

**NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA**

**FAREM-MATAGALPA**



**GRADUATION SEMINAR TO GET THE BACHELOR DEGREE IN ENGLISH**

**Theme**

**Methodological strategies of the Basic English skills applied in the curricular transformation in the teaching-learning process in Matagalpa and Jinotega, during the second semester 2010.**

**Sub-theme**

**Difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pablo Antonio Cuadra Institute, Esquipulas, during the second semester 2010 .**

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## **Theme**

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## **Sub-theme**

Difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pablo Antonio Cuadra Institute, Esquipulas, during the second semester 2010.

## **Dedication**

I want to dedicate this work with a lot of affection to people who encouraged me to finish my career, those who gave me their unconditional support everyday.

To God, because he gave me the life, the wisdom, the health and for being with me in every moment of my life, thanks to his infinite mercy.

To my mother Natividad Pineda Zeledon, because she was always willing to help me accomplish my goals and dreams.

To my daughter Ana Gabriela Taleno Pineda, because she is the inspiration of my life, the best gift that God gave me, and the person who makes me smile.

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To my mother, Esbelda Mejia Monzòn, because she was always willing to help me to accomplish my goals and dreams.

To my son Albenis Joel Castilblanco Mejia, because he is the inspiration of my life, the best gift that God gave me, and the person who makes me smile.

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Furthermore, we thank to the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua FAREM-Matagalpa, for the facilities they provided us for this research.

## Summary

This research studies the difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pablo Antonio Cuadra Institute, during the second semester 2010 in Esquipulas city.

Its purpose is to analyze the difficulties that exist in the application of the speaking strategies in new curriculum, especially in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students from this Institute.

Speaking is important for learners, because the spoken language is the heart of much human interaction, at home, at work, and in the society; furthermore, English is the universal language; so it is important in all contexts in which learning takes place.

The approach of the new curricular transformation is communicative approach and the fundamental purpose is to support the pedagogical labor, making the dedicate planning easy for obtaining successful results in the classroom, taking into account the teacher's experience, students' characteristics and didactic resources.

Actually it is not easy to keep a total control when there are forty or more students in a classroom, because it is difficult to catch the attention to all of them when a specific group distracts to other, and the teacher can not give individual attention, besides they are afraid to speak English, but the motivation is the key to make students able to speak English.

Another of the biggest problem in Nicaraguan learners is the lack of practice speaking, because all the time students are speaking their native language, and they never have the chance to speak English and improve it. For that reason it is important to apply speaking strategies that help students to develop their speaking skill.



## **I. Introduction**

One of the most important components of a culture is its language. The main objective in teaching English as a foreign language is to enable students to communicate effectively in many situations and contexts.

The new curriculum says that English is really important for the integral developing of students, because it permits to interchange ideas, express thoughts, emotions, and feelings in oral and written way into a variety of situations.

It is important in teaching English, especially in the speaking skill that teachers permit or encourage students to express their ideas, opinions, imaginations, and involvement, in order to allow them to draw what they know about something and provide for a rich sharing of ideas within a sociocultural context, for example: if the students are not excited about cars, other topics could include regional or traditional foods, activities, hobbies, or current events which provoke a response on the learners.

This research is about the difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pablo Antonio Cuadra Institute, during the second semester 2010 in Esquipulas city.

The purpose was to verify the way the speaking skill is being taught by English teachers according to the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and give suggestions about strategies that can be useful to develop the speaking skill.

The deductive method was applied, which started from the specific to the empirical information.

The pool was fifty one students of 11<sup>th</sup> grade and one English teacher, and the sample was the same.

Two variables were measured: new curricular transformation and speaking strategies through a survey for the students of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, an interview and an observation note to an English teacher.

## **II. Justification**

This research is about the difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The purpose is to identify and analyze the difficulties that teachers have in the application of speaking strategies and at the same time to verify the way that English is being taught by English teachers, according to the new curricular transformation, because the new syllabus demands that students have to be able to speak English in different real life situations.

It is necessary to recognize the great importance that speaking skill has in the teaching – learning process.

This research will provide new tools and ways to teach English in the classrooms, in order to improve the development of speaking skill in the students; besides it will help to create an environment where teachers and students will be able to interact each other, practicing English Orally, and giving to the students the opportunity to interact with other people around the world.

### **III. Objectives**

**General objective:**

To analyze the difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at the Pablo Antonio Cuadra Institute, Esquipulas, during the second semester 2010.

**Specific objectives:**

- 1) To verify the way the speaking skill is being taught by the English teachers according to the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 2) To identify the difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 3) To give suggestions about strategies that can be useful to develop the speaking skill in the 11th grade students.

**IV. Development****A. Curriculum**

There are many factors that influence negatively the acquisition of the new language. It can be considered as the social context in which the teaching process of the English language is developed.

In English as a foreign language where acquisition of English is the ultimate goal, one of the main tasks for the teachers is to provide students activities that best aid them in their learning process.

The objective of these activities is to make students practice their oral skills with interesting, motivating topics that allow them to talk about themselves and others, and to express their point of view as the new curriculum of Nicaragua says.

### **a.1 Definition**

“The curriculum is a micro- system of the subsystem of the half and basic education, which around of it plays other components that support its development” (De Castilla, 2008, pp 26)

The curriculum is not only the papers, materials, books or the teachers, but also all of the components which support the education, such as parents, students, and teachers.

On the other hand, these words suggest working together for developing the teaching/learning process successfully, but it is something unreal.

Parents are one of the most important components of the curriculum, however, they never realize about their children’s improvement, not even their children’s behavior in the classroom.

“Curriculum is one of the aspects of the educational system, which expresses values and the conception of the human being and the society, so it tries to satisfy the individual and social demands in the subject of education” (De Castilla, 2009,pp 2)

The author expresses that the curriculum has not only the disciplines for being developed into the classroom, but each one of the discipline teaches civic, moral and spiritual values and according to the necessities and characteristics of the society we live.

The new curriculum tries to form the most prosperous and worthy educational community with citizens that have the best education and formation about knowledge, principles, civic and spiritual values, which serve to the community in the future.

## **a.2 Approach of the new curriculum.**

“The new curriculum frames in a focus centered in the person as the promoter of the personal, social and cultural development, and the participative processes that help to live together in peace” (De Castilla, 2009 pp 27)

It is believed that the focus of the new curriculum looks at the person as a social being, who is transformed when the person participates in the constitution of the well-being of others, respecting the individual differences and attending the educational necessities from the community.

According to the general program of the foreign language discipline of the new curriculum, English is really important for the integral development of students, because it permits to interchange ideas, express thoughts, emotions, and feelings in oral or written way into a variety of situations and contexts.

So, it is in this logical way which the new program gives to the students a really big opportunity to put in practice their communicative capacity where they can express their own opinions, ideas, likes and dislikes, questions and answers, etc, and not only the speaking skill, but also the other three skills: writing, listening and reading; by putting in practice these three ones through the speaking. At the end, the only purpose of this discipline is to communicate in a foreign language.

The 100% of the students think that it is important to learn English, because they can share their viewpoints, ideas and know other cultures. (See annexe 9)

However before speaking, it is necessary to listen to pronunciation, sounds, and the meaning of many words and phrases. Actually this happens in our language when we are babies. So, after listening and speaking, we can read and finally we can write.

The biggest error that most English teachers make is to begin the class by teaching grammar, reading, dialogs, instead of start speaking in simple way like usual phrases or greetings, and answer questions, etc...

This does not mean that grammar is not important. In other words, students can learn by hear all the rules while they speak English in class over and over again.

The English teacher needs to be very creative, dynamic, and very friendly, especially in the first year of high school, because it is the first time that students learn English, but at the same time the teacher needs to be very disciplined and strict.

It is necessary to take into account the feeling of students, and the characteristic of the class. Besides the teachers need to remember that English is a new language for students, so a teacher has to be subtle, too.

Another important thing is English teachers' pronunciation. Do not pretend to teach English if you do not have a very good pronunciation, it is necessary to improve as a teacher in order to help the students' pronunciation.

English subject should be taught every single day during the five years of high school for a best learning process.

So, like mathematic and Spanish subject, English should be learned by students, at least forty five minutes every day or\_ why not? \_ One hour per day should be much better than two hours and fifteen minutes per week.

"The focus of the foreign language discipline is to communicate in a simple way using real situations of our country". ( Canelo, 2009, pp 3)

One of the English teacher's task is to help learners achieve an acceptable speed along with other attributes of fluency.

Fluent speech is phrasal, not word by word. That's why English teachers must be worried for teaching more vocabulary and at the same time useful phrases in order to improve their speech in a logical way. It is really important to appropriate of grammar as well, because we can not pretend to speak any language without knowing its rules, structures, idioms, slangs and even the culture.

