

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



**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:**

“THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF ENGLISH ORAL TASKS ON THE LEARNERS’ FLUENCY LEVEL IN THAT LANGUAGE: CASE OF ADVANCED INTENSIVE ENGLISH I COURSES OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR”

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning a second or foreign language is a process that concerns to the development of the four main skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). These four skills are of great importance to be developed in the learning process since all of them supplement each other and are the key to reach the language proficiency. In the teaching-learning process teachers make use of a diverse number of techniques to develop each of the four main skills. However, in many cases teachers give more emphasis to the development of one skill than to the others, the speaking skill being the ability on top to be developed.

The speaking skill has different sub skills that need to be developed in order for a learner to be proficient in this ability. Some of these sub skills are pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency. The last one is considered fundamental in the oral skill. So, speaking English fluently is to express a wide range of ideas without unnecessary pauses or breakdowns in communication, and speaking English accurately is to use an acceptable standard of pronunciation and grammar when communicating by Richards & Sandy, (1998).

In the Intensive English courses at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador, the students have the chance to develop their speaking skill by practicing new vocabulary in the classroom, and being part of a different type of oral tasks like explaining a topic, oral discussions, performing role plays, etc. However, during those courses there are different factors that influence the students' oral practice, impacting their performance and hindering the development of their oral fluency.

So, this report describes the main findings obtained at the end of the research where the main factors that influence students' oral fluency are listed and explained in order to let students and professors know whether these aspects impact negatively or positively on students' oral performance. Based on the results gotten, recommendations are addressed for students to follow in order to decrease the impact that the factors listed in this report have on their oral fluency, as well as recommendations for teachers to continue providing students with tools to make their learning easy.

## OBJECTIVES

### **General objective:**

To determine the incidence of English oral tasks on the Advanced Intensive English I students' fluency level in that language in order to present the results to the Foreign Language Department professors in charge of this subject.

### **Specific objectives:**

- 1) To determine the FLD students' attitude with regard to English oral tasks they have to carry out with the purpose of knowing its effect on their performance.
- 2) To determine the FLD professors' attitude with regard to English oral tasks that are more appropriate to students' oral fluency in order to present the results to the FLD.
- 3) To describe the salient problems that the students have regarding oral tasks with the purpose of helping them overcome those problems.
- 4) To determine the role of assessment with regard to oral task performance so as to know its incidence on students' performance.
- 5) To identify the affective factors and how they can be controlled in order to facilitate the FLD students' learning.
- 6) To demonstrate FLD students that they can face new challenges with the purpose of helping them to improve in their English learning process.
- 7) To provide the FLD professors with information regarding motivation so they enable their students to improve their oral fluency in English.
- 8) To inform the FLD professors about their students' affective factors in order for the professors to take into consideration this phenomenon in the teaching learning process.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the necessity of learning a second language for its importance in the working field, the *Ministerio de Education* of El Salvador (Ministry of Education) has seen the necessity of the implementation of English in the syllabus, but the big mistake is that the subject has not been taught since elementary school in El Salvador context. Students start studying English since seventh grade. As a result, students are afraid of the new language and find it difficult to learn. According to Cheryl walker (2004), “children should start learning a foreign language in kinder garden and continue through high school.” She says, “Learning languages helps increase listening ability, memory, creativity and critical thinking - all of which are thinking processes that increase learning in general.”

Ideally students should be taught intensive English courses since the very beginning for them not to face such problems as mispronunciation, lack of basic vocabulary and basic grammar content in higher levels. Moreover, the lack of interest in learning English is affecting students’ performance. According to Fernando Sigüenza a school teacher of English, students from public school do not care about learning a foreign language. Learners just focus on hobbies, sports, feelings and others, but not on studying. Sigüenza states those teachers from public school sometimes do not care about this. Those traditional teachers from public schools only come to classes to do their work, and students do not care about it either. When students start high school most of them have a low proficiency level of English.

All these troubles become a bigger obstacle when students want to apply for a job or a career at the university to choose a major like B.A in English Teaching. As a result students start studying facing many problems because schools do not provide them with the necessary knowledge for being competent in a foreign language area, and that becomes an obstacle to be efficient in speaking English. Thus, if the Government implements a new English program for all the public schools, students’ chances to meet their academic expectation will improve.



When being interviewed by the researchers' team, six professors from the Foreign Language Department (FLD) recommended that students should have an average knowledge of English Language before starting a major in the FLD in order to make the learning process easier and students' progress possible. Moreover, these teachers required student's responsibility and enrollment with the purpose of achieving the main goal which is speaking fluently in English. However, it is troublesome for all learners to achieve oral fluency in the English courses. As a result, students are affected in their evaluations. So professors use a series of techniques aimed at developing this important sub-skill (fluency) in such practices as oral tasks

The benefits students get from oral tasks are abundant: students have more opportunities for self-expression (controlling the topic), use of a wider range of language functions (narration, interrogation, description, etc), use of a wider range of syntactic construction, more self and peer correction, and others (Brandl, 2008). But, according to some observations from students of the FLD, there is an array of different impressions students have in their oral tasks. Some students seem to be interested in enrolling in activities like oral tasks while others seem to be uncomfortable of doing that, because of the fear of committing mistakes, showing weaknesses and other drawbacks in their speaking skill. As a consequence, they feel embarrassed by their classmates, and have difficulty in finding appropriate information, among others. For this reason, teachers have to continue encouraging their pupils' efforts in order to help them to meet their needs. In order to present the results through this study, the team of researchers seeks to find the answer for the following question: What are the most influential factors on the learners' fluency level of Advanced Intensive English I course?

## JUSTIFICATION

When people embark on the process of learning English as a foreign or second language, it is important to work on the development of the four main skills of a language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this learning process students must learn how to master them properly, in order to communicate in an accurate way according to what is demanded by the language.

The speaking skill is an essential part in the learning process when learning English. But speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions. It is too often assumed that spoken language skill can be developed by assigning students oral tasks with diverse types of topics to discuss.

By knowing the importance of the development of speaking skill, teachers select a series of communicative techniques in order to be applied in the classroom like speaking tasks. However, it is evident that not enough attention is given on some students' part to the factors that inhibit their production of spoken language and, therefore, their opportunities to develop oral fluency are lessened.

For that reason, the research on determining the most influential factors on learners' oral fluency level in English is of great importance, since during an oral activity in the classroom a variety of aspects can be found and every single student has its own attitude towards them. Such aspects can work on their side or against it, increasing or decreasing their oral performance. So, the importance of this study lies on finding such factors in order to let students know them and determine what to work on for overcoming the barriers that hinder the development of oral fluency in English.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Oral tasks as an effective tool to develop fluency**

In the latest years the English language has been one of the most studied languages all over the world. The process of teaching English as a foreign language is focused on the development of the four macro skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Nevertheless, communication should be the first priority, which is achieved through the development of the speaking skill. It is important for learners who are studying English in non- English settings to experience real communicative situations in which they learn to express their own ideas in a fluent way.

The purpose of this work is to demonstrate to students how important oral tasks are and how this tool can help them to get a high level of fluency as well as to show learners the main problems they might find when they have to perform an oral task in order for them to become aware of and try to overcome those difficulties before performing an oral task so that they can learn more and get better results at the end of the oral task. Based on the purpose previously mentioned, this work discusses some aspects to be taken into account in order to get satisfactory results when developing oral tasks.

Going further on the nature of tasks, let us state what a task is. A task is a classroom activity or exercise that has an objective attainable only by the interaction among participants; it has a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction; it also has a focus on meaning exchange. Besides, it is a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and produce the target language as they perform some set of work plans (Lee, 2000). As mentioned above, tasks are powerful tools that give many benefits, because they allow learners to be in constant contact with the language not only in classrooms, but also out of it. So for that reason tasks are necessary in the learning process in order to see the students' progress.

In any language classroom it is important to consider not only the need to develop accuracy (through a focus on form) and fluency (through active use of the target language in tasks) but also, and importantly, the need to develop complexity (Skehan, 1998) in

interpreting and using language and in reflecting upon language and culture in the context of use. Thus, in developing tasks, it is necessary and important to consider how each task builds on or extends previous learning and how it contributes to continuous and cumulative learning.

Tasks might be described as contextualized instances of language use. They include a purpose, an underlying reason for undertaking the task. They also include a context, the thematic, situational, and interactive circumstances in which the task is undertaken. Besides, they comprise a process and a product. Thus, as described by Clark, Scarino and Bromnel (1994), good language learning tasks involve the cautious use of existing knowledge and, above all, intellectual challenge for students. They develop confidence and provide a sense of achievement and enjoyment; and they contribute to learners' ever-developing communicative and learning repertoires.

Tasks can be categorized according to the main four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Whatever the aim of the task is, it is necessary to take into account the task's purpose, context, process, and product. One of the main macro-skills in language teaching and learning that needs much attention is speaking. This skill involves some sub-skills like fluency and accuracy which also require much attention to be developed.

According to Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) fluency is as follows: "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions." Besides that, they state that in second and foreign language learning, fluency is used to characterize a person's level of communication proficiency, including the following abilities: a) to produce written and/or spoken language with ease, b) to speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar, c) to communicate ideas effectively and produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication. In other words, the fluency level can reflect the level of proficiency in communication that a learner has reached. So, when someone has reached it, he or she is able to speak with confidence.

One way to determine the students' fluency level is through oral tasks. They are often carried out not only for knowing the students' fluency level but also to look for students' ability to produce words and phrases by evaluating students' fulfillment. There are a variety of tasks that can help students to develop oral fluency such as: debates, interviews, role-plays, discussions, and conversations.

Debate is a useful vehicle for fluency practice. Getting prepared for debates can promote proficiency in language development in ways that are challenging and exciting, because it is taken as a way for developing language fluency. By using debates, teachers can help the students to create a good performance in the reading, writing, speaking and listening skill, according to F. Christine (1982) a good thing of debate is that students enjoy this kind of discussion because they can talk about a topic they like.

In order for students to reach a high level of fluency, the most important thing is to practice the language as much as possible so with debates they are able to express their true feelings on specific issues and will feel comfortable by defending their actual feelings, using English in a fluent way and making debates more satisfying.

