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## Pre-service teachers' participation in ELT content-based classes: a study of positioning

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**PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN ELT CONTENT-BASED  
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**TRABAJO DE GRADO PRESENTADO COMO REQUISITO PARA OPTAR AL  
TÍTULO DE LICENCIADO EN LENGUA CASTELLANA, INGLÉS Y FRANCÉS.**

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## **Pre-Service Teachers' Participation in ELT Content-Based Classes: A Study of Positioning**

### **Abstract**

This research study seeks to explore the reasons and manners in which pre-service teachers participate in a content-based English language class of the undergraduate program in English language teaching at La Salle University. This study determines the mode in which pre-service teachers' manners of participating configure the development of a content-based class and the reasons that make students participate in it. The paper follows the positioning theory principles with a group of 21 students in the content-based class of Intercultural Communication. Participant observations, semi-structured interviews and sociograms were the instruments used to display elements that foster positioning; then participation situated in three momentums: nomination, lack of proficiency, and groupability. These results reveal that pre-service teachers participate in the content-based English class through an interactional process of teacher and peers' nomination along with their language proficiency, causing particular ways of self and others' positioning in the dynamics of specific groups.

**Keywords:** Participation, positioning, content-based English classes, pre-service teachers.

### **Resumen**

El presente trabajo de investigación busca explorar las razones y maneras en las cuales los profesores en formación participan en clases de contenido en inglés del programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del idioma inglés de la Universidad de La Salle. Este estudio determina el modo en el cual las formas de participación de los profesores en formación configuran el desarrollo de estas clases de contenido, y las razones que hacen que los estudiantes participen. El trabajo sigue los principios de la teoría de posicionamiento en un grupo de 21 estudiantes en la clase de contenido "Intercultural Communication". Observaciones participantes, entrevistas semiestructuradas y sociogramas fueron los elementos usados para mostrar elementos que fomentan el posicionamiento; entonces la participación se sitúa en tres momentos: nominación, falta de suficiencia y grupabilidad. Estos resultados revelan que los profesores en formación participan en las clases de contenido en inglés a través de un proceso de interacción de profesor y compañeros, uniendo la nominación y su suficiencia del lenguaje, causando un auto-posicionamiento y posicionamiento de los otros en la dinámica de grupos específicos.

**Palabras clave:** Participación, posicionamiento, clases de contenido en inglés, profesores en formación.

### **Résumé**

Le présent document de recherche a pour but l'exploration des raisons pour lesquelles les enseignants en formation prennent part dans des cours qui ont du contenu en anglais dans le cadre du programme de licence en l'enseignement de la langue anglaise de l'Université de La Salle. Cette étude détermine la manière dont les formes de participation des enseignants en formation façonnent le développement de leurs cours de contenu et des raisons pour lesquelles les élèves y participent. Le travail suit les principes de la théorie de positionnement dans un groupe de 21 étudiants dans la classe de contenu "Intercultural Communication". Des observations participantes, des interviews semi-structurées et des sociogrames ont été les instruments utilisés pour montrer des éléments qui encouragent le positionnement; la participation se situe donc en trois temps : nomination, manque de suffisance et groupabilité. Ces résultats montrent que les enseignants en formation participent aux cours d'anglais par le biais d'un processus d'interaction entre enseignants et camarades, en combinant la nomination et l'adéquation du langage, provoquant un auto-positionnement et le positionnement des autres dans la dynamique de groupes spécifiques.

**Mots clés:** Participation, positionnement, cours d'anglais, enseignants en formation.

## **Introduction**

Our project interest focuses on observing how pre-service teachers' manner of participation in ELT content-based classes occurs. The project analyses their participation in this type of classes by studying their emerging positionings. The participants are 9<sup>th</sup>-semester students of the BA in English language teaching at La Salle University.

Prieto (2005) states that students take part in decisions and activities that affect their learning processes and class development. Therefore, students' participation in content-based classes in English is relevant since without that participation the class development may decrease. This project is pertinent to identify the reasons of this type of students' participation. Also, it can shed light on checking whether that participation has an impact in the content-based English class development.

This research interest emerged at the time when we were taking sessions of content-based classes in the mentioned BA program. Those classes were designed for

ELT pre-service teachers. As our own experience, we took the preliminary observations at the time we were taking the class. We noticed that the students did not participate in mostly any part of the content-based class. We thought that some of the reasons that created that lack of participation would be the length of the class since it was four hours long and the students could feel tired. In addition, the topics studied might not be of everybody's interest in the class. As some of us were at a higher semester, we were accustomed to a different environment in terms of participation. Nonetheless, the more classes we attended, the more we noticed the resistance to participate in them.

Due to these experiences, we perceived that the interest in content-based classes decreased, possibly by the lack of students' participation. It means that participation could be a main factor in class development. Therefore, we wondered what is behind students' participation in class, what reasons make them participate at different rates.

By considering these aspects, we seek to answer the following research question:

*How do pre-service teachers of the BA in ELT at La Salle University participate in a content-based class in English?*

In order to answer this question, we state the following research objectives:

- To identify the manners in which pre-service teachers participate in a content-based English language class of the major.
- To explore the reasons that make students participate in those particular manners during the content-based English language class of the major.
- To determine the way pre-service teachers' manners of participating configure the development of that content-based class of the major.

This study becomes relevant for the mentioned program to know pre-service teachers' actions while participating in content-based classes. We, as pre-service teachers too, consider this classes pertinent for the students' progress in terms of

vocabulary acquisition, oral fluency, language proficiency, and content learning. In addition, we would like to observe how the participation is an important factor for the development of this type of classes.

