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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



RESEARCH PROJECT

DIFFICULTIES THAT ADVANCED INTENSIVE ENGLISH I STUDENT OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH WITH EMPHASIS IN TEACHING FACE TO PRODUCE ACCURATE AND FLUENT ORAL ENGLISH DISCOURSE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR, YEAR 2015.

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Difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I Student of the Bachelor of Arts
in English with Emphasis in Teaching Face to Produce Accurate and Fluent
Oral English Discourse at the Department of Foreign Languages of the
University of El Salvador, Year 2015.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking English is a difficult task: some experts state that some people understand the language and know a lot about its grammar and lexicon, but when they have to speak, they seem to be at a loss for words. This is a problem that other people have noticed as well. For example, according to Tatham and Morton (2006: 273) many people report that they can understand a language but they cannot speak it. There are also other countries where people experience the same phenomenon; for example, in the Japanese context, it seems that many people have difficulties in speaking English.

This is clearly a problem, because the aim of English language education is to provide learners with the capabilities to understand the language and the ability to both write and speak it. If learners are not able to speak English, this aim has not been fully achieved. Thus, it is necessary to study this issue in order to discover if people indeed have problems with speaking, and if they do, what kind of difficulties and what activities are being used in class to overcome them. Of course, not all learners struggle with speaking. However, since there are some people who do have problems with speaking, there is a good reason to research the matter. More insight into this might be able to help develop the teaching of English speech production and thus the abilities of English learners.

This study attempts to acquire useful information about this problem by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting the data collected through the use of some methods as surveys, interviews, and checklists. Students from Advanced Intensive English I of the Bachelor of Arts in English at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador,

Year 2015 were chosen because they are more likely to have experience of using English for a longer period of time. The aims are to identify the main difficulties they have in speaking English and the types of activities teachers are using to enhance and overcome them.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

Currently, English has gained a worldwide importance. It has become one of the most spoken languages around the world, and most people have started to enroll in learning English. Hence, two basic concepts of learning English have arisen. These concepts are ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language). They are used in different countries where the English Language is important. These countries are called ESL countries and EFL countries.

According to Fernandez (2012), ESL countries are nations where the medium of instruction in education and government is English although English may not be the native language. On the other hand, EFL countries do not use English as a medium of instruction, but English is taught in schools.

ESL is a relatively new concept, with a somewhat short history of only 300 years. The concept of ESL began when English started to become the common language spoken in business. However, it took a few hundred years for the language acquisition process to be formalized. EFL is usually learned in environments where the language of the community and the school is not English. EFL teachers have the difficult task of finding access to and providing English models for their students.

The Beginning of English Teaching

Finding an effective way to teach English became a concern for the British, who needed to communicate with other governments, colonies, and businesses, particularly in the 15th to 17th centuries, when the British Empire was expanding. The solution they found was to bring tutors to those who were upper-class government officials and use the same method as classical Latin and Greek were taught, using translation and rote memorization of vocabulary. These English classes were also focused on British politics, theory and religious beliefs. The idea was to integrate the supposed superior British education into other cultures, allowing the local people to govern themselves, but with British causes and interests in mind.

As technology improved and people began to migrate to the United States, this country had an influential role in English acquisition. Immigrants from all over the world came to the United States because of the abundance of work. However, most immigrants lived in communities in large cities and found little need to learn English. Schools integrated bilingual classes and instruction in foreign languages. With this, other countries started to apply the English teaching in their curricula. These triggered people's interest in learning English.

Since that moment on, many schools started to teach English as a Foreign Language, developing the four macro-skills (writing, speaking, reading and listening). Teaching communication was not a significant aspect in TEFL. Communication skills have been discussed by many authors as Swan (1985), Pattison (1987), Clark (1987), Morrow (1987), Terrel (1991), Brumfit (1984), Candlin (1987), Sheils (1995) in various aspects and

contexts. Free production or real world communication are still a problematic issue for many teachers around the world since participation of students is not that accurate and usual in English classrooms.

Hedge (1988) says that if teachers took old books to look for speaking activities, they would find nothing of relevance because the activities that were most offered in those books were reading and writing activities. Currently, there are many English speaking activities which can make students actively participate and develop the language.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

This research project was aimed at providing relevant information to the Foreign Language Department regarding the difficulties English students face to produce accurate and fluent Oral English discourse since it is a problem that a large percentage of them are undergoing in the major. For that reason, researchers focused on taking the Advanced Intensive English I students as a reference population for the research to be carried out. Consequently, a representative group of students was the sample chosen in order to gather the necessary information through the implementation of instruments designed by the research team.

C. OBJECTIVES

General objective:

- ✓ To Identify the main difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I students of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador face to produce accurate and fluent oral English discourse in order to propose solutions.

Specific objectives:

- ✓ To identify the activities teachers often use to enhance students' proficiency in the development of English fluency and accuracy.
- ✓ To measure the frequency in which speaking activities are applied during the English classes to develop students' oral English accuracy and proficiency.
- ✓ To find out in which activities students feel more challenged to participate.

D. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the main difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I students of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador face to produce accurate and fluent oral English discourse?
2. What are the activities teachers use to overcome students' difficulties in the development of English fluency and accuracy?
3. Do the speaking activities applied by teachers in class help students to overcome students' oral difficulties?
4. Does the frequency in which speaking activities are applied in class fulfill student's needs?
5. What are the activities used by students to produce accurate and fluent oral English discourse?

E. JUSTIFICATION

This research project was intended to identify the difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I students of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching face to produce accurate and fluent oral English discourse at the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of El Salvador in the year 2015. There might be several aspects triggering this problem, such as teaching methodology, students' motivation, students' background, students' native language and so forth.

Such a topic has not been researched before in the Department of Foreign Languages; therefore, the results of this research work can be very relevant and beneficial to the students involved in this research since it will provide them with some insights to identify the main difficulties they face when trying to produce accurate and fluent English discourse.

In order to have a better idea of the situation and obtain reliable information regarding students' oral proficiency, the research team decided to make use of the oral proficiency interview (OPI), a test that measures the oral proficiency level of the participants. This test was passed to 54 students who represented 20% of the total population of the advanced Intensive English I, students who were chosen using simple random sampling. The results gotten by the diagnostic test reflected the real situation students face at producing oral English discourse because the majority of them did not reach the appropriate level they should have.

The following chart reflects student's oral proficiency level obtained after doing the interview.

54 Students interviewed	Percentage	Oral Proficiency Level
7	13%	advanced low
11	20%	intermediate high
14	26%	intermediate mid
13	24%	intermediate low
6	11%	novice high
3	6%	novice mid

The information gathered in the table presented above was obtained with the help of some certified teachers, in accordance with the Oral Proficiency Interview Familiarization Manual by American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages. They were in charge of interviewing the group of students with the purpose of getting reliable information; therefore, the results were favorable for the study of this phenomenon:

Out of 100% of students under study, it is surprising to see that at the Advanced level, some students still have serious problems when producing English orally, using basic structures. As shown in the table above, 6% of students under study got a novice level, and 11% of them got novice high. Regarding intermediate levels, 24% of them got intermediate low,

26%, being the highest percentage, got intermediate mid and 20% got intermediate high. Finally, just 13% reached the required level of oral proficiency. As appreciated, the vast majority of students under study got intermediate levels. So, taking into account these results, this research work might help teachers identify which activities can be used the most so that students develop or improve their speaking skill. Also, this might help the researchers to identify the speaking areas students need help in. According to Cervantes (2009), students are interested in the methods, strategies and techniques that the teacher uses in class.

The information gathered was studied, analyzed, and tabulated to obtain the findings. With them, the insights were generated to identify the main difficulties students face to produce accurate and fluent English discourse. This might also help teachers replace or improve all of the activities they have been using in English classes which have not been effective to achieve the objective set in the lesson plan.

F. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

Difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I Student of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching Face to Produce Accurate and Fluent Oral English Discourse at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Year 2015.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Speaking is the active use of language to express meaning, and for learners, the spoken language is the medium through which a new language is encountered, understood, practiced, and learnt. Rather than oral skills being simply one aspect of learning language, the spoken form in the learner's classroom acts as the prime source of language learning. However, speaking problems can be major challenges to effective foreign language learning and communication. Samira Al Hosni, 2014.

There are two major aspects to consider when it refers to speaking competence, accuracy, and fluency. Speaking accuracy indicates "the extent to which the language produced conforms to target language norms" (Yuan & Ellis, 2003, p. 2), which involves the correct use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Speaking fluency refers to the ability to produce the spoken language "without undue pausing or hesitation" (Skehan, 1996, p. 22). Too many hesitations and pauses in speaking may obstruct the speaking fluency and also depress the speaker. As an essential tool for language teaching and learning, speaking can "facilitate language acquisition and development" (Goh, 2007, p.1), and it can be beneficial to learners' academic achievement as well as professional success (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). As an important aspect of language skills, English speaking should not be devalued but be "developed in its own right" (Goh, 2005, p. 105). Therefore, good speaking competence is essential to English learners, especially for those English majors at normal universities, for English teaching is likely to be their lifelong career.

To enter deeper on the matter, it is important to know the process of teaching and learning speaking and its main difficulties encountered in it; for that reason, the following points contain important and relevant information regarding this main skill.

Teaching of Speaking

The use of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in oral communication is, without doubt, one of the most common but highly complex activities necessary to be considered when teaching the English language, especially because we live at a time where the ability to speak English fluently has become a must, especially for those who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor (Al-Sibai, 2004, p.3).

The focus of teaching speaking, of course, is to improve the oral production of the students. Therefore, language teaching activities in the classroom should aim at maximizing individual language use (Haozhang, 1997). In the past, oral communication instruction was neglected because of the misconception that oral communication competence develops naturally over time and that the cognitive skills involved in writing automatically transfer to analogous oral communication skills (Chaney, 1998). However, Ur (1996) considered speaking the most important skill among four (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language. This indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it because there is no point knowing a lot about language if you can't use it! (Scrivener, 2005, p.146).

Oral Language Acquisition

Oral language acquisition is a natural process for children. It occurs almost without any effort. The ability to speak grows with age, but it does not mean that such growth will automatically lead to perfection. To speak in more effective ways requires particular attention and constant practice (Zhang et al., 1995). Speaking fluency appears to develop with increased exposure to second language (L2) input. (Zhang, 2009). Although it is widely recognized that input is very essential for language acquisition, it is not sufficient if not followed by interaction and output (the language a learner produces) because the processing of comprehension is different from the processing of production, and the ability to understand the meaning conveyed by sentences differs from the ability to use a linguistic system to express meaning. When input is negotiated and learners produce output in interaction, they selectively take in portions of comprehensible input and choose a correct linguistic form to express themselves. This process makes it possible for the learners to internalize what they have learned and experienced (Swain, 1985, as cited in Zhang, 2009).

Oral Language Learning

For language learning to take place, there are four conditions that should exist, and they are the exposure, opportunities to use the language, motivation, and instruction. Learners need chances to say what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened (Willis, 1996, p.7). A fact that is highlighted by second language research is that progress does not occur when people make a conscious effort to learn. Progress occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms, which are activated when learners are involved in communication with the

second language. The subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners are focused not on the language itself but on the communication of meaning (Littlewood, 1984). Harmer (1982) also argued that in a communicative task, the students' attention should be focused on the content of what they are saying, rather than the form. They should use a wide variety of language. According to Ellis (2003), this can be done by involving learners in performing two types of communicative tasks: focused communicative tasks and unfocused communicative tasks. Both of these tasks seek to engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language. They seek to develop language proficiency through communication. Through communication, learners can integrate separate structures into a creative system for expressing meaning (Littlewood, 1984, p.91).

Factors Influencing Learners' Speaking Competence

Speaking occurs spontaneously and transiently in real time, so producing spoken language can be very time-constrained (Wang, 2007). Influenced by cognitive factors, linguistic factors and affective factors, it is really challenging for EFL learners to speak English fluently and accurately.

a) Cognitive Factors

According to Levelt (1989), the speaking processes include conceptualization, formulation and articulation. Conceptualization deals with what information can be chosen to express the meaning. Formulation requires the speaker to produce the speech with his articulatory organs. As all the three processes take place on the spur of the moment, it is quite possible for learners to make mistakes in face-to-face communication. Therefore, their speaking may be

filled with “hesitations, false-starts, grammatical inaccuracies and limited vocabulary” (Hughes, 2002, p. 77). In this sense, both their speaking fluency and accuracy may be affected. Besides, human’s mind is a “limited-capacity processor” (McLaughlin & Heredia, 1996, p. 214), so it is not easy to focus on everything at the same time. Because of the limited attentional capacity, focusing on one area reduces students’ attention to other areas. Over-focus on accuracy may result in the lack of fluency, and too much emphasis on fluency may lead to the lack of accuracy (Skehan & Foster, 1999). Therefore, it is necessary for EFL learners to keep a balance between speaking accuracy and fluency.

b) Linguistic Factors

The correct use of language forms is critical for learners’ oral proficiency (Saunders & O’Brien, 2006). Comparing with native speakers, it is harder for EFL learners to use the accurate pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary (Bygate, 2005). Pronunciation plays an important role in intelligibility (Goh, 2007). Mispronouncing a single sound causes the listener’s misunderstanding; various uses of stresses as well as intonations result in totally different meanings. If learners often make mistakes in sounds, stress and intonation, their speaking accuracy is greatly affected. Besides, grammar plays a key role in learning the structure of English. But learning the accurate use of grammar is one thing, correctly using it in one’s speech is another. Some students are good at grammar in reading and writing; but they may often make mistakes in their spoken English. It is rather difficult for EFL learners to transfer the correct grammar to their speaking (Larsen-Freeman, 2001), so students should be facilitated in their grammar so that they can make progress in their speaking accuracy. Vocabulary is also important for EFL learners, just as the significance of bricks to a building. If the receptive vocabulary is rather limited, learners can hardly put

the “receptive vocabulary knowledge into productive use” (Nation, 2001, p. 129), so it is essential for EFL students to store a wealth of vocabulary in their long-term memory. In addition, the ability to quickly recall words from one’s mind may affect the speaking fluency (Levelt, 1989; Carter, 2001). Hence EFL learners should be able to have a fast access to the words and expressions in their mind while speaking so that their speaking fluency can be enhanced.

c) Affective Factors

Apart from cognitive and linguistic factors, learners’ speaking competence is influenced by affective factors. Both anxiety and self-restriction have an impact on learners’ oral proficiency. Anxiety is the affective factor that “most pervasively obstructs the learning process” (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 8). Worrying about being “wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible” (Brown, 2001, p. 269) greatly affects learners’ speaking performance. Too much nervousness makes learners “tongue-tied or lost for words” and absolutely influences their achievement in foreign language classroom (Zhang & Jia, 2006). Therefore, EFL learners should be supported enough before speaking, so that they can lessen their anxiety and perform better in speaking. Restricted by the face-saving, many learners are not brave enough to speak English in the classroom. Bearing in mind that “speech is silver, silence is gold”, many students choose to keep silent so as to avoid losing face in public. Affected by such self-restriction, it becomes harder and harder for them to open their mouth as time goes by. Since risk taking is viewed as an essence for “successful

learning of a second language” (Brown, 2007, p. 160), EFL learners should be motivated to speak bravely in order to promote their speaking competence gradually.

Factors that Cause Speaking Difficulties to EFL Learners

Zhang (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. According to Ur (1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they are as follows:

1. ***Inhibition***. Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy.
2. ***Nothing to say***. Students have no motive to express themselves.
3. ***Low or uneven participation***. Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.
4. ***Mother-tongue use***. Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

Errors and fossilization

Selinker (1974) identifies five processes of central to second language learning and acquisition, each of which can force fossilizable items, rules, and subsystems to appear and possibly remain in the Interlingua indefinitely. These five processes are:

Interference: Errors that can be attributed to language transfer (interference from the native language) can be found at the level of pronunciation, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, or meaning.

Transfer-of-training: Selinker maintains that some fossilizable errors may be due to the nature of the learning materials or procedures used in formal second language learning. He cites the example of Serbo-Croatian speakers who learned English from a textbook in which the third-person singular was almost always presented in the masculine form.

Overgeneralization of target language materials: Errors derived from overgeneralization result when a previously available strategy or rule is used in new situations where that rule does not apply.

Strategies of second language learning: Language-learning strategies are attempts to develop competence in the language and may include such procedures as the use of formal rules, rote memorization, deliberate rehearsal, contextual guessing, looking for recurring patterns, imitating formulaic routines, seeking opportunities to obtain comprehensible input, appealing for assistance from native speakers or teachers, and the like.

Strategies of second language communication: When learners attempt to negotiate meanings with native speakers in authentic language-use situations, they may frequently find themselves at a loss for words due to their imperfect knowledge of the target language.

Brown (2007) highlights some characteristics that must be taken into account in the productive generation of speech. Bear in mind that the following characteristics of spoken language can make oral performance easy as well as, in some cases, difficult.

1. Clustering

Fluent speech is phrasal, word by word. Learners can organize their output both cognitively and physically (in breath groups) through such clustering.

2. Redundancy

The speaker has an opportunity to make meaning clearer through the redundancy of the language. Learners can capitalize on this feature of spoken language.

3. Reduced forms

Contractions, elisions, reduced vowels, etc., all form special problems in teaching spoken English. Students who don't learn colloquial contractions can sometimes develop a stilted bookish quality of speaking that in turn stigmatizes.

4. Performance variables

One of the advantages of spoken languages is that the process of thinking as you speak allows you to manifest a certain number of performance hesitation, pauses, backtracking, and incorrections. Learners can actually be talked to pause and hesitate. For example, in English our "thinking time" is not silent; we insert certain "fillers" such as uh, um, well, you know, I mean, like, etc. One of the most salient differences between native and non-native speakers of a language is in their hesitation phenomena.

5. Colloquial Language

Teachers make sure their students are reasonably well acquainted with the words, idioms, and phrases of colloquial language and that they get practice in producing these forms.

6. Rate of Delivery

Another salient characteristic of fluency is rate of delivery. One of the teachers' tasks in teaching spoken English is that learners achieve an acceptable speed along with other attributes of fluency.

7. Stress, rhythm, and intonation

These are the most important characteristics of English pronunciation. The stress-timed rhythm of spoken English and its intonation patterns convey important messages.

Area of difficulty	Implications of this particular area	How to improve
1. Pronunciation of individual sounds	There may be confusion between minimal pairs (e.g. bed/bad, ship/sheep) and this may compromise meaning.	Use lists to practice repeating <u>minimal pairs</u> Use <u>tongue twisters</u> to practice special sounds. Practice the sounds of English by using <u>the phonemic chart</u> .
2. Word stress	Sometimes words 'shift' their stress so word stress can actually change the meaning of the word (e.g. record (v)/record (n))	Check your dictionary in advance of a seminar or presentation to make sure you know where the stress falls on long words. Repeat the words.

3. Sentence stress	Sometimes emphasizing different words suggests different contrasting information (e.g. how the meaning changes when different words of the following sentence are stressed : ‘Mary saw a red car driven by a young man with brown hair.’)	Try to exaggerate (make even stronger) the stress on key words – this may sound unusual to you, but will probably sound perfectly natural to the listener.
4. Rhythm	Rhythm is important to maintain the flow of the language. English is a stress-timed language. Problems regarding this are not so likely to affect comprehension, but getting the rhythm right does help the listener to follow your argument..	Practice reading <u>poems</u> , <u>limericks</u> , etc. out loud to get a sense of how English rhythm works.
5. Intonation	Getting the right intonation is important to convey the right attitude – i.e. high start for questions, and wide pitch variation to show greater enthusiasm.	Vary your voice more and try not to speak in a monotone.