Interview is another task that can be useful to reach a high level of fluency. Students will learn new interview vocabulary. They will be able to hold a short interview or participate in an interview as interviewees, and be able to perform well enough to be acceptable in any interview they participate in. According to K. Myo (1995) the very nature of an interview makes it an excellent and effective activity because students can observe, read and listen to.

Role play is also another kind of task that teachers can assign. Role plays encourage learners to develop fluency in their speaking skill. L. Carol (1989) comments that the use of a role play has added a great number of possibilities for communication practice. In role plays learners perform roles to interact convincingly in English, and the exercise is of satisfaction to them that they ask for more. This helps them to improve their ability to converse in English since the purpose of role play is to put the pupils into realistic communication without non pre-established language sample.

Role plays help students to develop their fast thinking ability, to use the language spontaneously, to use their imagination and induce them to use the language fluently because “Any language activity that focuses on the language of the native speaker is called a fluency work” (W.O John, 1983).

Conversation is another type of task that helps students to exchange information and helps them to improve their fluency. Conversations can be defined as the informal interchange of thoughts and information by spoken words, in which people get into it without knowing whether how this conversation can start or finish; therefore, since conversation is a spontaneous creation of words, it is an effective way that provides the students with the necessary practice to develop their fluency.

### **Factors that influence students’ oral performance during a task**

According to Mr. Ricardo Cabrera, professor of the FLD, University of El Salvador, beside the researchers’ experience as foreign language learners, there are many factors that influence the development of students’ oral performance. The most important reasons are the following:

*a)Affective factors.* Affective side in language learning involves various aspects of emotion, feeling, and attitude of the learner. The affective side can influence positively or negatively on learners Heyde, (1979). Brown (2000) and Schumann (1999) state that there are some affective elements that impede the realization of oral fluency such as: self-esteem, extroversion, anxiety, empathy, etc. Even a fluent speaker with exceptional verbal accuracy, can be rendered, broken, even incomprehensible, by feelings of insecurity, negative self-perception, or self-doubt.

*b)Students’ background knowledge.* This has to do with how much students know about the language and how much they have learned in previous levels instructions. It could not be expected that those students who have had problems when using the language, at lower levels will not perform appropriately the task required for advanced students because this is a whole process in which students are involved from the beginning.

*c) Students' motivation and attitude toward the language.* Benabou and Tirole (2000) define motivation as the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. This refers to the interest that students show to learn a second language, the desire to learn new things, and apply the knowledge whenever it is required. Motivation can help to get a satisfactory result. Moreover, Celce Murcia (1991) states that if the learners' motivation to improve is strong and if the investment of time and effort (genuine not finged) is great, there will be improvement.

*d) Lack of practice.* This has to do with the time devoted to practice the language. Typically students want to get a high level of fluency and a positive result when finishing a task, but they do not invest the time required to practice the language. It is rare to see that students keep quiet through the whole class, but when the class finishes, they begin talking using their mother tongue. If they do not practice the language inside the classroom, much less somewhere else, they will not be proficient as someone who devotes more time to have more contact with the language.

*e) Task difficulty.* This has to do with the difficulty students face during the task because the kind of task is not appropriate to the students' level, or in some cases teachers demand more from students to perform a specific task and these are not capable of doing it.

*f) Skill integration:* since the integration of the four macro skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) is required in the syllabus, teachers devote little time for developing activities that will accomplish specific objectives in each skill, and sometimes students perform much better in other skills than in speaking. That is why they pass to upper levels without achieving the requirements established for the speaking skill.

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, it is not only teachers' responsibility to make their students achieve the specific objectives required in the syllabus, but the students have to make their own effort if they really want to have success in their learning and much more if they want to become fluent in the language.

## **What students can do to improve their fluency in English**

In the learning of English as a foreign language, students from the FLD have to be responsible for their own learning and not to expect that the teachers is the only one that will bring into the class all that they need to become fluent in the language. To follow up, there are some recommendations that students could take into account in order to improve their oral fluency. These are the following:

- Practice the language as much as possible: students should practice the language not only inside the classroom (when they are required to do so), but also outside of it (when they are talking with friends and someone else who speak the language)
- Get involved in group activities. Students have to take an advantage of every time that a teacher promotes communicative activities in which students are asked to work in small group. By working in small groups students can express confidently what they really can do with the language.
- Be confident: emotion is critically important for fluent speech. It is not enough to "know what to say". You also need to "say what you know". In other words, you must have the confidence to use your knowledge without hesitation.

## **Features in speaking activities to arise students' interest**

Nowadays, teachers have numerous resources to fall back on in creating communicative activities. Whether selecting fluency activities from sources like those just listed or creating activities for a specific situation, teachers should cover that all fluency activities focus the students' attention on getting their meaning across. A meaning focus can be achieved by creating activities wherein students have a specific task to perform, a particular problem to solve, or a clearly defined goal to reach. If the activities are properly designed, the students



will become so involved in succeeding at their tasks that they will necessarily be focused on getting their meaning across.

Moreover, teachers have to encourage the students' interest to take part in the development of any speaking activity. Ur (1988) explains some important features in speaking activities that are necessary to take into account with the purpose of arising students' interest to take part in the development of such activities.

**A) Topic**

The importance of the topic as a focus varies: if the activity is a discussion or essay on a controversial subject, then obviously the topic must be one that holds the students' attention; but if the activity is a game-like or creating juxtapositions, then the subject matter becomes relatively unimportant, and the task itself is what provides the interest.

**B) visual focus**

It is very much easier to concentrate on thinking about something if you can see that thing, or at least some depicted or symbolic representation of it. In other words, it is important to provide students with a visual representation of something they can use in their oral performance to facilitate the expressiveness of them since it is believed that sight is an extremely powerful and demanding sense.

**C) Open – endedness**

A task that is open – ended allows for lots of different responses during its performance, and is therefore conducive to the production of varied and original ideas.

**D) Information gaps**

In most real – life language – based transactions, the transmission of new ideas from one participant to another does occur. When this factor is built into a classroom

language learning task, the effect is to add a dealing of purpose, challenge and authenticity which improve students' interest.

**E) Personalization**

Personalization is believed to be the use of interaction based on the students' personal experiences, opinions, ideas and feelings, even though, asking students to be very intimate or frank with one another can sometimes cause embarrassment or even distress.

**F) Pleasurable tension**

The reason why most games are interesting is that they provide their participants with a feeling of pleasurable tension; and this feature can contribute also to the interest of language practice activities.

**G) Entertainment**

Sheer entertainment is another source of interest in language practice activities. It can sometimes become the main objective of student contribution to a task, instead of a pleasing by – product.

**H) Play – acting**

Learners often enjoy being someone else, or being themselves in an imaginary situation. And a temporary departure from reality, incidentally, is not only a means of motivating students to participate, but also a very effective way of widening the range of language available for use.

The role of a professor is to make sure that all students get as many benefits as possible from all the activities and to encourage them to be part of any activity using the language freely even if they make mistakes.

## **Assessing Oral Presentations**

Assessing oral presentations are use to increase students ability to present information orally however it is not sufficient simply to ask a student to make an oral presentation. Students need feedback on their performance in order that they can improve. Beside, without any comment or assessment criteria, will not tell a student what He/ She should do to improve. So what might be the assessment criteria for an oral presentation?

The task or subject matter of the oral presentation will often be the subject matter of current modules because the ability at least to talk in the discourse of the discipline is relevant. However, if it simply the skill of presentation that is important, then the student may be asked to pick any topic at all.

### **Important aspects of oral assessment criteria**

- Assessment criteria are the details of performance on the basis of which a presentation is given a mark, or on which feedback is given. It would not be appropriate simply to provide a standard list of assessment criteria that would guide the marking of any presentation because what is valued in a presentation might differ. For example, in one presentation, the knowledge content might be assessed, whereas in another the focus might be the clarity and pacing of the speech. These are very different features of the same performance and reflect different purposes for the exercise. Thus, educators should know what the purpose of the activity is, and then they will identify what kind of rubric is going to be used.
- Not only it is important to develop a list of assessment criteria that are appropriate to the task at hand, but the list should also be conveyed to students in advance. In this way, they are enabled to shape their skills in a manner that they know is appropriate. It is not helpful to learn if students have to guess the basis for their assessment.

- One of the features of an oral presentation is that it does not leave a record. Unless the presentation is recorded, there is no chance for discussion of a disputed mark. For this reason, the assessment procedure must be simple so that the assessor can use it easily and fairly from the beginning. This in turn implies that the assessment should operate on the basis of very few assessment criteria – in effect those that the advisor can hold in mind during the presentation. Teachers have the responsibility to help students to develop sub-skill, but at the moment of performing a task they have to divide which aspect are going to be evaluated in that task and what aspect will be taken into account for a next presentation, so as not to have huge elements in a single evaluation criteria, otherwise the purpose of the activity will not be achieved.

If students get involve in oral presentations, they may be involved in the development of the assessment criteria.

#### **A list of assessable features of oral task**

It is indicated above why it is not appropriate to provide a standard list of assessment criteria for oral presentations. According to Jenny Moon the list below is designed to help in the development of assessment criteria. It provides a range of features of oral presentations from which assessment criteria may be selected and developed, depending on the focus of the presentation. The features are given in the form of questions that might be on a checklist. However, there are different formats of assessment criteria, and different ways in which they may relate to the allocation of marks. Some illustration of the latter is provided in the section that follows the list.

- ✓ Does the content of the presentation relate to the title and or purpose of the presentation?
- ✓ Is the depth of the content sufficient?
- ✓ Is the message of the presentation clearly put / argued?
- ✓ Is the argument consistent?
- ✓ Is there sufficient evidence given to support arguments?
- ✓ Is there an evidence of appropriate critical thinking?

