledged that the researchers' presence may subtly influence the environment even if an objective account is pursued.

To mitigate potential bias, all observations were strictly documented using a Structured Observation Protocol, and findings were triangulated by cross-referencing them with the teacher's interview data.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

To ensure the systematic gathering of data, the following steps were followed:

Step 1: Ethics and Access: Permits were obtained from the school administration and informed consent will be secured from both the teacher and Alex's legal guardians.

Step 2: Field Observations: For several days, the researcher conducted non-participant observations of speaking lessons using a Structured Observation Protocol. According to Barries (2024), field observation is an essential data-gathering method that enables investigators to study specific events or behaviors exactly as they occur within their real-life environment and this technique transcends the simple act of looking; it is an active mental process of selecting and classifying perceived reality to reveal the nature of things before any intervention.

Step 3: Teacher Interview: A semi-structured interview was conducted with Alex's English Teacher to explore her professional perspective on the challenges and strategies documented during the observation phase. According to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), this format is highly effective in qualitative research because it utilizes an interview guide with open-ended questions and follow-up probes to provide focus while giving investigators the autonomy to explore pertinent ideas that arise spontaneously. Furthermore, Karatsareas (2022) points out that this format provides a direct access to a participant's feelings and cognition (thoughts). This is essential for analyzing the instructional intent behind specific actions taken by the teacher.

Step 4: Data Synthesis: All qualitative data, including observation notes and interview transcripts were consolidated by using a thematic analysis. According to Morgan (2022), this method is considered a fundamental qualitative tool that provides a flexible "reflexive approach." the researcher's subjectivity is treated as a valuable resource in this framework, rather than a bias, allowing themes to develop through an inductive process of making sense of the data reports.

Research Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were originally designed and developed by the researchers to address the specific needs of this single-case study. Rather than adapting existing scales, custom tools were created to capture the precise intersection of ADHD symptoms and EFL speaking development in the participant's one-on-one instructional context.

To ensure academic rigor, the structured observation checklist and the semi-structured interview guide underwent a formal Expert Judgment Validation process. Four experts in the fields of Pedagogy, ELT, and Special Educational Needs (SEN) reviewed the tools. Their feedback was instrumental in refining the indicators and ensuring that the instruments were both scientifically grounded and contextually appropriate for the case study.

Table 1

Instrument Type	**Specific Instrument Name / Description**	**Focus / Data Collected (Refined for ADHD)**
Classroom Observation Checklist	Structured Observation Protocol for ADHD & Speaking	Identifies specific EFL speaking strategies (e.g., use of short, high-interest activities, multi-sensory cues) and characterizes Alex's engagement (e.g., duration of focus, impulsive interruptions, successful turn-taking) directly related to ADHD symptoms.
Semi-Structured Interview	Teacher Interview Protocol: Strategies and ADHD Challenges	Gathers teacher perspectives on the strategies used and the specific instructional challenges encountered due to ADHD-related behaviors.

Triangulation Strategy

Data was collected using a triangulation strategy involving multiple sources: Structured Classroom Observation (behavioral data), a Semi-Structured Teacher Interview (teacher perspective/contextual data), and a Theoretical Framework (Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory and Engagement Theory). To ensure the reliability, validity, and depth of the findings, this study employs methodological triangulation.

According to Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021), this multi-method approach is critical because every research method has inherent deficiencies; triangulation allows the researcher to offset the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another. In this study, combining direct observations with qualitative interviews ensures that behavioral data is not just statistically represented but is also understood within its complex, real-life context.

Trustworthiness and Quality Criteria

The trustworthiness of this study was established through:

Credibility: Achieved through Triangulation (as described above)

Transferability: Ensured by providing a description of the setting, participants (especially the ADHD profile), and the instructional context.

Dependability and Confirmability: Documenting every step of the data collection and analysis, including the coding scheme, to ensure the process is logical and verifiable.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers an in-depth look at EFL strategies for a student with ADHD, it has certain limitations. First, because this is a single-case study of a "bounded system" (Alex), the findings are particularistic and cannot be generalized to all students (Kekeya, 2021). However, the goal of this intrinsic case study is not statistical proof, but rather to provide a consistent description. This detailed account helps other teachers understand the phenomenon better and apply these specific insights to their own classrooms through an experience-based lens.

Analysis of Findings

Analysis of Classroom Observation Findings.

The observation data reveals the application of Structured Pedagogy and Scaffolding across three distinct lessons focusing on Accuracy, Fluency, and Vocabulary. According to Awadelkarim (2021), these systematic adaptations function like a temporary construction framework; they provide a gradual support structure within the student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), bridging the gap between what the learner can do independently and what they can achieve with adult mediation. By implementing these structured supports, the teacher creates an accessible learning environment that specifically addresses the self-regulation needs of an ADHD profile.

The teacher implemented a variety of environmental and instructional adjustments to accommodate Alex’s ADHD profile

Environmental Management

In the observations, Alex was seated in close proximity to the teacher, and visual distractions were minimized to maintain his "zone of focus." This intentional design is supported by the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) theory, which suggests that environmental stimuli directly influence a student's internal emotional processing and their subsequent behavioral responses (Busby et al., 2025).

Furthermore, this proximity facilitates the Flow Experience (FE), which is crucial for learners with ADHD. As indicated by Busby et al. (2025), finding an "information rate" that provides enough engagement to stimulate dopamine production without causing confusion. The teacher’s management of environmental factors included seating arrangement for proximity and minimization of visual distractions, which serves as a passive accommodation that helps stabilize Alex’s cognitive flow. This supports him to remain focused in the instructional task rather than being diverted by the "arousal" or "danger" signals often triggered by inconsistent or over-stimulating environmental

modalities. However, these strategies did not yet address the issues regarding his oral production and inhibition.

Content and Process Scaffolding:

- **Accuracy:** The teacher reduced grammatical complexity, allowing Alex to focus solely on the Present Simple.
- **Vocabulary:** Oral prompts were changed from longer instructions (four sentences) to shorter ones (two sentences) to prevent cognitive overload.
- **Fluency:** Alex was permitted to choose high-interest and it increased his natural motivation for oral production. However, this accommodation was observed just once during the three classroom observations.
- **Multisensory and Visual Tools:** The teacher used visual checklists, and "Sentence Starter" sheets to support his grammar and task initiation. For vocabulary, the teacher combined verbal instructions with written icons on the board.
- **Physical Accommodations:** Alex was allowed to stand at his desk, or move within a designated "standing zone" while speaking to manage hyperactivity.

These environmental and instructional modifications create a form of "Environmental Modifications." The teacher provides a non-verbal sensory anchor that stabilizes Alex’s attention during high-stress moments of spontaneous L2 production by maintaining a "focus zone" this prevents him from becoming overwhelmed by extraneous environmental stimuli. According to Koudsia and Kirchner (2024), this type of spatial regulation is essential to prevent cognitive overload, a state where the mental load of a task exceeds the limited capacity of the learner's working memory.

Furthermore, the transition from complex textbook prompts to shortened, two-sentence oral instructions directly addresses the high "element interactivity" that typically triggers information rejection in ADHD profiles. As highlighted by Koudsia and Kirchner (2024), simplifying the way information is presented reduces the extraneous load (the mental energy wasted on deciphering

disorganized or vague instructions). By addressing these cognitive hurdles, the teacher seeks that Alex does not experience "cognitive overflow”.

Teacher-Student Interactional Dynamics

The "Interplay Log" highlights how immediate teacher intervention directly impacts Alex’s behavioral engagement:

- **Refocusing Cues:** Tapping the desk or standing within two feet of Alex were successful non verbal cues that bridged attention gaps and returned him to the task. However, these cues maintain the student’s state of dependency towards the teacher.
- **Strategic Wait Time:** Impulsive guessing was reduced when Providing 30 seconds of "Wait Time" during vocabulary tasks and allowed Alex to retrieve target words favorably. Nevertheless, these verbal reminders contribute to student’s lack of autonomy in time management.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** The use of signals like "thumbs up" and nodding helped Alex sustain effort and reach the end of speaking tasks in spite of his limited grammar.

ADHD Symptom Management and Student Response

The findings indicate that while Alex’s inattention and hyperactivity were frequently present, they were often managed through specific redirections that focused on symptom reduction. According to Merrell and Tymms (2001), hyperactivity is a core behavioral trait characterized by being "driven by a motor" or talking excessively; notably, while these behaviors may not initially impair academic achievement, the gap between hyperactive students and their peers tends to widen over time if not addressed through persistent support.