8. Interaction

Learning to produce waves of language in a vacuum-without interlocutors-would rob speaking skill of its richest component: the creativity of conversational negotiation.

Speaking activities and strategies to develop oral English accuracy and fluency:

Now that the main factors that affect the learner's process of developing accuracy and fluency in order to produce oral English discourse proficiently are well known, it is important to know and classify the main strategies and activities that are engaged in the speaking skill development so that teachers and students cope with the main difficulties encountered throughout the learning process.

According to some experts like Swam (1985) & Pattison (1987), the most demanding skill for a teacher to teach is, undoubtedly, speaking. So, to motivate students in an EFL context, teachers should include many activities and strategies that attract students' attention and make them interested in the lesson.

The variety of speaking activities undoubtedly plays an important role in the development of the speaking skill. By using speaking activities, students have the opportunity to practice what they have learned. However, this is more effective when teachers vary the type of speaking activities. Richards (2006) classifies the activities by their qualities, characteristics, and distinctions: All of these aspects have to be considered in order to have a meaningful learning. Meaningful learning can be observed when students achieve the two qualities which are fluency and accuracy. This can also be seen when students are able to produce the language without sounding mechanical. Therefore, it can be considered that fluency and accuracy are two main and important aspects that determine the effectiveness of speaking activities.

“Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities where students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdown .On the other hand, accuracy is focused on creating

correct examples of language use". Richards (2006) classified the differences between activities focused on fluency and activities focused on accuracy:

Activities focused on fluency

- 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.

Activities focused on accuracy

- reflect classroom use of language.
- focus on the formation of correct examples of language.
- require the practice of language out of context.
- foster the practice of small samples of language.
- do not require meaningful communication.
- control choice of language

The communicative activities or speaking activities are classified by characteristics such as mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practice. The first characteristic refers to controlled practice activities which the students can successfully develop without necessary understanding. The common activities that can be considered as mechanical practice are, for example, repetition and substitution drills. Those activities have been used in schools, in which teachers keep on using the traditional approach which is focused on

grammar rules and structures. The second characteristic is meaningful practice which refers to activities where language control is still provided but the students are required to make meaningful choices. Also, students apply their knowledge in a real context. The last characteristic is communicative practice which refers to activities where real communicative context and real information is exchanged; it is used to develop language that is not predictable.

The distinctions of communicative activities were proposed by Richards (2006). He stated that there are two: functional communication activities and social interactional activities. The functional communication activities require the students to use the language resources to overcome an interaction gap or solve a problem. The social interactional activities require the learner to pay attention to the context and roles of the people involved and to attend to such things as formal versus informal language. Richards (2006) classified the activities as follows:

Information gap activities

This refers to the fact that in real communication, people normally communicate in order to get information they do not possess

- Looking for differences in a picture, role-plays in pairs asking for information about departures, times, prices, etc.

Jigsaw activities

Jigsaw activities have the similar characteristics of information gap, but with the difference that in jigsaw activities, the class must fit pieces to complete the whole.

- Activities that require the students to put the entire story together or arrange a conversation that they have listened.

Task competition activities

These activities focus on using one's language resources to complete a task

- Puzzles, games, map-reading, etc.

Information gathering activities

These activities require students to use their linguistic resources to collect information.

- Students-conducted surveys, interviews, etc.

Opinion sharing activities

In this type of activities, students compare values, opinions or beliefs.

- Ranking tasks, checklists of likes and dislikes, discussions, debates, etc.

Information transfer activities

These activities require the learners to take information that is presented in one form, and represent it in a different form.

- Students read information about a subject, and then they represent it as a graph.

Reasoning-gap activities

In this type of activities, the learners give information through the process of inference and practical reasoning.

Role- plays

In this type of activities, students are assigned roles and asked to improvise a scene.

According to Mai (2011) successful speaking activities have four characteristics. First, the students talk a lot. Second, participation is even. Third, the motivation is high. Finally, language suits an acceptable level. All the activities before mentioned by Richards enclose those characteristics. However, the most common activities used in the FLD classrooms are role-plays, dramas, discussion, debates, dialogues, games and others. Those activities also have the characteristics that allow the students to learn and practice the language. Participation is clearly observed in those kinds of activities and the students feel motivated to participate.

Also, Khameis (2006) says that a superior teacher encourages his or her students to speak English as much as possible inside and outside the classroom. Some other experts also agree that speaking is perhaps the most demanding skill for the teacher. So, the selection of speaking activities, the use of many activities and the exposure of students to the language can trigger their motivation and allow them to practice and produce the language. She also says that the teacher should capture the students' attention through a variety of speaking activities, and she presents a series of activities that capture the students' attention such as songs, poems, chants, dramas, stories, games, and Total Physical Response activities.

For Brown (2007a), an EFL teacher must encourage students to use language for social interaction in the classroom since this helps them acquire the language in more natural contexts. Besides, through interaction, students can build their own conversations, create

meaning that they understand, and that supports and helps them. Therefore, the topics and the themes around which students learn language should capture their attention and encourage them to interact more with one other.

Brown (2007b), also states that new teachers in the field always want to answer the question regarding drilling as a legitimate part of the communicative language classroom. And the answer to Brown is a qualified yes. Brown assures that drills offer students an opportunity to learn and to orally repeat certain strings of language that may pose some linguistic difficulty-either phonological or grammatical. Indeed, Brown states that drilling can help to establish certain psychomotor patterns (“to loose the tongue”) and associated selected grammatical forms with their appropriate contexts.

Some experts also state that to know students’ needs, styles, and learning preferences are some of the important aspects that teachers need to consider before planning a lesson. By doing this, participation levels will increase and the development of the lesson will be more successful. According to Richards and Bohlke (2011: 38) “what constitutes an effective lesson will depend on many factors, including the content of the lesson, the teachers’ teaching style, the students’ learning preferences, the class size, and the learners’ proficiency levels. “Planning a lesson not only means to see the content(s) that will be discussed and set or the number of activities. Each factor plays an important role in developing not only well-prepared lessons, but also in developing well-prepared students.

It is very important for teachers to take into account every single student in the classroom when planning a lesson since it is well known that not all students work at the same pace. All the activities brought to the classroom have to be appropriate to students’

level and have to fulfill students' needs. As Richards and Bohlke said, the content of the lesson is one of the main aspects that constitute an effective lesson. Students, as well as teachers, have their own style when learning. All teachers know that every student has their own learning style. Richards and Bohlke (2011) classified students as follows:

- Task-oriented students:
They are highly competent and successful in completing tasks.
- Social students:
They are personally interactive, and enjoy working with others.
- Dependent students:
They need constant support to complete a task.
- Phantom students:
They rarely initiate conversation or ask for help.
- Isolated students:
They set themselves apart from others.
- Alienated students:
They react against teaching and learning.

Richards and Bohlke (2011) also claimed that the class size is another important aspect to consider; as well as classroom arrangement. Those two aspects play an important role in the development of the lesson. Here, it is very important to mention whole-class teaching, individual work, and group work. Classroom arrangement develops students' participation levels. For instance, when asking students to work in pairs, the teacher may ask a student who has a very high participation level and competence to work with another who is reluctant or afraid of using the language. Another important aspect to take into

account is that there are some teachers that work based on books that already have planned lessons. Do teachers have the chance to change or modify the activities that the book presents? The answer is yes. According to Richards and Bohlke (2011:36) a teacher may modify, delete or add content, reorganize the content and finally modify tasks.

Undoubtedly, every teacher wants to know why the learners do not participate; also, they want to know how to make them participate. We have analyzed that there are three main aspects that trigger students' participation such as teacher's motivation, student's motivation and teacher's methodology. According to Koniyama (2009), teacher's motivation is one of the main aspects that move students to participate. There are two different forms of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is related with external factors such as rewards, and interest in the language; on the other hand, intrinsic motivation has to do with all the internal factors that motivate students to learn, such as emotions, feelings, health, etc.

Some teachers motivate their students giving them extra credits or points in order to make them participate in the class or some teachers say "Good job, excellent and so on". Those are considered rewards. Getting good grades and satisfying the teacher and classmates are ways of extrinsic motivation. Hence, the teacher should motivate students to participate. He or she should engage the learners, for in that way the students will feel motivated to participate. They are going to be willing and ready to participate.

Another aspect that triggers student's participation is self-motivation or self-determination. In the article, "*CAR: A Means for Motivating Students to Read*" Koniyama (2009) proposed an available formula in order to increase motivation in students; however,

this article is focused on one macro skill. The formula that he proposed is useful and encloses students' motivation. The CAR means competence, confidence, autonomy and relatedness. When the students develop competence or confidence, they are able to say "I can do it", and that force makes them take the risk of participating without thinking about making mistakes; they also enjoy taking part of the class or believe in themselves. Moreover, the autonomy makes students feel that they have the control, saying "I decide to do this or not." The decision that the students make is really important because participation is not forced. Nothing forced works. In addition, relatedness is the relationship that students have with the teacher and classmates. If we think in that way, participation is going to increase.

The teacher's methodology is another important aspect that encourages students' participation. According to Cervantes (2009), students are interested in the methods, strategies and techniques that the teacher is going to use in order to carry out the class. Every teacher has his or her own method, or different forms of teaching. Even though, there are different kinds of methods, students sometimes do not participate in class. Therefore, the teacher should use different "class activities" in order to increase their participation. In the class, there are some speaking activities that teachers use in order to make students participate, such as class discussions, group activities, pair-work activities, and games. This last technique is the most useful in order to increase participation. In the article, ***"Livening Up College English Classes with Games"*** Cervantes (2009) confirmed that games make an effect on the student's participation, the student's attitude, and the student's learning. She uses this technique in order to increase her students' participation. She engages the students in this way. Students participate if teachers engage them, if students are willing to

participate and if the methodology that the teachers use allows them to participate. All those aspects move the students to participate.

Many teachers fail to believe that games are not appropriate for an English class and they also think that games are a waste of time. It all depends on the type of games included in the lesson. Of course, the lessons should include games related to the content and games that really help students to practice what they have learned during the class or the course. Khameis (2006) confirms that many teachers consider games as merely fun activities that are a waste of time, but he states that games in the EFL context are much more than that. He believes that games include many factors such as rules, competition, relaxation, and learning which are all useful in promoting speaking. It is important to mention that the games have to be thought of according to students' age and level. By taking into consideration those aspects, games will engage students in real communication. Games are also a great opportunity to learn and review new knowledge, to practice pronunciation, to put into practice the grammar studied in class, etc.

In this regard, the strategies the teacher should focus on should be interesting and should capture students' attention, too. Besides that, the activities used in the classroom to challenge and motivate students to speak should be interesting as well. Hence, it is important to take into consideration some activities such as songs, chants, drama, stories, role-plays, debates, games and Total Physical Response TPR activities, which can develop language skills and bring enjoyment to the class. Finally, both verbal use of humor, use of students' first names and nonverbal eye contact, and positive gestures can be useful strategies to motivate students to participate in speaking activities in the classroom.

To conclude, teachers must be really compromised with their students if they want them to be competent when using the English language orally. The teacher must play an active role in the development of the lesson using a vast array of speaking activities to motivate the students' participation. In addition, the students play an important role in their learning. They should be aware about their own learning and change the negative attitude that affects their level of participation.

III. TYPE OF STUDY

To carry out this research, the investigators decided to use the descriptive research. According to Arriola et al. (2006), the purpose of the descriptive research is to examine a phenomenon that is occurring at a specific place and time. The descriptive research is concerned with conditions, practices, structures, and differences or relationships that exist. So, this group considered that this type of study fits with the objectives set, and it was convenient for the topic developed.

The author also states that the descriptive research can be used in qualitative or quantitative approaches. It is worth highlighting that in this research, both approaches were developed. In this research, the collection of data provided a description of the objects of study, groups or situations. The instruments that were applied to obtain the data were questionnaires, observation checklists, and interviews.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

This was a non-experimental research as the intention was not to manipulate the phenomenon, but to observe and describe it. It also attempted to back up some practices that have been used in the teaching of English at the Foreign Language Department, specifically in the Advanced English I course in the development of class discussions, debates, role plays, etc., specifically in the oral skill; this research work also attempted to make teachers be aware about the needs students have when learning and developing their oral skill, varying the contents that the books present and bringing to the class interesting topics from the outside world. The objectives were set so that the research can actually be useful to properly develop students' oral skill.

Qualitative and Quantitative

This research was both qualitative and quantitative. First, it was qualitative since it dealt with peoples' opinions, more specifically with opinions coming from students and teachers of Intensive Advanced English I of the Bachelor of Arts in English at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The students were asked to answer a questionnaire to gather the information. Two groups of Intensive Advanced English I were selected as the sample. Second, it is also quantitative because the data collected through the questionnaires were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted to know the percentages concerning each answer. By doing this, the interpretations reflected the main difficulties students have to produce accurate and fluent oral language to either back up the good implementation of activities that develop the oral skill or implement new and diverse activities that could really help students develop their oral skill.

V. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A. Population

The population selected on this research project was the Intensive Advanced English I courses, from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza from the University of El Salvador.

B. Sample

The sample chosen was two groups of the Intensive Advanced English I courses from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza from the University of El Salvador. Since the total of the population chosen was equal to 260 students representing 100%, the researchers worked with 54 students representing 20% to get valid and reliable data. For this, the research team made use of a website created to calculate a valid and reliable sample according to the number of people under study. Since there were seven groups, it was planned to work with two Intensive Advanced English I groups chosen throughout the **cluster sampling** in which each group was given a value (Group 1 = A, Group 2= B, Group 3=C) which categorized it as one individual cluster. Hence, once categorized, the researchers applied the **Simple Random Sampling** (SRS) to randomly choose two groups.

VI. DATA GATHERING PROCESS

A. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In this research study, two instruments were used. For the survey and for the observation, a questionnaire and a checklist were used accordingly.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was designed by the research team. The questionnaire was composed of a set of questions to be asked to the students of Intensive Advanced English I. 18 questions were included to elicit students' answers. The set of questions definitely helped to elicit ideas, preferences, and attitudes.

CHECKLIST

The checklist was composed of 5 multiple choice and 12 yes/no questions.

B. DATA GATHERING PLAN

The team considered that a survey and an observation were undoubtedly going to serve to obtain the information needed to solve the phenomenon under study since the research project was concerned with the main difficulties students face to produce accurate and fluent English, and the activities teachers use to overcome them. So, to obtain the information, it was planned to administer a questionnaire and a checklist. These were administered in the Intensive Advanced English I groups, specifically to those students chosen. For doing this, we went to the selected classroom and asked the teacher for

permission to administer the questionnaire to students and observe the class. Two sections from the morning shift were selected randomly.

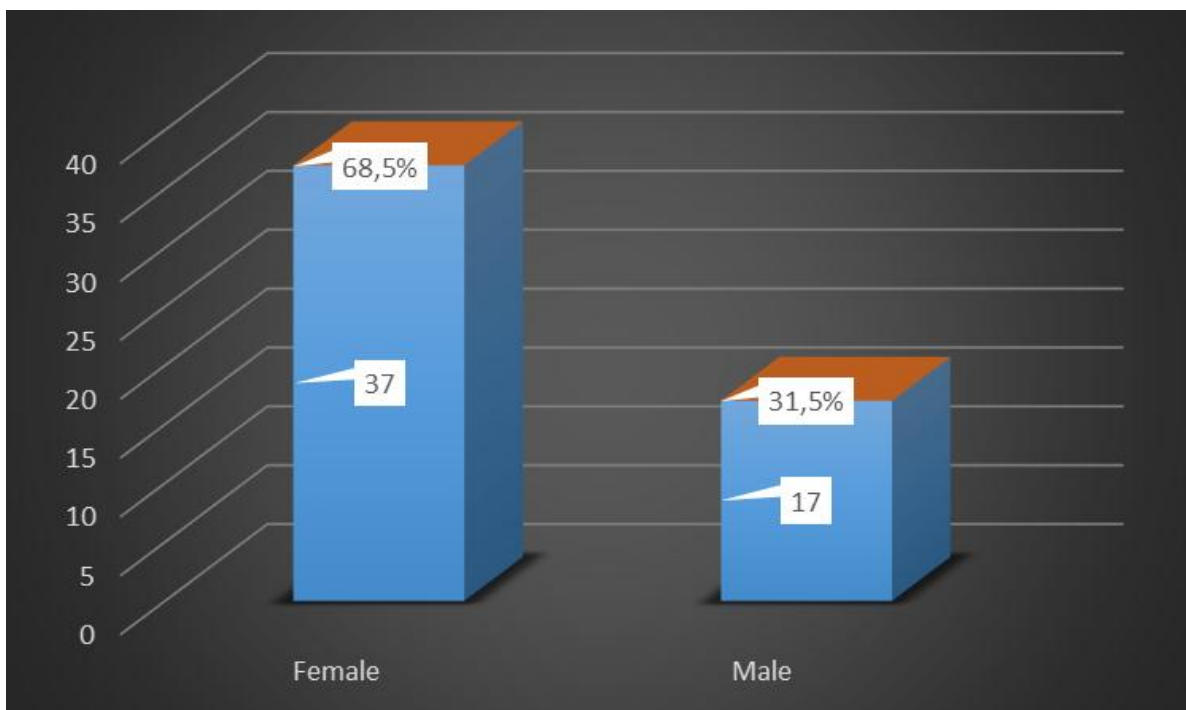
VII. DATA ANALYSIS

RESULTS OF STUDENTS' SURVEYS.

The information collected was analyzed question by question. First of all, the data were interpreted in a quantitated way through charts. Then, they were analyzed in a qualitative way.

Mark your gender with an "X".

	Frequency	Percent
Female	37	68.5
Male	17	31.5
Total	54	100.0

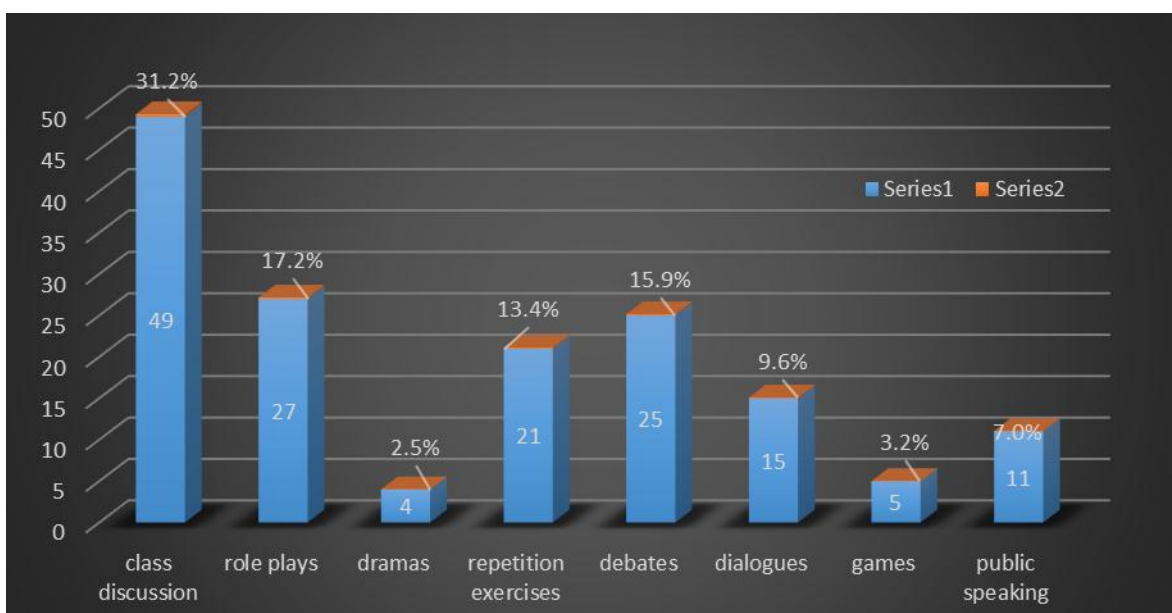


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph clearly shows that 68.5% of students under study are females and 31.5% of them are males; obviously, females are higher in number than males.

