

ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA DEL LITORAL

**Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras**

**CELEX**

**EFL SPEAKING STRATEGIES FOR AN ECUADORIAN  
UNIVERSITY HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM**

**PROGRAM**

**Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

A thesis submitted to the Master's

Thesis Committee in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master in Teaching English as

a Foreign Language

**Catalina Noemi Cevallos Lecaro**

Guayaquil- Ecuador

2011

## LIST OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	p.1
Chapter2: Literature Review .....	p. 4
Chapter 3: Pilot Study .....	p.34
Chapter 4: Methodology .....	p.51
Chapter 5: Findings .....	p.68
Chapter 6: Discussion .....	p.115
References .....	p.149
Appendix A .....	p.156
Appendix B .....	p.158
Appendix C .....	p.160
Appendix D .....	p.161

## Acknowledgement

Thanks to my Almighty God, without His support, I would have not been able to complete this master program.

To my dearest family, my mother Colombia, my brother Miguel, my sister Zoila; but a special thanks to my father Isidoro Cevallos and my grandfather Miguel Lecaro. Definitely, these two valuable men have had an important role in the process of getting this degree!

To Mr. Dennis Maloney and Ing. Jorge Flores who shared all their knowledge with me.

A special gratitude to Miss Rebeca Vera. She is the responsible of being in the English teaching field... and also of working in the place where I am...

Finally, Doctor Dara Shaw. Thanks for instilling me the love to read and especially to write in a foreign language (English). Moreover, you taught me the importance of improving every day!

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the use of English speaking strategies in order to help the learner to cope with difficulties in communication the students may encounter in their job areas. Furthermore, this research was also aimed to provide a broad view of when, how and what speaking strategies use, taking into account that not all the speaking strategies can be used in all situations. The participants were 11 students from an Ecuadorian university, who studied Hotel Management & Tourism. This investigation is a hybrid method of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Within the quantitative research, surveys (to the students) were used to conduct this part of the investigation. In the qualitative section, observations and semi- structured interviews were used in the analysis of this section. Those observations were carried out by the author of this research in a period of three weeks and three days. The total hours of face to face instruction were sixty four. These instruments were applied at the end of each session. The results showed that using speaking strategies increased students' self-confidence when communicating and the results also showed an improvement in the cognitive skills usage.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

I have thirteen years teaching English in an Ecuadorian university, and the last five years, I have been teaching English at the Hotel Management and Tourism program at the same Ecuadorian university.

As an English instructor of the Hotel Management & Tourism program, I observed that it was difficult for my students to feel confident to join a conversation in English. As the time passed by, I noticed that these students had production obstacles due to nervousness and lack of confidence. Moreover, these students looked for specific words and were not able to use simple language to communicate their ideas. Finally, these students were not skilful enough to communicate with a varied group of individuals (partners, bosses, teachers, administrators, etc).

My interest in conducting research on teaching speaking strategies aroused just from those previous experiences. Being a witness of my students' speaking problems, made me reflect that I could not be a passive instructor. Furthermore, the students from the Hotel Management & Tourism program were required to complete some conditions before graduation.

Internship is one of the things that students are forced to complete during the time they are studying at university. Initially, those hours of internship were done within the city. And most of the time their work area was not necessary a place where students could practice English. Three years ago more or less, the director of the career expanded the work areas where students can develop internship. However, they decided to sign a deal with a foreign company in USA, and Canada.

The purpose of it is to enable tourism students in different work areas where they not only gain experience in the field, but also study the English language, too. As soon as

the international internship program started there was a great response on the students' side. More doors were opened for the tourism students. These students also have facilities to travel and work in the Galapagos Islands. In other words, the flow of communication in English was not limited to use in the English classroom. Since then, and up to now; there have been lots of students who have applied to one or both programs. Unfortunately, not all of them were able to finish their internship whether it was in USA, Canada or Galapagos Islands. What caused this attrition among the students? One more time, the problem remains, the lack of "English" proficiency. In spite of the high number of students who cannot finish their required internship successfully abroad, the programs keep on offering them to the tourism students. Many students were faced with the thought of speaking in English, though few had much previous experience conversing in English in authentic situations. Furthermore, those who have had more experience with English started complaining about the difficulties they had, when speaking English with the people from all nationalities. Something else that caught my attention was the fact that not only the low proficiency students experienced difficulties when conversing in English, but also those students, who somehow, had had more exposure to the language, were still having problems. Therefore, I undertook the current study in order to investigate the influence and any relation between the teaching English speaking strategies and success when communicating in English as well as student perceptions regarding motivation and attitude towards English language learning.

## Research Questions

What are the speaking strategies used by two groups of language learners in the field of tourism and hotel management?

How does motivation relate to language learning in two groups of Ecuadorian tourism and hotel Management students?

How do cooperative learning and group management skills reveal students' ability to work with others to learn speaking strategies?

What relationship is there among anxiety factors and choices of speaking strategies?

How do students' backgrounds relate to the acquisition of and use of speaking strategies?

In order to assist the reader, in this section I have listed terms that I will be using in this study. The terms related to the research are the following:

LLS = Language Learning Strategy: They are the tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.

Speaking Strategies= these strategies helps the learners to improve their conversational skills

EFL = English as a foreign language

ESL = English as a second Language

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

In Chapter 2, I review the literature related to my research study. The topics and themes that I cover are: Conceptualizing the Speaking Skill; Speaking and Second Language Acquisition; The Relationship of Speaking to Listening; Factors Affecting the Development of Speaking Abilities, Teaching Speaking in the University EFL Setting; Motivation to Speak in the Target Language

#### Conceptualizing the Speaking Skill

According to Bygate (2003), speaking has not been given the same weight in classroom instruction as some of the other skills. He wrote that speaking is “transient” and “improvised” (p7) which could be the reason why this skill may be viewed as difficult to teach. However, speaking is a skill that requires the same thoughtful attention as the other skills

There are many reasons why speaking should be given due attention.

First, if our students are capable of managing this skill, the students will have more confidence when carrying out the students’ basic transactions (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking is the skill that reveals who an individual is in relation to the world. In other words, by the way we communicate with each other we can demonstrate our academic background to others, moreover, speaking is a vehicle “par excellence of social solidarity, of social ranking of professional advancement and of business. It is also a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is conducive for learning... (Bygate, 2003 p7)”



Many different researchers and book authors have written about and defined the speaking skill in the literature of second language acquisition, and English language teaching. For the majority of researchers, speaking involves the unfolding of a number of complex skills and different types of knowledge about how and when to communicate. For instance, Burns & Joyce (2003) stated that this knowledge is needed when using linguistic features as grammar and sound among other speaking features. However, the learner has to make a mental choice of what, when, and how to speak and under which circumstances.

According to Burns & Joyce (2003) this indispensable knowledge is the means by which the students can participate in any kind of living situation. What makes people speak has to do with their desire to speak and communicate. In other words, people have the desire to: relate to each other as people; exchange information; and seek practical outcomes (p.4)

Furthermore, speaking is considered ability because it is a vehicle for exchanging meaning. The exchange of meanings is categorized as interactional or transactional. The first one is related to exchange “pleasantries and to oil the social wheels” (Burns & Joyce, 2003 p.5). Speaking is also used for practical purposes like making appointments, or going to the bank to make a deposit. However, transactional and interactional spoken texts have different features and require different skills.

Researchers like Newton and Folse make a distinction between knowledge and skill. Understanding the difference between them is crucial in when teaching speaking. Bygate (2003) states that the using of grammar structures, when deciding what tense to use, or when trying to compose sentences by the use of appropriate vocabulary are aspects of the knowledge section that individuals use in their minds

when trying to communicate (or speak) with others. But for Bygate, that is only part of what speaking entails. The knowledge and skill aspects of speaking can be conceived and learnt by heart, though only a skill can be imitated and practiced. Learning trouble in each area could require different pedagogical means (Newton, 2009).

For Folse (2007) oral skills involve much more than “tossing out a topic... (p.5)” according to him, oral skills entail many different aspects like: focusing on fluency, pronunciation, language accuracy, and listening ability. Furthermore, Scarcella & Oxford (2006) perceived speaking as a series of underlying abilities or subskills, which are grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence. According to these experts, if students can manage the subskills, they will likely reach proficiency in the oral skill.

There are other points of view regarding speaking that go beyond giving a simpler concept to a deeper picture or framework of what speaking implies. It is stated that speaking is a dynamic process through which meaning can be formed. This process includes producing and receiving information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997; cited in Flores & Mary Ann Cunningham, 1999). Form and meaning vary according to the context. This context may include participants, experiences, physical environment, or the purpose of speaking.

Although speaking is natural, and expands without definite limits, it does not mean that it is always unpredictable, because language functions tend to occur in certain discourse situations which can be identified and shaped (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Finally, speaking does not only require knowing how to produce specific points of linguistic competence but also requires understanding when, why, and in what ways to produce the language, (Scarcella and Oxford (2006).

## Speaking and Second Language Acquisition

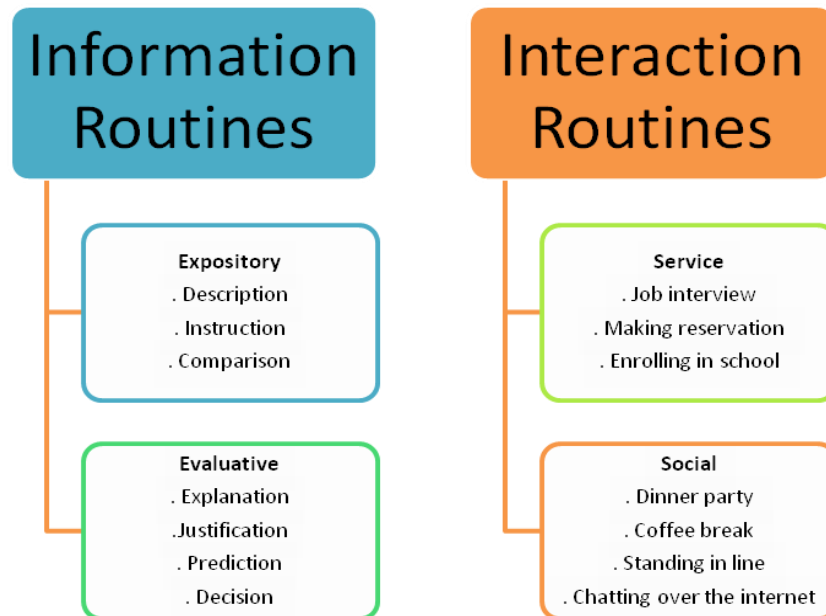
In the work of Chin-Fen Emily Chen (2003) he schematizes the importance of speaking in second language acquisition in the following way. For him, speaking requires three abilities: 1) Taking in messages; 2) Negotiating meanings and producing comprehensible output. But, for Chin-Fen, comprehensible output deserves more careful attention, since it requires that learners negotiate, formulate and test hypotheses about the structures and functions of language they are learning to produce. He also states that comprehensible output is relevant because it is in this stage where the students learn to monitor their speech in order to clarify meaning. Thus the process of adjusting makes the learner to improve accuracy in the language production.

But what kind of interactions do individuals face in everyday life? Different authors have given different names to these everyday kinds of interactions. First of all, it would be necessary to say that there are two types of interactions. The first are related to exchanging pleasantries and to social relations while the second ones are related to practical purposes. To Brown & Yule (1983) they are called transactional & interactional functions, but Bygate (1987) calls them information & interaction routines. Figure 1 illustrates these two kinds of interactions:

Figure 1

Bygate's graphic representation of speech interactions:

#### ORAL INTERACTIONS



Bygate's model of oral interaction (1987) Cited in: Chen "Computer Assisted Language Learning and Teaching" (2003) 1

According to the *Curriculum Guide for Secondary Level of Saskatchewan Education* (1997), speaking is a vital skill to teach because it is a tool through which learners can communicate, think, and learn. It has been said that speaking is the foundation of all learning because through these means, students gain knowledge, foster vocabulary, and discern the structure of the English language; which (according to this curriculum) are important features of learning. Moreover, within this curriculum, those learners who have excellent oral language foundations have academic advantages, because university performance is subordinated to the students' capacities for exhibiting knowledge in a clear and acceptable way in speaking and in writing, too.

The spoken word will dominate the lives of the majority of students. To assist and encourage students to speak in a confident and fluent way and in very kind of situation is another important feature to note this review. As oral language is a means for learning, the role of teachers is to create a “purposeful and varied activities that will enhance their speaking performance (Galloway, 1993)”. However that enhancement in their speaking skill will allow the learner to face successfully not only the speaking situations in the classroom but in their lives, too.

Bertran (2002) in his work *Effective Communication*, states that the role of speaking is meaningful in the classroom because oral language involves thinking, knowledge and skills. In a research study, Stabb (1986 cited in Bertran, 2002) said that there is a relationship between oral language development and the development of thinking abilities. Bertran (2002) agreed because while the learner is in the process of shaping his/her oral skills, at the same time their critical thinking and reasoning abilities will be working together. So, oral language functions as a bridge between students’ learning and thinking development. Moreover, speaking is considered as the basis of development of oral skills. For instance, while talking about reading an article, learners beginning to organize their thoughts and to concentrate on their ideas (Lyle, 1993).

Bertran (2002) states that oral communication should be achieved in proficiency first, more than in reading or writing. He based this assertion on the fact that the “speaking skill remains essential for communication of ideas and intelligent conversation” (Bertran, 2002).

#### The Relationship of Speaking to Listening

In this literature review, I decided to explore listening in relation to speaking. As the aim of this research is on the teaching of speaking strategies, I have limited the

study of the listening skill. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) in their discussion of the importance and relationship of listening to speaking quote a definition from Wolvin and Coakley (1985) which says: “Listening is the process of receiving, attending to, and assigning meaning to aural stimuli” (p.138). Based on this concept, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) come to the conclusion that listening interacts with speaking in a plural-oral communication feedback system. The speaking skill is the most frequently used language skill, which interacts with the nonverbal communication system.

In contradiction to what other’s have thought and written, listening is not a passive skill (Rzadkiewicz (2010) Tennant (2010) Hirai (2002). Newton (2009) interprets listening as the “natural precursor to speaking (p.37)”. These authors imply that the early phases of language progression in a person’s first language are confined to listening and the observation of non-verbal cues. As listening was perceived as a skill achieved naturally, there was a misconception of thinking that listening did not need the same level of formal instruction as the other skills required (Newton, 2009). The role of explicit instruction of listening took on an important role when researchers and writers in the 1980’s suggested that speaking skills should not be promoted. This view of language learning came from Nord’s (1980) point of view, that listening is the way to acquire a language. Listening provides facts from which to develop the information needed when using the target language. According to Nord, when this knowledge is developed, the learner can begin to speak. The researcher stated that the “listening-only” period is a time of attention and learning, which at the same time serves the foundation for the acquisition of other language skills, however, this delay of speaking, and focus on listening may be particularly worthwhile during the early phases of language learning, a view also supported by Krashen’s (1981) early research

Newton in his book *Teaching ESL / EFL listening and speaking* quoted Terrel (1982) and Krashen's (1981) work which included the benefits of concentrating on listening and delaying speaking. The first is called a "cognitive benefit". For learners, it is really difficult to focus on two or more skills at the same time. Second, speed coverage, or "receptive knowledge grows faster than productive knowledge (Gary & Gary, 1981 cited in Newton, 2009, p.39) Gary and Gary think that learning a language would be much more productive if the students just concentrated on listening first. Third, learning to listen to the target language provides a psychological benefit. Listening tasks lower anxiety when learning a language. Fourth, some types of listening activities may be good tools for leading to independent learning.

Other researchers have refuted these ideas about the importance and need for this silent period in second language instruction. Gregg (1984) and Swain (1985) censured it, by arguing that "logic and evidence" is not sufficiently documented to make the theory true. Moreover, although they consider the teaching of the listening skill important and support the idea of "early spoken production" they also give prominence to direct attention to the enhancement of ways for imparting interesting, successful, and sustained opportunities for listening early in a learner's language learning (Newton, 2009).

To sum up, we have to be clear that being a listener; is indispensable for building meaning. Furthermore, teachers should pay attention to the development of listening as a means for enhancing speaking skill or as Nord (1981) states "people must not learn to listen for speaking rather than listening for understanding" (Nord, 1981. p.69).

## Factors Affecting the Development of Speaking Abilities

Experts in the field of ESL/EFL and Applied Linguistics have studied a variety of factors affecting the development of the speaking skill. The factors are from linguistics, and psychology, such as: grammatical accuracy, self-confidence, motivation and paralinguistic communication skills. In the following paragraphs a detailed explanation of each factor is written.

**Grammatical Accuracy.** According to new trends in teaching English, there has been a tendency to focus on the oral skills without paying too much attention to the form (grammar) of the language. There are some who argue that the lack of grammatical accuracy is one of the main barriers in the development of speaking skills. They based this thought on the assumption that when native English speakers can say something without problems it is because they have been brought up speaking the target language, but it does not mean that these native speakers of English do not have challenges or difficulties when expressing ideas or concepts. Native speakers who have been using their language all their lives have the necessary tools or ways to overcome these difficulties. In other words, consciously or unconsciously they have acquired tools to solve communication problems. Although they make mistakes in grammar, these words do not distort or change the meanings of the statements they want to convey (Soriano, 2010), and those mistakes will not be a problem for the listener, either.

In contrast, the mistakes made by non-native speakers most of the time affect the meaning thereby causing misunderstanding. So, according to Soriano (2010) that is a reason why grammar should be considered a determining key to success or failure in the speaking skill of the target language.



Fluency. For some authors, people tend to think wrongly that fluency implies just repeating words or phrases quickly. Soriano (2010) insists that to get fluency in the language implies “practicing speaking in the right way” (p.156) by, letting the students’ have opportunities to interact with native speakers or with more knowledgeable partners, and to surround themselves in an English atmosphere. The lack of opportunities to practice speaking can be a big barrier to improving the speaking skill because sometimes English is just learned by exposure to the academic environment, but when students and professionals return home the exposure to English outside is almost null.

When talking about Oral communication, the participation and interaction in listener-speaker situations is the premise in which spoken proficiency is constructed, and this view is shared by Savignon (1983), Canale (1983) and Ellis (1987). Furthermore, the author implies that certain practices (in EFL classes) may limit oral communication even further. The first limitation is the, widespread use of the mother tongue in teacher talk in EFL classes. The second barrier that prevents the improvement of the speaking skill is the use of shared language in peer interaction. The third feature to be analyzed is the misconception of the “real motor-perceptive nature of speaking activities” (Bygate, 2003 pp. 5-7). As teachers, it is important to be clear about what motor-perceptive speaking activities are for. When using motor-perceptive activities, teachers help students in vocalizing the sounds of English in order to be familiar with the structures of English leading to linguistic competence. The weakness of these types of activities is that students are not training in using cognitive skills. It is also Lim Soh Lan, (1994) said that, it is important to keep in mind that when helping students in oral

communication it would be worthwhile to choose activities, which not only develop their motor-perceptive aspects of speech but also develop the speaking skill.

#### Teaching Speaking in the University EFL Setting

Learning English in an EFL context is more complex than in an ESL environment, but its complexity takes root in the number of opportunities or possibilities students have to practice English outside of class. Washburn and Christianson (1995) stated that when students who are learning English have the opportunity to interact with native speakers or more proficient peers; they develop strategies and in order to avoid communication problems. For instance, the students use strategies for “selecting salient topics, checking comprehension, asking for clarification, repeating utterances, stressing key words, and switching topics (Ellis, 1985 cited in Washburn and Christianson, 1995, p.3). These authors also believe in the importance of not just making the learner to talk with others, but negotiating meaning, as well. (Browne, 1993, p. 40). Ellis also thinks that providing opportunities to interact with native speakers, the linguistic environment will be a better one, but it is often extremely difficult to find willing native speakers to volunteer.

Recent research shows that not many classrooms can provide negotiated interactions with native speakers or more proficient nonnative speakers. However, for many teachers performing these kinds of activities are the most realistic and effective choice (Washburn and Christianson, 1995). There are other authors who stated the importance of it. For instance, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) believe that students need to be involved in a big variety of communicative situations with a mixture of speakers who will assist the learners to gain proficiency in the target language. Through a wise selection of activities where teachers use pair or small group activities students do not

just increase the quantity of meaningful and interesting interaction but also will give the learner many chances to speak English.

### Motivation

Ming Wei (2007) in his research “An examination of motivational patterns in relation to anxiety in China” cited Dörnyei’s work (1994) who made the distinction between second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language acquisition. SLA is characterized by “direct exposure or frequent interaction with the target - language community while FLA contexts involve the target language being taught in school as an academic subject and a great proportion of the variance in language attainment (Dörnyei, 1994 p. 49; cited in Wei, 2007)”. Dörnyei also claims that “in FLA settings, although integrative motivation affects language learning to some extent, instrumental motivation may be particularly important the inclusion of contexts as a variable is essential to our understanding of motivation in relation to language learning (p.4)”.

The researcher, Liu Ping in her work “Factors affecting Chinese students’ English Communication Performance” highlights the importance and the role of motivation in developing communication skills, (2009).

First, the author mentions Elliot and Dweck’s (1988) work, in which they present motivation to speak in the target language as synonymous with goals. The author establishes two types of goal orientation: Task-oriented and ego-oriented. The first one sees learning goals as something to increase knowledge as valuable and enjoyable. While the second type of goal is when the learner is worried about how he / she is seen in comparison to and in competition with their peers. According to this theory, Liu Ping, thinks that is the reason for different results of learning, depends on the students’ goal orientation. (Teachers see how much effort the learners make in

developing English communication skills. But for this Liu Ping expresses the importance of making students aware of establishing “clear and moderately difficult objectives” (Ping, 2009 p.) to carry out more effort to obtain their goals.

Liu (2009) in her case study elaborated a hypothesis that says: “The more students’ objectives are related to English communication, the more effort they will make in developing their communication skills” (p.3). She based this on her research about the “motivation – action relationship, (Liu cited in Locke & Lathan’s, 2002). The authors posited that “conscious self-established” objectives give rise to “human motivation and action (p.4)”. According to them, people who have clear and moderately difficult objectives are more likely to engage more effort in order to fulfill their aims. Furthermore, this assertion found compatibility with Linnenbrink & Pintrich’s (2003) study. They used the words goals and they divided them into “mastery goals and performance goals (p.5)”. Students with mastery goals view their reaching of their goals with a sense of satisfaction and continued effort because the students see attaining their goals as worthwhile. As Liu’s study was carried out in China, she stated that in China “the learners will make their effort to achieve their objectives if they set comprehensible English learning as objectives” (Liu 2009: p. 72).

