Suggestions to Increase Oral Participation in an at-risk Chilean Public Primary EFL Classroom

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Abstract
The current study inquires about the students' perception regarding their English classes at Escuela Dra Eloísa Díaz, an at-risk public school in Santiago de Chile. How do students value their English classes? What are the difficulties they have to face, and how can teachers increase students' participation are the research question that lead this investigation. Accordingly, the main objectives are to determine the students' perception regarding their English classes, to comprehend the main difficulties they have to face and to provide recommendations to enhance the weaker areas. To achieve the intended aims, the researchers use a mixed-method data collection procedure to gain meaningful information. A quantitative survey to obtain a broad vision regarding several aspects of the English classes at the targeted school, complemented by a focus group and a series of interviews aiming to get more in-depth knowledge qualitatively. After the analysis process, the authors conclude that oral participation is one of the main obstacles students have to overcome in their English language learning processes. Students are conscious of the importance of learning English and the difficulties they have to face. Among them, they recognize a low level in oral participation and the lack of personal effort. Reading is for them the easiest skill to develop, while speaking appears to be the most difficult one. Their perception of the English language learning process seems to be limited, and students clearly associate learning with having fun.

Keywords: Chilean Public Primary school, EFL classroom, learning, motivation, oral participation

Introduction
Learning is a process that involves the interaction between teachers and students around a given activity. The idea is to promote participation and to encourage students to express their thoughts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Oral participation promotes autonomous learning that should reflect the students' ability to develop communication skills that one may enhance through new teaching aids. In this interactive procedure, it is essential to consider the students' learning styles and to lower their emotional filter to achieve the English lesson objectives. In doing so, teachers have to overcome a series of barriers that may harm oral participation. Among which, one may mention, poor teacher-student relationship, lack of personal security or self-esteem, teacher-centred classes, low expectancies and motivation, inadequate teaching environments, and so forth.

The challenge to increase oral participation at a school that, according to official figures provided by the Junta de Auxilio Escolar y Becas (JUNAEB, 2019) [School Assistance and Scholarships Board], has an 86, 4% of students in a vulnerable condition is even bigger and more demanding. Accordingly, teachers have to face this difficulty when developing and implementing their lessons. They certainly need to design new strategies and develop effective pedagogical practices to boost the learning process and achieve the intended results.

The current study describes, in the most comprehensively possible way, how students perceive their English classes; mainly, how teachers develop the communicative skill and the difficulties students have to face.

How do students value their English classes? What are the main difficulties they have to face and overcome? What hinders their oral participation? How can teachers increase their students' engagement? All valid questions that help guide this research.

In an attempt to contribute, this study also provides a series of suggestions aiming to improve oral production in the classroom. The authors not only refer to strategies meaning to enhance verbal participation, but also to other factors affecting it. Hence, they consider motivational and affective variables, as well.

The vulnerable context in which the authors conduct the current research should allow the involved agents to identify and comprehend some of the primary classroom problematic situations. This process should serve as a base to develop adequate strategies to increase oral participation in this specific context. To achieve this, it is crucial to accomplish a well-balanced integration of teaching strategies, learning styles, visual teaching aids, and motivational aspects. Students who become involved in their learning process will have better chances to increase their level of oral participation in the classroom.

Context: school profile
As the authors have already stated, they researched at an at-risk school. Escuela Dra Eloísa Díaz (EDED) is a public school located in Conchalí, Santiago. EDED is a K-8 co-educational school and one of the most prominent educational institutions in the district, with total enrolment of 725 students.

The vision of the school is to promote education, to develop cognitive skills, values, and affective factors areas throughout the school's community. The mission is to provide a culture based on skills and abilities development, respecting the students' individuality and fostering life-long learning skills.

The programme taught at school follows the requirements and standards of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2019). In terms of curricular planning, the school follows the National Curriculum and applies all the Chilean standardized assessments.

EDED is part of the preferential school grant regime, a law that provides state resources to improve equity and educational quality at vulnerable public schools. The school uses them to acquire materials and to implement activities that help achieve ministerial goals.

The school's staff consists of the Headmaster, two professionals in charge of the discipline, an officer teacher responsible for the pedagogical, technical unit, a psychosocial department, and 40 teachers.

