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

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

Doctora

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DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación, "Students' perceptions on the factors that influence their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom in Ecuadorian high schools" realizado por Aguilar Cárdenas Andrés Eduardo, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, febrero de 2016

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Dedication

To my beloved family, especially for my kids Sebastian and Martín, who are my

motivation to face and overcome every obstacle found in my life.

With all my love to my parents who have been my support during all this years.

Andrés

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I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to my UTPL professors who
helped me achieve this important goal in my professional life. I would like especially
thank Dr. Ana Lucia Quinonez – thesis advisor – for all the help provided.

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CONTENTS

Abstract

The topic under research is "Student's perceptions on the factors that affect the student's willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom in Ecuadorian high schools", whose purpose is to know the students' perceptions on the factors that influence their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom.

The research was done in an educational institution in the city of Loja. The population from which the information was drawn was 83 students from basic (8th, 9th and 10th grades) and senior sections (1st and 2nd courses).

The general methods for this study were Qualitative and Quantitative. A questionnaire containing seven questions regarding student's perceptions was administered to the sample population as well as an observation sheet was completed during class observation. After the information was obtained, it was organized. Each question was tabulated and put into charts for later analysis. The analysis consisted on describing qualitatively and quantitatively the results of each one of the questions of the student's questionnaire.

Once concluded the study it could be said that the factors mostly influencing the willingness to communicate in English of our students are their lack of motivation and their level of knowledge.

Key words: willingness, oral communication, perceptions, EFL classrooms.

Resumen

El tema de esta investigación es "Student's perceptions on the factors that affect their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom in Ecuadorian high schools", cuyo propósito es conocer las percepciones de los estudiantes acerca de los factores que influyen en su voluntad para comunicarse de manera oral en las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera

La investigación fue realizada en una institución educativa de la ciudad de Loja, la muestra de la que se obtuvo la información fue un grupo de 83 estudiantes de educación básica (8vo, 9no y 10mo.) y de bachillerato de la escuela.

Se utilizó un enfoque cuantitativo y cualitativo. Para obtener la información se aplicó un cuestionario a los estudiantes y se utilizó una ficha de observación en la que se tomó nota del comportamiento de los estudiantes durante la clase. Cada pregunta del cuestionario aplicado a los estudiantes fue tabulada, analizada y argumentada con la información que se obtuvo en la ficha de observación y con la literatura consultada para el marco teórico la cual se obtuvo como referencia para el estudio

Una vez terminada la investigación, se puede concluir que los factores que influyen de manera determinante en la voluntad de los estudiantes para comunicarse en inglés son la motivación, la falta de confianza en ellos y el nivel de conocimiento de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: voluntad, comunicación oral, percepciones, clases de EFL

Introduction

The English language teaching-learning process requires teachers to be able to engage students in authentic and meaningful activities that develop oral communication. However, even though teachers put all their effort to promote student participation and interaction in the classroom, there is a poor response on the part of the students, who, in spite of being presented with situations to talk and provided with the corresponding activities, they still have problems in expressing their ideas orally and communicate willingly.

Knowing about the factors that influence on students willingness to orally communicate will help teachers to think and design some strategies to improve this important area of the language. This is the reason why it has been decided to work on the study titled "Students' perceptions on the factors that influence their willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classroom in Ecuadorian high schools" with the purpose of knowing what students think are the factors that influence their willingness to use the spoken form of the language in the EFL classroom. In order to achieve the objective of this study, the following questions were answered. How does motivation influence student's willingness to orally communicate? How does proficiency level influence student's willingness to orally communicate? and how does personality influence student's willingness to orally communicate?

This study will benefit not only teachers who will be able to take some action for engaging students in oral communication but also students for whom new activities and strategies will be created in order to help them overcome the difficulties they find in the process of using the language to communicate. Finally, research on education will be benefited since researchers can use this research as a base to continue working on topics like this here in Ecuador.

Previous research has already analyzed the willingness of students to communicate in English. Some of those studies are being described in the following lines: the first is the one by Kurihara (2006) whose purpose was to investigate students' attitudes toward the English oral communication classroom. In this study any limitation was found.

Another study is the one by Yashima, Shimizu, and Zenuk-Nishide (2004). The purpose of this research work was 1. To examine whether Japanese learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) results in L2 communicative behavior in intercultural contact situations both inside and outside the classroom and 2. To examine variables that affect WTC in the L2 and communicative behavior in this context. Again there were not limitations in conducting this research.

A third study related to the topic is the one done by The English Department in Indonesia Open University (2012). The purpose of the investigation was to know what psychological factors hinder students from practicing their speaking in English class and the causes of the factors as well as the possible solution to overcome those factors. There weren't limitations during this research.

During the completion of this study as a researcher I could say that one single observation does not permit to have a clear idea of the students' attitude about using the language, so I consider that the results were limited by the number of observations, for that reason, I would suggest for future research to observe more classes that can help researchers to have a better idea of the issue investigated.

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Method

Setting and participants

  This research study was conducted in a private school in the city of Loja. The population from which the information was taken was 83 students from basic (8th, 9th and10th grades) and senior sections of the school. In this school students are divided in three levels: beginners, intermediate and advanced. All the students are taught 10 hours of English per week.

Procedures

  To accomplish with the purpose of this study it was necessary first to work on collecting information from different sources such as books and journals. This step helped to collect the information needed to write the Literature review, which constitutes the scientific information on which the study was based.

  The second step was the field investigation. To complete this phase, students were administered a questionnaire containing questions which asked about their perceptions on the factors that affect their willingness to use the language (english) during English classes. It was also necessary to observe some classes in order to check students' attitudes regarding the topic investigated. The method used for this research work was quantitative-qualitative; quantitative aspect was used to describe the results in numbers and qualitative to analyze, describe and interpret the results.

  The information obtained from each question was tabulated and expressed in charts to be analyzed. All the analysis was supported with the information gotten from the observation as well as with the information from the Literature Review.

Discussion

Literature Review

For this section bibliographic investigation was done. The research included information regarding the topics related to the researched issue as well as some data from papers concerning the topic and objective of the investigation. All the information gathered was summarized and organized inside what constitutes the Literature Review which constitutes the theoretical support for the present research work. One of the topics researched was motivation, which will be described bellow:

Motivation

Motivation is an important issue when getting students to speak in a foreign language. In this regard, Glisan and Shrum (2000) assert that motivation is the direction of attentional effort, the proportion of the total intentional effort directed to the task and the extent to which attentional effort toward the task is maintained over time. Additionally, Gardner, (as cited in Glisan and Shrum, 2000) states that motivation is a very important factor and therefore one of the most complex issues in learning a new language, therefore, teachers need to identify the ways to motivate an individual to succeed in language learning.

Motivating students to talk is a very important issue when teaching English. Regarding this, Lightbown and Spada (2006) argue that in order for getting students to talk, the content or topic to be practiced must be interesting and relevant to the student's age and level of ability; the learning goals even challenging, must be manageable and clear; activities, tasks and materials also must be varied and reassured. They also say that the use of co-operative rather than competitive goals is also important, since students must work together in order to complete speaking tasks. All of the above motivates and helps students to develop speaking and

increases the self-confidence of students to talk, including weaker ones, because every participant in a co-operative task plays an important role. Knowing that their team-mates are counting on them can increase student's motivation to talk.

