PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Rationales

Students’ participation in classroom activities has been a centre of various TEFL research. In general, it can be affected by a variety of factors coming from teachers’ side, students’ side and others including classroom conditions, types and contents of activities, etc. Concerning teacher factors, research focuses on teachers’ teaching methods, teachers’ knowledge, teachers’ characteristics, and teachers’ roles in those activities. For students, their degree of participation can be different depending on their age, aptitude, characteristics, individual variations, learning styles, attitudes and motivation, language levels, learning habits, and gender differences. In addition, classroom factors such as physical classroom conditions, available teaching and learning equipment, classroom structures, and learning atmosphere can also have considerable effects on students’ participation.

Speaking skill is a comprehensive skill which involves students’ ability of listening, reading and writing. In other words, students’ participation in oral activities are also affected by all of the above mentioned factors though the level of effect may be different compared to that of other classroom activities.

In order to increase students’ participation in classroom activities in general and oral activities in particular, various techniques have been used including group work, playing games, questioning, using advanced audio-visual aids like video, etc. Among those techniques, group work has been most widely used and it turns out to be a very effective technique.

This study was carried out to help us have a deep understanding about the factors hindering the participation in oral activities of the second year Tourism students at Vietnam National University – College of Social Sciences and Humanities (VNU- CSSH). There are some typical differences about the subjects of the study (learners) that were discussed in details in Part II - Chapter II but it can be summarized as follows: First, English is not a major subject though the number of learning modules for this subject is quite large. Second, four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing are not separately taught and learnt. Third,
The English teaching program is divided into two stages: General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) - English for Tourism (ET). Additionally, the subjects of the study are different in their levels of English proficiency (half took English in the university entrance exam and the others did not.). Last but not least, the University lacks modern teaching and learning equipment. These typical differences, therefore, decided which factors were focused on and techniques were used to increase the students’ involvement.

With regard to the factors affecting the students’ participation, the study focused on the student factors including learning styles, attitudes and motivation, language levels, learning habits, and gender differences; teacher factors including teaching methods, knowledge, characteristics, and roles in oral activities; and classroom factors including the classroom itself, structure, and learning atmosphere. In order to increase the students’ involvement in oral activities, group work (including both small groups with 2 students and large groups with 3 – 5 students) was experimented. Besides group work, oral presentation was also experimented. This is not a new technique but the use of this technique to encourage students’ involvement in oral tasks is totally new. This technique was chosen to be experimented as our teaching experience shows that the Tourism students are quite active whenever it is used and we really want to be sure if it would enhance the students’ participation.

In conclusion, the study is of great values in terms of both theoretical and practical aspect. From the theoretical angle, it provides us with the knowledge about the factors affecting the second year Tourism students’ participation in classroom speaking activities as well as the knowledge about the techniques and activities to overcome these factors and increase their participation. The greatest value, however, is that by choosing appropriate techniques and activities and applying them to the two classes in the Tourism Faculty, we can enhance their participation and more importantly the English teaching and learning quality in the Faculty.

II. Aims of the study

The study aims to find out the factors that had negative effects on the second year Tourism students’ participation in classroom speaking activities. The factors came from the teacher, the students and the classroom. Based on the findings, the researcher analyzed the
techniques and activities often used by the teachers to increase the students’ participation. This work helped the researcher formulate a hypothesis about the most appropriate techniques to be experimented with a view to increasing the students’ participation: group work and presentation. The former has been widely used and turns out a very effective technique as it has outstanding advantages including improving the quality of student talk, helping individualize instruction, promoting a positive affective climate, and motivating learners, etc. For the latter technique, although it has never been used to increase students’ participation in oral tasks but if planned properly it will probably enhance students’ engagement in group work – a preparatory step to give an oral presentation. Actually, whenever this technique is used in oral tasks, the Tourism students appear more active because this kind of activity is future-work oriented. So, another main purpose of the study is to prove whether the use of the two techniques: group work and presentation really increases the students’ participation in oral activities.

The study also provides us and other teachers who are interested in the field with the knowledge about the application of the two mentioned techniques to enhance students’ participation. Last but not least, the study can partially improve the researcher’s ability of teaching and doing educational research.

III. Research questions

The two main research questions and two sub-questions corresponding to the two major aims are:

(1). How actively are the second year Tourism students involved in oral activities in the class, and what accounts for the degree of their involvement?

Sub-questions:

(i) Is the students’ current involvement in oral activities satisfactory with regard to their time-on-task?

(ii) What are the common oral activities do the teachers often use in the classroom, and how do those activities affect the students’ involvement?

(2). Is the use of group work and oral presentation helpful in increasing the second year Tourism students’ involvement in oral activities?
IV. Scope of the study

Concerning the scope of the study some of the following things should be taken into consideration. First, the subjects of the study are the second year Tourism students at CSSH. We chose the second year students because they had finished the first stage of the English teaching program – General English. They all had basic knowledge about English and began to learn English for Tourism. Therefore, this period of time may be the most suitable time for the study. Second, the study only focuses on oral activities because speaking skill is the most important and needs developing for their future employment aspect. Third, the study concentrates to find out the factors including teacher factors, student factors and other classroom factors hindering the students’ involvement in oral activities. Finally, the two techniques chosen to be experimented are group work and oral presentation. Besides the reasons mentioned in the previous part, the application of the two techniques is rather simple and totally feasible in CSSH where modern teaching and learning equipment is not available.

V. Methods of the study

The study was a quasi-experiment using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The data was collected by means of:

- Classroom observations
- Questionnaire
- Interviews

VI. Structure of the study

The study consists of four chapters as follows:

- Chapter I: Literature Review

  This chapter provides a theoretical background about factors affecting students’ participation in classroom speaking activities including student personal factors such as learning styles, attitudes and motivation, levels of proficiency, learning habits, and gender differences; teacher factors like teaching techniques, knowledge of the field expertise, characteristics, and teachers’ roles in speaking activities; and such classroom factors as classroom conditions, classroom structures and classroom
learning atmosphere. This chapter also gives a thorough description of two techniques used to increase student participation: *group work* and *oral presentation*.

- **Chapter II: Methodology**
  
  This chapter describes in details how the research was carried out including the procedures of finding out the factors affecting the students’ participation, the techniques to be experimented, the experiment itself as well as the data collection serving for the analysis.

- **Chapter III: Data Analysis and Findings**
  
  The collected data was analyzed to answer the two research questions. This chapter consists of two main sections corresponding to the two stages of the research. The first section clarifies how these factors affected the students’ participation. The other aims to answer how the use of the two techniques increased the students’ participation by comparing the levels of the participation before and at the end of the experiment along with analyzing the teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the two techniques.

- **Chapter IV: Implications**
  
  This chapter suggests what both teachers of English and Tourism students at CSSH should and shouldn’t do in order to get the most benefits from using the two techniques *group work* and *oral presentation* to overcome the negative factors and increase the students’ participation in classroom oral activities.
PART TWO: THE STUDY

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

I. Factors affecting students’ participation in classroom speaking activities

Students’ participation can be understood as students’ involvement in classroom activities, and in this case, oral activities. To be more concrete, it is shown in interactions between students and students, and between students and the teacher. The interaction between students themselves is established when they are working in groups. When working in groups, students’ participation can be measured by students’ sense of responsibility and cooperation. With regard to the student-teacher interaction, students who are considered to maintain a good interaction with their teacher often obey the teacher’s instructions and do their work seriously. Besides, students’ participation is shown in students’ responsibility for their own learning progress and of the whole class. For example, they are willing to share information and experience about the related topics, volunteer to perform a task, etc.

Students’ participation in classroom oral activities can be affected by a variety of factors originating from students, teachers, speaking activities and other classroom-related factors. In the following sections, some of the major factors will be discussed.

I.1. Student factors

I.1.1. Students’ learning styles

Skehan defines learning styles as “…cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the environment” (Skehan: 1991; cited in Brown: 1994).

Learners may have their own learning styles which help classify them into certain learner groups. Willing (1987; cited in Harmer: 2001) divides learners into the following groups based on their individual behaviours:

- **Convergers**: They are those who prefer to avoid groups, and who are independent and confident in their own abilities. Most importantly, they are analytic and can impose their own structures on learning. They tend to be cool and pragmatic.
• **Conformists**: They are those who prefer to emphasize learning ‘about language’ over learning to use it. They tend to be independent of those in authority and are perfectly happy to work in non-communicative classrooms.

• **Concrete learners**: Though they are like conformists, they also enjoy the social aspects of learning and like to learn from direct experience. They are interested in language use and language as communication rather than language as a system. They enjoy games and group work in class.

• **Communicative learners**: They are those who are comfortable out of class and show a degree of confidence and willingness to take risks which their colleagues may lack. They are much more interested in social interactions with other speakers of the language than they are with analyses of how the language works. They are perfectly happy to operate without the guidance of a teacher.

As can be seen from Willing’s classification, if the majority of students in one class belong to the two former groups, the degree of participation in oral activities of this class will be low. More importantly, it can have negative effects on creating a good learning atmosphere, which may prevent the others from taking part in oral tasks.

More recently, Harmer (2001) emphasizes the importance of understanding that there are different individuals in our class if we are to plan appropriate kinds of activities for them. Different individuals may have different learning styles, prefer different kinds of work, and expect different degrees of care and attention from the teacher. Harmer suggests that we should balance the interests between individuals and groups and pay attention to individual traits when putting them into groups. We, of course, can not take care of all individuals at the same time but over a period of time by taking care of different learning styles we can ensure that we have done our best not only for groups but for each individual.

We can conclude with certainty that if the teacher neglects these differences among students, only one or two groups of students can benefit from the activities organized by the teacher while others do not. This is one reason for the fact that when an activity is in progress, not all students participate in actively.
I.1.2. Students’ attitudes and motivation

Attitudes and motivation have been mentioned by language theorists and practicing language teachers to explain reasons for success in learning a second language. In general, attitudes and motivation are related as it seems logical that a positive attitude towards foreign language study and target language is one factor that motivates learners to invest more effort to learn a second language (Chandrasegaran: 1981).

Regarding the issue, there are ample definitions of motivation. Lightbown and Spada (1999) consider motivation a complex phenomenon and define it in terms of two factors: learners’ communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community. While Harmer (2001) defines motivation simply as “some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something”.

Harmer divides motivation into extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is caused by such outside factors as the need to pass an exam, the hope of financial reward, or the possibility for future travel, etc. In contrast, intrinsic motivation is caused by inside factors like the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better.

No one can deny the importance of motivation towards the success in learning a foreign language, so how can we initiate and sustain motivation? When starting to learn a foreign language, students may have in themselves some kind of motivation either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation which has fired them up. We, teachers, must be responsible for sustaining their motivation otherwise it may be weak and die (Rogers: 1996; cited in Harmer: 2001).

In order to do so, we have to understand the sources of motivation. According to Harmer, the sources of motivation are diversified. They may derive from the society we live in, significant others like parents or old siblings, the teacher and the method. Among these sources, the teacher and the method may be of the most importance. For the teacher, his or her attitudes and enthusiasm help create a positive classroom atmosphere. For the method, it means involving both teacher and students’ confidence shown in the way of teaching and learning. If either loses this confident motivation, the chance of success in learning a language will be very small.
With a view to helping teachers realize whether a learner is motivated or not, Ur (1996) points out typical characteristics of a motivated learner including:

- **Positive task orientation**: The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges, and has confidence in his or her success.

- **Ego-involvement**: The learner finds it important to succeed in learning in order to maintain and promote his or her own positive self-image.

- **Need for achievement**: The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.

- **High aspiration**: The learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, top grades.

- **Goal orientation**: The learner is very aware of the goals of learning, or of specific learning activities, and directs his or her efforts towards achieving them.

- **Perseverance**: The learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning, and is not discouraged by setbacks or apparent lack of progress.

- **Tolerance**: The learner is not disturbed or frustrated by situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; he or she can live with these patiently and in the confidence that understanding will come later.

Downs (2000) also points out some conditions that help increase students’ motivation. He says that motivation increases when students feel acknowledged and understood, when students are confident they can succeed, when language has a communicative purpose, and when students take responsibility for their own learning.

Clearly, motivation plays an important role in the success of language learning in general but we may wonder how much or to what extent motivation accounts for students’ participation in oral activities. We may not give the exact answer but we can conclude with certainty that the degree of motivation is directly proportional to the level of involvement in oral tasks. To be more concrete, the more motivated students are, the more actively they will participate in oral activities.
In conclusion, we should be aware of the role and the sources of motivation and then promote it among our students whether it is extrinsic or intrinsic as the two kinds of motivation called short-term and long-term goal by Harmer (2001) are interrelated, and when they are motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically as long as their motivation is enough sufficient intensity they will have in themselves a force that pushes them to participate more actively in classroom activities in general and oral activities in particular.

1.1.3. Students’ language levels

According to Harmer (2001), in a class where students’ language levels are different, teachers may have some difficulties choosing a suitable teaching method, language and activities used in class.

Harmer claims that some techniques and exercises are suitable for some students but less appropriate for others. The language we use in classroom and in the materials we expose to students must be carefully chosen concerning the complexity, length and genre.

With regard to Topic and Genre Harmer says that if students are not interested in the topics we are asking them to talk about, they are unlikely to invest their language production with the same amount of effort as they would if they were excited by the subject matter. If they are unfamiliar with the type of activity we are asking them to talk about, they may find it hard to engage themselves with the task we have given them. In order to speak successfully students must have certain knowledge about the topics and the types of activities otherwise the variety in the classroom appears counter-productive as a result.

Concerning the topic and genre Harmer (2001) suggests that teachers should take the following issues into consideration:

- **Choose interesting topics:** It will be impossible for us to choose the topics that can make all students get engaged with. It is, however, important for us to try and find the topics which will involve them.

  We can choose reasonable topics by observing students, through interviews or questionnaires. Actually, we cannot always choose interesting topics because we have to follow textbook topics for example; however, unpromising topics can be interesting if we know how to deal with them.


• **Create interest in the topic**: Our aim is to make our students get engaged in the task so we should create interest in the topic which the activity explores. We can do it by asking students to work in groups, asking anyone who knows about the topic to talk to the whole class, or asking students to express their ideas about the topic before the activity starts.

• **Activate schemata**: The next work we should do after we have created the interest in the topic is to help our students know the genre the task asks them to work in. In this situation we should give them time to discuss what happens through interviews if they are going to role-play or introduce them some techniques of presenting if they are going to give presentation.

• **Vary topics and genre**: For a general statement, varying topics and genre of oral tasks can increase students’ participation. To be more concrete, if topics are diversified, they will promote individual strengths using his or her own experience about the related fields and cater for all tastes as well as create interest among students. For example, when discussing about tourism services, some students may know more about one service than others and vice versa. In this case, if only one service is discussed, the oral activity seems to focus on one group of students instead of the whole class.

With regard to the genre, it is advisable to get students acquainted with as many kinds of tasks as possible and the tasks should be of real-life situations. When students are used to all kinds of oral tasks, they will feel more confident and take part in more actively.