The community recognises the school for its integration team. They promote inclusion with an open view of all the students' needs. This approach has allowed strengthening efforts to improve the students' learning achievements. Some of this team's functions are conducting curricular adjustments, reinforcing learning, and accompanying students in the classroom.

The school has a vast cultural diversity due to the immigration of students who come from different countries such as Haiti, Venezuela, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia. In terms of socioeconomic status, students come from a low-class background with 86, 4% percent of scholar vulnerability.

Despite this reality, EDED has been able to promote sports, culture, and technology. Several school teams compete and represent their school in communitarian activities. Besides, students participate in theatre shows and dance performances, making artistic interventions, enhancing experiential exchange with other educational communities.

Teachers report to be proud of their school´s achievement; mainly, when considering the students' social background. Indeed, these excellent results strengthen their commitment to the institution.

Another area of interest is the development of skills that link students to the educational community, facilitating their interest in learning, increasing participation, responsibility, and creating a closer alliance among teachers, students, families, and the school.

Literature review

Before presenting the research design, the authors dim it necessary to provide some bibliographical background to facilitate the understanding of the study problem and its integration to a larger field of study.

Vulnerability

One may understand vulnerability as the situation of groups, homes, and individuals regarding their access to material and immaterial assets, who may suffer significant changes in their living standards when facing circumstances such as redundancy or cuts in their income levels.

Subbarao & Coury (2004) define vulnerable children as "those whose safety, well-being and development are threatened, with major dangers including lack of care and affection, adequate shelter, education, nutrition, and psychological support" (p.1), while Bialobrzeska et al. (2012) consider a vulnerable student as

> someone who has no access or limited access to basic needs such as sufficient and nutritious food, shelter, adequate clothing, a safe home and community environment free from abuse and exploitation, family care and support, good health care, and the ability to take full advantage of available education opportunities (p. 4).

As one can realise, vulnerability does not only refer to an accumulation of material disadvantages but also a series or emotional and affective factors, crossed by social factors and personal and cultural characteristics.

In practical terms, one may regard vulnerability as a risky social condition that hinders the affected groups from achieving wellbeing in specific sociocultural contexts. Students in such a situation will require teachers who accompany them throughout their educational process, providing them with the necessary information and tools to complete their studies and access the labour world.

One of the main risks for vulnerable students is the desertion of the educational system. This situation implies the danger of weakening their psychosocial competencies development and meaningful learning processes, which would lead to compromising their insertion in the labour world.

The role of mentor teachers in vulnerable contexts should be of learning mediators, in the understanding that effective and long-lasting learning occurs when you expose your students to concepts and experiences in a highly interactive and participative way. Interaction within a given cultural environment is essential since students learn from social interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1993).

Mentor teachers should base their practice on closeness, trust, and reciprocity. Their action has to be flexible, executed in different spaces and a diversified manner, helping their students not only to identify their missing skills but also guiding them to overcome their weaknesses.

Oral skills development in an EFL classroom

When students are reluctant to participate in EFL oral classroom activities a considerable challenge for teachers emerges. As Wei (2008) suggests, it is not possible to improve spoken English without students' oral participation. Abebe & Deneke (2015), who state that in the context of an EFL environment "teaching and learning, students' verbal participation or engagement is essentially

important in the classrooms" (p. 74), shared this idea. Additionally, they consider that students should develop their communicative competence at school and that students should contribute creating the classroom discourse. In their experience, there is always a certain degree of hesitation among students to participate in oral activities. One may find this unfavourable attitude regardless of the years they might have been studying English. As a means to overcome this difficulty, Abebe & Deneke (2015) recommend a series of strategies such as creating a warm atmosphere, lowering students' anxiety, using names in a friendly way, relating topics to the students' life, introducing speaking opportunities outside the class, avoiding fears of making mistakes, building self-confidence, improving vocabulary knowledge and dealing with overcrowded classes. As one may realise, most of these suggestions are associated with psychological and motivational aspects rather than with technical matters.

Another exciting research worth reviewing is Bocanegra's & Ramírez' (2018). They also find that "students often become passive speakers since the teacher and not the students do almost all the talking" (p. 67). As the previous authors, they also aim to improve oral participation and performance, but this time using children's cartoons. Following an action research approach that consists of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting the authors find that the use of cartoons activated the students' motivation, improved participation, helped further participation in interactive classroom activities, and increased the level of amusement and satisfaction.