The teacher’s redirections aligned with the recommendations of Fabiano et al. (2024), who advocate for a shift toward Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). By defining and reinforcing target behaviors (such as following specific instructional cues), the teacher helped Alex move beyond the "hyperkinetic reactions" that historically characterized ADHD (Fabiano et al., 2024). This approach allowed Alex to bypass his "regulatory deficits" and focus on

becoming a positive contributor to the classroom community, ensuring his behavioral challenges did not impede his actual cognitive potential or linguistic progress.

Table 2

ADHD Indicator	Observed Frequency	Redirection Strategy
Inattention	High	Proximity (standing within 2 feet) and non-verbal desk-taps.
Impulsivity	Medium	"Wait Time" and hand gestures to signal waiting.
Working Memory	High	Breaking multi-step tasks into single steps on task cards.

Engagement and Participation Levels

According to the detailed participation rubric, Alex’s linguistic performance relied heavily on basic English and L1 support for complex ideas, even as he showed strong persistence in pushing through speaking tasks despite making errors.

As noted by Kang and Wu (2022), this data illustrates the multidimensional nature of behavioral engagement, acting as a critical link between a student's emotions and their actual performance. While Alex’s passive engagement

relies on external co-regulation, his active aspect (characterized by a genuine interest in academic tasks) is triggered by the "Interest-Bypass" effect. Alex experiences a surge increase in academic enjoyment when discussing high-interest topics like Minecraft or Marvel. Kang and Wu (2022) identified this as a positive predictor of achievement. This enjoyment conveys his transition from a passive participation to an active language production; he is more inclined to handle shyness and pronunciation barriers by becoming emotionally committed, using his interest as a bridge over his executive functioning gaps.

Analysis of Teacher Interview Findings

Impact of ADHD on EFL Speaking

The teacher characterized Alex's ADHD as a significant barrier to fluency, coherence, and confidence. Key challenges identified include:

- **Initial Inhibition:** Alex often struggles to start speaking tasks due to shyness regarding his pronunciation.
- **Impulsivity and Distraction:** He frequently loses focus when classmates interrupt and demonstrates impulsivity by interjecting unrelated topics during group work.
- **Low Initial Engagement:** His participation in speaking is described as "low," in comparison to other skills, he requires constant individual reinforcement.

According to Bouillard (2025), students with ADHD profiles usually experience a "double disadvantage" during speaking activities: they must handle the executive needs of language production and also handle the self-regulatory needs of ignoring classroom distractions at the same time. The cognitive effort required can be overwhelming and that often leads to the "initial inhibition" and "low engagement" observed.

Intentional Instructional Adjustments

- **Content Modification:** The teacher assigns shorter phrases and simplified vocabulary.

- **Process Scaffolding:** Instructions were broken down into easy, sequential steps to help with memory and focus.
- **Multisensory Engagement:** Songs, rhythmic, vocabulary drills, and dramatized dialogues stimulated the highest levels of engagement.

This VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile) approach is essential for neurodiverse EFL students According to Mohammed Cherif (2024), since it uses a "Language Triangle." By connecting visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile pathways at the same time, teachers strengthen the connection between linguistic units and their sounds.

The use of rhythmic stimulation and "learning by doing" (kinesthetic movement) is not meant only for entertainment; it contributes with various pathways to the brain and allows the student to gather and retrieve information more effectively than just through a single sensory medium.

Abstract grammatical or vocabulary concepts are made concrete and accessible for memory with this strategy, which is crucial for learners who experience challenges with memorization or traditional writing-based tasks, according to Mohammed Cherif, 2024.

Challenges in the Interactional "Interplay"

The "interplay" describes the real-time tension between class-wide instruction and individual support:

- **Environmental Constraints:** While the teacher attempts to use proximity to redirect Alex, she notes that physical seating changes have been difficult to manage consistently. According to Gangaway (2025), conventional seating arrangements are often inadequate for students with special needs, who frequently experience difficulty remaining in their seats. These students may resort to walking around the room, tipping their chairs, or kneeling in an attempt to find physical comfort and maintain focus on their academic tasks.
- **Absence of External Aids:** Notably, the teacher indicates that Alex does not formally utilize physical "self-regulation tools," such as fidgets

or visual timers. Instead, he relies heavily on the teacher's continuous verbal scaffolding regarding time management and task completion. The challenges faced by both the student and the instructor are increased when there is absence of these environmental supports, particularly considering that specialized tools (such as fidget bands, fidget chairs, and wobble chair feet) are frequently integrated by Occupational Therapists (OTs) to assist learners with sensory-processing difficulties. For helping learners modulate sensory input, these interventions are essential. They promote the self-regulation required to sustain focus within the classroom environment, According to Gangaway (2025). However, these fidgets have not been formalized by the teacher into Alex's instructional routine.

- **Personalized Tutoring Needs:** Personalized Tutoring Needs: the teacher emphasizes that his proficiency remains low and requires one-on-one tutoring to bridge the persistent learning gap, despite the improvements in his "willingness to participate". According to Fabiano et al. (2024), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises incorporating personalized academic support in the intervention strategies for learners in elementary and middle school modifications to the classroom environment, strategic class placement, and tailored instructional adjustments are often involved in these recommendations to better accommodate the student's needs.

A Pacing Paradox was revealed by the "Interplay" between teacher and student. The teacher must constantly choose between the class-wide flow of a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) lesson or the intensive and individualized "Wait Time" needed by Alex for processing. This tension highlights that while teacher-led scaffolding helps Alex, it is currently strongly teacher-dependent. The findings exhibit a state of "co-regulation", where the teacher acts as Alex's "external executive function", this results in Alex's lack of autonomy. A challenge for future practice is to move beyond these constant verbal reminders toward independent tools that allow for student-led self-regulation.

Synthesis of Findings

The synthesis of findings reveals a critical "Pacing Paradox" where the current instructional success masks a deeper systemic problem: Alex is engaged in a state of strong teacher-dependency that prevents the development of academic autonomy. While the teacher often manages Alex's high levels of inattention and impulsivity through proximity and non-verbal cues, these interventions function as an "external executive function," meaning Alex remains unable to self-regulate without constant adult mediation. This reliance is exacerbated by a "double disadvantage" in EFL speaking, where the simultaneous cognitive load of language production and sensory filtering leads to initial inhibition and "cognitive overflow." Furthermore, the absence of formalized self-regulation tools (like fidgets or timers) and the inconsistent use of "Interest-Bypass" strategies (observed only once across three sessions) create a gap where Alex's behavioral management is prioritized over his linguistic independence. Consequently, while immediate behaviors are controlled, the lack of student-led regulation tools suggests that the proficiency gap between Alex and his peers will likely widen as the curriculum demands more independent performance.

The Interdependence of Scaffolding and Engagement

The data confirms that Alex's verbal engagement is not a static trait but a dynamic response to the teacher's intentional scaffolding. Both data sources agree that visual and kinesthetic prompts (such as high-interest topics such as Minecraft / Marvel and rhythmic drills) are the most effective drivers of his oral production. By using these "interest-based bypasses", Alex's Affective Filter is lowered, allowing him to overcome the "initial inhibition" and shyness reported in the interview. According to a study conducted by Purwita et al. (2025), a student's engagement level is highly contingent upon their personal interest in the lesson's subject matter. Their research notes that a student may appear "uninterested" if the topic does not resonate with them, yet they become "instantly engaged" the moment the teacher introduces a theme of high personal relevance.

Resolving the Pacing Paradox through Co-Regulation

A critical point of synthesis is the management of the "Pacing Paradox". The interview shows that "Wait Time" and task-chunking are high-effort, teacher-dependent processes. Alex currently follows a co-regulation strategy in which his teacher serves as his "external executive function," reminding him to take turns and manage his time. While ensuring classroom engagement, this interaction also emphasizes how important it is to move toward self-regulation.

Strengthening a learner's ability to self-regulate not only boosts their academic persistence and resilience but also secures a more positive emotional state conducive to long-term well-being (Fan & Cui, 2024; Wang et al., 2022).

The Emergence of Informal Support Systems

A notable divergence, or "negative case," emerged regarding the use of physical "bypass tools". Although the teacher reported an absence of external aids in the interview, observations recorded the informal use of a stress ball and a standing desk to manage hyperactivity. Standing desks serve as a strategic tool to increase student focus and engagement by accommodating the physical need for movement during instruction (Gangaway, 2025). This suggests that while environmental adaptations are happening in real-time to support Alex’s behavioral engagement, they have not yet been formalized into a consistent pedagogical routine.

