



**ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPEAKING IN A PRE-INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH
COURSE OF STUDENTS OF FIRST SEMESTER AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT
UIS**

**ACTITUDES HACIA LA PRODUCCIÓN ORAL EN UNA CURSO DE INGLÉS
PREINTERMEDIO EN LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS EN LA UIS**

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ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS
BUCARAMANGA
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This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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LICENCIADO EN INGLÉS

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To everyone who made this possible...

You know who you are.

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RESUMEN

TÍTULO: ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPEAKING IN A PRE-INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH COURSE OF STUDENTS OF FIRST SEMESTER AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT UIS. ACTITUDES HACIA LA PRODUCCIÓN ORAL EN UNA CURSO DE INGLÉS PREINTERMEDIO EN LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS EN LA UIS. ¹

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PALABRAS CLAVES: Enseñanza del Inglés – Inglés como Lengua Extranjera – Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras – Actitudes hacia la Producción Oral.

DESCRIPCIÓN: El presente trabajo de investigación fue llevado a cabo por un grupo de tres estudiantes de Licenciatura en Inglés de la UIS, en un intento por determinar si los problemas observados en un curso de Inglés Pre-intermedio del mismo programa educativo durante las actividades relacionadas con producción oral se debían a factores emocionales, más específicamente a actitudes negativas tales como miedo o ansiedad al hablar en la lengua objeto de estudio (inglés). Este estudio fue desarrollado a lo largo del segundo semestre académico del 2008 en la UIS. Después de llevar a cabo una serie de observaciones en el aula, que determinaron que algunos de los alumnos pertenecientes al curso de Inglés Pre-intermedio no participaban activamente durante las actividades desarrolladas en clase, se realizaron dos encuestas en la población que establecieron que la falta de participación activa no se debía a actitudes negativas por parte de los estudiantes. Finalmente, se realizaron entrevistas tanto a los estudiantes como al profesor titular de la materia, ³ las cuales fueron diseñadas para descartar definitivamente cualquier actitud negativa como causa de la falta de participación oral en clase. Además de demostrar que los estudiantes no experimentaban, en efecto, miedo o ansiedad al hablar en inglés, las entrevistas revelaron que la posible causa de dicha falta de participación podía ser la falta de conocimiento previo de la lengua por parte de los estudiantes. Al final del documento se incluye sección en la cual se recomienda más investigación al respecto.

¹ Proyecto de grado.

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³ Para mantener la confidencialidad de la información provista por los miembros de la población de estudio, las identidades de los estudiantes y profesora participantes del estudio no son reveladas.

ABSTRACT

TITLE: ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPEAKING IN A PRE-INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH COURSE OF STUDENTS OF FIRST SEMESTER AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT UIS. ACTITUDES HACIA LA PRODUCCIÓN ORAL EN UNA CURSO DE INGLÉS PREINTERMEDIO EN LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS EN LA UIS. ⁴

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KEY WORDS: ELT – EFL – Foreign Language Learning – Attitudes towards Speaking.

CONTENT: The present study was conducted by a group of three students of the ELT Program at UIS, as an attempt to determine if the problems observed in a Pre-intermediate English Course of the ELT Program at UIS during the speaking activities carried out in class were a consequence of emotional factors, more specifically negative attitudes such as fear or anxiety when speaking in the target language (English). This study was conducted throughout the length of the second school semester of 2008 at UIS. After conducting a series of observations in the classroom that determined that some of the students belonging to the Pre-intermediate English Course did not participate actively during the speaking activities carried out in class, two surveys were conducted in the population which established that the lack of active participation was not due to students' negative attitudes. Finally, interviews, both to the students and the teacher in charge of the course were conducted;⁶ they were designed discard any negative attitude as the cause of the lack of active participation during the speaking activities in class. Besides demonstrating that the students did not experience, indeed, fear or anxiety when speaking in the target language, the interviews revealed that the possible cause of that lack of participation might be the students' lack of previous knowledge of English. At the end of this document, a section is included in which further research on this aspect is recommended.

⁴ Graduation Project.

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⁶ In order to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by the members of our population, the identities of both the students and the teacher are not revealed herein.

DEFINITION OF TERMS AND SOME ABBREVIATIONS USED

For clarity of meaning throughout the dissertation the following definitions and abbreviations are applicable:

Active students: are those students who speak spontaneously in English during the lesson –whether to the teacher or to their peers- and/or give fluent answers using the target language when asked questions during the course of the lesson.

Data-collection instrument (DCI) is a document containing questions presented in a systematic, highly precise fashion. The DCI's purpose is to enable the evaluator to obtain uniform data that can be compared, summed, and, if it is quantitative, subjected to additional statistical analysis.

EFL: is an acronym which stands for English as a Foreign Language. It refers to the learning of the English language in a non-English speaking country.

EFL Learners: are those who are learning English while living in a community where English is not spoken as a first language.

EFL Teachers: are those who are teaching English while living in a community where English is not spoken as a first language.

English Phonetics and Phonology I Course: is the first of the three Phonetics and Phonology courses which students of the ELT Program have to take. It deals primarily with the segments of the English language –i.e. phonemes. It is taught entirely in English.

ELT Program: It stands for English Language Teaching Program and it is a teaching program established at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS) in 2000; its name in Spanish at UIS is “Licenciatura en ingles”.

First or Native Language (L1): The language a child learns from infancy. Some children learn more than one language from birth and may be said to have more than one 'First' language.

Language Acquisition: is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language (Krashen, 1985: 2-3).

Language Learning: is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process, which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules (Krashen, 1985: 2-3).

Passive Students: are those students who do not speak in English spontaneously during the class or do not give fluent answers using the target language when asked questions during the course of the lesson.

Pre-intermediate English Course: is the first of the four English courses which students of the ELT Program at UIS have to take. It is part of the curriculum of the first semester and, together with the English Phonetics and Phonology I course, is taught entirely in English.

Target Language (L2): The foreign language being studied by EFL learners. In this particular study, it refers to English.

UIS: Universidad Industrial de Santander. It is a Colombian public university founded in 1948. It is located in Bucaramanga, Colombia and it is one of the most prestigious institutions of the country.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently foreign language programs –from elementary school through college- have been gaining widespread support from parents eager to have their children learn to speak another language as Valette states (1967). Behind the development of new curricula and instructional materials and the construction of language laboratories, she continues, there is a single aim: teaching the student to speak the language (Valette, 1967). Also, Brown tells us that, inside the classroom, speaking and listening are the most frequently used skills. They are recognized as critical for functioning in an English language context, both by teachers and by learners (Brown, 1994).

Although there are different factors that influence the development of the speaking skill in foreign language learning –some of them are mentioned in the theoretical framework for reference purposes- due to time constrictions, the scope of this study was mainly those which have to do with attitudes such as anxiety, fear and motivation and whether or not such attitudes were influencing the students' participation in the speaking activities carried out during the course of the less in a Pre-intermediate English course at the ELT Program at UIS. After establishing that the students did not have any of those negative attitudes towards speaking the researchers sought to determine if the lack of previous knowledge was the cause of students' lack of participation.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After conducting preliminary observations in several lessons of a Pre-intermediate English course of the ELT Program at UIS, it was determined that not all of the students belonging to the course participated actively during the speaking activities carried out in class. The purpose of this research is to establish the causes of the students' lack of active participation.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- ✍ To determine what causes some students' lack of active participation during the speaking activities carried out in a Pre-intermediate English course of the ELT Program at UIS

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ✍ To give suggestions to avoid students' lack of active participation during speaking activities carried out in class, observed in one of the Pre-intermediate English courses of students of first semester at the ELT program at UIS.
- ✍ To give rise to further research on the field.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews literature on speaking from two perspectives: the first section reviews the definition of speaking in foreign language learning, some of the factors that affect its development on foreign language students and how it can be fostered on those same students. The second section focuses on specific attitudes toward speaking that foreign language learners usually have –namely, anxiety and motivation.

4.1 Speaking

4.1.1 Definition

According to Wallace, speaking can be thought of as a mirror image of the listening skill and one for which the same linguistic and cultural knowledge is required. However, it is only a partial image since it involves the added problem of pronunciation, the articulatory production of sounds (Wallace, 1978). Nevertheless, speaking is more than pronunciation and intonation. At the functional level, speaking is making oneself understood. Valette reminds us that speaking is a social skill: whereas one can read and write in private or listen to the radio or watch television alone, a person rarely speaks without an audience of some sort. At a more refined level, speaking requires the correct and idiomatic use of the target language. The newcomer in a foreign country learns to express himself/herself in order to obtain the essentials of life; first, he/she uses gestures the gradually he/she picks up words and phrases. But with no formal training and without the incentive for perfection, he/she retains a marked accent and uses simplified and often inaccurate structures (Valette, 1967). The following section is dedicated to describe some factors that affect speaking development in foreign language learning.

4.1.2 Factors that affect speaking development in foreign language learning

According to Rivers, certain psychological factors which enter into interpersonal communication are highly relevant to the process of developing ability to communicate verbally in the target language. Spontaneous verbal expression is not solely the product of knowledge and skill in using the language code; it presupposes that the student has something to communicate. Silent students in the classroom often have nothing to say at the moment. The teacher may have introduced a topic which they find uninteresting or about which they know very little, and as result they have nothing to express, whether in their native language or the language they are learning (Rivers, 1968).

Rivers states that, as well as having something to say, the student must have the *desire to communicate* a message to some person or group of persons. Students who find their teacher unsympathetic and their classmates uncongenial may well feel that what they would like to say can be of little interest. Others may be very conscious of their limitations in the new language and feel that, by expressing themselves in it, they are laying themselves open to censure or ridicule. For many reasons like these, students prefer to remain silent (Rivers, 1968).

Rivers also says that comprehension is essentially interaction between persons; to this respect, Rivers assures that comprehension, besides being a skill in expression, also plays a role. Students may have acquired skill in expressing themselves in the new language code, but have had little practice in understanding the new language when it is spoken at a normal speed in a conversational situation. They therefore make an evasive acknowledgement of the fact that they have been addressed in order to free themselves from an awkward situation. Since

they have not comprehended sufficient elements in the message to be able to make any further contribution to the discussion, or to be stimulated into meaningful responses, the conversational interaction stops. Students need much practice in listening to the language before attempting sustained conversation (Rivers, 1968).

Rivers declares that, in a class group, the teacher must be alert to recognize personality factors which are affecting participation in discussion in the language. Some students are talkative, others are shy or taciturn. These characteristics affect student performance in the oral part of the lesson. Rivers noted among missionaries that the talkative extrovert learned the language faster than the quiet, studious person. Some students are by nature cautious or meticulous; others are unduly sensitive and therefore easily embarrassed or upset if found to be in error or not understood. Students in these categories often prefer to say nothing rather than run the risk of expressing themselves incorrectly, whether in a first or a second language (Rivers, 1968).

In addition, Rivers affirms that, in attempting to use the new language to express their own thoughts, students find themselves in an abnormally constricting situation, where their choice of expression is severely limited. At the age at which many of the language learners are studying a foreign language, they are accustomed to being able to demonstrate orally the maturity of their thought and the breadth of their knowledge. Finding themselves in childishly simple language, they feel frustrated and exasperated. At the early stage, students speak more in the narrative and descriptive vein than in the philosophical or polemical (Rivers, 1968).

According to Wallace, an important aspect of developing speaking is the matter of classroom atmosphere. This includes aspects of the affective domain that bear upon learning (Wallace, 1978). Yorio's classification (1976) of affective variables that influence language learning, particularly the development of the speaking skill, includes anxiety, self-consciousness and ego-permeability. About self-consciousness, Wallace mentions that many students can be corrected time and again without being embarrassed, but others must be handed carefully (Wallace, 1978). As to the ego-permeability, Wallace states that some students can throw themselves into the experience of language learning and forget their self-restraint of pride; others find this difficult and often impossible. The teacher, in each case, needs to discover the maximum capacity of the student in this regard and hold the student responsible for this capacity. This will provide a goal for each individual which will not be beyond his/her reach (Wallace, 1978).

