TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

PUJILI CAMPUS

NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH MAJOR

RESEARCH REPORT

EVALUATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN READING AND LISTENING SKILLS IN SENIOR STUDENTS AT "PROVINCIA DE COTOPAXI" HIGH SCHOOL IN PUJILI.

Research report before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and Foreign Language Pedagogy, English Major

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TUTOR:

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PUJILI - ECUADOR

AUGUST 2023

TUTOR'S ENDORSEMENT

In my capacity as a supervisor of the research report entitled "Evaluating English Language Proficiency Level in Reading and Listening Skills in Senior Students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" high school in Pujilí, Ecuador", and researched by Vergara Espinoza Johnny Alejandro with ID 1804331773, for obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major.

I CERTIFY THAT:

This research report has been fully revised and has the requirements and merits to be submitted for evaluation by the assigned revision Committee and its presentation and defense.
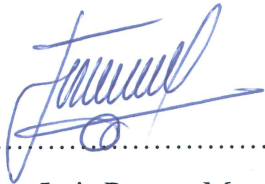
Pujili, August 2023

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MSc. José Ignacio Andrade Morán

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COMMITTEE APPROVAL

The research report entitled "Evaluating English Language Proficiency Level in Reading and Listening Skills in Senior Students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" high school in Pujilí, Ecuador", has been revised, approved, and authorized for printing and binding, before obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major; this meets the substantive and formal requirements to hand in for the presentation and defense.
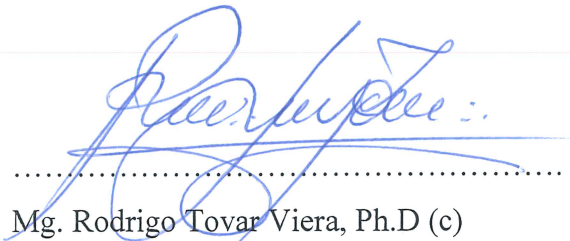
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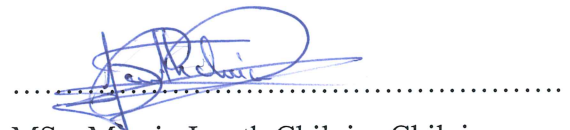
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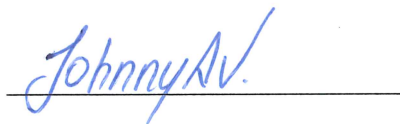
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

Full of love in my heart, I dedicate this project to my parents, Yhonny and Marlene because they are my pride and my most valuable treasure, my parents are the inspiration I got every day, they always are supporting me and motivate me to be a better person every day, they always have the faith I will achieve my goals and they are my main motivation, every effort they done is the result reflected in this study. To my siblings, Alejandra and Leonel for always trusting and motivating me to complete this step of my life, they are another pillar in my family because they are looking out for my wellbeing. To my dear teachers, Mercedes, Rodrigo, and Fabiola for pushing me to do my best, they are an example to do not staying in my comfort zone. Thanks a lot for being part of your pride. This magnific project is for all of you.

Johnny

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH MAJOR

THEME: Evaluating English language proficiency level in Reading and Listening in Senior students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School in Pujilí, Ecuador.

Author:

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ABSTRACT

Evaluating English Proficiency in language skills is fundamental for secondary students during their learning process. This mixed-method study aimed to establish the current level of language proficiency of Senior students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School. Specifically, it determined English proficiency in receptive skills; reading, and listening. The subject of this study comprises 40 Senior students selected using probability sampling technique, and two English teachers enrolled in the High School in the academic period 2022 – 2023. The researcher adopted a standardized test from Cambridge: Key English Test (KET) in reading and listening parts. Likewise, it was used a structured interview as an instrument to gather non-numerical data. For the analysis of quantitative data obtained it was used Descriptive Statistics (mean), and for the analysis of qualitative data, the researcher used Thematic analysis in order to make categories and to review the teachers' perceptions and experiences related to the evaluation applied. The main findings of this study show that students varied their reading and listening English proficiency. Overall results from the statistic mean scores determine that participants are 'modest users' or they have a pre-Intermediate level of reading comprehension. However, the students present a Beginner level or they are 'basic users' in listening. It is therefore recommended that English teachers from this High School should integrate extra classes, meaningful activities for the improvement of reading and listening skills.

Keywords: Proficiency, Evaluation, Perceptions, Senior students, receptive skills.

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI
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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY
ENGLISH MAJOR

THEME: "Evaluación del nivel de competencia en inglés en las habilidades de comprensión auditiva y de lectura en estudiantes de 3ro de bachillerato de la Unidad Educativa "Provincia de Cotopaxi" en Pujilí.

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RESUMEN

La evaluación del nivel de competencia en inglés es fundamental para los estudiantes del último año de bachillerato durante su proceso de aprendizaje. Este estudio cualitativo y cuantitativo tiene como objetivo determinar el nivel actual de competencia de inglés en los estudiantes de tercer año de bachillerato pertenecientes a la unidad educativa "Provincia de Cotopaxi". Específicamente, este estudio determina la competencia en el idioma inglés dentro de las habilidades de comprensión escrita y comprensión oral. Los participantes de este estudio fueron 40 estudiantes de tercero de bachillerato en el año lectivo 2022 - 2023, y también 2 profesoras de inglés pertenecientes a la institución. Los instrumentos fueron; una prueba estandarizada de Cambridge (KET) las partes de lectura y habilidad auditiva. Los datos cuantificables fueron analizados usando Estadística Descriptiva (Media). Asimismo, una entrevista estructurada fue usada para obtener datos no numéricos, dentro de la técnica se utilizó el Análisis Temático para analizar las perspectivas y experiencias de los maestros. Dentro de los resultados, los estudiantes varían de su nivel de comprensión lectora y en comprensión auditiva. En comprensión lectora, los participantes son 'usuarios modestos' del idioma inglés y poseen un nivel Pre intermedio. Además, en comprensión auditiva los participantes muestran un nivel 'Básico'. Por lo tanto, se recomienda que los profesores de inglés integren clases extra, actividades significativas para el mejoramiento de dichas habilidades.