A very limited portion of classroom speaking time may be spent generating "human tape recording" speech where, for example, learners practice an intonation or try to pinpoint

a certain vowel sound. Imitation of this kind is carried out not for the purpose of meaningful interaction, but for focusing on some particular element of language form.

There is a very obvious connection between listening and speaking. It is not just talking about listening up from a tape recorder only, but it means that to make sure that students imitate any speaking performance that is designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of language, it is necessary to develop other speaking activities.

Intensive speaking can be self-initiated or it can even form part of some pair work activities.

Another good deal of student speech in the classroom is responding: short ask and answer questions or comments. These kinds of replies are useful, and do not extend into dialogs.

So it is good to create a climate of confidence to encourage students to share all their ideas, know-ledge and experiences. Other forms of conversation are interpersonal dialog in a social relationship, role-play, report, descriptions, comment, discussions, etc.

Actually is not easy to keep a total control when there are forty or more students in a classroom but the teacher's interaction, the resource material, a really good plan, and the motivation is the key to make students able to speak English.

So it is really important that the teacher takes advantage of his/her knowledge of English to put energy and creativity to devise contexts and meaningful interaction as well.

Do not forget to integrate these two skills: listening and speaking, besides pronunciation, and of course conversation ., as you design and use speaking techniques, ask yourself as teacher, Have I allowed students to initiate into a new language as well?

This is a challenge for English teachers improve the quality of the teaching/learning process working like that: "To teach is to touch a life"

There is no doubt that the use of techniques and strategies at the moment we present the speaking skill in the classroom make the lesson more interesting and motivating, but above all, they stimulate the knowledge of students.

Teachers should leave the traditional method instead of, they need to be trained and be provided by resources that make the class more understandable and stimulating.

Implementing the new curriculum is not easy, but not impossible and to make it a success will depend of the teachers' effort.

“The school promotes the mental activity of the students, and they are responsible to be a unique people, without the possibility to imitate him/her”(C- Coll , 2002,pp15)

When the teacher promotes the mental activity, with is said that the student is learning successfully. The learning is produced by the interaction with others, and the learner learns when he/she is able to make a personal representation about a specific topic.

In the survey applied to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, the 98% of them said that the teacher gives them confidence to interact each others, and only the 2% said not. (See annexe 10)

The students experiment and learn from the mistakes that they make.

Nowadays the Nicaraguan educational system has been suffering changes constantly. These changes have contributed to develop better teaching opportunities in the educational field.

According to the Nicaraguan new curricular transformation, one of its fundamental purposes is to support the pedagogical labor, making the dedicate planning easy for obtaining successful results in the classroom, in the agreement with teacher's experiences, students characteristics, and taking into account didactic resources.

In the interview applied to the English teacher of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, she expressed that she has five years in teaching English, and she uses different kinds of materials on each class according to the topic, and according to the observation notes she always explain the lesson using gestures, body language, eye-contact, facial expressions, and give the tasks clearly, but the 86% of the students in the survey said that she does not use material to teach English, and only the 14% said that she uses them. ( See annexe 11)



It is well-known that the communicative approach in the new curricular transformation leads to the development of communicative, linguistic and sociolinguistic skills, as soon as, artistic skills.

It contributes to a logical, critical, and creative knowledge to the acquisition of procedures, in order to develop skills for the self-learning.

It is considered that the communicative approach is guided by factors like experiences in the classroom, classroom observations, courses in the field, etc.

According to the experience as teachers the most important for the new curriculum is to create the conditions, in order to change the educational practices, improving the learning opportunities of all students with an education for the life, and the job, furthermore; it pretends to prepare the students with success.

There is an anthology which is designed to provide the English teachers with strategies which help them to develop real communicative situations that provoke an actual language acquisition.

“The communicative approach which is indeed the approach that is supporting the new English Curriculum leads the correct use of the language so the message is the proper one, it has cohesion, coherence and according to the development level of their communicative capacity” (De Castilla, 2009, pp1)

It means that the student practices English in a variety of situations and settings, in that way the new syllabus provides the students with practice of communicative competences in which they can speak, listen, write and read in the target language, eradicating the use of long vocabulary list and the emphasis in grammar.

The communicative approach considers the text as basic unit of communication being oral or written it has a defined structure and it is the result of a communicative situation where those are some grammar rules provide cohesion and coherence making sense to the expressed or communicated ideas.

### **a.3 Components of the new Curriculum**

The Ministry of education has transformed the educational model in Nicaragua. The new model for Nicaraguan education is now based on five fundamental pillars or components.

First of all, it is important to know that the new curriculum was completed in January 2009 and it is a guide to develop all the school activities presented on the school calendar.

“The new Curriculum has five components: the goals and objectives of the Nicaraguan education, the evaluation, planning and educative training workshops which refer to as TEPCEs, the educational nuclei, the teachers, parents and students and finally the classrooms” (De Castilla 2008,pp 28)

The workshops are developed once a month with the aim of evaluating, planning and contextualizing the curriculum.

The TEPCEs, in the school as a part of the model of Educational Nuclei, an Educational Nuclei, according De Castilla is a determined space within the national territory where there is a Base School and a number of neighboring school.

The classrooms are being rebuild and rehabilited to develop the teaching process, it is important to mention that the teachers, parents and students are essential part of the process; the teachers play the most important role in the model of the quality of Education.

This model has been created exclusively by Nicaraguans, without imitating models from other countries.

The teachers are involved in a process of extensive training, all of these changes produce a quality of Education in Nicaragua, the objective is to give the best quality of Education possible, with a good curriculum and well trained teachers.

#### **a.4 Characteristics of the New Curriculum.**

“Much new Educational content emerged with the great National Curriculum Consulting which was introduced as part of the new curriculum”(De Castilla, 2008, pag 30)

The secondary school curriculum is being completely transformed to include a strong emphasis to provide students with more than just a ticket to get into the University, furthermore, the goal is to prepare students to be able to go to the university with the option of obtaining skilled work after finishing school.

“The new curriculum has a goal of teaching the National Identity” (De Castilla 208,pp 26)

That means that the students have to know and to make good use of whole Nicaraguan culture. It refers to all common elements that unite us as country, like history, cultural heritage and National Symbols.

The New Curriculum organizes the learning competence and contents in disciplines, and it is focused in learning theories where the students learn, taking into account that they have multiple intelligences and at the same time they have knowledge and learning strategies already.

Another new characteristic according De Castilla is that there is a relationship between theory and practice.

It is with the purpose for the students to acquire thinking ability , productive and operative abilities, too.

Economics, sociology and philosophy were eliminated from the secondary school curriculum in Nicaragua some years ago; today those subjects are being reincorporated.

There are many new concepts, such as, transverse ideas that modify the whole curriculum for example: Culture of peace, gender equality, defense of the environment, etc.

On the other hand, the new curriculum is organized monthly. The educational program that students receive is programmed and takes place at the TEPCEs.

## **B. Speaking Strategies**

### **b.1 What is a strategy?**

“Strategy is the plan for the future success in the language teaching process”. (Higgs and Clifford, 1982, pp 15)

An extensive use of authentic communication particularly in early stages of learning provoke that students often develop fluency at the expense of accuracy resulting in learners with good Communication skills.

The teachers should teach using good communication activities especially in the beginners in order to develop skills that students can use during the class and outside, this will permit to the students be able to communicate ideas, opinions and express their feelings freely.

If the teachers start in to apply different speaking strategies in the early stages of learning, they will have the opportunity in 11<sup>th</sup> grade to teach in a great environment where the students and teachers talk and both have good communication, but even in 11<sup>th</sup> grade working together teacher and students can create a comfortable learning environment to practice speaking with teachers encouraging errors that students make.

“Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning process” (Brown and Yule, 1983,pp 20)

The students are often embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understand them.

Teachers can help students overcome this problem by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the students` language skill levels.

In 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pablo Antonio Cuadra Institute, the 78% of them said that they are afraid to speak English in class and only the 22% said that they are not, according to the survey applied, furthermore in the observation note it was noticed that students always felt fear at the moment to speak and they were unwilling, too. The teacher

expressed in the interview that students are very shy and unconfident to speak English in class. ( See annexe 14)

## **b.2 Teaching speaking**

From a communicative view of the language classroom, listening and speaking skills are closely intertwined. The interaction between these two modes of performance applies especially strongly to conversation.

### **b.2.1. Oral Communication Skills**

The current issues in teaching oral communication can help to provide some perspective to the more practical considerations in teaching speaking.

According to Brown Douglas there are five oral communication skills which help learners to improve their speaking skill.

#### **b.2.1.1 Conversational Discourse.**

“The benchmark of successful language acquisition is almost always the demonstration of an ability interactive discourse with other speakers of the language” (Brown , 1992, pp267)

The conversation class is something of an enigma in language teaching, the goal and the techniques for teaching conversation are extremely diverse, depending of the student, teacher, and overall context of the class.