• **Provide necessary information**: When we ask our students to speak about some topic, we should ask ourselves what information is necessary to make their talk successful and then provide them with such information. In that way, we can make them topic-oriented and therefore they can come up to our expectations.

Another factor included in students’ levels that may hinder students’ participation in speaking activities is their pronunciation of the second language. As mentioned by some researchers like Shuying (1999) most students who are learning English have difficulties in
pronunciation, which makes them unwilling to communicate in the target language for fear of being ridiculed.

In brief, the limitation in the students’ language levels can directly affect their participation however much they like the activities. We, therefore, should choose the topics as well as the kinds of activities of their levels to encourage their participation.

I.1.4. Students’ learning habits

For a long time students have formed a habit of learning subjects in Vietnamese passively especially at university. They are hardly willing to speak out their ideas in class unless they are called. This habit may have a negative effect when they are learning a foreign language which needs their frequent practice.

Even for English, many schools and learners only focus on written exams while developing learners’ communicative abilities is not emphasized. When they go on to study at university it often takes them time and effort to change their habit. That explains why many of them do not take part in classroom activities especially oral activities.

I.1.5. Gender differences

Our experience from teaching different classes where the number of male and female learners is equal shows that in these classes students seem to participate more actively in classroom activities than those in the classes where male learners greatly outnumber female learners and vice versa. It is open to a question whether gender differences affect learners’ participation in classroom speaking activities.

The issue of *Sex Differences and Language Use in the Classroom* has been mentioned in some research but it has rarely been considered an important variable. Actually, the study helps decide the appropriate teaching strategies and materials used in ESL classrooms. In order to have a deep understanding about the problem, Homes (1986; cited in Das: 1986) studied sex differences and language use in terms of *Conventional Interaction* and found out interesting results as follows:

The research was carried out by Homes (1986) on the relationship between sex and language to examine the conversational strategies used by women and men interacting in different settings and different features of discourses such as *talkativeness, topic initiation,*
feedback, verbal support and patterns of interruption. The results of the research were quite different compared to our thought: Men talked more and took more frequent turns at talk; interrupted more often; withheld responses to women’s topics; and withheld self-disclosure. Women, on the other hand, tended to be more often than men to use speech strategies which supported other speakers’ contributions, initiating topics and providing feedback and providing opportunities for others to participate. In brief, collaboration, cooperation and flexible leadership characterize women’s talk more frequently than men’s interaction.

Clearly, these findings lead us to believe that sex differences may have a great effect on students’ participation and it is suggested that both female and male ESL learners should be provided with equal opportunities to practise a range of sociolinguistic skills. Teachers, therefore, should be alert to the dangers of sex-biased interaction patterns distorting the purpose of the small-group interactions they establish for practising communicative skills.

In conclusion, those are the main factors originating from students’ side that may affect students’ participation in classroom activities in general and oral ones in particular. For each student, the degrees of effect of those five factors may vary and within one factor the degrees of effect on different students are different. First, in a class may exist different learning styles as pointed out by Willing including four groups: convergers, conformists, concrete learners and communicative learners. The teacher should identify which group a student belongs to, then plan to change him or her to become a concrete and communicative learner if he or she belongs to the two former groups who may have difficulty getting involved in oral activities. It is a difficult task for most teachers because in non-English major universities, the number of students belonging to the two former groups often outnumbers that of the two latter ones. More importantly, the students of the two former groups are often obstacles towards creating an encouraging learning environment. Second, students’ knowledge including both knowledge of English proficiency and knowledge of field expertise seems directly proportional to their level of involvement in oral tasks. To be more concrete, the more knowledge students have, the higher their degree of participation is. In addition, if students are motivated, preferably intrinsically motivated, they will engage themselves more in classroom activities. Finally, a
passive habit of learning and the unbalance in the number between male and female students may also have negative effects on the participation of the whole class.

1.2. Teacher factors

1.2.1. Teachers’ teaching methods

Through the history we have experienced the existence and development of many teaching methods that can be divided into two types: teacher-centred and learner-centred methods. Stern (1983) lists out some main methods including:

- **Grammar-translation or traditional method**: This method emphasizes the teaching of the second language grammar; its principal technique is translation from and into the target language. The grammatical features are focused on in the textbook and by the teacher. The learner is expected to study and memorize rules, examples, verb paradigms, etc. This method is popular among those who prefer to study a second language by understanding its grammatical system.

- **Direct method**: This method focuses on the use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom. Since it involves much use of spoken language, stress is also laid on the acquisition of a good pronunciation.

- **Reading method**: This method is characterized by teaching through reading comprehension. It is clearly that vocabulary is the key point of this method.

- **Audio-lingual method**: Stern points out some distinctive characteristics of this method compared to others:
  + separation of the skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing – and the primacy of the audio-lingual over the graphic skills.
  + the use of dialogues as the chief means of presenting the language.
  + emphasis on certain practice techniques, mimicry, memorization, and pattern drills.
  + the use of the language laboratory.
establishing a linguistics and psychological theory as a basis for the teaching method.

- **Audiovisual method**: This method enables students to learn through meaningful utterances and contexts in a visually presented scenario. It may be interesting as the students can learn by both watching images and listening to sounds. However, like the audio-lingual method we may have difficulty carrying out this.

In more recent time, concerning developing learners’ communicative competence Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has captured pedagogists’ attention due to its salient characteristics including a desire to communicate, a communicative purpose, content not form, variety of language, no teacher intervention or learner-centredness, and no material control. Furthermore, the examples of these techniques are diverse including role-play, problem solving, games, group work, interview and discussion, etc.

Listing out these methods does not mean that we can choose a method to be perfectly applied to a certain class to increase students’ involvement. However, it helps us understand the strengths and shortcomings of these methods. In order to have a suitable method, the teacher should take some of the following factors into consideration including learners, teaching purposes and other available classroom conditions. This method can be one or a combination of those above mentioned methods. Choosing an inappropriate or not being flexible in applying methods to a certain class may have negative effects on students’ participation.

### I.2.2. Teachers’ knowledge

In the study *What Makes a Good Teacher*, Breach (2005) points out that most students believe that the teacher is a fountain of knowledge and their main responsibility is to pass on that knowledge to students. Breach compares the teacher as a teapot and the students with empty cups waiting for the knowledge from the teacher to be poured down in. In that case one may wonder what kinds of knowledge the teacher should have. In the following part, we are going to focus on language ability, specialist knowledge and general knowledge of an English-speaking country.

- **Language**: According to Underwood (1987), being a fluent, accurate English speaker is a great help, but this alone does not make us a successful teacher. In
deed, many teachers whose command of English is limited still are good teachers as they understand the difficulties their students often face. According to Underwood the secret lies in being confident about the language we use and we should not feel embarrassed due to the lack of greater knowledge.

- **Specialist knowledge**: English teaching in Vietnam can be divided into two types: General English (GE) and English for Special Purposes (ESP). ESP teaching is becoming popular in Vietnam due to the demands of the fields involved like business, tourism, technology, etc. In order to teach ESP, a teacher needs not only knowledge of the language but also knowledge of the subject he is responsible for (Knowledge of Content). According to Underwood the more specialist knowledge a teacher can apply to his lesson, the more interested his students will feel in because the students can experience language being used for a real, communicative purpose.

- **General knowledge of an English-speaking country**: According to Underwood, we can “bring to life” one of the environments in which English is spoken by talking about the places, the people and the customs. Even if we have never been to any English-speaking countries, we can bring to our class some pictures, photos, postcards, etc, and then ask our students to talk about things they can see from those “realia” compared to those in their own countries. This will help create an active and interesting learning environment. Underwood, however, suggests that those “realia” should be of their levels otherwise it will be counter-productive.

In summary, a good teacher of English must have a mass of knowledge including the language ability, the special knowledge especially for those who are teaching ESP and the general knowledge of English-speaking countries.

**1.2.3. Teachers’ characteristics**

Besides the knowledge, teachers’ characteristics may have a great effect on students’ participation. Our experience shows that many a time even a teacher with good knowledge fails to make his class an interesting place for students to enjoy. Those who always manage to create an exciting class are thought to have a ‘special gift’ for the teaching job. Actually, the thing called ‘special gift’ is his characteristics and qualities.
Barry (1993) points out some characteristics a teacher should have that help motivate students to participate in classroom activities in general.

- **Being natural**: The teacher should present himself as a real person. To be more concrete, he should express the feelings of a normal person such as happiness, annoyance, etc; and should laugh with students when humorous situations occur. Therefore, the relationship between the teacher and students will be closer, which helps increase students’ participation and their cooperation with the teacher in the process of teaching and learning.

- **Being warm**: The teacher considers students his fellow people, respects their personal characteristics, and is happy to have them around.

- **Being pleasant**: The teacher’s attitudes towards students express his relaxation, friendliness in the relationship with his students. Besides, being pleasant also means being enthusiastic towards the teaching job.

- **Being approachable**: An approachable teacher is the one who makes students feel good about being with him and the one that students can come to see whenever they have problems.

- **Being tolerant**: When learning a foreign language, students’ making mistakes is inevitable. The teacher needs to be tolerant with those mistakes instead of criticizing students as it can make them scared and it is likely that they will be afraid of speaking out their ideas lest they should make mistakes as a result.

As Vietnamese saying goes “A teacher is like a kind mother”. The above characteristics are the concrete ones that a teacher should have besides his command of knowledge and that help create a good rapport between the teacher and students. This close relationship itself has a great value in making his class an interesting place where students can enjoy their learning. In other words, the teacher’s characteristics may have a considerable influence on his students’ participation.

It should be noted that hardly any teacher can have all the above characteristics once starting the teaching job but he should bear in mind that his characteristics partially account for success in his teaching job so he should try to obtain them day by day.
I.2.4. Teachers’ roles in speaking activities

With an increasing concern about the CLT approach in foreign language teaching and learning, in which learners are the centre of the lesson, the roles of a teacher are different from those in the traditional grammar-translation method, Harmer (2001) uses the term ‘facilitator’ to suggest the teachers’ roles in a learner-centred classroom. According to Harmer (2001) a teacher can have the following roles:

- **Controller**: When a teacher acts as a controller, he is responsible for the class. This kind of role will be important when announcements need to be made, when orders have to be restored, when explanations are given, and when the teacher is leading a question and answer session. However, abusing this role may have some negative effects. First, it denies students’ way of learning by experiencing and students will focus everything on the teacher. Second, students will have fewer chances to speak out what they think. Finally, the classroom atmosphere may become less exciting due to the lack of variety in activities. From the above analysis, we can see that if a teacher emphasizes his role as a controller, it will not be suitable for teaching and learning a foreign language especially oral skills in which students need frequent practice.

- **Organizer**: Organizing students to do various activities is one of the most important roles of a teacher. He needs to provide students with information, tell them how to carry out the activities they are given, put them in groups and finally end the activities. If he does not carry out this role in a sensible way, students will not know what and how to do, and even chaos may happen. On the other hand, if the teacher carries out the role well, it will help encourage students’ participation in classroom activities.

- **Assessor**: After performing one kind of activity, students expect their teacher to give his comments on how they perform their work. It can be an important factor encouraging their participation in classroom activities if the teacher knows how to assess their work. As for this issue, Harmer emphasizes teachers’ sensitivity and fairness during his assessment. The teacher should tell the students at what degree they have come up to our expectations and point out their mistakes so that they can
avoid in the next time. However, he should not criticize too much on their mistakes as it can demotivate them from participating in classroom activities.

- **Prompter**: Sometimes during the process of performing one task, for example, role-play or presentation, students may have difficulty expressing their ideas because of their lack of vocabulary. In that situation, the teacher can provide them with discrete suggestions to help them continue their work. It does not mean that the teacher should dominate their work as he has to encourage them to think and work creatively and independently.

- **Participant**: Harmer suggests that a teacher sometimes should join in students’ activities as a participant other than a teacher, which will help enliven things inside instead of always having to prompt or organize from outside the group and students will enjoy having the teacher with them and it, to some extent, reduces the gap between the teacher and students. However, due to the better command of English and special knowledge as well as experience, the teacher is likely to dominate the proceedings.

- **Resource**: During the proceedings students may ask the teacher the meaning of a word or phrase, the information about the topic they are given. When the teacher responds to their questions, he acts as a resource. The teacher should bear in mind that he should not spoon-feed the students otherwise they will be over-reliant on the teacher.

- **Tutor**: When students are working on longer projects such as preparation for a talk or a debate, we can act as a tutor. We can go round the class, stay briefly with a particular group or individual, offer some sort of general guidance, etc. As it is concerned with more personal contact students have a real chance to feel supported and helped and the general class atmosphere is greatly enhanced as a result.

- **Observer**: We should observe what our students do especially in oral communicative activities so that we can give them useful feedback. When observing we should be careful not to be intrusive by hanging on their every word, by getting too close to them or drawing attention to ourselves as students may be distracted from the tasks they are involved in.
• *Feedback provider:* Our feedback towards students’ performance is vitally important telling them what, in our opinion, they have done well in terms of the content of the activity as well as the language used. According to Harmer in order to encourage students’ talk we should focus more on fluency than accuracy and allow them assess what they have completed. We should also consider when and how to give feedback as correction at inappropriate time, for example, when they are in the middle of an oral activity, and over-correction may inhibit them and take the communicativeness out of the activity. This may also lead to their hesitation to speak English in the class.

Based on the theory about teacher’s roles, we can see that teachers’ roles may affect students’ participation in terms of teachers’ acknowledgement about and implementation of those roles. Acknowledging those roles fully provides teachers with theoretical basis to decide appropriate roles. After determining which roles they should take on, they have to decide how to implement those roles properly otherwise they may not obtain their teaching goals. For example, if the teacher aims to encourage more students’ involvement but he emphasizes too much on his role as a controller and dominates all the classroom activities, students will not have chance to get engaged in those activities. It should be noticed that the proficiency level of our class will determine which role(s) will dominate. But in order to encourage more students’ participation we should shift our roles to enable our students to decrease their dependence on us and to try things for themselves.

In conclusion, students’ participation can be affected by teachers’ factors including teaching methods, teachers’ knowledge, teachers’ characteristics, and teachers’ roles in classroom activities. Teaching methods may play a decisive part in obtaining teaching goals, and in this case, increasing students’ involvement in oral activities. Besides teaching methods, teachers’ knowledge and characteristics also play an important part as the former makes oral activities interesting in term of the content and the latter helps create an exciting and encouraging learning atmosphere. Additionally, the fact that the teacher carries out his roles properly may encourage students to promote their roles in classroom activities. Thus, with a view to increasing students’ participation in classroom speaking activities, teachers should renovate their teaching methods to encourage students’ roles in speaking activities. At the same time, teachers should improve their knowledge including
both knowledge of language and knowledge of field expertise. Finally, teachers should be friendly and open-hearted to create a good rapport with students.

