

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



**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:  
CULTURE AND LOW LEVEL OF CLASS ORAL PARTICIPATION IN  
SPEAKING ACTIVITIES OF STUDENTS FROM INTENSIVE ADVANCED I  
COURSES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR DURING THE YEAR 2014.**

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TEACHING**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the last decades, the English Language has become the language which people put on their interest to learn as much as possible. To learn this language brings along to students the possibilities to increase many opportunities in their professional life. To learn this language represents to learn and to develop all the macro skills in order to communicate the message in the best way. So, the active participation in the language learning process results into the fundamental aspect to accomplish the requirements along the major.

In this case, the research points out the problematic that occurs in students of Advanced English I course at the FLD at the University of El Salvador where students show a low level oral participation in speaking activities during the class. Along this line, a body of research has investigated factors that influence students' inactive verbal participation in classrooms, such as culture, language proficiency, and affective aspects (Adamson, 1990; Chen, 2003; Jones, 1999; Kim, 2006; Liu, 2001, 2005; Morita, 2000, 2004; Tsui, 1996). Whereby, this research is focused in the influence that culture has over low level oral participation in class. "These factors include whether the reticence results from students' negative attitudes towards English as a medium of communication (Liu & Littlewood, 1997), students' lack of language proficiency (Cheng, 2000; Kim, 2006), students' identity differences, including cultural characteristics (Jones, 1999; Morita, 2000; 2004), and students' different perceptions of classroom participation" (Chen, 2003; Chu & Kim, 1999; Inoue, 1999; Jackson, 2002; Kim, 2006; Liu, 2001, 2005).

In this project, it is demonstrated the influence that culture has on the low level oral participation of students of Advanced English I at the FLD at the University of El Salvador. This research is divided into eleven chapters. In chapter one, it is exposed the Statement of the Problem in which is described the Historical Framework, Description of the Problem, Objectives, Research Questions, Rationale and Delimitation of the Problem. In chapter two, it is described the Theoretical Framework which includes the articles that describe and support this study. In chapter three, it is explained the Type of Study. Here, it is described the approach that was used during the research. In chapter four, it is explained the Research Design.

In chapter five, Population and Sample. In chapter six, it is exposed the Data Gathering Process including the Research Instruments applied to gather the data and the Data Gathering Plan. In chapter seven, it is pointed out Data Analysis, Data Base and the Statistical Procedure. In chapter eight, Findings; in chapter nine, Conclusions; in chapter ten, Recommendations; in chapter eleven, References. Finally, there are some Annexes such as the Project Profiles that the group presented at the beginning of the research in order to plan the research process and also there are some Appendices such as Questionnaires, Interviews and the Check List used to organize the information during the process.

## **I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### ***A. Historical framework***

This research demonstrated that students' oral participation represents such a dispensable form to communicate their ideas, opinions and thoughts in order to develop their skills. This research points out that culture and low level of oral participation of students in in-class speaking activities are the main points to be studied, so that, it is necessary to take into account the influence that culture has over students' participation in the classroom.

Culture in a country makes people belong to a certain group and that feeling of belonging makes them feel identified with them by different reasons or aspects including the language. Sharmin Sultana (2011) pointed out that "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture(Brown, cited in Jiang, 1994, p. 147)." In some cases people are interested to know and to learn a foreign language, but the cultural transition occurs and the process of acquiring the target language can become a difficult task for beginners. (Brown, cited in Jiang, 1994, p. 147) "English as the foremost medium of international communication at the present time, is called upon to mediate a whole range of cultural and cross cultural concepts, to a greater degree than in the past."

Some researchers have demonstrated that oral participation is important at the moment of studying a foreign language. Every day, teachers have to take decisions in their classrooms about language teaching methodologies or approaches and difficulties arises when those decisions are related about which activities are more effective and which can provide the development of skills that students could use in communicative purposes. "Effective teachers encourage their students' participation in classroom discussions, welcome their contributions, and motivate them by such practices" (Cazden, 2001; Stipek, 2002).



At the very beginning, some students start studying a foreign language but there could be a possibility that they may show negative behaviors at the time of participating freely during any activity in the class, but their participation increases when they acquire enough knowledge to express their ideas. “In addition, language acquisition theory hypothesizes that language learners experience an initial silent period, which is time spent receiving the language as input, prior to developing language-production skills (Krashen& Terrell, 1983; Saville-Troike, 1988).” But, along of the time teachers pretend that students might increase their participation when they are in high level and they reach a good developing of skills. “However, many educators often allow less proficient students to remain silent or to participate less than their English-fluent peers (Laosa, 1977; Penfield, 1987; Schinke-Llano, 1983; Wilhelm, Contreras, & Mohr, 2004).”

The course of English Advanced I in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador reflects low level of oral participation in English classes due to the influence of different factors or causes. “Our learners often need to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transitions. It is the skill by which they are most frequently judged, and through which they make or lose friends. It is the vehicle... of social ranking, professional advances and of business” (Bygate, 1987, p.1)

Wong Fillmore's (1991) model of second-language learning identified three motivational components that contribute to student progress: interest from the learners, proficient speakers who support and interact with the learners, and an environment that supports relationships between learners and proficient speakers. Many times, students become limited to participate by their partners through murmurs, mockery, jealousy, critics. Jones (2004) defines this phenomenon in language learning situation as a fear provoked when the learner is asked to speak in the second or the foreign language in public, with the risk of social embarrassment.

At the same time, students often are influenced by nervousness or anxiety that make them stop participating during speaking activities. Oxford (1990), Jones (2004), VonWorde

(2003) and Turula (2004) conclude that anxiety has a negative effect in language learning. Fears, nervousness, insecurity and lack of self-confidence are related to language anxiety.

### ***A. Description of the problem***

When talking about culture, it is important to mention that it can play an important role at the time of acquiring a second language whether in a positive or negative way. According to Kim Ann Zimmermann, a LiveScience Contributor, Culture can be described as: “the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, arts, etc. everything, that involves such a peculiar distinction from other cultures.” Since culture can represent a considerable factor when acquiring the target language, it can also be a key factor at the time of participating in oral activities in the class. According to Meyer (2003), Cultural influence of both the native and the target culture impact learning styles, instruction approach, and can impact considerably in language skills such as listening or speaking.

As it is seen in the researchers’ meanings of culture, the term itself encompasses a wide range of meanings and it can be analyzed differently from other points of view; that is why those concepts of culture were taken since they describe culture in such a way that helps this research with the essential information required. After having clear the meaning of culture, the significance of Salvadorian culture is determinant to be analyzed according to the different requirements that are needed in this piece of paper to demonstrate and to accomplish the different objectives presented in this document.

According to Rolando Vásquez Ruiz, University professor and researcher, in his research “Identidad Sociocultural Salvadoreña,” he defines the Salvadorian culture as: “a set of elements and thematic such as: cultural identity, general culture (autochthonous and native), traditions and modernization, etc.” Vásquez Ruiz provides a set of definitions about “cultural identity”, a term that Vásquez considers so important to be mentioned for a better understanding of what Salvadorian culture represents. He presents the meaning of “cultural

identity” according to Francisco Andrés Escobar. “The cultural identity is a component of the culture, the cultural identity has to be understood as the specific way in which women and men of a certain determined society understand their pertinent reality. Such cultural identity is experimented by the economical part, the political, judicial, social, linguistically, etc.”In short, cultural identity goes by each set of parts with the purpose to understand it, transform it and to put into service for all integrants of a determined society. The Salvadorian culture as Vásquez Ruiz says is the cultural identity that shows who Salvadorians are and how they behave in their society. But the concept of Salvadorian culture is difficult to define as he says in his research. There are many concepts about Salvadorian culture but the concepts presented recently are the ones that fit into the concepts needed. Unfortunately, there is no deep study about Salvadorian culture and its significance as a matter of study but this research has the objective to find, if there is any relation between Salvadorian culture and any positive or negative influence in in-class speaking activities.

Though there are no researches that describe how a Salvadorian person acts or behaves into a classroom, that is why the purpose of this research is to show those factors such as murmurs, critics, mockeries, shyness, jealousy, etc., are part of the Salvadorian culture and how those factors influence in the oral participation in in-class speaking activities.

In order to get students engaged with the English language, teachers consider that putting into practice the oral participation in in-class speaking activities there will be an important consideration from the students to be focused on the oral skill in order to succeed with the language. On the other hand, it is considered that an important requirement to produce the target language is to produce it accurately and proficiently. Taking this into account, teachers consider that promoting oral participation in class will create an active oral participation to eradicate errors, mistakes, and other negative aspects that will be removed through oral practice in an environment where the target language is being practiced.

But even though, oral participation is promoted in class, low level of oral class participation is taking place at English courses in levels where practice is needed to reinforce the knowledge acquired and to practice the language to produce it accurately and proficiently. This information was collected from a short interview to 4 different English teachers at the campus whose common problem in their classes is the low level of oral class participation. Teachers mentioned that this problem needs to be eradicated because they consider that at that level, students need to put into practice what they have learned along previous courses. They consider that these levels are levels where the oral participation is crucial. Through oral participation, students practice the language and they better what has been learned, teachers said.

The short interviews to the four different teachers permitted the group to gather information about certain factors that can be the reason for this low level of oral class participation problem. Teachers consider that problems with self-confidence, shyness, critics and cultural factors such as “mockery, murmurs, egoism, jealousy”, among others can be determinant at the time to promote this low level of oral in-class participation. Taking into account this information, the group is considering to represent Salvadorian Culture as a factor that can represent whether a positive or a negative factor when acquiring the English language.

### ***C. Objective***

#### **General objective**

To identify to what extent culture influences the low level of oral participation of students of Intensive Advanced English I semester II 2014.

#### **Specific objectives**

To discover to what extend the Salvadoran idiosyncrasy influences in the low level of class oral participation of students.

To identify how culture limits the students' oral participation in spoken activities in the classroom.

#### ***D. Research questions***

##### **Research questions**

To what extent culture influences the low level of oral participation of students of Intensive Advanced English I during the year 2014?

##### **Subsidiary questions**

- ◆ Which cultural factors influence the low level of oral participation or inhibit students to participate freely in in-class speaking activities?
- ◆ How does the Salvadorean culture of mocking, murmuring, having jealousy and critiquing limit or block students' oral participation in speaking activities in the classroom?
- ◆ Do shyness, fear and insecurity inhibit students to participate in in-class speaking activities?
- ◆ Does participation in speaking activities promote anxiety, nervous and stress in students?

#### ***E. Rationale***

English is the language which is used across the globe and is adopted widely for communication among speakers whose native languages are different. However, it is a fact that in our country speaking a second language opens many doors since the English language has many advantages mainly at big companies where the oral communicative skill is necessary.

The decision to take into account this research work was due to results gathered from short interviews to 4 different English teachers at the campus. They mentioned some common problems in their classes in which the low level of oral in-class participation was

one of the main problems that students showed. Teachers considered that problems such as: self-confidence, shyness, critics, labeling, marginalization and cultural factors could be the main problems that promote the low level of oral participation in in-class speaking activities.

Oral participation is promoted in class, but at the same time, low level of oral in-class participation is taking place in different English courses, especially in the Intensive Advance I courses in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador where practice is required and necessary to reinforce the knowledge acquired.

So that, this study will help to identify the real reasons why students present low level of oral in-class participation in order that teachers recognize and improve the different oral activities. At the same time, teachers will take into account the reasons which could affect the students' lack of participation and limit them when they express their own ideas about a given topic or a presentation.

Certain suggestions will be provided at the end of this project so that teachers can better their approaches taking into account the different factors that can be involved in the lack of participation that may present students in their classes.

### ***F.Delimitation of the problem***

After reading considerable information for the research, it has been decided to start a deep research about the low level of oral in-class participation and the positive or negative influence that culture can have when promoting oral class participation. The fact that low level of oral in-class participation is taking place considerably, it represents an important problem that has to be studied in order to find the root of the problem.

The low level of oral in-class participation is seen for some researchers as a serious problem that many institutions face and not all of these institutions pay special attention to eradicate this problem. According to Niman (1978) studies show that learners who raise

their hands more and more often responding to teachers' elicitation do better not only on their tests but also in their oral practices at the time of participating on speaking activities. Krahsen (1982) has found out that it is really necessary to know what affects the willingness to participate because teachers with communicative orientation are anxious to get their students to talk as much as possible in their classes.

As it can be seen, oral participation is crucially important according to these two researchers but there are certain factors that can become into barriers transforming the active oral in-class participation into passive oral in-class participation.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***2.1 Students take a passive role and they expect to be guided in the learning process***

According to different studies that are centered in the analyses of teacher- student interaction in the development of the oral skill, the passive learning role of students is something that affects the learning process and at the same time represents a barrier that teachers have to deal with.

According to Jin and Cortazzi (1993), in the survey they conducted to different students in Hong Kong, they found that the passive role of students is present all the time in the learning process since students expect to be guided in every single step of each activity developed during the class. Jin and Cortazzi also mention that there is no criterion on the different tendencies and expectations at the time of choosing lectures that are going to help students in the acquisition part. Students need to be guided step by step along their learning process. Taking this into account, it is important to mention that passivity in students blocks the learning process and makes students think that teachers are responsible of bringing the whole package of knowledge and to build up strategies where that package of knowledge must be assimilated by the students whereas they do not even try to get out of the comfort zone to take an active role.

In the effort to develop an active role in students, there are certain factors that must be diminished so that meaningful learning takes place. Tsui (1996) carried a research project that says: “based on the classroom action research project reports by 38 ESL teachers at the University of Hong Kong, claimed that students’ low English proficiency and fear of making mistakes, teachers’ intolerance of silence, uneven allocation of turns, and incomprehensible input can be some factors that cause Asian students’ silence or reticence in class.” As the example mentioned recently, the same phenomena occurs in the group studied where students’ silence, no participation and passivity are factors that can be seen as normal in the classrooms but those are aspects that must be diminished so that students start developing an active role in the classroom.

The factors mentioned before are just some factors from many others that do not permit students take an active role at the time of learning and this affects them directly at the time of putting into practice what they have learned. Their poor knowledge limits the opportunities they may have to participate actively in a debate, brain storming activity or any other activity that requires oral participation for sharing any opinion, feeling or point of view about determined aspects.

## ***2.2 Linguistic competence among other factors that inhibits students to take an active participation in speaking activities***

To continue studying this phenomena and to reinforce the facts of the different factors that inhibit students to take an active participation in speaking activities, the linguistic competence barrier arises as an aspect that mainly blocks free participation in speaking activities. “Students consider that they do not have confidence in their English, so that sometimes they prefer to keep quiet in class or they would rather wait and see if somebody else has a better answer or comment. Sociocultural factors including face-saving strategies, class size, showing politeness and respect to peer students, previous education experiences, etc., are also documented as the major factors that inhibit students’ participation in class” (Flowerdew and Miller, 1995; Jin&Cortazzi, 1993; Liu, 2001, 2002; Scollon, 1999; Song, 1995; Turner and Hiraga's, 1996).



As mentioned before in this document, some researchers expose certain characteristics in the culture of each country that intervene in the learning process. As an example, a good aspect that can be mentioned and seen as a key factor potentially important in the classroom is “participation.” Participation is the key factor that points out a difference between American classrooms and the classrooms in other countries according to Xiaoshi Li, University of Texas at San Antonio, *Intercultural Communication Studies* XV: 1 2006.

In American classes, students are required and expected to participate and speak up, while in other cultures, it is usually teacher-centered classes and when the teacher asks a question, students often remain silent. Participation is the main feature in American classrooms.

On the other hand, in many Central American countries, the participation feature is not well practiced, unless the learner has a fluent English, accurate pronunciation and enough vocabulary to brag in the class about your good English. Unfortunately, these cultural problems come to stop participation in students because they are not confident of their English. Their low proficiency, heavy accent, and the fear of making mistakes develop in students behaviors of frustration and passivity since they consider that any of their questions or comments can be stupid or their participation can make other students laugh at them. For example, students are used to make sure the answer is correct before they give it; students are afraid of making mistakes or asking questions because they are afraid of being laughed at by the teacher or fellow students; students are afraid that their answers are not correct or the best, etc. Therefore, students seem to have high anxiety levels which sometimes inhibit their participation. But it is important to mention that students are able to participate and express themselves pretty well if they are willing to do so or when the context makes them feel comfortable. Low proficiency and sociocultural obstacles must be overcome and diminished more quickly by being helped by their peer students, the teacher, classroom organization, and so on.

The linkage between students' classroom participation and their academic achievement is undeniable (Lim, 1992; Wodung, 1994; ZHOU, 1991). Studies have shown that when students participate actively and feel comfortable in class, their academic achievement seems to be higher than that of those who are passive in class. Krupa-Kwiatkowski (1998) summarized in her study that "interaction involves participation, personal engagement, and the taking of initiative in some way, activities that in turn are hypothesized to trigger cognitive processes conducive to language learning."

### ***2.3 Importance of oral class participation in speaking activities***

The passivity phenomena in students is a problem that can be caused by multiple factors but, there must be present certain activities in which the active role can be promoted in class. As Snider & Schnurer mention in one of their papers, the approach must be changed from the passive one to the active one. "The students' approach dramatically changes from a passive approach to an active one (Snider & Schnurer, 2002) and students place a higher value on learning by participating than on learning by being lectured at and receiving information passively." Students learn more effectively by actively analyzing, discussing, and applying content in meaningful ways rather than by passively absorbing information (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). This is the main goal of developing speaking activities in the classroom. "Participation in the classroom" is a key factor to overcome these problems.

Participation in the classroom can provide a critical opportunity for learners to better their speaking skills and to learn new strategies that can provide more opportunities for meaningful oral participation in class in order to reach goals that can be personal and academic. As the researchers mentioned before, their studies are focused on the participation in speaking activities, oral participation, which is a crucial factor in the learning process. The active and meaningful participation in speaking activities in the classroom is seen as an essential contribution and a concrete result that learning is taking

place in the classroom because students are engaged in the activities and they feel comfortable when participating in speaking activities.

As a result of this, some studies mention that students' talk can be considered as a crucial factor in the process to better the speaking skill. For example, Celce-Murcia (2001) reviewed nine approaches to the teaching of language and found that most, except for the grammar-translation and reading methods, required students to talk. More precisely, in the communicative approach of language teaching, the most popular method for language teaching since the end of the 20th century, student oral contribution has been regarded as essential for classroom participation.