Our study could also help discover the manner in which students participate, more specifically in the development of content-based English classes. We aim to discover the relation between participation and class development as defining factors of pre-service teachers' performance in these classes.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This section gives an account of the theoretical foundations that the study research follows. The concepts to study are participation, content-based classes, and class development.

**Participation.** Students' participation is the main concept of this current study that is framed in the development of content-based classes. Ferreiro (2005) states that students are actively taking part in the class decisions. Those acts affect class development and their learning process. It means that not only teachers are the captains of the class because of their knowledge, but also because they consider students' needs as a step for developing their learning process. Prieto (2005) calls students' participation as a "step" that helps them build their learning process. Therefore, participating in class is for students a type of scaffolding that allows them to take advantage of it, and to help the rising of their learning process and knowledge. It shows that students should participate actively in classes while teachers are supposed to encourage students to participate, and to create a better classroom environment for their learning improvement.

Prieto (2005) also points out that students and teachers should have a symmetric relation based on dialogue. For her, participating is no longer the antique concept of

raising hands, but it is the act students apply at the time they share their needs or when they answer or give their points of view without teachers' pressure. It shows participation as a bridge that connects the threshold existent between teachers and students. Prieto has defined participation out of the old concept; she has elevated participation from rising hands and answering questions to allowing students to be part of the class. She has included characteristics to the concept of students' participation such as dialogue and steps as part of the class. Currently, those characteristics are key concepts at the time of having a fluid class.

On the other hand, Abdullaha (2012) proposed a different definition of participation. In his article, he understands participation as a process in which students are actively engaged, although this attitude is not common on them. There are possible reasons for students' engagement that configure two possible types of students in a classroom: active and passive. Active students are the ones who are always speaking, asking questions, and somehow being outgoing during the class development. On the contrary, passive students are the ones who do not speak a lot in classes, although they participate in other ways by taking notes and silently analyzing the class elements and activities, being less talkative than the active speakers.

The lack of participation, Abdullaha (2012) follows, may be due to three factors. The first factor is the personality factor that includes students' likes and affinities with the class topics; these could motivate them to speak or not. In addition, their feelings could stop them speaking in class, for example, lack of confidence or low self-esteem, among others. Their cultural background, as part of the personality factor, could also partake by making the students face experiences that could affect their performing during class interaction.

The second factor is environmental. Students show concerns about classroom size, the number of students in the class, the schedule when the class is set, and the setting positions. Those issues could make students' participation possible or disfavor it. If they feel comfortable in a space, they can manage a class in a better way. Nevertheless, if they do not, it is difficult for them to interact actively or even passively in the class.

The third factor is related to classroom participants' influence in the class activities. Primary, the instructor's influence, their methods or class management, even their personality. If teachers criticize students or are not friendly at all, it is difficult for the students to speak, as they do not have any connection with their teacher. Moreover, peers' influence and the pressure they could make, causing students to feel insecure when they want to make an intervention in the class.

Students' participation in class activities is necessary since it results difficult to accomplish the learning objectives of the activities proposed without it. Class participation leads to incorporate in their personal stock a notion, a definition, a theory, an ability, or an attitude. Participation may also reveal elements that imply intellectual, psychomotor, and socio-emotional skills. Active participation is necessary for learning construction. This understanding finds support in Prieto's (2005) point of view; participation is necessary to improve learning processes and make students more engaged with knowledge.

Additionally, Rogers (1997) says that participation moderates the pace of teaching in a valuable way, increases the promotion of active learning by students in class, and gears the pace and depth of coverage to the students' abilities. A method that mediates participation, he suggests, is to put each student's name on a regular playing card, shuffle the deck in class just before the bell rings, and take cards from the top of

the deck to call on students. Other suggestions are taking questions and recognizing volunteers (the whole idea, after all, is to encourage discussion), but all students know that they may be called on every day.

In summary, Abdullaha (2012) presents participation not as a concept but as an external process that has influential factors for the class development. This statement differs from Prieto (2005), since she presented participation as the internal attitude of students at the time of interacting in class; the lack of this attitude could accelerate or slow down their learning process. In this way, we observe that Abdullaha centers the research study on students' appreciations related to their personalities, environment, teachers, and peers' influence, rather than in the learning process itself. From Ferreiro's (2005) point of view about participating in-group, and according to Abdullaha (2012) about environmental factors, they established that peers influence in students' participation has an observable affection when the student faces a group or individual interventions in English classes.

Teacher's methodology is a considerable factor in the four authors. All ponder teacher's influence as a determining factor. Teachers would be considered as captains and the ones who lead the class development. Their methods and strategies could give students reasons to participate in the class or foster a lack of participation. We could then say that participation is a concept that turns into a process in which students' participation behavior is vital. Participation is the interactional process that occurs in class, a process that contributes to learning. Participation, we recognize, is influenced by many factors that are only defined by the students and teachers' characteristics and the way they behave and perform in a class.

**Content-based classes.** In content-based classes, students have more opportunities to use the content knowledge and expertise they bring to class. They

activate their prior knowledge, which leads to increase learning of language and content material. According to Dupuy (2000), one of students' problems is language proficiency level, which affects their participation within a class. She also states that one of the major implications of this relationship between language and content is determining the prerequisite of competence levels for participation, and to analyze the main topics that students need to know to acquire the second language.

Bula (2014) provides another definition of content-based classes. He says that this type of classes is heavily rooted on the principles of communicative language teaching since they involve an active participation of students in the exchange of content. His study analyzes how students participate using content-based instruction. One of its characteristics is to involve students actively in all phases of the learning process. "Students do not depend on the teacher to control the learning experience" (Bula, 2014). He found that students play a more active role in the construction of knowledge by using creativity and participation skills.