Which of the following speaking activities are developed the most in your English classes?

students	speaking activities	Answers	
		Nº	Percentage
54	class discussion	49	31.2%
	role plays	27	17.2%
	dramas	4	2.5%
	repetition exercises	21	13.4%
	debates	25	15.9%
	dialogues	15	9.6%
	games	5	3.2%
	public speaking	11	7.0%
Total		157	100.0%

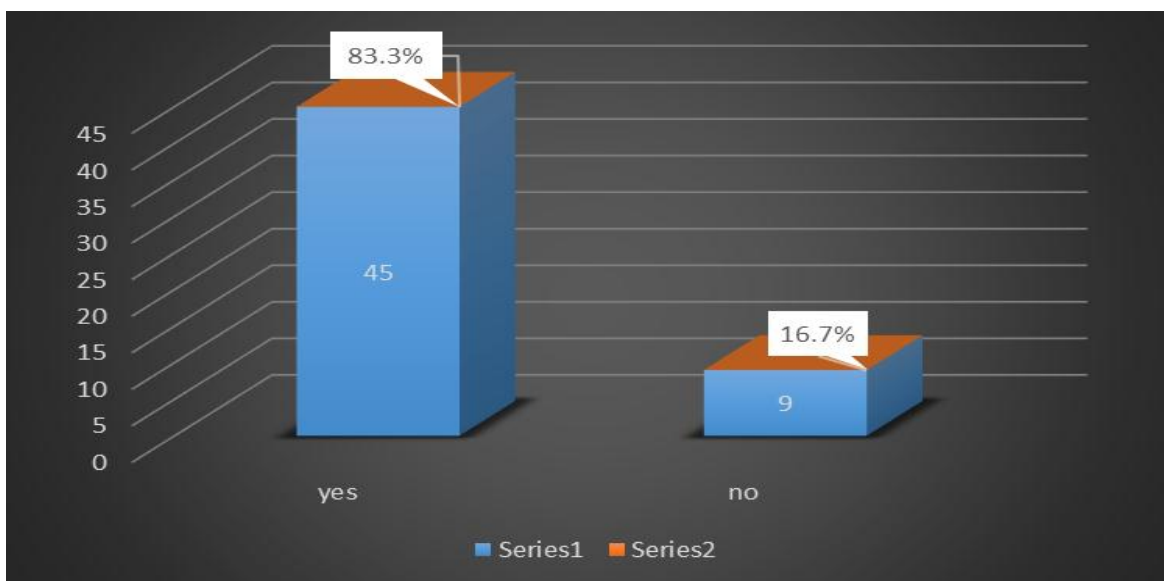


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph represents the different kinds of activities developed in class from which it is important to remark that 31.2% of the answers pointed that the activity used the most in class is class discussion, and the least used in class are dramas and games, the first with 2.5% and the second with 3.2% of the answers given by students. On the other hand, role plays got 17.2% of the answers and debates got 15.9%, which means that they are often used in class. Finally, repetition exercises got 13.4%, dialogues got 9.6%, and public speaking got 7% of the rest of the answers.

Do you consider that the activities selected in the previous question are the most effective to enhance your oral English proficiency?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	45	83.3
no	9	16.7
Total	54	100.0

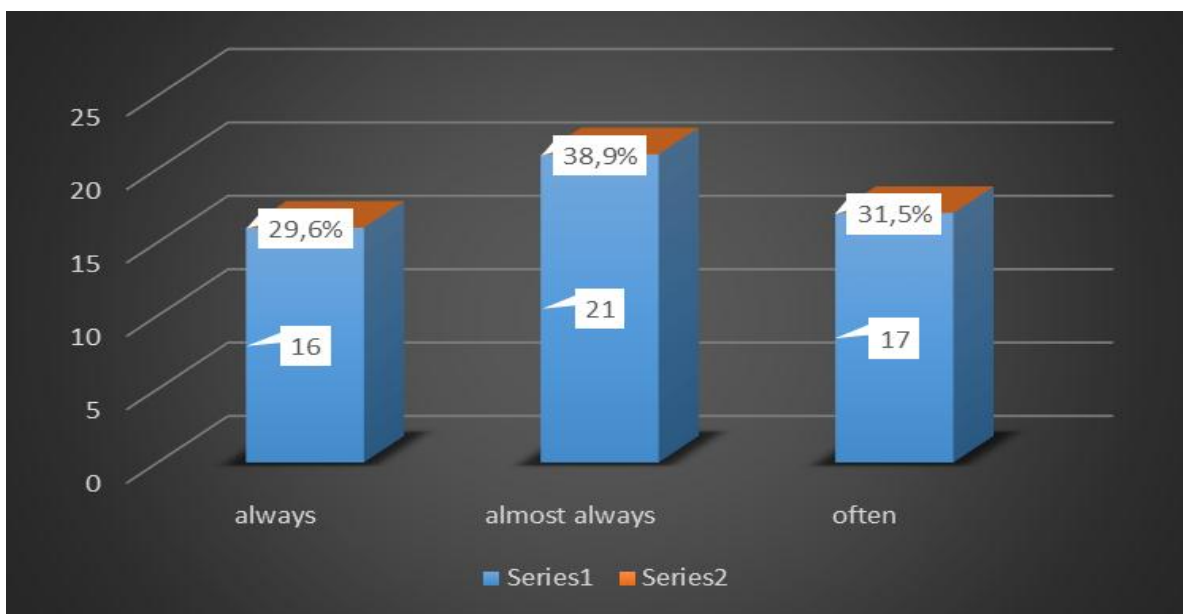


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

It is clearly seen that 83.3% of students consider that the activities selected in the previous question are the most effective to enhance their oral proficiency. Nonetheless, a small group of students, representing just 16.7% of them, consider that the activities selected in the previous question are not the most effective ones to enhance their oral proficiency.

How often are speaking activities developed in your English classes?

	Frequency	Percent
always	16	29.6
almost always	21	38.9
often	17	31.5
Total	54	100.0

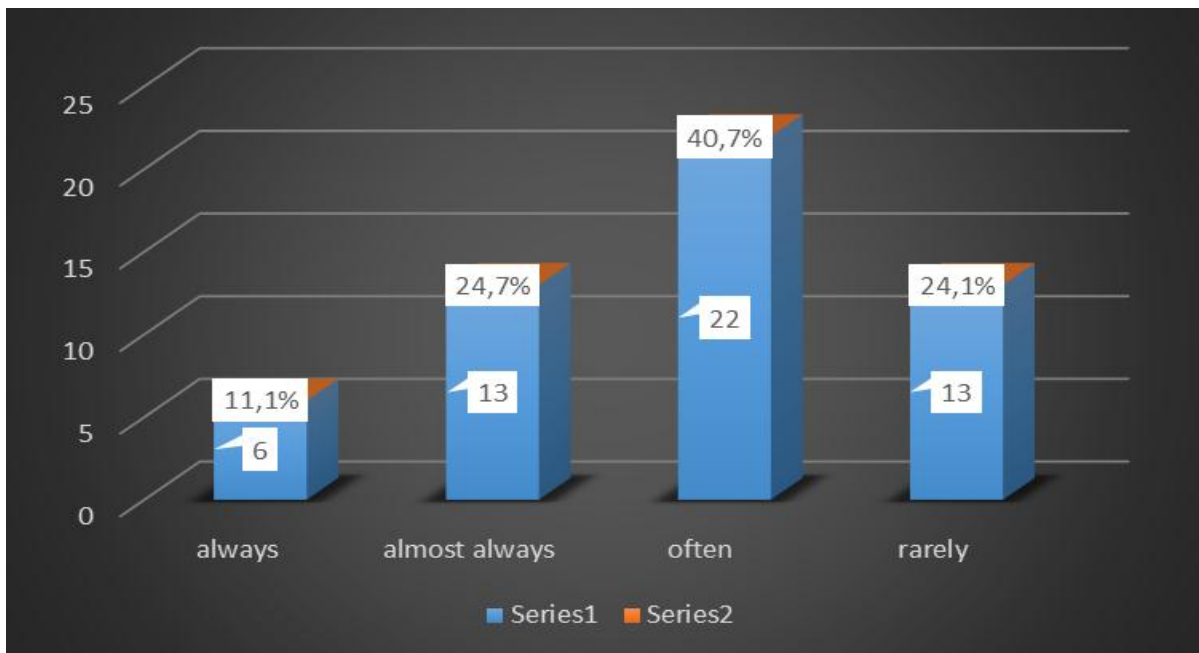


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

According to the data gathered in this graph, 29.6% of students under study consider that speaking activities are always developed in their English classes; however, 38.9% of them state that speaking activities are almost always carried out. Finally, 31.5% of students declare that speaking activities are often developed during the English classes.

How often do you participate in speaking activities in your English classes?

	Frequency	Percentage
always	6	11.1%
almost always	13	24.1%
often	22	40.7%
rarely	13	24.1%
Total	54	100%

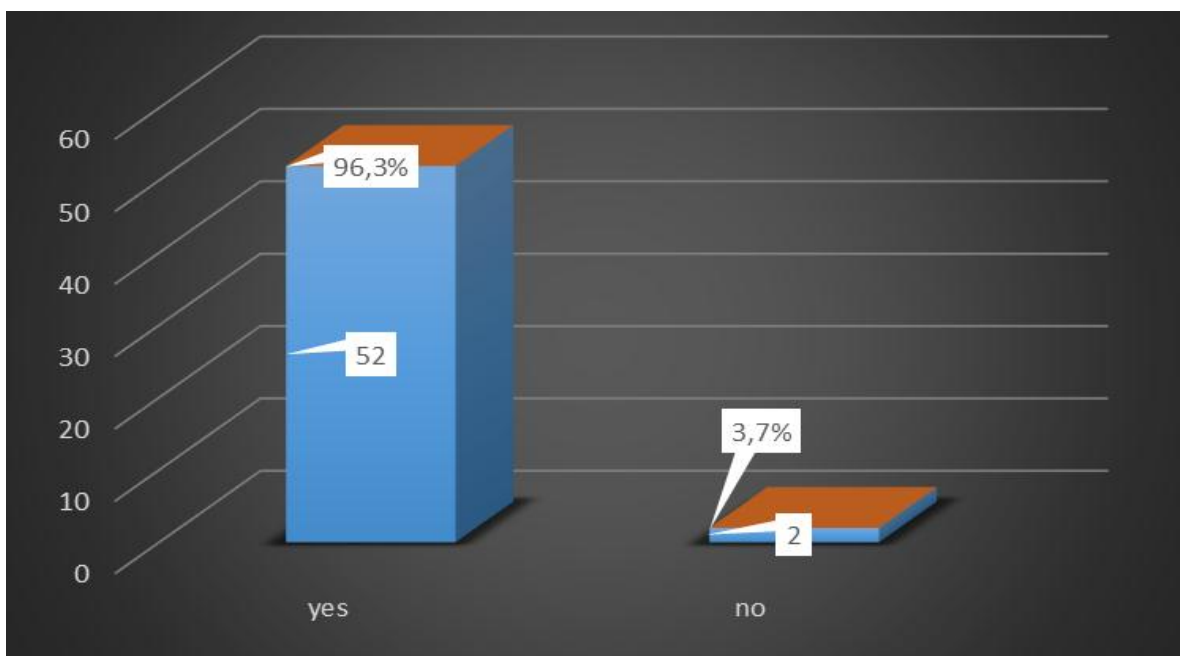


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph represents 11.1% of students affirming that they always participate in speaking activities, and 24.7% represents the students who almost always participate in speaking activities. Then, 40.7% of students consider that they often participate in speaking activities, and finally 24.1% of them rarely participate in speaking activities in their English classes.

Do you consider that speaking activities applied in classes help you develop your oral English skill?

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	yes	52	96.3%
	no	2	3.7%
	Total	54	100%

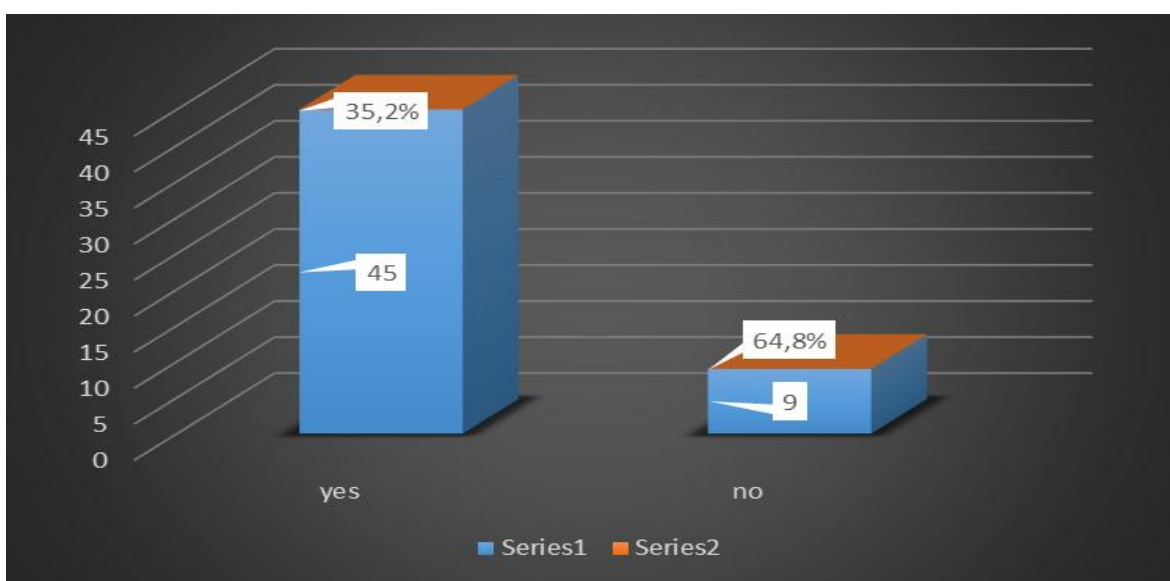


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph shows that the “Yes” value has 96.3% of students stating that the speaking activities applied in classes help them develop their oral English skill. On the other hand, the “No” value represents just 3.7% of students affirming that the speaking activities are not helping them in the development of their English skill.

Do you think that the time assigned to the speaking activities is enough to improve your oral English skill?

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	yes	19	35.2%
	no	35	64.8%
	Total	54	100%

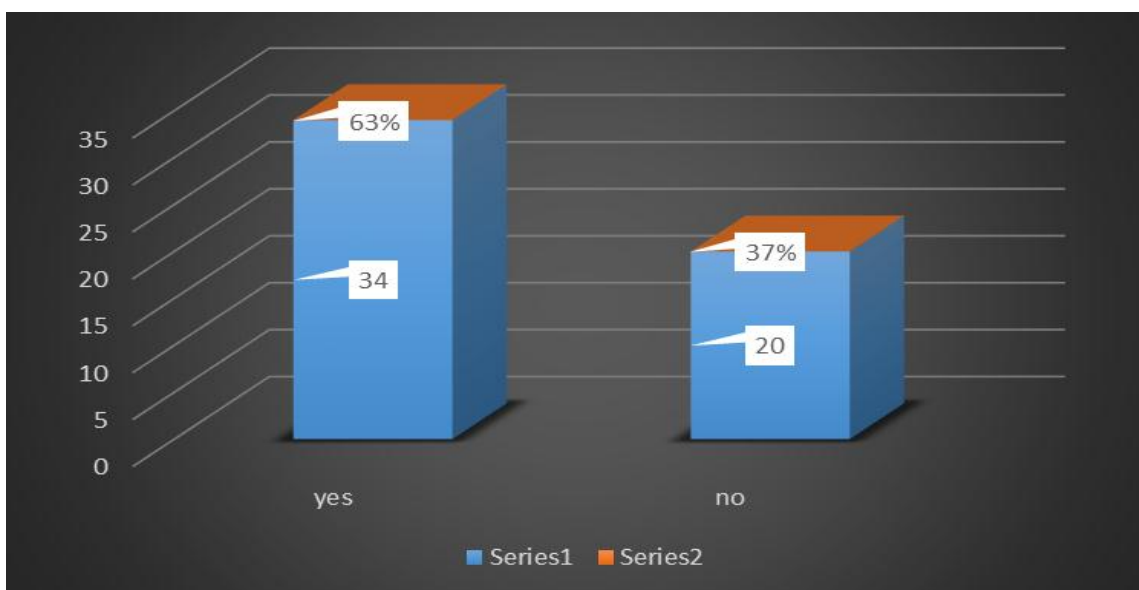


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

A great number of students say that they do not think that the time assigned to speaking activities is enough to improve their oral English skill. This number of students is represented by 64.8% of the population while 35.2% of students say that they do think the time assigned to the speaking activities is enough to improve their oral English skill.

Does the teacher use a variety of English speaking activities in your English classes?

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	yes	31	57.4%
	no	23	42.6%
	Total	54	100%

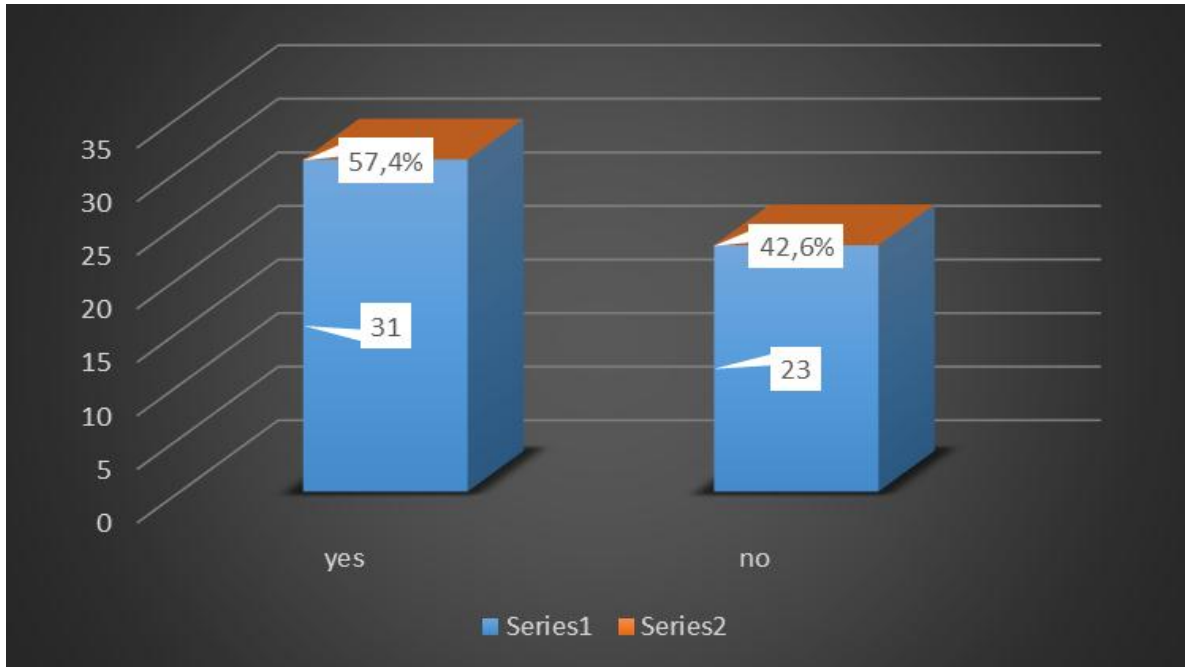


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

Based on the results, 63% of students assure that teachers use a variety of English speaking activities in their English classes while 37% of students affirm that teachers do not use a variety of English speaking activities in their English classes.

