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**CONTENT BASED APPROACH AS A TOOL TO  
ENCOURAGE ORAL PARTICIPATION IN  
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF STUDENTS FROM EL  
ÁRBOL ENGLISH SCHOOL**

**Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching**

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### **Dedication**

I immensely thank God for always giving me the strength to achieve my goals and giving me the courage to fight for my dreams.

Also, I dedicate this investigation to my mother, my father, my grandmother, and my aunt. My beautiful mother is my pillar and the perfect definition of strength, love, and dedication. My father is the ideal example of hard work and he has always inspired me to be a better person and to have a kind heart. My grandmother taught me the real meaning of unconditional love; she is my angel on earth. Finally, my aunt, who showed me to smile when in adversity, to fight and to be a brave and strong woman.

### **Abstract**

This investigation was carried out with the intention of analyzing the effects of Content Based Approach strategies to improve the oral participation of the students at El Árbol English School during the second trimester of 2019. During a group observation at this facility, the researcher perceived that students had problems when they were asked to speak in the target language; therefore, limited answers or not even an answers were part of the situations that the fieldworker observed. As a result, the investigator established the following questions: How can Content Based Strategies to encourage oral participation on students? How it can be improved the oral production on students? With the purpose of answering these questions, different sources on language theories and Content Based Approach were consulted to benefit students, so they could improve their oral participation.

To meet the objectives of this investigation, the researcher used six different instruments to compile the necessary information: a survey, an interview, an observation, a pre-test, and a post test. The researcher also included three Content Based Strategies: audio assisted readings, research dynamic, and peer discussion. Finally, the fieldworker found that after applying the strategies and instruments, the students lightly improved their oral participation in class. As a result, it was determined that Content Based Approach strategies can help students to improve their oral participation.

## Resumen

Esta investigación tuvo como propósito analizar los efectos de las estrategias de enfoque basado en el contenido para mejorar la participación oral de los estudiantes de la Escuela de Inglés El Árbol durante el segundo trimestre de 2019. Durante una observación grupal en esta instalación, el investigador percibió que los estudiantes presentaban problemas cuando se les pedía que hablaran en Inglés, debido a que daban respuestas limitadas o ninguna respuesta en absoluto. Como resultado, el investigador estableció las siguientes preguntas: ¿Por qué es necesario usar estrategias basadas en contenido para mejorar la participación oral de los estudiantes? ¿Cómo se puede mejorar la producción oral de los estudiantes? Con el propósito de responder estas preguntas, se consultaron diferentes fuentes sobre teorías del lenguaje y enfoque basado en el contenido para beneficiar a los estudiantes y así mejorar su participación oral.

Para cumplir con los objetivos de esta investigación, el investigador utilizó seis instrumentos diferentes para compilar la información necesaria: una encuesta, una entrevista, una prueba previa, una prueba, una prueba posterior y una lista de verificación de observación. El investigador también incluyó tres estrategias basadas en el contenido: lecturas asistidas por audio, dinámica de investigación y discusión en parejas. Finalmente, el trabajador de campo encontró que después de aplicar las estrategias e instrumentos, los estudiantes mejoraron ligeramente su producción del lenguaje en clase. Como resultado, se determinó que las estrategias de enfoque basado en contenido pueden ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar su participación oral.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY FRAMEWORK

This investigation is divided into five different chapters. Each of them will expose a relevant part of the study. The introductory part of this investigation will provide an abridgment of the different elements included in Chapter I, as the first chapter involves and is divided into five different components: problem statement, objectives, purpose and significance of the study, antecedents, and the scope and projection of the research. Moreover, these five components will serve as a guide to set a background and state specific information on the study.

The first element is the problem statement; therefore, in this section the main problem of the investigation is established, as well as a specific research question. The second element corresponds to the objectives, which are divided into general and specific and will be supported and reached through the process. The third element corresponds to the justification and purpose of the research, in which the main reason why the researcher investigates about this topic is established and justified. The fourth element corresponds to the antecedents; in other words, a background of the topic will be settled and supported with different previous national and international investigations studied and analyzed by the researcher. Finally, the fifth element corresponds to the scope, which includes the possible achievements the researcher will obtain through the investigation process.

#### **1.1 Problem Statement**

English has become an essential tool to grow and create new opportunities not only due to academic purposes, but also as a way of self-growing. Nowadays, many people are required

to use the language on a daily basis to communicate with others or improve their skills at work. Consequently, in the pursuit of achieving this goal, people have decided to start learning this language. For these reasons, people are now more concerned about the inclusion of this language in their lives. Moreover, there are many factors that make the English language an indispensable part of communication, as it is the most common language all over the world, it allows people from different cultures to communicate and interact, creating bonds with people who are not necessarily English-speakers. With the language, people can get around in different parts of the world and also aspire to have better job opportunities not only inside, but also outside their country.

The Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica established in its new English curriculum that speaking English fluently is one of the abilities a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner must develop to have access to better life opportunities; however, in some classrooms, the oral participation of students represent a major challenge for teachers who seek to improve the way students perform orally. Even though, many teachers struggle to make their students speak and participate in class, a variety of strategies can be implemented to facilitate the process and obtain positive results.

According to the Public Ministry of Education of Costa Rica in its new curriculum (2016, p. 12), it is stated that the new curriculum emerged as a result of a series of concerns observed in past years. The first one corresponds to the need of an updated curriculum that reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to communicate in a range of language use contexts and to succeed in the information age as 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners. Secondly, learners who received English lessons in elementary and high school, are not reaching the expected English proficiency levels after eleven or twelve years of instruction. Thirdly, for citizens to communicate effectively in the global context and to face the challenges of an interconnected

world, they need to possess a number of competences. While working at El Árbol English School to present a teaching practicum during the first quarter of 2019, the researcher was assigned a group of students and was asked to work multiple speaking tasks; consequently, the researcher observed that in different occasions, the group had oral participation problems. This observation made the fieldworker thinking that students understood the information, questions, instructions, and expressions used by the teacher; however, they were to participate more actively using the target language in class to take advantage of all the activities and have an effective learning process.

The reason for this investigation was inspired by psycholinguistics, defining and addressing the relationship between both, psycholinguistics and oral production, and the different deficiencies that students can have as a result of different conditions. Therefore, psycholinguistics is an important aspect that needs to be included in this research, with the purpose of understanding the background of the topic and actual weaknesses of the oral performance of students at El Árbol English School.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Investigation**

### **1.2.1 General Objectives**

To analyze Content Based strategies applied in the class to improve the oral participation of the students at El Árbol English School during the second trimester of 2019

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

- To identify the problems that students present during their oral participation in class
- To apply content-based approach strategies to improve the oral participation of the students

- To evaluate the content-based strategies applied to improve the oral participation of the students

### **1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this investigation is to help students at El Arbol English School overcoming the barriers that are keeping them from participating orally in the English class. It has to be stated that professors have struggled and worked on that problem, but the results have not been positive so far; so with this in mind, the researcher decided to carry out this investigation with the goal of providing teachers, at this facility, with an alternative to address this situation. For instance, by providing them with different perspectives on the impact of teaching oral English through the use of the Content Based Approach, professors could obtain a better result in the oral performance of students, while improving their oral participation in the different activities.

As Costa Rica faces new challenges in education, due to the advantages of this approach, such as contribution to students' content knowledge, encouragement to participate in class, and increase of confidence, among others, it is an efficient tool to support the students during their learning process. The research also aims to provide teachers at El Árbol English School with accurate information on the different problems that prevent students from speaking and participating in class and that along with Content Based Approach strategies, it can be developed an appropriate use of the language to help students to enhance their oral competence.

To involve teachers in this topic, this investigation will include different benefits of the approach and other relevant topics will be addressed to provide the required information for the implementation of the approach. By gaining a better understanding of the Content Based approach, teachers can help students to face their limitations in class. On the other hand,

students will be able to develop a better oral English competence. Moreover, this investigation will benefit teachers and, especially students at El Árbol English School, as the latter will be able to finally participate as it is needed and expected in class to reach all the academic goals that students are required during their learning development.

#### **1.4 Antecedents**

Brinton and Snow (2017) state that, “Content Based Instruction is a significant approach in language education. They also state that it is designed to provide second-language learners instruction in content and learning. As Weshe (2010) mentions in her article, *Content Based Second Language Instruction*, the Content Based Approaches to second and foreign language teaching have, in recent decades, become increasingly prominent at all levels of schooling and in postsecondary education. This article also mentions that due to the evolution of Content Based Instruction, there is a growing need to draw learner’s attention to formal properties of the language with communicative situation (p.1).

To have a wide idea about the topic of study, the fieldworker searched for past investigations related to the research topic; therefore, in this section of the research, three of them will be addressed with their specific findings.

The first investigation was “*Content- Based Instruction (CBI) in Japanese College Classrooms: Focusing on Language, content or both?*” researched by Mariyoshi (2010) in Japan, August 12, 2010. It was applied to seventy-six students of English as a second language at McGill University. The purpose of that study was to better understand the different features of the CBI classes offered at the postsecondary school in Japan. For that investigation, Mariyoshi used questionnaires, interviews, and observations to achieve the results set in the research. Some of the findings that the researcher considered useful for her investigation are the following. Student’s output was considerably limited, even though some teachers pushed

the students to speak. Most of the teachers explained that the subject matter was focused on vocabulary and teachers used language- related instructional strategies like repetition, gestures, or multimedia. Context, cultural factors, teacher's perception of various factors, students' degree of comprehension and students' decision making are all possible reasons for this limited student output.

Moreover, the study showed that both, teachers and students, perceived CBI classes as effective for improving listening activities and learning the subject matter. Students felt positive about the effectiveness of Content Based Instruction because they needed to understand English in order to understand the content and material. This study found a consistency with other studies, noting that Content Based Instruction resulted in greater improvement in receptive skills and content knowledge rather than expressive skills.

The second investigation, "*Teaching English Throughout Content- Based Instruction to EFL Beginners*" researched by Bedoya Hernandez (2012), in Pereira, was applied to a group of 23 people. The focus of the study included six learners selected according to the high attendance they had during the course. All were university students raised raised in a Spanish-Speaking context, where English was not necessary used for communication. The purpose of that study was to investigate the aspects observed in the process of the application of the Content Based Instruction in foreign language learners, including the role of the instructor in the implementation of theme- based model, the response of the students to the new approach, and the type of content used in classes.

To carry out this investigation, Bedoya used different tools such as observations, audio-video recordings, journals, interviews, and class discussions. Some of the findings collected by Bedoya that are-considered useful for the present research, are the following. In her research, Bedoya (2012) states that learners experienced changes throughout the process, in terms of

language development; since learners were provided with content and language and for that reason, they were willing to participate. She also states that participants felt changes in language development because they started a process of understanding in a more contextualized way.

This section in the investigation can serve as a guide to establish and analyze the possible outcomes for this investigation. In addition, regarding content development, Bedoya states that learners felt satisfied with the topics they were using, since they were current issues which were important for them to be informed about worldwide aspects. These findings correspond to a relevant aspect in this investigation due to the fact that the use of current topics will be included in the class activities. Students may work on tasks that deal with actual content, as Bedoya included in her study.

Finally, students in this investigation expressed that the new vocabulary proposed, guided them to express ideas concerning real-life issues, allowing them to communicate more meaningfully in authentic contexts, where they needed to utter what they wanted more effectively. Students, in this study, expressed that learning the strategy was difficult at the beginning because they had to pay attention not only to the language items, but also to the content. Although challenging, learners had an active role in CBI classes and were able to adapt and perform the tasks as needed. This information from her study is also relevant to this investigation because of the inclusion of new content in the implementation of the strategies designed to work with the students at El Árbol English School.

### **1.5 Scope**

It is important to mention some background aspects before disclosing any possible results or accomplishments from this study. These aspects might be the time, location, and population this investigation will be performed. The present investigation is going to take

place in a private facility located in Turrialba, Costa Rica, during the second trimester of the current year. The population selected for the investigation corresponds to a group of twelve students with an age range from 17- 25 years old.

Since the expected results of this investigation are linked to the objectives and methodology, the researcher established the following goals and limitations. The principal objective of this investigation is to encourage students to participate in class during the different activities designed by the professor at El Árbol English School. In order to achieve this goal and with an andragogy point of view, the researcher will apply multiple instruments to analyze the students' behavior in class. After that, a series of strategies from the Content-Based approach will be used within different activities to make the students speak in the target language and get them involved in the different dynamics, so students can have the necessary tools to let go of the things that are keeping them from participating in class.

Since this investigation is going to be performed in only one group of intermediate level students, the researcher expects to help this particular group to get involved in class activities and participate more actively during the English class. The other intermediate group at this facility will not be benefited at the beginning of this study. Nevertheless, if the result becomes positive, the researcher expects to help the professors at El Árbol English School to engage students during their class activities in order to obtain better results in the students' performance.

Another expectation is to meet the specific objectives stated at the beginning of this investigation; in other words, to be able to identify the different drawbacks that students present during oral production, to have a positive application of the strategies planned, and to evaluate their effectiveness in the improvement of the students' oral participation in class. If

all the objectives are met successfully, students will have a better performance in class, participating in a more active way using the target language.

Nonetheless, the expectations previously mentioned are conditioned to some aspects that can be part of the investigation process and can also vary during the research process. Some examples of these aspects can be the attitude of the students during the application of the strategies, the attendance of students to lessons, the limited time settled to carry out the activities planned, different personalities, and even emotional or personal problems that can affect their learning.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide him/her in his/her research. Thus, a theoretical framework is the application of a theory or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory to offer an explanation of an event or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem (Imenda, 2014). In this section of the investigation, a compilation of important information that was collected from different sources by the researcher will be stated in order to provide a result. Concepts, definitions, and theories on the Content Based Approach that will be part of this study, will also be defined in this section.

#### **2.1 Content Based Approach**

##### **2.1.1 Definition and Characteristics of the Content Based Approach**

To define this concept, Murcia and Olshtain (2001) stated that this approach is based on the notion that second language learning can be very effective when the focus is on acquisition of knowledge and information via the target language. Therefore, students can obtain a variety of information while learning things such as adjectives, verb tenses, synonyms, among other topics that are normally taught in English classes. They also explained that the learner uses the target language in order to acquire knowledge and learns a great deal of language as natural by-product of such. This can be related to the main topic of the investigation, since it is based on the use of Content Based Approach and refers to the acquisition of the language, in this case, focused on the oral participation of the students at El Árbol English School.

The Content Based Approach can be defined as a curriculum that is based on subject matter, uses authentic material, promotes the learning of new information, and considers specific student's needs (Leaver & Striker, 1989). It means that in this approach, the language is the means through something new is learned. Teachers who develop a Content- Based Approach lesson can include in their classes topics such as culture, religions, and animals, among others to teach the language. For this current investigation, the researcher will implement peer discussion before speaking tasks, research dynamic, and audio assisted readings as part of the Content Based Instruction strategies with the objective of helping students to produce the language, to participate in class, and to get rid of the barriers that are affecting their learning development.

The Content Based Instruction implies the total integration of language learning and content learning. It represents a significant departure from traditional foreign language teaching methods, as language proficiency is achieved by shifting the focus of the course from the learning of language per se to the language of subject matter. Based on Leaver & Striker (1989) the Content Based Instruction in its purest form should have four characteristics:

**Subject Matter Core:** The fundamental organization of the curriculum should be delivered from the subject matter rather than from forms, functions, and situations.