In order to get students to talk it is necessary to apply some specific strategies. Regarding them, Glisan and Shrum (2000) mention that some ways teachers can improve motivation to talk are:

1. By identifying the reasons why learners are studying a language.

2. By shaping the learners beliefs about success and failure in L2 learning.

3. To explaining the rewards and benefits of L2 learning.

4. By providing a positive classroom atmosphere where language anxiety is minimum.

5. By encouraging learners to set their own personal goals for learning and to develop their own intrinsic reward system.

Dweck and Dweck and Elliot (as cited in Sternberg, 2013) have shown that individuals' need to enhance speaking skills is one of the most important sources of motivation. It drives metacognitive skills, which activate learning and thinking skills which enable students' level of expertise to increase and therefore their motivation to talk improves. All of this depends in the kind of motivation students have developed.

Regarding types of motivation, Sternberg (2013) says that there are two types of them; the first one is called *achievement motivation* which is defined as behaviors dedicated to developing and demonstrating higher abilities; people who are high in achievement motivation seek moderate challenges and risks, are attracted to tasks that are neither very easy nor very hard, they are strivers-constantly trying to better themselves and their accomplishment. The other type of motivation referred to by this author is *competence motivation,* which refers to personal beliefs in students own

ability to solve the problem at hand. Indeed, motivation is the indispensable element needed for school success, without it, the student never even tries to learn.

Contrary to Sternberg, Brown (1981) identifies three types of motivation: the first one is *global motivation*, which refers to a broad disposition to engage in activities with an intrinsic or extrinsic orientation. Regarding language learning, it can be said that it is the general orientation to the goal of learning a second language; the second one is *situational motivation*, which varies according to the situation in which learning takes place; and the third one *task motivation*, which is the motivation for performing particular learning tasks.

Proficiency level

According to the Council of Europe (2001) the common European Framework constitutes a guide for English teachers and learners. It provides a common basis for elaborating language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. Besides, it describes in a very simple language what language students have to learn to do in order to use the language communicatively. It also says what knowledge and skills students have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency for all the skills, which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. These proficiency English levels which go from A1 to C2 are six (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). Each one of them has to fulfill certain parameters and levels of knowledge. Regarding the speaking skill, the requirements in each one of the levels are the following:

In A1, the speaker 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 the speaker formulate his/her message. The speaker in this level is also able to ask and answer

simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. Simple phrases and sentences are used to describe where he/she and people he /she knows live.

In A2, the speaker is able to communicate in simple and routine tasks which require a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities; the speaker can also handle very short social exchanges, even though he/she usually does not understand enough the conversation. He/she is also able to describe in simple terms his/her family and other people, living conditions, educational background and his/her present or most recent job by using series of phrases and sentences.

For B1 level it has been established that the learner can deal with most situations arising whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. He/she also can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar, personal interest or everyday life topics (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events). He/she describes experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions by connecting phrases in a simple way. Gives brief reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. He can also narrate stories or relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions.

Level B2 indicates that speakers in this level can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. They can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views. They can also present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest. They can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Speakers in level C1 are able to express themselves fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. They can also

formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate their contribution skillfully to those of other speakers. They can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

The highest level of proficiency C2 permits the speakers take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. It also permits express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If they do have a problem they can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it. They 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.

Personality

Personality is another important factor in determining the willingness to orally communicate of English students. Hereafter are described the sixteen types of personality stated by Drenth (2013).

One of the types of personality mentioned by this author is The Protector, people of this type are quietly forceful, original, and sensitive. They are also people who tend to stick to things until they are done. An important characteristic is that they are extremely intuitive about people, and concerned for their feelings. They handle well-developed value systems which they strictly adhere to; maybe this is why they are well-respected for their perseverance in doing the right thing. They like to be individualistic rather than leading or following.

The Scientist is another type of personality. It is said that this type of people are considered to be independent, original, analytical, and determined. They have an

exceptional ability to turn theories into solid plans of action. They possess highly value knowledge, competence, and structure. They tend to be driven to derive meaning from their visions. As long-range thinkers, they have very high standards for their performance, and the performance of others. They have the ability to be natural leaders, but will follow others if they trust the existing leaders.

The next type of personality is the Thinker; these people are logical, original, and creative thinkers. Their personality allows them to become very excited about theories and ideas. They are exceptionally capable and driven to turn theories into clear understandings. They have a sense of high value knowledge, competence and logic. They are also mainly quiet and reserved, that is why they are hard to get to know well others. They are often individualistic, without any interest in leading or following others.

Another type of personality is the Idealist one. Idealists are often quiet, reflective, and idealistic. They are always interested in serving humanity. Their well-developed value system, strive them to live in accordance with values and moral. They are characterized by being extreme loyal. They are easily adaptable and laid-back unless a strongly-held value is threatened. They can usually be talented writers. Another characteristic of this type of personality is that they are mentally quick, and able to see possibilities. Their interest in understanding and helping people is great.

The Inspirer is another type of personality referred to in this section; these people are characterized by being enthusiastic, idealistic, and creative for that reason they are able to do almost anything that interests them. This personality type gives them great people skills. They are individuals that need to live their life in accordance with their inner values. They are usually excited by new ideas, but they don't like a detail, that is why they are often bored with them. Another important

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characteristic of this personality type is that they are open-minded and flexible, and possess a broad range of interests and abilities, for that reason they can perform many different kinds of jobs.

The Visionary type of personality is also addressed here; people with this type of personality are creative, resourceful, and intellectually quick. Good at a broad range of things. Enjoy debating issues, and may be into "one-up-manship". They get very excited about new ideas and projects, but may neglect the more routine aspects of life. Because they are generally outspoken and assertive, they enjoy people and are stimulating company. They possess excellent ability to understand concepts and apply logic to find solutions.

Another type of personality to refer to is the Giver; they are popular and sensitive, with outstanding people skills. They are usually externally focused, with real concern for how others think and feel and usually dislike being alone. They see everything from the human angle, and dislike impersonal analysis. One important characteristic is that they are very effective at managing people issues, and leading group discussions, most of the time they are interested in serving others, and probably place the needs of others over their own needs.

The Executive is one more type of personality, people with this type of personality are assertive and outspoken - they are driven to lead. Their excellent ability to understand difficult organizational problems and create solid solutions makes them very interesting people. Besides they are intelligent and well-informed, they usually excel at public speaking, that is why they value knowledge and competence, and usually have little patience with inefficiency or disorganization.

The next personality type to address here is the Doer; they are people who are friendly, adaptable and action-oriented. "Doers" who are focused on immediate

results are people who live in the here-and-now; they're risk-takers who live fast-paced lifestyles. Most of the time these people are impatient and do not like long explanations. In spite they are extremely loyal to their peers; they are not usually respectful of laws and rules if they get in the way of getting things done.

There is another type of personality, which is the Performer; these people are People-oriented and fun-loving, they make things more fun for others by their enjoyment. They like to live for the moment that is why they love new experiences. They dislike theory and impersonal analysis. They are always interested in serving others. Most of the time, they are likely to be the center of attention in social situations. Also they are characterized by being well-developed common sense and practical ability.