So far, the authors have stressed the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use oral English for communicative purposes. In their opinion, language teaching and learning happens within a social context, which teachers have to consider when designing and implementing the learning activities; primarily, those related to developing speaking skills.

Choo & Stella (2015) go a step further when valuing oral participation as an evaluation tool. Their research intends to contribute to class participation as a form of assessment. It aims "to explore the alignment between student and teacher expectations in terms of graded class participation" (p. 1).

Among their main findings, one may highlight the need for teachers to express the oral participation expectation and desired outcomes, before initiating the assessment process, the convenience that students expressed their opinion regarding the evaluation method, and linking grading to specific objectives and outcomes. One of the main difficulties Choo & Stella (2015) report is the absence of uniformity in interpreting the scoring rubric.

Crosthwaite, Bailey & Meeker (2015) present another study that addressed the topic of in-class participation assessment. They intend to study a cohort of students learning style orientation (LSO), the relationship between their LSO, their English ability and their level of classroom participation, and the effect of using rubrics on learners of a particular LSO.

The LSO is diverse, and students are far from having one particular learning style. As a result, the authors conclude, "assessing classroom participation as part of the overall grade for tertiary EFL courses does not have a universally positive effect" (p. 17). Students with individualistic learning styles tend to participate less than their mates having common forms.

Accordingly, one should be extremely careful when grading their participation level; especially, for reasons of inclusion.

English speaking and the tests to measure this skill in the Thai context is the topic of Khamkhien's (2010) research. Despite the governmental efforts, such as curricular reforms, the author report that the level of the English performance does not meet the expected standards. The main reasons for these low results would be limited exposure to the English language, the lack of teachers' qualification, and the use of traditional grammar-translation methods. In the author's words 'Interaction in the language classroom is mostly teacher-dominated, and learners are called upon primarily to provide factual responses, which is not genuine and authentic' (p.186).

As far as the speaking tests are concerned, Khamkhien (2010) consider that formats affected testing and that most assessment tools present difficulties regarding pronunciation, authentic communication, and communication breakdowns. This situation conveys pedagogical implications that the implied agents should address: teaching approaches based mainly on the authentic English learning environment, the sound use of grammar, the role of the teachers, the alignment between teaching and assessing, and tests reflecting the learners' real-life oral performance.

Warayet (2011), as all the previously reviewed authors attribute great importance to oral participation during the English language learning process. He states, " … the most popular method for language teaching since the end of the 20th century, student oral contribution has been regarded as essential for classroom participation"(pp. 7-8). Warayet (2011) considers that participation involved much more than just speaking. Accordingly, he identifies and describes different ways in which students may participate. For example, embodied actions and desk talking. The former is constituted by an action like gazing towards the teacher, gazing towards the speaker, looking at textbooks, hand raising, head nodding, facial-expression, hand movement, and group-making. At the same time, the latter consists of student turns taking and oral discussion.

Tepfenhart (2011) presents another contribution to the subject study. She postulates that motivation affects verbal partnership, so she searches for factors learners found most influential in oral participation. Among the positive aspects, she identifies fun, recognition, and motivating classroom environment, being self-consciousness and low self-efficacy, the main constraints. Students tend to feel either embarrassed or not good enough to take part in oral activities. To overcome these limitations, the author suggests
- To encourage all students to participate.
- To create a safe and fun environment.
- To design and implement community-building activities.
- To tell students in advance the expected proficiency levels.
- To help lower-achieving students gain confidence.

The authors consider this last suggestion very important for the purpose of the current research. In Tepfenhart's (2011) words "as students gain some successes in the language, their confidence will grow. As their confidence grows so should their enjoyment of the class and of the language, and their amount of oral participation should naturally increase as well" (p. 21).

Having presented sufficient and up-dated literary support, the authors will now refer to the research design.

The present study

Research methods have always been very challenging, and several approaches attempt to guide investigators. Some may range from the positivistic perspective, whose ideal is to establish a sound distance between the researcher and the study object, up to the narrative inquiry, in which the informants talk about themselves without avoiding their subjectivity.

Some authors criticise qualitative research in terms of validity, generalization, and reliability; others consider quantitative methods do not provide profound and significant explanations of the topics studied, especially, as far as human behaviour is concerned. Rather than favouring one of these two approaches, the authors tried to overcome this dispute by stating that these two perspectives are not only legitimate but also complementary.

