UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

How do personality and motivation affect the oral proficiency of the advanced ENGLISH I students of semester II 2012 at the foreign languages department?

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF

LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLES OPCION ENSEÑANZA

PRESENTED BY

|  |
| --- |
| lissette Magdalena orellana domínguez od07009  Vilma Alejandra Mejía solórzano ms03019  krissia jeannette diaz rivas DR07009  Manuel alejandro mejia quintanilla MQ04011 |

ADVISOR:

LIC. RENÉ ARTURO HERNÁNDEZ RIVAS

San salvador, el salvador, central america, april 2013

AUTHORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

ING. MARIO ROBERTO NIETO LOVO

RECTOR

MTRA. ANA MARIA GLOWER DE ALVARADO

ACADEMIC VICE RECTOR

IN PROCESS TO BE ELECTED

ADMISTRATIVE VICE RECTOR

DRA. ANA LETICIA ZAVALETA DE AMAYA

SECRETARY GENERAL

AUTHORITIES OF SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

LIC. JOSE RAYMUNDO CALDERON MORAN

DEAN

MTRA. NORMA CECILIA BLANDON DE CASTRO

VICE-DEAN

LIC. ALFONSO MEJÍA ROSALES

SECRETARY

AUTHORITIES OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

MTRO. JOSE RICARDO GAMERO ORTIZ

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

RICARDO GARAY SALINAS, M Ed.

GENERAL COORDINATOR OF

THE DEGREE PROCESSES

LIC. RENÉ ARTURO HERNÁNDEZ RIVAS

ADVISOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Abstract…………………………………………………………………..iii
2. Chapter I: Introduction…..……………………………………………..1-3
3. Statement of the problem……………………………………………….4-5
4. Chapter II: Theoretical Framework
5. Personality: Extroversion vs. Introversion…………………………....6-8
6. The role of Motivation in SLA…………………………………..…...9-10
7. Language for communicative purpose: oral proficiency……………..10-13
8. Chapter III: Design of the study
9. Descriptive Research………………………………………….……....14-15
10. Quantitative Approach……………………………………….……….15-17
11. Qualitative approach………………………………………………..…18
12. Sample………………………………………………………..……….18-19
13. Data collection, instruments, and analysis…………………………….19-20
14. Data reliability measures………………………………………………20-22
15. Data validity…………………………………………………………..22-23
16. Data collection…………………………………………………….…..23-24
17. Chapter IV: Results………………………………………….…………..25-32
18. Findings……………………………………………………….………….33-34
19. Conclusions………………………………………………………………35
20. Recommendations……………………………………………………….36
21. References…………………………………………………..……………37-38
22. Annexes……………………………………………………..……………39
    1. First personality test…………………………………………………..40
    2. Second personality test………………………………………………..41
    3. Tables of level of motivation, personality,

type oral proficiency based on CEF scale

and final grades……………………….………………………………42

* 1. Observation checklist………………………………………………...43

ABSTRACT

Speaking has been regarded as the most important skill when learning a second language. This has been part of many researches; some of them agree that personality and motivation have an influence on achieving certain level of oral proficiency. Researchers classify personality in two types: extroversion and introversion. Most of the researchers agree that extrovert students are the ones who always achieve a high level of English, and therefore, the highest level of oral proficiency. The aim of this research was investigating how personality and the level of motivation affect the oral proficiency of Advanced English I students of the semester II 2012 at the Foreign Languages Department. By analyzing the data obtained, it was concluded that students’ personality type, on one hand, does not affect students’ oral proficiency level because both, extroverts and introverts, have the same probabilities of achieving a specific level of proficiency. The level of motivation, on the other hand, plays an important role on this process since highly motivated students have more chances of becoming more orally proficient than lowly motivated ones. Factors such as, gender, learning strategies, and teaching methods could have influenced these results, and this was suggested for further research.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led English to turn into a necessity more than a luxury. Therefore, English language has gained a great importance in nowadays life. People all over the world use this language to communicate with others and it has become a tool for developing everyday activities. Personality and motivation have been found to affect the way a person experiences many aspects of life including career satisfaction, (Krcmar, A., 2006). Applying for a job or scholarships, going abroad, and even playing a video game are some of the examples in which people have the need to learn English in order to succeed in these activities.

Learning English implies the development of many particular aspects such as the four macro skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) and the micro skills (punctuation, grammar, pronunciation, pragmatics, linguistics, syntax, etc). However, speaking represents a challenge for students since it is a tool they use to communicate with the outside world. Regarding the communicative competence of English, achieving a high level of oral proficiency is one of the most difficult goals to reach, due to the fact that there are different factors that might interfere or stop students from being highly orally proficient. Among those affecting factors we have personality and level of motivation.