Since participation is so important, here we can find some benefits of promoting participation in the classroom, according to Maryellen Weimer, PhD in Teaching and Learning, *10 Benefits of Getting Students to Participate in Classroom Discussions*.

1. “Participation adds interest—it is hard to maintain students' focus and attention when all they hear is the professor talking. It helps to hear another voice as well as an answer or another point of view.
2. Participation engages students—A good question can pique their interest, make them wonder why, get them to think, and motivate them to make connections with the content. This benefit is magnified when teachers play a bit with the question, when they repeat it, write it on the board, and don't call on the first hand they see.
3. Participation provides the teacher feedback—when students answer or try to explain, teachers can see the extent of their understanding. They can correct (or help to correct students) what students have not got right or do not see quite clearly.
4. Participation encourages dialogue among and between students—Students can be asked to comment on what another student has said. A question can be asked and students can be invited to discuss possible answers with each other before the public discussion.
5. Participation can be used to develop important speaking skills—in many professional contexts, people need to be able to speak up in a group. They may need to offer information, ask questions, or argue for a different solution. People do not learn to speak up

in a group by reading about how to do it—it is one of those skills best developed with practice. And it is one of those skills that develops better with feedback. If participation is being used to teach students this public communication skill, they will need feedback.”

A good concept about participation according to Meryellen Weimer, PhD in Teaching and Learning. “Participation is one of those workhorse instructional strategies—easy to use, straightforward, expected, and often quite successful at accomplishing a number of learning goals. It is good to remind ourselves of its many different uses, especially on those days when getting students to participate feels like pulling hens’ teeth.”

#### ***2.4 Can culture affect positively or negatively in the participation of speaking activities in the classroom?***

As it is seen, there is such a list of aspects that can be considered as barriers at the time of learning a second language and more specifically at the time of participating in speaking activities in class. The importance of participation in speaking activities is emphasized by many researchers but can culture affect the process of learning acquisition and more precisely the process of participation in speaking activities in class?

This research has as a main goal to find out the way that culture can affect positively or negatively in the participation of students in speaking activities performed during in-class activities. But, first of all, it is necessary to know the meaning of culture according to different points of view from some researchers.

“Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Tyler (British anthropologist) 1870.”

“Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves.” Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952.

## Can culture influence on the English Language Learning?

English language learning and teaching involves more factors than cognitive functioning or phonetic development. Cultural influence of both the native and target cultures impact learning styles, instruction approached and language skills such as listening or speaking. In the 1990s, researchers, Michael Byram and Carol Morgan published a report that asserted the importance of recognizing the learner's cultural background as well as the culture of the target language.

Hughes (2002) stated that the features of spoken language comprise a structural level and a discourse, or global level. Structural level is related to linguistic structure, such as vocabulary and grammar, while discourse level is concerned with how spoken language operates and is influenced from the global perspective.

As individuals that live in a complex and competitive society, people have to be prepared to face up any circumstance in life and since they belong to that society, it is required to prepare professionals with evidence of preparation but not just a preparation that requires a short overview of the world but a preparation to face up any cultural and language barrier. So, it means that this society requires professionals that can manage two or three languages among other aspects in order to get into that competitive society. It is important to mention that each individual has a different cultural background and it is also important to recognize that not everyone will act the same under any circumstance in life. Culture, life style, values, family background, and others play an important role at the time of choosing a major to become a professional.

Adolfo Díaz Martín, "El contexto socio-cultural del alumno y sus consecuencias tanto en el proceso de enseñanza como aprendizaje", Enero 2011. He mentions many aspects that are important at the time of the learning process. He considers that at the time to start working in the teaching area it is important to keep in mind that, as educators, there are many aspects that cannot be taking out as: socio-cultural context of the learner, behavior, interests, motivation, family status, among others. To know these aspects facilitates educators to prepare the different tools to put into practice at the time of teaching

so that students can receive a meaningful and significant instruction. He also mentions that cultural context affects positively the expectations proposed and to develop along a determined term.

Since knowing the cultural context of the individuals, objectives and goals are easier to accomplish because the development of the learners is according to the level they have. Martin also mentions that at the time to accomplish or to develop a relationship with the activities teaching-learning, it is necessary that these activities can be elaborated based on the real life of the learners so that they can work and develop those activities in the classroom freely, secure and comfortable because this represents a practice that is experienced and based in their daily life activities.

Global learners is what society requires as Timmis mentioned: “English language education plays an especially important role in molding global learners. We need global learners who possess the knowledge, skills, and attitude needed to critically evaluate and understand the world around them. They need to appreciate cultural differences and rely on this knowledge when participating in this multicultural, inter independent world. Strong support comes from a survey by Timmis (2002), in which the majority of the learners and the teachers of English from a large range of countries express a desire to speak English according to the native speaker norms, however the survey also demonstrated a wish to retain the aspects of their own culture” (Timmis 2002, 242).

### ***2.5 Factors that affect directly the participation in speaking activities in class***

After presenting the different problems that can affect positively or negatively the oral participation in speaking activities in class, the importance of presenting factors that affect directly the participation in speaking activities is a necessity since the oral production is a key factor and predominately at the time of communicating, interacting, sharing ideas, thoughts, beliefs according to the environment that surrounds an individual.

As it was mentioned before, the process of oral participation in speaking activities is determinant at the time of learning a new language but this process is being affected and the most common factors according to some researchers are: fear to participate in the class, fear of critics, murmurs, lack of new vocabulary, etc.

Fassinger (1995) in one of his research works wonders why the majority of the students in class do not participate in speaking activities. Students prefer to remain silent rather than participating actively. He mentions in his research that students consider themselves as shy persons, they participate if they are pushed, they consider that if they make a mistake classmates will laugh at them, etc. He mentions that there are 7 categories that affect the participation in class, but only 5 of them will be taken as the most important for this research. These are:

1. Personality: according to Fassinger, many students consider themselves as introverted so that being exposed to public is not what they prefer during the class.
2. Fear of making mistakes or fear to their classmates' opinions. (Murmurs and critics). In this category, Fassinger mentions what students say: "I do not participate because I feel afraid of making mistakes", "I do not want to hear a bad comment from my classmates or teacher", "I just participate when I am sure about my answer", "I do not want to make a ridiculous participation in front of my classmates or teacher because they will critique my participation."
3. Lack of previous preparation for the class: Fassinger mentions that lack of previous preparation for the next class justifies the poor participation from the students because this will have as a result students' silence. According to Fassinger students say: "I do not participate because I have not read the material yet", "I do not want to read the material" (these are excuses so that participation does not take place).
4. Lack of interest in a certain topic. Students consider this as an excuse for not participating in the class activities. According to Fassinger students say: "I am not interested in the topic", "I do not understand the topic that much", and "I feel bored with the topic".

5. Difficulties expressing ideas. Fassinger points out that students do not know how to express themselves. Students say: “I do not participate because I cannot express my ideas clearly”, “because it’s difficult to express my own ideas”, “I do not know how to express what I want to say.”

As Fassinger mentions, these categories are the most common scenarios that teachers have to deal with at the time of promoting oral participation in speaking activities. Students do not want to participate and the passive role is strongly present at the time of participating. These categories described are essentially important to recognize so that teachers can start putting into practice different strategies in which the oral participation in speaking activities can be developed to have active learners.

Another aspect that affects the oral participation in speaking activities, according to LirisLafont Mendoza in her research “Study of factors that affect oral participation in students of 6<sup>th</sup> grade at MaríaAuxiliadora School in Sahagún Córdoba” is the role that the teacher may have in the class during certain activities; in this case, during the development of speaking activities. She mentions that in the teacher’s effort to promote oral participation in speaking activities, the role of the teacher may affect students’ participation since teachers have to deal with academic high grades, good development of the students, meaningful learning and accurate production of the skills in this case, oral skill. The participation of the teacher may affect, as Mendoza mentions, “inside the classroom as language teachers, we have to deal with different types of situations or aspects like academic, affective, psychological among others; and we have to provide students appropriate situations that help them to develop their communicative abilities.”

Lundeberg and Moch (1995) pointed out that “if there are no threatened scenarios in which the doubt and errors are accepted, students will be able to participate and to work cooperating.” Lundeberg and Moch consider that an environment where errors and mistakes are allowed promote the active participating in any activity in the class and not an environment where making mistakes represents a punishment for students or any critic about the development of the student since errors are allowed.



After considering the information given by the last researchers mentioned above, it is important to mention that the role of the teacher is crucially important. Teachers need to create situations where students get achieved by input from the teacher. Teachers need to create situations where students get the chance to speak and to communicate with each other. Speaking activities in the classroom are an important part of the teaching area since those activities help students to develop their language and fluency when talking.

Penny Ur argues that activities that develop learners' speaking skills are an important part of a language course. Researches have shown that if a teacher varies activities, tasks, and materials and motivates students before starting activities the interest will rise. Lightbown P. and Spada N. 2003, p.64-65. Teachers have to prepare students with enough strategies to face the real world but they have to be aware that everything that they are going to put into practice must be assimilated correctly by the students and not only with the purpose of covering what has been planned or specified in the curricula but there must be meaningful learning and accurate production of what has been studied.

## ***2.6 Results of critics, murmurs, mockery, etc., in students' oral development***

Language is a system for communication and therefore goals for the English courses obviously concern communication skills. Oral communication, especially, is a big part of our everyday life and nowadays it is not unusual to hear a person speaking several different languages. However, in most cases, we feel most comfortable with speaking our mother tongue since it is the language we have learned naturally. But, when students are learning a new language, it is necessary to participate in activities which are going to help the development of the speaking skill. Since communicating in our mother tongue is easier, the purpose of educators is to promote the target language and to practice it as if the whole class is using their mother tongue. To have the whole class participating voluntarily in each oral activity in class has become a difficult task for educators because there are factors that are blocking students in this important part of the learning process. The factors that have been mentioned before in this research about critics, murmurs, fear of participation, etc., are factors that affect students' development directly. Unfortunately, the results of these

negative factors result into anxiety, fear of participation, insecurity, etc., in students' oral development.

When looking up the word anxiety, it is described as "An abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as swearing, tension, increased pulse, etc.), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it". According to Britannica dictionary.

According to Margareta Lanerfeldt, anxiety is explained as a sort of fear that is manifested by visual signs like irregular heartbeat, perspiration, stumbling, etc. She has therefore interpreted the word speaking anxiety as a fear of expressing oneself orally which can be recognized by the physiological signs mentioned above. It is most likely that these signs can obstruct and inhibit one's ability to speak since a person who experiences that kind of anxiety will not be able to focus on the speaking process.

Speech therapist Margareta Lanerfeldt also describes speaking anxiety as something that has a great impact on one's self-confidence since it often makes one experience failure when not being able to speak out and show what one knows. Irregular heartbeat, perspiration, stumbling and an inability to act are a few symptoms that block one's capacity to act and speak. Lanerfeldt explains that this issue often turns into a vicious circle because one bad experience from speaking often becomes a reminder when the next opportunity arises. If a student with speaking anxiety experiences failure, he or she will rather remain quiet than taking the risk of failing again. This situation drags them into a silence that becomes more and more difficult to break since it contributes to a role as "the quiet one" in class. Speaking anxiety creates a low self-confidence which makes students remain quiet in all situations, even if they have the capacity to express themselves and the knowledge that is worth hearing.

To continue talking about the different results of critics, murmurs, etc., in students, the fear of participation in speaking activities is another aspect that is taking place inside

the classrooms. MacIntyre and Gardner mention that the fear of participation brings as a result a negative perception of the oral participation so students prefer not to participate in order to avoid negative evaluations or negative situations inside the classroom. They also mention that people who fear negative evaluations rarely initiate conversations or participation in speaking activities and if students participate they do it minimally. Ely, 1986, also mentions that language students who experience this anxiety (fear to participate) tend to sit passively in the classroom, avoiding activities that could increase their language skills and may even avoid class entirely.

Gregersen, 1999/2000, mentions that the different activities that teachers conduct inside the classroom to develop the oral performance of students may create this fear of participation. He describes that students could display a frustration toward certain evaluations in front of the whole class since they express their horror about waiting for criticisms and often compared negatively with their peers. Gregersen considers these students as anxious students that have no confidence in pronunciation and intonation, and they are afraid of “being laughed at”. Gregersen mentions what students say literally when having this fear. A student says: “I am so bothered about speaking in front of class and feel shameful because I sense that everybody is looking at me. I’m looking like fool. Although sometimes I know what I am thinking is not the case.” The fear of participation is a negative factor as a result of the critic, murmur, and mockery from students to their peers.

The problem of insecurity results as the way that critics, murmurs, mockery, etc., come to affect students’ oral participation. Reitzel and Lucas (in Aida, 1994: 157) give the support that people who experience anxiety when participating in speaking activities may reluctance in communicating with other people or in expressing themselves in a foreign language in which they do not have a full competence. This comes to show that insecurity is present in students’ participation because their self- esteem is affected. The problem of insecurity develops in students a desire to hide themselves in the back rows and to avoid any possible involvement in those class activities which may put the students “on the spot” in front of their peers (Daly 1997 p.40).

The insecurity in students at the time of participating in speaking activities creates students that are unwilling to talk in front of others and also they tend to wait until the class finishes to ask a question rather than raising their hand to participate or ask a question. According to Ely (1986), the “can do” attitude, the risk taking attitude in using the L2 must be promoted in the class by the teacher.

Unfortunately, there are many aspects affecting the oral participation in speaking activities but there are also many strategies that can be used to avoid those aspects so that voluntarily participation takes place at the time of participating in speaking activities.

### **III. TYPE OF STUDY**

According to Saunders et al, exploratory research, as the name states, intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. It is conducted in order to determine the nature of the problem, exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps us to have a better understanding of the problem. Saunders et al. (2007, p.134) warn that when conducting exploratory research, the researcher ought to be willing to change his/her direction as a result of revelation of new data and new insights.

The development of this research was by using a mix approach research considering the characteristics and the analyses of data to answer the different questions of this research and to represent numerical results in the countdown of statistic answers for the better understanding and interpretation of accurate results. On the other hand, the qualitative approach was used to collect data with no numerical results but information about important observations and its interpretation taking into account at the same time its flexibility when showing events considering the answers and theory.

The purpose of using a mix approach was to gather information in order to be analyzed from both sides, taking into account the quantitative approach as well as the qualitative approach to determine numerical results and to describe the information of a

specific result. Moreover, the mix approach gave the researchers the opportunity to make a mixture of analysis to combine different information to triangulate different alternatives of investigation and at the same time different alternatives to explain the results for a better comprehension and interpretation of the phenomena.

#### **IV. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Descriptive or exploratory studies are used when little is known about a particular phenomenon. The researcher observes, describes, and documents various aspects of a phenomena. There is no manipulation of variables or search for cause or effect related to the phenomena. Valmi D. Sousa; Martha Driessnack; Isabel Amelia Costa Mendes (2007).

According to Creswell (1994) quantitative research is “a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods.” Therefore, it will be useful to gather and analyze the data in a numerical way where the team needs to find answers and explain the problematic through the use of statistic in order to establish with precision the behavior of the selected population.

#### **V. POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

##### ***a. Population***

This research was applied to four groups of students of Intensive Advanced English I at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

##### ***b. Sample***

The total universe involved in this research process were students from the Intensive Advanced English I at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador

during the year 2014. Taking into account this universe, there was a selection of a good and representative sample of sixty students in total from the population, fifteen students per each group making a total of the sample required for this research.

## **VI. DATA GATHERING PROCESS**

### ***a. Research instruments***

In this part of the research, it is described the instruments which were used to collect the necessary data. Since, the study in this research is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative, the necessity of making use of an observation, a questionnaire and an interview aroused in order to collect appropriate information.

The observation was carried out to achieve good results in this research with the purpose to observe the group of students and their behavior in that kind of activities. The survey technique was conducted in order to obtain quantitative data through a questionnaire and it was administered to students of English Advanced I of the Foreign Language Department.

The interview carried out to Advanced English teachers and to an anthropologist had the purpose to give more ideas and opinions about the influence of culture in oral in-class participation of the population in this study. Those interviews were possible using an interview guide leading the research to get the best results.

### ***b. Data gathering plan***

In order to find out if the questions were understandable and easy to answer, there was a pilot test of the questionnaire carried out to 10 students of the population. The instrument was easy to understand according to the population taken for the pilot test, they did not find any difficulty when answering all the items.

There was a checklist created specifically for observing each class. The checklist was structured by the researchers before the observation and it had as a purpose to check students' behavior and types of oral activities carried out in in-class by the teacher.

There was a semi-structured interview to the Intensive Advanced English teachers so that researchers had a better idea about how teacher manages the oral participation in speaking activities and how students respond to those activities.

There was also an interview to an anthropologist to know her point of view about Salvadorian culture, culture in general, behavior of students during an English class, and other aspects to clarify concepts about idiosyncrasy of a determined culture.

## **VII. DATA ANALYSIS**

### ***a. Data base***

The instrument was administrated to 60 students of Intensive Advanced English I courses of the University of El Salvador. The results were counted to determine the number of students' answers that match. After that, the information was transformed into codes to use a special program for statistics.