Objectives

The following objectives guide the current research.
1. To determine the students' perception regarding their EFL classroom.
2. To comprehend the main difficulties they have to face.
3. To provide suggestions to enhance oral participation.

Methodology

The current research uses a mixed-method strategy of quantitative and qualitative methodologies: a survey to obtain a broad vision of the study object, a focus group, and personal interviews to gain a limited yet more in-depth understanding.

Data collection instruments

The researchers applied a survey to all students who were present the appointed date, and it included aspects such as the interest for the English lessons, personal effort, motivation, instructions understanding, task completion, content learning perception, and degree of oral participation.

The focus group and interviews included participants of both genders, selected on a non-discriminative voluntary base. Sixteen students agreed to be part of these procedures, which represented 50% of the class. Both methods used a semi-structured technique.

Data analysis

The authors analysed the survey results using an Excel spreadsheet; the authors generated the necessary graphs and descriptively explained them.

The data collected via focus group was organised in figures to facilitate their study and representation. At the same time, the authors codified and analysed the interviews using some of the pertinent AQUAD 7 procedures.

The participants
All the students who took part in this research belong to Eight Grade A. The researchers chose this group because they were the older students in their school and hence, more mature and experienced.

According to official information, this group has a total amount of 32 students, 18 males, and 14 females. Students have been classmates since first grade, except for a few specific cases. In Chile, public schools start English lessons in fifth grade. Teachers base their English lessons mainly on grammatical structures and some other complementary activities. The Ministry of Education provides the programmes and guidelines and all the necessary materials, such as dictionaries and textbooks. In this class group, English classes consisted of four weekly pedagogical hours.

Results and discussion
In this section, the authors present and discuss the main results obtained through the different data collection methods.
The survey
The researchers asked the students to self-assess their performance during Unit 2: "Countries, culture, and costumes." 26 out of 32 students were present that day, and they all agreed to collaborate. Figure 1 depicts the answers.
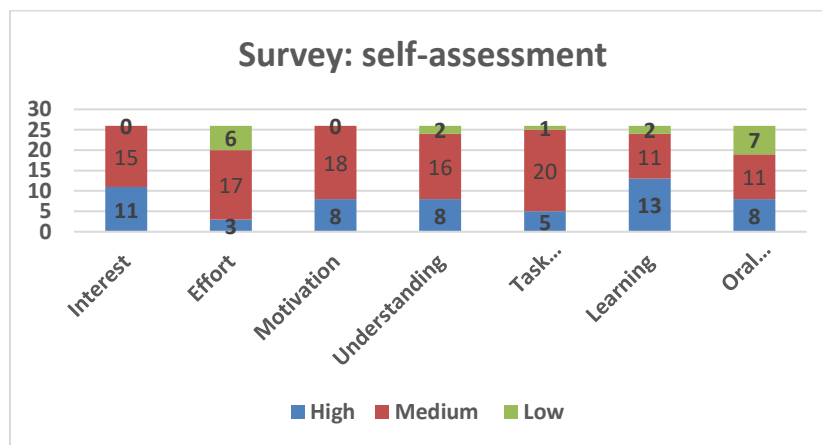

Figure 1. Students' self-assessment

Eleven students report feeling highly interested in the unit, while 15 express a medium or moderate interest. No informants feel uninterested. Regarding effort, only three students consider to have made a high effort, 17 a moderate one, and six acknowledge having made no effort at all. An effort is clearly and attitudinal competency closely related to the affective domain.

Motivation one of the engines that trigger students' learning, render the following results: eight highly motivated students, 18 reporting a medium motivation, and none felt utterly unmotivated. An understanding is associated with instructions comprehension, being the results: eight students reporting a high level of comprehension, 16 a medium degree and two inform not having understood much.

Five students report having completed all or most of the assigned tasks, 20 a medium level of task completion, while only one states a low degree of achievement. Interestingly, learning has the best results. Thirteen students consider to have achieved a high level of knowledge, eleven a moderate one, only two self-assess their learning degree as low. The concept learning obtains the highest number of participants who self-assess this concept at the highest level, which is undoubtedly positive.

Oral participation, one of the focus of the current study, reports the following findings. Eight students who consider having achieved a high level of verbal interaction, eleven learners who report a moderate degree of participation, and seven who self-assess their oral performance as low. Verbal participation is the studied area that gathers the highest amount of students in the lowest rank. As seen, oral participation is a complex issue due to all the intervening variables.

