

## **ENHANCING WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AND SELF-PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE THROUGH DEBATES ON NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**Cristina Zavala-Osorio**

*English tutor, English Online Program, University of Concepcion, Chile*

**Dr. Constanza Gerding-Salas**

*Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Arts, University of Concepcion, Chile*

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Learning a foreign language is crucial for university students' comprehensive academic training. However, Chilean undergraduate students have proven reluctant to speak in English, and they struggle to communicate orally in classes. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is one of the variables affecting foreign language learning and it is influenced by different variables, such as, topics, grouping, interlocutor, teacher and self-perceived communication competence (SPCC). In this scenario, this study aims to explore to which extent debate on national current affairs could affect university students' WTC orally in English as well as their SPCC. This study followed an action research design and the data was collected through two questionnaires, class observation and a focus group interview. The findings showed an increase in WTC and SPCC in three of the four students observed. Thus, debates on national current affairs could be a useful tool to enhance students' willingness to communicate.*

**KEYWORDS:** *willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence, speaking skill, debate technique, authentic didactic material*

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

A report of the Inter-American Development Bank from 2012 showed that only 2% of the Chilean population speaks English fluently. Moreover, in 2017, Chile ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the English Proficiency Index in Latin America and 46<sup>th</sup> at world level (First, 2017). Thus, Chilean English proficiency is low. At university level, English is not compulsory and “most Latin American countries have not yet developed a cohesive strategy to regulate English programs in universities or the English proficiency levels among students” (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017, p. 20). Moreover, undergraduate students at a Chilean university are reluctant to speak in English, and they struggle to communicate orally in classes. In addition, it seems as if the topics discussed during the lessons are not appealing and meaningful to them. In view of this problem, this study proposed to explore the contribution of using debate about topics on national current affairs to increase their WTC orally in English as a foreign language (EFL) and their SPCC. EFL students were also expected to benefit from debating about

current issues because national current affairs are a source of authentic input for them, they can have the opportunity to speak about topics with which they may be familiar.

## **LITERATURE**

### **The Latin American and Chilean context**

English became a compulsory foreign-language subject from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Chilean schools in the late 1990s (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). Since then, government programs have been promoting the teaching and learning of the English language across the country (Barahona, 2016, p. 12). In order to achieve this goal, Chilean students receive a minimum of hours of English instruction at school per year to acquire a satisfactory level of proficiency in English at graduation from high school. According to the report English Language Learning in Latin America, “B1 is the first level of an independent user on this scale and is the expected proficiency level of graduating secondary students in Chile.” (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017, p. 20). However, the Chilean reality is affected by a number of factors that prevent this from happening (Abrahams & Silva, 2017). In fact, Barahona (2016) affirms: “only 11% of Chilean teenagers reached level A2 (elementary) from the CEFRL [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages] and most students scored below an elementary level of proficiency” (p. 17). Moreover, according to the EPI 2016, Argentina is the only Latin American country ranked in the high proficiency band, and the rest of the countries in the region fall into the low or very low category (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017, p. 13).

In order to change this reality, in 2013, the Ministry of Education created a program called *Programa Inglés Abre Puertas* (PIAP, in Spanish). This program was designed to improve English language instruction and offers many opportunities such as summer camps and debate tournaments (Abrahams & Silva, 2017). In 2014, Chile’s National English Strategy set as a goal to “foster English skills among Chileans, in order to favor the cultural and commercial integration of Chile into a globalised world and improve its competitiveness” (Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, Ministerio de Educación & Ministerio de Economía, Fomento y Turismo, 2014, p. 9).

Actually, English-language capability is considered a key factor “in facilitating fair access to knowledge and progression through to higher study” (Matear, 2008, p. 134). Moreover, English proficiency enhances graduates’ starting salaries and earning potential (Guo & Sun, 2014). Echoing this posture, in its Institutional Strategic Plan, the Universidad of Concepción states that strengthening the learning of a foreign language is crucial for students’ comprehensive academic training (UDEC, 2016).

### **Speaking skill**

Along the history of foreign language teaching and learning, speaking has always been considered as the most essential skill for several reasons, for example, because many learners regard the speaking skill as the measure of knowing a language (Nazara, 2011). Moreover, Richards and Renandya (2002, in Nazara, 2011) assert that

a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking.

This skill is defined by Burns & Joyce (1997) as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information and that depends on the context, the participants, and the purposes”. Moreover, speaking is social, in the sense that it establishes rapport and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills (Thornbury & Slade, 2006). For this reason, some typical activities used to teach speaking include: dialogue, role-plays, discussions and debates (Thornbury, 2006 in Lustigová, 2011), which involve interaction. Nonetheless, even though speaking is a key skill, the amount of time and effort dedicated to speaking activities using the foreign language remains small (Zare & Othman, 2015, p.160).

In Chile, according to Barahona (2016), the 2009 educational reforms recognized that the emphasis on receptive skills was not enough to make citizens competent in the global market. Consequently, a curricular adjustment introduced a new level of expectation regarding the productive skills (Barahona, 2016). Later, the 2012 curriculum framework for ELT at primary level also intended for students to develop the four language skills through meaningful and authentic tasks that make them gain confidence to face learning English at school (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

### **Psychological factors affecting speaking**

Back in 1982, McCroskey & Richmond already claimed that communicatively competent behavior may be inhibited not only by cognitive skills but also by affective orientations such as WTC, communication apprehension (CA, hereafter) and self-perception. Additionally, Brown (2014) affirmed that language learners are different from one another in terms of cognitive, affective, and demographical variables, and these variables are recognized to have mediating influence on learners' second language WTC. Following this thought, Juhana (2012) stated that psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence and motivation are some of the most important factors that hinder students from speaking in English class. In another study, Nazara (2011) concluded that “most of students claimed that they were shy to speak English because of their classmates laughing and because they were afraid of their lecturers” (p. 39). McCroskey (2009), on the other hand, claimed that five communication traits (CA, SPCC, WTC, shyness and compulsive communication) have a strong relationship among them and anxiety as well as WTC greatly influences SPCC. In relation to CA, Shahbaz, Khan, Khan & Mustafa (2016) stated that CA is a major type of performance anxiety, and scholars, language learners and teachers all agree to some extent that anxiety interferes with language learning. McCroskey (1977) defined CA as “the predisposition to avoid communication, if possible, or suffer a variety of anxiety-type feelings” (p. 27).