Does the teacher give you the corresponding feedback regarding the oral difficulties you face after each English speaking activity?

	Frequency	Percentage
yes	31	57.4%
no	23	42.6%
Total	54	100%

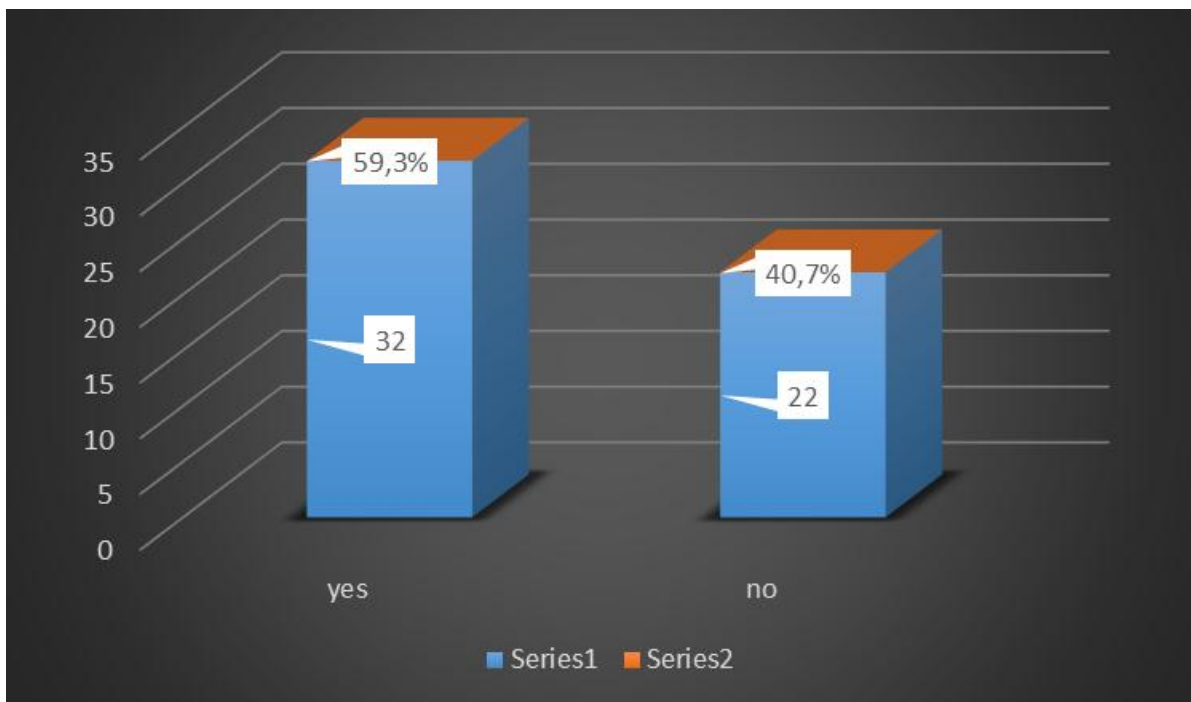


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

According to the findings, 57.4% of students assure that the teacher always gives them the corresponding feedback regarding the oral difficulties they face after each English speaking activity; in contrast, 42.6% of them affirm that the teacher does not give any corresponding feedback regarding the oral difficulties students face after each English speaking activity.

Does the teacher include different speaking activities from the ones in the book?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	32	59.3%
no	22	40.7%
Total	54	100%

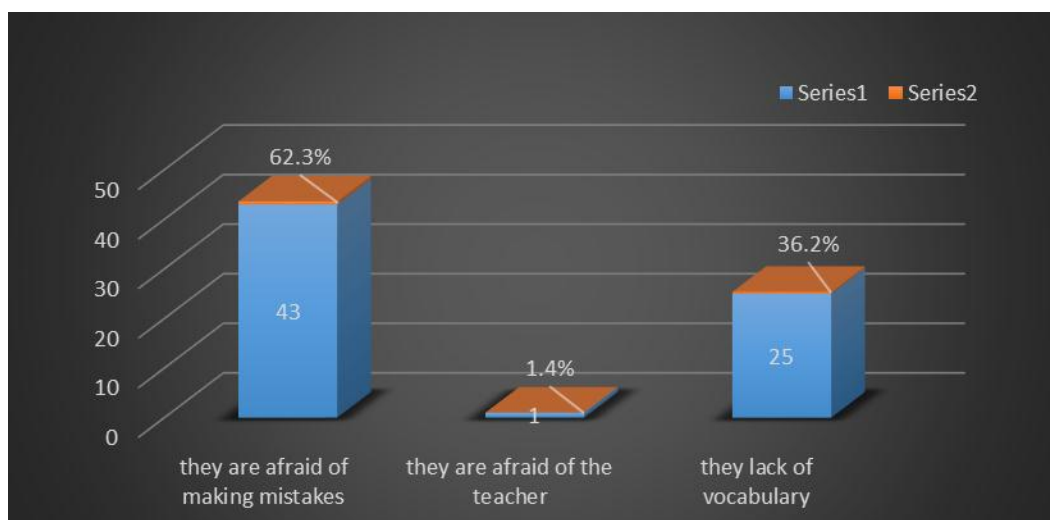


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

The “Yes” value has the highest percent of students representing 59.3% that assures the teacher includes different speaking activities rather than those from the ones from the book. Instead, the “No” value has 40.7% of students stating that the teacher does not include different activities rather that the ones presented in the book.

Why do you think some students do not participate in the speaking activities?

class participation	answers	
	Nº	Percentage
They are afraid of making mistakes.	43	62.3%
They are afraid of the teacher.	1	1.4%
They lack vocabulary.	25	36.2%
Total	69	100.0%

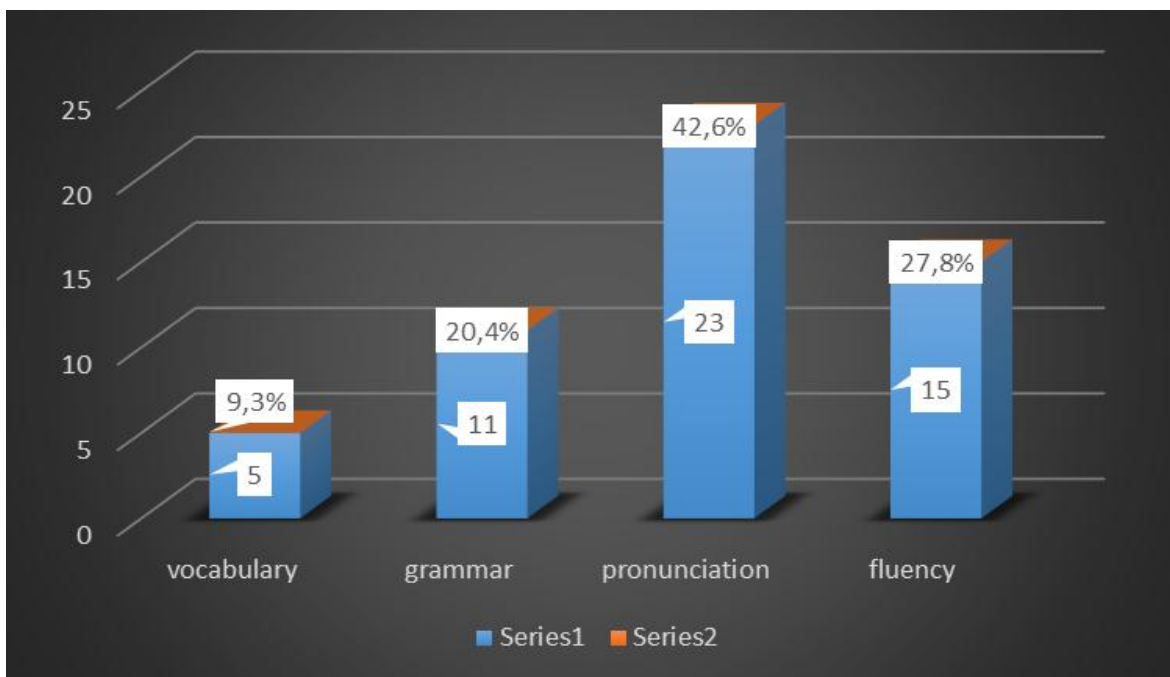


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

When asked about why they think students do not participate in class, 43 of the students, representing 62.3% of the answers said that they feel afraid of making mistakes. On the other hand, 25 students that represent 36.2% answered that they lack vocabulary to participate. Finally, only one student out of the 54 surveyed said that he is afraid of the teacher.

In which area do you think participation helps you the most?

	Frequency	Percentage
vocabulary	5	9.3%
grammar	11	20.4%
pronunciation	23	42.6%
fluency	15	27.8%
Total	54	100%

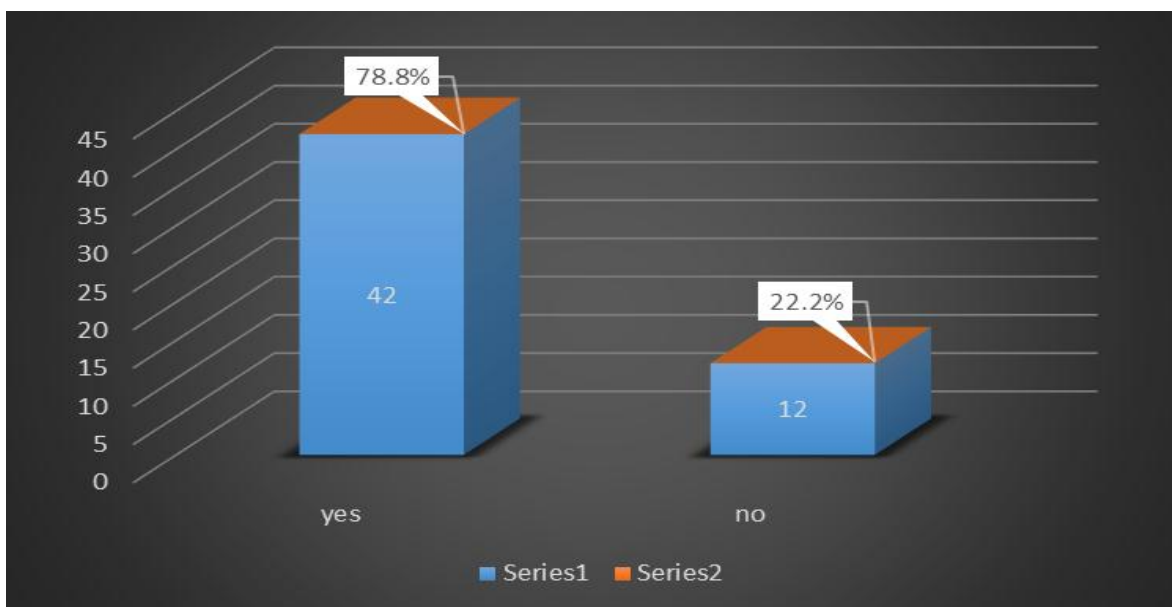


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph clearly shows that 42.6% of students are convinced that pronunciation is the area which helps them the most while participating in the English speaking activities. Then, 27.8% of students affirm that fluency is the area which helps them the most while participating. Hence, 20.4% of students consider that grammar is the area that helps them the most, and finally just 9.3% of them state that the area that helps them the most is vocabulary.

Dou you think that the speaking activities carried out in your English classes are appropriate to your level?

	Frequency	Percentage
yes	42	78.8%
no	12	22.2%
Total	54	100%

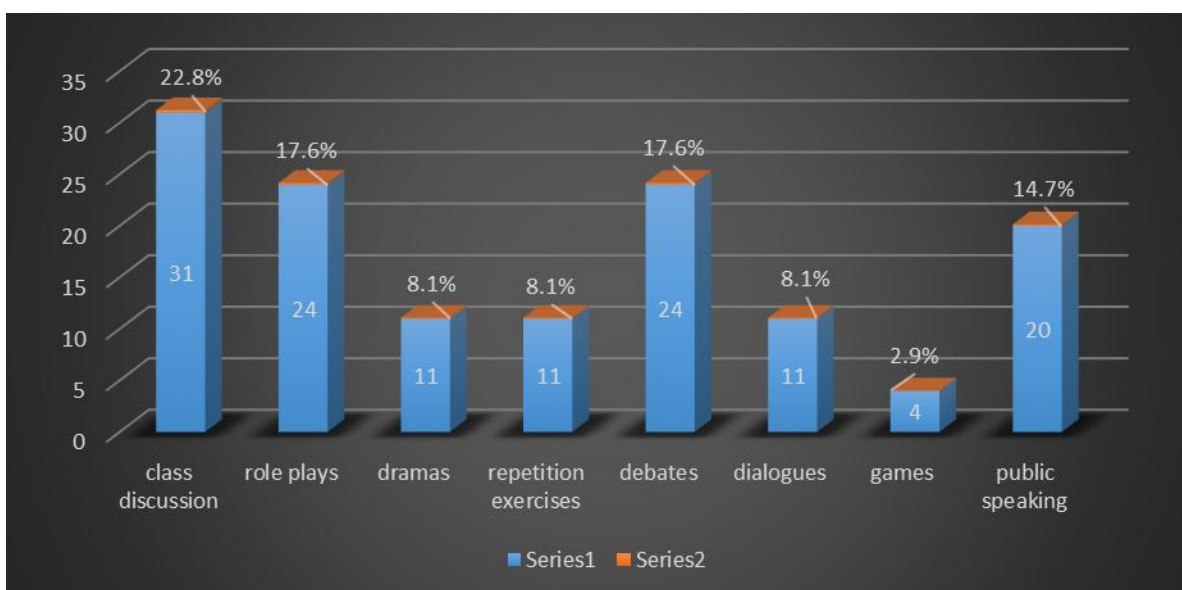


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph shows that the “Yes” value has 78% of students stating that the speaking activities carried out in their English classes are appropriate to their level. On the other hand, the “No” value represents 22% of students affirming that the speaking activities are not appropriate to their level.

Which of the following speaking activities do you feel more challenging to participate in?

		Answers	
		Nº	Percentage
speaking activities	class discussion	31	22.8%
	role plays	24	17.6%
	dramas	11	8.1%
	repetition exercises	11	8.1%
	debates	24	17.6%
	dialogues	11	8.1%
	games	4	2.9%
	public speaking	20	14.7%
Total		136	100.0%

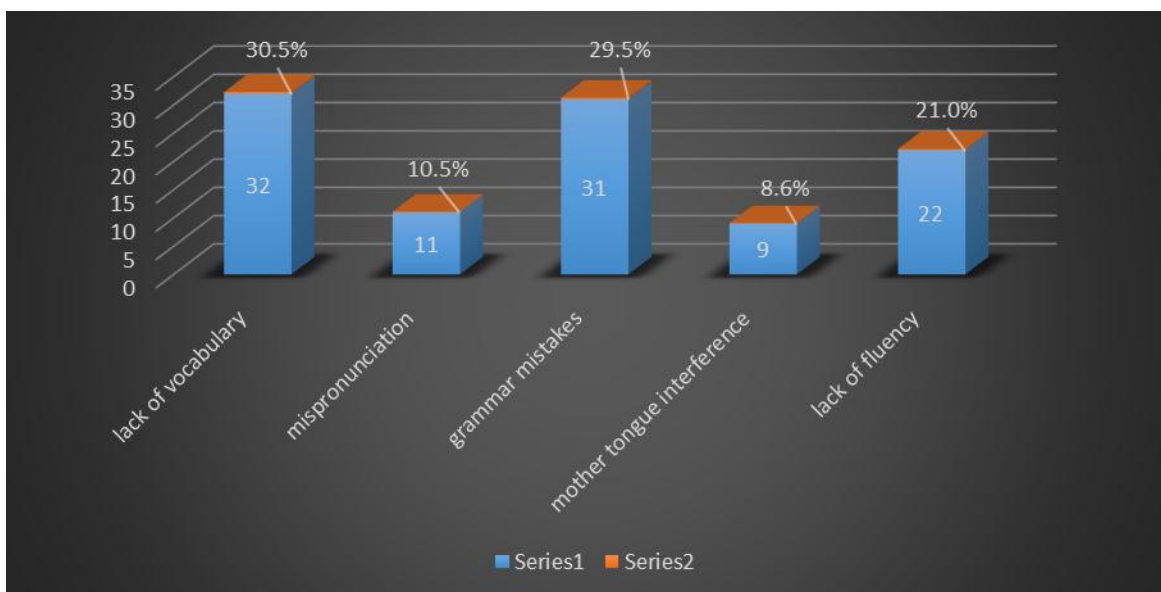


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph represents students' answers regarding the most challenging speaking activities for advanced English students. From the most challenging to the least, class discussion got 22.8% of the answers, role plays and debates got both 17.6%, public speaking got 14.7% while dramas, repetition exercises and dialogues got 8.1% each. Finally, games got only 2.9% of the answers given by students.

Which of the following speaking areas do you consider the most difficult to overcome?

		Answers	
		Nº	Percentage
speaking areas	lack of vocabulary	32	30.5%
	mispronunciation	11	10.5%
	grammar mistakes	31	29.5%
	mother tongue interference	9	8.6%
	lack of fluency	22	21.0%
Total		105	100.0%

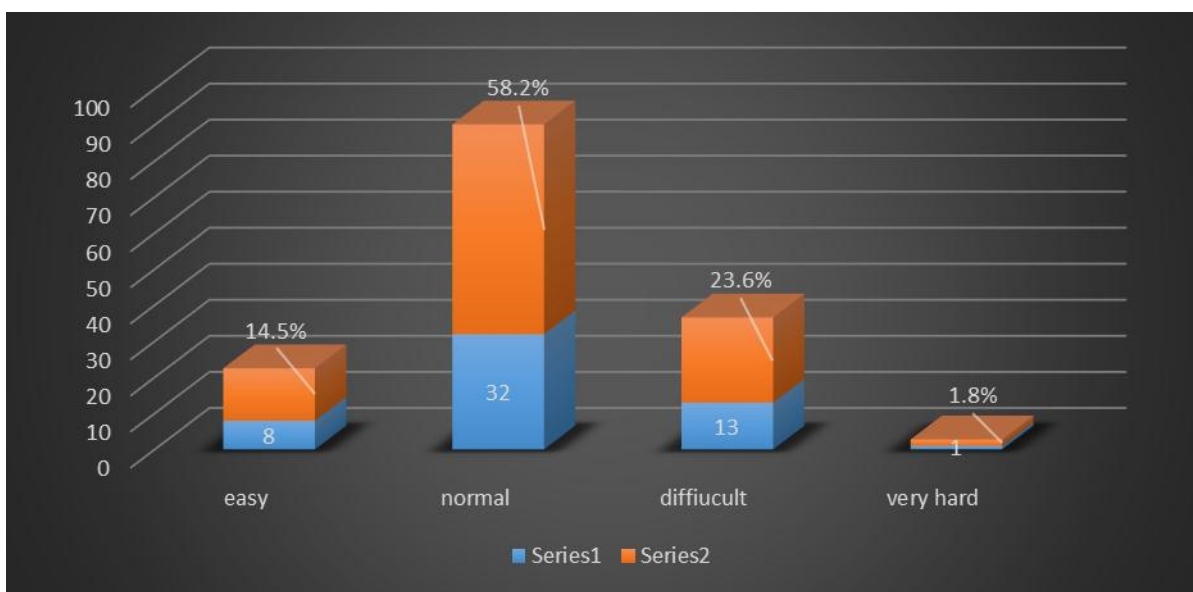


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph represents students' answers about the speaking area they consider the most difficult to overcome. The answers of the 54 students were as follows: 30.5% of the answers showed that lack of vocabulary is the most difficult area to overcome, followed by 29.5% of the answers that present grammar mistakes. Lack of vocabulary is represented by 21.0% of the answers, while mispronunciation and mother tongue interference have only 10.5% and 8.6% of student's answers accordingly. This means that the majority of students consider lack of vocabulary as the most difficult area to overcome.