Palabras Clave: Competencia, Evaluación, perspectivas, habilidades.

INDEX

1   GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme:

Evaluating English language proficiency level in Reading and Listening in Senior students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School in Pujilí, Ecuador.

Starting Date:

 April 2022

Ending Date:

August 2023

Place of Research:

"Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School – Pujilí, Ecuador

Sponsoring Faculty:

Extension Pujilí

Sponsoring career:

National and Foreign Language Pedagogy English

Work Team:

Project coordinator:

Mg. Andrade Morán José Ignacio

Researcher:

Vergara Espinoza Johnny Alejandro

Knowledge area:

Education

Research line:

Education, communication, and design for human and social development.

The research line of the career:

Education, Language and culture

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research looks into the level of English proficiency in Reading and Listening skills of Senior students in the "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School from the academic year 2022-2023. To evaluate the English proficiency level of students in High School it is very important to examine the current level of English of each student, from a specific educational institution located in Pujilí for that reason an applied research study was carried out there.

According to the main problem of the study; the High School students specifically at the secondary school level no idea about their level of proficiency in Reading and Listening skills, and some of them did not know about the need to achieve a certain level of proficiency in those English skills, for the future academic process. In Pujilí canton, there is not any analysis of the current level of proficiency on receptive skills of Senior students at and the field of the problem is: there is no evidence of any research carried out in the zone. According to Manuel (2022), language teachers and school heads both in private and public schools have the same observation as regards the low performance of the students in the English language.

The main purpose of this mixed-method research is to evaluate the level of proficiency in listening and reading of Senior students in "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School through a standardized test. The reason why to develop this research is to describe the importance of evaluation of English Proficiency in Senior students and the proficiency in receptive skills related to the comprehension of the language.

# 3	OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To establish the current level of English language proficiency in Reading and Listening skills through a standardized test in Senior students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School in the academic year 2022 - 2023.

Specific Objectives

- To identify relevant theories about listening and reading proficiency in English as a foreign language context.
- To determine how proficient Senior students are according to their level of understanding in Reading and Listening skills according to the CEFR.
- To analyze the teachers' perspectives about the causes and experiences related to the evaluation.

4 ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEMS ABOUT THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
To identify the main theories about listening and reading proficiency in English as a foreign language context.	Literature Review Look for research topics Write the Research Background	Research Background Theoretical Framework
To determine how proficient Senior students are according to the level of understanding in Reading and Listening skills according to the CEFR	Apply a standardized test Gather the quantitative data Analyze data Reflect on the results	Standardized Test Descriptive statistics
To analyze the teachers' perspectives about the causes and experiences related to the evaluation.	Gather the qualitative data Analyze the teachers' reflections Categorize de teachers' insights Discussion and conclusions	Structured Interview Excerpts from the teachers' reflection Discussion and Results Conclusions

5   JUSTIFICATION

The main purpose of this qualitative and quantitative research was to establish the current level of proficiency in High School students through a standardized evaluation adapted from Cambridge and a structured interview on third secondary students and English teachers at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School. The reason for developing this project was to identify the level of competency in reading and listening and the different perspectives of teachers according to those results.

It is important to highlight that an essential theoretical framework about the importance of evaluating secondary school students in reading and listening in the English language could be provided by this project. Therefore, it presents the different types of evaluations and the different levels of proficiency in reading and listening. Furthermore, the research details the opinions and perspectives about teaching the English process to High School students.

This study gathers information to benefit a great number of Senior students and the community of Pujilí particularly, all the participants enrolled at "Provincia de Cotopaxi " High School. There are non-previous studies about the current level of English proficiency level on Senior students in any institution in Pujilí, also most researchers in the country did not get interested to investigate the level of proficiency in Listening and Reading of students, then, in the country and more specifically in the zone it is difficult to get the efficient instruments and resources to evaluate students.

The direct beneficiaries are the High School students at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" secondary school since the aim of this project was to implement a standardized evaluation to examine the current level of English proficiency of students. Likewise, there are indirect beneficiaries who are the English teachers enrolled in the institution because they will notice the current level of their students, know their needs of them, and implement different strategies to improve those levels of learning in their future lessons.

Therefore, this project aims at exploring the current level of High School students through a standardized evaluation and the different perceptions of teachers at Provincia de Cotopaxi High School. This research paper follows a quantitative-descriptive design to analyze numerical data and qualitative data and make descriptions of the results obtained, also the following research question will guide this study:

-What is the current English Proficiency Level in Reading and Listening among Senior students at 'Provincia de Cotopaxi High School?

- How proficient are English students in Reading and Listening skills at High School?

-What are the teachers' perspectives about the causes and the possible implications according to the evaluation?

6   SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1   Background

The analysis of the studies bellow showed the importance of evaluating High School students' English level proficiency in their language skills. Thus, in 2022, a descriptive – quantitative study developed by Manuel at Gammad National High school, located in the Philippines, the author emphasized the need for implementation of a proficiency test to analyze the level of English proficiency level in Senior students. The main objective of this study was to examine the different skills in English language such as reading comprehension and its eight parts of speech. This study analyzed the data obtained from an 82-item proficiency test. The results of this study reflected that participant are High level in proficiency of Proficient user of reding and grammar. Students should be exposed to more purposeful activities and diverse texts to become extremely proficient as recommendation from the author.

In the quantitative – descriptive research conducted by Sijali (2016) in Nepal which aimed to determine the English language proficiency level of higher secondary level students according to different categories such as gender and level of instruction in several institutes around the country, the participants in the research were almost 600 students from several High Schools across the country. The instrument to gather data was an English Language Proficiency test, the researcher found that the English level of proficiency form the participants was poor and the government institutions students were less proficient than students in private secondary schools.

In 2016, a descriptive study conducted by Leyaley deduced that extra programs and standardized examinations help students to improve their level of performance and language proficiency. This quantitative study aimed to perceive the English language level of proficiency in Senior students. The data obtained from a standardized test suggest that students are Early intermediate in their language proficiency. It means that participants could communicate basic expressions or ideas using basic vocabulary. Teacher should give some feedback to students in order to correct mistakes as a recommendation from the author.