- ✓ Are conclusions drawn appropriately?
- ✓ Does the presenter put his/her own point of view in an appropriate manner?
- ✓ Is the audience engaged – is their attention maintained by the presenter?
- ✓ Is the response to questions and comment competent / accurate / adequate (etc.)?
- ✓ Is the personal organization of the presenter adequate (e.g. managing questions, notes, props etc.)?
- ✓ Is time keeping managed well (enough)?
- ✓ Is the presentation:
  - Audible, clear (articulation)
    - ✓ Does the speaker have ‘presence’ and adequate confidence?
    - ✓ Does he/she make appropriate eye contact?
    - ✓ Are there unexpected features in the content / presentation beyond the expected?
    - ✓ It is stressed that no more than a few of these criteria can be managed by an assessor listening to a short presentation.

As it has been stated here, the skills of oral task are important for student learning since oral tasks are an essential tool to set up a practice environment for students to develop oral fluency and be proficient in the speaking skill. There should be more to the process than a one-off assessed task that allows a tick to be put in a box say the skill is ‘covered’ somewhere on a program. For students to better know their performance and the skills they need to reinforce, teachers should sometimes allow learners to evaluate themselves as well. For example, students should be asked to give an oral presentation at least once at every level so that they become more familiar with the skills, more comfortable about the task and able to consider their performance and improve on it.

As it is evident that in the learning process students encounter a series of difficulties that hinder their improvement, it is necessary to determine the different factors that give students troubles to advance in their learning. Whatever the macro skill learners work on, they will find any difficulty that may limit their progress. In developing the speaking skill they can find a lot of factors that become an obstacle to reach their goals. Since students

count on their teachers mostly and keep in mind they are going to be provided with the necessary tools to learn the language ability, in this case the speaking skill through oral tasks, the elaboration of studies aimed at discovering the problems that students face during oral tasks is of great importance. Through such studies teachers are given important support to better treat such problems and help their students out to overcome the difficulties that they find when embarking on oral tasks.

### **Instruments for oral evaluation**

In order for teachers to measure the degree of students' correctness on the performance of any task, it is necessary the implementation of instruments of evaluation, but what does someone mean with the term evaluation? It is very important to understand the definition of evaluation itself, since it is the way through which someone can judge, measure, and get to know how well students are performing. There are three terms which are confusing and somehow related to evaluation: testing, assessment and measurement.

*Testing* is an activity whose main purpose is to convey (usually to the tester) how well the learners know or can do something" (Ur, Penny 2002). In this situation the test taker has the chance to demonstrate a skill, ability or knowledge considering the nature of the test. So test is an important tool that can help not only the learner to see how much the progress that he/she has gotten but also it makes the tester works easier to evaluate.

Kizlik (2010) defines assessment as a process by which information is obtained with regard to some known objective or goal. Assessment is a broad term that includes testing. A test is a special form of assessment. Tests are assessments made under contrived circumstances especially so that they may be administered. In other words, all tests are assessments, but not all assessments are tests. We test at the end of a lesson or unit. Whether implicit or explicit, assessment is most usefully connected to some goal or objective for which the assessment is designed.

*A test or assessment* yields information relative to an objective or goal. In that sense, someone test or assess to determine whether or not an objective or goal has been obtained. Assessment of skill attainment is rather straightforward. Either the skill exists at

some acceptable level or it doesn't. Skills are readily demonstrable. Assessment of understanding is much more difficult and complex. Skills can be practiced; understandings cannot. It can assess a person's knowledge in a variety of ways, but there is always a leap, an inference that we make about what a person does in relation to what it signifies about what He/She knows.

*Measurement* refers to the set of procedures and the main aspects for how to use the procedures in educational test assessments. Some of the basic principles of measurement in educational evaluations would be raw scores, percentiles ranks, derived scores, standard scores, etc.

*Evaluation* is perhaps the most complex and least understood of the terms. Inherent in the idea of evaluation is "value." When evaluating, what it is doing is engaging in some process that is designed to provide information that will help to make a judgment about a given situation. Generally, any evaluation process requires information about the situation dealt with. A situation is an umbrella term that takes into account such ideas as objectives, goals, standards, procedures, and so on.

Also evaluating is the process will defer information regarding the worthiness, appropriateness, goodness, validity, legality, etc., of something for which a reliable measurement or assessment has been made. To sum up, teachers measure what they have gotten, they assess learning, and they evaluate results in terms of some set of criteria. These three terms are certainly connected, but it is useful to think of them as separate but connected ideas and process.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out the present study and answer the research question, the researchers' team decided to follow some necessary steps and apply some research methods that are described in this chapter. First, a topic for this study was selected (Factors on oral tasks influencing students' oral fluency). Then, it was narrowed down to two variables which are oral tasks activities and students' fluency level since the main goal of the study is to determine how the first variable influences the second one. Three out of five Advanced Intensive English II courses from term II 2013 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador were selected by the researchers to gather the information to do this study. 45 students from these groups were chosen randomly as a sample of the study.

In the second step, bibliographical information related to the topic being studied was gathered to come up with a literature review. For that reason, previous studies, books, theses, and sources found on the internet were selected in order to write the theoretical framework that supported this research. Thus, important authors that have developed similar researches in different universities around the world were selected. After that, the theoretical framework was developed by using different opinions, findings, and results of the authors selected and by including the opinion of some professors from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

In the third step, the researchers' team selected the methods to be applied in this study. The survey research method was selected since it involves the use of interviews, questionnaires or checklists to obtain quantitative information. By using this method, the researchers gathered the expected information from the students and teachers that answered the questionnaire. Then, to analyze the information, quantitative research was selected since it refers to the systematic and empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Also, qualitative research was selected to be used and applied in this study since this method aims at gathering an in-deep understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior (Savenye et al. 2005) By



using this method, the researchers observed 8 classes and recorded the students' behaviors observed regarding oral tasks, as well as teachers' attitude on the subject. These data were gathered in a check-list form. Observation was used in order to confirm the information provided by students and teachers in the questionnaires to get precise data.

In the same step, a letter was sent to each professor in charge of the Advanced Intensive English II course in order to get his/her authorization to administer the observations and the questioning to students as well. Therefore, in order to gather, analyze, and interpret the information for this academic work, the research methods (quantitative and qualitative) were combined and used in this research in order to carry out the study and answer the research question.

In the fourth step, a pilot survey was administered to 8 professors from the FLD of the University of El Salvador with the purpose of getting advisory from them about what to improve on the surveys in order to better address the questions so that the answers fulfill the objectives of this work. Moreover, two personal interviews were administered to two professors of the English Language. One professor was from a public school and the other was from the FLD, in order to get their viewpoints on the matter. Therefore, these interviews helped to support this research.

In the fifth step, a survey with 8 questions was designed and administered to 6 professors from the FLD in order to get their point of view on the matter with the purpose of knowing their opinion based on their experience in teaching Advanced Intensive English II courses and compare both professors and students' opinions on the subject under study. For this process a letter was administered to the professors selected to answer the questionnaire to inform them about the objectives of the study and reason for the questioning. Professors who answered the questionnaire were selected randomly from the list of professors assigned to teach the Advanced Intensive English II course, second term 2013, published by the FLD department.

Finally, the information gathered by means of the questionnaire, check-list, and interview were studied, analyzed, and tabulated into a quantitative form in order to present the information gathered in a precise way and to help the research team to determine the

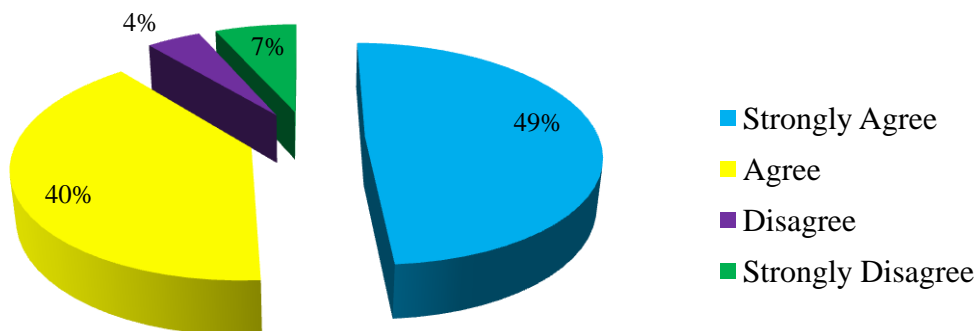
answer to the research question. The research methods already mentioned were applied to provide a suitable answer to the question: What are the most influencing factors of oral task performance and their effects on students' oral fluency level of Advanced Intensive English I course?

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### A. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

What follows is a section of analyses and interpretations of surveys passed to FLD students and professors. Each graph is analyzed and interpreted according to its results.

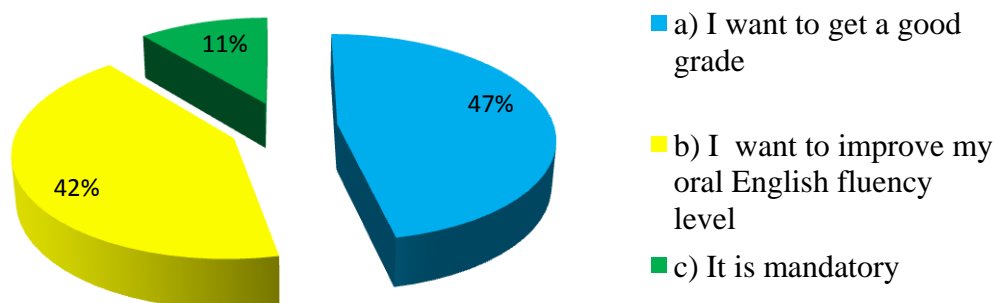
#### 1. Do you care about doing a good performance on your oral English fluency when you carry out an oral task?



According to this graph, 49% of the students answered that they have a strong tendency to care about doing a good performance when they carry out an oral task, while the 40% of them just care of doing a good work on that matter. In the other hand, 7% of them strongly admit that they do not care of this while the remaining 4% just answered that they do not do that.

As revealed by the graph, there is a significant tendency on the students' part to admit that they care about doing a good performance on their oral English fluency. On the other hand, the remaining 11% do not care about that.

