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## TÍTULO DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

# Students' perceptions on the factors that influence their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom in Ecuadorian high schools

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

AUTORES: Paredes Santín, Ruth Elizabeth

Villavicencio Delgado, Carlos Ernesto

DIRECTOR: Burneo Burneo, Rosario María, Dra

CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO DURÁN

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Autor: Paredes Santín Ruth Elizabeth Cédula: 0918634965

f..... Autor: Villavicencio Delgado Carlos Ernesto Cédula: 1304104795

#### DEDICATION

It is dedicated to our families for all their support and for always being there, to our sons and daughters for being the motor of our lives and the reason for overcoming any challenge. Special thanks to those who without being part of our families make us feel like if

they were.

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#### ABSTRACT

Developing speaking skills have proved to be the weakest part of the English learning process. Through this thesis, we attempt to know the students' perceptions on the factors that influence their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom, which could be a base for modifications in the teaching methodology for developing this skill, or could be a start for further research.

In order to reach this goal, this investigation work focused on the question "How do motivation, proficiency level, and personality influence student's willingness to orally communicate?" To obtain the needed answers, a sample of one hundred students from an important public high school in Guayaquil was chosen at random from five different classrooms belonging to Third Year of Baccalaureate in the Ecuadorian System. A survey was administrated, classes were observed, and the corresponding opinion from their teachers was asked.

This research has suggested that active techniques and updated methods and approaches help students feel motivated enough to develop and improve speaking skills especially, so they can communicate effectively in the English language.

#### KEY WORDS: Speaking skills, motivation, methods

#### **RESUMEN**

El desarrollo de las habilidades del habla es indudablemente el talón de Aquiles del proceso de aprendizaje del Inglés. A través de esta tesis, intentamos conocer la percepción de los estudiantes respecto a los factores que influyen en su deseo de comunicarse oralmente en el salón de clases donde aprenden inglés como lengua extranjera. Esta podría ser una base para realizar modificaciones en la enseñanza del desarrollo de esta habilidad; o el inicio de futuras investigaciones.

Para lograr este objetivo, esta investigación se enfocó en la pregunta: ¿Cómo influyen la motivación, nivel de proficiencia y personalidad en el deseo de los estudiantes de comunicarse oralmente? Para obtener respuestas se eligió aleatoriamente una muestra de cien estudiantes de Tercero de Bachillerato de un importante colegio público de Guayaquil. Se aplicó una encuesta, se observaron clases y se recogió la opinión de los docentes participantes.

Este trabajo ha sugerido que técnicas innovadoras y métodos actualizados contribuyen a que exista suficiente motivación para desarrollar y mejorar las habilidades para hablar inglés, lo cual conduce a que haya comunicación efectiva usando este idioma.

#### PALABRAS CLAVE: Habilidades del habla, motivación, métodos

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In Ecuador as in the rest of the world, teachers face the big challenge of getting students to participate in activities that include oral communication as part of the process of acquiring a foreign language, unfortunately, there is not the appropriate response even though these activities are designed to be authentic real-world and meaningful experiences.

Riasati (2012) found out that great part of success in teaching a foreign language is that students could be able to communicate as a result of their desire, and it is a teacher's concern the issue of inspiring this desire. This means that the teacher has to be aware of what the trigger is, and to be able of use it every time to get the needed speaking production. In our country, regardless of all the efforts done by teachers, students are unwilling to orally use the language they are learning, and therefore, failing in getting the expected proficiency. It is important to know what teachers can do about this issue, since their points of view and knowledge are not enough.

Previous research has shown that there is not only one factor influencing the willingness to orally participate. Sköld (2008) states that Motivation and anxiety levels are important factors that influence students' participation in oral tasks. Whereas, Java (2012) demonstrated that the reasons why some students orally participate in class while others not, include several factors like level of knowledge, topic of discussion, personality types, and classroom atmosphere. In addition, Juhana's (2012) findings confirm that there are psychological factors that affect negatively the practice of speaking English in class. Finally, Chi and Knell (2012) presented arguments to emphasize the role of affective variables on the second language learning process.

Ecuadorian English teachers need to be aware of the reasons why students are reluctant to orally participate in class in order to do something to stimulate their use the language and develop their speaking skills. This is the reason why the present focuses on obtaining the answer to the question "what are Ecuadorian students' perceptions on the factors that influence their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom in Ecuadorian high schools?" The present study plans to answer this question focusing on motivation, proficiency level, personality, and how these three issues influence students' willingness to orally communicate in English.

This research intents to enlighten local issues to relieve teachers' worries regarding their effectiveness. It is particularly important to the teachers of the institution where de research took place, due to the characteristics of the information obtained. In general, this research is also very significant to the education community of Ecuador in which this kind of investigations are very rare. The present work may be also a point of reference for future studies regarding the foreign language teaching in our country.

It would have been interesting to explore different suggestions to improve and increase students' oral practice, stated by the ones who need the practice themselves, which are the students. But it might be part of a future research.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Oral communication makes us different from the rest of the creation. Having the ability to express feelings and transmit any type of information is a privilege for sure. However, some factors affect the normal development of this ability while learning a foreign language as English. Some of them will be considered in this review.

#### Motivation

Motivation is a big factor that influences students to speak in class; this is why teachers should plan activities according to what makes them feel comfortable. To this respect, Locke (2013, p. 24) suggests, "They should be encouraged to say what they want to say, about what interests them, when it interests them." Nobody can force a student to speak if they do not want, so the topics chosen for tasks have to be thought according to the age, gender, social status, proper timing, culture of the class, among others, in order to assure their interest and therefore a positive response.

In social gatherings, for example, people tend to speak about what they know because it makes them feel comfortable and in control. People feel that what they have to say is valuable for somebody else, when they are not criticized and get the whole attention. This is why Locke (2013) indicates that speaking activities must make students feel that what they say is important and worth to hear, sustained and not suppressed, and that spontaneous participation is well received and not rejected even if the relevance is not the required one.