A quantitative study conducted by Domingo in 2018 placed in the Philippines suggested that examining secondary school students with international standards helps them to get noticed about their current level of proficiency. This descriptive study examined the result from an international adapted test developed by Senior students. The study findings showed that students had a higher level of proficiency in English according to the four macro skills such as: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in addition, the research could define a very good level of students in the aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing. The author suggests to improve the level of proficiency of students, they could practice and use more English language inside and outside the school and teachers might provide students meaningful activities to encourage students and they would be involved in language learning.

In 2017, a study conducted by Jimenez and Rodriguez from the University of Barranquilla, Colombia emphasized the need to describe the connection between the results from students and the improvement of a program. The research aim was to determine how efficient id the program of English studies in an Industrial Engineering faculty. This research analyzed the data obtained from a standardized test. A case study was applied to describe the different perspectives of students according to the evaluation and the English proficiency evaluation. The findings of this study concluded that the program has several weaknesses according to the test results. The author recommended programs should be more continuous and should have a self-evaluation process, and determine the relationship between the results and the curriculum.

The information reviewed from these academic sources concludes that evaluating Senior and secondary school students' English language proficiency is important since it allows students to know the current level of accuracy in English language. There was not much research about the topic in Ecuador, for that reason, it was difficult to find similar local studies. Therefore, by examining English proficiency, students are able to notice if they are competent in the different skills of the language. The studies analyzed were a guide to conduct this investigation because they helped the researcher to have clear ideas about what is going to be treated during the study. Likewise, it should be mentioned the present study will make teachers aware of the importance of evaluate students with standardized test and this paper will allow teachers to have a clear idea about student's performance in receptive skills.

6.2   Theoretical Framework

6.2.1   Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation is more than just gather data about a task or giving a grade, it is a judgment according to the information obtained, in this case the results of standardized test show what students have learned during teaching and learning process Jimenez (2017).

The definition of Weir (2005) is slightly similar from that of Jimenez et al. The author claims that language testing is more complicated than simply designing the tools for data generation, despite what certain practical publications on the market that focus primarily on the mechanics of test production might lead to believe. Even when these exams are low-stakes and intended to be used in the classroom for formative reasons, test creation must go further. "Language tests have had an impact outside the teaching and learning environment. They are used to make decisions about employment, citizenship, immigration, and the granting of asylum" (Hughes, 2020, p. 4).

From the distant past to the present, language tests have served as significant historical records. When there is little other proof of what occurred in the former language classroom, they can assist in providing information regarding attitudes about language, language assessment, and language teaching.

A theoretical view of language ability as consisting of skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and components (such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) informed language testing practice from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, as seen in large-scale institutional language testing and in the majority of language testing textbooks of the time (Bachman, 2000). The Cambridge ESOL Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) is a particularly important for research methods of language teaching and testing over the last

century since it has by far the longest history of any serious EFL examination still in use (Weir, 2005).

(Bachman, 1991), on the other hand, remarks on the aspects that contribute to the language tests. The author states that the development of a theoretical perspective that views language ability as multicomponent and acknowledges the impact of the test method and test taker characteristics on test performance, the application of more advanced measurement and statistical tools, and the creation of '*communicative'* language tests that incorporate '*communicative'* language teaching principles have all contributed to advancements in language testing over the past ten years.

6.2.2   Proficiency test

Proficiency tests are designed to measure people's ability in a language despite of any training they could have in that language as Hughes (2020) stated, based on this, language test aims to evaluate and estimate the level of competence in this language, in English it is necessary to take account the productive and receptive skills.

The content of the proficiency test is not based on the objectives of language courses, it is based on the indication of what learners have to achieve in a language or order to be considered proficient Hughes (2020).

"Proficiency equates with fluency, but there is a distinction between both of them. It is possible to be fluent without being highly proficient, as it is also possible to be highly proficient without being fluent" (Rao, 2016, p. 5).

6.2.3   Language Proficiency

Language proficiency can be defined as the ability and the level of performance according to a specific language to understand what is language proficiency in the academic field, Krashen and Brown (2007) stated that academic proficiency contains two proficiencies, for example,

the knowledge of the language, and the other kind of proficiency in the subject matter knowledge, according to those type, there is a set of strategies that facilitates its development. Hughes (2020) stated that 'proficient' means to have sufficient language command for a specific purpose. For example, when a student is going to give a test to measure the level of English for a apply for a visa o scholarship.

Rao (2016) defined proficiency "as a second language learner, one should be fluent, proficient and accurate in English, the ability to speak or express ideas with sufficient vocabulary and with accurate structure, to participate successfully in social, professional or practical conversations related to several topics" (p. 4).

6.2.4 Proficiency Levels

Advanced level: According to Baeta (2012) in this stage, students can communicate and understand concepts with native-like proficiency. The learners can write paragraphs in a well-organized way, at a native English-speaking level, students who are meeting grade-level standards.

Intermediate level: In this level of proficiency, students can communicate and understand academic content, more sophisticated vocabulary, and different verb tenses. Students can write using complex vocabulary and compound sentence paragraphs for different academic purposes (Baeta 2012).

Early Intermediate or Pre-intermediate: As Leyaley (2016) the learners at the pre-intermediate level of proficiency can communicate familiar and basic ideas with simple sentences, also, they can read and write short paragraphs using basic vocabulary. At the Pre-intermediate English proficiency level, students get to benefit from modeling high-frequency words and explicit teaching, sentence frames, and grammatical structures (Baeta, 2012).

Beginner level: Baeta (2012) students in this stage may begin in a 'silent stage' where they are not able to produce or understand the English language, learners tend to communicate by pointing, gesturing, repeating words and phrases, pantomiming, and drawing or sketching.

6.2.5   Importance of receptive skills in English teaching and learning

One of the receptive skills that is crucial to language teaching and learning is reading. It is crucial for a variety of reasons. First of all, students frequently encounter it in their daily lives. Second, it is certain that the students in this study will have to read a lot of lengthy articles or books in their departments because they are preparatory learners who are learning English for academic objectives. They cannot learn anything and, as a result, cannot perform well on the tests if they do not comprehend the texts. According to Aebersold & Field (1997), reading is the process by which individuals look at a text and give the written symbols within it meaning.

