

UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR

FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA ORIENTAL

DEPARTAMENTO DE HUMANIDADES

SECCIÓN DE IDIOMAS



INFORME FINAL DEL CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN:

LINGÜÍSTICA.

MODALIDAD DE CURSO O DIPLOMADO:

PROCESO DE GRADUACIÓN (CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN)

TÍTULO DEL ARTÍCULO FINAL:

THE ORAL PRODUCTION HINDERS THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF
THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS OF MODERN LANGUAGE.

PARA OPTAR AL GRADO ACADÉMICO DE:

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS ESPECIALIDAD EN FRANCES E INGLES.

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OCTUBRE 2024

SAN MIGUEL, EL SALVADOR, CENTROAMÉRICA

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Agradecimientos.

Como parte fundamental de nuestra formación queremos dar nuestros sinceros agradecimientos:

Primero y ante todo, deseamos expresar nuestro más profundo agradecimiento a Dios, cuya guía y fortaleza han sido una fuente constante de inspiración y apoyo durante nuestra carrera universitaria y el desarrollo de esta investigación. Su presencia ha sido fundamental para superar los desafíos y mantenernos enfocados en el objetivo de este estudio.

Así mismo, un agradecimiento muy especial a nuestros licenciados y licenciadas de la carrera de Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas por su dedicación, sabiduría y apoyo continuo. Su compromiso con la enseñanza y el aprendizaje ha sido una fuente constante de inspiración y ha enriquecido nuestra formación académica.

Agradecemos sinceramente a nuestra asesora Ana Silvia Orellana de Cruz por su tiempo durante la realización de este artículo, por su invaluable asesoramiento y orientación, por sus aportes y colaboración durante todo el proceso. Su apoyo y sugerencias enriquecieron enormemente esta investigación.

Finalmente, queremos expresar nuestro más profundo agradecimiento a nuestras familias y amigos. Su amor incondicional, paciencia y aliento constante han sido la base sobre la cual hemos construido este proyecto. Su comprensión y apoyo han sido invaluable a lo largo de estos años de estudio para poder cumplir nuestra meta académica.

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Abstract

This article is based on a research study focused on the lack of oral production hinders the communicative competence. When communicating in a second language there are many aspects that can affect the speech.

That is why a target population was taken to collect real data, the population that was considered to develop this project was made up of 54 students where a sample of 12 students were taken in this research by convenient methods, of which 50% are women and 50% are men. This number was selected to get a high level of reliability on the results obtained

The main stage of the investigation was the 4-hour observation process directed at the third-year students of the University of El Salvador. Also, the researchers administered a survey to obtain the participants' own perspectives. Both instruments collected the essential information to achieve the objectives.

Findings revealed that teachers were successful in fulfilling their roles as educators. This success was attributed to their use of effective didactic materials and instructional strategies. However, there are some problems that students have when speaking English such as doubts and frequently pausing, problems comprehension, lack of vocabulary among other factors during their interactions, creating a struggle to find the right words and structures, which limits the fluency of their conversations affecting their communication skills.

keywords: Oral production, communicative competence, teacher' strategies.

Resumen.

Este artículo se basa en un estudio de investigación centrado en la falta de producción oral que dificulta la competencia comunicativa. Al comunicarse en una segunda lengua hay muchos aspectos que pueden afectar el habla. El objetivo de esta investigación fue determinar cuáles son los problemas de comunicación que genera la falta de producción oral en los estudiantes de tercer año de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad de El Salvador durante el primer semestre de 2023. Es por ello que se tomó una población objetivo para recolectar datos reales, la población que se consideró para desarrollar este proyecto estuvo conformada por 54 estudiantes donde se tomó una muestra de 12 estudiantes en esta investigación por métodos convenientes, de los cuales el 50% son mujeres y el 50% son hombres. Este número fue seleccionado para obtener un alto nivel de confiabilidad en los resultados obtenidos. La etapa principal de la investigación fue el proceso de observación de 4 horas de duración dirigido a los estudiantes de tercer año de la Universidad de El Salvador. Además, los investigadores administraron una encuesta para obtener las propias perspectivas de los participantes. Ambos instrumentos recogieron la información esencial para alcanzar los objetivos. Los hallazgos revelaron que los docentes tuvieron éxito en el desempeño de sus funciones como educadores. Este éxito se atribuyó al uso de materiales didácticos y estrategias de instrucción eficaces. Sin embargo, existen algunos problemas que tienen los estudiantes al hablar inglés como dudas y pausas frecuentes, problemas de comprensión, falta de vocabulario entre otros factores durante sus interacciones, creando una lucha por encontrar las palabras y estructuras adecuadas, lo que limita la fluidez de sus conversaciones afectando sus habilidades comunicativas.