Petz (1992, as cited in Medved, M & Juraga, I., 2008) defines personality as a relatively stable whole which includes temperament, abilities, beliefs, interests, attitudes, values and motives, and is usually reflected in the person´s behavior in the environment. The personality of an individual is the result of the interaction of genetic predispositions and the environment which affects the extent of their development. Therefore, none of

those studies are conclusive because their results cannot be applied in every single context.

It is suggested that personality traits determine students’ behavior in the language classroom. Some researchers tried to define students’ preferences connected with studying a foreign language by examining their personality characteristics (Sylwia Grabiec, 1999). Sandra Hirsh and Jean Kummerow (1994, as cited in Grabiec, S., 1999) are some of the researchers that have conducted studies on how students’ personality influences their performance in the classroom. However, the existing evidence that demonstrates that oral proficiency has been affected by the different personality characteristics does not show exactly which personality type represents more disadvantages in the oral proficiency development.

The current research is a descriptive study since its main purpose was to describe the relation of personality type and motivation with oral proficiency. The study also aimed to investigate how each of the sixteen personality types, established by Myers-Briggs, as well as level of motivation affected one interactional context in foreign language classrooms. This context was made of students from the Advanced English I at the Foreign Languages Department.

This study consists of five chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews literature about the relationship between personality and motivation in relation to oral proficiency. Chapter 3 reviews the methodology used through this study. Chapter 4 presents the results gathered, followed by the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Many studies have been reviewed; however, the results have not been conclusive. The relationship between learner´s personality type and motivation and their oral proficiency has not been fully investigated. Moreover, most of these studies have been based on second language acquisition, and finally, these researches have been developed mainly in European and Asian countries.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some people are more naturally driven to achieve set goals than others. Some people aren’t afraid of being themselves and facing all kinds of situations that life presents. Some people are simply stronger than others in all senses. This kind of people likes to push and challenge themselves in order to get their target. On the other hand, some people need a greater help to achieve what they want. Some people don’t like to be noticed because they may think their contribution in any area of society is not enough or is worthless. What is it within these kinds of individuals that motivates or demotivates them? Why is it that some of them have a great need of self-help and others do not?

It is thought that motivation and personality are factors which may affect in a higher degree the decisions people make in life such as getting married, having children, moving to a new place, studying a major, and so on. An individual’s self-concept is the core of their personality and motivation. It affects every aspect of human behavior and an important one is the ability to learn.

This has been the main reason why it was decided to look for an answer for the following research question and its subsidiary questions:

Research Question: How do personality and motivation affect the oral proficiency of the Advanced English I Students of the semester II 2012 at the Foreign Language Department?

Subsidiary Questions:

* To what extent does personality affect the oral proficiency of the Advanced English I students of the semester II 2012 at the Foreign Language Department?
* Do highly motivated students from the Advanced English I semester II 2012 become more proficient than lowly motivated ones?
* To what extent does motivation affect the level of oral proficiency of the Advanced English I students of the semester II 2012 at the Foreign Languages Department?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language teachers have always had an intuitive sense that some learners will learn the language faster and easier than others. Research has shown that several factors contribute to the achievement in second language learning, including language aptitude, cognitive style and memory, attitude and motivation, and personality. One of the most important skills in a language is speaking since in that way we communicate our ideas immediately and easily. In addition, to become oral proficient is one of the main goals of every student, although not all of them achieve it in the same level at the end. What accounts for these individual differences? Various studies have linked psychological constructs of personality to oral performance such as *The influence of personality and anxiety on the oral performance of Japanese speakers* *of English*, a study developed by Taeko Oya, Emmanuel Manalo, and Jackie Greewood (2004) in Japan. However, the relationship between personality type of learners and their fluency level has not been fully investigated. The research question for this study has three primary areas which involve psychological, linguistic and communicative constructs:

1. Extroversion vs. introversion

2. The role of motivation in SLA.

3. Language for communicative purpose: Oral proficiency

Personality: Extroversion vs. Introversion

Researchers have looked at the relationship between the extraversion-introversion dimension of personality and different linguistic variables related to oral performance.

Various studies like *Personality and Second Language Acquisition* (Yan Zhan) have investigated the relation between personality variables and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and authors provide many different definitions for this term. However, this research is going to be based on the one created by Phillip Carter in his research *IQ and personality test*. This author states that personality refers to the patterns of thoughts, feelings and behavior that are unique to every one of us, and these are the characteristics that distinguish us from other people. He also explains that our personality implies the predictability about how we are likely to act and react under different circumstances. Studies which investigate personality traits are based on the belief that learners deal not only with cognitive or intellectual abilities, but also with emotional states that cause an impact on the way they learn a second language. To some extent, it can be assumed that the extrovertion-introvertion dimension of learners’ personality indeed affects the oral performance of their second language.