6.2.6   Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension play a crucial role in English language learning, it is necessary to read in order to understand one topic or idea presented in a text. This ability refers to the meaningful interface between what you already know and what the text is about, also, reading comprehension is a cognitive process that requires the intellectual activity of formulating meaning from the text (Baier 2005).

As Manuel (2022) stated that "Reading with comprehension is one of the primary goals of the Senior High School curriculum. Comprehension is what allows our Senior High students to understand the information about the topic specifically to effectively perform other skills needed in various tasks" (p. 75).

According to McKee (2012), reading is an activity to achieve an understanding of a specific topic or subject, this skill is essential because students need to process the information to be successful. Reading ability is one of the most important skills which language learners should

obtain, it leads to lifelong learning in language skills and helps to improve vocabulary (Li and Wilhelm, 2008). Reading comprehension is the ability to analyze the information, interpret what the writer is stating and understand the text (McKee, 2012).

Li and Wilhelm (2008) reading skill is a dynamic process because readers make inferences and link ideas, it requires the use of mental processes to collect, analyze and process information. Reading is a very important part of personal and educational growth, the concept of reading comprehension is more important because a person needs to comprehend what the writer is trying to communicate in the text (McKee, 2012).

6.2.7   Listening comprehension

The term *'listening comprehension'* has been defined by several experts. Nadig (2013 as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) remarks that listening comprehension is the different processes of understanding the spoken language. These include knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences.

According to O'Malley (1989), theoretically, listening comprehension is seen as an active process in which listeners concentrate on specific aural information, create meaning from passages, and connect what they hear to prior knowledge. Likewise, Kim & Pilcher (2016) states that the ability to understand spoken language at the discourse level, encompassing dialogues, stories (i.e., narratives), and informational oral texts, is referred to as listening comprehension. This entails the processes of extracting and producing meaning.

Chastain (1971 as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016), on the other hand, points out that the objective of listening comprehension is to automatically understand the language at regular speed. Based on what Hamouda (2013) said, having good listening skills is crucial for receiving information that is easy to understand. If there is no input, learning cannot happen.

7 METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research approach

This study was conducted by the mixed method as Creswell et al (2011) state a mixed method research design is a procedure that consists in analyzing, and combining, quantitative and qualitative methods in single research or several studies to comprehend the research problem. It is important to emphasize that a mixed method will contribute to this study, for the quantitative aspects, the researcher gathers numerical data about the results of the evaluation, on the other hand, qualitative aspects are shown in the opinions and thoughts form the English teachers about the development or level of competency reflected by the Senior students.

Also, as Creswell et al (2003) suggest "a researcher connects the phases while developing survey instruments and further, when selecting participants, for the qualitative follow-up phase based on the quantitative results from the earlier phase".

7.2 Research Method

A case study was the method applied to carry out this study which aimed at describing the teacher's perceptions about the application of a standardized evaluation to examine the current level of proficiency in reading and listening comprehension of High school students. This research method is defined as "a systematic investigation, intense research of a single individual, community or group in which the researcher examines in-depth data connected to several variables" (Heale & Twycross, 2017, p. 1). Also, it is important to highlight the case study helps to guide the study because it makes relationships between the student's performance in English classes and how this is represented in the evaluation.

7.3 Research context and participants

This research was performed in the "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School located in Pujilí canton, it is a public institution located in the urban area of the city, the participants were

Senior High School students and the range of age of students between 17 - 19 years old, the participants were male and female, there are six classes in the Senior's course and there are total 240 students, for this reason, it is important to use a probability sampling to reduce the population and choose a minor sample. Probability sampling means that every participant of the population has the opportunity to be selected, it is use principally in quantitative studies, the type of probability sampling was systematic sampling because it was easier to conduct, each participant of the population is listed with a number according to each class (there are four classes: A,B,C,D), the sample was chosen randomly. According to the intervals even and odds, each 'even' student on the list was selected, the sample was determined in 40 participants.

Also, for the qualitative data, the participants were two female English teachers who had more than 10 years of experience teaching secondary school students. The first teacher (Teacher A) is a 42 years old married woman with a bachelor's degree in Educational Sciences with a specialization in English with 21 years of experience in teaching. She has various certificates in English, the most recognized is C1+ in International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Moreover, the second teacher (Teacher B) is a 40 years old married woman with a bachelor's degree in English with 15 years of experience in teaching.

7.4   Data collection process

For the data collection, a standardized test was used during the study obtained from the Cambridge page, this test is for certificate B1 level of English, it is called Key English Test KET, it is important to highlight that the Reading and Listening parts were used in this test, the application was divided into two sessions among the 40 Senior students, the first session was the Reading Part and the students had around 50 - 60 minutes to complete the part, two days later another session was carried out and students had around 60 minutes to complete the Listening Part. (See appendix 1).

To authorize the application of the standardized evaluation to Senior students and to gather data from teachers 'perceptions, the High School authorities signed an informed consent,

also, the researcher signed a confidential commitment to develop the study. (See appendix 2). Furthermore, to get opinions and perspectives, the researcher created a structured interview to gather the data from the two English teachers who have many years of experience teaching Junior and Senior students in High School. (See appendix 3).

7.5   Data analysis

For the data analysis, Descriptive (mean) statistics was used as the method for this study because it helped to carry out the study in the easiest way and to have a clear view of the study. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize sets of numerical data to conserve time and space. Providing the mean and the range (i.e., minimum and maximum values) of a variable is a more professional way of describing the respondents' answers than listing all the scores that we have obtained. Dörnyei (2007).

 Also, as Dörnyei (2007) states that "descriptive statistics help us summarize findings by describing general tendencies in the data and the overall spread of the scores". To determine the proficiency level of the participants in the Reading and Listening parts, the mean average and descriptive statistics were used. Table 1 is used to determine English Reading and Listening proficiency.