Concluding the Interplay Dynamic

Ultimately, the triangulated findings demonstrate that Alex’s ability to produce English is directly tied to the density of support provided. The "interplay" is characterized by a constant back-and-forth where the teacher simplifies content and modifies the environment to match Alex's fluctuating attention levels. This descriptive synthesis establishes that the next stage of Alex’s development must involve moving these successful, yet informal, strategies into a structured Self-Regulation Framework. Current research highlights how essential self-regulation is for academic achievement among all types of learners. Specifically, Wang et al. (2022) noted that when students apply self-regulation toward specific goals, they experience higher success rates, lower

stress levels, and a more positive emotional outlook, all of which support overall well-being.

Data Triangulation

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employed methodological triangulation, cross-referencing the researcher's classroom observations with the teacher's interview responses and the established literature review.

Triangulation Matrix

The following table summarizes the convergence of data regarding the most effective instructional dynamics for Alex:

Table 3

Core Theme	Classroom Observations	Teacher Interview	Theoretical Link (Vygotsky / Engagement)
Task Scaffolding	Use of "Sentence Starters" and task cards with numbered steps.	The teacher reports breaking instructions into simple, sequential steps.	**ZPD:** Reducing cognitive load to allow functioning within the learner's range.
Environmental Adaptation	Consistent seating in close proximity to the teacher (within 2 feet).	In order to guide him and keep him from getting his attention lost, the teacher stays near him.	**Behavioral Engagement:** Proximity as a tool for sustained attention.

Motivational Interest	High engagement during presentations on Minecraft and Marvel.	The teacher identifies high-interest topics and songs as triggers for focus.	**Emotional Engagement:** Affective factors bypassing executive deficits.
Inhibitory Support	Application of 30-second "Wait Time" before oral production.	The teacher allocates extra time and waits for him to complete the task.	**Executive Function:** Supporting delayed response to improve accuracy.

Synthesis of Triangulated Findings

The convergence of data from classroom observations, teacher interviews, and the established theoretical grounding reveals that Alex's success in oral production is not a result of a single strategy, but a systemic adaptation of the environment and the task. Although students with ADHD may go to class regardless of the setting, environmental support has a critical role in determining their true level of participation, which is measured by focus and emotional investment (Shabat et al., 2021). Therefore, It is crucial to create a supportive environment in order to help a student transition from passive attendance to active, meaningful engagement.

According to the teacher's interview, Alex's inability to "order ideas" and control "initial inhibition" is the main way that ADHD impairs Alex's functioning. The employment of "Visual Structure Cards" and "Sentence Starters" was a clear manifestation of the pathway to manage his specific barriers. By giving Alex these resources, the instructor effectively scaffolds his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), enabling him to concentrate his limited executive resources on the communicative message itself rather than the demanding cognitive tasks. Additionally, prior studies show that sensory input and cognitive needs are the main barriers to school-based participation for kids

with ADHD. According to Shabat et al. (2021), more than 45% of study participants cited sensory stimulation and cognitive demands as limiting factors, making them both major barriers.

Although the teacher's subjective assessment during the interview characterized Alex's overall involvement as "poor," the structured observations offered a more complex, situation-specific perspective. Triangulation demonstrates a direct correlation between interest-based content differentiation and Alex's Cognitive Engagement. His engagement increased from a Level 2 to a Level 4 on the participation scale when speaking assignments focused on hobbies like Marvel or Minecraft. This proves that engaging subjects serve as an emotional "bypass" for executive function impairments, hence reducing his Affective Filter and increasing his language perseverance. According to Kim et al. (2024), differentiation should go beyond the visual appeal in order to optimize this effect. Instead content should be organized into "story" formats that are narrative-driven and have a distinct beginning, middle, and finish. The required "active motivation" to support the recurrent practice needed for linguistic mastery is provided by incorporating Alex's interests into this kind of goal-oriented framework (Kim et al., 2024).

The nature of Alex's attention is a crucial theme that comes out of the triangulation. The teacher's interview and the "Interplay Log" both confirm the fact that his attention still is not independent. A continuous cycle of nonverbal cues, such as desk taps, keeps him behaviorally engaged, yet it does not address verbal engagement. Additionally, the teacher adds that she has to "constantly remind him of the time" even though she gives the required "Wait Time" (30 seconds) to reduce impulsivity. This proved that Alex is currently in a state of co-regulation where the teacher functions as his "external executive brain". Rather than viewing this as a sign of permanent dependence, Derakhshan and Fathi (2024) frame this dynamic as a critical developmental bridge; by sharing the burden of regulation, the teacher fosters a sense of competence and agency in Alex that he cannot yet achieve alone. This collaborative navigation of academic stressors does more than keep him on task, it serves as a protective factor for his psychological well-being. By

internalizing these shared regulatory strategies, Alex is not just learning to stay quiet or wait; he is building the self-awareness and growth mindset necessary to eventually transform these external redirections into internal self-regulatory habits (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024).

Conflict in Data (The "Negative Case")

An essential part of this triangulation was the identification of a "negative case" regarding physical aids. Classroom observations recorded the use of a stress ball (fidget) and a standing desk to channel hyperactive energy. However, the teacher reported in her interview that Alex "doesn't have any physical aids." This divergence suggests that these highly effective sensory supports are currently functioning as informal, situational accommodations rather than a formalized, structured part of his pedagogical routine.

According to Fidosieva (2024), the success of a student with ADHD is fundamentally linked to a "multisensory" environment where physical and visual aids are not just available, but strategically integrated to reduce cognitive load. Educators to redefine a chaotic environment into a predictable one by making the transition from informal fidgeting to structured academic supports such as color-coded highlighting, graphic organizers, and scheduled movement (Fidosieva, 2024). For Alex, these formalized interventions do more than just "permit" movement; they bridge the gap between his sporadic focus and a sustainable routine. This shifts the classroom dynamic from merely tolerating his needs to actively leveraging them to prevent sensory burnout and mental fatigue.

Discussion

The findings of this case study illustrate a dynamic interaction between teacher-led scaffolding and the neurodevelopmental needs of an EFL learner with ADHD. By triangulating the classroom observations and the teacher’s interview along with the theoretical grounding, the following discussion explores how specific strategies mitigate ADHD-related barriers to speaking.

Following Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, the teacher's role as a "More Knowledgeable Other" (MKO) was evident in her use of interactional scaffolding. The teacher noted that Alex's oral expression is hindered by difficulties in organizing ideas and controlling impulsivity. To bridge this gap, she provided "Sentence Starters" and visual structure cards. These tools acted as external cognitive supports, allowing Alex to function within his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by focusing on communicative intent rather than linguistic retrieval. According to Megawati et al. (2026), the MKO's role is the critical mediating factor in the ZPD, shifting from a mere "director of tasks" to a "scaffolder of social processes." By providing these explicit verbal tools, the teacher does more than help Alex complete a sentence; she models the collaborative language necessary for him to navigate social challenges and internalize complex skills he cannot yet achieve independently (Megawati et al., 2026). This targeted guidance transforms the speaking activity from a source of frustration into a social-emotional growth experience.

Furthermore, the data supports Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2004) by demonstrating how task design influences Alex's participation:

- **Behavioral Engagement:** This was most consistent when the teacher used proximity cues and physical redirection. The teacher's strategy of standing within two feet of Alejandro to maintain a "zone of focus" directly minimized his off-task behavior.

- **Cognitive Engagement:** Alex's case demonstrates that while his overall participation may be low, his persistence arises when tasks align with personal interests like Marvel or Minecraft. This suggests that high-interest content can effectively "bypass" the executive function barriers common in ADHD.

Additionally, incorporating rhythmic drills and music serves as a form of multisensory instruction. The teacher encourages "overlearning" by linking vocabulary to physical action (kinesthetic rehearsal). This makes linguistic structures more automatic, thereby reducing the strain on Alex's limited

working memory during spontaneous speech. As Simamora and Weda (2025) note, kinesthetic activities are vital in EFL settings because "learning by doing" improves fluency and accuracy more effectively than passive listening ever could.

For a student like Alex, these movement-based strategies do more than just build interest; they provide the neurological support needed to transform theoretical vocabulary into active speaking proficiency (Simamora & Weda, 2025).