4.1.3 *Fostering speaking*

Next, some ways of fostering speaking suggested by researchers are presented. Rivers states that, if the teacher is to facilitate rather than impede the student's progress in communication he/she must take account of the nature of the skill being developed and the psychological factors which are involved (Rivers, 1971) As it is proposed by Rivers in a class group, the teacher must be alert to recognize personality factors which are affecting participation in foreign language discussion. Some students are talkative, others are shy or taciturn. These characteristics affect student performance in the oral part of the lesson. Some students are, by nature, cautious or meticulously careful; still others are unduly sensitive, and therefore easily embarrassed or upset, if found to be in error or not understood. Students in each of these categories often prefer to say nothing rather than run the risk of expressing themselves incorrectly (Rivers, 1971). It is said that teachers must keep in mind and encourage each student to participate as his

personality allows, in that way he will have a class where atmosphere lends itself to spontaneous expression and interest in communication (Rivers, 1971).

According to Chaudran, learning English is a task which demands practice and time to develop abilities like listening, reading, writing and speaking. Speaking is usually regarded as the most interesting ability; besides, it is synonymous with knowing the language since it is a productive skill which requires good reception in order to be produced in a fluent and correct way –which is to say, no one can speak a language unless he or she understands it first. Learner's output should be pushed towards the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed but also it must be precise, coherent and appropriate. Perhaps it is not only pushing, there are other ways to foster students' oral production since the environment, motivation and attitudes towards speaking must be taken into account (Chaudran, 1988).

Rivers argues that in view of the emotional and personality factors which are involved in a verbal interchange, spontaneous expression in the foreign language can be developed only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other. Topics for discussion must be such that student has something to say, or can make some contribution which will stimulate others to add information or to disagree. The teacher himself must adopt an encouraging rather than a correcting attitude; he must direct the interchanges in such a way that all students are involved at some time, as far as their personalities will permit, while he himself resists the temptation to dominate the discussion (Rivers, 1971).

According to Rivers the next most important step is the opportunity for the students to demonstrate that they can use the structure they have been

manipulating in an actual situation where they are engaged in communication with another person. The teacher must create in the classrooms situations of the type the students would encounter in real life outside the classroom: opportunities to ask each other facts and incidents of home and school life, or to comment on and tease their fellow students about current happenings (Rivers, 1971).

Finally, Rivers mentions that, as the student becomes more and more independent of his teacher, he should be encouraged to practice talking to himself and thinking in the foreign language as often as possible: describing to himself the things he sees on the way to school, recounting to himself what he has done during the day or what he intends to do (Rivers, 1971).

4.2 Attitudes toward speaking

There are different factors that affect speaking development. At the beginning of the present study the researchers focused specifically on some of the affective aspects that may influence negatively the improvement of the speaking skill in the population. As suggested by the research literature, anxiety and lack of motivation are the main affective aspects that influence negatively speaking development in foreign language learners.

4.2.1 Anxiety

MacIntyre defines anxiety as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning a foreign language” (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 25). Various instances of anxiety that students feel in language classrooms have been known to have a serious effect or impact not only on their language performance – particularly in the speaking skill- but also on their further foreign language learning process (Horwitz & Young, 1991). MacIntyre and Gardner corroborated this in

studies that showed that performance in speaking the target language was negatively correlated to levels of anxiety that the learners experienced (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991). According to Ehrman, the students who feel anxious in the classroom when they have to speak may try –often successful- to hide those negative feelings both from the teacher and their peers. This kind of behavior gives anxiety a covert nature which may make it difficult for the teacher to assess on the students' anxiety (Ehrman, 1996).

Brown distinguishes between two kinds of anxiety: *trait* anxiety (a pre disposition toward feeling anxious) and *state* anxiety (anxiety produced in reaction to a specific situation). He also distinguishes between anxiety that is debilitating and that which is facilitative. Whether the anxiety is an aid or hindrance often depends upon the degree to which it is found in the individual. For example: no anxiety at all might cause the person to be lethargic, whereas a small amount might bring the individual to an optimal state of alertness (Brown, 1994) In a study using induced anxiety, MacIntyre and Gardner found that the control group, whose members had not been exposed to anxiety-arousal, performed better than the experimental groups at all stages of the learning task set before them. They also concluded that whenever anxiety-reduction strategies are employed, they must be accompanied by re-teaching strategies so that students might have a second opportunity to learn what was missed during the time when anxiety was high. (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994)

Rivers makes a distinction between 'natural' and 'normal' uses of language in the classroom because it relates to the matter of self-consciousness. Rivers says that what language instructors teach in class is the 'normal' use of the language, the language patterns that conform to everyday use. The 'natural' use of the language, on the other hand, may be very idiosyncratic; it is a much more

personal, subjective use of the language. Rivers points out that anxiety and self-consciousness may develop when teachers use the latter in the classroom –the natural use sometimes occurs when students are asked personal questions which may embarrass them. The normal use is more objective and less threatening. Rivers admits that in class, depending upon the relationship between teacher and students, natural use can occur, but Rivers believes it is best developed outside the classroom. At any rate, it can only be used when students are well acquainted with what it is they are used to talk or write about (Rivers, 1976).

According to McCroskey, communication apprehension, which generally refers to a type of anxiety experienced in interpersonal communicative settings, is obviously quite relevant to second/foreign language learning contexts (McCroskey, 1987). Horwitz et al. agree with McCroskey by saying that this is true, especially in the language classroom where the learners have little control of the communicative situation, and their performance is constantly monitored by both the teacher and peers (Horwitz et al. 1986). MacIntyre and Gardner say communication apprehension seems to be increased in relation to the learners' negative self-perceptions caused by the inability to understand others and make themselves understood (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Wallace adds that unless the student feels very much at home with his/her teacher and with fellow students, he/she will not be able to achieve the freedom necessary for learning to produce sounds that are strange to him/her. To achieve a free and wholesome atmosphere it is necessary for the teacher to give each student a feeling of satisfaction in attaining some goal, however small, during each class hour; to prevent the student from being embarrassed in any way; to be as patient as possible with the student's mistakes; to encourage those who are having great difficulty (Wallace, 1978).

4.2.2 Motivation

Another main factor exposed by Krashen that influences foreign language learning and oral production is the learner's motivation. There are three kinds of motivation affect language learning. The first of these is called integrative motivation; this may be defined as the desire to achieve proficiency in a new language in order to participate in the life of the community that speaks the language. The second kind of motivation is called instrumental; this is basically the desire to achieve proficiency in a new language for utilitarian reasons. Finally the third type of motivation is called social group identification and it refers to the desire to acquire proficiency in a language or language variety spoken by a social group with which the learner identifies. Lack of identification may result in a learner refusing to acquire the language or language variety spoken by that group (Krashen 1988).

According to Noels (1999) there is a relationship between anxiety and motivation, he states that "the more students feel demotivated, the less effort they will expend and the more anxiety they will feel" (p. 31). Some other investigations suggest in a more explicit manner a possible negative relationship between anxiety and motivation in relation to language learning. For instance, Yan (1998) suggested that the strength of student motivation in general and anxiety were negatively correlated and a lack of motivation could result in anxious behaviors when speaking. These authors all call for the creation of a favorable, less anxiety-producing atmosphere, one that instills a positive attitude and offers motivation for language learning.

According to Dunkel, motivation was an important factor in language learning, and he differentiated between two aspects: one was the kind of motivation, which referred to reasons why a person decides to start studying a foreign language; the other was the intensity of motivation which referred to the effort the learner is willing to put into the process of learning the language (Dunkel, 1948).

Dunkel argued that it is important to make reference to some factors or combination of factors having to do with attitudes, motivation, level of anxiety and learner's monitor that are strongly influenced by the process of accumulation of situations or experiences through their learning process and by certain personality variables. One of them is the attitude toward oneself; the degree of self-esteem and/or self-confidence may vary from situation to situation or from task to task. Both may increase as one performs well in a variety of situations (Dunkel, 1948).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Sampling

The population of the research was a group of twelve students of first semester at UIS, belonging to a Pre-intermediate English course of the ELT Program. According to the syllabus of the class, the students were expected to have a B1 level, according to European Common Framework for foreign language students. All students were between ages 16 and 25. There were both men and women in the group. All of them had graduated from Colombian high schools. They had to attend Pre-intermediate English class two hours a day during weekdays at eight in the morning. The classes were taken in a 5x8 meter classroom in the "Humanidades" building at UIS during weekdays except on Tuesdays when they were taken at the Language Laboratory, in the same building. They used the textbook "Cutting Edge" for Pre-intermediate learners by Sarah Cunningham and Peter Moor, printed by Longman.

5.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Several instruments were used in order to collect data for the present study: double entry observations, an affective factors survey, a students' background survey and interviews. They are presented in more detail here:

5.2.1 Observations

According to Bernard, there are many positive aspects of the observational research approach. Namely, observations are usually flexible and do not necessarily need to be structured around a hypothesis. For instance, before undertaking more structured research a researcher may conduct observations in

order to form a research question. In terms of validity, observational research findings are considered to be strong (Bernard, 1994). Validity is the best available approximation to the truth of a given proposition, inference, or conclusion. Observational research findings are considered strong in validity because the researcher is able to collect a depth of information about a particular behavior.

The researchers chose to conduct observations at the beginning of this study due to the sensitiveness of the topic. According to Gall and Gall, before conducting a study, the researcher should ask himself whether or not people are uncomfortable or unwilling to answer questions about a particular subject –in the present study, it might have been awkward for the participants to answer questions about their participation in class; besides, self-reports of class participation by the students themselves often bring biased answers. Instead, a researcher may choose to observe black and white students interactions; in this case, observations are more likely to bring about more accurate data (Gall & Gall, 1996).

In addition, according to Babbie, the researcher must ask himself whether or not he/she can you observe the phenomena he/she is studying. If the answer is affirmative, conducting observations is an excellent way to start a research study. In the present study, the behavior observed was students' participation during the speaking activities carried out in class. Also, Babbie suggests that the researcher be aware of how much time he/she has for conducting his/her research: observational research may be time consuming. In order to obtain reliability, behaviors must be observed several times. In addition, there is also a concern that the observer's presence may change the behaviors being observed. As time goes on, however, the subjects are more likely to grow accustomed to the researcher's presence and act normally. It is in the researchers' best interest to observe for a long period of time (Babbie, 1992).

What is more, there is not a single kind of observation to carry out once the researcher has opted for this research approach. Choosing the most suitable type of observation for a particular research is very important. For the present study, the researchers chose to conduct direct reactive observations. As affirmed by Gall and Gall, in direct observations, people know that you are watching them. The only danger is that they are reacting to you. There is a concern that individuals will change their actions rather than showing you what they are *'really'* like. This is not necessarily bad, however; for example, the contrived behavior may reveal aspects of social desirability, how they feel about sharing their feelings in front of others, or privacy in a relationship. Even the most contrived behavior is difficult to maintain over time. A long term observational study will often catch a glimpse of the natural behavior (Gall & Gall, 1996).

Finally, as suggested by Bernard, the researcher who has chosen to make use of observation in his/her study should decide how he/she is going to interpret his/her observations. Bernard proposes three different ways of analyzing observations: first, mere descriptive observations require no inference making on the part of the researcher: the researcher sees something and writes it down. Next, inferential observations require the researcher to make inferences about what is observed and the underlying emotion. For example, a researcher may observe a girl banging on her keyboard. From this observation the researcher may assume that she is frustrated with the computer. Lastly, evaluative observations require the researcher to make an inference and a judgment from the behavior. For example, the researcher may question whether computers and humans have a positive relationship. 'Positive' is an evaluative judgment. The researcher observes the girl banging on her keyboard and concludes that humans and computers do not have a positive relationship (Bernard, 1994).

5.2.2 Surveys

According to Montgomery and Duck, not everything can be studied through observations. For example, when researching on marital problems, questions regarding sexual behavior are better left to a survey (Montgomery & Duck, 1991). In the present study, whereas students' participation in class was an observable behavior, the students' attitudes were not; that is to say, the researchers could not see them or measure them.

In this study, two surveys were carried out in the population. The first one was an affective factors survey based on Attitude/Motivation Test Battery presented by Williams and Burden, which was designed to elicit information concerning students' motivation, and attitude towards oral production (Williams & Burden, 1997). The second survey was designed to know the students' background knowledge of English; it contained questions about the participants' previous knowledge of English as well as their opinions about their level of English in high school.

5.2.3 Interviews

For the students' interview, a structured interview format was used. As described by Campion, this format uses a DCI to gather data, either by telephone or face to face –in the present study, all interviews were conducted face to face. In a structured interview, Campion continues, the evaluator asks the same questions of numerous individuals in a precise manner, offering each individual the same set of possible responses (Campion et al, 1994). The types of questions used in the students interview were first, 'binary' questions, which, according to Hollwitz and

Wilson, are good for obtaining factual information that falls into the yes-no, true-false category of answer and, second, scaled-response questions –which, Hollwitz and Wilson continue, consists of a list of alternative responses that increase or decrease in intensity in an ordered fashion (Hollwitz and Wilson, 1993). For the teacher’s interview, a different format was chosen: a semi-structured interview. This type of interview, as it is explained by Drever, has some pre-set questions, but allows more scope for open-ended answers (Drever, 1995).

