



Universidad Hispanoamericana
Faculty of Education
School of English Language Teaching

**The Impact of Implementing a Set of Speaking Techniques on Language Anxiety and
Oral Participation of a Basic Level Students Group from the Sykes Academy
During the I Period of 2022**

Final Work Research Paper Modality to Qualify for the Degree of English Teaching

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Yo Daisy Elena Jiménez Arias, mayor de edad, portador de la cédula de identidad número 1-1308-0256 egresado de la carrera de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Inglés de la Universidad Hispanoamericana, hago constar por medio de éste acto y debidamente apercibido y entendido de las penas y consecuencias con las que se castiga en el Código Penal el delito de perjurio, ante quienes se constituyen en el Tribunal Examinador de mi trabajo de tesis para optar por el título de Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Inglés, juro solemnemente que mi trabajo de investigación titulado: The impact of implementing a set of speaking techniques on the level of language anxiety and oral participation of a basic level students group from the Sykes Academy during the I period of 2022, es una obra original que ha respetado todo lo preceptuado por las Leyes Penales, así como la Ley de Derecho de Autor y Derecho Conexos número 6683 del 14 de octubre de 1982 y sus reformas, publicada en la Gaceta número 226 del 25 de noviembre de 1982; incluyendo el numeral 70 de dicha ley que advierte; artículo 70. Es permitido citar a un autor, transcribiendo los pasajes pertinentes siempre que éstos no sean tantos y seguidos, que puedan considerarse como una producción simulada y sustancial, que redunde en perjuicio del autor de la obra original. Asimismo, quedo advertido que la Universidad se reserva el derecho de protocolizar este documento ante Notario Público. en fe de lo anterior, firmo en la ciudad de San José, a los 28 días del mes de Abril del año 2022.

Daisy Elena Jiménez Arias



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LETTER FROM THE TUTHOR

San José, 28 de Junio de 2022.

Señora Jessica Ramírez González
Asesora de Servicios Estudiantiles
Universidad Hispanoamericana
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Estimados señores:

La persona estudiante Daisy Elena Jiménez Arias, cédula de identidad número 1-1308-0256, me ha presentado, para efectos de revisión y aprobación, el trabajo de investigación denominado o The Impact of Implementing a Set of Speaking Techniques on Language Anxiety and Oral Participation of a Basic Level Students Group from the Sykes Academy During the I Period of 2022, el cual ha elaborado para optar por el grado académico de Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés.

En mi calidad de persona tutora, he verificado que se han hecho las correcciones indicadas durante el proceso de tutoría y he evaluado los aspectos relativos a la elaboración del problema, objetivos, justificación; antecedentes, marco teórico, marco metodológico, tabulación, análisis de datos; conclusiones y recomendaciones.

De los resultados obtenidos por el postulante, se obtiene la siguiente calificación:

a)	ORIGINAL DEL TEMA	10%	10%
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d)	RELEVANCIA DE LAS CONCLUSIONES Y RECOMENDACIONES	20%	20%
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LETTER FROM THE READER**San José, 10 de agosto de 2022****Universidad Hispanoamericana
Carrera. Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés****Estimado señores**

La estudiante Daisy Elena Jiménez Arias, cédula de identidad número 1-1308-0256, me ha presentado para efectos de revisión y aprobación, el trabajo de investigación denominado "The Impact of Implementing a Set of Speaking Techniques on the Level of Language Anxiety and Oral Participation of a Basic Level Students Group from the Sykes Academy during the I Period of 2022", el cual ha elaborado para obtener su grado de "licentiate in English Language Teaching."

He revisado y he hecho las observaciones relativas al contenido analizado, particularmente lo relativo a la coherencia entre el marco teórico y análisis de datos, la consistencia de los datos recopilados y la coherencia entre éstos y las conclusiones; asimismo, la aplicabilidad y originalidad de las recomendaciones, en términos de aporte de la investigación. He verificado que se han hecho las modificaciones correspondientes a las observaciones indicadas.

Por consiguiente, este trabajo cuenta con mi aval para ser presentado en la defensa pública.

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Cordialmente,



1-1308-0256

DEDICATION

I owe my deepest love and gratefulness towards all the people that had helped me to become the person I am. God gave me the strength and the power to overcome all the obstacles, always having the support of my family. My parents have always been my role model to follow and have encouraged me to try harder to reach my craziest dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since the very beginning of the career, I met a lot people that put a print in my life. In spite of the obstacles faced, I learned something from every single one of them. The teachers became more than just sources of knowledge because they became my friends and counselors. Those are the reasons why I want to thank my classmates and teachers for teaching me to how to improve my teaching skills, for being patient and showing genuine trust and comprehension. My family who has always being my support in the most difficult times. I want to let them know how much I appreciate them and love them.

ABSTRACT

The innate skill of communicating is visible in the majority of creatures on earth. People as well as other beings have faced challenges but always found a way to interact to each other. Communication has been a way for humans to evolve, learn and improve. The better people learn to communicate, the bigger the number of people they will reach. Learning other languages is a growing need on humans for intellectual, but also for commercial purposes.

The basis of this paper is to explore how the language anxiety might interrupt or delay this learning process in students from the Sykes academy. This brief study throws important aspects to understand this broad topic and the way learners and educators manage such situation.

This project is supported by other relevant studies on this field. As a whole, it will contribute to future researchers to understand this phenomenon and to create possible solutions to overcome possible obstacles when teaching a foreign language.

Keywords: Language Anxiety / Motivation / Participation / Speaking activities

RESUMEN

La habilidad innata de comunicarse es visible en la mayoría de las criaturas de la tierra. Las personas, al igual que otros seres, se han enfrentado a desafíos, pero siempre han encontrado una manera de interactuar entre sí. La comunicación ha sido una forma para que los seres humanos evolucionen, aprendan y mejoren. Cuanto mejor aprendan las personas a comunicarse, mayor será el número de personas a las que llegarán. Aprender otros idiomas es una necesidad creciente de los seres humanos con fines intelectuales, pero también comerciales.

La base de este trabajo es explorar cómo la ansiedad por el lenguaje puede interrumpir o retrasar este proceso de aprendizaje en estudiantes de la academia Sykes. Este breve estudio arroja aspectos importantes para comprender este amplio tema y la forma en que los educandos y educadores manejan tal situación.

Este proyecto está respaldado por otros estudios relevantes en este campo. En su conjunto, contribuirá a que los futuros investigadores comprendan este fenómeno y creen posibles soluciones para superar los posibles obstáculos a la hora de enseñar una lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: Lenguaje Ansiedad / Motivación / Participación / Actividades de habla

**CHAPTER I:
RESEARCH PROBLEM**

1.1 Research Problem

Language and communication have connected people, countries, and continents for centuries. These fast interactions have also led people to develop the need of learning new languages to be able to interact with others. A single nation with a common language can experience several variations of the same language.

The isoglosses in a country are not an obstacle for people to understand each other; instead, those different dialects impulse them to learn more about the language. More people each day feel the need of learning a language due to business reasons. Why You Should Learn a Second Language and Gain New Skills (2020) maintained that

Lack of integration is a real problem for most countries. More often than not, this is due to the language barrier. People outside of their home countries end up being isolated, hanging out only with people from similar communities where their language is spoken. Learning a second language opens up the opportunity for being part of a community with a different culture, and learning more about the world around us (para. 9).

People move from one nation to another carrying their language and culture. This allows an intellectual and cultural exchange.

Language is an important tool, a means of communication that has had an important evolution as time passes by. Regarding the language definition, Rabiah (n.d.) has mentioned that “traditionally it is stated that language is a tool to interact or tools to communicate, in a sense, means to convey thoughts, ideas, concepts, or even a feeling” (p. 4). The learning process plays a fundamental role for people who want to get prepared in a variety of fields and to develop their intelligences and abilities besides the fact that it will help them to interact with others.

Teaching a foreign language such English has become one of the biggest challenges in Costa Rica. Due to the emerging a growing need towards globalization, English has become a need for those who want to improve their social and economic status. According to Zúñiga & Barrantes (2021)

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in a country such as Costa Rica is no different. Indeed, foreign language teaching poses additional difficulties when considering that pedagogy is an act of communication and in the teaching of English, language is both the means and the end of instruction. In this regard, the English language curriculum in Costa Rica is far from perfect, so it is not uncommon for English teachers here to have to start from scratch each time that they teach a new language course (p. viii).

The process of teaching foreign languages began several years ago in Costa Rica. Solis (2018) clarified that teaching started “in 1944 when the declaration of the mandatory nature of the teaching of English in primary schools was made, possibly stimulated by the commercial agreement that Costa Rica had ratified with the United States at the end of the 1930s” (para 2). Methodologies, approaches, and techniques have been implemented through the years. That same interest has made professors, researchers and even the government to work together to achieve one common goal: effective communication in the target language: English. That is the reason why, as explained by Solis (2018), the English teaching process has faced the same challenges “the lack of teachers, poor teacher skills, deficiencies in methodologies... unsuccessful and disjointed curricula with the same result consistently: students who exit the system speaking more than a very basic level of the language (para 3).”

1.2 Background of the Problem

Costa Rica's educational system is recognized worldwide due to its superior quality among other Latin American countries. In fact, Aguilar (2019) highlighted that based on the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results Costa Rica is located among the first four Latin American countries with the best education level (para. 1).

Education in Costa Rica was established as a free and obligatory right for all citizens. This was proven in the Article N° 78 from the Political Constitution, which indicated that "Pre-school, general, basic and diversified education are compulsory and, in the public system, free and paid for by the Nation" (p. 18).

Holding the responsibility of providing high standards in the levels of education, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) encloses different expectations related to the development of the speaking skill in the classroom. In terms of the foreign language acquisition, the MEP has a great interest in promoting adequate education. They explained that "speaking English fluently is one of the abilities a 21st Century learner needs in order to access to better life opportunities. The Costa Rican educational system is committed to achieving this goal of having bilingual citizens" (Programa de Estudios Inglés, 2017, p. 9). The English-teaching process in Costa Rican classrooms covers diverse expectations, objectives and functional components to make students speak the second language or L2.

It is possible to have a gist of what kind of aspects the MEP is concerned about. They emphasized, "English contributes to the social, economic and technological development. It also allows the learner to apply techniques to understand and produce appropriate oral and written messages." (Relanzamiento de la educación costarricense, 2003, p. 17). The students at some point in the future, when incorporating to the working society, will contribute to their own personal growth as well as of their communities.

Speaking achievement is such a relevant aspect that Costa Rica's educational system establishes and studies the most adequate objectives to guide the different institutions to the right path when teaching English. The Costa Rican English language syllabus provides the necessary tools to fulfill all the basic needs of the students all around the country. It has been emphasized on Educating for a New Citizenship (2016) that

the Costa Rican educational system is committed to achieving this goal of having bilingual citizens in two or more languages by means of a comprehensive, articulated curriculum from kindergarten through high school. Given this mandate, the new curriculum has been sequenced so that learners reach a minimum level of English proficiency of A2 when completing primary education and B1 or B2 (depending on the study plans) when completing secondary education progressively, according to the levels described by the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). To achieve this goal, curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment have to be aligned at the classroom level as well as in the national test (p. 4).