The Challenge of Real-Time Interactional "Interplay"

A critical finding is the teacher's "peer-first" feedback loop. By correcting other students before Alex, the teacher managed his emotional engagement, reducing the anxiety often associated with ADHD and pronunciation. However, the interview highlights a persistent challenge: the tension between class-wide pacing and Alex's need for personalized, immediate reinforcement. This suggests that while classroom strategies are effective, they must be supplemented with individual tutoring to address deeper learning gaps.

Table 4

Observation Findings (The "What")	**Teacher Interview (The "Why")**	**Theoretical Link**
Use of "Wait Time" (30 seconds).	Goal: To wait for him to complete the task and reduce impulsivity.	**Inhibitory Control:** Supporting the brain's executive functions.
Use of personal task cards and checklists.	Goal: Breaking activities into simple steps for better understanding.	**Scaffolding (ZPD):** Providing external maps for internal processes.

Use of high-interest topics (Minecraft).	Goal: Triggering attention through motivation.	**Engagement Theory:** Emotional engagement driving cognitive effort.

A relevant point of analysis arises from the "Wait Time" strategy. While the Classroom Observation Checklists confirm that the teacher provides 30 seconds of "Wait Time" to reduce Alex’s impulsivity, the Teacher Interview reveals that this process remains entirely teacher-dependent. The teacher must constantly monitor the clock and provide verbal reminders to sustain this pause.

From the perspective of Engagement Theory, this is a form of "co-regulation" where the teacher's behavior provides the cognitive structure the student lacks. However, to move Alex toward autonomous "self-regulation," the data suggests a need to externalize this executive function. By transitioning from verbal teacher prompts to independent visual aids the instructional goal shifts from managing the student's impulsivity in the moment to providing him with a tool to monitor his own cognitive pacing during oral production.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding EFL Teaching Strategies

1- The teaching process uses environmental modifications and physical proximity to create a 'zone of focus', yet it does not address the issues regarding his oral production.

2- The implementation of visual scaffolding, such as "Sentence Starter" sheets and task cards with numbered steps, reduces the cognitive load required for Alex to manage grammatical accuracy and word retrieval.

Regarding Engagement and Participation

3- Alex's participation levels demonstrate a direct correlation with the teacher's monitoring techniques; while his engagement is naturally volatile, he shows a high degree of responsiveness to redirection, specifically recovering his verbal focus immediately when the teacher employs gestural redirection.

4- Cognitive engagement is maximized when tasks are aligned with Alex's personal interests (Minecraft, Marvel), which allows him to bypass executive function deficits and sustain oral production, yet this strategy is not constantly part of the instructional routine.

Regarding Instructional Challenges

5- The most significant challenge is impulsivity management, as Alex often interrupts classmates or introduces unrelated topics, disrupting the pragmatic flow of communicative activities.

6- There is a persistent tension in the pedagogical "interplay" between maintaining the class-wide pacing and providing the individualized "Wait Time" and reinforcement Alex needs to overcome shyness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Formalization of Fidget Tools

Based on the success of informal tools observed, it is recommended to formalize the use of stress balls or standing desks as consistent accommodations to channel hyperactive energy into the linguistic task.

Use of External Visual Timers

To resolve the "Pacing Paradox," the teacher should implement visual timers (sand or digital countdowns) to externalize time management, allowing Alex to visualize his "Wait Time" without relying on verbal reminders.

Implementation of Lexical Folders

To support working memory, a personal "Speaking Toolkit" should be placed on Alex's desk containing high-frequency sentence starters, moving these scaffolds from the whiteboard to his immediate line of sight.

Interest-Based Task Design

Speaking prompts should be designed as "topic-neutral", allowing Alex to apply target grammar to his preferred interests (Marvel/Minecraft) to ensure motivation remains high enough to overcome initial inhibition.

Micro-Group Peer Modeling

To manage impulsivity and shyness, the teacher should transition from whole-class activities to Micro-Groups with a designated "Peer Model" to provide a low-pressure linguistic example for Alex to follow.

PROPOSAL

The following proposal, titled the SCOPE Framework (Space, Content, Organization, Pacing, and Evaluation), is a strategic pedagogical toolkit designed to optimize the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking process for neurodivergent learners, specifically those with ADHD. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, this framework serves as a bridge between theoretical findings and classroom application, specifically targeting the Zone of Proximal Development by providing the scaffolding necessary for Alex to move from guided to independent speech.

At its core, SCOPE aims to externalize executive functions to foster behavioral and cognitive engagement, as defined by Fredericks' Engagement Theory. Because neurodivergent learners often struggle with internal organization and time management, the SCOPE pillars act as an "external brain". It creates the "interest-based" conditions necessary for sustained engagement. This stimulates the student's working memory, allowing them to focus exclusively on the target language: English.

Each letter of the acronym represents a critical area of intervention:

- **Space:** Focuses on environmental modifications to minimize sensory overload and maximize focus zones.
- **Content:** Ensures that linguistic input is filtered through high-interest topics (like Marvel or Minecraft) to maintain dopamine levels.
- **Organization:** Provides visual scaffolds that are also sequential (1-4 Task Cards) and replace the need for internal planning.
- **Pacing:** Uses temporal tools like the Sand Clock and Traffic Light technique help manage impulsivity and provide necessary "wait time" for word retrieval.
- **Evaluation:** Introduces Self-Monitoring Sheets to build the student's awareness of their own learning process.

Pillar 1: S – Space (Environmental Modifications)

Alex's focus is highly sensitive to his physical location and proximity to his teacher.

• **The Focused Speaking Station:** The proposal establishes a designated "Speaking Station" in the classroom. This area must keep minimal visual clutter and the presence of a standing desk.

• **Sensory Regulation Tools:** Formalizing the use of a "Silent Fidget Kit" with stress balls or tactile strips is essential to provide the sensory input required to manage hyperactivity

• **The 2-Foot Zone:** Maintaining a physical seating arrangement that allows for consistent teacher proximity ensures that non-verbal refocusing cues (like desk-taps) can be applied discreetly and effectively.

Figure 1

Figure 1. The Focused Speaking Station Configuration. Illustration of Pillar 1 (Space), featuring a standing desk and "Silent Fidget Kit" for sensory regulation. The layout maintains the "2-Foot Zone," ensuring the instructor's proximity for discreet non-verbal redirection during speaking tasks.

Pillar 2: C – Content (The Interest-Bypass Menu)

The research identified a spike in cognitive engagement when topics matched Alex's personal interests.

• **The Bridge Card System:** For every standard curriculum unit, a "Bridge Card" will be created. This card allows Alex to adapt the target grammar to his preferred themes, such as Minecraft or Marvel.

• **Affective Filter Management:** By allowing "Topic-Neutral" prompts, the proposal ensures that the student's emotional engagement remains high, effectively "bypassing" the initial inhibition and shyness regarding pronunciation.