I.3. Classroom factors

According to Williams and Burden (1997), we cannot underestimate the importance of appropriate environmental conditions for learning to take place as an understanding of the ways in which aspects of the environment affect learning is vitally important for language teachers and learners. Some areas involving the classroom factors include classroom itself, classroom structure, and classroom atmosphere.

I.3.1. Classroom itself

Underwood (1987) points out some factors related to the classroom physical conditions that can affect the learning process:

- The lightness/brightness
- The temperature and fresh air
- The acoustics
- The lines of vision
- The layout of the desks/tables
- The possibility of moving desks/tables
- The other furniture
- The facilities for displaying pictures, charts, etc.

Among those, for normal language learning classrooms in non-English major universities in Vietnam the layout of the desks and chairs can have the most influence on learning oral productive skills. Underwood suggests three possible layouts corresponding to each kind of tasks carried out in the class.

Pattern 1

Pattern 2

Pattern 3
**Pattern 1:** This pattern is particularly good for group work especially tasks involving with interactions among students. It gives students a sense of belonging to a certain group. Any materials used can be put in the centre and the person whose duty is to write down something does not lose chance to interact with the rest of the group.

However, to ensure it works well the teacher must explain the task requirements clearly and be sure that students can work alone. Moreover, for this kind of table arrangement students sometimes have difficulty looking at the board.

**Pattern 2:** This pattern can be efficiently applied to role-play and simulations. It focuses attention towards the front of the class, though not necessary towards the teacher. If arranged in this pattern, most students can see each other’s face so they are more likely to pay attention to what others say. It is really good to carry out activities in front of the class. It is also good for pair work as students can turn to face their partner without moving any furniture.

**Pattern 3:** This pattern is for face-to-face discussion and they can easily look at the board. However, it may be difficult for the teacher to move around the class if he wants to check how students are working.

**I.3.2. Classroom structure**

Williams and Burden (1997) divides classroom structure into three types: competitive, co-operative and individualistic. Aims (1984; cited in Williams and Burden: 1997) points out that competition is only helpful for those who do well and learners may become fearful of making mistakes but they fail to see any value in doing so. More importantly, competition is not conductive to learning a foreign language where learners need to feel able to try to communicate in the language.

With individualistic environment, as Covington and Berry (1976; cited in Williams and Burden: 1997) say, it does not emphasize on comparing oneself with others but instead of comparing one’s present level of performance with previous achievements. As the learner achievement is independent of each other, the learner’s success is attributed to the personal effort.

Unlike individualistic environment, within cooperative settings learners become dependent on each other in order to achieve success. The strengths of this kind of structure are that
group success can help improve an individual’s self-esteem and even group failure can modify the positive perceptions of those who perform well individually.

By looking over three kinds of the classroom structure we can see that creating a cooperative environment is a must if we want to increase students’ participation in classroom activities.

1.3.3. Classroom atmosphere

No one can deny the role of classroom atmosphere in the success of language learning. According to Underwood (1987), both the teacher and students are responsible for creating a good learning atmosphere and a good learning atmosphere consists of the following characteristics:

*Giving a sense of purpose*

What makes every student in the class feel that they are doing something worthwhile and they have a certain role in class activities? Underwood (1987) suggests 10 ways to create that kind of atmosphere:

- Address every student by name and encourage the rest of the class to do so too.
- Always be polite to your students and expect them to be polite to each other as well as to you.
- Make sure that you do not show favouritism towards particular students.
- Plan clearly what you are going to do in each lesson, but do not stick so rigidly to it that you disallow even valid interruptions.
- Tell your students what you want to achieve in the lesson and then, at the end, say how successful you think they have been.
- Include every student in some way during each lesson if possible and do not let one or two students monopolize the class.
- Provide opportunities for the students to talk and listen to each other rather than all communication being between you and them.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say. If, for example, you have told the class to look at the next unit before the next lesson *if they have time*, do not complain if
some students have not done so. But if you say ‘This homework must be done by Monday,’ then you must be firm and express your displeasure. As far as a purposeful class is concerned, the firmness of your disapproval is an important part of your relationship with groups.

- Do the things which you have told the students you will do. (e.g. ‘I’ll bring it and show it to you at the next lesson.’) If you are bad at remembering, keep a notebook in which you write reminders to yourself.

- Be consistent is how you deal with your students. If you have said that certain behaviour is not acceptable (e.g. eating in class), then you must enforce the ‘rules’. Simple but firm insistence is best. Sometimes you will have to be stern with your misbehavers but if you treat all students alike, your firm stand will not spoil your relationship with groups.

*Ensuring that English is spoken*

There are some tips teachers can apply so as to be sure students use English as the communication language in class.

First of all, we should use English from the very beginning of the learning process, say, the first meeting with the class and inform students that you will conduct lessons in English. Then we need to use some techniques to ensure that this will actually happen. Generally, students will cooperate if they feel that you will help them to finish their work, and if they can receive help from us when they need, and they will not be made foolish in front of their friends if they make mistakes.

It is advisable to use simple language especially before starting a new lesson like asking about their daily activities, their health. By doing so, students can move their lesson smoothly finding themselves speaking in English. It is also worth bearing in mind that the use of audio-visual aids will increase the use of English in the class. As the language from a tape or video, for example, is normally real-life language that they are interested in and when they become familiar to the sounds of native speakers they are likely to feel more confident to speak English.
Finally, the teacher’s command of the target language can have a great influence on the student’s willingness to speak English in the class. In this case, the teacher can be considered the best model for the class.

**Balancing fluency and accuracy**

The final aim of foreign language learning and teaching is to help learners to use the new language accurately but we also want our students to use the language to express their own ideas freely. In other words, we should balance our encouragement of fluency and the need for accuracy. When we just start the language learning process it will be counter-productive and students especially weaker ones will be under pressure if we emphasize too much on accuracy. Students will be afraid of speaking English out and the gap between the weak and the good students will be wider.

It is also important to explain the importance of fluency and accuracy to our students so that they can set their own goals and then achieve them.

**Using appropriate language**

Underwood suggests expressions teachers should use regularly in the class as the regular use of the same expressions can enhance students’ feeling of security. The term “appropriate” here also means the language used by teachers is not too complicated for students to understand.

**Giving encouragement**

We should give encouragement to our students when they are making effort not just to those who are being most successful. We can give feedback to our students’ work with ‘Good’, ‘Well done’, or ‘That’s right’. If we do it frequently and appropriately, our students will have a feeling that they are on the way to success and will be eager to speak more often.

As far as giving encouragement is concerned, we should not compare the performances between two students. Instead, we should compare their performance with the previous one so that they can be aware of their progress and will try harder.

**Involving all students**
It is not easy to get all students involved in oral practice especially in a large class. Underwood suggests some ways of endeavouring to include all students:

- Use the class register list: We should call every second or third name or other patterns instead of calling them in order otherwise they will know their turn and they do not concentrate on their work as someone else but not them who is going to be called.

- Think of your class as a set of lines or rows of students and address a question to a person from each line or row in turn.

- If in the class there are a few students who tend to shout out the answer before others have time to try, we should have a rule in which if he/she has responded, he/she will lose the chance to answer the next question. We should carry out the rule delicately instead of saying ‘A or B, don’t answer any more’, which may discourage them from joining in again.

- After you have asked the first question, you can invite the one who has answered to name the person who will answer the next. If our students get used to this system, it can turn out to be very successful. However, it can be unpleasant if the student sees that as a way of victimizing his or her fellow students. If that happens, we should stop using it.

- If the student we ask cannot answer the question, we can help him or her by repeating or rephrasing the question, if it still does not work we can pass the question to the whole class. Avoid asking question like ‘Can anyone help A?’

*The place of examinations and tests*

Examinations are very important and students’ anxiety about the exams can spoil the atmosphere of the class. It is advisable to get our students familiar with the exams so that they can prepare well in advance and it is also a way to reduce their anxiety.

*Extracurricular activities*

Extracurricular activities, conducted outside the lesson time, can make a significant contribution to maintaining a good atmosphere in the classroom. It is a chance for students to use the language in real-life situations.
In conclusion, we have pointed and analyzed major factors that may affect students’ participation in classroom speaking activities. This is very important work as it provides us with basic theory to find out techniques to overcome those factors and increase students’ participation.

II. Techniques to encourage students’ involvement in classroom oral activities

II.1. Group work

II.1.1. What is Group work?

Group work can be defined as “… a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language” Brown (1994: 173).

II.1.2. Advantages of Group work.

With the recent and gradual shift from teacher-centered classroom teaching to learner-centered classroom teaching in TESOL worldwide, group work has become a key feature in language study. Indeed, it has a lot of benefits compared to working with the whole class together as pointed out by Brown (1994).

- **Group work generates interactive language.**

  In traditional classes, the teacher often dominates all classroom activities and students, therefore, do not have chance to speak English in the class. Group work is a very efficient solution to the problem. According to an estimate by Long and Porter (1985), we can increase individual practice five times as much as that of whole-class traditional methodology if we spend just half of the time on group work. Moreover, small groups provide opportunities for student initiation, for face to face give and take, for practice in negotiation of meaning, for extended conversational exchanges, etc. In short, group work increases the quantity of output, the quality and variety of interactive language.

- **Group work offers an embracing affective climate.**

  Another important advantage offered by group work is the feeling of security. Students especially weak and shy ones are normally feel afraid of speaking in front of the class thinking that they will be laughed at if they make mistakes. Brown also points out that
group work may help increase student motivation. Due to the feeling of security when working in small groups, students are freed to pursue higher achievements.

- **Group work promotes learner responsibility and autonomy.**

For traditional classes where a whole class activity is organized, students are likely to hide themselves. Group work, however, places responsibility for action and progress in each member of the group. The fact that they cannot “hide” themselves in a small group will force them to develop their responsibility and autonomy.

- **Group work is a step toward individualizing instruction.**

According to Brown, each student in a classroom may have needs and abilities that are unique. The most salient individual difference we can see is their proficiency levels. One may be better at some skill(s) than others and even in one skill, say, speaking skill one may be better at one kind of task than others. By working in small groups, teachers can recognize and capitalize on student differences and make sure that all students are making progress.

With these major advantages, this technique has been widely used in Vietnam in both English major and non-English major contexts with a view to increasing students’ participation in learning English as a second language.

**II.1.3. Some problems of Group work**

Group work, however, also has some drawbacks as pointed by Brown (1994) and other researchers that we should be aware in advance so that we can be well-prepared for the ways to deal with them when we are carrying out activities concerning group work in our class:

- **Learners make noise.**

In a class where learners are working in groups, noise is an inevitable result. We, however, need not worry about this problem as it is usually ‘good’ noise, which means that learners are using English and engaged in a learning task. Moreover, learners are normally not disturbed by that noise.

- **Learners make mistakes.**
During a group activity, we cannot control all the language used in the class and here and there learners may make mistakes. We can reduce those mistakes by giving them enough preparation or by checking afterwards by calling some members in groups to talk in front of the class and then correct their mistakes. Besides, we can make full use of peer correction in groups.

- **Learners speak the mother-tongue.**

Some groups of weak learners with indiscipline may speak mother-tongue instead of English or do something else but not the task. In this situation, we should give them our special care and make full use of our role as a ‘facilitator’ to help them to participate in the task.

- **Some learners prefer to work alone.**

In groups, some learners may prefer working on their own because of either their habit that has been formed since they went to school or the feeling of frustration they find when working with others. We should help our students to see that language learning is for communicating with others and the more they engage in such face to face communication, the more their overall communicative competence will improve.

- **Difficult to control class.**

We may have difficulty controlling what learners are doing in groups. We can gain more control by giving clear instructions about when to start, what to do, and when to stop; by giving clearly defined tasks which do not continue for too long; or by setting up a routine so that learners accept the idea of working in groups and know exactly what to do.

In conclusion, although group work has its own drawbacks, the advantages still outnumber the disadvantages and it turns out to be one of the most appropriate techniques in light of Communicative Language Teaching and learner-centredness. Considering its strengths we can see that group work is among of the most suitable ways to increase learners’ participation in classroom speaking activities.

**II.1.4. Classroom speaking activities**

Based on the students’ language levels, the contents of the present training program of the Tourism Faculty at CSSH, some of the following speaking activities can be used as pointed out by Brown (1994) and Harmer (2001).
Discussion

Discussion is one kind of speaking activity in which students are given a topic by the teacher (or they can choose their own one), then they have a set time to discuss it. In a discussion, students have a chance to think of the ideas and the language to express themselves. Students often feel more confident and comfortable when talking about something with their friends in groups. Harmer emphasizes that some discussions may happen in the middle of the lesson and they are not prepared for by the teacher but if encouraged they can provide some of the most enjoyable and productive speaking in the language class. Harmer suggests that the best way of encouraging discussion is to provide activities which force students to reach a decision which is often the result of choosing between specific alternative. However, during a discussion chaos may be an inevitable result and at that time the role of the teacher as a controller becomes very important.

Role-play and simulations

Role-play involves giving a role to one or more members of a group and assigning a purpose that participants must accomplish. Simulations often involve a more complex structure and more members and all the members of the group work on an imaginary situation and solve a specific problem (Brown: 1994)

According to Harmer (2001) students may benefit a lot from this kind of activity as it simulates a real-life encounter as if they were doing so in the real world. As for Harmer, role-play and simulations can be used to encourage general oral fluency or train students for specific situations especially when they are studying ESP.

K John (1982; cited in Harmer: 2001) points out the characteristics that a simulation must have including:

- Reality of function: the students must not think of themselves as students, but as real participants in the situation.
- A simulated environment: the teacher says that the classroom is an airport check-in area, for example.
- Structure: students must see how the activity is constructed and they must be given necessary information to carry out the simulation effectively.
It is clear that role-plays are effective when they are open-ended so that different students may have different views of what the outcomes should be, and a decision has to be reached. In addition, the students become more active as they are encouraged to share their views as much or as little as they need to achieve their aims.

Harmer summarizes three distinguished advantages of simulations and role-play. First, they are good fun and therefore motivating. Second, they help motivate hesitant students to express themselves. Finally, during the proceedings by broadening the classroom to include the world outside, students are put in more different situations and thus they can use much wider range of language.

**Interviews**

As pointed out by Brown (1994) interviews are very structured in terms of both the information sought and the grammatical difficulty and variety. With interviews students can practice using requesting functions, learn vocabulary, express personal ideas, produce questions, etc.

**Problem solving and decision making**

Problem solving focuses on the group’s solution to a specific problem and decision making is one kind of problem solving where the goal is decided by students (Brown: 1994). Both kinds of activities help develop students’ imagination and creativeness.

**Communicative games**

Though this kind of activity is not as popular among adult learners as young learners, we can make full use of this activity. An appropriate game can help develop students’ ability of communication and more importantly it can change the learning atmosphere.

**II.1.5. Planning Group work**

Ngoh (1991) concretizes six main stages to follow in a group activity:

- **Practice stage:** We provide them with necessary vocabulary and structures that enable them to achieve the task set.

- **Instruction stage:** We give clear and detailed instructions so that learners can fully understand the requirements of the task.
• **Organization stage**: We arrange learners into groups in a way that we can control them.