Complementarily, Swain and Miccoli (1994) say that a content-based classroom provides a useful setting for second language acquisition. However, with few exceptions, teachers may know about how learners react to class situations. These authors state that a better way to improve second language acquisition is group work, because students' learning has better results in-group participation than individually. In group work, students do not only focus on the cognitive processes but also on the results from interaction with the others.

As seen, Dupuy (2000) presents content-based classes as the way to improve students' participation and their learning whereas, Bula (2014) states that content-based classes need to work with content-based instruction to make students participate and be more active. Swain and Miccoli (1994) state that group work is not easy, but there are

excellent results in terms of student learning and participation process. We could thus say that content-based classes have better results if students' interests are considered and collaborative work is carried out. This is so as students seem to absorb more knowledge if their opinions are shared, analyzed and develop within classes.

**Class development.** This concept refers to the activities and actors involved in the development of class progress. Authors such as Harmer (1998) see class development very much like a lesson plan and define it as lesson planning that can have realizations as syllabus, didactic units, road maps or agendas. These different types of class development of a lesson have different class purposes. It means that teachers should occasionally prepare a complete didactic unit for a long period of classes. In other cases, they could use just an agenda. Lesson planning depends on the type of classes, students, topics, contexts, and institutional aims. In addition, Giuseppe (1985) reflects upon class development as lesson planning generally considering it as a process of teaching-learning actions and development inside the classroom. This process may vary depending on teachers' preferences for teaching contents and students' language needs. Lesson planning also depends on the target language of the class (in this case English).

There are as many ways to structure the class development as there are different teaching situations, and not a single plan can serve as a model for all situations (Snow, 2006). However, for general planning in the English language class, a basic initial formula would consist of the following parts (Harmer, 1998; Giuseppe, 1985; Brown, 2004; Snow, 2006):

1. *Preview*: Giving students an overview of the day's lesson conveys a sense that there is a definite purpose and plan behind the day's activities.

2. *Warm-up*: A lesson often starts with a brief activity that is relatively lively. Its main function is to generate a good class atmosphere, but it can also be for reviewing material from previous lessons or introducing new material in the day's lesson.
3. *Main activities*: These are the main course of the day's menu, the more demanding activities to which most of the lesson will cover.
4. *Optional activity*: This is an activity that you hope to use but are ready to omit if running out of time.
5. *Reserve (or spare-tire) activity*: This activity is present in case the other parts of the lesson go more quickly than planned.

When it comes to getting on an agreement to the order in which the class has to be developed, Harmer (1998) indicates that lesson planning has a sequential development. The indispensable steps that teachers must consider are students' level, needs, skills, topic, and purpose of the class. Teachers should wonder about these matters in order to prepare classes.

The needs of the students become imperative for the development of the class; it becomes essential to establish the order within the class. Harmer (1998) sees class development as an agenda that goes in line with students' needs while Giuseppe (1985) sees it as class development and processes of learning strategies. These two authors agree on a follow-up formula for classroom development. Alfonso, Gallegos, Santa, and Tache (2013) have a vision in which they consider classroom interaction fundamental to class development. Hattie and Timperley (2007) bow to the same vision, stating that it is basic for the development of the class and the process of all the elements that it holds.

Other authors like Alfonso et al. (2013) understand class development as class interaction or class communication. They regard it as “the verbal communication in the classroom is basically the way students and teachers communicate face-to-face and nonverbal communication is basically the communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. Teachers’ discourse is the main vehicle to develop interaction in the classroom” (p. 22). When English language teachers are going to develop their classes, they also need sources that help them trace their class sequence. That is why they need a guide or a lesson plan. In lesson planning, teachers should focus on many aspects (such as the ones mentioned before). There is not a perfect lesson plan; the relevance here is to develop which is useful for students and class needs.

For a better understanding about class development, we put an eye on classroom interaction. Hattie and Timperley (2007) refer to teacher-student or teacher-whole class interaction. Classroom interaction corresponds to three main aspects: input, interaction, *and* output. According to Carter and Numan (2001), input refers to the language used by teachers, output refers to language produced by both teachers and students, and interaction to the interrelationship between input and output with no assumption of a linear cause-and-effect relationship between the two.

All in all, we can say that class development is mainly a class agenda. It has a proposed formula to follow so that teaching and learning purposes occur. It also has elements like students’ needs, topics, contexts, institutional aims, language needs, and classroom interaction, all of which need to be part of the structure of the class.

### **Research Design**

Positioning Theory is the type of research used in this study. As identifying reasons and factors that may affect students’ participation in content-based classes is the

core purpose, we are going to introduce positioning theory in the analysis of individual and small-group dynamics in participation episodes.

Talking about the foundations of Positioning, this concept is used to facilitate the thinking of linguistically, oriented social analysis (Davies & Harré, 2007). According to these two authors, positioning happens primarily through conversation. It is through the force of discourse and its practice that people's capability to exercise their positionings is recognized. Thus, as Davies and Harré (2007) explain, their own and each other's positionings are unfolded through the joint action of the participants in conversation. Complementarily, Hall et al. (2010) state that, as conversation happens through language, certain positionings (who does and who does not have them) are exercised through language and communication. These social acts that people accomplish with language within conversation play a central role in making students and teachers position themselves in their practice (Hall et al., 2010).