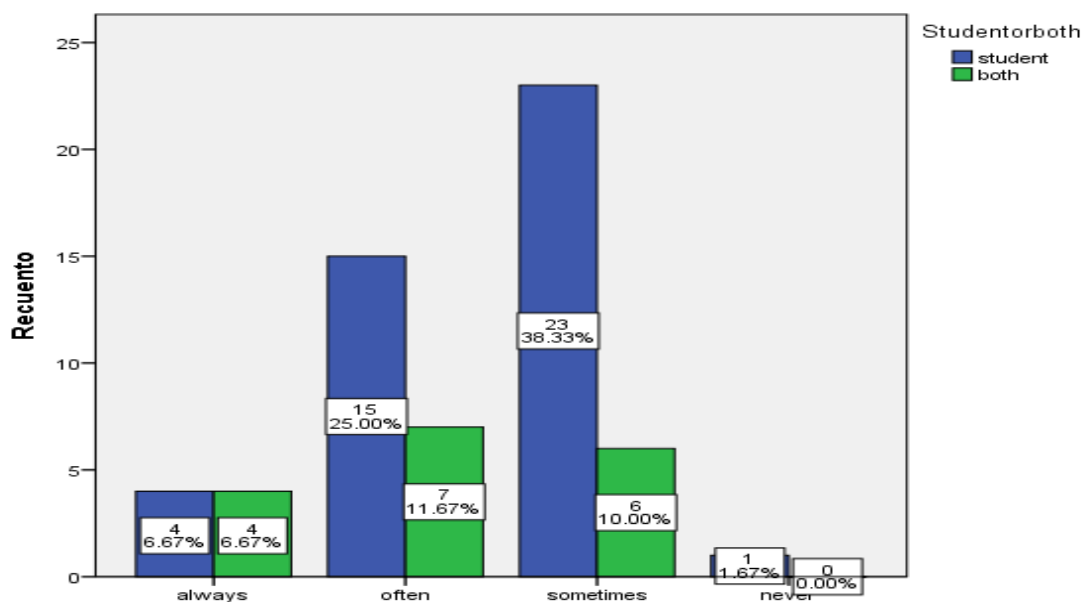
### ***b. Statistical procedure***

The simple statistical procedure was applied to analyze the data collected. The measure of the results are presented in bar chart graphics showing the students' opinion about the topic and behavior. To develop this procedure, the data was processed using the "SPSS" program. This program was useful to analyze and interpret the information gathered. In this part of the process is presented the univariate analysis where each question is analyzed separately.

*c. Data analysis*

*Univariate.*

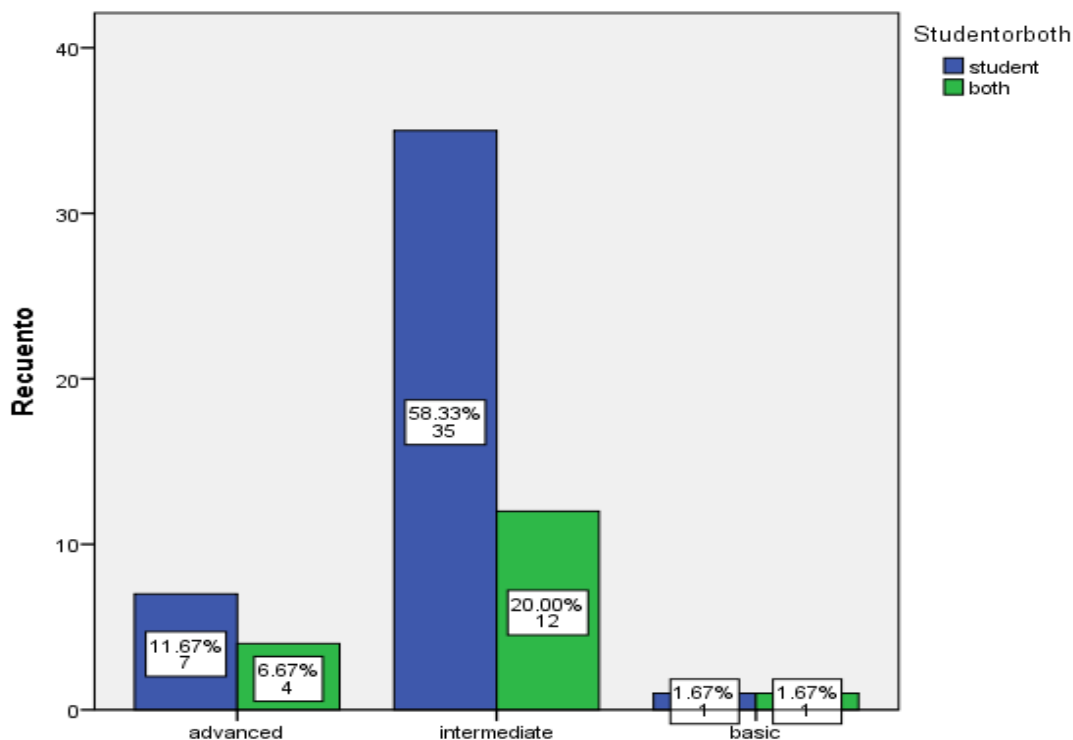
**1. To what extent do you participate in class during speaking activities?**



In this graphic, 8 of the students answered that they always participate in speaking activities while 22 of them said that they often participate in class. 29 of the students sometimes participate and 1 student never participate in class. These results show that the class is not motivated to participate in speaking activities even though the teacher prepares these activities so that students can practice their oral skill and at the same time they reinforce any grammatical structure that is not practiced correctly.



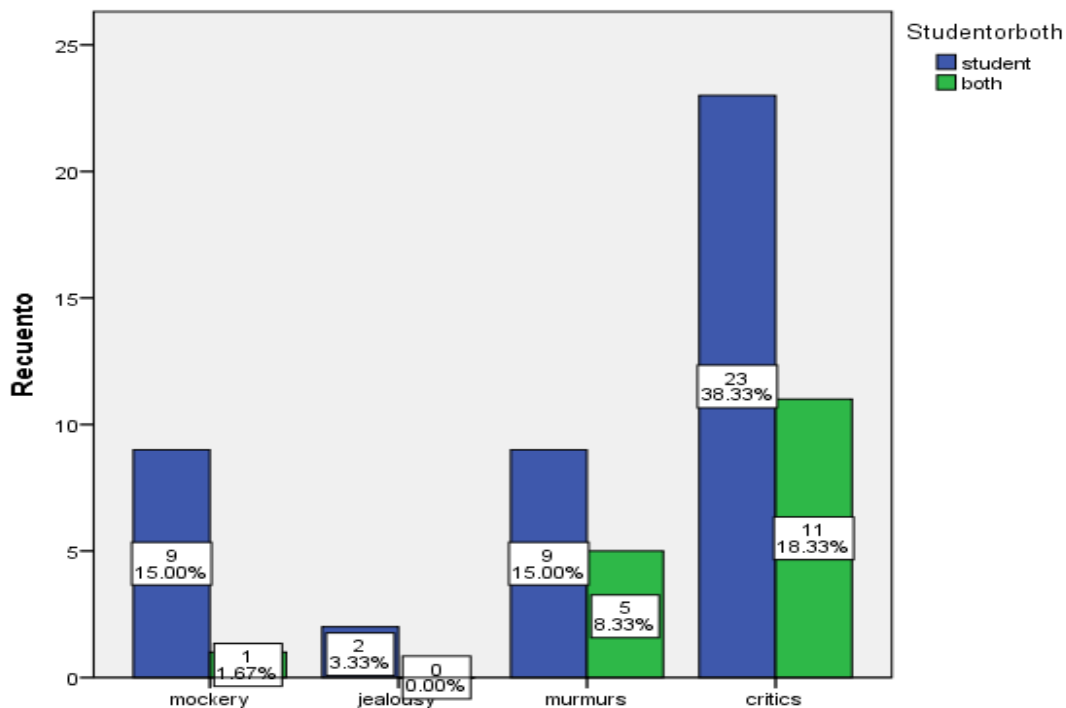
## 2. What level of English do you consider you have?



The results of this graphic show that 11 students consider their English is ADVANCED, 47 consider that their English is INTERMEDIATE and 2 students consider that their English is BASIC. According to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), students who are taking ADVANCED ENGLISH are able to understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning and they should express themselves fluently and spontaneously for social, academic and professional purposes. These are the objectives for Advanced English students but in this case, the results show that students are not prepared to fulfill these objectives. 47 of the students answered that their level of English is Intermediate, this represents more than a half of the students who answered the questionnaire (47 students from 60 students) and 2 of the students said that they have a basic level of English. The fact in this result is interesting since the students were taking advanced English and even though students were in the advanced level, they considered that their level of English corresponds to the intermediate level. On the other hand, only 11 students answered that their level of English is advanced. There can be

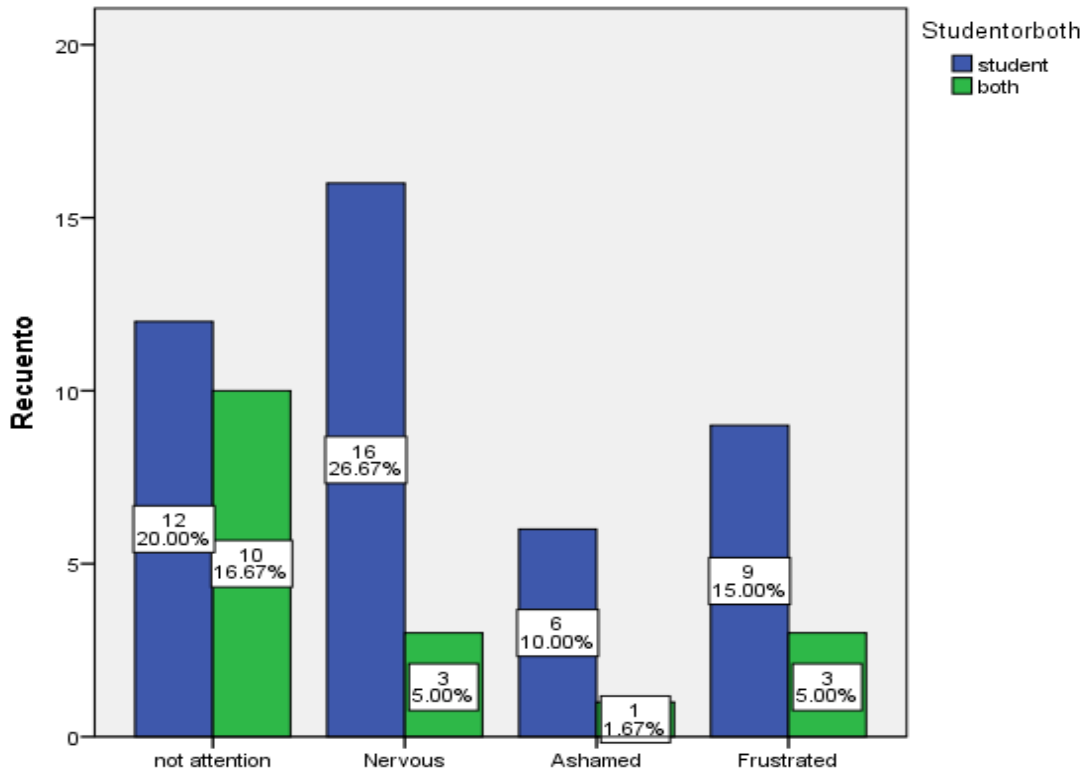
several factors that influence students to considerate that their level of English corresponds to the intermediate level. At the time of analyzing chart number 8, there is a relation between the fact that the majority of the students consider they have an intermediate English level and the fact that students somehow accept that there is a problem of lack of vocabulary in their development of the oral skill when participating in speaking activities.

### 3. What of those factors limit your participation in class during speaking activities?



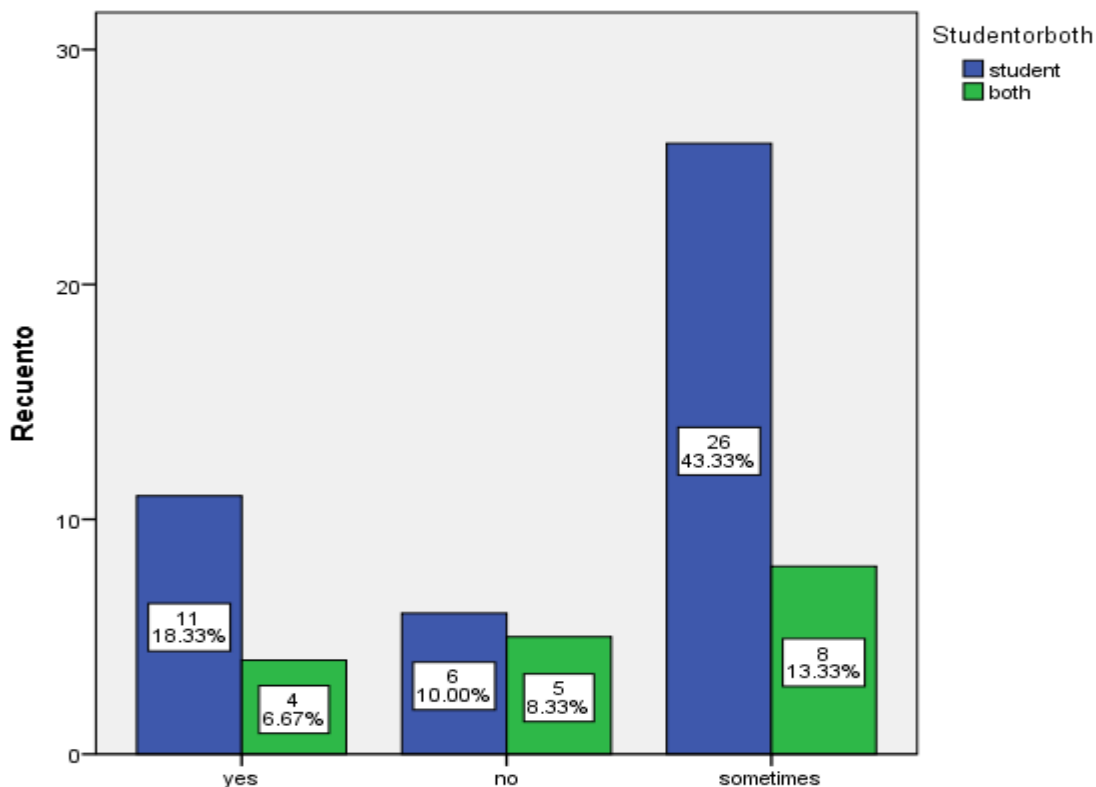
In this graphic, 10 students consider that mockery limits their participation in speaking activities, 2 students consider that jealousy, 14 consider that murmurs and 34 students consider that critics is a factor that limits their participation in speaking activities. These results show that critics is the factor that the majority of the students consider as a limitation for their participation but when the results of chart number 4 are shown, there is a contradiction in students' answers because in chart 4 students answered that they do not pay attention to their classmates' critics. The graphic 4 shows 22 students that do not pay attention to the critics at the time of participating in speaking activities something that contradicts what the same students answered in graphic 3 that critics is a factor that limit their participation in speaking activities (34 students from 60).

**4. How do you feel when your classmates criticize your speaking whenever you participate in any speaking activities?**



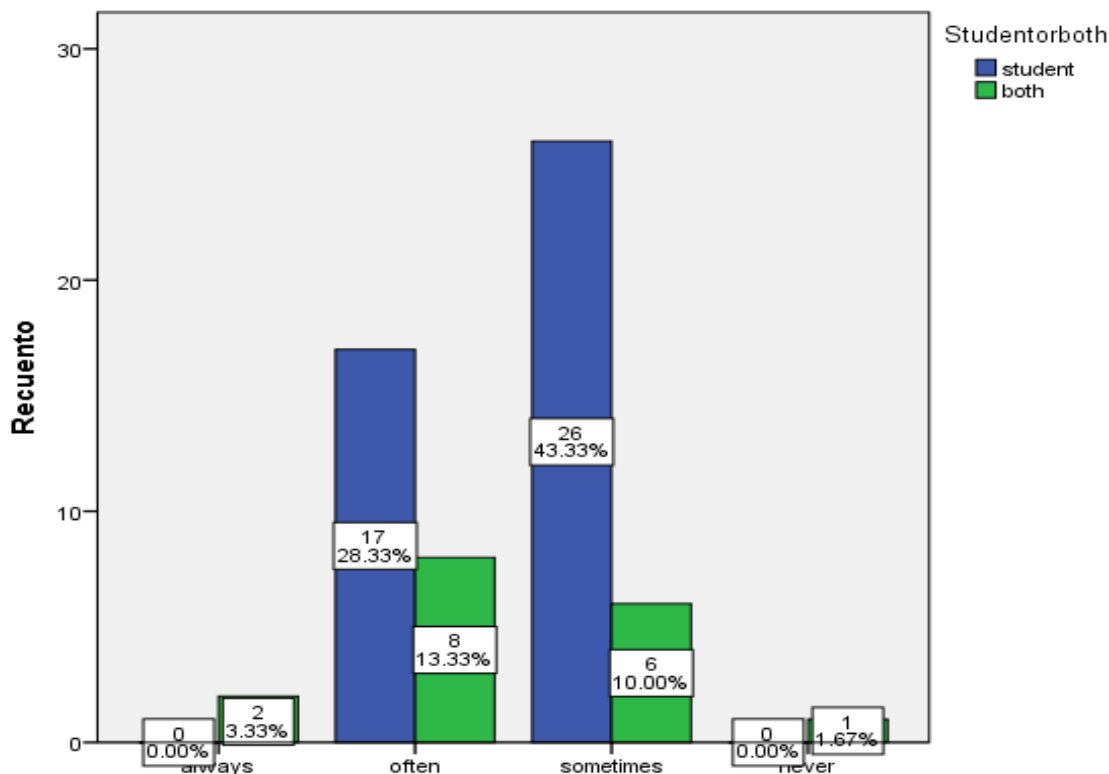
In this graphic, 22 students do not pay attention to their classmates' critics, 19 feel nervous, 7 feel ashamed and 12 feel frustrated because of the critics of their classmates when participating in speaking activities. When students answer that they feel nervous, ashamed and frustrated because of their classmates' critics, this can be an answer to the results shown in chart 1 where students answer that they often and sometimes participate in oral speaking activities. Students prefer not to participate instead of feeling nervous, ashamed or frustrated. The results in graphic 4 could be the reason why 8 of the students always participate in in-class speaking activities. There is also a contradiction in students' answers comparing graphic 1 and 4 because if students do not pay attention to their classmates' critics (as it is shown in graphic 4), the majority of the students would have answered in chart 1 that they always participate in in-class speaking activities.