The Caregiver, is the next type of personality to mention here; this is warm-hearted, popular, and conscientious type of personality. Individuals with this kind of personality tend to put the needs of others over their own needs. They possess a strong sense of responsibility and duty. These people also value traditions and security. Most of the time they are people interested in serving others. They need positive reinforcement to feel good about themselves. They have also a well-developed sense of space and function.

The Guardian, is the type of personality which is characterized by being practical, traditional, and organized and usually likely to be athletic. They are not interested in theory or abstraction unless they see the practical application which makes them have clear visions of the way things should be. They are also characterized by being loyal and hard-working and like to be in charge. These people are exceptionally capable in organizing and running activities. Finally, they are always characterized as "Good citizens" who value security and peaceful living.

The Mechanic is another type of personality; these people are quiet and reserved, interested in how and why things work. They handle excellent skills with mechanical things. Risk-takers who they live for the moment. Usually interested in and talented at extreme sports. Uncomplicated in their desires. Loyal to their peers and to their internal value systems, but not overly concerned with respecting laws and rules if they get in the way of getting something done. Detached and analytical, they excel at finding solutions to practical problems.

The Artist, is another type of personality, people who have this type of personality are quiet, serious, sensitive and kind. They do not like conflict, and are not likely to do things which may generate conflict. They are also loyal and faithful. They have also extremely well-developed senses, and aesthetic appreciation for beauty. They are not interested in leading or controlling others. Another characteristic is that they are flexible and open-minded and are original and creative. They enjoy the present moment.

The next type of personality is the Nurturer, individuals who have this personality are quiet, kind, and conscientious; they can be dependent on to follow through. They usually put the needs of others above their own needs. Another characteristic is that they are stable and practical and value security and traditions. They possess a well-developed sense of space and function. They have a rich inner world of observations about people. Their extremely perceptive sense of other's feelings makes them interested in serving others.

The last type of personality is the Duty Fulfiller, these people are characterized by being serious and quiet and mostly interested in security and peaceful living. Another characteristic is that they are also extremely responsible, and dependable. They possess a well-developed power of concentration. They are

usually interested in supporting and promoting traditions and establishments. As they are well-organized and hardworking, they work steadily towards identified goals. They can usually accomplish any task once they have set their mind to it.

Teaching speaking

Chaney (1998) states that speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts." (p. 13) Even though speaking is considered a crucial part of second language learning, its teaching has been neglected and English language teachers have continued to do it just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should be to improve students' communicative skills. This can help students to be able to express themselves and follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance, (Kayi, 2006)**.**

According to Lindsay (2000) the achievement of speaking skills depends largely on being able to listen and understand what is said to us. A learner will have difficulty speaking English if he or she doesn´t receive the proper training and organized practice in both listening and speaking.

Lindsay (2000) has also stated that speaking can be introduced through three stages, they are: eliciting, restricted oral practice, and developing oral fluency. Bellow a description of each one of them.

In the first stage (eliciting), teachers should aim to develop the students´ confidence in responding to specific questions or prompts. For this author, eliciting is the beginning of the development of fluency; it's not the time to concentrate on accuracy and highlight errors.

This same author suggests some ideas for performing this first stage. One of them is by asking questions with what, who, where, why, when and how rather than yes/no questions. Another way would be making students to follow some instructions that require verbal interaction, such as asking students to describe a picture or give some information. Still another way of eliciting student's information is by using realia, which promotes students to talk about the objects presented. One more way would be by using visual aids such as drawings, flashcards, videos or videotapes. If you ask the students to give definitions or tell some synonyms and antonyms, you can elicit from them the meaning of words. Also, many verbs and adjectives (sad, happy, and angry) can be easily elicited; this can be done by using gestures and facial expressions. Another way is to use prompts, cues, and questions in social situations. Also, by making lists of words from previous lessons on the board or in cards students can review vocabulary, this way teachers can elicit students to remember and use key vocabulary. Finally by using translations teachers can elicit an equivalent word of the word given.

This same author says that the second stage is the one called controlled practice which is essential in developing speaking skills. It is also known as an enabling phase because it focuses on developing accuracy through restricted or controlled oral practice. In this stage learners have the opportunity to practice new language in a limited form. It can be compared to free practice, which involves learners producing language by using the target content freely. Practice in this stage includes asking student to perform specific tasks as for example, give some cards to talk about specific items on it. Another way of doing it can be by giving some short dialogues to complete and practice. Sometimes it is also good to ask questions such

as "Which do you prefer, _ or _ ?" this is a very simple and powerful way of making the students practice the language in a restrictive way.

In *controlled activities* there is only one correct response, the teacher already knows the language which the students will produce. For example, if the teacher were to use flashcards as a prompt for students to practice vocabulary, there is only one correct answer for each flashcard. The same happens if students worked in pairs to complete gaps in a dialogue. Controlled activities allow students to solely focus on a single item to talk about. As it can be seen, controlled practice restrict students on the use of language; however it can still be meaningful because it allows the learners to personalize the activity.

And finally, the third stage, *developing oral fluency*, is the most interesting for teachers and students because it introduces topics that are stimulating, controversial, and relevant to students´ lives and aims. According to Richards (2007), "Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings and work to avoid communication breakdowns." (p.13). For this author, activities that focus on fluency are the ones that:

- Reflect natural use of language

- Focus on achieving communication

- Require meaningful use of language

- Require the use of communication strategies

- Produce language that may not be predictable

- Seek to link language use to context

Regarding teaching speaking, Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) say that every opportunity for speaking in the classroom should be taken. According to him, it is by trying to communicate that students realize their need for language and, by speaking, that they increase their fluency and confidence. At first, students may be self-conscious and reluctant to speak in front of a lot of people, but later they will be more willing to use the language.

Regarding strategies for making students to talk, Harmer (2001) says that teachers can ask students to act out scenes from plays and/or from their course book, these acting can be filmed. Students can also act out dialogues they have written themselves, which frequently involves them in coming out to the front of the class; however, when choosing who should come out to the front of the class teachers need to be careful not to choose the shyest students first. According to the same author, the following activities can also help to develop oral communication:

Communication games, these are designed to provoke communication between students. These type of activities frequently depend on an information gap so that one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture or find similarities and differences between pictures.

Prepared talks, where a student (or students) makes a presentation on a topic of their own choice. Such talks are not designed for informal spontaneous conversation, they are prepared, and they are more writing-like than this. However if possible, students should speak from notes rather than from a script.

Simulation and role-play, many students derive great benefit from simulation and role play. Students "simulate" a real-life encounter, as if they were doing so in the real world, either as themselves in that meeting or airplane, or taking on the role of a character different from themselves or with thoughts and feelings they do not

necessarily share. Role-plays are effective when they are open-ended, so that different people have different views of what the outcome should be, and a consensus has to be reached.

Until here some author's information has been included about important topics related to oral communication; however, it is necessary to refer to some studies which are related to the factors that influence on student's willingness to orally communicate in the EFL classrooms.

The first study is the one by Kurihara (2006). In this study the purpose was to investigate students' attitudes toward the English oral communication classroom through the following questions: 1. how did student attitudes change in one high school English oral communication class where students were reticent in the activities? 2. What hindered their spoken performance? 3. How could I eliminate the restricting factors to encourage students to speak more in the classroom?