According to your personal experience, choose the degree of difficulty of the following speaking areas?

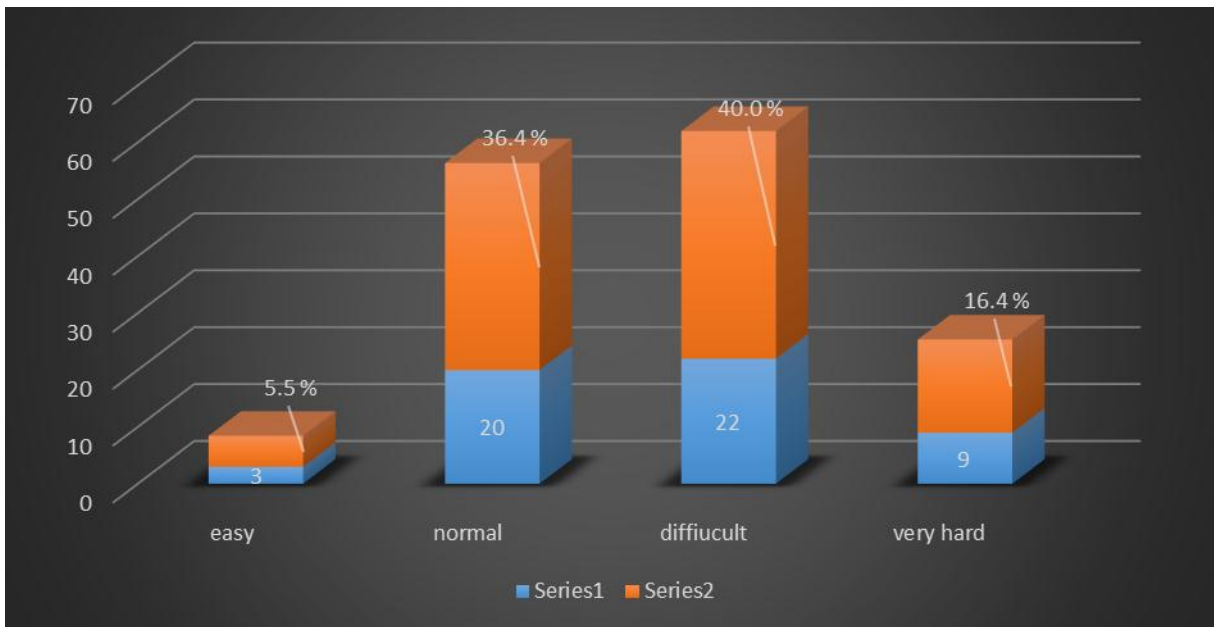
PRONUNCIATION			
		Frequency	Percentage
	easy	8	14.5%
	normal	32	58.2%
	difficult	13	23.6%
	very hard	1	1.8%
Total		54	100.0%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents student's answers regarding the question about the degree of difficulty they face in learning English pronunciation. 32 students out of 54; that is, 58.2% considered pronunciation with a normal degree of difficulty while 13 students, representing 23.6% of them claimed that learning pronunciation is difficult. Only 1 student representing 1.8% out of 54 said that pronunciation was very hard. Finally, 8 students out of 54 representing 14.5% considered pronunciation easy.

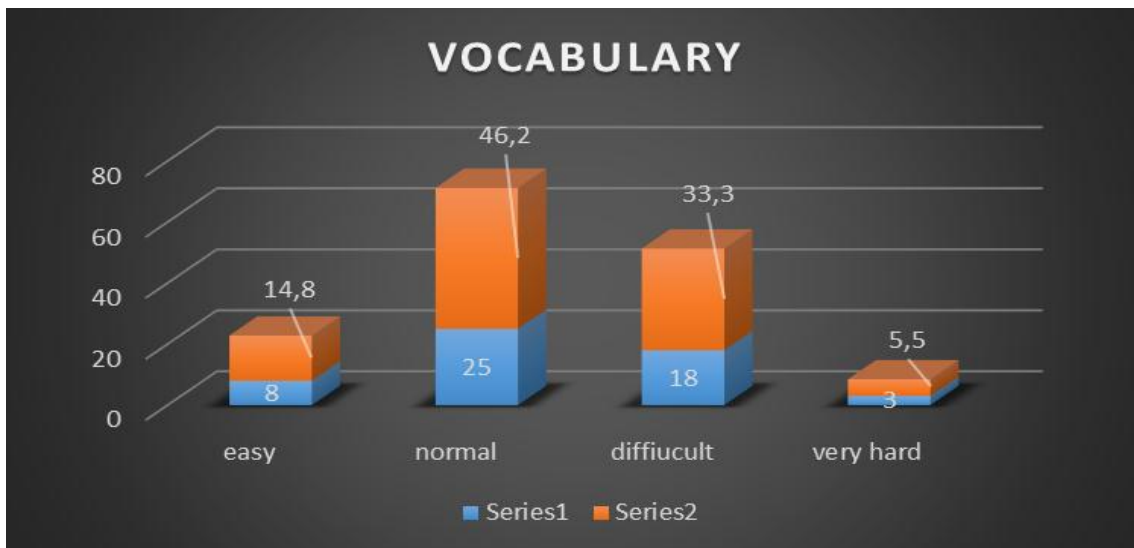
GRAMMAR			
		Frequency	percentage
	easy	3	5.5%
	normal	20	36.4%
	difficult	22	40.0%
	very hard	9	16.4%
Total		54	100.0%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

When asked about the degree of difficulty of grammar according to their own experience, 40% of the students considered grammar difficult, while 36.4% of them rate grammar as normal. On the other hand, 16.4% of the students considered grammar very hard. And finally, only 5.5% of the total sample claimed that grammar is easy.

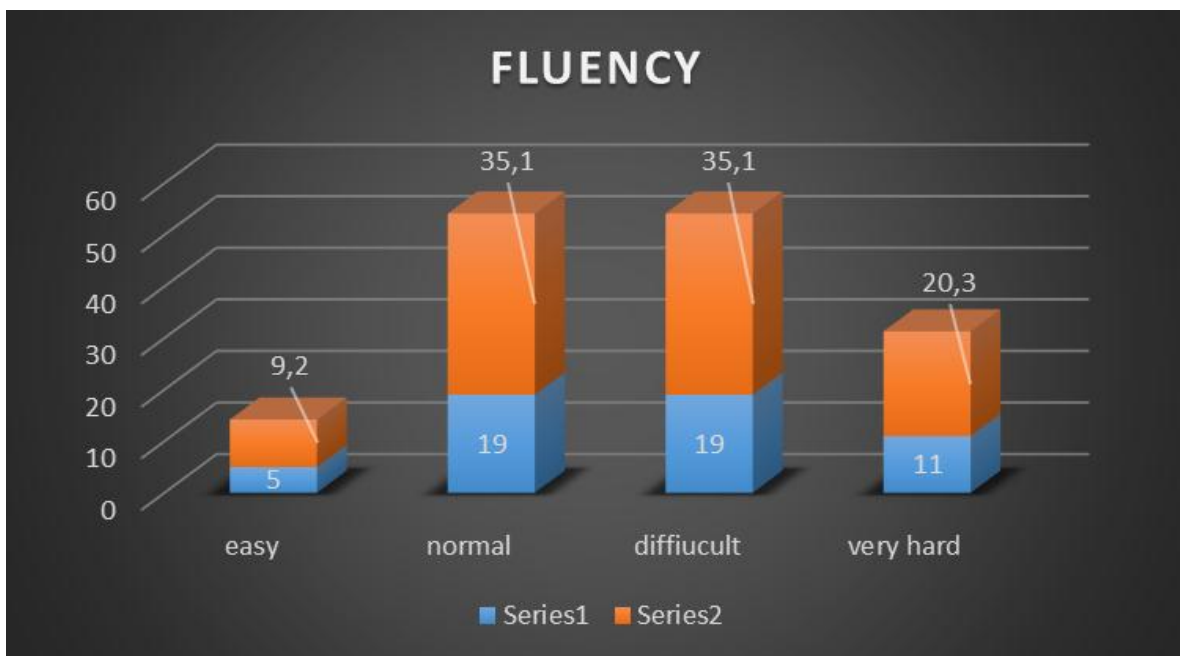
VOCABULARY			
degree of difficulty			
		Frequency	percentage
	easy	8	14.8%
	normal	25	46.2%
	difficult	18	33.3%
	very hard	3	5.5%
Total		54	100.0%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

When asked about the degree of difficulty of learning vocabulary regarding their personal experience, 45.5% of the students rated vocabulary in a normal degree of difficulty. However, 32.7% of the students considered vocabulary as being difficult and 3.6% of them as being very hard. On the contrary, 14.5% out of 54 students surveyed said that the difficulty degree of vocabulary was easy.

FLUENCY			
		frequency	percentage
	easy	5	9.2
	normal	19	35.1
	difficult	19	35.1
	very hard	11	20.3
Total		54	100.0

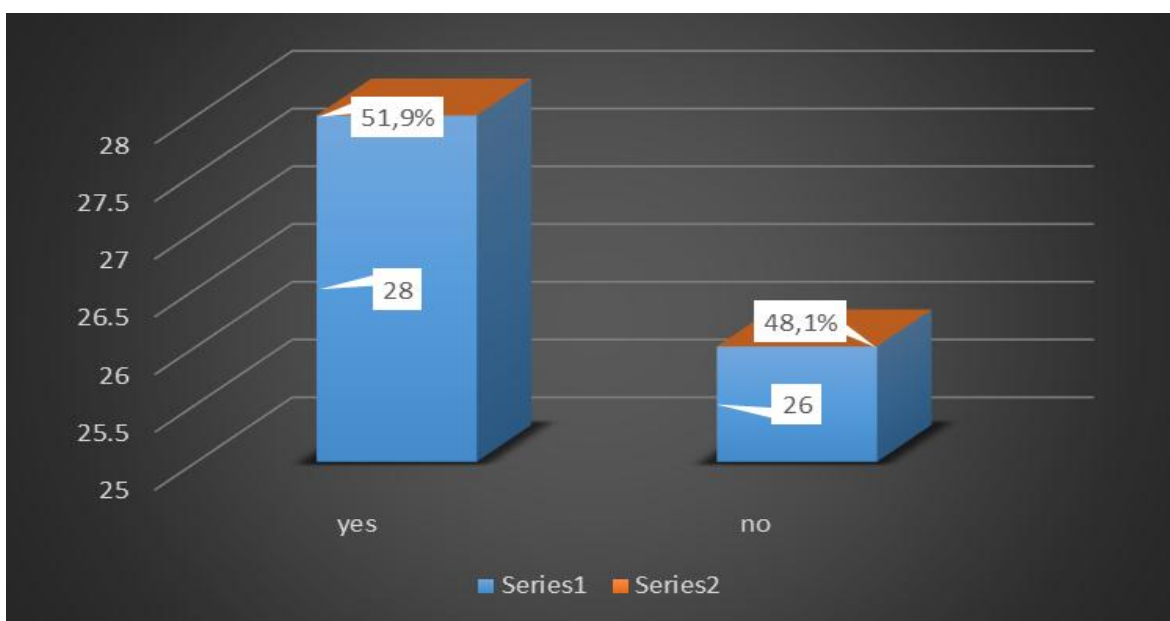


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

When asked about their personal experience regarding the degree of difficulty of fluency, 34.5% of the students rated fluency as being difficult, while 20% of them consider fluency with a very hard degree of difficulty. On the other hand, 34.5% out of 54 students consider the difficulty degree of fluency as normal, and 9.1% of them said that the difficulty degree of fluency was easy.

According to your own experience, which of the following aspects of speaking is the most difficult to develop?

	Frequency	Percentage
fluency	28	51.9
accuracy	26	48.1
Total	54	100.0

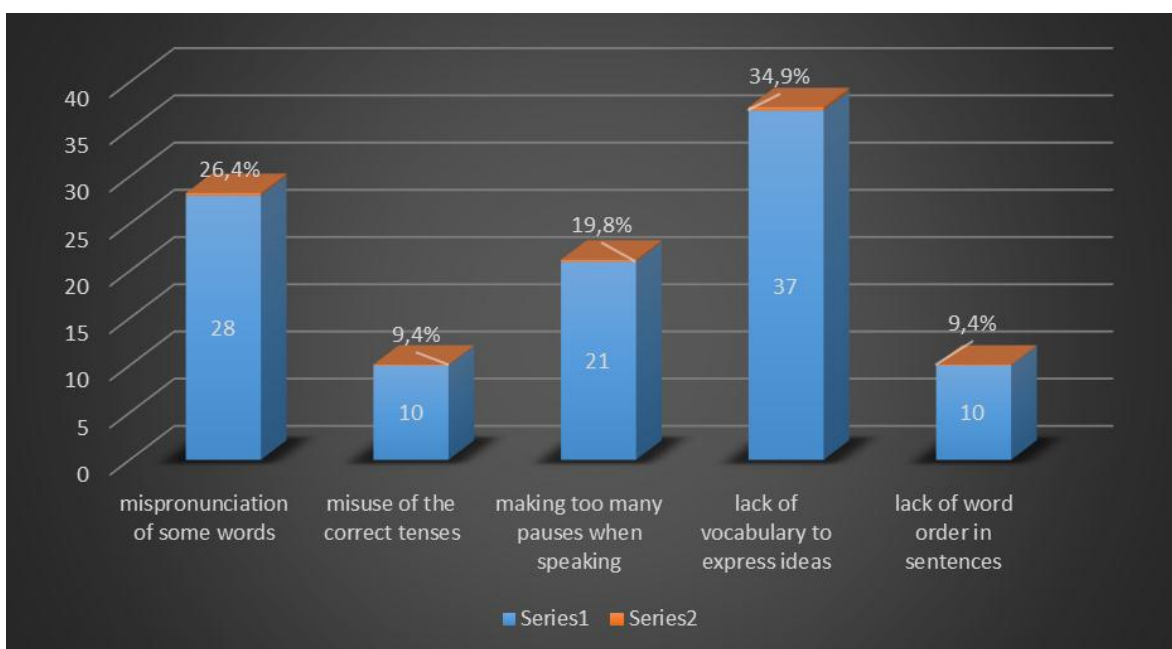


Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

In this graph, 51.9% of students, representing the highest percent, assure that the speaking activities that the book presents are appealing to them; meanwhile, 48.1% of them say speaking activities presented in the book are not appealing to them.

What are the main difficulties you face when producing oral English discourse?

		Answers	
		Nº	Percentage
	mispronunciation of some words	28	26.4%
	misuse of the correct tenses	10	9.4%
	making too many pauses when speaking	21	19.8%
	lack of vocabulary to express ideas	37	34.9%
	misplaced words in sentences	10	9.4%
Total		106	100.0%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

According to this graph, 37 students out of 54 admitted to have lack of vocabulary to express ideas; this represents 34.9% of the answers. Out of the same 54 students, 28 claimed that they had difficulties mispronouncing some words; this makes 26.4% of the answers. 21 students out of 54 said that they committed too many pauses when talking, which represents 19.8% of the answers. On the other hand, only 10 students admitted to have difficulties with the misuse of the correct tenses, which is 9.4% of the answers, and 10 students admitted to have misplaced words in sentences when producing English orally, which represents the remaining 9.4% of the answers. With this, it can be inferred that most

of the students present difficulties when producing oral English discourse due to the fact that they lack vocabulary to express ideas.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Procedure

The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year of 2015. An exploratory research was carried out, and the study was focused on Advanced Intensive English I Student of the Bachelor of Arts in English at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Year 2015. Two groups of Advanced Intensive English I were selected as the sample of this research. In order to gather information, an observation and a questionnaire were administered with the main purpose of knowing students' difficulties to produce oral English speaking. Therefore, observation undoubtedly fits in this research. Observation may be employed in the preliminary stages of a research project to explore an area which can then be studied more fully utilizing other methods, or it can be used towards the end of a project to supplement or provide a check on data collected in interviews or surveys (Stacey, 1960, Bennett, 1976, Rex and Tomlinson, 1979).

Data gathering plan of the classroom observation

The observation was held in the two groups of Advanced Intensive English I chosen. A schedule was organized with every teacher. After getting teachers' permission, the class observation was carried out during two weeks. It means one week per group.

In order to obtain the information, a checklist was designed. It was designed and conducted for a two-hour class. As soon as the observation week ended, the survey was administered

because if it had been done before, the researchers could have affected the students' interaction. And also in order not to disrupt the class, it was decided to do it in that way.

Observation Design

The observation was structured as a non-participant observation. According to Bell (2010) the structured approach can also be criticized as being subjective and biased. However, researchers will already have formulated a hypothesis or identified the objective of their study and the importance of observing some aspects of behavior will have become apparent. In the design of the observation, examples were taken from other researches and they were adapted to this study. This checklist facilitated the researchers to obtain the data. It is important to mention that the information gathered from the observation helped to contrast and/or backup the information obtained from the questionnaire.

The following chart is an example of the checklist used:

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
 SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
 FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT
 OBSERVATION CHECK LIST**

DATE: _____ **TIME:** _____

COURSE: _____ **GROUP:** _____

OBSERVER: _____

OBJECTIVE: to collect information related to the topic “Students’ Difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I Student of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching Face to Produce Accurate and Fluent Oral English Discourse at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Year 2015.”