Table 1: Proficiency Level for Standardized test Reading and Listening parts

PERCENTAGE	MARKS	GRADE	CEFR
44% - 69%	100 - 119	Level A1	A1
70% - 84%	120 - 132	Grade C	A2
85% - 89%	133 - 139	Grade B	A2
90% - 100%	140 - 150	Grade A	B1

To analyze the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used as the qualitative approach to describe and analyze the results obtained, as Braun & Clarke (2006) mentioned "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" p (79). Also, thematic analysis is the technique selected for the analysis of the teachers' reflections and perceptions about the evaluation process of their students.

It was necessary to classify the information about the research questions. Regarding the third research question, the categories identified were: motivation in learning the English language, difficulties teaching Reading and listening, strategies to improve student's performance in reading and listening, and perceptions about the evaluation results.

8   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the current English Proficiency Level of Senior students at Provincia de Cotopaxi High School?

To answer the first research question about the current level of English proficiency in Reading and Listening in Senior High School students with a standardized test, the results of the evaluation were analyzed with descriptive statistics.

Table 2 presents the proficiency level in reading comprehension using a standardized test, obtained from the table, 17 students who represent the 42% got a proficiency level of *A1*, students at the beginning language proficiency level may comprehend basic vocabulary and aspects from the reading part. Moreover, 40% of students present a Pre-intermediate level of proficiency *A2* they are next to achieve the next level of proficiency. On the other hand, the table reveals that just seven students, or 18% of participants presented an Intermediate level of proficiency B1 they can understand most parts of the section and comprehend the vocabulary presented on the test.

Table 2: Students' reading proficiency

Proficiency level	Number of students	Percentage
Beginner *A1*	17	42
Pre-intermediate *A2*	16	40
Intermediate *B1*	7	18
	40	100

As Domingo (2018) stated, "Listening is an interactive, not a passive skill, to which the students need to apply much effort and practice" (p.6). To answer the first research question about the level of proficiency of students Table 3 presents the results obtained by the Senior

students after the standardized test. Most of the students, twenty-three or 57.5 % of the participants present a Beginner level of proficiency in the Listening skill, they understand simple and basic announcements by audio. Moreover, fourteen participants, or 35 % present a Pre-intermediate level of proficiency. Finally, just three participants, or 7.5 % of the Senior students can understand correctly and respond effectively to the questions in the standardized test, they are registered in the Intermediate level of proficiency.

Table 3: Students' listening proficiency

Proficiency level	Number of students	Percentage
Beginner A1	23	57.5
Pre-intermediate A2	14	35
Intermediate B1	3	7.5
	40	100

RQ2: *How proficient are English students in Reading and Listening skills at "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School?*

To answer the second research question about how proficient are English students in Reading and Listening, it is important to analyze the data, Table 4 presents the average of the results in Reading proficiency, as the table indicates the statistic mean is 123.71, taking into account the intervals of marks this result is placed in the level of proficiency **Pre-Intermediate A2**, in other words, the average of proficiency on Senior students is A2. According to the CEFR: Pre-Intermediate level A2 students can; understand and use basic phrases and expressions, understand the simple vocabulary of written English, introduce themselves and answer basic questions about it, and interact with English speakers at a basic level.

Table 4: Students' Reading Proficiency Mean

Proficiency level	Marks	fi (students)	xi	fi(xi)
Beginner A1	100-119	17	109.5	1861.5
Pre-Intermediate A2	*120-139*	16	129.5	2072
Intermediate B1	140-150	7	145	1015
	total	*40*	*384*	*4948.5*
	Mean			*123.71*

Table 5 presents the results of proficiency level in listening skills, the participants are placed in a *Beginner A1* Proficiency level according to the mean, the mean is 119.16, taking into account the intervals. According to the CEFR students can understand everyday expressions and simple phrases, interact simply, and communicate with elementary vocabulary.

Table 5: Students' Listening Proficiency Mean

Proficiency level	Marks	fi (students)	xi	fi(xi)
Beginner A1	*100-119*	23	109.5	2518.5
Pre-Intermediate A2	120-139	14	129.5	1813
Intermediate B1	140-150	3	145	435
	total	*40*		*4766.5*
	Mean			*119,16*

RQ3: *What are the teachers' perspectives about the causes and the possible implications according to the evaluation?*

To answer the third research questions of the study it was necessary to classify the data into: motivation to learn English language, difficulties teaching reading and listening, strategies to improve student's performance in reading and listening, and perceptions about the evaluation results.

a) *Motivation to learn English Language*

Excerpts from teachers' interview

The constructivist method is the best way to motivate students learning because it starts from the previous knowledge of students and then constructs the knowledge taking into account the daily life situations, and its parts from the experience. (Teacher A)

Students get motivated when the activities come from an easier to a specific one, for example, teaching the verbs, could be basic to learn, by this, students can throw from the basics to the complex activities. (Teacher B)

The teachers express that they have different ways to motivate students to learn English, one important point is to begin with the basic aspects of English and then make activities more complex. Also, teacher A suggests that the constructivist method is the most adequate to motivate students as Hein (1991) this method is related to the concept that students construct knowledge for themselves, each student (individual and group) constructs meaning, and learning is the result of construct meaning; there is no other type. Prior knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions are important because that help to build new knowledge effectively as this allows students to have a clear perception of the new information, interpret it, and relate it to the previous one (Ambrose et al., 2010).

b) *Difficulties teaching Reading and Listening*

Excerpts from teachers' interview

Most of my students come from indigenous groups and sometimes L1 (Kichwa) interferes when students learn English, also, the reduction of English hours from 5 hours in secondary school students to just 3 hours, there is no adequate material to work on and this academic year we did not work with an English book. (Teacher A)

As difficulties in the teaching process, I witnessed that secondary school students do not have the best readings and listening performances, for example, in the English projects (hours to reinforce the English language on students from 8 9 10th) the use of audio and readings is scarce, and many times the infrastructure and the materials do not allow to develop those skills. Finally, the number of students per class is bigger than before, and it is difficult to learn with a large number of people in a little space. (Teacher B)

Teachers mention that there are several difficulties when they are working with secondary school students the receptive skills (Reading and Listening), the materials are not adequate and the infrastructure does not allow to develop of the audio or listening activities, the main difficulty is do not have an English laboratory to develop listening skill, technology could help to improve the development of those skills. According to Roldán (2016), the main difficulty when teaching English as a foreign language in Latin American countries is the lack of updated materials in the student's language.