It is said that people who do not talk too much, avoid situations in which they can be quite exposed or do not socialize easily with others are introverted individual. Extroverts, on the other hand, are those talkative people who enjoy being in contact with others and, therefore, have a lot of friends, and are generally impulsive. A typical extravert is someone who is sociable, likes parties, has many friends, needs to have many people to talk to, likes excitement, takes chances, acts on the spur of the moment, and is generally an impulsive individual. On the other hand, an introvert is described as someone who is a quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people: he is reserved and distant except to intimate friends (Adamopoulos, 2004). Thus, these characteristics of learners’ personality will influence the way they develop the learning process of a foreign language.

Many SLA theorists like Zafar Shahila and Meenakshi K.(2011) have claimed that extraverts are the better language learners, since they do not have the problem of being afraid of making mistakes. As such they take full advantage of language-use opportunities. It has been suggested that these types of learners will find it easier to make contact with other users of the target language and, therefore, will obtain more input. The classroom learner may also benefit from being extroverted by getting more practice in using the target language. Furthermore, extraverts are believed to be prone to risk-taking and are likely to try out a larger amount and variety of different word types and grammatical structures at a higher speech rate. Extraverts, who tend to be sociable, are more likely to join groups, more inclined to engage in conversations both inside and outside the classroom (Sahin,B., Tezcan, B., Türkcan, E., and Savran, Z, 2010). In recent years, a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between extraversion and SLA has emerged. In reviewing the literature on effects of extraversion on second language acquisition, two major positions are identified. The first advocates that “extroverted learners will do better in acquiring basic interpersonal communication skills”. The second maintains that: “introverted learners will do better at developing cognitive academic language ability”. The fact that extroverts are better foreign language speakers than introverts is one of the main points the current study intends to find out.

The Role of Motivation in SLA.

There are certain factors that may change the perspective that favor extroverts as better language learners. These are: motivation to learn the language, self-confidence, and anxiety, economical factors; however, the current study will be focused only on the motivation component. The term motivation is derived from the Latin verb *movere,* which means to move. Schumann, 1986, defined motivation as the driving force that initiates learning in the first place and sustains learning until the planned goals are achieved. The attitude towards learning English itself may influence motivation; this influence may be either positive or negative. According to Harmer (2001), there are two areas in learners’ motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is caused by external factors such as a financial award, travel, the need to pass an exam, etc. On the contrary, intrinsic motivation comes from within the learner; they are motivated and enjoy the learning process itself. Enjoyment and satisfaction in learning may encourage a student to do their best in the learning process. A student with a positive attitude may find the language enjoyable because the development of linguistic competence is perceived as interesting and challenging (MacIntyre, 1998).

It is believed that motivation is a crucial element in the learning process. In addition, many researches such as Paul R. Pintrich clearly show a positive correlation between motivation and achievement. When people expect to do well, they tend to try hard, persist and perform better (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002). From a social learning perspective, authors state that if a student is highly motivated to learn, this interest continues until they complete or achieve their goals at school. Motivation contributes to behavior through the influence of

judgments about personal efficacy (Krause, 2003). Regarding the humanistic theory of motivation, this term can be not only related to achievement and education but also to the students’ basic needs, which means their capacity of personal growth, freedom to choose their destiny and positive qualities. As a result, it can be assumed that motivation plays an important and critical role in the learning process of an individual.

Language for Communicative Purpose: Communicative Competence

The main objective for any second language learner is to manage all the areas a language required such as the four macro skills (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) as well as the micro skills (Pronunciation, Punctuation, Grammar, etc) in order to be considered proficient. Communicative competence is known as the ability that an individual has in managing the language correctly and appropriately with the purpose of accomplishing communication goals. According to Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, Longman, Communicative Competence can be described as the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom (Canale and Swain, 1980) .

According to Michael Byram (1997), Communicative Competence involves six different areas. The first is *Linguistic competence,* this area focuses on the ability to produce and interpret useful utterances that are formed in accordance of the language concerned. The second is *Sociolinguistic competence*, this refers to the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms determined by such conditions as setting the relationship communication partners, and communicative intention. Besides that, Sociolinguistic competence covers the relation between linguistic signal and their contextual or situational meaning. The third is *Discourse competence*, it describes the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts. *Strategic competence* is another area applied when the communication is difficult and language learners have to find ways of “getting their meaning across” or “finding out what somebody means,” applying communication strategies such as rephrasing, or asking for clarification. *Socio-cultural competence*, the fifth area, explains that every language is collocated in a socio-cultural context and implies the use of a particular reference frame that is partly different from the foreign language of the learner. The sixth and last area *Social competence,* enhance both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to manage social situations.