In order to overcome these speaking problems, Ur (1996) suggested the following strategies: “use group work, base the activity on easy language, make a careful choice

of topic and task to stimulate interest, give some instruction or training in discussion skill and keep students speaking the target language” (p. 121-122).

### **Self-perceived communication competence**

According to Hüseyn (2014), ‘SPCC’ is the strongest factor that directly and positively influences EFL learners’ WTC in English. ‘SPCC’ is how an individual perceives their own competence at spoken communication (Lockley, 2012). According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), this construct has two contributory factors: self-evaluation of L2 proficiency and foreign language anxiety, both intrinsically related to the individual’s perceptions and attitudes. As Pintrich (2002) states, SPCC is important because an awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses helps students to adjust their own cognition and thinking and, thus, facilitate learning. In fact, Blood & Blood (2004) revealed in a study that poor SPCC can inhibit communication learning and cause reduced interactions and social withdrawal. Regarding this, Hashimoto (2002) found that an “increased perceived competence will lead to increased motivation which in turn affects frequency of L2 use” (p. 57). Mercer (2011) also affirmed that accurate and inaccurate self-beliefs can help or hinder approaches to learning. Thus, in order to promote accurate SPCC in English learning, there are some crucial elements that have a great impact on SPCC: a) the educational environment, classroom and teaching method (Ushioda, 2010) and b) educators’ attitudes and approaches (Horwitz, 2001).

### **Willingness to communicate**

WTC has gained its importance through the emphasis that is usually placed on conversational approaches to ELT and through the belief that one must communicate to learn a language. According to Yu, Li, & Gou (2011) WTC is the main cause of second language use, as language learners with a higher degree of WTC will be more active in the L2. Therefore, developing WTC in learners is a desirable goal for language teaching, since greater L2 experience is likely to lead to greater proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 1998). In this respect, Yashima (2002) stated that L2 self-confidence was more predictive of WTC than actual proficiency. Galajda (2012) also claims that SPCC strongly impacts the participants’ WTC.

According to McCroskey & Richmond (2013, p. 47), WTC is “the most basic orientation toward communication”. Learners, however, show different responses to communicative opportunities around; some decide to communicate, while others prefer to be silent (Amiryousefi, 2016, p. 222). WTC in a L2 is defined by MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 547) as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a specific time with a specific person or persons, using an L2 when free to do so.” This author developed a model that presents a view of how various enduring (or trait) and situated (or state) individual variables interact and converge as WTC in the L2. The model emphasizes the moment of volition (i.e. willingness) that, “when the readiness to communicate reaches a certain threshold, language use is triggered at a particular time with specific interlocutors” (Yashima et al., 2018, p. 3).

Particularly, according to Shao & Gao (2016), “WTC in L2 appears to be more situation-specific and unlike a trait” (p. 4). In relation to this, Cao & Philp (2006) found that factors such as group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s), interlocutor(s)’ participation, familiarity with topics, self-confidence, medium of communication and cultural background work together to influence people’s WTC. More importantly, Su Bergil (2016, p. 185) concluded that “WTC levels had diverse effects on their [students’] overall speaking skills in terms of their context and receiver-type preferences”.

### **Debate technique**

Being a component of content-based learning (CBL) and communicative language teaching (CLT), debate incorporates useful language that is embedded within relevant contexts rather than using isolated grammar and vocabulary (Zembitzka, 2018). Additionally, Kearney (2014) states that contemporary debate emphasizes on the real world and relevant topics. Therefore, debates are one of the purposeful methods that can be used in teaching and practicing the speaking skill because it is seen as an active learning process through which students may learn more by constructing and creating knowledge in groups (Iman, 2017). Akerman & Neale (2011, p. 9) describe this technique as “a formal discussion where two opposing sides follow a set of pre-agreed rules to engage in an oral exchange of different points of view on an issue”. The debate structure allows students to prepare the topic which enables them to learn both content and language that includes appropriate vocabulary use to make the delivery of speech effective (Aclan & Aziz, 2015). In consonance with this, Lustigová (2011) says that debate is an active learning process that encourages students to be interested in the teaching-learning process, while significantly benefiting the students in terms of speaking ability and critical thinking skills. Additionally, debate has proven to be a very efficient method of teaching a foreign language for it allows for revising new vocabulary and teaching students how to organize their thoughts sensibly (Glušič, 2007 in Želježič, 2017).

However, one common objection to debate is that it is reductionist because it requires students to defend one and reject the other side of a motion, thus it strengthens an oppositional logic (Kennedy, 2007). Nonetheless, after exploring learners’ perceptions about classroom debate participation, Goodwin (2003) demonstrated that, while a few students reported anxiety with the competitiveness feature of the debates, most of them reported that they felt quite happy in debate exercises. Moreover, another study revealed that, during debates, students recognized the necessity to be effective and they also showed motivation in learning (Aclan & Aziz, 2015). From a different perspective, Tumposky (2004) highlighted some cultural issues in raising objections to the confrontational nature of debate and suggested that debates might encourage students to oversimplify and misrepresent information to reinforce an assigned argumentative position.

All in all, research findings indicate that classroom debate helps students develop critical thinking and oral communication skills because students learn to synthesize,



analyze, and evaluate statements, participating actively in their learning process (Zare & Othman, 2015). According to these authors, students also believed that participating in classroom debate helped them overcome the stage fright, boosted their confidence and improved their speaking skill. In his study, Rao (2010) also found positive correlations between debates and short and long-term learning outcomes. Fauzan (2016), in turn, supports the advantages of using this technique in class by saying that debate enhances students' confidence as well as their motivation.