Although it has been clarified the government's position about education, it is important to highlight that the acquisition of English cannot be accomplished if the students are not properly involved or prepared for the learning process.

With the goal of reducing the actual gap to real communication, this project analyzes the factors that trigger language anxiety among the students. Additionally analyzing its impact in the speaking participation process.

Several students face anxiety when participating in the foreign language. This is clearly depicted by Himli (2016) when he gathered some experts' opinions who agreed:

Speaking reluctance is one of the common problems experienced by English language learners. Gan (2012) claims that students who learn English as a second language (L2) are usually passive and reluctant to speak in a classroom; they have difficulties in communicating and getting themselves involved in any speaking activities conducted during the speaking lessons. Le Thi Mai (2011) asserts that students lack the confidence and are shy to speak in English as they are afraid of losing face in front of their classmates who are more proficient. The students' speaking reluctance influences their participation in language learning and this situation can be considered as a major problem faced by many L2 learners (p. 2).

It is interesting to highlight that his study pretended to investigate the correlation between participation and the anxiety experienced by the students when learning a second language.

Additional studies have been carried out about this topic. Lababidi (2016) explained on his study that

investigating the concept of language anxiety (LA) is of profound significance due to the adverse negative effects it can have on second language students learning experience and outcome. Consequently, investigating the roots of LA will help in gaining a deeper understanding of this complex phenomenon and will in turn assist second language teachers in creating a stress- free classroom environment (p. 186).

He pretended on his study to identify some factors that might cause language anxiety with the finality of having certain control over them.

Finally, Luo (2013) also devoted some time to analyze foreign language anxiety and she concluded that

foreign language anxiety has various manifestations. These manifestations include distortion of sounds, freezing up when called on to perform, forgetting words and phrases just learned, refusing to speak and remaining silent, complaining of difficulties in discriminating the sounds and structures of a foreign language message, over-study without any improvement in grades, a desire to gain teacher approval, avoiding eye contact, joking, short answer responses, avoiding activities in class, coming unprepared to class, acting indifferent, cutting class, putting off taking the foreign language until the last year, and crouching in the last row (p. 443).

This project gathers the main aspects, such the role and the limitations faced both by students and professors, to gain a better understanding of the reality lived in the majority of classrooms. The main goal is setting a ground for others to infer out of this research and to develop possible solutions to the language anxiety and the participation issues.

1.3 Justification

The Ministry of Public Education in Costa Rica has accepted that teaching a foreign language is an important part of the educational process. In fact, the president of Costa Rica Carlos Alvarado assumed a huge challenge when accepted that changes should be made in the English teaching in Costa Rica. Cerdas (2018) paraphrased his words when explained “English is a tool for life, for work, for well-being... As a country, we must make the English tool available to everyone” (para. 12). However, this is distant to the reality lived in most of the learning centers.

The Costa Rican English department has several obstacles to overcome. It has been pointed out that

Costa Rica enjoyed a long history of relatively high levels of educational accomplishment compared to the rest of Latin America. Today [it] is ranked 11th out of the 19 Latin American countries in the Latin Business Chronicle education... This ranking gives the country a new sense of educational urgency, given that its Constitution (1949) places education and culture at the forefront of the nation's goals (Menke & Carnoy, 2013, p.9).

When teaching a foreign language, one of the most difficult aspects to deal with is how to make the learning process effective and significant.

When learning English, it is essential to have a great deal of participation to foster the language. The learning process is not complete if pupils are not participating. The definition of participation according to the Oxford dictionary is "the act of taking part in an activity or event" (2021). In short, if only some students participate by volunteering answers, asking questions, or contributing to discussions, class sessions become to some extent a lost opportunity to assess and promote learning.

Factors such as the students' anxiety, enthusiasm, and willingness to participate can affect the quality of class discussion as an opportunity for learning. It has demonstrated that to reach the learning goal "the more contact hours students have with the linguistic system, the more fluent and accurate they are going to become" (Olivares & Brenes, 2013, p. 376).

It is critical to investigate if lack of participation is a problem in the majority Costa Rican public and private institutions and to try to understand if this participation issue is triggered due to fear or other limitations.

In addition to the pre-existing limitations, with the arrival of the Covid 19, the educational system had to face new challenges on how to develop the classes during the pandemic. As described by Zúñiga (2021) the Costa Rican educational system is going

through a crisis due to “unresolved problems, as well as the deep tension between educational purposes and the rigidities of the system. The current educational crisis is the worst in decades” (para 2).

Since there is little information about this phenomenon due to its recent impacts, an analysis about the pandemic and its effects in education should be conducted. Nonetheless, it can be said that getting access to technological devices, learning how to use new programs and getting used to the new virtual reality are some challenges that the students have to face with the new education aroused due to the Covid 19. These and other factors have increased the level of anxiety among the students that has also affected participation.

At this point it is imperative to analyze the factors that might trigger or reduce language anxiety among the students when participating in English. Based on this investigation, it can be inferred or concluded useful research aspects to correct such situations in the future.

Though materials and use of the target language are relevant to learn inside the classroom, teachers may have troubles identifying factors that may hinder participation. Susak (2016) pointed out that

the learning environment and institutions differ from one another for various reasons including size, private versus public, and geographical location, therefore, the results are difficult to apply to all colleges and universities. Also, educators teaching styles differ as does the profile of students, which need to be accounted for in order to determine proper ways to address low participation rates (p. 7).

The previous comment has made evident the difficulties of generalizing a problem that is lived by the majority of students but with different impacts. Firstly, one aspect to take into consideration is the personality of every single student in the classroom since

every student has different learning styles. Teachers have to be adaptable in order to create different activities that will move students to engage in the learning process. On the other hand, teachers have to seek the learning strategy that fits students' capacities since the decisions made by the professor can bring out benefits to each single student in the classroom.

Even though most instructors acknowledge the value of active participation in the college classroom, achieving success in eliciting it appears more difficult. Professors may talk most of the time leaving scarce moments for the students to participate. Students who actively participate in the learning process learn more and this active involvement in class facilitates critical thinking.

This project reinforces the teacher's teaching methods and performance with the finality of reducing or being able to control language anxiety. The objective of this study is to analyze language anxiety and its implications in oral participation.

1.4 Problematization

Since the beginning of human history, people started gathering in different communities all around the world. They began to face and manage communication as a means to reach common goals. From that moment on, humans started exploring and handling the art of acquiring native languages as well as learning foreign languages.

In Ahmad's (2019) words, "communication is fundamental to the existence and survival of individuals, groups, societies, and nations. Language is the most common tool of communication. It plays a vital role in helping people build a bridge of relationships" (para. 5). Due to these processes, the need of learning a language has arrived in different nations on earth, leading language learning to the governments and from there to the classrooms.

To be capable of speaking more than one language has become relevant for professional and personal growth. Educational systems have placed a significant emphasis to start teaching a second language in schools and high schools in order to prepare kids and teenagers to this globalized world. The OECD Analysis Of National Policies For Education (n.d.) remarked that “traditionally, the Education has been an engine for the country’s development and has been undeniable in building one of the more stable democracies, and one of the most skilled labor markets and the highest levels of welfare in Latin America (p. 4). To keep on a good path all parties involved, students and professors should share a widespread desire of receiving and providing a high standard of second language.

Keywords: language anxiety, motivation, participation, second language learning, strategies, styles.

Hypothesis: Students who are capable of controlling their language anxiety level will have a more active and meaningful oral participation.

1.5 General Objective

- To determine the effects the level of anxiety has on the students’ participation in the English classes while performing oral activities.

1.6 Problem Formulation

What is the impact of implementing a set of speaking techniques on language anxiety and oral participation of a basic level students group from the Sykes Academy during the I period of 2022?

1.7 Specific Objectives

- To validate the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale as a tool to measure the level of anxiety presented during the oral skill activities in the English class before and after implementing the speaking strategies.

- To analyze the anxiety students of L2 have and how it is affecting the participation during English classes.
- To determine which teaching strategies, impact the level of anxiety when participating in English classes.

1.8 Variables

The variables of interest for the development of this project are the level of students' participation (Dependent), as well as the level of language anxiety and the use of speaking techniques (Independent).

1.9 Scope

The results obtained from this project is valid only for this group from the Sykes Academy. The set of speaking will be useful for teachers of English in any public or private institutions. This research study beneficiates other students from the English teaching major as a model when developing their own studies in this field.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations experienced during the development of this project are listed below.

- Finding a suitable institution as well as choosing the group or sample to develop the project.
- The amount of time was also an issue because the limited time per week restricts the learning process.
- Materials were a challenge since they have to be adapted to each learning style.
- The publications or available material about language anxiety was less than expected.
- The sample chosen turn out to be a small group of students.

- The challenge of adapting to virtualization.

CHAPTER II:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Costa Rican teachers have experienced the need of implementing diverse teaching strategies due to the necessity of improving students learning. Educators should not stop pursuing modern ways of teaching. The evolution of teaching techniques continue every day having radical modifications like fresher plans, new objectives, new learning situations and forms of evaluation.

Factors such as teaching techniques, didactic materials, and motivation should be carefully analyzed in order to determine the best way of teaching English. This will also have an impact in the way that participation and its difficulties are overcome in the English learning process.

2.1 Historical Context

2.1.1 Background of the organization and community

2.1.1.1 Diagnosis of the institution

Sitel (previously known as Sykes) is a multinational company located in the United States with headquarters in Tampa, Florida, which provides services in different countries including Costa Rica. Employees and potential applicants receive technical and language trainings to provide excellent service to customers. According to the purposes of Sitel, the vision and mission are respectively:

Mission

We significantly improve the business of our brand partners and help consumers find and use the products and services they need by combining the power of machine intelligence with human ingenuity to modernize, optimize and integrate customer touchpoints across the commerce value chain.

Vision

To be known throughout the world as a company that creates meaningful connections between brands and consumers, makes a positive impact in the lives of our people, and is a responsible and respected corporate citizen. (para 5).

Sykes Academy always strives for excellence. Thanks to a clear vision and mission, the goals set for the company's students and employees are achieved. As a private company, it can determine and define the goals and objectives based on a growing competitive society in the area of English and excellent customer service.

The Sykes academy is currently delivering teaching lessons in all buildings as well as virtually using the Zoom platform. The Sykes Academy is a private institution that is managed and financed by the company Sitel. Sitel started the service in Costa Rica around 1999. As explained by Sykes the “company created this program to close gaps among those looking for a position in the growing services industry but whose English proficiency was insufficient to be considered strong candidates” (SYKES ENGLISH ACADEMY: A Key Contributor of Bilingual Talent for an Evolving Sector, n.d. para 2).

2.1.1.2 Infrastructure

The Sykes academy lessons are taught in different locations using facilities such as the buildings and also some virtual lessons are currently developed. The locations allow people to move to and from the buildings, as it is easily accessible as they are close to bus stops, taxis and even the train.