Harmer (2001, p. 88) additionally advocates that ". Many speaking tasks (role-playing, discussion, problem solving, etc.) are intrinsically enjoyable in themselves." How could it be? He states that a good task focused on getting students to speak could be highly motivated, and provider of great satisfaction, only if it has been arranged correctly and the feedback that they

receive is considerate and valuable. This is how students are more willing to participate due to their growth in confidence.

#### **Proficiency Level**

Another factor affecting students' willingness to participate is directly related to their level of knowledge of the language. That is, in other words, the proficiency level. There are six levels well known, defined, and categorized by The Common European Framework of References, which is the main and most accepted standard to measure students' proficiency levels of the language. The bottom and the top of these levels are A1 and C2. Related to what is expected from learners on each one, The Cambridge University Press (2006, p. 26) points out that the students' level allows them to perform in spoken interaction at a basic level (A1):

I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

In contrast, The Cambridge University Press (2006, p. 27) states that at a high level (C2):

I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a regular interaction, good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey fine shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it. On the other hand, The Cambridge University Press (2006) notes that in spoken production at a basic level (A1) students can use simple phrases and sentences to describe describe where they live and people they know. As well as for a high level (C2) they "can "can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points."

In Ecuador, at the end of high school, students are supposed to achieve intermediate level (B1) which in spoken production The Cambridge University Press states that they can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, their dreams, hopes and ambitions. They also can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

At this same level, in spoken interaction The Cambridge University Press (2006) states "I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life."

This is just to establish a distinction between beginners, masters and what is required in our country regarding the expertise of the language and to understand how knowing more might provide more confidence to learners to express their ideas smoothly and, even more important, accurately.

#### Personality

Unquestionably, different personalities affect behavior in all the aspects of human lives. Besides the different proposals of personality types, Berens & Nardi (1999) propose sixteen types of personalities: FORESEER DEVELOPER: People whose approach to life is very creative and considerate to others which makes them good at bonding differences and connecting They are also talented for perceiving and understanding, therefore very skillful at issues. As a consequence of these they are practical at problem solving. Foreseer Developers live their lives with a sense of purpose and living in an idealistic way would represent them a great deal of stress and a need to disengage from the apprehensiveness it causes to them.

HARMONIZER CLARIFIER: This personality type is described as going with the flow in the way that they avoid conflicts. They are aware of hidden messages and accomplished in reading between lines so that they always know what is behind what is said and great at uncovering mysteries. Harmonizer Clarifiers explore moral questions in order to soften any differences or to convey behaviors. They are talented for facilitative listening and relate through stories and metaphors. They are good for balancing completely unlike issues and getting reacquainted with themselves. They have a way of knowing what is believable to present themselves as reliable. Along their lives they are always struggling with structure and getting their existence in order.

ENVISIONER MENTOR: People with this personality type is focused in communicate and share values, the ones fitting this category have very successful relationships. They realize their dreams and the others' along with searching opportunities to grow together. They are talented for seeing potential in others, they enjoy any creative process and have an intuitive intellect. Envisioner Mentors are capable of reconcile the past and the future, they heed the call to a life work or mission, therefore it is difficult for them to live the present.

DISCOVERER ADVOCATE: People characterized for inspiring and facilitating others. They are good at exploring perceptions and such as the Harmonizer Clarifiers, they are aware of hidden messages and accomplished in reading between lines so that they always know what is behind what is said and voicing unspoken meanings. They recognize happiness and pursue to have ideal relationships, therefore they are predisposed to live out stories. They really want to authentically live with themselves. Discoverer Advocates are willing to respond to insights in any creative process trying to find the magical situation everywhere. They permanently feel a restless hunger for discovering their direction.

CONCEPTUALIZER DIRECTOR: This personality maximizes the achievements and encourages self-mastery. People with this personality usually build a vision in life and draw very long-range strategies. They set goals and measure progress toward those goals. Their way of thinking is very structured and have a talent for seeing the reasons behind things. Conceptualizer Directors are always trying to be at the vanguard of everything and maintaining their independence. They find it difficult to let go in interacting with others.

DESIGNER THEORIZER: They are always trying to become an expert. They have great ability in seeing new patterns and elegant connections therefore very brilliant for designing and redesigning. It is easy for them to cross the artificial boundaries of thought and activate the imagination. Designer Theorizers are really skillful for clarifying and defining, for making discoveries, and even for reflecting on the process of thinking itself. They are able to detach to analyze but frequently struggle with attending to the physical world.

STRATEGIST MOBILIZER: They are natural leaders. They are able to maximize talents and organize resources toward progress. Strategist Mobilizers are intuitive explorers capable of forging partnerships or alliances to get the most of situations. They have talent for coordinating multiple projects by mentoring and empowering as well as balancing peace and conflict. Despite of their predictive creativity, they are often overwhelmed by managing all the details of time and resources.

EXPLORER INVENTOR: They are distinguished for being very inventive. People with this personality are consummated at building prototypes and getting projects launched. They enjoy the creative process and permanent learning, they share their insights about life's possibilities which makes them to strategically formulate success. Explorer Inventors are inviting hosts who like the drama of the give and take. They try to be diplomatic but get surprised when their strategizing of relationships becomes problematic.

PLANNER INSPECTOR: People who like to conceive plans ahead and are always prepared. They are ready to take responsibility and like to get the work done first. They enjoy to take part and be active in the community. Planner Inspectors are loyal to their roles, they are always cultivating good qualities and doing the right thing to do. They tolerate life's afflictions and overcome adversity. They are really talented at planning, sequencing, and noticing what's missing but having to learn so much in retrospection is painful at times.

PROTECTOR SUPPORTER: This kind of personality is good at noticing what's needed and what's valuable. They are skillful in belonging to a careful and supportive organization because they have an unselfish willingness to volunteer. They know the ins and outs but also enjoy traditions. Protector Supporters work to protect the future, they are efficient at listening and remembering, being nice and congenial but could get exasperated when people ignore rules and don't get along.

IMPLEMENTOR SUPERVISOR: The characteristic of this personality is being well balanced. They are accomplished on bringing order to chaotic situations. They

have a work-hard attitude, they are industrious, they prefer educating themselves, and make a good balance between work and amusement. Implementor supervisors have a philosophy of life which tells them the steps to success. They keep up traditions and connect to their wealth of life experiences. They are often frustrated when perfectionistic standards for economy and quality are not reached.