The instruments for gathering data consisted of questionnaires conducted at both the beginning and end of the project as well as student journals written immediately after the group activity. Field notes taken while observing students in class, and interviews with student volunteers carried out at the end of the project were also considered. The questionnaires administered at the beginning of the project dealt with students' goal awareness in English learning as well as their expectations of the oral communication class, as measured on an eight degree Likert scale. Students were also asked about expectations of the proficiency level they aimed for in the English oral communication class as well as their perception of their present proficiency level.

The results show that there was some tension in whole class activities which seemed to be caused in part by the gap between the high expectations of students and

the difficulty of the material which affected students' attitude in group activities as well. Some of the conclusions were: students found it difficult to engage themselves in the task when the level of the material was too difficult. Group talk activity also revealed how peer relationships in each group affected student attitudes, the results were better when they formed their own groups because the activity became much livelier. Student generally felt more secure and relaxed when talking with peers in small groups, but they had to go through stress and pressure when they took the role of reporter.

Another study is the one by Yashima, Shimizu, and Zenuk-Nishide (2004) whose purpose was 1. To examine whether Japanese learners' WTC results in L2 communicative behavior in intercultural contact situations both inside and outside the classroom, and 2. To examine variables that affect WTC in the L2 and communicative behavior in this context. In doing so, the relationship between the construct international posture, confidence in L2 communication, and L2 learning motivation will be explored.

To fulfill the objectives, a set of questionnaires with attitudinal/motivational measures and WTC scales were administered to students for measuring the following issues: motivation intensity, desire to learn English, tendency of approach-avoidance, interest in international vocational/activities, interest in foreign affairs, willingness to communicate in English, communication anxiety in English, perceived communication competence in English and frequency of communication in and outside the classroom. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)–Institutional Testing Program (ITP) was also administered after matriculation of students participating in this study. The results of the research show that those who are more willing to communicate in various interpersonal situations in the L2 tend to

initiate communication in the classroom, and that those who recorded a higher score in WTC before departure were inclined to engage in communication with host nationals more frequently and for longer periods of time once they were into the sojourn than those who were less willing to communicate.

A third study related to the topic is the one done by The English Department in Indonesia Open University (2012). The purpose of the investigation was to know what psychological factors hinder students from practicing their speaking in English class and the causes of the factors as well as the possible solution to overcome those factors. This study employed observations, questionnaires and interviews. The observation was carried out to find out students' participations and responses in speaking activity. Open-ended questionnaires were addressed to students in order to know the psychological factors that hinder them from speaking. The interview was conducted to gain further information about psychological factors that hinder students from speaking, the causes of the factors as well as the solutions to overcome the factors. This interview was addressed to 12 students by reference of their English teachers: 4 students of high achievers, 4 students of medium achievers, and 4 students of low achievers.

The study reveals that most students are affected by psychological factors in terms of practicing speaking in English class. Of the five psychological factors, fear of mistake ranges first (37%) while shyness is the second (26%), followed by anxiety (18%), lack of confidence (13%), and the last is lack of motivation (6%).

Another study on a related topic is the one by Peng (2006), in which the researcher tried to know 1. To what extent L2 WTC correlated with the tripartite components of integrative motivation and 2. if the tripartite components of

integrative motivation were powerful in predicting L2 WTC.

The results of the correlation showed that there were significant positive relationships of L2 WTC to the attitude toward the learning situation and motivation.

The last study regarding willingness to orally communicate is the one by Alemi, Mesbah & Tajeddin (2013). Its purpose was to examine L2 learners' WTC in an EFL context and also to determine the influence of learner variables underlying WTC in English among foreign language learners. A WTC questionnaire was used as the instrument. It assessed language learners' willingness to communicate in English through 12 items in terms of three types of receivers, namely friends, acquaintances, and strangers. This questionnaire was administered in four situations including public speaking, talking in group, group discussion, and interpersonal conversation. To control the potential effects of English language knowledge on responding to the items this instrument was translated into the participants' mother tongue. At the end of the questionnaire, some demographic questions were proposed. The participants indicated their age, gender, major, proficiency level, whether they had been abroad and communicated with English speaking people, their length of studying English, and their personality type.

The results show that regarding the aim of modern language learning and pedagogy, which is to communicate effectively both inside and outside the classroom, willingness to communicate plays an important role in second language learning and communication. Some of the learners' variables such as proficiency level, length of studying a foreign language, being abroad, and the opportunity for communication with foreigners were found to influence EFL learners' willingness to communicate. By contrast, the other variables, namely, age,

major, gender, and personality type, were found to have no substantial effect on

EFL learners' willingness to communicate.

Description, analysis and interpretation of results

This section describes, analyzes and interprets the data obtained from eighty three students in a private high school in Loja city. The analysis was done quantitatively and qualitatively. In the quantitative part, results expressed in figures are shown, and in the qualitative, each item in the questionnaire given to the students was analyzed and interpreted in order to find out which the factors that influence students' oral participation in the classroom are. All the analysis is supported with the notes from the class observations and the concepts and ideas in the literature review.

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

Do you feel motivated to speak English in class?
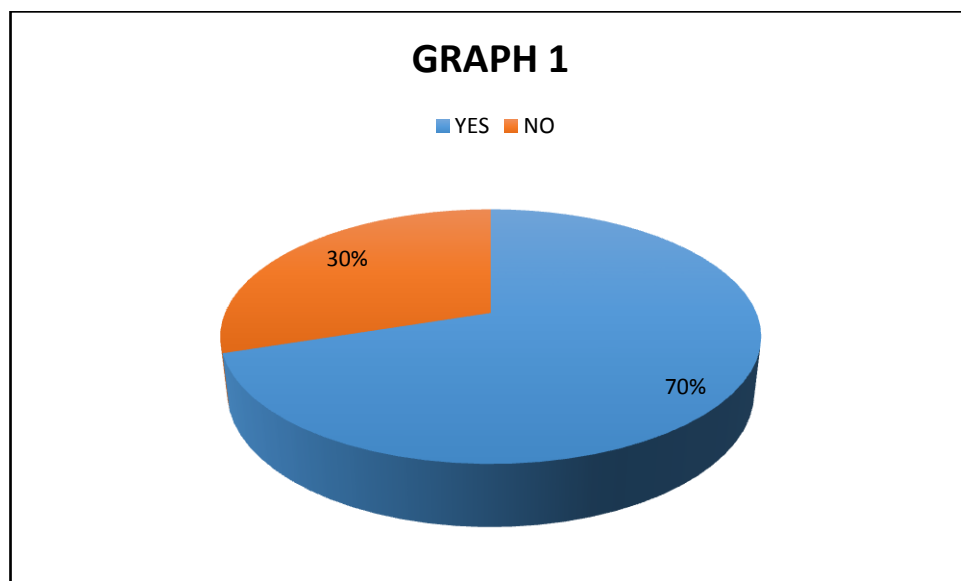
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

As it can be seen in graph 1, 70% of students answered that they feel motivated to speak the target language during the class period and only 30 % of students responded negatively to this question. The high percentage of students

whose answer was positive, expressed that their motivation comes from the belief that English is very important in their lives, so they want to learn it. According to the information obtained through the observation sheet, for these students speaking in class is a way to learn and increase their knowledge and their ability to express their ideas and feelings, and of course improve and be better at speaking. The results show that they are really motivated to learn and this makes them to be ready to talk.