The buildings have facilities such cafeterias, parking spaces and training areas. The car below shows the number of buildings currently used for work and teaching purposes.

Chart 1. Infrastructure and Location

Province	Quantity of Buildings
San Jose	3
Heredia	2
Guanacaste	1

Source: Sykes Academy 2022

The information collected above shows that despite having few buildings they are covering a great area of population. In addition, these structures have all the necessary facilities for a correct teaching and learning process.

In terms of the tools, Sykes has high-tech equipment in order to achieve the goals and objectives set. Below is a table with all the resources that are available in one of its office in Moravia.

Chart 2. Institutional Equipment

Furniture	Quantity	State
Student Computers	96	Good
Video Beam	8	Very Good
TVs	4	Good
Printers and Copiers	1	Very Good
Laptops	5	Good

Source: Moravian Sykes Academy 2022

The aforementioned furniture equipment allows the English language to be taught in the best possible way since technological equipment is available that allows it to be put into practice and also allows students to easily acquire knowledge.

2.1.1.3 Financing

The Sykes academy is private as detailed above, therefore the financing is fully covered by the Sitel. Unfortunately, the information related to the budget used in the Sykes Academy is handled confidentially. It is important to note that the company does not charge students for English training, on the contrary, it gives them the opportunity to improve their level of English and if they pass the course, they will obtain an economic bonus.

It is important to highlight that on 2015 an agreement was reached among Sykes (now known as Sitel) and the Costa Rican government. Diaz (2015) explained the main factors related to such agreement:

SYKES-Ministry of Labor Agreement, which aims to provide financial support to candidates whose level of English is not sufficient to be hired immediately. These people will be enrolled in SYKES Academy to receive 3 to 8 weeks of English and thus raise their level to apply for a job at SYKES.

SYKES-UTN Employability Agreement, which aims to replicate the English academy (SYKES Academy) in all UTN locations. The courses will begin this year in Alajuela and Puntarenas. SYKES will transfer its methodology, instruct its teachers and accompany the implementation process in each location (Para 5).

These private-public agreements allow this company to build strong relations but also help the community to get better intellectual and professional opportunities.

2.1.1.4 Human Resources

The teaching staff of the Sykes Academy are qualified personnel for the tasks they perform. All educators have higher education related to teaching English. The teaching staff that leads the English Department is chosen based on skills and knowledge backed by

previous university training. This allows the teaching process to take place under the tutelage of qualified personnel to overcome any difficulty or obstacle that may arise.

The administrative staff of the English department is in charge of an account supervisor and other administrative representatives to carry out the tasks of the area. This small group of people ensures that all processes are carried out optimally. The staff directed by the supervisor fulfills the functions both individually and as a group so that all the objectives and goals set are achieved.

One of the primary tasks of this team is to ensure that students remain in the company and their progress towards the workplace. In fact, this process has been achieved satisfactorily, considering that the academy was founded in 2007 and enrollment has increased year after year. The following table shows the number of students enrolled, and its promotion of English courses at Sykes Academy.

Chart 3. Number of Students

Sites	Students	Graduates
6	+13000	+9500

Source: Sykes Academy, 2022

The chart above shows the hard work that is being done so that more and more people can benefit from English courses, but it also shows that people respond to that effort by successfully completing the courses. Unfortunately, exact figures by year could not be obtained, as the company prefers to keep that information for records only.

2.1.1.5 Curricula

The Sykes Academy with the purpose of equipping people so that they can perform in the workplace prepares them academically using the best methods, content and objectives compiled over the years based on their own experience.

At Sykes Academy, it is expected as a primary goal that all students and employees accept responsibility, adhere to acceptable principles of personal conduct, and exhibit a high degree of personal integrity at all times. This includes respect for the rights and feelings of others and requires that they refrain from any behavior that could be harmful.

The academy's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7 am to 4 pm. However, sometimes and due to demand, these hours are extended until 9pm.

This academy as well as the recruiting team use the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a standard to identify and measure candidates and their corresponding development needs. The company clarified that

following these guidelines, the Academy offers proficiency levels, each with appropriate maturation times that advance students to the competency level that the industry requires:

A2 (Waystage), seven weeks, 140 hours

B1 (Threshold), six weeks, 120 hours

B2 (vantage), five weeks, 100 hours

B2 + (independent high), four weeks, 80 hours (SYKES ENGLISH ACADEMY: A Key Contributor of Bilingual Talent for an Evolving Sector, nd, para 4)

The English curriculum covers the four areas of production in the language such as speaking, listening, writing and reading. The didactic material used in the teaching process

is very varied. This includes paper, blackboard, computers, internet, recordings, presentations, videos and teaching material created by students and teachers.

The methods and techniques used are diverse. Each teacher has academic freedom in this regard. They determine which activities allow them to develop the class in the best way. In most cases, the aim is to improve speaking skills, which is why many of the activities are designed with the aim of producing in the target language. Activities include individual, pair, and team work to promote cooperation and tolerance. The use of technology is quite high since it allows exposure to the English language in a Spanish-speaking country.

The assessment used to measure student performance is varied. It should be noted that most of this is formative. The student is helped to self-correct and learn from the mistakes made in order to avoid them. At the end of each level, a grade test is carried out in the different areas to assess the improvement of the students.

Chart 4. Evaluation Breakdown

Criteria	Percentage
Oral tests	30%
Attendance	10%
Final test	60%
Overall	100%

Source Sykes Academy, 2022

At Sykes Academy, as shown in the table above, the main purpose is to help students improve the language, so the evaluation approach is based mainly on tests and oral performance.

2.1.1.6 Management

Sykes Academy is part of the private company Sitel. Among the functions performed by the supervisor is coordinating the activities to be carried out during the English courses, ensuring that the established schedules and the proposed objectives are met. Under the command are the teachers and the rest of the staff who are in charge of administrative procedures.

The English department is small. Leadership falls to the supervisor in charge of the English teachers as well as the rest of the administrative staff such as recruiters and assistants in charge of generating reports. Sykes explained that “Rogelio Mathews is the Language Programs manager for SYKES Costa Rica. He has a Master’s degree in international trade as well as in linguistics from the University of North Carolina and NYU” (SYKES ENGLISH ACADEMY: A Key Contributor of Bilingual Talent for an Evolving Sector, nd, para 8).

Communication in this department is effective since, being a small group of personnel, most situations can be kept under control. The most used method of communication is company email. The meetings that are held in person or through videoconferences. Observations are made monthly by the supervisor to the teachers to ensure that the parameters established for the classes are followed.

In order to record the attendance of the teachers, a computerized system called TAG (Time Activity Guardian) is used, which electronically records the check in and check out time. As for the students, each teacher is responsible for ensuring their attendance and if there is an absent student, they are always contacted to find out the reason for the absence.

2.1.1.7 Relations

As all the students are of legal age, there is no relationship or interaction between the teacher and the parents. There are several branches of Sykes Academy and therefore various groups, but it is very rare for these groups to interact with each other. There is an excellent relationship between the academies, the community since people can take advantage of the vacant positions, and the training provided.

2.1.1.8 Diagnosis of the group of students

For the teachers to be well equipped and prepared at the time of teaching, they must be aware of the aspects related to the students that promote or retract correct learning. Knowing social, personal and even physical situations allows to foreseen situations that hinder the teaching and learning process. The information taken into account must be reliable and as accurate as possible in order to make the right decisions. The group that collaborated to carry out the project is a very united group that is made up of students of legal age and of very similar ages.

2.1.1.9 Group Overview

The Sykes Academy group with which the project is carried out is made up of 16 students with ages ranging between 18 and 21 years. Most of these are unemployed and some are pursuing higher studies at the university. As the Sykes Academy courses are free of charge, there is an atmosphere of gratitude and most attend with the desire to improve their English language level.

This group of people attends virtually to classes from Monday to Friday to exclusively receive English classes from 8 00 am to 1130 am. As noted above, the group is made up of 16 students, 2 women and 14 men. The average age is 19 years old.

Because classes are taught via zoom this group has students from different places such as San Jose, Cartago and even Guanacaste.

2.1.2 General aspects of the academic area

The effort of the majority of students in the group is evident. Everyone attends with the same purpose, which is to improve their level of English. It is important to point out that most of these students acquired the English language thanks to exposure to it through music, movies, books, among others. The above demonstrates the desire to improve and the desire to correct errors when producing in the target language. All students have an approved high school degree and some are pursuing higher studies at private universities.

2.1.3 General aspects of the economic area

The economic income of the families is mainly covered by the head of the family, both the father and the mother. All students are of legal age in order to enter the workplace to help the family with household expenses. The majority of students live with their parents in their own home, a minority of them rent a house or apartment.

2.1.4 Participation of students in remunerative activities (work activities)

Although all the students are of legal age, only 3 of them have had previous work experience in Call Centers. They are all studying at the academy in order to improve their level of English and thus become part of the Sitel company as potential employees.

2.2 Theoretical Context

2.2.1 Teaching English in Costa Rica

2.2.1.2 Strategies and methodologies implemented

For the majority of teachers, the language that they teach is not their native language, but a language that has been acquired which in some cases might complicate the process of teaching. It has become evident that

there are two very important variables to which the country should direct its gaze and that is that we do not only need teachers with an appropriate linguistic command and with C1 international standards, but we also need a teacher who knows the methodology and didactic for this measurement in the classroom, both go hand in hand (Castro, 2020, as cited by Quesada, 2020).

The way English classes are delivered has evolved through the years. Classes 20 years ago are distant than the way they are delivered nowadays. This evolution forced the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) in Costa Rica to modify the methodology used. The *Fundamentación de la Transformación Curricular Costarricense (2015)* explained “the pedagogues of the XX century showed the path that the education of the XXI century must continue. For this, education must leave behind a traditional education, centered in content, and opt for an education active where students learn doing” (p. 118). Through these changes and updates, the learning process becomes easier for students in the sense that the learners develop the ability to use the language as a tool to increase their skills.

2.2.1.3 Teacher’s qualifications

The English teaching process started in Costa Rica several years ago. In fact, Solano (2012) highlighted that “English teaching in Costa Rica started as early as the mid-nineteenth century and was first institutionalized in 1825 in the internal bylaws of the Casa de Enseñanza Santo Tomás” (p. 167). This process has experienced several changes since that starting point; however, the act of teaching remains the same. Teaching requires from professionals, innate talent, dedicated practice and study. There are teachers who are born with an amazing natural talent and they make teaching an art rather than a duty, others require of guidance to master this profession.