FACILITATOR CARETAKER: They are the humanistic type. They are always accepting and helping others. They are good at managing people and very patient to hear them out. They express others concerns and are always willing to help with people's needs. Facilitator Caretakers admire the success of others but also remember what's really important. They are talented at providing others with what they need, they keep things pleasant and manage to maintain a sense of continuity without forgetting the accounting for the costs. Because of their nature, they are often disappointed by entrepreneurial projects.

ANALYZER OPERATOR: People with this personality are always actively engaged in solving problems. They are brilliant at observing how things work. They are good at using tools for the best approach and feel a strong need to be independent. They frequently behave according to their hunches or intuitions and have great capability for understanding a situation. Analyzer Operators enjoy taking things apart, making discoveries and sharing those discoveries but they often feel uncomfortable by powerful emotional experiences.

COMPOSER PRODUCER: This is the classical opportunist. People with this personality take advantage of opportunities and stick with what's important. They are able to pull together what is just right. Composer Producers are creative problem solvers, relationships builders and capable of attracting the loyalties of others. They are their own true self, have their own personal style but they are always acting according others<sup>´</sup> expectations. They are also in permanent conflict with nurturing their own self-esteem.

PROMOTER EXECUTOR: People with this personality always tent to take charge of situations. They are good at tactical prioritizing, enjoy acting as a consultant, and are brilliant for negotiating. They permanently worry about getting a measure of their success. Promoter Executors keep their options open which makes them to win people over. They care a lot for family and friends, enjoy excitement at the edge and gets disappointed when others don't show respect.

MOTIVATOR PRESENTER: People with this personality is the typical optimistic person who stimulate action. With a good sense of style and a great talent for presenting things in a useful way, they are natural actors-engaging others. They are excellent at opening up people to possibilities, show enormous respect for freedom, and enjoy taking risks. Motivator Presenters share a love of learning, especially about people. They express genuine caring and sometimes misperceive other people's intentions.

#### **Teaching Speaking**

When teaching speaking, the desired way is in form of interaction, which is natural and with the main purpose of socializing. As Richards (2008) mentions, when people gather, they wish to be friendly, so they exchange greetings, start small talks, share incidents, and more, to create a comfortable zone of interaction among peers. It means that the importance of the message becomes secondary, while the impression that the speaker may cause turns to be more important.

For this reason, opening and closing conversations, choosing topics, making small-talk, joking, recounting personal incidents and experiences, turn-taking, using adjacency pairs, interrupting, reacting to others, and using an appropriate style of

speaking are some of the things a teacher needs to plan for teaching, taking into account their relevance in developing talking as an interaction, as stated for Richards (2008).

Richards (2008) also comments that the communicative materials provided for the teachers these days include a wide range of resources such as information-gap and group activities, as well as role plays, which allow to use the language for sharing and obtaining information. They also promote the implementation of real world transactions in activities such as ranking, values clarifications, brainstorming and simulations. All these make easier for a teacher to plan talking as an interaction.

A closer look to some engaging tasks is necessary to understand why they are important in developing speaking skills. There are more controlled and usually easier tasks like information gap, and surveys as well as more challenging and less controlled like discussions and role plays.

One way of getting students to have conversations and to collect information that could be used in an extended practice is to handle a set of questions in pairs or groups. According to Harmer (2001, p. 89) "If students plan these questionnaires themselves, the activity becomes even more useful."

Information gap allows students to exchange information they have in a collaborative way, since the gaps are filled complementing each other's data. The level of difficulty could be raised according to the characteristic of the information.

Planning discussions give students the opportunity to freely express their opinions about topics that could be very motivating, but it is necessary to give students some time for preparation. Harmer (2001, p. 89) points out that "The ability to give spontaneous and

articulate opinions challenging our own language, let alone the language we are struggling to learn."

Role play activities could be very enjoyable and rewarding because students be in different situations and are required to proceed as they think it is appropriate. The key factors are the contexts they are asked to represent.

After having analyzed methodological aspects related specifically to Speaking as a skill to be developed in our students, it is appropriate to consider previous experiences of other teachers from different parts of the world, who like us, do lots of effort to promoting communication in the classroom. They have completed studies on particular situations that could explain why students have problems on oral production.

It is well known that emotions play a significant role on the learning process, especially when a new language (clear distinctions on pronunciation, syntax, cultural context between L1 and L2-) is the target to be mastered. Chi and Knell (2012) present arguments to emphasize the role of affective variables on the second language learning process. These kinds of studies commonly investigate older students, notably, young adults. However, the one mentioned above was done to 175 children in the upper primary grades from fourth to sixth grade. What is curious about it is that the method of learning the second language among the participants was different. Some of them attended schools with English immersion programs while more of the fifty percent of students were randomly selected from other schools. The results of this study revealed that students participating on immersion programs from fourth to fifth grade were more confident when they were tested on their speaking ability related to the ones being part of the other program while there was no significant difference on the sixth-graders students from both programs whom appear to have similar results. They propose that

the inevitable increasing of responsibilities while they grow up provokes a decrease of positive motivation since everyone surrounding them expects more but motivates less. They They suggest a further investigation on nonlinguistic variables to understand why exactly a decline in motivation is found throughout the years.

In any case, would that explain at least superficially what occurs to adults when they learn a new language? Is it that the lack of motivation and choosing the wrong program would lead learners to feel incapable to speak and perform at least a basic conversation to use the language for real communication from the initial stages of the learning process? Or is it that growing up instead of making us confident people turns us into more complex beings that are much more concerned of what other people think causing us to develop fears and traumas?