Communicative competence will be acquired during the process of mastering content information on specific topics such as social studies, culture, business, history, political systems, international affairs, economics, etc.

**Use of Authentic Texts:** The core material (texts, video tapes, recordings, audio recordings, visual aids, etc.) should be selected primarily (but not exclusively) from those produced from native speakers of the language. The learning activities can be both,

exploratory and experimental in nature, and can be focused on conveying real messages and accomplishing specific tasks.

**Learning of New Information:** Students should use the foreign language to learn new information and to evaluate that information based on the knowledge of their own culture (C1, and their own emerging literacy in the second culture (C2).

**Appropriate to the Specific Needs of the Students:** The topics, content, materials, and learning activities should correspond to the cognitive and affective needs of the students and should be appropriate to the proficiency level of the class (Leaver & Striker, 1989).

### **2.1.2 Pertinence of the Content Based Approach in Foreign Language Teaching**

María Dueñas (2004) states in *The Whats, Whys, Hows, and Whos of Content Based Instruction in Second/Foreign Language Education* that Content Based Approaches propose that the optimal conditions for learning a second/ foreign language occur when there is a combination of the target language and meaningful information that are integrated in the classroom. Therefore, the inclusion of information that can be perceived as meaningful by students will be part of this investigation. This aspect is relevant by virtue of the possible positive outcomes that can have in the oral execution of the English language in the students at this facility.

Stryker and Leaver (1997) expresses that in Content Based Instruction courses there is a constant interplay between language and content. It means that this approach can include different specific topics in the target language, giving instructors the change to elaborate and plan their lesson based on a variety of options that can help students learning the structures needed and combining both, information and the study of the language. An example of this can be a lesson plan designed to teach students the use of -ed and -ing adjectives while using a

text, audio, or video about the culture around the world that supports and helps the students understanding the uses and differences between both kind of adjectives.

Striker and Leaver (1997) also addresses that the experience in foreign language classrooms has convinced people that content- based approaches have the potential to improve students´ motivation, to accelerate students` acquisition of language proficiency, to broaden cross-cultural knowledge, and to make the language learning experience more enjoyable and fulfilling. Moreover, the author mentions that the students who experience a well-organized content-based program, are more likely to become autonomous, lifelong learners to develop the wings they need to fly on their own. All the aspects mentioned provide a variety of constructive ideas regarding the use of Content Based Approach that can show relevance in the development of this study.

### **2.1.3 Benefits of the Content Based Instruction in the Classroom**

As part of the investigation on the Content Based Approach, it is significant to provide accurate information on the benefits this approach can bring to students, so professors can have an idea of the possible advantages that students can experience in class. As claimed by Leaver and Striker (1989), on a research about Content Based Approach in the Foreign Service Institute in Virginia, United States in the early 1980's, the Content Based Approach provides learners with the following benefits:

**Enhance Motivation:** The increase in motivation may occur because the Content Based takes into account the literacy skills, experience, cognitive skills, and self- motivation inherent in most adult students.

**Enhanced Self- Confidence:** FSI students, who experienced the sensation of combining L1 and C2 skills to accomplish a real task, appeared to become more confident in their ability to use the language in untested situations.

**Enhanced Cultural- Literacy:** FSI experiments suggest that Content Based Instruction that is focused strongly on sociopolitical and cultural information and cross-cultural literacy skills, provides students with a significant short cut to C2 proficiency that might normally take months or years “in-country” to achieve.

**Enhance L2 Proficiency:** Content based Instruction for adult learners also appears to enhance the speed of language acquisition. (p. 272-273).

## **2.2 Relevant Second Language Acquisition Theories**

Theories of second language acquisition can be classified according to different criteria. According to their form, theories can be classified along a continuum with ‘deductive’ on one end and an ‘inductive,’ on the other. Theories following the deductive approach contain concepts and constructs that are assumed to be true without proof. These are the axioms of the theory. Laws of logic are applied on these axioms to obtain the hypothesis of the theory. If these hypotheses are empirically supported they become the laws and facts of the theory. Unlike the deductive approach, the inductive approach does not begin with axioms. Instead, it is empirically based. Theoretical statements are formulated after a significant amount of empirical relationships have been established (McLaughlin, 1987).

According to Gitsaki (1998):

Second language acquisition theories were developed along the lines of first language acquisition theories. Over the past three decades, studies in linguistics have focused on second language acquisition investigating how a second language is acquired, detailing the different stages of development and assessing whether second language acquisition follows a similar route to that of first language acquisition. To

conclude with this idea the author states that a number of theories of second language acquisition were formulated, either inductively or deductively, and research on the second language classroom flourished (p. 90).

### **2.2.1 Relevance of Krashen's Theories of Language Acquisition in Oral Production**

Stephen D Krashen (1987), expert on linguistics from the University of South Carolina, United States, stated the five main hypothesis of second language acquisition in his book *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, where he explains the basis for each of them. For this investigation, it results helpful to consider them, since the main objective of teachers and schools is to help learners to acquire the language and shape their skills to use them effectively. It results beneficial to mention the most relevant ones for this investigation.

#### **2.2.1.1 Acquisition Learning Distinction Hypothesis**

This theory is relevant to the topic under study because it alludes to the importance of meaningful interaction in the target language, as well as the natural communicative act. It states that adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language. The first way is language acquisition, a process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process; in other words, people acquiring a language are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring it, but they ~~but~~ are aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication.

The result of language acquisition, acquired competence, is also subconscious. We are not generally consciously aware of the rules of the language we have acquired. Instead, we have a feeling of correctness. Grammatical sentences feel "right" or sound "right" and errors feel wrong; even, if we do not consciously know what rule was violated. The acquisition language distinction may not be unique to second language acquisition. People certainly

“learn” small parts of the first language in school while they are taught some of the bases of the language (e.g. for most people the who / whom distinction), and similar distinctions have been made in other domains.

### **2.2.1.2 Natural Order Hypothesis**

In recent years, one of the most exciting theories in language acquisition has been that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. Acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early and others, later. The agreement among individual acquirers is not always 100%, but there are clear statistically significant similarities. Based on this hypothesis, professors should take into account that the process of acquisition of a second language in students is not the same as the first language, even though similarities exist.

### **2.2.1.3 The Monitor Hypothesis**

In this section, Krashen (1987) posits that acquisition and learning are used in very specific ways. Normally, acquisition “initiates” peoples’ utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function and that is a monitor or editor. Learning comes into play only to make changes in our utterance, after it has been “produced” by the acquired system. This hypothesis implies that students want to correct themselves and also to know the rules to be able to do it. In the classroom, it could be present when students want to express a more fluent speech in the tasks assigned by the instructor.

### **2.2.1.3 The Input Hypothesis**

The input hypothesis attempts to answer what is perhaps the most important question in our field and gives an answer that has a potential impact on all areas of language teaching. It states that we acquire by “going for meaning”, and as a result we acquire structure. As a result, Krashen (1987) stated part 1, 2, and 3 of the input hypothesis. (1)The input hypothesis relates

to acquisition, not learning. (2) People acquire by understanding language that contains structures a bit beyond our current level of competence; this is done with the help of the context of extra-linguistic information. (3) When communication is successful, the input is understood, and there is enough of it,  $i + l$  will be provided automatically.

This theory is not enough for students to acquire the language, it means that students need more than just receiving the input, and not just reading or listening to it. For this reason, it is fundamental for professors to help students to get focused, so they can pay attention and it can become a more structured and meaningful input. Finally, the student can start creating an idea of the different rules required.

#### **2.2.1.4 The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

It states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process. This hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective filter- even if they understand the message, since the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible of language acquisition, or the language acquisition device.

Research, over the last decades, has confirmed that a variety of affective variables relate to success in second language acquisition. Most of those studies can be placed into one of this three categories: (1) Motivation: Performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition. (2) Self- confidence: Performers with self- confidence and good self- image tend to do better in second language acquisition. (3) Anxiety: Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, weather measured as personal or classroom anxiety (Krashen, 1987).

## **2.3 Andragogy**

### **2.3.1 Definition of Andragogy**

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the population selected for this investigation corresponds to a group of adults. For this reason, it is pertinent to state the definition of andragogy and the different features of this concept. Based on the Oxford dictionary, the concept andragogy is defined as the method and practice of teaching adults learners. This concept was originally defined by Malcom Knowles (1970) as “the art and science of helping adult learn, in contrast to pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children”(p. 43). He states that Andragogy is premised on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of learners that are different from the assumptions on which traditional pedagogy is premised.

The first assumption explains that adults’ self- concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self- directed human being; this means that they begin to see their normal role in life no longer as being full -time learners. Most adults tend to see themselves increasingly as producers or doers; therefore, their chief sources of self-fulfillment are now their performances as workers, spouses, parents, and citizens. For those reasons, adults sometimes can be less opened to learn and put more resistance in the acquisition of knowledge. During the period working at El Árbol English School, the researcher witnessed these aspects, as students seemed worried and stressed over the roles mentioned. In different occasions, the students who have children spoke and shared with their classmates about the responsibilities or difficult situations they were facing at that moment and also some of their achievements during their week routines.

The second assumption manifests that adults accumulate a growing source of experience that becomes an increasingly resource of learning. Adult learners integrate in the class the previous experiences they had to use them during their current learning process. Experience

constitutes one of the most influential aspects due to the impact of its incorporation, providing learners with more and useful content to contribute during class. While working in this investigation, the researcher listened to students support their opinions and points of view based on the different experiences they had. Some students spoke about the obstacles they have faced such as economic or emotional difficulties, and others shared about the different positions they have on topics that might be considered controversial, based on their upbringing.

Their readiness to learn constitute the fourth assumption that according to Knowles becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles. Adults have their phases of growth and resulting developmental tasks, readiness to learn and teachable moments. However, whereas the developmental tasks of youth tend to be the products primarily of the evolution of psychological and mental maturation, those of the adult years are the products mostly of the evolution of the social roles. Students tend to be more ready to learn the things they might need in their present situation. For example, an adult who needs to learn or improve a specific aspect to apply for a better job opportunity.

Finally, the last assumption enunciates that their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly their orientation toward learning shifts from one subject- centeredness to one of performance – centeredness. Adults tend to have a perspective of immediacy of application toward most of their learning. They engage in learning largely in response to pressures that they feel from their current life situation. To adults, education is a process of improving their ability to cope with the life problems they face now (Knowles, 1970).

### 2.4.1 Principles in Effective Adult Learning

There are different principles in adult learning that need to be mentioned in this research, since the population used to carry out this study is constituted by adults. Vella (2002) gives special importance to the dialogue between the facilitator and adult learner, as she believed that the following twelve principles provide opportunities to begin, maintain, and nurture the dialogue between teacher or instructor and the learner.

**Needs assessment** participation of the learners in deciding what is to be learned.

**Safety in the Environment and the Process** involves trust in the competence of the teacher (tutor)/learner relationship and in the means of acquiring new information.

**Sound Relationship between teacher/ tutor and the learner for learning and development** involves respect, safety, open communication, listening, and humility.

**Careful attention to sequence of content and reinforcement** involves appropriate programming of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, by moving from simple to complex tasks from groups supported to sole efforts.

**Praxis** involves action with reflection; that is, acquiring new knowledge, practicing new skills and attitudes, and then reflecting on what was accomplished.

**Respect for learners as subjects of the own learning**, this means to allow the students to make their own decisions.

**Cognitive, affective, and psychomotor factors**, the emphasis placed in these three aspects of learning breaks the learning task into more manageable units.

**Immediacy of the learning**, adult learners want to be able to use the newly acquired information.

**Clear roles and role development**, recognition of the clear roles and in the communication between learners and teacher/tutor with attention to the impact of cultural orientation.

**Teamwork** and work provide both, a process and a principle in real life situations, learners must be able to function independently, as well as in groups.

**Engagement of the learners in what they are learning**, this requires an active rather than a passive role in the learning process.

**Accountability** how do they know they know? This is an outcomes, skills, and attitude assessment.

Vella (2002) stated that these principles have been proven to work under diverse and difficult situations. In addition, she promoted the idea that learning is best achieved through dialogue between the teacher/ instructor and the learner. During this investigation, the fieldworker took the time to have a dialogue with the students with the idea of not only collecting information that could be useful for the study, but also to make students feel comfortable and aware of the researchers' willingness to collaborate in their learning during the investigation time.

#### **2.4.2 The Learning Climate in Adult Classrooms**

To carry out this investigation, it was essential to understand the impact of the learning climate in adult students, so the study could be based on those aspects. By having the characteristics clearly stated, it would be easier to work with the students setting an atmosphere that would prone a better performance of the students. Moreover, working with adults implies to understand their needs and find different ways to cope with the possible limitations they have.

Being an adult has many responsibilities implicit; work, family, bills, among others. For some students, these aspects can really determine the way they perform in class. However not all professionals are aware of the influence that this component can have in adult learners. For these reason, the researcher considers all the aspects of what being an adult means with the idea of helping students to feel motivated and supported in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to go beyond the curriculum to analyze what other aspects need to be improved in order to provide the students with the best conditions to learn; in other words, students need to feel comfortable and happy in the classroom to make the learning process effective and fruitful. According to Knowles (1970) there are some relevant considerations regarding the proper climate environment for teaching adults, and are developed as follows.

Physical environment should be one in which adults feel at ease. The classroom should be furnished with adult- sized and comfortable equipment; also the room should be arranged informally and should be decorated according to adult taste; acoustics and lighting should take into account declining audiovisual acuity. Even more important, psychological climate should be one which causes adults to feel accepted, respected, and supported; there must exists a spirit of mutuality among teachers and students as joint inquires; there must be ~~is~~ a freedom of expression without fear of punishment or ridicule. People tend to feel more “adult” in an atmosphere that is friendly and informal, in which they are known by name and valued as unique individuals, rather than in the traditional school atmosphere of formality.

The behavior of a teacher probably influences the character of the learning climate more than any other single factor. Teachers convey in many ways, whether their attitude is one of interest and respect for the students or whether they see the students essentially as receiving sets for transmissions of wisdom. But probably the behavior that most explicitly demonstrates that a teacher really cares about students and respects their contributions is the act of really

listening to what the students say (p.47). For this research, the fieldworker will pay attention to what students have to say, as sometimes professors do not pay attention to what their students want or need to express and this can create a negative idea in students, not allowing them to feel comfortable in class and preventing their learning.

### **2.4.3 The Role of Experience in Language Learning Acquisition**

When it comes to teaching, it is important to understand the students' background, since this aspect can play a significant role in their learning process. Being more aware of this feature can benefit both, students and teachers, to set the appropriate learning dynamic. For instance, students at El Árbol School are all different and unique. Depending on the student's experience, teachers can have a wider idea on how to address language acquisition and this can certainly benefit them. When teachers understand what students have gone through and the things they have done or achieved, the learning experience can become more pleasant for students, leading to better results; unlike in a classroom where the instructor barely knows about their student's involvement.

To carry out this investigation, the researcher will take into account the different roles that students currently have. From the selected population, five students work and study, three have children, and four only work. With this in mind, the researcher can have a hint of the experience that students can have at this point of their lives and even take advantage of that to design adequate material where they can use to improve their skills.

Having lived longer, adults have accumulated a greater volume of experience. The differences in experience among children and adults have at least three consequences on learning: (1) Adults have more to contribute to the learning of others; for most kind of learning they are themselves a rich source for learning. (2) Adults have richer foundation of experience to which to relate new experiences (and new learnings tend to take on meaning as we are able

to relate them to our past experience). (3) Adults have acquired a larger number of fixed habits and patterns of thought and therefore tend to be less open minded (Knowles, 1970, p. 50).