## 5. Do classmates' murmurs limit your participation in in-class speaking activities?



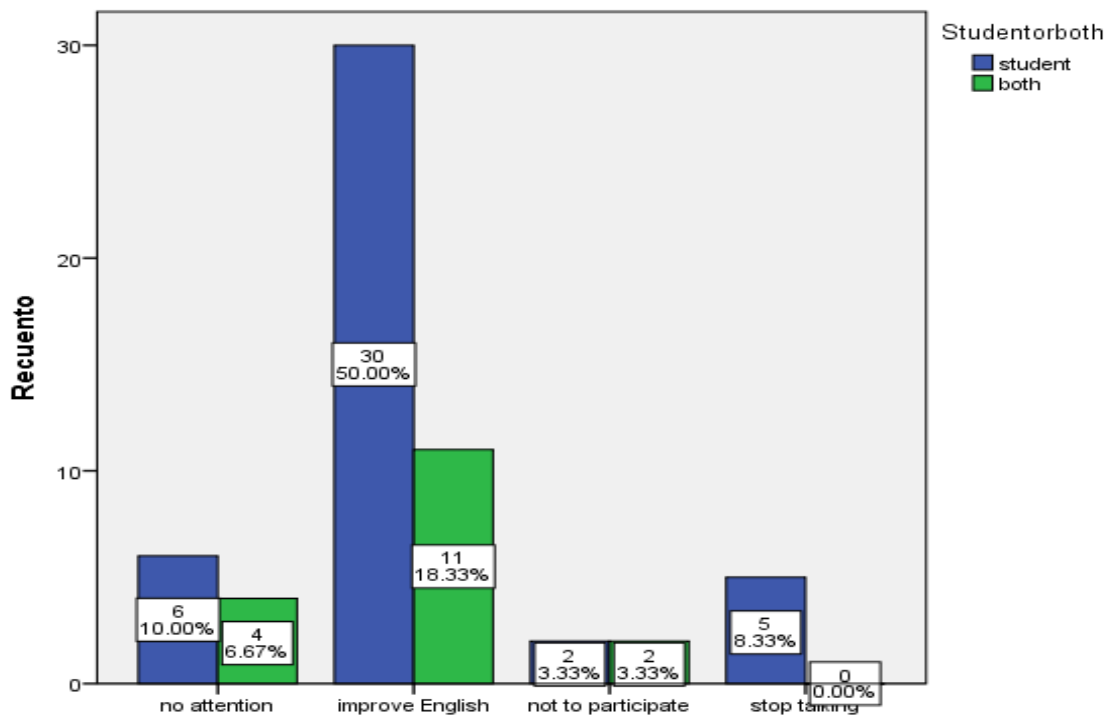
On graphic number 5, 15 students consider that classmates' murmurs limit their participation in in-class speaking activities, 11 consider that murmurs do not limit their participation while 34 students consider that classmates' murmurs sometimes limit their participation. When making a relation between graphic 3 and 5, there is a contradiction since in this question 34 students answered that murmurs sometimes limit their participation while in chart 3, 14 students answered that murmurs limit their participation. There should be concordance in the answers of these two questions since they are similar but on graphic 3, 34 students answered that critics is the factor that limit their participation. Unfortunately, students consider that it is better to limit their participation rather than to participate actively in class taking into account that people learn from their mistakes. For students, it is more important what their classmates and teacher can say about their participation rather than participating to manage and better a skill.

**6. Are you a risk taker when participating in speaking activities even though you can make mistakes?**



According to the results shown in this graphic, 2 of students are risk takers during speaking activities even though they will make mistake, 25 of them said that they often are risk takers in speaking activities, 32 of the students sometimes act as risk takers participating in speaking activities and just 1 student never takes the risk to participate in speaking activities. According to these results, the majority of students consider that participating sometimes in speaking activities is very important even though they will make mistake in front of their partners, so that they decide to take the risk in order to practice and to learn. There is a relation between chart 6 and chart 1. In graphic 6, the majority of the students are sometimes risk takers because they sometimes participate in speaking activities as it is shown in chart 1 where 26 students from 60 answered that they sometimes participate in speaking activities. The students that consider themselves as risk takers are the ones that sometimes participate according to chart 1.

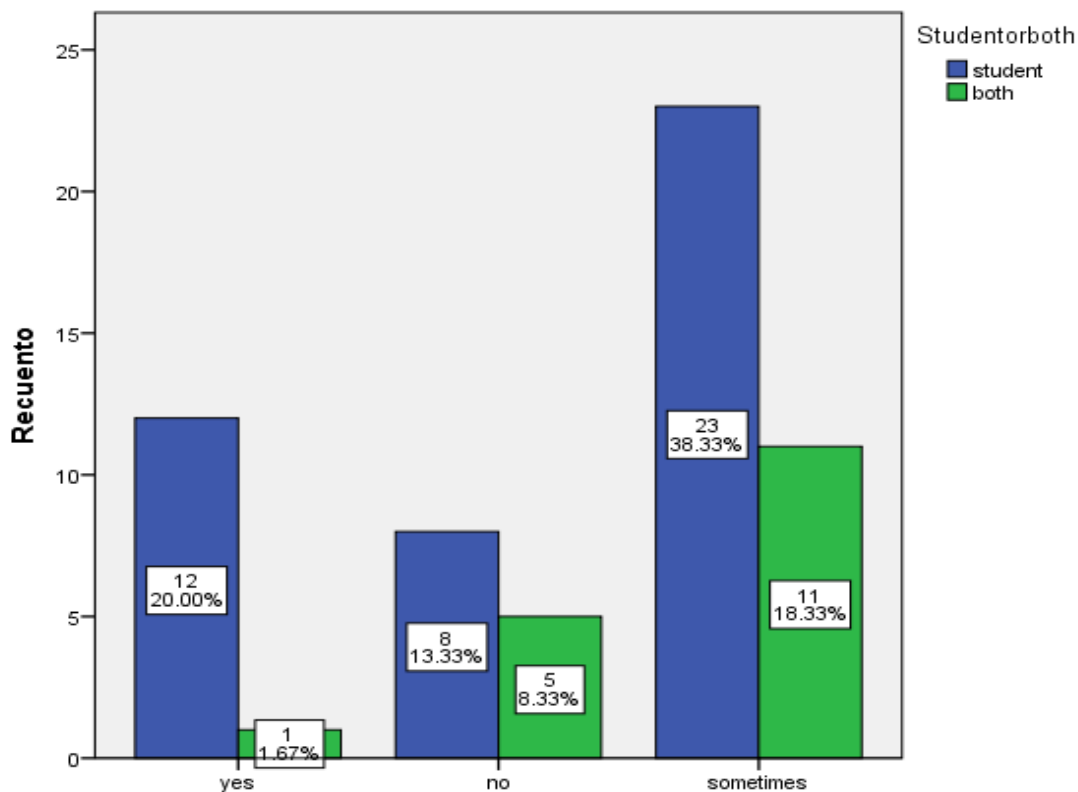
**7. When you listen to mockeries about mispronounced words, what attitude describes you the most?**



In this graphic, 10 students answered that they do not pay attention to mockeries about mispronounced words at the time of participating in speaking activities, while 41 students answered that they improve their English as a result of listening to those mockeries. 4 students do not participate and 5 students consider that stop talking is the best attitude for them to avoid mockeries from their classmates. There is a contradiction when comparing results between graphics 1,3,5 and 7 because when analyzing the information given by the students in chart 1, the majority of the students answered that they sometimes participate in speaking activities and on graphics 3 and 5 they answered that sometimes critics and murmurs limit their participation. Taking into account these results, it is contradictory that students try to improve their English if they do not practice their English skill in speaking activities and at the same time having the results that factors like critics and murmurs are considered as limitations for their active participation in speaking

activities. There could be a probability that students prefer to practice their English outside the classroom where nobody critic their English.

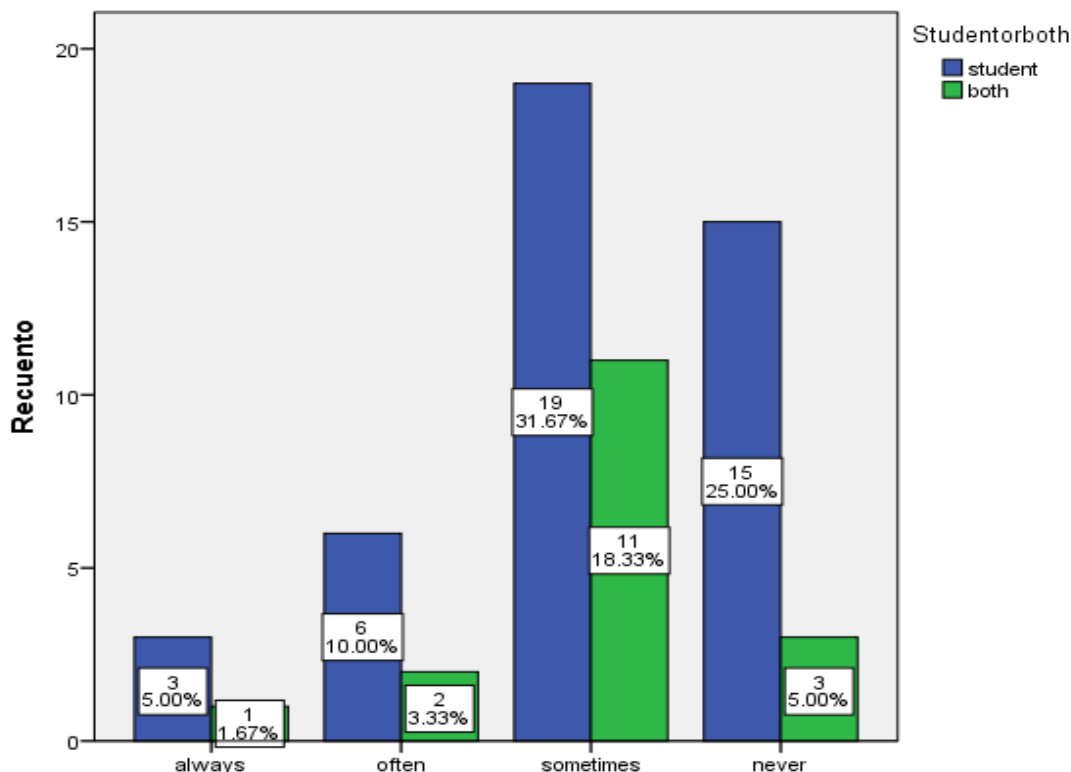
**8. Is there any mockery from your classmates when they realize about your lack of vocabulary?**



On graphic number 8, 13 students answered that there is mockery when the classmates realize the lack of vocabulary at the time of participating in speaking activities. The same number of students (13) answered that there is no mockery from their classmates and 34 students answered that sometimes there is mockery as a result of their lack of vocabulary. The answers for this question could be a key factor why students consider that their English corresponds to the intermediate level, as it is shown on graphic 2. The lack of vocabulary limits students' participation in speaking activities. Moreover, students somehow consider and accept that their intermediate level corresponds to the lack of vocabulary among other factors that limit their participation in speaking activities.



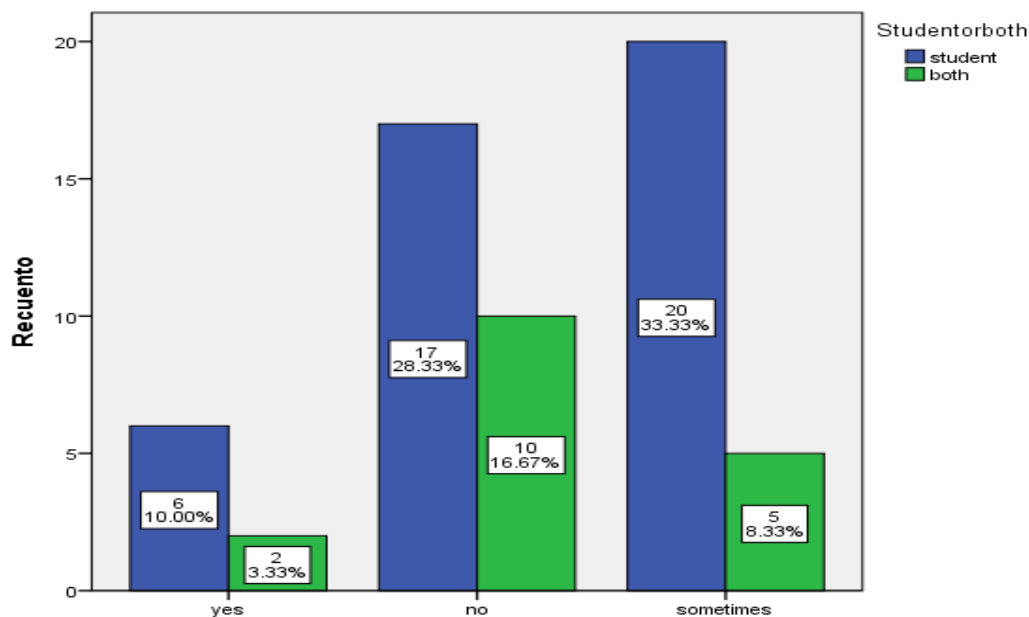
**9. When your classmates participate in speaking activities during the class, do you feel jealous about his/her fluent and accurate English?**



The chart shows that 4 of the students said that they always feel jealous about their classmates' fluency or accuracy in speaking activities, while 8 said that they often feel jealous in that situation. On the other hand, 30 of them said that they sometimes feel jealous about their partners and 18 said that they never feel jealous about their classmates' fluency and accuracy when they participate in class. As the graphic shows, the majority of students consider that they sometimes or never feel jealous about fluency and accuracy of their partners at the time of participating in speaking activities. On the other hand, few students consider that they always and often feel jealous. In most cases, the jealousy is a factor that influences or makes students to participate in order to be better than their classmates at the time to participate, but in this case, students are not pushed by their classmates' fluency or accuracy neither by the participation in speaking activities of each other as the graphic 10 shows, which is related with this graphic; Most of the students (27 said no and 25 sometimes) considered that their classmates are not jealous about their active participation

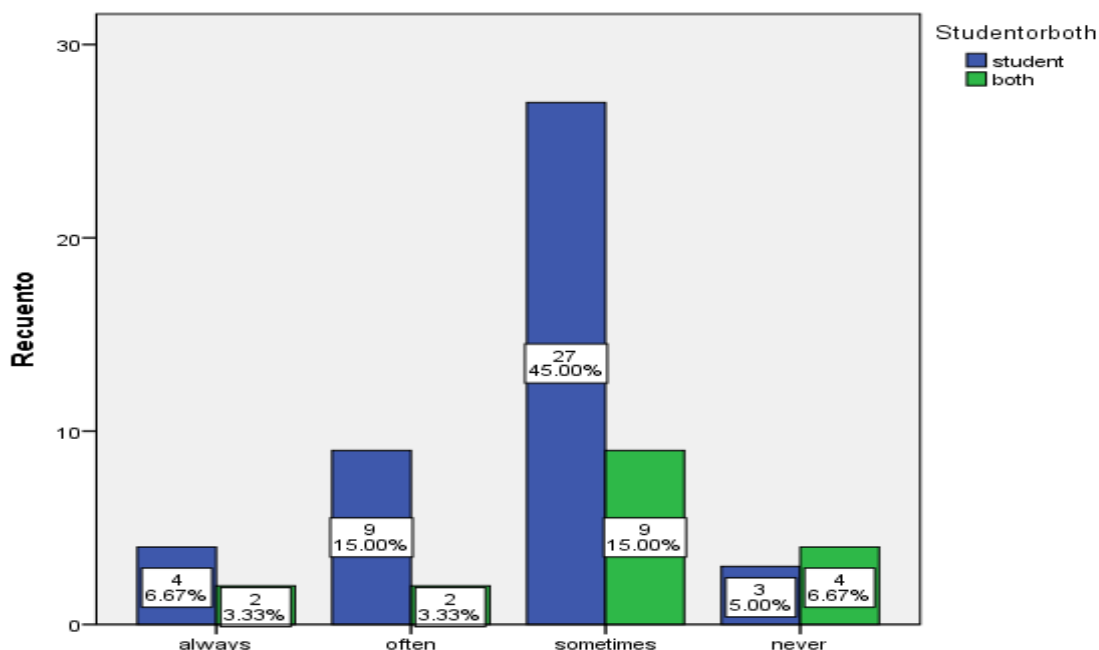
in speaking activities during the class. Nevertheless, it is considered that just 4 of 8 students in graphic 1 said that they always participate in speaking activities. It could be the same number of students who always are motivated to participate because they feel jealous about their classmates' fluent and accurate English considering that the other part of students are not motivated to participate.

**10. Do you consider that your classmates are jealous about your active participation in speaking activities?**



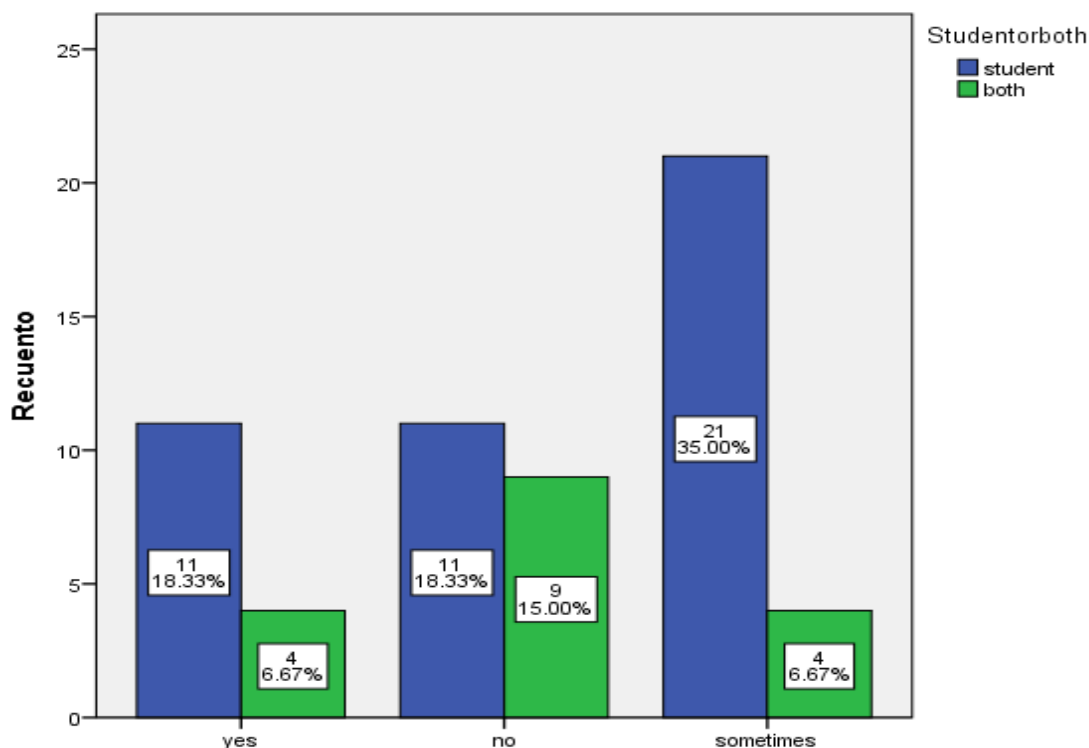
According to the results of this question, 8 of the participants consider their classmates are jealous about their active participation in speaking activities, 27 of them consider their classmates are not jealous about their participation and 25 of them said that their partners sometimes are jealous with their active participation in speaking activities. As a result, it is evident that the majority of students considered that their active participation in speaking activities does not provoke jealousy in their classmates. Nevertheless, few students assure their classmates are jealous about their active participation. In this case, it is necessary to take into account that the same students who consider their classmates of being jealous about their active participation will be the same students who always participate during speaking activities as the graphic 1 shows (8 always and 22 often participate), so, the other students as it is shown in graphic 1 (29 sometimes participate and 1 never participates) could be considered as the students that do not participate because they feel jealous but at the same time, there might be some other reasons. Even though in this graph 8 students considered that their classmates feel jealous about their active participation, there is a contradiction between this graphic and graphic 3 because the results show that just 2 students considered that the jealousy factor limits their participation.