Positioning theory aims to examine the discursive production of interpersonal positions that rely on interlocutors' local moral orders. According to Harré (2012), "Positioning theory focuses on situation-specific actions and the construction of different positions in interaction stating the inability of the concept of role in explaining the fine-grained dynamics of social behavior" (p.191). In Valsiner's words (as cited in Linehan & McCarthy, 2000), positioning theory is seen as "an analytic tool that can be used flexibly to describe the shifting multiple relationships of a community of practice" (p. 435).

There are three aspects to consider in analyzing individuals' positioning. The first aspect is the lived storyline that the interlocutors adopt. This includes interlocutors or groups' history and background as well as their participants' ongoing interaction. The second aspect refers to interlocutors' speech acts with their illocutionary and

perlocutionary effects. The third aspect is the positions that participants assign and adopt with respect to the two previous elements.

Three concepts come into surface in these three aspects: storyline, positions, and actions-acts. The storyline is the narrative acted out in situational contexts; the positions are the participants' performance, and the actions-acts are the meaning given storyline and performance. We have to take into account that positioning is never static but always fluid. Following Davies and Harré (1990), "Different participants in an interaction may, however, position themselves and others present indistinctly different ways. By drawing on different storylines, the same set of words or actions may be given very different meanings" (p. 43).

The analysis<sup>1</sup> we do considering positioning theory focuses on individual and small-group discussion segments of videotaped lessons. Position-oriented analysis can proceed with any one of the three aspects of the positioning triad in mind. We start the analysis by focusing either on the adopted positions, created and lived storylines, or on individual speech acts, but one should bear in mind the mutually dependent nature of these aspects (Harré & Van Langenhove, 2010).

**Context.** The participants are ninth-semester students in the BA program in Languages of La Salle University, Bogotá. There were twenty-one students with an

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<sup>1</sup> Although other data analysis methodologies are also considered to identify positioning in individuals (as conversation analysis, interaction analysis, membership categorization, and role theory), the methodology used in the current study, Positioning theory, allows identifying how people ascribed and claimed themselves and others in all types of interactive discourse, as classroom participation is (Davies & Harré, 2010). According to the objectives of this study, Conversation Analysis does not accomplish the way people locate themselves, since it focuses on the organization of interaction in the social act of participation (Seedhouse, 2005); in turn, Interaction Analysis concentrates on encoding and decoding the process of interaction in the classroom (verbal statements of communication) (Flanders, 1970); Membership Categorization analyses the way people recognize themselves and others as certain sort of individuals (Sacks, 1992); Role Theory explains stable and long-standing duties of people in communicative events (Biddle, 1986).

average age of twenty-two years old; there were five men and sixteen women. The setting was the emphasis class of Intercultural Communication, afternoon shift.

**Data collection instruments.** We decided to use three instruments: recorded observations, interviews, and sociograms. We observed the participants during six sessions of three hours, of the indicated content-based class. By recording the participants' manners of interaction in this class with their peers and the homeroom teacher, we sought to identify the manners in which pre-service teachers participate in the content-based class, and to explore the reasons that make them participate in those manners. We transcribed the recorded sessions on the relevant information to get positioning analysis data. Based on that information, we defined the participants' positioning in the class. As Scott and Usher (2011) say, "observation can be helpful in the early stages of analysis in that it allows the researchers to make a judgment about how signs are read and thus locate the data in the context in which they were collected" (p. 109-110 ).

Our observations were participant. According to DeWalt and DeWalt (2002), participant observation refers to the process that allows researchers to learn about the activities of the subjects studied in their own context. Schensul, Shensul, and LeCompte (1999) define participant observation as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting" (p. 91).

The second instrument was unstructured interviews. We did them in conversational groups of four people or individually. In our research, unstructured interviews were intended to identify the participants' position with respect to their reasons of participation. Interviews are the most common formats of data collection in qualitative research. Researches do not have a specific set of questions in unstructured

interviews, they mostly consist of a catalogue of topics connected to the research objectives. This allowed participants to have control over the path that the interview takes while researchers organize the information that is going to be studied (Corbin & Morse, 2003) Besides, unstructured interviews also allowed participants to tell their points of view in the way they see, feel, and experience them, giving them the freedom of adding as many details they want.

The third instrument was sociograms. According to Miller (2017) a sociogram is a tool for charting the relationships within a group. It is a visual representation of the social links and preferences that each person has. Sociograms work mostly during activities, the topic does not matter. In most cases, the social relationships will be relatively constant regardless of the activity. Sociograms, following Miller (2017) have certain ways of interpretations such as the three patterns to identify: the isolates, who no one has chosen or who have only been chosen by another isolate, the cliques that are defined as groups of three or more people within a larger group who all choose each other and the stars, these people are generally popular and well-liked, hence being chosen by many of their peers. In our research, sociograms helped to identify these patterns that indicated positioning in group behavior during the activities developed in content-based classes' recordings.

**Data analysis.** Our data analysis followed an ethnographic logic (Green, Dixon, & Zaharlick, 2003), seeking to analyze and to represent data by using artifacts (field notes, interviews, and transcriptions). We observed six class sessions of the Emphasis III Intercultural Communication class and analyzed them by creating a data-tabulated table. The elements are: first, the video moment analyzed, second, the student that was going to be the candidate to be interviewed, third, the position that we had granted to him or her in the for observation and the reasons to do it.

To do the observations, we placed a video camera in one corner of the classroom, and we recorded an approximation of 1 hour and a half of each class session. The observations were participant. To analyze these data, the recorded videos were portrayed and shredded according to the participants' answers, showing them, some notes in order to provide the selected students with a background before the interviews. Those responses from the interview were transcribed in verbatim after constant watching of the videos to get positioning analysis data.