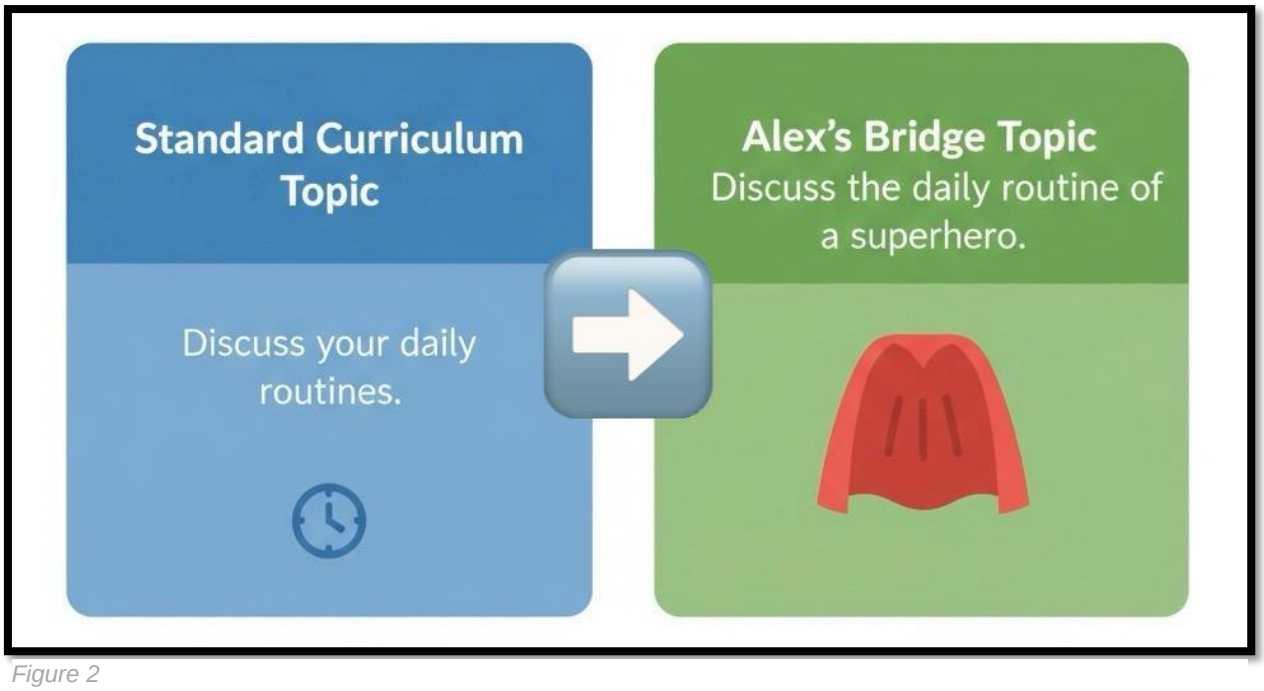

Figure 2

Figure 2. The Bridge Card System for Content Customization. This figure illustrates Pillar 2 (Content), demonstrating the "Interest-Bypass" strategy. By adapting standard EFL curriculum topics—such as daily routines—to Alex's personal interests (e.g., superheroes), the framework reduces affective barriers and maximizes cognitive engagement during speaking tasks.

Pillar 3: O – Organization (Visual Scaffolding)

Working memory deficits were identified as a primary barrier to fluency.

• **The Lexical Tool Folder:** To support language production, the student uses a "Lexical Tool Folder" containing color-coded sentence starters".

• **Task-Chunking Blueprints:** Instructions are delivered through "Step-Cards," which break down complex tasks into numbered actions to prevent cognitive overwhelm.

• **Icon-Based Routines:** Visual icons on the board act as permanent reminders of the lesson's routines, ensuring the student always knows the "what" and "how" of the current activity.

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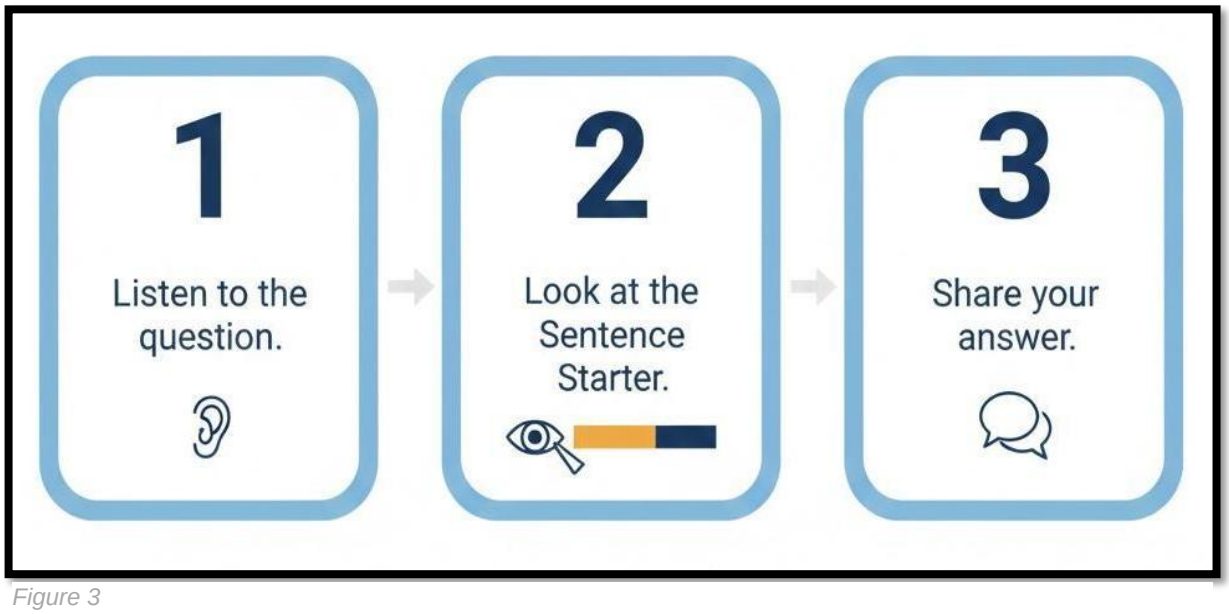

Figure 3

Figure 3. Task-Chunking Blueprints for Executive Support. This figure illustrates Pillar 3 (Organization), showcasing the use of "Step-Cards" to manage working memory deficits. By isolating complex oral instructions into single, numbered actions, the strategy prevents cognitive overload and provides a clear visual roadmap for Alex to achieve autonomous task completion.

Pillar 4: P – Pacing (The Traffic Light Protocol)

The "Pacing Paradox" highlighted the difficulty of managing "Wait Time" in a group setting.

• **The Traffic Light Visual Timer:** Replacing verbal reminders with a visual timer. How it works:

• Red: 30 seconds of silent "Processing Time".

• Yellow: 30 seconds of "Scaffolded Speaking" using the tool folder.

• Green: Free-flow communicative interaction.

• **Autonomous Wait-Time:** This protocol externalizes the demand of time management, allowing Alex to visualize his processing needs rather than relying on teacher-led co-regulation.

Figure 4

Figure 4. The Temporal Scaffolding Sand Clock. A physical tool for the Traffic Light Protocol that externalizes time into three visible phases of cognitive demand: Red (silent processing), Yellow (scaffolded production), and Green (free-flow communication).

Pillar 5: E – Evaluation (Empathetic Feedback)

The teacher identified that shyness and fear of error are major inhibitors.

• **The "Peer-First" Feedback Loop:** Formalizing the strategy of correcting a peer's pronunciation within earshot of Alex before providing him with direct, private feedback.

• **Self-Reflection Emoticons:** At the end of each speaking session, Alex uses emoticons to rate his own level of "Focus" and "Persistence". This builds the self-awareness necessary for long-term cognitive engagement.

Figure 5

Figure 5 The Self-Monitoring Reflective Journal. This instrument corresponds to the Evaluation (E) pillar of the SCOPE framework. It utilizes a three-tier visual scale (Strong Yes, More or Less, No) to foster metacognitive awareness in the learner. By selecting a representative emoji after each speaking task.

Implementation

Implementation Timeline

To ensure the feasibility of the proposal, a three-phase rollout is suggested:

1. Phase 1: Stabilization (Weeks 1-2): Establish the "Speaking Station" and introduce the "Silent Fidget Kit".
2. Phase 2: Scaffolding (Weeks 3-6): Implement the "Lexical Tool Folders" and the "Traffic Light Clock" timer to manage impulsivity.
3. Phase 3: Autonomy (Weeks 7-10): Introduce the "Bridge Card System," allowing Alex to lead his own topic selection and self-evaluation.

SCOPE Step-by-Step Implementation Guide

The "Pacing Paradox" highlighted the difficulty of managing "Wait Time" in a group setting.

• **Step 1: Space – Creating the "Focus Anchor":** The objective is to minimize sensory distractions and establish a physical boundary for speaking tasks.
1. Station Setup: Implementing the "Speaking Station" requires specific placement, it should be a designated corner or desk within two feet of the teacher to allow for subtle non-verbal redirections like a simple desk-tap.
2. Visual Decluttering: It is crucial to remove all distracting posters from the student's direct line of sight.
3. Fidget Integration: Fidget tools should be kept at the station with a clear rule: they stay below the desk and are used strictly during active listening or speaking tasks to maintain focus.

• **Step 2: Content – Launching the "Interest-Bypass" Menu**
The objective is to lower the Affective Filter by using high-interest topics like Minecraft or Marvel to drive grammar practice.
1. Interest Mapping: Conduct a quick survey of the student’s current "hyper-focus" topics (e.g., specific video games or movie franchises).
2. Bridge Card Creation: For the current unit (e.g., Past Simple), create a "Bridge Card." Instead of the standard prompt "Talk about your last vacation," the card says: "Talk about the last mission you completed in Minecraft".

3. Scaffolded Choice: Provide three Bridge Cards per lesson, allowing the student to choose the one that generates the most emotional engagement.