The focus group

Two gain more profound knowledge of the study subject; the researchers conducted a focus group whose data they will now present through a series of charts to summarise the students' answers.

Why is English important?

As one can realise from Figure 2, the students provide a wide variety of reasons to account for the importance the English language had from their points of view.

Figure 2. English importance

The reasons include the need for communicative competencies, potential travels, linguistic autonomy, fulfilling functions such as buying and placing orders, being informed and up-dated, and gaming.

Which is the most accessible skill to develop

Reading is the most natural skill for the students, mainly because they can read as many times as they like, and understanding American speakers is difficult for them.

Which is the most challenging skill to develop?

It is not possible to identify the most difficult skill for them since students report having difficulties when listening and when speaking. Figure 3 illustrates the reasons for their opinions.

Figure 3. Most challenging English skill

What suggestions for the EFL classroom could you provide as a student?

During the first focus group, the researchers asked the students for classroom activities suggestions. Figure 4 synthesizes their replies.

Figure 4. Suggestions

The students' suggestions prove to be quite sensitive and well inspired. They consider collective and collaborative work, acquiring new vocabulary, supporting understanding through translation (debatable), full language immersion, the use of technological and visual means, and the counselling and motivational role of the teacher.

What would you like to learn in English?

When asked what they would like to learn, the students provide a broad and diversified scope of answers. The most enthusiastic ones report wanting to learn everything, though it is not accessible

to precise what they mean by that. For others, the cultural aspects of the language are an exciting target. Trustfully, learning a language also means getting to know its historical and cultural background.

Students relate an essential set of answers to linguistic fluency, which participants aim to develop through increasing their vocabulary, their functional sentences, and their verbal production. Another group of learning expectations is associated with personal aspirations, such as traveling to English speaking countries, meeting people there, and buying.

How would you like to learn English?
Finally, the authors ask the participants about their preferred learning methods. Figure 5 provides a good view of their answers.
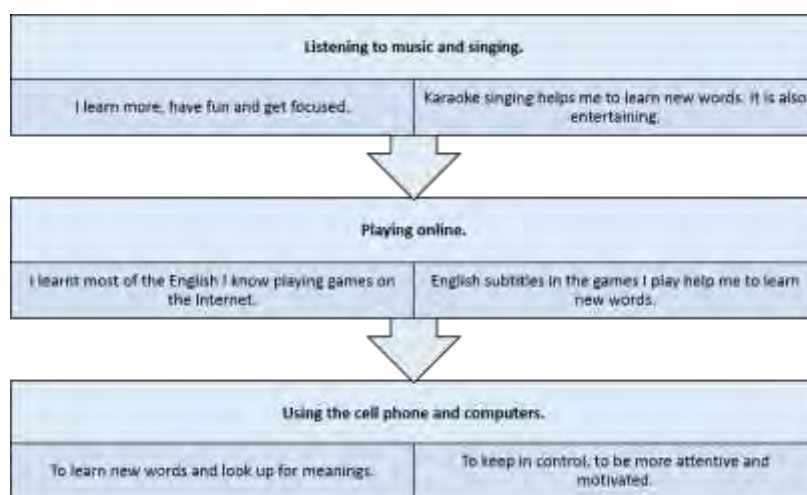

Figure 5. Learning preferences

As one may realise, their wishes are in the line of learning while having fun, playing, and using technological devices.

The interviews
In the search for in-depth knowledge through diverse methods of data collection, the authors also conducted a series of interviews. Figure 6 depicts the code use frequency.
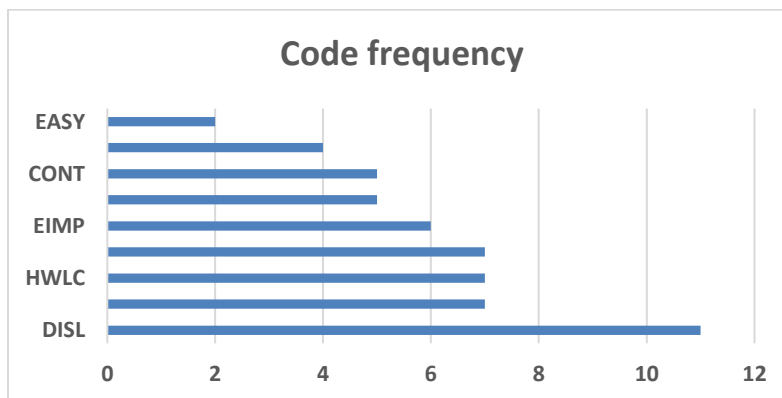