## **2.5 Oral Production in Students**

As in every language that a person is learning, there are different skills involved that need to be studied and practiced in order to perform correctly in the target language. English language learning involves the use of four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All of these skills must be used in class and integrated in the curriculum to contribute with the academic growth of the students, to prepare them to be ready to interact, and to communicate without the fears of speaking in a foreign language during class and outside the classroom.

According to Chastain (1988), speaking is using background and linguistic knowledge to create an oral message that will be meaningful for the intended audience. For that reason, it is essential to develop the habit of production in students and take advantage of different strategies to promote the practice of speaking during each class. Consequently, students need to have certain background knowledge to be able to express themselves using the target language. In addition, for students to be able to speak, they are also required to have the enough linguistic knowledge not only to produce, but also to be sure that what they are producing has a clear meaning and will be understood by the receptor.

For this investigation, the researcher will focus on the oral participation of the students. The idea emerged as a result of an observation and, consequently, the disposition to make a chance in this group and positively impact the way they are performing in class. It is pertinent to mention the significance of the oral participation of the population under study, as well as the different possible reasons or causes that are preventing the students from participating in the English class, and possible strategies to contribute to the solution of this problem.

### **2.5.1 Importance of the Oral Production in Students of English as a Foreign Language**

Through speaking, students are not only able to communicate with others and exchange information, but are also able to establish bonds and express themselves providing different ideas or points of view, achieve personal and academic goals, and put into practice the rest of the knowledge required in the oral production like grammar structures, vocabulary, etc. As speaking involves the use of the different rules of the language, oral development can be considered significant in the learning process. However, many teachers struggle in the pursuit of making their students produce the language, and even though students spend enough time listening to the teacher speaking in class, watching videos in the target language, music and other material, the lack of participation during class seems to represent an important challenge in the classrooms.

According to Violeta Mack-Donovan (2001) in her project *“Suggestions and Activities to Increase Oral Production in Students in the FL/SL Classroom,”*

What becomes very obvious is that the more students practice speaking, the more they will be able to speak. This means that the more opportunities teachers provide for their students to use the target language both in and out of the classroom, the more effective they will become as speakers of the language (p. 1).

This can be promoted in all classes, giving students the chance to use the target language as much as possible, especially because some students only speak in the target language in the English class. Ur (1996) considers speaking as the most important skill among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The author states that people who know a language are referred to as a speakers of that language. It is essential to promote speaking practice in students and to be able to work on their weaknesses and strengths to help them improve and

develop their oral competence in the best way possible. In addition, teacher must work with the necessary tools to help students overcome their speaking limitations. This argument supports the MEP's programs, where the relevance of developing speaking skills is clearly stated and applied.

### **2.5.2 Possible Causes of the Lack of Oral English Language Production on Students**

In this project, the professor and principal at El Arbol English School, Manuel Solano Coto, (personal communication, February 20, 2019), expressed that the oral participation of students has been a major problem in his school. Mister Solano states that this is not a strange behavior among students; however, there is a need to change and enhance this specific area. Even though, professors have implemented different strategies like games, the use of cellphones in activities, and other interesting dynamics to solve this problem, it continues to be an area that needs to be improved. Consequently, it is relevant to mention some possible causes of the lack of oral participation on students.

Tuan and Mai (2015) conducted a study about the different factors affecting students' speaking performance at Le Thanh Hiem High School in Vietnam. Their results revealed that (1) the students speak very little or nothing. (2) They cannot think of anything to say. (3) They use their mother tongue instead of English when they discussed in groups or pairs. (4) Low participation. (5) Lack of motivation to express themselves. (6) They translated to Vietnamese before they speak. The students' difficulties occurred when they spoke English because of their limitations in mastering the components of speaking. In addition, they rarely practiced speaking inside and outside the classroom.

All the factors, mentioned by Tuan, are not a far from the reality that professionals in education witnesses in their jobs. In some classrooms, teachers have to deal with these kinds

of scenarios every day; consequently, in order for teachers to solve these kind of problems in the production of the language, they first need to identify the possible causes that are generating these sort of obstacles during the language production. In this particular investigation, the researcher could observe that students at El Árbol English School demonstrated some of the factors mentioned by Tuan and Mai.

During the observation period, the students spoke very little and they used short phrases to express what they wanted to say. Students also used Spanish during the activity and to communicate with their classmates about out of class topics. The participation of the students was remarkably low, and students expressed a lack of motivation that seemed to affect the development of the activity. According to Ur (1996), there are many factors that cause difficulties in speaking and their areas are the following: inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low or uneven participation, and mother- tongue use. In addition to those factors, there are others that need to be mentioned, due to the fact that they are present in the classrooms nowadays, and also constitute to part of the problem stated in the study.

#### **2.5.2.1 Lack of Motivation in Learners**

In the process of acquiring English as a Foreign Language, motivation has been one of the most important factors that contributes to successful learning. As Ellis (1977) stated, “motivation involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity in which learners feel personally involved in learning activities” (p.76). Teachers must find the best alternatives to motivate students throughout their learning acquisition process, since it represents a relevant aspect on learning and can contribute to better results. For this research, the investigator will use strategies according to the students’ interests in order to get them engage in the topic and motivate them to participate more in class activities.

For instance, the lack of motivation in the class can lead to opposite and negative effects. In addition, an unmotivated student prefers to abstain from participating in “communicative activities, losing interest, and becoming more frustrated in the process of learning a L2” (Ellis, 1997, p.76). In order for a student to be motivated, teachers must encourage them with different alternatives, always having a goal in mind to provide their students with the necessary tools to produce, while feeling involved and valued in the process.

### **2.5.2.2 Fear of Making Mistakes**

The fear of making mistakes was one of the aspects observed by the fieldworker during the observation period at El Árbol English School. Some students hesitated when they were asked to participate, not only since they did not have the ability to do it, but also because they were not sure about how to express what they wanted to say. As human beings, it is completely understandable to make mistakes in different circumstances in of life, and the process of acquiring a new language is not the exception. Some teachers may see this as an opportunity for students to learn and expand their knowledge. However, in the case of some students, they tend to perceive this negatively, making them feel that it is a better not to use English at all.

Lamott (1995) stated in her book, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and life*, “Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor, the enemy of the people” (p.28). In the pursuit of perfectionism, sometimes students forget the importance of trying and they assume that making mistakes can lead them to some consequences. However, they ignore the repercussion of this behavior. As a result of this way of thinking, learners prefer to stay in their comfort zone instead of trying to speak in English.

Contrary to what many students may consider, making mistakes will allow learners to progress and improve; in other words, do not speak because of this can have the contradictory

effect in the learning process, preventing teachers to point out the students' mistakes and to identify what they are doing correctly and incorrectly in regards to the language acquisition. This aspect of learning is a big impediment for students and teachers, leading to the fear of not trying and oppression of other skills such as creativity and expression. In contrast to children, adults can have more sensitivity while speaking, due to the fear they can feel that people can judge or criticize them, so they could feel completely vulnerable and hesitant every time they are given the chance to speak in class.

### **2.5.2.3 Lack of Content Knowledge**

One of the possible causes for the lack of oral participation corresponds to the poor content knowledge in students. Some students do not have enough knowledge to discuss a topic, so it is more difficult for them to discuss, comment, or try to maintain a conversation with peers. When students do not have information to exchange, the process of discussion becomes uncomfortable or even impossible. Therefore, students need at least to have enough knowledge to develop their ideas clearly and to transmit their message to others. This aspect refers to one of the deficiencies demonstrated by students at this facility during the observation period.

On the other hand, when students have enough content knowledge about the topic they are studying, it is easier for them to produce, express, share, and even have a long conversation or discussion with another person using the target language. These are some of the most important points about the importance of developing the content knowledge in students to improve their oral participation.

### **2.5.2.4 Lack of Critical Thinking**

It is significant to mention the role of critical thinking in the oral production of the language, since this concept can represent an obstacle in the performance of students. It is

fundamental to understand that critical thinking should be promoted not only by professors, but also by parents since the early development stage of people. As a result of the lack of structural deficiencies from early stages of peoples' development, this skill must be improved and encouraged with the support of professors. Thus, once the basic teaching processes are completed, the students can continue in their development stages in a more integral way.

According to Bailin, Case, Coombs and Daniels (2014) critical thinking is a normative enterprise in which, to a greater or lesser degree, we apply appropriate criteria and standards to what we or others say, do or write. The expression 'critical thinking' is a normative term. Those who become critical thinkers acquire such intellectual resources as background knowledge, operational knowledge of appropriate standards, knowledge of key concepts, possession of effective heuristics and of certain vital habits of mind.

According to Paul and Elder (2010), the definition most useful in assessing critical thinking abilities is as follows,

Critical thinking is the process of analyzing and assessing thinking with a view to improving it. Critical thinking presupposes knowledge of the most basic structures in thinking (the elements of thought) and the most basic intellectual standards for thinking (universal intellectual standards). The key to the creative side of critical thinking (the actual improving of thought) is in restructuring thinking as a result of analyzing and effectively assessing it (p. 38).

The authors also state the growing importance of critical thinking, as it is becoming increasingly relevant due to four different facts: accelerating change, intensifying complexity, escalating interdependence, and increasing danger. Additionally, they mention that in a world charged with fears and insecurity, masses of people are unthinkingly following leaders who tendentiously divide the world into good versus evil, who use force and violence to enforce

their views. On the other hand, they express that we are daily faced with a glut of information. And much of that have been cunningly packaged to serve vested interest groups, not the individual citizen, nor the public good. Finally, the authors state that students need to take charge of their own minds, to recognize in this way their own deepest values, and to take action that contributes to their own and the good of others (Paul & Elder, 2010).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, critical thinking is not only beneficial for the student's development in the classroom, but also it can be beneficial in other aspects of their life. Critical thinking can help students grow in a more integral way, allowing them to communicate and question themselves and other peoples' information sources. To conclude, the only way to learn any discipline is to learn to think critically within that discipline. Critical thinking is necessary to all effective learning environments and to all levels of education. It enables students to master systems, become more self- insightful, analyze and assess ideas more effectively, and achieve more control over the learning, their values and their lives (Paul & Elder, 2010).

## **2.6 Psycholinguistics in Second Language Acquisition**

To have a better understanding of the possible causes that impede the correct acquisition of the language in students, it is necessary to understand the concept of psycholinguistics. "The term psycholinguistics was introduced in 1936 by Jacob Kantor, but it was rarely used until 1946, when his student Nikolas Pronto published his article *Language and Psycholinguistics: a review*" (Levelt, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, psycholinguistics deals with a broad array of issues involving language acquisition, language comprehension and production, and the processing of language in the mind/ brain (Fernandez & Cairns, 2011).

According to Purba (2018), psycholinguistics is an integration of two disciplines: psychology and linguistics. The author states that psycholinguistics is concerned with the

relationship between the human mind and the language, as it examines the language processes that occur in the brain while producing and perceiving the language, and involves the possible psychological factors in language learning. For this reason, it is relevant to consider the influence of psycholinguistics in adult language acquisition, as well as the role that those factors play in the production of the oral language.

As (Purba, 2018) mentions, psycholinguistics has a workable control over the field of teaching speaking as a skill and has specified several difficulties such as, students'-oriented difficulty. Psycholinguistics explains that personality, like introvert and extrovert students, affects students' performance in language learning. Speaking limitations like voice disorders, stuttering, and disarticulation also has a psychological origin caused by factors like personality. There are also some traumatic disorders such as aphasia and autism caused by localized damage. Consequently, teachers should understand this concept to address students with these kinds of problems. The participants in this study do not have any learning disability; however, some students demonstrate to have an introvert personality, a factor that can contribute to the poor participation in class activities.

## **2.7 Content Based Approach Strategies for Speaking Improvement**

Being a teacher means more than just teaching the curriculum. Teachers need to be aware of all the possible causes that affect students' growth and development in the classroom, and based on that, to apply a series of strategies or techniques to solve the problems and contribute to a better learning experience. The following corresponds to a group of strategies stated by the researcher to improve the oral production of the students at El Árbol English School.

### **2.7.1 Audio Assisted Readings Before Speaking Tasks**

As Edirisingha, Rizzi, Ming, and Rothwell (2007) stated, “the use of audios has been used in distance and face-to-face learning for many years and its benefits have been well reported” (p.89). The use of audios with their corresponding transcript could facilitate the understanding of the material for students; it means that students could be able to have a better performance when it is their time to use, discuss, or comment the topic of the material they were given. This would generate more content knowledge and at the same time, make it easier to produce in the target language. This strategy of including audios can also help students’ fluency skills, as well as word recognition by connecting what they are listening to what they are reading in the text. Students can generate more self-confidence, and due to the idea that they are more aware of the pronunciation of different words and sounds, they could also develop more confidence and feel better when it comes to participate in speaking tasks.

### **2.7.2 Research Dynamic Before Speaking Task**

A research dynamic could improve students’ performance in the target language. By obtaining content knowledge about a specific topic through research, students could have the chance to study what they later are going to be asked to discuss and at the same time this could enhance their confidence and knowledge, serving as a way to develop more confidence in speaking activities. It means that a research dynamic can offer students the chance to investigate, analyze, and later to put all that information into practice in their speaking skills.

### **2.7.3 Peer discussion to promote Confidence Before the Speaking Task**

As Hanrahan and Isaacs (2001) state in their article, *Assessing Self- and Peer-assessment: The students’ View*, “self and peer discussion have been used increasingly in higher education to help assign grades to students’ work, and also to help students to learn more effectively” (p. 53). The implementation of peer discussion as both authors mentioned

can be positive for students, as it could be assigned in the classroom in order to strengthen students' abilities to accomplish the desired performance in the target language.

Peer work can have multiple benefits for students. It can contribute with students, being exposed to different points of view and adding a diversity of opinions to enrich their knowledge and generate more confidence that can be beneficial for them when they are asked to speak. This strategy may also create an atmosphere of confidence between them, boosting their confidence and encouraging them to feel free and comfortable while speaking in class.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter describes the methodology and different tools used to carry out this investigation. In this chapter, the instruments, strategies, and activities executed during the research to achieve the different results, will also be mentioned as part of the study. According to Kotari (2004) a research methodology consists “on a way to systematically solve the research problem” (p. 8). In addition, Kotari also mentions that in this section the various steps that are followed by the researcher are studied. This chapter also corresponds to one of the main parts of the investigation due to the information that it states.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

In the pursuance of the different results of an investigation, there are different approaches that can be used to guide the researcher in the process of collecting data and implementing the different strategies needed. These approaches in investigations correspond to the quantitative, the qualitative, and the mixed approach. For each type of approach, a concise description will be presented in the following paragraphs.

For the quantitative approach, Jhonson and Christensen (2014) state that the research relies on the collection of quantitative data or numerical data. These authors also mention that quantitative researches attempt to operate under the assumption of objectivity. They assume that there is a reality that needs to be observed. This approach tends to be more objective due to the use of numbers to analyze all the data collected. For this type of approach, the fieldworker can implement some questionnaires and surveys with closed ended questions.

Another research approach that is present in investigations is the qualitative approach, in which Jhonson and Christensen (2014) argue that “it is important to get close to the objects of the study through participation, so that they can experience themselves the subjective dimensions of the phenomena they study” (p. 86). For this reason, it is important that the researcher takes the time to learn about the participants and to become aware of different aspects about their information like academic and economic status, traditions, and other relevant information that is compiled via observation.