There are two major scales used to identify and assess the level of competence and proficiency that a second language student can achieve. The first is the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). These proficiency guidelines are descriptions of what individuals can do with the language in terms of Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading in real-world situation in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. In other words, it provides a classification of the different levels of proficiency a second language learner can achieve. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The last three levels (Advanced, Intermediate and Novice) are subdivided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels. The second scale is The Common European Framework (CEF). It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set and besides that defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. The CEF identifies three reference levels that present a description of what students are supposed to do at each stage. These three levels are: Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User. Each level is divided in two categories that contain specific description of tasks that learners have to manage. Since CEF provides more detailed description of what second language users are supposed to do with the language at a certain level of proficiency, this research will be based on it.

The other important variable in this research is Proficiency. For Stern (1983), proficiency means the actual performance of a Learner in a given language, and it involves the mastery of the forms, the linguistic, cognitive, affective and sociocultural meanings of those forms, the capacity to use the language focusing mainly on communication paying minimum attention to form and the creativity in language use. Learner’s output can be considered in terms of oral and written proficiency; however, this research will be focus just in the Oral Proficiency. According to Ommaggio, (1986), oral proficiency is what includes the ability to communicate verbally in a *functional* and *accurate* way in the target language. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to *new contexts (topics) and* *situations.*

Previous research has suggested that extrovert with an outgoing personality and more tolerance for risk would be a better language learner than the more introverted personality who is more conservative and more self-conscious. These results are centered just by analyzing two personality types, two extremes, two choices; a person is either

extrovert or introvert. According to Briggs, K and Briggs Myers, I., (1962) there are 16 personality types and this is why this phenomenon has not been fully investigated. Also previous research has been made on the relationship between personality and oral performance. Furthermore, motivation is believed as one of the crucial factors when developing the learning process, then it can be assumed that also interferes in the second language acquisition. These studies have been made on foreign countries; there are no studies about this issue in El Salvador. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the possible relationship between the personality type, motivation, and oral proficiency of students in the Foreign Languages Department.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In order to answer and gain understanding from the research question, a descriptive research method was employed. Then a general outlook of the research design follows starting with a frame of the key method that was used, strictly speaking, personal semi-structured interviews, observations, and two personality tests, one based on the theory used for this research and the other to back up the results gathered from the first one. After that, the relevance, validity and reliability of the instruments are explained as well as the justification of the method. The succeeding section contains a description of the sampling technique, the data collection process and next a review of the method that was used for data analysis is provided. The chapter culminates summing up the former sections.

The present study was defined as Descriptive Research, since it aimed at finding out information about a specific phenomenon and at the same time described the possible relation of its variables. Furthermore, a combination between quantitative and qualitative method during the data collection process and analysis were adopted to assure the success of the study design.

1. Descriptive Research

One of the most common and valuable types of research used in the educational field is Descriptive Research. This research provides descriptions of situations or events from a group of people or conditions found in the society. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe accurately situations or events, such as the characteristics of a population, a social condition, or a particular topic (Isaac Stephen and William B. “A Handbook in Research and Evaluation”, 1971).

Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass& Hopkins, 1984). In this research, visual aids such as graphs and charts were used to help the reader understand the data distribution. This step was very important since it is difficult for people to understand and get the meaning of raw data such as the frequency with which participants show certain behavior and the level of proficiency and motivation that they present. Then, it was important to provide the information in such way that it could be easily understood. This study included some data collection methods and analysis procedures such as surveys, interviews, observations, percentages, and correlation between variables. The rest of the information was ranged into some parameters based on some oral proficiency categories taken from the CEF scales. The research also includes the recorded information gathered through the oral interviews.

1. Quantitative approach

Quantitative research refers to the implementation of measurements and in gathering and analyzing them by assigning numerical values to research subjects or to their attitude, opinions, and other attributes (Bullock et al, 1992). This type of approach includes various data and collection and analytical methods such as survey techniques, experiments, structured observation, content analysis and parametric and non-parametric statistical analysis. This study explained and generalized the problem previously stated in the research question by applying the final results to the whole population of the Department. A good deal of research in applied linguistic involves quantifying aspects of language learners of factors which influence language learning or use such as knowledge about language,

motivation, self regulation and anxiety (Lazaraton 2005, as cited in Paltridge, B., & Phakity, A., 2010). This research, intended to find out whether the type of personality and the level of motivation affect either in a positive or negative manner the oral proficiency that students can develop through the learning process. Since many psychological and cognitive constructs such as language proficiency and motivation could be inferred through observations of various behaviors or thoughts, this study took as one of its most important steps a three-week observation which established the level of motivation that the subject under study had. The collection and analysis of the data used in this study involved several stages that are explained in the next section.