Palabras clave: Producción oral, competencia comunicativa, estrategias del maestro.

Introduction

This article presents an investigation that was carried out at the University of El Salvador, Multidisciplinary Oriental, San Miguel campus, in 2023. The acquisition of English as a second language is an intricate educational process where all participants are required to engage in activities to ensure its effectiveness. Teachers are a large part of this process, their work in the classroom is very important to provide guidance, but students for their part must be active learners; they have to take responsibility for their own learning because they are the main protagonists of this process. However, the achievement of this competence is often hindered by various challenges faced by language learners.

This research was carried out in order to find out what are the communication problems that the lack of oral production generates in third-year students of Modern language at the University of El Salvador during the first semester 2023, which significantly impacts their overall communicative competence. The research contains the following sections:

The delimitation, in which is presented the general and specific objectives. To be achieved at the end of the investigation process. The research question, that is general. Through the development of the project it is intended to give satisfactory logical answers to this question.

Then, the justification or rationale is presented. In this part, it is explained the importance of this research project, so it is necessary to investigate how the lack of oral production hinders communicative competence, so as to provide some important points that may be useful for future research.

Next, there is the theoretical framework. The body of the document shows the concepts that have been taken into account. There is also the mention of some theories according to some authors as to relate them to the topic presented and the variables that have been measured.

Then the methodology in which the method was used for this research is presented; The participants, the techniques and instruments used for data collection, as well as the interpretation of such information are described. The research was carried out through a survey, using a questionnaire as an instrument that was applied to a sample of 12 third-year students, of which 6 are women, and 6 are men. In the questionnaire items had a defined number, which consisted of 20 items about the research problem. The questionnaire was applied to a sample of the group of students, which helped to obtain quantitative data that allowed generalizing the results of the investigation. The student sample was chosen randomly, that is, the students were not chosen intentionally.

The next chapter contains the most important part where the results and the most outstanding findings to test the hypotheses are presented. In addition, the conclusions of the investigation. And finally the recommendations suggested to overcome the problematic situation that arose during the research process.

I. Methodology

The present study aims to determine what are the communication problems that the lack of oral production generates in third-year students of Modern Language at the university of El Salvador.

The research design is descriptive. By adopting this research design, one gains a deeper understanding of the reasons and mechanisms behind the study without manipulating variables, just describing them. Asio (2021). The research approach is quantitative that was the most appropriate as it fits with the objective of this research, which according to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), explain this phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics.

Population and sampling: The participants of this research study are students who study the first semester of modern languages in third year. Based on a group composed of fifty-four students. The sample consists of twelve students, in the course, intensive advanced English, in which we will take six female and six male. This number is selected to get a high level of reliability of the results obtained.

First of all, to collect the information and data necessary in this research, we use two techniques that are precise to collect the data. The first one is observation that is used to collect and quantify things using set parameters and criteria (Ellis, 2022), this means using a schedule of observations and quantifying particular observations. As explained by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, (1993), observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation in the social setting chosen for study. The second one is a survey that is a method of data collection where the information is collected from a group of individuals by asking them a

series of questions to which they provide a series of answers based on their knowledge and experiences. Creswell, J. W. (2012), says that the survey applies to a sample or entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population.

For this study, data collection is carried out using a single method namely questionnaire for a survey. A questionnaire in English will be developed and administered in 12 third-year students of Modern Language which is focused on a number of 10 closed-questions for the main objective of this project. The questions will be formulated with the purpose of identifying the factors that affect or paralyze the development of oral production in third-year students of Modern Languages at the University of El Salvador. During the process of data collection, we will select randomly a total of twelve students consisting of six females and six males.