**11. Are you afraid when the teacher asks you to participate in any speaking activity in front of the class?**



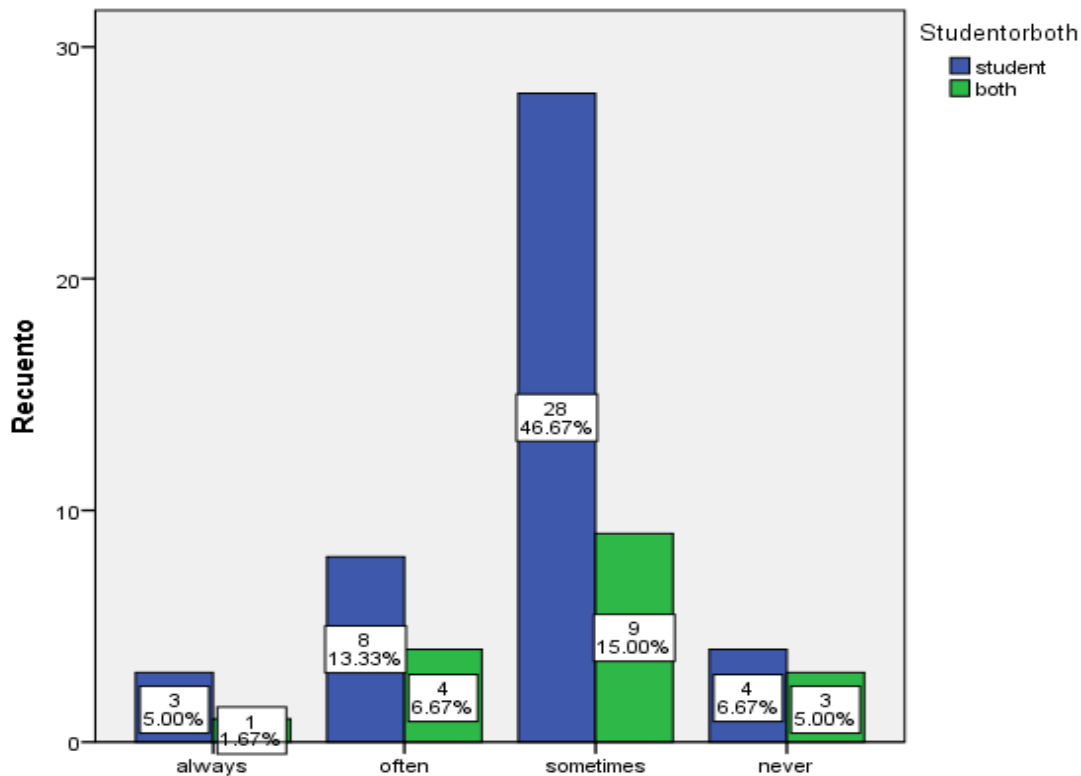
In this chart, 6 students said that they are always afraid when the teacher asks them to participate at any speaking activity in front of the class, 11 of them often feel afraid, 36 said that they sometimes are afraid when the teacher asks to participate in front of the class and 7 of the students said that they never are afraid when the teacher asks them to participate in front of the class. This result shows that the majority of students sometimes or often feel afraid when the teacher asks them to participate while few students assure that they always feel afraid. Even though, teachers prepare any activity to make students participate in front of the class, they not always have the confidence to practice their language during speaking activities in front of the class or they feel afraid to participate due to the fact that they fear to make mistakes as explained in the graphic 14 in which 20 students said that they fear to make mistakes. On the other hand, students feel uncomfortable when their participation is forced and they feel more afraid if they have to participate in front of the class. As the graphic 16 shows (21 in front of the class and 20 in oral evaluations) the majority of students considered that they feel frightened when they participate in front of the class during speaking activities, nevertheless, they feel more comfortable when they participate freely.

## 12. Does shyness represent a barrier to participate in any speaking activity?



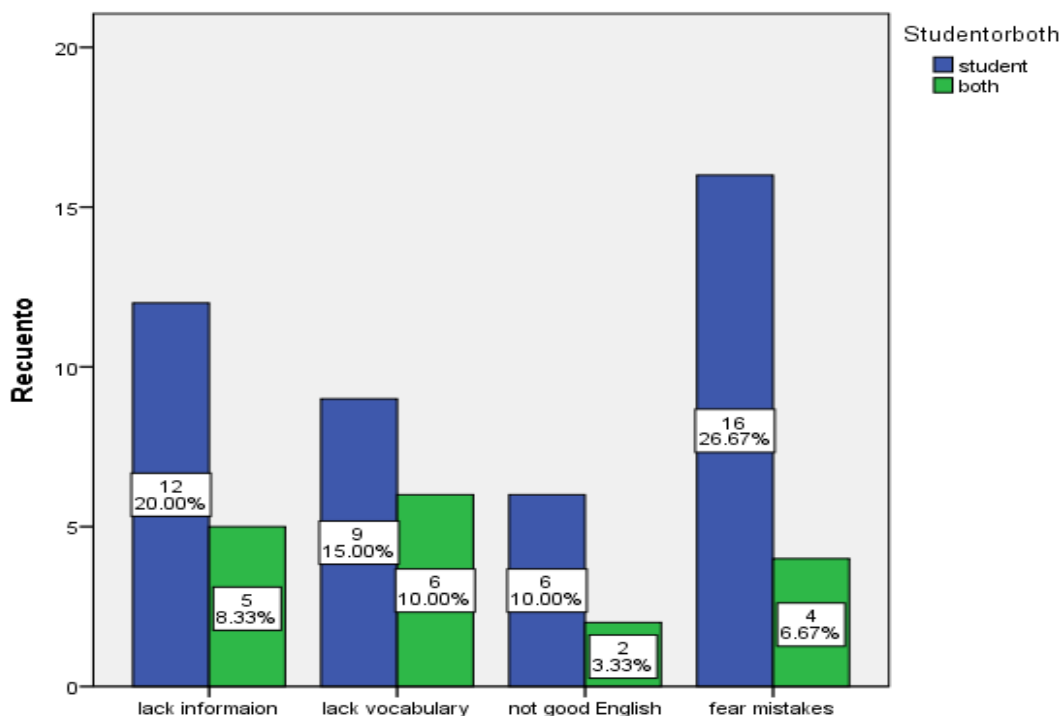
The results, obtained in this question, show that 15 of the students responded that shyness represents a barrier to participate in any speaking activity and 20 said that shyness is not a barrier to participate, while 25 of the students considered that shyness sometimes represent a barrier to participate in any speaking activity. Most of the time, shyness blocks students to talk in public, so, in this case the majority of students considered that this factor could influence in their participation. Even though, this graphic shows that less students said that shyness is not a barrier to participate, people most of the time become to be shy to participate when they are in an overcrowded group, the stress and pressure that too many people are listening to their participation makes students remain silent so that there is a contradiction between the answers in this graphic and graphic 15 in which 34 students considered that overcrowded groups influence over their participation, 17 students said that sometimes overcrowded groups influence in their participation.

### 13. Do you feel insecure to participate in speaking activities?



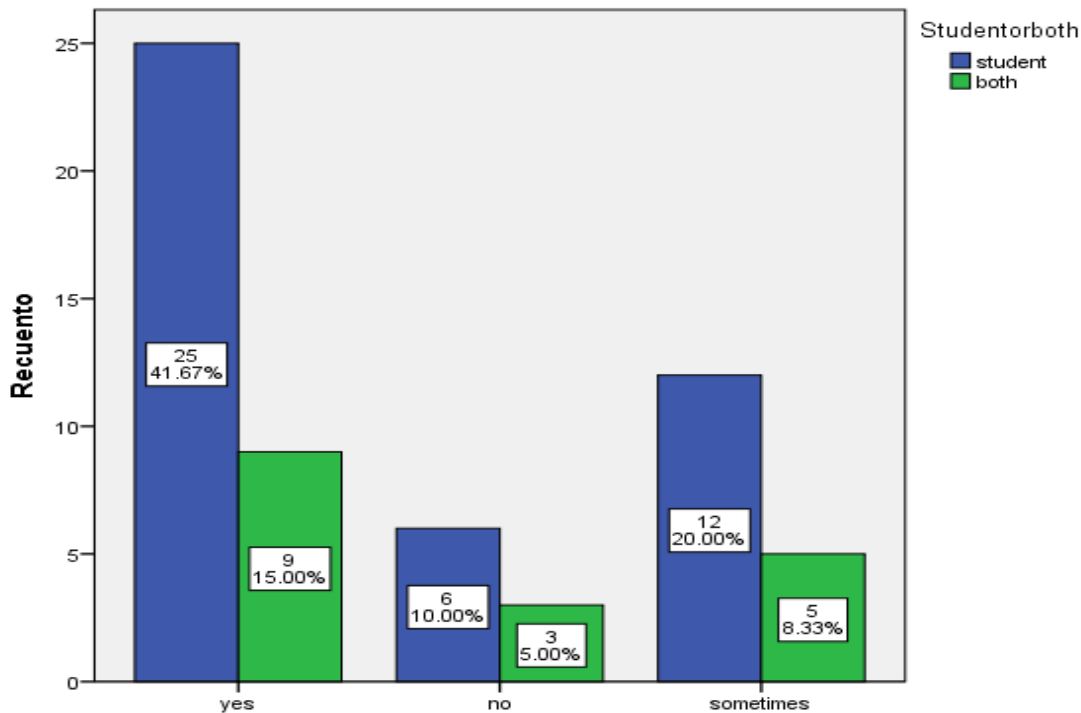
In this graphic, 4 said that they always feel insecure to participate in speaking activities, 12 of them considered that they often feel insecure to participate while the 37 said that they sometimes feel it when they participate and 7 said that they never feel insecure to participate in speaking activities. As the graphic presents, it means that the main part of students said that they sometimes, often or always feel insecure when they participate, nevertheless just few students said that they never feel insecure. It means, that the students in this course are being limited to participate during speaking activities by their insecurity at the time to express their ideas. It is evident in graphic 1 that just 8 students always participate and 12 of them often participate during speaking activities where the majority of them sometimes participate. It is clear, that the limitation of the students to participate could be their insecurity to make mistakes as the graphic 14 shows (20 students fear to make mistake).

**14. Choose the reason that makes you feel insecure at the time of participating in speaking activities.**



The graphic represents that 17 of students considered that lack of information about the topic makes them feel insecure at the time of participating in speaking activities, 15 of them considered that they have lack of vocabulary, while 8 students considered that they do not have good English. On the other hand, the majority of the students said that the main reason which makes them feel insecure is that they fear to make mistakes at the time to give their opinion or express their ideas. As this graphic shows, the majority of the students considered that fear to make a mistake is the main reason to feel insecure. Clearly, there are 20 of the students who said in graphic 13 (53 students out of 60 said that always, often or sometimes feel insecure) that considered that they fear to make a mistake in this graphic. Moreover, the other part of students who said that they feel insecure in graph 13 (33 out of 53 students) assure that other reasons lack of information about the topic, and lack of vocabulary, they do not have good English. In this case, even though the teacher tries to do different speaking activities, the insecurity factor and fear to make mistakes influences in great measurement students' participation.

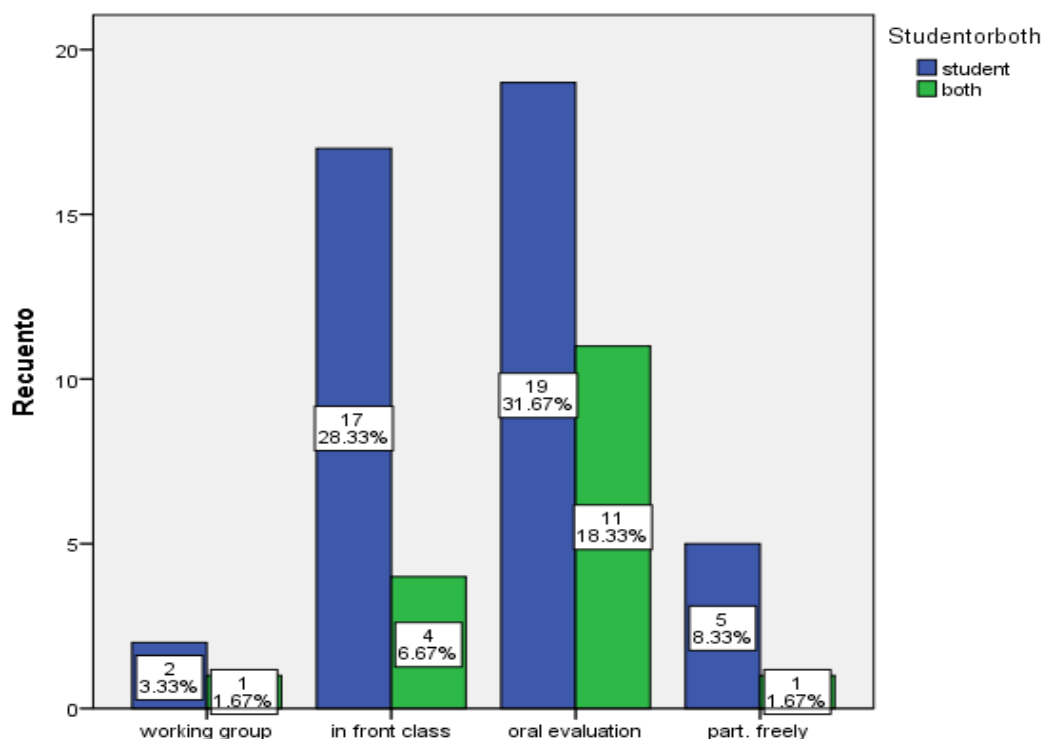
**15. Do you consider that overcrowded groups influence over your participation in in-class speaking activities?**



The graphic represents 34 of the students who considered that overcrowded groups influence over their participation in class, 9 of them said that overcrowded groups do not influence over their participation and 17 of them considered that the overcrowded groups sometimes influence over their participation in class speaking activities. Most of the time, students do not participate since they are a lot of students and they feel nervous or they are shy to express themselves. So that, this result demonstrates that students are not comfortable in an overcrowded group during speaking activities. It will demonstrate that students who sometimes or never participate as graphic 1 shows (29 sometimes, 1 never) are influenced negatively to feel afraid or shy when they participate in overcrowded groups during speaking. Moreover, according to graphic 3 (34 students) said that they tend to limit their participation by classmates' critics; in that way if there is an overcrowded group, the critics will increase when they fear to make mistakes as the graphic 14 shows (20 out of 60 students tend to fear to make mistakes during speaking activities).