Direction: put a check (√) in the option that you consider appropriate

1. Which kinds of activities are developed the most in the class?

Groups	In-class Activities			
	reading activities	listening activities	writing activities	speaking activities
G1				
G2				

2. Which of the following speaking activities are applied the most in the class?

Group	Speaking Activities							
	class discussion	roleplays	dramas	repetition exercises	debates	dialogues	games	public speaking
G1								
G2								

C. Which of the following speaking areas are the most difficult for students?

Groups	Speaking Areas			
	vocabulary	pronunciation	grammar	fluency
Group 1				
Group 2				

4. What are the most observable difficulties students face when producing oral English discourse?

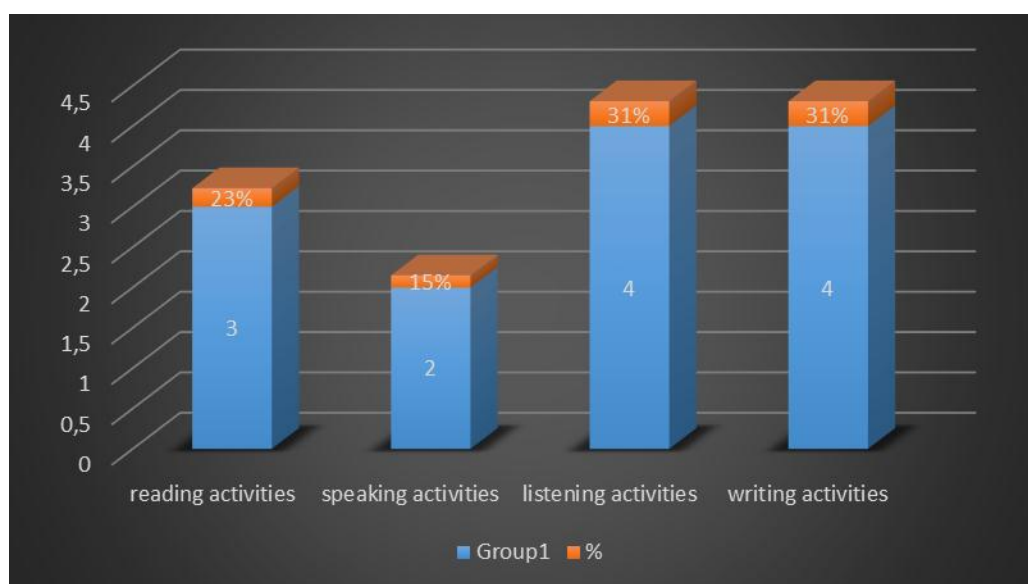
Groups	Difficulties at producing oral English discourse				
	mispronunciation of some words	misuse of the correct tenses	making too many pauses when speaking	lack of vocabulary to express ideas	misplaced words in sentences
G1					
G2					

5. Which of the following common speaking mistakes does the teacher focus the most on?

Groups	Common speaking mistakes			
	grammar mistakes	pronunciation mistakes	fluency mistakes	Teacher overlooks students' mistakes
G1				
G2				

These graphs represent the information collected during the class observation carried out by the research team during two weeks of classes, in which the main objective was to identify the difficulties students face when using the target language.

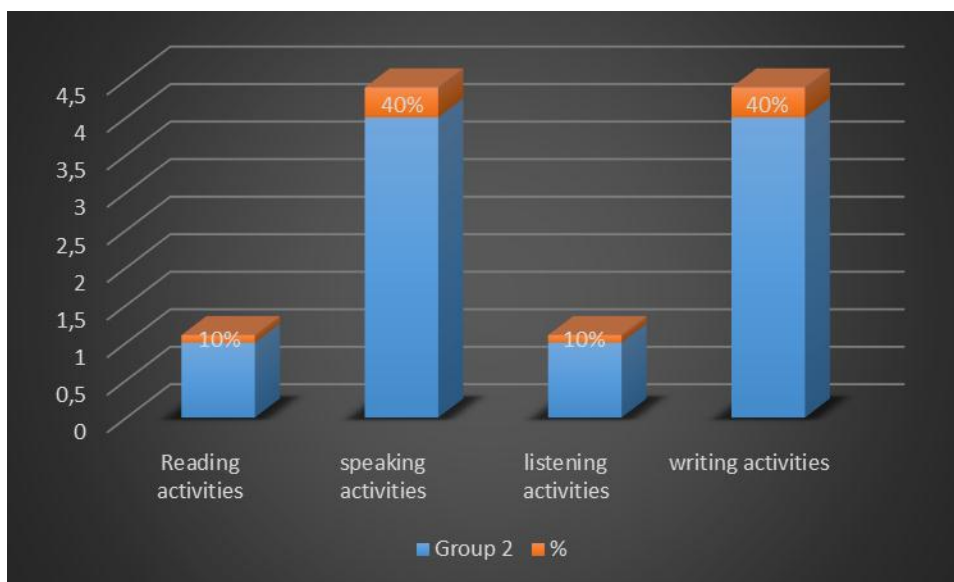
Which kinds of activities are developed the most in the class?	Group 1	
	answers	%
reading activities	3	23%
speaking activities	2	15%
listening activities	4	31%
writing activities	4	31%
total	13	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015.

This graph presents the information gathered from the class observation carried out in group 1 about the question related to the activities developed the most in the class, in which listening activities and writing activities represent each 31% of the activities used during the observation period. On the other hand, reading activities represent 23% and speaking activities 15% of the ones used by the teacher during the classes observed.

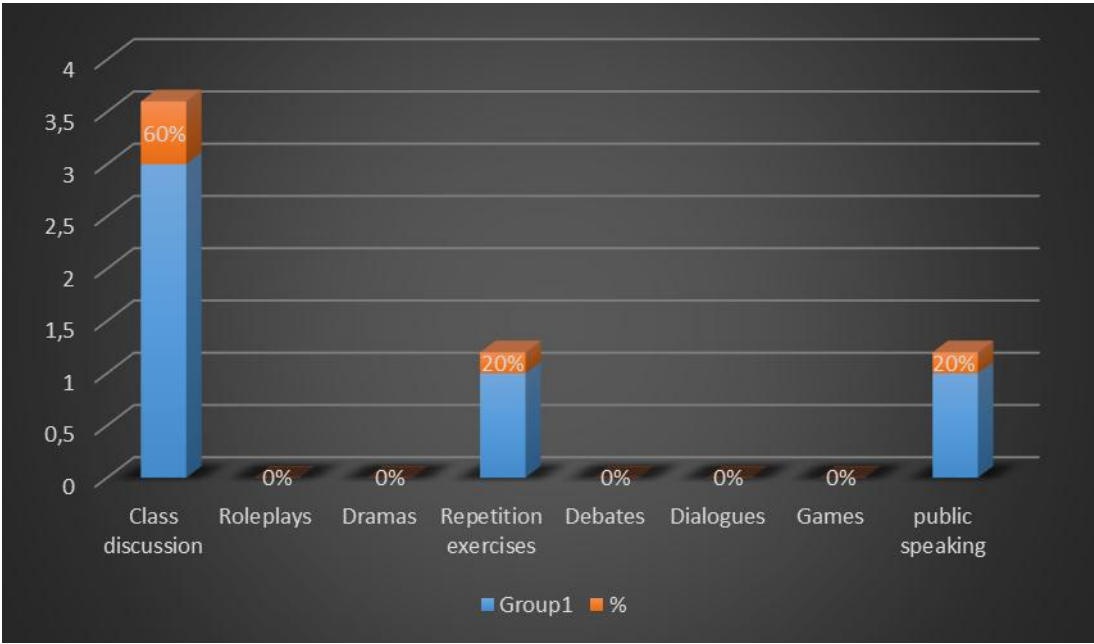
Which kinds of activities are developed the most in the class?	Group 2	
	answers	%
reading activities	1	10%
speaking activities	4	40%
listening activities	1	10%
writing activities	4	40%
total	10	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents the information gathered from the class observation carried out in group 2 about the question related to the activities developed the most in the class, in which speaking activities and writing activities represent each, 40% of the activities used during the observation period. On the other hand, reading activities and listening activities represent each 10% of the activities used in class.

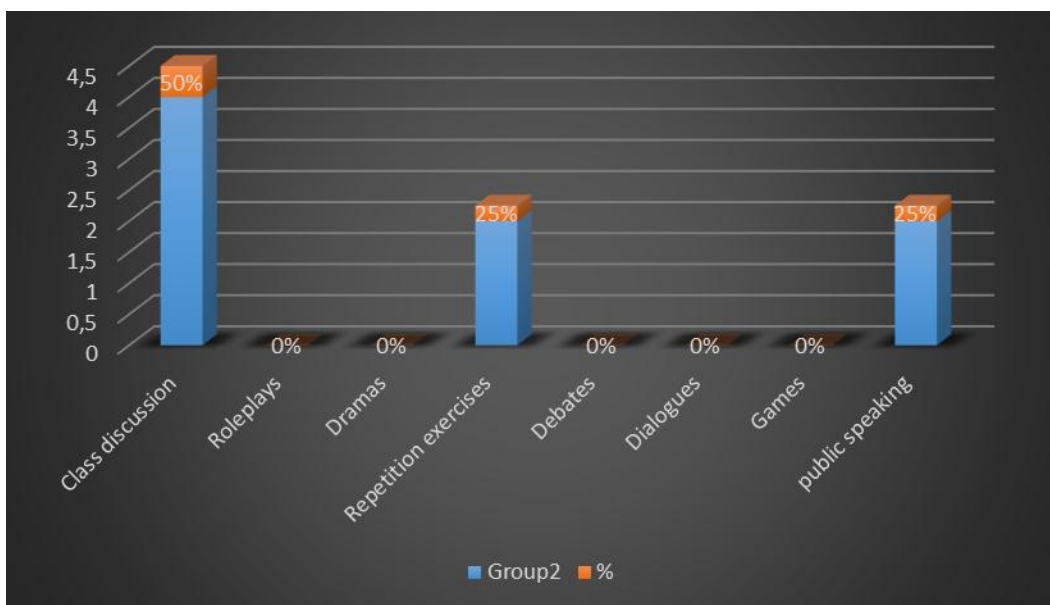
Which of the following speaking activities are applied the most in the class?	Group 1	
	Answers	%
class discussion	3	60%
roleplays	0	0%
dramas	0	0%
repetition exercises	1	20%
debates	0	0%
dialogues	0	0%
games	0	0%
public speaking	1	20%
total	5	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents the information obtained through the class observation carried out in one of the Advanced English I groups. It reflects in percentages the answer to the question regarding the speaking activities applied the most in the class, in which class discussion is the most used in the class representing 60% of the activities. Besides, repetition activities and public speaking represent each 20% of the activities applied in class. On the other hand, roleplays, dramas, debates, dialogues, games, and other types of activities were not used at all during the class observation.

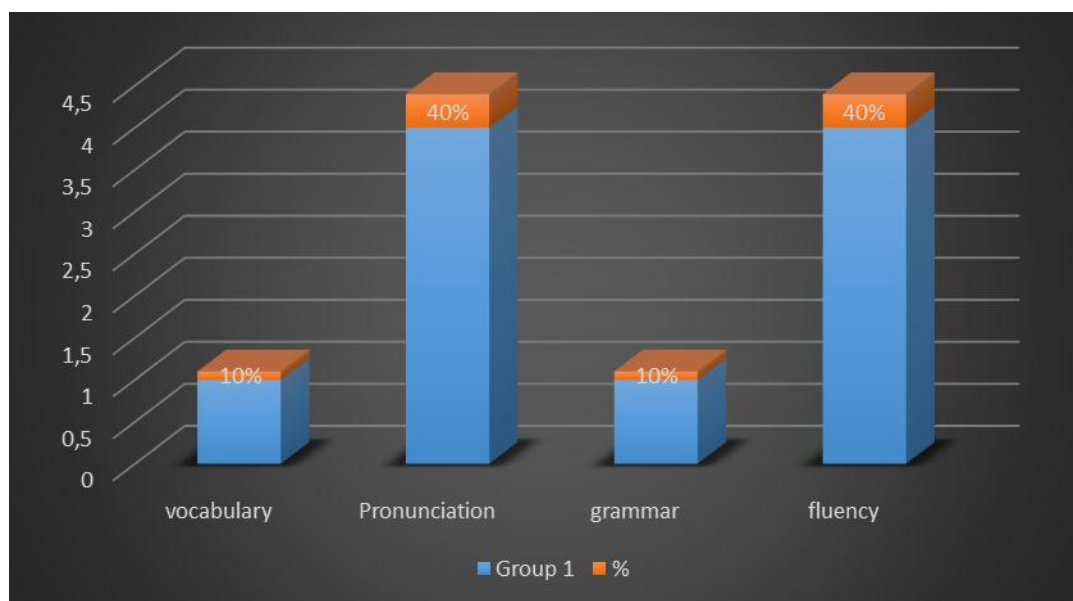
Which of the following speaking activities are applied the most in the class?	Group 2	
	answers	%
class discussion	4	50%
roleplays	0	0%
dramas	0	0%
repetition exercises	2	25%
debates	0	0%
dialogues	0	0%
games	0	0%
public speaking	2	25%
total	8	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents the information obtained through the class observation carried out in one of the advanced English groups. It reflects in percentages the answer to the question regarding the speaking activities applied the most in the class in which class discussion is the most used in the class representing 50% of the activities. Besides, repetition activities and public speaking represent each 25% of the activities applied in class. On the other hand, roleplays, dramas, debates, dialogues, games, and other type of activity were not used at all during the class observation.

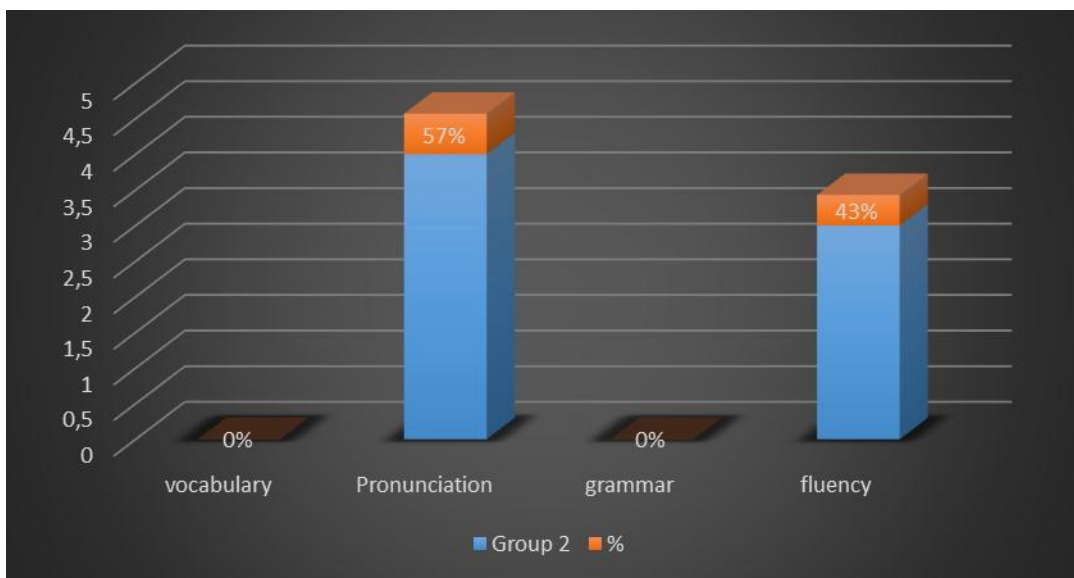
D. Which of the following speaking areas are the most difficult for students?	Group 2	
	answers	%
vocabulary	1	10%
Pronunciation	4	40%
grammar	1	10%
fluency	4	40%
total	10	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents information regarding to the question about some of the speaking areas in which students present the most difficulty. According to the classes observed and student's participation in class, it was noticed that pronunciation and fluency were the areas in which students presented the most difficulty with 40% in both areas, during the class development. On the other hand, grammar and vocabulary were areas in which students faced difficulty only in 10% each, in the classes observed.

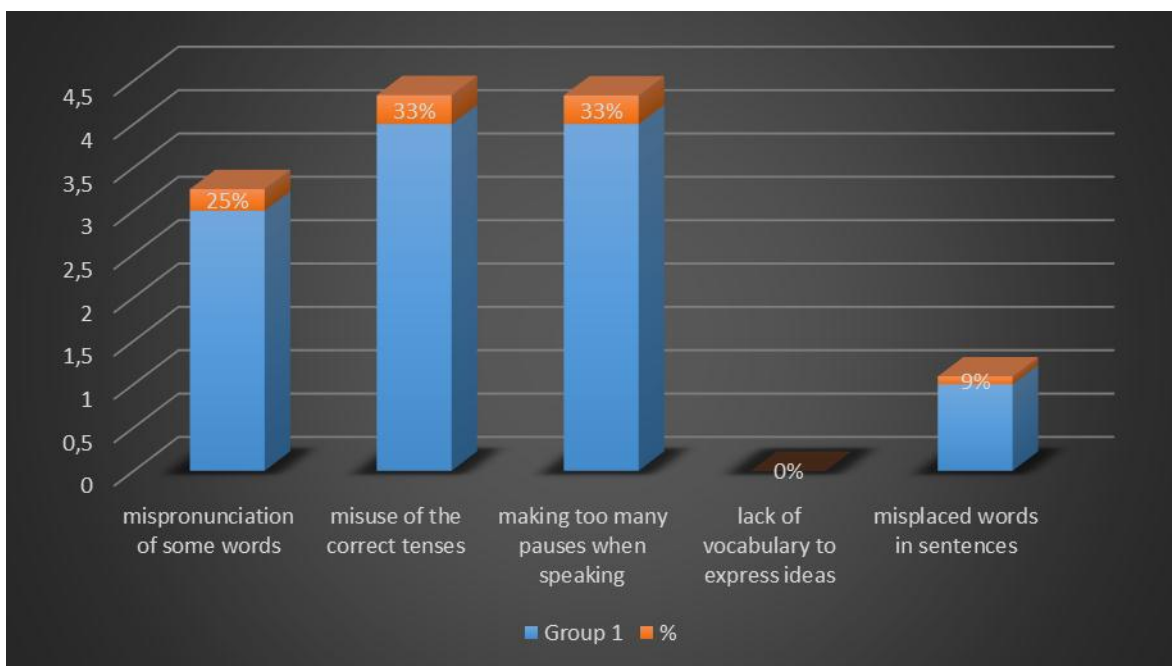
E. Which of the following speaking areas are the most difficult for students?	Group 2	
	answers	%
vocabulary	0	0%
Pronunciation	4	57%
grammar	0	0%
fluency	3	43%
total	7	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents information regarding the question about some of the speaking areas in which students present difficulty. According to the classes observed and student's participation in class, it was noticed that pronunciation and fluency were the areas in which students presented the most difficulty, the first with 57% and the second with 43% during the classes observed. On the other hand, grammar and vocabulary were areas in which students didn't present difficulties.

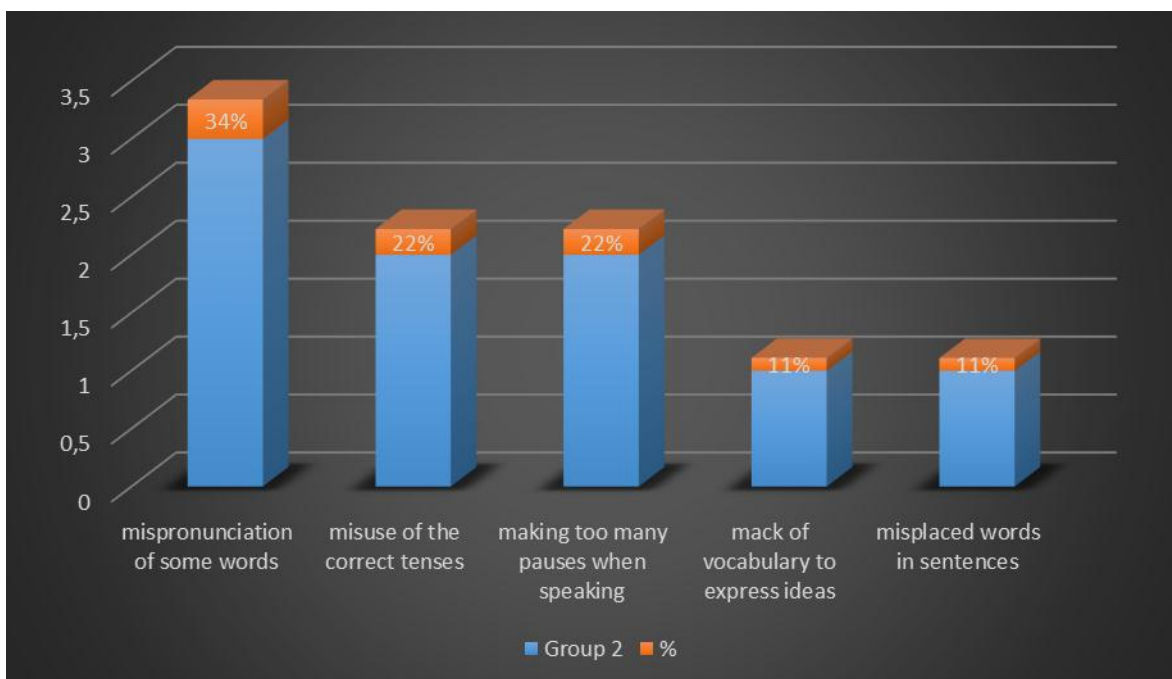
What are the most observable difficulties students face when producing oral English discourse?	Group 1	
	answers	%
mispronunciation of some words	3	25%
misuse of the correct tenses	4	33%
making too many pauses when speaking	4	33%
lack of vocabulary to express ideas	0	0%
misplaced words in sentences	1	9%
total	12	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents the results of the data gathered regarding the following question: what are the most observable difficulties students face when producing oral English discourse? According to the graph, students have difficulty with the use of tenses, and they make too many pauses when speaking, in both cases it represents 33% in the classes observed. Moreover, students presented difficulty mispronouncing some words, representing 25%, and they misplaced words when speaking, representing 9% of the classes observed. Finally, students, didn't present problems with vocabulary used to express ideas.