### **Authentic material**

Thornbury (2005) claims that speaking tasks must be productive, purposeful, interactive, challenging, safe and authentic. Thus, the use of authentic materials in the classroom has become general practice during the past 30 years and the need or usefulness of them has been recognized especially in English non-native countries (Akbari & Razavi, 2015). Moreover, according to Otte (2006), using authentic materials leads to oral language development. In turn, Kilickaya (2004) affirms that the use of authentic texts increases students' motivation. Finally, if one educational goal of English as an international language is to enable learners to communicate their culture to others, then materials should provide students with the information to do this by including local cultural contents (Mckay, 2003).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Type of research**

The research approach is qualitative because it consists of the social analysis of a study involving people in their natural setting (Mason, 2002). In this study, as is the case of most action research (AR) projects, the sample consists of a group of students and the teacher in the classroom. While the students play an active role in the learning process, the teacher plays several roles in AR: a change agent, a knowledge broker, a reflective scientist, a self-reflexive scientist and a process facilitator (Wittmayer & Schöpke, 2014). The primary reason for engaging in AR is to assist the "actor" in improving and/or refining his or her actions" (Sagor, 2000, p. 2-3). Thus, it is based on practical action and on informing and building theory in order to improve teaching methods (Burns, 2009). Taking the different existing AR categories into account, this study can be classified as an individual project carried out by a teacher. The scope of this study is exploratory because it seeks to examine the contribution of classroom debate to increase EFL students' WTC and SPCC, an issue which has not been sufficiently addressed in Chilean schools. According to Mason (2002), the intellectual puzzle of this type of research, is mechanical because it focuses on exploring how something works; in this particular case, the contribution of debate techniques to students' WTC orally in the EFL and their SPCC.

### **Participants**

The participants of this study were 4 students (3 males and 1 female) from the Natural Resources Conservation Engineering program at a Chilean university. Their ages

ranged from 25 to 30 years old. They were studying English in a communicative b-learning course consisting of 4 modules, each one lasting one semester. They had 2.5 hours of English classes a week and they were required to work on the online platform at least 3 additional hours a week. They were participating in the last module of the program and their level of English was B1, according to the CEFRL. These participants are part of a convenience sample, that is, the selection was made on the basis of who was available (Berg & Lune, 2012) when informants were required. These students volunteered to take part in this AR study since they were interested in having extra practice to improve their speaking skill, because, in their opinion, their competence was not as good as required to pass the subject.

### **Research question and objectives**

From the researcher's personal experience and teaching practice, along with her interest in achieving improvements in students' oral performance, the following research question and objectives emerged in the context of communication competence: to which extent do debates on national current affairs carried out in English affect university students' SPCC and their WTC orally in EFL?

General objective:

To explore the extent to which debate techniques based on national current affairs affect university students' SPCC and their WTC orally in EFL.

Specific objectives:

1. To identify students' SPCC through the implementation of EFL debate activities on national current affairs (SO1).
2. To describe students' WTC orally in EFL through the implementation of debate activities on national current affairs (SO2).
3. To explore students' perceptions regarding their experience in EFL debates on national current affairs (SO3).

### **Stages of the action research study**

The intervention, which lasted one month, was carried out in the month of June 2019, with a frequency of one 60-minute session per week, completing four sessions in total. The debate format chosen for this study was an adaptation of Karl Popper's debate because it focuses on relevant propositions, emphasizing the development of critical thinking skills and tolerance for differing viewpoints. In this format, debaters work in two teams (affirmative and negative) and each team offers arguments to the opposing team taking turns (Idebate, 2012).

In the introductory session, students were explicitly taught how to deal with debate by using argumentative language and following the chosen debate format. After this introduction, each debate session started with a slide presentation that included a

video and some pictures to introduce the debate topic. The teacher and students then did a brainstorming activity about their previous knowledge on the topic. Then the students were asked to join either the team in favor of the main idea to be discussed or the team against it. Then they were given a short written text for them to identify arguments for the debate. After having the students read the text with the teacher explaining the vocabulary, the two teams started debating. As far as the kind of material used is concerned, students were exposed to authentic material in English, and input referred to Chilean current affairs; for example: free education, pollution, abortion and working hours.

### **Data collection techniques**

The present study included four data collection techniques: two questionnaires to measure SPCC and WTC, classroom observation and a focus group discussion. Both questionnaires were applied before and after the intervention; the classroom observation was conducted during all four sessions and recorded in audio logs. Last but not least, the focus group discussion was carried out at the end of the intervention. The adaptation of the WTC questionnaire and the focus group questions were validated by a group of experts through the use of a summary of the study and a validation chart.

### **Questionnaires**

To find out about students' SPCC, the original version of the SPCC questionnaire by McCroskey & McCroskey (2013) was used. In order to explore about students' WTC inside and outside the classroom, the WTC questionnaire, adapted by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Conrod (2001), was used. The procedure was conducted as follows: firstly, students had to answer SPCC questionnaire in English (McCroskey & McCroskey, 2013). The SPCC includes a scale that indicates how competent a person believes he or she is at communicating in different situations (e.g., with strangers, acquaintances and/or friends). It includes 20 descriptive situations and respondents use a scale that goes from 0 (completely incompetent) to 100 (competent). Secondly, an adaptation of the WTC scale by MacIntyre et al. (2001) was used to explore students' WTC before and after the first and last debate session. The adapted questionnaire included 18 situations inside and outside the classroom followed by closed-answer questions and respondents had to opt for 1= Almost never willing, 2 = Sometimes willing, 3 = Willing half of the time, 4 = Usually willing or 5 = Almost always willing. Seven questions refer to speaking (from question 1 to question 7), six refer to reading (from question 8 to question 13), two refer to writing (question 14 and question 16) and three refer to listening (question 15, 17 and 18). The WTC scale measures a person's WTC in four communication contexts: public, meetings, small groups, pairs and with three different types of receiver: strangers, acquaintances and/or friends. According to McCroskey & Richmond (1987), the validity of this instrument is strong and results of extensive research have proven its predictive validity.



### **Classroom observation**

Thirdly, classroom observation was conducted in order to explore the students' level of participation during the debate sessions depending on the topics that dealt with. For this purpose, the researcher recorded one audio log after each debate session. The teacher had a direct relationship with the participants and took part in the activities related to the subject matter being studied (Silvermann, 2011). Observations included subjective reflections by the teacher, that is, personal observations and comments that the researcher could draw from the situations as a consequence of having observed incidents in the field, that is, critical events (Berg & Lune, 2012).

### **Focus group**

Finally, a focus group discussion was conducted at the end of the intervention, which consists of a non-directive style of interview which has, foremost, the purpose of encouraging a variety of viewpoints on the research topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The focus group activity corresponded to the SO3 of this study. A procedural guide was prepared in order to organize what the moderator had to say and ask. This interview included general questions about the students' opinions of their English learning progress, about the intervention itself and about the possible effects of the intervention upon their learning. As these interviews are gatherings of people intended to elicit perceptions about a particular area of interest in a non-threatening and receptive environment, this focus group was carried out in Spanish, the participants' native tongue. All the information emerging from the participants' perceptions of the intervention were audio-taped and later transcribed manually.