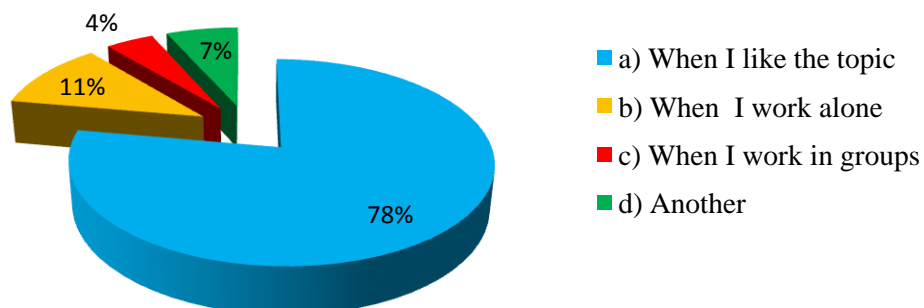
## 2. Why do you perform an oral task?



This graph shows that almost half of the sample (47%) answered that they perform an oral task because they want to get a good grade meanwhile the 42 % of them perform an oral task because they want to improve their oral fluency in English and the remaining 11% of them just do it because it is mandatory.

As revealed by the data, there is a considerable tendency on the students' part to get a good grade in their oral tasks in English and improve their oral fluency in English. Only 10% of them consider oral tasks as something mandatory.

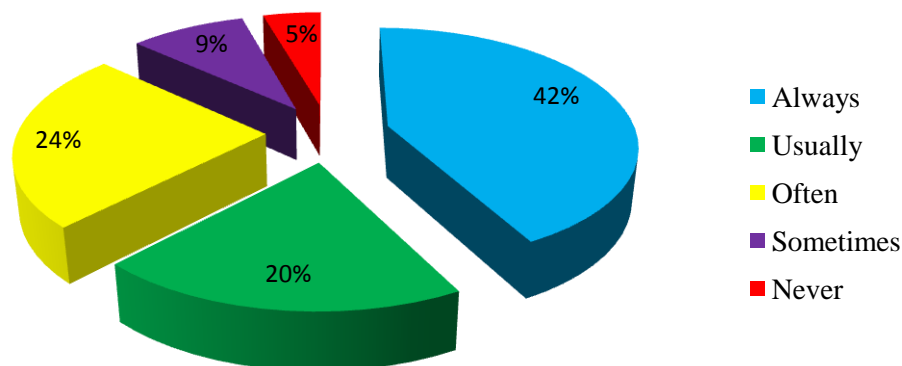
## 3. When do you get better grades in an oral task?



It is noticeable to see that most students (78%) answered that they get better grades when they like the topic while 11% of them said that they get higher grades if they work alone. 7% of students answered they are successful in other situations while the remaining 4% of them admitted that they get better grades whenever they work in group.

As revealed by the data, there is a strong tendency on the students' part to admit that they get better grades when they like the topic presented in class. It is noticeable to see that a limited number of them (11%) are successful when they work alone and a reduced number of them (4%) get good grades when working in groups.

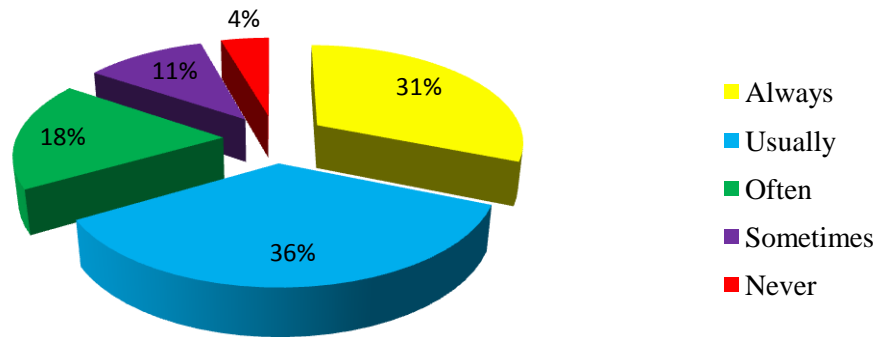
#### 4. Do you receive explanation from your teacher about the criteria to be evaluated before an oral task?



Regarding this graph, 42% of the students answered that they always receive explanation from their teacher about the criteria to be evaluated on an oral task. So these people know what the aspects are to be evaluated before embarking on a task. 24% of students said that they often get informed about the evaluation criteria, 20% of them admit that they usually receive explanation about what will be taken into account in the evaluation. Just a few percent of them (5%) answered that they never receive the criteria before a task.

As revealed by this graph, in most cases the subjects under study receive explanation from their professors about how they will be evaluated before embarking on an oral task.

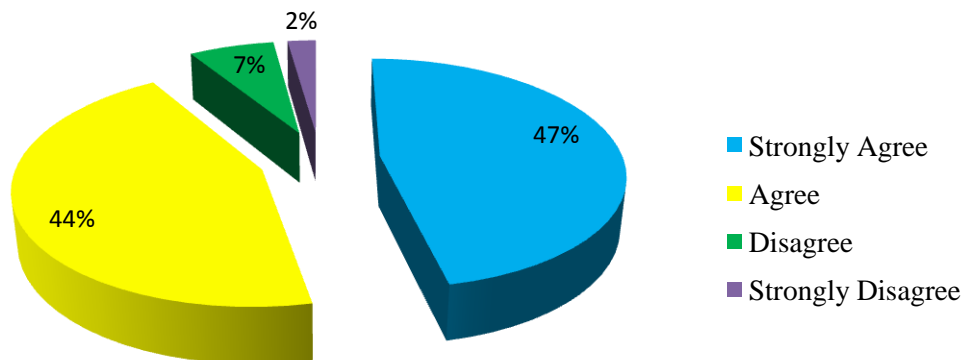
**5. Does your teacher make use of any technique to increase your motivation for you to improve your oral fluency through oral practice?**



As this graph shows, 36% of the students surveyed answered that their teachers always make use of any technique to increase their motivation for them to improve their oral fluency, and the other 31% answered they usually do this. 18% of the students answered that their teachers often motivate them to improve their oral English fluency whereas 8% of them answered that this sometimes happens and the remaining 4% said teachers never use any technique to motivate them.

According to the data, most students recognize that their teachers make use of any technique to increase their motivation for them to improve their oral English fluency.

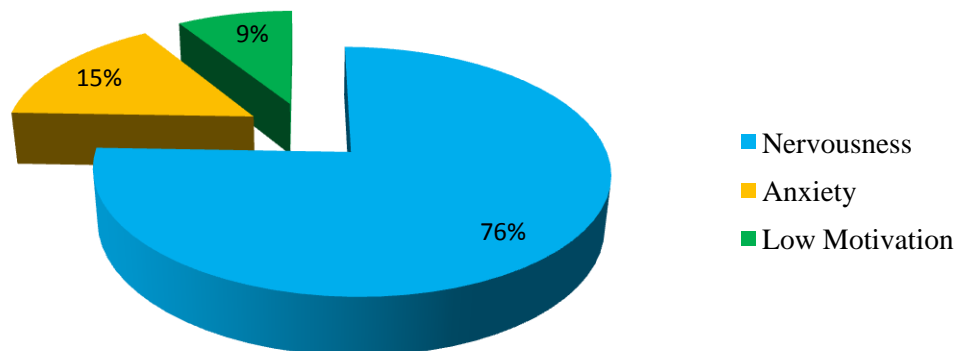
**6. Do you think that time pressure and nervousness affect your oral English fluency in an oral task?**



According to this graph, 47% of the students surveyed strongly agree that time pressure and nervousness affect their oral English fluency in an oral task. Moreover, 44% of them often agree in thinking that this phenomenon happens. On the other hand, 7% of students surveyed disagree on the matter and the remaining 2% of them strongly disagree about that situation.

There is a strong tendency on the students' part to admit that time pressure and nervousness affect their English fluency. This reflects that most students recognize that time pressure and nervousness affect their English fluency.

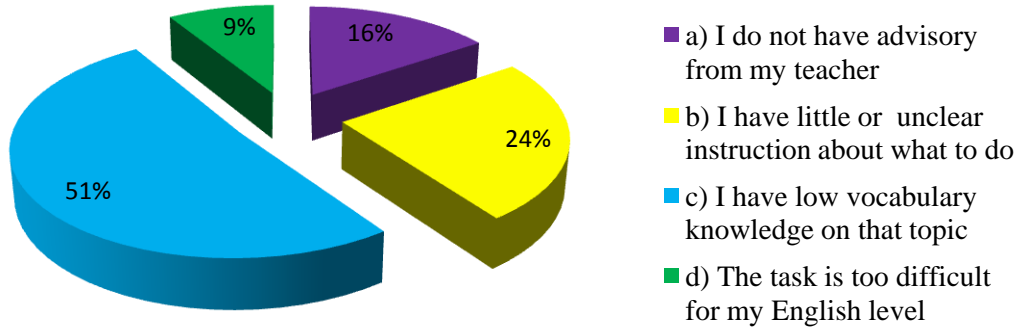
**7. Which of the following factors affects the most your oral English fluency in an oral task?**



As shown in this graph, 76% of the students surveyed answered that nervousness affects the most their oral English fluency when embarked on an oral task; meanwhile 15% of them said anxiety is the cause of their academic failure, and the remaining 9% associate their failure on oral tasks with low motivation.

According to the data, a good number of students are aware of the incidence nervousness has on their performance with regard to oral English fluency when having oral tasks. The prevailing factor of students' academic failure in oral tasks is that of nervousness.