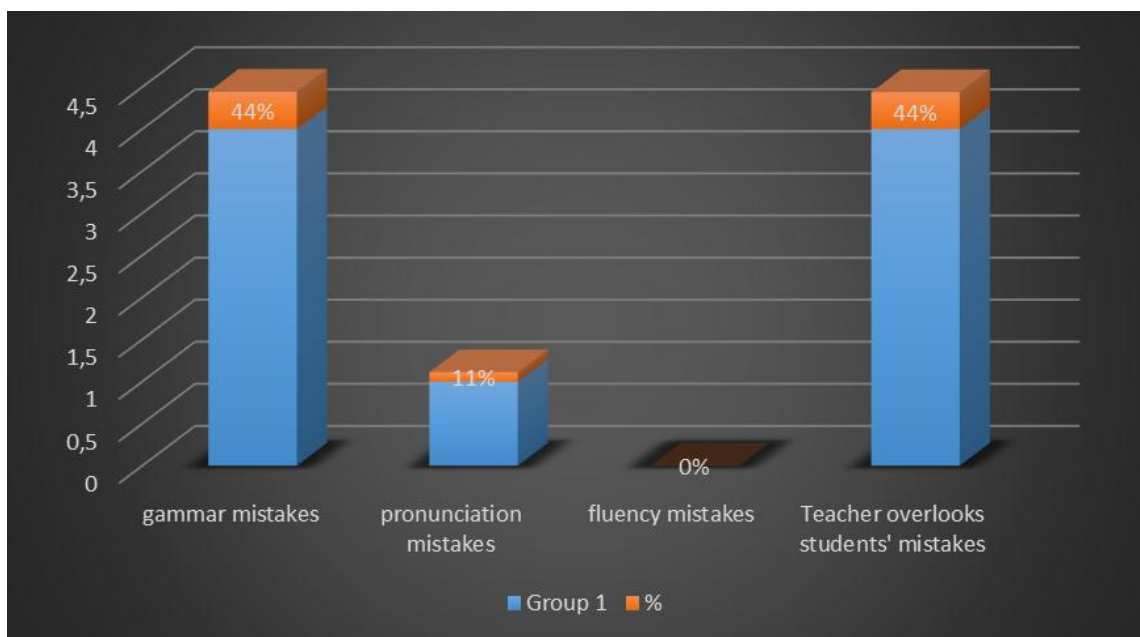
What are the most observable difficulty students face when producing oral English discourse?	Group 2	
	answers	%
mispronunciation of some words	3	34%
misuse of the correct tenses	2	22%
making too much pauses when speaking	2	22%
lack of vocabulary to express ideas	1	11%
misplaced words in sentences	1	11%
total	9	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents the results of the data gathered regarding the most observable difficulties students face when producing oral English discourse. According to the graph, students presented difficulty mispronouncing some words representing 34% in the classes observed. They also presented difficulty with the use of correct tenses, and they made too many pauses when speaking, in both cases representing 22%. Moreover, students presented lack of vocabulary to express ideas and they misplaced words in sentences, in both cases with 11%.

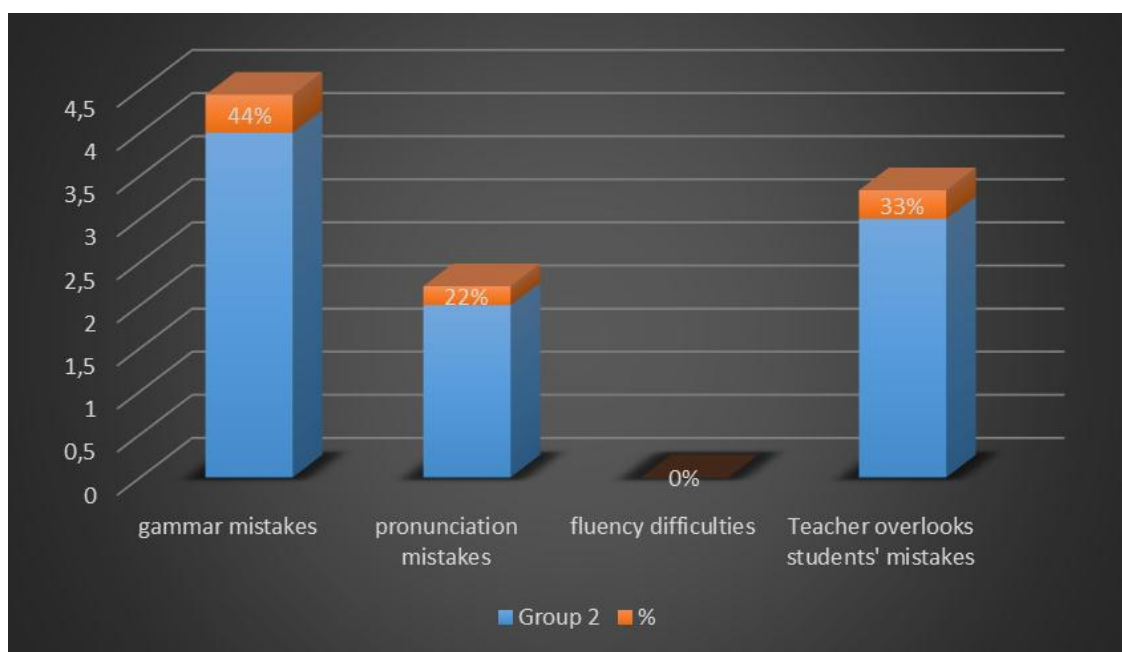
Which of the following common speaking mistakes does the teacher focus the most on?	Group 1	
	answers	%
gammar mistakes	4	44%
pronunciation mistakes	1	12%
fluency mistakes	0	0%
Teacher overlooks students' mistakes.	4	44%
total	9	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

This graph presents information regarding the most common speaking mistakes teachers focus the most on. According to the classes observed, it was noticed that the teacher focus more on grammar mistakes representing 40% of the classes. On the other hand, it was also noticed that the teacher overlooked students' mistakes most of the time; this happened in 40% of the classes observed. It is important to mention that the teacher also focused on pronunciation mistakes, but this took place only in 12% of the classes observed while fluency was not taken into account.

Which of the following common speaking mistakes does the teacher focus the most on?	Group 2	
	answers	%
grammar mistakes	4	44%
pronunciation mistakes	2	22%
fluency difficulties	0	0%
Teacher overlooks students mistakes	3	33%
total	9	100%



Source: Questionnaire administered to Advanced English I students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza, semester II-2015

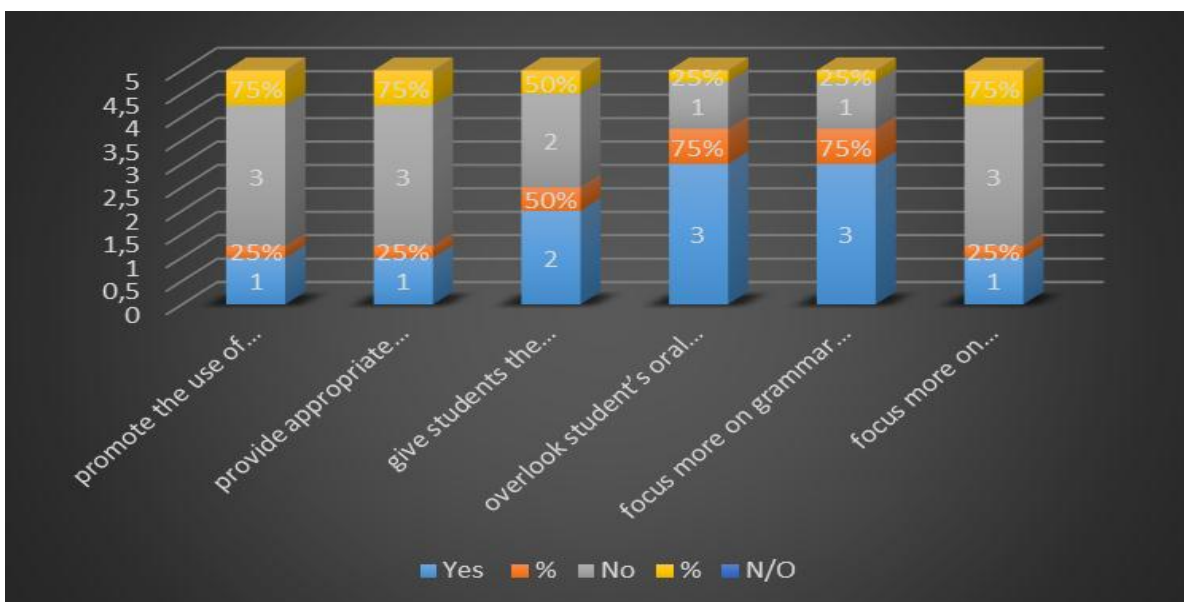
This graph presents information regarding the most common speaking mistakes the teachers focus the most on. According to the classes observed, it was noticed that the teacher focused more on grammar mistakes, representing 44% of the classes. On the other hand, it was also noticed that the teacher overlooked student's mistakes most of the time; this happened in 33% of the classes observed. It is important to mention that the teacher also focused on pronunciation mistakes, but only in 22% of the classes observed, while fluency was not taken into account.

Second part

Direction: write a check (√) in the option that you consider appropriate. N/O stands for no option

In the class, does the teacher...	Yes	No	N/O
promote the use of authentic language in meaningful context?			
provide appropriate feedback in order to correct students' speaking mistakes?			
give students the opportunity to initiate oral communication?			
focus more on grammar mistakes?			
focus more on pronunciation and fluency mistakes?			
In the class, do the students...			
present difficulties in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions?			
make pauses when speaking English?			
present difficulties in the use of correct tenses?			
use the target language to communicate with others?			

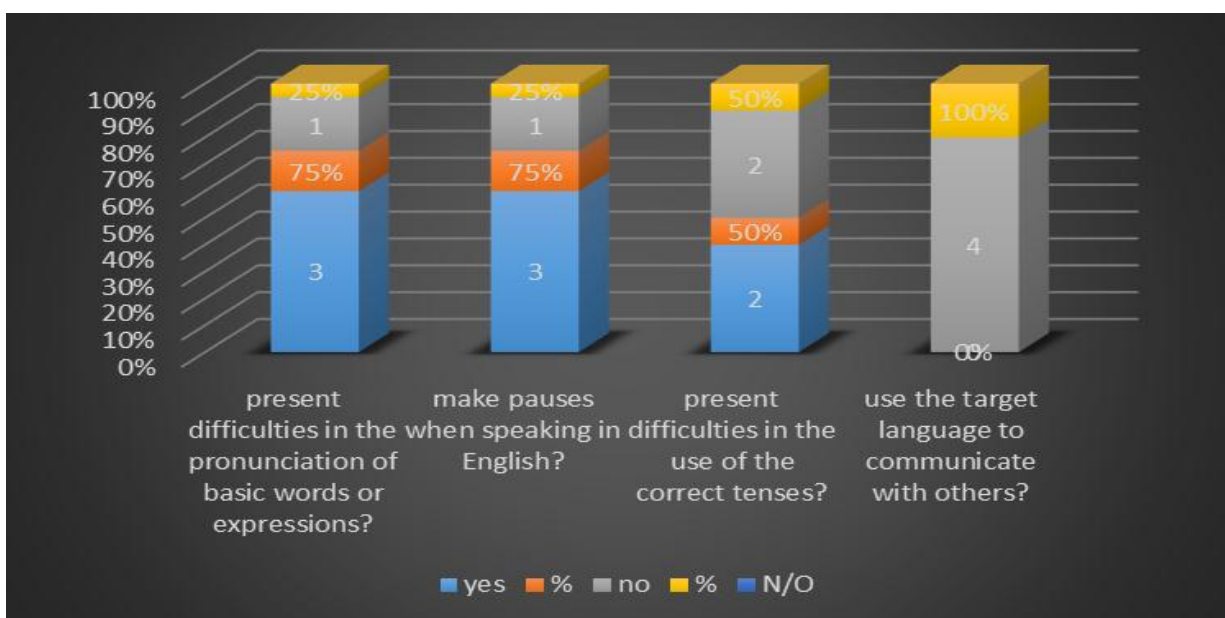
group 1	4-day observation				
In the class, does the teacher...	Yes	%	No	%	N/O
promote the use of authentic language in meaningful context?	1	25%	3	75%	
provide appropriate feedback in order to correct students' speaking mistakes?	1	25%	3	75%	
give students the opportunity to initiate oral communication?	2	50%	2	50%	
overlook student's oral mistakes?	3	75%	1	25%	
focus more on grammar mistakes?	3	75%	1	25%	
focus more on pronunciation and fluency mistakes?	1	25%	3	75%	



In the first question: “Does the teacher promote the use of authentic language in meaningful context?”, it was observable that during the four days of observation, the teacher did it only 25% of the times. Also, it was observed that during the four days of classes, the teacher did not often provide students with feedback to correct their speaking mistakes, but only in 25% of the class. The teacher actually gave students the opportunity to initiate oral communication in 50% of the classes observed. For the fourth question, it was clearly observed that the teacher most of the time overlooked student’s oral mistakes; that is, 75% of the times. For the fifth question, it was obvious that the teacher focused more on

grammar mistakes during the classes observed, this happened in 75% of the classes. Finally, for the last question regarding students' pronunciation and fluency mistakes, the teacher almost never focused on this kind of mistakes, only in 25% of the classes observed.

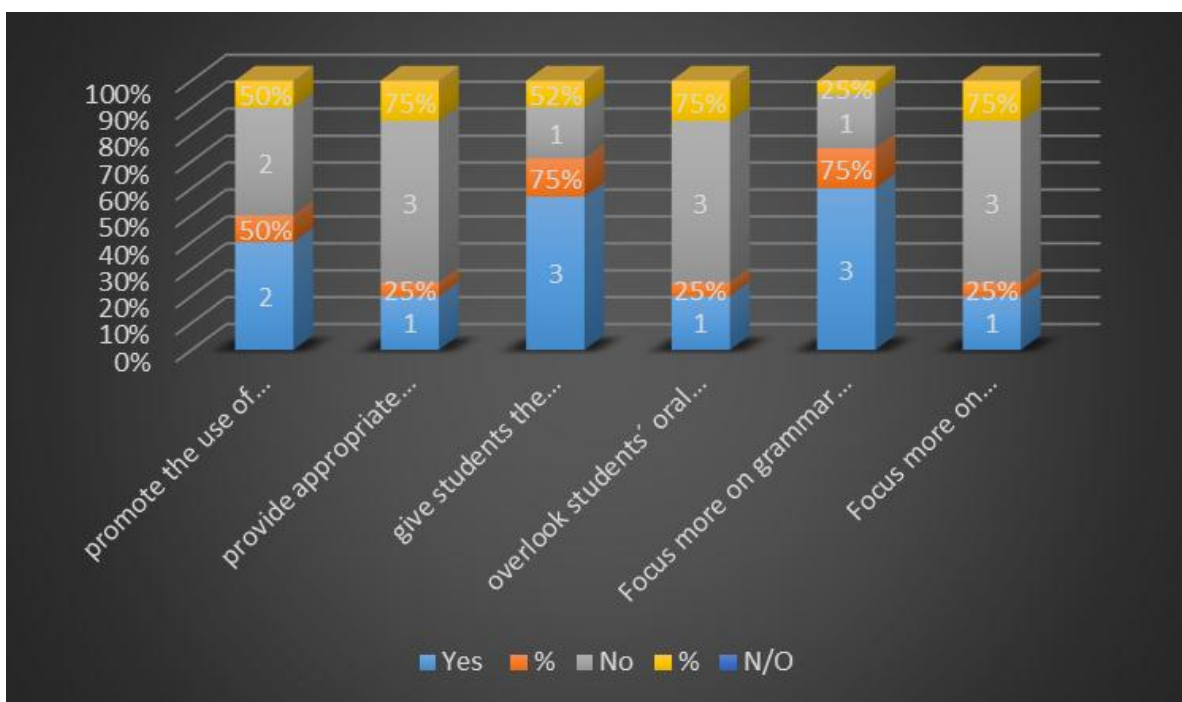
Group 1	4 days observation				
	yes	%	no	%	N/O
In the class, do the students... present difficulties in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions?	3	75%	1	25%	
make pauses when speaking in English?	3	75%	1	25%	
present difficulties in the use of the correct tenses?	2	50%	2	50%	
use the target language to communicate with others?	0	0%	4	100%	



Students presented difficulties in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions during the observation period. This happened in 75% of class participation. On the other hand, some students made use of an acceptable level of English pronunciation in 25% of the classes observed. Besides that, as reflected in the graph, the majority of students who

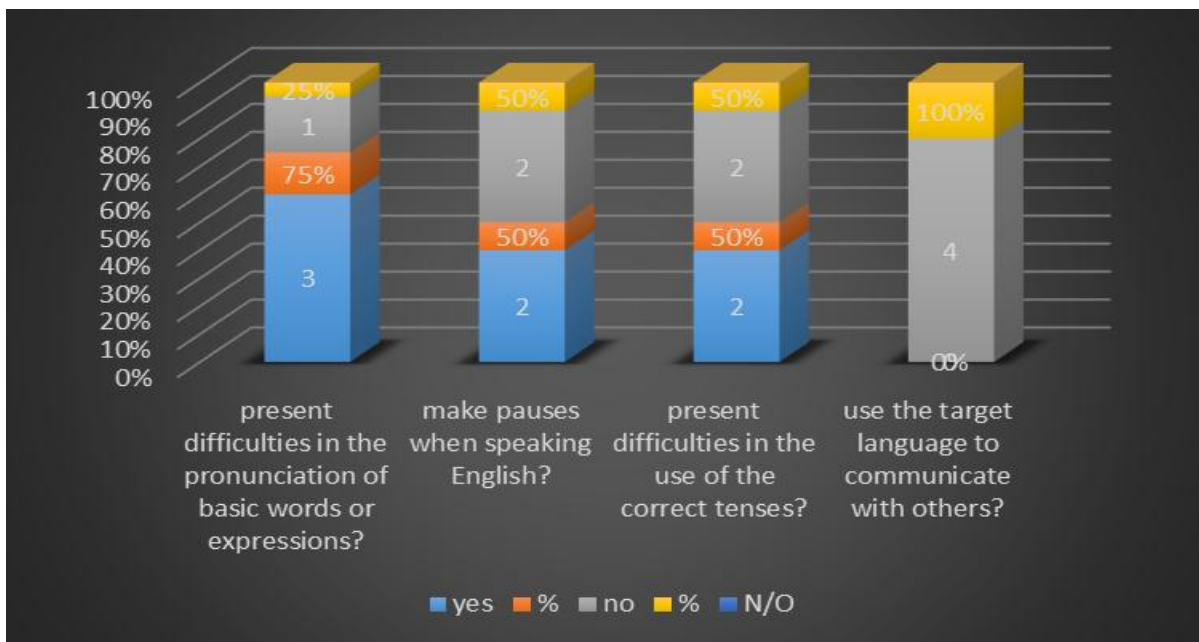
participated in the class made pauses when speaking English; this happened during 75% of the classes observed. During the four days of classes, it was noticed that part of the students presented difficulties in the use of correct tenses used in class, this happened in 50% of the classes. In the case of the last question regarding the students' use of the target language to communicate with others, it was observed that in 100% of the classes observed, they never used the target language to communicate with their peers.

group 2	4 days observation				
In the class, does the teacher...	Yes	%	No	%	N/O
promote the use of authentic language in meaningful context?	2	50%	2	50%	
provide appropriate feedback in order to correct students' speaking mistakes.	1	25%	3	75%	
give students the opportunity to initiate oral communication?	3	75%	1	52%	
overlook students' oral mistakes?	1	25%	3	75%	
Focus more on grammar mistakes?	3	75%	1	25%	
Focus more on pronunciation and fluency mistakes?	1	25%	3	75%	



It is observable that during the four days, the teacher promoted the use of authentic language in meaningful context only 50% of the times. For the second question, it was observed that during the four days of classes, he did not often provide students with feedback to correct their speaking mistakes, but only 25% of the times. For the third question, the teacher actually gave students the opportunity to initiate oral communication in 75% of the classes observed. It was clearly observed that the teacher most of the time overlooked students' oral mistakes; that is 75% of the times. The teacher focused more on grammar mistakes during the classes observed, this happened in 75% of the classes. Finally, it was observed that the teacher almost never focused on present difficulties in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions as this only happened in 25% of the classes observed.