The analysis of data collected through the survey will be used descriptive statistics, which Freedman, D., Pisani, R., & Purves, R. (2007) refer to as the branch of statistics that focuses on summarizing, organizing, and presenting data in a meaningful and concise manner. Additionally, Excel will be used for the graphical representation of the data collected.

II. Results.

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews, highlighting the participants' perspectives on various factors. To illustrate these results, a classification scheme of objectives will be used, detailing the factors examined and the corresponding questions. The chapter will emphasize the most significant data, which demonstrates the most relevant factors that affect students in learning a new language.

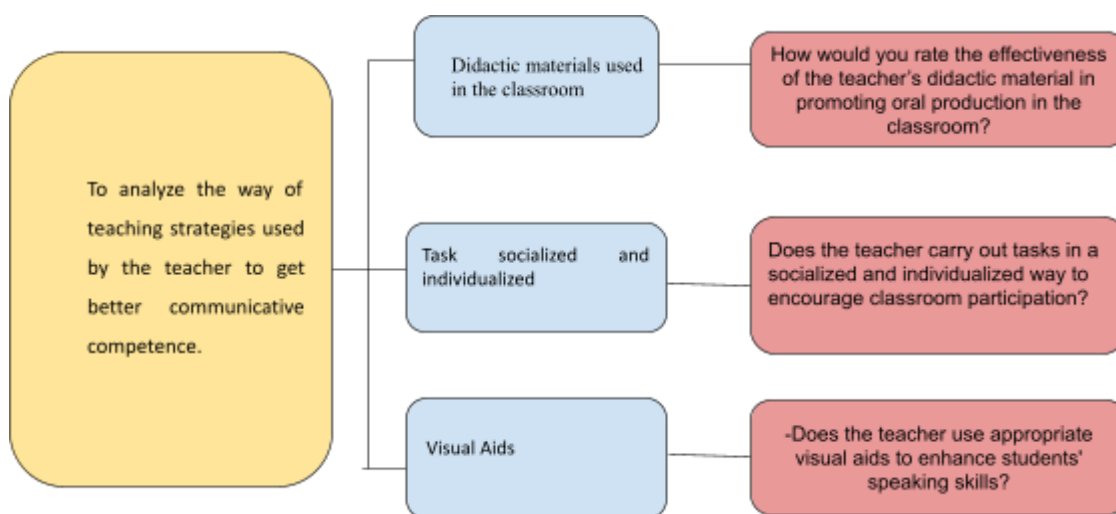


Figure 1. Title: *Classification scheme of objectives 1.* Source: *Natalia Gonzalez, Ivania Hernandez, Jenny Portillo.*

Regarding the first question about didactic materials used in the classroom illustrated in the image above, 58.3% of students stated that teachers always use these resources to enhance their learning. However, 41.7% of students mentioned that teachers sometimes use teaching materials to support their learning process.

Following the same diagram order. The next questions related to task socialized and individualized, 54.5% of the students surveyed believe that the teacher always carries out tasks in a socialized and individualized manner to encourage participation. On the other hand, 45.5% of the students indicate that teachers sometimes use this approach.

On the other hand, the factor corresponding to visual aids, 27.3% of the students indicated that teachers always use appropriate visual aids to enhance students' speaking skills. and 72.7% mentioned that teachers sometimes use these visual aids, which means they make a good job to improve students' speaking skills.