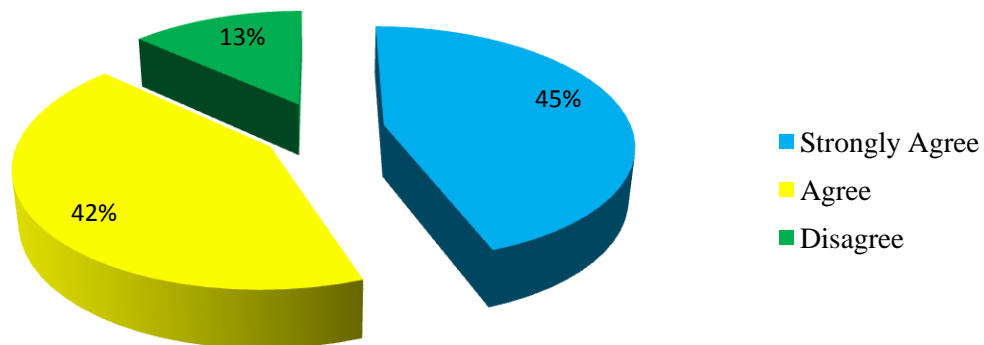
**8. Which form the following factors do you think affects you the most in your oral English fluency during an oral task?**



As shown by this graph, 51% of the students surveyed answered that having low vocabulary knowledge on the topic affects the most their oral English fluency in an oral task, whereas 24% of them answered that having little or unclear instruction about what to do is the factor that affects them. 16% answered that not having advisory from the teacher is what affects their performance in oral tasks, and the remaining 9% said that the task difficulty is the cause of their academic failure.

As revealed by the students' answers, low vocabulary and little or unclear instruction about what to do are the most influential factors of their poor oral fluency in English.

**9. Do you consider that receiving advisory on what to do and how to carry out your oral task influences your performance?**



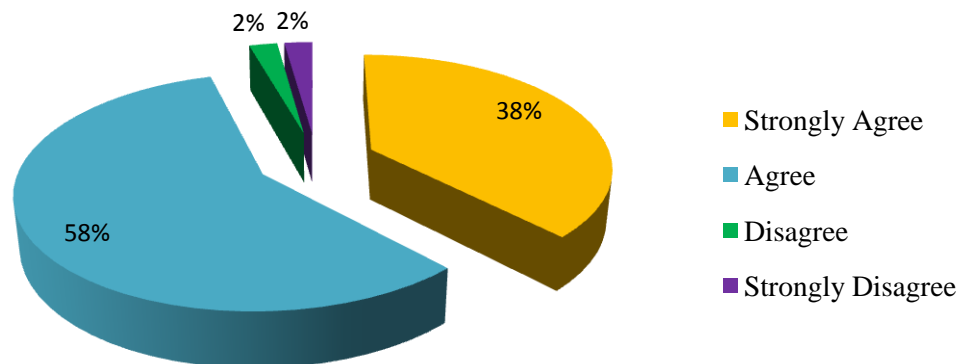


According to students' answers, almost half of them strongly agree that receiving advisory influences their performance while another important number of them agree with that fact and a little number of students disagree that receiving advisory influences their performance on oral tasks.

To conclude, if students have advisory from their teachers, the former will have more opportunities to perform better on oral tasks and their tendency to fail will be reduced.

As shown by the students' answers, receiving their professors' advisory has a powerful impact on the students' oral performance.

**10. Do you consider that knowing the criteria to be evaluated in an oral task helps you to do a better performance?**

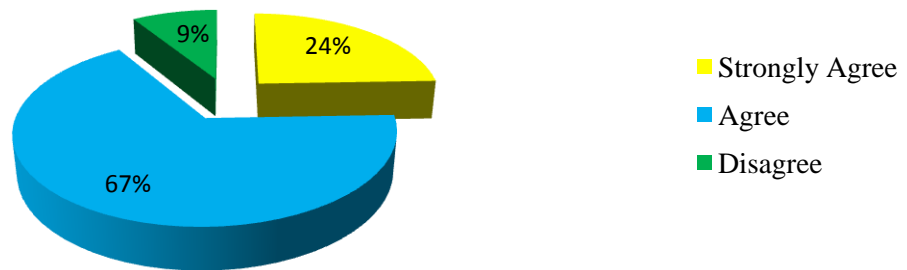


The results for this question reveal that most students surveyed agree that knowing the criteria to be evaluated on an oral task influences their performance. Another important number of them strongly agree with this fact. On the other hand, a very short group of students disagree, and the same number of them strongly disagree that knowing the criteria to be evaluated influences their performance.

The conclusions for this question are the following: If students know what will be evaluated in their performance on an oral task, they will have more chances to perform better and have satisfactory results.

As revealed by the students, there is a strong tendency on their part to associate the fact of knowing the evaluation criteria with a better oral performance.

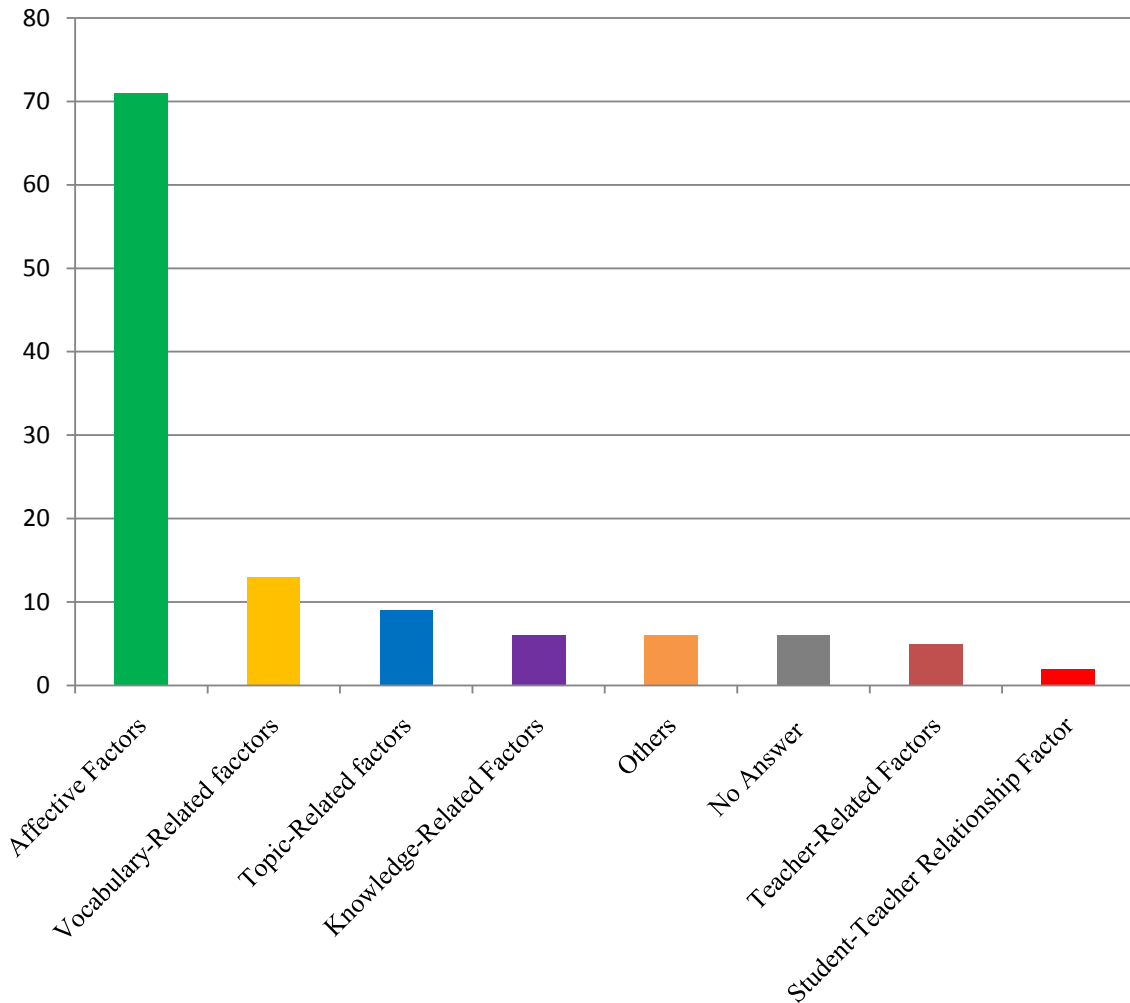
**11. When you receive assessment criteria before carrying an oral task, do you think that a large number of requirements to accomplish may affect your performance?**



This question reveals that the majority of students think that having a long list of aspects to accomplish may affect their performance, while a little number of them is pretty sure about that fact. On the other hand, a very little number of students disagree with the statement that their performance may be affected if they have a long list of requirements to be accomplished in an oral task.

Based on the results shown, the researchers' conclusion is that students' performance may have an impact on their oral tasks if they are asked to accomplish a long list of aspects.

**12. What are the salient problems that you think affect your performance during an oral activity or evaluation?**

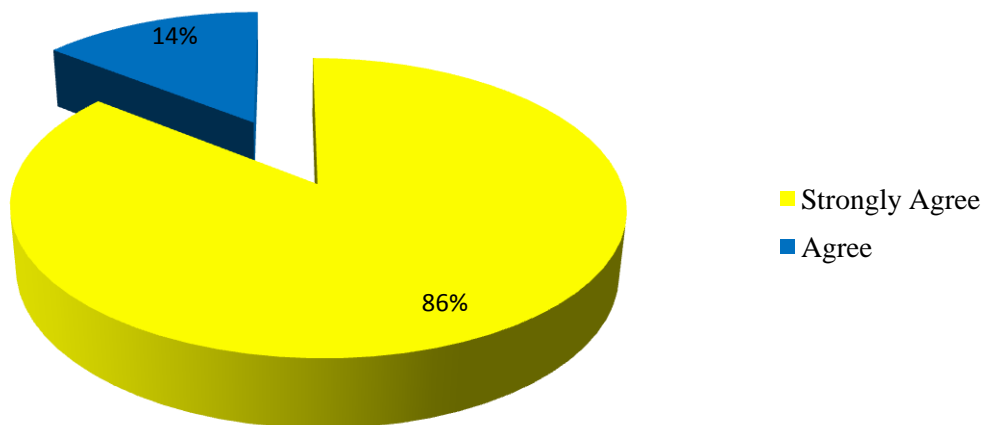


According to this graph, the majority of students surveyed think the prominent problems that affect their performance during an oral task or oral evaluation are the affective ones. Next are vocabulary-related factors, followed by topic-related problems. Knowledge-related factors, others, and no answer come next. A teacher-related factor follows in the graph, and student-teacher relationship problems ranks last. This means that the prevailing factor of students' academic failure in an oral task is that of affective problems such as nervousness, anxiety, low motivation and others.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### B. PROFESORS QUESTIONNAIRE