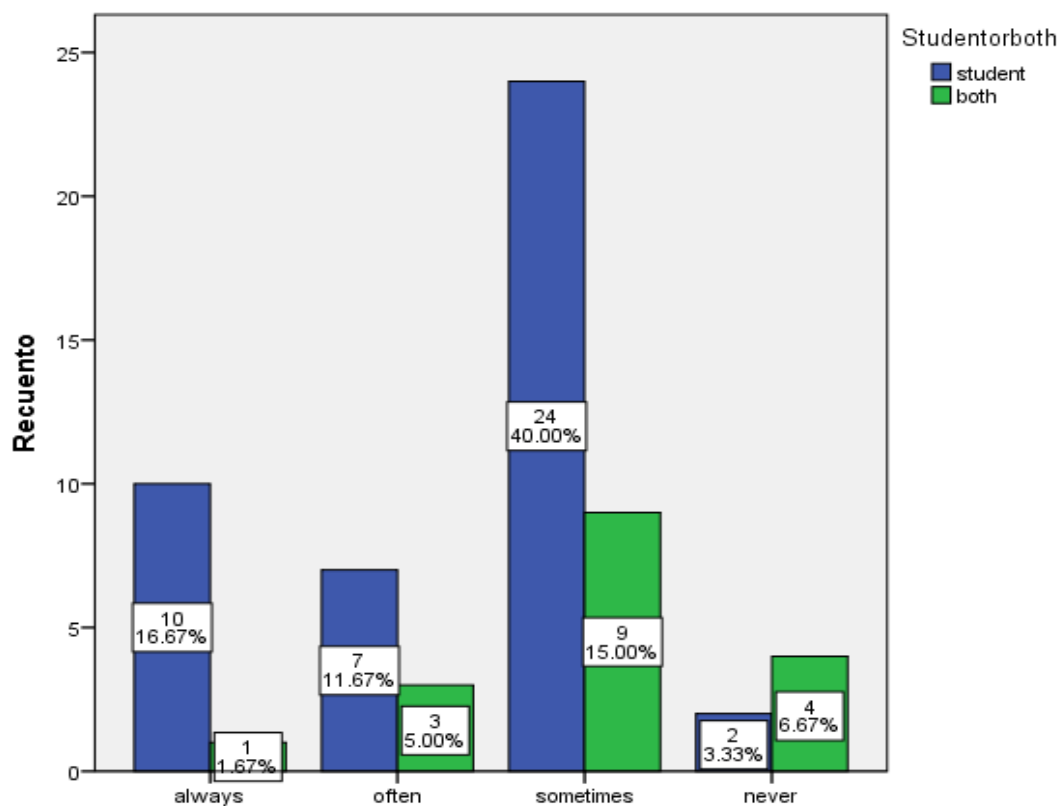
**16. In which situation do you feel more frightened at the time of participating in speaking activities?**



The results in this chart show 3 of the sample feel less frightened at the time of working in group, 21 of them are frightened when they are participating in front of the class, while 30 of the students said that they feel so when they have an oral evaluation and 6 said that they feel frightened when they participate freely. The oral communication is very important when someone is learning a language so that it is the way in which everyone communicates their ideas, in this case students said that they feel more frightened at the time of performing an oral evaluation or participating in front of the class. Even though the active participation is necessary in this level of the career, students exposed that they feel less frightened when they participate freely or when they work in group. The negative influence of critics as it is shown on graph 3 (34 said classmates' critics) becomes a factor which influences that students do not want to participate or feel afraid in oral evaluation and also in front of the class. Moreover, another influence is the overcrowded groups as this analysis shows in graphic 15 (34 students) said that overcrowded groups influence in their

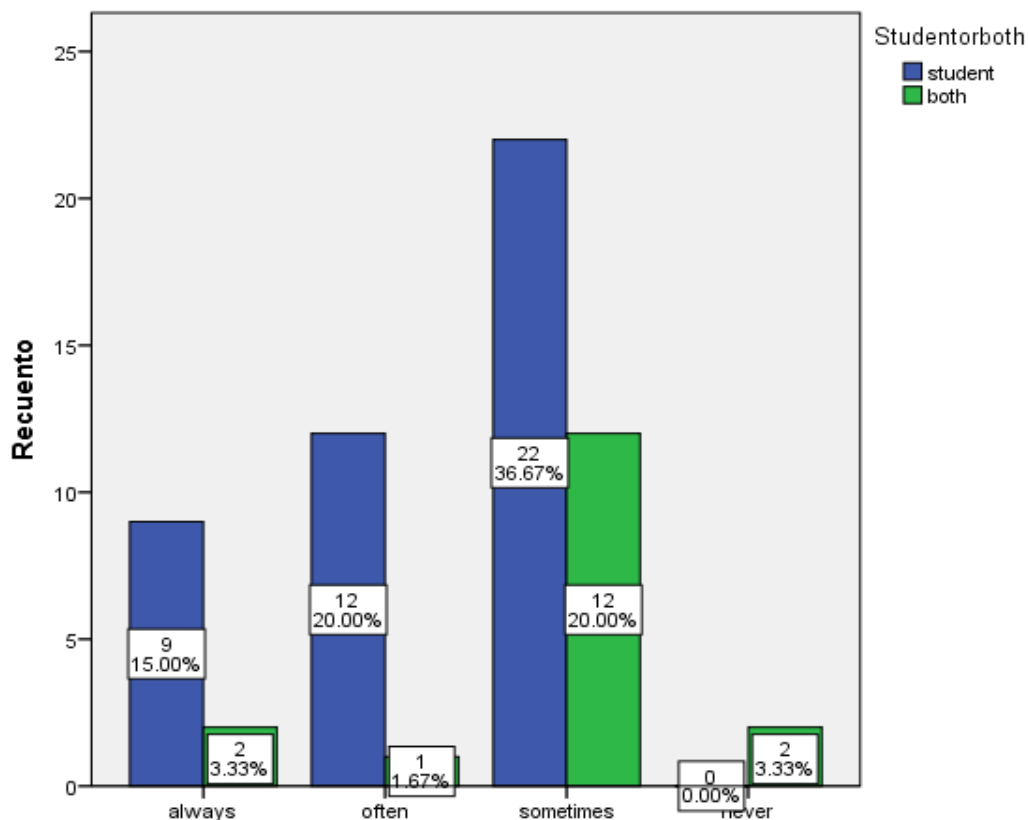
participation, so that, students have more limitation and feel uncomfortable at the time to participate in speaking activities.

**17. Are you anxious to know that the teacher will ask you to participate at any determined speaking activity?**



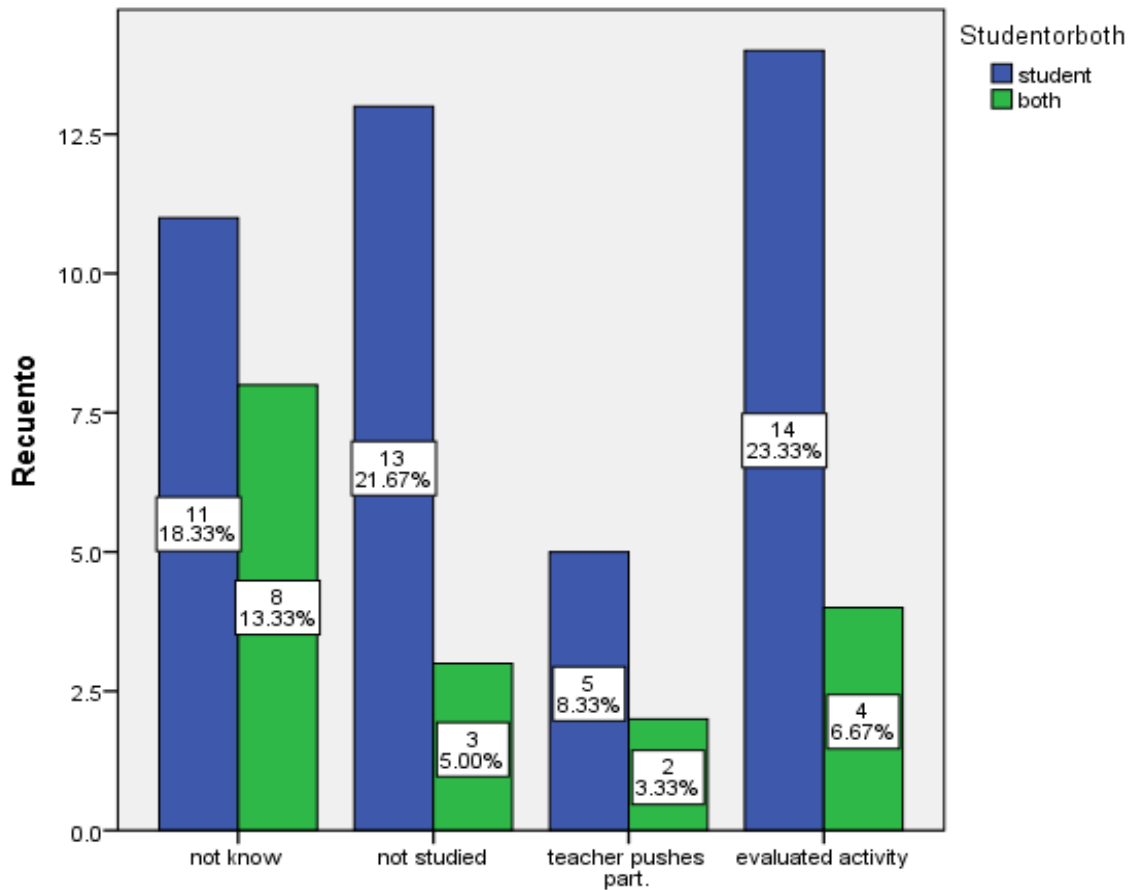
The result in this chart shows that 11 students always feel anxious when the teacher asks them to participate, 10 students said that they often feel anxious, 33 of them said sometimes and 6 of them answered never. In this chart, students have demonstrated that in most cases they are anxious when the teacher asks them to participate while 6 students are never anxious to know that the teacher will ask them to participate at any speaking activity.

**18. When you have to perform an oral evaluation or homework assignment, do you feel stressed?**



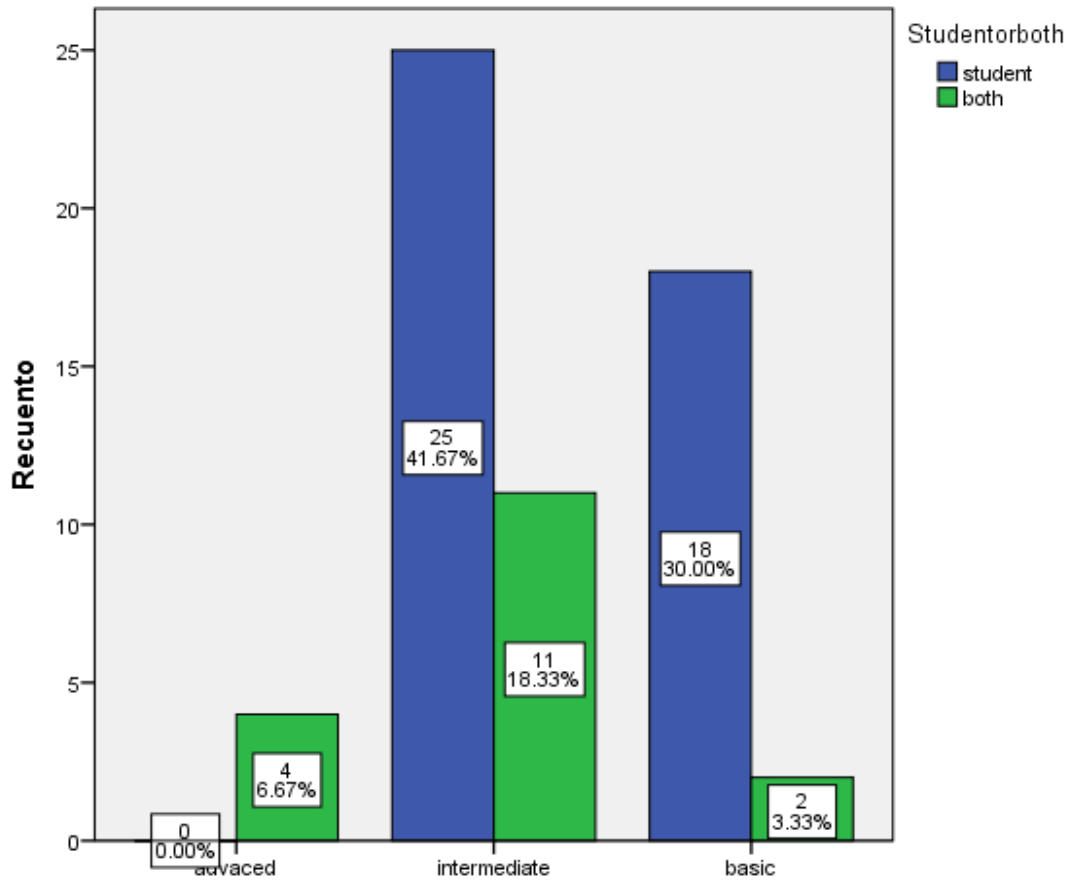
In this chart 11 of the students said that they always feel stressed, 13 students said often, 34 said sometimes and 2 said they are never affected by stress. The result in the chart is that the majority of the students suffer from stress whereas 2 students considered that they are never stressed by an oral evaluation or homework assignment. On the other hand, on chart 17, the majority of students are anxious to know that the teacher will ask them to participate at any speaking activity. That means that the majority of the students are affected by anxiety and stress. These are factors that affect their participation in speaking activities as well as their lack of vocabulary as shown on graphic number 8 where students somehow accept that they have the problem of lack of vocabulary.

**19. At the time of participating in speaking activities, in which situation do you feel nervous?**



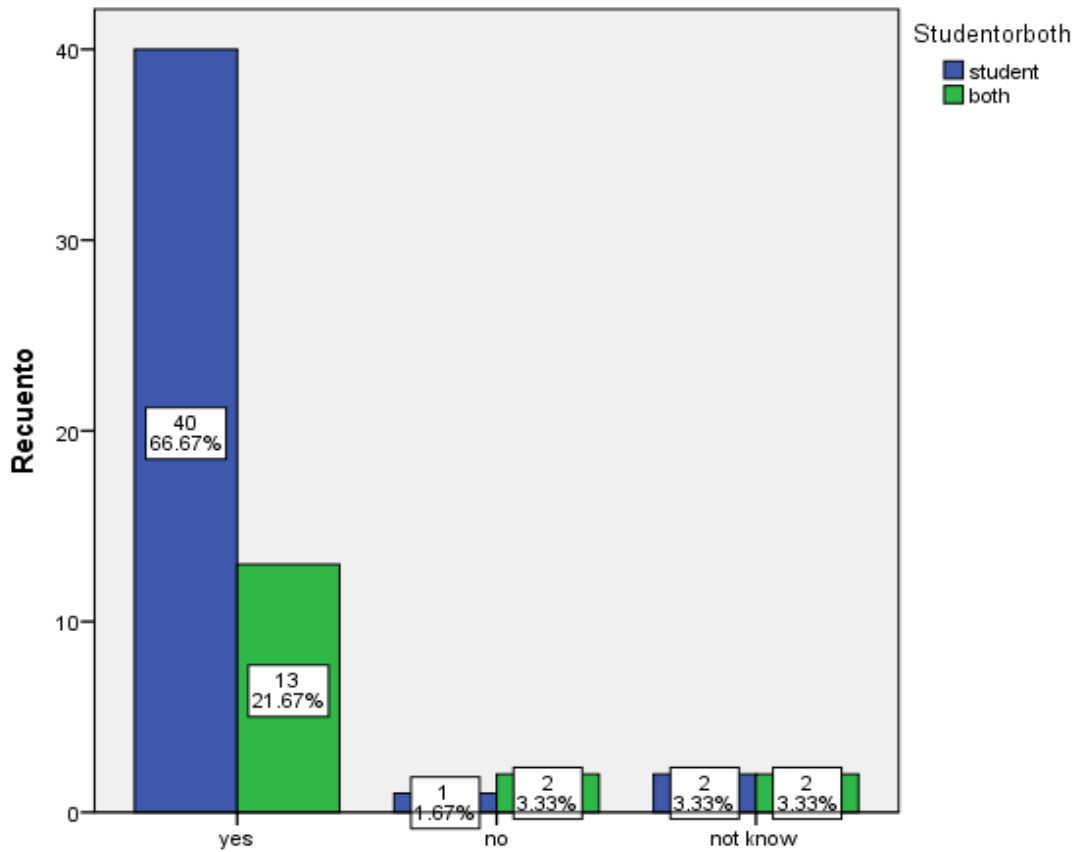
In this chart, 19 students answered that they feel nervous when they do not know about the topic, 16 said that they feel nervous when they have not studied about the topic, 7 said that they feel nervous when the teacher pushes them to participate and 18 when they have to participate at evaluated activities. The result about this chart is that most of the students feel nervous when they do not know about the topic so, it means that the students are not studying at home to be prepared for any activity in which previous knowledge is required.

## 20. What level of cultural knowledge do you consider you have?



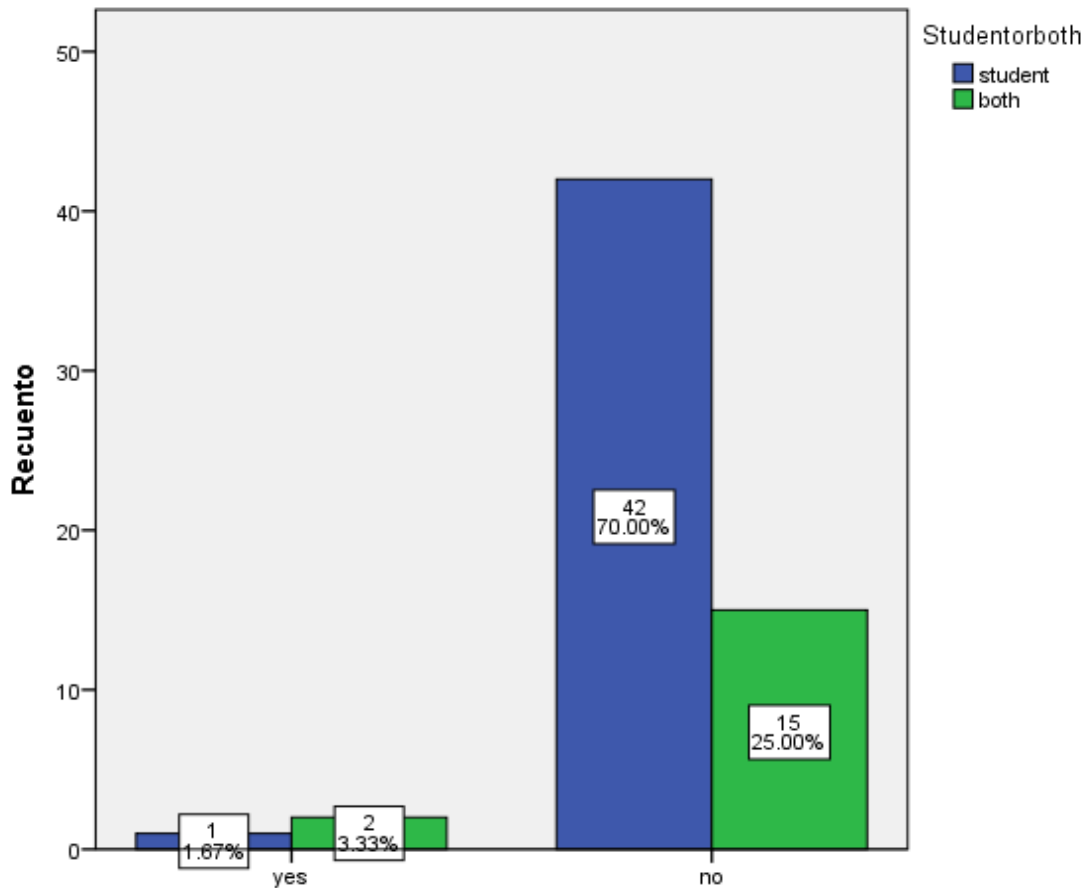
In this chart 4 students answered that they have advanced level of cultural knowledge, 36 said intermediate and 20 said they have a basic level of cultural knowledge. Even though in this chart students answered that they have an intermediate level of cultural knowledge, there is a contradiction with graphic number 8 in which students somehow accept that they have lack of vocabulary. It could be possible that students know about culture but they do not apply that knowledge at the time of participating in speaking activities since they sometimes participate as it is shown in graphic number 1.