Juhana's (2012) findings confirm that there are psychological factors that affect negatively the practice of speaking English in class. Chi and Knell (2012) focused on children while Juhana (2012) did it on teenagers, which is the next step before becoming into adults. Sixty two students from second grade Senior High School participated on this investigation through observations and surveys that allowed discovering the fact that the fear of making mistakes was the main factor affecting these students followed by shyness and anxiety. The author's conclusion revealed that the classroom is not being an ally to learn the L2, but being a place where all the partners are free to shame on students who make a mistake or have strong problems on pronunciation or any other aspect involved in learning a new language. If we add being part of such classrooms to being shy we get a lethal combination that will destroy for sure the hope of achieving the goal of using L2 to communicate. Juhana (2012) further suggests to teachers to analyze each of our students especially when they are quite passive and identify responsibly the possible causes of that reaction. Not only that, but also to contribute to overcome the negative factors and avoid classmates to make fun of someone and

create a confident atmosphere where everyone is free to make mistakes without being judged. Teachers have as their main task to reduce the fear of mistake factor to the last one causing students to not speak English and just fight against their personalities. Half of the battle ahead!

To emphasize the responsibility of teachers on improving their willingness to communicate, Javad (2012) researched about the reasons why some students orally participate in class while others not, even if they have been studying the language for some time. To achieve his goal, Java interviewed seven language learners learning English as a foreign language in a private Iranian language institute.

To validate the results of his study, the technique that was adopted peer debriefing. It means that a colleague got to revise the whole work so she could give back her own comments and viewpoints. This is also called interrater method which guarantees reliability in the analysis of qualitative results since both analysis are compared.

After analyzing the data from the interviews, Javad (2012) determined that there are several factors that influence their willingness to speak. They are:

Task Type: The majority of the students answered that they prefer to practice speaking in pairs or group activities rather than individually.

Sex of Interlocutor: The willingness to speak is not greatly influenced by the sex of the person they speak to. The preferences in this aspect did not reflect a significant difference as teachers might think.

Age of Interlocutor: The researcher wanted to know the willing to participate speaking with people of different ages. Students again did not show marked preference on the age of the person they had to talk to.

Familiarity with Interlocutor: More than 50% responded that this is a very important factor in making them willing or unwilling to speak in class.

Interlocutor Participation: Interlocutor participation was also pointed out by three of the students as an influence on their degree of willingness to speak.

Grading: When students are aware that their speaking is being graded, It becomes a very important factor for their willingness to speak.

Correctness of Speech means that students had to express the degree of willingness to participate when they know that they will not make mistakes. Most of the learners (five out of seven) believed that accuracy is important, and they would be more willing to speak if they were sure of not making mistakes.

Topic of Discussion: This is a factor with great influence on the students' degree of willingness to speak English. The characteristics of the topic that were important are familiarity, interest, preparation and discussing a topic the learners are comfortable discussing.

Personal Characteristics is another factor that the respondents describe as contributing to their degree of willingness to speak. Personal characteristics which are directly related to their personality types were mentioned. Indeed, four of the seven respondents unanimously describe this factor as an important contributor to their degree of willingness to speak.

Perceived Speaking Ability: Another factor learners noted as contributing to their willingness to speak is perception of their speaking ability. The respondents argued that they were not very satisfied with their current speaking ability and that this is a factor that discourages them to speak in class.

The Teacher's Role is another factor the respondents described as influencing their degree of willingness. It is the teacher and the role he/she plays in the classroom.

Classroom Atmosphere: Another important factor that is evident in the respondents' interviews is the atmosphere of the classroom, which makes them willing or unwilling to speak. Four of the respondents consider the class atmosphere as an important factor contributing to their degree of willingness to speak

Javad (2012) demonstrated in the study that a wide collection of factors influence willingness to speak. It cannot be blamed on students' reticence to one single factor. Therefore, teachers must plan considering all the variables as a result of all the factors found, and offer to students a wide range of activities to cover different needs. Javad (2012) also states "it is really necessary for language teachers to promote factors that facilitate communication and remove those that hinder communication. They should also be mindful of the interactions between variables while planning learning activities."

Everybody learns differently because of our differences, and there is not a fixed recipe for teaching; it has to be done according to the students differences.

It does not have to be a fixed recipe, but there must be something that might contribute to create a more comfortable environment that helps students increase their participation in speaking activities. In order to place oneself on the learners' shoes, Barjesteh, Neissi & Vaseghi (2012) conducted a research to find how contexts types or the type of activities and receiver types or how close the partner of that activity is, to the influence on the willingness to communicate in a class with students who had been learning English for about four years.

In Panel Discussion classes, self-assessment questionnaires were used to measure a person's willingness to initiate communication. It had 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Students had to indicate the percentage of times they would choose to communicate in each type of situation.

The results obtained indicate that the learners are highly willing to communicate in two context-types which are Group Discussion and Meeting. The receiver type that encourages more oral participation is the friend type. Other contexts types in which the willingness to communicate was low were Interpersonal Conversation and Public Speaking. Regarding receiver type, talking to a Stranger has the lowest degree on willingness to communicate.

According to the results, Barjesteh, Neissi & Vaseghi (2012) propose "To generate situational WTC, topics in which L2 learners are interested, about which they have background knowledge, which they have experience with, and which can drive their personal or intergroup motives need to be offered."

In addition, Baghaeil, & Dourakhshan (2012) also tried to find out reasons that influence student willingness to speak, but focused on the idea that who most orally participates in a class is the one that achieve success. Once you have the results, successful learning situations can be created.

The scale for Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language (WTC-FLS), developed by Baghaei (2011) was given to the participants along with a C-Test battery. WTC-FLS is a questionnaire with 20 statements about respondents readiness to initiate communication under different circumstances, different contexts and with different people.

Three subscales to measure willingness to communicate with three different types of receivers were applied to 148 students, and also the C-Test was used to measure general language proficiency. The participants for the three subscales were native speakers of English, non- native speakers of English, and in the school context. The author recommends computing three separate scores for the respondents, one for each subscale. Aggregating scores on all the 20 items is not recommended due to the multidimensional nature of the construct (Baghaei, 2011).

As a result, Baghaeil, & Dourakhshan (2012) found the following correlations: The correlation between WTC and success in learning English as a foreign language is moderate according to the C-Test, Willingness to communicate in the school context has a significant correlation with success shown by the highest outcomes with the C-Test, and willingness to communicate with native speakers of English has also a strong correlation with success, having the second highest results with the C-test. Willingness to communicate with non-native speakers has almost no correlation with success in foreign language learning as indicted by C-Test.