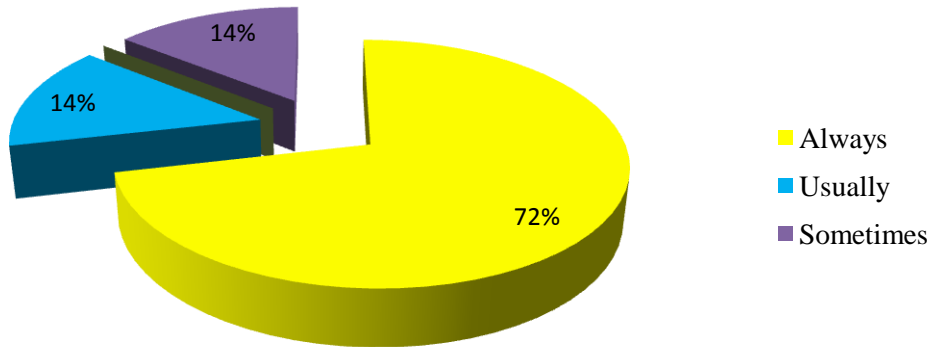
**1. Do you think it is necessary to provide students with assessment criteria before embarking on an oral task in order for them to do a better performance with regard to oral English fluency?**



As shown in this graph, 86% of the teachers surveyed strongly agree that it is necessary to provide students with assessment criteria before embarking on an oral task in order to do a better performance meanwhile the remaining 14% of them agree with that fact

According to the data, all the teachers are aware of the fact that it is necessary to provide students with assessment criteria before embarking on an oral task in order to do a better performance.

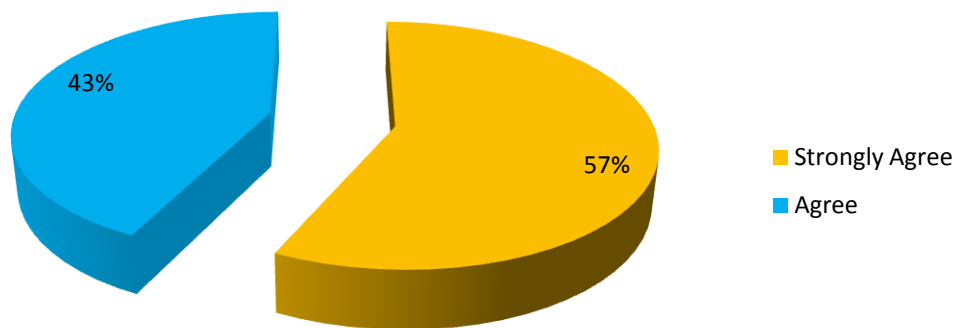
**2. Do you provide your students with explanation about the criteria to be evaluated before an oral task?**



In this graph, 72% of the teachers surveyed answered that they always provide students with explanation about the criteria to be evaluated before an oral task meanwhile 14% answered they usually do it, and the remaining 14% of them sometimes do that.

According to the data, teachers have a strong tendency to explain their students about the criteria to be evaluated before embarking on oral task.

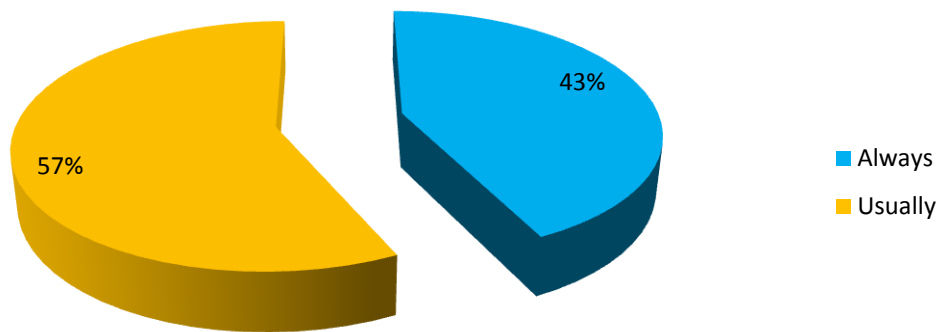
**3. Do you think it is necessary to increase your students' motivation for them to improve their oral English fluency?**



This graph shows that 57% of the teachers surveyed answered they strongly agree that it is necessary to increase students' motivation in order to improve their oral English fluency, whereas 43% of them agree on this matter.

According to the data, all the teachers think that it is necessary to increase students' motivation in order to increase their oral English fluency level.

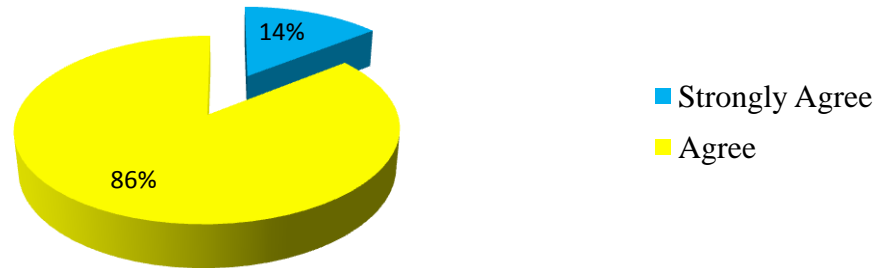
#### **4. Do you make use of any technique to increase your students' motivation for them to improve their oral English fluency?**



Meanwhile 43% of the teachers surveyed said they always make use of any technique to increase students' motivation in order to improve their oral English fluency, 57% of them usually do it.

According to the data gathered, all the FLD teachers recognize that they usually use any technique to increase students' motivation for them to improve their oral fluency in English. This means that they are aware of the fact that motivation is very important for students to progress.

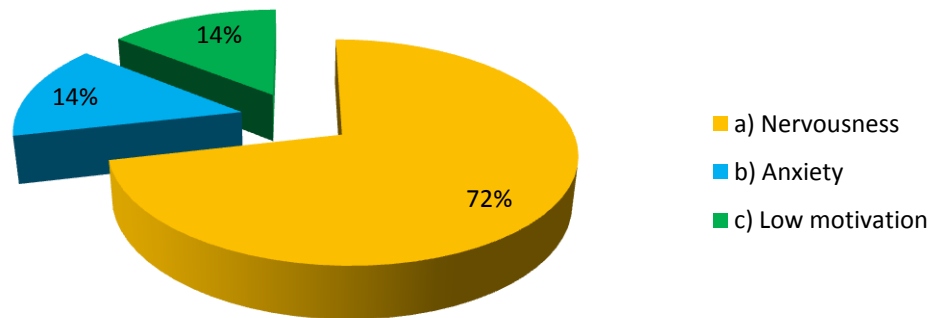
**5. Do you think time pressure and nervousness affect your student's oral English fluency in an oral task?**



This graph shows that 86% of the teachers surveyed agree that time pressure and nervousness affect students' oral English fluency in an oral task, whereas the remaining 14% of them agree with this in strong terms.

There is a marked tendency on the teachers' part to admit that pressure and nervousness affect their students' fluency in English when performing oral tasks.

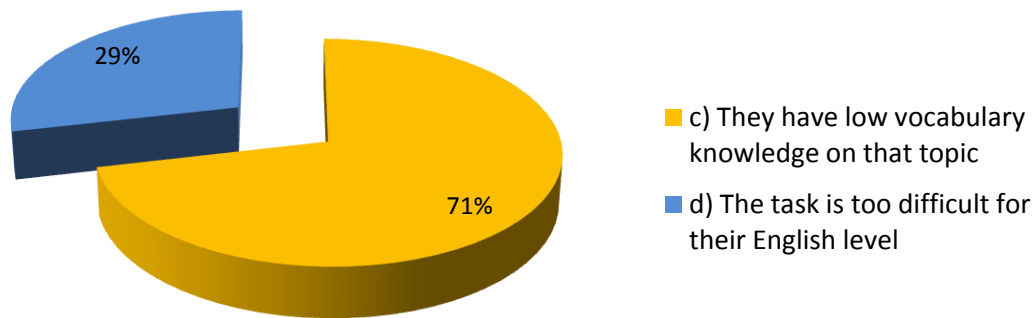
**6. From the following factors, which affects the most your students' oral English fluency in an oral task?**



According to this graph, most teachers surveyed answered that the factor that mostly affects their students is nervousness (71.4%), while few of them (28.6%) answered that low motivation is the one that affects their students' oral fluency in English during an oral task.

According to this information, definitely affective factors influence negatively on students' oral fluency, nervousness being the prevailing one.

**7. From the following factors, choose the one that you think affects the most your students' oral English fluency during an oral task.**

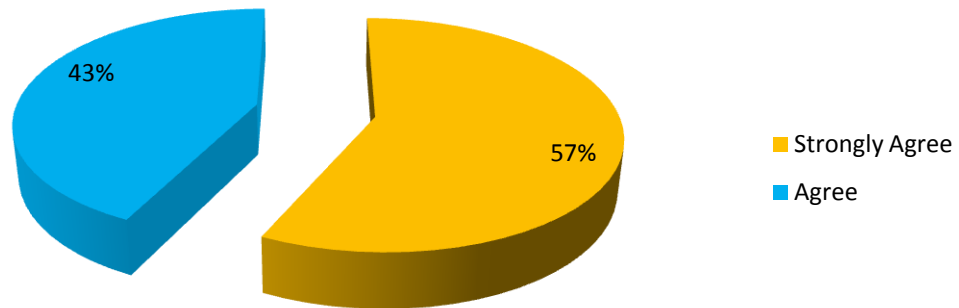


As shown in this graph, it is noticeable that the majority of the teachers surveyed (71.4%) think that their students' low vocabulary knowledge influences negatively their oral English fluency in an oral task, but some of them (28.6%) answered that they fail due to the fact that the task is too difficult for their English level.

This means that students find the tasks difficult because of the lack of interest they have in learning new vocabulary, so at the moment of performing students show a low level of oral English fluency.