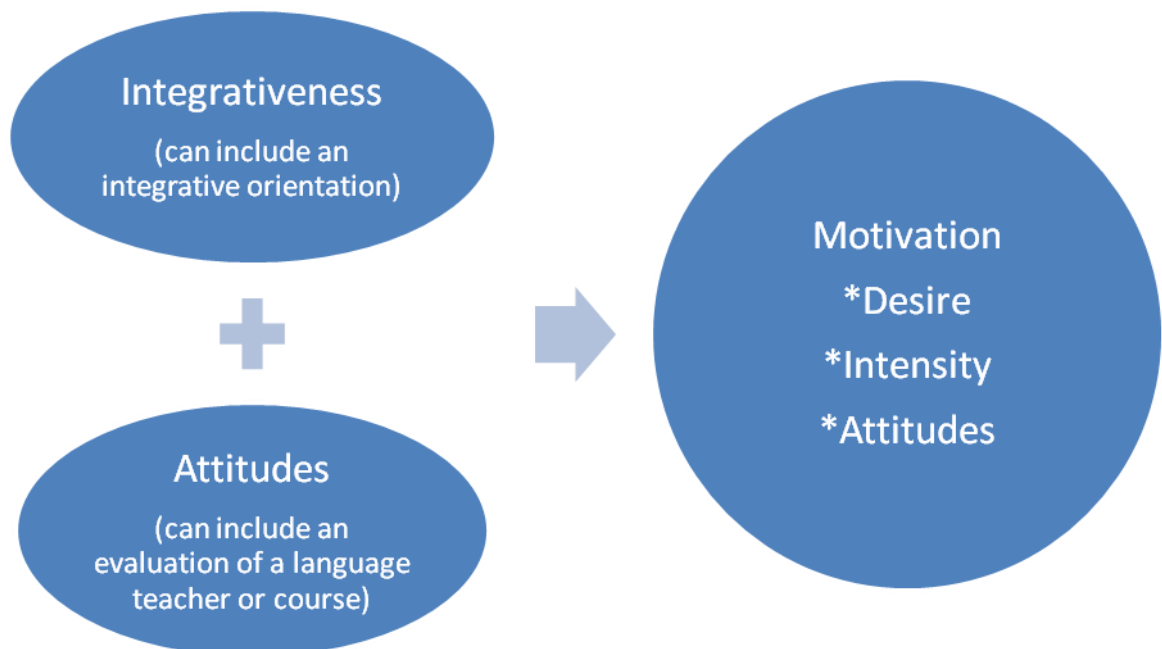
There are others who see motivation as a means for enhancing foreign language acquisition. Norris – Holt (2001), in her research talks about Gardner’s socio-educational model, and the importance of motivation as a supplying element in the acquisition of another language. She writes about the two types of motivation Gardner (1982) (cited in Norris-Holt, p.3) shows and in the light of research she tries to establish reciprocity between the kind of motivation and favorable outcome in the acquisition of other languages. Although there has been some research about motivation and its influence in first language acquisition, Gardner (1982) has been

one of the pioneers in carrying out research about motivation as an influencing factor in the acquisition of a second language. Gardner stated that motivation is one variable that when it is combined with other factors that influence learners' success. Gardner's socio-educational model shows "The social and cultural milieu, individual learner differences, the setting or the context and linguistic outcomes as interrelated features of second language acquisition. (Gardner, 1982, p.3)

Gardner sees motivation as formed by three elements: Effort which he describes as the time a student spends studying the language; desire which has to do with how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language and affect which is the learners' emotional reaction with regard to language study (Gardner, 1982)

Figure: 2

GARDNER'S SOCIO – EDUCATIONAL MODEL OF  
MOTIVATION



(Adapted from Dörnyei, Z (1994). *Modern Language Journal*, 78, p. 517)

Gardner's socio-educational model of motivation concentrated on integrative motive. Motivation was the key point of the model, but at the same time he presented some factors, which affected integrativeness and attitudes as seen in Figure 2. According to Gardner these were other components that affect "individual differences", and were seen as compound variables." (Root, 1999, p.6)

#### Criticism of Gardner's socio-educational model of motivation

Root (1999) criticized Gardner's socio-educational model of motivation, by analyzing its problems. Researchers found that his model of motivation is just restricted to two kinds of orientations. At the same time, researchers disagree on the way Gardner gives so much attention to one of these two orientations, the integrative orientation. Root (1999) agrees Gardner's point of view saying that he bases his beliefs on research which show that students who choose integrative reasons over instrumental ones show evidence of "higher levels of motivational intensity" (Gardner, 1985, p. 53). She thinks that Gardner is simply echoing the study's results that have been carried out about motivation in foreign languages.

On the other hand, there have been other researchers who wanted to investigate motivation under different orientations. Clement and Kruidenier (1983) carried out a study in order to see other factors (besides the one Gardner mentions) that may influence motivation. From their survey they found out four types of orientations. Their results show that the instrumental orientation was an important feature, together with reasons like: traveling, meeting new friends, and acquiring knowledge, but the key point of their study was to know "Who learns what in what milieu" (1983). What this words implies is the fact that they do not want to study instrumental or integrative orientations in a general way but to determine what are the specific factors that affect motivation and within which kind of environments.

Ely (1986) was one of the few who carried out studies on this topic but in FL settings. This study was held in California, with students who were learning Spanish. With this study, what he really wanted to prove was that this division of orientations (instrumental & integrative) did not represent the complete “spectrum” of student motivation (Root, 1999). However, the results showed a collection of motivation that in one way or another they were similar to the instrumental and integrative ones.

Crookes & Smicht (1990) were also interested in studying motivation from a different perspective. They wanted to see how the internal and external factors affected motivation in the learners. The internal and attitudinal factors were:

- Interest in the language based on existing attitudes, experience & background knowledge
- Relevance (some needs being met by language learning)
- Expectancy of success and failure
- Outcomes (extrinsic and intrinsic rewards)

Three internal characteristics that they specify were:

- The language learner decides to engage in language learning
- The language learner persists over time and interruptions
- The language learner maintains a high activity level (p.8)

#### Dörnyei's Model

Besides Gardner; Dörnyei (1994) was another researcher who studied motivation in the EFL setting. With the difference that he did not just study it from two perspectives. He decided to analyze motivation in language learning with a more expanded view. Opposed to Gardner's focal point on integrativeness, Dörnyei posits that instrumental orientation may have a big impact on the language learner. He created a model of learning motivation in which it is divided into three levels of

factors. These three levels of factors allow the discussion of motivation and the inclusion of specific situations, which involve the learners and the surrounding context (cited in Root, 1999).

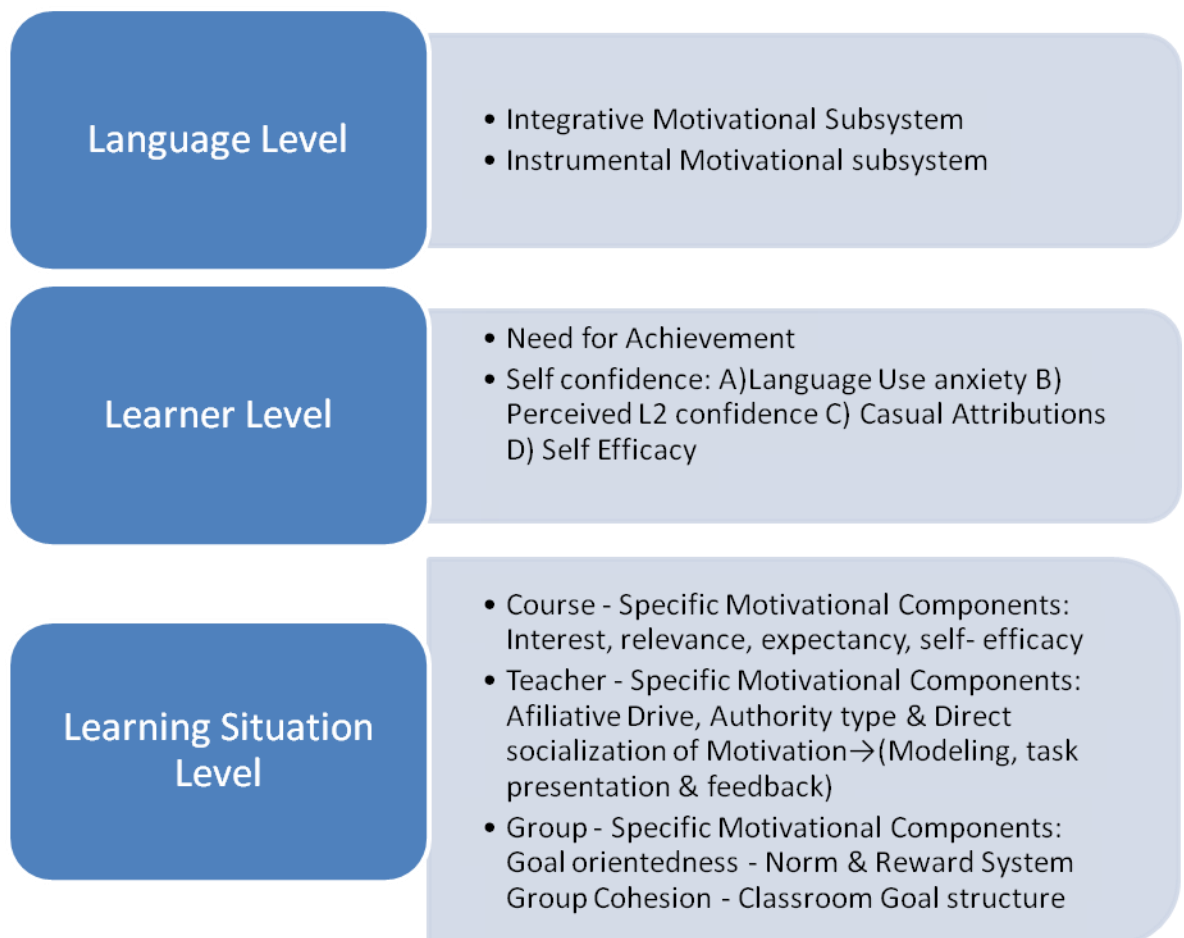
The first level in this model is the language level. This contains integrative and instrumental motivation seen as subsystems that at the same time are focused on reactions and attitudes towards the target language, the second level deals with the learner level. It consists of “individuals’ reaction to the language and learning situation (p.276)”. According to him, the inclusion of “cognitive theories” of motivation is necessary. It means that cognitive theories are seen in terms of someone’s thoughts, in other words, when the data is concealed and converted into an opinion (Dörnyei, 1994a, p. 276). The third level concerns the learning situation level. It relates to specific motivational factors bound to the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners with which a learner interacts. The author includes intrinsic and extrinsic motives within this level. The first relates to when a learner does something because of personal improvement, while the second really pushes the learner to be better in the language is (for instance) the academic rewards.

According to my own observation, over my 13 years of teaching, extrinsic motivation, in Ecuador, can be perceived in all academic settings. It seems that extrinsic motivation is fostered in places where traditional methods are still implemented. Figure 3 is a diagram of Dörnyei’s Model.



Figure 3

## Dörnyei's Components of Foreign Language Learning Motivation



In the research of Norris-Holtse cites Rookes and Schmidt (1991) definition of motivation as the “Learner’s orientation with regard to the goal learning a second language”. Furthermore, for its understanding, the construct of motivation has been divided into integrative and instrumental. It is believed that those learners who like the culture (i.e. people, food, and arts, etc) of the target language are more likely to be successful in the acquisition of the foreign language. This is also viewed as a desire to be part of a society in order to operate socially in the community.

There are others who give a more specific definition of integrative motivation referring to integrative motivation but in the EFL context. This definition infers that

the learner “desire to become bilingual, while at the same time becoming bicultural (Benson 1991). On the other hand, instrumental motivation is described as “the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a foreign language, (Hudson, 2000). Some of these practical needs may be when the learner has to prepare for an international exam to enter a university, needs English for completing their internships, or needs to read some technical material for their projects.

According to Taylor, Meynard and Rneault 1977; Ellis 1997; and Crookes et al 1991, It both integrative and instrumental motivations are the key to favorable outcomes. However, in terms of long term success when talking about learning a second language, integrative motivation has been found to be much more important than instrumental motivation. Although it has been also found that integrative motivation has more productive outcomes when learning a second language, though the learners tend to give more instrumental reasons of why they learn another language.

Thinking that the learner will choose one of the two kinds of motivation is to talk about imaginary situations, because according to Brown (2000) when the learner is studying a second language he / she uses a mixture of both types of motivation. Brown based his point of view on the example of an international student living in USA, who was learning English because of her admission in a post-graduate course, but at the same time he /she wants to learn to learn the language because he / she desire to be accepted within the American Culture.

Thanasulas (2002) in his work “Motivation and Motivating in the foreign language classroom” mentioned Dornyei’s words (2001) about motivation in foreign language learning: “teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness that motivation is usually not intrinsic to the learners

(Thanasoulas 2002, p. 1)”. According to Thanasoulas (2002), the teacher should generate some preconditions such as:

- Appropriate teacher behavior and good teacher-student rapport
- A pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere.
- A cohesive learner group characterized by appropriate group norms.

(p.6)

For the first condition, the author states: “teacher behavior is a powerful motivational tool (Dornyei, 2001 p.120)”. Dornyei implies that depending on how the teacher motivates the students may influence the learners so as to attract them to engage the task. Furthermore, Thanasoulas (2001) thinks that this positive influence takes root in establishing a relationship of mutual respect and trust with the learner (2001), by providing a learning environment, which will engage students in the subject matter.

In the second condition: A pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, it is inferred that without providing ample opportunities to learn, steady encouragement and support of their learning efforts the students will not be motivated to learn (Good & Brophy, 1994 p. 215)

Group management is one of the essential preconditions for generating motivation in the class environment. The author says that: “Fragmented groups, characterized by lack of cooperativeness can easily become ineffective, thus reducing the individual members’ commitment to learn (p.5)”.

Finally, Thanasoulas (2002) suggests that if there is motivation in the language learner, the classroom environment that will be conducive to learning. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects because it involves adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of thinking.

Therefore, language teachers may take into account a variety of factors that are likely to a lack of success in the foreign language classroom.

### Anxiety and Language Learning

In this section I have reviewed research about anxiety, because anxiety concerns are well documented as part of the study of foreign languages.

Anxiety can affect not only social skills, and self-esteem, but also much or all of students' oral (Woodrow (2006) & Koba Ogawa & Wilkinson (2000)). Furthermore, there have also been studies carried out that analyze the relationship between anxiety and foreign language learning. Within the educational research, Woodrow (2006) in her work, "Anxiety and Speaking English as a Second Language"; presented anxiety as being either a relatively stable personality trait or a "temporary condition experienced at a particular moment" (Spielberg, Anton & Bedell (1976) cited in Woodrow (2006)). Furthermore, there is a third type of anxiety, which is "situation specific anxiety (Spielberg, Anton & Bedell (1976) cited in Woodrow (2006)". This represents a trait that recurs in specific situations; according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) & Horwitz (2001) (Cited in Woodrow 2006) who concur that situation anxiety is a characteristic that repeats in language learning situations, especially classrooms.

According to Leibert and Morris (1967) anxiety reactions can be divided as reproducing worry or emotionality. Emotionality refers to physiological reactions, such as turning red or racing heart, and behavioral reactions, such as hesitating and moves restlessly. Worry, on the other hand refers to "cognitive reactions" such as "self-deprecating thoughts or task irrelevant thoughts (Zeidner 1998; Naveh-Benjamin 1991, p 4). However, according to Woodrow (2006) worry is perceived as the "more debilitating" of the two because it employs "cognitive capacity" that could

be given up exclusively to the task in hand, for instance, speaking in a foreign language (Tobias 1985, p.5).

There are other researchers like S. Tobias (1985) that presented two models of anxiety: an interference model of anxiety and an interference retrieval model though the authors pay special attention to an interference retrieval model which establishes a connection with anxiety as hindering the memory of earlier learned material at the output stage, while “an interference model of anxiety refers to problems at the input and processing stages of learning (p.5)” as a result of poor study habits or a lack of skills.

Horwitz and Cope (1986 cited in Woodrow, 2006) investigated language learning anxiety. They viewed anxiety as a formation of three components: 1) Communication apprehension 2) Test anxiety, and 3) Fear of negative evaluation. Their research is based on one dimensional domain anxiety (p5), which is anxiety that occurs in classrooms settings (Horwitz and Cope 1986; Aida 1994; Phillips 1992). The conceptualization of one dimensional domain anxiety is based on the “linguistic settings of the students learning a language (p.6)”. There have been other research studies about language learning anxiety where most of the communication in the target language takes place in the classrooms. For instance, in the United States, foreign language courses are often required in liberal arts undergraduate degree programs.

Woodrow (2006) said that there have been other studies in which anxiety has been studied in a two language situation. According to her, in Australia, where English is the main language of communication when students are outside the classroom. It seems to be that the conceptualization of anxiety may be expanded in order to reflect potential situations beyond the classroom that could trigger language

anxiety. Based on this view, Woodrow (2006), states that classroom communication may be considered “less anxiety provoking than many communicative events faced in everyday life by students living in a second language environment”.

Koba, Ogawa, and Wilkinson (2000) conducted a research study called “Using the Community Language Learning Approach to Cope with Language Anxiety”. In this article, the authors found that in the skills of speaking and listening, anxiety is commonly found. Anxiety is perceived even in students who are considered apt in the speaking skill, because in interactions both skills cannot be separated. This difficulty is perceived when discriminating sounds, and structures or in catching their meaning (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1991: cited in Koba, Ogawa, Wilkinson; 2000).

Regardless of the native culture and proficiency in the language, everyone may have some kind of anxiety about learning a foreign language. Tanveer (2007) in his research “Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL / EFL learners in learning speaking skills & the it cats on communication in the target language”, tries to find some explanation about what causes language anxiety. Tanveer shared many answers that I considered important to include. The first one is due to the fact that since anxiety is a “psychological construct (p.3)”, it results from the “learner’s own self”. Second, language anxiety could arise as result of lack of language control due to his / her low proficiency level. Regardless of these two factors, Tanveer (2007) called them intrinsic motivators. In the social context, language anxiety may be faced by extrinsic motivators (Schawrtz, 1972: cited in Tanveer, 2007). For instance, different social and cultural environments. Social status of the speaker and the interlocutor are also seen as to be important factors in causing language anxiety.

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING & THE SPEAKING SKILL

Although I could not find abundant information about the use of cooperative learning with speaking strategies specifically, here I report on a few of the research studies related to the implementation of cooperative learning in the EFL teaching.

First, several authors offer definitions of cooperative learning is. For Beth Lewis (2004) it is a “form of active learning (p.1)” where the students work together to perform specific tasks in a small group. Dahley (1994) besides discussing the “interdependence among group members” emphasizes Johnson & Johnson’s (p.2) opinion that having students in a group in a room does not mean cooperative learning is taking place. They suggest that cooperative learning must have five elements:

1. Positive interdependence
2. Face to face interaction
3. Individual accountability
4. Social Skills
5. Group processing (p.1)

. Spencer Kagan in an article in *Educational Leadership* (Dec/Jan 1989/1990) provides a compendium definition of cooperative learning from the following specialists including the Johnsons, Slavin, Cooper, Graves & Graves, and Millis, which express the following:

“The structural approach to cooperative learning is based on the creation, analysis, and systematic application of structures, or content - free ways of organizing social interaction in the classroom. Structures usually involve a series of steps, with proscribed behavior at each step. An important cornerstone of the approach is the distinction between structure and activities” (Kagan 1989 – 1990, cited in Panitz 1996)

In other words, cooperative learning is viewed as a collection of principles and techniques (Jacobs, Power, and Loh, 2002, p.1) or instructional use of small groups (Johnson & Johnson 1993, p.9). The fact is that cooperative learning entails grouping students to work together.

Reviewing some definitions of cooperative learning, revealed information about the positive effects and usefulness of cooperative learning to improve classroom management and learning in EFL.

Chen (2006) carried out a study analyzing the implementation of cooperative learning (among others like: Multiple Intelligences; Whole Language Approach), which she found to have a positive effect on students' language proficiency and attitude. In her study, the author highlights many ways a teacher can aid learners within the classroom environments. For instance, in the study she carried out in Taiwan, one of the problems English teachers have is that "the teaching is teacher-centered and the classes are very large" (Chen, 2006, p, 40). However, she states that it is important to enhance students' independent study is by using group work. She also advocates establishing a relevant atmosphere to provide students who have different proficiencies and intelligences to acquire the four skills (Chen, 2006, p. 41)

Another useful aspect of cooperative learning is student-student" communication. For this reason, oral communication is fostered. Furthermore, research has shown that group work might engage students in helping each other, so when talking about large classes, it would be a good instrument to manage these types of classes. Furthermore, because of the big variety of intelligences that are required for working in groups Armstrong (2000) states that it is also fitting for Multiple Intelligence teaching (cited in Shu-fen Chen, 2006).



Other researchers have found that cooperative learning has varied benefits for the learners. Lacey & Walker (1991) concluded that students seem to participate in the learning process and also produce innovative ideas with more frequency. Yu (1995) found out that cooperative learning instills a “positive effect on developing self-esteem, changing behavior, and improving personality (p.4)” Tsa (1998) analyzed the power of cooperative learning on Teaching EFL and the results indicated an improvement in their language skills.

#### LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES - DEFINITIONS

From the 80's up to now, researchers have dedicated time to investigating the relationship between language learning strategies and foreign language learning / second language learning.

The construct of language learning strategies is a general term which encloses a series of sub-strategies that aim to aid students when learning a foreign language or a second language.

In order to have a better understanding of the wide spectrum of language learning strategies, I studied different definitions of language strategies. A discussion follows on the specific topic of speaking strategies, which in fact are the core of this research.

The well-known idea of language learning strategies was defined by Tarone (1983) as “An attempt to develop linguistic and Sociolinguistic competence in the target language to incorporate these into one's interlanguage competence” (p.67). For Rubin (1987), LLSs are strategies contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affects learning directly”. (p.22) O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined LLSs as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help themselves, comprehend, learn, or retain new information” (p.1). There are others who think that LLSs are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or

techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. They are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability (Oxford, 1992 / 1993. p.18). Finally, Cohen (1998) stated that LLSs are processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall and application of information about the language. For this study, the Language learning Strategy definition which serves as the basis to construct this study was the one mentioned by O'Malley & Chamot (1990). Language Strategies modify and improve the students learning habits and processes of the target language.

#### WHY ARE LLSs IMPORTANT FOR L2 / FL LEARNING AND TEACHING?

Lessard – Clouston (1997) explains that among the “Communicative” approaches to language teaching a fundamental objective for the learner is to enhance communicative competence in the target language, and one of the main jobs of LLSs is to help students in doing it successfully. Lessard-Clouston (1997) mentions the influential article of Canale and Swain’s (1980) in which the value of communication strategies as a key aspect of strategic competence is recognized.

Many views and opinions about the terms communication strategies and language learning Strategies” have been written. Questions have been raised concerning whether or not communication strategies are correlated to learning strategies or not. For Hismanoglu, (2000), communication strategies are not directly related to language learning. Bialystok, (1990) believes that communication strategies are “an undeniable event of language use (p. 4)”. Then Johnson and Johnson’s (1998)

point of view is that “in practice, it is not easy to distinguish learning strategies from communication strategies”. By reviewing these concepts, in the Latif’s (2007) article he concludes that both terms will be considered as related to each other in his paper.

On the other hand, Michael Lessard-Clouston (1997) in his paper “Language learning strategies: An overview for L2 teachers” mention (Zeidner 1998; Naveh-Benjamin 1991, p 4) different points of view about the terms language learning strategies and communication strategies. Some of these defend the belief that between these two terms a big difference exists, but there are also views that defend that in fact there is a relation between them. For instance, Bialystok (1990) states that communication strategies are used by speakers intentionally and consciously in order to cope with difficulties in communicating in a L2 / FL. On the other hand, the term LLSs is used to describe in a broad concept, all the strategies that L2 / FL learners use when learning the target language. So, by this it is inferred that communication strategy is just a category of LLSs.

At the same time, Lessard-Clouston insist that “an understanding of LLSs is crucial if as L2 / FL teachers wants to help the learners in fostering their learners’ communicative competence and language learning at the same time (p.1).

To conclude with this view, Oxford (1990) writes, LLSs “... are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence” (p.1).

Since the focus of this thesis is on speaking strategy, I want to refer to the importance of LLSs in fostering students’ communicative competence. Besides, highlighting those LLSs may help students become better language learners.