Therefore, results clearly show that success in learning English as a foreign language is a consequence of using the opportunities to communicate in this language.

It is important to mention that the learners' WTC in the school context is the best predictor of success in language learning which seems quite reasonable according to Baghaeil, & Dourakhshan (2012).

Sköld (2008) investigated the relations between students' attitudes and their behavior in communicating in English in different tasks. Two groups of students from different course levels were used for a survey and their teacher was interviewed to obtain his point of view about spoken English in the classroom.

In order to collect information to reach the goals of this investigation, three different strategies were observed. Students had to complete a questionnaire to examine their attitudes toward spoken English, lessons in both groups were filmed to investigate the actual speaking situation in the classroom, and the English teacher of the two classes was interviewed to get his impressions on spoken English in the classroom.

Regarding to motivation, the findings stated that a majority of the pupils think that spoken English is important when being abroad, that to be able to communicate people

should be able to understand and to answer back. Furthermore, knowing that English is very important today will also be useful for them in the future. Also, both groups indicated that the most important English language skill was speaking.

Anxiety has frequently been associated with speaking in public, but for both groups, it did not seem to be a general problem. However, some students suggested that it would be better if a larger number of pupils spoke during the lessons instead of only a few, which seemed to be a problem in one of the groups.

Sköld (2008) states that "the overall finding of this study is that the amount of spoken English pupils use is affected both by the group, the teacher's views on the importance of certain activities, the planning of the lesson, and the type of oral tasks assigned."

Motivation and anxiety levels are marked as important factors that influence students' participation in oral tasks. So teachers should plan in a varied way in content as in method to keep students motivated and interested. Attractive activities and the awareness of the different situations where they may need to speak English will make students more motivated to practice and increase their proficiency. They obviously believe that spoken English will be useful for them in the future. Moreover, one could assume that this would lead the pupils to take every opportunity to practice this skill since they reported that they believe spoken English to be highly useful for them later on. Sadly, anxiety about speaking in front of their peers will not allow them to do so.

#### **METHOD**

#### **Setting and Participants**

The investigation took place in a very important military high school in Guayaquil. The changes related to the demand of the Ministry of Education in making this institution into a public one –after having been one of the most important private high schools in the citymotivated the authors to choose it. It used to be an icon related to the teaching of English. However, the situation has dramatically changed in two years. It was necessary to find out how these changes affected or benefited the final product in the terms of the oral production of the language. Currently, as a public institution and guided by the National Standards for the teaching of English, students graduated from this high school must get a B1 level according to the Common European Framework of References. Besides this, the institution was also chosen as one of the pilot schools for the program of the International Baccalaureate (IB) which adds to the situation a singleness that deserves investigation. Consequently, one hundred students from Third year of Baccalaureate in five different classrooms from both morning and afternoon shifts were chosen randomly. The teachers were also observed.

#### Procedures

The main two research methods used were quantitative and qualitative. One hundred students from a public high school were chosen at random from five different classrooms after observing their classes. The total population of the sample belongs to third year of Baccalaureate in the Ecuadorian System. The type of questions applied to the participants was also an important variable considered at the moment of deciding which courses would finally be part of the sample. It was mandatory to have accurate answers, therefore, the questions were written in their mother tongue. The techniques used for the investigation consisted in surveys to students and observation to teachers. The instruments consisted on a questionnaire and an observation sheet respectively.

Students were given a questionnaire including seven questions. Four of them inquired students to express the real reasons that "motivate" –or obligate- them to participate in speaking activities in the classroom. To this respect, Locke (2013) remarks that students learn better a new language if they are really involved in activities that bring it to life instead of just listening to someone talking all the time. Due to this fact, seven decisive aspects were proposed to be chosen –more than one if necessary- as the motivation spark(s) to light the fire of willingness. One question related to the influence of the level of English in their participation and the last two questions referring to the personality type. Sixteen types were part of the survey including the description of each. Teachers were also observed using an observation sheet that was filled by themselves after the class. Questions in the observation sheet involved the aspect of motivation.

Once gathered, the data was also tabulated to be considered from a quantitative point of view. Then, all the arguments proposed to each yes/no question were also analyzed to get to accurate conclusions and provide more realistic recommendations.

#### DISCUSSION

#### Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

Ecuador is facing significant changes related to education, changes that have obligated all the system to evolve. English is used to be an optional subject. However, standards have been designed in order to get a B1 level which according to The Cambridge University Press (2006) establishes -based on the Common European Framework of References- that students at this level must be able to deal with most situations likely to manage conversations about daily topics (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events) even when they are unprepared.

But is this really happening? Do Ecuadorian students leave public high schools with this ability to maintain a conversation in English? Sadly, they do not even want to speak in their classrooms. What are the main factors affecting the correct improvement of the speaking skill? This research has proposed three of them: motivation, level of English and personality type. Seven questions were asked to one hundred students from Third Year of Baccalaureate.

This section will analyze quantitatively and qualitatively the results obtained in each question. The three questions for each factor to be interpreted will be followed by the corresponding question from the questionnaire given to each student. A pie chart will easily provide an idea to the reader of the results obtained in terms of numbers. Then, the interpretation of the researchers will complete the analysis.

#### **Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

How does motivation influence student's willingness to orally communicate?



Do you feel motivated to speak in English in the classroom?

Source: Questionnaires for students

Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

Graph 1 shows that more than half (64%) of the total sample feels motivated to speak English in class. The first fact coming to each of the sixty four students, who answered positively, in general, is that students feel comfortable enough to practice speaking in class. This original motivation may be initiated due to students' knowledge about the importance of the English language in the corporate world, the fact that to speak the dominating global language will open new doors to them, the enjoyment of speaking the language, the contact with the English language they already have in social internet media, movies, video games and such.

The lack of motivation of the other 36%, who answered negative may respond to the feeling that what they have to say might not be important or worth to hear, as stated by Locke

(2013). Other causes could be simple boredom, shyness, being mocked in front of others, the lack of interest in learning the language, the fact of being forced to learn the language, which are widely known common issues at this age.