It is important to give students the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions using a simple vocabulary, because one of the easiest and most interesting forms of communicate activity in the classroom is when the students share information about their own lives, interests and experiences; besides, when they talk there is a natural “information”, because everybody has something different to say.

According to the observation note, the teacher always uses a simple vocabulary, and sometimes the students practice discussion about familiar subjects. In the survey applied

the 55% of the students said that they like to participate in class, but the 45% said that they do not like it. (See annexe 8)

#### **b.2.1.2 Teaching Pronunciation.**

“The speaking skill can not be developed unless the teacher practices the listening skills to have a successful conversation in the students” (Brown , 1992, pp 268)

Listening to speak English is an important way of acquiring the language, so teachers must provide to the students a lot of practice in the classroom, they should give to students the opportunity to listen real conversation, English songs, and other listening activities.

In some places of Nicaragua there are Peace Corps volunteers that can help teachers and students to develop the speaking skill, especially in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

In the survey applied to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, the 96% of them said that they practice pronunciation of the words on each class, and only the 4% said that they do not, and the teacher always practice pronunciation with students, that is according the observation notes. (See annexe 12)

#### **b.2.1.3 Accuracy and Fluency**

As issue that pervades all of languages performance centers on the distinction between accuracy and fluency. In spoken language the questions that teachers face is: how shall they prioritize the two clearly important speaker goals of accurate language and fluent language?

“Accuracy in speaking class includes the control of grammar and pronunciation as a part of learning language fluency. The speaker must process and produce comprehensible information”(Mark , 2006 pp22) .

This requires the speaker can generate speech that be acceptable in both content and form, the role of accuracy in a speaking class is created for learners to engage in natural interactions through the use of communicative tasks and activities.

Teachers should generally sit back and let learners engage in the natural interaction whenever possible conversation is regarded as a skill requiring the speaker generates an acceptable speech in order to facilitate the oral production of speech in many ways, on the other hand, teachers must plan communication strategies to deal with conversation difficulties.

The 78% of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students expressed that the teacher do not suggest working in group and only the 22% said that the teacher does it, that is according to the survey applied. ( See annexe 11)

#### **b.2.1.4 Affective Factor.**

“ One of the major obstacles learners have to overcome in learning to speak is the anxiety generated over the risks of blustering things out that are wrong, stupid or incomprehensible” (Brown, 1992, pp 269)

In some cases the students are unwilling to speak, because they feel fear to say something wrong, that is normal especially in 11<sup>th</sup> grade that is because they are used to write and read instant of speak, but teachers can motivate and encourage students to participate in class giving them confidence.

Another way to motivate is considering the intrinsic motivation for learners, this kind of motivation is free from the influence of external factors such as reward or punishments.

Intrinsically motivated students talk because they find it interesting or enjoyable, therefore motivation comes from inside and is self-determined, the more self-determined students `motivation is the more likely they are to develop their speaking ability.

According to the observation note the teacher always motivates students to participate, and they interact with her during the class. In the survey applied 82% of the students

said that the teacher always speaks English in class and only the 18% said that she does not. ( See annexe 12)

#### **b.2.1.5 The Interaction Effect.**

“The greatest difficulty that learners encounter in attempts to speak is not the multiplicity of sounds, words, phrases, and discourse forms that characterize any language”( Brown,1992, pp269)

Conversation is collaborative as participants engage in a process of negotiation of meaning, so for the learners, the matter of what to say- a tremendous task, to be sure is often eclipsed by conventions of how to say things, when to speak, and other discourse constraints.

In other words, one learner’s performance is always colored by the person (interlocutor) he or she is talking with.

#### **b.3 Types of classroom speaking performance.**

“There are six types of listening performance, with the obvious connection between listening and speaking, six similar categories apply to the kinds of production that students are expected to carry out in the classroom”(Brown, 1992, pp 271)

##### **b.3.1 Imitative**

“A very limited portion of classroom speaking time legitimately be spent generating “human tape recorder” speech, where for example, learners practice an intonation contour or in to pinpoint a certain vowel sound”(Brown , 1992, pp 271)

Imitation of this kind is carried out not for the purpose of meaningful interaction, but for focusing on some particular element of language form.

Drills offer students an opportunity to listen and orally repeat certain strings of language that may pose some linguistic difficulty-either phonological or grammatical.

##### **b.3.2 Intensive.**



“Intensive speaking goes one step beyond imitative to include any speaking performance that is designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of language” (Brown,1992, pp 273)

Intensive speaking can be self- initiated or it can even form part of some pair work activity, where learners are “going over” certain form of language.

It is important to practice the speaking skill with beginners for the future years the students do not have problems of communications in a second language.

In the observation note the teacher sometimes helped students to develop their speaking skill trough dialogues, presentations about different topics, and games, but the 86% of the students said that they do not practice listening activities in class and only the 14% said that they do it, that is according to the survey applied. (See annexe13).

### **b.3.3 Responsive**

“A good deal of student’s speech in the classroom is responsive: short replies to teachers – or students-initiates questions or comments” (Brown, 1992, pp 273)

These replies are usually sufficient and do not extend into dialogues, for example, the teachers can use closed questions or opened questions if they want to get more information about their students.

It is good in this kind of classroom speaking performance that the teacher uses a simple vocabulary to maintain the conversation.

According to the observation note the teacher rarely ask questions to help learners to explore their thinking, such as closed and open questions, however, in the interview the teacher said that the most effective strategy to make the student talk is ask them about their personal life or their real situations.

### **b.3.4 Transactional Dialogue.**

“Transactional language, carried out for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information, is an extended form of responsive language.” (Brown, 1992, pp 273)

Conversations, for example, may have more of a negotiate nature to the students than responsive speech; conversations could be part of group work activity as well.

The students can involve in activities like a critical thinking, they will have the opportunity to reflect on different topics.

### **b.3.5 Interpersonal Dialogue.**

“Interpersonal dialogue, carried out more for the purpose of maintaining social relationships than for the transmission of facts and information”(Brown , 1992, pp 274)

These conversations are a little trickier for learners, because they can involve some factors, for example: emotional language, slang, sarcasm, etc.

Learners would need to learn how such features as the relationships between interlocutor, casual style and sarcasm are coded linguistically in the interpersonal conversation.

The topics should be compatible with the students `learning styles and preferences, personalities, and cultural background.

### **b.4 Speaking strategies in the new curriculum.**

There is not a specific document or a book that describes the strategies to teach English in a communicative way, but teachers have a manual of activities in which the teaching strategies that can be used in 11<sup>th</sup> grade are written; this manual was written and produced by peace corps volunteers in Nicaragua, with the purpose of offering more support and ideas to the English teachers.

“What you do in the classroom the first days of class will determine your classroom management success for the rest of the year” (Katrina , 2008 pp 138)

The teachers should help students to create a safe, comfortable learning environment that allow them to work efficiently and break the ice with any nervousness so that the students enjoy learning.

Furthermore, it is good to consider that education is not taking a glass full of information and emptying it into the students mind, instead it is making a student capable of receiving the necessary skills in order to become a good citizen.

That means that the teachers can teach the basic values on a daily basis through activities and not only through words.

The teachers have a large influence on the students live, the expectations that they have for their students will influence their development in class, as well as in their lives.

“The first day of the class, prepare a message with positive expectations for the students” (Katrina , 2008, pp 139)

It is important to begin the class in this way, because the students feel comfortable and encouraged by the teacher, so there is a motivation in the classroom.

When the students enter the teacher can tell them: good morning, please start on the task that is written on the board, the first job as a teacher is to make sure that the students start learning.

When everyone has had sufficient time to complete the task, the teacher should then introduce him or herself and tell students the positive expectations that she or he has for the class, such as, thank you giving me this opportunity to be your English teacher because our society needs more young people like you, interested in learning and I promise that you are going to have fun and will learn many new things, something like that; in this way the teacher encourages students to learn.

It is a sad reality that many students come from families with a lack of structure and stability and the role of the teacher is not only teach, in this case the teacher is a guide and a adviser.

“The teacher must create a safe and comfortable environment where the student can talk freely” (Katrina , 2008, pp 151)

One of the four ways to evaluate students with different learning styles is through speaking. Speaking activities are the best outlet for students to communicate authentically and spontaneous; most interaction students might have in English would be oral.

These activities require few materials and little teacher preparation, but it can require significant class time.

According to the survey applied to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students the 84% said that they like more time on each class to practice English and only 16% said that they do not like it. (See annexe 14).

Speaking evaluation has to be approached carefully, as students might be afraid to speak and be graded.

The teacher could assign work for the class to complete while the rest of students are being graded individually at the teacher's desk, other students can talk to each others, so the test-taker feels more comfortable during his or her test.