Figure 6. Code frequency

As one can observe, students refer to what they dislike about their English classes (DISL) eleven times. What they like about them (LIKE), what is difficult for them (DIFF), and how they would like their classes to be (HWLC) occupy the second position, as students mention them seven times each. The importance they attribute to the English language learning (EIMP) obtains six references; five times, they refer to contributions students can make (CONT), as well as changes students would introduce to the English classes (CHAN). Participants mention reasons for not participating (PART) in English classes four times, while what is easy for the students (EASY), only scores two references.

Having presented the frequency of the codes, the researchers will now conduct a code-by-code analysis.

Code CHAN: What students would change in the EFL classes
Most students agree in organising funnier and more dynamic classes. They would motivate through videos, and they would use games to foster learning. Besides, they would generate exercises to complement what they are learning.

Through these answers, one could realise how motivational aspects are essential for students and how they associate games and videos with learning while having fun.

Code CONT: How students could contribute
The interviews helped to collect answers to ponder the students' awareness of their responsibility in the English language learning process. For example, students participating more often in classes, paying more attention, helping to maintain a positive learning environment, and being more motivated to learn.

Code DIFF: What students find difficult
Just as students are conscious of their responsibility in the learning process, they also show awareness about the difficulties they have to face. Through the interviews, the students inform about the following difficulties:
- not knowing how to speak in English
- getting confused
- a different word order (comparing English to their mother tongue)
- a noisy environment
- highly talkative and loud classmates
- reluctance to complete the assigned tasks
- laziness
- lack of verbal participation, and
- classmates who do not respect the other students' opinions.

As one may realise, difficulties are mainly of two orders, personal and collective. The latter affects the former. A student may be willing to make an effort to overcome his or her difficulties, but if the context is not promising, that effort may prove useless. Consequently, group management, through activating motivation and engaging students, is essential.

Code DILS: What students dislike

The collected data allows suggesting that there are personal and technical factors students do not like. Among them, one may mention some of the teachers' discouraging attitude, activities that implied too much writing, explanations that are difficult to understand, and the repetitive use of the same teaching resources.

Doubtlessly, the students' opinions convey an excellent challenge for the English teachers and denote a certain level of quality teaching expectations that can be very useful at the time of generating the students' commitment and personal engagement with the English class and their learning processes.

Code EASY: What students find easy

The students' view seem to be rather pessimistic in this regard, as they can identify only two aspects that they consider easy for them: reading what teachers write on the blackboard and pronouncing isolated words following the teacher's model. One may relate this poor perception to their academic self-esteem and their previous learning experiences.

Code EIMP: Why is learning English important

In contemporary society, the importance of the English language is almost self-explanatory. The students provide a wide and varied scope of reasons. Among them, one may list
- visiting English speaking countries
- being able to communicate and express yourself correctly
- meeting people from other countries
- accessing materials written in English, and
- feeling "cool" speaking another language.

Despite their vulnerable condition, the students seem to be aware of the needs and demands of the English language in the knowledge society.

Code HWLC: How students would like their classes

Additionally, it is possible to obtain a clear idea of what students expect in their English classes: interactivity, entertainment, and learning. They ask for video material in English with lots of examples to consider the students' interests, music, and activities where they all can participate, and not only the same three students and useful sentences to speak with people of other countries.

Code LIKE: What students like

The participants are also able to identify some aspects of their English classes they like. Some of them are very ambitious. They want to learn everything about the English language, all that the teachers explain and learning more things. Other students evidence more specific expectations; for example, learning new sentences, creating posters, and preparing dialogues. Indistinctively, all of them evidence a certain degree of enthusiasm and a desire to learn that teachers should use to boost their classes.