**Analyzing quantitative data**

There are a number of stages researchers typically move through in the preparation of quantitative data for analysis; however, this research only took some of them due to the fact that just some of them applied to the type of data that was expected to be collected. The stages this research moved through were the following: *checking and organizing data phase, the data coding phase,* *the data entry stage,* and *reliability analysis stage.*

As it was mentioned before, the present study dealt with quantitative and just a bit of qualitative data. The first step during the research was establishing or identifying the number of participants that had an introverted or extroverted personality. This was done by administering the Myers-Briggs personality test based on Carl Jung theory which included 72 multiple choice questions aimed at finding out the type of personality each individual had. Having obtained this information, the data was processed and presented by using percentages that later were represented as bar graphs. The next step in the research took

place with the semi-structure interviews. These interviews were developed by Lic. Gracia Maria Castillo and Profa. Cindy Moreno de Quinteros, two experienced interviewers that have enough experience on assessing students’ oral proficiency using the CEF scales. These interviews were done with the purpose of getting the level of oral proficiency that each participant had. During this process, each respondent was taken to a comfortable place so that he or she could feel willing to provide the necessary information in order to get the closest to reality level of oral proficiency. Some warm-up questions were asked so that the interviewees could feel confident and thus the interviewer could obtain the data that later helped to establish how orally proficient each participant was. The data gathered via the semi-structure interviews was compared with the participants’ personality type and it led to know the percentage of introverted and extroverted students that were classified as orally proficient.

Once the personality type and level of oral proficiency were established, it was important to define which participants were highly or lowly motivated. To accomplish this, a checklist with very specific and clear descriptions was used. Every single item from the checklist was written in such way they could be ranged into three specific categories: always, sometimes, and never in order to measure the frequency in which participants practiced the activities described on the checklist. Therefore, the data obtained with this instrument was analyzed with a standard statistical procedure of frequency, in which *always* indicated that the participant was highly motivated and *never* showed that he or she was lowly motivated. Finally, all the results were depicted in percentages. These percentages showed how many introverted or extroverted students were orally proficient and highly motivated, and how many of them were not.

Qualitative approach

This study dealt with both quantitative and qualitative data which are believed to make the results at the end more reliable. Qualitative research main purpose is to emphasize the importance of looking at variables or the objects of the study in the natural setting in which they are found that is why the three-week observation were carried out into the classrooms where students were supposed to show what they had learned. These observations were supposed to be done in three specific groups selected through a stratified random sampling from three different schedules: morning, afternoon, and evening; nevertheless, only two of them could be observed due to the fact that one of the teachers in charge of one of the groups did not allow the researchers to develop those observations in his group. Motivation, on one hand, was measured by applying passive participant observations to the sample in its natural environment; in this case their learning context, as said before. Oral proficiency, on the other hand, was measured by interviewing the sample population using the CEF scales that defined the level of proficiency each participant owned.

Sample

When the population or object of study is too large, it may be time consuming or too complicated analyzing all members of the so called population in a comprehensible way. Then, a representative sample for evaluating attitudes or characteristics of the entire object of study can be more efficient and still provide the necessary or required information. There are several sample techniques that can be applied to select the number of participants that will be analyzed to give answer to the study. Because the whole population had the same probability of being selected and for assuring the reliability of the results, a stratified random sampling technique was used.

The participants were a group of respondents from the Advanced Intensive English I semester II 2012 of the University of El Salvador. This group consisted of 30 native Spanish speakers selected from a population of 263 students that were considered to have already reached a B1 level of oral proficiency based on the Common European Framework scales. According to the CEF scales, a student with a B1 level is expected to understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. The speaker can also describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. All respondents were chosen randomly and the majority of them were supposed to be studying their second year of the English teaching major.

Data collection, instruments and analysis

One of the principal and crucial steps in any research is the selection of the most appropriate and suitable data collection instruments. The correct design and selection of these instruments guarantee, in a way, the validity and reliability of the results at the end of the research. In Quantitative research, interviews are more structured than in Qualitative. In a structured interview, the researcher asks a standard set of questions and nothing more (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Personal interviews with participants on a one-to-one basis were considered favorable for the study compared to group interviews, since they are more likely to lead to the true views of the respondents when certain levels of confidentiality and trust is required and established (Brown, 2001). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is one of the most widely used psychological tests in both organizational psychology and vocational counseling. It has also been used in a number of studies involving second language learning and teaching. The MBTI is a self-report questionnaire that consists on 72-forced choice items and it measures four dichotomous styles of functioning in human beings: introversion-extroversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling and judging-perceiving (Myers, McCaulley, & Most, 1985; Quenk, 2000). The developers of this test agree that each person is a combination of all the types mentioned earlier. With the four two-dimensional categories, the MBTI groups its subjects into sixteen personality types and each of these types has different descriptions.