The last approach corresponds to the mixed one, in which is stated that it is relevant to understand both, the subjective and objective realities. It also mentions that is important not to influence what you are observing. As a result, the use of the mixed research will add very useful information (Jhonson & Christensen, 2014). For this approach the inclusion of quantitative and qualitative instruments will be needed.

It is relevant to state that the current investigation consists on a qualitative approach, since it aims to analyze the effect of a particular phenomenon in a specific population. The population selected for this investigation, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, corresponds to a group of twelve students from an intermediate level. On the other hand, the phenomena observed consisted on a lack of oral participation of the students during class activities.

In addition, this investigation is developed from a qualitative point of view, as a result of the study of the different behaviors of the students at El Árbol English School in their learning environment; for instance, the way they interacted and they responded to the different assignments. Therefore, it was carried out an observation with the purpose of finding possible limitations and plan different strategies and activities to contribute to the solution of the problems detected. It also corresponds to this approach due to the implementation of a survey and questionnaire, which were carried out to obtain more background information of the

students and professor at this facility. Due to the fact that oral participation corresponds to a qualitative aspect, the implementation of rubrics was planned to measure the efficacy and to promote the implementation of the different strategies.

### **3.2 Research Method**

In this section of the investigation, the research method used to carry out this study will be detailed. According to Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado and Batista Lucio (2014), the research method consists on a series procedures with the-corresponding steps, so that the researcher can put them into practice to meet the objectives of the investigation. In this kind of approach, there are five main designs according to Hernandez. The grounded theory design proposes to explain the phenomenon that was studied by using the collected data. In addition, grounded theories can enable researchers to conceive social patterns and the multiple structures from an area of interest through a process of comparison. In the narrative design, the fieldworker analyzes the effects, facts, and life of a group of individuals or group. Moreover, ethnographic design corresponds to a design that focuses on studying the culture, beliefs, traditions political, and educational context of population (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014).

According to Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014) the term phenomenology corresponds to a design that explores and studies the effects of a specific case in a specific population. The population could be from a particular place, such as a school, workplace, or community. For the current investigation, the phenomena is present in the study of the impact and influence of the application of the Content Based Strategies to improve students' oral participation in class.

Finally, the action design works stating a problem, creating a plan and studying and analyzing the outcomes of the procedures. For this research, the investigator will also use the action design method, since a problem, which is the oral participation of the students at of an

intermediate group at El Árbol English School, is stated at the beginning of the process. After that, a plan based on strategies will be elaborated to encourage learners to participate in class. To carry out this plan, the researcher will design different activities using the Content Based approach, each of them with a specific goal and elaborated based on the deficiencies that need to be addressed in order to overcome those problems. Finally, the results will be evaluated to present and explain the outcomes concerning the population and the problem based on the collected data.

### **3.3 Information Sources**

All researches need sources of information that is reliable material that must be evaluated before it is included in the research to verify if it comes from valid documents. Using these sources, researchers can bring more information to the readers and support their ideas with useful information and proof that there is a solid framework in the study. These sources mentioned are divided into three groups depending on their origin: Primary, secondary, and tertiary.

According to Universidad of Minnesota Crookston (2019) primary sources are evidences that occur or happened without any interpretation or commentary. It states that this information corresponds to new information that has not been shown yet. These sources expose original thinking, show new evidences, and also share new information. Some examples of these sources correspond to original artwork, scholarly journal articles, personal narratives, diaries, interviews, among others. For this investigation, the fieldworker used some articles and interviews in order to collect and provide information about the topic of study.

Secondary Sources, on the other hand, correspond to an analysis that summarizes, interprets, reorganizes, or adds information to primary sources. They can also be described as a restatement of the primary sources. Some examples of these sources are textbooks,

biographies, histories, etc. In this current investigation, some past investigations were described in Chapter I as part of the antecedents that were used as a guide for the research.

Finally, tertiary sources correspond to the sources that gather and organize other sources. These sources are usually not credited to a particular author; they can also summarize other information. Examples of these sources are dictionaries, guidebooks, manuals, and others. As a tertiary source, the investigator used dictionaries to state some relevant definitions that were stated in Chapter I.

### **3.4 Analysis Categories**

For this investigation, the researcher has presented two major categories: Content Based Approach and oral participation.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

In every investigation, it is necessary the use of different instruments to collect the different results that will provide useful and pertinent information to the research. For the present work, the approach used is the qualitative one with a phenomenological and action research. For this reason, an interviews, a questionnaires, and observations will be used to collect the necessary information.

#### **3.5.1 Interviews**

Interviews are common and useful instruments in the collection of data in a research. In order to implement an interview in a research there are three types of interviews that can be used. The first one corresponds to structured interviews, in which a list of planned questions are asked; those questions are relatively quick and easy to use and have no scope for follow up. The second one corresponds to unstructured questions; they can start with open questions and tend to be more difficult to analyze. Finally, semi-structured interviews are based on key questions to help define the areas that need to be examined (Gill, Steward, Treasure, &

Chadick, 2008). In the present investigation, an interview is going to be used to gather information about the students' background and all possible important information related to the population. This will consist on group of questions designed to gather information about the academic director's background, the behavior of the students, and also the inclusion of Content Based Approach in class activities.

### **3.5.2 Observation**

According to Baker (2006) "an observation is a complex method because it often requires the researcher to play a number of roles and to use a number of techniques, including her/his five senses, to collect data" (p.172). For the present investigation, the fieldworker will implement an observation as an instrument to determine the possible limitations that students have while participating orally in class. To be able to understand, study, and help to increase the students' oral participation, the fieldworker decided to observe a regular class at the school. The observation consisted on being present during a complete class which was specifically a two-hour class and pay attention to the participants' behavior, characteristics, limitations, strengths, and other aspects that can be useful in the development of this study. In addition, the researcher also paid attention to the way the instructor referred to students, how they interacted, and the way he addressed their limitations during the activities.

### **3.5.3 Pre- Test**

According to Insights Association (2019), a pre-test corresponds to the first measurement that is used anterior to an experiment. For this research, a speaking activity will be applied as way to analyze the students' participation in class. During this activity, each student will be asked to sit in the floor and throw a dice to add a part to the story based on the image they got. The idea of the activity is to create a big story with the contribution of all the

participants. The students will be required to speak only English and put away their cellphones or any other distracting devices.

#### **3.5.4 Post-Test**

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a post-test can be defined as “a test given to students after the completion of an instructional program and are often used in conjunction with a pretest to measure their achievement and the effectiveness of the program.” (2019, pp. 1). For this stage of the investigation, a short presentation will be assigned to students as a way of contrasting their improvement in oral production and analyze if the objectives have been accomplished. The post- test will consist on a short presentation about endangered animals, in which the participants will have to include information of the animal they chose and also be willing to answer their classmates’ questions. The presentation will be delivered in trios, and each of the students will be assigned a part of the information.

#### **3.5.5 Survey**

According to the Cambridge dictionary, a survey can be defined as “an examination of opinions and behaviors, made by asking people questions.”(2017, pp. 1). This instrument is going to be first used to determine the participation of students in regard to their oral participation. It will include five different criteria including aspects like collaboration, interest of the students, production, and attention. It is going to be applied to the academic director and professor at the beginning of the research process and it will function as a starting point for the study. The professor will mark with an X the answer to the different criteria in regard to the frequency in which students show that behavior, it corresponds to: always, sometimes, few occasions, most of the time, and never.

### **3.6 Collection Data Process and Analysis**

In previous paragraphs, some useful tools or instruments were mentioned and explained by the researcher. For this section of the investigation, the strategies used to meet the objectives to improve the students' oral participation are going to be explained. To carry out the strategies, the investigator will create a lesson plan for each activity and the necessary material to perform in every stage. For this part the researcher, it is going to be provided an explanation on how the different activities are going to be developed.

#### **3.6.1 Audio Assisted Readings**

As mentioned in Chapter II, this strategy can facilitate the understanding of the material and, in this way, students can have a better performance when speaking. This strategy will be the first to be implemented in this research. To apply the audio assisted readings in the class, the fieldworker will hand in a card with a reading about extinct animals that was previously selected for each student; then, the students will have ten minutes to read the script. After reading, students are going to listen to the corresponding audio, while following the reading. Finally, students will answer some questions about the reading to compare and share their opinions with their classmates.

#### **3.6.2 Research Dynamic**

This strategy is going to be used during the second intervention. As the fieldworker mentioned in Chapter II, by acquiring content knowledge about a topic students can be able to produce more in the target language and, in this way, to increase their participation. To carry out this dynamic, the investigator will give each student a card with the name of an influential person in the world. Students will have to collect relevant information about the person they got. They can include name, nationality, age, awards they have won and other aspects they consider interesting. After researching, students will fill a chart with the information they

have. Finally, students will use the cart as a guide to share their information with the rest of the class.

### **3.6.2 Peer Discussion**

This corresponds to the third strategy used in this research. To implement this activity, the investigator will give the participants a text about an unusual pet to read. Some of the animals selected to assign the students were unknown for the group for example: bearded dragon, chinchillas, spotted genet, and hedgehog. After reading, the participants will share in pairs their opinion about the pet they got. Finally, each one of the students will share a brief summary about their classmates' pet to the rest of the class.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter will provide the results and analysis of the different data collected during the research process. According to Onwuegbuzie and Denhan (2014), “the analysis of data represents the most important and difficult step in the qualitative research process.” (pp. 3) Previously, the researcher collected data from the instruments mentioned in chapter III, such as an interview, a survey, tests, an observation, and a check list. To execute this investigation, the researcher worked with a population of twelve students in their corresponding classrooms in order to observe the impact of Content Based Strategies in their oral production.

#### **4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results**

In the following paragraphs, the investigator will state in detail the way in which the instruments of this investigation were applied through the research data collection process. The instruments are an interview, a survey, an observation, a pre- test, test, and finally a post-test.

##### **4.1.1 Interview**

With the objective of obtaining background information about the school, students, and other relevant data, the researcher applied an interview to the academic director and Professor Manuel Solano. The interview consisted of six questions. The first two were related to the professor’s background and experience as a teacher. In this part, he mentioned that he worked at “Centro Cultural” for some years and then, he decided to found his own school in Turrialba. After that, Mister Solano answered two more questions related to students’ difficulties and skills related to language acquisition. In this regard, he stated that the lack of production and

participation in the target language has always been an impediment for students to learn and for teachers to carry out their activities in class. He also mentioned that even though he encourages students to use the language, it is still a problem in the class.

Asking about the group in particular, he expressed that most of the students have a good level on English and do not present major struggles in class. He stated that in this group, students have problems in regards to obligations, it means that sometimes they do not present homework and other assignments required in the course. Furthermore, the last question referred to the inclusion of the Content Based Approach in the curriculum and the possible strategies it could have. He mentioned that he has used this approach; however, sometimes activities or dynamics based on Content Based Approach can be time consuming. He asked the researcher about her ideas about the use of this methodology and he encouraged her to help the students to change this behavior. At the end of the interview, he indicated that the use of Spanish is not allowed, only if the level requires an explanation that can be confusing for the students. However, students persist in the use of Spanish during classes.

#### **4.1.2 Survey**

In this investigation, the researcher also conducted a survey that was applied to the academic director and Professor Manuel Solano, with the objective of setting a starting point in regards to the participation of students using the target language. The survey was based on five criteria: collaboration interest, language production, and attention in class. The professor was supposed to mark if students always, most of the times, some of the times, in few occasions, or never present that criteria. As a result of the application, the data showed that students sometimes collaborated, showed interest, and produced in class. On the other hand, according to the survey, students paid attention in class most of the time.

The survey lasted about 5 min; however, the professor took his time to explain the reason why of the surveys' answers. The first criteria corresponded to the collaboration of students during class. He expressed that sometimes students did not want to collaborate because they felt tired or were not completely interested in the topic or activity. He also mentioned that students sometimes had to be pushed to collaborate and share their thoughts and that represented an impediment for the development of the class, as it did not allow to cover all the aspects needed.

#### **4.1.3 Observation**

Before working with the population of this study, the researcher decided to carry out an observation. In this observation, the fieldworker could detect possible limitations and struggles students presented during the English class, while they were performing a pair discussion dynamic. During the observation time, the investigator noticed that students were able to understand and follow instructions. On the other hand, the researcher could also observe some of the limitations previously mentioned by the academic director Manuel Solano. For instance, the students used Spanish in class not only to communicate among themselves, but also to answer to some questions about the topic they were studying. They were limited to give short answers, as it was difficult for them to give an opinion and share their thoughts. Some students were not confident and comfortable while speaking. In many occasions, the professor had to ask students to participate in the activity by reminding them about the percentage that it has on their final grades. Moreover, this observation allowed the fieldworker to think about the areas or limitations that would be addressed in order to collaborate to with the necessities of the students at this facility.

#### **4.1.4 Pre-test**

Another way to collect data for the investigation corresponds to the application of a pre-test. In this research, the pre-test consisted on a story telling activity. For this activity, the students were asked to sit in a circle, with no books, cellphones, or any other distracting device. The idea was to analyze the behavior and attitude of students towards the language, as well as their oral participation during class activities. Moreover, in this activity, the twelve students had to participate throwing a dice and adding a part to the story when it was their turn. The dice had different images like objects and characters. In order to perform this activity, the students were not allowed to speak in Spanish or use short phrases. At the end of the activity, students shared their opinions about what they liked the most or what they did not like about the story (See Lesson Plan 1).

The application of this activity enabled the investigator to collect the following information. The students' motivation about the speaking activity was higher at the beginning. While giving instructions, most of the students were motivated and demonstrated a good attitude. However, with the progress of the activity students became less enthusiastic and less energetic. Students' participation was not constant during the entire activity; at the beginning, all students participated adding their part to the story and throughout the process, the lack of participation was evident. Some students were not confident while speaking and the use of Spanish was present in the task. Students used Spanish to clarify doubts about vocabulary and to make comments.

According to what the investigator observed in this activity, students understood the instructions and all the information that the professor gave them. On the other hand, they did not use the knowledge they had to produce the language. Most of the students used Spanish in class, even though they are not allowed to do it, and the use of short phrases also corresponded

to an impediment for students' language production. For a better understanding of the results mentioned in the previous paragraph, the investigator created a table to illustrate the different data collected.