Researchers have given detailed arguments about the importance of LLSs in communicative competence. First, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978, 1996), Rubin

(1975), and Stern (1975) mention some constructive strategies that a group of students, in research about “good language learners”, used. They were from using “an active task approach, monitoring L2 / FL performance to listening to the radio in the L2 / FL and speaking with native speakers.

The second argument is in O’Malley, and Chamot (1990), who propose the development of cognitive students’ skills by making the students aware of the LLSs they use and the reason for using the strategies.

Latif (2007), mentioned other researchers who have a positive impact on the benefits of using LLSs and at the same time the positive outcomes for the communication strategies. For instance, learning strategies execute a greater function in Language Learning. LLSs make the students recall and accumulate material, and make their learning easier by shaping the learning environment (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, p. 219).

LLSs could be also called a means for adapting not only to the structures of the new language, but to the culture of the target language, too! Furthermore, LLSs not only assist the learning progress but also spur it on. Oxford (2000) says that there is a relationship between strategy use and students’ language proficiency while Chamot, (1994) relates strategy use with self-confidence.

Researchers have found also found that LLSs are usefully applied to many language teaching methods, approaches and theories. Therefore, LLSs may be used for multiple functions. For instance, compensation and social strategies are associated with a communicative language approach. Memory and cognitive strategies have been related to grammar translation and Audio-Lingual methods. Interlanguage Theory has been associated with metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Affective Strategies have been associated with Suggestopedia (Griffiths & Parr, 2001)

In addition Kinoshita (2003) in her article: “Integrating Language Learning Strategy Instruction into EFL / ESL Lessons” states that when implementing LLSs the students become more “active participants in the learning progress, learners become more efficient and positive in their approach to learning (Kinoshita, 2003 p.2)

Through this chapter, it has been presented a broad spectrum of what the teaching of speaking strategies implies. Taking into account and integrating each of these features, the teaching of speaking strategies may be more efficient and effective in the language learners. In the following chapter, (#3) the reader will find a detailed description of a preliminary study, which in fact, serve as the basis for the design for the second research (the Intensive Course), which will be describe in chapter 4.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Pilot study**

As I work for a university here in Ecuador, I decided to conduct my study in the same place where I work. This study was held in the semester B of 2009-2010. The students, who participated in the pilot study, belonged to the Hotel Management and Tourism major. They were in their last level of their required English courses. In other words, the seventh semester. On that level, as a requirement for graduation, they had to take a subject which is called professional speaking.

For that subject, four hours of class a week were assigned to teach the students. Due to my initial research with them, I realized that those four hours were not enough to carry out the study.

For that reason, I arranged with the students to have four extra hours in an available time they had to complete it.

Within that speaking course I had 10 students. Since those students were in “Professional Speaking” they were supposed to have an advanced level in the language, but in reality their level of proficiency was lower than expected... In the following lines, a demographic chart, which contains information about students’ backgrounds, will be shown, in order to provide the reader a better understanding of the students who participated in the study.

Demographic Chart – Pilot Group

Names	Age	Gender	Job Area	Hometown
Vanessa	19	Female	She doesn't work	Guayaquil
Esther	20	Female	She doesn't work	Puerto Rico - Manabí
Diego	20	Male	He doesn't work	Guayaquil
Tatiana	20	Female	She doesn't work	Guayaquil
Susie	23	Female	She doesn't work	Guayaquil
Nancy	21	Female	She doesn't work	Guayaquil
Betty	22	Female	She doesn't work	Guayaquil
Cesar	22	Male	He doesn't work	Vinces

Furthermore, before class began, I looked for the teaching materials that would be required for my course, but I was unsuccessful because no materials had been left by the previous teacher. Facing these inconveniences, I started teaching the course in the third week of October.

The pilot study, itself, began in November. The students completed the following data collection instruments:

A speaking strategy checklist, which we went over in class. (n= 8)

A recorded a conversation on the topic of “What is your plan after you finish your courses?” I hoped to be able to gauge their communicative performance from this recording...

A checklist on a motivation & attitude towards learning English.

As I had not met the students before, I spent those first weeks talking to them to arrange their schedule for those extra-classes. These extra classes were decided to carry out in view of all the cons I had to face from the very beginning. The first one was their proficiency in the language. It was too low that I had to spend some extra hours to teach or review what they were supposed to know at that level (vocabulary usage, grammar, etc) second, these hours were also used to complete the tasks that were not possible to perform within class time. At that period, Ecuador had electric crisis. However there were days in which I really need the use of some kind of equipment and I could not. So there were some of the inconvenient that forced to have extra classes. Regarding their different schedules they had, those extra-classes were from Monday to Friday from 11:00 am, to 6:00 pm.

I noticed immediately that the materials I had chosen for them were too difficult, so one of the quick changes I had to make were to reevaluate and adapt the materials. In light of the technology facilities students had in their houses, I asked them to be connected on SKYPE. This means was used to perform and simulate, listening and speaking tasks in order to approximate the nearest job environment students may encounter in the tourism field.

On the other hand, it was important to state that the tasks in which technology was involved were not possible to carry out in the university. Although the career has a computer lab, this room is not available for English. That is why I searched for other ways to perform the SKYPE activities. One alternative was, to make an agreement



with the students in the evenings from Monday to Friday from 7pm to 8:30pm and those who couldn't do that, had to be connected on weekends. As my study dealt with speaking strategies, to be more specific, how, when, how often and under what circumstances or situations those strategies are implemented by the students; I had to arrange the materials under the following criteria:

The materials to be used in class should:

Require a two way exchange of information

Feature a planning stage

And require a finite answer (i.e., closed task)

(Folse.Keith S. 2006)

There were other factors that I took into account at the moment of selecting the material, like: age, learner proficiency level, and personality. Furthermore the speaking tasks were also intended to be performed alone, in groups, or in pairs.

Through this pilot study I was challenged to look some sites in which a combination of listening, speaking and the field of tourism were involved. However, the following list was the sites that I decided to include to be part of this pilot program. In the following lines, I will provide you a list of material resources which helped me a lot in the speaking course:

[www.eslflow.com](http://www.eslflow.com)

[www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com)

[www.englishclub.com](http://www.englishclub.com)

[www.sitesforteachers.com](http://www.sitesforteachers.com)

[www.mes-english.com](http://www.mes-english.com)

[www.smu.edu/esl/ConversationBuddy.html](http://www.smu.edu/esl/ConversationBuddy.html)

Every single English class, the students had to fill in a speaking strategy checklist, and I also used to interview them individually in order to know their views about the speaking activities done during class. In November I started implementing the study. Although I had prepared myself with the activities I felt as sailor without a compass, because I did not know if this was going to work or not...

After I finish writing the pilot study put in a reflexion on what I am going to do differently and why...then write a detail explanation of the new program. Read chapter about reflexion and journal. Begin journal on the first day of the course. Definitely, speaking is a skill that cannot be developed by itself. It comes hand in hand with another skill which is listening. They both are complement of one another. So at the moment of selecting material, I was careful to look for exercises in which the mixture of these both skills was able to perform in a natural way. What do I mean by a natural way? It means that I tried to avoid activities in which the students perceived them as boring, childish and irrelevant. On the contrary, it was my goal to share with the students' authentic and meaningful language through interesting tasks that was relevant to their field of study, Tourism.

The lists of webs that I have included on it; provided help for students who have trouble with auditory and speaking skills. As well as strengthen these skills ability and the self-confidence when implementing the skill in everyday life.

The activities the web were chosen under: cooperative activities, pair activities, movement, one centered and story telling. For all the kinds of tasks, pictures were a key factor at the moment of choosing and preparing material.

The reason for it was due to their low English proficiency (something unexpected to me, since these students were supposed to have an advanced level in seventh semester).

One of the main barriers I had to overcome was to make them think in English. As the time pass by, I realize that these students were totally visual when learning something. So most of the activities performed in class must include pictures.

Although at the end of the pilot study the students could not reach a high level of English, a reasonable goal was gained from including pictures in speaking tasks.

The procedure I had planned to be followed in the pilot study was like this:

First, a listening activity where the students were introduced to the topic (which it was always related to tourism). Within that section the students were introduced new vocabulary. So in that way, they started to acquire information in order to expand their knowledge for using the language. Furthermore, I have to say that before class, students must have to complete some listening tasks I sent them as homework. Those listening tasks (which were taken from internet) were intended to instill in them independent learning, which help them to raise motivation within the students.

Once the students prepared themselves with their listening activities which were sent as homework; I was ready to start the class by introducing new vocabulary.

This new vocabulary does not just included new words but also phrases or idioms that helped the students to develop the post-activities that were performed within the class, like role plays, dialogues, or small debates. As I noticed their nervousness every single class I decided to start the class with listening first and once I noticed they were confident enough I kept on the class with the speaking activities.

I found that conducting the class so, brought to me a lot of benefits because of the type of students I had at that time.

They were 8 students. Two of them had an advance level of the language. And the rest of them had a low intermediate level of English. All of them were full time students. Although as individuals, they all have differences between them. I

discovered that they all have similarities, too. These similarities dealt with emotional reactions. For instance, when doing tasks, they were good enough at working in groups. Another similarity was stress degree that students used to bring with them to class, and the low level of motivation they had towards the subject. I would dare to say that these similarities brought to me more problems than benefits. The speaking process in the class was performing in the following way:

Because of its usefulness, I used picture dialogues. Students were asked to work in pairs in order to figure out what the dialogue meant in words. Once the students finished the task, they started acting the dialogue in pairs. Just in case they did not remember the dialogue they had the chance to look at the picture dialogue. Doing this task in this way, let the students to gain the ability to think in English and use synonyms when they did not remember the previous word.

By reading this process, it looks so easy but when doing it with students whose English level is low... it is very complicated. From the very beginning the students complained about it. It was so hard for them to read the dialogue not from words but from drawings. There were not fluency, intonation, and the flow of the conversation most of the time turned into monotono dialogue.

However, there were in those moments of the class that I taught them how to use speaking strategies. I found out that if I had just told them how to use the strategies without giving them a vivid example of it, they were not able to internalize the strategy. Because of their low proficiency in the language they were not capable of “retain” information just by hearing a lecture of speaking strategies. I also realized that if I found a meaningful example of when and how to use the speaking strategy, the students would had be able to absorb “their minds” in a better way!

How did I realized it?, well I have to say that the first classes I started with oral explanations about speaking strategies and other related concepts. But when the time of putting into action came, they were not able to use, not even one of the strategies. Nevertheless, I changed my class delivering by provoking a real problem in the class and then analyzing with them which strategy they should use from the provided list. For instance, the speaking strategy list given to the students was divided into three sections. So they were forced to analyze under which category was the problem fitted and furthermore what was the specific strategy to be used to solve the speaking inconvenient in the dialogue performed at that time.

I found out that the more they were given the opportunity to practice the better they assimilated the speaking strategy. Although they refused and complained about the tasks where the use of pictures were presented (e.g. picture dialogue, or using pictures to retell the story); they finally got use to these types of tasks!

It is important to say that this comfort with these kinds of exercises was not perceived until the first week of December. It was clearly perceived in their attitude towards the class and subject. Two of the students, one day, at the end of the class; told me that they that they felt really confident with themselves doing these picture tasks.

They thought that using pictures instead of words, made them developed, somehow, “sleepy” minds when communicating in English.

It had been said before that their English proficiency was not according to their English semester. So another task I used was verb phrases. I decided to include this because of their lack of vocabulary. Furthermore, I remembered what an English teacher told me when trying to increase my vocabulary repertoire: “If you learn action verbs you will have a high percentage of your communication problems overcome”.

What I understood was that in a sentence, key words to make sense are action verbs.

Without having a good storage of action verbs in our minds, there would be a good chance of failure in our communication goals.

However verb-phrases tasks, with a slight variation were also included in the speaking class.

But what kind of variation was it? Well normally this exercise is performed in the following way: You have two circles or boxes, one of them contains verbs, and the other contains noun-phrases, so students are supposed to match the chosen action verb with the appropriate noun phrase. Now the change I decided to make was the following: In one circle was a box full of verbs and in the other circle were the noun phrases, not in words but represented with pictures.

Doing this, I realized that students were more willingly to learn verb phrases than using the conventional way.

This exercise was intended to be used as a base for the rest of tasks during the class. It was stated in that way because of the tourism vocabulary they were forced to use in the post-task.

#### USING TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR THE PILOT STUDY

Technology as a tool to enhance English classes is not just for teaching with fun, but also to give students a close example of situations in the real world they will have to face when speaking in another language (e.g. calling and receiving calls). Since I was learning English up to now, I have realized that using the tasks that provide the book is not enough to train and do not give an overall of what a real calling – task implies. Answering and calling in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and hardest things Tourism students must encounter. The majority of them agree that when they have worked in hotels, airlines and travel agencies, this is what they are

forced to do when having the first work experience. They have come to realize that even students with high proficiency in English had, in a certain degree, problems when calling and answering in English.

When I prepared this section, I thought that the students were not going to be willing to do it, because of the extra-time they had to provide.

However, all those previous thoughts vanished when they showed good disposition towards this section of the class.

But my surprise turned into a nightmare, when problems with electricity came to Ecuador. So, regarding to this problem my students and I had to meet twice, in order to reorganize the agenda to have internet connection.

About this extra time- exercise, I share my intentions and ideas with some of my colleagues. They all thought, it was going to be a failure. Because it is rare, to have students putting some kind of effort on something, that is not included within the English hours in class.

Now a question raises... knowing that these students were not the good ones in their promotion, what made them be so enthusiastic and willing in doing extra tasks out of their English classes?

Since they were in seventh semester, at least, twice in their lives they were involved in the real world of working. At that moment in their lives, they had had the experience of “Needing” of looking for a job. It could be so, because of helping their parents with university fees or because of required internship. It is well-known that in the area where they were working they had to face, among others, the task of making and receiving calls in English.

And believe it or not, to have good speaking and listening skills were important factors at the moment of being hired or not in a job.

So, when telling the students that this course offered them the possibility of improving the necessary skills in listening and speaking, it opened their interest to the extent of investing extra hours.

The schedule time to meet the students on internet was of one hour, two or three days a week. The means used was SKYPE. I decided to use it because of the facilities “SKYPE” provides. For instance, free access to everyone!

However, once we arranged and reorganized the things related to “Skype”, we were ready to start our “CIBER-MEETINGS”...

#### THINGS I DID IN CLASS

As it was the first week, I decided to practice simple conversations. These conversations pretended to be in three environments: Hotel, travel agency, and at the airport. I have to say that at the beginning of the week I told them in class what was the topic for the conversation about. But this explanation was delivered in general terms. I did not tell them which questions or phrases to use because in one way or another, in previous courses; they had had enough exposure to these kinds of dialogues which were not completely unfamiliar. Another reason for doing it was that I found out that if I give the students all the things easily they did not learn. What I would like to express is the fact that at the moment of the explanation they learn, but this learning is in short term. On the other hand, letting them search for the unknown information by themselves made their learning more profitable...

I was totally concern that during the first week of practice I was going to cope with a lot of cons somehow.

I decided to let them have confidence with the task. No corrections were allowed from me. Regarding to this last thought, I believe, it made the task to get closer of



what we could call a speaking task which enables the students to socialize or like other authors refer to autonomous interaction (Martin Bygate, pag.59).

However moving forward to these future problems, I wrote a list of the negatives points to be solved during the second week of our cyber-meeting. Of course, the students never knew the existence of it. I thought that it would be convenient to show them at the end of the course. One powerful reason for doing it so was their motivational attitude. It was really hard for me to raise their self-esteem.

If I would had showed to them that list; the students wouldn't had wanted to keep on these cyber-meetings!

It would be worthwhile to say that these things were written at the end of each section, with the intention of keeping the natural flow of the conversation. The things I found out during the first week were the following:

Cannot think in English fast. (Mother tongue interference)

Intonation

Pronunciation

Lack of concentration, easily could be distracted.

Cannot control their negative feelings like nervousness

Lack of vocabulary. So it was impossible to make them use synonyms as a way to avoid communication problems.

After the first week of using Skype I analyze that these cons which were found during the first week, were not going to be overcome in one go. Furthermore, my desperation increased when I saw the fact that my English classes were just four hours a week and the electricity problems kept in Ecuador. So it made the situation worse, since it was indispensable the use of electronic devices as means to improve and help students with that list of shortcomings.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTRA-CLASSES

That is why at the beginning of this writing, it was mentioned, that I had decided to have extra-classes with the students because at those times we were able to have electricity, so we could see what solution could fit with the presented problems. As the list of problems was big and varied, I group them under the following headings: “Concentration and feelings” “Pronunciation” “Mother Tongue Interference” and “Lack of vocabulary”. Grouping these problems under these categories helped me to look for better ways to overcome them. For instance, every time I noticed a pronunciation problem in the students I used a pronunciation book which contained a variety of drills that I considered important to perform. It was really worthwhile to have those extra hours of class. Without those classes they would not be able to show some improvements within the class and at the same time in the cyber meetings.

I have to confess that in this pilot study the relation between the students and me became more than a relation of teacher- student. I would dare to say that as the time pass by they looked at me as an older sister...

The more I spent time with them (within the class, the extra hours of class and the cyber meetings) the better I realized why they acted or behaved most of the time with unwillingness towards the subject; which in this case was English.

There were some findings that made me think that as teachers we have to be careful when conducting a class. But I also found out that there were other reasons that were not related to academic matters but psychological ones!

The name of this chapter is called Pilot study due to the reason that I could not finish conducting this program until the end of the semester.

Eventhough I was not able to accomplish until the end of it, I came to some conclusions that helped me to construct a better course in a second try I had to perform this program. With its pros and cons the pros the program started the two last weeks of October and I could carry out with apparent normality until the two first weeks of January 2010.

What had happened? Well as I said before, everything ran as I had planned until the two first weeks of January. Suddenly, the students started to miss whether the English class, the extra-classes or what it was worse they did not connect on Skype!

The turn of being not motivated was of me! I remembered that feelings of sadness and anxiety fill my mind and heart!

This is the negative part that a researcher must experience and must be prepared when conducting a research...

Although it was carefully planned it did not mean that success was going to be on my side! Well this is how I perceive things.

Now, time passes by, I still keep on thinking in the same way; with the difference of taking out productive findings, too!

First of all, I would like to start saying the findings during the few months that lasted the pilot study.

As I stated before, the more I spent class with them, the better I had answers to my inexplicable questions which remained for semesters...

For instance, some students had been my students in previous semesters, so I had made up my mind with some misconceptions.

One finding was that one of my students never liked to write in English, so as consequence never brought his / her homework. I had always considered her (even in her Spanish subjects) a lazy student. But during one of her sessions in the extra-

classes, (this class was just individually) I discovered she was dyslexic. Once she told me that was the reason she refused, even to speak in English. According to her, if in Spanish remained the problem why to make an effort in English!

I was really shocked. That day I felt guilty with myself because some semesters ago I had not realized that problem. And all that came to my mind, at that time; was that she was a lazy student!! This case really kept me awake at nights. Thinking that if I would had detected this problem in previous semesters I would had done something at least to help improve her studies and self-stem, too!

Since then, I value a lot the opportunity of conducting this type of qualitative research. Because it allowed me not just to analyze in depth my classes but to rethink and replant the way I delivered my classes.

Even though I am not a psychologist, I searched for a solution, which somehow may lighten the burden in that student.

Another thing that I found out was the fact that depending on the teachers' perceptions about the students' proficiency in the language that we give a challenging task to the student.

In other words, depending on the student's ability towards the language, we challenge them to perform the task. As I had a group with a low proficiency, I thought that the tasks they were going to perform were the easiest ones!

Surprisingly, this low the students' motivation to the extent of not wanting to participate in class...

There have always been misconceptions about the students' proficiency level and the kind of tasks or activities they perform. As a matter of fact, I was one of the people who thought that.

I had prepared a series of tasks before the course started. But as soon as I met the student and knew their English background, I changed completely the tasks. Why? Because I had the wrong misconception of delivering easy tasks to students which I considered their proficiency low.

However, most of the time things do not go as we think... I started noticing that students came to my class without too much interest. Furthermore as weeks pass by, they did not want to try the exercises. Although the exercises were easy I made sure that they were not boring. Surprisingly, this last factor was not enough to raise the students' motivation. How did I realize it? Well, one day, a student approached to me to ask: "What my opinion about them (the students) was" he also asked me about my future expectations about him and his classmates..."

Even though I did not realize the student's real purposes of his questions, I answered them. I said first, that I see them as fighters and overcoming their barriers, no matter what, in order to get their goals. I also remembered that I put emphasis on the fact that valuable things in life do not come easily, and most of the time there is a high cost to pay. Then, there was a long silence between us... I kept telling in my mind: "What was going wrong?"

Immediately, he replied saying there was no coincidence between my words and actions.

Furthermore he said: "If my previous opinion about them was sincere, how could it be possible I delivered them tasks that made them feel so stupid..."

Just then, I realized what had been arousing lack of motivation and lack of interest within the class.

This situation made me reflect and correct a wrong misconception I had about the students' proficiency and tasks. Later, some kind of improvement in their attitude towards the class was perceived.

But my happiness did not last too much. After some weeks of hard work, lack of attendance was seen in my class. Once again I did not know why? Later, I discovered that some of my colleagues, who needed to complete their programs, were using my English hours to have their own classes. Furthermore, I knew that in order to persuade them to be absent in my classes there was a Kind of brainwashing. In other words, the students were told that English classes were not important as their classes.

This bad attitude kept on until the end of the semester.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

My initial research took the form of a Pilot study which leads me to enhance and build a new study. Information about the pilot study can be found in Chapter 3. The second redesigned study was conducted in the same university as in the pilot study. There were 11 students, four men and seven women. Their proficiency levels were between Intermediate and high intermediate. Ten of them had finished all their credits and subjects, except for their last module of English, which was Professional Speaking. Only one of the students was in her fifth semester of tourism studies, so she was taking Professional Speaking in advance. Interestingly, this student is not Ecuadorian, she is from China. The students' ages were 22 except for one, who was 19.

Although my students did not escape from having bad experiences with English classes, their personal histories did not prevent them from having a will or desire to improve their language skills. Nine of them studied in high-schools, which are considered "bilingual". Two of them came from public high-schools, but these two students had had the opportunity of studying English in academies like the Centro Ecuatoriano Norteamericano, covering all the modules. Surprisingly, no matter what background they came from, all of them had had the experience of being in an English-speaking country. Furthermore, in the following lines, a demographic chart of the students of the students of the intensive course will provide further information to comprehend the research.

Demographic Chart – Intensive Group

Names	Age	Gender	Job Area	Hometown
Janet	20	Female	Hotel Receptionist	Machala
Lorena	20	Female	Restaurant	Guayaquil
Amanda	20	Female	Front desk	Guayaquil
Ketty	21	Female	Travel agency	Buena Fe
Liz	20	Female	Counter	Guayaquil
Samanta	20	Female	Airline (assistance)	Galapagos Island
Yadira	19	Female	Airport	China
Lincoln	20	Male	Front desk in a hotel	Portoviejo
John	22	Male	Travel Agency	Galapagos Island
Marcos	21	Male	Hotel Manager	Guayaquil
Leopoldo	20	Male	Counter - airport	Guayaquil

### The Professional Speaking Course

#### Teaching Objectives

In this course the teacher will:

- Introduce and encourage students to speak in a wide variety of situations.



- Help students acquire useful speaking strategies, in order to make them aware that by using strategies, they can overcome the difficulties in communication that they may encounter in their job environments.
- To learn when, how and what speaking strategies to use by making them aware that not all the strategies can be used in all situations.
- To create emotional access between the instructor and the learner.