The social and economic levels among the students might be the cause of these widely contrasting feelings, as it was observed in the classes attended.

These differences can help us to understand the result to the next question from the survey.



Do you feel motivated to speak English with your classmates?

Source: Questionnaires for students

Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

Graph 2 reveals a significant change in students' minds related to the first question. When another participant is immersed as a possible partner, -twenty students from the sixty four previously considered- moved to the other side, leaving an affirmative answer for only the 44%. Now, it is easily understood that students do feel influenced by other factors like the partner's level of English and the closeness to him/her, which was observed in all the classes. Empathy and meanness –this last one in many cases unaware- were also observed as factors involved in the confidence students need to voluntarily offer some amount of oral participation specially in pair work. This is some hardcore evidence reflecting the answers in the following question, asking students about their willingness concerning their participation in the English speaking activities.



Is your participation in the English speaking activities voluntary?



Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

When answering this question, the situation almost remains stable compared to the second question. A similar tendency in terms of numbers is perceived. Graph 3 shows that more than fifty percent (53%) prefers to avoid speaking activities. The big question now is: What happened to the initial motivation? It is worrying to notice that even when there is a considerable intention to speak in class, it suddenly declines. The initial motivation for some reason disappears, and this reason points to additional factors added in the moment to perform the act of speaking. This reveals that such factors as the partner's level of English and the closeness to him/her, to mention only a few, have a great influence on the motivation and

performance of students when participation is involved. Not liking the language, various levels of motivation, lack of initiative, personality, fear of being mocked, obligation to get good grades and other factors, among others, play a major role in students' level of participation in class. How can it be possible to find out what really sparks them the most to participate? We can find the answers in the next surveyed question.





Source: Questionnaires for students

Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

It is imperative to go further to know what the factors that motivate or compel students to speak are. This question is the key to find it out. The variables given were: type of activity, to improve language knowledge level, grades, to demonstrate knowledge, incentives, teacher's attitude and the topic. There was no limit of possible answers to this question. As a result, the highest percentage was given to the variable "grades" (18%), which shows us that there still is some feeling of obligation to participate; otherwise, grades might have been affected. This is not a good variable to come out first for sure but it clearly indicates what we already know about willingness to participate, which is deficient in most of the cases. The fact of being in their last high school year also offers them a great deal of pressure, as observed. This confirms that anxiety levels are important factors that influence students' participation in oral tasks as stated by Sköld (2008).

Then, the next variable is refreshing since students are interested in improving their level of English showing 16% of the answers. Following these two factors, two others of the list share the same percentage (14%); they are the topic and teacher's attitude. The same thing occurs with the next factors chosen by students. To demonstrate knowledge and the types of activity are also considered as motivating factors both wit the 13% of the answers.

Finally, incentives with 12% was the last factor chosen by students as a motivation input. Teachers tend to think that learners are always doing things expecting to be rewarded. Students from this high school demonstrated to be focused on getting a good level of English instead of superficial, materialistic things as incentives. This is a consequence of being almost graduated and feeling the responsibility of going to a university or getting a job. This fact reminds us that, at the end, they always expect the best from us, to be as resourceful as possible to contribute to their learning.

Regardless of the top outcome to this question, the following three agree in the circumstances that they could demonstrate their knowledge, that what they say could be

important to others, and that for the teacher any spontaneous participation will be well received as mentioned by Locke (2013).

#### How does proficiency level influence students' willingness to orally communicate?

Do you consider that your English level has any influence on your classroom English speaking activities?





Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

It is relevant that the graph 5 shows an overwhelming 90% of the students that consider their English level having a concrete effect on their English speaking activities. They have the erroneous belief that their English fluency must be in an almost perfect stage in order for them to participate in the simplest, most common English communicative activity. Fear of making mistakes is a great factor of negative influence in the practice of speaking English in class as identified by Juhana (2012). Consequently, the poor vocabulary, the distinguished pronunciation, the lack of diction, wording and deliverance backs up are part of their belief.
Therefore, their confidence is minimized throughout the whole educational journey due to the absence of teachers' intervention to change such belief by remarking that mistakes are well received, and that they are a good source for improving. There is, however, another factor which is involved in the following question, their type of personality and the influence in communicating accordingly.

#### How does personality influence students' willingness to orally communicate?



Which type of personality do you think you have?

#### Source: Questionnaires for students

Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

Berens & Nardi (1999) analyzed sixteen personality traits that help to link the respective influence each personality trait has over the different learning abilities when it comes to speaking skills. This rubric is used as a guideline to relate a basic knowledge of each personality trait to the ability being surveyed.

The results show that the personality type mostly found in students, almost one fifth of the sample, was foreseer developer with 18%. Berens & Nardi (1999) described this personality trait as one that is based on personal growth, sustaining vision, honoring the gifts of others, taking a creative approach to life, having a talent for foreseeing things, exploring issues, connecting differences and connecting people, being a practical problem solver, living with a sense of purpose, living an idealistic life often presenting them with a great deal of stress and with a need to withdraw. This personality trait categorizes such students as the ones that are interested and motivated in learning English regardless the external drawbacks or advantages involved in such process, and according to the class observations, the most proactive students regarding oral participation.

The second highest result as shown in graph 6, which was the thirteen percent of the surveyed students, corresponds to The Conceptualizer Director. According to Berens & Nardi (1999), learners that fit in this personality are the ones that maximize achievements, drive for self-mastery, build a vision, have a very long-range strategizing, realize progress toward goals, have an organized way of thinking, demonstrate talent for seeing the reasons behind things, but find it difficult to interact with others. This reveals concordance with the results of the surveys when it comes to interacting with someone in dialogues, pair work, or group work explaining the reaction and the shift that takes place from one answer, as in question number one, to the aftermath shown in question number two.