**21. Do you consider that knowing about the culture of the target language is important?**



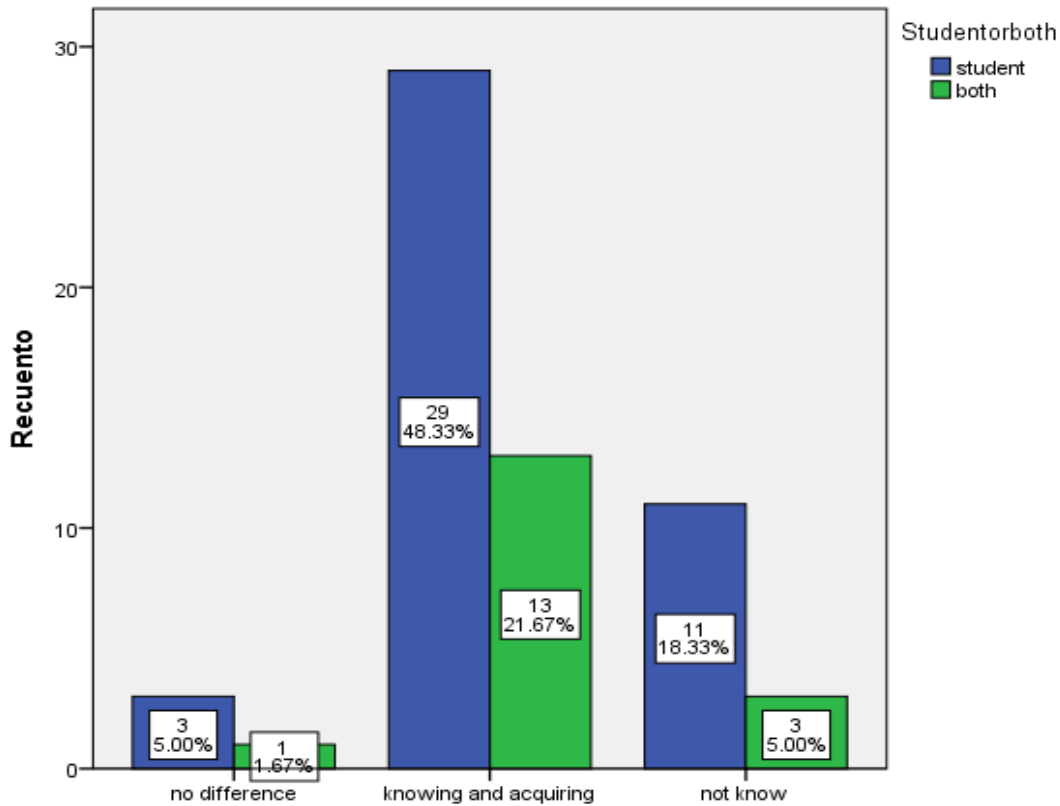
In this chart, 53 students answered that knowing about the culture of the target language is important, 3 students said it is not important and 4 students said that they do not know if knowing about culture of the target language is important. The result is that the majority of the students considered that knowing about the culture of the target language is important but they do not put into practice what they know or what they may acquire from the culture of the target language.

## 22. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country of Anglo-Saxon culture?



In this chart, 3 of the students said that they have lived in an Anglo - Saxon culture and 57 said that they have never lived in an Anglo - Saxon culture. That means that the majority of the students are not familiar with different cultures. Unfortunately, not all the students in our country have the opportunity to live abroad for knowing about other cultures. In some cases, students sometimes not even know about their own culture.

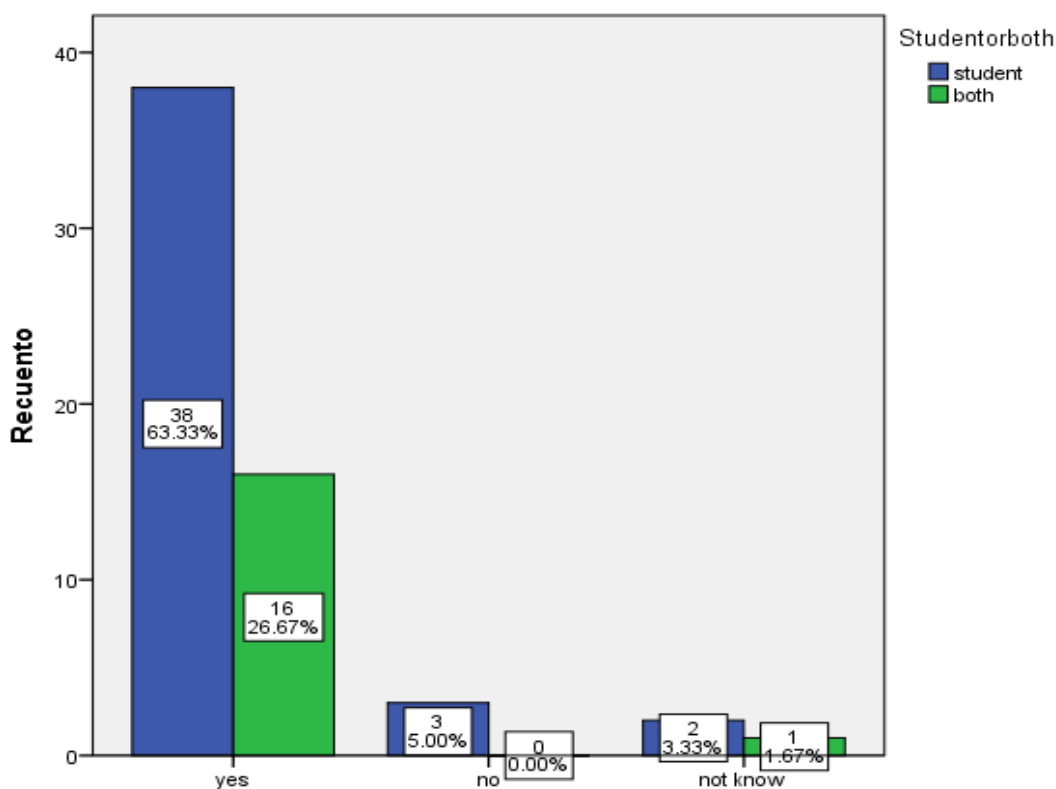
23. What is the difference between knowing and acquiring the culture of the target language?



In this chart, 4 students answered that there is no difference between knowing and acquiring the culture of the target language, 42 students said that knowing is to recognize what culture is about and acquiring is to pretend that that culture is part of their culture and 14 said that they do not know what the difference is. The graphic shows that most of the students know what the difference is between knowing and acquiring the target language. It means, that even though the majority of students considered their cultural level as intermediate and basic on graphic 20, it is shown (20 students said that they have basic level, 36 intermediate and 4 advanced) that most of them recognized the difference between knowing and acquiring the culture of the target language.

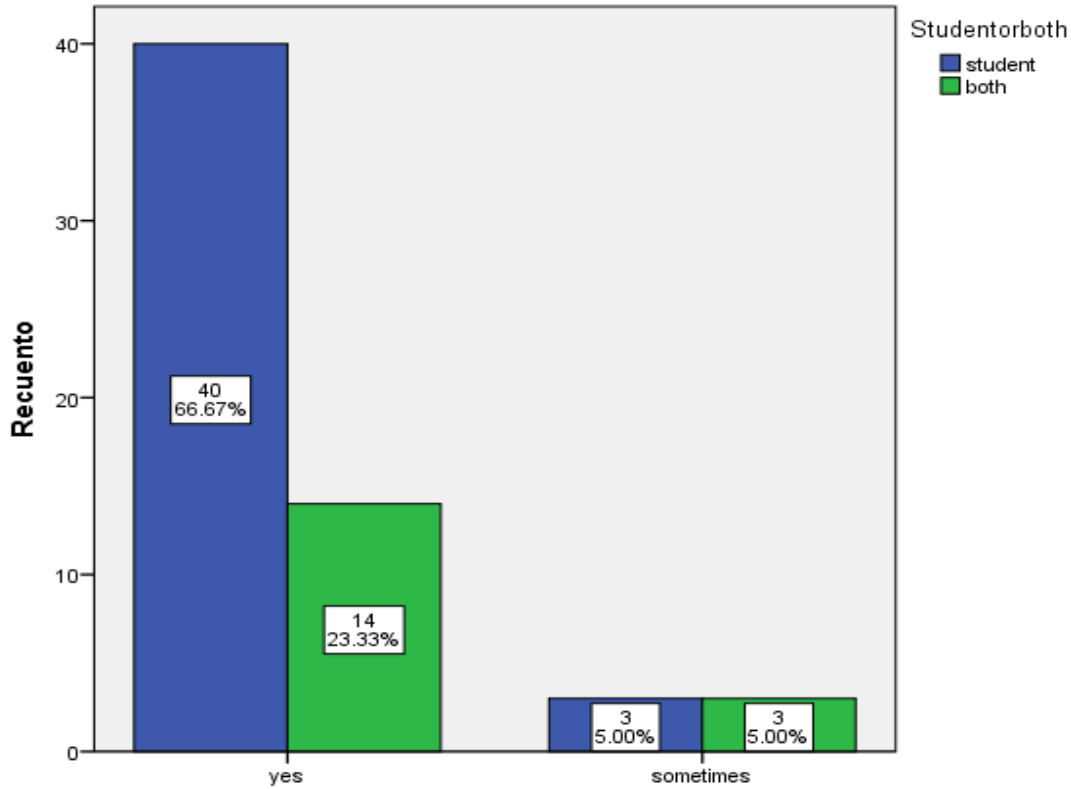


**24. Do you consider that knowing about culture represents a better transmission of your message while participating in speaking activities?**



In this graphic 54 students said that it is important to know about culture and it represents a better transmission of their message in speaking activities, 3 students said that knowing about culture do not represent a better transmission of the message and 3 students said that they do not know if knowing about culture their message could be transmitted in a better way when participating in speaking activities. The result is evident that the majority of the students recognize that when they have high level of knowledge about culture, they are able to transmit the message in a better way. Even though, the majority of students recognize in this graphic that knowing about culture represents better transmission of the message when they participate in speaking activities, the graphic 20 shows (20 students have basic level and 36 students have intermediate level) that just a minority considered they have an advanced level of culture. So that, it means that some students do not try to improve their knowledge in order to transmit the message in better way.

**25. Do you consider that knowing more about culture enriches your vocabulary?**



In this chart, 54 students answered that they consider that knowing about culture enriches their vocabulary and 6 students said that it does not enrich their vocabulary. The result is clear since in chart 24, 54 students considered that knowing about culture represents a better transmission of their message. In the same way, they considered that knowing about culture could enrich their vocabulary. Moreover, in this graphic the students recognized that knowing about culture enriches their vocabulary.

## **VIII. FINDINGS**

### **A. Answers to the research questions**

#### **a. To what extent culture influences the low level of oral participation of students of Intensive Advanced English I?**

According to this research, the findings obtained through the instrument, observation and interviews applied showed that the influence of culture in the low level of oral participation in in-class speaking activities of students from Intensive Advanced I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador is none. According to the instrument administered to the students, culture does not influence at all in the oral participation in in-class speaking activities taking into account that students consider that knowing about culture is important, enriches their vocabulary, and permits them to transmit a better message. Having known this, culture does not represent a factor neither negative nor positive in the oral participation of students.

#### **b. Which cultural factors influence the low level of oral participation or inhibit students to participate freely in in-class speaking activities?**

According to the interview conducted to teachers, an anthropologist and the theoretical framework, the factors that affect the oral participation of students in in-class speaking activities are not cultural. The information gathered in this research, shows that there are other factors such as emotional factors which inhibit students to participate freely in in-class speaking activities.

**c. How does the Salvadorean culture of mocking, murmuring, having jealousy and critics limit or block students' oral participation in speaking activities in the classroom?**

After conducting this research, the results obtained showed that mocking, murmuring, having jealousy and critics limit or block students' oral participation in speaking activities in the classroom by promoting the no participation in the class. These factors cause in students a low level of oral participation and some of them prefer to stay in the comfort zone rather than participating actively. But an interesting finding obtained from the anthropologist is that these factors are not part of the Salvadorean culture since those are part of emotional aspects that identify each individual in his/her attitude.

**d. Do shyness, fear and insecurity inhibit students to participate in in-class speaking activities?**

Shyness, fear and insecurity inhibit students to participate in in-class speaking activities since students confirmed it in the instrument results. Shyness is present as a negative factor as well as fear and insecurity to talk freely according to the results obtained. In the instrument, students affirmed that the fear to critics and murmurs creates insecurity at the time of participating actively and that negative effect make students feel shy to participate.

**e. Does participation in speaking activities promote anxiety, nervousness and stress in students?**

Students recognized that at the time of participating in speaking activities they feel anxious, nervous and they feel stress about certain activities specially those oral activities that are evaluated such as: role plays, oral evaluations face to face, etc. They also feel anxious when the teacher pushes them to participate randomly in the class since there might be negative comments from other students about their participation.

## **B. Most outstanding findings**

According to the information gathered, the main limitation of students to participate in speaking activities is the number of students in each group of class because there are from 36 to 42 students when the ideal number of students in each class should be 15 students in order to monitor the progress in each one or identify their development in oral skill. Likewise, Lorena Cuerno Clavel, the anthropologist interviewed, considered that most of the time when there are overcrowded groups the teacher cannot see or control the participation of each student.

Students engage actively in speaking activities just if they feel comfortable with the language, with the environment or if they feel comfortable with the teacher. That is why less than a half of students in study hold speaking during the class or speaking activities. At the same time students' opinion showed that they are afraid when the teacher asks them to participate or they said that most of the time they are not motivated to participate in speaking activities. According to the anthropologist, participation during the class is influenced by the development of the class, often students do not learn or participate because they do not have the ability, it could be that the teacher did not apply the best methodology or there is no motivation.

The information gathered in this research reported that most of students are very good at grammar, writing and reading or listening but it is difficult to find students who can perform all macro skills, especially when it is about speaking skill. So it is considered that the level of oral skill in students is very low even though they are taking the Advanced Intensive English I.

The majority of students have to be pushed to participate in speaking activities or in some cases the participation increases or decreases according to the type of activities that the teacher is developing in the class. At the same time, students showed that they feel anxious to know whether the teacher will ask them to participate or not, it means that students do not like to participate voluntarily they just participate in order to get a grade.

According to the opinion from teachers, factors such as nervousness, mockery, critics and jealousy absolutely represent a negative influence but especially the nervousness and anxiety factors which are affecting the participation in students due to those factors can create the lack of encourage expressing their ideas. The anxiety and nervousness factors are the most shown at the moment they have evaluated activities, oral tasks or exams. At the same time, students exposed that classmates sometimes mocker about their lack of vocabulary. So, it makes them feel more frightened in oral evaluation in front of the class.

Teachers said that students sometimes make fun but they do not make critics or a negative comment. It is rarely seeing students making fun or making comments in class. On the other hand, according to the opinion of students, murmurs and critics are shown as factors that limit their participation even though they showed a contradiction when they said that they do not pay attention to their classmates' critics.

According to the information read and gathered, the concepts managed by the researchers about culture are something completely different to what has been proposed at the beginning of this research paper. After analyzing, investigating and interpreting the real concepts of culture guided by the anthropologist Lorena CuernoClavel. In her interview, she defined culture as: "La cultura es una construcción social que define comportamientos, conductas y formas de ser no solamente de una sociedad sino de una cultura." There is such a difference between cultural aspects and socioaffective aspects, something that influences negatively or positively at the time of participating in speaking activities, all depends on the way each individual takes, assimilates or interprets any critic, information or gesture from the audience.

According to the observations in the groups of Advanced English I, furniture in the classroom where students received classes is arranged and distributed in the same way almost every day, students are seated in the same way and there are small groups of classmates together. On the other hand, there are distractors such as: cellphones, portable video games, etc.

Directions, transitions and instructions are in a moderate range. It seems that most of these are understood and clear for the students; however, not all the instructions are checked by the teacher for students understanding and clarifications. The teachers sometimes invite them into a dialogue.

The observation guide shows that interaction between student and teacher is low. There are some teachers that ask for general questions for clarifications or to support his/her comment or opinion. Not all the teachers ask to hear from someone who has not said anything yet.

According to the description about that students' motivation to participate seems to be low, in some activities students seem to be comfortable and they do not participate voluntarily and there is a low self-confidence. There is hesitation from some students at the time of participating and they have an intermediate level of vocabulary to the observation guide.

There are some factors present like fun and laugh from students when other students mispronounce words in oral activities into the classroom but it is moderate. That means that it is not high. However, in some cases, it makes students feel ashamed and that makes students to participate less.

An interesting finding showed in the graphics is that people who just dedicate their full time to study participate more in in-class speaking activities while students who work and study at the same time participate in less opportunities. Students who are fully concentrated studying the major take advantage of the opportunities to practice the language in in-class speaking activities while students who work and study at the same time participate when necessary.

## **IX. CONCLUSIONS**

The research presented showed that cultural factors do not affect students' lack of participation in speaking activities in the classroom. According to the anthropologist interviewed, culture does not take place in the students' lack of participation in speaking activities because such factors are personal factors or psychological factors that affect the students' lack of participation such as being shy, nervous, and the low self-esteem in students which represents a barrier in the learning process, etc. Furthermore, the data analysis demonstrated that students do not participate for a variety of aspects as, fear to make mistake, and because they think their partners will probably criticize, laugh or murmur about their low level of English. On the other hand, the research showed that students are not motivated to participate not only for personal factors, but also for the lack of preparation (some students are not updated with information that can be significant in their learning process), lack of vocabulary (some students are in a comfort zone learning vocabulary taught in class only) and lack of students' motivation (some students are neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated).

Summing up, the research contributed to clarify the objectives stated at the beginning of the research, which stated that: Culture influences in the low level of students' participation in speaking activities in the classroom. It was proven that there was no influence from culture, whether negative or positive, in the low level of students' oral participation.



## **X. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researchers give the following recommendations to:

### ***Professors***

Professors should apply more speaking activities in which students can engage and practice constantly in order to provide more confidence in the students and provide an attractive environment.

Professors should make an effort to apply oral activities taking into account that the target language is being learned by adult students and it becomes a little more difficult to acquire it at this age.