### Instructional Methodology

The design of the course for the second round of this research study changed. The first change was that this course was an intensive one. When we talk about Intensive Groups, it means that the students take them during their vacation time, and the in-class hours are increased. The Professional Speaking Course lasted three weeks and three days. The total hours of face to face instruction was sixty-four, the same number of instructional hours as the pilot study course had. The Pilot Study course lasted sixteen weeks, but the instructional time was four hours per week. The difference is that within the Intensive Group the students had four hours of English every day during those three weeks and three days.

### Chronology of the activities and data collection of the Research Study –Week 1.

The first day of the week, two types of questionnaires were administered to the students. The first one was a survey questionnaire about English Learning Motivation and Attitude Questionnaire (Vaezi, 2008), and the second was a Speaking Strategy Use Survey (Cohen, Oxford, and Chi, 2005). The first day of class was also used to negotiate the kinds of tasks to be performed in class. I also used the first class to learn some personal information, which I considered essential for redesigning the Pilot Study Course. Furthermore, I dedicated time to interviewing the students in English, in order to learn about their speaking ability in the language, to determine

their backgrounds and also something about their attitudes toward English. The personal information refers to: the ages of the students, when they first studied English, which high school they went to, and what their expectations of the speaking course were. I also asked them:

- ❖ Have you had the chance of taking any English courses abroad?
- ❖ Why do you think that your speaking abilities have failed for you in your workplaces or internships?
- ❖ What do you think you need in order to be successful in the skill of speaking English?

While doing this part in the process of my research, students were wondering, and asked me, “How come a teacher is listening to our voices?” I explained to the students that their sincere answers would help me to fulfill some gaps in the speaking course that maybe have not been covered before. This interview with the students was important because half of the interview was in English and the other one half was in Spanish. Through the English interview I wanted to gain an insight into what the speaking issues on the students could be besides the one I had perceived. However, at the time of my research, I realized that the remedial work for the students was more than just requiring the students to speak. But I had to recognize that there were other deep problems in the students learning processes that interfered in the development of their speaking skills.

Another problem I found was that the students seemed resistant to the idea that the use of strategies could help them to overcome their communication problems. I clearly remember my first encouraging words towards them. I told them that in this course they were going to learn and put into practice speaking strategies that would help them learn to avoid uncomfortable situations. As time passed, I began to realize

that my whole research effort was not only to obtain perceptions of the teaching of the speaking strategies, but also to explore how student attitudes and the emotional side of the individuals is linked to their success in learning speaking skills.

On the second day, I decided to have the students work in groups of three. Every group was given a tourism topic. The topics were: Traveling, Hotel Management, Catering and Airport. In order to be fair, the students drew the topics. The students did not know that I wanted them to improvise a dialogue just by the given topic. Moreover, I also decided not to teach them the speaking strategies yet!

As soon as I told them what to do, they were shocked... One of these students, as if he was reminding me of the steps, told me: "Miss, How long are we going to take to prepare the dialogue?" I didn't answer the question because I didn't want them to prepare in advance. I asked them to keep their pencils, books, and notebooks, and to sit down in a circle while the group who was improvising the dialogue stood up in the middle of the circle. Each group had a different topic. Each topic was related to their field of study. There were four groups of three students.

Normally, when I give students a dialogue, I always give them time to think about what they are going to say. But, on that second day, I decided to change the part in which students were going to have time to prepare it! I conducted this exercise in this way for two reasons: First, in the real world, the flow of any kind of conversation comes naturally, meaning that if you are engaged in a conversation, for example at work, you do not know in advance what you are going to say. At that moment, what matters is to be understood, and to keep up with the flow of the conversation.

Second, I wanted the students to learn meaningfully. I thought that by using this impromptu dialogue task without teaching the students the strategies, they would

be able to understand how useful speaking strategies can be when confronting the real world.

Since I have been working as an English teacher, I have realized that trying new things with my university students in class, such extemporaneous exercises scare them. No matter how good and innovative the class, the students will always complains when the learning activities are new to them. So, I thought that perhaps by creating the requirement of using speaking strategies, by doing these improvised dialogues, their complaints and attitudes were going to be modified to some degree. At the end of the impromptu dialogue task, I asked the students to write their feelings and impressions (in Spanish) on a separate piece of paper, without writing their names.

On the third day I started implementing the exercises. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) stated that: “Skillful teachers will need to adapt the exercises to the ongoing interests, needs and goals of the ESL students they teach (p.166)” These words are true, but at the moment of designing the material I faced the most challenging situation, the variety of learning preferences that my students had! I wondered how I could design the activities in which the learner speaking ability and strategic competence could be developed, but, then I thought that, instead of thinking about the students’ differences I must observe carefully their similarities.

I thought that the tasks they were going to perform would be in pairs or groups but I also considered making the students work by themselves. With the cooperative activities I intended to improve the fact that students help one another to reach their goals; and moreover, to instill in them the concern of improving group management and conversational skills.

I was worried about to have a dynamic class for four hours every day, for three weeks. For me, it was really hard to accommodate the students' different communicative needs and shortcomings, and to choose appropriate tasks to address those needs...

After the third day, my concerns were to find a methodological framework that could be suited to these students, and that in three weeks and three days (which was the allowed time for this Intensive Group) this methodological framework could aid the students speaking needs and reach the planned objective for this speaking course.

After reflection, I thought that I must start my search by looking at the similar struggles the students had about the language. I decided to read checking my interview notes, questionnaires and audio taped interview recordings.

I understood from the beginning that I needed to develop a systematic framework for designing the speaking lessons to obtain good results. By checking my students' responses from the interviews I learned something that really got my attention.

Because of the mistakes, he made when speaking in English; a student told me:

Name of Student: "Miss, please understand us, all our lives, our speaking sections in our classes had been just... Speaking... I mean, not paying attention to grammar. It is really hard to think on both. I mean use the appropriate grammar and words at the same time.

Some teachers might consider these words excuses from a "lazy student". But these answers opened my mind in a way that made me restructure my ideas and the design of the speaking course. The schema of this speaking course had to be designed in a way that not only aided the students in speaking strategies but in integrating a focus

on using the language with a focus on form, too ( Bygate, 2003, Burns & Joyce, 2007)

I decided to redesign the speaking course by using a framework based on the idea of scaffolding, which is intended to provide organized support for students in the learning process, (Burns and Joyce (2007) In the idea of scaffolding, there is a shared responsibility within the classroom. In other words, there are phases in a lesson in which the teacher will have the main responsibility for what is happening in the classroom, at other times they will share responsibility with the learners, and at other times the responsibility may fall entirely with the students. Although my main concern was to aid the students with the speaking strategies to overcome the problems they may encounter when communicating, my second concern was to lead the students towards independence in learning. The Burns and Joyce (2007) guidelines for lesson planning were classified in 5 categories:

- Preparation activities
- Activities which focus on language awareness and skills
- Activities which focus on discourse awareness and skills
- Interaction activities
- Extension activities (Burns & Joyce 2007)

I chose this activity framework because it can be adapted for different language levels, and purposes. That is to say that within this lesson planning framework the teaching of speaking strategies was also included but in the interaction & extension phases.

This framework led me to be sure about what the purpose of the learning activities were, when selecting, adapting or designing the exercises. This lesson plan framework let me explain to the students, the goal of the tasks before performing

them. I think that explaining to the students the purpose of the tasks in the class helped them to develop awareness of the learning process, and gave them a notion of where the class was going. It seemed to involve the students in taking responsibility for their own learning.

So, these were the reasons that made me choose Burns' and Joyce's categorization of the activities found in the lesson plan format. Next, I have included a brief explanation of each lesson plan category

Preparation activities: These activities aided the students, in advance, to be aware and to comprehend the kind of oral interaction they were going to perform and the conditions or situations that interaction was intended to develop. This stage facilitates and prepares students when they have to perform their oral tasks, and furthermore helps the students to know how they are supposed to participate in the oral performance. (Burns & Joyce, 2007)

Activities which focus on language awareness and skills: The second part of the class was oriented to provide the students with the essential language necessary for adequate communication. That is, to train the students in vocabulary and management of grammatical structures when producing the spoken language.

Activities which focus on discourse awareness and skills: In the third stage of my class. I decided to focus the learning activities on discourse awareness and skills. Teachers of speaking must be conscious that to be successful in oral communication does not only mean to have knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Another important feature in the spoken interaction that we, as teachers, may forget to teach is how to start, keep, and finish the spoken performance. We must make students aware that if they learn the rules and strategies, which control the conversation flow, it could add to their success in communication (Burns & Joyce, 2007). The stages described

are preparation for spoken interactions in particular situations. In this fourth stage, the students put into practice all they have learnt before, and begin to learn the speaking strategies. When practicing these spoken interactions, there were moments in which the normal flow of the conversation was interrupted. These interruptions seemed to be due to the lack of speaking skills management. Every time these problems appeared, the students and I analyzed the problem together in order to find an accurate solution. It is in this stage, when the students participating in the study were given the “Speaking Strategy Use” (See Appendix A) worksheet from which they chose the best option for the communication issue. I always allowed students to choose their own strategy for overcoming the immediate stumbling block in their speaking. I told the students that for a problem in every spoken interaction we perform, there will always be more than one solution, but the solution they choose, should be the one they feel comfortable with! The students had the Speaking Strategy Worksheet to serve as a guide for making their notes about how, when, and what strategies use; depending on the language context they were performing.

#### Extension activities

Normally, a speaking class would end with the learning activities however, knowledge and communication strategies, need to be rooted in the students’ mind by through By recycling the learning activities, students become confident with the things they had learnt during that day and with their performance, too

#### Group management skill instruction

Although the students got along well, I noticed that they all needed to acquire group management skills that were going to be used in some of the activities during the course. In order to figure out their preferences (on the first day of class) , and with the aim of getting to know them because these students were new to my course, I let



them give their opinions of how an English speaking class should be. I asked them to sit in small groups of three. After discussing their statements, they made one list per group of their expectations of an English speaking class. This list was going to be discussed with the whole class. As soon as the activity began, I noticed that all of them wanted to speak at the same time. So this made the students waste time when preparing their pros and cons arguments for the topic.

As time passed, I realized that I couldn't overlook the group management problem without finding a solution soon. I say this because within the course they were not only to perform individual tasks but also group tasks. Furthermore, I also considered group management skills necessary for dealing with people in class and for teaching the students skills that were going to be useful in all kinds of environments for dealing with all kinds of people!

At this point of my research, I realized that if I wanted to have good results with the teaching of speaking strategies, I must teach, group management skills too! No matter how careful one can be while preparing and conducting a research study, along the way, you will find unexpected obstacles which should be seen as an essential part in the process of accomplishing the study's goals. As the course went on, I learnt that obstacles (depending on how we see and perceive them) can become allies if they are managed for the purpose we have planned. To tackle the problem of group management I used a questionnaire from with the students, which are in the Scarcella and Oxford (1992).

Figure 4

Group Management Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>

1. What one word would describe how the group was today? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What one word would describe the way you would like the group to be? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is everyone participating?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you (everyone in the group) trying to make each other feel good?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you trying to help each other to feel able to talk and say what you think?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you listening to each other?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you showing you are listening by nodding at each other?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you saying that's good" to each other when you like something?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you asking each other questions?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are you listening and really trying to answer these questions?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
11. Are you paying attention to each other?  
Always \_\_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is any one person talking most of the time?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Tapestry of Language Learning, Scarcella & Oxford (1992) p. 159. Adapted from: Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, and Snapp, 1978. The Jigsaw classroom. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

---

Every day at the end of group activities the students filled it out. So, gradually, I could monitor their progress about group management skills.

As a way of lowering anxiety, I always started the class with an individually-centered task which was followed by a listening activity. This first kind of activity was intended to make the students feel comfortable with the language. I had two ways of presenting the individual task: 1) Analyzing quotes. For this activity, I gave the students a piece of paper with a quote which said “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit.” Aristotle. 2) A Short Interview.

For instance, the students were challenged to think and answer questions like: Thinking about yesterday, then, tell me a thing you think you did wrong, so you would like to change it to become a better person... I was enthusiastic about doing this as a conversation starter because there were 11 students so I had the time to spend some minutes talking with them as if we were friends. I am also conscious that these activities are not about Tourism but I thought it would be worthwhile to wake up their sense of responsibility, and also to instill in them the need of working hard to reach excellence. It took me a week, to accustom the students to the habit of thinking and analyzing in depth about their own behavior; and to get to the point, of realizing that success is not only for a few, but rather for all of them..

#### Speaking Strategy Instruction

First, within this speaking course the books were considered supplementary texts to help the students to put their attention on the Language Learning Strategies that could help the students learn foreign language skills and the language learning strategies they need to achieve them.

The structure or design of the speaking strategy use training was based on three steps that I had to consider:

Study my teaching context.

Focus on speaking strategies in my teaching.

Reflect and encourage learner reflection

These three steps were the basis for the Speaking Strategy Instruction Framework.

The original idea was taken from the article “Language Learning Strategies: An overview for L2 Teachers” (Michael Lessard-Clouston, 1997).

I thought that I could not start teaching Speaking Strategies if I did not think deeply about my students, the kind of material, which was going to be used, and my own teaching.

In order to have an answer about the kind of students I have, I observed their behavior in class. It was done by using a checklist (Appendix A) which helped me to know what speaking strategies they seemed to be using.

In addition, I analyzed my students through a Background Questionnaire (See Appendix B) each student filled out the questionnaire, so that I could be more informed about the kind of individuals the students were and learn about their speaking learning styles and their understanding of speaking strategies.

#### Selecting the Teaching Material

I had to consider the teaching material, I was supposed to use when considering speaking strategy training. According to Lessard-Clouston (1997) when selecting the material for a Language learning Strategy course. It is important to analyze if the material should include explicit or implicit Language Learning Strategy training. The author of the article gives example of Scarcella and Oxford’s (1992) Tapestry textbooks series, which incorporates “Learning Strategy” boxes, which highlight Language Learning Strategies and encourage students to use them in the foreign language tasks or skills (1997).

I had the challenge to look for speaking materials, which included explicit speaking strategies. To my surprise, I found useful links, which contained opportunities not only for using speaking strategies, but also for opportunities to increase their cognitive skills!

For instance, (link 15), in these exercises speaking strategies were almost all explicit. There were other links in which the explanation of the speaking strategies was not explicit but, because of its good content and its usefulness in the field (Tourism), I chose to include them as part of the course material. When there was no explicit explanation of the speaking strategy, I provided it with a “: why and when” explanation of its use.

After I decided on the appropriate material, I also had to think about my teaching method. I was conscious that the one to be used was something that could appeal to a variety of speaking strategies. Definitely, the speaking strategy training could not just be implicit or just explicit. Timing for using the implicit and the explicit strategies had to be carefully thought out. Once I had analyzed my teaching context, my next step was to look for appropriate and specific speaking strategies, which were relevant to the learners, materials and my teaching style.

The Speaking Use Inventory, which was taken from: “Language Strategy Use Inventory” by Andrew D. Cohen, Rebecca L. Oxford, and Julie C. Chi (2005).

I chose this *Speaking Strategy Use Inventory* (Appendix A) because it allows the learner to analyze and practice the speaking strategies from different perspectives. In the first section of the inventory, the learner is drawn in to taking responsibility through their own learning. It means that these speaking strategies, also focused on practicing the target language on their own.

The second part of the inventory, speaking strategies is aimed to embark the learner in a conversation, independently of how good his / her English proficiency would be.

The third and final section of the speaking strategies, led the learner to develop and enhance the students' cognition skills. In other words, this "Speaking Strategy Use" does not only allow the learner to speak in English but also allows the students to be conscious of the essential qualities, purpose, and significance of these speaking strategies.

#### Reflections on My Teaching

Reflecting on and encouraging learner reflection is another step that I tried to include within this training course. In this last section of this Speaking Strategy Instruction, I decided that it was worthwhile to reflect on my own speaking strategy training and teaching in the classroom.

After each class, based on my observer notes I thought over the productiveness of the class, and the speaking strategy performance. This part of my own reflection let me have a different perspective on my work and helped me to concentrate on teaching how to use the speaking strategies to overcome communication problems within my FL classes.

Besides my own reflections, I took into account my students' own reflections about the strategy training course. I decided to ask the students to keep a journal an idea taken from Nunan (1996). They were supposed to complete the following sentences

Student Reflections:

This class / week, I learn \_\_\_\_\_

I learned to use the strategy \_\_\_\_\_ in the following situation(s)

---

My difficulties are

---

I would like help

---

My practicing plans are

---

(Nunan, 1996, p 36) (“Learner Strategy Training in the classroom: An Action Research Study. TESOL Journal, 6 (1), 35-41)

This part of the students’ reflection I found supported in Graham’s (1989) belief: For learners, a vital component of self-directed learning lies in the on-going evaluation of the methods they have employed on tasks and of their achievements within the program. In other words, independently of the method used, it is necessary for the students to experience deep thinking about their learning and speaking strategy use.

After studying my teaching context and considering my students’ backgrounds, the materials I had available, and my own teaching. I had no doubt that this course should not only be for teaching speaking strategies but also for introducing the students in taking their own responsibility for their own learning through analysis and reflection of what they are doing and why. Furthermore, in order to be specific and relevant to the students with this speaking language strategy course, I decided to deliver a small presentation about the importance of communication in a foreign language, and what would be the role of speaking strategies as well.

## Chapter 5

### Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings and results of this research study according to the five research questions. The Pilot Group and the Intensive Group group were compared because in the process of the research I found that there were noticeable differences.

Research question 1: How does motivation relate to language learning in two groups of Ecuadorian Tourism and Hotel management students?

To explore and describe students' motivational factors towards learning a foreign language, a questionnaire of 24 statements was filled out by each student. This questionnaire was filled out by the two groups: The Pilot Group and the intensive group. The purpose was to find out what kind of motivational orientation (intrinsic or extrinsic) the students have through the results. Furthermore, how motivational factors compared between the two groups in relation to language learning.

The percentages in the tables 1 and 2 represent a scale of agreement which was ranged in the following way:

1	2	3	4
Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly
Agree			Disagree

In the case of Ecuadorian context for this group of EFL learners this study, in the Pilot Group the results also showed motivational Orientation is inclined to integrative reasons.



In the results of the motivation survey administered to the Pilot Group I found a mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, but in the Intensive Group there was a high-percentage of agreement in the questions compared with the Pilot Group. For example, it is clear that their extrinsic orientations towards the language from the *intensive group* represented a higher percentage in the statements which are compared in Table 1:

Statements	Pilot Group (Strongly agree)	Intensive Course (Strongly agree)
14. Studying English can be important for me because it will someday will be useful in getting a job	87.5%	100%
16. Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to search for information and materials in English on the internet	87.5%	90.9%
22. Studying English is very important to me so that I can read English Books	87.5%	100%

These differences in orientations take root from the fact that in the interviews; a pattern emerged indicating that the students perceive learning English as indispensable and necessary for work in the Hotel Management and Tourism field.

The following representative comments from the intensive group illustrate this point:

*Janet I-Intensive: Sí, porque tú nunca sabes cuándo van a venir extranjeros a tu hotel, y si no los entiendes, Como les vas a dar un buen servicio.”[Yes, because you never know when foreigners are going to come to your hotel and if you don’t understand, how are they going to receive good service?]*

*Leopoldo 2:* “Si como dueño de la agencia no sé hablar inglés, simplemente se van a otra agencia y yo pierdo dinero.”

*John 3:* “Sí es necesario porque el trato a los clientes es lo más importante. En un hotel, recibiré clientes de muchas partes del mundo”.

Another pattern of responses emerged that showed the perception of the participants that English is a vehicle for earning recognition and respect from others, from the Pilot Group than from the intensive group. This pattern of comments was stronger in the Pilot Group.

The percentage of the pilot that group who perceived English as a means to be accepted and gain friends not only in Ecuador but around the world was 62.5%, while the percentage of the intensive group was 36.4 %. This pattern emerged from the Pilot Group interview some of the comments made were the following they are representative of the group's comments:

*Cesar1:* “Estoy consciente de que Inglés es necesario para sobrevivir en el mundo del turismo, pero he encontrado más interesante el ser aceptado por gente de todo el mundo, y a su vez coleccionar muchos amigos de lugares que uno ni se imagina”. [*I am conscious that English is necessary for surviving in the Tourism world, but I have found it more interesting to be accepted by people all over the world and to make lots of friends from places that I've never imagined*”.]

*Esther2:* El hecho de tener amigos alrededor del mundo me hace sentir que soy importante para otros, y es aquí, donde el Inglés toma su lugar. En otras palabras, para mi Inglés no es un instrumento para hacer dinero, mas bien, para decir al mundo que existo”. [*The fact that having friends from all over the world makes me feel that I am important to others; and this is where English*

*takes its place. In other words, for me English is not a means for making money but for telling the world that I exist].*

*Vanessa3: “Yo estoy estudiando esta carrera solo por el título, y también porque a través de esta carrera, yo puedo estudiar Inglés al mismo tiempo. De esta manera demuestro a mi familia que a más de estudiar una carrera aprendo otro idioma, también”. [I am studying this career just to obtain the diploma and because through this career I can study English at the same time, so I will show my family that besides studying a career I learnt another language, too.]*

*Tatiana3: Aunque estoy estudiando Hotelería y Turismo, no pienso trabajar en este mismo campo. Mi objetivo al estudiar Inglés es porque yo hago voluntariado en una fundación donde las personas que también trabajan allí, no hablan español. Como yo no hablo inglés bien, no puedo ser útil y tampoco puedo participar en sus actividades, mucho”. [Although I am studying Hotel Management and Tourism career, I am not thinking on working on the field. My goal to study English is because I am a volunteer in a foundation where the people who work in it, do not speak Spanish. As I do not speak English very well, I cannot be useful and cannot participate in their activities, too much”.]*

The data from the students' interviews underscored a pattern of responses from the questionnaires. I learned that, in the intensive group, the students all shared the joy of reading and surfing on the internet. The pages they read were all related to their field of study, and these pages were mainly in English. The students told me that they saw the necessity of being updated on these topics because of their jobs they have.

In one way or another students' bosses asked them to be able to handle these topics to talk (whenever they considered it necessary) with their clients. This is supported from the motivational survey and the amounts of agreement in percentages were the following:

Table 2:

## Responses from the Motivational Survey

Statements	Pilot Group (Strongly agree)	Intensive Course (Strongly agree)
20. Studying English is very important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak in English.	75%	91%
21. Studying English is important to me so that I can understand English-Speaking films, videos, TV or radios.	75%	100%
22. Studying English is very important to me so that I can read English Books	87.5%	100%
23. Studying English is important to me because it will enable me to get to know new people from different parts of the world.	87.5%	100%

The interview data supported the results of the motivational questionnaire. Here are some comments that were representative of the intensive group on the topic of how they surf the internet now in comparison to how they used the internet as teens.

*Yadira1*: [“Well, in my case I think I still read and surf on the internet. But I have to say that the purpose is totally different. Now my readings and the surfing on the internet are directed to investigate about my area, Tourism, my job demands me to be updated about tourism.”]

*Marcos2*: “When I was a teenager I used to spend time on chatting or using Google to buy things... and when talking about books...just read what I like... nothing more. Now, although I continuo buying on the internet and reading books that I like, I feel the necessity to separate more time to increase my knowledge about my career that is Tourism.”

*Samanta3*: “To tell you the truth, since I work and study at the same time, I do not have too much time for doing the things I used to do when I was young. So the little free time I have, is just for doing my homework and for reading some pages on the internet that have interesting articles about my field of study.”

*Liz4*: “You know what? Since I work for a hotel as an assistant... helping to organize events... well important seminars or conferences... I have to talk with a lot of people. My boss says that I have to be informed of many tourism features if I do not want to be seen as ignorant.”