• **Process stage**: Learners are engaged in the work and try to reach the goal set.

• **Presentation stage**: A representative of groups presents the work they have done. The others listen, give comments or may ask to know more about the speech.

• **Post group stage**: We give comments, point them to the mistakes to avoid in the next time and then give more related tasks to reinforce their learning.

Unlike Ngoh, Brown (1994) points out seven rules teachers should obey when they are carrying out a group work activity:

• **Introduce the technique**: The introduction is a brief explanation which should include a statement of the purpose for students to know and follow.

• **Justify the use of small groups for the technique**: We remind students that using small groups helps students who are reluctant to speak up in front of the class have a chance to do so in the security of a small group.

• **Model the technique**: We show students clearly how students are expected to do. It is very important when we are carrying out a new or difficult task.

• **Give explicit detailed instructions**: We give students specific instructions including a restatement of the purpose, rules they are to follow, a time set, and roles they play.

• **Divide the class into groups**: Brown introduces some categories of grouping students such as proficiency levels, gender differences, personality types, cognitive style preferences, interests, etc. Though we choose any of those ways, we should ensure that all members of a group are able to practise speaking English with each other, feel relaxed and comfortable, and be included as equal members.

• **Check for clarification**: We should make sure all students have fully understood their assignment before working in their groups.

• **Set the task in motion**: We announce that it is time for students to start their work.
II.2. Presentation

II.2.1. What is oral presentation?

Presentation is a popular kind of activity where a student (or students) give(s) a presentation on a topic of their own choice or given by the teacher. Such talks are not designed for informal spontaneous conversation but they are subject matter oriented; because they are prepared, they are more ‘writing like’. Presentation is a defined and useful speaking genre, and if properly organized, can be extremely interesting for both speakers and listeners.

II.2.2. Advantages of oral presentation towards ESP students

According to Comfort (1995), presentation exerts considerable demands on the learners’ communicative ability, requiring them to perform to a very high standard under very stressful conditions. Presenters are under the pressures of achieving their own objectives, meeting expectations from the audience, dealing with difficult questions from the teacher and the classmates, having to stand and speak in English in front of the audience, using visual aids, etc. In order to meet those demands, presenters must have certain knowledge about ESP including knowledge of language and knowledge of content, knowledge of how to make presentation.

We use oral presentation as a technique to increase the students’ participation in classroom speaking activities because this kind of activity is often carried out after discussion activities. Students, therefore, will have to participate more in these activities as they want to be well-prepared before performing in front of the class. Moreover, the topics are closely related to their expertise, and as pointed out by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) the language in ESP is usually used in real communication, which helps increase their interest in their learning. In other words, their learning has concrete purposes which are future work-oriented.

II.2.3. Some problems of presentation making

Although this kind of activity has salient advantages towards developing learners’ communicative competence, both students and the teacher may have some difficulties carrying out it.
First, this kind of activity is quite difficult with high demands, that is, students have to perform their work under high pressures: speaking English in front of the crowd, attracting attention and dealing with questions from the audience, etc. Thus, in order to perform the work well, learners must have knowledge of language, knowledge of content, and basic skills of making presentation. In a mixed-level class, it is likely that some good students will dominate the activity.

Second, students often lose their confidence when giving their presentation. It is the result of the fact that they do not often have chance to speak English in front of the crowd and they are lack of their above mentioned knowledge. In addition, some students may give a boring presentation and cannot attract attention from the audience, which can also make them feel less confident to deliver their talk.

Finally, this kind of activity takes time so not all students have chance to speak English in one lesson.

It can be inferred from the analysis that students should be allowed time to prepare for this kind of activity. In other words, it is advisable that the teacher should give them the topic(s) in advance so that they can prepare well in term of both language and content.

As for the teacher, he has to plan the lesson carefully to have as many interesting topics as possible as well as the procedures to carry out the activity. Moreover, the teacher has to master the level of each student to assign him/her a suitable topic based on their level of English proficiency as well as help them him/her accomplish their work. Additionally, he has to provide students with basic skills of giving presentation. Thus, we can see that the teacher has to work harder with this kind of activity.

In conclusion, though presentation has certain drawbacks it is a good technique to improve students’ communicative ability and a ‘push’ to force students to participate in group activities.

**II.2.4. Procedures of oral presentation**

Comfort (1995) suggests four stages a presenter should follow through his or her presentation including:
• **Introduction part:** In this part the presenter tells the audience some brief information about his/her name, the title of the presentation, the purpose(s) of the presentation, the length of time he/she will take, the main parts or points he/she will cover, the visual aids he/she will use, the time the audience can ask questions.

• **Body part:** The presenter goes on in details what have been introduced in the introduction part. In each part the presenter can use the visual aids to supplement his/her presentation (if available) and the body languages to attract the audience’s attention. He/she should signal the audience when moving from one part to another by using key words and phrases for linking ideas.

• **Finishing off:** The presenter summarizes what have been mentioned and invites questions from the audience.

• **Question time:** In this part the audience including both the teacher and other students ask the presenter to know more about the presentation. This part is very important as it helps the teacher to know whether other students pay attention to his/her presentation or not.

It can be concluded that by introducing the procedures in advance will help students feel more confident when making presentation as they know how to carry out the task. We, however, should encourage them to do it creatively as individual creativeness can attract the audience. We can also see that by encouraging or even forcing the other students to give comments or ask questions during the question time, they will pay more attention to the presentation.
CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives a thorough description of how the research was carried out, including seven steps as follows:

III.1. Research questions

The final aim of the research is to investigate the techniques to overcome the factors that may have negative effects on the participation in classroom oral activities of the second year Tourism students at CSSH. In order to obtain the goal of the study, we had to follow two stages: First, we had to find out the present degrees of participation, the factors that may have negative effects on the students’ involvement and analyze the techniques and activities the teachers of English at the Tourism Faculty in CSSH often used to overcome those factors and increase the level of participation. Then, based on the findings a hypothesis was formulated about the techniques and activities to be experimented with a view to increasing the students’ participation.

In conclusion, the two research questions corresponding to the two stages are:

(1). How actively are the second year Tourism students involved in oral activities in the class, and what accounts for the degree of their involvement?

Sub-questions:

(i) Is the students’ current involvement in oral activities satisfactory with regard to their time-on-task?

(ii) What are the common oral activities do the teachers often use in the classroom, and how do those activities affect the students’ involvement?

(2). Is the use of group work and oral presentation helpful in increasing the second year Tourism students’ involvement in oral activities?

III.2. A Quasi-Experimental Research

This research was a quasi-experimental study, using classroom observations ‘before’ and ‘at the end’ of the experiment, questionnaire and interviews with both the teachers of English and the second year students in the Tourism Faculty at CSSH.
According to Wiersma (1995), a quasi-experimental research involves the use of intact groups of subjects in an experiment, rather than assigning subjects at random to experimental treatments.

Like experiments, quasi-experiments, as pointed out by Nunan (1992), are carried out in order to explore the strengths of relationship between variables which do not remain consistent. In this study, it is the relationship between two independent variables: the two classes and the use of the two techniques group work and presentation in which the two classes were the organismic variable and the two techniques were the experimental variable, and another dependent variable: the level of participation in the classroom oral activities among the second year Tourism students at CSSH.

One problem that is often mentioned in any types of experiment is the validity due to the lack of random assignment including both internal validity which is the minimum control necessary to interpret the results and external validity which deals with the extent of generalizability of the results (Wiersma: 1995). In the study, in order to gain the validity the two classes were separately experimented with two techniques: group work and presentation. The two experimented classes had initially formed on the basis of ability grouping, one class with higher English proficiency and the other with average English proficiency. The teachers teaching the two classes during the experiment had also taught these two classes in the previous term to ensure that the experiment would be carried out properly. The researcher (himself) was the observer who met and discussed with the two teachers before the experiment to overcome the difficulties they might face during the proceedings of the experiment. After the experiment, the degrees of participation in each class before and at the end of the experiment were compared and then some conclusions were drawn out about the relationship between the use of the two techniques and the level of the participation in the classroom speaking activities of the second year Tourism students at CSSH. So as to gain more validity, the researcher asked another teacher of English for help during the classroom observations before and at the end of the experiment. For each stage, the researcher and the other teacher in turn observed the two classes in four lessons. Then the researcher took the average amount of the students’ ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’. The researcher also asked this teacher to note down necessary information accounting for their levels of participation that could be used in the data analysis.
In this way, possible representativeness and generalizability may be argued on a logical basis and the results and findings may be more valid and reliable.

III.3. The current situation of English teaching and learning at Tourism Faculty of CSSH

The Faculty of Tourism at CSSH started training in 1993 specializing in three areas: Tourism Culture, Tourism Business Management, and Tour Guides/Operators. The annual intake is 80 students including about 40 students who take a foreign language in the entrance exam, and the others do not. The number of students who choose English as a compulsory subject is about 70 and the others choose other foreign languages like Russian, French and Chinese. In order to facilitate teaching and learning, those who choose English are divided into two classes on the basis of their English proficiency.

Being aware of the importance of English towards employment among the students after graduation, the Faculty has paid a great deal of attention to English teaching program, which is shown in the large number of modules (44) in the total number of the modules in the training program.

The English training program consists of two stages: In the first stage – General English (26 modules) students learn English following three textbooks *Life Lines* (Elementary, Pre-intermediate, and Intermediate) by Hutchinson (1996). In the second stage - English for Tourism (18 modules) students cover 16 main issues concerning tourism in English designed by the Department of Foreign Languages at CSSH.

The assessment is based on two tests: One mid-term test (30 % of the total mark) and one final test (70 %). Each test includes one oral test and one written test in which the oral test accounts for 30% of the total mark and the written test 70%.

III.4. Selecting Subjects

The term ‘subject’ is used to mean someone who participates in an experiment, who receives experimental treatments. In this study, the subjects are 66 second year Tourism students (including 57 female and 9 male) at CSSH who were in the second stage of the English learning program – English for Tourism.
Along with the students are 4 teachers: Two were directly responsible for carrying out the experiment as they were the teachers of the two classes; the others were the researcher and another teacher of English who observed the two classes before and at the end of the experiment.

III.5. The experiment

As mentioned above the students at the Tourism Faculty were divided into two classes named Class A and Class B based on their levels of English proficiency (the students in Class A were better at English than those in Class B). In order to gain the validity, the experiment was conducted separately on the two classes. The procedures of the experiment can be described as follows:

- First, the researcher and another teacher in turn observed the two classes in four lessons to be aware of the degrees of the students’ participation before the experiment, using the observation sheets suggested by Wajnryb (1992). The degrees of participation were measured in terms of their ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’. These would be a valuable source of data for the comparisons with those at the end of the experiment.

- Second, a survey questionnaire was distributed among the students of the two classes to find out more about the factors that might affect their participation in classroom speaking activities.

- Then five students in each class were randomly chosen and interviewed to know more about the related factors.

- After that, the researcher met and discussed with the teachers of the two classes to know about their evaluations of the students’ participation, their techniques and activities they often used to increase the students’ participation, and the difficulties they faced while carrying out these techniques.

All of these things helped the researcher formulate a hypothesis about the two techniques: group work and oral presentation. Then with the help of the two teachers, the researcher began to carry out the experiment on the two classes which lasted in 8 weeks from 4/9/2006 to 28/10/2006 (4 class periods / week). Before the experiment, the researcher met
and discussed with the two teachers to find out solutions to get over the obstacles to the experiment to maximize the benefits of the two techniques.

After 8 weeks of experiment:

- The researcher and another teacher in turn attended and observed the two classes in four lessons, using the observation sheets by Wajnryb (1992), noting down the students’ participation in terms of their ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’.

- Then with the help of the two teachers teaching the two classes, five students in each class were randomly chosen and interviewed to know their attitudes towards the two techniques, which would help confirm the results obtained through the classroom observations.

- At the same time, the researcher met and interviewed the two teachers of Class A & B to know about their evaluations, attitudes as well as their recommendations to maximize the benefits when using the two techniques to increase the students’ participation

In brief, the experiment can be summarized as follows:

Class A: \[ O_1 \quad X \quad O_2 \]
Class B: \[ O_3 \quad X \quad O_4 \]

\(O_1\): the degree of the participation before the experiment of Class A

\(O_2\): the degree of the participation at the end of the experiment of Class A

\(O_3\): the degree of the participation before the experiment of Class B

\(O_4\): the degree of the participation at the end of the experiment of Class B

\(X\): Group Work and Presentation

By comparing variables \(O_1\), \(O_2\), \(O_3\), and \(O_4\) we can have considerable results for the study.

**III. 6. Data collection procedures**

The data of the research was collected by means of questionnaire, classroom observations, and follow-up interviews.
III.6.1. Classroom observation (appendix 1)

The researcher and another teacher in turn attended the two classes before and at the end of the experiment, noting down the students’ participation in classroom speaking activities which was measured by their ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’ using the observation sheets suggested by Wajnryb (1992). The ‘before’ experiment classroom observations are vitally important. The results decided whether we would have the following research. To be more concrete, if the present level of participation was unsatisfactory, we would have to find out the factors that might have negative effects and hinder the students’ involvement. The data collected from the before experiment classroom observations would be used to compare with those of the post experiment classroom observation to prove whether the use of the two techniques *group work* and *oral presentation* would be helpful in increasing the students’ involvement in oral activities. By completing Observation sheet 1 and 2 we had information not only about the students’ level of participation (Observation sheet 1) but also about the reasons for that level of participation (Observation sheet 2).

Concerning the classroom observations before the experiment, the researcher and another teacher in turn attended and observed the two classes during four speaking periods. In order to have accurate judgments on the students’ levels of participation, the researcher did not interfere in the teaching methods of the two teachers. In other words, the two teachers still followed their routines.

As for the classroom observations at the end of the experiment, along with the two teachers, the researcher decided the stages they should follow in order to maximize the benefits of the two techniques. These procedures used by the teachers are the results of analyzing the obstacles and the theoretical basis in carrying the two techniques.

III.6.2. Student questionnaire (appendix 2)

66 students of the two classes were invited to respond to the questionnaire before the experiment concerning the factors affecting their participation in classroom speaking activities. All the questions aim to investigate the factors originating from the teachers’ side, the students’ side, and other classroom conditions. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were designed using *Likert scale* technique with 5 items, which enabled us to have more reliable evaluations from the students. The questionnaire also includes two
open-ended questions in order to permit greater freedom and more data from the students (Dornyei: 2003)

III.6.3. Follow-up interviews

III.6.3.1. Before the experiment

The teacher interview (appendix 3)
The teachers interviewed gave information about the factors affecting the students’ participation, their evaluations on the students’ participation, the techniques and activities they often used to encourage more students’ involvement, and the difficulties they often faced while carrying out those techniques, all of which helped formulate a hypothesis about the techniques to be experimented with a view to increasing the students’ participation.

The student interview (appendix 4)
Ten students were randomly chosen from the two classes and interviewed, which helped to clarify the data obtained from the classroom observations and questionnaire.