c) ***Strategies to improve students' performance in Reading and Listening***

Excerpts from teachers' interview

Learning in base on experience is important to get students engaged with the subject, the use of adequate materials such as audio, speakers, or technological tools could be a strategy to improve Listening skills, on the other hand, before students start reading it is important that they are conscious what they are going to read and the teacher has to evaluate the relevance of the text in relation with the topic and aims of the lesson. (Teacher A)

In the case of the results of the evaluation, teachers can re-structure their lesson plans and pay attention to the weaknesses in the different skills. Also, to reinforce the topic,

giving extra classes in the afternoon, for example, to give an extra activity to practice Reading or Listening could help to improve students' performance. (Teacher B)

Teachers express their opinion about the strategies to improve Reading and Listening skills such as: planning the lessons in a better way, implementing new activities to get students involved, to use technological tools is the main strategy to improve receptive skills. Vindas (2020) mentions that a teacher's mistake is to assign activities excessively or unnecessarily, which can divert the learning objective and consume time for teaching.

d) *Perceptions about the evaluation results*

Excerpts from teachers' interview

The results of the evaluation reflected the teaching process and the quality of teaching and learning, always an evaluation is a guide to know how students are developing their knowledge. (Teacher A)

By evaluations, teachers can know how the students are learning and developing their English skills, in this case, Reading and Listening, according to the evaluation, it is important to give some corrections and feedback. (Teacher B)

Teachers mention that the results of evaluation reflect the teaching and learning process, in other words, the teaching process in Senior students is relatively poor, they are focused on teaching speaking or how to write, to learn from the basics to the complex topic. However, this evaluation helps the teacher to notice the current level of proficiency of students, the teachers show consciousness that the evaluation guides the teaching process and helps to improve it.

To summarize, the current English proficiency level in Senior students is Beginner (A1), Pre-Intermediate (A2), and Intermediate (B1) level. The results showed that A2 is the average reading proficiency for High School students. They can introduce themselves and respond to basic inquiries about it, understand and apply simple vocabulary in written English, and communicate with native English speakers on a basic level. On the other hand, A1 is the average listening proficiency. This means that they can engage easily, comprehend common expressions, simple sentences, and use simple language.

To improve the students' English level, teachers have tried to reinforce receptive skills by applying the constructivism method as a teaching strategy, and teaching basic things first so students do not get frustrated. However, the L1 interference and the lack of technology are difficulties that teachers and students face every day to teach and learn English.

9 RESEARCH IMPACTS

This research project would have an educational and social impact since teachers could have a theoretical base to examine and implement strategies to know the current level of Reading and Listening proficiency in High School students. Teachers will be aware of the English skills that they should reinforce in order to create a new curriculum and improve the educational process. In fact, Ecuadorian students' English levels could increase enormously. Moreover, this research could be used by other investigators as a guide for future studies related to the educational field. This research also motivates teachers to examine their students with a standardized evaluation to know the reality beyond the classrooms. If teachers know about the level of proficiency of their students in English language skills, they can improve their process of teaching or implement new strategies to reinforce the knowledge of students, in this way; it contributes to the educational field and reality of teaching English.

10   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   Conclusions

This project aimed to evaluate the language proficiency in Reading and Listening of the Senior students of "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School. This study helps teachers and students to improve the quality of language learning. Adopting the test instrument from Cambridge: Key English Test (KET), it was found that students were modest and basic users in the receptive skills; Reading and Listening.

- To determine how proficient Senior students from "Provincia de Cotopaxi" High School are in reading skills in the academic period 2022 – 2023, they were categorized under *Pre-intermediate level A2*, according to this level students are 'modest users of language' which means, students have a partial command of the language, they can read short paragraphs and familiar ideas and understand the overall meaning in most situations. This level of proficiency is a cause of the lack of practice of these skills and the lack of adequate materials beyond the classroom.

- Moreover, Listening was more complex to achieve for Senior students because they were placed under *Beginner A1* or 'basic users of language', the level of proficiency of listening skill is under the standards of achievement. This level of proficiency refers that they can understand short audio with basic vocabulary, they can comprehend basic useful expressions, and they tend to misunderstand some more complex text or audio. It was a cause of poor practice inside the classroom and teachers do not have the technological tools to put into practice listening skills.

- According to the teachers' perspectives contribute to the project because their experiences and point of view facilitate as a guide to conduct the study. Teachers mentioned there are some causes for the low development of students in receptive skills, teachers stated that it is difficult to practice reading, because the lack of

materials does not allow meaningful learning, to develop listening skills is hard to implement the cause of adequate space for learning or technological tools to make the practice easier. Nevertheless, teachers make an extra effort to develop productive skills; for example, speaking is a strong skill for Senior students, also, to know how to write is important to improve students' language learning.

10.2   Recommendations

- To increase the level of proficiency in reading skills for Senior students, the following recommendation is provided: language teachers should suggest students read more text and practice the skill, and the authorities and the government must provide English teachers the adequate materials to work with. Also, English teachers should recommend students to assist with extra lessons if there is something to clarify or to reinforce.

- Moreover, it is recommendable that teachers encourage students to practice this skill outside the classroom because there are a lot of tools to improve that skill. Authorities and the Department of Education should take into account the High School needs, because students require an audio-visual laboratory to develop reading and listening skills, according to the results presented in this study, the level of proficiency in listening skills is under the standards of achievement for that reason, High School should implement a plan to improve that skill.

- Finally, English teachers should be in constant capacitation, and to look for creative methods, activities, or ways to teach listening and reading comprehension to help students, it is still recommended that English teachers integrate more emphasis on meaningful activities where students can practice inside and outside the High School. Also, teachers could encourage students to take some proficiency tests to practice and get noticed about their level of English. Students must get familiarized with those kinds of international evaluations because it will help in their personal and professional life.