*Ketty5*: “I keep on reading and surfing on the net, but the real thing is that the topics I read and investigate now, are related to my area of study and work... Tourism! Nobody asked to me to do it but my studies and work made me do that change... if I don't do that change, I will never have a better job.”

Although the percentages in the Pilot Group were high, English (as a means to grow in their jobs) was not perceived in the same way as in the intensive group. This

assertion is supported by the fact that the students from the Pilot Group did not work. They were full time students. However, for them, English was seen as means to socialize all over the world, being accepted by others, and, especially to fulfill a requirement to pass the semester. Furthermore, their interest in learning English was just related to social interaction but not for increasing their performance of speaking English as a means to be better in their careers and jobs.

The observations I made in class, and recorded in my journal notes, during discussion activities with the same topics support this difference in the attitudes and perceptions of the two groups. The extracts from my observation notes with the Pilot Group are the following:

November 16th, 2009

I think I have to restructure the topics of the discussions. The students complained about the importance and usefulness of discussing ecotourism. Moreover, it seems to be a failure, since the students not even know what to say... finally, I had to stop this activity and change to another task.

November 17th, 2009

I have to be realistic, although I gave them some ecotourism topics to be read in advance, they did not show any interest in having this type of discussion or debate. The students insisted on performing more dialogues and sketches with more informal topics... they told me that English is a means to socialize all over the world, and not for having formal speeches.

Furthermore, the results from the motivational survey support this marked difference in the attitudes and perceptions of the two groups. The intensive group and the Pilot Group responses were contradictory and surprisingly different.

Table 3:

Statement	Pilot Group (Strongly agree)	Intensive Course (Strongly agree)
24. Studying English is important to me because without it one can't be successful in any field.	75%	36.4%

From these results, it seems that the Intensive Group does not see English as the only key to succeed in life. The following answers were taken from informal conversations I had with them (Intensive Group), when finishing class. Here I share some students' comments representative of the perceptions of the group:

*Janet1*: "English is important but it is not the key to success. I know many people who have had success and do not even speak English. One of them is my uncle!"

Fake name: "English is a small part of success."

*Marcos2*: "Miss, I was told that perseverance is the key to success without it you cannot even finish studying English."

*Yadira3*: "I have read that the most outrageous inventions were not created by intelligent people but by persevering people, so there is no reason to think that without English a person cannot be successful"

Evidently, students did not see the speaking of English as whole, a unique instrument to be success in life. When they were referring to success, these students just thought about one section of their lives. That is their jobs and careers. On the

other hand, the responses of the Pilot Group support the answers they gave me from the informal interviews. Some of the pilot's group answers were the following:

*Nancy1*: "Well, Miss, success depends on how good relations one has in the place where we live. One of the ways you can expand those relations or friends is by learning English."

*Susie2*: "For me success is linked to be in a high position. But to be in that high position you have to show others that you deserve that high position. I think that speaking English could be a good way to be within that group."

*Betty3*: "The more you expand your friends or relations around the world the better you will be in terms of having more chances to have success in life."

For the Pilot Group, English was not seen as a way to go up in their job careers but as a means to obtain good relationships which could help them to have success in life. If we read the extracts of the comments on this topic, these students do not talk about their careers or jobs specifically, but success in general terms.

These differences in motives & attitudes towards the speaking of English could be from the fact that the Pilot Group students, the majority of them do not work.

However the pilot's group students did not see the necessity to apply English in their jobs. On the contrary, the intensive's students group already worked in places related to hotel management & tourism.

### Speaking Strategies Results

The instruction of strategies has been defined as a means to enhance linguistic and sociolinguistic competence (Tarone, 1983). Others see language strategies as "special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to retain, comprehend, learn, or understand new information" (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990). What can be inferred



from the work of these authors is that language strategies in one way or another change individuals attitudes and actions as they acquire their target language. More specifically, speaking strategies not only reveal specific conceptions and manners but also reveals us students' differences in tendencies towards learning a language. The speaking strategies results and the findings of this part of the research study are presented here.

What are the speaking strategies used by two groups of language learners in the field of Tourism and Hotel Management?

Table 1

Speaking strategy: Practice saying new expressions to myself

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	37.5%	45.5%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	9.1%
I've never used this Strategy but I'm Interested in it.	25.0%	45.5%
This strategy doesn't fit For me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

In strategy number 1, practicing by reciting expressions to myself, 37.5% of the Pilot Group affirmed the use of this strategy and at the same time another 37.5%

stated the intention of using this strategy again. On the other hand, the intensive group's results were different. 45.5% stated that they like the use of this strategy while another 45.5% affirmed being interested in using it.

Table: 2

Speaking Strategy – Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level using them

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	12.5%	27.3%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	62.5%	27.3%
I've never used this Strategy but I'm Interested in it.	25.0%	45.5%
This strategy doesn't fit For me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

In strategy number 2, their differences in avoidance towards the practicing of grammatical structures, as a way to improve their English; is clearly seen in the following percentages. In the Pilot Group 62.5% of the students expressed the usage of this strategy and the predisposition of using it again. In the intensive group a 45.5% never used it but they have willingness of trying it.

Table: 3

Speaking Strategy – Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it in that way

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	18.2%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	25.0%	54.5%
I've never used this Strategy but I'm Interested in it.	25.0%	27.3%
This strategy doesn't fit For me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

The highest percentage (50%) of the pilot group indicates that they use and like this strategy. These results are supported from their opinions they wrote in their journals:

*Diego1*: “Miss, thinking about how an American would say a word or a phrase is something that I have always done... I think since I started learning English... I like this strategy because it can be done anytime, anywhere...”

*Cesar2*: “I have always practice this strategy... I didn't know it was a speaking strategy. But the good thing about it is that it can be practice alone.”

*Fake name*: I always practice this strategy because I don't need to depend on my teacher all the time... I can practice this strategy by myself.”

*Betty3*: I have always done this; the thing that I like from this strategy is that you don't need the teacher next to you to tell you what to do...”

On the other hand the highest percentage of the intensive group indicates that they use this strategy sometime but not very often as the pilot group, and. These results are supported from their opinion that these students wrote in their journals:

*Samanta1*: I did this strategy when I was learning English for the first time. I didn't know it was a speaking strategy... now that my English is improving more and more, I don't use it very often..."

*Lincon2*: I don't know why, but when I started learning English this is something I used to do almost everyday! But as the time passed by, and I improve in English I don't use it very too much."

*Liz3*: Regarding to this strategy, I have used it many times in the past, especially before oral tests or when I had to talk with a foreigner... I don't have an answer why I don't use this strategy very often. But it doesn't mean that I am not going to use it in the future... Miss, do you think that the reason I don't use this strategy too much, it's because I'm improving in English?

Table: 4

Speaking Strategy – Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	25.0%	27.3%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	45.5%
I've never used this Strategy but I'm Interested in it.	37.5%	27.3%
This strategy doesn't fit For me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Table: 5

Speaking Strategy – Initiate a conversation in the target language as often as possible

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	25.0%	36.4%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	50.0%	36.4%
I've never used this Strategy but I'm Interested in it.	25.0%	27.3%
This strategy doesn't fit For me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

When talking about having the first step in starting a conversation or looking for a chance to be involved in a dialogue (strategies 4 & 5), none of the two groups like it. In other words the highest percentages for strategies 4 and 5 are located in the second statement, which expressed that both groups have tried the strategy and there would be a chance of doing it again. For instance, in strategy number 4, the intensive group has a 45.5%. In the strategy number 5, the Pilot Group has 50.0%. When stating the use of this strategy and the predisposition of implementing it again.

Table: 6

## Speaking Strategies – Direct the conversation to familiar topics

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	45.5%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	12.5%	9.1%
I've never used this Strategy but I'm Interested in it.	25.0%	18.2%
This strategy doesn't fit For me.	12.5%	27.3%
Total	100%	100%

Another difference to be found in the two groups was the use of strategy number 6 as a way to assure the success of the dialogue and also to have a feeling of confidence when interacting with others. This small difference is reflected in the following percentages: the Pilot Group has a 50.0% and the intensive group has a 45.5%.

But this tendency was also supported by the students' speaking strategy journals, where they (both groups) expressed their comfort, ability and preference regarded this strategy. For instance,

Representative comments on starting conversations from the Pilot Group interview:

*Diego1*: "It is always relaxed to have a conversation having a notion of the topic you are talking to... because in that way you are just worrying of using and learning new words ..."

*Susie2*: “I like this strategy because it made me feel more confident, knowing that my only worry would be regarded just to use the language appropriately, and not trying to figure it out what is the topic about.”

*Esther3*: “I have tried it once. I was in a social event. At least this strategy made me feel as if I could manage the conversation.”

Representative comments about perceptions about starting conversations-Intensive group

*Marcos1*: “Initiating a conversation with a familiar topic could be a good first step to continue the dialogue with topics that are unfamiliar to you. It has happened to me. Suddenly you realize that in the middle of the dialogue you are trying unfamiliar topics with native speakers.”

*John2*: “I think that this strategy really fit to me because it made me comfortable specially that I am really nervous when having to speak in another language.”

*Lorena3*: “having conversations with familiar topics is a good way to gain confidence and making us feels that we can contribute with useful ideas in the dialogue”

*Amanda4*: “With this strategy you have the opportunity to be inserted in social & job circles. Besides learning something new about the target language, we gain reliance and independence in the target language, too.”

Table: 7

Speaking strategy – Planning out in advance what I want to say

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	62.5%	18.2%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	12.5%	63.6%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	25.0%	18.2%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Regarding strategy number 7, planning in advance what they want to say in the target language, the Pilot Group has a 62.5% in which agree that they use this strategy and really like it. On the other hand, the intensive group has a 63.6% in which they expressed that they have tried this strategy and have an intention of using it another time. As it can be seen both groups have high percentages of agreement with this strategy. The intensive group's results have two reasons. Although they did not reject using this strategy, they told me that they preferred to improvise. The first reason about not using this strategy too much was that it may be fine for students who do not know much vocabulary, and the second one was that using this strategy will prevent them from training their minds to think fast and to use the language in a creative way. Here are some of the intensive group's representative comments that describe their opinion about the usage of strategy # 7. That is, planning out in advance what they want to say in English; the intensive group's perceptions of planning out in advance what they want to say are presented in the following:



*Janet1*: “Definitely, this strategy (#7) would not be bad for beginners, but I think that as the time pass by; you improve in the language, you have to implement other strategies in which you train your mind to think fast at the moment of speaking.”

*Lincon2*: “I do not think that it is not useful at all. However one should be careful of not depending too much on it; to the extent of not being able to produce a word in a dialogue because of being used to prepare before speaking.”

*Yadira3*: “I think that when you use this strategy you are doing two things at the same time. First you are making sure to be understood by others and second you store in your mind what you have prepared in advanced. It means that you are training your memory, too!”

*Ketty4*: “When preparing in advance what is going to be said can save you of being misunderstood by others. But we have to be careful of not depending too much on it.”

Table: 8 Speaking Strategy - Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	36.4%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	12.5%	45.5%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	37.5%	18.2%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

As, in the results of the motivation survey; a pattern emerged among the respondents of the Pilot Group which sees English, as a way or means to socialize and to gain friends all over the world. It is also conceivable that in strategy number 8: Ask a question as a way to be involved in the conversation; the students of the Pilot Group stated that they use this strategy and like it. Fifty percent of the group affirmed that they liked this strategy. On the other hand, a 45.5% of the intensive group affirmed that they have tried this strategy and would use it again. This percentage (from the intensive group) suggests that for the student participants, English may be perceived as an instrument in their job areas. So every time these students think about socializing, they associate this word with business meetings, specifically. There is evidence for these assertions in the students' speaking strategy journals. For instance:

The perceptions of the Pilot Group about using questions to start conversations.

*Vanessa1*: "Today I learnt that asking questions is a good way to make other people feel that you are interested in the conversation. Moreover, it is good if you are not good at fluency, yet."

*Cesar2*: "My difficulties with this strategy are that I still have problems in structuring questions correctly, but I think that this strategy will help me to participate in the class, especially in tasks where teachers require our participation."

*Tatiana3*: "Today I learnt that if you are nervous or your fluency does not come out, you can start formulating simple questions and then produce more complicated questions in order to gain confidence with the social situation we are involved. With lots of practice I think I can manage it."

*Betty4*: “Although my English is fairly good, I like using this strategy because it makes my nervousness disappear while at the same time, I am gaining confidence with the listener.”

#### The Intensive group’s perception of English for Work Purposes

*Leopoldo1*: “Since 2008 I started working, all the things that I am learning, I try to apply in the place where I work. As in this course, I am thinking on how to take advantage of these speaking strategies. So this strategy can be implemented in the several meetings I have with my boss and coworkers. My boss is not Ecuadorian so the meetings are in English.”

*Lorena2*: “I do not consider myself bad at English. I have tried this strategy several times, especially when I was a beginner in the language. Now that I have this speaking strategy course, I am thinking over on using it again in my job, because this strategy will help me to be connected and understand in a better way my duties at work.”

*John3*: “As I work with foreign people, I have used this strategy especially at meetings with coordinators. Besides letting us participate in the meeting, this strategy helps us to be sure of our understanding of what has been said in the meeting.”

Table: 9

Speaking Strategy - Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far.

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	12.5%	18.2%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	54.5%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	50.0%	27.3%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

The results from the survey, for Strategy 9, anticipating what will be said based on what has been said so far', do not follow the same kind of pattern compared with the results of the other strategies. What I want to say is that none of them have a high percentage stating that they like the strategy and that they like it. However, the Intensive Group has a 54.5% agreement that they have tried this strategy and they would use it again. While the pilot course has a 50% in which it is expressed that they have never used this strategy but they were interested in it.

The results from the Intensive Group have their support in the "students' strategy report". They reported using this strategy as a way to survive in their workplaces. These students told me that this strategy was used mainly with their superiors, but it was not something with which they felt comfortable because by using it they will not be sure if their anticipated words would be right or wrong. However, they admitted that after using it a lot, they gained some cognitive benefits. Some of their thoughts are written in the following lines:

*Ketty1*: “I have to admit that this strategy trains our mind to think fast. I would use it again after a lot of practice. I feel as I am guessing”

*Amanda2*: “Anticipating based on what has been said is not easy to do in another language. I think that I can practice this strategy with my partners at work...”

*Lincon3*: “I have never tried this strategy. However, I think it would be useful to perform it in my workplace.”

*Marcos4*: “This strategy seems to be difficult to practice, since you have to put attention with your five senses, but I would like to try it here in class and in my work place. Those places might be fine to gain a lot of practice.”

On the other hand, the Pilot Group struggled to learn the strategy because their level of English did not seem to be strong enough to be able to perform it.

Furthermore, as these students told me, they found it difficult to anticipate since it is difficult for them to understand the teachers’ talk. For instance, in the students’ strategy report I found a pattern in their answers when I started teaching them the speaking strategies:

*Susie1*: “I think that in order to be success with this strategy, I have to improve my listening skill first.”

*Nancy2*: “Teacher, if you want me to practice this strategy with you, I would like you to speak slowly because I do not understand most of your class...”

*Esther3*: “Definitely, I have to improve listening and then I could practice the tasks in class to train this strategy”

*Diego4*: “Anticipating is bond to have good ears otherwise it would be a disaster like me in the first task. As I did not listen well I talked about a different topic... I felt embarrassed.”

Table: 10

Speaking Strategy - Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	12.5%	27.3%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	36.4%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	37.5%	18.2%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	12.5%	18.2%
Total	100%	100%

Regarding strategy number 10, none of the groups has a high percentage of agreement showing that they use regularly try to use unfamiliar topics, and that at the same time they like it. However, in the pilot study, 73.5% indicated that they have tried once to use this strategy but also would use it again. While within the same Pilot Group, there is another 37.5% who expressed that although they have never used this strategy, there is a positive predisposition for using it.

The results from the Intensive Group did not follow the same pattern. 36.4% of the students have tried this strategy once and would use it next time. A percentage of 12.5% of the students in the pilot study thought this strategy did not fit them. At the same time, 18.2% of the students rejected this strategy.

When comparing the percentages of both groups, it is evident that there is a slightly higher percentage, showing a positive attitude (in using this strategy) from the Intensive Group's side than from the Pilot Group.

These results have also been reflected in the attitudes the students have towards the unknown. A sampling of the students' typical comments on the topic follows:

Pilot Group's comments on doing unfamiliar types of activities and topics

*Cesar1*: "I think that the strategy wouldn't be so bad. But I would use it more if I have more vocabulary stored in my mind."

*Tatiana2*: "I believe that this strategy is not useful for students who are not proficient in the language. But it does not mean that I am never going to use this strategy."

*Betty3*: "Once I remember, I tried this strategy, but the conversation failed because I did not know what to say as I did not manage the related vocabulary of the topic."

Intensive Group's Representative Comments on discussing unfamiliar topics.

*Yadira1*: "I am not so daring in going through the unknown, but it does not mean that I'm not going to take risk using it. One can never say, that something doesn't work if I have never try it."

*John2*: "Trying unfamiliar topics would be a good way to learn new expressions. I would not reject this strategy at all."

*Lorena3*: "Although walking through the unknown does not go with me... I will definitely take risk using this strategy."

Table: 11

## Speaking Strategy - Encourage others to Correct Errors in My Speaking

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	54.5%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	25.0%	45.5%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	25.0%	0%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Definitely, the student comments about their perceptions of using Strategy 11, encouraging others to correct their speaking errors show that asking for corrections is something that the students always use and like. Fifty percent of the Pilot Group 50% indicated that they use this strategy and like it, too. The intensive group responded similarly with 54.5% agreement. Furthermore, this percentage of both groups means that, the students are aware of the importance of other people's feedback as a means to improve in the target language. The students' strategy journals indicated their preference for this strategy.

## Pilot Group's Perceptions of Asking for Error Correction when Speaking.

*BettyI:* "I've always asked others about correcting my mistakes. I've done this since I started to learn the language. For me it's a surprise to learn today that this is a speaking strategy. I think it is important other's people's opinions because they see errors that I don't perceive."



*Cesar2*: “One thing is how I perceive my own progress in English; another thing is how others perceive my progress in the language. For me both points of views are necessary to improve.”

*Diego3*: “Although sometimes it is embarrassing to be corrected by others, but it is essential to hear the advice from others.”

*Esther4*: “Today I learnt that encouraging others to correct my mistakes could be compared as a thermometer, because it allows me to measure my improvements in the language.”

#### Intensive Group’s Perceptions of Asking for Error Correction when Speaking.

*Janet1*: “In the place where I work I always ask my boss to correct my mistakes. He is a perfectionist so I trust in his point of view.”

*Liz2*: “Although I consider my English good, I am still being corrected by my co-workers. I work at the airport as a counter, so last week a colleague corrected my mistake regarded to a collocation...”

*Marcos3*: “I would never have thought that asking others correcting my language mistakes would be a speaking strategy. Anyway, it works because people make me realize how well I speak English. At the same time, I have the opportunity to hear other advises.”

*John4*: “Since I started learning English, I’ve always kept telling to myself that I must be open-minded. Because in my case, it is not easy to accept other’s people’s corrections; but at the end, this strategy works. Now wherever I am, I ask others to correct my errors.”

Table: 12

Speaking Strategy - Try to figure out and model native speaker's language patterns when requesting, apologizing or complaining

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	25.0%	27.3%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	45.5%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	37.5%	27.3%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

For Strategy 12, there was a high percentage of use- 45.5%, from the Intensive Course that affirmed that the students have tried this strategy and would use it again.

While the results from the pilot course are different, compared with the Intensive Group. 37.5 % ( Pilot Group) affirm that they have tried this strategy and would use it again and another 37.5% stated that they have never used this strategy but they are interested in it.

Although there is not a high percentage of agreement in the first question, they still have a positive attitude about trying this strategy. For the intensive group, the practice and performance of this strategy was easier to carry out. The reason is that most of the students from this group, work. So, it is in these workplaces where they have more opportunities at least, to model the way native speakers talk. For instance, there were some students from the Intensive Group who work at the airport. They told me that they tuned their ears and observed the way their colleagues or their bosses apologize when accepting errors in their jobs. Here are some of the comments that were representative of the group's responses

## Intensive Group Comments about modeling native speakers' English

*Ketty1*: “Now that I have received some train in this strategy, I pay more attention to the way my supervisor speaks English to others (passengers or colleagues) this week. The other day, I had to assist my boss at the counter area. So I tried to spoke to the passengers, by remembering the way my supervisor used to do...”

*Amanda2*: “It is incredible how a simple thing can get me out of a fix. What I want to say is that now that I am working in the tourism area; I can learn and at the same time avoid speaking problems by using this strategy. I have to admit that, since I've been taught about this strategy I've been aware of the importance of imitating native speakers' talk, when they use certain phrases and so on... It is just a matter of putting our five senses on what we are doing.”

*Yadira3*: “There are things that you don't learn in class, but your workplace certainly does. However, if you pay attention to the way native speakers of English speak, definitely you will be improving the language. Imitating others people's talk also helps you to speak the language more natural.”

Table: 13

## Speaking Strategy - Ask for help from my conversation partner

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	63.6%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	25.0%	18.2%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	25.0%	18.2%

This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Regarding Strategy 13 both groups had high percentages of agreement stating that they use this strategy and like it. The Pilot Group has 50.0% and the intensive group 63.6%.

These results are supported from my own observation notes and the students' strategy journals.

#### Teacher's Reflections (Intensive Group)

"The problems I faced in order to encourage the students work with others, I think, are getting solved. I can say that they are assimilating the idea that asking for help from their partners is not the end of the world! Furthermore, the students found out that they can have fruitful learning through their partners, too!"

Fake name: "Today I learnt that this strategy not only let you avoid inconvenient with the language but also learn new things through your partner. That not necessarily has to come from the teacher!"

Fake name: "Asking for help from my conversational partner means that you don't have to wait for the teacher to give you the solutions. In other words this strategy makes you think that there are other resources besides the teacher, and that is your conversational partner..."

Fake name: "One of the things that I like the most, from the teaching of speaking strategies is that you learn not just to depend on the teacher, but asking for help from others."

## Teacher's Reflection (Pilot Group)

“In general, I don't have any problems in teaching the students to rely more on their conversation partners for assistance, even though, there are few students who seem not to use it frequently. However, most of the class showed interest in implementing it in a better way. They're constantly asking about different ways to ask for help in the target language, made me feel, that I am doing fine! It really encouraged me to keep on this project!”

## Students Speaking Strategy Reflections: (Pilot Group)

*Diego1*: “Asking for help from my conversational partner is something that I use regularly. But one must be careful who you ask for help.”

*Vanessa2*: “I used to do it since I started learning English and now, in this course, I have to use it that again. With the difference that I use this strategy in a better way. I mean I use different phrases to ask for help formal and informal phrases.”

*Cesar3*: “As a matter of fact, I always use this strategy. But today the teacher made me be aware of the formality and informality when asking for help! Something small but important!”

Table: 14

Speaking Strategy – Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	72.7%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	12.5%	9.1%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	37.5%	18.2%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

The use of synonyms (Table: 14) from both groups was stated as something they used and like. The pilot course students' responses resulted in 50.0% agreement while the responses from the students from the Intensive Course were at 72.7% agreement. Although both percentages of agreement are high, in the Pilot Group there was also a 37.5% who affirmed that they had having used this strategy but were interested in using it.

Students Speaking Strategy Reflections and comments representative of the group's perceptions follow: (Pilot Group- Strategy 14-Use of Synonyms)

*Nanacy1*: "I recognize that the use of synonyms is the best and the most efficient one. But it could fail if you don't know many words. That's my problem!"

*Susie2*: "I am conscious that this strategy really helps! Some years ago, I could not make use of it because my vocabulary was poor!"

*Tatiana3*: "Today I learnt when and how to use synonyms and also how to increment and create new words! The suffixes and prefixes can give you a lot of help!"

## Students Speaking Strategy Reflections: (Intensive Group)

*Leopoldo1*: “I use this strategy regularly at my workplace. It is useful for me since I am not good at remembering the exact words from my supervisor’s messages!”

*Lorena2*: “Today I learnt that using synonyms not only help you when having speaking inconvenient, but also this strategy can become a good habit. Because it can also help you; when having study problems, especially for taking exams!”

*Lincon 3*: “It is said that by the way we speak, we reflect who we are. I am so conscious that my limitation in the speaking skill is due to lack of vocabulary. So, from now, this strategy will become a habit that must be included in my life if I want to succeed in my workplace... I should start practicing what I learnt today, suffixes and prefixes.”

Table: 15

Speaking Strategy - I use the words from my own language, but say it in a way that sounds like words in the target language

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	37.5%	27.3%
I’ve tried this strategy & I would use it again	25.0%	63.6%
I’ve never used this Strategy but I’m Interested in it	37.5%	9.1%
This strategy doesn’t fit For me	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

With reference to Strategy 15- Using words from the L1, but saying them in a way that sounds like the target language, there are some similarities and differences in

the responses from both groups. In the Pilot Group there are tight percentages showing their likes and dislikes. 37.5 % of the students say that they use this strategy while another 37.5% of the students say that this strategy does not fit for them. Furthermore, 25% of the students of the Pilot Group expressed having tried this strategy and a being willing to use it again. So the group was divided in their response to the use of this strategy.

Regarding the Intensive Group results, the percentages were different. There were a high percentage of the students of this group who expressed that they had tried this strategy and also a willingness of trying it again. 27.3% of the students of the same group stated they use this strategy and like it. But, there are a small percentage of students who expressed that this strategy did not fit for them.

These students were also thinking about what other people would think if they did not speak English correctly. Furthermore, when we covered this strategy in class, there were some students who rejected practicing it because they did not want to be the object of ridicule. These assertions are based on the students' strategy journals.

#### The Pilot Group's Comments on Strategy 15

*Betty1*: "I think that people would make fun of me if I use it. Furthermore, I am not good at using Spanish words and saying them in a way that seems to be English... it would be like creating my own English dictionary."

*Vanesa2*: "I really feel nervous when I try to speak in English, imagine if I use Spanish words to make them sounds like English words! No way, it does not go with me!"

*Diego3*: "Definitely, just in case of desperation I would use this strategy but I do not think it goes with the way I am."



*Tatiana4:* “During this course Miss Catalina has given us a list of speaking strategies. I understand that these strategies are meant for particular situations and environments but I am also inferring that the use of these strategies has to deal with our personalities. So, this strategy does not fit with me, I am not so daring...”

Students’ intensive course reflections about strategy 15 are presented in the following lines:

*Ketty1:* “This strategy seems to be something ridiculous, but as matter of fact, this strategy helped me to avoid an inconvenient when I got my first job as a receptionist in a hotel in Guayaquil. At the very beginning I felt embarrassed but the client understood what I wanted to tell him.”

*Marcos2:* “I remember that I used this strategy once. It was in English in first semester here in this university. The teacher was not patient enough. However, I wanted to please him using my little English. I had finished an exercise, so I told him: “Teacher, I terminator”. He looked at me seriously like trying to figure it out my words. After few minutes of silence my teacher understood, that I wanted to say that I finish. From that experience I’ve never forget that my teacher looked at me differently, because he understood that I wanted to learn English no matter how. However, if this strategy will help me to overcome some language inconvenients, I would do it at my workplace, too!”

*John3:* “If I am learning a foreign language and if I want to be success in the language I have to take into account that I must try all the different means our teacher give us in order to improve the language. So, if this strategy will help me to improve the language I would do it. Moreover, I am used to do all kinds

of things in order to show my superiors that I have the desire to improve in the language and my duties in my workplace.”

*Liz4*: “As far as I concern, I’ve used it some occasions in the past. I do not remember exactly the words I said... but the thing that I remember clearly, was the fact that I could get across the meaning. Although, people made fun of me, I did not care because I was conscious that, these things are part of the learning process. However, if there is the need to use this strategy, I would do it one more time, even in front of my superiors in my job.”

Table: 16

Speaking Strategy - Make up new words or guess if I don’t know the right ones to use

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	25.0%	36.4%
I’ve tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	45.5%
I’ve never used this strategy but I’m interested in it.	37.5%	18.2%
This strategy doesn’t fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

In the case of Strategy 16, the results from the pilot course do not show a high percentage of agreement for the first choice of the Table 16. 25.0% which states that the learner uses this strategy and likes it. Some of the students from the Pilot Group, 37.5% expressed having tried this strategy and willingness to use it again, while another 37.5% expressed that they had never used this strategy, but they were interested in it. A logical explanation from these results can be drawn from the fact

that these students felt uncomfortable or uneasy using this strategy. Impressions taken from the students' strategy journals on the use of Strategy 16 follow:

*Vanessa1*: "I have used it here in class, I think that it is not for sure that you have your meaning across... and then while you are trying to make up or guess new words the other person gets distracted and turns around to talk with someone else. Furthermore, it is too much work in the brain for me! But it does not mean that this strategy is going to be forgotten and never used!"

*Cesar2*: "Today I learn that guessing could be another way to avoid problems with speaking. Although I feel unsure, I think I would do it if the circumstances let me so. But it is not easy to keep the flow of the conversation while you are working inside your mind at the same time."

*Betty3*: "I must tell you that I've never used this strategy because I do not feel confident guessing."

*Susie4*: "Making new words or guessing correctly would be the same as winning the lottery. I think that the success of this strategy depends on the LUCK. But anyway, I do not mean that I am rejecting this strategy completely."

On the other hand there is a high percentage in the second question from the Intensive Group, which indicates that the students have tried this strategy and would use it again, more members of this group seemed to have a better predisposition for taking risks by performing this strategy, even though this strategy might not be successful when the students perform it. These assertions have their basis in the students' strategy journals:

*Yadira1*: "Although I am afraid of making mistakes, I think I would use this strategy one more time. In my opinion, I have to study the suffixes and

prefixes more frequently. That would be one key, if we want this strategy works!”

*Amanda2*: “I think that I have to be daring when using all types of strategies to improve the language and this one is not the exception, even though I would be exposed of not guessing correctly and being misunderstood.”

*Lorena3*: “My opinion is that making up new words is a good strategy. Because if you learnt to use suffixes and prefixes; you can form new words without the problem of being misunderstood.”

*Samanta4*: “I’ve used this strategy before, but today the teacher gave me some hints to use in a better way this strategy. What I understand is that guessing sometimes implies the creative combination of suffixes and prefixes.”

Table: 17

Speaking Strategy - Use gestures as a way to try and get my meaning across

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	50.0%	45.5%
I’ve tried this strategy & I would use it again.	37.5%	45.5%
I’ve never used this strategy but I’m Interested in it.	12.5%	9.1%
This strategy doesn’t fit for me.	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Using gestures as a strategy to get meaning across is a strategy that received a high percentage of agreement for both groups. 50% from the Pilot Group’s, while the Intensive Group 45.5% stated that they liked and used this strategy, however in the

same group, 45.5% affirmed having tried this strategy and expressed their willingness to use it again. These results illustrate the affinity the students had towards the strategy. It works with all kinds of students, outgoing and shy students. According to both Intensive & pilot Groups, this strategy is very useful. They think like that, because it is a fast way to get with the meaning across. Secondly, while using gestures in order to be understood, there is a chance to look for or think about the word in your mind while at the same time you use your hands and face to communicate with others. These affirmations have their foundations in the students' strategy journals: Students' intensive group reflections and perceptions of using gestures to get meaning across:

*John1*: "Although I have used it since I started learning English, today I practice it in a better way. It means while using my hands to get with the meaning across, I keep on looking in my mind the wanted word."

"Today, I learnt that using gestures is not just a matter of moving my hands and making faces without any sense. The exercise that the teacher made us perform was to realize that we need to put our five senses when using this strategy."

*Lincon2*: "if you can manage your nervousness in a way that is not an obstacle for thinking, it can really be helpful especially when you work under pressure, and need to be understood."

*Janet3*: "This strategy seems to be easy. But in fact needs all your attention in order to get your meaning across. I work in a place where pressure is in the first place. So, there are times in which nobody is around you to assist you, with your language problems. However, your creativity must be on at those

times. Anyway, I will keep on practicing at home the exercises I was given in class.”

Students’ Pilot Group reflections and perceptions of using gestures:

*Esther1*: Today I learnt that using gestures not only help you to get your meaning across, but those seconds of gestures can give you a chance to think of the exact word or synonym.”

*Cesar2*: “If you use gestures appropriately could be that the other person may know the word that you need to use, so this is another way to increase your vocabulary, too!”

*Betty3*: “Using gestures has been very useful to me. I am a shy person, so whenever I don’t find the right word to say; my gestures were aided me in order to not get into panic. Most of the time, the other person understands and tell me the word I don’t know.”

*Nancy4*: “In this class, I have realized that when you are nervous, you don’t realize that you may do things in the wrong way. For instance, when using gestures I thought I was doing it in a way the other person understood... but it wasn’t. Through this activity, I also learnt that making gestures is not just moving hands with nonsense.”

Table: 18

Speaking Strategy - Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said

Statements	Pilot study	Intensive Course
I use this strategy & I like it.	25.0%	27.3%
I've tried this strategy & I would use it again.	25.0%	36.4%
I've never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.	25.0%	18.2%
This strategy doesn't fit for me.	25.0%	18.2%
Total	100%	100%

In the last strategy, the percentages in the pilot study do not show a unified opinion or point of view, due to the use of L1 if the students know that the other person speaks the same mother tongue. Twenty-five percent of the students of this group (Pilot group) affirmed that they use this strategy and liked it. Twenty-five percent of the students affirmed having tried this strategy and being willing to use it again. Another 25% of the students stated that they have never used it but are interested in it. Then, twenty-five percent of the students affirmed that this strategy didn't fit them. There was rejection when I introduced this strategy, because these students argued that this strategy does not force them to use English all the time. Furthermore, it could turn into a bad habit when learning a language. They recognize that, this was one of the reasons they have not improved their English during their years at university. If they knew that the English instructor spoke Spanish, they did not make any effort to speak in English. These affirmations are supported by the entries in the students' strategy journals:

*Esther1*: “This strategy could be useful for others and not for me. I know myself very well. I wouldn’t just speak one word or phrase in Spanish but a whole class... There is also the temptation of using the mother tongue more than it is recommended.”

*Cesar2*: “I think that one of the things that made my language improvements delayed; was the use of the mother tongue. I know that the strategy means just to switch back for one word or a phrase, but in reality I speak the whole class in Spanish.”

*Diego3*: “I used this strategy twice during this week in class. But I had to be careful on not depending too much on the mother tongue.”

*Vanessa4*: “I do not think this strategy is bad at all. One must be careful on not speaking in Spanish all the time, and that’s it! But it can be denied the usefulness of the strategy!”

On the other hand, 36.4% of the Intensive Group affirmed that they have tried this strategy and would use it again. They expressed a positive attitude towards this strategy because they experienced good results, when they used it in the past. The students in the Intensive Group said that this strategy was used a lot at their workplaces. One of the positive things of performing this strategy (according to them) is that it saves time at the moment of trying to communicate. Furthermore, this strategy helps to avoid misunderstandings in communication; because when language learners use their mother tongue they can express to the listener exactly what they want to express in English. These statements are based on the students’ strategy journals:

*Ketty1*: “Personally, I’ve been using it a lot. Specially [sic] at my work place.

This strategy has been useful when I work at the counter area where all the



things must be done fast and right! If I don't know or I am not sure about a phrase or word in English, I immediately speak Spanish towards the person I am talking to... some of my colleagues don't like it because they say that I am projecting insecurity and it doesn't seem to be professional. But if the other person doesn't matter, I will keep on doing it whenever I need it."

*Yadira*<sup>2</sup>: "before coming to this Speaking course I used to do this strategy. I have noticed that some people feel like embarrassed using it. Because they say that using Spanish is not a good way to improve English. But I don't think so, sometimes this strategy can save you to say stupid things and may be offend others without you have noticed it!"

*Lorena*<sup>3</sup>: "Once I was at the airport in England and I was at the customs examination because I had some dough in my hand bag. Well, the dough was to prepare "pan de Yuca", a kind of bread that is eaten in Manabí. So, the custom officers (they were two) didn't understand my explanations.

However, I realized that one of them did. So I looked at him, and started to explain what the dough was for but in Spanish. At the end, those officers were laughing and let me continue without problems. Now that I have been taught about this strategy, made me feel that I did the right and I don't have to feel bad for speaking in Spanish at that time."

In the following section of this research, I present other important findings.

The first things that I found, refer to the effects of the use of students' reflection journals and the second findings, are related to the students' strategy use itself.

Findings from the Students' Reflection Journals.

During the Pilot and Intensive Group, the teaching of speaking strategies enabled the students to reflect on the pros and cons regarding their English learning.

This is seen in their reflection journals, where the students (after each class) were asked to write an entry about the strategy learned on that day, they were also asked through open ended questions to think about the disadvantages of using the learned strategy and what it is more important, what kind of solutions they were going to give to overcome it. For instance,

Student Reflections:

This class / week, I learn \_\_\_\_\_

I learned to use the strategy \_\_\_\_\_ in the following situation(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

My difficulties are

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like help

\_\_\_\_\_

My practicing plans are

\_\_\_\_\_

(Nunan, 1996, p 36) (“Learner Strategy Training in the classroom: An Action Research Study. TESOL Journal, 6 (1))

I have to admit that this strategy journal was not easy to carry out from the very beginning. Both groups showed a tendency to reject this activity when asked to write it after each class. Here I include some of their complaints about keeping the journal.

Pilot Group

*Vanessa1*: “It is too much work. I don’t like thinking!!!!”

*Cesar2*: “It seems as if you were control my life!! Why do you want to know what is inside my mind?!!!”

*Betty3*: “It’s supposed to be a speaking course. So there is no need to write anything. Listen, SPEAKING course, not writing!”

*Nancy4*: “No way, I don’t see the purpose of it. It’s a waste of time.”

### Intensive Group

*Marcos1*: “I have never had a scheduled life and this reflection journal seems to be like the police, verifying if I have learnt something today... but if you asked me to do so, I will do it. I have to tell you that it is hard to reflect on my own thoughts.”

*Samanta2*: “when you were explaining to us about this reflection journal, I thought it was ridiculous, but as I thought it was going to be a piece of cake to fill it, I didn’t complain... now I say that thinking about my weaknesses in the learning of the language, and giving a solution at the same time, made me think about taking back the words I said before about the reflection journal.”

*Liz3*: “I don’t understand why I should write the reflection journal if I know my weaknesses furthermore; why I should give an intended plan to solve my weaknesses... I don’t want to be rude, but I think that is your job.”

Through these commentaries the students not only showed rejection towards the reflection journal but they also had misguided beliefs about the learning process. The students thought that it is just a teachers’ job to give them a solution to overcome their problems. The students were not used to having order or being discipline on whatever they do in life, and this is also perceived in their studies, too. I decided not to complain to the students with both groups. I kept the decision of having the

journals at the end of the classes with both groups. I took that decision, because I have realized that when you want to convince students, actions speak louder than words. However, I was sure that as time passed, they realized that without order and discipline nothing was going to work out in their lives. One of the things, which I realized was the fact that, if I wanted them to keep the reflection journal, I must be the first one to have my own one.

However, the members of the Pilot Group didn't complete it as expected. In the middle of the course, they were quitting to the extent that at the end of the course I only had 3 students. However, the recorded material mainly relates to the Intensive Group. Since the students of the Pilot Group did not finish nor give the journals to me as I expected...

I managed to keep the Intensive Group's journals until the end of their course. I was being observed in every detail by these students during the whole Intensive Group. I consider it necessary to say this, because this is one of the reasons they were challenged to finish their journals until the end of their course. These assertions come from my own journal:

March 18, 2010

"I realized that, one must be careful in every action we make in class. Through our behaviours we are teaching not only the subject, but also good study habits that will help our students later in their workplaces. Today, at the end of the class, three students asked me what a small notebook was for. I explained them that my intention was to keep a systematic record of what it is done in class, for later improvements. Their faces seemed to be doubtful... after the two of them left the class, the other student approached me and said that he was convinced to finished the journal, because what he really liked from the course was that the teacher not only give

instructions but is involved in all the activities, including, keeping the journal... and for him it was the first time, to see a teacher, writing a journal for teaching improvements.... And I kept telling myself, that in my case, it was also the first time, I kept a journal for my own improvements...”

The last week of the Intensive Group, I decided to have an informal conversation with the students about their journals’ expectations and these were some of their thoughts:

Fake name: “Although I didn’t like the journals at the beginning, later I realized that it is good to have a detailed record of what I have been doing through this course. Only in that written way, I could realize how much I have been progressing in the language. My memory is ok, but I don’t think I was going to store many details in mind as the notebook has stored.”

Fake name: “In spite of the entire negative attitude I had at the beginning, I want to tell you that this journals are useful not only in class but at work, too! I have told you that I had a job two weeks ago. I use an adaptation of the strategy journal in order to have a record of my strengths and weaknesses in my job. Furthermore, when I am at home, I reflect on possible solutions to those problems. I think that, if keeping a journal works in my speaking proficiency, it will work in the same way in my professional life.”

Fake name: “Miss Catalina, I am the one who cause you a lot of trouble when writing the journal. But I want to thank you for not doing my will... Although my English proficiency still needs to be improved, I learnt other valuable things like not depending on you all the time. Furthermore, my esteem rises since through this reflected times; I was able to give solutions on my own! It means that I am not so dumb.”

It is true, their English proficiency still needs to be improved, but the seeds for achieving that goal have been sown: being independent learners, being conscious of their strengths and weaknesses in the foreign language and being able to construct their own solutions to reach their goals.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion

The discussion and analysis of the data in this chapter are guided by the original research questions of the study.

Research Question # 1: What are the speaking strategies used by two groups of language learners in the field of Tourism and Hotel Management?

The speaking strategy checklist was analyzed according to five categories which belong to the different kinds of strategies that Rebecca Oxford in her book *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Learner Should Know* mentioned.

The students from the Intensive Group were more likely to use cognitive strategies in which analyzing and reasoning are important in order to perform the strategy a point which was illustrated in tables #3, #9, #12. While the Pilot Group tended to perform cognitive speaking strategies where through practice they can assure what they have already learnt. This tendency (from the Pilot Group), of paying more attention to practice than analysis comes resulted from their, insecurity when developing tasks where analysis and reasoning were required. This behavior was understandable since their proficiency level in English was much lower than the intensive group. The avoidance towards reasoning and analysis by the Pilot Group was also seen in their comments as they were doing tasks, which demanded using resources for receiving and sending messages.

The next thing that I have found was that arranging and planning (the use of metacognitive strategies), were more inclined to be used in the pilot's group side. For them it was a good way to assure their success in their class activities. The results of the use of strategy # 7 (see figure 7) supports this finding. I found that the Pilot Group

appealed to this strategy to overcome their limitations in speaking. However, the more they improve and get confidence in the language the less the students seemed to need to turn to this strategy, as in the case of the Intensive Group.

I think that Oxford (1990) is right when she asserts that “language is a form of social behavior; it is communication that occurs among people. So language learning involves other people and the implementation of social strategies...” I have found that no matter how much English you speak, the need to perform the most basic social interactions is clearly perceived in both groups (pilot and intensive group).

Furthermore, this need of speaking in a foreign language become stronger, if the learner takes advantage of the benefits of social interaction. These assertions are supported the strategy results #5, #8, # 11. (See figures 5; 8; 11).

In both groups, the benefits they gained from these social interactions were to be accepted in a social group of “important people and to gain the respect of the native speakers, too. According to them (intensive and Pilot Group), one way of gaining respect of native speakers is showing them an interest in speaking English the best way they can.

It has been said that the compensation strategies “enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations of linguistic knowledge. (p. 47)” (Oxford, 1990). So, beginners used compensation strategies due to the lack of grammar or vocabulary knowledge. However, in transferring this idea to the context of both groups (pilot and intensive group), one immediately thinks that the Pilot Group whose level of English was lower than that of the intensive group, were the ones who most depended on this type of strategy. Through this research, I found out that compensation strategies were used frequently by both groups. These assertions are supported in the strategies result charts, (see figures #6, #13, # 14, # 16,



# 17) where the results showed high percentages of use for these strategies by both groups.

Throughout the process of this research, there is a question that remains unanswered. How come students with better linguistic knowledge of English still keep on using compensation strategies?

As time passed, I found that, they chose the strategies they felt comfortable with according to their personalities. In the following lines, I will include an extract of my own journal which illustrates this point:

March 19, 2010

“I have been teaching seven strategies, but I see that the students don’t vary when using the strategies... It is ok to use gestures, but why Lincon used that during all the activities in class? On the other hand, I see Susan using one strategy... in this situation she can use another one like “making up new words” or at least being daring, in guessing the words... I’d better not interrupt them and let the class continue...”

March 22, 2010

One can teach many ways to the students to reach their goals, but at the end, are the students who choose the ways and the strategies, which makes them feel sure and comfortable... I won’t finish the class without asking the students why they just used one strategy, if they were given more than one option. (After the class)... Their faces were as if I was asking something obvious... one of the students told me the following:

*Leopoldo*: “Miss how you can expect that my friend use the strategy: Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation” if he never does this,

not even in Spanish, remember he is very shy... remember, every time you want to talk him, you are the one who ask him; not vice verse”

I realized that I my thoughts might have been wrong. I had been thinking that all the strategies were going to be used by all kinds of students or... personalities. Now I understand why Carlos likes trying topics even when those topics are not familiar to him, he is not afraid of trying new things; he is like daring in the way he is... talking about those students whose personalities are not so outgoing... the strategies they use are the ones that make them feel comfortable and sure...

From that experience I learnt that a teacher is not someone who imposes students using ways to reach their goals, but a guide.

#### Anxiety factors and their Influence on the Speaking Strategy Learning

Research Question 1: What is the relationship among anxiety factors and choices of speaking strategies?

Through my literature review I determined that many experts, among them Arnold, 2000 and MacIntyre & Gardner: 1991 that speaking in the target language produces anxiety. (I decided to start with this assertion because it describes what it has been found in this section of the research. The findings of this study suggest that factors like, “the lack of confidence in our linguistic knowledge (citation)” that provokes anxiety in the students but also “the exposure of their language imperfections in front of others (citation)”. In this study I explored whether other factors besides the linguistic ones, provoke student anxiety and accordingly, if there is any relationship when choosing the speaking strategies. Furthermore, I wanted to know in what kind of environments or situations students feel most anxious (See Appendix 4). Another thing that must be cleared is that, this anxiety survey was done with the students from the Intensive Group. Due to some inconvenients I faced with the

Pilot Group; the anxiety survey was only administered to the Intensive Group because the importance of exploring this aspect of the group became apparent during work with the Pilot Group. Besides the survey, my own reflection journal written during the course, and interviews with the Intensive Group were analyzed to determine if there were patterns related to classroom anxiety behaviors.

Results related to the anxiety survey were divided into two parts. The first results describe anxiety in relation to the place the students were in. The second group of results, describe patterns in classroom anxiety behaviors that it were found in the students from the Intensive Group.