### **Data collection analysis**

After collecting the data, methodological triangulation (Berg & Lune, 2012) was obtained through the analysis of the previous data analysis procedures, which is typical of qualitative research. In the case of the two questionnaires (SPCC and WTC), they already had their own scoring scale, which was used unmodified. Firstly, the questions are classified in categories and each one has a specific score. After that, the sub scores of each category are added and divided, and the results represent either high or low SPCC or WTC, according to the authors. On the other hand, the data collected from the focus group interview and from the audio logs was thematically analyzed by using meaning condensation procedures (Braun & Clark, 2006).

### **FINDINGS**

The analysis of the data collected will be presented according to the specific objectives of this study. It is important to clarify that out of all the participants, who originally numbered 10, only 4 of them took part in all the intervention sessions and answered both questionnaires before and after the workshop (students A, B, C and D). Therefore, the analysis will be focused on these students' responses.

### Specific objective 1

In order to comply with SO1, a SPCC scale was applied in the first and the last session of the workshop. Students answered the same questionnaire and their scores were compared by using a frequency analysis. The total SPCC score is computed by adding the subscores for ‘stranger’, ‘acquaintance’, and ‘friend’. According to McCroskey & McCroskey (2013), scores are classified in high SPCC, medium and low SPCC, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. High and Low SPCC scores per subcategory and total SPCC.

|          |              |                |               |
|----------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Context  | Public       | > 86 High SPCC | < 51 Low SPCC |
|          | Meeting      | > 85 High SPCC | < 51 Low SPCC |
|          | Group        | > 90 High SPCC | < 61 Low SPCC |
|          | Dyad         | > 93 High SPCC | < 68 Low SPCC |
| Receiver | Stranger     | > 79 High SPCC | < 31 Low SPCC |
|          | Acquaintance | > 92 High SPCC | < 62 Low SPCC |
|          | Friend       | > 99 High SPCC | < 76 Low SPCC |
| Total    | Total        | > 87 High SPCC | < 59 Low SPCC |

In general terms, there was an increase of SPCC in most of the questions. The increase was between 7% and 17%, except for question 11 “Talk in a small group of friends” and question 12 “Present a talk to a group of acquaintances”, which showed a decrease in their score (between 7% and 11% lower). On the contrary, question 2 “Talk with an acquaintance” showed the biggest improvement ranging from an average of 52.5 to 72.5 (See Table 2).

Table 2. SPCC Average score per question before and after the workshop

| Question | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   | 11   | 12   |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Before   | 50   | 52.5 | 62.5 | 58.8 | 72.5 | 55   | 43.8 | 53.8 | 58.8 | 38.8 | 72.5 | 56.3 |
| After    | 62.5 | 72.5 | 75   | 62.5 | 80   | 62.5 | 60   | 65   | 65   | 50   | 67.5 | 50   |

On the one hand, all Context scores experienced an increase after the workshop, especially the SPCC in meetings and dyads (10% more). On the other hand, it was observed that there was an increase among the students’ SPCC for all types of Receivers after the workshop. However, the highest increase was for communication among strangers (11%) and acquaintances (6.9%). Nevertheless, the sub-category “friends” continued to be the receiver type with the highest score before and after the intervention (going from 65.3 to 71.9) (See Table 3).

Table 3. Average SPCC score per Context and Receiver before and after the workshop.

| Average | Context |         |       |      | Receiver |              |        |
|---------|---------|---------|-------|------|----------|--------------|--------|
|         | Public  | Meeting | Group | Dyad | Stranger | Acquaintance | Friend |
| Before  | 57.5    | 52.1    | 63.3  | 56.2 | 47.8     | 55.6         | 65.3   |
| After   | 59.2    | 62.5    | 65    | 70.8 | 58.8     | 62.5         | 71.9   |

With regard to the total score of the 4 students, three of the four students increased their SPCC and only one of them experienced a 52.2% decrease (Student A), from 70.8 (medium score) to 37.5 (low score). Student D presented the highest rise, from 53.3 (medium) to 86.6 (high), which is 62% more than the first score (See Table 4). Thus, the total average score, increased from a low score of 56.2 to a medium score of 64.4 after the workshop, which is 12% higher (See Table 4).

Table 4. SPCC average score per student before and after the workshop

| Student | Before | After |
|---------|--------|-------|
| A       | 70.8   | 37.5  |
| B       | 43.3   | 63.3  |
| C       | 57.5   | 70.0  |
| D       | 53.3   | 86.6  |
| Average | 56.2   | 64.4  |

### Specific objective 2

In order to comply with SO2, the WTC scale adapted from MacIntyre et al (2001) was applied before and after the workshop. When comparing the results per questions, it can be observed that there was an increase of WTC in all situations (between 16% and 74%), except for question 4 “Ask for instructions/clarification when you are confused about a task you must complete”, 9 “Read an English article in a paper” and 12 “Read an advertisement in the paper to find good merchandise”, which remained unchanged. Among all questions, situations 5 “Talk to a friend while waiting in line” and 10 “Read letters from a pen pal written in native English” presented the biggest increase of 60% and 74%, respectively. Interestingly, situation 7 “Participate in a debate” increased 32% (See Table 5).

Table 5. Average per question before and after the workshop.

| Question | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Before   | 3.0 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 3.5 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 4.5 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 2.5 | 3.8 | 2.8 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| After    | 4.3 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 4.3 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 4.3 |

In relation to the four language skills, in average, both writing and speaking experienced the biggest increase, as shown in Table 6. Writing increased from an average of 2.6 to 3.4 and speaking from 2.9 to 3.7 (31% and 28%, respectively). Reading, on the other hand, had the lowest rise (19%), increasing from 3.2 to 3.8. Listening increased 20% in comparison to its original score.

Table 6. Average per skill before and after the workshop.

| WTC    | Speaking | Reading | Writing | Listening |
|--------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Before | 2.9      | 3.2     | 2.6     | 3.5       |
| After  | 3.7      | 3.8     | 3.4     | 4.3       |

Therefore, the average WTC per student also rose (between 10% and 38%) as it is shown in Table 8. Student B showed the biggest improvement in WTC and student D, the lowest. Moreover, the average WTC before the workshop was 3 – “willing half of the time”, and after the workshop, it was 3.8 – closer to “usually willing”.