5.3 Data Collection and Analysis

After framing the research problem, the researchers chose to use a mixed research methodology –both qualitative and quantitative- due to the nature of the present study. On the one hand, the deductive quality of quantitative research allowed us to test our hypothesis with the data collected; on the other hand, the inductive characteristic of qualitative research enabled us to generate new hypotheses from the data collected during fieldwork.

A letter of consent was sent to the teacher in charge of the class in order to get permission to observe the lessons, conduct interviews, carry out surveys and everything else necessary for the research (See Appendix 1). Continuous observations of the lessons –both in the classroom and in the language laboratory- carried out during two weeks, showed that some of the students did not participate actively in the class during the speaking activities (See Appendix 2). All the observations were analyzed in the search for patterns, themes and holistic features in the data, bearing in mind the participation scoring guide (see Appendix 2) .This is what they showed:

1. There were two different kinds of students: passive and active; passive students were those who did not speak in English during the class spontaneously and/or gave non-fluent answers whenever they were asked questions by the teacher. In some cases they gave simple one-word answers or did not answer at all. Active students were those who took the initiative to speak in English during the class and gave fluent answers when asked questions. It would have been irresponsible, however, to draw instant conclusions from mere observations and state that passive students had problems with the language or experienced negative emotions towards speaking in public. As Rivers suggests, spontaneous verbal expression is not solely the product of knowledge and skill in using a language code; it also implies that the student has something to communicate. The silent student in the classroom may not have anything to say or be willing to say it at a particular moment or even during the course of an entire class (Rivers, 1971).
2. The speaking activities in the class included role-play activities, games, and informal debates. Nunan states that effective interactive activities should be manipulative, meaningful, and communicative, involving learners in using English for a variety of communicative purposes. Specifically, Nunan also states that speaking activities should first, be based on authentic or naturalistic source of materials, second, allow learners to manipulate and practice specific features of the language and third, enable learners to rehearse, in class, communicative skills they need in real world; and finally, activate psycholinguistic processes of learning (Nunan, 1989).
3. During the speaking activities, students worked individually, in pairs or in bigger groups. According to Baker and Westrup, having students working in pairs or bigger groups in a class with both passive and active students can be considered beneficial; Baker and Westrup recommend pair work and group work as good ways to improve students' speaking skills –if activities

are well-planned and controlled- particularly in class with mixed abilities. Baker and Westrup continue saying that foreign language teachers should encourage their students to take some responsibility for doing the activity properly during the group work. This will help them get confidence and develop their speaking skills (Baker & Westrup, 2003).

4. Students tended to use Spanish a lot in class when talking among themselves. A few students used English occasionally to talk to their peers. As it was pointed out before, there is a clear distinction between the 'normal' and the 'natural' uses of the language. The 'normal' use is more objective and less threatening whereas anxiety can emerge from the 'natural' use of the target language in the classroom (Rivers, 1976). It is then not surprising that first-semester students avoid this use of English. The vast majority of them used English 'only' when they had to address the teacher. Although the teacher used only English in the classroom, which contributed to give students the necessary comprehensible input suggested by Krashen, no effort was made to encourage students to try to do the same (Krashen, 1987; 1988).
5. The teacher was very enthusiastic during the speaking activities. She did not impose any pressure on the students to get them to talk. Passive students did not show any signs of enthusiasm during the speaking activities. There were two main observable reasons for some students' active participation: there was no pressure imposed by the teacher and students were enthusiastic. Other students, however, did not show any signs of enthusiasm; these were the students who participated the least too. As stated by Skinner and Belmont, enthusiasm is a sign of engagement. Students' engagement plays an important role in succeeding at achieving the goals of a particular learning task (Skinner and Belmont, 1993).

The general conclusion from the observations was that the vast majority of students did not participate actively and spontaneously during the speaking activities carried out in class and did not give fluent answers in the target language when called upon. It was then time to determine if passive students were experiencing fear, anxiety or distress during the speaking activities carried out in class. After getting the consent of the students (see Appendix 3), two surveys were conducted in order to gain deeper insight of the students' attitudes toward speaking. The first of these surveys (see appendix 4) was designed to comprehend the students' emotions and attitudes towards the class, the target language, the ELT program at UIS and learning in general. This survey was analyzed using statistics (see Appendix 4).

The first and second statistics (see Appendix 4, Graphic 4.1 and 4.2) showed that the majority of the students considered learning English easy and all of them considered it interesting. This was rather surprising since, as it had been observed, there were quite a few students who did not showed any signs of enthusiasm during the class and because the third statistic (see Appendix 4, Graphic 4.3) showed that most of them considered speaking to be the most important ability in their academic life and listening the second; whereas no one considered reading or writing as the most relevant skill to master.

The fourth statistic (see Appendix 4, Graphic 4.4) showed that the majority of students believed they should participate more in the speaking activities performed in class.

The fifth and sixth statistics (see Appendix 4, Graphic 4.5 and 4.6) showed that half of the population experienced, indeed, negatives feelings when they

spoke English in class. The reasons why they experienced those negative feelings were, first, that they felt unable to express themselves in English and second, that they were afraid of not being understood. In a few words, the students lacked the necessary knowledge, not the confidence, to speak in English in public. This was further corroborated by the seventh and eighth statistics (see Appendix, Graphic 4.7 and 4.8), which showed that none of the students had fear of speaking in public in Spanish and that seventeen percent of them admitted that their English level was not good enough for the class.

The ninth and tenth statistics (see Appendix, Graphic 4.9 and 4.10) showed that, all of the students considered important to travel to an English-Speaking country in order to improve their English; half of them thought they would improve speaking best whereas the other half believed it was listening the ability they would further improve. The eleventh and twelfth statistics (see Appendix 4, Graphic 4.11 and 4.12) showed that seventeen percent of the students did not like working in groups yet all students considered it key to improve speaking. The thirteenth statistic (see Appendix 4.13) showed that sixty-seven percent of the students spoke English outside the classroom. Nevertheless, the fourteenth statistic (see Appendix 4.14, Graphic 4.14) showed that, only seventeen percent of those students did it on a daily basis; the rest of them only spoke English outside the classroom occasionally.

Given that the results of the first survey showed no evidence of high anxiety levels or lack of motivation in the students that might be causing their lack of participation in the speaking activities carried out in class, the researchers conducted another survey (see appendix 5) that was devised to attain a better understanding of the students' learning variables, in terms of their previous knowledge of the target language in order to see if a possible lack of previous

knowledge of English could account for the students' lack of participation in the speaking activities.

The first statistic of this survey (see Appendix 5, Graphic 5.1) showed that twenty-two percent of the population had a terrible performance in English in high school. The second and third statistics (see Appendix 5, Graphic 5.2 and 5.3) showed that most of the students did not take any English course before entering university; of those who did take one, none of them did it for more than a year. The fourth statistic (see Appendix, Graphic 5.4) showed that seventeen percent of the students did not like English when they were in high school.

After finishing conducting all of our surveys, it was determined that if not all students talked during the class or did not talk as much as others was not because they were experiencing fear, anxiety, distress or any other negative feelings when speaking in the target language. The reason for their lack of participation was perhaps their level of proficiency in English –which was not good enough for the class. The researchers decided to conduct two interviews -one structured interview to the students and one semi-structured interview to the teacher to further corroborate this.

The students' interview (see Appendix 6) was designed having in mind the results of the surveys, which showed that students who did not participate actively in the speaking activities of the class were not experiencing any negative emotions –such as anxiety, fear or distress- when speaking. Instead it was considered probable that the causes of their lack of participation were their lack of previous knowledge of the target language. The questions formulated during the students' interview attempted to corroborate this.

First, students were asked if, first, they considered an English proficiency test to be necessary as a requirement to enroll the ELT program at UIS or not and, second, the reasons why they thought so or thought not (see Appendix 6, graphics 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3). Seventy-eight percent of the students answered affirmatively. Of those who said yes, sixty-two percent stated that the test was necessary because some of their classmates had failed or were failing English; nineteen percent justified the institution of the exam by saying that students should be classified according to their level of proficiency in English and be divided into different groups; the other nineteen percent said that all the students in a class should be at the same level. Of the twenty-two percent of students who answered negatively, sixty-two percent argued that students should be given the chance to catch up with the level of the class; twenty-eight percent alleged that it was not necessary for the normal development of the class that all students have the same level of proficiency in English and ten percent claimed that the instruction in English received at school was enough for the level of the class.

Then, students were asked whether or not they considered important to speak in English outside the classroom (see Appendix 6, graphic 6.4). All of the students answered affirmatively. When asked to justify their answer (see Appendix 6, graphic 6.5), sixty-two percent of the students answered that speaking English outside the classroom helped them develop fluency and good pronunciation in the target language; twenty-eight percent of the students said that it helped them make the target more meaningful by using it in everyday life and ten percent responded that it helped them be more aware of the most common grammar mistakes.

Finally, students were inquired as to why not all of their classmates participated equally during the speaking activities in class (see Appendix 6, graphic 6.6). Fifty-eight percent of the students answered that their peers had different levels of proficiency in English; thirty-two percent said that those students who did not participate much in class during the speaking activities might not have as much interest in the class as others and ten percent of the students stated that speaking was not the ability some of their peers were best at. It is important to highlight the fact that no student mentioned language anxiety or fear as a possible reason for students not participating equally during the speaking activities in class.

The teacher's interview (see Appendix 7) was designed having in mind both the results of the surveys and the students' interviews, which showed that passive students were not experiencing any anxiety or fear when speaking. The answers given by students during the interviews reassured the researchers that the cause of passive students' lack of participation was their lack of previous knowledge of the target language. The questions formulated during the teacher's interview were designed to determine if the teacher's perspectives on the causes of students' lack of participation during the speaking activities were the same.

First, the teacher was asked to what she attributed the fact that not every student in her class participated actively during the speaking activities developed during the lessons (see Appendix 7). The teacher answered that some of the students probably preferred learning by being receptive (observing, listening) rather than being productive at the initial stage of their learning process. Then the teacher was asked to what she attributed the fact that not each one of her students spoke English outside the classroom or why those who did speak English outside the classroom did not do it frequently. The teacher responded that it could be attributed to many factors such as the basis they came with –meaning their

previous knowledge of the target language, the students' lack of autonomy, our country's linguistic situation, that is to say, that English is a foreign language in Colombia, not a second language and/or to their lack of will to make efforts or be more committed to study;

Next, the teacher was asked how it affected the class in terms of oral production the fact that some students admitted that they did not like English when they were in high school and they did bad as well. She answered that enrolling the ELT Program must have been a second option for those students, which led her to think that probably they were not interested enough in the class. She continued saying that if there was not will to do things there could not be any improvement in their learning process either. As to the students' performance in high school, the teacher said that, if it was bad, it meant they did not acquire the basis required to take Pre-intermediate English at the ELT Program at UIS.

Finally, the teacher was asked if she thought that that people who want to enroll the ELT program should take and approve some sort of English language proficiency test prior to being accepted. The teacher judged that applicants should take and approve some sort of English language proficiency test prior to enrolling the ELT program at UIS. The reasons she gave were that students should be all at the same level and it was necessary to make sure students like English.

6. CONCLUSIONS

After carefully analyzing the two surveys and the teacher and students' interviews, it was concluded that the lack of active participation of some students during the speaking activities carried out in class was not a consequence of negative attitudes toward speaking, such as fear, anxiety or lack of motivation. Instead, the cause of the students' lack of participation is probably their lack of previous knowledge of the target language.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some ideas that might assist teachers in charge of the Pre-intermediate English course of the ELT Program at UIS in improving first-semester students' oral production in the target language; they are based on the cautious examination of the conclusions drawn from our research and our personal experience as both foreign language learners and pre-service teachers. First, foreign language teachers should provide learners with opportunities for meaningful communicative behavior about significant topics by using both learner-learner and learner-instructor interaction as the key to teaching language for communication because, as stated by Rivers, communication derives essentially from interaction (Rivers, 1987). In our particular case, the creation of an English conversation club oriented by teachers might offer the perfect opportunity for students to feel free to talk about their favorite topics and without the pressure that the fact of being in class imposes on them. As a way to assure students' participation in the club, the teachers might create some sort of incentives for students who join the conversation club –for example, a few extra-points in their final grades.