All instructors or teachers must acquire the skills to be successful in what they do by learning a variety of teaching styles to accommodate themselves to the different types of students and learning styles. This has become an uphill battle through the years and the changes has become more evident through the years about what is expected by the professionals. Moreno (2010) shared a glance of professionals about the qualifications or traits that professors must display when he compiled different descriptions through the years:

according to Gibbs (2002) ‘Teachers need to be able to survive the demands, threats and challenges within the diverse circumstances of teaching.’ He stated that an effective teacher needs the capacity to be persistent, flexible, and innovative on new teaching approaches and be prepared in the case of failure. For Stronge et al. (2004) the effective teacher has a psychological influence on the students, having a strong influence on their achievement. According to Killen (2006), the effective teacher is the one who has clear objectives and own goals of teaching. A teacher can provide the students with the answer of a question, which can be effective only if the main objective is simply to compare and analyze different results. However, if the objective is to make the student think about the option of providing different possible answers, the teacher, in this case, may be regarded as ineffective. Smith (1995) stated that teachers and teaching need to be creative to allow the students learn naturally. He also added that educational institutions should spend more time on “doing” and less time on ‘talking about learning and teaching’ In addition, Gurney (2007) suggested that instead of reflecting on theory and practice, we should reflect on what we do in the classroom (p. 36).

There are certain qualities that help people be high-qualified teachers such as patience, enthusiasm to help others, social skills and the ability to communicate effectively and in a variety of ways. It is also important for teachers to continue learning, even from their students, and to be up-dated by means of research and investigation in any aspect of pedagogy that may be relevant. Furthermore, it is said that the greatest teachers are the ones who demonstrate true passion when they teach, and a real interest in their students. In other words, these teachers are the ones who get worried about the material, care about planning high-quality lessons full of interaction, and try to make the learning process creative.

2.2.1.4 Students' qualifications

Second language learning is a complicated task for the pupils as well. This learning process requires motivation, a positive attitude and linguistic abilities, and a purpose to acquire a language. Galatro (2018) explained the reason of this phenomenon when she said “children ... have the time and energy to spend hours in environments that challenge their communication skills... Children are also better candidates for immersive language learning because they have fewer inhibitions.” Studies about learning a language states that children are more likely to learn a language faster and easier (para. 1).

Teenagers, on the other hand, tend to find more difficult to learn a second language. The reason for teenagers to have a negative attitude towards a language and towards education itself is that they are in a stage in which they are overcoming all kinds of issues mainly in their social, physical and psychological development. This process is explained in the following way:

Due to developments in the limbic system of the brain, teenagers are extremely prone to risk taking. They also tend to be driven by emotions rather than logic. However, they are very capable learners, often more capable than they're given

credit for, and are also very adaptive. The challenge, then, is to find a way to tap into this adaptive capability (Putchu, 2015).

Of course, this cannot be generalized to all teenagers. Aspects like culture and values are relevant and might influence teenagers' personality and attitude. Due to these psychological aspects, teachers are responsible for encouraging students' participation in order to create a suitable teaching environment.

2.2.2 Speaking Participation in the English Classroom background

Understanding the development of the four language skills inside classrooms and the whole learning process requires the analysis of different approaches and theories. Behaviorist theory, the Social Cognitive View and the Affective Filter theory are second learning language theories that cover this important language-learning issue among students.

2.2.2.1 Behaviorist theory

Behaviorists focus on the significance that behavior has in the learning process of each single person in society. They straightforwardly argued that "the observation of behavior is the best or most convenient way of investigating psychological and mental processes" (Behaviorist learning theory, n.d., para. 4). The process of language learning in this theory works as a behavior like any other conscious or subconscious activity of people. Those mental processes that behaviorists see are the result of constant practice, feedback and most important habit formation. People or learners that constantly encourage themselves or have access to different sources of second language learning have a great chance to acquire the language more rapidly. The continuous interaction leads the students to learn the second language. Having an active participation not only will enhance their

competence in the target language (L2), but also will develop certain social skills regarding to the use of the L2.

2.2.2.2 Social Cognitive View

One more relevant aspect related to second language learning is the Social Cognitive View, which deals with the manipulation of the information in the brain. To be more specific about this theory, the web article *What is cognitive learning? (2020)* points out that “learning happens in a social context and is impacted by the person, environment, and behavior. In social cognitive theory it is suggested that there are several factors that impact a person’s ability to perform and learn” (para. 7). In regards to second language learning this theory sees language as an object that be manipulated by the students, it is not a strict pattern that follows just one or two rules to learn it. People or students in this case need to know that there are different ways that can complement each other to learn a foreign language. Cognitive activity allows people to explore the language in diverse steps. Learners have their own strategies to process information they need.

2.2.2.3 The Affective Filter theory

Continuing with second language learning theories, the Affective Filter hypothesis enters in this realm of learning. This theory has considerable importance because it deals with the explanation of the role feelings play in the process of learning and using second language in the classroom. Depending on the grade of comfort provided by the environment and activities students’ affective filter can be high or low. Excitement and willingness are two states that can hinder or improve learning the new culture’s language. To have a clear example of the role of this hypothesis, Schütz (2019) acknowledged that

Learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, low level of anxiety and extroversion are better equipped for success in second language

acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, introversion and inhibition can raise the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. (para. 13)

Thus, learning is related to the pupils' state or mind and disposition to use the target language in the classroom. The role of educators in this specific case is to provide a secure environment where students can interact among themselves without falling into stressful situations. To keep a lowered affective filter is a key to learn a second language. Moreover, it is relatively relevant for teachers to understand what kind of activities or actions can fit the student's needs.

This Affective Filter hypothesis implementation clears the way for teachers, since it promotes a better understanding of how to enrich the classroom. Teachers, then, have the opportunity to promote an effective language learning in order to improve students' communicative competence.

2.2.3 The Relationship between Speaking and Participation

2.2.3.1 Syllabus as a Guide to Develop English Lessons

Due to globalization, every single country has had to make adjustments to be capable of controlling their economy and helping their citizens to have a better life status. For many years, English has had an important role in global economy that is why it is imperative, nowadays, to learn this language.

The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) has decreed English as a must subject in every institution of the country, in rural as well as urban regions. In fact, the English syllabus was "written in order to help the students to participate actively into the challenges of the global economy for the benefit of the country (Araya & Cordoba, 2011, p. 2)".

According to MEP, English teaching should be based on three main components which are

“the formal, the functional and the cultural aspects.” directly related to real communication (Araya & Cordoba, 2011, p. 2). On the other hand, the topics and objectives have been carefully chosen in order to enhance students’ learning process. The curriculum has as a purpose to move students to be capable of getting involved in real communication. This purpose is closely related to teachers since they are the ones in charge of guiding students towards this goal.

Teachers require the mastery of teaching and learning techniques, methodologies and strategies that can help to develop students’ different skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking. Teachers’ role is essential when developing the curricula properly because they are responsible of teaching the students to appreciate, but at the same time, to learn real communication on the target language. Moreover, teachers bear the responsibility of choosing materials and activities that will cover all the students learning styles and levels, taking into consideration the curricular adaptations in the class. For professors of English, unlike other professionals, everyday knowledge conforms a “set of representations that [they] use to interpret, understand and orient they professional activity and daily life in all dimensions” (Araya & Cordoba, 2011, p. 6). That is to say that they not only need knowledge about theories on English training, but also to be familiar with social and institutional contexts because everyday life affects the way the students react to the class.

For teachers it is a difficult task to instruct students in a meaningful way if they do not have the required aids. For instance, to develop certain topics that may not be interesting for the students or that are difficult to teach, they have to follow the objectives even if they do not have the required materials or resources. On the one hand, it is an advantage because educators are free to plan what to do and how to do it. On the other hand, instructors do not have the required resources to be teaching, looking for materials

and preparing all the handouts they have to fill in. As a result, teachers have to be innovative to facilitate the acquisition of new information through an interesting way.

Using motivating teaching materials in English classes the acquisition of the language as well as the acquisition of values and attitudes will be promoted. This was described on the III English Teaching Congress as

providing students with authentic materials so that they can develop not only their grammatical competence, but also their discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Also, the teaching techniques described ... aim at empowering students to not only take charge of their language learning process in class but also outside of class (2020 p. 9).

Moreover, the use of appropriate material should enhance students' participation promoting a better environment in the classroom.

2.2.3.2 Learning styles in the English class

Teenage students might get affected when learning a second language by aspects such as their proficiency and their emotional condition; for example, error correction, pronunciation mistakes, and the fact of being forced to participate in the class. There are different researchers who have tried to classify different types of learning styles according to the students' performance. In regards to Costa Rican students, English Language Literature Program Bilingual Experimental High Schools established that

learning styles are presented as possibilities to be included when planning learning activities to guarantee success in the formative process... defines learning style as the outward expression to the human mind's ability to mediate knowledge; that is, the means and capacities human beings employ to receive and express information (2011, p. 19).

Though this is a general description, it applies for most students, and it helps to develop the learning strategies according to the students' style to learn.

2.2.4 Language Anxiety

Every person is different as well as their reaction toward a situation. Sweating, nervousness and insecurity are some characteristics of people when they do not feel comfortable. This situation is also lived in the English learning process. This condition has not been widely studied but it is important to highlight that “as for the academic benefits, having a robust growth mindset implies learners deal with setbacks, feedback, and challenges much better in comparison with those students with a tendency toward the fixed mindset” (Barquero & Leis, 2019, p. 65).

Learning a language is equivalent to any other learning process in the sense that the learners' perception will play an imperative role. For example, when people are learning to ride a bike it is quite likely they will fall, however, depending on the learners' perspective and perseverance they will achieve the goal of mastering this activity. Like the exemplification mentioned before, when learning a second language, the learners might face challenges but depending on their mindset, these challenges can be overcome.

One of the main language barriers is the language anxiety. This emotion is described by some authors as

the *fight or flight* response, which is a normal anxiety response: ‘Increased adrenaline causes us to feel alert and energetic, and gives us a spurt of strength, preparing us to attack (fight) or escape to safety (flight)’; in other words, experiencing anxiety is fine. Nonetheless, if the anxiety responds to fears that are only part of one's imagination, that is negative anxiety (Lopez, 2018, p.67).

2.2.4.1 Role of anxiety in the classroom

Language anxiety can play a positive or negative role the learning progression, however the person's perspective will determine if this anxiety level is measured and if is a challenge or an obstacle. In the learning perspective educator must be a guide so the majority of the students are capable of dealing with the experienced anxiety. Lopez (2018) also explained that

students are less likely to volunteer and participate in oral activities, they avoid difficult linguistic structures and might feel they are left behind; therefore, they will not produce as much. Thus, not only is oral production affected but there is a limitation in listening comprehension, as well as in vocabulary retrieval; consequently, those negative implications would extend to learners' tests and grades. Undoubtedly, language anxiety is worth of attention (p. 68).

It is imperative to address the situation lived in the English learning classes concerning language anxiety. To do so, it is equally important to understand the factors that might trigger this behavior because these factors might simplify or obstruct the leaning process.

2.2.4.2 Language anxiety factors

One of the main factors to analyze when covering language anxiety is the intrinsic factor for motivation. Teenagers are not only affected by the fact of being learning a new language, but also due to the physical and emotional changes, they are facing during this stage. To understand this process, it is required to have a clear definition if the word motivation. To study the impact that motivation has on the students we have to understand its origins.