Data reliability measures

There are numbers of issues that researches must address and be aware of in order to make the results of the study as trustworthy as possible. The reliability of the data collected is one of the key aspects that need to be taken into consideration by any researcher.

With the purpose of achieving reliability in the current study, three data collection procedures were adopted. Two questionnaires are the first instruments that were used to collect part of the data needed. They were two personality tests, one made of 72 questions and the other made of 49 questions aimed at determining the personality type of each participant. One personality test was based on the theory presented by Myers-Briggs and the second was used to back up the results gathered from the MBTI. Regarding the analysis of the answers, the two personality tests contained the parameters to define the personality type of each participant in regard to the answers provided to each question. These instruments are considered as reliable and valid indicator because if these tests are administered twice; people come out with the same types of preferences the same seventy five percent to ninety percent of the time. In addition, some important researchers such as Mary H. McCaulley consider that the validity is quite good across most age and ethnic groups and it has been used in many different studies developed on the social and educational field such as*The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Teaching-Learning Process.*

The second data collection procedure was a semi-structured interview which was used to determine the level of oral proficiency that each participant had. The questions that were asked during the interview were carefully planned before it, but there could be also spontaneous questions that the interviewer could ask depending on the interaction during the interview. Each interview was recorded for further analysis and the analysis was done by comparing the oral performance provided by the participants to the features that characterize the definitions of each level of oral proficiency from the Common European Framework (CEF) scale.

One of the reasons of choosing the Common European Framework of Reference for languages scales to measure and classify the proficiency level of the participants was because these scales identify and assess the level of competence and proficiency in an interconnected way, based on an action-oriented approach.

By using these scales it was possible to describe the performance of participants mainly along two broad dimensions: the quantity dimension, which means the number of tasks the participant can perform successfully by language use, in what number of contexts, in relation to what number of themes, domains etc.; and a quality dimension which involves how effectively and efficiently the participant can achieve their goals through language use.

The third and last data collection procedure was the three-week observations that combined with a simple checklist were useful to define or establish whether the participants were highly or lowly motivated. These observations were simple and precise. Researchers observed for two weeks how participants, in this case advanced English students, behaved and reacted during their class. There were 30 respondents that were observed. These respondents represented the sample selected from the two Advanced English I groups. Each observer was assigned fifteen participants that were observed in a separate way, five of them during the first week and the other part in the second and third one. The checklist was designed using short descriptions of what highly and lowly motivated students are supposed to do as well as how they should respond to situations in the learning context. There was one checklist per participant every day and the results were analyzed using a standard statistical procedure of frequency.

Data validity

Validity is an estimate of the extent to which study or a set of instruments measures what it purports to measure (Newman & Benz, 1998M; Selinger&Shohamy, 1989). Research participants should respond similarly to the same question or item under the same conditions at different times. The MBTI test was first used in 1985 and has become one of the most utilized in personality and language research. This fact allowed the research to gain content validity. Each item from the MBTI test was related to the construct that it was intended to measure. In addition, all these items were specifically designed to be clearly understood by all participants.

Starting with the interviews, they were done by interviewers who had experience and knowledge in CEF scales and who were not part of the group of researchers. This was done with the purpose of making the interviews more objective and with much more validity. The observations, on the other hand, were administered in two of the schedules of the Advanced English I courses, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. This was done so that the study had a very complex and reliable sample. Besides that, a checklist containing the features that characterized both highly motivated and lowly motivated students was prepared in order to make the observations more agile.

Data collection

As it was mentioned previously, the data collection included two questionnaires (personality tests) and a semi-structured face- to- face interview with thirty volunteer participants that were attending one specific class: Advanced English I at the Foreign Languages Department. These students were supposed to be in the second year of the English teaching major. The thirty students completed first the personality tests and later the face-to-face semi-structured interview. Each interview lasted ten minutes in order to give each participant the opportunity to express their ideas; however, some warm-up questions were asked before so that the interviewees felt comfortable and willing to share their views.

This chapter has outlined in detail the research design and described the research procedure that was used through the whole research. A quantitative approach was adopted with the purpose of filling a gap found in the literature review. Four phases were followed in order to analyze the data gathered through questionnaires, an interview, and the observations. The reliability and validity of these instruments refer to the fact that the instruments actually measure what they claim to measure.