Second, teachers should take the time to instruct their students in understanding the different types of learning styles and how to identify their own; given that classes cannot be modified to adapt to the particular needs of every single learner, students should at least be told what kind of study techniques and strategies serve them better according to their particular learning styles. This not only will eventually improve their performance but also will prove practical knowledge in their future as foreign language teachers themselves.

Finally, students ought to be reminded of the importance of studying outside the classroom; teachers should emphasize the importance of listening and vocabulary building as the pillars of future development of speaking. Training in the choosing of appropriate dictionary and the adequate use of it is vital.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The outcome of this research showed that emotional factors were not the cause of students lack of participation during the speaking activities conducted in class in the population studied. Since students' lack of previous knowledge of English was pointed as one of the factors that might be causing students troubles with speaking, it might be a good idea to study if –as suggested both by the teacher and students of our research population- the prior approval of an English Language Proficiency test should be instituted as a requirement for applicants to enroll the ELT Program at UIS.

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10. APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

TEACHER'S CONSENT LETTER FORM

Bucaramanga 4 de diciembre de 2008

Apreciada Profesora ⁷

Por medio de la presente, nosotros, Manuel Andrés Rosero Niño, Jorge Wilson Torres Hernández y Diego Francisco Zapata, estudiantes de último semestre de Licenciatura en Inglés en la Universidad Industrial de Santander, queremos en primer lugar, darle un cordial saludo y al mismo tiempo informarle que en este momento estamos realizando nuestro proyecto de grado bajo la dirección de la profesora Tatiana Mikhailova, titulado “Actitudes de los estudiantes de primer semestre de Licenciatura en Inglés hacia la producción oral”.

Por esta razón, quisiéramos pedir gentilmente su autorización para poder ingresar a sus clases y de esta manera realizar una serie de observaciones, cuestionarios y entrevistas necesarias para llevar a cabo el proyecto. A continuación hemos incluido la justificación de este proyecto de grado y una breve descripción de los métodos de investigación y recolección de información a usar.

⁷ In order to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants of the study, the identity of the teacher is not revealed here.

JUSTIFICACIÓN DEL PROYECTO DE GRADO

Previos estudios en el área de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras sugieren que el miedo, la angustia y la ansiedad hacen parte de las actitudes más comunes en el salón de clase por parte de los estudiantes cuando se trata de hablar en la lengua objeto de estudio. En nuestra experiencia como estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras y como docentes practicantes hemos encontrado que la producción oral es una de las habilidades que los estudiantes más desean desarrollar y sin embargo una de las que más dificultades les representa.

Nuestra investigación pretende comprobar si la población a estudiar tiene las actitudes mencionadas o no. Si tal es el caso, buscaremos encontrar sus causas principales y sugerir posibles estrategias a utilizar para remediarlas. De no ser así, buscaremos señalar qué clase de actitudes tienen los estudiantes y cómo éstas afectan positiva o negativamente la interacción oral en inglés en el salón de clase. Nuestra población a investigar será uno de los grupos de alumnos de primer semestre del programa Licenciatura en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander.

Los autores de este proyecto buscan contribuir a la bibliografía de referencia de profesores locales acerca de aspectos relacionados con el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés en nuestra carrera, específicamente lo que se refiere a la producción oral, la cual reviste vital importancia para los futuros docentes. Confiamos en que nuestro análisis dará pie a ulteriores investigaciones más amplias que lleven a los futuros estudiantes de la carrera a desarrollar una producción oral más eficiente.

MÉTODO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y RECOLECCIÓN DE INFORMACIÓN

Este estudio tendrá varias etapas para su realización:

Observaciones generales en el salón de clase destinadas a mirar el tipo de interacción oral en inglés de los estudiantes en el salón de clase y generar las primeras hipótesis sobre la clase de actitudes detrás de ésta.

En caso de determinar que la producción oral de los estudiantes en el aula no es a ideal y que esto está condicionado por actitudes de miedo, ansiedad o angustia, realizaremos observaciones enfocadas, encuestas a los estudiantes y una entrevista al profesor del grupo junto con una revisión de la teoría al respecto destinadas a corroborar este hecho y prescribir posibles soluciones.

En caso de determinar que la producción oral es la apropiada para estudiantes de ese nivel llevaremos a cabo encuestas para conocer las actitudes de los estudiantes hacia la producción oral y entrevistas a los mismos para saber ratificar las conclusiones que éstas arrojen.

Al final presentaremos nuestras conclusiones e incluiremos sugerencias para profesores –posibles estrategias a utilizar para mejorar la producción oral de los estudiantes en el aula.

Agradecemos su cordial colaboración y esperamos este de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación.

Yo _____ he leído esta carta y se me ha explicado el proyecto de investigación. Así mismo, se me ha dado la oportunidad de realizar

preguntas y los integrantes del proyecto las han respondido satisfactoriamente. Estoy de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación descrita anteriormente y recibiré una copia de esta carta.

APPENDIX 2

CLASS OBSERVATIONS

FIRST DOUBLE ENTRY DESCRIPTIVE FOCUSED OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 05th 2008

All students attended the class

Observer: Manuel Rosero.

At the beginning of each observation the researchers wrote the number of students who attended the class on that specific date. Also, a specific letter was given to each student in order to protect their identities.

DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
Ss are sitting in a round table	In my own student teaching practice I have noticed that this helps promote participation and prevents indiscipline.
An oral activity starts. Teacher tells students they are going to describe a suspect to the police, she gives instructions on how to do this activity. She gives students some time to prepare to tell their descriptions. While doing the activity students A and B were speaking in Spanish as well as students J, I K and L. Student N volunteers and gives fluent answers for his description. The teacher asks her about hair and	I think those students who volunteer are willing to participate and share their descriptions with the rest of the class.

<p>clothes and she answers the teacher willingly. The teacher calls upon student A, he did not say anything at all. I can observe that some of them (students A, B,J and I) are talking in Spanish among themselves.</p>	<p>Those students may not be interested in participating in this oral activity.</p>
<p>Ss are now working on a worksheet. That the teacher handed out to them.</p>	<p>I think this is useful, because it gives more input about what they are going to speak about.</p>
<p>The teacher gives instructions and habitually does not do anything to check if Ss understood her directions. After a while, she asks for volunteers.</p> <p>Student E raises his hand and answers the questions of the worksheet. Then student N volunteers and H too. The rest of students remain passive during this activity (Ss A,B,C D,F ,G, I, J, K, L and M.</p>	<p>I think the teacher should check students' comprehension of her instructions. Not only is this advisable but it is also a good way to get Ss to talk.</p> <p>I think that the students who participate actively are motivated and willing to take risks and do not fear about making mistakes when speaking. On the other hand, passive students may feel anxious or feel demotivated.</p>
<p>The teacher is now using some realia to talk about health problems. Ss are not using the textbook this time.</p> <p>Student H tells the rest of the class what to do if you have a cold.</p> <p>Then the teacher asks about what to do if you have fever and calls upon</p>	<p>I think this is a key tool to motivate students to talk.</p> <p>This student may be very motivated because she volunteers in the speaking tasks.</p> <p>This student might feel anxious when giving an opinion to the rest of the</p>

<p>student B, his answer is “rest” the teacher tries to make him speak a little bit more but he just repeats “rest”.</p>	<p>class.</p>
<p>Right now, student N is talking about the time he broke his arm he share his ideas with the rest of the class. He is sitting right next to the teacher’s desk. Student E ask student N about his accident.</p>	<p>I do not observe any signs of fear or anxiety on him.</p>
<p>Once more Ss are working in pairs and once again they (Ss A, B, F, G, J and I) are talking in Spanish.</p>	<p>I wonder why that happens –could it be lack of confidence, interest or vocabulary they have? I remember I used to like talking to my classmates in English when I was a freshman; I also recall that not all of my classmates liked it, though.</p>
<p>The teacher does not encourage Ss to use English when they talk among themselves.</p>	<p>My own teacher failed to do that either. I wonder whether that is beneficial or not.</p>
<p>Ss had just done a role play activity on health problems.</p>	<p>I think they did well, but they did prepare their dialogs in advance and then used them during the activity, which turned it into a reading-aloud one.</p>

SECOND DOUBLE ENTRY DESCRIPTIVE FOCUSED OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 05th 2008

All students attended the class

Observer: Jorge Torres.

DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
<p>Students are doing an activity in which they have to describe a suspect to the police. They have to play roles(Witnesses and policemen).</p> <p>There were some couples (A and B and K and L) who were speaking in L1 while preparing to give their descriptions to their partners.</p>	<p>I think, this helps students to practice speaking and work together.</p> <p>Maybe, those students do not understand instructions since they are using L1.</p>
<p>The teacher checks homework and tries that students feel free to speak without putting pressure on them.</p>	<p>This is good to make people feel comfortable and not to push them to talk from the very beginning.</p>
<p>The teacher starts giving instructions of a reading activity. After this, she starts asking questions about the text; just few students volunteer (N and E).</p> <p>There were some students who remain passive (J, I, M and L) and do not participate during this activity.</p>	<p>I believe at this point that some students do not to participate because they do not have the English level for the class.</p>
<p>The teacher starts to ask students if they have ever had an accident.</p>	<p>I think talking about experiences may help students somehow to talk about</p>

	themselves and it may lower anxiety.
One of the students (student N) starts talking about the previous-mentioned topic and he seems to be very excited when talking.	I think that this student speaks about himself with no indications of anxiety or de-motivation.
After this, students get together and they start to talk; the majority of them in Spanish.	I think they do not feel comfortable yet speaking in the target language.
When the teacher asks each student about the topic, some just give one-word answers (students A, B, C, D) or do not say anything at all.	In my opinion they do not participate equally because they do not like speaking in front of the rest of the class.

THIRD DOUBLE ENTRY FOCUSED GENERAL OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 09th 2008

Observer: Manuel Rosero.

Ten students attended the class

DESCRIPTIONS	INTERPRETATION
The professor has just asked Ss how their weekend was. Student J answers "nice". When asked about more details, she does not say much.	This is not unexpected. Last time I could observe that the level of most of the students here is not really appropriate for the required level of the class.
Then, student N starts talking about his weekend. He is more fluent than	I wonder what would happen if the teacher had this guy sit at the back of

<p>the first one. Curiously, this is the same student that talked the most last class and is sitting right next to the teacher's desk.</p>	<p>the classroom, next to the students who do not participate (A,B,D and C as much.</p>
<p>The teacher leaves the classroom; after a minute, students start speaking in Spanish.</p>	<p>Perhaps it is a bad idea to leave students alone.</p>
<p>The professor has just asked students if they have ever had a traffic accident. Two students tell their stories. Once again, student N and H are the first volunteers, they give a complete description of their story.</p> <p>The others students (A, B, C, D F, I J, K) remain passive during this activity. When the teacher asks each of them about if they have ever had a traffic accident, they remain quiet and some say "no" with a soft voice.</p>	<p>These two guys do seem to experience any fear or anxiety when speaking to the class.</p> <p>I wonder if these students feel fear of speaking in public and if they are motivated to talk.</p>

FOURTH DOUBLE ENTRY FOCUSED GENERAL OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 09th 2008

Ten students attended the class

Observer: Jorge Torres.

DESCRIPTIONS	INTERPRETATION
The class starts. The teacher asks students how their weekend was.	This is a good warming activity that helps students realize that learning a language is not based on working on a textbook.
Some students respond this question by saying “good” or “nice”(J and G) and then, the teacher asks why it was nice; however, those students do not say much about; just one sentence (“I rested”)	Maybe students, as I said before, would like to say a lot of things but they do not find the words to say it.
While one of the students (student N) is talking about his weekend, some students use Spanish among them to talk.	It seems this students is highly motivated when speaking I think it may be very useful for students to practice their English in the classroom when they talk to their partners, I wonder if the students speak in English outside the classroom.
Once the teacher is gone, some students start speaking in Spanish about things that are not related to the activity (students A, B, J, K, L, M).	I wonder if they have already finished or they just want to gossip Or if they do not feel motivated to do this activity.

FIFTH DOUBLE ENTRY DESCRIPTIVE FOCUSED OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 16th 2008

Ten students attended the class

Observer: Manuel Rosero.