Table 7. Average WTC per student before and after the workshop.

| Student | Before | After |
|---------|--------|-------|
| A       | 2.2    | 2.9   |
| B       | 2.4    | 3,5   |
| C       | 3.3    | 4.1   |
| D       | 4.2    | 4.6   |
| Average | 3      | 3.8   |

### Specific objective 3

In order to comply with SO3, a focus group (semi-structured interview) was conducted. Four students participated by answering 10 questions in 30 minutes approximately. The different dimensions resulting from this interview were: importance of speaking in English, students' feelings when speaking, speaking topics, students' perceptions about debates, students' SPCC, and students' WTC.

### Dimension 1: Students' perceptions about speaking in English

Students were asked to express their opinions about the importance of speaking English, and how they felt when they had to speak in English and while they spoke in English. Firstly, all four students agreed that speaking in English was very important for different reasons, such as academic or social purposes and for traveling. To them, the most important reason was its usefulness for academic purposes. When students were asked about their feelings while speaking in English, the majority of the students admitted having negative feelings (nervousness, embarrassments, insecurity, and stress). Only one of four admitted a feeling great delight when speaking in English. Speaking skill development was also mentioned as a key factor for speaking in English. The sub-themes here were timing, context, difficulty and late awareness. Half of the students said that the speaking skill was something that was better developed during childhood, and three agreed that they were not aware of the importance of developing this skill until they started attending university. In relation to motivation, all four students said that it was key for speaking and agreed that the topics chosen for oral activities had a big influence upon motivation, and two of them said that the lack of self-confidence could be an obstacle.

**Dimension 2: students' perception about the workshop**

Within this dimension, two main themes were inquired: students' impressions of debating in English and the topics used for debate. When asked specifically about the workshop, the students had a very positive perception about it. For example, all students said that the activity was interesting and entertaining, and two stated that it was useful. Regarding the topics used for debate, the four students said that the contents were interesting and two of them stated that they were also relevant.

**Dimension 3: Students' perception about the effect of this workshop**

Finally, students were asked about their perception in relation to the effects of this workshop upon their speaking skill. Most of the students claimed that they were more confident about their oral performance after the workshop, and all four said that they had noticed an improvement in their speaking skill.

**Audio logs**

The main themes analyzed in the audio logs were students' participation, topics and speech. Given the format of the debates, all students had to participate. However, in the first session, the teacher designated the starting team and student. On the contrary, from session 2 onwards, students volunteered and expressed they were feeling more confident. In relation to the preference shown regarding the topics debated, students stated that they found 'global warming' the most interesting; in the second place, they mentioned 'abortion', then 'free education' and, finally, 'working hours'. During the first two sessions, the researcher noticed that some students (two of them) tended to read their arguments rather than use their own words. The other two used the text to prepare the topic, but expressed their arguments without reading their notes.

**DISCUSSION**

As it was trusted, after the intervention, most students increased the level of their SPCC and only one of them experienced a decrease. In fact, the total average score increased from a low score to a medium score after the workshop, which can be explained by considering that accurate SPCC seems to be facilitated through lessened anxiety and better self-evaluation (Lockley, 2013). According to Ushioda (2010), both features can be developed from a good educational environment, and adequate classroom and teaching methods. In fact, during the workshop sessions, both good ambience and open communication were encouraged throughout the activities. On the one hand, considering that whole-class activities are thought to be the most difficult activities, scaffolding learners' involvement, that is, going from groups to whole class discussions also increases student confidence and enables better self-evaluation, as De Saint Léger & Storch (2009) sustain. On the other hand, a supporting and understanding teacher, as Horwitz (2001) states, may be also a crucial factor in reducing students' anxiety, which often translates into good performance.

Regarding teacher role, during the focus group, students stated that they had felt at ease during the intervention because I not their "regular" teacher and because they



knew that their participation was not going to be a summative assessment but it would be taken as an in-process evaluation. According to Horwitz (1986), this can be explained by the concept of ‘fear of negative evaluation’ and ‘test anxiety’, which are some of the anxiety variables frequently observed in EFL classrooms (Hooi Lian & Bt Budin, 2014). In this respect, Hashemi & Abbassi (2013) stated that many language learners think that authoritative and humiliating attitudes from teachers towards students can severely affect their cognition and their WTC in the class.

It is worth noting that, according to MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan (2003), some variations among SPCC and WTC can be explained by gender and age, or as Lockeley (2013) poses, they may even be caused by cultural and subject-specific characteristics. The aforementioned could explain why statement 11 and statement 12 showed a decrease in their score after the intervention. Moreover, as Galadja (2012) claims, communicatively competent behavior may be inhibited not only by cognitive skills but also by affective orientations such as self-perception, for example, people who have low self-esteem tend to have low self-perception and tend to be less willing to communicate and more anxious.

In relation to students’ WTC orally in EFL through the implementation of debates on local current affairs, it is clear that there was a big increase in students’ willingness. In relation to language skills, speaking was the ability that received the highest average and, specifically, question 7, “participate in a debate”, increased its score. This correlates with Davidson (1996, cited in Krieger, 2005, p. 1) who claimed that “with practice, many students show obvious progress in their ability to express and defend ideas in debate”.

Moreover, the results of this study showed a positive correlation between SPCC and WTC after the intervention, but it did not prove to be proportional, because the biggest increase was for WTC (50%), whereas SPCC grew 12%. However, it matches previous studies on the same topic (Clément et al., 2003; Ghonsooly et al., 2012) which stated that SPCC was the strong predictor of WTC. For example, in SPCC results, the category “friends” received the highest score and “strangers”, the lowest, just as in WTC. Riazi & Riasiati (2007) called this phenomenon, familiarity with the interlocutor, that is, students perceive that they are more competent when talking with friends. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that there are many factors other than SPCC that influence WTC; for instance, CA, culture and gender (Shahbaz et al, 2016).

In relation to situations in which students felt more comfortable and willing to communicate, the results showed that they were more at ease when speaking in pairs or in groups than when practicing oral skills individually. This is consistent with the results obtained by Cao (2011) who states that students prefer small-group or pair work to whole-class activities in both ESL and EFL settings because these environments are less intimidating and demanding. However, in another study, Cao & Philp (2006) suggest that not all learners prefer small group work to whole class discussion. This correlates with De Saint Léger & Storch (2009), who also emphasize

that students' preferences are not uniform and that they behave differently according to the context. The students in the current AR study also claimed to feel more relaxed and less afraid of talking during the intervention because they knew that they could express themselves in a safe environment, where they could give their opinions without being interrupted or ridiculed. In this regard, Nazari & Allahyar (2012) sustain that one of the ways of facilitating students' WTC is by actually letting students produce language without restrictions.