DATA ANALYSIS

Reaching a high level of oral proficiency is one of the main objectives of any foreign language student. However, having a high level of proficiency is not something innate in a student. This is just the result of many external and internal factors that all together affect the level of proficiency itself. Since this is a very wide topic to study, the researchers have focused this research on two internal aspects: Personality and level of motivation. This chapter analyses the data collected and it has been divided into two main parts: The socio-demographic information and the results gathered through the study.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Due to the fact that the entire population under study was too broad, a random sampling technique was applied. The whole universe consisted of 296 students from the Advanced Intensive English I of the semester II-2012, divided in 8 groups. However, 0nly 10.1% of them was selected to provide the researchers with the required data. This percentage (10.1%) represents a number of 30 students that made up the sample of the study. From those 30 students, 21 were from the Modern Languages major (70%), and 9 from the English Teaching Major (30%). They were studying in two different schedules; from six to eight a.m. and three to five p.m.

Graph 1

Graph 1.1

From those participants, 21 were majoring in Modern Languages (70%), and 9 in English Teaching (30%).

Graph 1.2

There were 16 male (53%) and 14 female (47%).

RESULTS

Two are the constructs that have been investigated through this study in relation to oral proficiency. The first one is personality type. One of the main objectives of the research was to find out whether personality affects, either in a positive or negative way, the level of oral proficiency one individual can get. To accomplish this with as much reliability as possible, two personality tests were administered. One of them was based on Myers-Brigs theory, which is the theory the current study mainly focuses on; while the other one is based on Nicolas Moreno’s - specialist in clinic psychology, in order to compare and give more validity to the results gathered in the first personality test. The Myers-Brigs personality test contained 72 questions, whereas Nicolas Moreno’s personality test contained 49 questions. The two tests aimed at defining the type of personality of each member of the sample. It is important to mention that both tests showed the same results regarding participants’ personality type in almost all the cases. That matching result equals the 97% (29 participants) being a 3% (1 participant) the discrepancy found.

Through the research, it was found out that both introverted and extroverted types of students can achieve the same level of oral proficiency. These results were reached through administering the oral interviews that were run by two experienced interviewers - Lic. Gracia Maria Castillo and Profa. Cindy Guadalupe de Quinteros, who administered those interviews based on the descriptors of the Common European Framework scales in order to categorize the respondent’s level of oral proficiency. After analyzing the results of these interviews, it can be stated that extroverted and introverted students can reach B2 level of oral proficiency. However, there was a twenty percent of extroverted students who

overcame introverted ones, which leads this research to the conclusion that both types of students can achieve the same level of oral proficiency but extroverted ones have more chances of doing it.

From the 30 students in the sample, 18 (60%) turned out to be extroverted and 12 (40%) introverted. From the whole sample, only 10 students reached the B2 level (33%). Out of the 18 participants that were classified as extroverted ones, 6 reached the B2 level and 4 from the 12 introverted ones reached the B2 level. This represents the same percentage for introverts and extroverts (33.3%). Based on these results, it can be stated that both extroverted and introverted students have the same opportunities to achieve a specific level (B2) of oral proficiency.

The second variable or construct under study was motivation. Since the theory says that those students who are highly motivated learn faster and learn more than those who are not, the other objective of this research was to determine if the level of motivation had to do with the level of oral proficiency that an English student can get. To accomplish this, some checklists containing 20 multiple choice criteria were used along the three-week observation to get the level of motivation in each student. Those criteria described different aspects such as enthusiasm and willingness in the learning process, and so on. Along the observation process a total of three hundred and sixty copies were used. After those three weeks, it was found out that out of the 30 students that represented the sample of the study, 16 (53%) of them were highly motivated and 14 (47%) of them were lowly motivated. From those who were highly motivated 7 (70%) reached the B2 level based on the CEF scale which classifies them as orally proficient students at their Advanced English I course

whereas only 3 (30%) students from the lowly motivated ones achieved the B2 level. Based on this, it is stated that motivation plays an important role to develop a high level of oral proficiency because the results from the data obtained reflect a 40% difference between the two results.

Graph 2

This graph shows the personality type results out of the thirty participants who represented the sample of this study. These thirty participants were required to fill in two different personality tests that, as it was mentioned before, coincided in their results at the end. After having completed these tests, sixty percent of the respondents were classified as extroverted, and the other forty percent as introverted.

Graph 2.1

After analyzing the data obtained from the checklists used, it was found out that 47% of the observed students were lowly motivated and 53% were highly motivated.

**Graph 2.2**

This graph shows the results of the oral interviews showing the level of oral proficiency of the students based on the CEF scales.

**Graph 2.3**

This graph shows the percentage of students with introverted and extroverted personality that are orally proficient.

Graph 2.4

This graph shows the percentage of students with high and low motivation that are orally proficient according to the Common European Framework scales.