III.6.3.2. After the experiment

The teacher interview (appendix 5)
The two teachers responsible for teaching the two classes during the experiment were interviewed to give their comments, evaluations, and their attitudes towards the application of the two techniques: group work and presentation to increase the students’ participation. They were also asked to give their recommendations to maximize the benefits of the two techniques.

The student interview (appendix 6)
Ten students were randomly chosen from the two classes and interviewed to give their evaluation on their level of participation, attitudes towards the two techniques they were taught in the last two months.

One thing should be noticed here is that due to the limit of the students’ English proficiency, all the questions in the student questionnaire and interviews were in Vietnamese to get more accurate information.
III.7. Analyzing and processing the data

After having been collected, the data of the study was divided in groups based on certain categories serving the purposes of the analysis. As the data was both quantitative and qualitative so it was also analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, most of the data was qualitative so qualitative analysis was dominant in the study.
CHAPTER III: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

IV. Some general assessments before the experiment and factors affecting the students’ participation in classroom speaking activities

IV.1. Students’ levels of participation in classroom speaking activities

Before the experiment, the researcher and another teacher in turn observed the two classes in four speaking periods, in which group work was used. Then the researcher took the average amount of the students’ ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’ used for the data analysis. In all four lessons, the two teachers followed their traditional routines. The following is the description of one lesson in both classes:

- Class A & B
- Number of students in each class: 33
- Time: 45 minutes (from 7.00 a.m. to 7.45 a.m.)
- Lesson content: Hotel Services
- Lesson objectives: Students have to talk about services in hotels.

The procedures used by the teacher can be summarized as follows:

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher announced the topic and asked the students to discuss it. The teacher gave only one topic to the whole class. Concerning the group formation, the teacher asked the students sitting next to each other to form a group of two or three. Then the students discussed the topic with each other in their group. The teacher went around the class to help the students with vocabulary. It was difficult for the teacher to control all the groups especially ones in the middle of the class due to the table arrangement in which five or six students sat at one desk. Then, after about 20 minutes the teacher asked some students to talk about the topic. The students who had to do this work did not have to stand in front of the class but sat at their own seat. Finally, the teacher gave comments on each production. The results of the observations before the experiment can be illustrated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class A (33 Ss)</th>
<th>Class B (33 Ss)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-task</td>
<td>Off-task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The degrees of students’ participation
With an overall look at the statistics in Table 1 obtained by observing the two classes we can see that the level of participation in classroom speaking activities of the second year Tourism students at CSSH before the experiment was quite low. The percentage of the students ‘on-task’ in Class A and Class B made up approximately one third of the total time in each class.

During the classroom observations the researcher also found out that when the students were asked to work in groups, only a few of them worked seriously. Actually, most of the discussions lasted for a few minutes and then they did something else instead of focusing on their work.

On being interviewed about the evaluations on the students’ participation, both teachers directly responsible for teaching the two classes agreed with what the researcher had found.

In conclusion, the students’ participation in classroom speaking activities was very poor, which affected their learning results. So it is urgent that we find out teaching techniques to increase their participation. However, in order to have suitable teaching techniques we must understand the factors that might have negative effects on their participation.

### IV.2. Assessment on students’ English proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very good (%)</th>
<th>Good (%)</th>
<th>Fair (%)</th>
<th>Bad (%)</th>
<th>Very bad (%)</th>
<th>Not given (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General proficiency</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Students’ self-assessment on English proficiency*

The data in Table 2 shows that the English proficiency of the second year Tourism students at CSSH was not good. In the general assessment of four skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing only 19.7 percent of the students whose command of English was good while the rest was fair or worse.

Among the four skills, the writing skill was the best with 48.4 percent ranked at very good or good level and only 16.7 percent was bad or very bad. The reading skill was nearly as
good as the writing skill. Compared to the writing and reading skill, their communicative skills were not good. For the speaking skill only 21.1 percent was good or very good while 78.9 percent was fair or worse. The listening skill seemed to be worst with only 6 percent ranked at good level.

These findings can be explained as follows: First, it is the regulation in the student annual enrolment of CSSH. Among the total number of students in each course, only half of them take English test in the entrance exam while the others do not. Those who take English test in the entrance exam must have quite a good command of English and at the university they find it much easier to learn English than those who do not. Another reason could be that whether students take English test in the entrance exam or not, they are acquainted with traditional ways of learning English at secondary schools where vocabulary and grammar are always high in their priority list. Finally, it is likely that teaching methods are not ‘strong’ enough to create a turning point to make students change their learning habits towards communication oriented approach. In short, those are reasons why the second year Tourism students’ English proficiency was bad especially at listening and speaking skill.

One thing that should be considered is that when the research was carried out the students were at their second stage of English teaching program: English for Specific Purposes, which means they had finished 26 modules of General English. The results obtained after a long time of learning General English, however, were not satisfactory. Therefore, we can conclude with certainty that these unsatisfactory results might be attributed to some certain aspects, one of which was the students’ participation in classroom activities.

IV. 3. Assessment on speaking periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very boring</th>
<th>Very stressful</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Very interesting</th>
<th>Most afraid of speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Students’ self-assessment on speaking periods*

A worrying state of the speaking periods before the experiment can be seen in the statistics presented in *Table 3*. The percentage of the students who thought the speaking periods were very monotonous and boring was 24.2% and very stressful was 19.7%. Meanwhile, the percentage of the students thinking the speaking periods were very effective and
interesting was 3% and 15.2% respectively. This may be the cause as well as the effect of the fact that 77.3 percent of the students were afraid of speaking in the class. Clearly, the results seem consistent with the students’ self-assessment on their communicative ability.

IV.4. Factors affecting students’ participation

IV.4.1. Student factors

Learning styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Extremely disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Not given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Students’ learning styles*

*In which:*

*Item 1:* I only like speaking English with friends next to me or at the same table with me

*Item 2:* I like using English to discuss about the topics I have already prepared at home

*Item 3:* I only like speaking English when appointed by the teacher

*Item 4:* In the class I only speak English when the teacher asks and I answer

*Item 5:* I like speaking English through role-play or other activities concerning group work.

The students’ learning styles are clearly presented in *Table 4*. It appears that most students preferred working in groups with such activities as role-play, group discussion, etc. The number of the students who enjoyed group work accounted for 86.3% while only 1.5% did not like working in this way. Nine among ten students who were interviewed about the reasons why they liked working in groups expressed similar opinions. Some possible explanations obtained during the interviews with ten students could be as follows: First, with group work they had more chances to practise speaking English. As the time was limited and the class was large so very few students could speak to the teacher. Second, working in groups they could learn from each other vocabulary especially terminology,
pronunciation, new ideas, and ways of expressing themselves, etc. More importantly, speaking English with friend(s) was less stressful than speaking to the teacher as most students felt afraid of making mistakes when speaking English to the teacher. Working in groups helped them avoid those scared feelings.

However, one among ten students who were randomly chosen to be interviewed said she did not like working in groups because her partners were worse at English than her. So she did not learn anything from them and even could not speak English as they always kept silent.

Clearly, for group work cooperation among learners is vitally important. Imagine that if the other students in the class were like her, what would the class be like? This lends support to conclude that the students’ sense of cooperation partially accounted for their low level of participation.

In addition, the statistics in Table 4 also shows that though they enjoyed group work, more than one third only liked working with friend(s) next to them or sitting at the same table. The students in the two classes could choose their seat by themselves in the speaking periods but for some reason, say, they came to the class late and they could not sit at their usual place. This might also affect their participation especially with the activities in which the cooperation between and among the members was necessary.

Moreover, more than 30 percent of the students who only liked speaking English when asked or appointed by the teacher, thinking that the teacher would help them in many aspects including pronunciation, vocabulary, ways of expressing, and even grammar. However, as mentioned above the class was large and the time was limited so the teacher could not cover all the students in one speaking period. If these students kept waiting for a chance to speak to the teacher, they might neglect the task(s) they were doing in their group.

As can be seen in Table 4 66.3 percent of the students liked talking about the topic(s) they had already prepared at home. This statistics along with the data obtained by interviewing ten students implies that they wanted to have time to prepare as they would like to have more information about the topic(s) and have more time to think about the language they would use. In other words, they wanted to be well-prepared in terms of the content and the
language so that they could feel more confident to talk about the topic(s) in the class. However, the student interviews also reveal that the teachers hardly gave them any chance to do so.

In conclusion, the findings show us that most of the second year Tourism students at CSSH appreciated working in groups, discussing the topics given by the teacher. However, it is their learning styles which were shown in their passive way of learning and their sense of cooperation with other members of the group that minimized the benefits of the technique. It can also be inferred from the findings that group work will be an appropriate technique to increase the students’ participation in oral activities if the teacher knows how to motivate the students to learn in a more active way and enhance their sense of cooperation among the students in the class.

**Motivation and attitudes**

It can not be denied that positive attitudes and motivation are closely related to success in second language learning. However, the success in second language learning may be a long term goal. In order to succeed in learning a foreign language; and in this case, to speak English fluently, learners must participate in the classroom activities actively. Therefore, it can be inferred that motivation and attitudes are also related to learner’s participation.

Motivation can be divided into internal motivation or integrative motivation and external motivation or instrumental motivation. The former kind of motivation refers to language learning for personal growth and the latter one refers to language learning for more immediate or practical goals. Although both kinds of motivation are important, it is said that internal motivation is more important to success in language learning than external motivation. It is also said that students will learn better if they have in themselves some kind of motivation whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic as long as it is enough sufficient intensity.

Based on the data obtained by interviewing ten students, we can summarize their purposes of learning English as follows: the first and most important purpose was to be well-prepared for exams or to get good marks; and the second important purpose was for their prospects for future work. If they were good at communicative skills they would get a job
easily. None thought they learned English because they liked it or wanted to discover the culture of the native speakers.

These findings provide evidence that their motivation was extrinsic – an ‘outside push’ to force them to study English. We may wonder whether they could be good at learning English with only extrinsic motivation. The answer will probably be ‘yes’ because the final goal in any of our training programs at higher education level is work-oriented. However, it would be much more difficult for them to succeed in something or achieve something without their interest in it. In other words, if they learned English because they liked it but not because they were forced to do so, it would be much more likely that they would succeed.

Looking back the theory about the sources of motivation and the above findings we can point out some factors that might affect their motivation and then their participation including the learners’ attitudes; the variety of activities, tasks, and materials; and the cooperation among the students which will be clarified in the following parts.

Concerning the learners’ attitudes, although none interviewed mentioned any reasons related to internal motivation for their English learning, most of them had positive attitudes towards the speaking skill, which was shown by a large percentage of the students (62.1%) who realized the importance of this skill (see Appendix 7 question 3).

From the above analysis, we can conclude with certainty that the lack of intrinsic motivation had a dramatic effect on their participation in classroom speaking activities. We teachers should develop in them intrinsic motivation with a view to increasing their participation.

**Students’ levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Extremely disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Not given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N₀</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Students’ levels of English proficiency*
In which:

Item 1: I am afraid of speaking English in the class
Item 2: I like speaking English in the class but I do not know what to say
Item 3: I like using English to discuss about the topics I have already prepared at home

If learners want to take part in any classroom activity, they must have certain knowledge about the activity. In case of a speaking activity, especially the one involving English for Special Purposes they must have knowledge of language, knowledge of content, which means what to speak; and knowledge of the ways to express ideas, which means how to speak.

An overall statement made based on the data in Table 5 is that the students’ communicative ability was not good. As can be seen from question 4 in the questionnaire (Appendix 7), only 21.2 percent of the students thought they were good at speaking skill. Table 5 also shows that nearly half of the students liked speaking English but they did not know what to say. Moreover, it can be inferred from the fact most of the students (74.3%) preferred talking about the topic(s) they had already prepared at home that their English proficiency was limited and they could not do well if requested to speak about those topics immediately at the class. Their lack of knowledge of language can be measured by means of vocabulary especially special terms and grammar. In the students’ files, they pointed out another reason for which they were afraid of participating in speaking activities was their pronunciation. Although they knew the meaning of a word but they did not know how to pronounce it. Feeling that they would be laughed at by others hindered them from speaking out their ideas.

As mentioned above, half of the students did not take the English test in the university entrance exam and they did not have enough knowledge of language especially the difficult topics involving much terminology, which seemed beyond their ability. In addition, whether they took the English test in the entrance exam or not, they were heavily affected by traditional ways of teaching and learning at secondary schools where teaching and learning a foreign language only focused on vocabulary and grammar.

The low level of participation can also be explained in term of their lack of knowledge of content which means their field expertise. For example, if the teacher asked them to talk
about one beauty spot or services of a hotel which they had never been to or had little information about, they might have difficulty dealing with the teacher’s questions though they might have enough knowledge of language. 71.2 percent of the students emphasized the importance of having background knowledge about the subjects that would help them participate more in the lesson (see Appendix 7 question 6).

Moreover, the students’ lack of knowledge of the ways to express their ideas might also prevent them from taking part in classroom speaking activities. The student interviews lead us to know that the teachers did not often teach the students how to express ideas or present one issue. Thus, the students often did their work using their own experience and they did not feel confident about what they were doing was right or wrong.

In summary, the students’ lack of knowledge is one among the main factors affecting their participation in classroom speaking activities. In this case, the reasons come from both teachers and students. Obviously, the teachers could have done more than what they once did to increase the students’ participation.

**Gender differences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly disagree &amp; Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Strongly agree &amp; Agree</th>
<th>Not given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>Female (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Differences in learning styles between male and female

**In which:**

*Item 1:* I am afraid of speaking English in the class  
*Item 2:* I only like speaking English with friends next to me or at the same table with me  
*Item 3:* In the class I only speak English when the teacher asks and I answer

In a class where the rate of males and females is equal, students are more likely to take part in classroom activities more actively as they somehow motivate each other to learn. That’s why classes including both males and females are much more popular than single-sex ones. In the two classes in the study the male accounted for one-sixth of the total population and they were like single-sex classes. The great unbalance in the number of the male and
female had a considerable influence on their participation as many activities would be more interesting if they were attended by both sexes. The differences in characteristic features might lead to some differences in the individual learning styles and then the level of participation. For example, Table 6 displays some differences in learning styles between the male and female students. The statistics implies that the male were stronger in characteristics and seemed less afraid of speaking in the class than the female did. The percentage of the students who did not feel afraid of speaking in the class of the male and female was significantly different: 88.9% and 63.2% respectively. Another dramatic difference is that the male seemed to be more flexible than the female, which was shown in the percentage of the female who only liked speaking English with friends next to them or sitting at the same table was 38.6% while the corresponding percentage of the male was 0%. Additionally, the female appeared more passive in learning than the male. One possible explanation could be that female students are often more careful with words than male ones (Marjorie Ford & Jon Ford), that’s why 31.6 percent of the female only spoke English when requested by the teacher, which means they were forced to speak whereas the percentage of the male was only 11.1%.