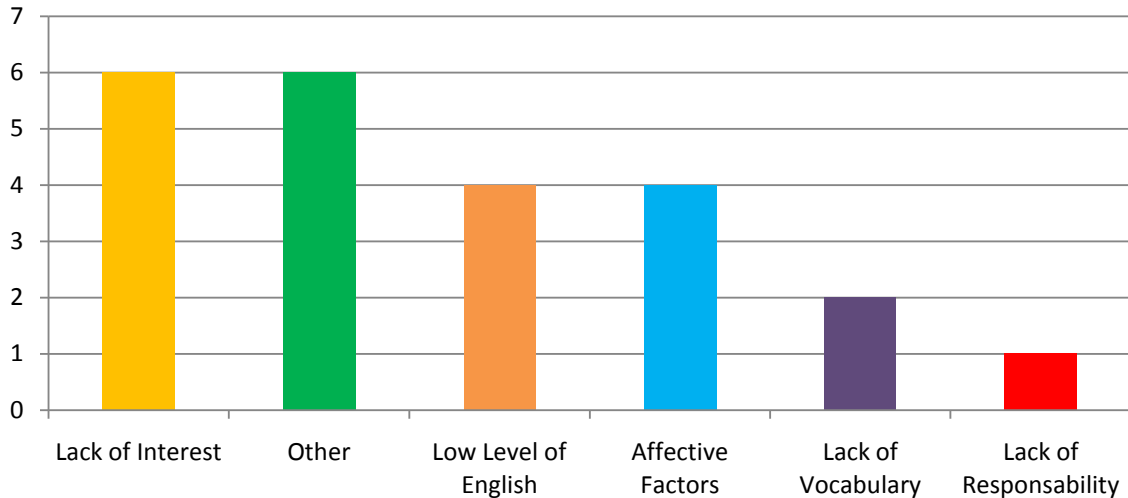
**8. Do you consider that providing students with advisory on what to do and how to carry out their oral task influences their performance with regard to oral English fluency?**



According to this graph, 57% of teachers strongly agree that providing students with advisory before they carry out an oral task influences their performance, and another important number of teachers surveyed just agree with this fact.

According to the data gathered, if teachers provide students with advisory on what to do and how to carry out an oral task, it will bring them an important benefit in their performance.

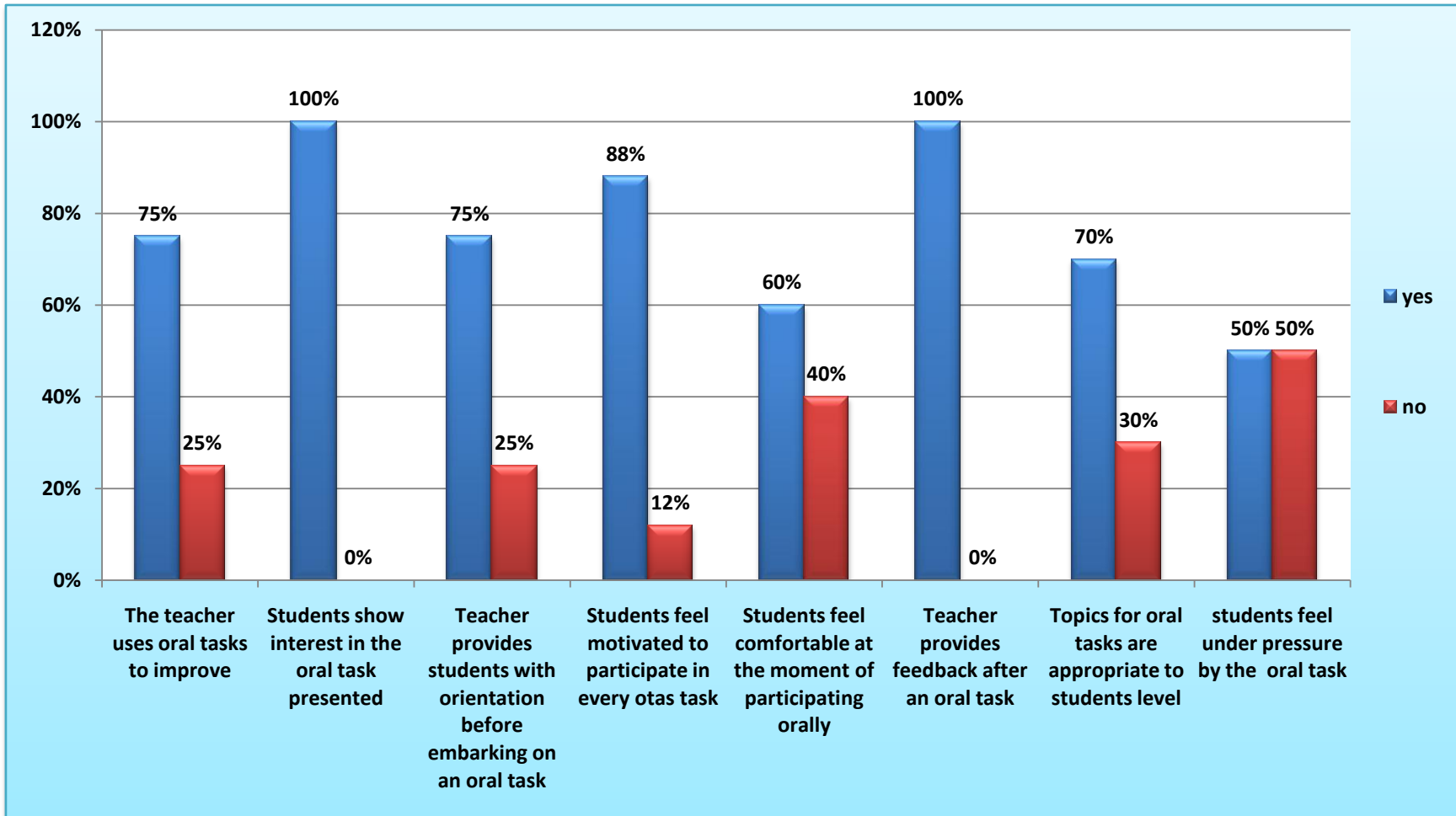
**9. What are the salient problems you think affect your students' performance during an oral activity or evaluation?**



As shown in this graph, the prevailing factors that cause students' academic failure in an oral task are lack of interest and other factors. Next are low of English and affective factors. Lack of vocabulary ranked next, and lack of responsibility was in the last position.

This means that teachers associate students' academic failure in an oral task mainly with their lack of interest and other factors.

## CLASS OBSERVATION GRAPH



## CLASS OBSERVATION GRAPH

### Analysis and interpretation of the graph above (observation of classes)

- 1) The teacher uses oral task to improve his/her students' oral English fluency

According to the graph, 75% of class observed, teachers provided students with oral tasks in order to improve students' oral fluency. And the remaining 25% do not do that.

This means that teachers usually give students the opportunity to improve their oral fluency.

- 2) Students show interest in the oral task presented by the teacher

Regarding the graph, all the students, 100%, show interest in the oral task presented by the teacher.

As revealed by the graph, students always show a complete interest in participating in the oral tasks presented by the teachers.

- 3) The teacher provides students with orientation before embarking on a task

As shown by the graph, 75% of the classes observed, teachers often provide the students with guidance before embarking on a task meanwhile the remaining 25% of them give no orientation about the oral tasks.

According to the graph, teachers often provide students with guidance before embarking on a task for them to do a better performance

- 4) The students feel motivated to participate in every oral task

As revealed by the graph, it was noticeable to see that students were motivated to participate in every oral task presented by the teacher in a high way (88%) and the remaining 12% of them show no motivation to participate in the oral tasks developed.

Thus, students are usually motivated and willing to participate in an oral task given by their professors.

- 5) The students sometimes feel comfortable at the moment of participating orally

The graph demonstrates that 60% of students feel comfortable at the time of participating orally. The remaining 40% of them were uncomfortable at the moment of expressing themselves orally in the oral tasks.

The majority of students feel comfortable at the moment of participating and this benefits them because the more they practice the more fluent they can become.

- 6) The teacher provides feedback after an oral task to his/her students when necessary

As shown by the graph, 100% of the classes observed allowed the researchers to realize that students received feedback when necessary after having completed their oral task.

From all the classes observed, it was found that students always received feedback and that increased the opportunities for them to improve their English.

- 7) The topics chosen for the oral task are appropriate to the students' level

In 70% of the cases of served, oral task were appropriate to the students' English proficiency level whereas the remaining 30% had difficulties to perform the activity as revealed by the graph.

As it was observed in classes, a good percentage of students were able to develop the oral task as expected, only a few of them had troubles at the moment of performing a task because of the kind of topic.

- 8) Some students feel under pressure by the teachers' oral task.

As revealed by the graph the teachers' oral task make half of their students feel under pressure whereas half of them had no problem in interacting orally with their teachers and classmates.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Regarding assessment in oral tasks, the FLD professors consider that assessment criteria are really influential on their students' oral performance, whereas students' opinion is that knowing the criteria to be evaluated in an oral task somehow helps them to perform better.
- With regard to teachers providing criteria to be evaluated, FLD professors admit that they always provide students with explanation about the criteria to be evaluated. This comes to be similar to students' opinion since they say that they always receive explanation about what will be measured in an oral task. So, students are aware of what aspects they have to care about and give their best effort to find success.
- When considering the use of any technique to increase students' motivation, students and teachers declare that the FLD professors have a strong tendency to use any technique to motivate students to take part in their oral fluency improvement.
- When considering the affective factors that influence students' oral fluency, it is remarkable that nervousness has a negative impact on students' oral performance. There is a strong tendency on the FLD professors and students' part to admit that these phenomena affect learners' oral fluency in English. So, students' failure, in part, is due to these factors.
- Regarding the factors that mostly affect students' oral fluency, teachers and students admit that having low vocabulary knowledge on the topic carries out negative results since vocabulary knowledge is an important part not only in the evaluation criteria, but also for students' progress in their learning process.
- When talking about teachers' advisory to students, both the FLD professors and students consider that advisory has a powerful impact on students' oral performance since it is a prevailing tool to let students know what to do and how to do it, and at the same time to guide them in the right way to accomplish their goals.