The term ‘motivation’ was originally derived from the Latin word *movere*, which means ‘to move’. However, this one word is obviously an inadequate definition for our purpose here. What is motivation? How do you create, foster and maintain motivation? It is not too straightforward to define motivation, which is why; everyone can make their own definition so that there are several definitions of motivation. According to Scott, motivation is a process of stimulating people to action to accomplish desired results (Seven 2020 as cited by Scott, n.d., p. 63).

The motivation purposes might differ in the Costa Rican students. For instance, they might be motivated to attend to classes, others might be interested in learning, and some others become more attracted to the rewards or successfully learning a language.

Intrinsic motivation refers to internal desire to perform an action because it is enjoyable and satisfying. When learning is perceived as goal in itself, students find the task interesting, and challenging, they become intrinsically motivated. Extrinsic motivation, however, comes from external factors driving learning for instrumental goals such as earning reward or avoiding punishment (Linguarum, 2013, as cited on Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003, p. 271).

The factors previously mentioned promote a learning process full of challenges and areas of opportunity both for the learner as well as for the instructors. Teachers must take advantage of controlling these intrinsic and extrinsic factors associated to motivation to reduce language anxiety.

2.2.4.3 Error correction and its relation to anxiety

Learning includes the process of receiving feedback and correcting mistakes. If these errors are not corrected it might lead to fossilization. Fossilization is defined by the British Council as “the process in which incorrect language becomes a habit and cannot

easily be corrected” (n.d. para. 1). The need of correcting error can cause anxiety both for the learner and the tutor.

Some studies prove the importance of the feedback and the way it is provided. It is explained that

in any educational setting, feedback plays an important role to encourage student’s learning. It has to be an invaluable tool for facilitating the acquisition process, assessing learners’ performance... interaction between teacher and student need high communication skills and is considered as a necessary tool to motivate students and help teachers understand how effective could be their teaching methodology specially in terms of error correction strategies...As speaking is a challenging and painful task, providing students with suitable type of feedback have to be taken into account (Ebrahimi & Hajmalek, (2016) as cited on Lazaraton, 2001, p.114).

Preparation and different ways to provide feedback can help to increase or decrease the language anxiety lived by students when receiving assessment from the professor or from their peers.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This project studies a relevant issue in the learning process: language anxiety. This phenomenon might hinder the student's performance, and create fear towards second language acquisition. Though many researchers and experts have investigated the causes and possible solutions to limit or reduce student's language anxiety, there is still a considerable field of study about this topic.

In this study, an exploration of the theoretical background has been covered. This chapter depicts the set of techniques that have been gathered to verify the students' language anxiety and its influence towards their learning competence in regards to oral participation in English.

This chapter describes important aspects related to the methodological framework such as the research type that subdivided into the purpose, the framework, sources of information, variables, nature of the research and character. Another section covers its subjects and sources of information that is divided into sample and its type as well as the techniques and the instruments implemented.

3.1 Investigation

3.2 Type of Research

Below are all the factors that led to design the type of research developed.

3.2.1 Purpose

Although this project covers at certain point the theoretical and the applied research, it develops the applied research at greater scale. Applied research has been described in the blog *What is Applied Research?* as "to test pedagogic processes in order to discover the best teaching and learning methods" (2021, para. 14). This project pretends to promote consciousness towards the language anxiety problem, but also to propose possible solution to cope with it. The same blog also mentioned that this type of research promotes solutions

by the means of gathering information through the methods implemented (What is Applied Research?, 2021, para. 15).

This project highlights the problem observed as well as recommend possible variables that might trigger it as well as some others that might help to solve it.

3.2.2 Temporal Dimension

The temporal o cross sectional studies has a main characteristic that “the observation of variables... is performed in a single moment the same, when the researcher records a ‘photograph’ of the facts variables of interest and not the ‘movie’ of its evolution” (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018, p. 356). Taking this explanation into consideration it is valid to state that this research is temporal since it is planned and executed in a specific timeframe to analyze its variables.

3.2.3 Framework

Due to the nature of this project and the extension of its objectives this research is consider a micro framework. In the words of Gilke et al a micro framework “examines individuals and individual-level interactions of various kinds, including, for example, people’s intentions, feelings, and beliefs” (n. d., para 2). We expect to get results applicable to students and educators in similar conditions and this situation should not be generalized as experienced in the whole district or country.

3.2.4 Character

There are some research designs that can be used in this project due to its benefits and characteristics to reach the main objectives. As described on Types of Research (2020) the most common research designs are

theoretical research, also referred to as pure or basic research, focuses on generating knowledge, regardless of its practical application... descriptive research is to define

the characteristics of a particular phenomenon without necessarily investigating the causes that produce it... Explanatory research is the most common type of research method and is responsible for establishing cause-and-effect relationships that allow generalizations to be extended to similar realities...A correlational study aims to determine whether a variable changes, how much the other elements of the observed system change (para. 2).

This project can be classified as a theoretical study because of the fact that previous background in the language anxiety field has been analyzed as well as a descriptive study to understand its characteristics or implications in participation. It is also an explicative study since it analyses the emotions lived through the implementation of methodologies. It can also be considered a correlational study since we intend to see the relationships between the variables of interest.

3.3 Nature of the research

This project has quantitative features since it considers and follows the use of sampling techniques such as surveys whose findings may be expressed numerically. This project also entails qualitative characteristics such as the quality, type, or components of a group. This has been determined taking into consideration

that quantitative are distinct from qualitative data. Whereas the first designates numerical quantities such as measurements or counts, for example, height, weight, price, the second can be used to describe other sorts of attributes, for example, sex, nationality or commodity. In the idiom of quantitative research, these sorts of attributes are referred to as 'soft' data, approximating rather than precisely measuring the characteristics of a thing or phenomenon (Franklin, 2012, p. 241).

3.4 Subjects and Sources of Information

3.4.1 Sources of information

To provide reliability to the project it is imperative to use valid and updated references. These pieces of information have been gathered from different sources or channels.

3.4.2 Primary sources

Primary sources “expose for the first time scientific discoveries, observations and original data. The data they provide is first-hand” (del Castillo & Olivares, 2014, as cited on López, 2009; Gueva and Miladis, 2009, p.133). Primary sources include books and Scientific articles. Such references have been developed or supported by experts and that can be implemented to validate a fact or to expand a topic.

One of the primary sources implemented in this project is all the documents shared and delivered by the Ministry of Public educations since this governmental institution is the one with valid knowledge; such knowledge has been developed and supported by experts. This information can easily be implemented to validate a fact.

3.4.3 Secondary sources

Another type of sources included or used in this project are the secondary sources. Del Castillo (2014) also describe the secondary sources as documents that compile and review the information published in the primary sources. They take up the primary or original documents. They provide a synthesis of the information that exists in the primary documents on topics of interest; Furthermore, they are used to refer users to documents whose contents can help solve their information needs (p. 133).

Some of the secondary sources used are dictionaries to describe or depict important definitions as well as abstracts that cover similar researches.

3.4.4 Tertiary Sources

Finally, the tertiary sources are also used in this project as foundations of information. It can be said that a tertiary sources “refers to documents that summarize names and titles of other magazines and periodicals/bulletins, as well as titles that contain references” (del Castillo , 2014, as cited on López, 2009).

Some of the main common implemented tertiary sources are the bulletins published about the education in Costa Rica as well as the articles circulated in public universities of the same country.

3.5 Sampling and type

To develop a research it is required to choose a target population and a sample group to implement or apply the proposal. In Inyang (2017) words, the sample is “a small collection or unit that represents an entire population or area by virtue of the fact that it includes the important characteristics or features of the larger collection (p. 12).” In terms of the sampling type selected, we used the random sampling strategy. He also explained that this sampling strategy “gives each unit an equal chance of being selected. This is used in order to avoid bias towards the selection of certain units individuals, say, or groups or plots of land (p. 12).”

3.5.1 Population

The population of the study are students from the Sykes Academy.

3.5.2 Sample

Regarding the sample, a group of beginner students was selected to accomplish the research. The type of sampling method used in this specific case was the convenience sampling since the teacher facilitated the group.

3.6 Techniques and instruments

3.6.1 Description of the instruments

Some instruments were designed and used to gather the necessary data to analyze the problem of participation and language anxiety that are the aim of this project. These instruments are going to be described separately in the following lines:

3.6.1.1 Instrument #1 Pre-test and post-test

The pre-test and the post-test are a structured scale that mainly covers the students' feelings or perception towards motivation and language anxiety. This scale was developed by Djafri (2018) when he analyzed this phenomenon. In order to identify students' improvement regarding participation and language anxiety, the researchers administer a post-test that is exactly the same as the pre-test. The original scale has been modified due to length and research purpose.

3.6.1.2 Instrument #2 Class Observation

The observation is a structured observation in which the researcher creates certain aspects that will help to notice or detect relevant features like the amount of students' participation, the role of the teacher, and some others. This scale is divided into two sections: the teacher and the students in order to obtain information from both informants. The observer writes aspects or patterns of behavior that they expect to occur or not, and writes a scale to categorize them. This scale ranges between always, most of the times, sometimes, seldom and never.

3.6.1.3 Instrument #3 Teacher's Survey

The questionnaire for the teachers gathers information related to the participation and language anxiety problem and teachers' opinion about this issue. The questionnaire contains questions that the teachers answer by using their knowledge and experience about the topic being researched. The first four questions are close questions in which the informants share their opinion. The last question is an open-ended question about their opinions regarding students' language anxiety and the main way to attack the problem.

3.7 Variables

The variables must be consider so the project develops its path properly. Korb (2012) has described a variable as “the characteristic or attribute of an individual, group, educational system, or the environment that is of interest in a research study” (para. 1).

The paragraphs below describe variables of interest to be considered (taken into account) for the development of this project.

3.7.1 Independent Variables

The independent variables are the factors that can be modified, changed or controlled by the researcher as explained by Martínez (2012) when he detailed that an independent variable is the fact that is presented as an antecedent, cause or condition that affects in a determined way the dependent variable. This category will be the one manipulated by the researcher in order to generate the proposed changes (p.134).

3.7.2 Dependent variables

The other set of variables included in the hypothesis is the dependent variables. The dependent variables are the fact that occurs as a consequence or effect of the independent variable. These types of categories are predictable as long as the independent variable is manipulated. By observing and measuring them, the specialist can determine whether or not

their innervation has generated the expected changes in the hypothesis or hypotheses (Martínez, 2012, p 134).

This project proposes the use of a set of speaking techniques to establish the relationships among the different variables. The variables on this project are the level of students speaking proficiency while participating in English classes and the influence of language anxiety in the English lessons and the influence of such speaking techniques to diminish or increase the other two variables. The variable level of students' participation depends on the other variable, level of language anxiety, since the results rely on the appropriate use and implementation the speaking techniques.

3.7.3 Operacionalization of Variables

The following chart includes variables of interest to be considered for the development of this project.