In conclusion, these findings provide us evidence to believe that gender differences, in this case the female students greatly outnumbered the male ones, had a negative effect towards creating an exciting learning environment which seems vitally important in oral activities and the final consequence was the students’ low level of participation in those activities.

IV.4.2. Teacher factors

Teachers’ teaching techniques

If teachers’ teaching techniques and activities are effective and interesting, learners will enjoy their learning and participate more in all classroom activities. In this part, the effects of the teachers’ teaching techniques and activities on the students’ participation will be analyzed in terms of the variety, content of classroom activities as well as the teachers’ implementation of these activities. During the student interviews, we were informed that the teachers often let the students work in pairs with a very common activity: role-play. According to the teachers of the two classes, role-play gave them a chance to practice the language used in different fields or
situations, which would be very useful for their future job. In addition, role-play is one kind of task in the textbook that Tourism students have to cover. Role-play was enjoyed by 86.4 percent of the students (see Appendix 7 question 5). Along with role-play, discussion in groups of three students was applied though less often than role-play. Besides role-play and discussion, other activities like playing games or giving presentation were also organized. However, playing games and giving presentation, according to the teachers of the two classes, were inappropriate activities. For the former activity, the class was too large so it was difficult for the teacher to control. More importantly, it seemed unsuitable and ineffective when the students were learning English for Specific Purposes. For the latter activity, it appeared too difficult for the students because besides the knowledge of language and content they had to have certain knowledge of how to make presentation.

Before coming to some conclusions about the lack of variety of the types of speaking activities towards their level of participation we should consider the students’ opinions about the issue by looking at the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item N,</th>
<th>(1) Least important =&gt; Most important (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7: Students’ assessment on the importance of the variety of types of speaking activities towards their levels of participation*

*In which:*

*Item 1: Speaking activities are diversified*

*Item 2: Students are allowed to choose their own topics*

*Item 3: Students do not have to follow textbooks.*

Table 7 summarizes the students’ ideas about the importance of the variety of speaking activities towards their participation. In general, they preferred choosing their own topics instead of having to follow ones in the textbook.

Coming back to the above analysis, we can see that the speaking activities organized by the teachers of the two classes were not diversified enough and they did not come up to the
students’ expectations. That’s why 24.2 percent of the students thought the speaking periods were monotonous and boring (see Appendix 7 question 7).

In addition, during the student interviews about the contents of the speaking activities, they all said that they were quite interesting. In fact, the time of the interviews was the time they started to learn English for Tourism. After a long time of learning General English, now they began to learn new things. That’s why they had such feelings. Actually, through the classroom observations and the student interviews we also found out that the teachers often followed the textbook. Some lessons in the textbook were complicated and boring and the teachers should have supplemented it with other materials to make the speaking activities really interesting to attract more student participation. This was clarified by the fact that the level of participation of Class B was higher than that in Class A as the teacher of Class B often provided the students with outside-textbook materials during the speaking periods.

Clearly, the findings appear consistent with our hypothesis about the negative effects of the lack of the variety and interest of speaking activities on the students’ participation. In order to increase the students’ participation, we teachers should consider the two above mentioned categories when choosing materials to teach the two classes.

Coming back to group work which was also used by the teachers of the two classes to increase the students’ participation in oral activities but the result was not satisfactory. The main reason lies on the teachers’ implementation of this technique. For group formation, the teachers often let the students choose their own seat, thinking that the close relationship between and among the members of each group would encourage them to speak English. However, when students can choose their own seat, the cooperation among the members of the class can not be enhanced and neither can their activeness and flexibility. Additionally, the students were not often given the topics in advance so they did not have time to prepare. The teachers also often depended too much on the topics in the textbook, which for most of the students were not interesting. Moreover, when students were working in their groups the teachers did not accomplish their roles in a proper way that encouraged the students’ involvement in their work, which will be discussed in more details in the following section.
Teachers’ characteristics

One of the factors that help create an interesting learning environment is teachers’ characteristics. An interesting learning environment means students can enjoy their lessons, and it offers everyone something to do instead of sitting still in the class. In other words, teachers’ characteristics may greatly affect student participation.

In the general assessment on the speaking periods before the experiment we had a very disappointing result with 77.3 percent of the students who were afraid of speaking in the class; 24.2 percent thought the speaking periods were monotonous and boring; and 19.2 percent thought they were stressful (see Appendix 7 question 7). Such kind of atmosphere might be the result of the topics to be discussed (boring and difficult), the cooperation among the students, and the rapport between the teacher and the students, etc. The relationship between the teacher and the students would probably be good if the teacher was friendly, open-hearted, enthusiastic and helpful especially towards the weaker students. When the students felt that they were being taken care of by the teacher, they would not hesitate to talk to the teacher and their classmates. When more and more talks were created, the learning atmosphere would be improved and so would their participation as a result. It could be inferred from the students’ files about the things the teachers should change to encourage them to talk in the class that it was the teachers’ characteristics which hindered them from participating in classroom activities. Many wrote that sometimes the teachers felt angry and shouted at them when they made mistakes. It might be their mistake as they did not prepare their homework well before coming to the class, or it showed their real ability and they could not do better at that time. However, under no circumstances should the teacher be angry and shout at them. The teacher should point out their mistakes so that they could do better in the next time. The angry feelings and negative attitudes could not make them better but make them feel more scared. Another thing the teachers should bear in mind was their fair treatment to all the students. The teachers should not pay attention to only good students who could make the lesson flow smoothly as many thought so. If the teacher did in that way, many others would have negative thought about the teacher and they could think that they would not be called as they were not good students. In line with this theory we can assume that the teacher should treat everyone the same. But
treating people the same is not equal treatment if students are not the same (Marjorie Ford & Jon Ford). Hence, the teachers should pay more attention to weaker students.

Being pleasant, friendly and flexible does not mean we let our students do anything they want in class. We should be firm and strict so as to ensure that they are working well. In the students’ files some students wrote that because the teacher was too easy, many students might do other things instead of concentrating on the lesson and some used mother tongue language, thinking that it would be easier and they would not be ‘punished’ by the teacher.

In conclusion, the teachers’ characteristics, attitudes and behaviours, to some extent, affected the students’ participation. It is said that some are born to become a teacher as they own characteristics of a good teacher. However, not all born have those characteristics. We have to train to obtain them through our teaching job, being aware that those characteristics will help us encourage our students to participate more actively in their lesson.

**Teachers’ roles in speaking activities**

In light of CLT approach, there is some considerable deviation from traditional teacher roles. This deviation is shown not only in speaking skill but also other skills. In general, teachers should take on the role of a facilitator or counselor to allow more room for learner involvement.

Through the teacher interviews we found out that they all were aware of the teacher roles in light of learner-centred approach in term of the theory. However, by observing their teaching in the two classes and interviewing with the students we also found out that there were some considerable problems during the procedures of accomplishing these roles, which might affect the students’ participation.

First, the teachers applied the theory of teacher roles mechanically. In this case the students were exceedingly free to do group work. Therefore, the students did not do their work seriously and some did something else instead of focusing on their group work. In each group some students dominated the work and the others did not have chance to practise speaking. Although the role as a controller, as Harmer (2001) pointed out, is more suitable for traditional teaching methods and teachers should take on the role as facilitator (Scharle
& Szabó: 2000), the teachers, to some degree, should have controlled the students to ensure that they were working well in groups.

Second, in order to enable teachers to take on the role as a facilitator, teachers should plan carefully to promote students’ responsibility for their own learning. This can be done by giving students topics in advance and then they can prepare at home before discussing in class. In this way they can do better in groups as they have already prepared the topic(s) so that they can participate more in classroom activities. Students also become more responsible for their learning. However, the teachers of the Tourism Faculty at CSSH did not often give the students topics to prepare at home, which made them difficult to take on the role as a facilitator and had negative effects on the students’ participation. Moreover, the students might be heavily affected by traditional teacher roles and they might need time to get themselves acquainted with new teaching methods. Thus, the teachers’ changes should be gradual and systematic.

In addition, feedbacks from teachers should not be critical but constructive. Teachers’ attitudes when giving feedbacks are also vitally important. During the student interviews, we found out that sometimes the teachers appeared angry or even shouted at the students when they made mistakes, which might make them afraid of speaking in the class.

In summary, mastering the theory about teacher roles is not enough. It is much more important for teachers to carry out those roles properly. There are some difficulties concerning the teachers, the students as well as the classroom that prevent them from accomplishing those roles.

**Teachers’ knowledge**

One among the factors that make the lesson interesting and the class an exciting place for students to enjoy their lesson is teachers’ knowledge. The teachers’ knowledge can be defined in terms of knowledge of language and knowledge of field expertise. This study does not focus on the former kind of knowledge as the teachers’ command of English is good enough to teach in the two classes though some may be better at pronunciation or voice than others, which can make their lectures sound more interesting.

All the teachers teaching English in the Tourism Faculty were trained to become teachers of General English. They teach English for Tourism without any formal training in the
field. They learn by reading books, magazines, and internet, etc. This means their field expertise is limited and it may affect their teaching. Their lack of field expertise might make them difficult to explain tourism related terms; organize speaking activities of the students’ interest, etc. In fact, the teachers often follow the activities in the textbook, which do not motivate students to participate in. Thus, one possible explanation for the low level of the students’ participation in the study was the teachers’ lack of expertise knowledge.

**IV.4.3. Classroom factors**

Besides the factors related to the teachers and the students, the classroom itself might also affect the students’ participation. The problem here is the desk and chair arrangement which can be illustrated as follows:

![Table arrangement](image)

*Table 8: Table arrangement*
With long desks of five or six students, it was very difficult for the teacher to arrange group work. The tables and chairs could not be moved and the students had to turn round or back to work in their groups, which might make them feel uncomfortable and could affect the quality of the work. Additionally, it was also difficult for the teacher to control all the groups especially when those groups were in the middle of the class as the teacher could only go around the class.

The classroom atmosphere is one of the most important factors that decide the degree of students’ participation. The classroom atmosphere can be affected by the rapport between teacher and students, the cooperation among students, and the classroom activities, etc.

As can be seen in the students’ general assessment on the importance of creating an exciting atmosphere towards learning speaking skill was 92.4% and 89.3 percent of the students agreed that it was important for the teacher to know how to make the students feel safe to speak English in the class (see Appendix 7 question 6).

Concerning the relationship between the teacher and the students, the classroom observations, student interviews, and student files provided evidence about the reasons for the poor participation. First, it was the teachers’ characteristics as mentioned above. They were not friendly and open-hearted so it was quite difficult for the students to speak freely with the teacher in and out of the lesson time; they appeared angry with the students’ mistakes and some even shouted at them when they made mistakes; some teachers paid attention to the good students, thinking that it would be much easier; and some did not appear enthusiastic with the students and responsible for the students’ progress.

All these things created a gap between the teacher and the students and that gap became bigger and bigger day by day and more and more students were afraid of speaking in the class as a result.

If teachers’ characteristics help to make the classroom atmosphere interesting, teachers’ method and expertise will make it effective. Actually, the class observations revealed that some teachers still resorted to the traditional methods in teaching speaking skill and emphasized their roles as a controller. The students had fewer chances to speak in the class. If the teachers’ major knowledge is limited, it can also have a bad effect on the classroom atmosphere. By interviewing with 5 teachers of English in the Tourism Faculty,
we found out that they were not formally trained as teachers of English for Tourism and they had difficulty with terminology or other issues related to tourism while the students’ expectations towards the teachers were high and they felt that they were disappointed by the teachers.

Besides the teacher-student rapport, the cooperation among the students also accounted for the poor degree of participation in classroom speaking activities.

The data obtained form the question 5 in the questionnaire shows that quite a large percentage of the students (33.2%) only liked to talk with their friends at the same desk or around them. The possible reasons are as follows: First, they were close friends, and it was much easier for them to talk or discuss about something with each other. Second, they liked talking with those of the same or higher level so they could learn from each other. Choosing to sit next to each other was a good way to do so.

This suggests that their sense of cooperation was not high, which could create a gap among the weak and good students. Imagine that for some reason they could not choose their own seats, they would not speak with their classmates as often as usual.

The activities organized in the class also play a decisive part in making the classroom an interesting place for the students to enjoy their lessons. It is not surprising when comparing the degrees of participation in the two classes: Class B was considered worse at English than Class A but the degree of participation in Class B was higher than that in Class A. By observing the two classes, we found out that in Class B the teacher organized more activities and she chose materials of the students’ level rather than follow the textbook all the time like the teacher in Class A.

In conclusion, the classroom atmosphere was one among the most important factors affecting the students’ participation. In addition, such a classroom atmosphere might also have negative effects on the students’ motivation and the final consequence was the low level of participation in the classroom speaking activities.

**IV.5. Conclusion**

After the analysis of the factors affecting the participation in classroom speaking activities among the second year Tourism students at CSSH we have some of the following conclusions:
The degree of participation was quite low because of many reasons which came from the students, the teachers and the classroom conditions. As for the students’ side, the reasons were learning styles, attitudes and motivation, proficiency levels, and gender differences. With regard to the teachers, they were teaching techniques, characteristics, implementation of teachers’ roles in speaking activities, and lack of field expertise. Concerning the classroom conditions, the reasons included the available facilities and classroom atmosphere in which there was lack of the students’ sense of cooperation.

Based on the analysis and the findings, we can see that group work may be the most appropriate technique to overcome the factors affecting the second year Tourism students’ participation in speaking activities. The experiment of this technique on the second year Tourism students and the results will be a great contribution. The results obtained will help confirm its outstanding strengths in increasing students’ participation in classes like those of the Tourism Faculty. More importantly, if it works well, the students will get benefits from the teachers’ application of the technique and it will be the technique which is often used to motivate Tourism students at CSSH to participate in classroom speaking activities.

With a view to increasing the students’ participation, we also used another technique: Oral presentation. We call this a technique but it is also one kind of classroom activity. This is not a new technique but the application of it to encourage students’ involvement in classroom speaking activities is totally new. For Tourism students, who often work as tour-guides after graduation, this technique is highly work-oriented. The thought of being prepared well for their future job may motivate them to participate in speaking activities more actively. Moreover, this kind of activity is often used after group discussion and students may concentrate more on discussion activities with the hope of performing their work well.

V. Students’ participation at the end of the experiment

After two months of experiment, the researcher attended and observed the two classes again to judge their levels of participation in oral activities, noting down considerable reasons accounting for their levels of involvement that would be used for the data analysis. The researcher also interviewed both teachers and students to know their attitudes, their
evaluations towards the two techniques *group work* and *presentation* as well as their recommendations to maximize the benefits of the two techniques.

**V.1. Observations in experimental classes**

The two techniques *group work* and *presentation* were experimented in both classes A and B with the same activities *group discussion* and *presentation giving*. Other available classroom physical conditions were the same in the two classes. The observation of one among four lessons can be described as follows:

**V.1.1. Classroom descriptions**

- Class A & B
- Number of students in each class: 33
- Time: 60 minutes (from 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m.)
- Lesson content: Tourist Attractions in Vietnam
- Lesson objectives: Students had to introduce about tourist attractions in Vietnam (preferably one(s) in their hometown). By doing so, they could review a mass of vocabulary concerning geography, culture, traditions and customs, etc. Besides, they could practise speaking English in front of the class and work in groups, discussing their topics to prepare for their presentation.