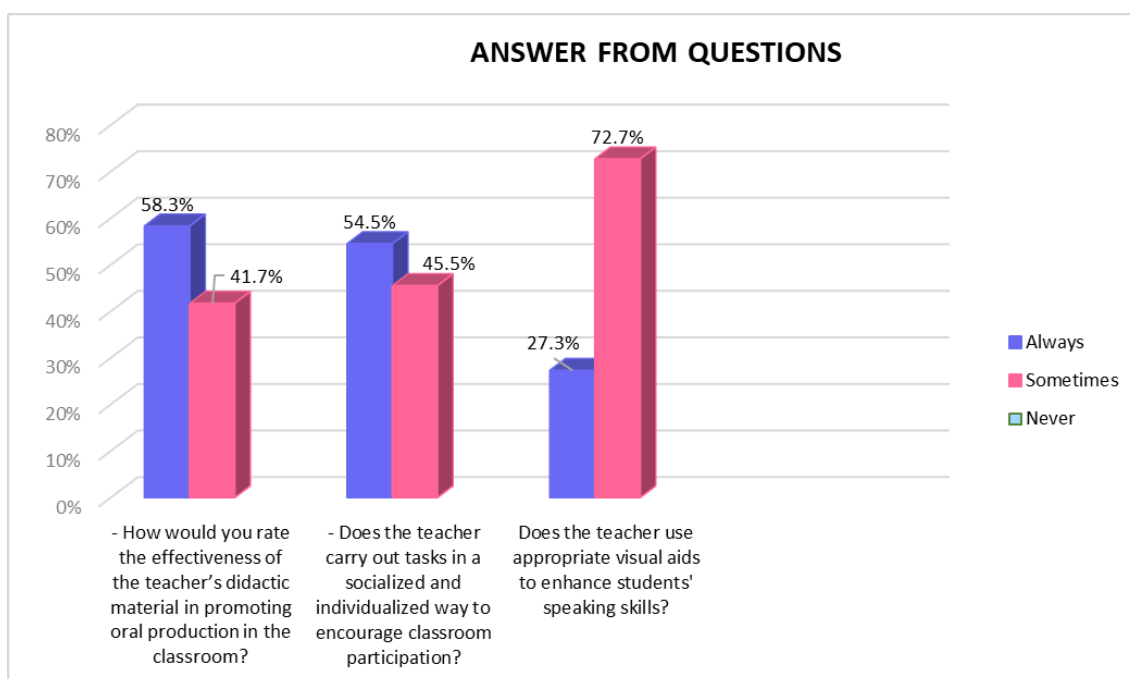


Figure 2. Title: Graph answers from questions 1. Source: Natalia Gonzalez, Ivania Hernandez, Jenny Portillo.

Besides, the next objective carried out in this investigation was to identify the external and internal factors that generate the lack of oral production in students within the classroom. The following diagram shows better the catheterization with the questions related.

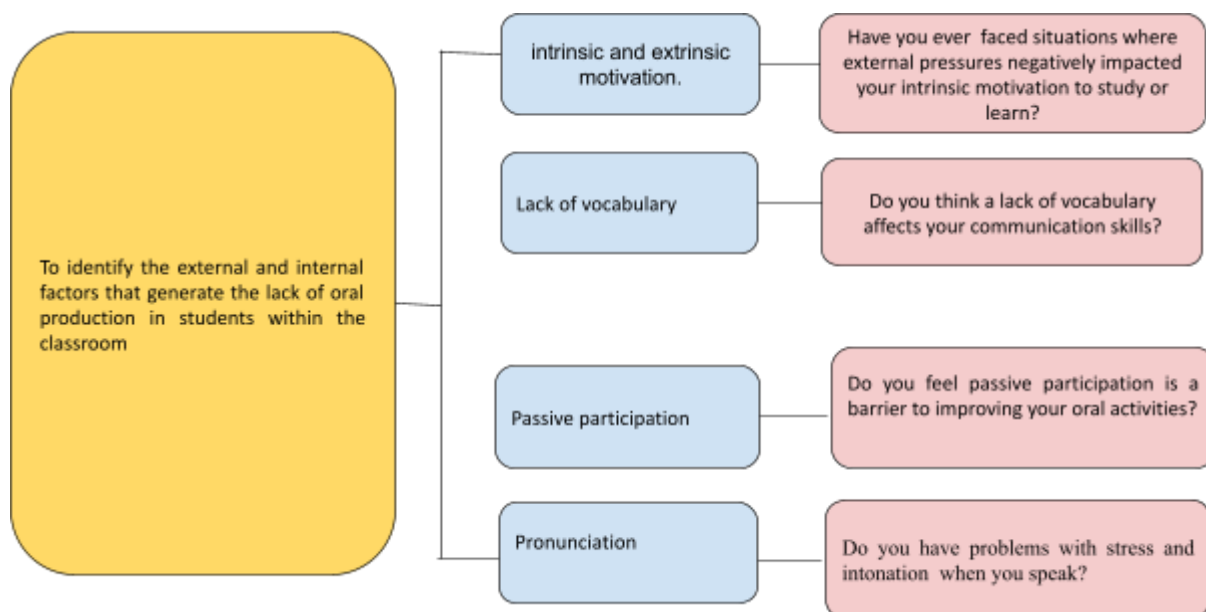


Figure 3. Title: Classification scheme of objectives 2. Source: Natalia Gonzalez, Ivania Hernandez, Jenny Portillo.