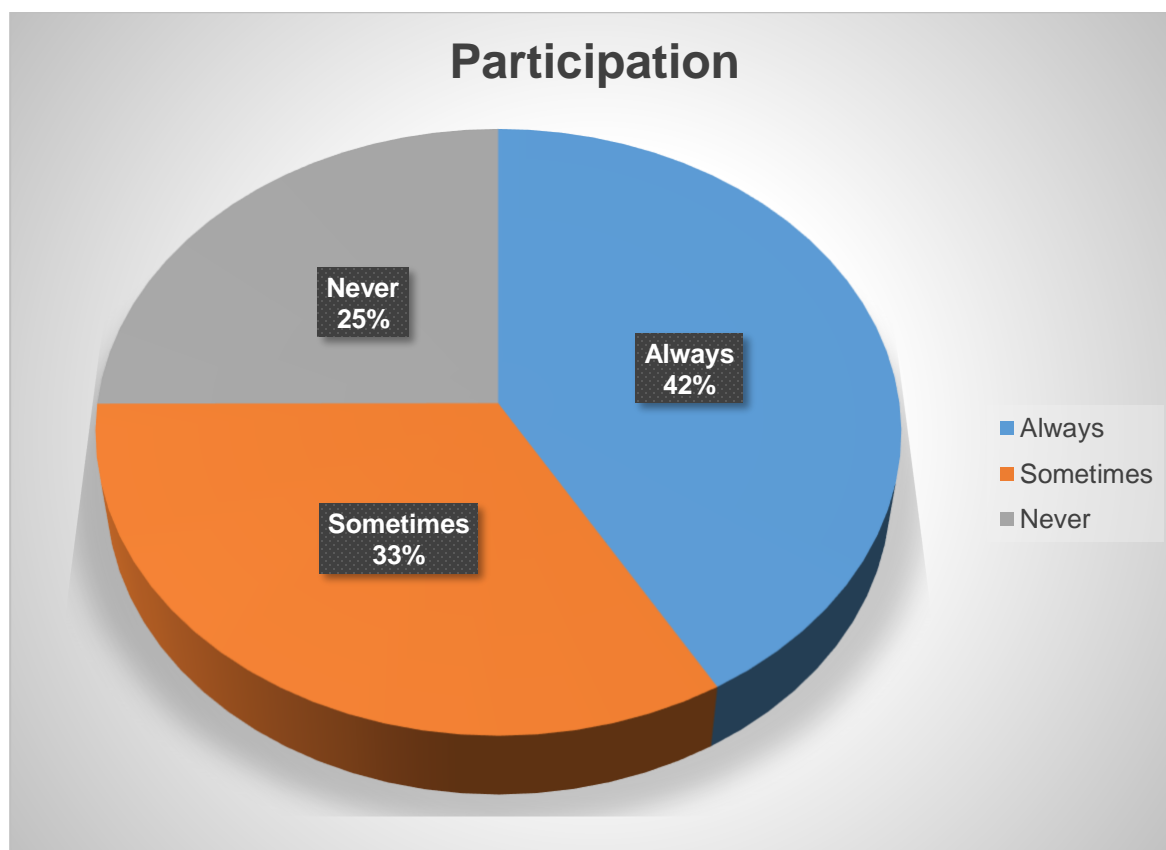
**Table 1.**

*Pre- test Rubric*

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
<b>1. PARTICIPATION</b>	- Five of the twelve students contributed and shared their opinions in English one hundred percent of the time	- Four of the twelve students contributed and shared their opinions in English fifty percent of the time	- Three of the twelve students contributed and shared their opinions in English zero percent of the time
<b>2. SPANISH IN CLASS</b>	- Eight of the twelve students used Spanish in class one hundred percent of the time	- Two of the twelve students used Spanish in class fifty percent of the time	- Two of the twelve students used Spanish in class zero percent of the time
<b>3. INTEREST IN THE ACTIVITY</b>	- Seven of the twelve students showed interest in the activity one hundred percent of the time	- Three of the twelve students showed interest in the activity assigned fifty percent of the time	- Two of the twelve students showed interest in the activity assigned zero percent of the time

<p><b>4. COMPLETE ANSWERS OR STATEMENTS</b></p>	<p>- Six of the twelve students provided complete answers or statements one hundred percent of the time</p>	<p>- Three of the twelve students provided complete answers or statements fifty percent of the time</p>	<p>- Three of the twelve students provided complete answers or statements zero percent of the time</p>
<p><b>5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LANGUAGE</b></p>	<p>- Seven of the twelve students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language one hundred percent of the time</p>	<p>- Three of the twelve students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language fifty percent of the time</p>	<p>- Two of the twelve students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language zero percent of the time</p>
<p><b>6. CONFIDENCE WHILE SPEAKING.</b></p>	<p>- Five of the twelve students demonstrated confidence while speaking one hundred percent of the time</p>	<p>- Three of the twelve students demonstrated confidence while speaking fifty percent of the time</p>	<p>- Four of the twelve students demonstrated confidence while speaking zero percent of the time</p>

*Source: Researches' own creation.*

**Figure 1**

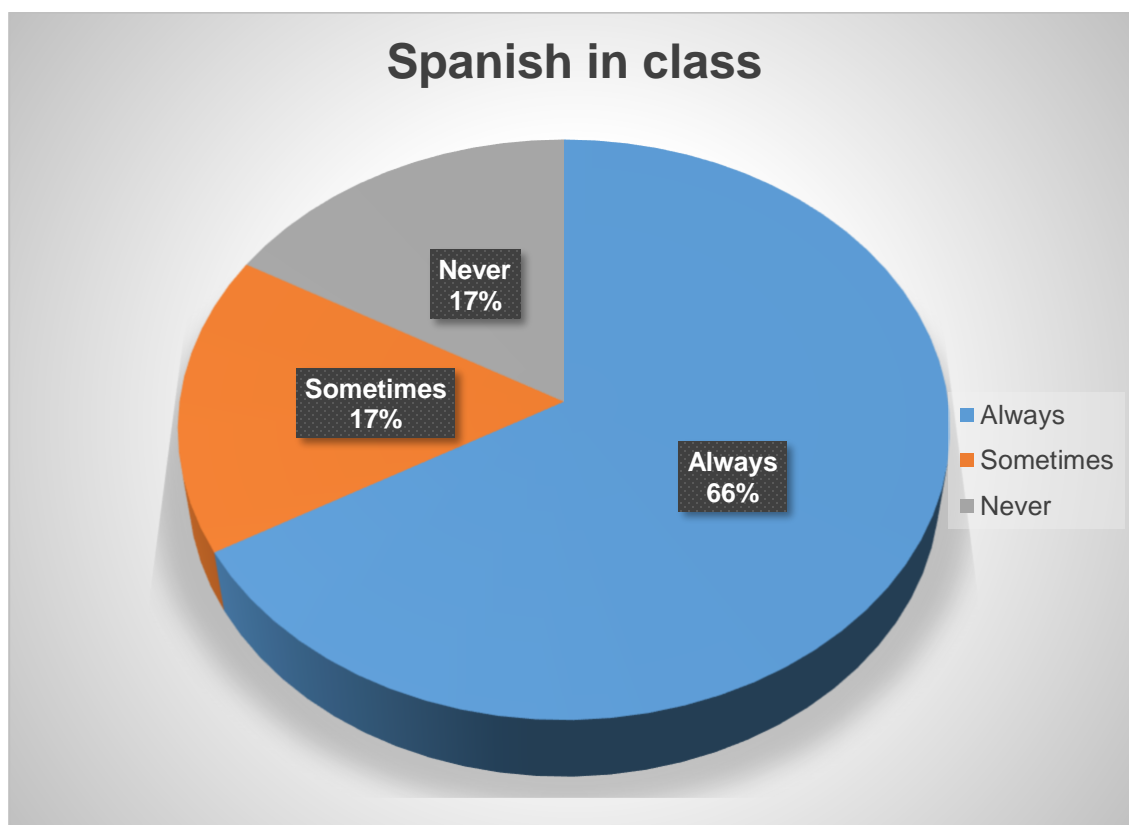
*Figure 1 shows the frequency in which participants made contributions and shared their opinions in English during the pre-test activity. Source: Researches' own creation.*

This figure graphically shows that during the pre-test activity, five students (42%) always participated; that is, they were contributing and sharing their opinions in English. Four of the students (33%) sometimes participated and contributed in class by sharing their thoughts and opinion in the target language. Finally, three students (25%) never participated nor made contributions or shared their ideas during the story telling activity.

Based on figure 1, the investigator could state that less than half of the population participated as it was expected during the activity. Even though, students were encouraged to speak, there was an evident lack in their English language production. During the

implementation of the pre-test dynamic, the investigator also noticed that students were not participating actively during the activity; although, they were encouraged to participate actively, as they seemed more interest on other aspects around them like their cellphones.

**Figure 2**

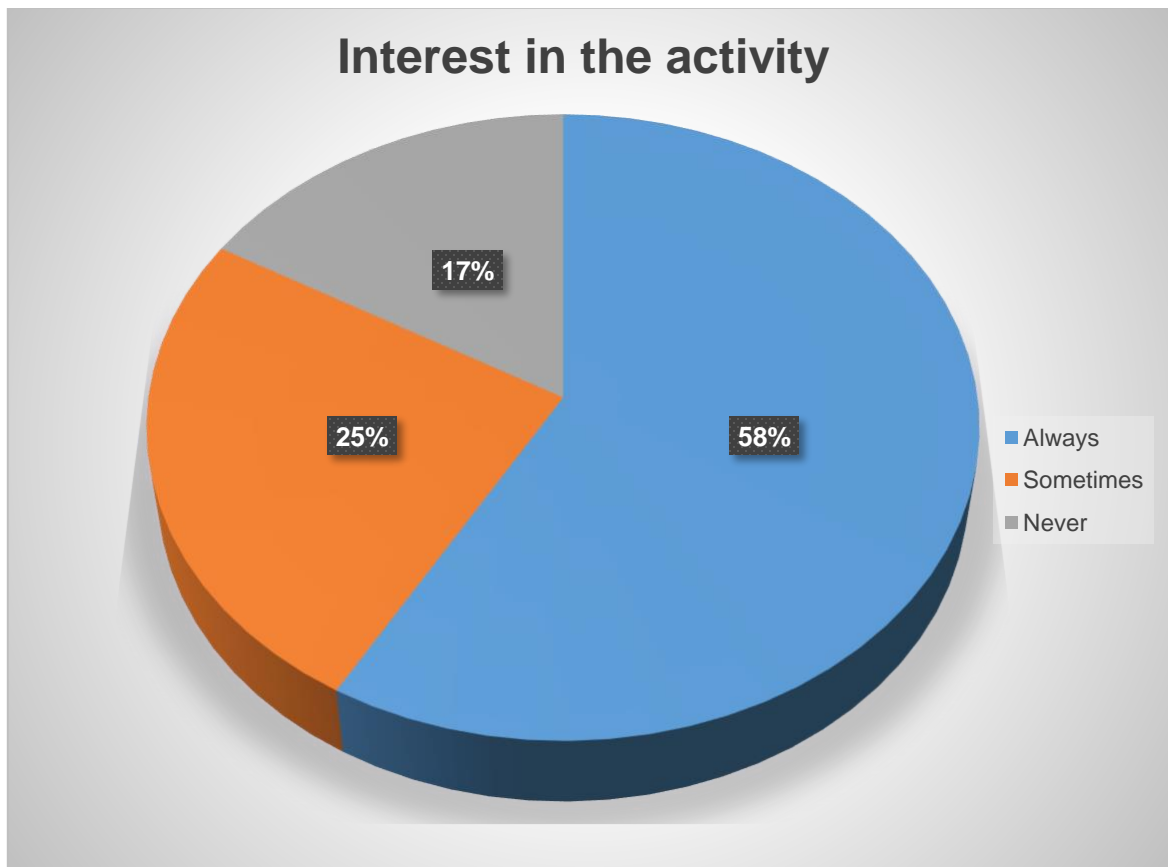


*Figure 2 shows the frequency in which participants used Spanish in Class during the pre-test activity.  
Source: Researchers' own creation.*

According to this figure, eight students (66%) always used Spanish during the pre-test activity. From the twelve students, two (17%) sometimes used Spanish while the story telling performance. Finally, two students (17%) never used Spanish during the task. Even though, students were asked to speak only English during the task, Spanish was present not only throughout the activity, but also to communicate among participants. This represented one of

the limitations expressed by the academic director, as well as one of the barriers that was observed by the fieldworker since the beginning of the study. During the pre-test activity, the students used Spanish in many occasion not only to participate in the story telling activity, but also to communicate with their classmates. Some students claimed that some ideas were too difficult to express in English, and for that reason they preferred to use Spanish.

**Figure 3**



*Figure 3 shows the frequency in which participants showed interest during the pre-test activity.  
Source: Researchers' own creation.*

This figure shows that during the pre-test activity seven students (58%) always showed interest. Three of them (25%) sometimes showed interest in the activity assigned. And finally,

two of the students (17%) never showed interest during the story telling activity. Even though, more than half of the participants showed interest during the pre-test activity, sometimes students were distracted looking at their cellphones and did not focus on the task. At some moments, students were not listening to their classmates' part of the story and they were also speaking with other classmates. Students expressed that they were tired because of work.

**Figure 4**

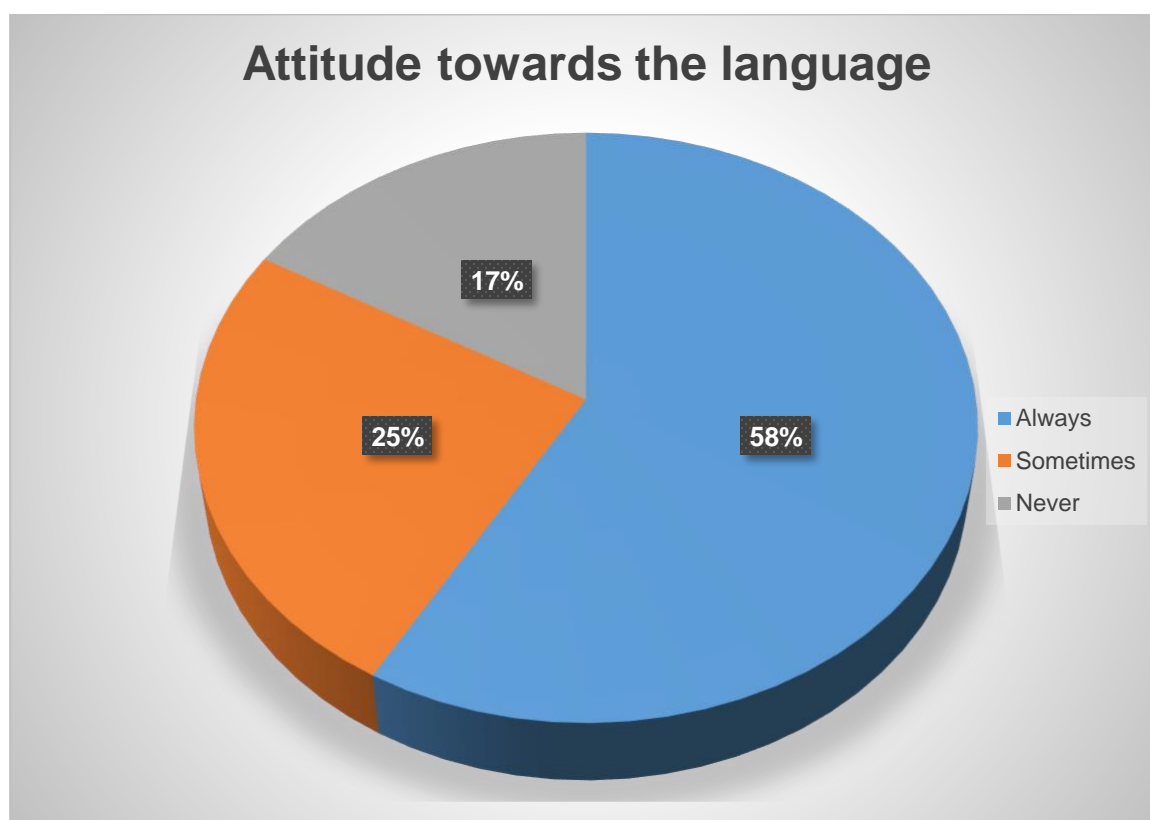


*Figure 4 shows the frequency in which participants provided complete statements during the pre-test activity.  
Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 4 graphically demonstrates that six participants (50%) always provided complete statements during the pre-test activity. Three students (25%) sometimes provided complete statements during the story telling activity. And finally, three students (25%) never provided

complete statements during the activity. Thanks to the figure information, the investigator could state that half of the population provided complete statements or ideas during the task. Even though, one of the instructions for the activity corresponded to the use of complete phrases or ideas, not all the students followed that request and that did not let the investigator gather more information about the students' language production.