Elemental Unit	Characteristics	Units of Measurement
The students' speaking participation will provide the information elicited by the measured units.	Level of students' participation (Dependent)	Pre-test
	Level of students' participation (Dependent)	Structured observations
	Level of students' participation (Dependent)	Post-test
	Language anxiety (Independent)	
	Use of speaking techniques (Independent)	

CHAPTER IV:
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

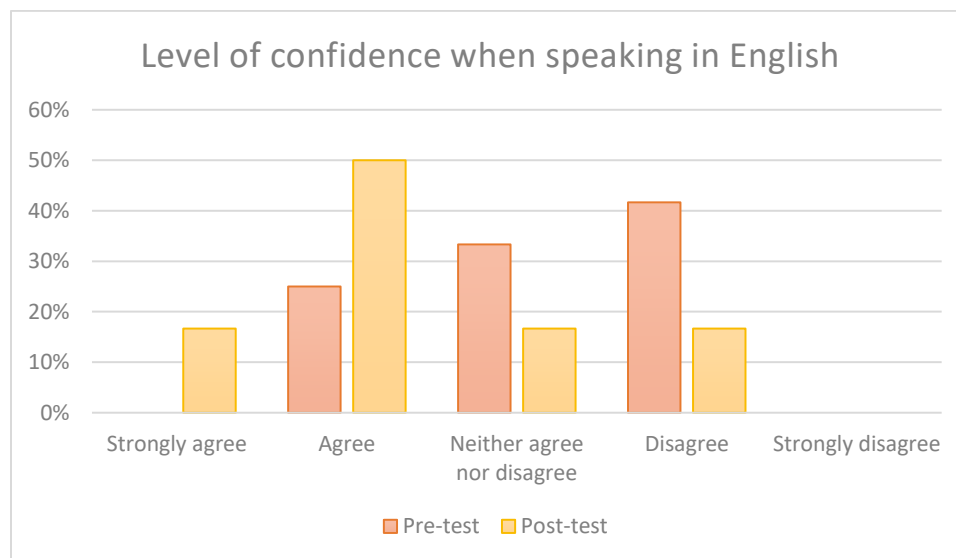
Next is the presentation of the results obtained from the applied instruments. These instruments are useful to gain a better understanding on the students and teachers emotion and perception towards the topic in question as well as throwing details about the factors involved.

4.1 Information obtained from the pre-test and post-test

A pre-test and a post-test were administered to the students from the Sykes Academy. These tests are part of the Instrument #1. The instruments gathers the students' perception about language anxiety and some factors that influence it.

The following graphs illustrates the data gathered from this instrument.

Graphic 1



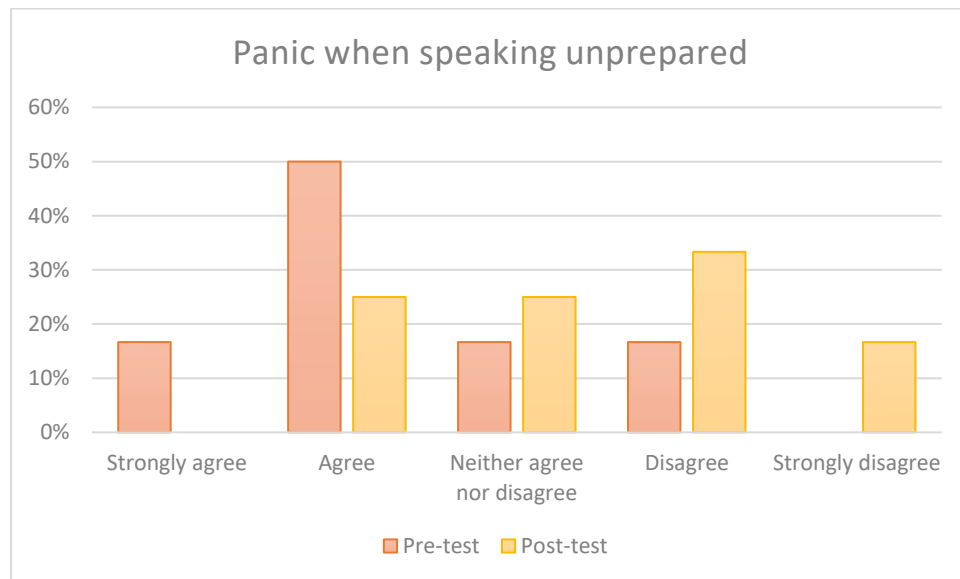
Source: Instrument #1 Survey applied to the students of the Sykes Academy

The graph above shows the learners feeling towards the target language. The statement says: "I feel confident in myself whenever I speak in a foreign language class." In the pre-test the majority of the students were not feeling confident when participating in English since 42% of the sample express disagreement with the statement presented. On the other hand, while gathering the information on the post-test, the feeling of the students

towards the use of the target language improved since 50% of the group mentioned they were confident when producing in English.

The information above suggests that at the beginning of the course the majority of the students were facing certain degree of anxiety when producing in English whereas at the end of the course their confidence improved.

Graphic 2

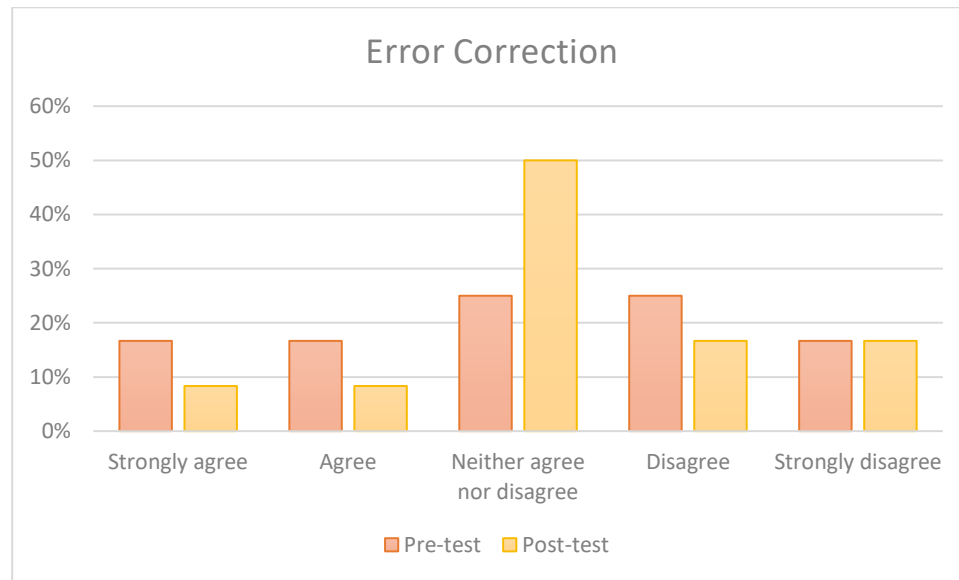


Source: Instrument #1 Survey applied to the students of the Sykes Academy

The graph above demonstrates that in the pre-test 50% of the students panicked when having to participate unprepared in English. The statement "I panicked when I had to speak unprepared in a foreign language class" demonstrates that before the instructions the majority of them felt they were not ready to do so. However, towards the end of the course the majority moved from neutral until disagreement as shown by the fact that 49% were in disagreement or total disagreement.

The information illustrated in the graph shows that during the course progress the students were exposed to impromptu activities that moved them to participate proactively and in a more natural way.

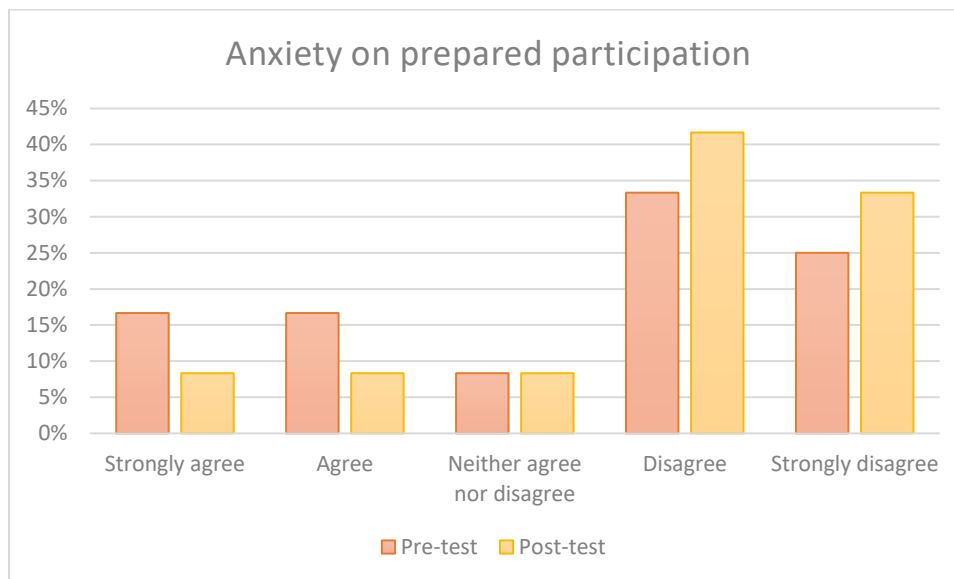
Graphic 3



Source: Instrument #1 Survey applied to the students of the Sykes Academy

This graph gathers interesting information about the students' perception towards the error correction received by the instructor. 34% of the students stated they felt ashamed when being corrected. Towards the post-test the students showed a more neutral emotion towards the corrections administered.

The data gathered from the students show that the environment experienced while the feedback was provided did not have much negative sequels on the learners.

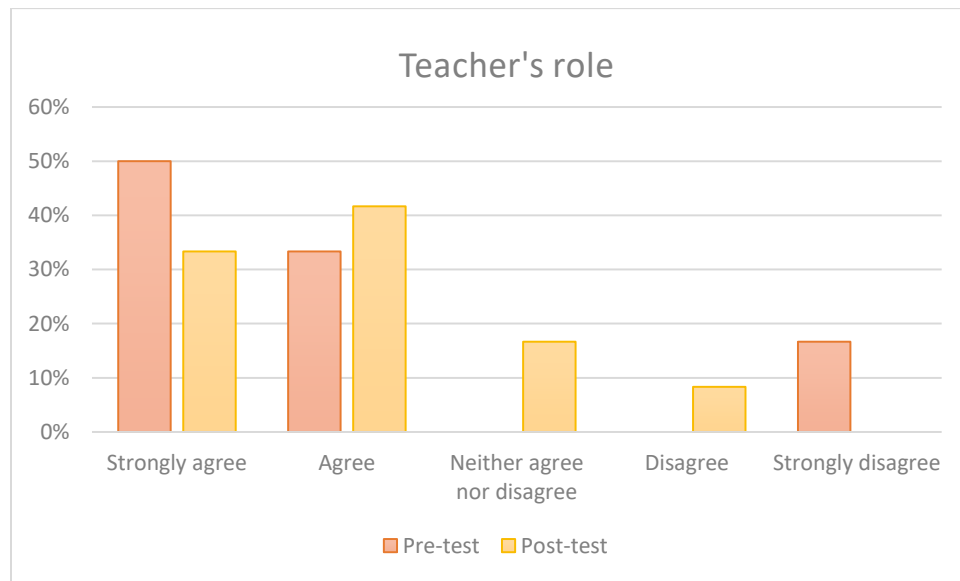
Graphic 4

Source: Instrument #1 Survey applied to the students of the Sykes Academy

This graph illustrates that the majority of students care about the English lessons. In fact, the results obtained on the pre and post tests remained quite similar which demonstrated that when the students had the opportunity to prepare their participation in the target language the level of anxiety suffered was diminished.

58% affirm that they entirely agree or are in agreement with the presented statement: Even though I had prepared myself for the language class, I still felt anxious. In the same way, while administering the post-test a 75% of the group was also in agreement of this idea.

It can be considered that most of the students really like or enjoy the opportunity of preparing their participation and it helped to improved their contributions inside the classroom.

Graphic 5

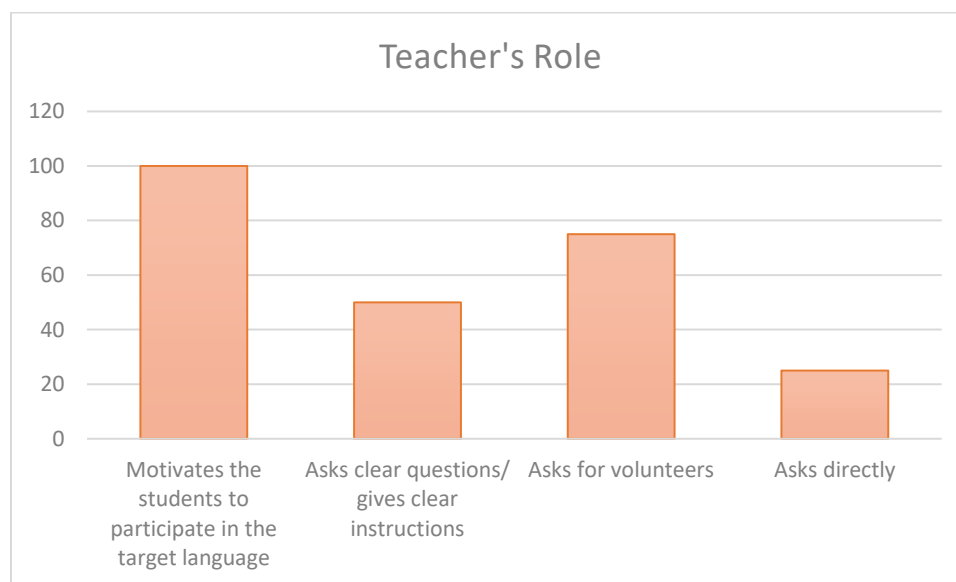
Source: Instrument #1 Survey applied to the students of the Sykes Academy

The graph above shows that a significant number of students consider the teacher's role important on their process. In fact, 50% totally agree and 33% agree as stated in the pre-test. In addition, just a minority showed negative feelings towards their professors.

This information gives a chance to see the importance that the teacher has. This information also reveals that the students need guidance in order to have more opportunities for the students to participate.

4.2 Information obtained from the teacher and students during the observation

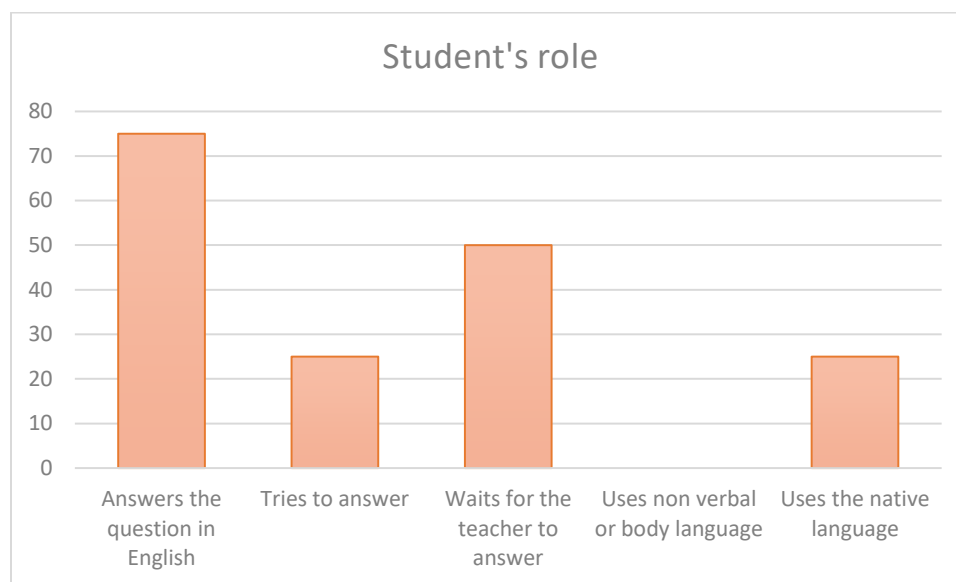
The following is the analysis of the results obtained from an instrument base on both the role of the teacher and the role of the students in the class in instrument #2. There was one teacher and twelve students being evaluated. The following graphs present the information gathered from this instrument.

Graphic 6

Source: Instrument #2 Class Observation

The graph above illustrates that the teacher asks for the students' opinions 100% of the times. The teacher motivates the students to participate and asks clear questions to the students 50% of the times. Also, the teacher asks for volunteers or asks directly 75% of the times whereas 25% of the times she needed to request direct participation.

This information shows that the teacher is always trying to ask the students for their personal opinion. This information also reveals that most of the times the teacher is motivating the students to participate and that she is asking clear questions to the students to reinforce the students' learning process. Furthermore, sometimes the teacher is asking for volunteers or directly which are helpful strategies to make them participate.

Graphic 7

Source: Instrument #2 Class Observation

This graph demonstrates that 75% of the times the students answer the inquiries in the target language. Even 25% of them try to answer even when not completely sure about their answer. The students wait for the teacher to answer the questions 50% of the times. Finally, the students answer the questions in Spanish 25% of the times.

This information reveals that most of the times the students are paying attention to the topic which means that they feel interested in the class. Additionally, the students are sometimes waiting for the teacher to give the answer or they try to guess the answer; both aspects allow the students to develop their knowledge, and to gain confidence to acquire the target language. Unfortunately, a small number of the students are giving their answers in Spanish which means that they are not properly developing the speaking skill.

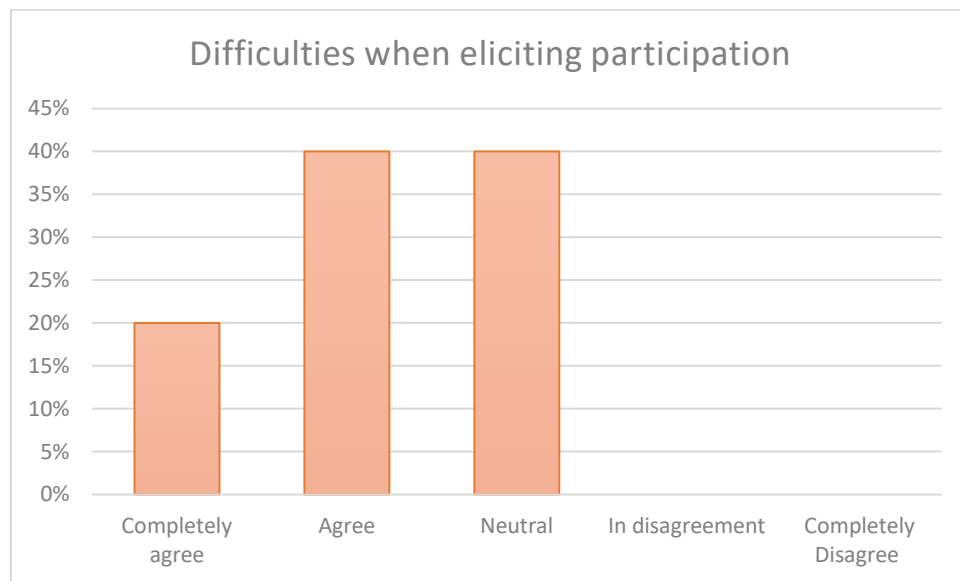
Both graphs reveal the importance of the role of the teacher and the role of the students. It is clear that both parts have a significant role to develop the class properly. The information gathered pointed out that in one hand, the teacher is motivating the students to

participate and to give their opinion while in the other hand the students are motivated and participate without being forced; this situation helps them to develop their skills for the language.

4.3 Information obtained from the teachers' survey

The following graphs illustrates the information obtained from the survey applied to the teachers in regards to their students' participation based on the instrument #3. The teachers who answered this questionnaire were professors from the Sykes Academy.

Graphic 8

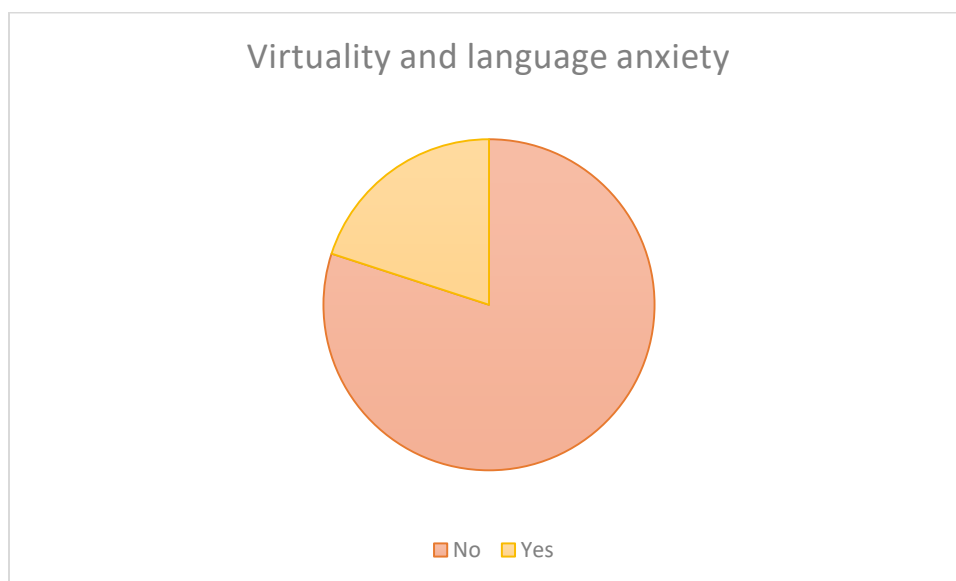


Source: Instrument #3: Survey for Teachers

This graph illustrates that teachers have to face some difficulties when getting participation from the students because 20% of interviewees said that they have to deal with this problem often and 40% said that they completely agree or felt neutral about the difficulties face. None of the interviewees expressed being in disagreement to the question: Do you face any difficulties in getting participation from the students?

The information gathered in this questionnaire suggests that the problem of encouraging participation among students is real and that teachers have to find ways to fight against it. As the percentages show, this problem is not always present in the classrooms, but most of the times teachers will find some difficulties when getting participation from their pupils.

Graphic 9



Source: Instrument #3: Survey for Teachers

The preceding graph confirms how teachers are really concern about their students' results and progress and how they face the virtuality nowadays. 80% of the teachers said that virtual lessons do not diminish the level of language anxiety. They always encourage the students to participate but the use of these technological tools have been a limitation rather than a benefit.

This information presents that it is possible to obtain positive results from the students' participation from every group. Moreover, by interviewing different teachers we can understand that participation and language anxiety is a problem among students

everywhere and that teachers are really worried and trying to find techniques or activities to overcome this difficulty.

CHAPTER V:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter allows to synthesize all the theoretical, methodological and analytical aspect related to this project.

The purpose of this section is to describe how the research thrown its results, expected or not, about language anxiety. These conclusions are valid for this specific process, but allow future researchers to analyze possible variable that could be modified in order to improve the overall results obtained.

5.1 Conclusions

- It was noticeable that language anxiety is an important issue to take into consideration when teaching a second language because through the interaction between teacher and students and between students and students, the learning environment will be more suitable to develop the learning process.
- Motivation is a key issue to obtain meaningful output from the pupils throughout the lessons.
- Self-confidence in students is imperative because confident students participate more than those students who are reluctant to participate.
- The way the teacher interacts with the students had a positive or negative effect on the way they will react towards the subject or the topic. If the teachers are not interested in the development of the lesson or do not try to be innovative they will transmit a negative influence, but if teachers try hard to help students they will feel interested in the topic.
- Teachers need to be adaptable to the students' need. They have to look for techniques to convey the message and reach the goal that is helping the students to learn English.

- The teacher's feedback to students contributes to increase the amount of student's effective partaking in the class development in the sense that they will be more open to participate if they feel that their participation is meaningful and right.
- Proper choice of material along with creative activities facilitates participation in the class. Not only activities are essential to promote an exchange in classes but also materials because if the range of material is limited, students will lose their attention and will distract.
- The type of grouping helped the students to feel confident during the development of the classes. Sometimes students do not feel they can do certain tasks, but if they are supported by their classmates, they are going to develop their tasks better. That is why it is important to implement group-peer work.
- The implementation of creative activities is relevant when promoting participation in the class since students can get bored of doing the same activities or they can gain more benefits from other activities that will develop all their linguistic skills.

5.2 Recommendations

Every learning process has valuable lessons both for the students as well as for the teachers. Below a list of some suggestions for future projects.

- Before planning a lesson, teachers have to plan a way to promote participation because in that way they encourage the learning process.
- Teachers have to motivate the students through catching activities and honest conversations to trigger off all type of students to enjoy the process they are going through.
- It is imperative to promote self-confidence in students by being careful in the way teachers correct students' mistakes and help them to overcome learning obstacles.
- To interact with the student in a respectful way will allow the teacher to notice the students' concerns and likes to develop a lesson that will cover the students' expectations.
- Teachers need to be like chameleons to get as much participation as possible from the students.
- Educators should control the amount of students' output to balance their contribution so that all students participate.
- As teachers need to get prepared to teach a lesson, students need to be well prepared to participate.
- Materials and activities are triggers that will activate the students' interest in the English classes.
- To vary the type of grouping will improve students' interaction with different classmates and the degree of support that they give each other in the lessons.

- The implementation of different activities should be necessary for all teachers because it will help them to develop their lessons easily and will help their students to get interested in learning a new language.

CHAPTER VI:
PROPOSAL

6.1 Name of the proposal

The name of the proposal is “SPEAK UP” since this phrasal verb gives the idea of expressing one's opinions frankly and openly.

6.2 Place to be developed, organization and involved population

This proposal is planned to be carried out at Sykes Academy where the project was developed. To the same sample to project was developed.

6.3 General and specific objectives for the proposal

6.3.1 General Objective

- To implement a set of speaking techniques to improve participation and to control language anxiety.

6.3.2 Specific objectives

- To implement the use of different activities to improve the oral participation in English.
- To create workshops for students to interact in the target language.
- To create a workshop for teachers to implement materials and activities in virtual classes.

6.4 Chronogram of activities

With the aim of continuing with the learning process, two important participants are involved: the teacher who is in charge of choosing the activities and leading the lessons and the students who play an important role on their progress. The use of those activities and tools will promote a better control of the virtual class and will improve the participation.

Activities chronogram:

This treatment consists of a set of speaking techniques to improve participation and reduce the level of language anxiety. The instructors develop and put into practice activities

that diminish or control the language anxiety level experienced. This process takes place during one month approximately in which the instructors analyze the problem with a pre-test, suggest a possible solution with creative activities, and evaluate the results through a post-test.

Up next, it is possible to find a list of the most important techniques in a general way:

Technique	Purpose
Let's Share	This technique has as a purpose to involve the students to a complete interaction among all the classmates.
Let's Prepare	The goal of this technique is to allow the students to prepare for the tasks ahead with an effective warm-up. This gives everyone in the class plenty opportunity to get prepared for their English Class.
Let's Enroll in the activity	This technique involves the students who are reluctant to participate by giving them specific roles.
Let's Analyze the mistakes	This technique moves the students to correct their mistakes by different means that are not going to hinder their learning process.
Let's Keep it fun	After having a productive warm-up, it is necessary to enhance the students to keep them active and interested in the topic.
Let's Use comment cards	This technique promotes class discussion by using students' own ideas.

Let's Practice	After the presentation of the topic, students need to practice the new material. Every activity should be intended to make students practice the language.
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1. Let's Share:

Sharing ideas and thoughts is really important since it promotes critical thinking. This technique involves speaking as well as the listening skill of the students. It consists of having the students talking about whatever comes to their minds related to the topic. The steps to follow are:

- A. The professor creates breakrooms.
- B. The teacher shared the link to generate a topic they will choose.
- C. They must fill in the silence; they can say just words or sentences if they want.
- D. The professor moves around all break rooms to check if they are doing well.

2. Let's Prepare:

It pretends to offer attractive warm-ups that will catch the student's attention. There are thousands of warm-ups that can be useful for any topic and for any class. Warm-ups have the objective to prepare students for different tasks. By means of this technique, students will be willing to start the class and to play a game before any class. It is important to provide the maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and shared knowledge. The main warm up of this technique is named "Match the Sentence" and consists of going around the class and having each student completing a sentence.

- A. The teacher sends in fragments of sentences to each student.

- B. One student reads his/her segment aloud and the student who thinks that he/she has the rest of the sentence reads it aloud.

3. Let's Enroll in the Activity:

This activity pretends to guide the opportunity to the students who are reluctant to talk by offering them important roles in the development of the class discussion. In order to develop this activity the students work in small groups where they are the leaders. The steps to develop the activity consist of the following:

- A. The teacher creates a roulette that is stopped by a student.
- B. Each tab contains a different situation that the students have to perform.
- C. They perform the actions written on the tab. They have to ask for help to their classmates.

4. Let's Analyze the Mistakes:

Through this technique, the teacher promotes the correction of errors on grammatical structures, pronunciation, spelling, and so on, so that students feel confident to participate. The teacher uses the online board and the repetition of structures as a means to make the students understand and practice. The activity consists of impromptu talks. This activity is fully explained as follows:

- A. The teacher shared a chart with different topics for the students to develop orally.
- B. The students have to talk for 30 seconds giving their opinion, facts or reaction about the topics related to Specific Information of words in a Given Context.
- C. The teacher writes the students' mistakes.
- D. The students and the teacher detect the mistakes together, analyze the mistakes and correct them.
- E. Finally, the students repeat the correct form in order to foster the accurate structure.

5. Let's Keep it Fun:

This technique has the goal to keep the class fun. After having an effective warm-up, students need to keep on with the same attitude developed through the warm-up. The mission of this technique falls directly on the teacher because he/she is the one who has to keep attractive activities for the students to maintain the willingness during the rest of the class. This activity is based on telling a story based on some clippings or images. The steps to develop this activity are:

- A. The teacher shares images related to the topic Specific Information of words in a given context.
- B. One student starts with the story by creating just one sentence. The following student repeats the former sentence and create his/her own based on the second image, and so on.

6. Let's Use Comment Cards:

This technique intends to facilitate the students with an opportunity to convey their thoughts. This activity is developed in the following steps:

- A. The teacher writes one opinion or question.
- B. Students write their own opinion.
- C. The teacher collects them and read them aloud in order to initiate the class discussion.

7. Let's Practice:

Speaking is practiced through an activity in which the group is deeply involved. This technique is named "Situation Solvers." It can be implemented by means of the following steps:

- A. The class is divided into small breakrooms.

- B. The teacher hands in a situation to each group.
- C. The students have some minutes to discuss it.
- D. Then, a spokesperson from each group describes the situation and the solution to the whole class.

GLOSARRY

Language anxiety: feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language context, including speaking, listening, and learning.

Apprehension: anxiety or fear that something bad or unpleasant will happen.

Participation: the action of taking part in something.

Motivation: the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way.

Learning Strategies: individual's way of organizing and using a particular set of skills in order to learn content or accomplish other tasks more effectively and efficiently in school as well as in non-academic settings.

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ANEXES

Annexe 1

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Annexe 2






Instrument #1 Foreign Language Anxiety Scale Pre and Post test

This questionnaire describes the emotional attitudes of English learners towards language classes, examines their general well-being.

We want to know what you think of them. Please indicate on the scale next to the statements how much you agree.

Just choose one option per box. There is no "good" or "bad" answer here. At the same time, we want to assure you that your responses are kept confidential.

The numbers mean:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
				

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in myself whenever I speak in a foreign language class.					
I panic when I had to speak unprepared in a foreign language class.					
I am ashamed when the teacher corrects my language mistakes in class.					
Even though I had prepared myself for the language class, I still felt anxious.					
The professor really helped me understand the English lessons					

Describe a situation or event that made you feel anxious or worried in your foreign language class.

Describe the options or ways to reduce anxiety in your foreign language class.

Annexe 3

Instrument #2 Class Observation

This observation focuses on specific aspects of the class that help the good development of English classes. The numbers mean:

100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Always	Most of the times	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

The teacher's Role

Aspect	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Motivates the students to participate in the target language					
Asks clear questions/ gives clear instructions					
Asks for volunteers					
Asks directly					

The Student's Role

Aspect	100%	75%	50%	25%	0%
Answers the question in English					
Tries to answer					
Waits for the teacher to answer					
Uses non verbal or body language					
Uses the native language					

Annexe 4

Instrument #3 Language Anxiety Teacher's Survey

The purpose of this survey to identify the impact of language anxiety in oral participation. The data collected will be kept confidential.

Select the option that best suits your opinion. Please indicate on the scale next to the statements how much you agree. The numbers mean:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
Do you face any difficulties in getting participation from the students?					
Do you include authentic material or activities to enhance students' participation?					
Are the techniques used worthy to reduce language anxiety?					

What is the main trigger for language anxiety and how do you manage it in your group?

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