Anxiety in relation to the place where the students must speak in a foreign language definitely influenced the degree and perception of anxiety in these learners. According to the survey 81.8% of the students stated that they were *very anxious* when having to speak English in class; while 18.2% of the students stated that they were slightly *anxious* about speaking English in class. Regarding speaking English out of class

72.7% of the students expressed being moderately anxious while 27.3% of them indicated that they were very anxious. A very low percentage of the students reported that they did not feel anxiety when speaking English. Student perceptions of anxiety were not limited to places or environments; through this research I have found that the students from the Intensive Group felt very anxious when:

- a) they were asked to perform, group discussion in class,
- b) participating in a role play or dialogue,
- c) And giving oral presentations to the class.

Table 19: Anxiety Results

Statements	Not at all Anxious	Slightly Anxious	Moderately Anxious	Very Anxious	Extremely Anxious
Taking part in a group discussion in class	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	54.5%	0%
Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of my class	0%	18.2%	27.3%	45%	9.1%
Giving oral presentation to the rest of the class	0%	18.2%	27.3%	36.4%	18.2%

These results agree with my own observation in the class, and also some of my students' opinions about the performance of these activities in class:

March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

We're analyzing the pros and cons of building a lot of malls. Their answers are analyzed from a touristic point of view... Although the students perform the activity well, I don't get the enrolment of all of the students... Susan just speaks if her classmates or the teacher asks her. She seems to be uncomfortable. Her friend Pablo, wrote and showed me (before discussion began) his ideas about the topic, but I don't see that he is confident enough to share his ideas with the group... what is worse, two friends of theirs can't keep the discussion activity. These students seemed to be scared. Their minds are in blank... (a classmate told me that), they can't even apply any of the strategies taught before... I don't know what's happening...

The following student comments underline the issue of performance anxiety in the classroom.

Students Commentaries about the in class tasks:

*Samanta1*: “Miss, you know that my English is fairly well, but every time I give oral presentations my mind turns into black [sic]... I just think about my grade at the end of this activity.”

*Ketty2*: “You know that if you ask me to participate in dialogues I’ll do it. The problems come when in the middle of the acting, I realized I made a mistake in pronunciation, so these thoughts block my mind... that is why I stopped a lot during this activities.”

*Marcos3*: Mistakes and judgments are the words that come to my mind every time I have to do some of the dialogues or oral presentations. It’s hard for me to get rid of these words while you are doing an activity in front of my classmates.

Another finding about student anxiety in speaking in class was related to the fact that the more formality is involved in the environment, the more anxious students will be when speaking in English. The anxiety survey results showed that for these students there was a substantial difference when they had to communicate with me, and when they have to communicate with coordinators or any other person who is in an academic position. This difference is related with formalities and academic hierarchies.

Tanveer (2007) stated that “speakers’ sense of inferiority while talking to someone higher in status, may cause stress or anxiety for them (p 10).” They think that deans and directors speak English perfectly. In the following charts, the percentages show the level of anxiety students in the intensive group felt when talking to a teacher and when talking to administrative staff.

Table: 20: Anxiety Results

Statements	Not at all Anxious	Slightly Anxious	Moderately Anxious	Very Anxious	Extremely Anxious
The teacher asks me a question in English in class.	0%	18.2%	81.8%	0%	0%
Talking to administrative staff of my language school in English.	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%	45.5%	0%

These results from the survey coincide with what I experienced while working with the Intensive Group. I noticed that every time my students had an academic problem; they were so nervous because it meant that they had to visit the Coordinator. Although he speaks Spanish perfectly, my students knew they were supposed to speak in English even if they are out of class. Some student's expressions about this situation were written in my journal:

*Samanta1*: "Miss Catalina, Is there any other person who can solve my problem? Just to think I have to speak English to him I want to faint!"

*Liz2*: "Just to think that I have to talk to the coordinator my hands start sweating... He is a native speaker; for sure his English is perfect."

*Lincon3*: "Definitely, I would prefer talking to you. The teacher's look is friendlier. I don't think that he would be patient enough to talk with me in English!"

*Lorena4*: "No matter how good my English is, I have realized that I am always scared, when I have to talk with him. That sense of superiority makes me forget all the English I've learnt through my whole life!"

Through the results and students' opinions I have found that they have some beliefs that may impede their successful oral performance and communication. This theme will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Furthermore, some research supports what I found in the students from the Intensive Group. The results suggest "certain beliefs about language learning also contribute to the students' tension and frustration in the class" (Horwitz et al, 1986 (p.127).

This research also found that these thoughts come from "learners' irrational and unrealistic conceptions (p)" about language learning. In the Intensive Group, the student responses indicated beliefs that seemed to impede their improvement in the language. For example, the students had a very hard time guessing unknown words. They indicated the difficulty of working with this strategy. A pattern indicating this belief is seen in their own reflection journals:

*Samanta1*: "I don't feel comfortable with guessing, if I don't know the right one, I prefer to be silent."

*Amara2*: "Definitely, I can't do this guessing. Since I was a child I was taught to be sure of what I am going to say."

Another student belief that emerged as a pattern from the research was related to pronunciation. Besides their voiced desire to achieve native like accents, I found that they had confrontations among themselves when discussing the quality of the accents in the group. A frequent question that I heard them ask was, "Which is the best English accent the British or the American? I would say that this concern was one of the most problematic in my class. Every time the students speak with a British accent, the other students started saying that it is not the right access, and when some of the students spoke with an American accent, the other students expressed that it

was too informal. In the following lines, are some of their students' thoughts about different English accents:

*Leopoldo1*: “Miss Catalina, Marcos got a 10 and he spoke like an American, and I've used the British style and I got 8! How come?”

*John2*: “I don't want to speak in front of them! You know who they are... they start making faces as if I am speaking non-senses! They made me feel ridiculous every time I speak with British accent.”

*Ketty3*: “I don't understand why you accept their American accent. I was taught that the most appropriate one come from United Kingdom!”

The intensive group students demonstrated what I perceived as faulty thinking.

I noticed that I needed to help the students increase their confidence. One of the things I did was to increase the activities where students had few chances to fail.

Many times, as teachers, we tend call our students attention to their learning difficulties in English classes, and this is all the feedback we give to the students. I say this, because I used to talk with the students about their problems they were supposed to correct, and not about the good aspects they had in their learning process. Before, I was not aware of this aspect of my teaching, until one of my students made me realize what I was doing. One day, I remember that a student approached me and said:

“Miss Catalina, I think I'd better quit the course because I don't feel I am making progress... I think like that because you are always telling us what we have done wrongly[sic], but I don't hear something good about my learning.

So another thing, I decided to do was what Onwuegbuzie (1999), in his research studied on how to lower student anxiety: “Encourage them to think about their



positive personality traits and build upon them (page).” In other words, he encouraged building students’ self-confidence and self esteem in their EFL abilities (p)”

The data showed that it is also important to describe in what ways anxiety interferes with the selection of speaking strategies in the students. I found out that there was a connection between the activities and when most of the students rated feeling very anxious:

Taking part in a group discussion in class: 54.5%

Taking part in a role play or dialogue in front of the class: 45.5%

Giving oral presentations to the rest of the class: 36.4 %

The speaking strategies they used when feeling anxious were:

Looking for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym: 72.7%

Asking for help from my conversational partner: 63.6%

Using gestures as a way to get the meaning across: 45%

These three strategies, were the ones students reported as preferred, when they experienced being very anxious. Furthermore, these percentages of agreement with the survey statements seem to have a connection to thoughts the students wrote in their speaking strategy journals:

*Samanta I*: “Today I had to face one of the most difficult task I’ve always done in class, to give an oral presentation about creating a touristic project in my neighbourhood. At the end of my presentation I felt worry because I was conscious that I had to use many synonyms, because I forgot the exact words I had in my written speech... but at the same time my classmates, told me that it was ok that I used gestures, because it helped my classmates to understand my speech in a better way...”

*Liz2:* “On this day, well, I have to be honest; I got really frightened when I heard my teacher saying that we were going to have a dialogue simulating to have problems with a customs officer at the airport... although my performance was not perfect, I felt I could manage my speaking problems in the dialogue; with the gestures I used. It helped me to unblock my mind.”

*Lincon3:* “Comparing my behavior in group discussions, at the beginning of this course, I think I have done small improvements. As a matter of fact, I am still very anxious but now I dare more to ask my classmates for help when I don’t know how to expressed my opinions.”

Research Question: How do group management skills reveal student ability to work with others to learn speaking strategies?

One of the problems I observed during the first two days of the course was the lack of ability to work with others. However to tackle the problem of group management, I considered it necessary to include in the class, useful group management skills like the importance of listening to others, helping others, and what it is most important in respecting each other.

The problems observed in this area also have their basis in the students’ notes they were about to write at the end of the class. These students’ opinions belong to the first days of the course. So, here are some of their complaints about working in groups:

*Marcos1:* “Teacher I suggested you performing individual tasks!”

*John2:* “My classmate who sits on the left is a show woman! She has a know-it- all attitude!”

*Leopoldo3:* “Working in groups is a waste of time. I get along well with my classmates but they just want to include the best opinions!”

*Lincon4*: “My classmates are not patient with me! I do not feel well in there!”

*Janet5*: “In my group there is not a dialogue, there is a monologue...!”

I also found that the lack of group management skills were transmitted to their job environments, too. One day after class, three students were talking to me about this group management problem, and all of them agreed that they did have to deal with the same problems with their co-workers. Their words about it were the following:

*Marcos1*: “It’s all the same Miss... the problems I have in class with my partners when working in teams, are the same ones I have to deal with my colleagues. They don’t want to admit others people’s opinions as valuable ones...”

*Janet2*: “Don’t waste your time trying to solve these problems in class. It happens the same in my workplace. Everybody wants to talk and nobody wants to listen to others. To tell you the truth, I do the same things... I just pay attention to the things I consider important.”

*John3*: “If my classmates say stupid things why do I have to accept these opinions? As you see my behavior in class (not making each other feel good), I behave in the same way in my workplace.”

At the very beginning, I thought about giving up solving management problems, but the same day I had the conversation with these three students, I also found out that the students from the intensive course didn’t have a clear picture of what working in groups really meant and for what purpose or goal they perform group activities. These assertions are based on the students’ journals about group work:

*Lorena 1:* “Miss Catalina, what is the reason you ask us to work in groups?”

I’m asking you this because I don’t find any logical explanation.”

*Yadira 2:* “Today everybody talked (at the same time), nobody listen to the others, and everybody complaint... Miss what’s the point of working with my classmates?”

*Amanda 3:* “Miss, I’m conscious that I am just a student, but with respect, I will give you an advice... If you just make us realize a small goal to reach while working in groups... then it all will have a little bit of sense.”

So, for the next class, I came in with the purpose of giving four points to accomplish while working in groups. The four points were based on the things I observed students fail a lot when doing group work. These four statements were:

To get everybody to participate

To make each other feel good

To help each other when having communication problems

To respect each other opinions.

After each group activity the students had to rate the previous statements as “always”, “usually”, “rarely”, “never”. The following results represents the first week of working in groups:

Table 21: Group Management Skills

Rating the process of working in groups (intensive Group)

Question	Always	Usually	Rarely	Never
Is everyone participating?	0%	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%
Are you trying to help each other to feel able to talk?	0%	27.3%	27.3%	45.5%
Are you saying “that’s good” to each when you like something?	0%	0%	54.5%	45.5%
Are you paying attention to each other?	18.2%	18.2%	36.4%	27.3%

During that week the results revealed that the students had little interest in assisting their classmates whenever the students from the Intensive Course had problems accomplishing their tasks; not even wanting to contribute to create a proactive atmosphere within their groups. Something that caught my attention was the fact that these students produced less effort to reach a goal when working in groups than when they were asked to solve a task individually. This assertion has its support from the teacher's journals:

Group #2 was composed of 4 students. I observed that each member of the group is reluctant to help the other members of their own group who were having trouble in expressing her thoughts... the rest of the members of that group, were not willing to move even a finger to assist their partner when trying to communicate... they didn't seem to know that the success of reaching their goal as a group doesn't depend on one person but on all of them...

Group #3 was also composed of 4 students. Within this group the atmosphere seemed tense... No one wants to be the leader. I don't understand it! I've just check their individual tasks and they have performed well, but now they seemed to perform the task just to fulfill a requirement! What is worse, I've just realized that they are not discussing the questions they were supposed to report to me! Although they are sitting in circles, they are writing their own answers!

Lack of coordination was another reason why their group performance was a mess. Besides wanting to talk at the same time, there were groups in which nobody clearly understood their roles clearly. Even more, there were moments in which just

one student had to do all their classmates' tasks because nobody understood their roles.

After that first week, I felt frustrated. This dissatisfaction arose, because before implementing group activities, I had explained all the rules about working in groups; to the students. To be more specific, I told them that working in groups didn't mean just having one student work. Furthermore, I was sure, that my explanation was, clear enough to these students. I thought that the problem here was that, no matter how hard a teacher explains something; students often pretend to listen but then they did not attend well enough to remember the explanation...I had to find a way in which these students could assimilate deeply in their hearts the importance of working proactively in groups. I worried that their negative attitude just led them to fail not only in their academic performance, but in other aspects of their lives, too!

I came to the conclusion that honest, daily reflection on their own performance about working in groups could be a possible way to help them improve in their group management skills. To alleviate the stress in the class, that reflection was oral and individual, just with the teacher. Through this individual reflection, I found out that behind all those bad behaviors in these students, some feelings of insecurity and competition were in these students. Through these reflections, there were expressions like:

*Leopoldo1*: "I don't want to share my ideas in the group, because the laziest ones will have the credit easily."

*Marcos2*: "I'm the leader of the group, I think that I have the right to choose what it's best for the group... in other words I have the right to decide the best answers!"

*John3*: “Why should I do my best in the group? If my effort will not matter to the rest of the group...”

As the time passed, things become better. I noticed that these individual interviews, about talking and reflecting on their group management performance, were worthwhile. I considered the individual sessions worthwhile, because I started observing a change in their behavior when learning the speaking strategies. Without telling them to form groups, they looked for partners to practice the speaking strategy of that day. They also understood the necessity of being heard and paying attention to others; since most of the strategies required a partner. I also observed that whenever they saw a classmate struggling with a speaking strategy, he or she said words of encouragement. In other words, they started to understand the importance of making each other feel comfortable and supported by their group members. These words have its support on the teachers’ notes:

I am so happy to see and hear Leopoldo working with Amanda Sometime ago, it was impossible to imagine both of them working together... She is helping him to practice the speaking strategy: “Direct the conversation to familiar topics”. He is a little bit disappointed, because he didn’t get the idea of that strategy. But she tells him: Don’t worry; with more practice I’m sure you got it! Let’s keep practicing! Lorena asked for help. She wanted to practice the speaking strategy: “Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.” Surprisingly, she is offering her help to the classmates who helped her with the above strategy...now they want to sit close because they want to support each other...”

Before the intensive course finishes, I decided to carry out the group management skills survey, in order to make the students aware of their improvements in this area. Although their improvements didn’t appear to reach all the skills, they

were surprises in the results that caught my attention and made me feel that my job was not in vain at all! These results were the following:

Table 22

Results from the Group Management Survey (Intensive Group)

Question	Always	Usually	Rarely	Never
Is everyone participating?	72.7%	27.3%	0%	0%
Are you trying to help each other to feel able to talk?	63.6%	27.3%	0%	9.1%
Are you saying “that’s good” to each when you like something?	54.5%	18.2%	27.3%	0%
Are you paying attention to each other?	54.5%	36.4%	9.1%	0%

These results not only reveal positive changes in group management skills but also show that the students came to realize that these group management skills serve as good means to learn or acquire effectively the learning strategies. This analysis of the data is supported by the students’ reflection journals and my observation notes.

Fake name: To learn to work in groups, let me see my classmates from a different, positive perspective. Now I see my classmates from a different, positive perspective. Now I see my classmates as means of help when trying to understand something especially the speaking strategies, but at the same time, by listening to others can create an environment of respect that serve as basis to build a peaceful working time.

Fake name: I didn’t realize how much a group of students can reach a goal when we all pay attention to each other and respect my classmates’ participation turns every time we have group activities in the class. Every time, you gave us a break, we got



together and share our tips in order to perform effectively the speaking strategies in class.

Fake name: I didn't know that a simple phrase of encouragement can do a lot in terms of raising others people's self esteem. At the same time, I have realized that this good self esteem in the people made them work proactively... (Miss, is this word ok? I've heard you saying it many times)

### Discussion of the Pilot Study

On the basis of this pilot study, the teaching of speaking strategies was incomplete. In a relatively short period of 4 hours a week for five months, it was impossible to cover all the required class activities, as well as the specialized speaking activities that I had designed for use with these students who participated in the research study pilot group. I was disappointed with this result, so I decided to try again with a new group of students, and with new ideas about refining the planned activities.

I have also come to the conclusion that to be success in any kind of EFL teaching, the environment or the situations we have to deal with that are out of the English learning contexts, plays an important role in the success or failure of the learning process. In this case, the critical situation Ecuador went through, from October 2009 to January of 2010 regarding forced power outages during the drought from 9:00AM – 12:00 noon and from 3:00pm to 5:30pm were during the time I was teaching the pilot group. Perhaps, the most prominent fact, which affected the students' determination to continue, was the lack of electricity during English classes. Without electricity, students were not allowed to perform the different activities I had. This situation completely shocked me because, most of the means I needed to

perform my English classes demanded electricity, for example, I couldn't use the CD player for listening, nor the Internet links. The classroom was too dark without electric light, and the air conditioners and fans could run at that hottest time of the year.

In addition, these students from the pilot group came into the semester with a misconception of English, as a subject. They perceived English as a subject that needed to be studied only to complete their requirements, and that was it! These thoughts, were conceived and reaffirmed because of the professors' words and behaviors of the other subjects. It was interesting to learn from some informal comments of several of the students that my colleagues who were not English professions exhibited negative behaviors towards English language instruction, which may have influenced the pilot students' behaviors. Having to wait for some of these colleagues to finish their classes even though the class time had ended some minutes before, may have influenced these students' perceptions when they arrived on time for class but then had to wait for the classroom. Furthermore, the pilot group participants didn't do their best to participate in class which they demonstrated by not even being responsible with their assignments!

#### Discussion of the intensive course

On the basis of the research, carried out with the intensive course, things turned out better than before. For instance, the Ecuadorian problem with power outages had been solved which meant that I could make use of means like internet or the CD player through the intensive course. The attitude of the intensive course students' towards the course was another positive thing I encountered! This positive behavior may be due to a change I made by opening the course for the students who were going to graduate soon and who had not taken their last module of English. In

addition, another thing that contributed to the improved attitude of the intensive group was their desire to learn because of the direct application to their work in tourism areas, so English was not a choice but a necessity for these students. These situations made the students more mature towards the learning of the target language.

Through this intensive course something that caught my attention through informal conversation with the students was that most of them came from low socio-economical levels. My question at that time was: How can these students afford studying in a private university, and even more to chose to study in an expensive career? The average per capita income of Ecuadorians is 7,900 per month.(Index Mundi, 2010)

[http://www.indexmundi.com/ecuador/gdp\\_per\\_capita\\_%28ppp%29.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/ecuador/gdp_per_capita_%28ppp%29.html)

Well, after I was looking for some clarifications, I found out that, those students who belonged to a low socio-economical level were children of emigrants who had gone to work in Italy and Spain. That was the reason why they could afford to pay all the expenses of their studies in a private university, because their family members were sending money back to support their education. I have stated that these students were better than the ones I had in the pilot group, however, saying that the students from the intensive course were better, but they still had problems. There were other factors that still hindered these students from having good English communication skills. In the following sections, these factors will be shown in a more detailed manner.

In this section I present my discussion according to my research questions.  
 Research Question 1: How does motivation relate to language learning in two groups of Ecuadorian Tourism and Hotel management students?

On the basis of the motivation survey results, I infer that the pilot group was inclined to have an integrative orientation. The students from the pilot group expressed many times, that English is a “vehicle in which they can be recognized and be respected by others”. That thought, of telling others that they “exist”; was deeply rooted in their minds. According to some research, this type of orientation is known as integrative orientation this kind of orientation takes place in ESL environments. So, a question came to my mind: How in an EFL setting (Ecuador) can integrative orientation take place? The answer may find its root in the idea that studying a language in Ecuador is perceived as connected to “social status”. Possibly because of the high cost of the language academies in Ecuador. Furthermore, not all the secondary high-schools give the students the opportunity to learn English to an advanced degree. In other words, studying foreign languages (not only English) is very expensive. However, as it is expensive, it means that not everybody in Ecuador can afford this. Consequently, studying English often can only be reached by people of middle class or high class, unless they immigrate to an English speaking country where they are immersed in the language or can attend free classes.

From the results of the motivation questionnaire, from the intensive group, the data suggests that this group of students tend to have an instrumental orientation (Ref). If we returned to the intensive students’ results, it is common to read that English is “indispensable and necessary for work”. Besides perceiving English as crucial and vital for their jobs, they also considered the language as a key means for keeping current with topics related to their jobs and careers: Hotel Management and Tourism”. This will to surf on the net and to read by themselves in English, may have an explanation in that most articles they read apply to their jobs areas. The knowledge gained from reading in their field is not only stored in their minds, but can be

practiced and reinforced in real life. Moreover, this positive habit, not only leads to the students gain good job positions, but also personal satisfaction, too.

Another pattern of response was related to their conception of being skilled in English language as the only means to succeed in life! The intensive group had a more pragmatic and realistic point of view. By their responses, the students from the intensive course perceive English as “part of success” but not as a whole. I think this is so, because of the terms they used to explain the word success. One of the terms the students used to describe success is perseverance. On the other hand, the pilot students’ responses indicated that they perceived English as a vital instrument in having success in life.

I think that these two opposite orientations (from the pilot group & intensive group) can be explained by their different requirements. The students from the pilot group were full-time students. During their years of study, their parents paid their academic expenses. Most of these students, had parents who were owners of big companies, so their economic incomes in those families were high. Furthermore, it was from their parents that they had the idea that, through English one can gain “good relationships”; and those good relationships are the ones who place these students in good jobs.

On the other hand, the situation (of the intensive group students) of being children of emigrants, who had to live far away from their parents, made them grow faster in terms of being more mature towards their academic lives. Although, their parents help them paying their academic expenses, they felt the necessity of looking for jobs in order to gain experience in the field. This early involvement in their jobs made the students from the intensive course perceive English with an instrumental perspective; and open their minds to see other factors as important ones to success in life.

Research Question 2: What are the speaking strategies used by the two groups of language learners in the field of Tourism and Hotel Management?

Through this speaking strategy inventory, it is safe to conclude that the strategies which were used the most, by both groups were connected to the classification of Compensation Strategies. These strategies were: a) direct the conversation to familiar topics b) Ask for help from my conversational partner c) Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym and d) Use gestures as a way to try and get the meaning across. This preference may have response from the fact that with these compensation strategies, students of both groups felt the most secure and comfortable. However, no matter their proficiency level of English, their necessity to look for secure ways to communicate were the first choices in the students of both groups.

One of the strategies that was target in the students of both groups, were the use of synonyms or look for different ways to express an idea (see strategy 14). This strategy is also known as CIRCUMLOCUTION or lexical repair strategy. The students of both groups recognize that the use of this strategy avoid them from having communication breakdowns. Furthermore, there were some things that I observed while teaching them this strategy. The first one is that when the students of both groups were performing this strategy, it guides the students to learning by obtaining unknown or unremembered language items from the dialogues. Moreover, this kind of learning was the most efficient one. I think so, because I noticed that all the communication problems the students of both group had to solve when practicing with their classmates, remained in their minds for long terms. Something that did not happened if I, (the teacher) explain them or give them the solution directly.