Some professors should pay more attention to the students who almost never participate in order to encourage them to take the risk to participate in each activity developed in class.

### ***Students***

Students should make an effort to participate freely without being pushed by the teacher, taking into account that practicing the foreign language inside and outside the classroom will provide them a better fluency in their speaking skill.

Students should recognize the importance of oral participation valuing others' opinions without criticizing their comments or their mistakes.

### ***Foreign Language Department***

1. Authorities of the FLD should take into consideration to assign only 15 students per each class to avoid overcrowded classes to evidence in a better way students' oral participation.

2. The authorities of the FLD should take into consideration to assign more hours for the use of the English laboratory in order to students practice their listening and speaking skills.

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# **ANNEXES**

## **PROJECT PROFILE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **TOPIC**

Culture and low level of oral participation in class speaking activities of students from Intensive Advanced I courses at the Department of Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the year 2014.

#### **COMPONENTS**

Culture

Low level of oral participation in in-class speaking activities.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

When talking about culture, it is important to mention that it can play an important role at the time of acquiring a second language whether in a positive or negative way. According to Kim Ann Zimmermann, a LiveScience Contributor, Culture can be described as: “the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, arts, etc. everything, that involves such a peculiar distinction from other cultures. Since culture can represent a considerable factor when acquiring the target language, it can also be a key factor at the time of participating in oral activities in the class. According to Meyer (2003), Cultural influence of both the native and the target culture impact learning styles, instruction approach, and can impact considerably in language skills such as listening or speaking.

In order to get the student engaged with the English language, Teachers consider that putting into practice the oral participation in in-class speaking activities there will be an important consideration from the students to be focused on the oral skill in order to success with the language. On the other hand, it is considered that an important requirement to produce the target language is to produce it accurately and proficiently. Taking this into

account, teachers consider that promoting oral participation in the class will create an active oral participation to eradicate errors, mistakes, and other negative aspects that will be removed through oral practice in an environment where the target language is being practiced.

But even though, oral participation is promoted in class, low level of oral class participation is taking place at English courses in levels where practice is needed to reinforce the knowledge acquired and to practice the language to produce it accurately and proficiently. This information was collected from a short interview to 4 different English teachers at the campus whose common problem in their classes is the low level of oral class participation. Teachers mentioned that this problem needs to be eradicated because they consider that at that level, students need to put into practice what they have learned along previous courses. They consider that these levels are levels where the oral participation is crucial. Through oral participation, students practice the language and they better what has been learned, teachers said.

The short interviews to the four different teachers permitted the group to gather information about certain factors that can be the reason for this low level of oral class participation problem. Teachers consider that problems with self-confidence, shyness, critics and cultural factors such as “burla, murmura, egoism, invidia”, among others can be determinant at the time to promote this low level of oral in-class participation. Taking into account this information, the group is considering to represent Salvadorian Culture as a factor that can represent whether a positive or a negative factor when acquiring the English language.

## **II. RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

After reading considerable information for the research, the group has decided to start a deep research about the low level of oral in-class participation and the positive or negative influence that culture can have when promoting oral class participation.

The fact that low level of oral in-class participation is taking place considerably, it represents an important problem that has to be studied in order to find the root of the problem. The low level of in-class participation is seen for some researchers as a serious problem that many institutions face and not all of these institutions pay special attention to eradicate this problem. According to Niman (1978) studies show that learners who raise their hands more and more often responding to teachers' elicitations do better not only on their tests but also in their oral practices at the time of participating on speaking activities. Krahsen (1982) has found out that it is really necessary to know what affects the willingness to participate because teachers with communicative orientation are anxious to get their students to talk as much as possible in their classes.

As it can be seen, oral participation is crucially important according to these two researchers but there are certain factors that can become into barriers so that active oral in-class participation results into low level of oral in-class participation and that is the main purpose this research has.

### **III. OBJECTIVES**

#### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To identify to what extent culture influences the low level of oral participation of students of Intensive Advanced English I semester II 2014.

#### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

To discover to what extend the Salvadorean idiosyncrasy influences in the low level class oral participation of students.

To identify how the Salvadorean Culture limits the students' oral participation in spoken activities in the classroom.



#### **IV. JUSTIFICATION**

Nowadays, learning the English language has become very necessary and important for overall development, so that people can acquire better job opportunities offered in companies within the country, as well as abroad. Often acquiring a job in companies like hotels, call centers or airlines required to have an advanced level of English language, especially when speaking that language can give better opportunities to communicate with people anywhere in the world.

Oral participation is promoted in class, but at the same time, low level of oral in-class participation is taking place in different English courses, especially in the Intensive Advance I courses in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador where practice becomes necessary to reinforce the knowledge acquired.

The decision to take into account this research work is due to results gathered from short interviews to 4 different English teachers at the campus. They mentioned some common problems in their classes in which the low level of oral in-class participation is one of the main problems that students show. Teachers considered that problems such as: self-confidence, shyness, critics and cultural factors can be the main problems that promote the low level of oral participation in in-class speaking activities.

Culture is a broad term which describes people, beliefs, music, arts and other things that involves a complete society. According to Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi, (1990) Their aesthetic sense including cinema, literature, music and media, while their sociological one refers to the organization and nature of family, interpersonal relations, customs, material conditions, and so on. Their semantic sense encompasses the whole conceptualization system which conditions perceptions and thought processes and their pragmatic or sociolinguistic sense refers to the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills and language code which are necessary for successful communication. As these researchers mention, culture is what describes a complete society and those cultural aspects can be determinant when trying to acquire a certain aspect that is out of the culture that the person

is accustomed to. It is important that cultural aspects of a certain individual diminish at the time of being exposed to a new culture in order to learn certain characteristics of a new system as the researchers describe. In this case, the new system an individual wants to acquire is a successful communication in the target language.

Students into a classroom have the intention to learn the language and communicate it that is the way they establish a relationship with different people who can let them improve or not their skills. In the communication discipline, scholars have researched cultural factors that are related to a person's communicative styles (e.g., see Kirn, 2000; Kirn, Aune, Hunter, Kirn, & Kim, 2001). In different classrooms, students tend to participate spontaneously without teachers pushing them to do it, but most of the students tend to be quiet during oral activities and this is due to different attitudes shown by some of the students such as criticism, ridicule, and marginalization.

English is the language which is used across the globe and is adopted widely for communication among speakers whose native languages are different. However, it is a fact that in our country speaking a second language opens many doors due to the demand that the English language has many advantages mainly at big companies where the oral communicative skill is necessary. So that, it is considered that this study will identify the real reasons why students present low level of oral in-class participation in order that teachers improve the students' participation when they exchange ideas about a given topic, expressing their own ideas, and presentations of different topics.

## **METHODOLOGY**

There are some factors that affect students' academic performance during the process of second language acquisition, mainly at the moment of communicating ideas using a second language. That is why, this research will be focused on culture and the oral in-class participation of students and how culture influences them to decay their oral participation during the process of acquiring a second language.

The development of this research will be using a mix approach research considering the characteristics and the analyses of data to answer the different questions of this research, to probe the different hypothesis, if considered, and to represent numerical results in the countdown of statistic answers for the better understanding and interpretation of accurate results. On the other hand, the qualitative approach will be used to recollect data with no numerical results but information about important observations and its interpretation taking into account at the same time its flexibility when showing events considering the answers and theory.

The purpose of using a mix approach is to gather information that can be analyzed from the both sides, from the quantitative approach and qualitative approach sides to determine numerical results and to describe the information of a specific result. Moreover, the mix approach will give the group the opportunity to make a mixture of analysis to combine different information that lead the group triangulate different alternatives of investigation and at the same time different alternatives to explain the results for a better comprehension and interpretation of the phenomena.

According to Creswell (1994) quantitative research is “a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods”. Therefore, it will be useful to gather and analyze the data in a numerical

way where the team needs to find answers and explain the problematic through the use of statistic in order to establish with precision the behavior of the selected population. Besides, it is considered to apply a descriptive study so that the team's purpose is to describe if culture exert some influences in the students' oral participation and behaviors shown during speaking activities in the classroom. At the same time, with this study, the different situations or attitudes that students of English Advanced I of Foreign Language Department of University of El Salvador that they will expose, either in a positive or negative form when they participate in speaking activities, will be explained in the best way.

The design considered to apply in this research will be an experimental design in which it is important to recognize the two variables such as culture and low level oral class participation, where culture is the independent variable and oral participation of students is the dependent variable. This is the reason why the experimental design becomes useful in this research in order to identify the influences that the culture as independent variable has over the dependent variables which in this case is, oral participation. To use experimental design will help to recognize the different effects that culture will cause at the time students are in the classroom participating spontaneously in any activity which requires the oral participation of students.

Furthermore, to achieve good results in this research it is necessary to carry out an observation in the group of students during some spoken activities that the teacher will develop in the classroom, due to the team will see directly the behavior of students in that kind of activities and take any variation of behavior as an important data. The data gotten by observation will be acquired through an observation guide in which will be reflected the way students act in spoken activities and at the same time show the main data that will give explanation to the phenomenon.

Also, the team considers to apply the survey technique in order to obtain quantitative data through a questionnaire that will be administered to student of English

Advanced I of the Foreign Language Department. All this information will be represented by graphics, so, it will contribute to measure the data and analyzed with precision.

At the same time, it is necessary to conduct an interview to some teachers and an anthropologist that will give more ideas and opinion about the influence of Salvadorian culture in oral in-class participation of the population in this study. Those interviews will be possible using an interview guide which will lead the research to get the best results.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

After finishing this research, the group will identify if Salvadorean Culture represents a negative factor that does not permit the oral participation in class.

At the end of this research project, the group will have enough information to advice what to do and what to put into practice to eradicate the low level of oral class participation.

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



**OBJECTIVE:** To identify to what extent culture influences the low level of oral in-class participation of Intensive Advanced English I 2014.

## CHECKLIST 2014

**TEACHER'S NAME:**

ROOM:	GROUP:	SUBJECT:	SCHEDULE:

DATE OF EVALUATION					

AREA	DESCRIPTION	MARK		
		1- low	2- moderate	3- high
<b>Classroom arrangement</b>	1. The number of students in the class.			
	2. Some areas of room are well defined and organized.			
	3. The distribution of desks in the classroom is according to the activity			
	4. Furniture is arranged to allow students' movement easily.			
	5. All students are seated in areas that allow them to see instruction.			
	6. Students have personal space to place belongings.			
	7. Distractions (visual, tangible, and auditory) are minimized.			
	8. There are small groups of classmates together in class.			
<b>Methodology</b>	1. Directions given are clear and understood by all students.			
	2. Transitions are structured and described clearly.			
	3. There are activities according to level.			
	4. The pace of instruction is brief and appropriate for all students.			
	5. Student understanding is checked frequently (individually or for the whole class).			
	6. Cooperative activities are utilized.			
	7. Adaptations and modifications are made for individual student needs.			
	8. Each student has a positive interaction with the teacher.			
	9. The teacher asks general questions to students for clarification, or to support his or her comment or opinion.			
	10. The teacher asks to hear from someone who has not said anything yet.			
	11. The teacher keeps on eye contact with students when they are sharing their opinion or idea.			
	12. The teacher allows time for pauses and silence. He/she gives the			

	students time to think.			
	<b>13.</b> The teacher uses meaningful materials.			
<b>Attitude</b>				
	<b>1.</b> The students are comfortable in class.			
	<b>2.</b> The students are motivated to participate.			
	<b>3.</b> The teacher extends a cordial invitation to studentto enter into a dialogue.			
	<b>4.</b> The students are able to participate in the class activities voluntarily.			
	<b>5.</b> The teacher mentions names of students at the time of participating in speaking activities.			
	<b>6.</b> The teacher makes each student feel special by verbally sharing individual compliments in front of the class.			
	<b>7.</b> The teacher encourages students' positive self-confidence and self- esteem.			
	<b>8.</b> There is a group of students who always participate in the oral activities.			
	<b>9.</b> There is a low level of oral in-class participation.			
	<b>10.</b> The English of the students is accurately according to their level of course.			
	<b>11.</b> Students hesitate at the time of participating.			
	<b>12.</b> The students' vocabulary is appropriate according to the level of the course.			
	<b>13.</b> Students are using other distractors such as: cellphones, magazines, portable video games, etc.			
	<b>14.</b> Some students make fun of classmates' mistake in oral activity in front of the class.			
	<b>15.</b> Some students feel ashamed of participating in an oral activities in front of the class.			
	<b>16.</b> Some students prefer not to participate in oral activities.			



UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR  
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**Objective:** To identify to what extent culture influences the low level of oral participation of students of Intensive Advanced English I semester II 2014.

Gender: M\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Student and employee: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instruction:** select the answer that you consider is the most appropriate for each question.

1. To what extent do you participate in class during speaking activities?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never
2. What level of English do you consider you have?  
a) Advanced                      b) Intermediate                      c) basic
4. Which of those factors limits your participation in class during speaking activities?  
a) Mockery                      b) jealousy                      c) Murmurs                      d) critics
5. How do you feel when your classmates critique your speaking whenever you participate in any speaking activities?  
a) I do not pay attention at them  
b) Nervous  
c) Ashamed  
d) Frustrated
6. Do classmates' murmurs limit your participation in in-class speaking activities?  
a) Yes                      b) No                      c) sometimes
7. Are you a risk taker when participating in speaking activities even though you can make mistakes?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never
8. When you listen to mockeries about mispronounced words, what attitude describes you the most?  
a) I do not pay attention to them  
b) I will try to improve my English  
c) I prefer not to participate any more  
d) I stop talking immediately



9. Is there any mockery from your classmates when they realize about your lack of vocabulary?  
a) Yes                      b) No                      c) sometimes
10. When your classmates participate in speaking activities during the class, do you feel jealous about him/her fluent and accurate English?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never
11. Do you consider that your classmates are jealous about your active participation in speaking activities?  
a) Yes                      b) No                      c) sometimes
12. Are you afraid when the teacher asks you to participate in any speaking activity in front of the class?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never
13. Does shyness represent a barrier to participate in any speaking activity?  
a) Yes                      b) No                      c) sometimes
14. Do you feel insecure to participate in speaking activities?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never
15. Choose the reason that makes you feel insecure at the time of participating in speaking activities.  
a) Lack of information about the topic  
b) Lack of vocabulary to participate  
c) My English is not good  
d) Fear to make a mistake
16. Do you consider that overcrowded groups influence over your participation in in-class speaking activities?  
a) Yes                      b) No                      c) sometimes
17. In which situation do you feel more frightened at the time of participating in speaking activities?  
a) Working in group  
b) Participating in front of the class  
c) Performing an oral evaluation  
d) Participating freely from the desk
18. Are you anxious to know that the teacher will ask you to participate at any determined speaking activity?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never
19. When you have to perform an oral evaluation or homework assignment, do you feel stressed?  
a) Always                      b) often                      c) sometimes                      d) never

20. At the time of participating in speaking activities, in which situation do you feel nervous?
- a) When I do not know about the topic
  - b) When I have not studied enough
  - c) When the teacher pushes me to participate
  - d) When it is an evaluated activity
21. What level of cultural knowledge do you consider you have?
- a) Advanced
  - b) Intermediate
  - c) basic
22. Do you consider that knowing about culture of the target language is important?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) I do not know
23. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country of Anglo-Saxon culture?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) How long
24. What is the difference between knowing and acquiring the culture of target language?
- a) There is no difference
  - b) Knowing is to recognize what culture is about - Acquiring is to pretend that that culture is ours
  - c) I do not know
25. Do you consider that knowing about culture represents a better transmission of your message while participating in speaking activities?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) I do not know
26. Do you consider that knowing more about culture enriches your vocabulary?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) sometimes



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

**Objective:** To identify to what extent culture influences the low level of oral participation of students of Intensive Advanced English I.

INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

1. What's your name? \*\*\*\*\*
2. What group of Advanced English do you have?
3. What time are you teaching the course?
4. How many students do you have in your group?
5. Do you consider that the number of students in your group is appropriate for the development of speaking activities?
6. To what extent do your students engage actively in speaking activities during the class?
7. Do you consider that the development of speaking activities is important to reinforce the participation of students?
8. Do you consider that your students manage the appropriate level of English?
9. At the time of teaching, do you push all students to participate in in-class speaking activities or a specific number of them do it voluntarily? Explain.
10. Do you consider that cultural factors such as: nervousness, mockery, critics, and jealous represent a negative influence at the time of developing speaking activities in class?
11. Have you ever faced a situation in which a student or a group of students make fun, criticize, or make a negative comment about a certain student's oral participation? Explain your experience.
12. Have you ever experienced anxiety from students at the time of participating in a certain speaking activity that you perform in class?
13. Do you consider that teaching about general culture permits students to transmit in a better way the idea they want to share?
14. Do you consider that Salvadorian culture affects positively or negatively the performance of students in speaking activities?



UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR  
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FACULTAD DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

ENTREVISTA ANTROPOLOGA:

1. ¿Qué es cultura?
2. ¿Cómo describe la cultura salvadoreña?
3. ¿Cómo percibe el salvadoreño el aprender un nuevo idioma? ¿Qué motiva al salvadoreño aprender un nuevo idioma? (económicamente, profesionalmente, otros factores)
4. ¿Considera usted que los salvadoreños somos tímidos por naturaleza o solamente cuando hablamos otro idioma?
5. ¿Considera usted, que al hablar el idioma inglés, el salvadoreño se limita en su participación?
6. ¿Por qué el salvadoreño muchas veces prefiere escuchar otras opiniones, participaciones, o ideas acerca de un tema y no toma la decisión de participar abiertamente?
7. ¿considera usted que los factores culturales de un salvadoreño como: múrmura, crítica, burla, y celos influyen a la hora de realizar actividades orales dentro del salón de clase?
8. ¿Ha tenido la oportunidad de estudiar el idioma inglés?
9. ¿alguna vez experimentó nerviosismo, estrés o frustración en alguna actividad oral durante sus estudios del idioma inglés?
10. ¿Alguna vez ha evidenciado en los estudiantes la crítica, múrmura, burla o envidia acerca de la participación de algún estudiante tomando clases de inglés?
11. ¿Qué podría determinar en la actitud de un salvadoreño para dejar a un lado toda la crítica, burla, envidia a la hora de participar de forma oral en una clase de inglés?