- **Step 3: Organization – Deploying Visual Scaffolds**

The objective is to support Working Memory by externalizing the "map" of the conversation.

1. The Lexical Folder: Assemble a folder with color-coded "Sentence Starters."

• Green: Phrases to start an idea (e.g., "In my view...").

• Yellow: Phrases to add detail (e.g., "Furthermore...").

• Red: Phrases to conclude (e.g., "Finally...").

2. Task-Chunking Blueprints: Before a task, hand the student a "Step-Card." If the task is to describe a character, the card should only list: 1. Name, 2. Power, 3. Appearance. Do not give all instructions at once.

- **Step 4: Pacing – Implementing the Traffic Light Clock Protocol**

The objective is to move from teacher-dependent "Wait Time" to student-led self-regulation.

1. Visual Timer Setup: Place a digital countdown or a "Traffic Light Clock" visual (Red/Yellow/Green) on the desk.

2. The Silent 30: When a question is asked the student must wait 30 seconds to process the idea without speaking.

3. The Scaffolded 30: The student uses their Lexical Folder to build the sentence.

4. Free Flow: The student produces language with the teacher providing only non-verbal nods of encouragement.

- **Step 5: Evaluation – Empathetic Feedback Cycles**

The objective is to build metacognition and reduce communicative anxiety.

1. Peer-First Correction: If Alex makes a mistake, the teacher finds a similar mistake in a peer's speech and corrects it publicly first. Then, the teacher provides Alex with a private, low-volume correction.

2. Self-Reflection Journal: At the end of the lesson, the student marks an emoticon on their "Strategy Journal" to rate their focus: Happy Face (Focused), Neutral Face (Distracted), Sad Face (Frustrated).
3. Positive Reinforcement: End every session with a "Success Log" entry, noting one specific instance where the student successfully used a scaffold or self-regulated their "Wait Time".

Synthesis and Final Reflection on the SCOPE Framework

The SCOPE Framework represents a significant departure from traditional ADHD management, which often focuses on suppressing behavior. Instead, it views Alex's cognitive profile as a unique style that requires a specific "interface" for learning. By moving from reactive co-regulation to proactive self-regulation, the teacher stops acting as the student's "external brain" and becomes an architect of an environment where Alex can function independently.

This model challenges the standard "one-size-fits-all" approach to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). While CLT values spontaneity, SCOPE recognizes that for ADHD learners, spontaneity without structure can lead to inhibition. We create a "Neurodiverse-Inclusive CLT" by intertwining sociocultural scaffolding into the classroom. This ensures that the goal of speaking is achieved not by lowering the linguistic standard, but by raising the level of cognitive support.

Furthermore, the long-term value of this proposal extends beyond Alex's 10th-grade year. The tools provided are transferable skills. As Alex masters these "metacognitive scaffolds," he begins to develop a toolkit that he can carry into higher education. In addition, the framework provides a replicable model for other EFL teachers within the institution, offering a roadmap for supporting other neurodivergent learners without sacrificing the momentum of the general student body.

In conclusion, the SCOPE Framework is more than a set of classroom tips; it is a commitment to Equitable Language Education. It recognizes that for Alex,

the ability to speak English is inextricably linked to his ability to regulate his executive functions. In addition to teaching a language, an EFL instructor empowers a student to negotiate a neurotypical world with confidence, autonomy, and a voice of his own by creating an organized, predictable, and engaging environment. Additionally, this framework is designed to be a low-cost, high-impact intervention. The majority of the required materials (such as Visual Timers, Lexical Folders, and Task-Chunking Step-Cards) are low-technology solutions that can be created using standard classroom supplies. A change in the teacher's instructional time during the early setup phase is the main "investment" needed, not money. In the end, the instructor saves time by front-loading the environment's organization instead of relying on verbal instructions and reactive behavioral redirection.

Sample Intervention Activity: The "Superhero Scaffold" Routine

Objective: To develop oral fluency and descriptive accuracy in a student with ADHD by externalizing executive functions through temporal and visual anchors.

Target Skills: Speaking (Descriptive language), Vocabulary (Likes/Dislikes), and Self-Regulation.

I. Lesson Components (The SCOPE Application)

• Space & Content: Use of high-interest visual flashcards (Marvel/DC) to ensure immediate task engagement and reduce "task refusal."

• Organization: Visual Task Cards (1-4) to provide a sequential narrative structure, preventing the student from losing their train of thought.

• Pacing: Sand Clock to manage wait time and inhibit impulsive responses.

II. Step-by-Step Procedure

Step 1: The Choice (Task Engagement)

The teacher presents character flashcards (e.g., Spider-Man, Batman, Hulk). The student selects one. This choice empowers the student and activates prior knowledge.

Step 2: The Thought Phase (Sand Clock)

• First 30 seconds: The teacher places the Sand Clock for Alex’s thinking phase.
• Second 30 seconds: "Look at your character. Think about their looks and their powers. Use your lexical folder for the words you need, no talking until the sand runs out."
• Purpose: This builds the habit of "internal rehearsal" before speaking.

Step 3: The Production Phase (Visual Task Cards)

Once the sand is down, the student follows the sequential visual prompts to build their spoken paragraph:

• Card 1 (Identification): "The character I chose is..."
• Card 2 (Physical Description): "He looks [strong/tall/masked] and wears a [color] suit."
• Card 3 (Abilities): "His superpower is [flying/climbing walls/strength]."
• Card 4 (Personal Connection): "I like him because he is [brave/funny/cool]."

Step 4: Self-Reflection (Evaluation)

To move the student toward self-awareness, the evaluation phase uses a three-tier visual scale featuring emoticons. Alex uses these stickers to rate his own focus: a "Happy Face" indicates successful self-control, a "Neutral Face" suggests a need for more support, and a "Sad Face" points to areas of high frustration. This process turns the teacher’s observations into the student’s own insights, fostering a sense of autonomy over his learning process.

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APPENDIX

Classroom Observation Checklist 1

Case Study: ADHD Student "A" | **Unit of Analysis:** Teacher-Student Interactional Dynamics

1. Pre-Observation: Lesson Context

- **Target Speaking Skill:** (Fluency, Accuracy, Interaction, Vocabulary) Vocabulary
- **Task Type:** [ ] Individual [X] Pair Work [ ] Group Debate [ ] Presentation
- **Environmental Differentiation:**

  [X] A's seating allows for proximity to the teacher.

  [X] Visual distractions (posters/windows) are minimized in his line of sight. [ ] Physical space for movement is available.

2. Instructional Process: Differentiation & Accommodations

Check if the strategy was used, then describe the specific "Adjustment" made.

Strategy Category	Observed?	Specific Qualitative Description
Content Differentiation	[X]	*Did the teacher modify the difficulty or length of the oral prompt for A.? Teacher reduced the oral prompt from four sentences to two simple instructions to prevent cognitive overload.*
Process Differentiation	[X]	*Were instructions multi-sensory (Visual/Auditory/Kinesthetic)? Instructions were multi-sensory; the teacher spoke them, wrote them on the board, and used icons for "Listen" and "Speak".*
Product Differentiation	[N/A]	*Was A. allowed to demonstrate speaking via a different medium?*
Timing Accommodations	[X]	*Was "Wait Time" or extra prep time explicitly given to A.?Teacher provided 30 seconds of "Wait Time" after the prompt*

		before A was required to begin speaking with his partner.
Presentation Tools	[X]	*Did A. have a personal copy of instructions or a visual checklist? A was given a personal desk-strip with a visual checklist of the 5 target words for the activity.*

Response Format	[X]	*Was A. allowed to use a fidget, stand, or use a graphic organizer?*

The "Interplay" Log (Interactional Dynamics)

Time	Teacher Action / Strategy	A's Verbal/Behavioral Response	Analysis of Interaction
12:20PM	Teacher taps A's desk and points to visual checklist	A looks at checklist and begins labeling the first image. | Proximity successfully bridged the attention gap.	Proximity successfully bridged the attention gap.
12:27	Teacher gives 30s "Wait Time" after a question.	A counts on fingers, then answers using a target word.	Scaffolding response time reduced impulsive guessing.

4. ADHD Symptom Management & Engagement

ADHD Indicator	Observed Frequency	Teacher's Redirection Strategy
Inattention (Daydreaming, off-task)	**Low / Med / High**	Non-verbal desk-tap
Impulsivity (Blurting out, interrupting)	**Low / Med / Hi**	Hand gesture for "wait"
Hyperactivity (Fidgeting, leaving seat)	**Low /Med /High**	Allowed to take breaks.