**V.1.2. Teaching procedures**

The lesson followed four stages including teacher’s introduction, group discussion, presentation giving, and comments on students’ production.

- **Stage 1: Teacher’s introduction**

  In this stage the teacher told the class what they would have to do during the lesson: They would have to work in groups, discussing the topics they had prepared at home in about 20 minutes. Then some groups would be called to give presentation on the group topic which would last for 30 minutes including question time after each presentation.
• **Stage 2: Group discussion**

*Teacher’s group formation:* The teacher asked those who had prepared the same topic (one tourist attraction in Vietnam) to form a group. Each group consisted of 3 students who had been arranged by the teacher on the basis of the students’ choices about the topics they were interested in. Those three students sat at the same desk.

*Teacher’s instructions:* After forming groups, the teacher asked the students to discuss in groups the topic they had prepared. Each group had one leader who had to write down the outline to prepare for the group presentation. Each member of the group had to be responsible for one small issue of the topic. For example, concerning the beauty spot *Sa Pa*, one talked about the location, others about the people, cultural attractions, and tourist activities, etc. It means all the members of the group had to speak English. The teacher also announced the amount of time they would have for the discussion activity. To make sure that all the students understood the instructions, the teacher asked one or two students to repeat what each group would have to do. Then the teacher asked the groups to start their work when all the students knew what they would have to do and had no questions about it.

As group discussion activity was a preparatory step for the presentation giving activity, and to encourage the sense of cooperation among the members in each group, the teacher also announced how he/she would assess their production. Their presentation would be assessed based on the performance of the whole group and of each individual.

*Teacher’s roles during group discussion:* When the students started discussing their own topics, the teacher went around the class to make sure that all the groups were working. The teacher stopped here and there to help the students with vocabulary or pronunciation, etc. Most of the time the teacher let students work on their own and did not interfere too much though they made mistakes. On the whole, during that activity the teacher worked as a facilitator or a source instead of a controller.

*Students’ levels of involvement in group discussion activity:* The researcher attended the two classes A & B, using the observation sheets suggested by Wajnryb
(1992), noting down the students’ ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’. The results can be illustrated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On task</td>
<td>Off task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.5 %</td>
<td>16.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 9: Students’ levels of participation in group discussion*

- **Stage 3: Presentation**

*Teacher’s instructions:* After the group discussion activity stopped completely, the teacher gave detailed instructions on how each group would have to give their presentation including the time each group would have about 10 minutes and 5 minutes for questioning.

*Students’ presentation:* Two groups were called to give their presentation on the topic they had discussed in their own group. In each group, the group leader made an introduction and one main issue of the topic and the others were responsible for other main issues. In the end, the group leader made a conclusion and invited questions from their classmates. Then the members of the group in turn answered the questions.

*Teacher’s roles during students’ presentation:* When the students were giving presentation, the teacher listened and noted down their mistakes that would be useful for the teacher’s comments after their performance. The teacher also helped them if they couldn’t find words or phrases to express their ideas so that they could continue their performance smoothly. Besides, the teacher worked as a controller to be sure that other students in the class were paying attention to the presentation.

*Students’ level of involvement in presentation giving activity:* The teacher attended the class, using the observation sheets suggested by Wajnryb (1992) and noting down the students’ ‘time-on-task’ which means the students were paying consistent attention to the presentation and ‘time-off-task’ which means they were doing something else instead of listening to the presentation. The results can be shown as follows:
Stage 4: Comments on students’ production

In this stage the teacher asked the students to give comments on the performance of each group and individual. By doing so, the teacher gave them more freedom to judge their own work and encouraged them to pay attention to others’ performance. Then the teacher gave his/her own comments on the task they had performed, pointed out the mistakes they had made so that they could do better in the next time.

V.2. General comments on students’ levels of participation in oral activities

Based on the results obtained by observing the two classes, we can see that the levels of participation of the students in the two classes were considerably high when using the two techniques group work and presentation. As for group work, 83.5 percent of the students in Class A and 78.2 percent of the students in Class B were really interested in the discussion activities and paid consistent attention to the task. With regard to presentation, the percentage of the students who got involved in the task was also high with 85.2% in Class A and 75.4% in Class B.

Clearly, the results obtained at the end of the experiment are quite satisfactory compared to those before the experiment. In order to understand more about the effectiveness of the two techniques, we should put those results in a comparison and analyze how group work and presentation encouraged the students’ participation in oral activities.

V.3. Findings discussion

V.3.1. Comparisons of students’ participation before and at the end of the experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class A Before</th>
<th>Class A After</th>
<th>Class B Before</th>
<th>Class B After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On task</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off task</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Students’ levels of participation before and after the experiment
The students’ levels of participation in Class A and B “before” and “at the end” of the experiment are clearly illustrated in Table 11 and Figure 1 & 2. There was a considerable increase in the level of participation which was measured in term of the students’ ‘time-on-task’ in both classes. The percentage of the students who engaged in the task in Class A rose from 31.5% before the experiment to 84.4% at the end of the experiment. The percentage in Class B also doubled from 35.8% to 76.8%. The results provide us with evidence to believe that the use of the two techniques group work and presentation was really helpful to increase the students’ involvement in oral activities.

VI. 3.2. Findings discussion

There are many factors contributing to the success of the experiment, which will be discussed in details as follows:

One possible explanation for this considerable increase is the topic. All the topics were interesting as they were related to their major and the students were familiar with those issues as they had already learnt them. What they had to do was to transfer what they had known from Vietnamese into English. Their background knowledge about the topics really facilitated as well as made them interested in their learning though transferring this knowledge into English was still rather challenging for some in the class especially those in Class B.

Second, the teachers who were interviewed at the end of the experiment all said that they often assigned topics to the students one or two weeks in advance so that they could have more time to prepare. The fact that the students had more time to prepare what they would
discuss in the class enabled them to become more confident and active in all classroom activities including oral ones.

Third, by asking the students to work in groups including preparation at home, the teacher promoted their sense of cooperation among the members of each group and the whole class. The teacher’s way of assessment which was on the basis of the performance of the whole group and each individual enhanced the cooperation among the members in a group and at the same time encouraged the creativeness and responsibility for their own learning and learning progress of each member in the groups.

Finally, with the two techniques the students had more time, freedom to work on their own and more opportunities to speak English in the class. Actually, regarding group work, the students spent most of their time speaking English with their friends, which for most of them was more interesting as they were not afraid of making mistakes. Concerning presentation, it was a rather new kind of activity so it, to some extent, aroused the students’ curiosity and it also provided the students with a chance to affirm their ability in front of the class. Those who did not want to lose face had to prepare well on their own and with other members of the group. Presentation was also highly work-oriented, which really promoted the students’ interest. On the whole, the two techniques with two activities group discussion and presentation giving were a smooth continuum from preparatory step to performance without or with a little interference from the teacher. Besides, the very two techniques helped create an encouraging learning environment.

Comparing the data collected ‘before’ and ‘at the end’ of the experiment we can see a change in the levels of participation in the two classes. Before the experiment the level of involvement in Class A was lower than that in Class B but at the end of the experiment the degree of involvement in Class A was a little higher than that in Class B. What made this change? The answer is the oral topics. Before the experiment the teacher in Class B had more interesting topics but during the experiment the teachers in both classes had sound topics. The English proficiency of the students in Class A is higher than that in Class B and interesting topics really encouraged the students in Class A to participate in classroom activities.
However, the data also shows that the students in both classes did not pay consistent attention to the task, which can be explained as follows:

One reason could be their English proficiency. Although they had background knowledge concerning tourism issues as it was their major, they had difficulty transferring this knowledge into English. One problem all students learning ESP is their lack of special terms. The students found it difficult to find terminology to express exactly what they meant. They also had difficulty pronouncing special terms. What’s more, abusing special terms during presentation made it difficult for the audience to understand what they were talking about. Besides, some students gave boring presentations that might distract the audience from paying consistent attention to their performance. Those who were giving presentation were not willing and did not feel confident to speak English when they did not receive encouragement from the audience.

Group formation could also account for the problem. Unlike the way of forming groups before the experiment, in which the students could choose their own partners to work with, during the experiment, the students were asked to work in different groups to enhance the cooperation and their flexibility for a long-term purpose. In each group, there might be some differences in characteristics, levels of English proficiency, etc or some did not get on well with each other. All these things might affect their cooperation but it is likely to be better day by day.

Finally, the time for the experiment was quite short (2 months with 1 lesson per week). This period of time is long enough to have an adequate assessment on the two techniques but it is not long enough for the students to get used to those techniques especially necessary skills concerning group work and presentation. For example, most of the questions raised by the students at the question time after presentation were not clear and it was difficult for the presentation givers to answer. It indicates that students’ questioning skills need improving.

In order to have a deep understanding about the effectiveness of group work and presentation, we should consider the students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the two techniques which will be discussed in details in the following section.
V.4. Students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards group work and presentation

V.4.1. Students’ attitudes

At the end of the experiment, the researcher interviewed ten students in the two classes to know their attitudes towards group work and presentation.

Generally, all the students expressed their interest in the lessons for the last two months. Concerning group work, they admitted that they enjoyed learning in groups especially discussion activities in which they had more opportunities as well as freedom to practise English with other members of the group. They could also learn a lot from their friends both English and major knowledge. In addition, their relationship with others could be enhanced, which is vitally important when they did something together.

With regard to presentation, though it was a rather new kind of oral activity, it turned out very effective in increasing the students’ involvement. All the students interviewed said that this activity was highly work-oriented and all the students enjoyed it as all of them wanted to prepare well for their job after graduation. However, they also admitted a feeling of reluctance at the beginning of the activity but that feeling soon went by and they gained their own confidence to speak English in front of the class seeing that they were receiving encouragement from their friends and teacher.

On being asked about their evaluation on their level of participation during the time of the experiment, they all admitted that they became more active and participated more in classroom activities than before. They also wanted the teachers to remain the same activities in the future.

Thus, with the data collected from the classroom observations and the students’ positive attitudes we can conclude with certainty that group work and presentation are really helpful to increase the students’ involvement in classroom oral activities. However, it is also necessary to know the teachers’ attitudes towards the two techniques.

V.4.2. Teachers’ attitudes

At the end of the experiment, the researcher interviewed the two teachers who were responsible for teaching the two classes during the experiment to know their evaluations on the student’s level of participation, their attitudes towards group work and presentation.
Both teachers felt very satisfied with the students’ level of participation after two months of experiment. Group work encouraged all students even the shiest and weakest ones to speak English in the class. The two techniques helped save teachers’ energy in the class; however, they had to prepare the lesson more carefully to have more interesting topics and to carry out them successfully.

The teachers also admitted that presentation was quite difficult and the students needed to have more time to get used to this kind of activity. However, they thought that using this kind of activity to increase the students’ engagement in oral activities was feasible because the students were really interested in giving presentation.

It was revealed from the teacher interviews that it was possible to organize other activities concerning group work like role-play, simulations, communicative games, etc but for the tourism students the most popular activities were discussion, role-play and simulations.

V.5. Conclusion

Based on the factors that had negative effects on the students’ participation in classroom oral activities, the researcher chose two techniques group work and presentation to experiment on the two classes with a view to increasing their involvement. The results of the experiment were really satisfactory. There was a considerable increase in the levels of participation in both classes at the end of the experiment. Besides, both teachers and students had very positive attitudes towards the two techniques. These results lead us to believe in the effectiveness of the two techniques. However, in order to get maximum benefits the two techniques offer, some recommendations are proposed to both teachers and students at the Tourism Faculty at CSSH.
CHAPTER IV: IMPLICATIONS

VI. Recommendations

VI.1. Recommendations for the teachers of English of the Tourism Faculty at CSSH

VI.1.1. Improving ESP knowledge

As mentioned above the English Teaching Program for the Tourism students at CSSH includes both General English and English for Specific Purposes, and the teachers all were trained to become teachers of General English. So they lack the field expertise, which may directly affect the training quality of the Faculty.

In order to improve the training quality for a long-term purpose, and to improve the students’ participation in classroom activities; and in this case, they are classroom oral activities, the Faculty must cooperate with the teachers in a plan to enhance their tourism-related knowledge. This can be done as follows:

- **Organizing ESP training courses:** During these courses, experts may give lectures on basic concepts concerning tourism and the teachers can raise questions to clarify the issues they have not fully understood in the textbooks or other related materials they have read. These courses can be very effective as it saves time and all problems will be directly discussed and solved.

  Organizing such a course will be time-consuming and costly as the Tourism Faculty at CSSH is rather small. However, the University or the Faculty can cooperate with other universities who have the same training courses such as Hanoi Open University, Hanoi Cultural Universities, etc to organize such courses.

- **Organizing regular workshops or seminars:** Within the Faculty, the teachers can also have professional meetings or seminars to exchange teaching and material selecting experience, solve together the problems each has met during his or her teaching. The teachers can attend the others’ lectures to have more experience or to help each other improve the teaching quality.

- **Others:** The University and the Faculty can help the teachers by means of time and other necessary conditions to enable them to enhance their expertise knowledge, for example, attending a tourism in-service training course.
Clearly, providing the teachers with tourism-related knowledge is urgent work, which helps improve the English teaching and learning quality at the Tourism Faculty in CSSH. It should be noticed that it is not an overnight success; however, the teachers still can become master teachers and make their lessons more interesting by using their good command of expertise knowledge as long as they keep bearing in mind a plan to gain it.

VI.1.2. Changing the assessment system

The findings obtained from the student questionnaire and interview before the experiment suggest that most of the Tourism students are extrinsically motivated, that is, they learn English to pass the exam and to get a job in the future. Along with developing intrinsic motivation among the students, the Faculty and the teachers should enhance their extrinsic motivation by changing the current assessment system with a view to increasing their participation in classroom speaking activities.

So far, the mark proportion of the oral tests accounts only 30 percent of the total mark while the rest is for the written ones. This kind of assessment is not ‘strong’ enough to force the students to take part in classroom speaking activities as most of them are extrinsically motivated, that is, they learn English to get a job after graduation. From our points of view, oral tests should be half of the total mark. If assessed in this way, the students will automatically become more active in speaking activities to be well-prepared for their oral exams.

Each faculty may have different ways of assessment based on its training purposes. For the Tourism students, the majority of whom will serve in tourism sector in which they need to have a good communicative ability, the current assessment needs changing to meet their future work demands.

VI.1.3. Using Group work to good effect

VI.1.3.1. Training the students group work skills

In order to facilitate the students to participate in group tasks, the teachers should provide them with necessary language forms that can help them speak naturally as pointed by Tillitt and Bruder (1985) including openings and closing, introductions and address systems, invitations, thanking people and replying to thanks, apologizing, expressing anger and resolving conflicts, giving compliments and replying to compliments, getting people’s
attention and interrupting, agreeing and disagreeing, controlling the conversation, and getting information. Additionally, the students have to obey rules when working in groups like obeying teacher’s group arrangement, being self-disciplined, etc.