**Figure 5**



*Figure 5 shows the frequency in which participants demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language during the pre-test activity. Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 5 shows that seven students (58%) demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language. During the application of the activity, 3 students (25%) demonstrated a positive

attitude towards the language. Finally, two students (17%) never demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language during the implementation of this activity. As it was showed in the figure, more than half of the population demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language. However, during the progress of the activity, some students complained about the request of speaking only English. They claimed that it was too difficult to speak only English and they also complained about not knowing how to translate a word or the best way to express what they wanted to say. In this activity, students also expressed with a negative tone that they did not want to sit in a circle for the task because they were too tired to move. However, they finally agreed on following the fieldworker's instruction.

**Figure 6**



*Figure 6 shows the frequency in which participants demonstrate confidence while speaking during the pre-test activity. Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 6 demonstrates that five students (42%) always demonstrated confidence while speaking during the pre-test activity. Three students (25%) sometimes demonstrated confidence while performing this task. Finally, four students (33%) never showed confidence while speaking during this task. The researcher observed that during the pre-test the participants hesitated when trying to create a statement or simply to express how they felt. The students took their time to think about the image in the dice and they created a statement, but when they finally did it, it resulted in a short sentence. When the researcher clarified their doubts regarding vocabulary, they expressed that they knew the meaning of the word they asked, but they were not one hundred percent sure. For that reason, they preferred not use it at all.

#### **4.1.5 Strategies**

Based on the pre-test activity outcomes, the investigator decided to implement three different strategies previously mentioned in Chapter II. These strategies were carried out in order to help students overcoming the limitations they presented during the pre-test activity, by addressing the deficiencies identified in this group.

##### **4.1.5.1 Audio Assisted Reading**

The researcher considered that by using audio assisted readings students could improve their English language performance in a speaking task. By listening to the pronunciation of the words and following a text, students can enhance their skills and have a better performance in the target language. Consequently, by knowing the correct pronunciation of the words, students could also develop more confidence and feel more comfortable while participating.

To perform this strategy, students worked individually on a text about extinct animals. Students were asked to read the text by themselves. After that, the researcher played an audio

with the reading for students to listen to the different words and their pronunciation. Finally, students answered some questions about the text to share their opinions and compare them with a classmate's (See Lesson Plan 2).

From this strategy the researcher collected the following information. At the beginning of its implementation, students were not very enthusiastic or motivated. They used Spanish to ask questions about the vocabulary from the reading. However, as the activity continued, students used English to communicate and to ask questions to the investigator. During peer work, students used Spanish at the beginning. However, they continued the activity using English and sharing their thoughts in the target language, too.

#### **4.1.5.2 Research Dynamic**

As a way to improve the outcomes from the first strategy and reach the investigation's goals, the researcher implemented another strategy. For this second strategy, students were given the name of an influential person for them to research about relevant facts and information about them. After that and having more knowledge, students filled a chart with the information gathered. Finally, the chart was used as a guide to share their information with the rest of the classmates using only the target language (See Lesson Plan 3).

From this investigation the researcher collected the following information. Students were motivated with this activity. They had a positive attitude while researching and they asked questions using the target language. While sharing the information with other classmates, students were more confident when speaking and sharing their ideas. The final outcome observed corresponds to the acquisition of more content knowledge. By researching, students acquired more knowledge that was also used during the speaking process of the task. The most remarkable change that the fieldworker observed was the use of the target language

during the speaking task, as well as the confident shown in the task; even though, they had to share it with the entire class.

#### **4.1.5.3 Peer discussion**

The third and last strategy consisted on a peer discussion. In pairs, students were given a text about unusual pets. With this text, the students were asked to discuss in pairs some questions about the pet they got. Finally, students shared a summary of their classmates' information with the rest of the class (See Lesson Plan 4). For this activity, the researcher collected the following data. Students positively performed the activity with a good attitude during the entire time. Students were motivated and expressed that they liked the topic under discussion. One of the most relevant data collected corresponded to the use of English during the application of the strategy and also the production of longer answers. Moreover, the inclusion of peer discussion had a visible and positive impact on students. Students' use of the target language was increased, as the researcher noticed. Finally, the fieldworker used a rubric to evaluate the students' achievements during the three activities applied (See Lesson Plan 3).

#### **4.1.6 Post-Test**

Finally, a post-test activity was applied to contrast students' outcomes with the ones obtained in the pre-test. In this activity, the participants had to work in four groups of three to give a short presentation about endangered species. The students had to deliver interesting information and be willing to answer their classmates' questions (See Lesson Plan 5). During this task, students were motivated and also demonstrated a positive attitude towards the activity. Students were asked to speak only in English, and they followed this instruction almost during the entire activity.

Some students used Spanish to clarify vocabulary doubts; however, they were aware of that and tried to change it by using phrases in English to give examples. In regards to

participation, students were able to give an opinion or ask a question, and while speaking, they were more confident and also were able to produce longer sentences with new vocabulary. To demonstrate the outcomes of the post-test activity, the researcher created a table to better understand the information.

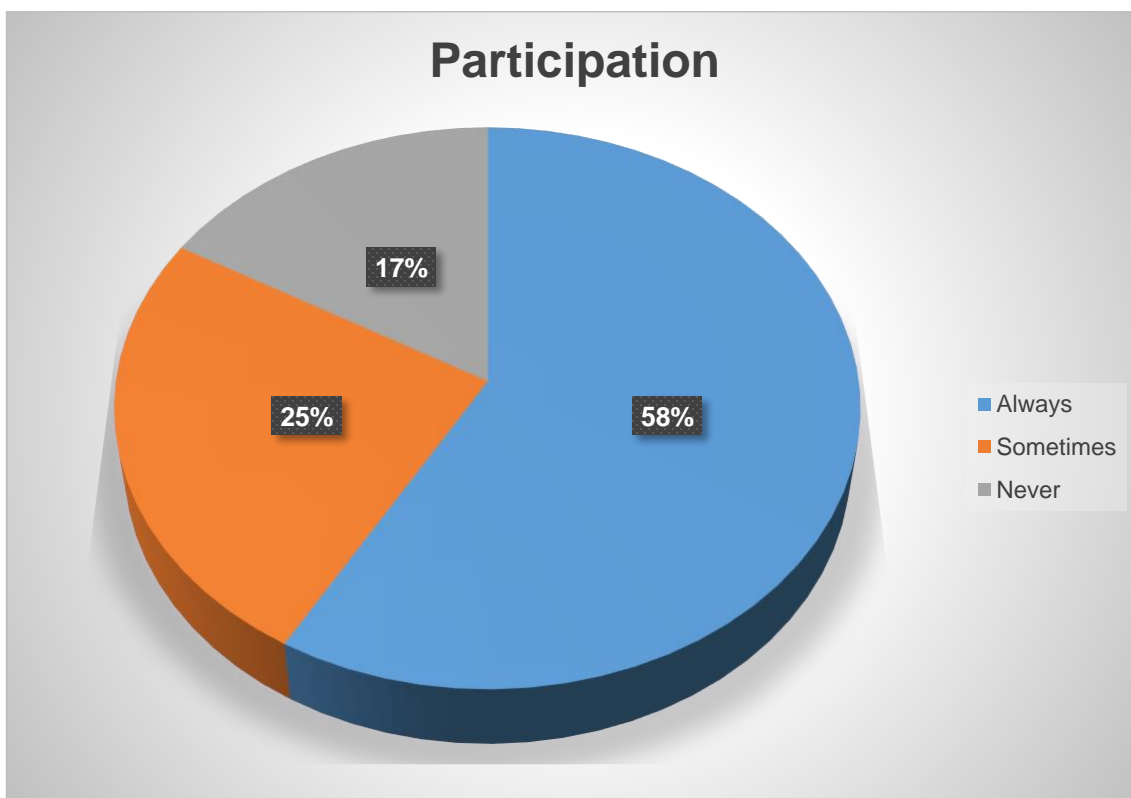
**Table 2**

*Post-test Rubric*

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
<b>1. PARTICIPATION</b>	Seven of the twelve students contributed and shared their opinions in English one hundred percent of the time	Three of the twelve students contributed and shared their opinions in English fifty percent of the time	Two of the twelve contributed and shared their opinions in English zero percent of the time
<b>2. SPANISH IN CLASS</b>	Six of the twelve students used Spanish in class one hundred percent of the time	Three of the twelve students used Spanish in class fifty percent of the time	Three of the twelve students used Spanish in class zero percent of the time
<b>3. INTEREST IN THE ACTIVITY</b>	Ten of the twelve students showed interest in the activity one hundred percent of the time	One of the twelve students showed interest in the activity assigned fifty percent of the time	One of the twelve students showed interest in the activity assigned zero percent of the time

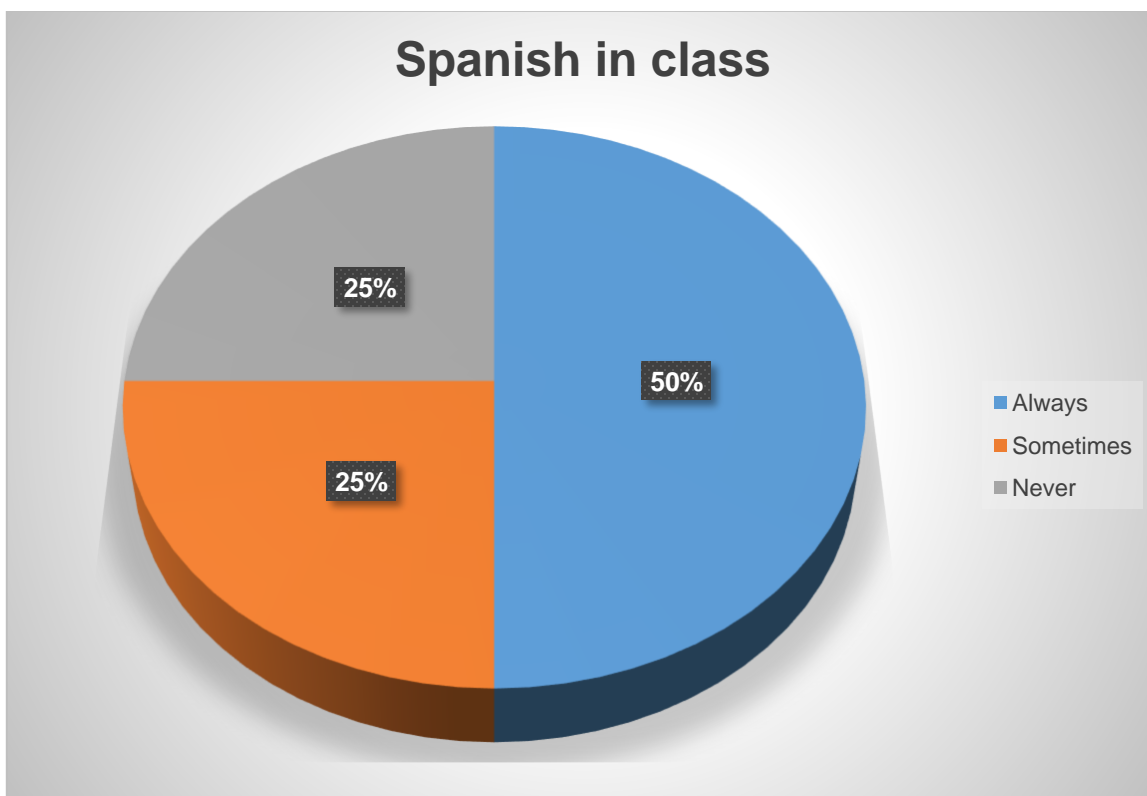
<b>4. COMPLETE ANSWERS OR STATEMENTS</b>	Nine of the twelve students provided complete answers or statements one hundred percent of the time	Two of the twelve students provided complete answers or statements fifty percent of the time	One of the twelve students provided complete answers or statements zero percent of the time
<b>5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LANGUAGE</b>	Eight of the twelve students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language one hundred percent of the time	Two of the twelve students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language fifty percent of the time	Two of the twelve students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the language zero percent of the time
<b>6. CONFIDENCE WHILE SPEAKING</b>	Six of the twelve students demonstrated confidence while speaking one hundred percent of the time	Three of the twelve students demonstrated confidence while speaking fifty percent of the time	Three of the twelve students demonstrated confidence while speaking zero percent of the time

*Source: Researches' creation*

**Figure 7**

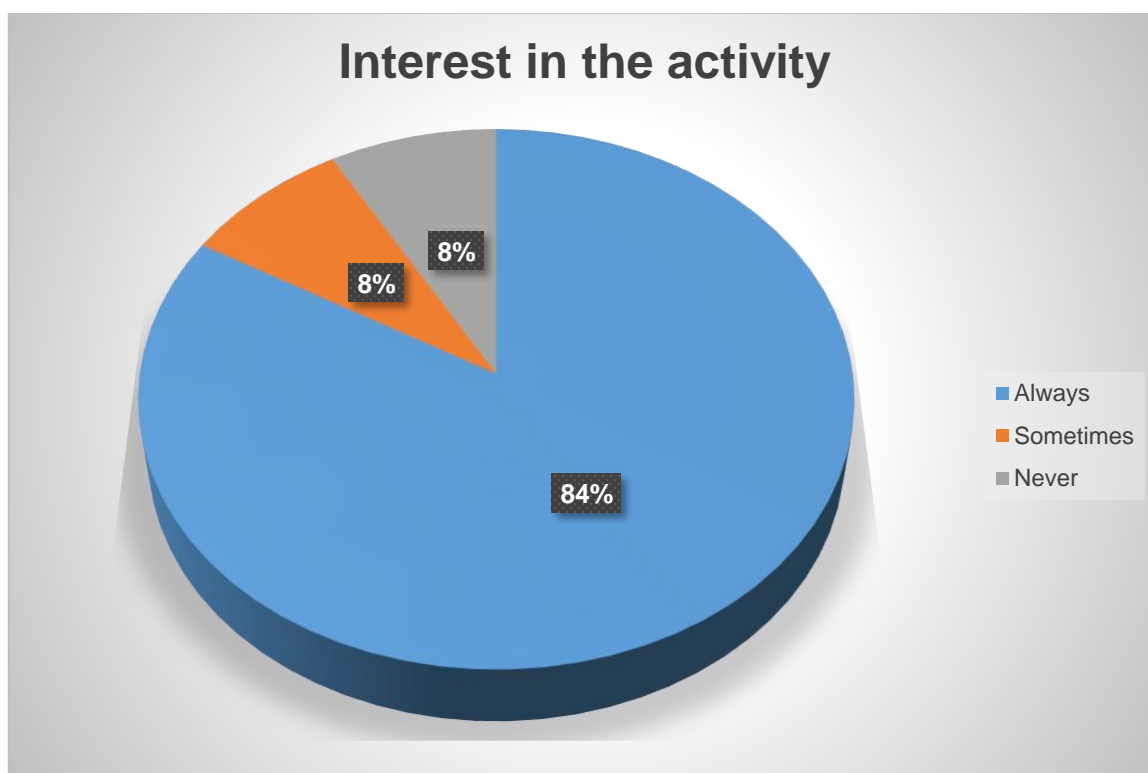
*Figure 7 shows the frequency in which participants made contributions and shared their opinions in English during the post-test activity. Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 7 graphically demonstrates that seven students (58%) always contributed and shared their opinions in English during the post-test activity. Three students (25%) sometimes participated in class sharing providing opinions or making questions for their classmates. Finally, two students (17%) never participated in the activity. According to the figure, more than half of the population actively took part in the post-test process.