In the observation sheet it was also found that another factor that motivates students to speak in the English class is the way of teaching and the activities they perform in classes, they said that they really like it when the activities planned to be performed in classes are interesting. It is important to report that some of the students also said that if they are presented with different and interesting activities they tend to be willing and motivated to perform those activities. Also they said that the activities planned by the teacher are one of the fundamental factors that motivate them to speak during English classes. Regarding this, Lightbown & Spada (2006) state that in order to motivate students to talk in class, the activities presented must be interesting and relevant to the students; idea which confirms the findings of this this research.

On the other hand, during the observation it was also noticed that some students were not interested in talking. This lack of interest came from the fact that they do not like English. The answers provided in the observation sheet let us know that they do not find important to learn English and also that they do not like it as well as that they do not understand it, so there is not motivation to learn the language and less to participate in oral activities. As it can be seen, Shrum (2000) is correct when he says that motivation is a very important factor for learning and therefore one of the most complex issues in learning a new language.

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Regarding this lack of motivation, other interesting responses are related with lack of confidence on the part of students, they feel they do not know how to express their ideas in English and that is why they do not want to talk during classes. They are afraid their partners laugh at them if they talk, so they prefer not to say anything.

Lastly, it is important to mention that other students said that they are not able to understand the teacher. They hope he could speak Spanish during the English class so they would know what he asks them to do or to talk about. As they do not understand their teachers' instructions, they prefer not to say anything because they do not want to make mistakes in front of all their partners.

*Do you feel motivated to speak English with your classmates?*

GRAPH 2

■ YES ■ NO

33%

67%
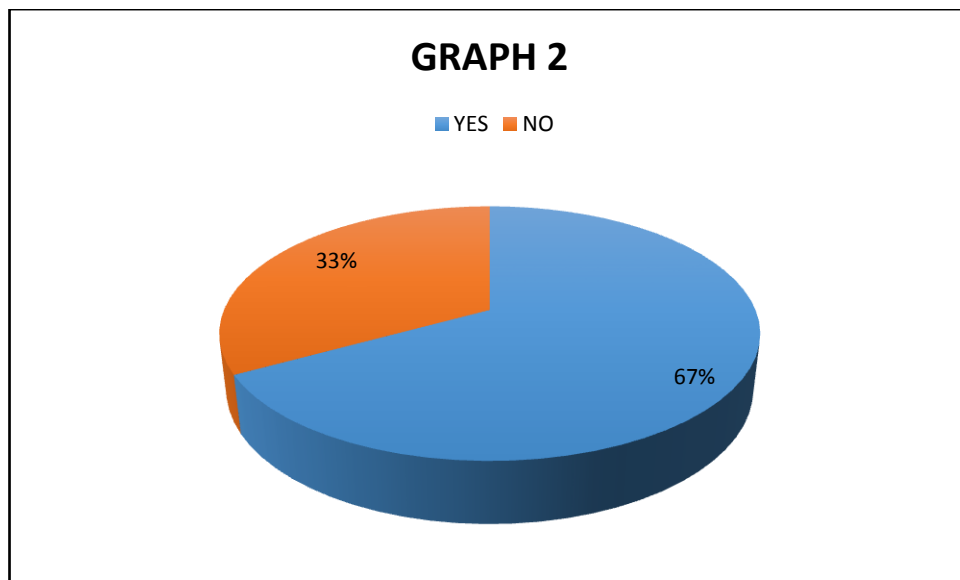
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

In the graph above it is seen that in question 2 the results are: 67% answered "yes" and 33% said "no". The students, who answered "yes" to the question whether they feel motivated to speak the language with their classmates, claimed that they are motivated to participate in oral activities because it allows them to interact among their classmates and it also helps them to learn and improve their language. They also

think their classmates do understand them, so they feel confident and motivated to talk to them. Also they consider that their good level permits them to express their ideas clearly which, motivates them to talk too. Most of them feel and agree that in an English class it is necessary to use the language and practice it orally. As it is seen, a great number of students are really motivated to talk and find the English class the perfect time to talk to their classmates; this is why they always speak in English in class and with their classmates.

On the other hand, the rest of students (33%) said that their lack of motivation to use English to talk to their classmates comes from the fact that they do not understand what their peers say; neither they know how to express themselves in English. They also affirmed that they would feel motivated to talk if they could do it in Spanish; for these students it is better to speak Spanish to understand what they have been told; others say they feel demotivated because they are unable to follow a conversation, that is why the few occasions they talk are when they are required to do so because they do not understand what they are being told so they are unable to know how to follow a conversation. Some others acknowledged that (contrary to them) most of their classmates speak fluently, for this reason they do not feel motivated to talk to them in class. All these answers provided in the instruments administered to students confirm that these students are not motivated at all because they do not have the linguistic level required to talk, which is demotivating for them and does not le them to talk.

Do you participate voluntarily in speaking activities during the English classes?
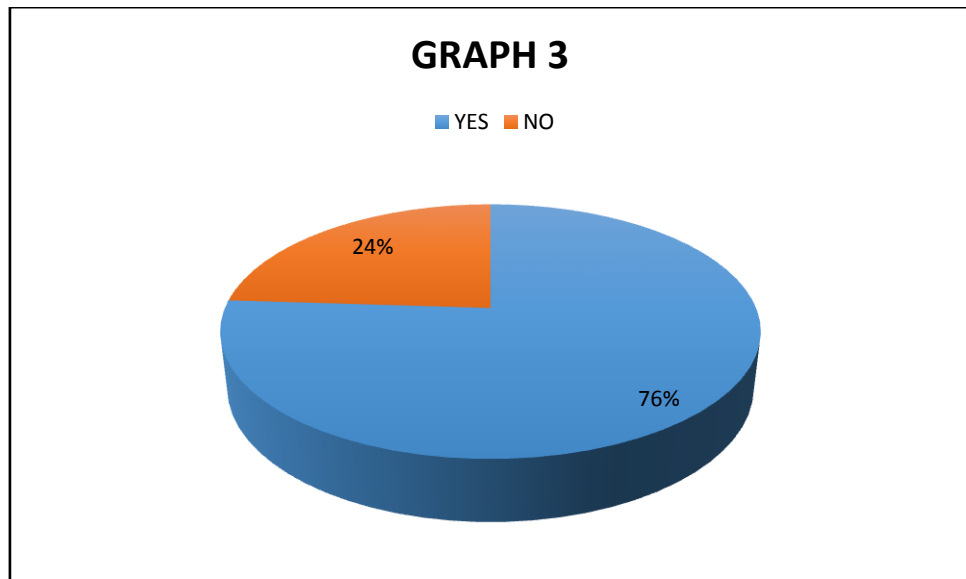
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

The graph above shows that a high percentage of students (76%) claimed that their participation is voluntarily, while a low percentage (24%) have assured that their participation is not willing.