To analyze the interviews, we made unstructured questions based on the previous visualization we allowed them to see, visualization of the moments analyzed by us. The questions emerged from the things that students said at specific moments of positioning in the recorded sessions. We tried to lead the interview in order to find if our previous reasoning about them coincided with their own visions and perspectives. To analyze this information, we created a table. The elements of this table aimed to create a contrast between data on observations and data on interviews. The elements of this table were: firstly, the candidates' turn and the respective number of the interview according to the order they were executed, secondly, the moment showed and the positioned granted, thirdly, the position found in the interview.

For sociograms, we took the recordings of the content-based classes and created a visual representation of the groups in the class. We tracked the data of the behavior in, out and between groups during the classes; portraying them in the sociogram through colors for each specific group, and as well as those who do not belong to any group also known as isolates; we used arrows to indicate the actions in, out and between the groups. Sociograms in our research, are a tool for unlocking data on relationships and group dynamics.

## **Findings**

In this section, we present the findings about the reasons and manners in which participants in the observed content-based class participate. Four findings are presented: positioning, nomination, language proficiency, and groupability. These findings arose after analyzing the observations, the interviews, and the sociograms. The information that was gathered with those instruments was contrasted in order to look for the results. Just after contrasting and comparing the information, the results that are presented below emanated.

**Positioning.** This result is related to the disposition students have individually, and the one acquired from others' disposition to give contributions when they participate in the classroom activities. This disposition can range students as active or passive speakers. Students who participate during content-based English classes are observed on interactional situations where they are asked to contribute. Students can be positioned in two different types: self-positioned or others positioned; these positionings occur along the class because of students' response to the dynamic promoted. Classmates' self-positioning and others' positioning do not foster students' participation because there is a constant attitude of non-engagement in the class (see further explanation of each one below). In the following, we provide detail of each positioning.

***Self-positioning.*** This type of positioning is evident when students, themselves, provide reasons and attitudes, such as self-confidence to participate and the lack of self-confidence to intervene in the class, which affect their performance during the classes, specifically their participation attitude. To exemplify this positioning, we provide the following examples:

Self-positioning when students show a lack of self-confidence to answer questions [ <i>observation 4, Time 39:02, Turn 12</i> ]
At this moment of the video in the turn 12, a student answers a question that was first asked to another student. Self-positioning is evident when the student answered in a very low voice tone, not sure about the accuracy of her answer. She positioned herself as a non-sure partially active speaker.

Self-positioning when students show self-confidence to answer questions [ <i>observation 1, Time 29:58- 31:19 Turn 10,12,14</i> ]
At this moment of the video in the turn 10, 12, and 14 a student acknowledged confidently some characteristics that were part of the activity. Self-positioning is evident when the student recognized she had those skills and she showed them proudly. She positioned herself sure active speaker.

Given the above, self-positioning behavior is evident, since the attitude the student showed in that specific part of the observation stressed the lack of confidence the person has. According to this, the student positions herself as a non-sure partially active speaker, which made her participation not as notorious as she wanted to.

**Other positioning.** This type of positioning occurs when students ascribe their peers certain attitudes, such as pushing them to participate or the fainting of interacting in class, in a recurrent way, due to their peers' performance through the content-based English classes. To exemplify this positioning, we provide the following example:

Others' positioning when students are asked to be part of interactional activities. [ <i>Observation 5, Time 8:40, Turn 03</i> ]
At this moment of the video, a student is directing a class activity, in which the classroom is divided in two groups. When the leading student asks her classmates, who wants to participate no one answers. One student says to another, in Spanish: 'esta no hace nada'. This phrase positions the other student as a non-active speaker.

Others' positioning when students are asked to be part of interactional activities. [ <i>Observation 1, Time 21:59- 31:19, Turn 10, 12, 14</i> ]
At this moment of the video in the turns 10, 12 and 14 one student was accepting the characteristics that the teacher was saying aloud and other student was nodding.

Other-positioning is evident when the second student recognized her partner's assumption and she agreed. She positioned her partner as a sure active speaker.

Others' positioning is evident in the examples above, since the observations made, showed the attitude of reducing the communication abilities that some students have. Those communication competences are reduced by the peers when they feel their partners are not sure enough to participate.

**Nomination.** This result refers to the class management control that the teacher provokes on interactional activities through nomination. This result also accounts for the peers' influence in students' contributions, which leads to participation. Nomination occurs when the teacher notices no student wants to answer voluntarily to the class activities, thus she must intervene. Therefore, interactional activities are controlled by nomination in order to encourage students to speak. The teacher selects the students who are passive speakers in order to help them to be more active. Nomination configures the development of the content-based classes of the major. There are three types of nomination: teacher's nomination is a participation controller, students as non-active speakers, and peers' push to increase participation.

***Teacher's nomination as a participation controller.*** Passive students are nominated by the teacher who pushes them to participate. To exemplify this type of nomination we provide the following examples:

Teacher's nomination as a participation controller. *[interview 2, paragraph 2].*

Passive students were nominated by the teacher who pushed them to participate. The passive students recognized this participation pushed and supported teacher's action. They also agreed that this action encourages themselves to participate.

Teacher's nomination as a participation controller. *[observation 1, time 10:20. Turn 01 to Turn 07].*

At this moment of the video the teacher decided to nominate a student who is known as non-active speaker to read the sentences. The teacher noticed that some students do not rise their hands, and possibly that is why she nominated.

***Students as non-active speakers.*** In this type of nomination, the students participate only when is required by the teacher, situation that positions them as non-active speakers within the class activities. To illustrate this type of nomination, we provide the following examples:

Students as non-active speakers. [*observation 1, Time 10:20, paragraph 1 and 2*].