Working Memory (Forgot instructions)	**Low / Med / High**	**His memory was good. He absorbs info when you have his attention.**

5. Detailed Participation Rubric

Rate A's engagement specifically during the speaking phase.

Score	Behavioral (Protocol)	Linguistic (EFL Use)	Cognitive (Persistence)
5	Always on task; follows instructions perfectly.	Uses only English; applies new grammar/vocab.	Never gives up; uses strategies to solve gaps.

4	Consistent; needs almost no redirection.	Uses mostly English; self-corrects minor L1 slips.	Shows strong effort to continue despite errors.
3	Generally follows rules but needs some prompts.	Uses basic English; relies on L1 for complex ideas.	Tries to push through, but may quit if too hard.
2	Often off-task; requires frequent reminders.	Very little English used; mostly L1 or gestures.	Gives up easily; low frustration tolerance.
1	Does not follow protocols; disengaged.	No attempt to use English or target structures.	No effort shown; avoids the challenge entirely.

• Behavioral: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Consistency in following task protocols) •
Linguistic: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Use of target language/EFL structures) •
Cognitive: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Persistence when the speaking task got difficult)

Classroom Observation Checklist 2

Case Study: ADHD Student "A" | **Unit of Analysis:** Teacher-Student Interactional Dynamics

1. Pre-Observation: Lesson Context

- **Target Speaking Skill:** (Fluency, Accuracy, Interaction, Vocabulary)

Accuracy

- **Task Type:** [X] Individual [ ] Pair Work [ ] Group Debate [ ] Presentation
- **Environmental Differentiation:**

[X] A's seating allows for proximity to the teacher.

[X] Visual distractions (posters/windows) are minimized in his line of sight. [ ] Physical space for movement is available.

2. Instructional Process: Differentiation & Accommodations

Check if the strategy was used, then describe the specific "Adjustment" made.

Strategy Category	Observed?	Specific Qualitative Description
Content Differentiation	[X]	*Did the teacher modify the difficulty or length of the oral prompt for A.? Teacher modified the difficulty by allowing A to use only the Present Simple grammar structure.*
Process Differentiation	[X]	*Were instructions multi-sensory (Visual/Auditory/Kinesthetic)? | Instructions were provided on a personal task card with step-by-step numbers.*
Product Differentiation	[N/A]	*Was A. allowed to demonstrate speaking via a different medium?*
Timing Accommodations	[N/A]	*Was "Wait Time" or extra prep time explicitly given to A.?* *Standard time limit was followed*

Presentation Tools	[X]	*Did A. have a personal copy of instructions or a visual checklist?* A was given a "Sentence Starter" sheet to support grammar accuracy.

Response Format	[X]	*Was A. allowed to use a fidget, stand, or use a graphic organizer? A was allowed to stand at a high desk while speaking to the teacher.*

The "Interplay" Log (Interactional Dynamics)

Time	Teacher Action / Strategy	A's Verbal/Behavioral Response	Analysis of Interaction
12:30	Teacher places task card on desk and points to Step 1.	A reads the card and begins preparing his first sentence.	Physical prompting helped A initiate the task.
12:36	Teacher notices A looking at his other classmates and walks toward him.	A immediately returns his gaze to the sentence starter sheet.	Teacher proximity acted as a cue to refocus.

4. ADHD Symptom Management & Engagement

ADHD Indicator	Observed Frequency	Teacher's Redirection Strategy

Inattention (Daydreaming, off-task)	**Low / Med / High**	Teacher stood within 2 feet of A to maintain a "zone of focus."
Impulsivity (Blurting out, interrupting) **Hyperactivity (Fidgeting, leaving seat)**	**Low / Med /** **Med/ Low /Hi** **High**	Teacher reminded A to "think and check" his sentence starter sheet first. Teacher designated a "standing zone" for A to move within while speaking.

Working Memory (Forgot instructions)	**Low / Med / High**	Teacher broke the multi-step task into single steps on the task card.

5. Detailed Participation Rubric

Rate A's engagement specifically during the speaking phase.

Score	Behavioral (Protocol)	Linguistic (EFL Use)	Cognitive (Persistence)
5	Always on task; follows instructions perfectly.	Uses only English; applies new grammar/vocab.	Never gives up; uses strategies to solve gaps.

4	Consistent; needs almost no redirection.	Uses mostly English; self-corrects minor L1 slips.	Shows strong effort to continue despite errors.
3	Generally follows rules but needs some prompts.	Uses basic English; relies on L1 for complex ideas.	Tries to push through, but may quit if too hard.
2	Often off-task; requires frequent reminders.	Very little English used; mostly L1 or gestures.	Gives up easily; low frustration tolerance.
1	Does not follow protocols; disengaged.	No attempt to use English or target structures.	No effort shown; avoids the challenge entirely.

• Behavioral: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Consistency in following task protocols) •
Linguistic: [1] [2] [3] [4 [5] (Use of target language/EFL structures) •
Cognitive: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Persistence when the speaking task got difficult)

Classroom Observation Checklist 3

Case Study: ADHD Student "A" | **Unit of Analysis:** Teacher-Student Interactional Dynamics

1. Pre-Observation: Lesson Context

- **Target Speaking Skill:** (Fluency, Accuracy, Interaction, Vocabulary)

Fluency

- **Task Type:** [ ] Individual [ ] Pair Work [ ] Group Debate [X] Presentation
- **Environmental Differentiation:**

[X] A's seating allows for proximity to the teacher.

[X] Visual distractions (posters/windows) are minimized in his line of sight. [ ] Physical space for movement is available.

2. Instructional Process: Differentiation & Accommodations

Check if the strategy was used, then describe the specific "Adjustment" made.

Strategy Category	Observed?	Specific Qualitative Description
Content Differentiation	[X]	*Did the teacher modify the difficulty or length of the oral prompt for A.? A was allowed to choose a topic of high personal interest (Marvel) to increase natural motivation and fluency.*
Process Differentiation	[X]	*Were instructions multi-sensory (Visual/Auditory/Kinesthetic)?* A practiced the presentation once with the teacher (kinesthetic rehearsal) before presenting to the class.
Product Differentiation	[N/A]	*Was A. allowed to demonstrate speaking via a different medium?*
Timing Accommodations	[X]	*Was "Wait Time" or extra prep time explicitly given to A.?* A was given a 5-minute "cool down"

		period before his turn to manage pre-presentation anxiety.
Presentation Tools	[X]	*Did A. have a personal copy of instructions or a visual checklist?* A used a "Visual Structure Card" (Introduction -> 3 points -> Conclusion) to keep his speech on track.

Response Format	[X]	*Was A. allowed to use a fidget, stand, or use a graphic organizer?* A was allowed to hold a small stress ball (fidget) behind the podium while speaking.

The "Interplay" Log (Interactional Dynamics)

Time	Teacher Action / Strategy	A's Verbal/Behavioral Response	Analysis of Interaction
12:30pm	Teacher nods and points to the "Intro" picture on the flow chart.	A stands up and says: "Hobby... Minecraft. I like."	Teacher's prompt initiated the speech, though A used fragmented phrases.
12:34pm	Teacher asks: "What do you build, A?"	A points to a picture: "House. Big house. Stone... and wood."	Simple questioning pushed A to add more detail without needing full syntax.
12:36pm	Teacher gives a "thumbs up" when A finishes a point.	A smiles and says: "Finished. Minecraft good."	Positive reinforcement helped A reach the end of the task despite limited grammar.

4. ADHD Symptom Management & Engagement

ADHD Indicator	Observed Frequency	Teacher's Redirection Strategy
Inattention (Daydreaming, off-task)	**Low / Med / High**	Teacher used a "quiet signal" (finger to lips) when A started looking at the floor.
Impulsivity (Blurting out, interrupting) **Hyperactivity (Fidgeting, leaving seat)**	**Low / Med /** **High Low /** **Med / High**	(Individual presentation; no peer interruptions occurred). Teacher allowed A to shift weight and use a fidget tool while speaking.

Working Memory (Forgot instructions)	**Low / Med / High**	A was allowed to choose a topic of high personal interest (Minecraft) to increase natural motivation and fluency.

5. Detailed Participation Rubric

Rate A's engagement specifically during the speaking phase.