Regarding affirmative answers it is important to mention that it was found that most students in this group affirm that they are willing to speak in class because they are able to do it. For this group of students participating in speaking activities is a practice that allows them to put into practice what they know. Others mention that they participate in speaking activities willingly because of the type of activities presented by the teacher. Again, for these 76 % of students, activities which are interesting call their attention, make them feel exited and lead them to perform the tasks asked by the teacher without being pressured to do so, although it does not happen as frequent as it should be.

During the observation it was noticed that students did not want to participate in speaking activities because for them it was difficult to engage themselves in speaking activities when the level of the activities was difficult. This is why I feel that for the students to be successful, the teacher needs to prepare activities that adjusts to the level of all the students in the class, so they would be able to work on them without feeling they are going to fail, which gives them confidence and willingness to participate in oral tasks.

The rest of the students, the ones that did not like to participate, said that they do not like to talk in class, neither participate in speaking activities because they feel they do not have the competence to do it, they think they cannot express their ideas in English, so they prefer not to talk. When they are forced to do it, they feel nervous and afraid of making mistakes. Others mention that sometimes the teacher presents topics which they are unable to talk about.

During the observation it was noticed that it is the lack of vocabulary which does not permit them to participate in oral activities. For this reason, I would suggest teachers to prepare the students for the oral activities. One way of preparing them could be giving them a set of vocabulary words that helps them to develop the topic they could use in the oral activity. As mentioned by Jones (2008) making sure that students know vocabulary in advance is a teacher´s task which constitutes a must for students being able to talk and participate in oral activities. Another way of helping them to participate willingly in speaking activities could be by providing them the topic in advance, so they prepare it at home and have the opportunity of coming to the class with ideas for talking. These activities give confidence and make students willing to participate in class taking part in speaking activities.

Which of the following aspects do motivate you to participate in speaking activities?
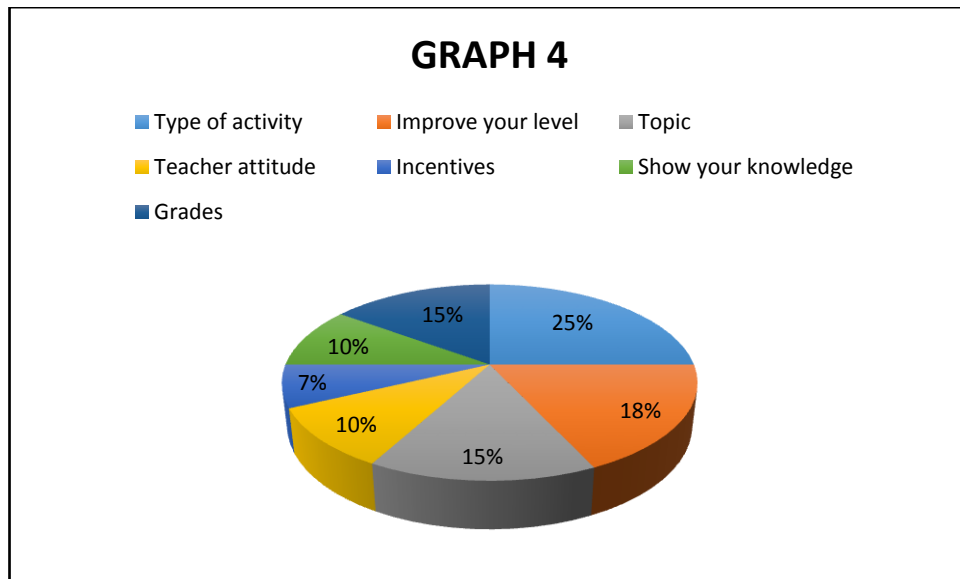
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

The chart shows that there is a balance among the reasons for students to participate in oral activities. 25% percent of students claimed that they like the type of activities presented by the teacher. As it was said in a previous question, the type of activities presented by the teacher plays a very important role in student's willingness to participate in oral tasks. In this question the students said that if the activities are interesting, they feel motivated to participate in oral activities. Also, from the observation it can be said that easy activities make students more willing to participate because they feel more confident.

Regarding the second higher percentage, it is seen that 18% of students feel that one of the motivations to talk is learning. Some students think that participating in oral activities is a practice for them and of course this practice permits them to improve their level and to learn more. From the observation it can be added that there were some students that when presented with a new activity they tried to participate;

they were looking for new vocabulary and asking the teacher how to say something they wanted to say. All of this shows interest in learning. It also means that they are interested in improving their level.

The chart also shows that 15% of the students mentioned that the topic they have to talk about is one of the things that motivates them to participate. Some students answered that they prefer to talk about topics they are interested in. When a topic is not of their interest they do nothing for participating. Besides, they said some of the topics are too difficult to talk about; students said they do not feel confident to talk about certain topics because they do not have enough vocabulary. This shows that students do not have the linguistic competence, and they are aware of it, this is why they do not take part in oral activities. In my opinion, teachers need to adjust the level of difficulty according to the group of students they are working with. One suggestion could be to present different topics of different difficulty level and let students to talk about the one they feel more confident about. Or they can let students to choose a topic they would like to talk about. In my experience if students talk about something they like, they feel confident. The reasons for this low percentage of the students in favor of the topic as a motivation to participate can be that teachers do not look for topics according to the level and preference of students.

Similarly, 15 % of students think of the score as a motivation to talk. They believe that participating in speaking activities during classes would allow them to get good grades.. This percentage of students is not too high, which means that students are not very interested in grades. However, during the observation it was seen that when teachers offered to give them some extra points, some students tried to do their best in order to get those points, it means that grades are a motivation for the students to participate in speaking activities. In my opinion, giving out some

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extra points can help in certain circumstances but not always. Besides, students need to know that they have to earn points in all type of activities during the whole class and under any circumstances, not only when they are offered extra points.

The chart also shows that 10% of students mentioned that the attitude of the teacher motivates them to participate. This percentage shows that maybe some of the teachers in the institution are not showing a good attitude as teachers. Maybe they are showing disinterest in their students, maybe they are not being patient enough or maybe they are not fulfilling their role as teachers. Something I noticed during observations was that one of the teachers did not like to work with students who did not have a good level, if they asked something he/she ignored them; they were always asking questions to the ones who showed linguistic competence. I think this is not a good attitude. The low students are the ones who mostly need attention from the teacher and who need more practice, motivation and encouragement from the part of the teacher. If students feel they are important for the teacher, they can feel more confidence and be willing to participate.

10% of students mentioned that showing their knowledge to the teacher and to the class is something that motivates them to be part of speaking activities. In fact, some students mentioned that they liked to talk in class because they wanted their teacher knows they can speak in English. However there were few students who had this feeling, and I think these students were the ones who really knew how to talk in English, so they were confident about their linguistic knowledge.

Finally 7% claimed that they participated and felt motivated because of the stimulus they received from the teacher. Regarding this, it is important to mention that students need some support to perform their talking activities; their minds need

to be activated in order to be able to talk, Nicholson and Jhonston (2008). This is one of the teacher's roles during speaking activities.

As we have seen through these results, the students are motivated in almost all the circumstances; however, it is noticed that they are mostly motivated by the type of activity and by the topic presented to work with. This shows that students are interested in learning but teachers need to know how to engage them into the activities by showing them attractive activities and material.

How does proficiency level influence student's willingness to orally communicate?

Do you think that your proficiency level influences on your participation in the speaking activities?