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12   APPENDICES

12.1   Appendix 1: Standardized Test: KET English Test

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Cambridge Assessment English

KEY ENGLISH TEST

Questions 1 – 6

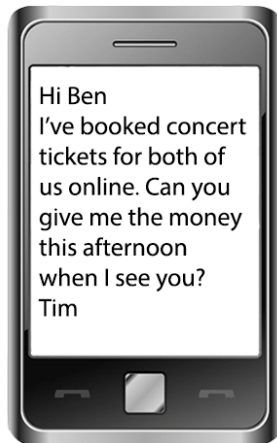For each question, choose the correct answer.

1

For Sale
Women's bicycle (small)

11 years old - needs new tyres
Phone Debbie
 - 0794587454

A The bicycle that's for sale was built for a child.

B Some parts of the bicycle must be changed.

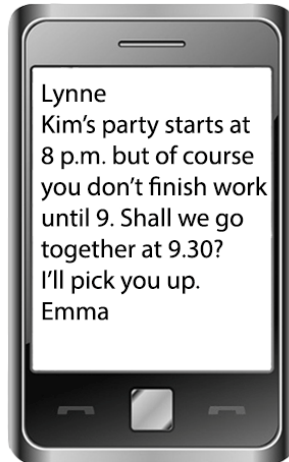**C** Debbie is selling the bike because she's too big for it now.

2

Hi Ben
I've booked concert tickets for both of us online. Can you give me the money this afternoon when I see you?
Tim

A Tim thinks Ben should look on the concert website.

B Tim hopes that Ben will be able to come with him.

C Tim wants to know if Ben can pay him back today.

3

ADVENTURE PARK
Half-price tickets for groups of 12 or more
Ask at entrance

A You get into the park by going this way.

B It is more expensive to go here alone.

C You will have fun if you come with friends.

4

Lynne
Kim's party starts at 8 p.m. but of course you don't finish work until 9. Shall we go together at 9.30?
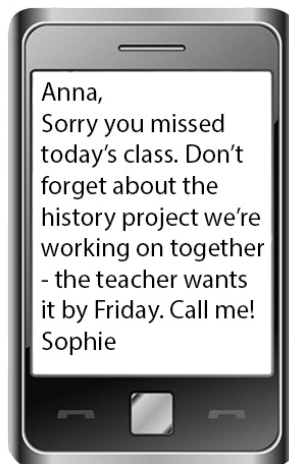I'll pick you up.
Emma

A Emma knows that Lynne can't be at the party when it starts.

B Emma wants to go to the party a bit later than Lynne.

C Emma wants to go out with Lynne but not to the party.

5

DAN'S ICE CREAMS
Buy one, get one free!
(Special offer 12 - 2 p.m. only)

A The ice cream shop is open for only 2 hours.

B Two ice creams will cost the same as one.

C You can get free ice creams all afternoon.

6

Anna,
Sorry you missed today's class. Don't forget about the history project we're working on together - the teacher wants it by Friday. Call me!
Sophie

Why did Sophie write this message?

A to check if Anna has completed her homework

B to let Anna know what they did in class today

C to ask Anna to contact her about the homework

Part 2

Questions 7 – 13

For each question, choose the correct answer.

		Tasha	Danni	Chrissie
7	Who writes both a magazine and a blog?	A	B	C
8	Who says that studying and writing a blog at the same time can be hard?	A	B	C
9	Who answers questions from other people who read her blog?	A	B	C
10	Who plans to stop writing her blog soon?	A	B	C
11	Who didn't have many people reading her blog in the beginning?	A	B	C
12	Who asks a member of her family to help her write her blog?	A	B	C
13	Who says writing a blog is easier than some other types of writing?	A	B	C

Part 3

Questions 14 – 18

For each question, choose the correct answer.

A family of dancers

The women in the Watson family are all crazy about ballet. These days, Alice Watson gives ballet lessons, but for many years, she was a dancer with the National Ballet Company. Her mother, Hannah, also had a full-time job there, making costumes for the dancers.

Alice's daughter Demi started learning ballet as soon as she could walk. 'I never taught her,' says Alice, 'because she never let me.' Now aged sixteen, Demi is a member of the ballet company where her mother was the star dancer for many years.

Alice's husband, Jack, is an electrician. They met while he was working at a theatre where she was dancing and got married soon after. 'When Demi started dancing, the house was too small for her and Alice to practise in so I made the garage into a dance studio. Now the living room is nice and quiet when I'm watching television!' he says.

Last month, Demi was invited to dance in the ballet *Swan Lake*. Of course, Alice and Hannah were in the audience and even Jack was there, which made it very special for Demi. Jack says, 'I'm not that interested in ballet myself but it's fantastic seeing Demi taking her first steps with Alice's old company!' Demi was wearing a dress that Hannah made for Alice many years before.

'It was very exciting for all of us,' says Hannah. 'Demi's way of dancing is very like Alice's. I know I'm her grandmother, but I think she has a great future!'

14   What is Alice Watson's job now?

    A   dancer

    B   teacher

    C   dress-maker

15   Demi had her first ballet lessons

    A   at a very young age.

    B   at the National Ballet Company.

    C   from her mother.

16   Jack helped his wife and daughter by

    A   moving to a larger house.

    B   letting them use the living room for dancing.

    C   making a place for them to practise in.

17   What was the best thing about the *Swan Lake* show for Demi?

    A   It was her first show with the company.

    B   All her family were there.

    C   She was wearing a new dress.

18   Hannah says that Demi

    A   will be a star one day.

    B   is her favourite granddaughter.

C   dances better than Alice did.

Part 4

Questions 19 – 24

For each question, choose the correct answer.

William Perkin

William Perkin was born in London in 1838. As a child he had many hobbies, including model making and photography. But it was the **(19)** ………… of chemistry that really interested him. At the age of 15, he went to college to study it.

While he was there, he was **(20)** ………… to make a medicine from coal. This didn't go well, but when he was working on the problem, he found a cheap **(21)** ………… to make the colour purple. At that **(22)** ………… it was very expensive to make clothes in different colours. William knew he could make a business out of his new colour. Helped by his father and brother, William **(23)** ………… his own factory to make the colour. It sold well, and soon purple clothes **(24)** ………… very popular in England and the rest of the world.