Group 2	4-day observation				
In the class, do the students...	yes	%	no	%	N/O
present difficulties in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions?	3	75%	1	25%	
make pauses when speaking English?	2	50%	2	50%	
present difficulties in the use of the correct tenses?	2	50%	2	50%	
use the target language to communicate with others?	0	0%	4	100%	



Students presented difficulties in 75% of the classes in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions during the observation period, in contrast to 25% of class participation in which some students made use of an acceptable level of English pronunciation. Besides that, as reflected in the table, an important part of students who participated in the class made pauses when speaking English; this happened during 50% of the classes observed. During the four days of classes, it was noticed that part of the students presented difficulties in the use of correct tenses used in class, this happened in 50% of the classes. In the case of the last question regarding the students' use of the target language to communicate with others, it was observed that in 100% of the classes observed, they never used the target language to communicate with their peers.

VIII. FINDINGS

A. ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the main difficulties that Intensive Advanced English I students of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador face to produce accurate and fluent oral English discourse?

Based on the findings, the main difficulties students have are lack of vocabulary to express ideas, mispronunciation of some words, too many pauses when talking, and the misuse of the correct tenses. However, it can be inferred that the majority of the students present difficulties when producing oral English discourse due to the fact that they lack vocabulary to express ideas and make too many pauses when talking.

- What are the activities teachers use to overcome students' difficulties in the development of English fluency and accuracy?

Based on the findings gotten, the activities that teachers used the most to overcome students' difficulties are class discussions, role plays, and debates. This information agrees with the one gotten from the observation checklist although there is a contrast with students' answers regarding feedback, because according to the class observed, corrections

and appropriate feedback are barely carried out in the class. So students may not be aware of their common speaking mistakes in order to correct them.

- Do the speaking activities applied by teachers in class help students to overcome students' oral difficulties?

Students stated that the speaking activities applied in classes help them develop their oral English skill and overcome their difficulties. But something that is important to mention is that teachers do not vary the speaking activities or look for new ones that can suit students' needs; this was stated not only in the questionnaire, but also in the classes observed which reflected that only a few speaking activities are used to enhance students' oral skill.

- Is the frequency and time assigned to the speaking activities enough to improve students' oral English skill?

Based on the findings, the majority of students under study consider that the speaking activities are always developed in their English classes. However, a great number of students say that they do not think that the time assigned to the speaking activities is enough to improve their oral English skill.

- What are the activities used by students to practice the oral skill to gain accuracy and fluency?

Based on the findings gotten, the most challenging speaking activities for advanced English students are class discussions, role plays, and debates.

B. MOST OUTSTANDING FINDINGS

Based on the data gathered, the study revealed that the main difficulties students have regarding oral English accuracy and fluency are lack of vocabulary, mispronunciation of words, and too many pauses when producing oral English discourse.

The data collected from the survey revealed that they find it difficult to build sentences when they try to express their ideas due to the lack of vocabulary. The data collected through observation carried out supported this as it showed that students struggled to find the appropriate vocabulary item when trying to speak English, which reflected their insufficient vocabulary repertoire. In addition, during the class observations, it was noticed that students' participation was very low.

Even though the majority of students considered that the speaking activities carried out in the class are interesting and appropriate to their level, in the class observation, they were not that willing to participate. The data collected from the survey shows that they fear making mistakes in front of their classmates; for that reason, they do not often participate in speaking activities.

The data collected from the survey revealed that the activities developed the most in the English classes are speaking activities as a great number of students confirmed that speaking activities are always used in the class, However, the class observation showed

something different as it was clearly noticed that teachers emphasized more on the other macro skills. It was noticed that students speak very little in class, and that was mostly to answer the teacher's questions. Most of the time, those answers were single words or very short sentences.

In the survey, they also considered that speaking activities are interesting and that these activities help them to develop their speaking skill in a very effective way as the teacher provided the corresponding feedback after each activity. But according to the class observation, the teacher provided very little feedback.

Also, a great number of students expressed that speaking activities carried out in class help them to improve fluency which is considered the most difficult area to overcome. Students also believe that when teachers vary the speaking activities, they have opportunities to practice the language. This is a very important factor to take into account when planning the class as it is necessary to create a good environment, so the students feel confident and motivated to practice and improve their English skills.

Another very important factor to consider is that, according to the findings, they feel challenged to participate in activities like class discussions, role plays, and debates. The teacher's methodology is a very important aspect that encourages students' participation. According to Cervantes (2009), students are interested in the methods, strategies and techniques that the teacher is going to use in order to carry out the class. Hence, it is affirmed that students under study declared they like to participate in games, and that if they were teachers, they would use games as a good way to make students put their English into practice.

Definitely, throughout the administration of the questionnaire and the observation carried out in the Intensive Advanced English I classes, it was found that students participated if teachers engaged them, if students were willing to participate, and if the methodology that the teachers used allowed them to participate.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ Brown (2007) states that discussions, role-plays, and dialogues are effective activities which motivate students to participate in speaking activities. The findings show that teachers of Intensive Advanced English I are on the right way since they carry out these types of activities not only to motivate students but also to increase students' oral skill.

- ✓ This study revealed that the main speaking difficulties that students from the Intensive Advanced English I courses face are linguistic and inhibition difficulties. Students are unable to speak English because they lack the necessary vocabulary items and grammar structures. They also lack sentence formation skills and also feel embarrassed when they make mistakes in front of their classmates, which prevents them from speaking to avoid such situations.

- ✓ The aim of English language education is to provide learners with the capabilities to understand the language and the ability to both write and speak it. If learners are not able to speak English, this aim has not been fully achieved. Thus, it is necessary to discover if people indeed have problems with speaking, and if they do, what kind of difficulties and what activities are being used in class to overcome them.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

To The Foreign Language Department

1. The foreign language department should grant teachers the use of technological equipment to encourage students to take advantage of technological programs to enrich their vocabulary.
2. They also should include more extracurricular activities through the use of virtual platforms making use of blended learning.
3. They should encourage teacher to include interesting topics brought from the current events or from the textbook, so students can use authentic language in meaningful context to let them acquire vocabulary.

To the teachers

4. Teachers should include games that allow students to participate in speaking activities as Cervantes (2009) states games provide a great opportunity to increase participation, change student's attitudes and acquire the language in an excellent environment.
5. They should focus on both fluency and accuracy, depending on the objectives set.

According to Brown (2007), teachers need to bear in mind a spectrum of learners' need, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency.

6. When performing speaking activities like role plays, class discussions, or debates, teachers should make sure that students perceive and use the building blocks of language. Also, they should provide the appropriate feedback and correction always focused on the objectives set.
7. Teachers should also give students the opportunities to initiate oral communication as according to Brown (2007), part of oral communication competence is the ability to initiate conversations, to nominate topics, to ask questions, to control the conversation, and to change the subject. This is a very important factor teachers should take into account when preparing the lesson plan.

To the students

8. Students should be conscious of their own learning participating in the class activities, and practicing English inside and outside the classroom.
9. They should actively participate in activities such as discussions, dialogues and role-plays to enhance speaking skill.

10. Students should also take advantage of all the resources available as libraries, computer's room to enhance to their English skills. And to take advantage of all the material given by the teacher.

ANNEXES

Annex A

“Format for the research report”



Universidad de El Salvador

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

“Format for the research report”

- i. Front page
- ii. Index
- iii. Introduction

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- A. Historical framework
- B. Description of the problem
- C. Objectives
- D. Research questions
- E. Justification/rationale
- F. Delimitation of the problem

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

III. TYPE OF STUDY

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

V. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

- A. Population
- B. Sample

VI. DATA GATHERING PROCESS

- C. Research instrument(s)
- D. Data gathering plan

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

VIII. FINDINGS

- C. Answers to the research questions
- D. Most outstanding findings

IX. CONCLUSIONS

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

ANNEXES

Annex A. Research

Annex B

**Surveys and Observation Instruments Administered to Advanced English I
Students from Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza,
Semester I,2015**

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT:

SURVEY

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
SEMINAR II**

GENDER F M

OBJECTIVE: to collect information related to the topic “Students’ Difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I Students of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching Face to Produce Accurate and Fluent Oral English Discourse at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Year 2015.”

DIRECTION: Read each of the questions presented below and mark with an X the answer that you consider appropriate.

1. Which activity is developed the most in your English classes?

reading activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	listening activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
writing activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	speaking activities	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How often are speaking activities developed in your English classes?

very often	<input type="checkbox"/>	rarely	<input type="checkbox"/>
always	<input type="checkbox"/>	never	<input type="checkbox"/>
almost always	<input type="checkbox"/>		

3. How often do you participate in speaking activities in your English classes?

very often rarely
always never
almost always

4. Do you consider that the speaking activities developed in your classes are appropriate to improve your oral English fluency and accuracy?

5. Yes No

6. Do you consider that speaking activities applied in classes help you develop your oral English skill?

Yes No

7. Which of the following speaking activities are applied the most in the class ?
(Choose the ones that apply).

class discussions dialogues
role plays games
dramas
repetition exercises
debates

8. Do you consider that the activities selected in the previous question are the most effective to enhance your oral proficiency?

Yes No

9. Do you think that the time assigned to the speaking activities is enough to improve your oral English skill?

Yes No

10. Is there a variety of English speaking activities in your English classes?

Yes No

11. Does the teacher give you the corresponding feedback regarding the oral difficulties you face after each English speaking activities?

Yes No

12. Does the teacher include different speaking activities from the ones from the book?

Yes No

13. Do you think that the speaking activities that the book presents are appealing to you?

Yes No

14. Why do you think some students do not participate in the speaking activities?

They are afraid of making mistakes

They are afraid of the teacher

The lack of vocabulary

15. Do you consider class participation a good way to increase your speaking skill?

Yes No

16. In which area do you think participation helps you more? (Choose only one option).

vocabulary

grammar

pronunciation

17. Do you think that the speaking activities carried out in your English classes are appropriate to your level?

Yes

No

18. In which of the following speaking activities do you feel more challenged to participate (Choose one option).

discussions

games

role-plays

debates

dramas

dialogues

19. Are the English speaking activities applied in class challenging for you?

Yes

No

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
 SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
 FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT
 OBSERVATION CHECK LIST**

DATE: _____ **TIME:** _____

COURSE: _____ **GROUP:** _____

OBSERVER: _____

OBJECTIVE: to collect information related to the topic “Students’ Difficulties that Advanced Intensive English I Student of the Bachelor of Arts in English with Emphasis in Teaching Face to Produce Accurate and Fluent Oral English Discourse at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Year 2015.”

Direction: put a check (√) in the option that you consider appropriate

2. Which kinds of activities are developed the most in the class?

Groups	In-class Activities			
	reading activities	listening activities	writing activities	speaking activities
G1				
G2				

2. Which of the following speaking activities are applied the most in the class?

Group	Speaking Activities							
	class discussion	roleplays	dramas	repetition exercises	debates	dialogues	games	public speaking
G1								
G2								

F. Which of the following speaking areas are the most difficult for students?

Groups	Speaking Areas			
	vocabulary	pronunciation	grammar	fluency
Group 1				
Group 2				

6. What are the most observable difficulties students face when producing oral English discourse?

Groups	Difficulties at producing oral English discourse				
	mispronunciation of some words	misuse of the correct tenses	making too many pauses when speaking	lack of vocabulary to express ideas	misplaced words in sentences
G1					
G2					

7. Which of the following common speaking mistakes does the teacher focus the most on?

Groups	Common speaking mistakes			
	grammar mistakes	pronunciation mistakes	fluency mistakes	Teacher overlooks students' mistakes
G1				
G2				

Second part

Direction: put a check (✓) in the option that you consider appropriate.

In the class, Does the teacher...	Yes	No	N/O
promote the use of authentic language in meaningful context?			
provide appropriate feedback in order to correct students' speaking mistakes.			
give students the opportunity to initiate oral communication?			
overlook student's oral mistakes?			
focus more on grammar mistakes?			
focus more on pronunciation and fluency mistakes?			
In the class, Do the students...			
present difficulties in the pronunciation of basic words or expressions?			
make pauses when speaking in English?			
present difficulties in the use of the correct tenses?			
use the target language to communicate with others?			

ANNEX C

What is the Oral Proficiency Interview?

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) is a valid and reliable testing method that measures how well a person speaks a language. It uses a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability, i.e., it measures language production holistically by determining patterns of strengths and weaknesses. The ACTFL OPI is interactive and adaptive, adjusting to the interests, experiences, and the linguistic abilities of the test takers. Through a series of personalized questions, a sample of speech is elicited and rated according to the proficiency levels described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012– Speaking. The ACTFL OPI assesses the Interpersonal mode of communication (two-way communication) as described in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning.

The OPI assesses language proficiency in terms of a speaker's ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations. It does not address when, where, why, or the way in which a speaker has acquired his/her language. The OPI is not an achievement test assessing a speaker's acquisition of specific aspects of course and curriculum content, nor is it tied to any specific method of instruction. The OPI does not compare one individual's performance to others, but each individual performance to the assessment criteria.

What is the ACTFL rating scale?

Superior advanced intermediate novice

The four major levels are delineated according to a hierarchy of global tasks. This hierarchy is summarized in a rating scale spanning a wide range of performance profiles, from those of speakers who are able to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics and issues to those of beginning learners. The scale describes a full range of proficiency from Superior to Novice.

While the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking describe five major levels of spoken language proficiency (Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, Novice), the ACTFL Rating Scale (derived from the Guidelines) encompasses four major levels.

These are:

Superior

Can support opinion, hypothesize, discuss topic concretely and abstractly, and handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation. Can narrate and describe in all major time frames and handle a situation with a complication.

Intermediate

Can create with language, ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics, and handle a simple situation or transaction

Novice

Can communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterance, lists, and phrases

The major levels are further divided by minor borders into high, mid and low sub-levels. These sub-levels differ from each other in terms of the quantity as well as the quality of language produced and in some cases by the tasks performed.

Superior

Advanced High, Advanced Mid, Advanced Low

Intermediate High, Intermediate Mid, Intermediate Low

Novice High, Novice Mid, Novice Low

The “high” sublevel

Speakers at “High” sublevel communicate with ease and confidence when performing the functions of their respective level. They are capable of functioning much of the time at the next higher major level and may spontaneously raise the exchange to that level, but they are unable to sustain language at that next higher level without intermittent lapses or evidences of difficulty.

The “Mid” sublevel

Speakers at the “Mid” sublevel represent a number of speech profiles, based on their particular mix of quantity (sheer volume of speech produced) and/or quality (efficiency and effectiveness with which meaning is communicated) at level, and/ or the degree to which they control language features from the next higher major level base level.

The “low” sublevel

Speakers at the “Low” sublevel summon up all their linguistic energy to sustain the requirements of the level. The “Low” functions primarily within the level with minimal quantity and quality of language and little or no demonstrated ability to perform the tasks of the next higher level.

What assessment criteria are used?

The Oral Proficiency Interview addresses a number of criteria simultaneously. The OPI is an integrative assessment that evaluates spoken language ability from a global perspective rather than based on the presence or absence of any given linguistic feature.

Proficiency Level*	Global Tasks and Functions	Context/ Content	Accuracy	Text Type
Superior	Discuss topics extensively, support opinions and hypothesize. Deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation.	Most formal and informal settings. <i>Wide range of general interest topics and some special fields of interest and expertise.</i>	No pattern of errors in basic structures. Errors virtually never interfere with communication or distract the native speaker from the message.	Extended discourse
Advanced	Narrate and describe in major time frames and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication.	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations. <i>Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities.</i>	Understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.	Paragraphs
Intermediate	Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions.	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations. <i>Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities.</i>	Understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.	Discrete sentences
Novice	Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases	Most common informal settings. <i>Most common aspects of daily life.</i>	May be difficult to understand, even for speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.	Individual words and phrases

Annex D

Time Table

MONTHS ACTIVITIES	MARCH				APRIL				MAY				JUNE				JULY				AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				OCTOBER				NOVEMBER				DECEMBER			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Planning of Research Project	█	█	█	█																																				
Research Strategy Design					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																
Literature Review	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																				
Instrument Designing																	█	█	█	█																				
Profile Presentation																	█	█	█	█																				
Oral interview									█	█	█	█	█	█																										
Class observation																					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█												
Questionnaires																					█	█	█	█																
Data Analysis and Interpretation																									█	█	█	█	█	█										
Conclusions																													█	█	█	█								
Recommendations																													█											
Thesis Oral Presentation																																	█	█	█	█				

Annex E

KEY TERMS

Accuracy: Fluency, according to the Oxford dictionary, is defined as the quality or condition of being fluent, in particular the ability to express oneself easily and articulately.

Fluency: defined by the Oxford dictionary as the quality or state of being correct or precise.

Proficiency: Mastery of a specific [behavior](#) or [skill](#) demonstrated by consistently superior [performance](#), measured against [established](#) or popular standards.

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/proficiency.html#ixzz3sZHFpcfw>

Unfocused communicative tasks: no effort is made in the design or the execution of a task to give prominence to any particular linguistic feature. The language used to perform the task is “natural” and only very broadly determined by the content of the task.

Focused communicative tasks result in some linguistic feature being made prominent, although not in a way that causes the learner to pay more attention to form than to meaning.

human endeavor: It is any action that a person would take in order to achieve a worthwhile objective.

cognitive skills: They are brain-based skills we need to carry out any task from the simplest to the most complex. They have more to do with the mechanisms of how we learn, remember, problem solve, and pay attention, rather than with any actual knowledge.

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