GRAPH 5

YES ■ NO

12%

88%
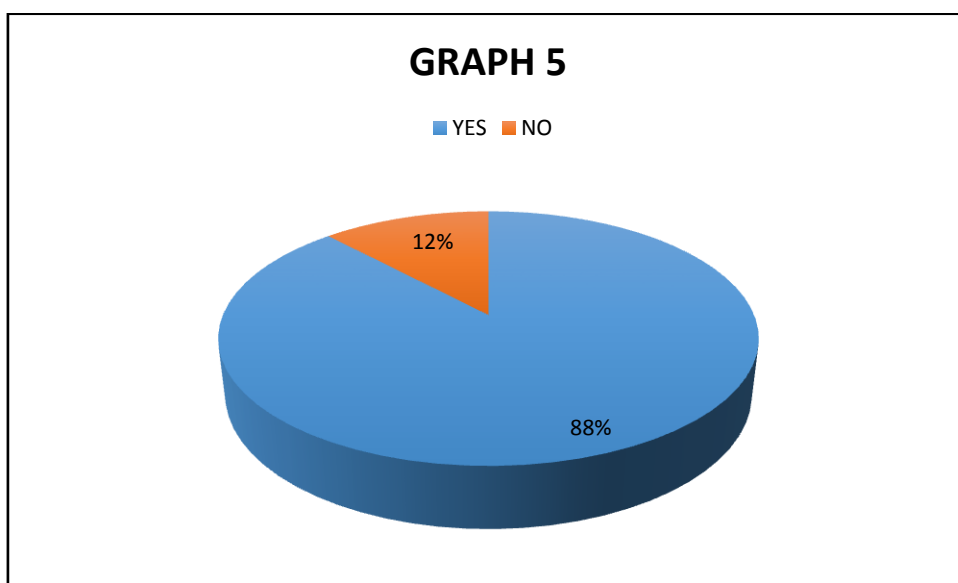
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

Regarding this question it is necessary to say that 88% of students believe that having good knowledge of the language definitely influences their participation in class activities. Although 2% did not consider this as a defining cause.

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As we can see, there is a large percentage of students who think that their level definitely influences on their participation on speaking activities. Some, of them considered that if they have a good level they are able to participate more in speaking activities and as a consequence, learn more. They feel like their English level helps them to perform better during practice. They feel more confidence; as a result, they are always willing to participate. This is coherent with what was seen during classes where it was noticeable that students with good English level were the ones who always wanted to participate. Besides, their level was used not only to improve their learning but also to improve their grades.

On the other hand, for those students whose answer was negative, it is important to mention that most of them claimed as the main reason for not participating in speaking activities the fact that they do not understand the language. They also said that they are not ready to use the language because they feel they are not linguistically secure of what they are asked and how to respond to it. During the observation it was seen that some of the students who answered that the English level does not influence their participation in speaking activities were the ones who had low level of English. Besides, the students who considered themselves as having a low English level were not willing to participate, when asked to do it, they hesitated and just said few words, this confirms that the level does influence on students willingness to participate in speaking activities.

According to Nation (2013) the learners' knowledge deals with their employment of fluency and accuracy, and this with the practice students are exposed to, therefore; the ability to speak emerges by itself when they have practiced enough and are ready to do it; as a consequence they feel more comfortable making use of the language, it means that the more practice, the more accuracy and the more

participation. Again, teachers must work on helping students to reach the linguistic level that students need to start talking and feeling confident about their speaking performance.

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

What type of personality do you have?
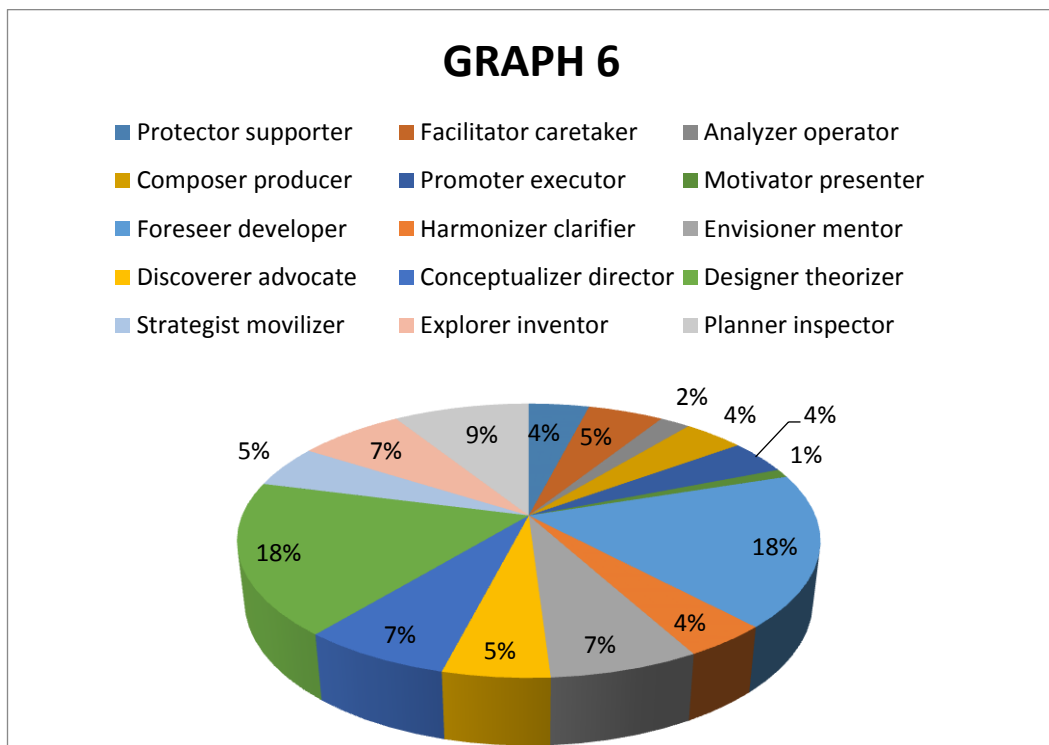
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

Regarding this chart, there was a variety of answers provided. As 16 personality types were given as choices; students had a large list from where to choose, that is why, percentages are divided and as a result very low percentages are shown.

As it seen, two personality types are the most representative since they have the higher percentage. They are the *foreseer developers* and the *designer theorizer*

which have been chosen by 18% percent of students each. According to the authors mentioned, the first group is made of people who have strong opinions about life and firmly defend their points of view and the second group includes people who are said to be aware of the most minimum features and are always well informed about contemporary news. The characteristics of these types of students can help students to engage in conversations or debates easily.

There is another group whose percentage is not high, neither representative. It is 9%, this means that 8 students, consider themselves as *planner inspectors,* this means, they are people who like to be direct, and like to spend time and energy in significant tasks.

Next, five personality types that share the same percentage are presented; they have reached 7% (6 students). Among them are the *explorers-inventors*, described as quick minded, creative and enjoy taking part in discussions; the *analyzer-operators*, who are said to be mechanical and reasonable with their ideas, they are problem-solvers and use their instinct to interact adequately. The same percentage of students have marked their personality as *promoters-executers*, that are people who tend to follow rules as recommendations, and look for right and unbreakable convictions.