FINDINGS

Although previous research has established that personality is a crucial element in the learning process, the results obtained show that it is not one of the factors that completely determine the level of proficiency that a student at the University of El Salvador can accomplish after a certain period of time. Likewise, it was proved through this study that both introverts and extroverts can achieve a high level of oral proficiency and they have also the same chances to reach the same oral performance.

Based on the results obtained in the research, it can be said that the level of motivation represents one of the main components that affect the level of oral proficiency that one student can achieve. From the results gathered in this study, highly and lowly motivated participants did equally in oral proficiency; however, the percentage of proficient students that were highly motivated exceeds lowly motivated ones. Motivated students have more chances of becoming orally proficient students.

Surprisingly, a very low percentage of the sample reached the B2 level. This means that the majority of Advanced English students presented certain deficiencies such as pronunciation issues, influence of their modern tongue, grammar problems, among others that stop them from reaching higher level of oral proficiency. Out of the 30 surveyed participants, 13 (44%) have still the A2 level, 7 have the B1 (23%), and 10 (33%) reached the B2 level at the end of the course. This represents that only few of them accomplished the requirements an advanced English student should have.

Although this was not the objective of the study, the researchers believe it is important to mention that through the research it was found out that the percentage of English Teaching Major students (31%) that reached the B2 level was higher than the ones from the Modern Languages Major (22%).

In conclusion, despite of what the theoretical framework stated at the beginning of this study, personality does not represent a crucial factor in becoming orally proficient. It has been proved that both introverted students and extroverted one can achieve B2 level of oral proficiency. Motivation, on the other hand, has a direct effect on how oral proficient a student can be, it represents an important element in this process, and as it was stated before highly motivated students can do better in achieving a high level of oral proficiency than lowly motivated ones. However, the results gathered through this research cannot be seen as conclusive due to the fact that there can be some other innate elements in every student that may influence their learning of English.

CONCLUSIONS

Personality is a factor which did not produce any negative or positive effect on the oral proficiency of students from the Advanced English I of the semester II 2012. According to the findings in this research, both introverted and extroverted personality types, were not significant in the oral performance of the students from the Advanced English I of the semester II 2012; due to the fact that students who were categorized as introvert and extrovert reached the same level of oral proficiency in terms of percentages.

Unlike personality, motivation does show a slight difference in the percentages, which leads to the conclusion that those who are highly motivated have more opportunities to reach a higher level of oral proficiency than those who have a low level of motivation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings that this study collected, and taking into account the researchers’ experience and constraints faced during the study, it is suggested to take a bigger sample for further studies. This would help next generations demonstrate which the real causes that affect an individual’s level of oral proficiency are.

Although the objective of this study was not finding out what level of oral proficiency the sample has reached, but finding out whether the respondents had reached a B2 level of oral proficiency or not; something that caught the researchers’ attention was the high numbers of students that were still in the A2 level of oral proficiency. It is also suggested to find out what the real factors are the ones which are interfering in those respondents who have not reached the expected level.

REFERENCES

Al-Sibai, D (2004). Promoting Oral Fluency of Second Language Learners. King Saud University. Department of English.

Borala , I (2004). An Exploration of Language Learning Strategies and Learners Variables of Sri Lankan Learners of English as a Second Language with Special Reference to their Personality Types. Griffith University.

Briggs, K and Briggs-Myers, I (1985). The High Level Description of the Sixteen Personality Types.

Carter, P (2007). IQ and Personality Tests. British Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Clement, R., Dornyei, Z., Macintyre, P., and Noels, K., (1998) Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation.

Dornyei, Zoltán. Attitutes, Orientations, and Motivations in Language Learning: Advances in Theory, Research, and Application. University of Nottingham. Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom. Department of English, Eotvos University.

Gardner, R. C. (2007). Motivation and Second Language Acquisition. University of Western Ontario.

Graebic, S (1998). Learning Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition

Juaga, I and Krajnovic, M (2008). Perception of Influence of Foreign Language Learning on Personality. University of Zagreb. Faculty of Humanitites and Social Sciences.

Krajnjan, Stevan (2009). Report Card and EIP comments.

Kasschau, R (1980). Psychology: Exploring Behavior.chapter 11: personality theories.

L, Rebecca (2003). Language Learning Styles and Strategies: an overview. Oxford University.

Paltridge, B and Phakiti (2010). Continuum Companion to Research Methods in Applied Linguistics. British Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Pintrich, Paul R. (2003). A Motivational Science Perspective on the Role of Student Motivation in Learning and Teaching Context. University of Michigan.

Smith, Carey Elizabeth (2008). The Role of Motivation and Inspiration in Learning.

Zhang,Y (2005). The Role of Personality on Second Language Acquisition

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.1

ANNEX 1.2

ANNEX 1.3

ANNEX 1.4