The question is related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. 16.7% of students indicated that they have always faced situations where external pressures negatively impacted their intrinsic motivation. However, 66.7% of students said that they sometimes have faced this situation. On the other hand, 16.7% of the students answered that they have never faced this situation.

Relating to the question: Do you think a lack of vocabulary affects your communication skills? 75.0% of the students added that lack of vocabulary always affects their ability to speak while 25.0% of the students mentioned that sometimes lack of vocabulary influences their communication skills.

Regarding the question that says do you feel passive participation is a barrier to improving your oral activities? 25.0% of students said that passive participation is always a barrier to improving oral activities. And 58.3% of students added that passive participation is always a barrier. On the other hand, 16.7% said that passive participation is never a barrier.

The question related to stress and intonation: Do you have problems with stress and intonation when you speak? 25.0% added that they always have problems while they are speaking the language. However, 75% of students answered that they sometimes have problems with stress and intonation.

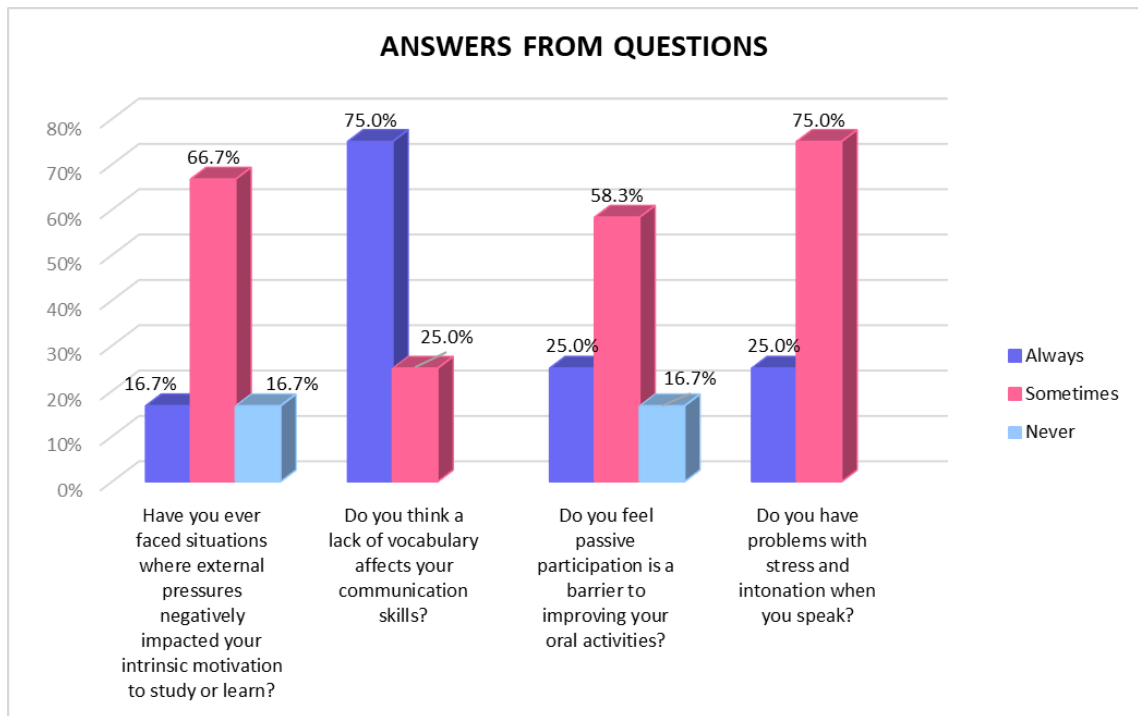


Figure 4. Title: Graph answers from questions 3. Source: Natalia Gonzalez, Ivania Hernandez, Jenny Portillo.

Figure 5. Title: *Category table of problems that affect communicative competence.*

Source: Natalia Gonzalez, Ivania Hernandez, Jenny Portillo.