Another group, sharing similar percentages is made of three personality types, which have reached 5%. Within this group are the students who consider themselves as *discoverers advocate*, who are considered to be sensitive and friendly, even though they like spending their time independently; *facilitator-caretakers*, characterized as being enthusiast for taking care of others' problems and finally, *strategist-mobilizers*, who are natural strategists who like to build and develop relevant projects.

The following personalities share 4% all. *Protector-supporter* who are defined as good listeners, they also are able to discern what is worthy and what is not, they also enjoy doing several types of activities at any time; *composer-producer,* who like to explore new tasks and do not hesitate taking chances to collaborate with peers; *conceptualizer-director*, people who are considered to be perfectionists and sometimes arrogant; *harmonizer-qualifier*, considered as to be quite reserved and stealthy, especially when they deal with problems;

Envisioner-mentor, considered as people easy to communicate and enjoy connecting others with their ideals and beliefs gets 2%. Finally *motivator presenter*, who love being the center of attention and admire freedom, got 1%.

The rest of personalities is been little represented, very few students identify themselves with the other types of personalities, being them 4, 3, 2 and 1 student respectively.

Do you think that your personality influences on your participation in speaking activities?

GRAPH 7

YES NO

30%

70%
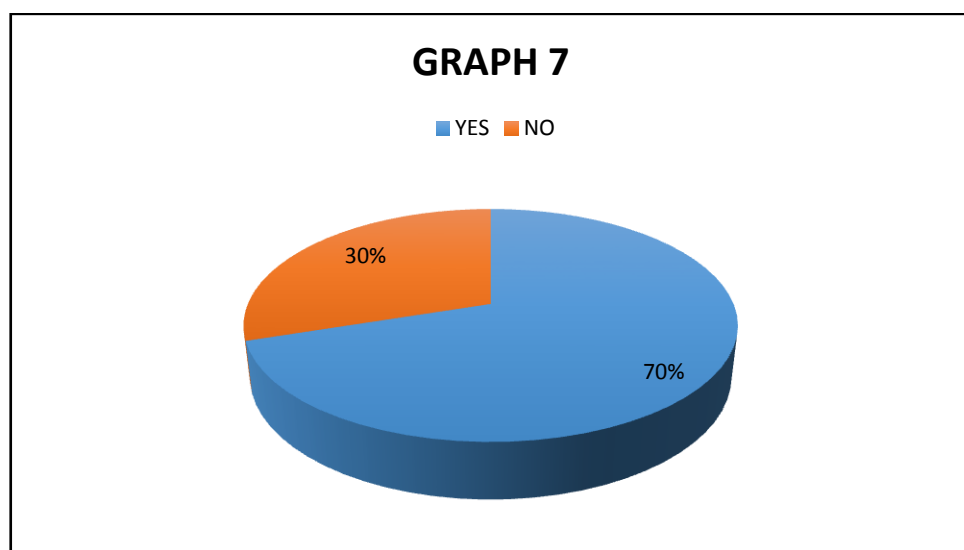
Author: Andrés Eduardo Aguilar
Source: Students questionnaire.

In the last question students express their beliefs about their personality types and the relation with their willingness to orally communicate. Regarding this, the chart shows that 70% of the surveyed students said they think their personality influences on their desire to work in speaking activities during classes. They mentioned that they are extroverted people who like to talk, express their ideas and defend their view points. Besides, they said they just talk without being afraid of making mistakes (even they make them); they do it because for them practicing helps them to improve the language and learn better.

On the other hand, the rest of students 30% said they do not think their personality influences on their desire to communicate. They do not participate in oral activities because they feel they are not ready to speak another language; besides, they mentioned they feel ashamed because they think they do not pronounce correctly neither they know as much vocabulary to express their ideas. Also they said they do not like talking in class because for them it is difficult to understand and follow instructions or what their peers or teacher tell them; besides, for them getting ideas to talk is so difficult. Some of them said that they would like to talk, but they feel afraid, that is why they do not dare to be part of speaking activities. For that reason they prefer to stay silent. As we can see from the point of view of this group of students, the type of personality is not a determinant for their participation in speaking activities. Some of them said they like to talk, but not in English.

Conclusions

- Motivation really influences on student´s willingness to orally communicate, it promotes students to participate in oral tasks .

- The types of activities presented by teachers in class are the major source of motivation for students to participate in speaking activities, the more interesting the activities, the more motivation students get.

- One of the factors that influences negatively on students' willingness to orally communicate is the lack of confidence students have on themselves, students who feel they are unable to get ideas to talk are the less willing to talk.

- The level of students is an important factor influencing students to communicate; students who have not gotten enough knowledge and experience in the target language are less willing to participate.

- There is a very close relation between personality and student's willingness to talk. The 36% of the students surveyed have identified themselves with personalities whose characteristics make people outgoing, extroverted or collaborators, characteristics that lead students to talk more.

- Regarding types of personality students fit, it is possible to conclude that most of the students consider to be *analyzer-operators* and *promoters-executers.*

Recommendations

- Being speaking a very difficult skill to develop, teachers should be trained on motivational activities that promote and conduce students to talk during English classes; students need to be motivated in order to be able to perform speaking activities

- It is suggested that before preparing speaking activities, teachers be aware of their student's English level, this will help them to create activities that suit all the students in the class. Activities that suit all English levels make classes more motivating, interesting and easy for the students.

- It is suggested that teachers receive training on strategies to make students confident on the use of language. If students feel confident, they would advance in their effort to talk.

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UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

TITULACIÓN DE INGLES

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 básica:	8vo ( ) 9no ( ) 10mo ( )
Año de bachillerato:	1er año ( ) 2do año ( ) 3er año ( )
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	**Foreseer developer:** superan las diferencias y se relacionan con otras personas. Además son prácticos al momento de resolver problemas.	( )
2	**Harmonizer clarifier:** descubren misterios y tienen una forma de conocer lo que es creíble.	( )
3	**Envisioner mentor:** comunican y comparten valores, son intuitivos y disfrutan de procesos creativos.	( )

4	**Discoverer advocate:** exploran percepciones y responden a ellas mediante un proceso creativo.	( )
5	**Conceptualizer director:** visualizan las razones tras las cosas que suceden, son independientes y encuentran difícil interactuar con otras personas.	( )
6	**Designer theorizer:** son talentosos para diseñar y rediseñar. Activan su imaginación, descubren, reflexionan sobre el proceso de pensamiento.	( )
7	**Strategist movilizer:** 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	**Planner inspector:** idean planes y tomar responsabilidades. Cultivan buenas cualidades y hacen las cosas correctas.	( )
10	**Protector supporter:** 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	**Implementor supervisor:** tienen talento para traer el orden en situaciones caóticas. Se autoeducan y tienen una actitud trabajadora.	( )
12	**Facilitator caretaker:** 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	**Composer producer:** toman ventaja de las oportunidades. Resuelven problemas creativamente y tienen su propio estilo personal	( )
15	**Promoter executor:** tienen talento para negociar, les gusta actuar como consejeros. Cuidan de su familia y amigos. Se molestan cuando los otros no muestran respeto.	( )
16	**Motivator presenter:** 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?	

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
TITULACIÓN DE INGLES
Observation sheet

INSTITUTION:	
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 motivate 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.

SI	NO
¿Por qué?	