Graph 6 also shows that the next two personality traits revealed according to the survey, shared the same percentage. They are harmonizer clarifier and protector supporter with eleven percent each. Berens & Nardi (1999) allows us to see that harmonizer clarifier students go with the flow, know what is behind what is said, uncover mysteries, explore moral questions, have talent for facilitating listening, relate through stories and metaphors, balance opposites, get reacquainted with themselves, have a way of knowing what is believable, and struggle with structure and getting their lives in order somehow do not channel the whole concept and limit themselves in learning the language unless a reason, motive, cause is shown for them to do so otherwise. On the other hand, Berens & Nardi (1999) describe protector supporters as people who are good at noticing what's needed and what's valuable. They are skillful in belonging to a careful and supportive organization because they have an unselfish willingness to volunteer. They know the ins and outs but also enjoy traditions. Protector Supporters work to protect the future, they are efficient at listening and remembering, being nice and congenial but could get exasperated when people ignore rules and don't get along.

The last personality trait to be considered for this analysis is designer theorizer which according with graph 6 represents nine percent of the students. Berens & Nardi (1999) classify this type of learners as the ones that see new patterns connections, have talent for design and redesign, cross the artificial boundaries of thought, activate the imagination, clarify and define, make discoveries, reflect on the process of thinking itself and detach to analyze.

This type of students are very demanding when it comes to learning. It can be one of the most difficult groups to be motivated since their level of thinking is too elevated. They make up nine percent of the pie chart and due to their innate abilities of reasoning, inquiring, and thinking processes, they clash with the common traditional educational system, which is

still a sad reality that keeps recycling regardless of the efforts from the government to change this old fashion way of thinking in education.

With these small samples of the survey results, they cater the different types of personalities that can be found in a single classroom. Students identified themselves with fourteen of the sixteen personalities mentioned. Curiously, neither implementor supervisor nor motivator presenter can be found in graph 6 because they were not chosen by students as their personality traits. Berens & Nardi (1999) let us know that qualities like having the ability to bring order in chaotic situations, educating oneself, having an industrious, hard-working attitude, balancing work with play, having a philosophy of life and having the steps to success can be found in the implementor supervisor trait, unfortunately, yet no student met this category in the survey. The same can be said about the motivator presenter personality trait which corresponds to individuals that have a sense of style and a distinctive talent for presenting things in a useful way, they are natural actors-engaging others, take risks, and have a love of learning.

This gives us concrete evidence that we are lacking this type of students in the classroom, and the educational system is not stimulating ways to bring out this type of student and feed them to society.

The next survey question indicates without doubt what students think about their personality traits and their willing to orally participate in the class.

# Do you think your personality type influences in your classroom English speaking

#### activities?



Source: Questionnaires for students

Authors: Paredes R. & Villavicencio C.

Graph 7 demonstrates that a vast majority of students (78%) believe that their personality traits do have some type of influence on their English speaking activities in the classroom. However, when students were asked why, their response was that the level of English is what influences the most in their English speaking activities and not their personality. This somehow is a valuable response because students feel confident when they show mastery of the language in the classroom. These personality traits have a partial positive contribution because they do fuel a student's performance as long as the student feels confident about the way he or she handles the language in the classroom. On the other hand, if the student's performance is poor, personality traits will take over instead of the positive, productive performance the student should present, making it harder and even hindering the student's ability to demonstrate the management of language production.

## CONCLUSIONS

There are factors that belittle this motivation that is not found in others like the student's boredom, shyness, lack of motivation to learn the language, the small importance they believe the language has involving their surroundings.

It can also be concluded that about more than a third of those students that feel motivated in learning English lost that motivation when other student takes part in the speaking practice tasks. This apparently is due to the fact of how efficient the student is, or is not, in speaking English, giving the student enough confidence to participate or shy away.

While forty-seven percent of student volunteer their participation in the English classroom, fifty-three percent of students do not feel appropriate in doing so, instead, they feel obligated in complying with such participation because of grades even though they do not like the language, have no interest in learning it, have fear of being mocked by their peers and find it difficult to engage.

Because of the sense of responsibility students have towards the English subject, they have to compulsory work in having good grades, and that implies having to orally participate in class. On the other hand, students have a desire to improve their English level as shown in the statistical figures similar to the choice of getting good grades.

Teachers tend to emphasize grades to a maximum degree of importance making them the imperative goal instead of effective oral interactive activities to enhance learning.

Learners expect much more than the traditional classroom activities. The topics proposed and the teachers' attitudes are of the utmost importance variables so motivation can be dominant. As analyzed in question number four from the survey, students have the false belief that their English proficiency level should be very good to perform well in any speaking activity and teachers have not yet changed that belief. Nevertheless, the level of English appears to be the key factor to push students' performance to the maximum.

A wide variety of personalities is found in a single classroom. Most of the students seem to be foreseer developers or conceptualizer directors. Traditional, common objectives found in the everyday teachers' planning are not properly developing students' critical thinking as a whole. It seems that creative students are in danger of extinction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To keep and increase the initial motivation that students have regarding the oral participation in English speaking activities, teachers should plan activities involving the use of amicable, updated resources in the classroom that will keep the learning flame active, motivating and involving students, especially in producing language of their own.

It's imperative for teachers to know their students and their personality traits well enough, so they can adequately group them creating a pod of trust and confidence, where the weak student is helped or assisted by the one with a stronger speaking ability, making this process a helpful one and not one of mockery, clowning or disability in learning the language.

There should be different ways and styles of teaching the same topic in order to satisfy all those different styles of learning and personalities. This must be seen as a challenge to bring out the best of the teachers in order to fulfill their purpose which is teaching effectively.

We have to abandon the traditional, spoon fed methodology and become guides as constructivist teachers with the eagerness to shed light on students so they can discover new knowledge on their own.

The evaluation process, techniques, and instruments of assessment should be picked cautiously so they can show that learning objectives concur and comply. The evaluation is not only towards the student, but also to the teacher. Grading must not only be quantitative, but also qualitative; it must reflect an utter conception in helping the student and not showing a malicious desire to make them failure.

Teachers should promote auto evaluation as an agreeable approach for students not to feel intimidated and take it as a way to improve their learning.

Teachers should use inquiring questions to develop critical thinking in order to activate students' reasoning.

All the techniques, methods, approaches and considerations mentioned before, and anything else that we could think of, are not few neither worthless to be done to motivate students to speak, and should be included as a challenge causing a significant difference that is reflected positively in students' oral performance.