19	**A**	class	**B**	subject	**C**	course
20	**A**	thinking	**B**	trying	**C**	deciding
21	**A**	way	**B**	path	**C**	plan
22	**A**	day	**B**	time	**C**	hour
23	**A**	brought	**B**	turned	**C**	opened
24	**A**	began	**B**	arrived	**C**	became

Cambridge Assessment English

KEY ENGLISH TEST

Listening

Sample Test

TIME Approximately 35 minutes (including 6 minutes' transfer time)

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this question paper until you are told to do so.

Write your name, centre number and candidate number on your answer sheet if they are not already there.

Listen to the instructions for each part of the paper

carefully. Answer all the questions.

While you are listening, write your answers on the question paper.

You will have 6 minutes at the end of the test to copy your answers onto the separate answer sheet. Use a pencil.

At the end of the test, hand in both this question paper and your answer sheet.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

There are five parts to

the test. Each question

carries one mark. You

will hear each piece

twice.

For each part of the test there will be time for you to look through the questions and time for you to check your answers.

**P
a
r
t
3**

Questions 11 – 15

For each question, choose the correct answer.

You will hear Robert talking to his friend, Laura, about a trip to Dublin.

11   Who has already decided to go with Robert?

    A   family members

    B   colleagues

    C   tennis partners

12   They'll stay in

    A   a university.

    B   a guest house.

    C   a hotel.

13   Laura must remember to take

    A   a map.

    B   a camera.

    C   a coat.

14   Why does Laura like Dublin?

    A   The people are friendly.

    B   The buildings are interesting.

    C   The shops are beautiful.

15   Robert's excited about the trip to Dublin because

    A   he can't wait to go to the music festival.

    B   he loves the food there.

C   he wants to go to a new art exhibition.

Questions 16 – 20

For each question, choose the correct answer.

16 You will hear a woman talking to her friend about why she's bought a motorbike.
Why did she buy it?

A It's fast.

B It was cheap.

C It'll be easy to repair.

17 You will hear two friends talking about going to University.
What subject is the man going to study?

A history

B geography

C chemistry

18 You will hear two friends talking about a photograph.
What's the photograph of?

A a sports stadium

B a zoo

C a school playground

19 You will hear a woman talking to a friend on the phone.
Why's she upset?

A Her train was delayed.

B She's lost her wallet.

C She's broken her glasses.

20 You will hear a woman talking to her friend, David, about something she's bought.
What has she bought?

A some clothes

B some food

C some games

UNIVERSIDAD
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Carrera de
Pedagogía de los
Idiomas
EXTENSIÓN PUJILÍ

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

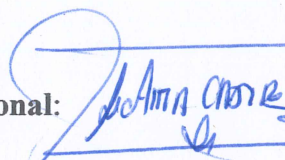**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo, **Msc Ana Castro** con número de cédula 0502966880 , rectora de la Unidad Educativa "Provincia de Cotopaxi" certifico que me han informado acerca de la participación voluntaria de los docentes Margarita Pila, Claudia Ante pertenecientes al área de inglés. Asimismo, la participación de los estudiantes de primero de bachillerato BGU paralelos "A" y "D" en el proyecto de investigación denominado **"English Proficiency: Reading and Listening in High School students"** desarrollado por el estudiante **Vergara Espinoza Johnny Alejandro**, estudiantes de octavo ciclo de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi.

Entiendo que este proyecto de investigación tiene como finalidad identificar el nivel de inglés de los estudiantes de Bachillerato y las diversas perspectivas de los docentes acerca de los diversos niveles de proficiencia en las habilidades de Reading y Listening estudiantes, mismo proyecto que será llevado a cabo en la Unidad Educativa "Provincia de Cotopaxi", que consistirá en la recopilación de datos por medio de un test estandarizado de Cambridge y una entrevista que será realizada a los docentes del idioma Inglés enrolados con el área de estudio, en el periodo académico 2022-2023.

Estoy en conocimiento que la información de los participantes se mantendrá confidencial y sus datos personales no serán divulgados en el proyecto. Por lo tanto, acepto el desarrollo de este proyecto de investigación, pues además he recibido una copia del presente documento.

Firma de la rectora institucional:

Cédula: 0502966880

Fecha: 2/06/2023

Correo electrónico: anab.castroc@educacion.gob.ec

12.3   Appendix 3: Guidelines for a structured interview

GUIDELINES FOR A STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Guía de Entrevista Dirigida al Docente de Inglés

Entrevistado: _____   **Fecha:** _____

Entrevistador: VERGARA ESPINOZA JOHNNY ALEJANDRO

Objetivo: El objetivo de la siguiente entrevista es obtener información útil del nivel actual de competencia en el inglés en las habilidades de Reading & Listening

Instrucciones: Escuche detenidamente cada pregunta y formule sus respuestas en base a sus experiencias reales y opiniones sinceras.

Parte 1: Experiencia del docente

Hábleme de su trayectoria como educador en el área de inglés ¿Cuántos años lleva laborando? ¿Qué títulos posee? ¿Tiene certificaciones de inglés, por ejemplo, FCE, TOEFL u otros?

Parte 2: Conocimiento sobre los diferentes tipos de evaluación para medir el nivel de competencia del lenguaje

¿De qué manera incentiva a jóvenes de bachillerato para aprender inglés?

¿Qué tipo de evaluaciones conoce para medir el nivel de inglés en los estudiantes?

¿Cree Ud. que una evaluación estandarizada es la más adecuada para nuestro contexto educativo?

Parte 3: Desafíos en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje

¿Considera usted que los estudiantes de bachillerato están progresando en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés?

¿Considera que los resultados de la evaluación reflejan la pobre o adecuada enseñanza del idioma inglés?

¿Cuáles han sido los desafíos que enfrenta usted como docente al impartir clases a jóvenes con un nivel no adecuado de inglés?

¿Se realizan tutorías a estudiantes con bajo rendimiento académico?

¿Cuáles son las posibles estrategias para fortalecer las habilidades de Reading y Listening?

¿Cree que el gobierno presta atención adecuada al fortalecimiento y capacitación de los profesionales del idioma inglés?