Score	Behavioral (Protocol)	Linguistic (EFL Use)	Cognitive (Persistence)
5	Always on task; follows instructions perfectly.	Uses only English; applies new grammar/vocab.	Never gives up; uses strategies to solve gaps.
4	Consistent; needs almost no redirection.	Uses mostly English; self-corrects minor L1 slips.	Shows strong effort to continue despite errors.
3	Generally follows rules but needs some prompts.	Uses basic English; relies on L1 for complex ideas.	Tries to push through, but may quit if too hard.
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● Behavioral: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Consistency in following task protocols) ●
Linguistic: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Use of target language/EFL structures) ●
Cognitive: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] (Persistence when the speaking task got difficult)

Semi-Structured Interview Guide: EFL Speaking & ADHD

Case Study: Alejandro (10th Grade)

Date: 04/02 **e:** _____

Purpose: To explore the teacher's perceptions and intentional strategies used to support Alejandro's speaking development. This data will help characterize the teaching process and identify the specific challenges of instructional "interplay" in an EFL setting.

1. Professional Background & Context

1.1. How long have you been teaching EFL, and what is your experience working with neurodivergent students (specifically ADHD)?

Response: I am about to complete two years working as an EFL teacher, with both neurodivergent and neurotypical children.

Notes:

1.2. How would you describe your understanding of how ADHD specifically impacts a student's ability to develop **speaking skills** in a second language?

Response: ADHD affects oral expression in a second language because the student may have difficulty maintaining attention, organizing their ideas, and controlling impulsivity, which influences fluency, coherence, and confidence when speaking English.

Notes:

2. Characterizing Alejandro's Participation

2.1. How does Alejandro typically engage during speaking tasks compared to other classroom activities (reading or writing)?

Response: Alejandro's participation in speaking activities is low, as it is necessary to reinforce the correct pronunciation of words individually and exclusively.

Notes:

2.2. What specific behaviors (e.g., impulsivity, losing the thread of a conversation, difficulty starting) do you observe most frequently during oral interaction?

Response: [redacted] has difficulty getting started and is a little shy due to pronunciation issues. He also tends to get distracted easily when a classmate interrupts the activity.

Notes:

2.3. What specific topics or task formats (e.g., games, role-plays, personal stories) seem to trigger his highest level of verbal engagement?

Response: He tends to pay more attention when implementing songs or rhythm to vocabulary phrases, as well as when dramatizing dialogues.

Notes:

3. Intentional Differentiation (Proactive Planning)

Differentiation refers to the changes made to the lesson design for the whole class or specifically for [redacted] to reach the same goal.

3.1. **Content:** Do you modify the vocabulary, the length of texts, or the complexity of speaking prompts for [redacted]?

Response: Due to we work with the English book, when we are doing pronunciation practice activities, I assign short phrases or basic vocabulary words to [redacted], taking into account his reading and writing difficulty.

Notes:

3.2. **Process:** How do you adapt the *way* you teach the speaking lesson (e.g., using kinesthetic movement, breaking tasks into smaller chunks) to support his focus?

Response: Generally, when we practice speaking through songs, we accompany it with body movements, such as using our hands or making sounds related to the vocabulary.

Notes:

3.3. **Product:** In what ways do you allow [redacted] to demonstrate his speaking proficiency differently than his peers (e.g., a recording instead of a live presentation)?

Response: I try to have us practice repeating sounds in groups of students so that [redacted] can learn from others and I can also hear his progress in pronunciation more clearly. However, I almost always need to review with him personally the words he can't repeat correctly during the activity.

Notes:

3.4. **Environment:** What physical changes (e.g., seating, reducing visual noise) have you implemented to manage his attention during speaking tasks?

Response: He has been moved to a different seat to help him concentrate better. However, this has proven difficult to manage, so during class I try to stay close to him to redirect him to the activity and prevent him from losing track.

Notes:

4. Specific Accommodations & "Bypass" Tools

Accommodations are the specific tools given to [redacted] to help him overcome ADHD-related barriers.

4.1. Which **timing** or **presentation** accommodations (e.g., providing extra "wait time" or giving written checklists for verbal instructions) work best for him?

Response: Taking into account his level in all English skills, I allocate more time for the development of the activities, trying to wait for him while he completes the task.

Notes:

4.2. Does [redacted] use any **external aids** (fidget tools, visual timers, or allowing him to stand) to help him regulate himself during oral production?

Response: No, he doesn't have any physical aids to help him regulate his time. He is simply informed of the time allotted for each activity, and I constantly remind him of the time.

Notes:

5. Interactional Challenges & "Interplay"

This section focuses on Research Question #3: The challenges of the moment-to-moment teaching process.

5.1. How do you adjust your interaction in real-time when you notice [redacted] is struggling to follow a multi-step verbal instruction?

Response: I try to repeat the activity instructions to him personally, calling him by name and looking him directly in the eyes. I break the activity down into simple steps for his better understanding and ask him to repeat the step we are on, making sure he knows what the next one is.

Notes:

5.2. How do you balance the need to give him immediate feedback on his English (accuracy/ fluency) without interrupting his focus or causing frustration?

Response: I first try to give feedback to another classmate about something specific I notice in the accuracy of his pronunciation before going t[redacted]; that way, his attention is focused on his classmates and it makes it easier for me to give feedback to him as well.

Notes:

5.3. What is the most significant challenge you face when trying to manage his participation during **group** speaking activities (e.g., turn-taking, impulsivity)?

Response: The most significant challenge for [redacted]s managing his impulsiveness, as he tends to interrupt other classmates' participation with topics unrelated to the activity.

Notes:

5.4. How do these individual adjustments for [redacted]mpact the overall **pacing** and structure of your lesson for the rest of the class?

Response: These actions have allowed [redacted]o focus a little more on the activities that are carried out in real time and better understand the steps that are in each stage of the development of the class.

Notes:

6. Reflection & Institutional Support

6.1. Based on this school year, how would you characteriz[redacted]'s growth in **verbal engagement**?

Response: [redacted] willingness to participate in speaking activities has improved; however, his level remains low and requires more practice in this and other skills.

Notes:

6.2. What kind of support (training, materials, or counselor guidance) would help you better implement these strategies in the future?

Response: Continue monitoring his learning and studying his family and school environment in greater depth, as I advise that it is necessary to examine the root cause of [redacted] learning gap. Also, continue providing him with personalized tutoring to further improve his English language skills.

DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

Nosotros, **Orellana Villacís, Nahomi Nikole**, con C.C: # 0926784570 y **Lockerman Rodríguez, Edwin George**, con C.C: # 2400249286 autores del trabajo de titulación: **Analysis of EFL teaching strategies for the development of speaking skills applied to a student with neurodivergence: a case study,** previo a la obtención del título de **Licenciados en Pedagogía de Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros-Inglés** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

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REPOSITORIO NACIONAL EN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA			
FICHA DE REGISTRO DE TESIS/TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN			
TÍTULO Y SUBTÍTULO:	**Analysis of EFL teaching strategies for the development of speaking skills applied to a student with neurodivergence: a case study.**		
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INSTITUCIÓN:	Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil		
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TITULO OBTENIDO:	**Licenciada en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros - Inglés**		
FECHA DE PUBLICACIÓN:	**27 de febrero de 2026**	**No. DE PÁGINAS:**	**82 p.**
ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS:	**Teaching methods, Learning disabilities, Inclusive education.**		
PALABRAS CLAVES/ KEYWORDS:	***ADHD, EFL Speaking Skills, Scaffolding, Student Engagement, SCOPE Framework, Self***		

RESUMEN/ABSTRACT

This qualitative single-case study explores the instructional interplay between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching strategies and the development of speaking skills in a 10th-grade student diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The research addresses the gap between the student's linguistic potential and his oral production, which is often hindered by executive function deficits such as inattention, impulsivity, and working memory limitations. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Fredricks' Engagement Theory, the study utilized methodological triangulation, including structured observation checklists and a semi-structured teacher interview, to characterize current pedagogical practices. Findings indicate that while the Teacher successfully employs environmental modifications and task-chunking to reduce cognitive load, these strategies remain largely teacher-dependent through co-regulation. Observations revealed a "Pacing Paradox," where the need for individualized "Wait Time" conflicts with classroom momentum. However, cognitive engagement spiked when content was aligned with the student's personal interests. Consequently, the study proposes the SCOPE Framework (Space, Content, Organization, Pacing, and Evaluation). This toolkit provides structured scaffolds, such as visual timers and lexical anchors, designed to transition the student from teacher-dependency toward autonomous self-regulation.

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