**Figure 8**

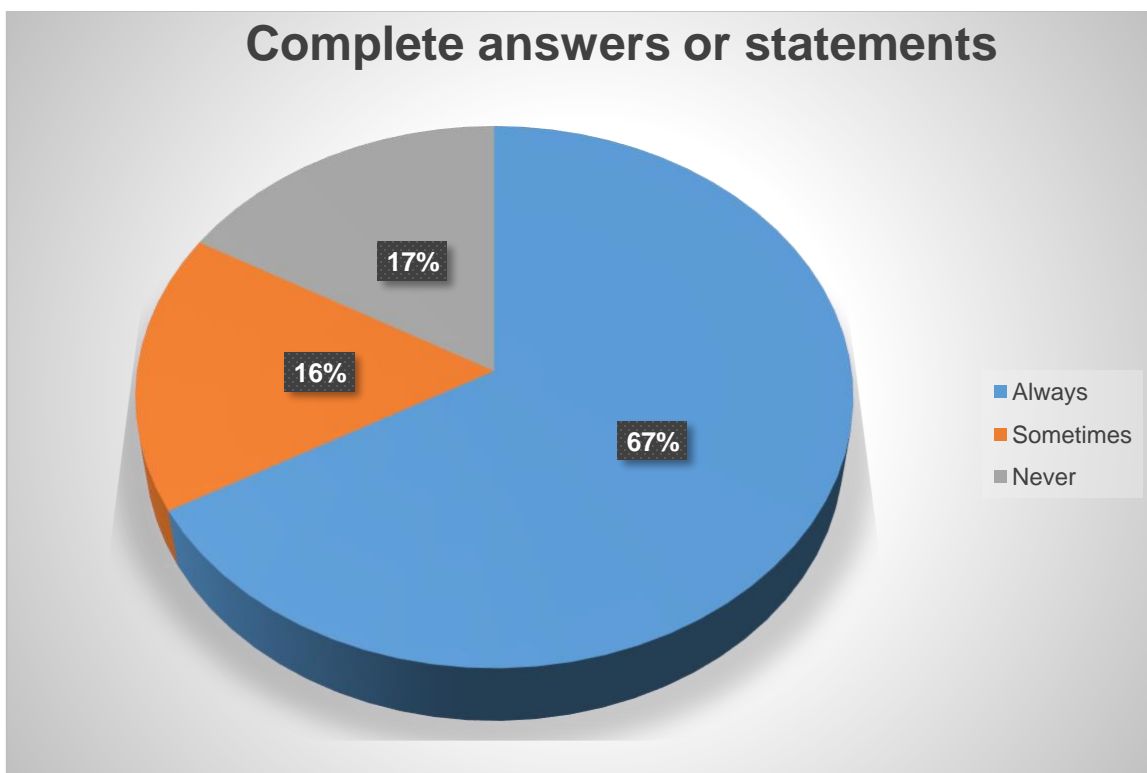
*Figure 8 shows the frequency in which participants used Spanish in class during the post-test activity.  
Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 8 shows that six students (50%) always spoke Spanish during the post- activity. Three students (25%) sometimes spoke Spanish while performing this activity. Finally, three students (25%) never spoke Spanish in the course of the presentation activity. Based on this figure, the researcher could state that half of the population used Spanish in class with different purposes. The other half of the population developed less use of Spanish in the activity time.

**Figure 9**

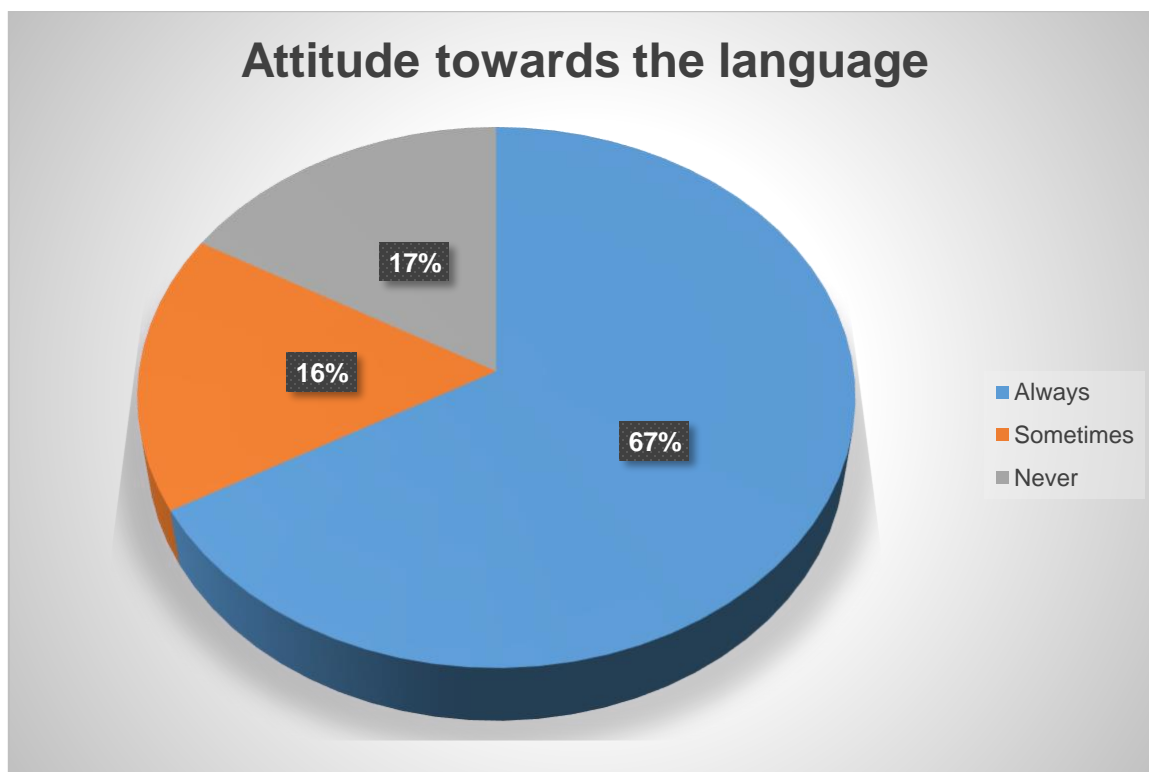
*Figure 9 shows the frequency in which participants showed interest during the post-test activity.  
Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 9 shows that ten students (84%) always showed interested in the post-test activity. One student (8%) sometimes demonstrated interest during the task. Finally, one students (8%) never showed interest while presenting their work. As shown in the figure, a significant portion of the population were interested in the activity. Most of the students paid attention and were involved in the task and also in their classmates' presentations. Students expressed that they enjoyed to research about this topic and that they also learned new facts in the process.

**Figure 10**

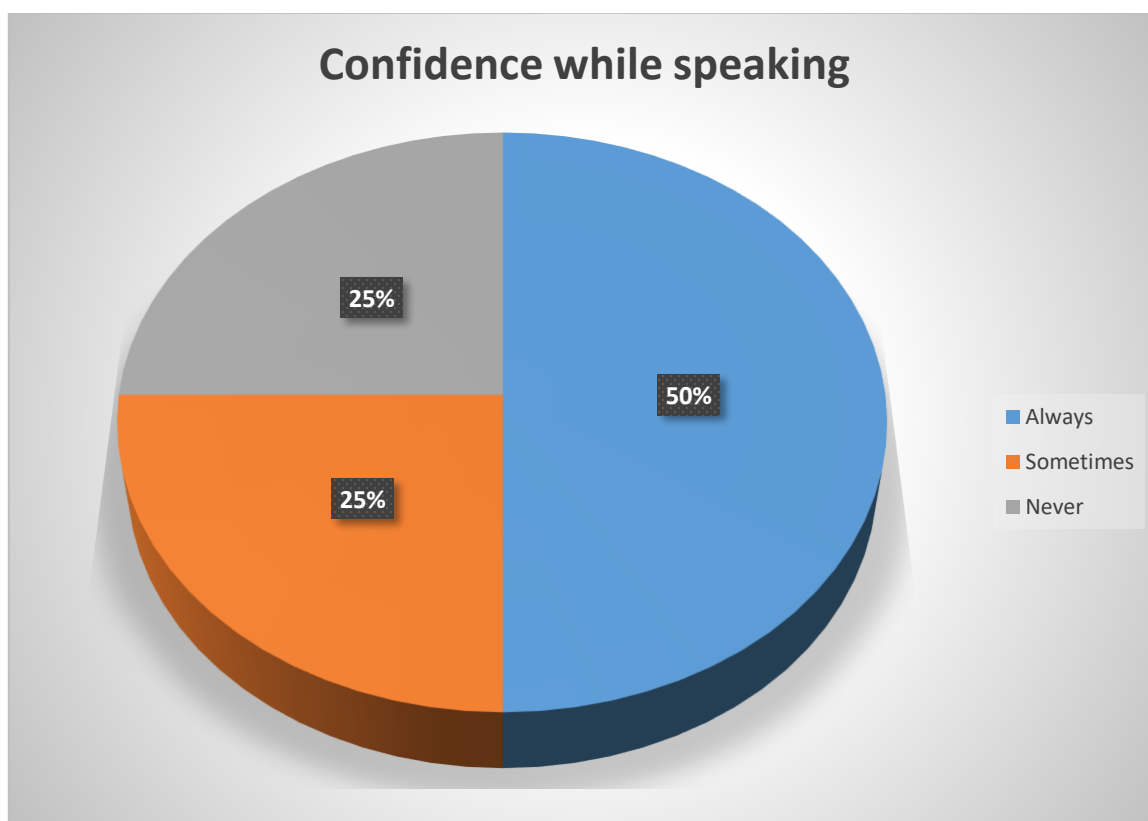
*Figure 10 shows the frequency in which participants provided complete answers or statements during the post-test activity. Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 10 graphically demonstrates that eight students (67%) always provided complete answers and statements while performing the post- test presentation activity. Two students (16%) sometimes provided complete answers or statements when they were carrying out their presentation. Finally, two students (16%) never answered or provided statements in a complete way. Most of the participants expressed their ideas and thoughts about the information presented by using complete ideas that were easy to understand and interpret.

**Figure 11**

*Figure 11 shows the frequency in which participants had a positive attitude towards the language during the post-test activity. Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 11 shows that eight students (67%) always had a positive attitude towards the language during the implementation of the post-test activity. Two students (16%) sometimes demonstrated a positive attitude towards the target language. Finally, two students (17%) never expressed a positive attitude. Based on the figure, more than half of the students had a good attitude. However, the rest of the students struggled to be more positive about the use of the English language in their learning process. As previously mentioned, the attitude of a student can really influence their language acquiring process.

**Figure 12**

*Figure 12 shows the frequency in which participants demonstrated confidence during the post-test activity.  
Source: Researchers' own creation.*

Figure 12 graphically demonstrates that six students (50%) always demonstrated to have confidence while speaking during the post-test activity. Three students (25%) sometimes demonstrated to have confidence while speaking. Finally, three students (25%) never demonstrated to develop this attitude during the post-test task. Based on the figure, the researcher could observe that half of the students performed in a more confident way.

As previously stated, the use of three Content Based strategies had the objective to help the researcher to achieve the goals set in this investigation. Throughout the process of implementation of the first, second, and third strategy, the researcher analyzed the different outcomes. For instance, the students' motivation and good attitude towards the language

became more constant through the implementation of the strategy. On the other hand, even when students refused to speak in English all the time, the use of the target language and oral production increased. Even though, students still struggled with confidence and speaking limitations, they did not completely disappear, but they become continuously reduced.

The principal objective of this investigation was to improve the oral production of the students by using Content Based Strategies. After finishing the post-test stage, the investigator was able to state that students improved their production of the language. Even though they used Spanish in class, they presented a noticeable difference from the first stages of the analysis.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the present chapter, the researcher will present a series of recommendations and conclusions based on the application of Content Based Approach strategies on the students at El Árbol English School in Turrialba. In addition, the purpose of this study will be stated in this chapter, as well as some unexpected results and a restatement of the research question.

#### **5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion**

In order to reach the objectives previously stated in Chapter I, the researcher developed different stages in this investigation. During the first stage, the fieldworker made an observation with the purpose of identifying the possible limitations of twelve students of an intermediate group at El Árbol English School. During the second stage, the researcher established a research question as part of Chapter I. On the other hand, the general objective of the investigation, which was to evaluate Content Based strategies applied in class to improve the oral production of students, and the three specific objectives that were to identify the problems that students present during the oral production, to apply the Content Based strategies in the class to improve the oral production of the students, and to analyze the Content Based strategies applied in class to improve the oral production of the students, were stated in this stage.

During the third stage, the fieldworker focused on studying relevant theories regarding the Content Based Approach, oral production, and possible strategies that could help in the fulfillment of the objectives and thus, to benefit the students at this institution. Furthermore, in this stage the investigator also consulted different sources to support different ideas. In the

fourth stage, the investigator created and implemented different instruments. An interview and a survey applied to the academic director, an observation made to the group that was part of this study, a pre- test, and a post- test, were used to identify the outcomes and evaluate if there was any improvement in students' oral production. During the fifth stage of this investigation, the researcher studied the different results compiled from the application of the Content Based strategies. To clearly state the gathered results, the investigator organized and structured the information into figures, for a better understanding of the readers. Based on these figures, conclusions and recommendations will be stated by the fieldworker in this chapter.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

In this section, the researcher will indicate and comment the conclusions and results shown by the application of the Content Based strategies to reach the objectives presented in Chapter 1.

### **5.2.1 To identify the problems that students present during their oral participation in class.**

In the initial process of the investigation, the researcher had the space to collect information to identify possible problems that students presented during their oral participation in class. During this initial process, the investigator could identify that even though students had knowledge of grammar and understood instructions, they were not performing orally as expected in class. Students were not able to express themselves in English using complete answers, they did not use the target language to communicate their ideas in class, and they were not confident and did not show content knowledge when they spoke. Therefore, in order to achieve the first objective of the research, the fieldworker implemented a pre-test stage. In this stage, the investigator used a story telling activity and a rubric to obtain the required information about the students' oral performance. To carry out

this activity, the group was asked to create a story based on the images in the dices. Each student had to add a new part for the story using complete ideas.

In this institution, students have been working on acquiring their grammar knowledge, speaking skills, and expanding their vocabulary in order to show competence and being able to communicate effectively in the target language. Nevertheless, with the assistance of a rubric, the fieldworker could detect and state that while performing the story telling activity students presented various limitations. The researcher could identify that less than half of the students participated actively in the activity. Spanish was not used only by three students from the group of twelve participants, as the other nine used it in different moments.

The interest on the activity was not consistent among the twelve students, since not all the students were involved in the task. In addition, half of the students, that is that only six students from the twelve selected, provided complete ideas during the activity. It showed that the six remaining did not perform as expected during the story telling activity. On the other hand, the attitude towards the language was also observed during the task. For this aspect, it was determined that students were not always positive during the task, as five of the participants complained about the instructions given and others, about the way in which the activity was developed.