If the students do not feel comfortable, the teacher could place chair outside the classroom and administer the test there, removing the students from the classroom will create more security and less shame for the students while speaking to the teacher.

“The key for student success with speaking activities is repetition” (Katrina D, 2008, pp 152)

The students need to have time to practice the words or dialogues, the teacher should say the words, the students repeat them, and review the more difficult vocabulary.

There must be clear expectations and no surprises, the students must produce personal information for being graded on pronunciation, information and comprehension.

The best evaluation is to grade the students on participation and enthusiasm.

### **C. Why speaking skill matter.**

#### **c.1 Importance**

Speaking is important for learners for many reasons. One of them is spoken language is at the heart of much human interaction, at home, at work, and in society.

“Speaking skill is important in all contexts in which learning takes place; good speaking is a key aspect of employability” (Caroline , 2007, pp2)

It is good to recognize that the speaking skill can help to get a job, maintaining employment and progressing at work. Learners need to use and develop their speaking skill to maximize learning gains.

A workplace needs analysis and describes the entire context in which English is used, including the skills setting topics, and relevant long age functions.

### **c.2 What makes speaking difficult?**

In some cases the students do not want to speak, because there is little fear to say something wrong or mispronounced, but they like the subject.

According with the sample the 90% of the students said that they like English class, and the 10% of them said that they do not like it. This is important, because students get involve in class. (See annexe 8)

“The teachers should select aspects of speaking which are relevant to their practice and their learners”. ( Caroline, 2007, pp8)

If the students are not excited about cars, other topic could include regional or traditional foods, sports, hobbies or current events which provoke a response on the learners.

The topics might be connected with family, culture, fashion, etc. as the new curriculum says and the teachers can use a simple vocabulary in order to get the students understand and they feel encouragement to speak with confidence.

### **c.3 Use of authentic materials.**

The use of authentic material is very important in language teaching and learning.

“When the teachers use authentic material, they have several advantages, because the students comprehend successfully” (Caroline, 2007, pp14)

The students are more interested in the physical and the tangible, their own understanding comes through hand and eyes and ears. The physical world is dominant at all times.

One way to capture their attention and keep them engaged in speaking activities is to supplement them with lots of brightly colored visuals, toys, or objects to match the ones used in what the teacher says or songs that the teacher sings.

The 82% of the students said that their English class is dynamic and the 18% said that there is not a dynamic class.

The teacher should try to make the picture on thick paper whenever possible for future classes. A great way to create it is make visual and realia with the students into classroom, then the teacher may collect them to use again.

“Included with the concept of visuals are gestures, which are very affective for students to gain understanding and speaking in the language” ( Caroline, 2007, pp16)

Students have fun with movement and the more fun for learners, the better they will remember the language learned and they will feel willingness to speak, where the students listen and physically respond to a series of instructions from the teacher.

Certainty students are more likely to feel interested and invested in the lesson when there is a creation of the visuals or realia.

## **V. Conclusions**

- 1) Ways the speaking skill is being taught by the English teachers, according to the new curricular transformation.
  - a) The teacher does not use authentic material for developing skill, and she does not suggest working in group.
  - b) The teacher begins by teaching grammar, readings, and dialogs; instead of begin using speaking activities.

- c) She does not practice listening activities like dictation, little conversations, and some phonological or grammatical aspects of the language, and they are fundamental to develop the speaking skill.
- 2) Difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation.
- a) The students are afraid and unwilling to speak English in class.
  - b) There is not enough time to teach English per week.
  - c) There is not a specific or a book that describes the strategies to teach English in a communicative way.
- 3) Suggestions about strategies that can be useful to develop the speaking skill.
- a) The teachers should leave the traditional method instead of that, they need to be trained and provide resources that make the class more understandable and stimulating.
  - b) The teacher should encourage students to speak English freely and give them confidence to get personal information, and take into account the individual characteristics of each group.
  - c) The teacher should create the conditions in order to change the educational practices, improving the learning opportunities of all students with an education for the life.
  - d) The teacher should teach English by using different kinds of material elaborated by the students.
  - e) The teacher should invite to a native speaker to the class to demonstrate real conversation.
  - f) The teacher should mix listening and speaking activities at the same time.

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VII

# ANNEXES

**Annexe 1**  
**National Autonomous University of Nicaragua.**  
**FAREM- Matagalpa**  
**Survey to students.**

**General Data.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear student, this is a research about the difficulties in the application of the speaking strategies in the new curricular transformation, so we ask for your collaboration by answering the following question, putting a check (v) where you agree. Your information will be a lot of support for us.

1. Do you like English class?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_. No\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you like to participate in class?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_. No\_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you think it is important to learn English?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are your English classes dynamic?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
5. Does the teacher encourage you to participate?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_. No\_\_\_\_\_
6. Does the teacher give you confidence?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
7. Does the teacher use different materials to teach English?  
Yes, she does\_\_\_\_\_ No, she doesn't\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Does the teacher suggest working in groups?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you practice the pronunciation of the word on each class?  
Yes, I do\_\_\_\_\_ No, I don't\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Does the teacher always speak English in the classroom?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you practice listening activities in class?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you practice speaking activities in class?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
13. Are you afraid to speak English in class?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
14. Would you like to have more time on each English class?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

**Annexe 2**

**National Autonomous University of Nicaragua.**

**FAREM- Matagalpa.**

**Interview to teachers.**

Dear professor, we are carrying out our graduation seminary, so we ask for your collaboration by answering the following questions. We thank you beforehand your information.

**General Data:**

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teachers' name:**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you been working as an English teacher?
2. How many contents do you plan for each class?
3. What kind of material do you usually use in the classroom?
4. What are the difficulties that you have in the English teaching process, especially when you teach speaking skill?
5. Do you give the class in English or Spanish?
6. What kind of activities do you usually use in the class?
7. Do you practice speaking activities to improve the speaking skill in the students? Which ones?
8. In a scale from 1 to 10 how many scores do you give to the students in speaking activities?
9. Do you find problems when you practice speaking activities in the classroom? What kind of problems?
10. According to your experience, what are the most common difficulties that affect the students speaking skill?
11. What strategies do you use to overcome these problems?
12. In your opinion, what strategies could be the most effective to make the student talk?
13. What opinion do you have about the speaking strategies presented in the new curricular transformation in 11<sup>th</sup> grade?

General variable	Sub-variable	Definition	Indicator	Questions	Scale	To whom	Instrument
Speaking Strategies.	Teaching speaking	A strategy is the plan for the future success in the teaching process of the language.	Motivation	1.Do you like English class? 2.Do you like to participate in class? 3.Do you think that it's important to learn English? 4.Are your English classes dynamic? 5.Does the teacher encourage you to participate? 6.Does the teacher give you confidence? 7.Does the teacher use different materials to teach English? 8.Does the teacher suggest working in groups? 9.Do you practice the pronunciation of the word on each class? 10.Does the teacher always speak English in the classroom? 11.Do you practice listening activities in class? 12.Do you practice speaking activities in class? 13.Are you afraid to speak English in class? 14.Would you like to have more time on each English class?	Yes/No	Students	Survey
New Curricular Transformation.	Curriculum	The curriculum is a micro-system of the subsystem of the half and basic education, which around of it plays other components	Teacher's role  Teacher's role  Obstacle				

**Annexe 4**

**Annexe 6**

Variable	Sub-Variable	Definition	Indicators	Questions	Scale	To whom	In
Strategies.	Teaching speaking	A strategy is the plan for the future success in the teaching process of the language.	Motivation Student's role Motivation Teacher's role	1.The teacher motivates the students to participate. 2.The teacher speaks English in class. 3.The students get involved in class. 4.Students teacher interact during the class. 5.There is motivation in the class. 6.The teacher explains the lesson twice or more times. 7.The teacher practices the pronunciation of new words with the students. 8.The teacher helps learners to develop their speaking skill. 9.The teacher gives learners opportunities to discuss in pair,small groups and whole groups.	Always. Sometime s. Rarely. Never.	Teacher.	Ob No
	Curriculum	The curriculum is a micro-system of the subsystem of the half and basic education, which around it plays other components	Strategie  Student's role Teacher's role Obstacles	10.The teacher asks questions to help learners to explore their thinking. 11.The teacher is always asking yes/no questions. 12.The teacher tends to use information questions. 13.The teacher uses non-verbal communication(gestures,body language,eyes-contact,facial expressions). 14.The students practice discussion about familiar subjects. 15.The teacher gives the task clearly. 16.The teacher uses a simple vocabulary. 17.The students feel fear at the moment to speak. 18.The learners are unwilling to speak.			