As teachers, we must foster the development of personalities like designer theorizer or analyzer operator which show a higher level of critical thinking, in order to increase the amount of students with a higher sense of commitment, who feel encouraged to be part of the speaking activities proposed.

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# ANNEXES

# UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

## La Universidad Católica de Loja

# MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

# TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

#### **CUESTIONARIO DEL ESTUDIANTE**

Estimado estudiante: Este cuestionario tiene como objetivo conocer su opinión acerca de cómo influye la motivación, nivel de conocimiento y la personalidad en el uso del idioma Inglés en las actividades de "speaking" en el salón de clases. La información que usted brindará a continuación se utilizará únicamente con fines académicos e investigativos.

#### **Datos Informativos:**

Nombre de la Institución:			
Tipo de Institución:	Pública: ( )		
	Privada: ()		
Año de educación	10mo ( )	1er año Bachillerato ( )	2do año Bachillerato
Ciudad:			

Instrucción: Marque con una X según su criterio e indique la razón de su respuesta.

1. ¿Te sientes motivado a hablar Inglés en el salón de clase?

SI	NO
¿Por qué?	

2. ¿Te sientes motivado a hablar Inglés con tus compañeros en la clase?

SI	NO
¿Por qué?	

3. ¿Tu participación en las actividades de "speaking" en el salón de clase es voluntaria?

SI	NO	
¿Por qué?		

4. ¿Qué te motiva a participar en las actividades de "speaking" que se realizan en la clase?

Tipo de actividad	( )
Incentivos	
Mejorar tu nivel	
Demostrar tu conocimiento	
El tema	
Calificación	( )
Actitud del profesor	

5. ¿Consideras que tu nivel de Inglés influye en tu participación en las actividades de "speaking"?

SI	NO
¿Por qué?	

6. ¿Qué tipo de personalidad consideras que tienes? Marque una sola opción.

1	<b>Foreseer developer</b> Superan las diferencias y se relacionan con otras personas. Además son prácticos al momento de resolver problemas.	(	)
2	Harmonizer clarifier: son analíticos, entusiastas y buscan una explicación más allá de los superficial.	(	)
3	<b>Envisioner mentor:</b> comunican y comparten valores, son intuitivos y disfrutan de procesos creativos y de trabajar y crecer en equipo.	(	)
4	<b>Discoverer advocate:</b> exploran percepciones y responden a ellas mediante un proceso creativo. Aprecian la felicidad y son intuitivos.	(	)
5	<b>Conceptualizer director:</b> visualizan las razones tras las cosas que suceden, son independientes y encuentran difícil interactuar con otras personas.	(	)
6	<b>Designer theorizer:</b> son talentosos para diseñar y rediseñar. Activan su imaginación, descubren, reflexionan sobre el proceso de pensamiento.	(	)
7	<b>Strategist movilizer:</b> son líderes y organizan los recursos para lograr el progreso. Gestionan adecuadamente todos los detalles de tiempo y recursos.	(	)

8	Explorer inventor: son creativos e ingeniosos, intentan ser diplomáticos.	(	)
9	<b>Planner inspector:</b> idean planes y tomar responsabilidades. Cultivan buenas cualidades y hacen las cosas correctas.	(	)
10	<b>Protector supporter:</b> notan lo que es necesario y valioso. Son muy buenos para escuchar y recordar. Se sienten ansiosos cuando las personas ignoran las reglas o no tienen buena relación con los demás.	(	)
11	<b>Implementor supervisor:</b> tienen talento para traer el orden en situaciones caóticas. Se auto-educan y tienen una actitud trabajadora.	(	)
12	<b>Facilitator caretaker:</b> aceptan y ayudan a los demás. Reconocen el éxito de otros y recuerdan lo que es importante.	(	)
13	Analyzer operator: resuelven problemas activamente, necesitan ser independientes. Actúan de acuerdo a su intuición.	(	)
14	<b>Composer producer:</b> toman ventaja de las oportunidades. Resuelven problemas creativamente y tienen su propio estilo personal	(	)
15	<b>Promoter executor:</b> tienen talento para negociar, les gusta actuar como consejeros. Cuidan de su familia y amigos. Se molestan cuando los otros no muestran respeto.	(	)
16	<b>Motivator presenter:</b> tienen talento para presentar las cosas de una forma útil. Respetan la libertad y toman riesgos. Algunas veces malinterpretan las intenciones de otras personas.	(	)

7. ¿Consideras que tu tipo de personalidad influye en tu participación en las actividades de "speaking"?

SI	NO
¿Por qué?	<u> </u>

# UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

# La Universidad Católica de Loja

# MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

# TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

## **OBSERVATION SHEET**

<b>INSTITUION:</b>	
DATE:	
GRADE:	

# 1. The students actively participate in speaking activities in the English classroom.

YES	NO
Why?	

# 2. The students like to talk in English with their classmates.

YES	NO
Why?	

# 3. The students are self-motivated to participate in speaking activities.

YES	NO
Why?	

4. ¿Which of the following aspects motivates the students to participate in speaking activities?

Grades	( )
Rewards	( )

Improve their English	
To impress the class with their knowledge	
The topic	
Type of activity	
Teacher's actitude	

Why

5. Which types of speaking activities do teachers use in the classroom?

•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

6. The students' knowledge of the language influences on their participation in speaking activities.

YES	NO
Why?	

7. The students' type of personality influences their participation in the speaking activities.

YES	NO
Why?	

1. ¿Te sientes motivado a hablar inglés en el salón de clase?



2. ¿Te sientes motivado a hablar inglés con tus compañeros en la clase?



3. ¿Tu participación en las actividades de "speaking" en el salón de clase es voluntaria?



4. ¿Qué te motiva a participar en las actividades de "speaking" que se realizan en la clase?





5. ¿Consideras que tu nivel de Inglés influye en tu participación en las actividades de "speaking"?

6. ¿Qué tipo de personalidad consideras que tienes? Marque una sola opción.



7. ¿Consideras que tu tipo de personalidad influye en tu participación en las actividades de "speaking"?