Category of problem	Description	Impact on communicative competence
Lack of vocabulary	Insufficient knowledge of words and phrases in the language.	Limits the ability to express complex ideas, understand texts and engage in conversations effectively.
Passive Participation	Be minimally involved or not actively interacting during language activities.	Reduces the opportunity to practice language skills, affecting the development of fluency and accuracy.
Stress and intonation	Difficulty in controlling the accent and rhythm of speech, which affects effective communication.	It makes understanding difficult in speech and listening, affecting the clarity and meaning of the message.
Intrinsic motivation	Lack of interest or internal motivation to learn and improve in the use of the language.	Less interested in learning the language, decreasing persistence in learning, resulting in slower progress and less retention of language skills.

III. Discussions

This section presents the discussion based on the findings of this research. This chapter also answers the research question : What are the causes that produce oral production problems of third-year students of Modern Languages?

In the first part of the results that was related to didactic materials used in the classroom. 58.3% of students added that teachers always use the appropriate material for promoting oral production. On the other hand, 41.7% of students mentioned that teaching materials are only sometimes used to facilitate comprehension, which can be interpreted as an opportunity for improvement rather than a criticism. It is possible that, in certain cases, the materials are more oriented towards oral production, leaving other language skills in the background. However, the need to improve and implement teaching materials in all areas of English language learning is suggested.

Overall, these results show that teachers are moving in the right direction, using resources that promote oral production and ensuring that these materials contribute effectively to the learning process of all students.

According to Morales (2012) defines didactic material as “a set of material means which intervene in and facilitate the process of teaching and learning” (p.10). Didactic material helps to facilitate language learning. Teachers should choose or create learning materials that match the program's objectives, the way they teach, and students' learning styles. Using the right materials can help make learning more interesting and motivate students to engage in their learning.

In the section on socialized and individualized tasks, 54.5% of the students surveyed positively perceive the use of both group and individual tasks by teachers. This indicates that

teachers are implementing effective strategies that promote teamwork and, at the same time, offer space for individual learning, which is crucial for balanced academic development. The combination of socialized and individualized tasks allows students to acquire collaborative skills, such as communication and cooperation, while reinforcing their autonomy and responsibility in individual learning. However, 45.5% of students said that teachers sometimes use these strategies, suggesting that, although they are used, they are not applied consistently in all classes. This could mean that some teachers do not implement these practices on a regular basis, which could limit the positive impact they have on learning.

Another element that contributes to teacher's strategies or methodologies is task socialized and individualized. A student should engage in tasks that have a meaningful purpose in order to create an environment that supports his or her learning, both in the collaborative and personal context. This contributes to developing skills in both group interaction and self-learning. Johnson and Johnson (2009) maintain that students need to be taught the social skills needed for high quality cooperation and they must be motivated to use them if they are to facilitate learning in themselves and others. By integrating socialized and individualized tasks, teachers can help students build a solid foundation not only for mastering English but also for their personal and professional development.

Moreover, visual aids is another important factor that was taken into account for this investigation and the data from this research demonstrate their significant impact on learning. Although only 27.3% of students reported that teachers always use these tools, it is noteworthy that 72.7% indicate that teachers use them sometimes. This suggests that most students recognize visual aids as a regular feature of their classes. This is positive because visual aids not only help in understanding complex topics but also make classes more engaging and interesting. Regular use of images, graphics, videos, and other visual resources allows students to connect better with the content, as they can see and hear the

information clearly. This approach enhances information retention and increases interest in the subject matter. Nevertheless, it would be ideal if the use of these tools were even more consistent in classes to maximize their positive impact on learning.

According to Gulnoza (2022) Visual aids stimulate the cognitive interests of students, create, under certain conditions, an increased emotional attitude of students to learning, provide a versatile formation of images, contribute to a strong assimilation of knowledge, and an understanding of the connection between scientific knowledge and life. Furthermore, visual aids enhance the learning experience by translating abstract concepts into more concrete forms that are easier for students to understand and remember. They support various learning styles, especially those who benefit from visual stimulation, and make the learning process more engaging and interactive. By incorporating visual elements, educators can not only capture students' attention but also improve their ability to retain and apply information.

In addition, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was another element investigated in this research. The findings reveal that a significant portion of students face situations that negatively impact their desire to learn. Specifically, 16.7% of the students reported that they always encounter these challenges, while 66.7% said this happens sometimes. This suggests that many students experience motivational barriers at various times, which can affect their ability to study effectively. Meanwhile, the 16.7% of students who stated that they have never experienced such issues may imply that some students have developed strategies or are in circumstances that help them maintain a steady level of motivation, or that they encounter fewer obstacles in their learning process.

These results highlight the need to identify and address the factors that affect students' motivation. To improve the situation, it is essential to implement strategies such as: offering emotional support, implementing programs that focus on building intrinsic motivation and resilience, such as growth mindset training, help students set clear, achievable goals to

maintain focus and measure progress, providing one-on-one counseling or mentoring to understand individual challenges and offer tailored guidance, among others. Implementing these strategies can help address motivational barriers, improve students' study effectiveness, and support overall academic success.

creating achievable goals so that students feel valued and motivated can have a significant impact on their academic performance and at the end it can encourage students to overcome these moments of demotivation. According to Schiefele, (1991) Intrinsic motivation is an inner force that motivates students to engage in academic activities, because they are interested in learning and they enjoy the learning process as well. Schiefele explained that intrinsic motivation is the true drive in human nature, which drives individuals to search for and to face new challenges. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity or task purely for the inherent satisfaction or enjoyment that comes from doing it.

According to Benabou and Tirole (2003), extrinsic motivation promotes effort and performance with rewards serving as positive reinforcers for the desired behavior. Extrinsic motivation arises from external factors or rewards that push individuals to perform a task or achieve a goal. The motivation comes from seeking outcomes that are separate from the activity itself. In the teaching learning process the rewards are high grades, certificates or other formal recognition, prizes like books, gadgets and special privileges or responsibilities, such as leading project or getting extra free time.

Furthermore, the lack of vocabulary was also investigated. 75% of students surveyed indicated that a lack of vocabulary always affects their ability to communicate, highlighting the importance of having a strong lexical command to express ideas clearly. In contrast, 25% stated that this factor sometimes influences their communication, suggesting that in certain cases, they manage to compensate for this deficiency with other strategies. These results

highlight the crucial importance of strengthening students' vocabulary. A broad vocabulary not only improves the ability to communicate clearly and accurately, but also increases students' confidence in expressing themselves.

According to Kufaisi (2012) states that without having a sufficient vocabulary, English learners who follow an academic program will encounter difficulties in the development of language skills. Without a broad vocabulary, they find it difficult to understand complicated texts, write effectively, and participate in discussions. In addition, they have trouble understanding lectures and grasping instructions, which negatively affects their academic performance. Therefore, improving vocabulary is essential for students to be able to meet these challenges and succeed in their studies.

Besides, passive participation is another important factor that was taken into account in this investigation. 25% of students answered that they consider passive participation is a barrier that prevents them improving in oral activities. These students do not actively participate in oral discussions or activities, making progress difficult for them. Passive participation in this context may involve listening without engaging or not actively interacting during oral activities, limiting their opportunity to practice and improve their skills. However, 58.3 % added that they sometimes feel that passive participation is a barrier. It means that these students experience obstacles in their oral progress intermittently, possibly depending on the context, subject or level of comfort in certain situations. While 16.7% said that passive participation is never a barrier against oral activities. For these students, lack of active participation does not affect their ability to learn or confidence in speaking. These students may find other ways to practice and improve their oral skills outside of active classroom participation. Nevertheless, most students recognize that passive participation is a barrier to improving in oral activities. This points to a significant problem in the educational environment, where lack of active participation is affecting the development of essential communication skills.

According to Warayet (2011) described students who are silent as passive who are reluctant in interacting inside the class and this can affect the class environment negatively. There are many reasons that prevent students from participating and make them keep silent, they are shy, these students often fear making mistakes and being judged by their classmates or teachers. This makes them avoid actively participating in class to avoid being exposed to criticism or teasing. In addition, shyness is often associated with insecurity, so these students tend to think that their contributions are not valuable enough. This lack of confidence leads them to not raise their hands or engage in group activities, making their class participation minimal.

Moreover, pronunciation is also included in this investigation. 25% of students indicated that they always have problems with stress and intonation when they speak. This indicates that a quarter of the students are continually struggling with these aspects, which can affect their fluency and clarity when communicating orally. On the contrary, 75% of students answered that they sometimes have problems when they speak. While most students face difficulties, they do not experience them all the time, which may depend on the situation or their level of confidence at certain times. Although most students have occasional difficulties with emphasis and intonation, a significant minority face these problems on a regular basis. This highlights that pronunciation remains an important area of improvement for many students

According to Fraser (2001). If the English speakers put the stress in the wrong syllable, then the word will not be understood by the listener, even misinterpreting. Then the accent in the correct syllable is essential for words to be clearly understood, as a misuse of the accent can make a word sound completely different or seem like another word.

According to Mennen (2015). Having incorrect intonation patterns, both in perception or production; obscure the communication with native and non-native speakers (NN) of the

target language. Therefore, Poor intonation affects both the way in which the message is perceived and the way in which it is expressed, limiting the effectiveness of communication in the language.

IV. Conclusion

The third-year students of modern languages, specializing in French and English, consider that the difficulties that arise in the oral production of the English language come from different factors, adding that the environment in which they are taught the language influences the development of their ability to speak another language.

The conclusions obtained through the interpretation of the results show that there are many factors that affect oral production, however there are some more relevant than others in this research.

The following are some conclusions drawn based on the findings and discussion:

The research began with an observational study, which determined the problem. During the observation, it was noticed that most students avoided participating in oral expression activities, reflecting a lack of vocabulary which means they do not have enough vocabulary to effectively engage in oral expression activities. Fear of communicating in the language in front of others: They are apprehensive about speaking in the language leading to avoidance of such activity. Additionally, it was evident that students had difficulties or poor expression and intonation: Students exhibit issues with effective expression and intonation, impacting their overall communication skills.

From the investigation, it was proven that achieving fluency or strong oral production is a challenging process for students, particularly when they are in the first semesters of university. In general, the results showed that students faced numerous issues that hindered their performance in speaking tasks. As we can notice with the results of the questionnaire administered, most of the difficulties are, students have a poor vocabulary to communicate or create a conversation in class, this makes the speech slower and does not give a clear message. Also, passive participation which limits the effectiveness of language acquisition and development.

Likewise, stress and intonation that is another factor that affect oral production when students speak, students lack self-confidence, tend to stutter and do not speak fluently, use filler words and this result in their pronunciation not being adequate or understood. The last element is external pressures which affect their intrinsic motivation, thanks to the investigation done it was possible to confirm, all these students' problems are due to the little contact they have with the language. These difficulties in oral production not only impact their ability to express themselves clearly, but also influence their ability to understand the speech of others.

On the other hand, the data gathered from the survey of third-year modern language students at the University of El Salvador, Multidisciplinary Oriental, San Miguel campus, indicated that teachers effectively fulfilled their teaching roles. This success was linked to their use of effective didactic materials and instructional strategies, which encompassed a range of interactive methods such as discussions, lectures, and small-group activities. By employing these techniques, the teachers fostered oral production skills in students and encouraged active participation in class. This increased engagement likely contributed to a more stimulating and dynamic learning environment.

V. Recommendations

Throughout this research, as researchers, we observe the problems that students face when expressing themselves in English in the classroom. In addition, teachers play an important role in improving the oral ability in the learning process of students. Therefore, we offer the following recommendations in order to improve oral production in English.

For the teachers:

→ We recommend the teacher to continue using strategies to improve active speech for students to develop their foreign language such as plays, small-group activities among others because students would feel in various real social situations, increasing their vocabulary and speaking ability.

→ Create a classroom with a good environment where your students have the confidence to freely express their questions, doubts and concerns without fear of being pointed out for their mistakes.

→ Promote conversation clubs and activities related to oral production outside of the classroom because opportunities to practice the English language are limited.

→ Spread positive energy. Lessons will be more efficient if teachers promote active and positive participation. Therefore, students will be focused and motivated while engaging in compelling learning activities.

For students:

→ Practice more English by forming small groups with your classmates to discuss or debate topics that appeal to you to improve your vocabulary and listening comprehension.

→ Do not be afraid to express yourself in English because it is normal to make mistakes at the beginning of this learning process and knowledge is acquired from those mistakes.

→ Stay in touch with the language throughout the day, do not limit yourself, this will help you gain a deeper understanding of English skills.

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