DESCRIPTIONS	INTERPRETATION
The teacher is now asking some questions to check students' reading comprehension. Only a few students answer the questions (N and H).	I think that some students have reading comprehension problems. However, I might be wrong; maybe, they are just too shy. It may be a good idea to ask the teacher how the students did in their tests.
Most of the time, the teacher asks a question and then directs it to a student in particular. Sometimes, however, the teacher changes her approach and points before asking the question. When the teacher asks student G he make a face of unwillingness and does not participate.	In my own student teaching practice I always ask a question first and then direct it to a student in particular. I think it is a good strategy to get the attention of the entire class. I think this student does not like speaking in English; he was one of those students who always speaks in Spanish during the speaking activities.
When students have to work together, some of them continue using Spanish (A, B, G, L, J, I and K) within their groups.	This is a recurring behavior in every class.

SIXTH DOUBLE ENTRY DESCRIPTIVE FOCUSED OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 17th 2008

Observer: Jorge Torres

Eight students attended the class.

DESCRIPTIONS	INTERPRETATION
<p>Those students who participate the most in the classroom do the same in the laboratory (H, N and E) they always to talk about the topic of the class and to repeat sentences form the book. They are talking about old and new things. In contrast, the ones who remain passive are the same as in the classroom; they remain passive and do not say anything (A, B, C, D).</p> <p>Then, student F says that one of the advantages of the internet is that you can find info about what you want</p>	<p>I think that some students may not feel motivated to participate in class.</p> <p>It was surprising to me that these students participate without being called upon and that his answer was not one word, I think this topic motivates him to speak</p>
<p>As seen in previous observations, students A, B, C and D do not volunteer and do not give fluent answers when they are called upon.</p>	<p>Some students remain passive and do not raise your hand to participate.</p>

SEVENTH DOUBLE ENTRY DESCRIPTIVE FOCUSED OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 18th 2008

Nine students attended the class

Observer: Manuel Rosero

DESCRIPTIONS	INTERPRETATION
Students are doing an oral activity right now. They are moving around the classroom and talking to their peers in English. They are using small cards and are reading them.	I think this is very much alike to what they do in class when they read from the book, except that today they are standing up instead of being sitting.
When the teacher directs questions to the “passive” students (A, B C, D G and K) there is a clear difference in the way they answer as oppose to the way “active” students (E, H and N) do.	This is something consistent without the observations I have done so far.
“Passive” students tend to sit together and vice versa.	I wonder whether it would be a good idea or not for the teacher to mix “passive” and “active” students. I also wonder what kind of reaction students would have.
The teacher is right now doing exactly what I was thinking of; she is pairing up “active” students with the “passive” ones.	I do not know if this is going to work because the teacher has just left the classroom and most pairs are talking in Spanish.
Now, students are doing a role-play exercise; they are using their notes as a visual aid.	I think that it must be difficult to sound spontaneous when you are reading something.

EIGHTH DOUBLE ENTRY DESCRIPTIVE FOCUSED OBSERVATION

DECEMBER 19th 2008

Ten students attended this class.

Observer: Jorge Torres

DESCRIPTIONS	INTERPRETATION
<p>The teacher says that they are going to play a game in order to practice speaking. The students pay attention to the teacher and make two groups; students are enthusiastic about participating in this game.</p>	<p>It seems that the students feel relaxed and motivated about the game. There is no pressure on them. And they are changing their ways of learning.</p>
<p>The game lasts about thirty minutes. Then, the teacher asks students who the winners in each group were. Then the teacher asks which words they found more difficult to guess. As always students N, E and H volunteer. Other students (F and G) tell the teacher about those difficult words, student A asks “¿eso es espuma en español?” Student H answers “yes foam” The rest of the students remain quiet.</p>	<p>I think this is key to students because they can compare their answers and notice the similar words they found more difficult to guess. I think these students would like to share ideas with the rest of the class but sometimes, may feel anxious when speaking.</p>
<p>Finally, The teacher asks all students what they are going to do on vacation. All students answer. Those students who always participate in oral activities(N,H and E) are the first volunteers and give long answers; on the other hand, those</p>	<p>I think these three students always have an active participation because they do not feel anxious and are motivated during the speaking activities.</p>

students who remain silent during the speaking tasks just say “rest and stay at home and or repeat what their partner has already said (A,B,C,D,F,G and I).	It seems that these students refuse to share their ideas to the rest of the class because they may have nothing to say or because the topic is not appealing to them.
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ORAL PARTICIPATION SCORING GUIDE

Students always take a voluntary active role in the speaking activities challenging themselves on a daily basis, they ask question and are willing to take risks. These students always work on speaking assignments and are willing to share their ideas with the whole class.	5
Students consistently take an active role in the speaking activities. They participate regularly in the speaking activities and frequently volunteer their ideas. These students are willing to share their ideas as a result of having completed the speaking assignment.	4
Students sometimes take an active role in the speaking activities; these students sometimes are reluctant to take risks, answer questions and share ideas.	3
Students occasionally take an active role in the speaking activities. They participate and ask question infrequently. They often do not participate and rarely share their ideas and ask questions. The students only participate when call upon.	2

<p>Students rarely or never take an active role during the speaking activities. These students often refuse to share their ideas even when call upon and give one word answers or do not say anything at all.</p>	<p>1</p>
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APPENDIX 3

STUDENTS' CONSENT LETTER FORM

UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS-LICENCIATURA EN INGLÉS

Apreciado Estudiante,

La encuesta/entrevista que usted responderá a continuación tiene como objetivo establecer ciertos factores que influyen en el desarrollo de la producción oral como estudiante de primer semestre de Licenciatura en Inglés. Nuestro objetivo es hallar las posibles causas de dichos factores y sugerir posibles estrategias para remediarlos.

Tenga en cuenta que la información aquí consignada será totalmente confidencial y se usará exclusivamente para fines establecidos en el párrafo anterior.

¿Desea responder voluntariamente? SÍ NO

He leído, me han explicado y estoy de acuerdo con la realización de la encuesta.

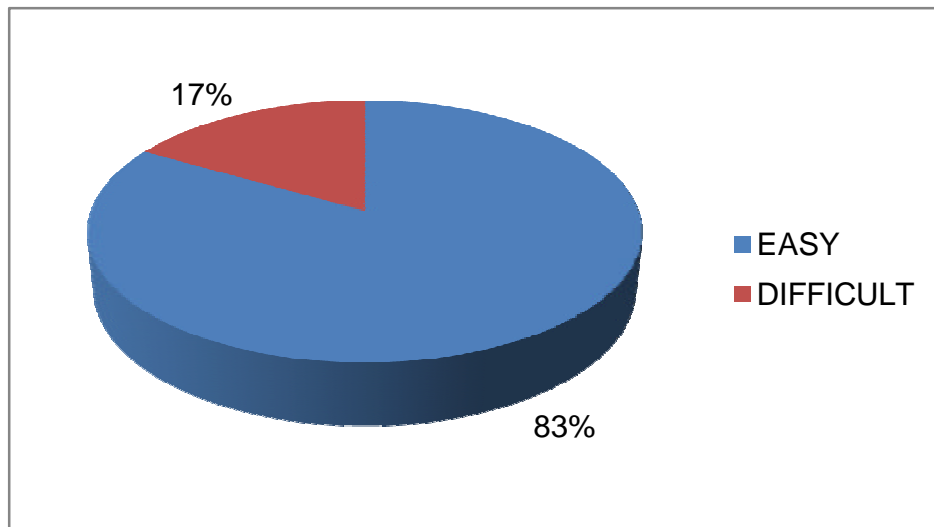
Firma del estudiante

APPENDIX 4

AFFECTIVE FACTORS SURVEY

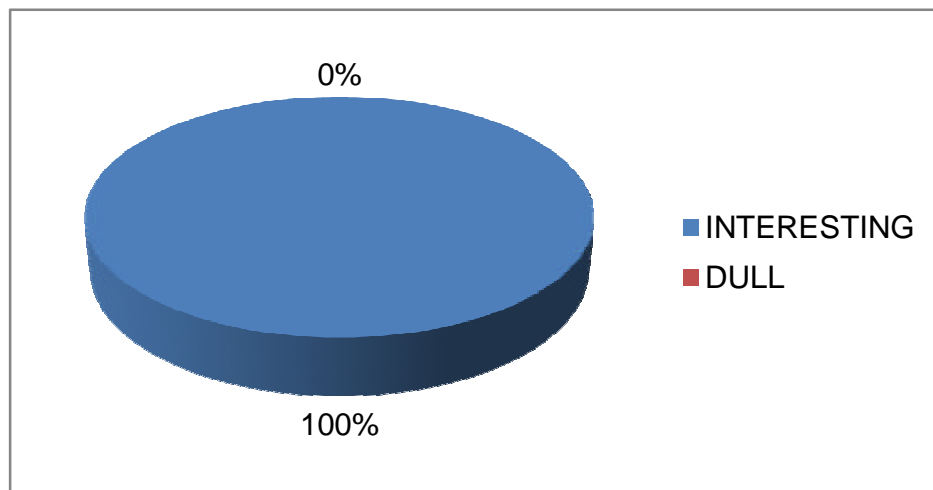
1. Do you think learning English is:

Graphic 4.1



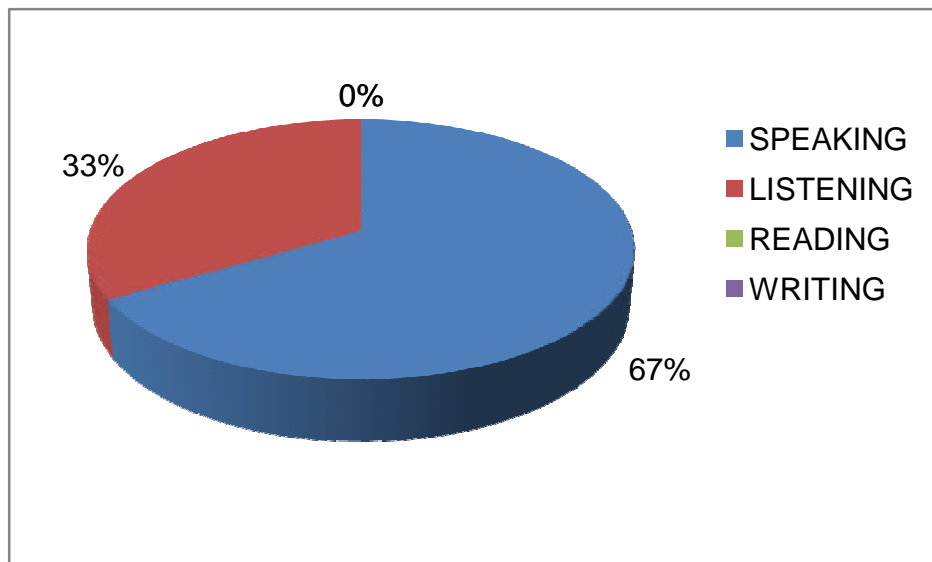
2. Do you think English is:

Graphic 4.2



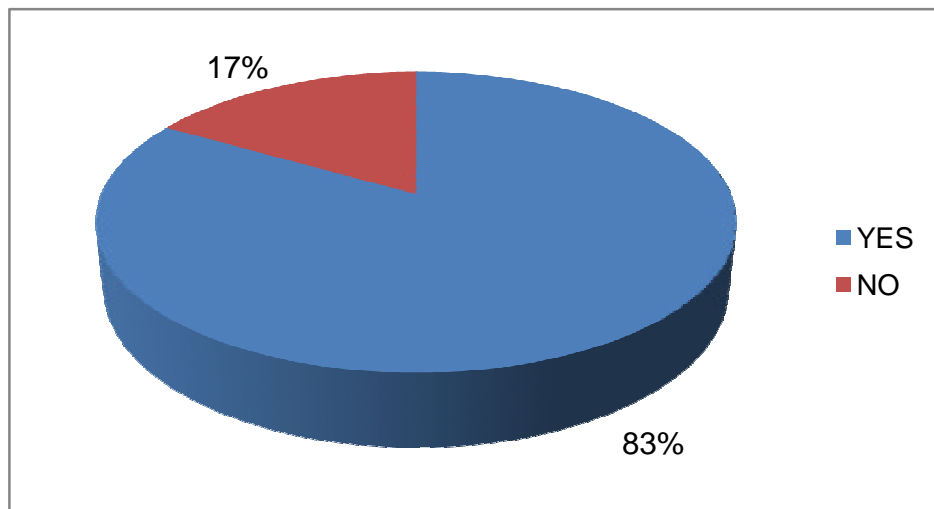
3. What skill do you think is the most important for you in your academic life?

Graphic 4.3



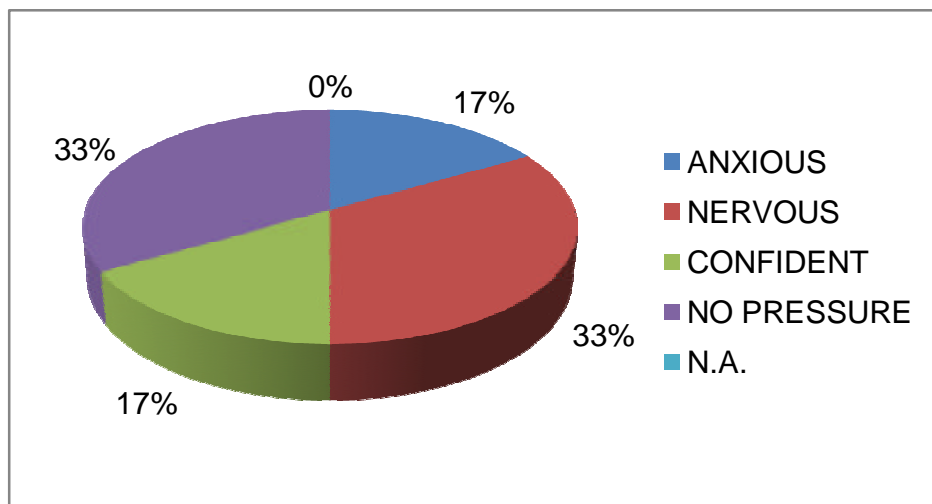
4. Do you think you should participate more in speaking activities during the English class?

Graphic 4.4



5. How do you feel speaking in English in class?

Graphic 4.5

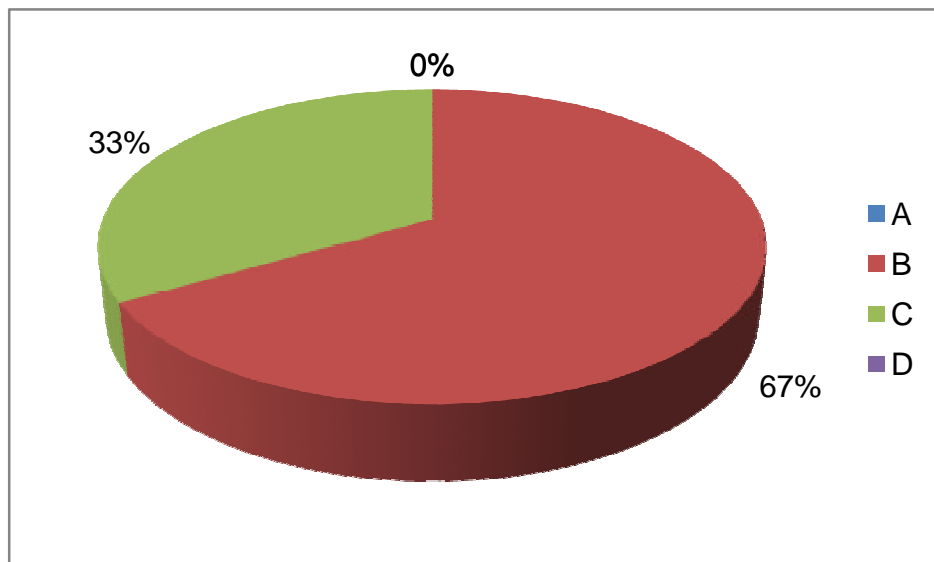


6. If your answer was nervous or anxious, please answer the next question:

You believe this sensation is due to:

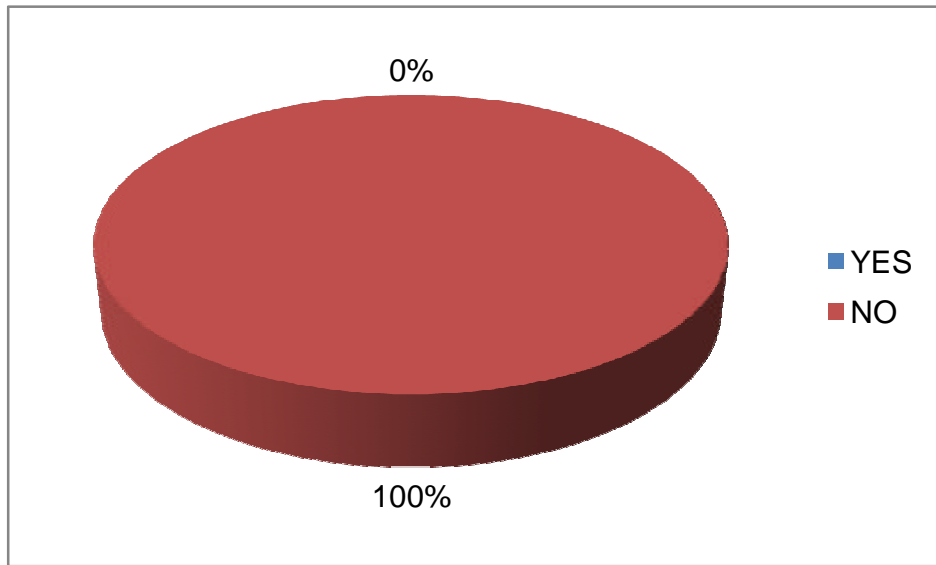
- a) You are afraid that people make fun of you because of your pronunciation.
- b) You feel unable to express yourself in English.
- c) You are afraid of not being understood.
- d) Another, specify_____.

Graphic 4.6



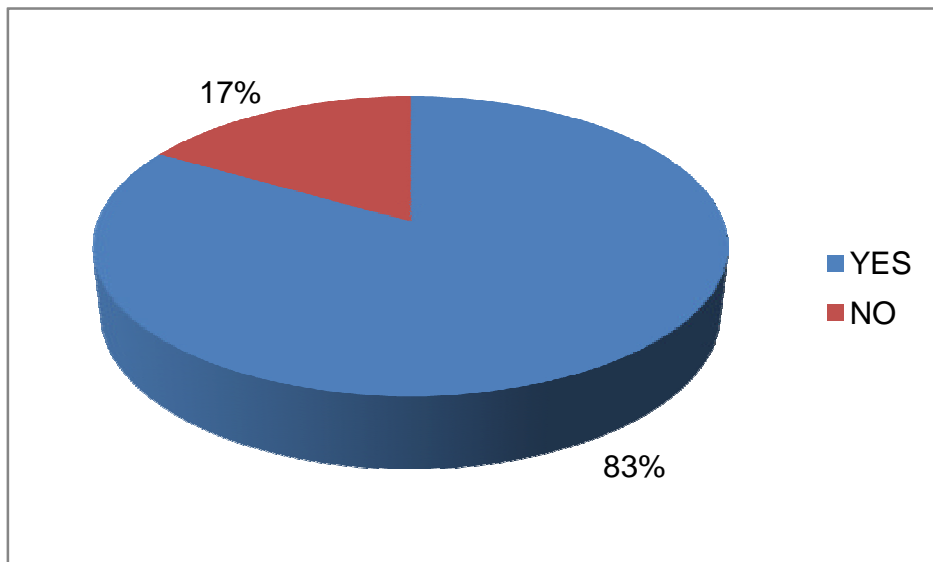
7. Are you afraid of speaking in public in your mother tongue?

Graphic 4.7



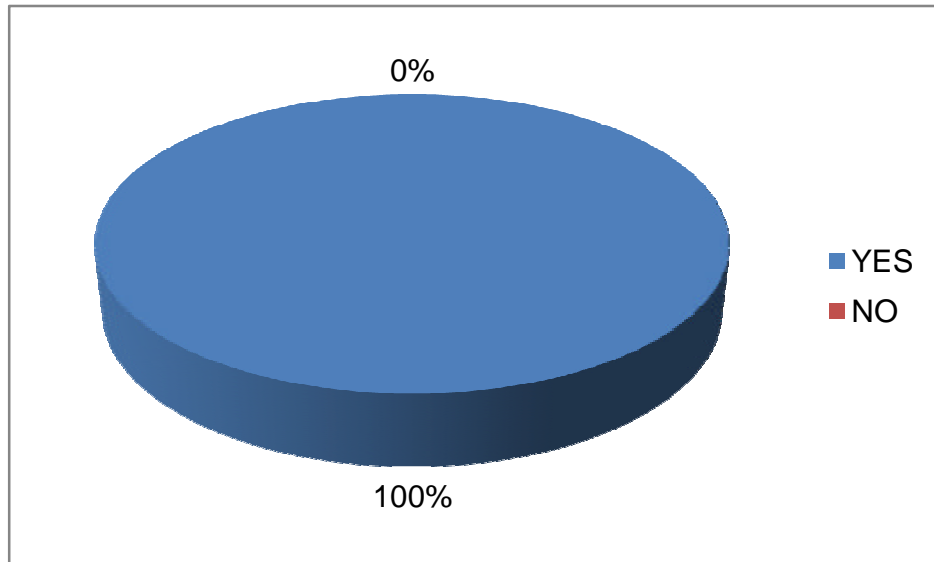
8. Do you think your English level is appropriate for the English level of the course?

Graphic 4.8



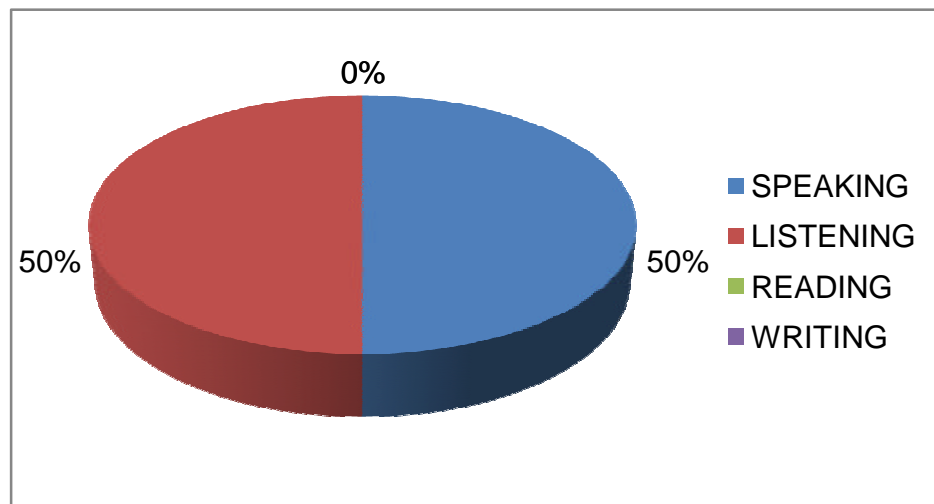
9. Do you think travelling abroad is important to improve your English:

Graphic 4.9



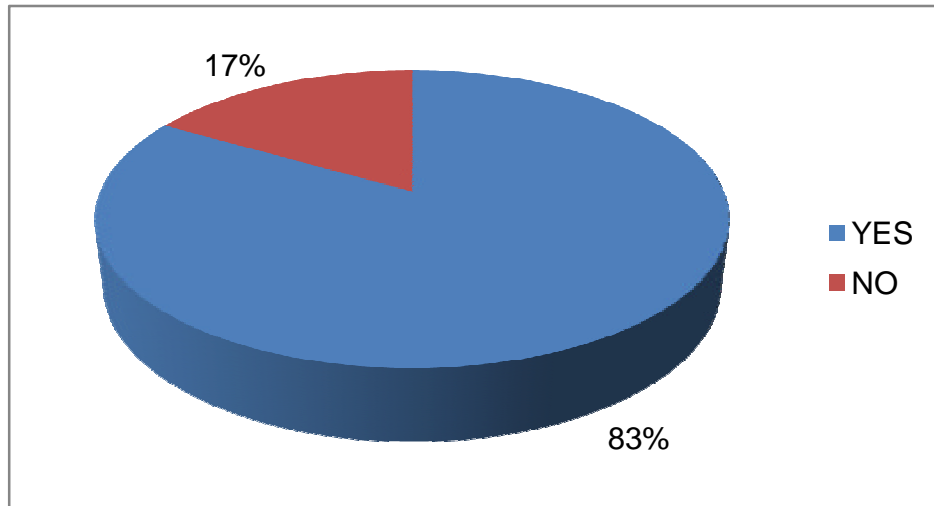
10. If so, what skill do you think you can improve better by being in an English speaking country?

Graphic 4.10



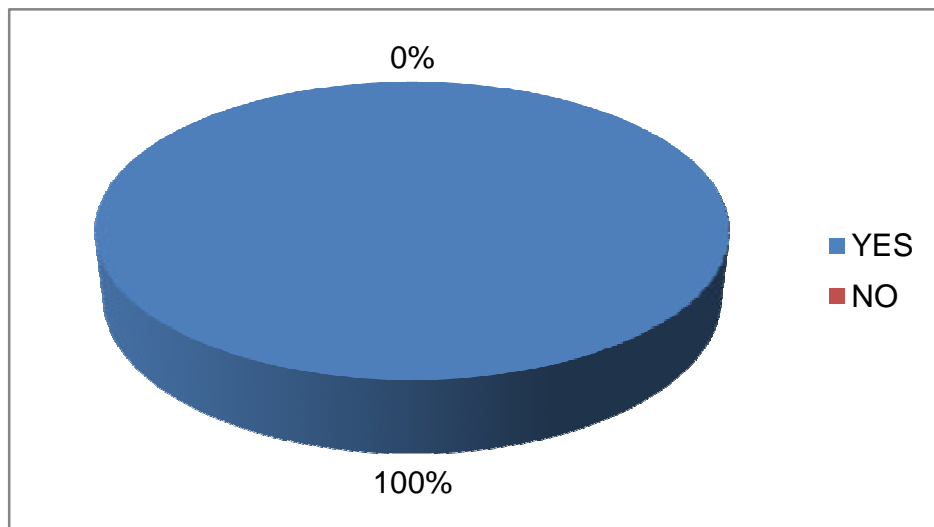
11. Do you like working in groups?

Graphic 4.11



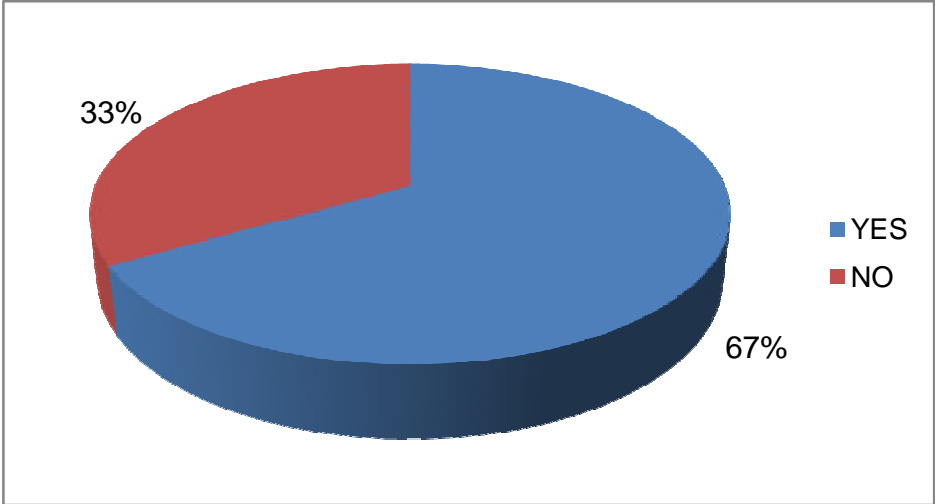
12. Do you think pair work is useful to improve your Speaking skill?

Graphic 4.12



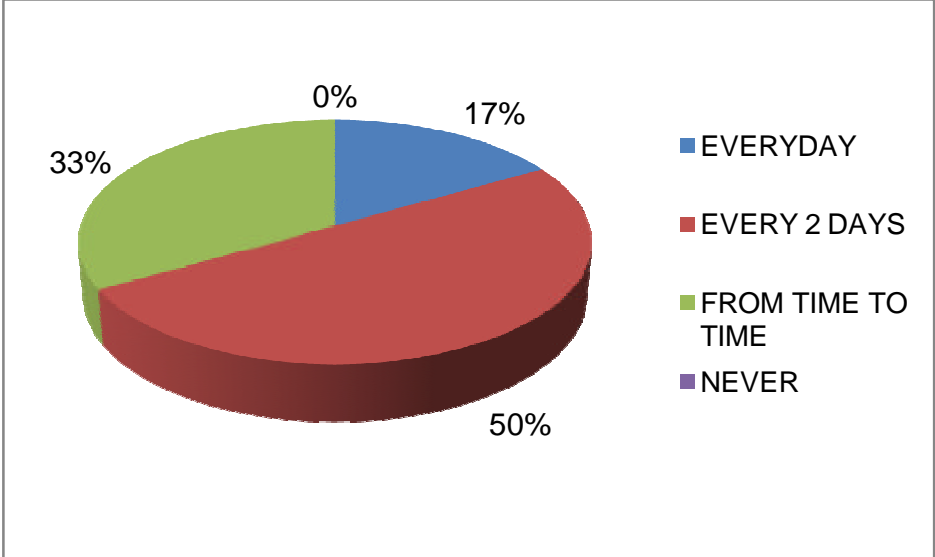
13. Do you speak English outside the classroom?

Graphic 4.13



14. If so, how often do you speak English outside the classroom?

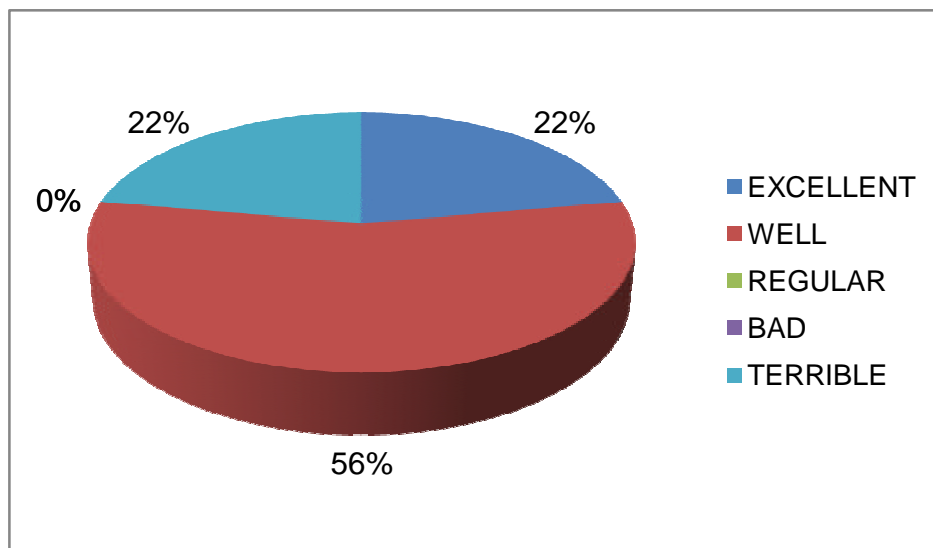
Graphic 4.14



APPENDIX 5
STUDENTS' BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH SURVEY

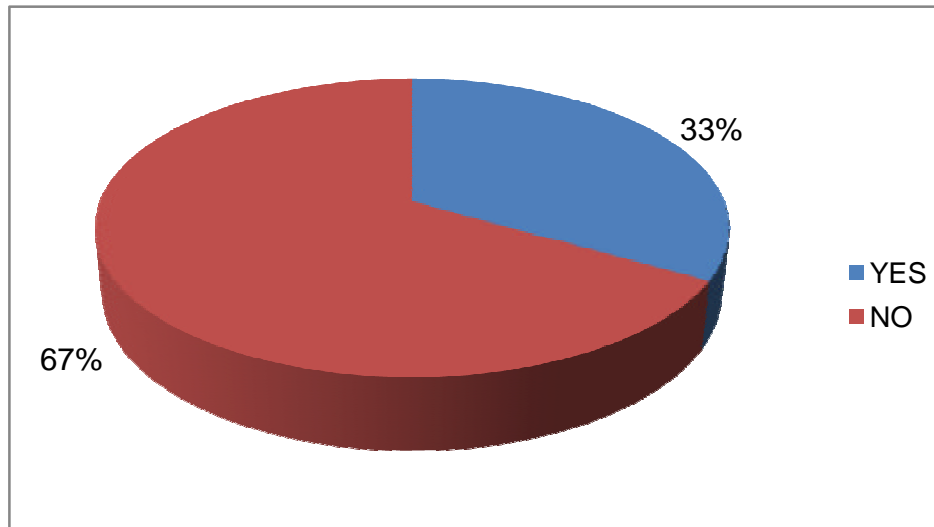
1. How well did you do in English at school?

Graphic 5.1



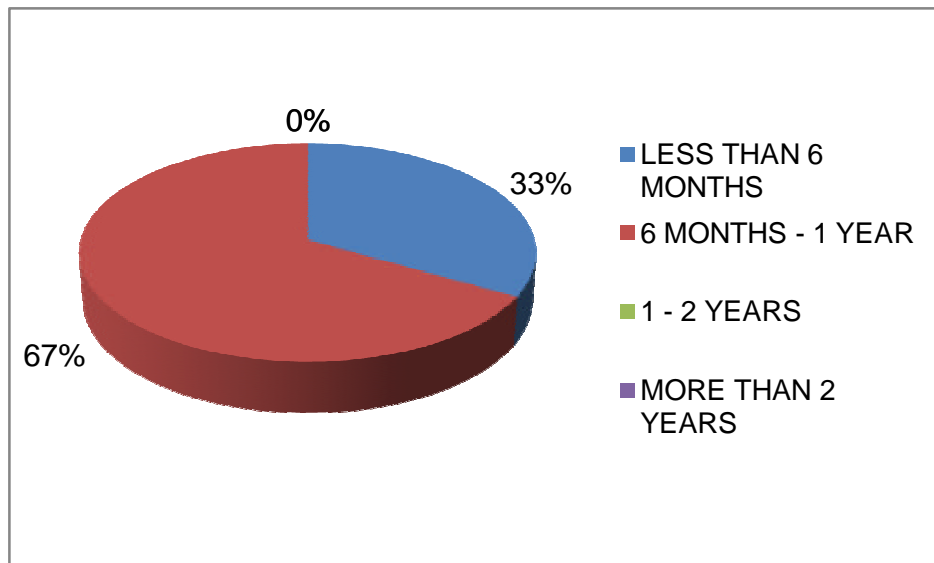
2. Did you take any English course before entering university?

Graphic 5.2



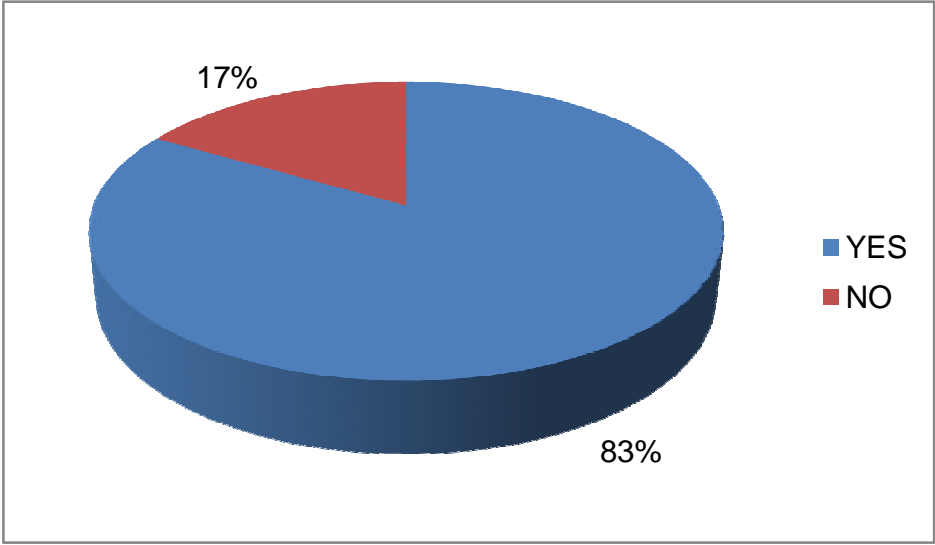
3. If so, how long was it?