- When considering the salient problems that affect students' oral performance, the FLD professors think that the lack of interest in interacting orally is the prevailing difficulty whereas the students' salient problems are the affective factors. So, teachers from the FLD admit that if students are well prepared, take time to practice, and are concerned about their own learning, they will not have difficulty to succeed in their oral tasks.
- When talking about students' motivation to increase oral fluency in English, there is a strong tendency on teachers' part to admit that it is necessary to motivate students for them to care about their oral English fluency and take part in order to improve since it will help them to get a higher level of English fluency
- Regarding receiving assessment criteria before an oral task, the fact of a large number of requirements to accomplish may affect students' oral performance. Students admit that having a long list of aspects to accomplish definitively affects their oral performance because they do not only focus on a specific aspect, but also they have to cover all the requirements asked, which can be too much for them to do and, as a consequence, they get bad results.
- Regarding the importance students give to their oral fluency when they carry out an oral task, there is a prevailing tendency on students' part to admit that it is really important for them to pay attention to oral fluency while performing a verbal activity.
- Regarding the reasons why students perform an oral task, students confirm that they do it because they want to develop oral fluency, so students are aware of the importance of this tool and how useful it is because they use oral tasks not only to be fluent but also to get a higher level of fluency.
- When considering situations for students to get good grades, the students under study declare that they get better results when they like the topic. Besides that, they affirm that they get better results when something they have to accomplish is of their interest and meets their needs.

## **Recommendations for students**

- ❖ Students should take into account that affective factors like nervousness, anxiety, introversion, and the like can be controlled. What learners need to know is that being confident about their knowledge of the material, having enough time for rehearsal, and being prepared for their presentations will guarantee a successful performance.
- ❖ Having an extended vocabulary allows students to show progress, domain on the topic and also helps them to get satisfactory results in an oral presentation. So learners have to put into practice the new vocabulary learned in classes and also they have to learn new words each day by themselves.
- ❖ Learners need to admit that learning a new language includes a variety of aspects to learn, for example, a new vocabulary, new grammatical structures, and others. The more pupils learn new things about the new language, the more they have to be evaluated. Receiving assessment criteria before an oral task is part of the evaluation system from FLD professors, so students do not have to see this like a long list of aspects to accomplish and perceive it as an obstacle. On the contrary, they should take it as a challenge easy to face.
- ❖ Students should know that there are two kinds of motivation: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The first one has to do with the motivation that comes from oneself and the other one is the one that we receive from another person. So if teachers do not use any technique to motivate their students, learners should motivate themselves.
- ❖ Topics play an important role in oral presentations. Students do a better job and get better results when the topic to be developed is of their interest or meets their needs. However students have to be ready to face new challenges and demonstrate that they are able to face them.



## **Recommendations for FLD professors**

- ❖ FLD professors should make sure that all their students receive the metrics they have to meet when they embark on an oral task with the purpose of making it clear for learners the criteria they have to put more attention for getting the desired results.
- ❖ The FLD professors should make sure that all their students understand what is required in every evaluation criterion provided. So, teachers from the FLD should give explanation about the metrics to be applied in order for students to clear up what they need to reinforce.
- ❖ Professors from the FLD should keep increasing student's motivation to improve their oral fluency in English. Students need to be knowledgeable of the importance of their oral fluency in English, since it is a very essential component of the oral proficiency level, and it is a teacher's task to maintain students' own will to reach the higher level of oral fluency.
- ❖ The FLD professors should keep using diverse types of techniques to drive their students' motivation for increasing their oral fluency level in English. This will keep students struggling for reaching the higher oral fluency level in every oral activity they get involved in.
- ❖ FLD professors should take into consideration students' nervousness and time pressure as an influencing factor in their performance at the moment of evaluating them orally. For every oral activity, teachers should keep in mind those aspects that affect students' oral performance, so professors have to make use of different techniques to create a good environment for students to get confidence with themselves.
- ❖ Since this study shows that students are highly influenced by nervousness during their oral performance, the FLD professors should take into account this phenomenon at the moment of evaluating them, and address their learners to overcome this barrier.
- ❖ Due to results shown in this study, students should be provided with the necessary tools to acquire the higher level of vocabulary knowledge so that they obtain the proper level of oral fluency in English when performing an oral task.

- ❖ Whenever students embark on oral tasks, they should receive the necessary guidance and detailed explanation of what they will have to do. Revision of how students are doing with regard to the task they are working on will be important for students in order for them to get the required outcome at the moment of presenting their work.
  
- ❖ Since results in this study show that students' failure in oral tasks is due to their lack of interest in improving their oral fluency in English, learners should be encouraged constantly to get really involved in every oral activity developed in the learning environment.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

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



This questionnaire is addressed to students who are taking Advanced Intensive English I course from the major of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza.

**Objective:** To gather information from students of Advanced Intensive English I course from the major of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza in order to know how oral tasks influence their oral English fluency level.

**Directions:** Based on your own opinion, check the box of the option that best answers each of the following questions.

### Questions:

1. Do you care about doing a good performance on your oral English fluency when you carry out an oral task?

Always  Usually  Often  Sometimes  Never

2. Why do you perform an oral task?

a) I want to get a good grade

c) It is mandatory

b) I want to improve my oral English fluency level

d) Another \_\_\_\_\_

3. When do you get better grades in an oral task?

a) When I like the topic

c) When I work in groups

b) When I work alone

d) Another \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you receive explanation from your teacher about the criteria to be evaluated before an oral task?

Always  Usually  Often  Sometimes  Never

5. Does your teacher make use of any technique to increase your motivation for you to improve your oral fluency through oral practice?

Always  Usually  Often  Sometimes  Never

6. Do you think that time pressure and nervousness affect your oral English fluency in an oral task?

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

7. From the following factors, which affects the most your oral English fluency in an oral task?

a) Nervousness  b) Anxiety  c) Low motivation  d) Introversion

8. From the following factors, choose the one that you think affects you the most in your oral English fluency during an oral task

a) I do not have advisory from my teacher

b) I have little or unclear instruction about what to do

c) I have low vocabulary knowledge on that topic

d) The task is too difficult for my English level

9. According to what you have experienced, do you consider that receiving advisory on what to do and how to carry out your oral task influences in your performance?

**Strongly agree**    **Agree**    **Disagree**    **Strongly disagree**

10. Based on what you have experienced, do you consider that knowing the criteria to be evaluated in an oral task helps you to do a better performance?

**Strongly agree**    **Agree**    **Disagree**    **Strongly disagree**

11. When you receive assessment criteria before carrying out a task, do you think that a long list of aspects may affect your performance?

**Strongly agree**    **Agree**    **Disagree**    **Strongly disagree**

12. What are the salient problems that you feel affect your performance during an oral activity or evaluation? (provide a list)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



## APPENDIX B



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

This questionnaire is addressed to teachers who are in charge of Advanced Intensive English I course from the major of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza.

**Objective:** To gather information from teachers of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza in order to know how oral tasks influence their students' oral English fluency and to answer the research question.

**General Question:**

What is the incidence of English oral tasks on the Advanced Intensive English I students' fluency level in that language?

**Directions:** Based on your own opinion, provide an accurate answer to each question by checking in the box of the option.

**Questions:**

1. Do you think that it is necessary to provide students with assessment criteria before embarking on an oral task in order for them to do a better performance with regard to oral English fluency?

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

2. Do you provide your students with explanation about the criteria to be evaluated before an oral task?

Always  Usually  Often  Sometimes  Never

3. Do you think that it is necessary to increase your students' motivation for them to improve their oral English fluency?  
**Strongly agree**  **Agree**  **Disagree**  **Strongly disagree**
4. Do you make use of any technique to increase your students' motivation for them to improve their oral English fluency?  
**Always**  **Usually**  **Often**  **Sometimes**  **Never**
5. Do you think that time pressure and nervousness affect your student's oral English fluency in an oral task?  
**Strongly agree**  **Agree**  **Disagree**  **Strongly disagree**
6. From the following factors, which affects the most your students' oral English fluency in an oral task?  
**b) Nervousness**  **b ) Anxiety**  **c) Low motivation**  **d) Introversion**
7. From the following factors, choose the one that you think affects the most your students' oral English fluency during an oral task.  
**e) They do not have advisory from their teacher**   
**f) They have little or unclear instruction about what to do**   
**g) They have low vocabulary knowledge on that topic**   
**h) The task is too difficult for their English level**
8. Do you consider that providing students with advisory on what to do and how to carry out their oral task influences in their performance with regard to oral English fluency?  
**Strongly agree**  **Agree**  **Disagree**  **Strongly disagree**
9. What are the salient problems that you think affect your students' performance during an oral activity or evaluation? (provide a list)
-

## APPENDIX C

CHECKLIST ON ORAL ENGLISH FLUENCY TASKS

DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

ENGLISH LEVEL:

TEACHERS' NAME:

GROUP:

TIME:

Objective: To observe Advanced Intensive English I students and teachers' behaviors related to oral English task performance in order to determine the problems that students face in it.

ASPECTS TO OBSERVE	YES	NO
The teacher uses oral tasks		
Students show interest in the oral task presented by their teacher		
The teacher provides the students with orientation before embarking on a task		
The students look motivated to participate in every oral task		
The students look they feel comfortable at the moment of participating orally		
The teacher provides feedback to his/her students when necessary		
The topics chosen for the oral task are appropriate to the students' level		
Some students look they feel under pressure by the teacher's oral task		

## APPENDIX D

CHECKLIST ON ORAL ENGLISH FLUENCY TASKS

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

ENGLISH LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHERS' NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective: To observe Advanced Intensive English I students and teachers' behaviors related to oral English task performance in order to determine the problems that students face in it.

ASPECTS TO EVALUATE	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
The teacher uses oral tasks						
Students show interest in the oral task presented by their teacher						
The teacher provides the students with orientation before embarking on a task						
The students look motivated to participate in every oral task						
The students look they feel comfortable at the moment of participating orally						
The teacher provides feedback to his/her students when necessary						
The topics chosen for the oral task are appropriate to the students' level						
Some students look they feel under pressure by the teacher's oral task						