On this moment of the video, students were passive, they did not seem to be encouraged by the activity, and most of them did not participate on it. Teacher sometimes need to nominate a student to continue with the activity.

Students as non-active speakers. [*observation 1, Time 11:07. Turn 05 and Turn 06, paragraph 1*].

On this moment of the video, the teacher was making questions and looks for someone to answers. She also raised her face looking for a student's eyes, he understood it and then he answered. Also, teacher pointed with the sheet to her students to make them answer.

***Peers' push to increase participation.*** In class activities that need students to lead the tasks, the students push one another to participate by leading, even the known as passive students. To illustrate this type of nomination we provide the following examples:

Peers' push to increase participation. [*Observation 4, Time 5:55. Turn 02 to Turn 05*].

In that activity they were needing a leader, for that reason these students pushing one of them to participate because they know he was not very active in class. Also, they used Spanish words to give an order to him (turn 01), he understood it and decided to participate and represent his group (turn 05).

Peers' push to increase participation. [ <i>Observation 4, Time 39:02. Turn 11 to Turn 13, paragraph 2</i> ]
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On this moment of the video two students was making an activity per groups, so one of them nominated another to the class but the student who was selected did not answer by the distraction made by her peer, for that reason the student that was sitting next to first nominated, shared her opinion to the class.
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Those findings mentioned above give account of the relevance of the nomination at the time of developing the content-based classes. Also, they showed how the nomination works when the teacher or the students require it. Therefore, it is noticed that this finding is one of the factors that not only configures the development of the content-based classes

**Language proficiency.** This result displays a set of communicative abilities that the students show or are lack of, which allow them to participate in an active or passive way. It occurs when students are assigned to participate in a specific activity. Moreover, language proficiency is identified at the time the participants' communicative skills are adequate or deficient for the activities they are asked to elaborate. Besides, it appears because pre-service teachers feel self-confident about their communicative abilities or they assume their competences are lacking something else. In all the sessions observed, language proficiency was remarkable, therefore, it worked as a factor that enhances or declines participation. There are two moments of language proficiency in the students' participation: the lack of language proficiency and students being attacked by active speakers.

***The lack of language proficiency.*** This lack becomes an obstacle for the students to participate. One example is [*observation 3. Time 1:30. Turn 04 and Turn 10*]. In this part, a pre-service teacher is leading the class, the instructions she had to share were not clear, therefore, the activity was incompletely developed. The lack of

language proficiency was evident at the time she had to repeat the instructions over and over since her classmates did not get the information. Moreover, the teacher's intervention is another factor that concedes lack of language proficiency as a factor of non-participation. She made emphasis in a question that confirmed the misunderstanding and then, the lack of language proficiency the pre-service presented.

*Students being attacked by active speakers.* Some students participate constantly, which positions them as active speakers. For example, in [interview 3, intervention 4], the student in the interview reports that she felt attacked by a student who is positioned as an active speaker. She also added that sometimes she wants to be active, but these students' attitudes make her feel annoyed: "*Hey if I can give my answer then so can she, so it bothers me, but I am not a conflictive person*" (Interviewed 4). The attitude the student had at that specific moment in the session was designated as being proficient, since she felt able to answer.

The two moments mentioned above evidence the existence of lack of proficiency in the content-based classes. It means that lack of proficiency is a result as much a factor that configures the development of the classes. This finding appears to enable us to identify how lack of proficiency affects the participation of the students.

**Groupability.** This result is evident when the class arrangement and work groups are always set in the same way, which interferes on interaction, and subsequently with class development. During the sessions observed, the students have arranged the classroom in a specific way, work groups are also fixed. Although class development is thought to promote interaction between classmates, the groupability is marked when the group is sealed and they are asked to split their usual teams, since it seems more comfortable for them working in this way. Therefore, interaction is skewed during the class and active participation decreases. Groupability is configured in three

different manners: unconscious interaction, affinity to interact, and group-sharing interaction.

***Unconscious interaction.*** This result happens when groups have interactions between them in class with no on-task intention or purpose behind it. Students' groups are not aware of the interactions they are performing. This is a way pre-service teachers participate in content based-classes but in groups.

Excerpt 1, [Interview 1, participant 1]
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Interviewer: How do you see the interaction inside your group, outside and in-between?
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P1: I think that.... I just don't pay attention to it I just make interactions.
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The lack of attention or awareness from the students when interacting is visible in the example by demonstrating that students interact between, inside and out their groups mostly without being conscious of the performance of interaction itself.

***Affinity to interact: Do students really want to interact?*** This result takes place in those moments before any initial interaction between students' groups. This happens when students' groups quickly take into consideration the reasons behind the interactions they are about to perform in the classroom. The reasons that make students groups participate are the following ones:

***Forced participation.*** This happens when students feel forced to participate in order to complete a requirement from different reasons (E.g. Interview 2, Participant 2: “So, we say. Let's do this because I want my grade, because the teacher is looking at me, because I have to participate”).

***Forced interaction.*** This happens when students consider the interaction they're about to perform as forced by external factors. (E.g. Interview 2, participant 2: “The

teacher said I had to interact with you, so this is why I am interacting with you, let's do it because I want my grade”).

*Benefits interaction.* This is what happens when students consider the interaction that is about to be performed as beneficial for them or their groups. (E.g. Interview 2, participant 2: “The quality of interaction that I see is a self-serving interaction, it is I need something from you, and you need something from me kind of interaction”).