Graphic 5.3



4. Did you like English when you were in high school?

Graphic 5.4



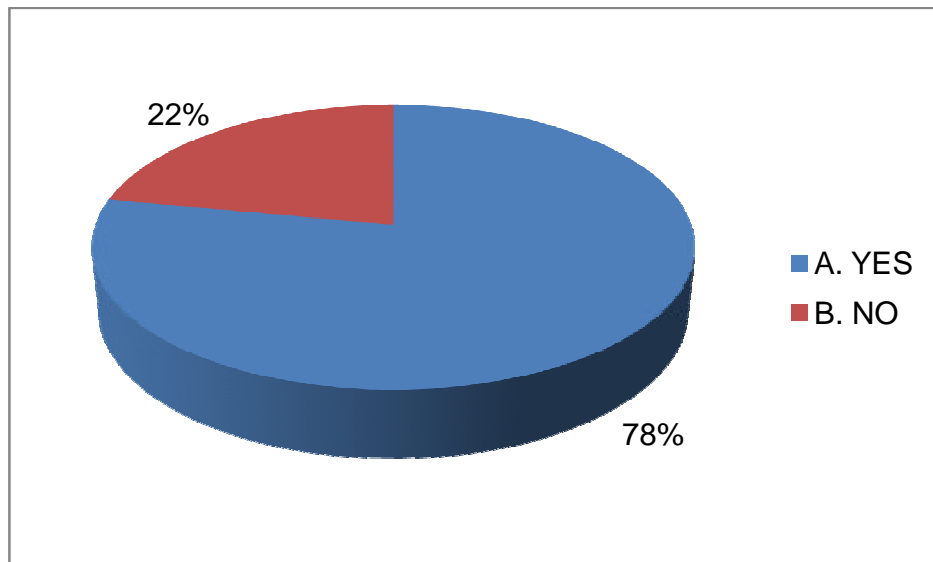
APPENDIX 6

STUDENTS' INTERVIEW

1. Do you think that people who want to enroll the ELT program should take and approve some sort of English language proficiency test prior to being accepted?

YES ___ NO ___

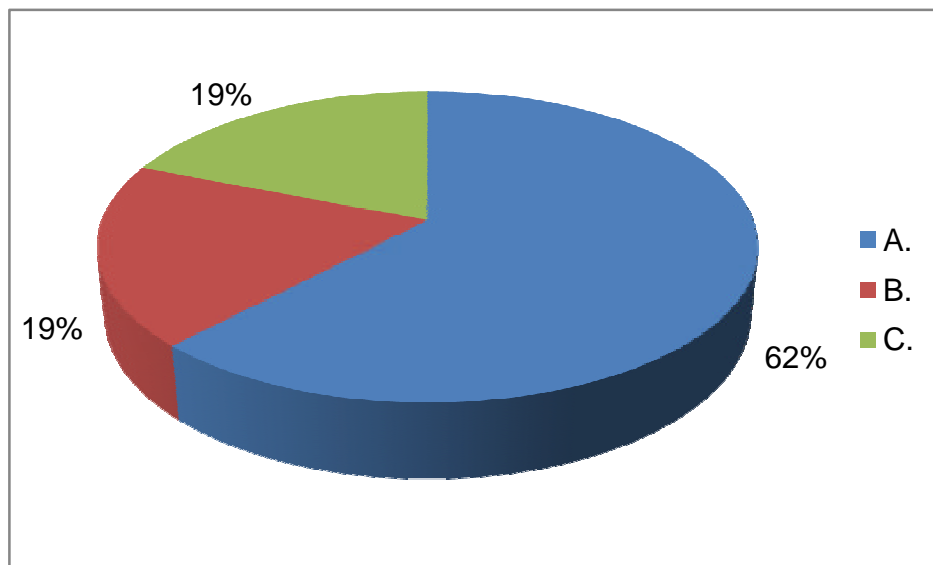
Graphic 6.1



2. Tick the reason that, in your opinion, justify the institution of the test

- A. Some of your classmates have failed or are failing English.
- B. Students should be classified according to their level of proficiency in English and be divided into different groups.
- C. All the students in a class should be at the same level.

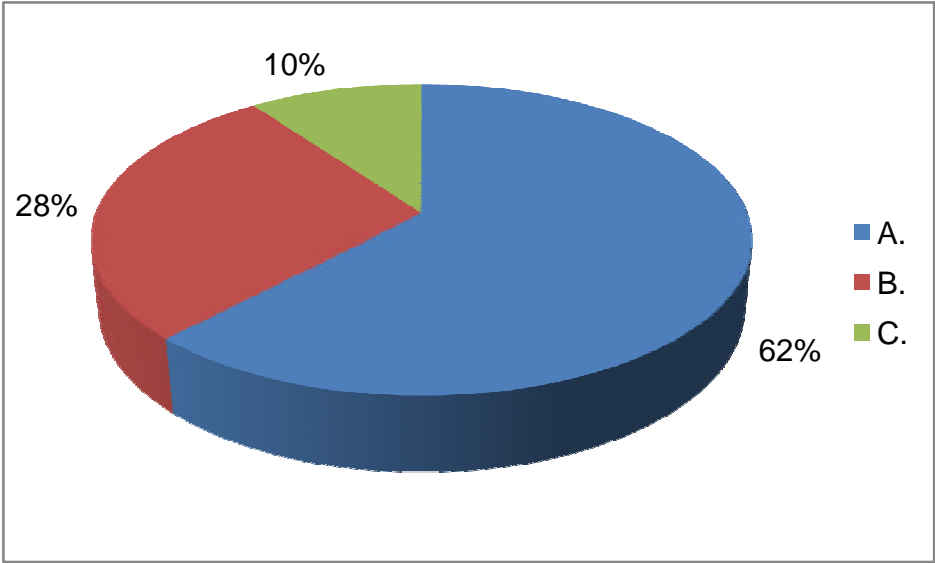
Graphic 6.2



3. Tick the reason why, in your opinion, a test should not be instituted.

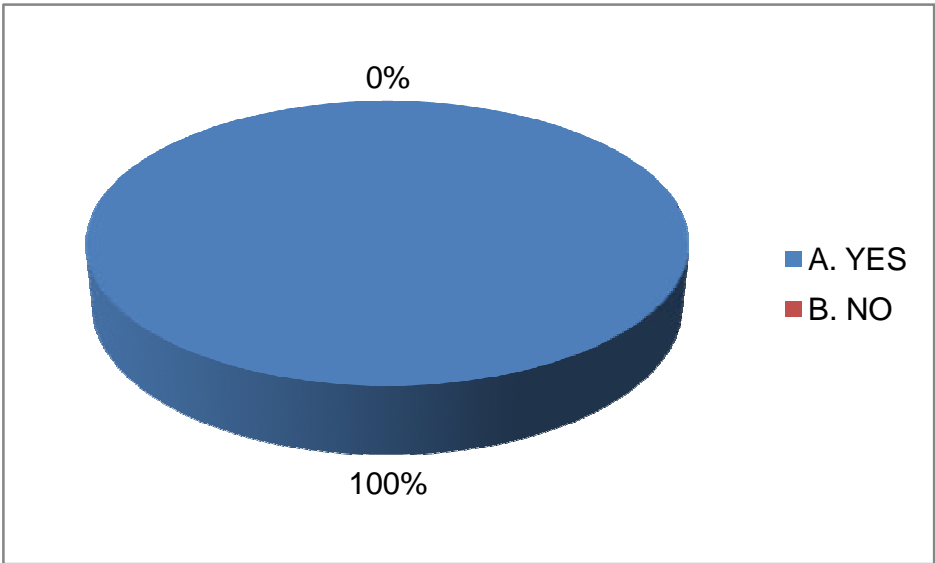
- A. Students should be given the chance to catch up with the level of the class.
- B. It is not necessary for the normal development of the class that all students have the same level of proficiency in English.
- C. The instruction on English received at school is enough for the level of the class.

Graphic 6.3



4. Do you think it is important to speak in English outside the classroom?
YES___ NO___

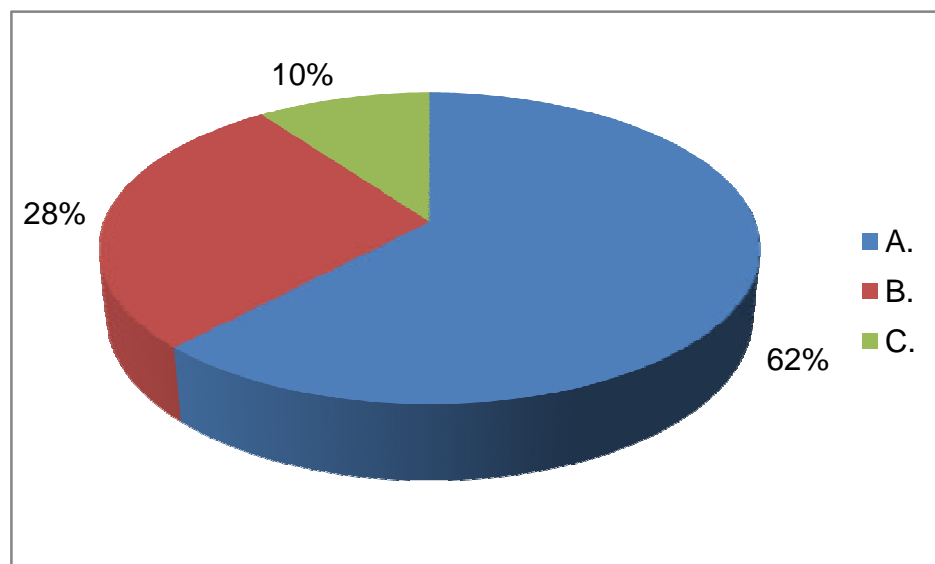
Graphic 6.4



5. Tick the reason why, in your opinion, speaking English outside the classroom is relevant for you as an EFL learner.

- A. Developing fluency and good pronunciation in the target language.
- B. Making the target more meaningful by using it in everyday life.
- C. Being more aware of the most common grammar mistakes

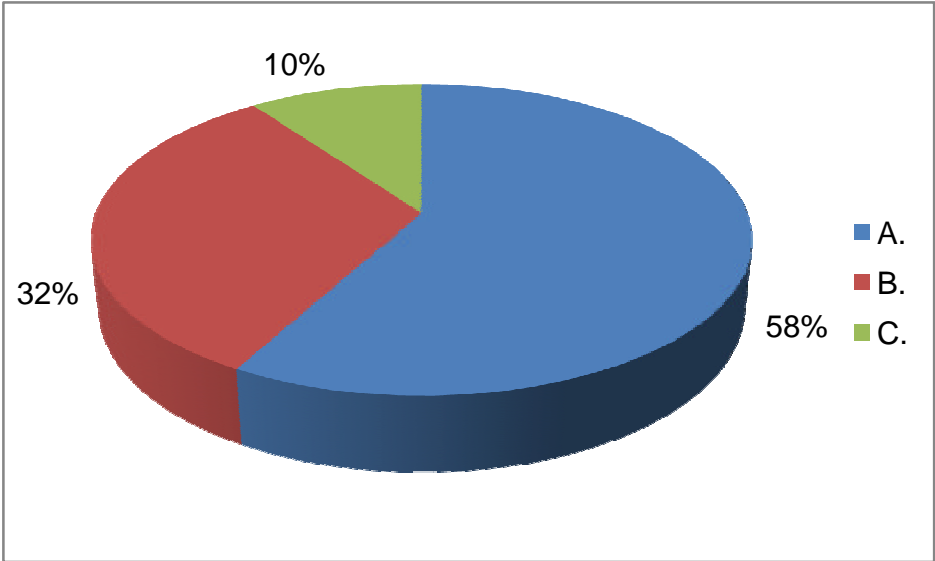
Graphic 6.5



6. Tick the reason why, in your opinion, not all of your classmates participate equally during the speaking activities in class.

- A. They have different levels of proficiency in English.
- B. They do not have as much interest in the class as others.
- C. Speaking is not the ability they are best at.

Graphic 6.6



APPENDIX 7

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

1. To what do you attribute the fact that not every student participates actively during the speaking activities developed in class?

Some of them prefer, probably, learning being receptive (observing, listening) rather than being productive at an, let's say, initial stage."

2. One of our surveys showed that not each one of your students speaks English outside the classroom; what is more, most of those who do speak English outside the classroom do not do it frequently. To what do you attribute this?

"To many factors such as:

- a. The lack of autonomy.*
- b. Our linguistic situation: English is taken as foreign language not as a second one.*
- c. The lack of will to make efforts or to have a constant discipline."*

3. How do you think it affects the class in terms of oral production the fact that some students admitted that they did not like English when they were in high school and they did bad as well?

"In terms of attitude, if they didn't like English, it <let> me think this program was a second option for them. So, they probably will not be interested enough. If there is not attitude, there is not will to do things and therefore, to try to improve in their learning process every day. And, talking about their

performance at high school, if it was bad, it means they did not acquire the basis required to start to see Pre-intermediate English.”