Finally, students agreed that debates were an excellent opportunity to practice and increase their self-confidence and competence perception. Godwin, 2003; Kennedy, 2007 and Omelicheva, 2007 also refer to this topic and they underline the fact that most students felt debates improved their English in academic and real-life situations, helping them to practice what they have learnt. Considering that one of the biggest apprehensions on part of students is embarrassment and self-consciousness, debating in front of a group of students was good practice to overcome stage fright. Nazara (2011), in turn, alleges that most of students are shy to speak English because of their classmates laughing and because they are afraid of their lecturers. Therefore, participating in classroom debates not only helps students overcome their fear of talking before a crowd, but also boosts their confidence, improves their speaking ability, and enhances their critical thinking skills (Zare & Othman, 2015). What is more, Fisher et al. (2001) underlined that participating in classroom debate strengthens learners' capability to handle disagreements outside of classroom. McClain (1989) also supports debate as a teaching tool and states that it should be considered a cooperative rather than a competitive effort.

Moreover, according to Shamsudin, Othman, Jahedi, & Aralas (2017), debate is more effective in promoting students' WTC and SPCC because every student has a role as a debate speaker and, according to different debate patterns, it is mandatory for each speaker to deliver an argument. As students mentioned in the focus group, at the beginning of the intervention, they did not know if they would be able to conduct a debate, and once they realized that they could, they felt very happy and encouraged to speak, as they also started to feel more relaxed and less anxious.

On the side of drawbacks, some objections to debates have been that they tend to be too competitive and highly demanding. According to Shamsudin et al. (2017), students experience more CA in debate than in other activities because they have to prepare and deliver their speech one after another and they also have to be mentally prepared to answer questions posed by the opponent team. However, this can be managed by giving students enough time to prepare their arguments. Another way to handle this situation is by teaching students specific language chunks and communication strategies to deliver arguments or counterarguments. Tumposky (2004), on the other hand, mentions that there are some cultural issues against the confrontational nature of debate because adversarial argumentation is unfamiliar and uncomfortable for some student populations; for example, some female students. The author also suggests that debate might encourage students to oversimplify or misrepresent information to win. Probably that situation may occur, but the teacher's

role is to provide students with good tools for sound argumentation and fruitful language practice. Nisbett (2003) too calls the attention to societal and cultural learning styles, by stating that Westerners feel more comfortable giving opinions and supporting them than Asian. Nevertheless, as teachers we can de-emphasize the competitive aspect of debates and create an encouraging atmosphere for students who have doubts about their speaking abilities (Zembytska, 2018). As more and more immigrants have arrived in the country, cultural differences are an interesting and relevant aspect to consider in today's Chilean society and educational system, as there may surely be different ways of approaching conflict and confronting ideas in the different nationality groups rooted in the country.

Furthermore, students remarked that it was the topics dealt with during the debate sessions what encouraged them to participate more actively than in their regular classes. In the intervention, they were provided with material about Chilean trending topics, but they were also given the opportunity to select some topics from a list given and they even proposed others, for example, they asked to talk about the working hours system in Chile. According to Aubrey, 2010, this type of initiative, i.e. making topics interesting and relevant for students, is just what is necessary to enhance students' WTC. In this way, students admit the necessity to be effective and they show motivation toward learning new words (Aclan & Aziz, 2015).

## **IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

This study has some implications for my future practice as a teacher and researcher. First of all, as a teacher, because conducting an AR study inspired me to consciously and continuously take action and devote some time to reviewing my teaching practices, and try new activities and methods. Secondly, regarding topics, I believe that even though we usually have a syllabus we have to stick to, it is important to consider students' motivations and interests to address contents and also include activities and topics that promote students SPCC and WTC. Thirdly, it is my responsibility, as a teacher, to offer a safe environment for students to participate and practice fostering confidence building and WTC and decreasing communication apprehension and anxiety.

Some of the implications for my future practice as a researcher have to do with managing practical issues derived from contingencies that are difficult to anticipate. Therefore, in the future, I plan to have a back-up plan for my research and select a research topic that is easily adaptable to a different context, participants and facilities in order to avoid delays. For example, I was forced to change the action plan and material and adapt them to my new participants, new schedules, and new English level because I changed my job after beginning my research. In addition to that, considering the nature of debates, video recording the debate sessions could be a good idea which would allow me to analyze students' body language and participation in more depth next time I involve myself in AR practice.

## CONCLUSION

On the whole, the results of this study, obtained through the four collection instruments showed an increase in SPCC and WTC. Of the four students, three showed an increase in their average scores with respect to the questionnaires answered before the intervention, except for one, whose score decreased, which can be explained by personality traits. As a matter of fact, some authors, such as MacIntyre et al. (2003) and Adelifar et al. (2016) pose that personality traits of individuals may be a determining factor in WTC.

In relation to SPCC, at least two students reached an average medium level of SPCC. Analyzing types of contexts, the students of this study answered that they preferred talking in dyads and groups, instead of larger meetings and public contexts. Considering the type of receiver, there was also an increase in SPCC for all types of receivers after the workshop, especially regarding talks among strangers and acquaintances, but the favorite receiver was, as expected, friends, which is explained by the phenomenon of familiarity (Riazi & Riasati, 2007).

Regarding WTC, there was an increase of students' WTC in all situations, except for three questions included in two reading and one speaking skill activities. In fact, the average WTC after the intervention was closer to "usually willing". When analyzing the different language skills, speaking was the one that received the highest average. Specifically, question 7 "participate in a debate" increased its score 32%.

Finally, students expressed a positive reception towards this intervention including the activities, the format and the topics dealt with. They also reported that they felt better prepared to participate in similar activities after the intervention, and that they noticed their communicative competence self-perception had increased.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

In Chile, there are not many studies addressing SPCC and WTC in EFL students and research on gender differences, SPCC and WTC correlation, motivation and WTC correlation, etc. would be, in my opinion, very useful both for teachers and students. On the other hand, Yashima (2002, p. 57) stated that it appeared that an "international posture", i.e. an inclination on part of some learners to be more interested in or have more favorable attitudes toward what English symbolizes, influenced motivation, which in turn, predicted proficiency and communication confidence, but that there was no significant direct path from motivation to WTC. In my view, it would be very interesting to assess this in our reality.