*Location interaction.* This happens when the location inside the classroom allows in some way the interaction to happen between groups. (E.g. Sociogram: SDV\_135 (see below), we can observe how the change of location makes groups that had not interacted before interacting with each other by seeing the pink and purple group interacting between them.

*Non interaction.* It happens when students hold minimal to zero interaction with the other groups inside the classroom. (E.g. Interview 1, Interviewer: “Do you think there is an interaction between them?” Participant 1: “There is no interaction, or as well there is not a huge one”).

*Interaction equals participation.* This happens when the interaction between groups encourages the participation by them on the classroom. (E.g. On Video SDV\_0136, we can see how the interaction between groups *orange* and *yellow* shows an increasing participation by orange group when the yellow group cheers the moments of participation of the orange group).

***Group-sharing interaction: Do students match?*** This result takes place in the moment when students’ group face and ponder on the potential characteristics they may share with the other groups in the classroom before any interaction is about to be performed. The following manners of participating configure the development of those content-based classes of the major:

*Let's stay close.* This happens when the students share certain characteristics with each other and vote to stay close thorough the classes. (E.g. Interview 2, participant 2: “Ariana: Our group was much closed. We had our own codes, that were ours and no one from the other groups knew them”).

*Let me in?* This happens when one student in some way sends a verbal or non-verbal request to interact with others. (E.g. In video SDV\_0133, we can see how one student participates in class and afterwards places a question to the purple group aiming for an interaction but is rejected by them).

*You got an invitation.* This happens when a member of one group initiates an interaction with other group and their interaction is accepted and continued by the receiving group. (E.g. In the video SDV\_ 146, we can see a member of the orange group actively interacting with a member of the purple group, through speaking and hand gestures. We can see how the member of the orange group hold and interaction with the purple group whom with they had not interacted before).

*Can you make this clear for me?* This happens when students interact with each other merely for the need to clarify something. (E.g. Interview 1, participant 1: “Well, I think that the interaction is most of the times to make a clarification or to make topics clear”).

*Let's help the teacher.* This happens when students participate in order to help the teacher with the classroom development. (E.g. Interview 1, participant 1: “Well sometimes I participate because the teacher sometimes makes a question, and nobody answers so I say to myself, okay I am a teacher too and I know how it feels so I participate”).

*Game is on!* This happens when students see the interaction between each other like a playful thing. (E.g. Interview 1, participant 1: “We have seen that in some cases

you support others in order to make them participate. Like you once told Student 8 to go on and participate and then the same with others... Well that's like a teen's game you know").

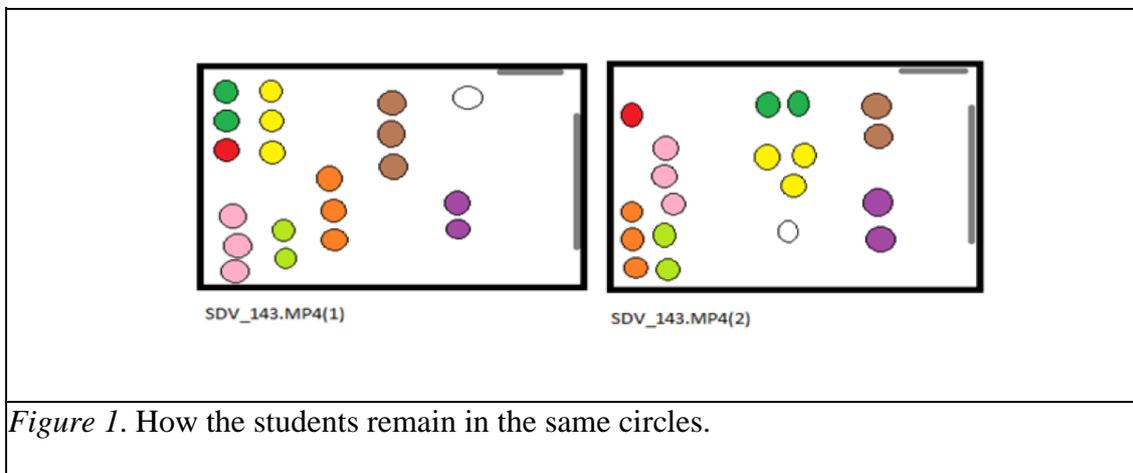
*Are you good for me?* This happens when students see if the interaction with others is good for them inside and outside the classroom. (E.g. Interview 2, participant 2: "With the groups like orange and dark green groups, you may feel that there is a physical interaction inside and outside the classroom. Like you can talk and greet each other with no problem outside and inside the classroom").

*Stay in your lane.* This happens when students feel some kind of restriction regarding possible future interactions with other groups. (E.g. Interview 2, participant 2: "There is some kind of situation that blocks groups' interaction because there is an ego that is high that makes you feel like you can't look or reach over there so on that side there is not much of interaction with others and just specifically with those who you feel you match with").

In general, these three different manners (unconscious interaction, affinity to interact, and group sharing interaction) affect the students' participation and interaction. According to the moments observed during the sessions, the teacher asked students, in multiple opportunities, to change the regular groups where they work. This is due to their repetitive organization in the classroom activities. In the six sessions observed, the same groups remained together, and they only split when they were asked to.