### Annexe 5

Variable	Sub-Variable	Definition	Indicators	Questions	Scale	To whom	Instruments
Learning strategies.	Teaching speaking	A strategy is the plan for the future success in the teaching process of the language.	Teacher's experience  Planning	1.How long have you been working as an English teacher? 2.How many contents do plan for each class? 3.What kind of material do you usually use in the classroom? 4.What are the difficulties that you have in the English teaching process,specially when you teach speaking skill? 5.Do you give the class in English or Spanish? 6.What kind of activities do you usually use in the class? 7.Do you practice speaking activities to improve the speaking skill in the students? 8.In a scale from 1 to 10 how many scores do you give to the students in speaking activities? 9.Do you find problems when you practice speaking activities in the classroom?What kind of problems?	Information Questions	Teacher.	Interview
Curricular information.	Curriculum	The curriculum is a micro-system of the subsystem of the half and basic education, which around it plays other components	Teacher's role  Teacher's experience	10.According to your experience,what are the most common difficulties that affect the students speaking skill? 11.What strategies do you use to overcome these problems? 12.In your opinion,what strategies could be the most effective to make the student talk? 13.What opinion do you have about the speaking strategies presented in the new curricular transformation in 11 <sup>th</sup> grade?			

## Annexe 7

### Survey to students

No	Questions	Yes	%	No	%	Total
1	Do you like English class?	46	90	5	10	51
2	Do you like to participate in class?	28	55	23	45	51
3	Do you think it is important to learn English?	51	100	-	-	51
4	Are your English classes dynamic?	45	82	6	18	51
5	Does the teacher encourage you to participate?	51	100	-	-	51
6	Does the teacher give you confidence?	50	98	1	2	51
7	Does the teacher use different materials to teach English?	7	14	44	86	51
8	Does the teacher suggest working in group?	11	22	40	78	51
9	Do you practice the pronunciation of the words in each class?	49	96	2	4	51
10	Does the teacher always speak English in the classroom	42	82	9	18	51
11	Do you practice listening activities in class?	7	14	44	86	51
12	Do you practice speaking activities in class?	49	96	2	4	51
13	Are you afraid to speak English class?	40	78	11	22	51
14	Would you like to have more time on each English class?	43	84	8	16	51

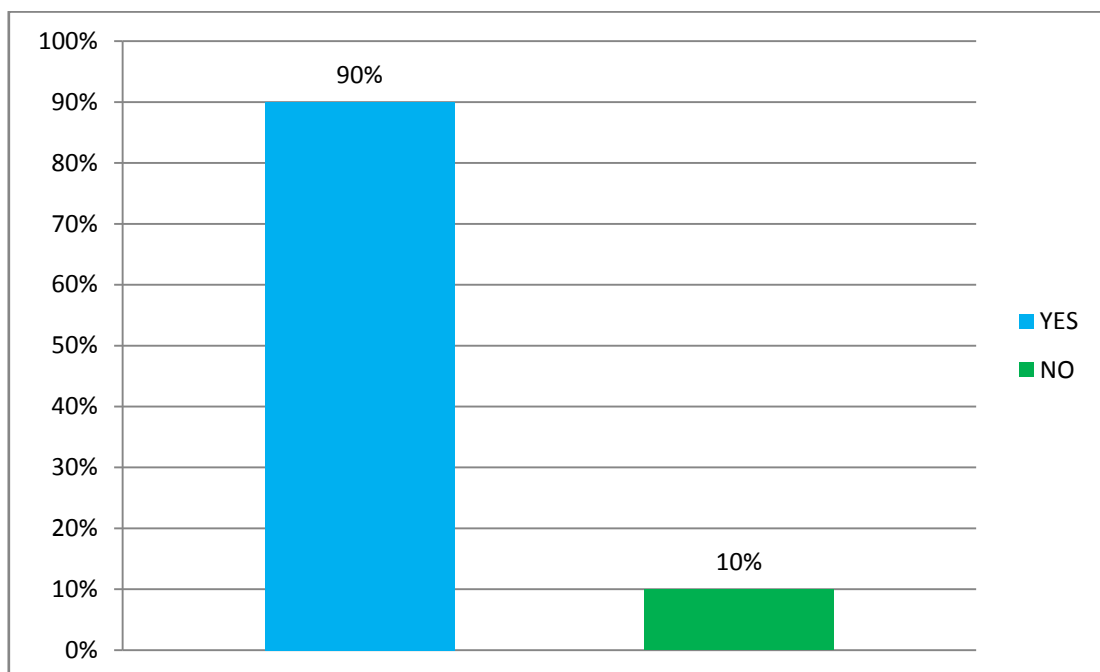
Universe: 51    Sample: 51

## Annexe 8

Survey to students

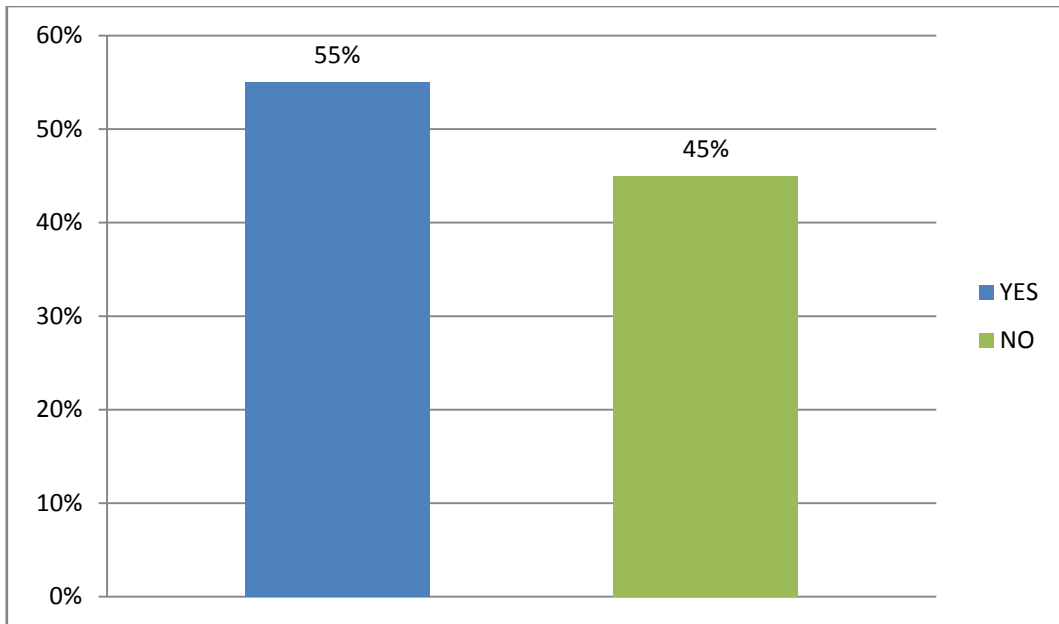
Sample: 51

1. Do you like English class?



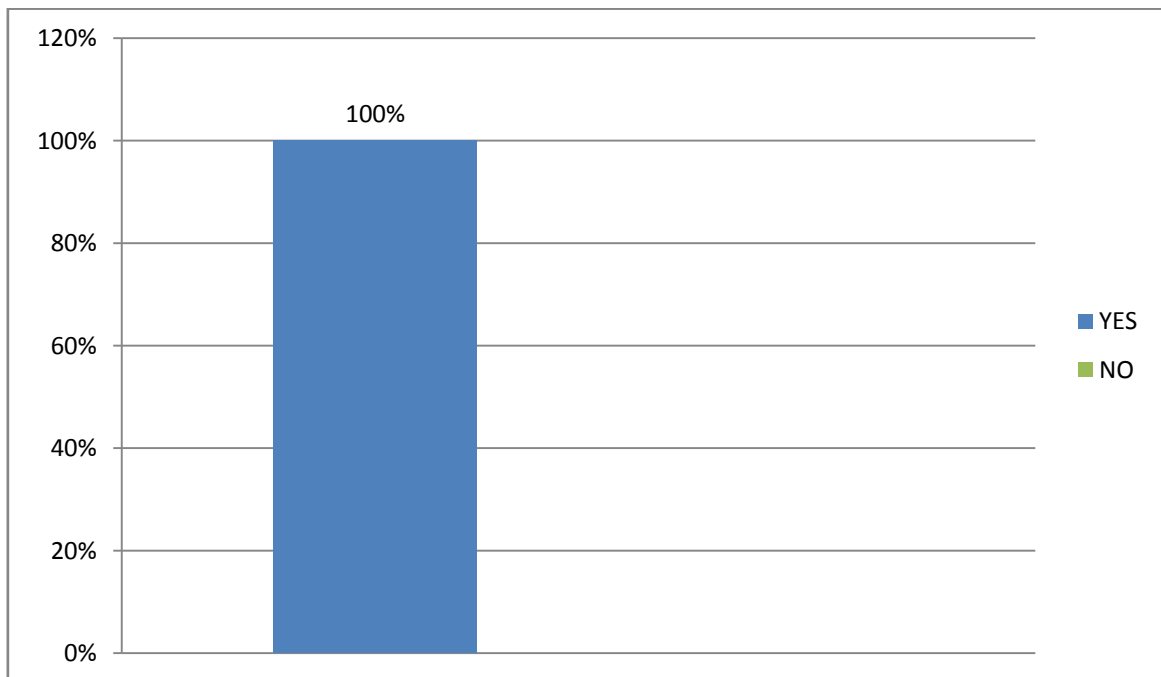
2. Do you like to participate in class?



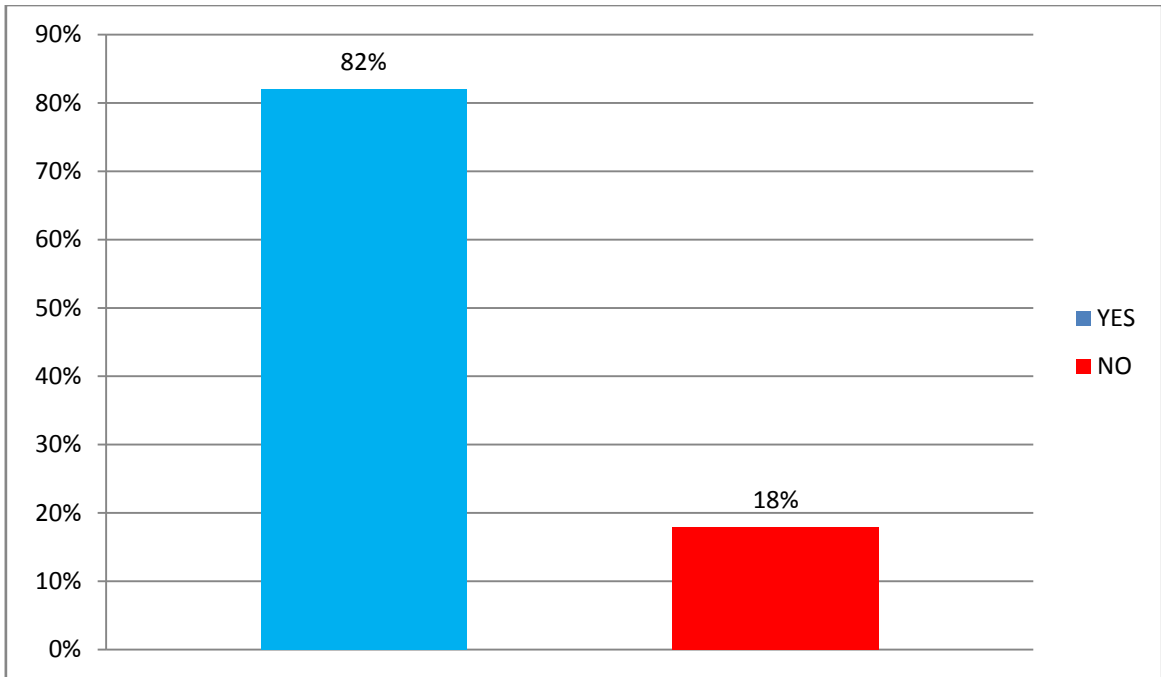


**Annexe 9**

3. Do you think that it is important to learn English?

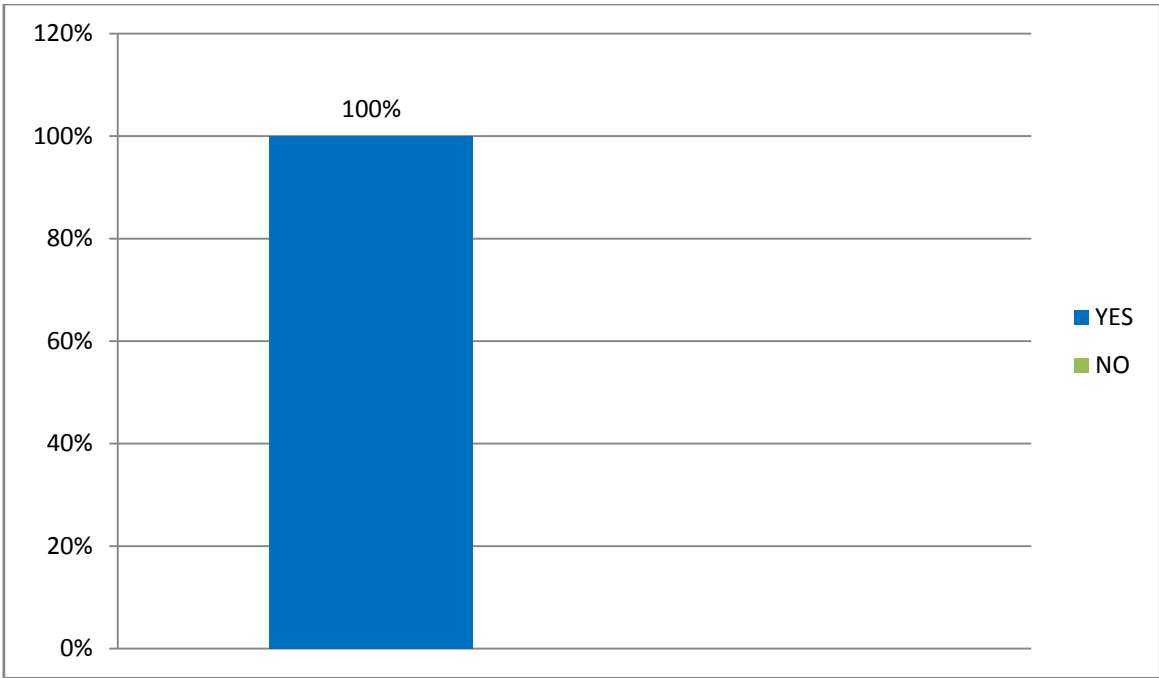


4. Are your English classes dynamic?

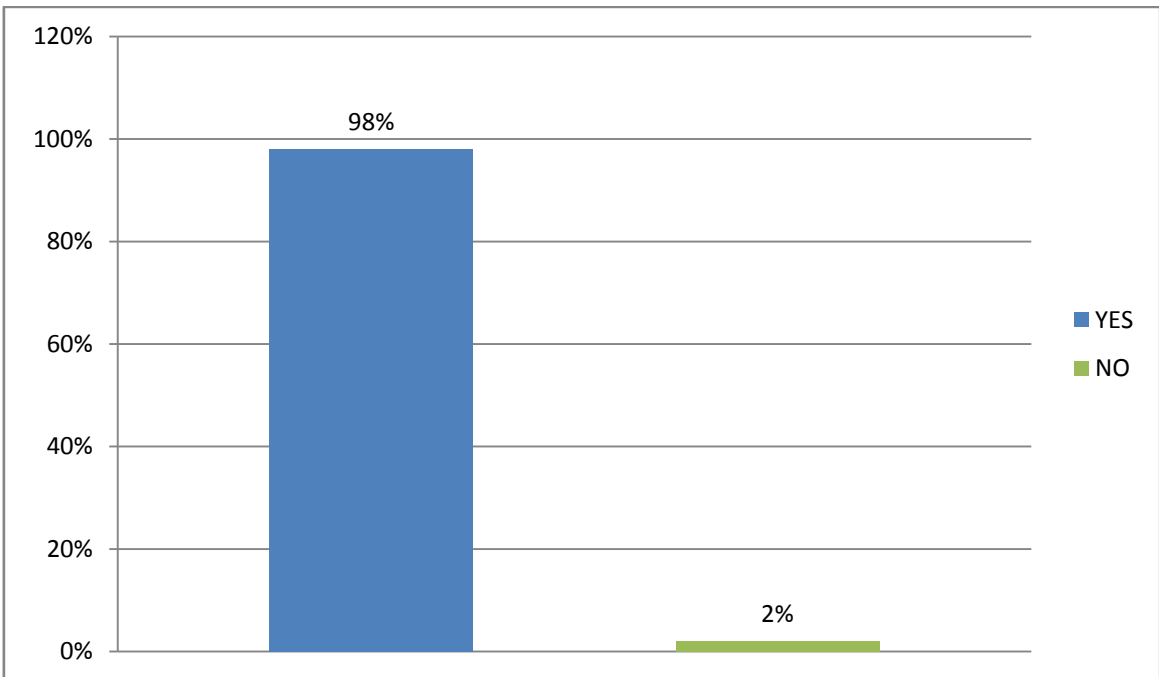


### Annexe 10

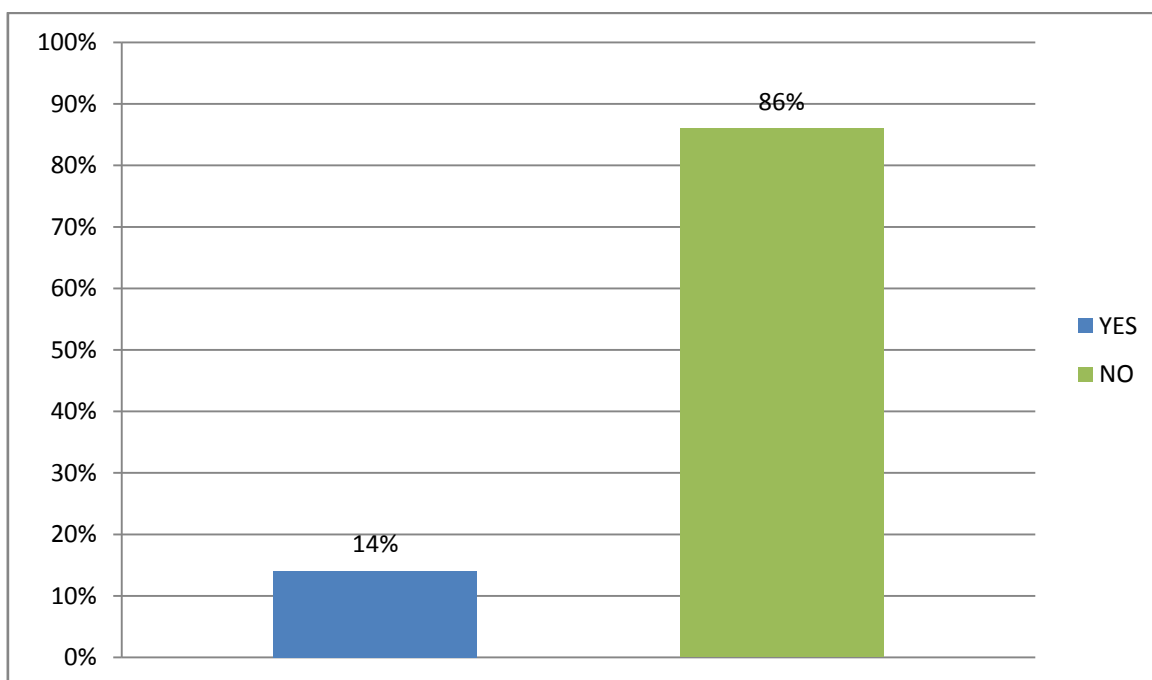
5. Does the teacher encourage you to participate?



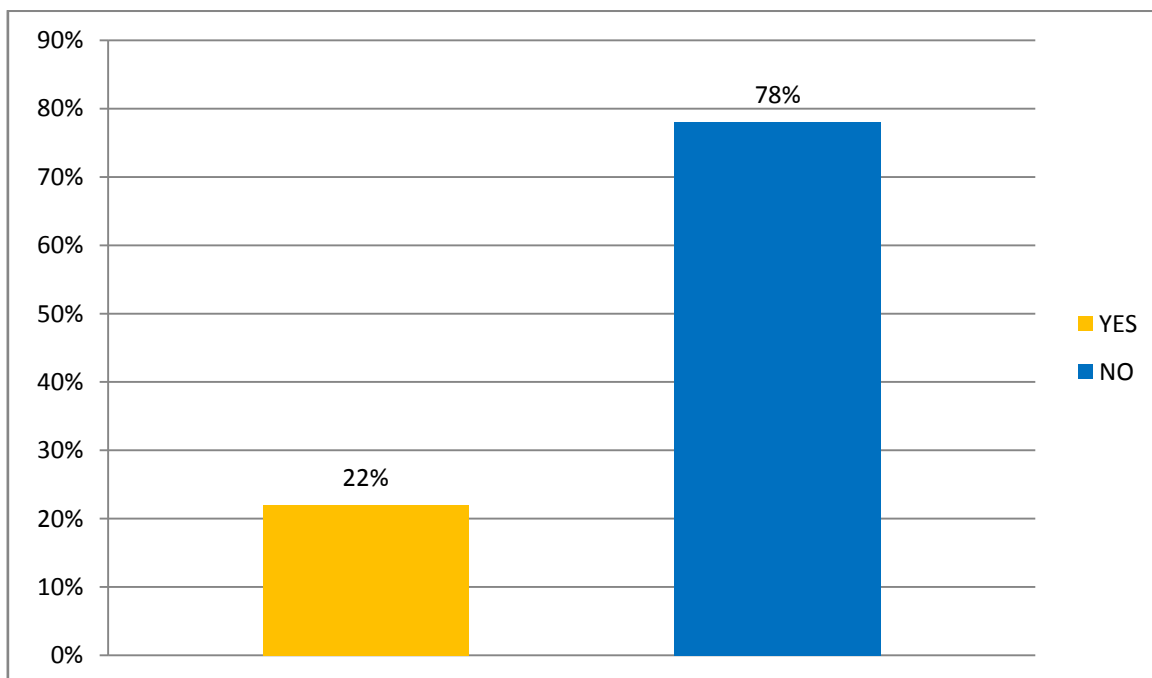
6. Does the teacher give you confidence?



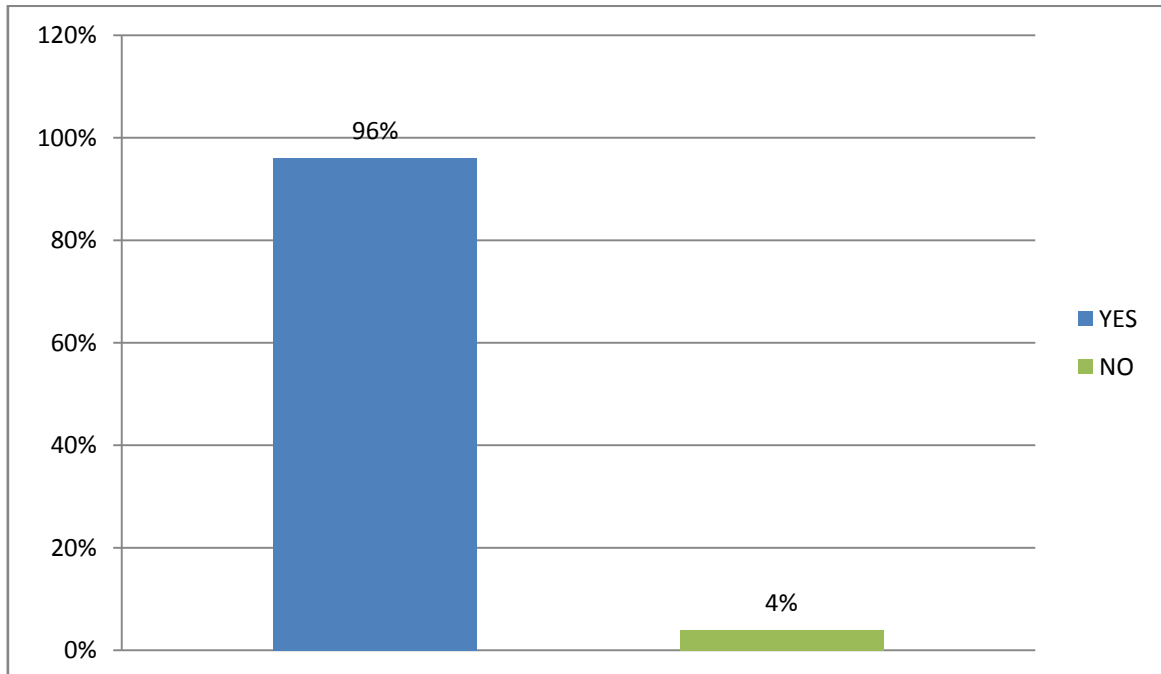
7. Does the teacher use different material to teach English?