One of the main objectives in my course, was to make the students (of both groups) aware that not only the teachers' feedback is the one they should listen to but, their classmates feedback, too! So "encouraging others to correct errors in their speaking" was not only intended to be used as a communication strategy but also to make them value others people's opinions, too. Moreover, this strategy was also one of the highest rated in preference and usage from both groups.

Within the investigation, I would like to mention that, even though my research was aimed to explore the speaking strategy use in the students when communicating; I noticed that the students started to use certain terms like: mother tongue, collocations, suffixes & prefixes, inferring, etc in their journals and when talking to me in class. This made me think that, these students began to analyze, build up concepts and ideas about their own learning in the target language. As far as I concerned, I do not remember to have taught these terms, to the students in a direct way... I think that this learning, took place indirectly and unconsciously. So the students were instilled these kinds of terms, that gradually incorporated in their own repertory.

Unexpected things happened, during the teaching of strategies; especially with the intensive group. One day, these students asked me to teach them and practice a strategy which did not belong to the communication group. This strategy belongs to the vocabulary group. Since they asked me to give them some classes about suffixes and prefixes, made me think this experience was very unusual to me. The students from the intensive group saw the necessity of extending their vocabulary repertoire, so they asked me if there would be the possibility to teach them the use of these suffixes and prefixes to gain more fluency in English and at the same time to have different ways to express their ideas.

Through the results of speaking strategy use inventory, it can be perceived how daring or risk taken a group of students may be when performing the speaking strategies. The research showed that the students from the pilot group did not feel comfortable when using strategy number 16 in which say: making up new words or guess if someone doesn't know the right word to use. The words they used to describe this experience were like: unsure, guessing is a matter of luck, difficult to get the attention of others while guessing the right one, uneasy, etc. This supports my thoughts about lack of risk taking when trying new things. On the other hand, the results from the same speaking strategy showed that the students from the intensive group were more daring at the moment of guessing. Even though in their journals these students did not hide the feeling of fear of error or fear of not been understood, they expressed the decision of taking risk in order to achieve their goals, which is being understood by others.

The same thing happened with strategy #15: "use the words from their own language, but says it in a way that sounds in the target language". The students from the pilot group were not willing to perform it frequently, because they thought that people were going to make fun of them. Even though, the students from the intensive course recognized that sometimes people laughed at them, they consider on continuo using this strategy because it help them to overcome communication breakdowns.

Regarding to the intensive group, their attitudes towards these strategies were positive and more daring than the pilot group. This assertion takes root from the fact the students from the intensive group, had jobs! However there is a need to do their best in their jobs and keep their jobs. Moreover, in there jobs on of the skills that supervisors wants their employees to develop, is to solve problems by themselves. Even if these problems are due to English. These students were under pressure to



show how efficient and effective they are in their work places, so in that way, they would have access to be in high positions.

To conclude these sections of speaking strategies, I would like to add some extra findings about the positive effects of teaching strategies in the learners:

Providing the students with the right tools to survive when having problems, can have a big positive effect in those students whose English is not good. The use of strategies make the students feel that their goal to reach a good level in the language was not impossible. The teaching of the speaking strategies trains them to think fast, even though they were under pressure. The students understood that, the learning of the speaking strategies were not using just solve the language problems that emerged in the class, but out of class, too. Most of the students (but not all of them), trying some new strategies made them feel confident at the moment of trying new things. They projected a more relaxed attitude than before. The students understood that the key to be success when communicating in a foreign language was not the avoidance of their weaknesses. It is the persevering attitude to find a treatment towards their shortcomings to communicate successfully. They understood that keep in silent was not the solution when someone is not able to communicate accurately.

Research question 3:

What is the relationship among anxiety factors and choices of speaking strategies?

By the results of the anxiety survey, it can be inferred that these students showed to be very anxious when speaking English in class. Moreover this anxiety grows, if the students perform the following activities: Taking part in a group discussion in class; taking part in a role play or dialogue in front of the class and giving oral presentations to the rest of the class. Another thing to point out is that the more formal the environment is the more anxious the students from the intensive course are. For

instance, speaking in English to the coordinator or someone who is in high academic position. I think that this behavior is inherent in all human beings since we are children. We grow up with the idea that people who had certain hierarchy is perfect or impossible to reach! So this idea makes the students to be very anxious when having a conversation with these kinds of people.

It is safe to say that when their feelings of anxiety grow, the speaking strategies the students from the intensive group use are the compensatory ones. For instance, looking for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym, asking for help from my conversational partner and using gestures as a way to get the meaning across. The strategies that, these students use when feeling very anxious, are the ones that, these students expressed they felt the most comfortable with.

I was conscious that these feeling of anxiety, was not going to vanish in one day. Even more, I was sure that I was going to deal with this anxiety factor until the end of the intensive course. But at the same time I thought I could contribute with some tips in order to alleviate this heavy burden; that in one way or another prevented the students of acquiring the right tools to be successful when communicating.

I was wondering how I could (at least) lower the feeling of anxiousness in the students and in the class. I remember that through my investigation for this thesis I had read the following: "Students' anxiety about foreign language learning is likely to be a consequence of their learning difficulties." (Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky 2000: 251)

These words gave some insight regarding how to lead the class towards lowering the levels of student anxiety. I was conscious that getting rid of this feeling was a challenge for the students in this Intensive Group. But I was felt clear in my mind that

I had to do something that at least reduces anxiety. So in that way, the teaching of speaking strategies would be somehow fruitful.

The first thing I do was to take away the feeling of competition and comparison. I told them that I was not going to accept any kind of comments in which the message of comparison and completion was implied. I told them that the fact that they took this subject meant to me that all of them still needed to learn something regarding foreign language learning. In other words, they were not perfect.

Through these findings I come to the conclusion that anxious learners often use smaller word production or less complex and interpretative remarks. But at the same time the appropriate teaching and use of speaking strategies can enhance the students' confidence with the result of lowering their anxiety in the class.

Research question 4:

How do students' backgrounds relate to the acquisition of and use of speaking strategies?

“Experience of success provides students with more power to pursue a new goal.”

This phrase describes what I experienced with the students from the Intensive Group. Students' backgrounds (regarding language learning) played an important role in the acquisition of learning strategies. In the case of the students from the Intensive Group, there were two factors in their backgrounds that contribute positively in the learning process of speaking strategies.

The first thing was that the 63.6% of the students of the Intensive Group had good experiences speaking in English. On the other hand, 36.4% of the students stated having bad experiences speaking in English, but these students said that in spite of all the obstacles they faced at that time, they were able to manage and overcome their speaking problems successfully. Consequently, that feeling of success made them feel

determined to keep on learning the foreign language and the speaking strategies with a positive attitude.

The second thing was the fact that these students were employed. Furthermore, they worked in the Tourism field, which is very important, too, because in that way they experienced firsthand, the importance of speaking strategies, their usefulness, and what it is more important how and when to use the strategies appropriately.

I found out that every time I explained a speaking strategy or explained in which situations the students could use it, the students immediately linked the new material to the personal experiences at work. For instance, the strategy: Use the words from your own language, but say it in a way that sounds like words in the target language. As I had some trouble in getting the students from the Pilot Group to understand this understand this, I thought it would be the same with the Intensive Group. To my surprise, they started to remember experiences in their workplaces that could be matched with the new strategy:

Fake name: “Miss I remember that one day I wanted to say in English an airport problem a client had was “irremediable”, so in desperation to communicate quickly my thoughts I spoke the word “irremediable” of course pronouncing it with an American accent. Later, found this word in the dictionary but it isn’t used very often...”

Fake name: “Miss, I remember that one day I didn’t know how to say “compensación” in English so as I had the tourist in front of me, the first thing that came to my mind was to say “compensation”... is that what you referred to when talking about this strategy?”

The fact that these students work, made the teaching of speaking strategies more bearable than the ones I had before (the Pilot Group). Furthermore, since all of them

worked, it made them realize that speaking strategies could be a tool to communicate effectively to the client even though they had shortcomings in the foreign language. Another advantage of these working students is the fact that as they were used to deal with job problems, their attitudes towards learning speaking strategies were much better in terms of good attitudes and being organized when trying a specific speaking strategy. When I say good attitudes, I refer to the fact that they did their best even though the strategy they were practicing was not comfortable for them. As to being organized these students use to write a written plan to improve their speaking skills. So in that way, they reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in the subject matter. This academic reflection was not so hard for them to perform, since most of the students in their workplaces have a notebook in which they describe their duties for the day and at the same time they reflect on their performance of each task at the end of the day. This “job diary” was not imposed by their bosses, but the necessity to keep their jobs and show their bosses their interest in improving their job skills. Fulfilling this workplace expectation encourages these students to write in an organized way about what the remedies were for their shortcomings...

#### Research Question 5:

How do group management skills reveal student ability to work with others to learn speaking strategies?

It was earlier stated, the problems I had to face every time students from the intensive course had to do group activities. Through this research I come to the conclusion that group management skills are vital in the learning of speaking strategies. Because in that way students experienced many positive outcomes when working in groups. By the students' responses and reflections, it is safe to conclude that these students understood the importance of acquiring group management abilities. They realized

that working in groups enhanced respect among each other, so this environment of respect developed a peaceful place to reach their academic goals. Furthermore, in some of the students reflections, students expressed the usefulness and benefit of giving their classmates (who were very shy or nervous) words of encouragement. These students observed that when their classmates receive these compliments they encourage themselves to contribute with very good ideas to reach their group goals. Furthermore, it is safe to infer that, by performing good management skills, students enhanced their learning of speaking strategies. I think so because in their reflections they stated that working with their classmates let them understand and exchange ideas or tips about some strategies that they considered difficult. But what really surprised them was the fact that they were able to find solutions to their own academic problems and not just the teacher. In addition to this, the students from the intensive course, they realize that the acquiring of group management skills can be transferable to their jobs areas.

#### Pedagogical implications

The study attempted to explore and describe how the implementation of a program of explicit instruction on speaking strategies would influence the learning complexities of speaking in English for the university level Tourism and Hotel Management students... It seems that the results of this study have shown benefits in relation to the teaching of speaking strategies.

The findings of the study suggest that in order to have success with the teaching of speaking strategies there are other factors that we as teachers should take into consideration. For instance, to assure and enhance group management skills in the students and, what it is more important, to lower the levels of anxiety in the students by creating a proactive and confident relationship among the students and

their teacher, to train and require students to reflect on their speaking strategy learning process, to precisely train, and finally to strengthen the speaking skill by implementing the in-class and out of class practice of the strategies., According to the findings in this study the elements in the program implemented in the study for targeting the speaking skill in English classes seem to have substantial impact on students communication performance.

This investigation also assumed the idea of incorporating speaking strategies in the English classroom educational schemes. So in this manner, the students became familiar with the speaking strategies and at the same time, became familiar with kind of language education training this type of courses involves.

#### Conclusions

This study was carried out with the purpose of exploring the outcomes of the speaking strategies with a group of university students. The results of this research indicated that the teaching of speaking strategies is a viable instrument for enhancing their students' speaking skills. At the same time, this teaching of speaking strategies, raised the students' confidence in this group of the participants in this study as they learned to communicate better in the target language.

Furthermore, in order to create a meaningful classroom environment in which the learning of the speaking strategies would be more efficient, teachers should take into account that there are some factors that may affect the acquisition of the speaking strategies. Among them, there is the anxiety factor. Previous research and the findings of this study indicate that anxiety is a concern in language learning. However, teachers must be aware of this issue in classroom performance and give the students some support to attenuate foreign language anxiety.

This study also provided support for fostering the students' own reflections on their learning of speaking strategies. This part of their learning process helps the students to analyze their shortcomings when communicating and to have an active role in looking for solutions to their own communicative problems. With this group of students, reflection helped them think that their progress in the learning to speak and communicate well in English is not just a matter of the teacher, but of the students, too!

#### Implications for Further Research

It would be interesting to investigate the long-term outcomes of these university students when if and how they continue to implement the speaking strategies once they have graduated from university. It also would be interesting to research the impact of speaking strategies on students studying English in other faculties in order to see if there are any differences in speaking strategy choice, and also to explore what are the learning patterns they have when acquiring these speaking strategies.

Finally, if a teacher decides to include the teaching of communication strategies, in their educational plans, he or she should instill the notion that when having communicative problems ceasing to communicate is not a solution,, but rather that there are ways to compensate in potential communication breakdowns. As Rababah (2002) wrote, the use of communication strategies do not indicate a communication failure; on the contrary, employing these strategies can compensate for “the lack of linguistic knowledge and prevent communication breakdowns. (Cited in Yea-Fen Chen, 2006, p.1)



## References

- Bertram, Gillian. (2002). Effective Communication. English online.  
Every Child Literate – a share responsibility.  
<http://englishonline.tki.org.nz/English-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/Speaking-strategies/Effective-communication>
- Bygate, Martin. (2003). Speaking. Oxford University Press.
- Burns, Anne & Joyce Helen. (1997) Focus on Speaking. National Center for English Language teaching & Research.
- Carreira, Matsuzaki (2005). New Framework of Intrinsic / Extrinsic and Integrative / Instrumental Motivation in SL Acquisition. The KEIAI Journal of International Studies. No 16.  
<http://www.u-keiai.ac.jp/issn/menu/ronbun/no16/039.pdf>
- Castillo Prieto, Claudia Yanine. (2007). Improving Eleventh Graders' Oral Production in English Class through Cooperative learning Strategies. ISSN 1657-0790. Bogota-Colombia
- Chen Tan (2009). Cooperative Learning and Oral Expression Competency for Chinese Students of English.
- Chi- Fen Emily Chen (2000). Using technology to teach Speaking & Pronunciation.  
<http://www2.nkfust.edu.tw/~emchen/CALL/unit6.htm>
- Chou, Yen – Lin. (2004). Promoting Learners' Speaking ability by Socioaffective strategies. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. X. No.9

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Chou-Socioaffective.html>

Craig, Smith. (1995). College Conservation Classes: Beyond Survival.

The Internet TESL Journal Vol. 1. No 2.

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Smith-TeachingTips.html>

Cohen, Andrew D; Weaver, Susan J; and Tao-Yuan Li (1996) The Impact of Strategies Based Instruction on Speaking a Foreign language.

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/about/profiles/CohenPapers/SBIimpact.pdf>

D. Luke Stephen (2006). The Power of strategy Instruction. Evidence for Education. Volume 1. Issue 1.

<http://www.nichcy.org/Research/EvidenceForEducation/Pages/PowerOfStrategyInstruction.aspx>

Florez, Mary Ann Cunningham. (1999). Improving Adult English language Learners' Speaking Skills.

<http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/adult.htm>

Folse, Keith S. (2006). The Art of Teaching Speaking. The University of Michigan Press.

Galloway, Ann (1993). Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction and Sample Activities.

<http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/sample.htm>

Gilfert, Susan & Croker, Robert (1997). Dialogue Performances: Developing Effective Communication Strategies for Non-English Majors in Japanese Universities. The Internet TESL Journal Vol. V. No.3

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Gilfert-DialogPerf.html>

Harunur Rashid Khan. (1998). Speaking Strategies to Overcome Communication Difficulties in the Target Language Situation. Volume 5. Language in India.

<http://www.languageinindia.com/dec2005/harun1.html>

I.S.P. Nation & Newton, Jonathan (2009). Teaching ESL / EFL Listening and Speaking. ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series.

King, Jane (2002). Preparing EFL Learners for Oral Presentations. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. VIII. No3.

<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/King-PublicSpeaking.html>

Kinoshita, Catherine Y. (2003). Integrating Language Learning Strategies Instruction into ESL / EFL Lessons. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. IX. No.4.

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kinoshita-Strategy.html>

Koba Naomi, Ogawa Naoyoshi, and Wilkinson Dennis (2000). Using The Community Language Learning Approach to cope with language Anxiety. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. VI. No 11.

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Koba-CLL.html>

Lessard-Clouston Michael (1997). Language Learning Strategies: An Overview for L2 Teachers. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol 3. No 12.

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lessard-Clouston-Strategy.html>

Liang, Xiaoping; A. Mohan, Bernard, & Early Margaret (1998). Issues of Cooperative Learning in ESL Classes: A Literature Review. TESL Canada Journal. Vol. 15. No 2.

<http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/article/viewFile/698/529>

Mead, Nancy A; Rubin, Donald L. (1985). Assessing Listening and Speaking Skills.

<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-923/speaking.htm>

Muhammad Abbel Latif (2007) the Teachability of Second / Foreign Language Learning Strategies. University of Essex.

Nakatani, Yasuo (2006). Developing an oral Communication Strategy Inventory. The Modern Language Journal.

Norris-Holt, Jacqueline (2001). Motivation as a Contributing Factor in Second Language Acquisition. The Internet TESL Journal Vol. VII. No 6.

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Norris-Motivation.html>

Panitz, Ted (1996) A Definition of Collaborative vs. Cooperative Learning. London Metropolitan University.

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/collaborative-learning/panitz-paper.cfm>

Rebecca Oxford (2001). Integrated Skills in the ESL / EFL Classroom.

CAL CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

<http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0105oxford.html>

Robinson, Renee; Xavier, Saint (2007). The Role of Communication in Student Achievement. Academy Exchange Quarterly.

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+role+of+communication+in+student+achievement.-a0172686653>

Ruei-Ling Li (2010). The Relationship between Speaking Anxiety & Speaking Strategies among University Students in Taiwan.

Saskatchewan Education (1997). English Language Arts 10: A Curriculum Guide for the Secondary Level. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education. "Speaking".

<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/xla/ela15a.html>

Scarcella & Oxford. (2006). The Tapestry of Language Learning. Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Shu – Fen Chen (2005). Cooperative Learning, Multiple Intelligences & Proficiency: Application in College English Language Teaching & Learning.

<http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adt-acuvp120.25102006/02whole.pdf>

Soh Lan, Lim (1994). Fluency and Accuracy in Spoken English – Implications for classrooms Practice in a Bilingual Context. The English Teacher Vol. XXIII.

<http://www.melta.org.my/ET/1994/main4.html>

Tanveer, Muhammad (2007). Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL / EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language.

[http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/thesis\\_M\\_Tanveer.pdf](http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/thesis_M_Tanveer.pdf)

Tennant, Adrian (2000). Listening Matters: Process Listening.

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/listening/teaching-tips/listening-matters/listening-matters-process-listening/154594.article>

Uhl Chamot, Anna (2005). Language Learning Strategy Instruction: Current Issues and Research Cambridge Journals.

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=322795&jid=APL&volumeId=25&issueId=-1&aid=322794>

Varasarin, Patchara (2007). An Action Research Study of Pronunciation Training, Language Learning Strategies and Speaking Confidence.

<http://wallaby.vu.edu.au/adt-VVUT/uploads/approved/adt-VVUT20070911.162030/public/01front.pdf>

Wallace, Trudy; Stariba Winifred E. & Herbert J. Walberg (2004). Teaching Speaking, Listening & Writing.

[http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/EducationalPracticesSeriesPdf/PRATICE\\_14.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/EducationalPracticesSeriesPdf/PRATICE_14.pdf)

Washburn, Nancy & Christianson, Kiel (1995). Teaching Conversation Strategies Through Pair – taping. The Internet TESL Journal Vol2. No 3.

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Christianson-PairTaping.html>

Wei, Ming (2007). The Interrelatedness of Affective Factors in EFL Learning: An Examination of Motivational Patterns in Relation to Anxiety in China. The TESL-EJ. Vol.II. No 1.

<http://tesl-ej.org/ej41/a2.pdf>

Woodrow, Lindy (2006). Anxiety and Speaking English as a Second language.

<http://rel.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/37/3/308>

Zhang, Yan (2009). An Experimental Study of the Effects of Listening on Speaking for College Students. English Language Teaching. Vol. 2. No 3.

<http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/viewFile/3715/3315>

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Speaking Strategy Use**

#### **Strategies to practice speaking:**

1. Practice saying new expressions to myself.
2. Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.
3. Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way.

#### **Strategies to engage in conversations:**

4. Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers.
5. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.
6. Direct the conversation to familiar topics.
7. Plan out in advance what I want to say.
8. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.
9. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far.
10. Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me.
11. Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking.
12. Try to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when
13. Requesting, apologizing, or complaining.

#### **Strategies for when I can't think of a word or expression:**

14. Ask for help from my conversational partner.
15. Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym.
16. Use words from my own language, but say it in a way that sounds like words in the target language.

Make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use.



Use gestures as a way to try and get my meaning across.

Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said.

What other speaking strategies do I use?

- *This strategy does not fit for me.*
- *I have tried this strategy and I would use it again.*
- *I use this strategy and I like it.*
- *I've never used this strategy but I am interested in it.*

© 2005 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota. These materials were created for the Maximizing Study Abroad Series, published by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota. Permission is granted to duplicate these materials for educational purposes. Permission to reprint must be sought from the CARLA office.

**APPENDIX B**

**INTERVIEW**

**FEMALE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **MALE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SEMESTER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FIELD OF STUDY:** \_\_\_\_\_

A. Do you like studying Language?

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Which languages do you speak?

\_\_\_\_\_

C. Did you study English at primary school or high school?

\_\_\_\_\_

D. Do you like learning English? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

E. Which of these skills have been the most difficult to develop?

Number from 1 to 4:

1. Very difficult   2. Difficult   3. Average difficult   4. Not difficult

Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Listening \_\_\_\_\_

Speaking \_\_\_\_\_

F. Which of these options do you think will contribute to develop the Speaking

Skill?

Learning grammar

Learning more vocabulary

Learning speaking strategies

Other \_\_\_\_\_

G. What kind of situations have you experienced when speaking in English? Good or bad? \_\_\_\_\_

H. Could you give some details about it?

---

---

---

---

I. Do you considered indispensable and necessary learning English when working in the Hotel management & Tourism career? Why?

---

---

---

---

J. Which of the following skills have you used more frequently in your jobs? Please specify what kind of job you have had.

Job position \_\_\_\_\_

Speaking \_\_\_\_\_

Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Listening \_\_\_\_\_

K. What do you think it is lacking in order to improve the speaking ability?

---

---

---

---

L. Why do you think the speaking ability is hard for the students to develop?

---

---

---

---

M. Do you know about the speaking strategies?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

N. Which one(s) have you used? And in which situations?

---

---

---

---



**APPENDIX D****FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE APPROPRIATE LETTER: A) STRONGLY DISAGREE B) DISAGREE C) AGREE D) STRONGLY AGREE**

1. Studying English can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with other people who speak English. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Study English can be important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more varied people. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Study English can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate English art and literature. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups. \_\_\_\_\_
5. It is important for me to know English in order to know the life of the English-speaking nations. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Studying English is important so that I can understand English pop music.
7. Studying English is important to me. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Studying English is important to me so that I can keep in touch with foreign friends and acquaintances. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I would like to know more about native English speakers. \_\_\_\_\_
10. The British are kind and friendly. \_\_\_\_\_
11. The Americans are kind and cheerful. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Studying English can be important for me because I'll need it for my future career. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Studying English can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Studying English can be important for me because it will someday will be useful in getting a good job. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Studying English can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I know English. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Studying English can be important for me because I will be able to search for information and materials in English on the internet. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Studying English can be important for me because I will learn more about what's happening in the world. \_\_\_\_\_
18. Studying English can be important for me because language learning often gives me a feeling of success. \_\_\_\_\_
19. Studying English can be important because language learning often makes me feel happy. \_\_\_\_\_
20. Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English. \_\_\_\_\_
21. Studying English is important to me so that I can understand English-speaking films, videos, TV or radios. \_\_\_\_\_
22. Studying English is very important to me so that I can read English books.
23. Studying English is important to me because it will enable me to get to know new people from different parts of the world. \_\_\_\_\_
24. Studying English is important to me because without it one can't be successful in any field. \_\_\_\_\_