Therefore, groupability configures class development, since there is notable fixed classroom and group arrangement. In the two sociograms below, Figure 1, it is noticeable how the students' groups maintain the closeness that they have established from the start of the classes (SDV\_143.MP4 1) and how they remain in the same circles

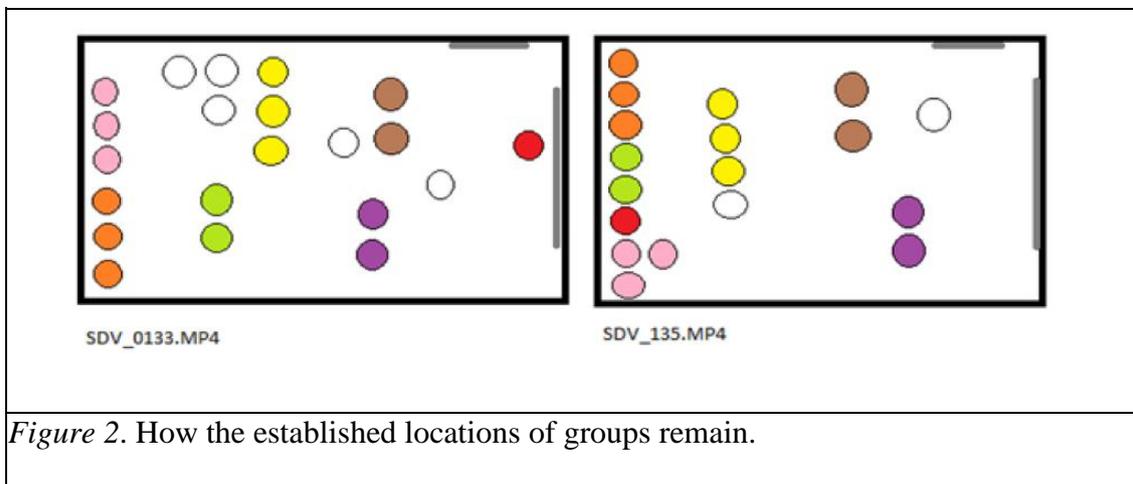
SDV\_143.MP4 2), even though the activities they need to do demand a change of locations and composition of the groups.



It is seen the closeness of the student's groups by looking at the three orange, three pink and two light green circles and the bottom left of (SDV\_143.MP4 1) just like it is seen the remained closeness on the sociogram (SDV\_143.MP4 2) by looking at the three orange, three pink and two light green circles on the bottom left. The groups of three yellow, two brown, and two purple circles, as well, remain close on the upper right of both sociograms, the only change being the location of the two dark green circles that go from being on the upper left of the (SDV\_143.MP4 1) to the middle upper part of the second sociograms along the three yellow circles. On a quick review, it is observable how the students keep that closeness between groups class after class (Yellow and dark green circles remaining close in both sociograms; and the orange, light green and pink circles staying close as well in both sociograms).

In these two other sociograms, Figure 2, it is seen how the established locations of the three orange, three pink, and two light green circles remain on the bottom left part of (SDV\_0133.MP4) while the yellow and non-participants of groups remain in the

middle of both sociograms (SDV\_0133.MP4, SDV\_135.MP4), and the purple one stays in the same spot on the right bottom part of the sociogram (SDV\_0133.MP4).



The idea of presenting these two sociograms in Figure 2 is to put out the fact that the placement of the teacher in the classroom does have an effect on the locations of all the groups inside the classroom. In the first sociogram (SDV\_0133.MP4), it is seen how the teacher is on the front of the classroom and the locations of the students remaining like in any other class. On the other hand, in the second sociogram (SDV\_135.MP4), in it is seen how the groups' locations change when the teacher takes place at the back of the room in the middle of the orange, light green, and pink circles; they go from being in an initial location that can be seen in the first sociogram (SDV\_0133.MP4) to this new different location placement in the second sociogram (SDV\_135.MP4).

Putting everything together, throughout this section of findings, we have presented an overall view of positioning of the participating students, in both individual and group scenarios. Positioning is very rich in the observed class, what turns this theory into a real-life ploy. We found elements that foster positioning situated in three momentums: nomination, lack of proficiency, and groupability. These momentums are the result of different internal and external factors such as the affinity to

interact, desire to interact, lack of language proficiency in participation, and group-sharing interaction.

## **Conclusions**

Following our research question regarding to how pre-service teachers of BA in ELT at La Salle University participate in content-based English classes, we found that they participate according to the position granted by themselves or by others, that they are nominated by the teacher and peers to do so, and that they have specific group dynamics which configure the development of the classes. Also, there is a strong influence from proficiency level of language management in the self-confidence they show or are lack of in their contributions. According to these findings we can state the following conclusions:

It is suitable to state that pre-service teachers participate in content-based English classes through an interactional process of teacher and peers' nomination. This comes combined with their language proficiency competence, causing self and others' positioning in the dynamic of specific groups (groupability). Students' groups also configure class development with their contributions.

Pre-service teachers' positioning is divided into others and self-positioning. These conceptions allow them to be placed and recognized as active or passive speakers. Nomination is evident when pre-service teachers are pushed by the teacher and their peers to make contributions fostering class interaction. These two concepts (nomination and positioning) are intertwined with the pre-service teachers' language proficiency assumptions, which are displayed in the content of their contributions.

Student-group participation on the content-based classes is stirred by unconsciously participation, but by being stimulated to do so, mostly by own peers. The pre-service teachers, in the observed content-based class, participate unconsciously.

They are participants when they feel forced to do it by various internal or external factors. They join the participation because inside, outside of, and between their own groups, reciprocal encouragement comes up to participate.

Unconscious participation is one of the ways students' groups participate in content-based classes. It takes place when students groups maintain interactions between them with no intention or purpose behind it. In addition, the reasons behind the interactions can go from feeling forced to interact by the teacher or a peer until participating for an upcoming benefit. Characteristics that students' groups may share between them make students groups match, it is this matching which configures the participation performance in the observed class.

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