Code PART: Why students do not participate in classes
Though students seem to be well aware of the importance of active participation in classes, several aspects prevent them from doing so. One may relate some of them to psychological facets, while their previous learning experiences and class context may account for others. Some reasons they mention:
- Feeling ashamed of talking
- Not knowing what to say
- The difficulty of giving opinions in English
- Not having had English at an early stage
- Misbehaviour
- Noise and lack of concentration
- The few students who participated were always the same
- Unattractive activities
- Not enough singing and computer use

Teachers should address all these issues if they genuinely want to increase the level of the students' oral participation in their EFL classroom.

Conclusion and propositions
Students seem to be quite conscious of their limitations and the difficulties they have to face when learning English. A low level in oral participation and the lack of effort appear to be two main constraints. However, they also inform about their interest in this subject and their desire to learn. The degree of awareness about the importance of the English language may account for their interest and their willingness to learn it, despite they do not deploy all their means to do so.

Reading is the most natural skill to develop according to the participants; mainly, because they have the chance to reach a certain degree of understanding by reading as many times as they want. Oppositely, the students consider speaking the most difficult skill, thus affecting oral participation in the classroom. Some reasons for this are some psychological aspects such as insecurity, low self-esteem, and feeling ashamed, as well as some linguistics facets as lack of vocabulary and poor sentence structuring command.

The vision the students have about the English language learning process seems somewhat bounded. In their conception, it consists only of acquiring new words, getting understanding through translation, and learning new sentences. Probably, the teaching methodology their teachers have used exercises some influence on this reductionist conception. Notwithstanding, a few students consider that learning cultural and historical issues is also important, possibly, a sign of more maturity or a broader vision of the role of English in the world and their lives.

Finally, students associate learning with having fun. They report music, playing games, and the use of technological devices as desirable learning tools. Doubtlessly, all these means are part of their daily routines and highly familiar for them.

One of the objectives of the current research is to provide some suggestions to increase oral participation in an EFL classroom, which the researchers will now fulfil. Though the authors intend

these suggestions for the specific vulnerable school where they conducted this study, some of them may be applicable in other realities with the necessary adjustments or may serve as a source of inspiration for other teachers as well.

Considering that variables such as environment, social status, culture, language, and affection affect vulnerable students significantly, the following suggestions will bear them in mind. The authors present them from the teachers' perspective.

- Become a leader who provides guidance and counselling rather than a mere language instructor.
- Get your students to identify themselves as active members of their class. This action should help them to assume their responsibility in oral activities such as role-playing and debates.
- When teaching favour collective and collaborative approaches. Oral participation requires pair and group work.
- Provide the necessary vocabulary and design learning opportunities to build language discourse through participation. Discourse development should become part of every English lesson.
- Highlight any contribution or advancement, no matter how irrelevant it may appear. This action should boost students' motivation, and sense of achievement.
- Consider your learners' interests when planning the lessons. Students will tend to become more engaged in them, and they will feel included.
- Bear in mind, their desire for games and entertaining activities. Include some sorts of fun competition, visual aids, and the use of some technological devices.
- Involve your students in classroom discussions. This involvement implies avoiding doing all the talking, as students may feel discouraged and finding it difficult staying focused.
- Favour interactive and participative methodologies as a sound mean to maintain concentration and reduce anxiety.
- Set clear learning and participation expectations so that students develop an explicit vision of their role during the lesson.
- Create a respectful atmosphere. Students should feel well and secure. That is to say, consider mistakes as a mean of learning and effectively dealing with any sign of misbehaviour or disrespect among them.
- Help students understand that a pleasant classroom environment facilitates learning. A set of basic classroom rules and their fulfilment may help you achieve this.
- Do not forget that classroom participation also means paralinguistic communication. Consequently, pay attention to gestures and body language.
- Closeness and personal follow up are usually suitable means for supporting left behind students and developing students' commitment.

Limitations and suggestions for further research
The research conveys at least two main limitations. The authors conducted the survey, focus group, and interviews in Spanish, the students' mother tongue; therefore, some nuances might have got lost in translation. Additionally, the research occurred at a local and specific educational establishment, with its own culture and peculiarities; hence, it would be difficult to generalise its results.

The methodological implications of increasing oral participation may offer exciting possibilities for further research. What strategies do teachers use to enhance oral production? How do students value them? What methodology, resources, and material are more useful in attaining the desired goal? How do teachers interconnect speaking to the other linguistic skills? How do teachers support slow or left-behind students to overcome their low levels of oral participation and production? These are all research questions that could have direct implications for the teachers' daily practice.

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