### **5.2.2 To apply Content-Based strategies to improve the oral participation of the students**

In order to achieve the second objective of the investigation, the researcher designed and applied three activities based on the Content Based approach. In the first activity, which consisted of an audio assisted reading, the students were asked to read a text about extinct animals. Students had ten minutes to read and analyze the text. After that, the professor played a recording with the text for students to listen and follow the reading. Finally, students

answered some questions about their text and to share their opinion with their classmates. For the second strategy, students worked on a research dynamic. During this activity, students investigated about an influential person. After that, students filled a chart with relevant information about the person they researched about. Finally, students shared their information with the rest of the class guided by a chart.

During the application of the strategies mentioned, students demonstrated progress in the improvement of the areas previously stated. The researcher observed that the use of content as a tool to acquire the language helped students to strength their skills regarding oral production. As shown in the evaluation of each strategy, students were able to diminish their limitations through the process, learn about new topics, and perform each of them in a positive way. The confidence and interest showed during the activities increased, and the students were more willing to talk using the target language with more frequency than at the beginning.

### **5.2.3 To evaluate the Content-Based strategies applied to improve the oral participation of the students**

In order to reach the third and final objective of the present investigation, the fieldworker implemented a post-test activity. For this activity, students were asked to work in pairs to research about endangered species. After researching, students had to create a short presentation about the species they researched about and deliver the information to the rest of the class. Furthermore, students had to be ready to answer their classmates' questions about their presentation or to clarify any doubts. Finally, by using a rubric, the researcher could state the different pertinent aspects about the students' performance. Based on this rubric, a set of six figures were generated to expose the data collected with its corresponding percentages.

The post-test figures showed that the participation of the students increased after the application of the strategies conducted by the researcher. The use of Spanish decreased to half

of the population. Additionally, regarding the interest showed during the post-test activity, only 8% of the students did not show enthusiasm during the assignment in comparison to the pre-test phase, where 17% of the students demonstrated that they were not interested during the task. Furthermore, more than half of the students always used complete phrases or ideas to express themselves, in contrast to the pre-test activity where six students were not capable of doing that. Finally, the students' attitude towards the language and confidence improved in more than half of the population.

### **5.3 Restatement of the Research Question**

The general objective of this investigation was to analyze Content Based strategies applied in class to improve the oral participation of the students. The general objective was stated by the fieldworker as a result of asking herself the following questions: Why study Content Based Approach? Why study how to improve the oral participation of students? These questions were formulated after observing the behavior, characteristics, and other features of an intermediate group at El Árbol English School during her teaching professional practicum, implemented during the first quarter of 2019. The investigator observed the group during a speaking activity, in which students were sharing their thoughts about controversial topics. After that, the pre-test observation process helped her to strengthen these questions.

As a way to meet the objectives of this investigation and to answer the research questions, the fieldworker analyzed different learning acquisition theories and Content Based approach strategies. In this way, the researcher was able to create different instruments and planned different activities that could help students to enhance their English oral participation and communicate in a more effective way. The instruments used and previously mentioned allowed the fieldworker to evaluate the effectiveness of Content Based Approach in class.

Based on the study of the drawbacks, the investigator determined that Content Based approach helped students to improve their oral participation.

The strategies implemented consisted on an audio assisted reading, a research dynamic, and a pair discussion. Conforming to the data collected and results taken from the different instruments, the application of the strategies was positively accepted by the students, as they helped them to produce more content using the target language in class and to communicate using complete ideas, as well as the inclusion of content, which generated more enthusiasm in the students' learning process.

Finally, after the implementation of the strategies and instruments, the fieldworker was able to answer how to improve the oral production of students and reach the objective that was to analyze the Content Based approach strategies to improve the oral production of the students. To sum up, the researcher received a positive result from the investigation, and was capable of saying that Content Based approach strategies could help students to improve their oral production.

#### **5.4 Unexpected Results**

During the observation period carried out during the first stage of the investigation, the researcher determined that students did not show enthusiasm during the class activity. Due to this fact, the fieldworker decided to use accurate and interesting information within the material to promote a positive attitude in the students during the class activities. This idea was well received by students and their attitude towards the language positively increased by 9%, as a result of finding new topics that could be more captivating for them.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Once data was tabulated and collected, the practitioner contemplated the following recommendations. Based on the first specific objective, which was to identify the problems

that students face during the oral participation, the recommendation for future researchers would be to establish a pertinent period to observe and gather information from the population selected. For the present investigation, the researcher observed the students for a period of seven days; however, the fieldworker considers that establishing a longer period of time for this process could lead to better and more outcomes.

The second recommendation is based on the second specific objective of this study, which was to apply the Content Based strategies in class to improve the oral production of the students. The recommendation for future investigators would be to apply strategies based on the students' preferences and opinions. It means, to elaborate and design activities that can include topics to make them feel interested, as well as activities that can encourage students to participate using the previous and new knowledge.

Finally, the third recommendation is based on the last specific objective, which was to evaluate the Content Based strategies applied in class to improve the oral participation of the students. As a result of the usage of the different strategies in the classroom, the recommendation for future researchers would be to elaborate rubrics that include the most relevant aspects according to the students' deficiencies showed during the observation period.

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## APENDIXES

### Tribunal Examinador

Esta Tesina fue aprobada por el Tribunal Examinador de las Carreras de Inglés de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, como requisito para optar por el grado de Bachiller en Inglés.



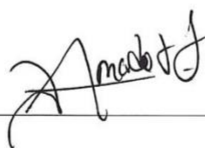
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Lic. Joshua Masís Bermúdez  
Tutor



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M.Sc. Yanith Delgado  
Lectora



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M.Sc. Dinier Amador Serrano  
Director de las Carreras de Inglés

## Carta del Director de Carrera

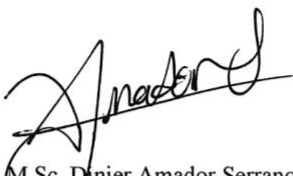
San José, 14 de Agosto de 2019

Señores  
Universidad Internacional de las Américas  
Estimados señores:

El suscrito M.Sc. Dinier Amador Serrano, Director de las Carreras de Inglés, hace constar que ha revisado la Tesina de la estudiante Jennifer Paola Sánchez Hidalgo, portadora de la cédula de identidad número 3-0472-0366, que ha titulado: Content Based Approach as a Tool to Develop Strategies for the Oral Production of the Students of El Arbol English School.

La mencionada Tesina, responde a los requisitos exigidos en la Guía que nuestra carrera tiene para estos casos. Por tanto, se autoriza al autor para que lo presente ante el tribunal examinador nombrado para esta ocasión.

Atentamente,



M.Sc. Dinier Amador Serrano  
Director de las Carreras de Inglés

## Carta del Lector

San José, 14 de Agosto de 2019

Máster  
Dinier Amador Serrano  
Director de las Carreras de Inglés  
Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Estimado señor:

La estudiante Jennifer Paola Sánchez Hidalgo, portadora de la cédula de identidad número 3-0472-0366, ha presentado para su lectura y corrección de estilo la tesina denominada: Content Based Approach as a Tool to Develop Strategies for the Oral Production of the Students of El Arbol English School. He revisado y corregido la coherencia de los objetivos con el marco teórico, instrumentos y resultados, la calidad del trabajo y la relevancia del trabajo. Por lo tanto, hago constar que este se encuentra listo para ser presentado a la Universidad como trabajo de graduación.

Atentamente,



M.Sc. Yanith Delgado  
Lectora de Tesis



## Universidad Internacional de las Américas Código de Ética

La suscrita **JENNIFER PAOLA SÁNCHEZ HIDALGO**, número de cédula: 3-0472-0366 graduada del grado de Bachillerato de Inglés con énfasis en Enseñanza de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, se compromete a cumplir, durante el ejercicio profesional, con el Código de Ética de la Institución, que se rige por los siguientes principios:

**PROBIDAD:** actuar siempre con rectitud y honradez.

**PRUDENCIA:** actuar con pleno conocimiento de la materia sometida a su consideración.

**JUSTICIA:** permanente disposición hacia las funciones de la profesión, bajo los lineamientos legales que debe respetar todo profesional.

**RESPONSABILIDAD:** cumplir con los deberes, tanto en calidad como en oportunidad.

**DISCRECIÓN:** guardar respeto sobre los hechos o informaciones de los que tenga conocimiento con motivo del ejercicio profesional, sin que esto perjudique las funciones y responsabilidades.

**INDEPENDENCIA DE CRITERIO:** no involucrarse o comprometerse con situaciones, intereses o actividades contrarias a la moral, a la sana crítica y que, por ley, sean incompatibles con las funciones profesionales correspondientes.

**DIGNIDAD Y DECORO:** actuar con sobriedad y moderación.

**TOLERANCIA:** evidenciar una actitud paciente y de comprensión ante las opiniones divergentes que puedan expresar otras personas.

**EQUILIBRIO:** desempeñar las funciones profesionales con sentido práctico, buen juicio y equidad.

**ACTUALIZACIÓN:** comprometer parte del tiempo en actualizar los conocimientos y adaptarlos en el desarrollo de la actividad profesional.

**VOCACIÓN:** mostrar siempre apego al trabajo y a la educación recibida, como fundamentos para el desempeño laboral.

**BUENA FE:** toda conducta o comportamiento, criterio emitido y labor desempeñada debe basarse en los más altos principios éticos y tendrá como fundamento la buena fe.

**JENNIFER PAOLA SÁNCHEZ HIDALGO**

**3-0472-0366**

## 1- Survey

### Speaking Participation Survey

**Teacher: Manuel Solano**

**Group: Build up 4**

**Date: 11-4-19**

Criteria	Always	Most of the Times	Some of the Times	In Few occasions	Never
1. Do your students collaborate with discussions in class?			x		
2. Do your students show interest in the topics of discussion?			x		
3. Do your students answer to their classmate's questions?			x		
4. Do your students create questions to ask their classmates?				x	
5. Do your students show attention and interest in their classmate's ideas?		x			

**Comments:**

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*Source: Researchers' own creation*

## 2- Lesson Plan 1

Universidad Internacional de las Américas

## Lesson Plan

## Lesson Plan #1

## Pre- test

Objective	Content	Strategies/activities/ procedures	Material	Evaluation	Time
1. To evaluate students oral performance	Story telling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As a group, students will sit in a circle to create a story.</li> <li>2. Individually, each students will throw a dice and add a part to a story according to the image in the dice.</li> </ol>	Dices with different images	Monitor students' performance	25 min

## 3- Lesson Plan 2

Universidad Internacional de las Américas  
Lesson Plan

## Lesson Plan #2

### Strategy: Audio Assisted Reading

Objective	Content	Strategies/activities/ procedures	Material	Evaluation	Time
<p>1.To apply Content Based Strategies in order to improve students' oral participation</p> <p>2. To enhance students participation</p>	<p>Extinct animals audio and reading</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individually, students will read a text about extinct animals.</li> <li>2. The professor will play an audio with the text for students to follow the reading.</li> <li>3. Individually, students will answer to some questions about the reading</li> <li>4. In pairs students will compared their answers and share their opinions.</li> </ol>	<p>Text and audio called "extinct animals of the world"</p>	<p>Monitor students' performance</p>	<p>25min</p>

## 4- Lesson Plan 3

Universidad Internacional de las Américas  
Lesson Plan

## Lesson Plan #3

### Strategy: Research Dynamic

Objective	Content	Strategies/activities/ Procedures	Material	Evaluation	Time
<p>1.To apply Content Based Strategies in order to improve students' oral performance</p> <p>2. To help students develop content knowledge before speaking task</p>	<p>Influential people in the world</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The professor will give each students a card with the name of an influential people in the world.</li> <li>2. Students will research about the person they have.</li> <li>3. Students will fill a chart with important information about the person.</li> <li>4. Students will share their information with the class using the chart they filled as a guide</li> </ol>	<p>Cards with the name of the people</p> <p>Chart to fill with the information</p>	<p>Monitor students' performance</p>	<p>25 min</p>

## 5- Lesson Plan 4

Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Lesson Plan

## Lesson Plan #4

## Strategy: Peer Discussion

Objective	Content	Strategies/activities/ Procedures	Material	Evaluation	Time
<p>1.To apply Content Based Strategies in order to improve students' oral performance</p> <p>2. To encourage students to speak and discuss using the target language</p>	Unusual Pets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The professor will give the students a text about an unusual pet.</li> <li>2. Students will read the text.</li> <li>3. In pairs, students will share their opinion about the pets they have.</li> <li>4. Students will share a summary about their classmates' pet with the rest of the class.</li> </ol>	Unusual pets' reading	Monitor students' performance	25 min

## 6- Lesson Plan 5

## Lesson Plan #5

## Post- Test

Objective	Content	Strategies/activities/ Procedures	Material	Evaluation	Time
1.To analyze the effectiveness of the Content Based Strategies in order to improve students' oral performance	Endangered Species	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In trios, students will choose an endangered species.</li> <li>2. Students will prepare a short presentation about the animal they chose.</li> <li>3. Students will present the information about their animal to their classmates.</li> </ol>	Paper  Markers  Animals' pictures	Monitor students' performance and progress	30 min

## 7- Strategies' evaluation

## Strategy 1

## Audio Assisted Reading

	Accomplished	In progress	Unaccomplished
<b>Students successfully understood the reading</b>			
<b>Students successfully conducted a discussion with their peers</b>			
<b>Students successfully answered to the readings' questions</b>			

*Source: Researchers' creation*

**Strategy 2**  
**Research Dynamic**

	<b>Accomplished</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Unaccomplished</b>
<b>Students successfully acquired information</b>			
<b>Students successfully filled the chart with the information</b>			
<b>Students successfully shared their information with the class</b>			

*Source: Researchers' creation*

**Strategy 3**  
**Peer Discussion**

	<b>Accomplished</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Unaccomplished</b>
<b>Students successfully discuss some question with a peer</b>			
<b>Students successfully gather their classmates' information</b>			
<b>Students successfully share a summary of their peers' information with the class</b>			

*Source: Researchers' creation*

## 8- Pre- test / Post- test Rubric

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>1. Participation</b>	<b>Students contribute and share their opinions in English one hundred percent of the time</b>	<b>Students contribute and share their opinions in English fifty percent of the time</b>	<b>Students contribute and share their opinions in English zero percent of the time</b>
<b>2. Spanish in class</b>	<b>Students use Spanish in class one hundred percent of the time</b>	<b>Students use Spanish in class fifty percent of the time</b>	<b>Students use Spanish in class zero percent of the time</b>
<b>3. Interest in the activity</b>	<b>Students show interest in the activity one hundred percent of the time</b>	<b>Students show interest in the activity assigned fifty percent of the time</b>	<b>Students show interest in the activity assigned zero percent of the time</b>
<b>4. Complete answers or statements</b>	<b>Students provide complete answers or statements one hundred percent of the time</b>	<b>Students provide complete answers or statements fifty percent of the time</b>	<b>Students provide complete answers or statements zero percent of the time</b>
<b>5. Attitude towards the language</b>	<b>Students demonstrate a positive attitude towards the language one hundred percent of the time</b>	<b>Students demonstrate a positive attitude towards the language fifty percent of the time</b>	<b>Students demonstrate a positive attitude towards the language zero percent of the time</b>

<b>6. Confidence while speaking.</b>	<b>Students demonstrate confidence while speaking one hundred percent of the time</b>	<b>Students demonstrate confidence while speaking fifty percent of the time</b>	<b>Students demonstrate confidence while speaking zero percent of the time</b>
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