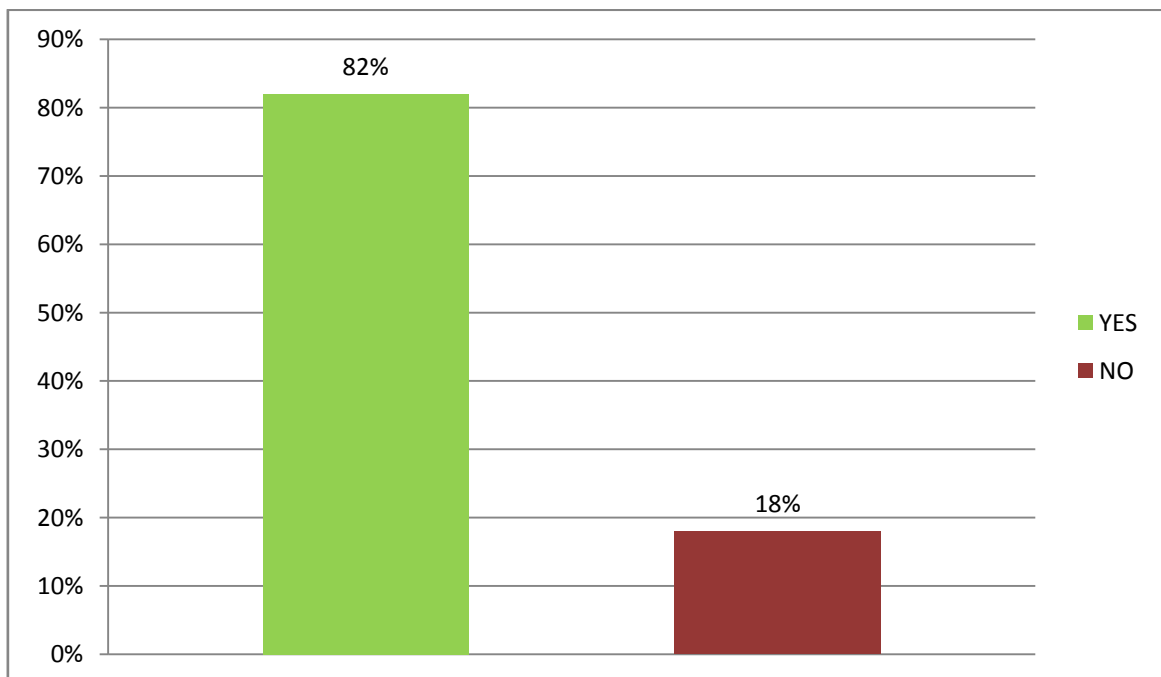
8. Does the teacher suggest working in group?



9. Do you practice the pronunciation of the words on each class?

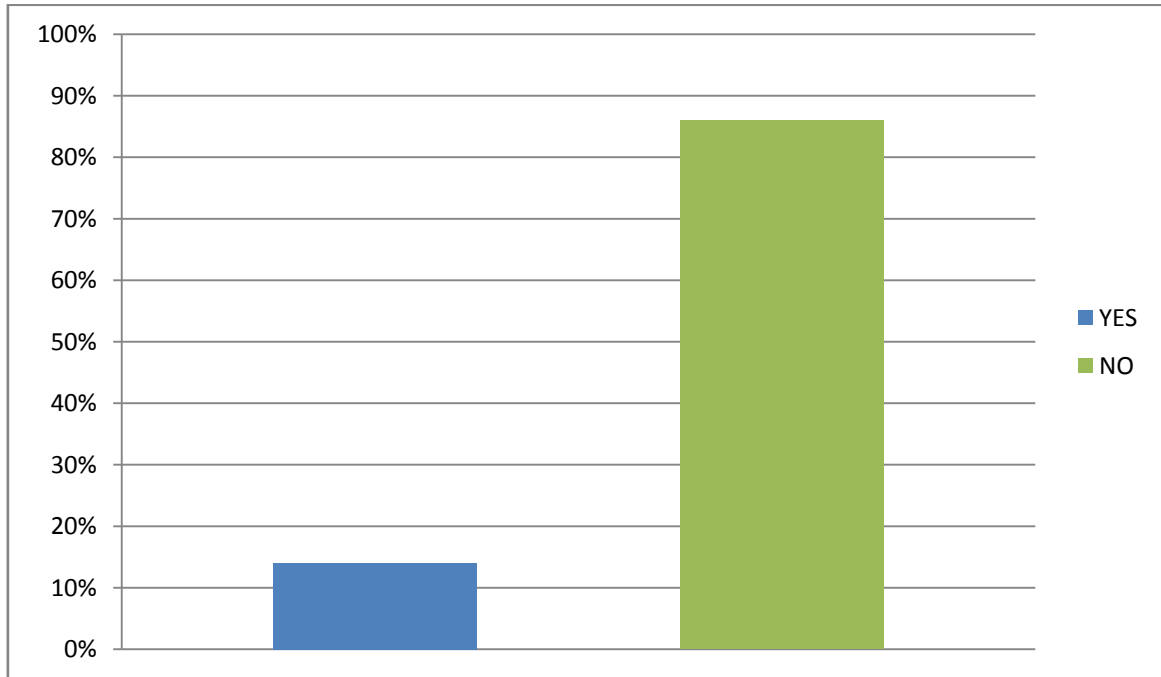


10. Does the teacher always speak English in the classroom?

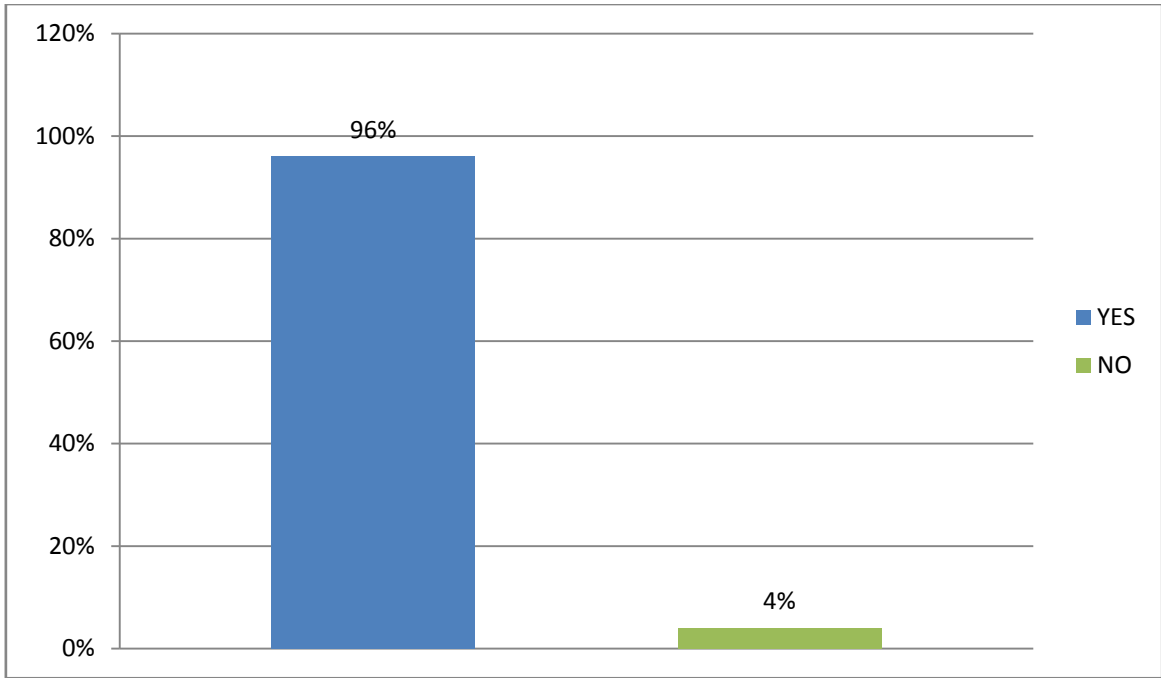


### Annexe 13

11. Do you practice listening activities in class?

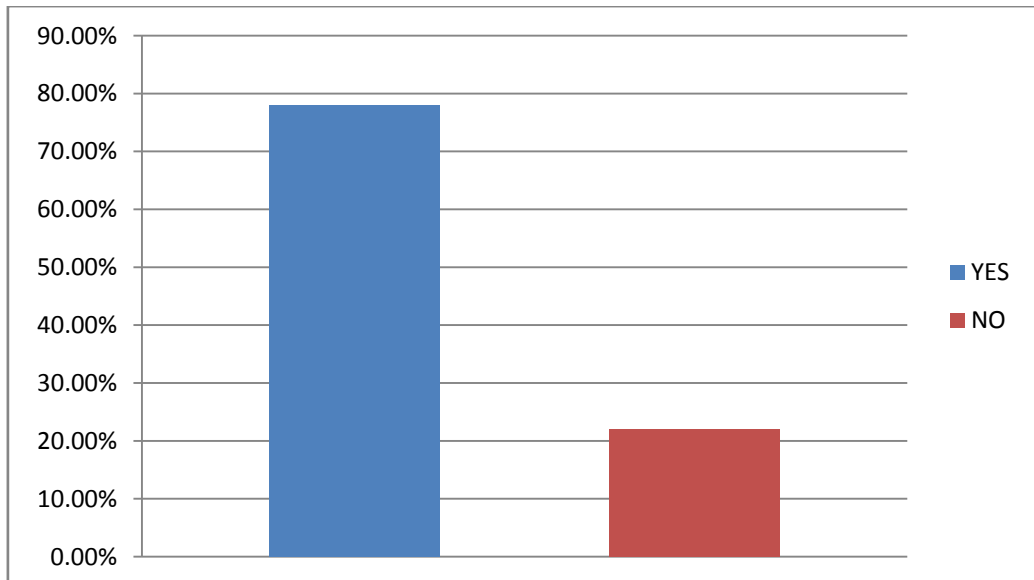


12. Do you practice speaking activities in class?



**Annexe 14**

13. Are you afraid to speak English in class?



14. Would you like to have more time on each English class?