VI.1.3.2. Recommendations for grouping students

One among the necessary conditions that contributed to the success of the experiment was the teacher’s group formation, that is, the teachers interfered in grouping students instead of letting them form their own groups.

Students can be grouped in many ways depending on the kinds of oral tasks, the classroom conditions, and the students themselves, etc. Whatever way of group formation, students must be ensured to have chance to practise speaking with each other, feel relaxed and comfortable, and be included as equal members.

During the time when the experiment was carried out, with the help of the Faculty the students could learn in the room where two or three students could sit at a desk instead of five or six ones like the one before the experiment. The findings show an increase in the student participation in oral tasks though the desks could not easily moved round as suggested by Underwood (1987). However, in order to get the best results for group work, the teachers should consider the following things when grouping the students:

- The number of each group should be 3 or 4 so that each member of the group can have more chance to speak English. If there are 3 students at a desk, those three students can form a group.
- Gender can help boost group dynamics. It is advisable not to form all-male groups.
- Give the students a specific role in a task or activity and change the role among the members of the group to avoid the domination of some student(s) in a group.
- Enhance cooperation and peer correction among the members of each group.
- Change members in groups so that they can work with different partners at different time.

VI.1.4. Using presentation to good effect

It is a rather difficult kind of activity that requires a good command of English normally at intermediate or advanced level. In this activity, learners give extended monologues in the
form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps short speeches. In order to help the students do the task well and attract more student participation, the teachers should:

- provide the students with basic skills of giving presentation.
- let the students time to prepare carefully what they will talk about. They can prepare by working in groups discussing the topic(s) or prepare at home.
- choose topics of the students’ level and interest and if possible let them choose their own topics under the control of the teachers.
- ask others to pay attention to the presentation, give comments, and raise as many questions as possible at the end of the presentation.
- have more than one topic assigning students to discuss in groups before calling one or two in a group to give presentation. If all groups in the class work on only one topic, the others may not listen to the presentation thinking that there is nothing new and more importantly they want to have more time to prepare for the topic waiting for their turn.

VI.1.5. Establishing good rapport with the students

It is simple work but very useful as it is the relationship between the teacher and students that is built on trust and respect and that leads to students feeling capable, competent, and creative. In order to create good teacher – student rapport the teachers can use some hints suggested by Brown (1994) as follows:

- Learn the students’ name
- Show interest in each student as a person.
- Give feedback on each student’s progress.
- Openly solicit the students’ ideas and feelings.
- Laugh with the students and not at them.
- Value and respect what the students think and say.
- Work with the students as a team, and not against them.
- Develop a genuine sense of vicarious joy when they learn something.
Concerning giving feedback on students’ progress, the teachers should be careful to balance between praise and criticism as it may partially account for teacher-student rapport. Brown (1994) points out some guidelines for effective praise in comparison with ineffective praise that the teachers can use as a reference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Praise</th>
<th>Ineffective Praise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ show genuine pleasure and concern</td>
<td>+ be personal, mechanical, and “robotic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ show verbal and nonverbal variety</td>
<td>+ show bland uniformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ specify the particulars of an accomplishment so students know exactly what was performed well</td>
<td>+ be restricted to global comments: so students are not sure what was performed well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ be offered in recognition of noteworthy effort on difficult tasks</td>
<td>+ be offered equally strongly for easy and difficult tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ attribute success to effort, implying that similar success can be expected in the future</td>
<td>+ attribute success to ability, luck or other external factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ foster intrinsic motivation to continue to pursue goals</td>
<td>+ foster extrinsic motivation to perform only to receive more praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ be delivered without disrupting the communicative flow of ongoing interaction</td>
<td>+ disrupt the communicative flow of ongoing interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is undeniable that criticism is necessary for students’ progress but the teachers should have constructive criticism instead of being angry or shouting at the students otherwise they will be reluctant to participate in the speaking activities organized by the teachers.

**VI.1.6. Selecting classroom oral activities**

The teachers should plan oral activities carefully. The activities must be diversified and of students’ interest and level. There are some principles the teachers should consider when selecting oral activities to carry out in the class: First, oral activities should cover the spectrum of learner needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to massage-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency. Second, oral activities should be intrinsically motivating. Finally, oral activities should encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.

Based on those categories, some of the following activities concerning group work and presentation can be used in speaking periods including: acting from a script,
communication games, discussion, prepared talks, questionnaires, role – play and stimulations with an emphasis on discussion, role-play and simulations, and prepared talk (presentation)

It depends on the content of the activities the teachers can use one activity more often than others but the teachers should not depend on one activity for a long time, which may result in learners loosing interest.

**VI.1.7. Planning more interesting topics to encourage students’ participation**

Having an interesting topic in a speaking period is very useful to encourage student participation. The teachers should consider the following things when choosing topics:

- Topics should of students’ level, which means they are not too difficult in terms of both the language used to talk about and the field expertise involved. If the topics are difficult but necessary the teachers should provide the students with necessary information first and then ask them to discuss about those topics.

- Topics can be in the textbook or outside the textbook that are designed by the teacher. It will be better if the topics are related to the lesson to create a feeling of security that the students are learning something in the lesson but not something outside it. However, the teachers should be flexible so as not to distort the learning atmosphere.

- The teachers can adapt the topics in the textbook to make them more suitable, interesting and familiar to the students. For example, in a discussion activity the students have to talk about beauty spots in the world, they can choose one in Vietnam instead because they may have more information about it.

**VI.1.8. Forming a habit of speaking English in the class**

In order to increase the students’ time of speaking English in the class the teachers should plan to form a habit of using English. This habit should be built right from the beginning of the first lesson. The teachers should set a good example for the students, which means they have to use English all the time but the English used should not be too complicated so that the students can understand what the teachers say otherwise they will lose interest in the lesson. We also need to motivate but not force the students to speak English in the class by
promoting their interest by having sound topics, for example. It should be noticed that this habit cannot be formed overnight so the teachers should be patient. It is also important to encourage the students to use English not only when learning speaking skill but all other skills. Besides, the teachers should let the students have more chance to practise listening to get acquainted to native speakers’ voice. Once the students have had a habit of speaking English in the class, they will participate more often in classroom speaking activities.

VI.1.9. Organizing extracurricular activities

Besides the activities organized in the classroom, the teachers should organize extracurricular activities like seminars in which the students can speak English freely with the teachers about certain topics or visit to some beauty spots in Hanoi where the students can meet and speak English with native speakers, etc. Those activities appear to be very useful as the students can use English in real-life situations and can become more confident to speak English in the class because they may think the language they are learning will serve their future work. Moreover, those activities will enhance the cooperation and mutual understanding among the students which will help them work more effectively in groups in the classroom context. Finally, those activities will help promote students’ intrinsic motivation towards learning English in general and learning speaking skill in particular.

VI.1.10. Develop student responsibility

Once the students feel that they must be responsible for their own learning they will have to participate in classroom activities. But how can the teachers develop responsibility among the Tourism students?

First, the teachers should encourage intrinsic motivation which is the inner drive or interest of the students. If the students are intrinsically motivated, they will be more able to identify with the goals of learning, which makes them become more responsible for their outcome. Along with the intrinsic motivation the teachers should reinforce extrinsic motivation as two kinds of motivation are interrelated and both have positive effects on their participation.

Second, the teachers need to develop the students’ self-confidence which means the students believe that they are capable of managing their own learning and they can rely on themselves but not other classmates or the teacher. The feeling of self-confidence is vitally
important as the lack of this feeling often makes them afraid of speaking in the class or participating in any classroom speaking activity.

One of the reasons that prevent the students from taking part in classroom speaking activities is their lack of background knowledge. Each student may be weak at different fields affecting their participation. So the third thing the teachers should do is to provide them with variety of learning strategies so that they can choose one that works well with them to improve their communicative competence. It is advisable to organize a seminar on this issue for the whole faculty.

Fourth, the teachers should enhance cooperation and group cohesion which are important for an exciting learning environment in which the students can rely on each other and it can create more opportunities for feedback from peers. More importantly, the students are more likely to get engaged in a task.

Additionally, the teachers should share relevant information with the students like our aims of asking them to work in groups. Feeling that they are being taken care of and being aware of the importance of having a good communicative ability will encourage their participation. However, the teachers should remain strict rules for misbehaviours.

Finally, the teachers should engage the students in learning process like choosing their own learning materials or topics, correcting mistakes. By doing these things the students will take more responsibility for their learning.

**VI.2. Recommendations for the Tourism students at CSSH**

**VI.2.1. Cooperate with friends**

With the two techniques, the students spend most of their time working with their friends from preparatory step to discussion and presentation in the class. The students need to improve their relationship with others. Once the relationship has been established they can work well together: they can help each other prepare for the topic, exchange the ideas and correct other mistakes during a discussion activity, pay attention to and give comments on others’ performance during the presentation, etc.

**VI.2.2. Cooperate with teacher**

Although the students spend most of the time working with their friends, the teacher is always available for help. The students should take advantage of the teacher’s help to ask
the teacher about what they do not really understand, vocabulary and pronunciation, the way to carry out their work effectively, and the teacher’s comments on their performance, etc.

VI.2.3. Take risks

For most of the students, attending the class is the only opportunity to practise speaking English. However, some of them still remain passive in speaking periods and are afraid of speaking English in the class thinking that they will be laughed at by others if they make mistakes. Those students will never make any progress in their communicative ability. Instead of sitting still in the class they should take risks speaking English and do not mind making mistakes as they can learn from their mistakes. A student learning to speak a foreign language can be compared to a child learning to talk and mistakes are inevitable.

VI.2.4. Find more opportunities to practise speaking English

In order to speak English fluently, the students should take advantage of all the opportunities to practise speaking English. The opportunities may be in the class when they are working in groups or with the teacher. They can also improve their English speaking ability by attending English speaking clubs or by speaking English with foreigners who come to visit Vietnam. All those things help them feel more confident to use English and become more active in classroom oral activities.
PART III: CONCLUSION

I. Summary of the study

The study was on the second year Tourism students at CSSH to find out the techniques to increase their participation in classroom oral activities. The study consisted of two stages: In the first stage the researcher found out the present level of participation and the factors that had negative effects on their participation. In the second stage, based on the findings from the previous stage, the researcher chose two techniques group work and presentation to experiment on the second year Tourism students who were divided into two groups on the basis of their English proficiency with a view to increasing their involvement. The study was carried out with the use of classroom observations, student questionnaire, and teacher and student interviews.

The classroom observations before the experiment showed that the students’ level of participation measured in terms of their ‘time-on-task’ and ‘time-off-task’ was very low. The reasons accounting for that level of participation came from the teachers, the students, and the classroom itself.

As for the teachers, the factors included teaching methods, knowledge, characteristics, and role accomplishment during oral activities. The low level of participation was the result of the lack of variety of activities organized in the class by the teachers. The teachers depended too much on the textbooks and the popular activities were role-play and simulations. Although they were effective to increase more students’ involvement in oral activities but abusing them made the students lose their interest. The teachers also used group work but the results were not satisfactory. The reason was their way of carrying out this technique, which was shown in the teachers’ forming groups, choosing oral topics, and accomplishing their roles during the activity. Moreover, the teachers’ lack of tourism related knowledge, to some extent, affected the students’ level of participation. Additionally, the fact that the teachers were angry or shouted at the students when they made mistakes did not help create an encouraging learning atmosphere in which the students could not enjoy speaking English with their friends and teacher.

Concerning the students, their level of English proficiency was the most important reason that hindered them from taking part in oral activities organized by the teacher. The limit in
the background knowledge about the oral topics also accounted for their level of participation. Furthermore, they were heavily affected by their way of learning English at high schools whose focus was on vocabulary and grammar and many of them found it hard to change this learning habit. In addition, the great unbalance in the number between male and female students also had negative effects towards creating an interesting learning atmosphere.

With regard to the classroom, the desk arrangement (long desks with five students each) made the teachers difficult to carry out oral activities. More importantly, the classroom atmosphere in which there was lack of cooperation among the members did not encourage the students to speak English with each other.

With such a classroom it is understandable when many students said that they learned English because they wanted to pass the exams and to get a job after graduation but not because they liked it. The feeling of ‘having to learn’ rather than ‘enjoying learning’ hindered them from participating in any classroom activity.

With a view to increasing the students’ participation, the researcher chose two techniques group work and presentation to experiment on two Tourism classes and obtained very satisfactory results which can be summarized as follows:

In general, the students’ level of participation in oral activities increased considerably when the teacher used the two techniques though there was a little difference in the levels of participation between the two classes.

As for group work, the teachers in both classes planned carefully to carry out the technique in a proper way: forming groups, choosing topics of the students’ level and interest, accomplishing their roles during group discussion. The classroom observations at the end of the experiment showed that most of the students became more active and participated more in group discussion.

The most interesting result of the study lies on the high level of participation when presentation was used. The main purpose of using this kind of activity was to reinforce the students’ participation in the discussion activities as presentation is the preparatory step towards giving presentation because most of the students did not want to lose face so they had to work more seriously in groups. However, the result was beyond our expectations.
Most of the students enjoyed the activity. The reason was that presentation was a new kind of activity and highly work-oriented. Presentation giving is quite difficult and to do the work well, students must have good knowledge and more importantly basic skills of making presentation. That’s why their level of participation was a little lower compared to that when a discussion activity was organized.

The findings also showed us the importance of oral topics in increasing student participation. Before the experiment the level of participation in Class A was lower than that in Class B though the level of English proficiency of the students in Class A was higher than that in Class B. During the experiment the teacher’ choosing sound topics encouraged the students in Class A to speak English in the class, which was shown in the higher level of participation in Class A compared to that in Class B.

In conclusion, the findings lead us to believe that group work and presentation are two effective techniques to increase the second year Tourism students’ involvement in classroom oral activities.

Although the study was on the second year Tourism students, it will be a valuable reference for both teachers and students of the whole Tourism Faculty as well as other faculties at CSSH such as the Faculty of Oriental Studies and International Studies which have the same English teaching program.

**II. Suggestions for further study**

During the process of writing this thesis I have faced quite a lot of issues that need clarifying including:

1. Is the use of group work and presentation really useful in improving the quality of the Tourism students’ talk?

2. Redesigning the speaking syllabus for Teaching English for Tourism at CSSH, adding more interesting topics, situations, and types of oral activities.

3. Time duration for GE and ESP to get the best results.

4. Factors affecting teaching and learning English at CSSH and techniques to overcome those factors.
Among those issues, I am really interested to continue my study to prove if *group work* and *presentation* are really useful to improve the quality the tourism students’ talk. I am also interested to know if questioning technique that used to be used to increase the students’ participation in communicative activities at large classes in Thai Nguyen College of Education by Tran Thi Ngoc Bac (2005) can also be useful to increase the level of the Tourism students’ participation in oral activities as well as improve the quality of their talk.
REFERENCES:


