

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



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES APPLIED BY
TEACHERS OF READINGS AND CONVERSATION I AND II THAT FACILITATE THE
DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL FLUENCY.

CASE: STUDENTS OF READINGS AND CONVERSATION I AND II AT THE FOREIGN
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INTRODUCTION

Most of people who study English as a second language do it because they want to have the capacity to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings not only in a written way, but also in an oral way. However, not all the people have the opportunity to obtain specific levels in the oral skill; this is due to a series of facts that take place during the whole English learning process. Moreover, being their main interest to become proficient in a second language, students place the speaking skill as one of the main goals of study.

In order to fulfill the needs of the students, teachers must base their teaching on those communicative activities that best fit on the development of adequate levels of fluency when practicing the language. Along with the process of learning a second language, students need to find many ways of how to develop and improve their oral skill easily. This research has been developed in order to provide information related to the use of communicative strategies, some of them already implemented by some teachers to the students so that they can improve their oral skill. The purpose of getting these activities is to provide other students ways to facilitate the learning of oral communication by putting them into practice.

The improvement of English speaking requires a variety of tools which include communicative activities, which are used in order to help students to develop a high level of oral fluency. Students need to be in constant contact with the language, the environment in which the students practice English is really helpful since it gives them the opportunity not only to practice but also to learn more vocabulary. That is why it is very important to identify the most effective communicative activities so that students can make a good use

of them in order to increase, their vocabulary, and linguistic skills to avoid facing problems when producing the language.

Since in the learning of English, the ones who receive most benefits are students, then they are the ones that have to do the greater part of the work. If they really want to succeed in the learning of English, they have to look for those activities that can help themselves to increase their oral fluency. In this research some of the activities that can be used by teachers and students to develop good levels of fluency are explained. Students should keep in mind that the more they practice, the more they will improve and increase their oral skill, and in that way to obtain the required level of oral fluency.

I. TOPIC

The effectiveness of the communicative activities applied by teachers of Readings and Conversation I and II that facilitate the development of oral fluency.

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learning English involves four main skills which are writing, reading, listening and speaking. Since speaking is a crucial part of a learning process, it is considered as the main means by which information is communicated both in and out of the classroom. Effective instructors provide students speaking strategies that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence when using it. Even though, students at the Foreign Language Department are provided with a list of communicative activities they can use; it is not enough for them to reach certain degree of oral fluency. One of the main reasons of this research work is to determine the activities that are more useful for students to improve their oral fluency.

An appropriate instruction to use the communicative activities will help students to develop a high level of oral fluency. The uses of grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, spelling, etc. are involved to the need to have an acceptable level of speaking. Communicative activities are in a way a tool applied by either teachers or students to reinforce and achieve an important skill which is oral fluency.

Due to the lack of fluency in the students at the Foreign Language Department, as researchers we have realized that there are some students with a serious problem of fluency even when they are almost about graduating, that is why the main purpose of this research

work is to identify which communicative activities have helped students of Readings and Conversation I and II at the Foreign Language Department to develop a high level of fluency in the oral skill. In order to take more advantage of this subject, some of the most useful communicative activities will be presented to increase students' fluency.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

As every research work brings contribution to the research literature in its field and also it shows the benefits that the participant acquires from it, this research work offers some benefits. One of the main benefits is to provide teachers and students some of the best communicative activities to apply in the subjects Readings and Conversation I and II in order to increase student's oral fluency. Those communicative activities will be aimed to help students improve their speaking skill so that they can be able to demonstrate ease and comfort with the language. In addition, students will perceive about which communicative activities fits better with their learning style. Teachers can also realize about which activities were found most helpful for students who were coursing the subject so that they can take it into account while doing the oral activities. It will not only benefit students but also teachers since they will not waste their time doing ineffective activities.

C. OBJECTIVES

1. General Objective:

- ✚ To find out if the communicative activities applied by teachers of Readings and Conversation I and II are useful to the development of oral fluency of the students taking the subject.

2. Specific Objectives:

- ✚ To determine how communicative activities suggested by teachers help students to the development of oral fluency.
- ✚ To identify which communicative activities applied by teachers support the development of oral fluency.

D. JUSTIFICATION

At the time of learning English, students need to develop the four main skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four of them are important for good communication; however, based on Later and Chew, 1989 “The speaking skill is considered as the major means by which information is communicated both in and out of the classroom”. The focus of this work will be to identify which communicative activities applied by teachers of the subjects Readings and Conversation I and II favor the development of oral fluency.

According to Nunan (2003), oral fluency is the ability to speak a foreign language (English) in a clear and confident way without seeming to make any effort. Therefore, it is important and essential that teachers of the subjects Readings and Conversation I and II select the appropriate communicative activities to be applied in the classroom so that students can accomplish the goal of getting their meaning through the second language.

First of all, the importance of this research is to let teachers know if the communicative activities they have used in the subjects of Readings and Conversation I and II 2011, at the Foreign Language Department, UES, have been useful to help students to develop fluency in the oral skill. Readings and Conversation students will be the object of study because this is the level in which students increase their oral fluency since they already know how to communicate in the language. Also, this work meant to identify which communicative activities from the ones mentioned in the programs, have been useful for

the development of oral fluency. At the same time it suggests new activities as pair work, extensive readings etc. that can be more effective for developing fluency.

A. LIMITATIONS

There were some limitations during the development of this study. One of the limitations was the lack of a control group. Since some members of the group work almost all day long, it was difficult to get and work together in the research. Another limitation was that some students did not want to answer the survey because they did not have enough time to do it and also, they had another class later, so we as a group had to work hard to look for those students that were able to help. Finally, another limitation was that some teachers did not give the group enough time to pass the surveys since they had to teach the class even when we made an appointment.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (Chaney, 1998, p. 13). Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and Oxford language English teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' oral skills, because in that way students can express themselves.

Nowadays, many English teachers agree that students learn to speak in the second language by "interacting". Therefore, communicative activities are an effective way to improve students' oral fluency. By using these activities students will have the opportunity to communicate with each other in the target language. In short, teachers should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that promote oral language.

A. Oral Fluency

An effective communication is the main aim of every foreign language learner. The oral use of a foreign language seems to be more problematic for the majority of students, for it is closely connected with an internal uneasiness that appears during the personal interaction face-to-face. However, it can quite effectively be taken care of by improving English oral skills. Teachers have often claimed that fluency is a difficult concept to define however according to Derwing et al. (2004), the difficulty in achieving a definition lies in the fact that fluency encompasses many aspects of language. Realizing the difficulties involved in arriving at a precise definition of fluency, Hartmann & Stork (1976) suggest that "a person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed." Richards (1985) maintain that fluency is "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions." Finally, according to Dr. Jack Richards "fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate

meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings and work to avoid communication breakdowns.

Teachers should place greater emphasis on fluency including finding new ways to incorporate fluency-enhancing activities into their classroom teaching. According to Brown (2003), communicative activities can help learners to communicate fluently with whatever proficiency they happen to have and at any given time, including the ability to use speed, pauses, and hesitations efficiently.

Categories of fluent speakers

There are some categories of fluent speakers and Fillmore (1979) identifies four of them. The first one is the speaker who speaks fast, that is, who fills time with talk such as a disk jockey. The second one is the speaker whose speech is coherent, complex and dense. The third type of fluent speaker is one who knows how to use language appropriately, and a variety of contexts. The fourth type of fluent speaker controls aesthetic functions of language, being creative and imaginative.

For Lennon (1990), there is a “broad sense” and a “narrow sense” for fluency. The broad sense is represented by “the highest point on a scale that measures spoken command of a foreign language”. The narrow sense refers to “isolatable component of fluency such as correctness, relevance, appropriateness, pronunciation, lexical range, and so on”.

Faerch, Haastrup, and Phillipson (1984) include fluency as a component of communicative competence, and define it as “the speaker’s ability to make use of whatever linguistic and pragmatic competence they have.”

They distinguish three types of fluency:

- **Semantic fluency:** linking together propositions and speech acts (also known as coherence).
- **Lexical-syntactic fluency:** linking together syntactic constituents and words.
- **Articulatory fluency:** linking together speech segments.

Furthermore, non-fluency in an English language learner is evident in frequent pauses, repetitions, and self-corrections.

On the other hand, Riazantseva (2001) showed that fluency is related to controlling pausing and hesitation events. She investigated the relationship between L2 proficiency and pausing patterns. She found that native-like fluency presents norms of pause duration, frequency, and distribution of these pauses throughout language production. She concludes her study by suggesting that knowing how to pause and hesitate in an L2 is part of fluency characteristics to be achieved by L2 learners.

Dr. Jack Richards, in a recent online publication entitled “*Communicative Language Teaching Today*”, defined fluency as “natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence”.

Finally, improving Oral Fluency helps advanced-level students communicate more effectively by focusing on specific oral skills. Although students may spend several years in learning a second language, we must recognize the fact that a great number of these students are still not proficient and fluent in speaking the foreign language.

Since the recent trend in learning second languages is directed toward the development of oral proficiency, and since oral fluency is one of its components, students need to speak with the highest level (level four) of fluency in order to demonstrate their oral proficiency.

B. Communicative Activities

Fillmore's (1979) first kind of fluency is "the ability to fill time with talk. A person who is fluent in this way does not have to stop many times to think of what to say next or how to phrase it". As Fillmore goes on to show, this fluency will depend on a range of factors including having quick access to and practiced control of many of the language's lexical and syntactic devices, being able to decide readily when it is appropriate and efficient to use them. Brumfit (1984) sees fluency "as the maximally effective operation of the language system so far acquired by the student". This definition suggests that fluency can be measured by looking at the speed and flow of language production, the degree of control of language items, and the way language and content interact.

From a teacher's point of view, activities to develop fluency are those which focus the learner's attention on the message that is being communicated and not the language forms. Brumfit describes such activities in the following way: "the emphasis of making the accuracy/fluency distinction is on the mental set of the learner. The goal of fluency-directed communication activities is to enable the learner to integrate previously encountered language items into an easily accessed, language system as a result of focusing on the communication of messages. Such activities are essential to language learning if the learner

is to be able to use the language. Some teachers, for example Allwright (1979), argue that activities with a message focus are all that are essential for language learning to occur.

As we go back in time and stop to analyze the language teaching history, we are going to see that the way in which the language is taught nowadays, it has not been always in the same way, but it has been constantly changing from one period of time to another.

Throughout the years, the changes on the way of teaching a language have been influenced by the needs and interests that people have had on wanting to learn a foreign or second language. As the needs for learning a new language vary, new ways of teaching will also appear, since in the present most of the people want to learn a new language for communicative purposes rather than merely translating from one language to another one, that is the reason why the new trends on the way of teaching a language focus more on communicative activities, which have as their main purpose to make people develop the capacity of using the language appropriately in any situation they may face.

In a general context communicative activities provide students with the opportunity to hear and use the language. They provide situations where there is a need to use language. These activities use pair and group organization and ESL students can be paired with a more proficient language model. The language required to do any activity must be introduced before it begins. Moreover, communicative activities include any activity that encourage and require a learner to speak with and listen to other learners, as well as with people in the classroom.

Communicative activities have real purposes: for example, to find information, break down barriers, talk about themselves, and learn about the culture. Even when a lesson

is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson.

There are probably dozen of effective activities in the literature that teachers can use to facilitate the learning in the classroom. These activities enable the teacher to “problematize” instruction, and they allow learners to actively engage in the learning process. For this reason, they are referred to as “enabling tasks” (Bourke 2002). According to Estaire and Zanon (1994), “enabling tasks act as a support for communication tasks. Their purpose is to provide students with the necessary tools to carry out a communication task.” Upon completing a communicative task, students have the opportunity to explore points of language arising out of the task cycle. The language focus may consist of analysis or practice activities. Analysis consists of consciousness raising activities in which students analyze texts, transcripts, and sets of examples in order to notice specific language points, such as: semantic concepts related to themes, notions, functions, words or parts of a word etc.

Furthermore, research on second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher classes. Offering well-designed and well-executed communicative activities can help turn the English classroom into an active, safe, and enjoyable place where literacy- and beginning-level learners can learn what they need and want to learn. (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

In order to teach learners how to speak in the best way possible, some communicative activities are provided below, that can be applied in classroom settings, together with suggestions for teachers who teach oral language.

Discussions

After a content-based lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, it is essential that the purpose of the discussion activity is set by the teacher. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. For example, students can become involved in agree/disagree discussions. In this type of discussions, the teacher can form groups of students, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, and provide controversial sentences like “people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel”. Then each group works on their topic for a given time period, and presents their opinions to the class. It is essential that the speaking should be equally divided among group members. At the end, the class decides on the winning group who defended the idea in the best way. This activity fosters critical thinking and quick decision making, and students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with the others. For efficient group discussions, it is always better not to form large groups, because quiet students may avoid contributing in large groups. The group members can be either assigned by the teacher or the students may determine it by themselves, but groups should be rearranged in every discussion activity so that students can work with various people and learn to be open to different ideas. Lastly, in class or group discussions, whatever the aim is, the students should always be encouraged to ask

questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification, and so on. (Harmer, 1984)

Role Play

One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can tell the student that "You are David, you go to the doctor and tell him what happened last night, and..." (Harmer, 1984)

Information Gap

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Also, each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language. (Chaney, 1998)

Brainstorming

On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The good characteristic of brainstorming is that the students are not criticized for their ideas so students will be open to sharing new ideas. (Harmer, 1994)

Storytelling

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes as an opening. In this way, not only will the teacher address students' speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class. (Chaney, 1998)

Interviews

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that the teacher provides a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner to the class. (Harmer, 1994)

Story Completion

This is a very enjoyable, whole-class, free-speaking activity for which students sits in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous

one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on. (Harmer, 1994)

Reporting

Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class. (Chaney, 1998)

Finally, teaching speaking is a very important part of second language learning. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay attention to teaching speaking. Providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is desired. With this aim, various communicative activities such as those listed above can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for a successful communication. These activities make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them.

C. Vocabulary Acquisition

Productive and receptive skills

Nation (1990) describes word knowledge in terms of receptive and productive knowledge, which together comprise the four language skills. Receptive knowledge is

recognizing and understanding the words when listening to a conversation or reading a text and productive knowledge is using words fluently and appropriately when speaking and writing. The receptive and productive skills relate to each other in important ways and can also be categorized as written skills (reading and writing) and oral skills (speaking and listening) (Nation 2001b). For example, a student cannot write without reading and cannot hold a meaningful conversation without listening. This interrelationship between productive and receptive skills makes it crucial to adopt a four-skill approach to vocabulary teaching. The receptive skills, and specially reading, are known to be effective ways to acquire vocabulary, but those same words do not easily come to mind when the learner is speaking or writing (Nation 2001b).

Learning high frequency vocabulary

One useful strategy in learning vocabulary is to master a large number of *high frequency words*, those words that appear most often in written and spoken texts and are therefore the most useful ones to learn. According to Nation and Newton (1997), the most frequent 2,000 words in English, with their inflected forms, “account for at least 85% of the words on any page of any book no matter what the subject matter” (238), and this percentage can be even higher for spoken language of comparable length. It is therefore important to expose students to a large amount of four-skill practice that contains a large percentage of high frequency words.

According to Nation and Waring (1997), aducated adult native speakers of English have a vocabulary of about 20,000 word *families*,and they define a word family as “a base word, its inflected forms and a small number of reasonably regular derived forms”.

However, second language learners of English can meet their basic needs with fewer words; based on word frequency research, Nation and Waring (1997) suggest that learners need a receptive vocabulary of 3,000 to 5,000 word families and a productive vocabulary of 2,000 to 3,000 word families to function well in their daily use of English.

Vocabulary knowledge cannot be gained from one single encounter with a word, even if this encounter involves a lot of direct teaching efforts (Nation 2001b). Vocabulary knowledge, as much for the second language as for the first language learner, will grow gradually only through successive encounters with the word in various contexts and through different activities while the individual is “exposed to large amounts of comprehensible input” (Nagy 1997, 74).

Input is comprehensible when it includes a large amount of familiar vocabulary that is found in appropriate listening exercises and texts used for extensive reading (Nation 2001a). However, not every word in a language is equally useful, and teachers should make sure that materials contain the high frequency words that appear with great regularity in literature, conversations, and textbooks. Knowledge of high frequency words makes texts more comprehensible, and programs that devote too much time on low frequency words may be holding their students back from understanding and producing English.

According to Nation (2001a, 23), learners should learn low frequency words “gradually after they know the high frequency words,” and “teachers should not spend valuable class time” on low frequency words because “there are too many of them and the time spent on them is not repaid by opportunities to meet and use them.” When necessary, four strategies for learning low frequency words include: (1) guessing the words from

context, (2) studying words and their translations on small cards, (3) analyzing the parts of words (roots, prefixes, and suffixes), and (4) using a dictionary to look up meanings (Nation 2001a).

A vocabulary development framework

According to Nation (2001a, 23), each high frequency word deserves time and effort from learners and should be “met repeatedly in listening, speaking, reading and writing, deliberately studied, and met in easy texts with some pressure to process them faster than usual.” A well-balanced vocabulary development program incorporates equal opportunities from the following four strands:

1. Meaning-focused input

A wide exposure to familiar vocabulary is essential, and it is achieved through spoken input and extensive reading (Nation 2001a). Extensive reading is defined as “one graded reader at an appropriate level (where 95%-98% of the words are already known) every one or two weeks and reading a total of about 20 per year” (Nation 2001a, 23).

2. Meaning-focused output

Learners also require speaking and writing activities that focus on negotiating the meaning of unfamiliar words. Clarifications, repetitions, and explanations of words help learners to enlarge and retain their productive vocabulary. Nation (2001 b) suggests retelling a story, reporting on an article, and role play because these oral activities present familiar words in new contexts.

3. *Language-focused learning*

Research shows that students profit from directly studying word parts, collocations, and the meaning, pronunciation, and spelling of vocabulary (Nation 2001a). These activities also help students become independent learners.

4. *Fluency development*

Students benefit from a variety of four-skill activities that involve high frequency words. In fluency-centered activities, the learners know all the words used pay more attention to communicating ideas, and perform tasks during a limited time. Nation (2001a 24) suggests activities such as “extensive reading using easy graded readers, ten-minute writing (where learners write as much as they can in ten minutes), listening to the same text several times” and the *4/3/2 activity* in which students switch among three partners and tell the same story in decreasing amounts of time (i.e., four, three, and two minutes).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions:

- Which communicative activities applied by teachers of Readings and Conversation I and II are useful to the development of oral fluency?
- How communicative activities suggested by teachers help students to the development of oral fluency?
- Which communicative activities applied by teachers favor the development of oral fluency?

B. Type of the Research

In the social sciences quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypothesis pertaining or applicable to phenomena. That is why, this study used the quantitative method with the purpose of finding out if the communicative activities applied by teachers of Readings and Conversation I and II were useful to the development of oral fluency.

C. Design of the research

This study followed a quantitative method. It was a descriptive statistics design focused on survey analysis. These surveys were addressed to the students of Readings and Conversation I and II on the second semester at the Foreign Language Department. Teachers of both subjects were interviewed in order to gather more meaningful information.

D. Research site, population and sample

The research was conducted in the University of El Salvador, at the Foreign Language Department. It was focused on the subject Readings and Conversation I and II course during the academic year 2011 in the first semester.

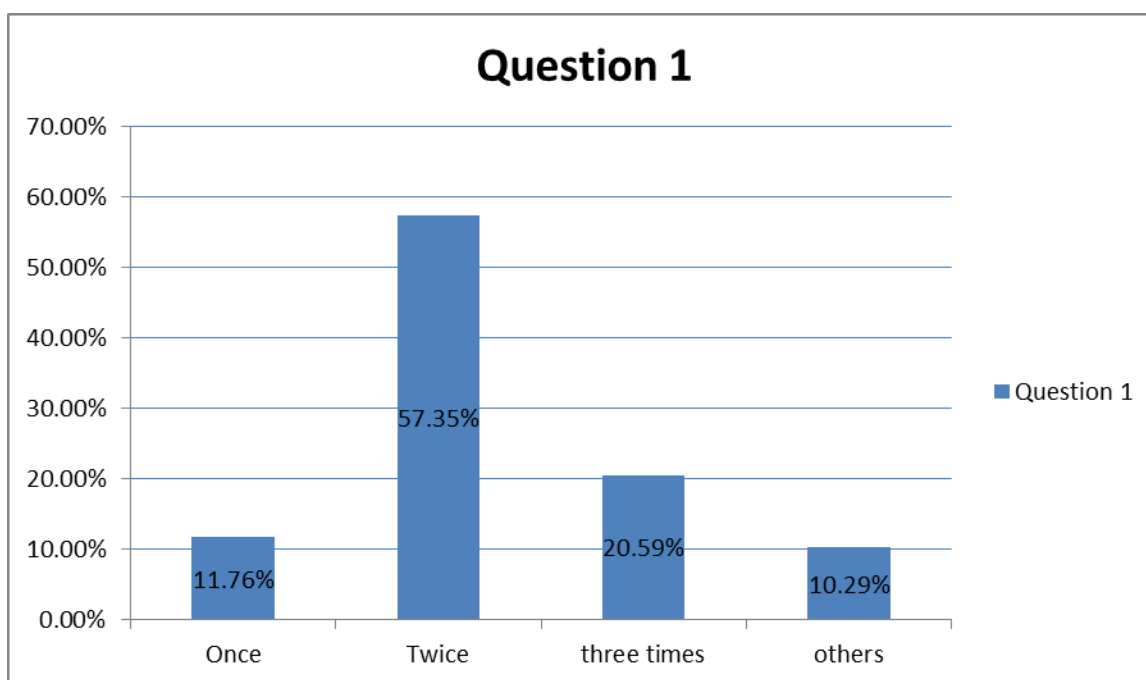
The instrument used was a survey which contained 25 questions in order to collect more accurate statistical information. The survey was divided into 3 parts. In the first part 10 questions regarding to Readings and Conversation I were asked. In the second part, the same questions were asked, but regarding to Readings and Conversation II. In the last part, 5 questions about both subjects were asked in order to gather more extra information. This survey was carried out to the fifty percentages of the students attending classes at Readings and Conversation II. There was also an oral interview for the teachers of both subjects which contained 7 questions in order to know the teachers' point of view about the activities they used in both subjects.

In numbers, it was possible to get 68 surveys which were really important to carry out this research work since it is based on students' opinions. There were four groups. The first one only had 9 students so the sample was taken from all of them. The second group had 40 students, only 22 answered the survey. As to the third group, it had 44 students and the sample was taken from 22 students, and the last group had 30 students so the sample was taken from the 50% of the students.

IV. PLAN OF ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

PART I

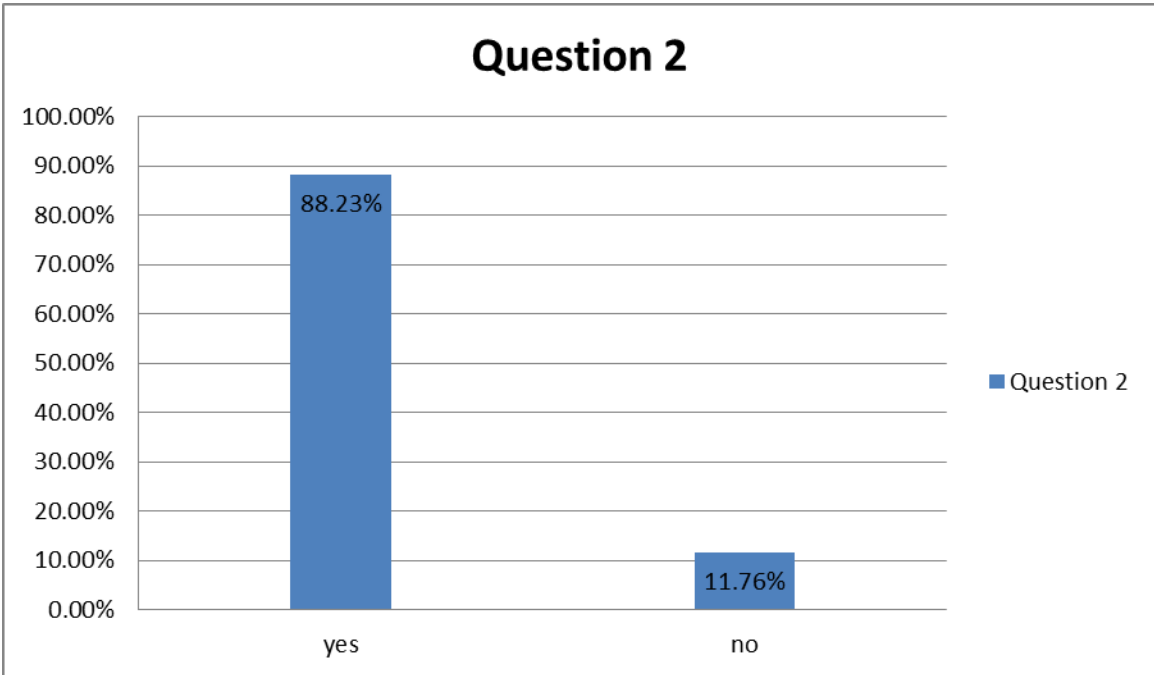
Question 1. How often in the semester did you do Oral Presentations in Readings and Conversation I?		
		%
Once	8	11.76%
Twice	39	57.35%
Three times	14	20.59%
Others	7	10.29%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: 39 students answered that in the semester they did oral presentations twice, 14 students answered that they did this kind of presentations three times, but 8 students said that they did oral presentations once in the semester and 7 students answered the option “others” in which they said that they did from 4 to 6 times oral presentations in the semester.

Interpretation: according to the results, the 57.35% of students did oral presentations in Readings and Conversation I twice in the semester, while 20.59% said that they did them three times, 11.76% of students answered that they did this kind of presentations once and 10.29% of students are the only ones that affirmed that they did from 4 to 6 times oral presentations in the semester.

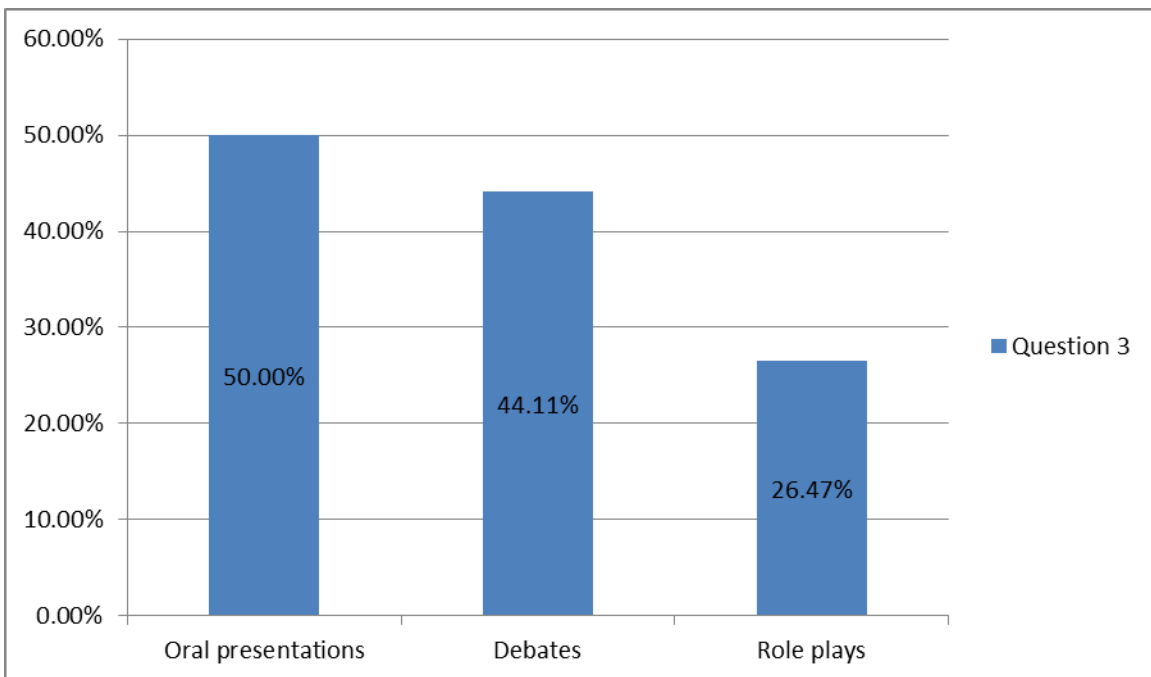
Question 2. Do you consider that the vocabulary found in the readings is useful for the development of oral fluency?		
		%
Yes	60	88.23%
No	8	11.76%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: according to the gathered information, 88.23% of students consider that the vocabulary found in the readings is useful for the development of their oral fluency, but 11.76% answered that the readings' vocabulary is not useful to develop oral fluency.

Interpretation: showing students' answers it seems that most of them consider that the vocabulary in the readings given by the teacher is useful for the development of fluency.

Question 3. On a scale from the least (1) to the most (5), Which strategies helped you to improve your fluency in the oral skill?							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	%
Oral Presentations	2	3	6	23	34	68	
	2.94%	4.41%	8.82%	33.82%	50%		100%
Debates	3	5	11	19	30	68	
	4.41%	7.35%	16.18%	27.94%	44.11%		100%
Role-plays	6	6	12	26	18	68	
	8.82%	8.82%	17.64%	38.23%	26.47%		100%

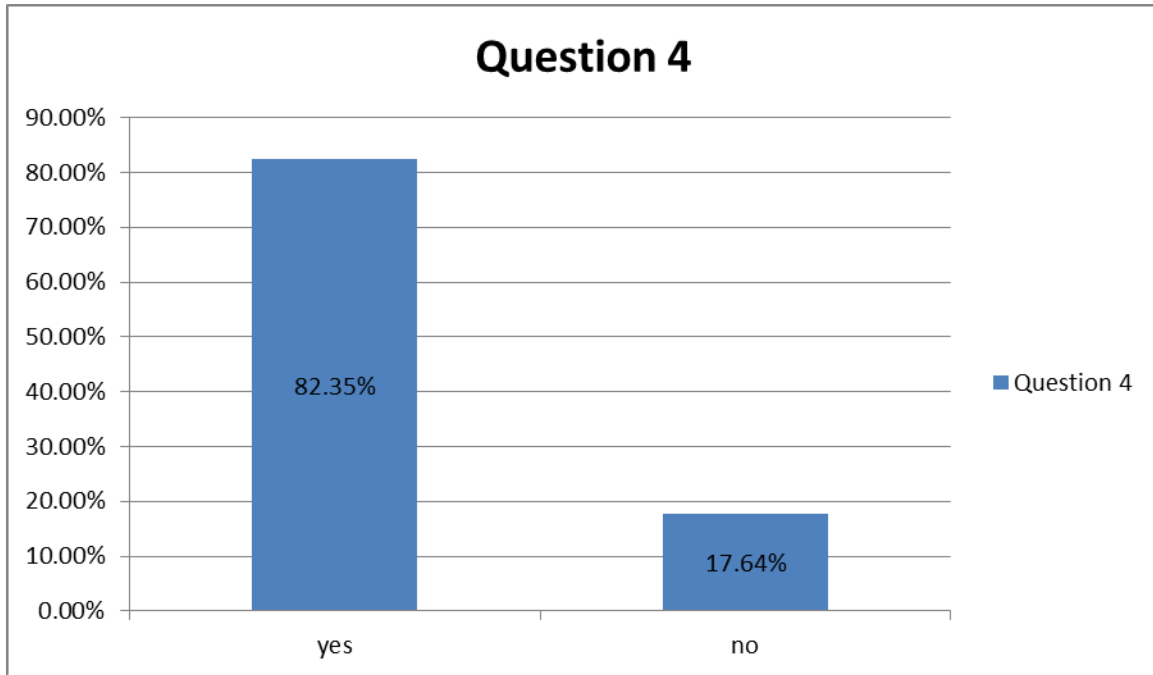


Analysis: in a scale from the least (1) to the most (5), students' answers show which strategies helped them to improve their fluency in the oral skill. 34 students said that *Oral Presentations* helped them a lot to improve their oral fluency, but 2 students answered that these presentations did not help them so much. On the other hand, 30 students said that *Debates* helped them so much to improve their oral fluency; however, 3 students consider that they did not help them. As to *Role-plays*, 18 students think that this strategy was useful

for them, but 6 students answered that it did not help them to improve their fluency in the oral skill.

Interpretation: according to the results, 50% of students think that *Oral Presentations* were very useful for them. 44.11% said that *Debates* helped them a lot, and only 26.47% consider that *Role-plays* helped them to improve their fluency in the oral skill.

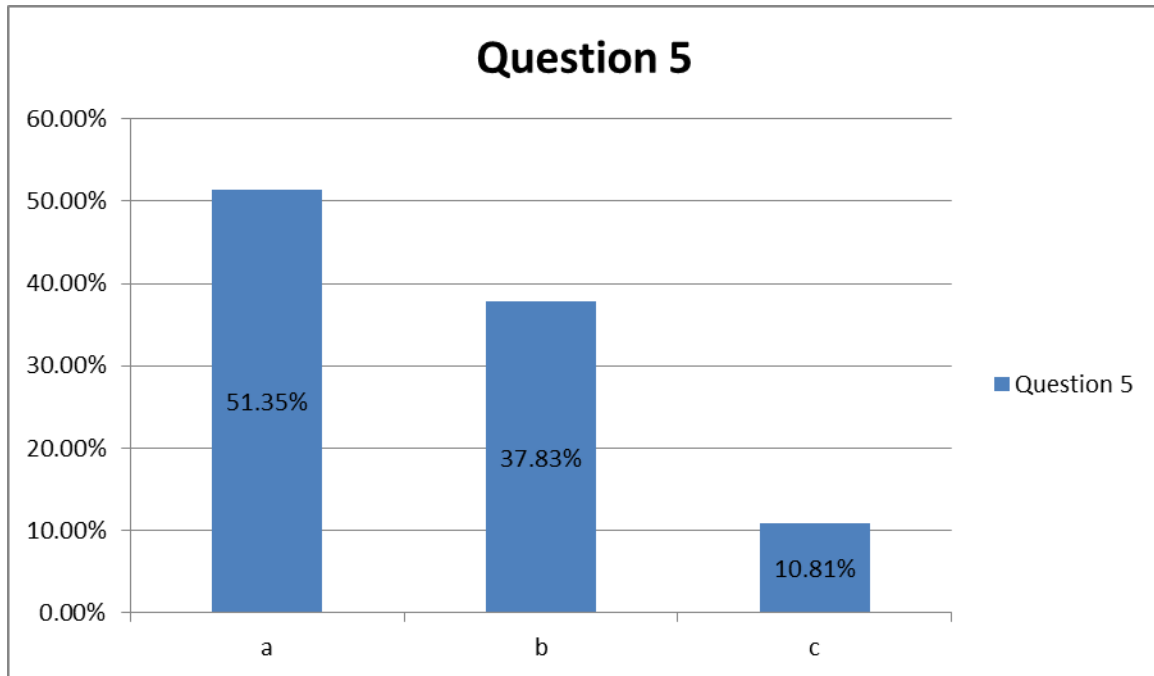
Question 4. Did the teacher develop all the activities that were included in the syllabus?		
		%
Yes	56	82.35%
No	12	17.64%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: according to the gathered information, 56 students said that the teacher developed all the activities that were included in the syllabus of Readings and Conversation I; while only 12 students affirmed that the teacher did not.

Interpretation: 82.35% of students answered that the teacher developed all the activities that were included in the syllabus which means that most of the teachers are doing the activities that the syllabus required.

Question 5. Which method did the teacher use to develop the readings in the class?		
		%
a) Read and discuss the material in the class	38	51.35%
b)Read the material at home and discuss it in the next class	28	37.83%
c)Others	8	10.81%
TOTAL	74	100%

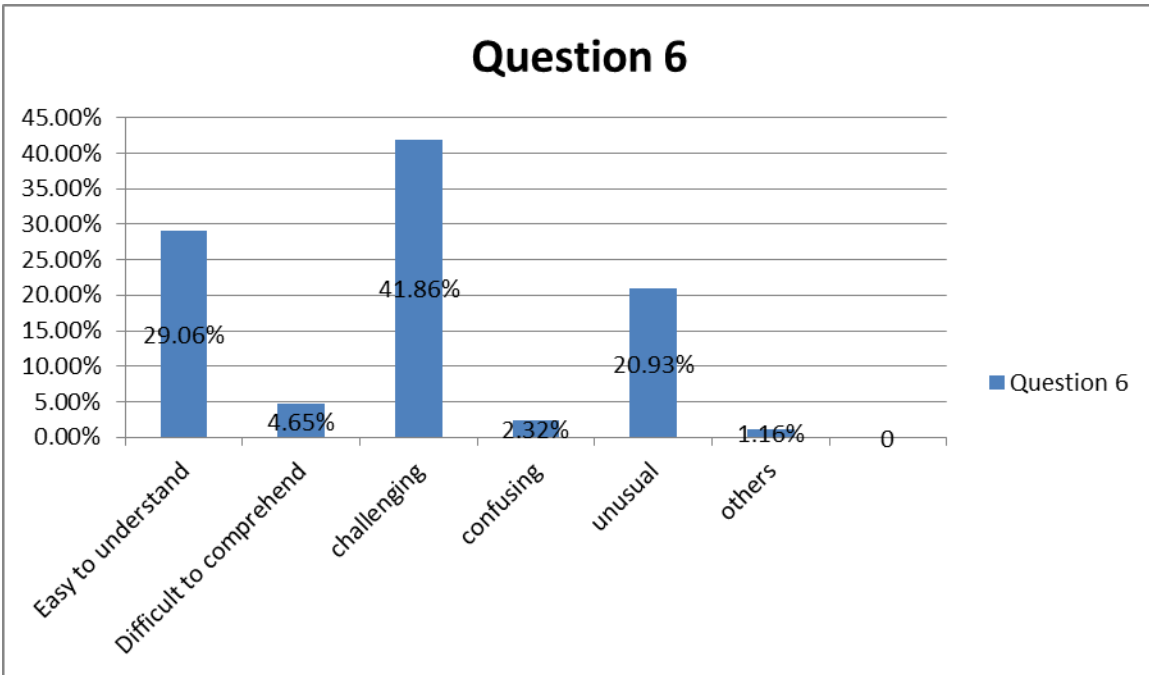


Analysis: according to the table, it shows a total of 74 since students chose more than one answer. As to the method the teacher used to develop the readings in the class, 38 students answered that they read and discuss the material in the class. On the other hand, 28 students said that they read the material at home and discuss it in the next class, and 8 students answered the option “others” in which they did not say which other methods the teacher used to develop the readings in the class.

Interpretation: according to the graph, 51.35% of students answered that they read and discuss the material in the class; however, 37.83% said that the teacher gives the material

for them to read it at home and discuss it in the next class, and 10.81% of students answered the option “others” in which they did not say which other strategies the teacher used.

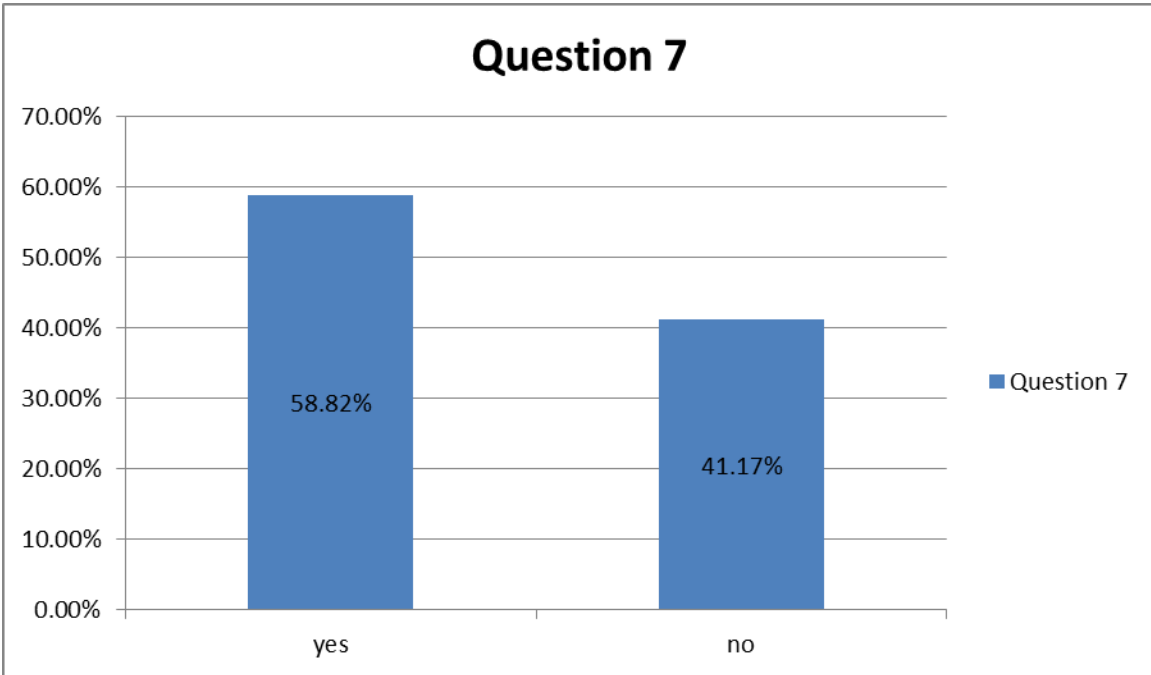
Question 6. How do you consider the vocabulary found in the material (text books, articles, handouts, etc.) given by the teacher?		
		%
Easy to understand	25	29.06%
Difficult to comprehend	4	4.65%
Challenging	36	41.86%
Confusing	2	2.32%
Unusable	18	20.93%
Others	1	1.16%
TOTAL	86	100%



Analysis: 36 students answered that the vocabulary found in the material given by the teacher was challenging, 25 said that it was easy to understand, 18 answered that was unusable, 4 students said that was difficult to comprehend, 2 students affirmed that was confusing and only 1 student answered others.

Interpretation: the relevant point here is that only the 4.6% of students think that the vocabulary is difficult to comprehend which means that there are not so much problems on it.

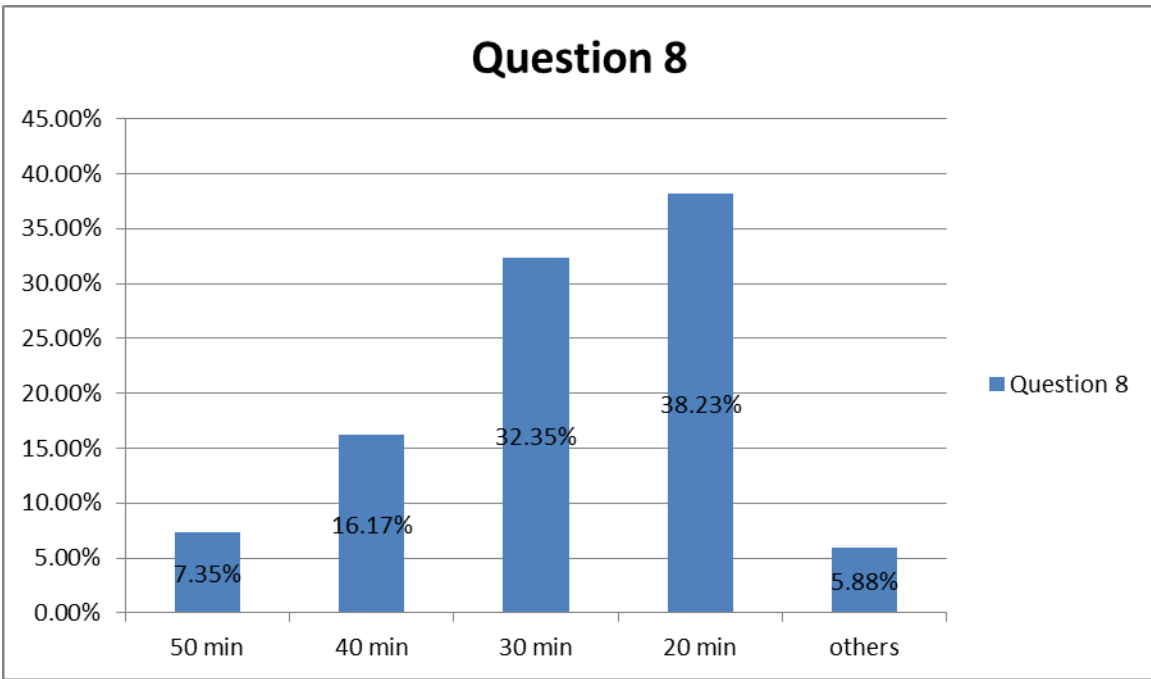
Question 7. Do you think that the vocabulary found in the readings was easy to apply in real conversations?		
		%
Yes	40	58.82%
No	28	41.17%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: the survey reveals that 40 students think the vocabulary in the readings was easy to apply in real conversations since it was not technical. Also some students said that the vocabulary was easy because once they get the meaning of new vocabulary it will be easy to use. On the contrary, 28 students consider that this vocabulary was not easy because it was so technical, difficult and it is not useful in their real conversations.

Interpretation: 58.82% of students think that the vocabulary found in the readings was easy to apply in real conversations and 41.17% consider that the readings' vocabulary was not easy; on the contrary, it was difficult for them. Also, they think this vocabulary can be used only in specific areas and formal conversations.

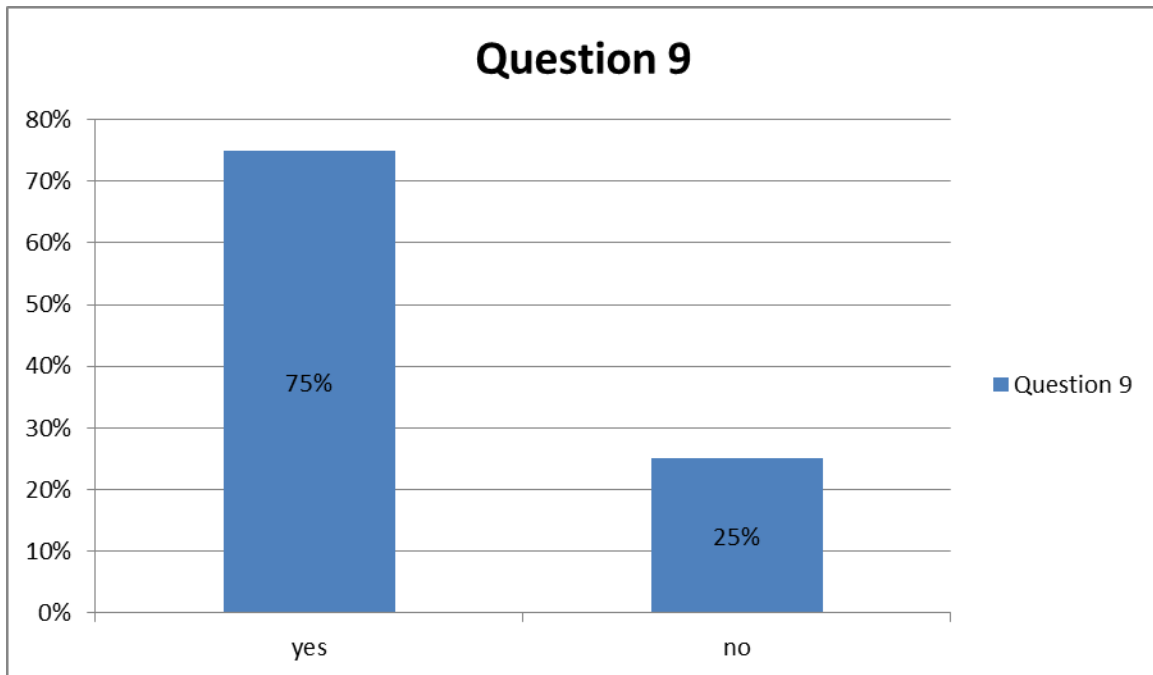
Question 8. In 50-minute class, how long did the teacher take to have students to do oral practice?		
		%
50 minutes	5	7.35%
40 minutes	11	16.17%
30 minutes	22	32.35%
20 minutes	26	38.23%
Others	4	5.88%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: 5 students answered that the teacher lets them do oral practice in 50-minutes class, 11 students said that they did oral practice in 40-minutes class. Also, 22 students answered that they practiced the language in 30-minutes class, and 26 students said that they did oral practice in 20-minutes class; while only 4 students answered the option “others” in which they affirmed that the teacher lets them do oral practice from 7 to 10 minutes class.

Interpretation: Most of the students answered that teacher takes 20 minutes to do oral practice in the class, being a total of 38.23%, and only 7.35% of students said that they practice the language 50 minutes class.

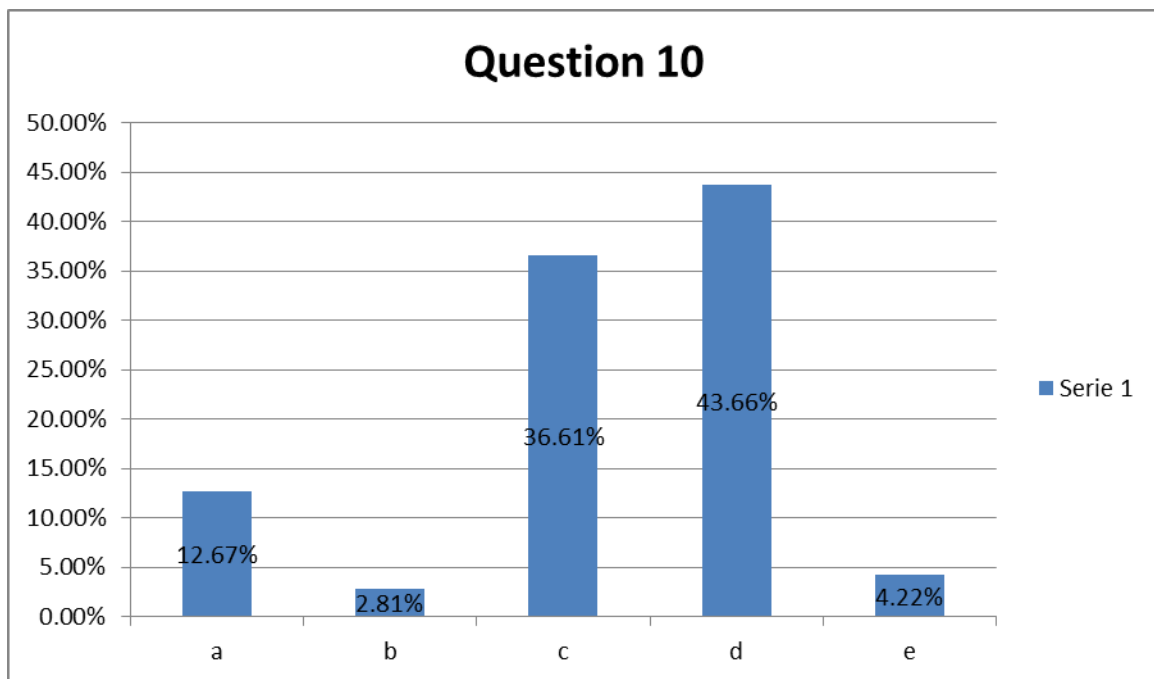
Question 9. Besides the class time, did you use other strategies to improve your fluency?		
		%
Yes	51	75%
No	17	25%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: the results show that 51 of 68 students used other strategies to improve their fluency; while only 17 students said they did not do that.

Interpretation: the graph shows that 75% of students looked for more strategies to improve their fluency, and only the 25% used only the strategies that were required by the teacher.

Question 10. Which of the following strategies did you practice?		
		%
a. Conversation Club	9	12.67%
b. Video Conference	2	2.81%
c. Read books aloud	26	36.61%
d. Practice with your classmates out of the class	31	43.66%
e. Others	3	4.22%
TOTAL	71	100%

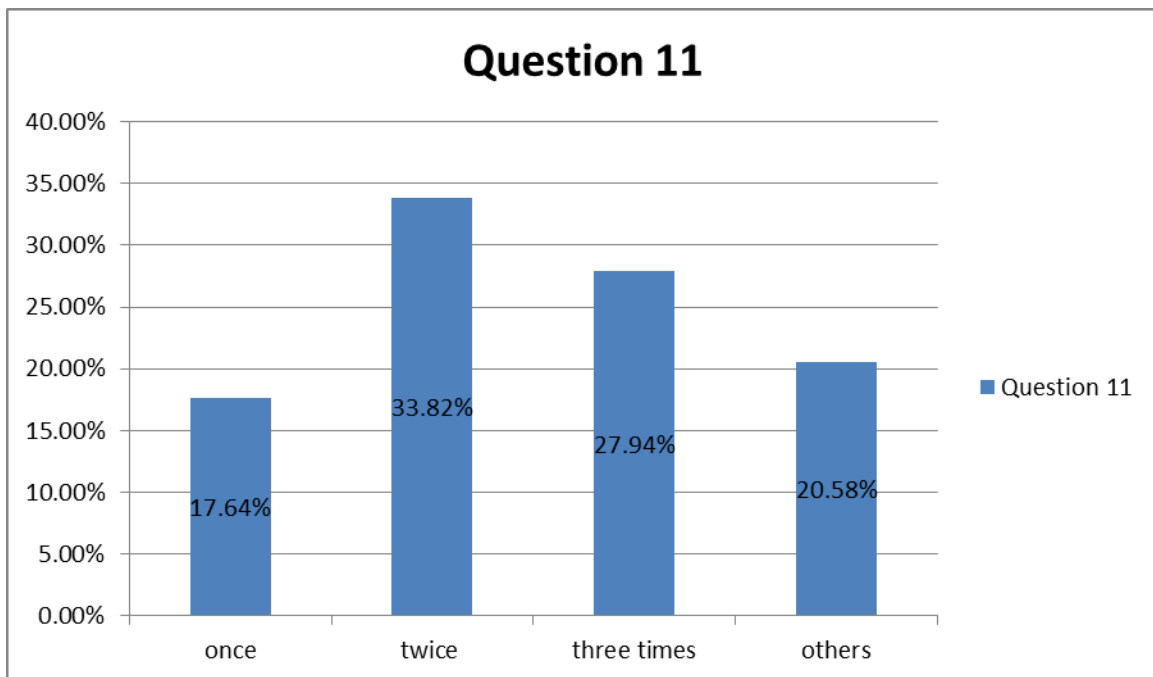


Analysis: according to the table, it shows a total of 71 since students had the opportunity to choose more than one answer. As to the strategies they practiced, 9 students said that they participated in a conversation club (a), 2 students preferred to participate in a video conference (b). Also, 26 students answered that they read books aloud (c), and 31 students said that they practiced the language with their classmates out of the class (d). Finally, only 3 students answered the last option (“others”) in which some of them explain that they also read some articles in internet and listen to English music and sing it; other students said that they practice the language at work.

Interpretation: the results show that most of the students practice the language with their classmates out of the class, and 36.61% of them prefer read books aloud. Also, 12.67% of students answered that they participate to a conversation club, while 2.81% participated in a video conference. Finally, 4.22% of students practiced other strategies like reading articles in internet, listening to English music and sing it, and practicing the language at work.

PART II

Question 11. How often in the semester do you do Oral Presentations in Readings and Conversation II?		
		%
Once	12	17.64%
Twice	23	33.82%
Three times	19	27.94%
Others	14	20.58%
TOTAL	68	100%

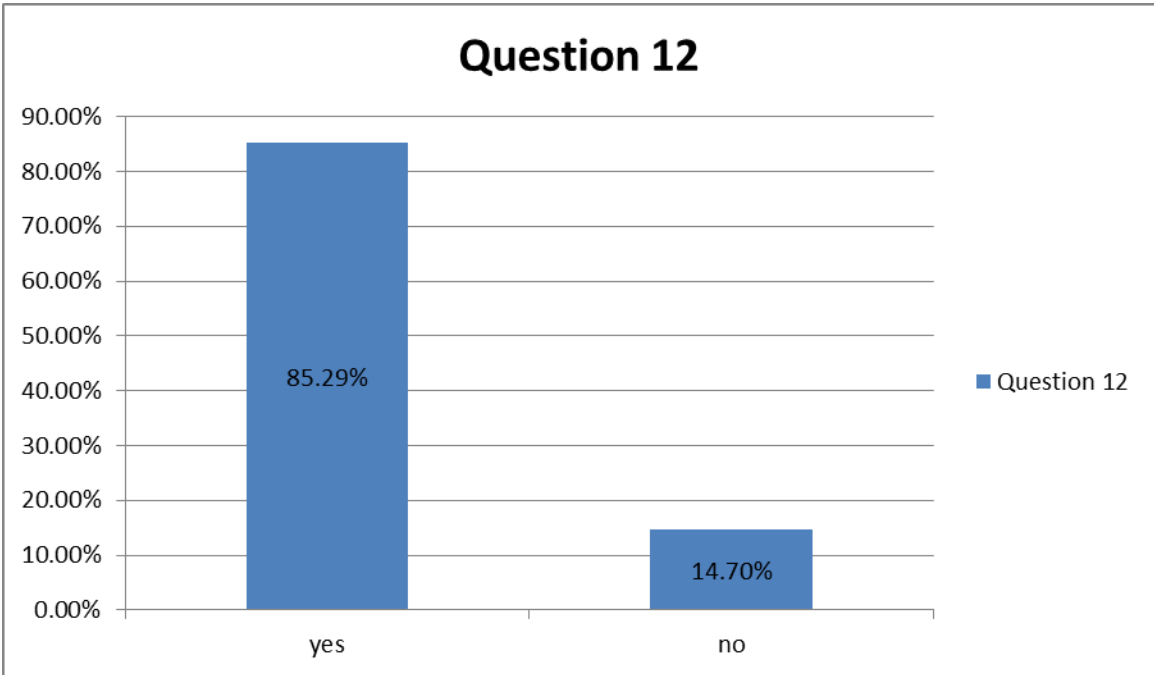


Analysis: 23 students answered that in the semester they did oral presentations twice, 19 students answered that they did this kind of presentations three times, but 12 students said that they did oral presentations once in the semester, and 14 students answered the option “others” in which some of them said that they did from 4 to 7 times oral presentations in the semester; however, other students affirmed that they never do oral presentations.

Interpretation: from the gathered information it reveals that 33.82% of students did oral presentations in Readings and Conversation I, twice in the semester; however, 27.94% said

that they did them three times. Also, 17.64% of students answered that they did this kind of presentations once, and 20.58% of students affirmed that they did from 4 to 7 times oral presentations in the semester.

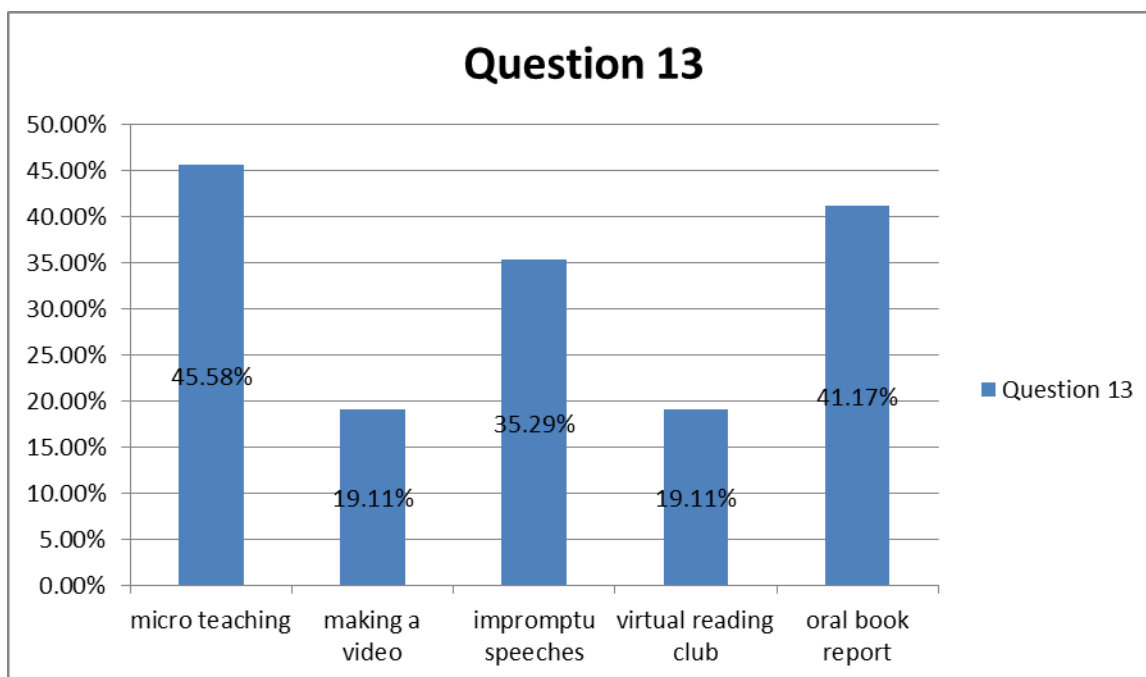
Question 12. Do you consider that the vocabulary found in the readings is useful for the development of oral fluency?		
		%
Yes	58	85.29%
No	10	14.70%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: the results show that 85.29% of students consider that the vocabulary found in the readings is useful for the development of their oral fluency; while 14.70% answered that the readings' vocabulary is not useful to develop oral fluency.

Interpretation: showing students' answers it seems that most of them consider that the vocabulary in the readings is useful for the development of oral fluency.

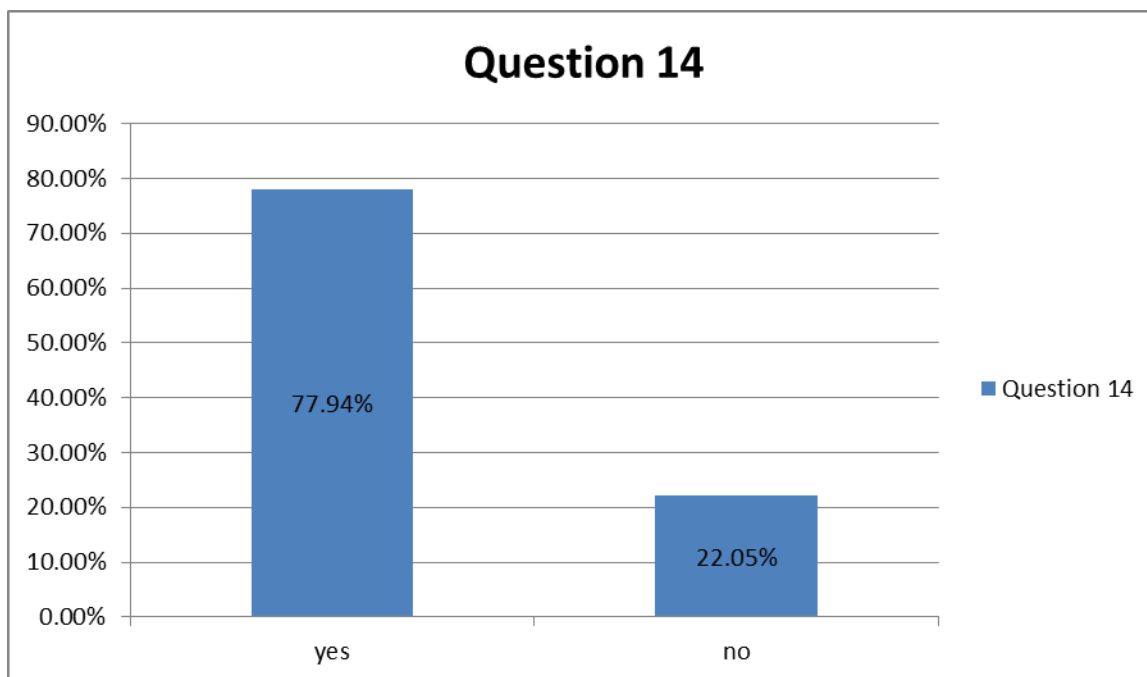
Question 13. On a scale from the least (1) to the most (5), which of these strategies have helped you to improve your fluency in the oral skill?							
	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	%
Micro Teaching	2	2	11	22	31	68	
	2.94%	2.94%	16.17%	32.35%	45.58%		100%
Making a video	8	4	21	22	13	68	
	11.76%	5.88%	30.88%	32.35%	19.11%		100%
Impromptu speeches	5	10	12	17	24	68	
	7.35%	14.70%	17.64%	25%	35.29%		100%
Virtual reading Club	18	7	14	16	13	68	
	26.47%	10.29%	20.58%	23.52%	19.11%		100%
Oral book report	5	6	7	22	28	68	
	7.35%	8.82%	10.29%	32.35%	41.17%		100%



Analysis: in a scale from the least (1) to the most (5), students' answers show which strategies have helped them to improve their fluency in the oral skill. 31 students said that *Micro Teachings* have helped them a lot to improve their oral fluency, but 2 students answered that this strategy has not helped them so much. On the other hand, 22 students said that *Making a Video* has helped them so much to improve their oral fluency; however, 8 students consider that it has not helped them. As to *Impromptu speeches*, 24 students think that this strategy has been useful for them, but 5 students answered that it has not been the best strategy. Moreover, 16 students said that *Virtual Reading Club* has helped them for the improvement of their fluency; while 18 students affirmed that it has not helped them. Finally, 28 students answered that *Oral book report* has been a good strategy since it has helped them a lot, but 5 students said that it has not been a good strategy because it has not helped them to improve their oral fluency.

Interpretation: according to the graph, 45.58% of students think that *Micro teaching* has been very useful for them. 41.17% said that *Oral book report* has helped them a lot. Also, a 35.29% consider that *Impromptu speeches* have helped them to improve their fluency in the oral skill. On the contrary, 19.11% of students answered that *Making a video* and *Virtual Reading Club* have not been useful since they have not helped them to improve their fluency in the oral skill.

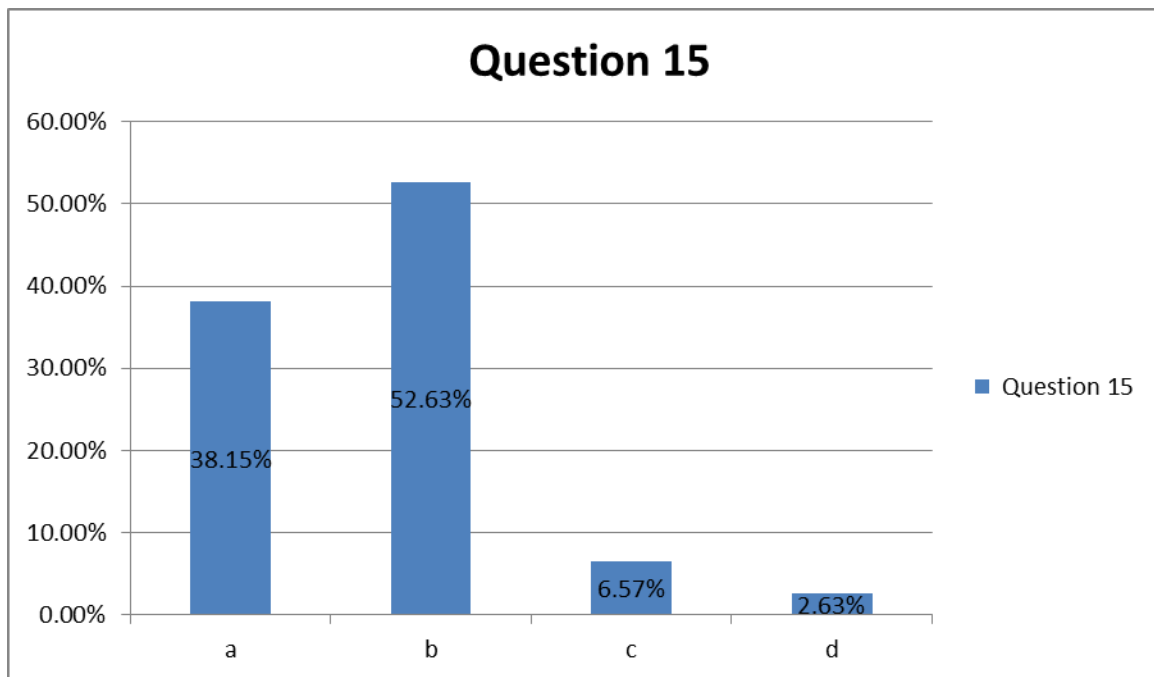
Question 14. Does the teacher develop all the activities that are included in the syllabus?		
		%
Yes	53	77.94%
No	15	22.05%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: 53 students said that the teacher develops all the activities that are included in the syllabus of Readings and Conversation II; however, 15 students affirmed that the teacher does not.

Interpretation: 77.94% of students answered that the teacher develops all the activities that are included in the syllabus which means that most of the teachers are doing the activities that the syllabus required.

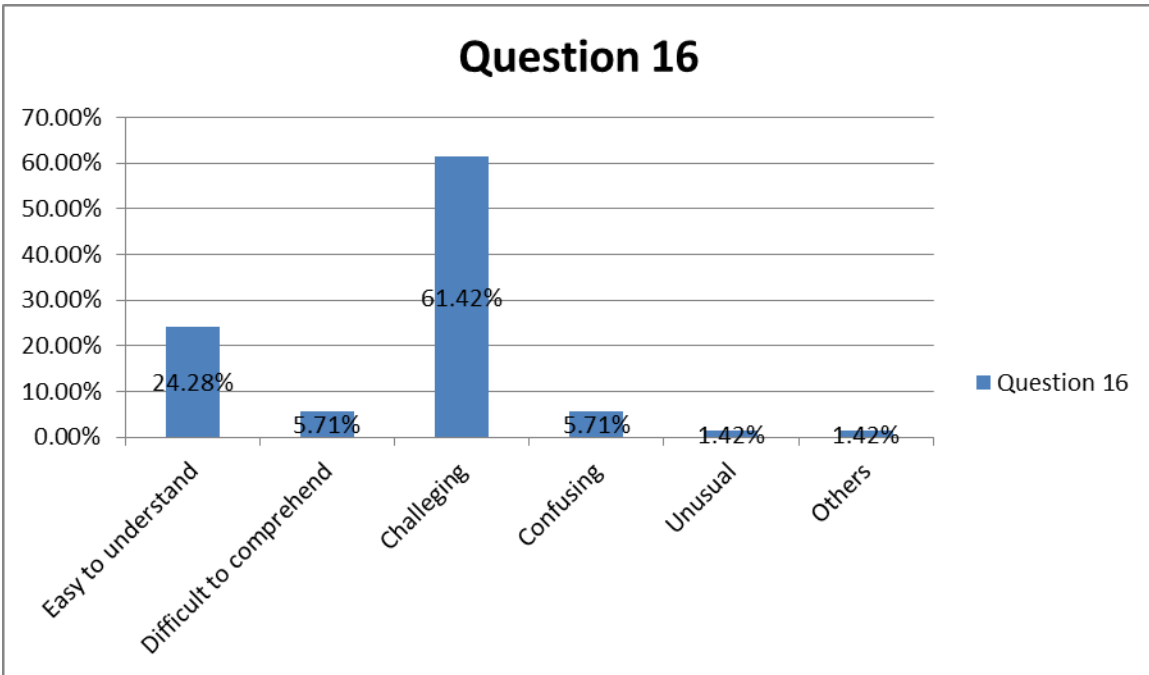
Question 15. Which method does the teacher use to develop the readings in the class?		
		%
a) Read and discuss the material in the class	29	38.15%
b) Read the material at home and discuss it in the next class	40	52.63%
c) Both	5	6.57%
d) Others	2	2.63%
TOTAL	76	100%



Analysis: according to the table, it shows a total of 76 since students chose more than one answer. As to the method the teacher uses to develop the readings in the class, 29 students answered that they read and discuss the material in the class (a). Moreover, 40 students said that they read the material at home and discuss it in the next class (b). 5 students said that the teacher uses both methods (c). On the other hand, 2 students answered the option “others” (d) in which they did not say which other methods the teacher uses to develop the readings in the class.

Interpretation: 38.15% of students answered that they read and discuss the material in the class; however, 52.63% said that the teacher gives the material for them to read it at home and discuss it in the next class. Also, 6.57% said that the teacher uses both methods, and 2.63% of students answered the option “others” in which they did not say which other strategies the teacher used.

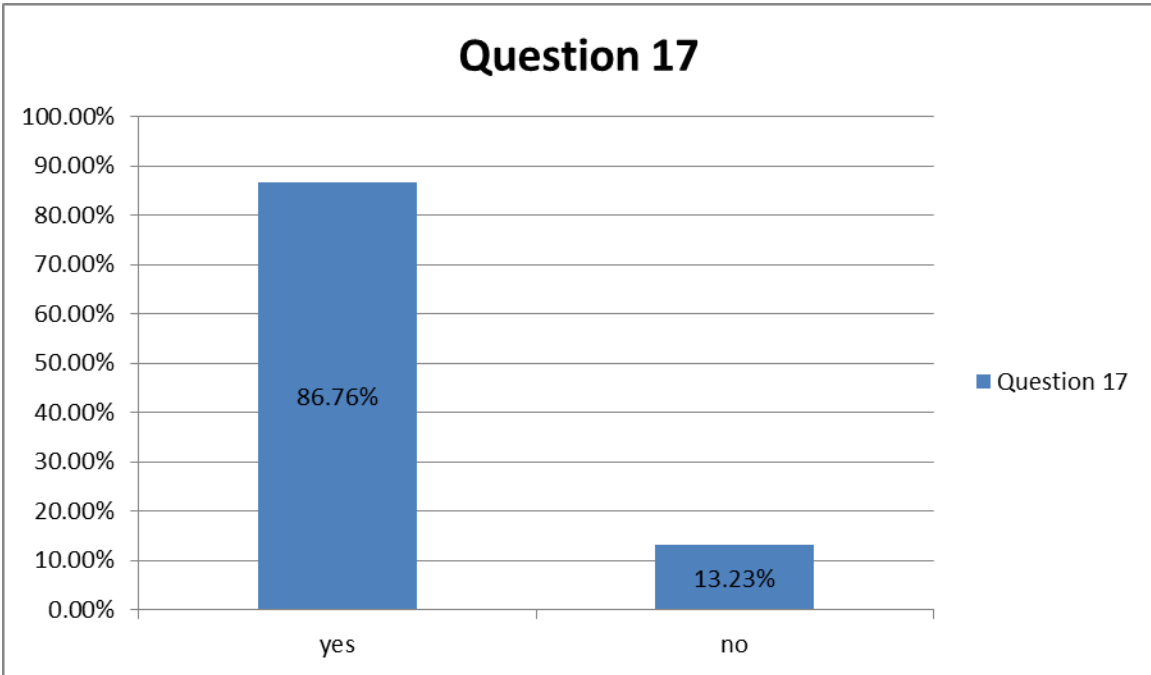
Question 16. How do you consider the vocabulary found in the material (text books, articles, handouts, etc.) given by the teacher?		
		%
Easy to understand	17	24.28%
Difficult to comprehend	4	5.71%
Challenging	43	61.42%
Confusing	4	5.71%
Unusable	1	1.42%
Others	1	1.42%
TOTAL	70	100%



Analysis: 43 students answered that the vocabulary found in the material given by the teacher was challenging, 17 said that it was easy to understand, 1 answered that was unusable, 4 students said that was difficult to comprehend, 4 students affirmed that was confusing and only 1 student answer others.

Interpretation: the relevant point here is that only the 5.71% of students think that the vocabulary is difficult to comprehend which means that there are not so much problems on it.

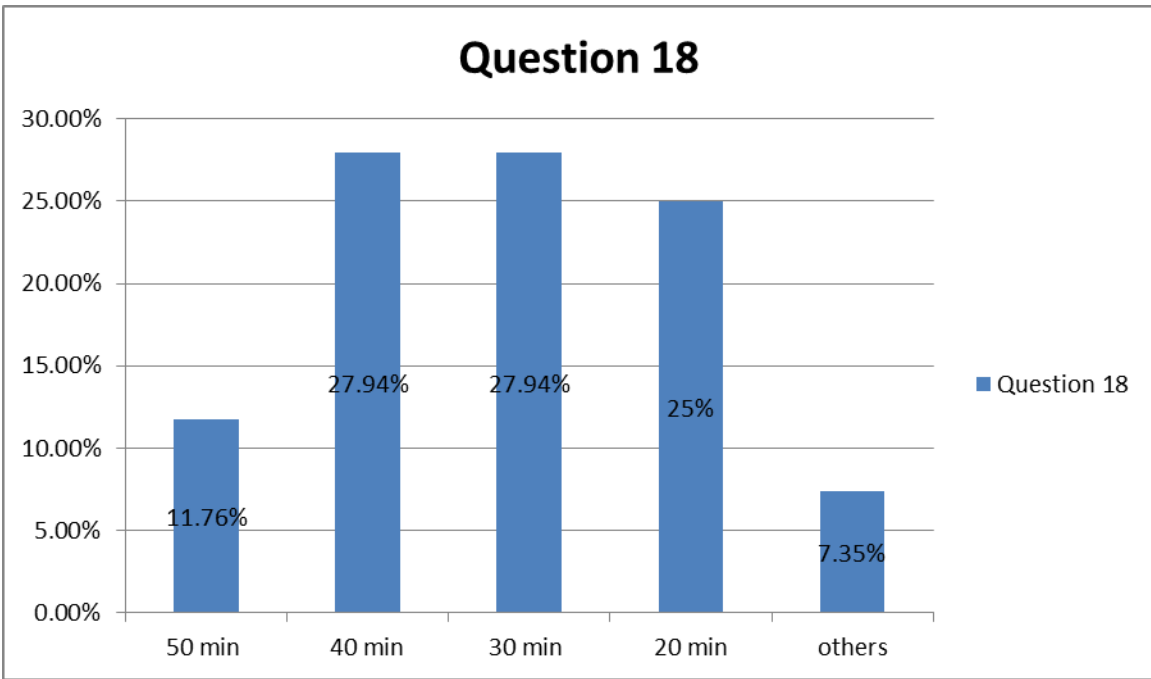
Question 17. Do you think that the vocabulary found in the readings is helpful in a real conversation?		
		%
Yes	59	86.76%
No	9	13.23%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: the highest scale shows that 59 students think that the vocabulary found in the readings is helpful in a real conversation and only 9 do not think the same way.

Interpretation: It seems that most of the time students use the vocabulary they found in the readings when they have a conversation.

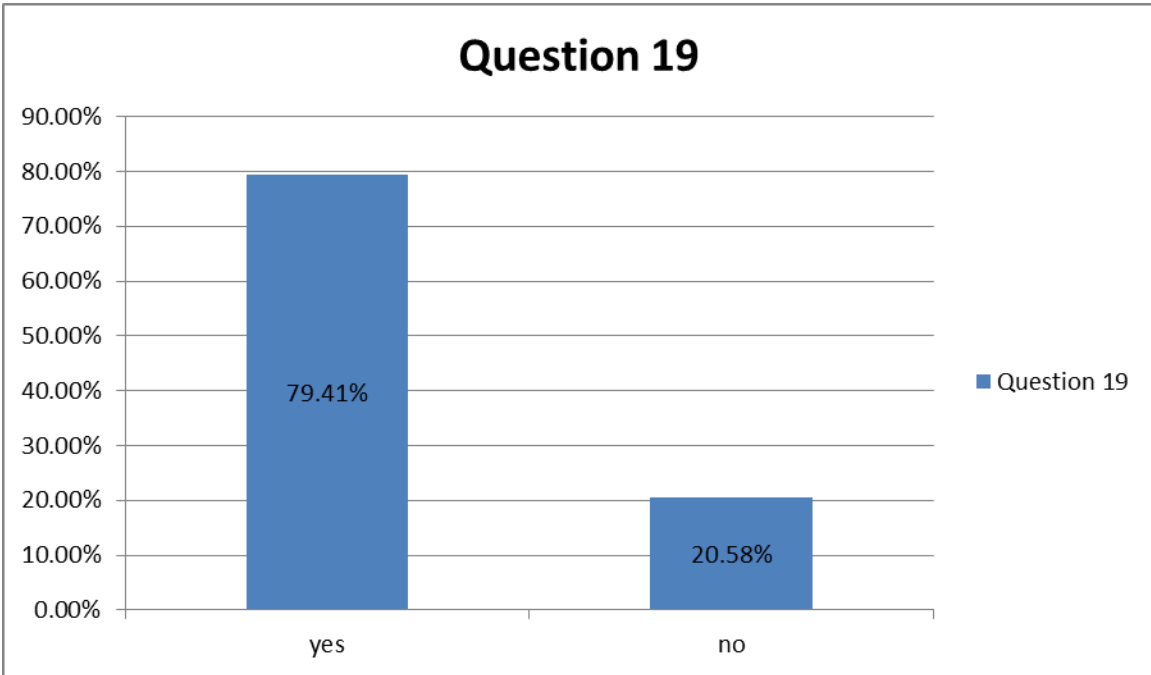
Question 18. In 50-minute class, how long does the teacher take to have students to do oral practice?		
		%
50 minutes	8	11.76%
40 minutes	19	27.94%
30 minutes	19	27.94%
20 minutes	17	25%
Others	5	7.35%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: when practicing in the class, 19 students answered that the teacher gives 40 minutes to do oral practice, 19 students said that they only have 30 minutes, 17 students answered they have 20 minutes to practice and only 8 students says they have 50 minutes.

Interpretation: the results show that the students have between 30 and 40 minutes to practice English in the classroom since it is the same amount of percentage. Some of these students said that this time was not enough. They argued that they need more than an hour to do oral practice.

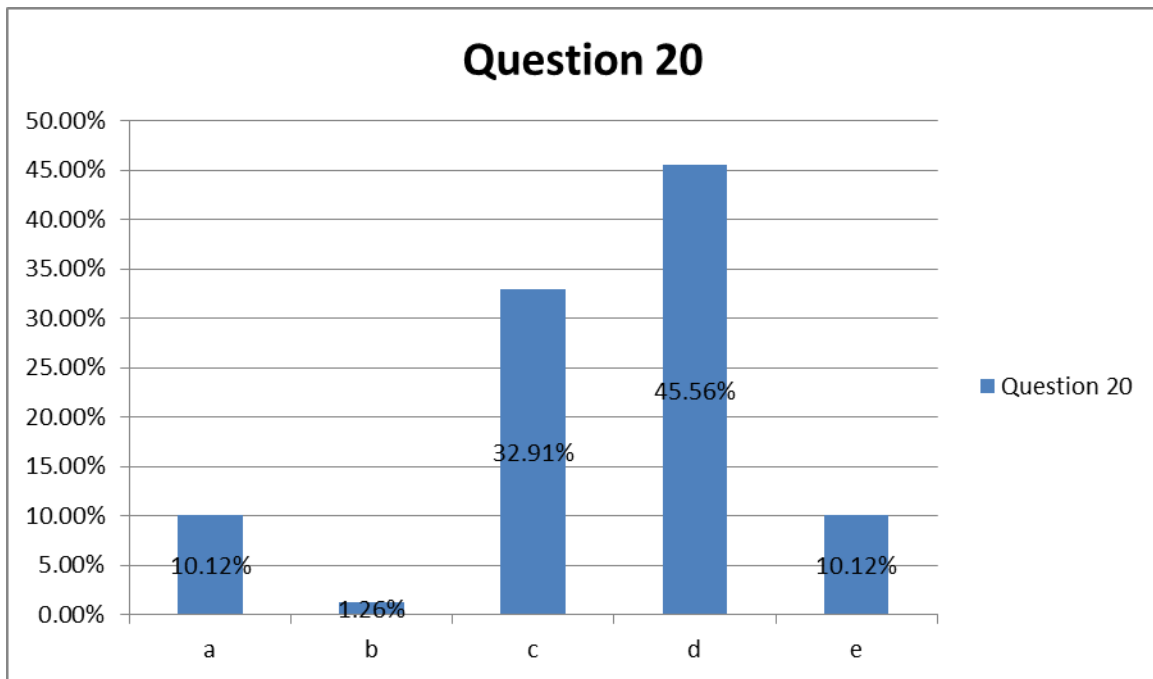
Question 19. Apart from the class time, do you use other strategies to improve your oral fluency?		
		%
Yes	54	79.41%
No	14	20.58%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: the results show that 54 students use other strategies to improve their oral fluency and only 14 students said they do not do it.

Interpretation: according to the graph, most of the population looks for other strategies to improve their oral fluency. This means that few students practice English with the strategies given by the teachers.

Question 20. If yes, which of the following strategies do you practice?		
		%
a)Conversation Clubs	8	10.12%
b)Video Conference	1	1.26%
c)Read books aloud	26	32.91%
d)Practice with your classmates out of the class	36	45.56%
e)Others	8	10.12%
TOTAL	79	100%

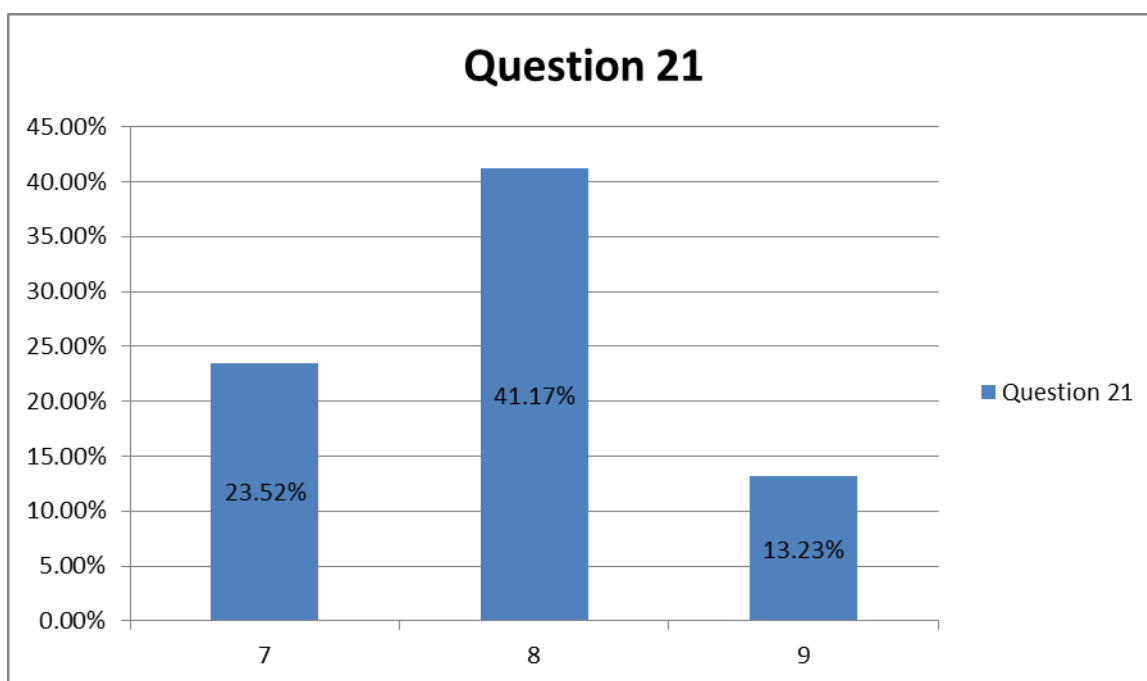


Analysis: the table shows a total of 79 answers because the students were asked to answer more than one option in this question. The results show that 36 students practice with their classmates out of the class, 26 answered that they read books aloud, 8 students said they attend conversation club, the same amount of students said they look for other strategies and only 1 chose video conference.

Interpretation: the graph shows two strategies with the highest percentage which are the ones students use apart from the ones given by the teacher. These strategies are practicing with their classmates out of the class with the 45.56% and reading books aloud with the 32.91%.

PART III

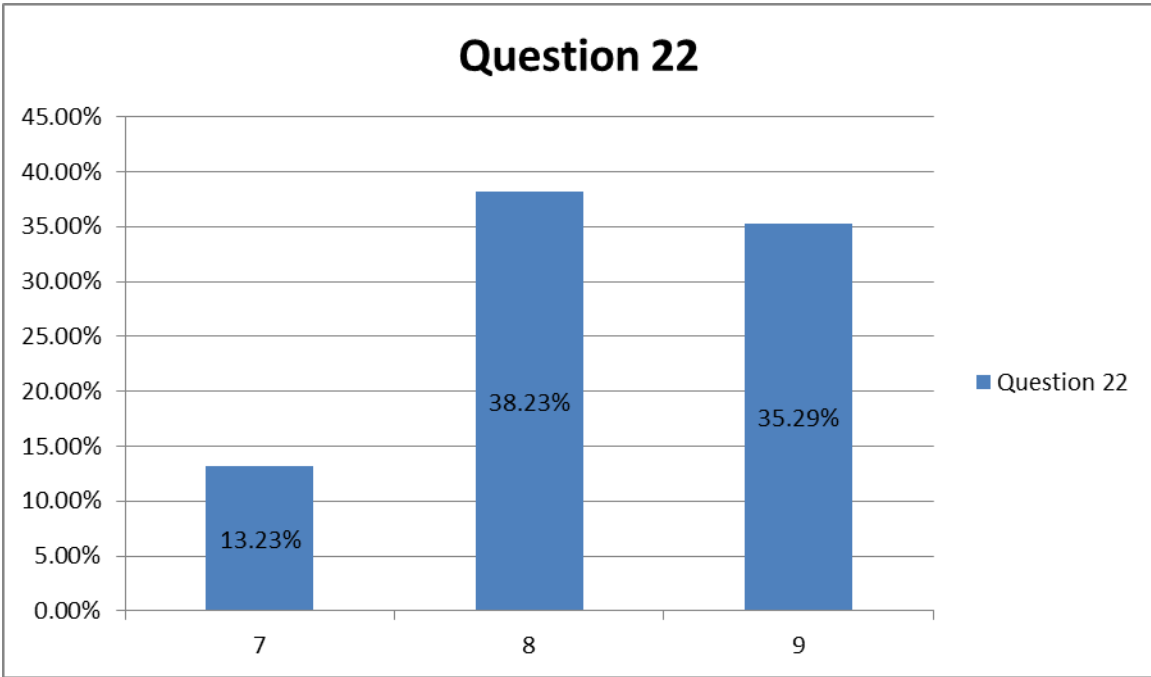
Question 21. To what extent do you think Readings and Conversation I helped you to improve your oral fluency?											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL	%
1	-	1	1	3	5	16	28	9	4	68	
1.47	2.94	1.47	1.47	4.41	7.35	23.52	41.17	13.23	5.88		100%



Analysis: the table shows that, from a scale from 1 to 10, only 5.8 % of the students answered that the subject Readings and conversation I, help them to improve their oral fluency, 16 students marked the number 8 and 28 students marked the number 8 in the scale.

Interpretation: According to the graph, 41.17 % of students said that the subject helped them in a way, but it was not enough to improve their oral fluency, while only 5.88 % answered that the subject was useful.

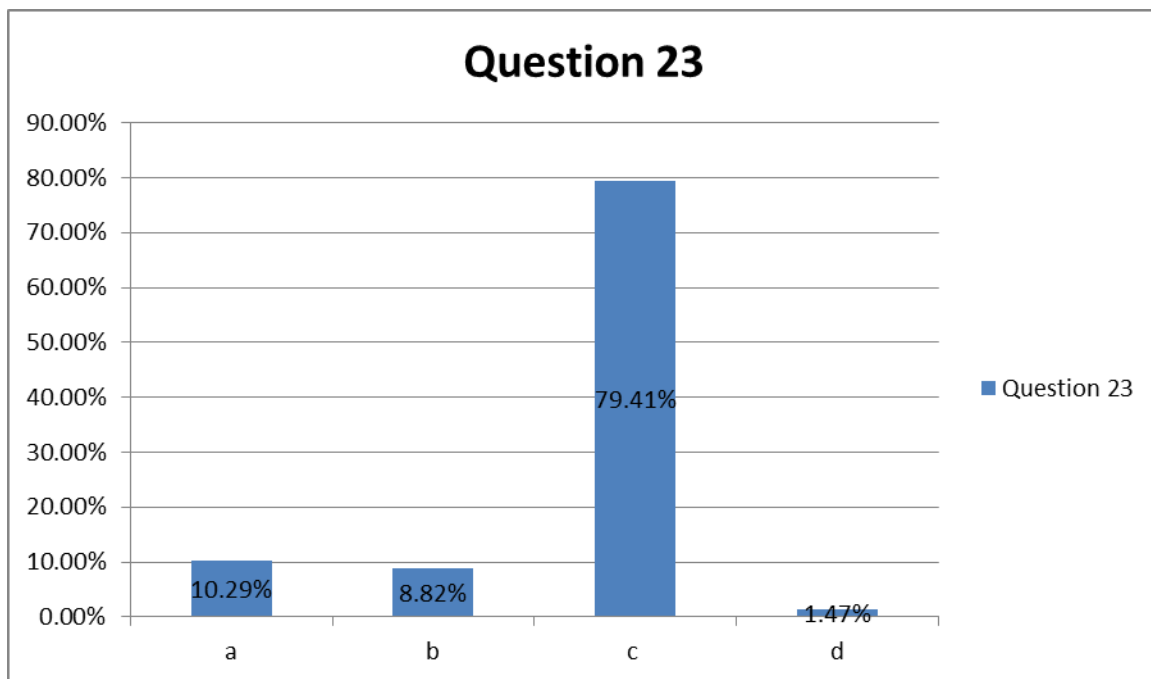
Question 22. To what extent do you think Readings and Conversation II have helped you to improve your oral fluency?											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL	%
-	-	-	-	-	3	9	26	24	6	68	
					4.41%	13.23%	38.23%	35.29%	8.82%		100%



Analysis: From a scale from 1 to 10, 26 students gave an 8 to the subject, 24 gave a 9 and only 6 students answered that Readings and conversation II have helped them to improve their oral fluency since they gave a 10.

Interpretation: the highest amount of students which is the 38.23 % gave an 8. It seems that most of the students are positive and feel comfortable with the subject.

Question 23. From the following list, which factors do you consider have helped you to improve your oral fluency?		
		%
a)Because of my own effort	7	10.29%
b)Because of the strategies the teacher uses	6	8.82%
c)Both of them	54	79.41%
d)Others	1	1.47%
TOTAL	68	100%



Analysis: According to the table, 6 students answered that they have improved their oral fluency because of the strategies the teacher uses, 7 said by their own effort and 54 students answered that both of them have helped them to improve it.

Interpretation: 8.82 % of students are positive about the strategies the teachers use in the class, 10.29% said that they have improved their oral fluency because of their own effort but the 79.41% answered that it is for both.

CONCLUSIONS

Many people want to learn and get involved with the English language to communicate with other English speakers; but to know a language is to be able to speak it fluently. The oral skill is considered one of the most important for communication purposes, and students need to be provided with different communicative activities that help them achieve a high level of fluency in the speaking skill. Therefore, all of the activities discussed here are an excellent way to fulfill this purpose.

On the other hand, this study has revealed that students do not agree with some activities included in the program of Readings and Conversation I and II. Students suggest omitting activities like *Making a Video* since it is difficult to do it and they don't feel comfortable doing this kind of activity, *Impromptu Speeches* because they feel nervous and stressed out when developing the activity. Moreover, they do not agree to participate in *Micro Teachings* because they think that this activity has nothing to do with the subject. For that reason they prefer oral presentations because they are not teaching something but they are just explaining a topic with their own words. Students also suggest teachers not to provide books and readings they consider boring. Besides that, students would like teachers to include more *Oral Presentations* and interesting readings in the program of the subjects because by doing this kind of activity they have more opportunities to practice the language.

In order to make a better research about fluency in the oral skill, it was important not only to ask the students but also to interview the teachers about it, since they interact

with students almost every day. In the interviews most of the teachers said they develop all the activities included in the programs. Also, some of them agreed that after reading a material, it is better to have discussions in the class instead of doing debates. Moreover, of 5 teachers interviewed, two agreed that in order to improve fluency in the oral skill, it is better to work in pairs than to work in groups.

It is important to mention that all of the teachers interviewed would like to have two hours per day to develop the class because they think this time is not enough to make the students speak a lot and be more familiar with the language. Also, some teachers said that one way to make students practice the language was to give them the option to choose a research topic they consider is very important, specially based on education, and then to make oral presentations about the topic. On the other hand, there were some teachers who said that debates came after the presentations since the topic was interesting for students, and some of these debates were not controlled by the teachers, some of them were spontaneous so it was not something systematic because the teachers consider it is not good for students. As a conclusion, having a good level of fluency is not so easy; therefore teachers and students have to work together in order to be successful in the oral skill in and outside the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it has been gathered some recommendations that not only can help teachers of Readings and Conversation class, but also the students taking this subject. The first recommendation for the teachers is to be aware about the materials such as articles, readings, books, etc. they use in the class due to the majority of the students feel that the material is not interesting. Teachers should provide students a list of books, readings or topics so that they can choose the ones that they consider more interesting, useful and comfortable for them at the time of understanding and practicing the language. Because mostly when the teacher is the one who chooses the material students might think that it is boring or the vocabulary is too confusing or complicated.

Vocabulary is important since it is one of the main tools to improve oral fluency because the more vocabulary students know the better they will communicate in the language. For that reason, another recommendation is to motivate students by providing them interesting books or readings so they can dedicate at least an hour per day in order to acquire more vocabulary so that they can improve their oral fluency.

Communicative activities such as impromptu speeches, oral presentations, debates, and oral book reports are good because they facilitate the learning process of the students and at the same time these activities create a comfortable environment, that is the reason why the activities teachers apply in the classroom should be done in an exciting and creative way so that they can help to contribute the achievement of all the competence students of the subject in matter need.

Another recommendation is that the teachers who teach these subjects should take into account the activities that the students suggest such as extensive readings, impromptu speeches, debates and oral book reports because these activities encourage students to express their ideas and practice the language. It also helps them to feel comfortable and confident at the time of communicating in the language.

The program of the subjects Readings and Conversation I and II include some useful communicative activities such as oral presentations, making a video, debates etc. even when these activities help students to practice the language it is not enough to obtain a good level of oral fluency; therefore, teachers should motivate students to attend to conversation clubs by giving them the opportunity to get an extra point in the subject. These conversation clubs will help students to improve their oral fluency.

In conclusion, to have a good level of oral fluency is a big challenge; it could be possible if teachers and students work together in order to overcome all the difficulties or limitations presented in the classroom. Even though the responsibility of learning is mainly on students since they are the ones who need to improve their oral skill, they will always need the teacher's help. Teacher's motivation towards students is really influential for them since they need to be induced by teachers most of the time. Communicative activities provide students the opportunity to keep communication with learners, but the effectiveness of these activities not only depends on the teacher but also on the students because they are the ones who are involved in the learning process.

GLOSSARY

Accuracy: Refers to the acceptability, quality and precision of the message that is conveyed.

Appropriateness: To take possession of or make use of exclusively for oneself, often without permission.

Communicative activities: The type of activities that involve students to practice the language with real communicative purposes.

Communicative competence: Grammatical knowledge and other rules of a language which enable a speaker to use and understand it.

Correctness: The state or quality of being correct.

Fluent: Be able to speak smoothly or readily.

Fluency: Rare of speech and the use of cohesive devices to bind discourse together.

Hesitation: The act of hesitating; suspension of opinion or action; doubt; vacillation.

Pragmatic competence: Be able to use a language in interpersonal relationships, taking into account such complexities as social distance and indirectness.

Proficient: Having or marked by an advanced degree of competence, as in an art, vocation, profession, or branch of learning.

Relevance: Closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand.

Skill: The ability to do something well, usually as a result of experience and training.

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5. Moss, D., and Ross F. (2003). *Communicative activities*.
6. Nan, Y, and Mingfang Z. (2009). *Using VOA special English to improve advanced English learners' productive use of high frequency words*. English Teaching Magazine, 47 (3), 26-27.

ANNEXES

Research Topic: The effectiveness of the Communicative activities applied by teachers of Readings and Conversation I and II that facilitate the development of oral fluency.

Aim: To discover how useful the communicative activities are for the students in order to improve their fluency in the speaking skill.

PART I

Please answer the following questions about Readings and Conversation I.

Directions: Select the best option and answer if it is required.

1. How often in the semester did you do Oral Presentations in Readings and Conversation I?

- a. Once b. Twice c. Three times d. Others _____

2. Do you consider that the vocabulary found in the articles is useful for the development of oral fluency?

Yes _____ No _____ Why? _____

3. Mark with an **X** on a scale from the least (1) to the most (5), which of these strategies helped you to improve your fluency in the oral skill?

Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Oral presentations					
Debates					
Role -plays					

4. Did the teacher develop **all** the activities that were included in the syllabus? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, did the teacher give you enough confidence to participate in the class? Yes _____ No _____

5. Which method did the teacher use to develop the readings in the class?

- ___ Read and discuss the material in the class
 ___ Read the material at home and discuss it in the next class.
 Others _____

6. How do you consider the **vocabulary** in the material (text books, articles, handouts, etc.) given by the teacher?

- ___ Easy to understand ___ Difficult to comprehend ___ Challenging ___ Confusing ___ Unusable
 Others _____

7. Do you think that the vocabulary found in the readings was easy to apply in real conversations?

Yes _____ No _____ Why? _____

8. In a 50-minute class, how long did the teacher take to have students to do oral practice?

- ___ 50 minutes ___ 40 minutes ___ 30 minutes ___ 20 minutes Other _____

9. Besides the class time, did you use other strategies to improve your fluency? Yes____ No____

10. If yes, which of the following strategies did you practice?

- ___Conversation Club ___Video conference ___Read books aloud
___Practice with your classmates out of the class Others_____

PART II

Please answer the following questions about Readings and Conversation II.

Directions: Select the best option and answer if it is required.

11. How often in the semester do you do Oral Presentations in Readings and Conversation II?

- a. Once b. Twice c. Three times d. Others _____

12. Do you consider that the vocabulary found in the readings is useful for the development of oral fluency?

Yes ____ No____ Why? _____

13. Mark with an X on a scale from the least (1) to the most (5), which of these strategies have helped you to improve your fluency in the oral skill?

Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Micro Teaching					
Making a video					
Impromptu speeches					
Virtual reading Club					
Oral books report					

14. Does the teacher develop all the activities that are included in the syllabus? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, does the teacher give you enough confidence to participate in the class? Yes ____ No ____

15. Which methods does the teacher use to develop the readings in the class?

- ___ Read and discuss the material in the class
___ Read the material given by the teacher at home and discuss it in the class.
Others _____

16. How do you consider the vocabulary in the material (text books, articles, handouts, etc.) given by the teacher?

- ___ Easy to understand ___ Difficult to comprehend ___ Challenging ___ Confusing ___ Unusable

Others _____

17. Do you think that the vocabulary found in the readings is helpful in a real conversation?

Yes ____ No ____ Why? _____

18. In a 50 minutes class, how long does the teacher take to have students to do oral practice?

- ___ 50 minutes ___ 40 minutes ___ 30 minutes ___ 20 minutes Other _____

19. Apart from the class time, do you use other strategies to improve your oral fluency?

Yes _____ No _____

20. If yes, which of the following strategies do you practice?

____ Conversation Clubs ____ Video conference ____ Read books aloud.
____ Practice with your classmates out of the class Others _____

PART III

Please answer the following questions about Readings and Conversation I and II.

Directions: Select the most appropriate answer for you.

21. To what extend do you think Readings and Conversation I helped you to improve your oral fluency?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

22. To what extend do you think Readings and Conversation II have helped you to improve your oral fluency?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

23. From the following list, which factors do you consider have helped you to improve your oral fluency?

____ Because of my own effort ____ Because of the strategies the teacher uses
____ Both of them Others _____

24. In no more than 10 words, suggest what you would like to **include** in the program of Readings and Conversation I and II:

25. In no more than 10 words, suggest what you would like to **omit** from the program of Readings and Conversation I and II?

Thank you very much for your help.

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

(Questions about Readings and Conversation I and II) *

1. Did you do all the activities that were required in the programs?
2. How many debates did you do in your class?
3. Do you think that the activities that are found in the programs are the best or enough to help students to develop oral fluency?
4. In your opinion, what is the best strategy or activity to develop oral fluency?
5. To what extent do you think Readings and Conversation I and II help the students to develop oral fluency?
6. Do you think these two subjects are enough to practice oral skill?
7. What other things do you think can be added to these subjects to help students improve their oral fluency?

* During the interview there were not only the questions assigned in it, but also follow-up questions in order to get more information and to take into account teacher's point of view about the communicative activities required in the programs of Readings and Conversation I and II.



**UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS Y HUMANIDADES
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS**

READINGS AND CONVERSATIONS I

I. GENERALIDADES

NOMBRE DE LA ASIGNATURA:	Readings and Conversation II
CODIGO:	LCI214
PRERREQUISITO:	Readings and Conversation I
UNIDADES VALORATIVAS:	4
PLAN DE ESTUDIO DE LA CARRERA:	Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés:
AÑO Y CICLO ACADEMICO:	2010/ Semester II
NIVEL Y AREA:	3 rd Year / Language and Skills Development Area
UNIDAD ACADEMICA QUE LA IMPARTE:	Foreign Language Department
FACULTAD:	Sciences
DURACION DEL CICLO:	16 Weeks
NUMERO DE HORAS DE TRABAJO Y SEMANAS:	80 hours, 16 Weeks
FECHA Y ACUERDO DEL PLAN DE ESTUDIO DEL C.S.U.:	17/08/01, Acdo No. 70- 99-2003 (V-2.8)

1.13 PROFESOR (A):
MsE. MIGUEL ANGEL CARRANZA
LIC. JOSÉ LUDWIG CORNEJO
LIC. GILMA ZEPEDA DE LAÍNEZ
LIC. CLAUDIA VIDES DE GUZMÁN
LIC. CECILIA REYES DE AMAYA

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the second of the two reading courses included in the curriculum whose aim is to develop fluent readers able to reflect and discuss about a wide range of topics. A primary focus is to teach readers how to approach a reading without having to continually stop and use a dictionary. Activating prior knowledge and cultivating vocabulary prior to the reading builds student's confidence before they tackle a reading passage. Using skills such as scanning, skimming, prediction, recognizing simile and metaphor, identifying meaning from context, identifying fact vs. opinion, arguing for and against a topic, understanding inference, and identifying main ideas gets students to approach reading texts in different ways. Students become less dictionary dependent, reading faster becomes more automatic; in turn, readers should be able to use their cognitive skills to better comprehend what they read.

They can then spend more time analyzing and synthesizing the content of the reading, rather than focusing solely on moving through the passage one word at a time. A secondary focus is to develop the speaking skill throughout the semester by having discussions in pairs and groups and the class about specific topics related to the readings. A final focus is to prepare the students to successfully take and pass proficiency exams such as the TOEFL or TOIC. Class time is mainly devoted to checking comprehension and vocabulary exercises, and the discussion of the material assigned by the teacher.

III. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, the students are expected to:

1. Be able to read all kinds of texts efficiently by applying reading skills and cognitive strategies.
2. Increase reading speed and Lexis in English.
3. Discuss effectively on a variety of topics.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, the students are expected to:

1. Be able to read complex information in order to make inferences from the text.
2. Be able to synthesize and restructure from texts
3. Be able to apply critical interpretation of the texts in order to grasp the intention of author.
4. Be able to understand argumentation especially those actions related with the justification of the information, the explanation of a preposition, and the sustenance of a conclusion.
5. Be able to generate hypothesis through the interpretation of texts.

V. CONTENTS

Unit No.	Chapter	Reading Skill
1	Looking for Work	Scanning / Skimming for Content
2	Computer Culture	Understanding Inference / Arguing For and Against a Topic
3	Travel Adventures	Identifying Chronological Events / Previewing
4	Haunted by the Past	Identifying Meaning from Context / Recognizing Sequence Markers
5	A Good Read	Recognizing Simile and Metaphor / Scanning
6	A New Generation of Thinking	Skimming for Content / Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas
7	It's Dinner Time!	Arguing For and Against a Topic / Identifying Meaning from Context
8	Beyond Planet Earth	Understanding Inference / Scanning
9	Energy for Life	Identifying Fact versus Opinion / Previewing
10	Language and Life	Identifying Cause and Effect / Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas
11	The Natural World	Understanding Inference / Skimming for Content
12	Music: Influence and Innovation	Identifying Meaning from Context / Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas

VI. METHODOLOGY

Class time are mostly devoted to the enhancement of the **READING** and **SPEAKING** skills. Students are expected to read extensively and be ready to participate in the discussions posed on the comprehension of the assigned readings. Participation will be evaluated, therefore; it is of utmost importance for students to

express personal reactions towards the readings. **A key-word list** (20 words.) will be issued at the beginning of the week's readings; every week 10 words will be incorporated in the **Lexis Notebook**. Therefore, students are required to look them up in advance for classroom checking. The Lexis Notebook will be handwritten and kept in a number 12 notebook (21.0 x 28.0 cm. - 8.½ x 11 in.). Each entry consists of: **(1)** spelling, **(2)** pronunciation key (International Phonetic Alphabet), **(3)** part of speech, **(4)** meaning according to guidelines, and **(5)** a sentence as example. There will be 2 Oral evaluations, 4 Reading quizzes, 1 revision of the Lexis Notebook, 1 Oral Check-up of the Lexis Notebook, and a final examination consisting of an Oral and Reading part. For the Oral Evaluations (quizzes and final exam) a list of topics and guidelines for presentations will be issued in advance so students have enough time to prepare. Student's learning will be assessed throughout the semester by the teacher and those in need of further explanation will be summoned for tutoring.

VII. EVALUATION SYSTEM

a. Lexis Notebook revisions	05%
b. Lexis Notebook Oral Check-up	05%
c. Reading Quizzes	20%
d. Presentations	20%
e. Midterm Exam	
• Oral exam	15%
• Reading exam	10%
f. Final Exam	
• Final Oral exam	15%
• Final Reading exam	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

VIII. REFERENCES / RESOURCES

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- Newsweek Magazine, Inc., Magazine Articles. 251 West 27th Street, New York.
- Time Magazine. Magazine Articles.



**UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS Y HUMANIDADES
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS**

READINGS AND CONVERSATION II

I. GENERALIDADES

NOMBRE DE LA ASIGNATURA:	Readings and Conversation II
CÓDIGO:	LCI214
PRERREQUISITO:	Readings and Conversation I
UNIDADES VALORATIVAS:	4
PLAN DE ESTUDIO DE LA CARRERA:	Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés:
AÑO Y CICLO ACADÉMICO:	2011/ Semester I
NIVEL Y ÁREA:	4th Year / Language and Skills Development Area
UNIDAD ACADÉMICA QUE LA IMPARTE:	Foreign Language Department
FACULTAD:	Sciences
DURACIÓN DEL CICLO:	16 Weeks
NÚMERO DE HORAS DE TRABAJO Y SEMANAS:	80 hours, 16 Weeks
FECHA Y ACUERDO DEL PLAN DE ESTUDIO DEL C.S.U.:	17/08/01, Acdo No. 70- 99-2003 (V-2.8)
PROFESOR (A):	LIC.. MIGUEL ANGEL CARRANZA LIC. JUAN CARLOS CRUZ LIC. RHINA FRANCO RAMOS LIC. FIDEL NAVIDAD MORALES LIC. CECILIA REYES DE AMAYA

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the second of the two reading courses included in the curriculum whose aim is to develop fluent readers able to reflect and discuss about a wide range of topics. A primary focus is to teach readers how to approach a reading without having to continually stop and use a dictionary. Activating prior knowledge and cultivating vocabulary prior to the reading builds student's confidence before they tackle a reading passage. Using skills such as scanning, skimming, prediction, recognizing simile and metaphor, identifying meaning from context, identifying fact vs. opinion, arguing for and against a topic, understanding inference, and identifying main ideas gets students to approach reading

texts in different ways. Students become less dictionary dependent, reading faster becomes more automatic; in turn, readers should be able to use their cognitive skills to better comprehend what they read. They can then spend more time analyzing and synthesizing the content of the reading, rather than focusing solely on moving through the passage one word at a time. A secondary focus is to develop the speaking skill throughout the semester by having discussions in pairs and groups and the class about specific topics related to the readings. A final focus is to prepare the students to successfully take and pass proficiency exams such as the TOEFL or TOIC. Class time is mainly devoted to checking comprehension and vocabulary exercises, and the discussion of the material assigned by the teacher.

III. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, the students are expected to:

1. Be able to read all kinds of texts efficiently by applying reading skills and cognitive strategies.
2. Increase reading speed and Lexis in English.
3. Discuss effectively on a variety of topics.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, the students are expected to:

1. Be able to read complex information in order to make inferences from the text.
2. Be able to synthesize and restructure from texts.
3. Be able to apply critical interpretation of the texts in order to grasp the intention of author.
4. Be able to understand argumentation especially those actions related with the justification of the information, the explanation of a preposition, and the sustenance of a conclusion.
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V. CONTENTS

Unit No.	Chapter	Reading Skill
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5	A Good Read	Recognizing Simile and Metaphor / Scanning
6	A New Generation of Thinking	Skimming for Content / Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas
7	It's Dinner Time!	Arguing For and Against a Topic / Identifying Meaning from Context
8	Beyond Planet Earth	Understanding Inference / Scanning
9	Energy for Life	Identifying Fact versus Opinion / Previewing
10	Language and Life	Identifying Cause and Effect / Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas
11	The Natural World	Understanding Inference / Skimming for Content
12	Music: Influence and Innovation	Identifying Meaning from Context / Identifying Main and Supporting Ideas

VI. METHODOLOGY

Class time are mostly devoted to the enhancement of the *READING* and *SPEAKING* skills. Students are expected to read extensively and be ready to participate in the discussions posed on the comprehension of the assigned readings. Participation is a very important part of the class, therefore; it is of utmost importance for students to express personal reactions towards the readings. There will be three or four reading quizzes based on the textbook or other sources. The tasks will be a micro teaching, video making, or others at the teacher's discretion. The two midterm exams will be oral consisting in a report based on a book chosen by every student at the beginning of the semester. Another aspect that will be part of the class are impromptu speeches which will be based on the textbook or on any other material given by teacher. For every task, evaluation, and activity a list of topics and guidelines will be issued in advance so that students have enough time to prepare. Student's learning will be assessed throughout the semester by the teacher and those in need of further explanation will be summoned for tutoring.

VII. EVALUATION SYSTEM

Reading Quizzes (3 or 4)	25%
Task 1 *	15%
Task 2 *	15%
Midterm Oral Exam (book report)	25%
Final Reading Exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

*The tasks will be chosen by the teacher among a variety of activities like: video making, micro teaching, virtual reading club, impromptu speeches, or others at the teacher discretion.

VIII. CLASSROOM RULES

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Students' active participation is required.
2. **IN-CLASS STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR:** At the teacher's discretion, the students who show a disruptive behavior or refuse to participate in the class activities may be asked to leave the classroom.
3. **MISSED EVALUATIONS:** Requests presenting a genuine written justification for missed evaluation should be made within the next three days following it. Otherwise, evaluations **WILL NOT BE MADE UP** .
4. **COURSE MATERIALS:** It is **MANDATORY** for all students to have their own required materials for attending classes.
5. **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:** Students must turn in their homework assignments on the **DUE DATES**; excuses are **NOT** accepted unless they are valid ones – a certified sickness or death of a close relative.
6. **BEGINNING OF CLASS:** The classroom might be closed five minutes after the beginning of the class. Late comers may not be allowed to come in for class.
7. **STUDENTS WHO WORK:** Students who have a job will comply with all the regulations and policies established for the course. No special concessions will be given.
8. **GROUP CHANGES:** No group changes allowed under any circumstances.

IX. REFERENCES / RESOURCES

- Active Skills for Reading, Book 4. Neil J. Anderson. Thomson & Heinle 2003.
- Exploring Second Language Reading. Neil J. Anderson. Thomson & Heinle.
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