Finally, from the studies about cultural differences between Western and Asian cultures regarding WTC and SPCC noted by Nisbett (2003), I believe that another topic that could be worth studying in more depth are the cultural differences between English speaking countries and Spanish speaking countries, specifically Latin American countries with respect to oral communication and public speaking, to see how these differences affect students' WTC and SPCC.

**REFERENCES**

- Abrahams, M. J., & Silva, P. (2017). 6 What Happens with English in Chile? Challenges in Teacher Preparation. *English Language Teaching in South America: Policy, Preparation and Practices*, 16.
- Aclan, E. M., Aziz, N. H. A. (2015) Why and How EFL Students Learn Vocabulary in Parliamentary Debate Class. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, v6 n1, pp. 102-113.
- Adelifar, M., Jafarzadeh, Z., Abbasnejhad, G., & Hasani, A. S. (2016). The relationship between personality traits and WTC in EFL context. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(2), pp. 45-54.
- Akbari, O. & Razavi, A. (2015). Using authentic materials in the foreign language classroom: Teachers' perspectives in EFL classes. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 5 (2), pp. 105-116.
- Akerman, R., & Neale, I. (2011). *Debating the Evidence: An International Review of Current Situation and Perceptions*. The English Speaking Union. Retrieved from [http://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/ESU\\_Report\\_debatingtheevidence\\_FINAL.pdf](http://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/ESU_Report_debatingtheevidence_FINAL.pdf)
- Amiryousefi, M. (2016). Willingness to communicate, interest, motives to communicate with the instructor, and L2 speaking: A focus on the role of age and gender. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1 (14).
- Aubrey, S. C. (2010). Influences on Japanese students' willingness to communicate across three different sized EFL classes. *Asian EFL Journal*.
- Barahona, M. (2016). Challenges and accomplishments of ELT at primary level in Chile: Towards the aspiration of becoming a bilingual country. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24 (82).
- Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Blood, G. W., & Blood, I. M. (2004). Bullying in adolescents who stutter: Communicative competence and self-esteem. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders*, 31, pp. 69-79.
- Brown, H. D. 2014. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. 6th ed. New York: Pearson Education.
- Burns, A. & Joyce, H. (1997). *Focus on Speaking*. Sydney: National center for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Burns, A. (2009) Action research in second language teacher education. *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cao, Y. (2011). Investigating situational willingness to communicate within second language classrooms from an ecological perspective. *System*, 39(4), pp. 468-479.
- Cao, Y., & Philp, J. (2006). Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A comparison of behavior in whole class, group and dyadic interaction. *System*, 34(4), pp. 480-493.



- Clément, R., Baker, S.C., & MacIntyre, P.D. (2003). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The effects of context, norms, and vitality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 22(2), pp. 190–209.
- Cronquist, K. & Fiszbein, A. (2017). English language learning in Latin America. *The Dialogue Leadership for the Americas*.
- De Saint Léger, D., & Storch, N. (2009). Learners' perceptions and attitudes: Implications for willingness to communicate in an L2 classroom. *System*, 37, pp. 269-285.
- Fauzan, U. (2016). Enhancing speaking Ability of EFL students through debate and peer assessment. *EFL journal*, 1(1), pp. 49-57.
- First, E. (2017). EF English Proficiency Index. Retrieved from: <http://www.ef.com.co/epi>.
- Fisher, M., LaPointe, C., Peterson, K., & White, D. (2001). Using debate to develop empowered learning in the classroom: A prescription. Retrieved from: [debate.uvm.edu/NFL/rostrumlib/Snider%20Empow.pdf](http://debate.uvm.edu/NFL/rostrumlib/Snider%20Empow.pdf).
- Galajda, D. (2012). Perceived Competence and Communication Apprehension—the Affective Variables of Willingness to Communicate in L1 and FL. In *ICT for Language Learning Conference Proceedings*.
- Ghonsooly, B., Khajavy, G.H., & Asadpour, S.F. (2012). Willingness to communicate in English among Iranian non-English major university students. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 31(2), pp. 197–211.
- Goodwin, J. (2003). Students' perspectives on debate exercises in content area classes. *Communication Education*, 52(2), 157-163.
- Guo, Q & Sun, W. (2014). Economic returns to English proficiency for college graduates in mainland China. *China Economic Review*, 30, pp. 290- 300.
- Hashemi, M., & Abbasi, M. (2013). The role of the teacher in alleviating anxiety in language classes. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*, 4(3), pp. 640-646.
- Hashimoto, Y. (2002). Motivation and willingness to communicate as predictors of reported L2 use: The Japanese ESL context. *Second Language Studies*, 20(2), pp. 29-70.
- Hooi Lian, L. & Budin, M. (2014). Investigating the relationship between English language anxiety and the achievement of school based oral English test among Malaysian Form Four students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 2(1).
- Horwitz, E. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, pp. 112-126.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1986). Preliminary evidence for the reliability and validity of a foreign language anxiety scale. *TESOL Quarterly* 20(3), pp. 559–562.
- Iman, J. N. (2017). Debate Instruction in EFL Classroom: Impacts on the Critical Thinking and Speaking Skill. *International Journal of Instruction*, 10(4), pp. 87-108.
- Juhana, J. (2012). Psychological Factors That Hinder Students from Speaking in English Class (A Case Study in a Senior High School in South Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia). *Journal of Education and Practice*. 3 (12).

- Kearney, M. W. (2014). How durable is it? A contextualized interpretation of fiat in policy debate. *National Journal of Speech & Debate*, 2(2), pp. 3-6.
- Kennedy, R. (2007). In-class debates: Fertile ground for active learning and the cultivation of critical thinking and oral communication skills. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 19(2), pp. 183-190.
- Kilickaya, F. (2004) Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL Classrooms. *TESL Journal*. Retrieved on December 8, 2018 from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kilickaya-AuthenticMaterial.html>
- Krieger, D. (2005). Teaching debate to ESL students: A six-class unit. The Internet *TESL Journal*, 11(2), Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Krieger-Debate.html>
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009) Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research USA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lockley, T. (2012). Studies in second language learning and teaching. *SSLT*, 3(2), pp. 187-212.
- Lockley, T. (2013). Exploring self-perceived communication competence in foreign language learning. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 3(2), pp.187-212.
- Lustigová, L. (2011) Speak your mind: simplified debates as a learning tool at the university level, *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, (4) 1, pp. 18-30. Retrieved from <https://www.eriesjournal.com/index.php/eries/article/view/30>
- Macintyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Conrod, S. (2001). Willingness to communicate, social support, and language-learning orientations of immersion students. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 23(3), pp. 369–388.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2003). Sex and age effects on willingness to communicate, anxiety, perceived competence, and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. *Language learning*, 53(S1), pp. 137-166.
- MacIntyre, P.D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in an L2: A situated model of confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, pp. 545–562.
- Mason, J. (2002) Qualitative Research. London: SAGE Publications
- Matear, A. (2008). English language learning and education policy in Chile: Can English really open doors for all? *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(2), 131–47. doi: 10.1080/02188790802036679.
- McClain, T. B. (1989). Secondary School Debate Pedagogy. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 25(4), pp. 203-4.
- McCroskey, J. (1977). Classroom consequences of communication apprehension. *Communication Education* 26, pp. 27-33.
- McCroskey, J. C. (2009). Communication Apprehension: What We Have Learned in the Last Four Decades. *Human Communication* 12(2), pp. 179-187.
- McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (2013) Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC). Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Science. Retrieved from [www.midss.ie](http://www.midss.ie)

- McCroskey, J. C. & Richmond, V. P. (1982). Communication apprehension and shyness: Conceptual and operational distinctions. *Central States Speech Journal*, 33, pp. 458-468.
- McCroskey, J. C. & Richmond, V. P. (1987). Willingness to communicate and interpersonal communication. In J. C. McCroskey and J. A. Daly (Eds.) *Personality and interpersonal communication*, pp. 129-156, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2013). Willingness To Communicate (WTC). Measurement Instrument. Database for the Social Science. Retrieved from [www.midss.ie](http://www.midss.ie)
- Ministerio de Educación. (2012). Bases curriculares 2012. Idioma extranjero inglés. Santiago: Ministerio de Educación, Gobierno de Chile. Retrieved from: <https://www.curriculumnacional.cl/>
- Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, Ministerio de Educación, Ministerio de Economía, Fomento y Turismo. (2014). *National English Strategy 2014 – 2030*. Retrieved from: <http://www.economia.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/140307-Documento-Estrategia-Nacional-de-Ingl%C3%A9s-2014-2030.pdf>.
- Nazara, S. (2011). Students' perception on EFL speaking skill development. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 1(1), pp. 28-43.
- Nazari, A., & Allahyar, N. (2012). Increasing willingness to communicate among English as a foreign language (EFL) students: effective teaching strategies. *Investigations in university teaching and learning*, 8, pp. 18-29.
- Nisbett, R. E. (2003). *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and Why*. New York: Simon/Schuster.
- Omelicheva, M. Y. (2007). Resolved: Academic Debate Should Be a Part of Political Science Curricula. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 3, 161-175. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15512160701338320>
- Otte, J. (2006). Real language to real people: A descriptive and exploratory case study of the outcomes of aural authentic texts on the listening comprehension of adult ESL students enrolled in an advanced ESL listening course. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 67(4), 1246B.
- Pintrich, P. R. (2002). The role of metacognitive knowledge in learning, teaching, and assessing. *Theory into Practice* 41(4), pp. 219–225.
- Rao, P. (2010). Debates as a pedagogical learning technique: Empirical research with business students. *Multicultural Education & Technology Journal*, 4(4), pp. 234-250.
- Riazi, A. & M.J. Riasati, 2007. Language learning style preferences: A students' case study of Shiraz EFL institutes. *Asian EFL Journal*, 1, pp. 156-188.
- Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding school improvement with action research*. Alexandria (VA), USA: ASCD.
- Shahbaz, M., Khan, M. S., Khan, R. M. I., & Mustafa, G. (2016). Role of self-perceived communication competence and communication apprehension for willingness to communicate in L1 and L2. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 6(1), 158.

- Shamsudin, M., Othman, M., Jahedi, M., & Aralas, D. (2017). Enhancing English Learners' Willingness to Communicate through Debate and Philosophy Inquiry Discussion. *English Language Teaching*, 10(8), pp. 145-152.
- Shao, Q., & Gao, X. A. (2016). Reticence and willingness to communicate (WTC) of East Asian language learners. *System*, 63, 115-120.
- Silvermann, D. (2011) *Qualitative Research: Issues of theory, methods and practice* (third ed.) (London, SAGE Publications)
- Su Bergil, A. (2016) The Influence of Willingness to Communicate on Overall Speaking Skills among EFL Learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Volume 232, 14, p. 177-187.
- Thornbury, S. & Slade, D. (2006). *Conversation: from description to pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Tumposky, N. (2004). The debate debate. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 78(2), pp. 52-55.
- UDEC (2016) Plan Estratégico Intitucional 2016-2020. Retrieved from: [http://www.udec.cl/intranet/documentos\\_oficiales/PEI\\_2016\\_2020.pdf](http://www.udec.cl/intranet/documentos_oficiales/PEI_2016_2020.pdf)
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Ushioda, E. (2010). Motivation and SLA: Bridging the gap. In L. Roberts, M. Howard, M. Ó Laoire, & D. Singleton (Eds.), *EUROSLA Yearbook 10* (pp. 5-20). Nijmegen: John Benjamins.
- Wittmayer, J. & Schäpke, N. (2014). Action, research and participation: roles of researchers in sustainability transitions. *Sustainability Science*. 9.
- Yashima, T., 2002. Willingness to communicate in a second language: the Japanese EFL context. *Modern Language Journal* 86, pp. 54–66.
- Yashima, T., MacIntyre, P. D., & Ikeda, M. (2018). Situated willingness to communicate in an L2: Interplay of individual characteristics and context. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(1), pp. 115–137.
- Yu, H., Li, H., & Gou, X. (2011). The personality-based variables and their correlations underlying willingness to communicate. *Asian Social Science*, 7(3), p. 253.
- Zare, P. & Othman, M. (2015) Students' Perceptions toward Using Classroom Debate to Develop Critical Thinking and Oral Communication Ability. *Asian Social Science*; Vol. 11, No. 9. Canadian Center of Science and Education.
- Želježič, M. (2017) Debate in the EFL Classroom. *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*. Vol. 14 (1), pp. 39-54 (126).
- Zembytska, M. (2018). Developing Communicative Skills through Debate in the ESL Classroom. *Proceedings of XI International Conference on Science and Education*.