

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



“THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF WRITING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BETWEEN ADULTS AND TEENS PROGRAM FROM THE 20TH LEVEL OF THE ENGLISH MORNING AND AFTERNOON REGULAR COURSES AT CENTRO DE ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR (CENIUES) IN JULY 2016.”

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SPECIALIZATION IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Writing has been an action made by mankind since thousands of years. Apparently, it is an activity that is normal and easy but also can be complex and a challenging process when it is done in a foreign language. Students who learn English as a foreign language sometimes can find it difficult to produce in an accurate form. So, this research has been centered in the differences of English writing proficiency between Adults and Teens program from the twentieth level of the English morning and afternoon regular courses at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador* (CENIUES) as well as to know about the current errors students present when writing.

In chapter one, it is stated the problem, the objectives, (general and specific), research questions and justification that are the basis to carry out this research.

Chapter two is about antecedents of the institution, theoretical framework concerned to the objectives stated for this study, hypothesis and variables involved in this matter.

Chapter three deals with the methodological design used by researchers over Adults and Teens students from the twentieth level of the English morning and afternoon regular courses at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador* (CENIUES) in which it is specified the type of study, research design, population, sampling and the techniques used in order to get data.

Chapter four contains the data analysis and its interpretation. Here it is presented the results obtained from the written composition task made by teens and adults of the twentieth level at CENIUES.

Also, it is given some conclusions and recommendations to students, teachers and the institution to be taken into consideration to improve this area. Besides, bibliographic information has been added which helped to support the research.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Writing is a difficult, complex and a challenging process that affects not only native English speakers but also many students that learn English as a foreign or second language worldwide. This difficulty in writing reflects also the lack of interest from students regarding this area which leads them not to develop their writing skills.

Since writing is one of the four macro-skills that helps students to master and be proficient in a foreign language, this should be an important issue to be considered as Lee (2003, p, 112) asserts, “It is likely that most business and technical writing in the world is done in a second language”.

However, crafting a composition or a written task can become a difficult assignment for students. Deficiencies are obvious when they write. The writing process implies a wide range of cognitive, techniques and strategies of which students are mostly unaware. As a result, writing has become a neglected area which needs to be improved.

Also, the effectiveness of teachers’ writing process taught in class plays an important influence over students’ writing since writing has been defined as a complicated process that not only requires organization and review of ideas but also demand the correct use of grammar, vocabulary and rules of the written language. According to many specialists, writing is a process that involves five steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Each of these steps plays an important function through the writing process. So, how is the writing process effective over students from the twentieth level at CENIUES? Do they apply this writing process when writing a composition, paragraph, or any kind of writing task? So, it is important to highlight a reciprocal help (teachers-students) to accomplish proficient writing skills.

Due to the implications that this important skill requires in the acquisition of a second or a foreign language, it is necessary to carry out a research centered in determining the differences of English writing proficiency between adults and teens when they reach the twentieth level at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas de la Universidad de El Salvador* (CENIUES), demonstrating students’ difficulties.

Writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all students that are about to graduate from CENIUES English program. Despite learning English for many years, many of these students

remain weak in the English language, especially in their writing skills. However, students are seldom guided on the use of techniques in the process of writing that could help them to become good writers. Some teachers provide little guidance to their students on writing because they may have a poor understanding of their students' knowledge of writing. Thus, there is a crucial need for English teachers to better understand the techniques used by their students in their writing tasks. As for example when writing, do teachers notice about their students' techniques?

Moreover, about popular interest, many people may think that the younger the learner of a foreign language, the more effective the learning process and the better the outcome obtained. So, it is tempting to believe children are better second language learners than adults because their brains are specially organized to learn language, whereas those of adults are not. In this study, it has been taken into consideration two major groups from CENIUES: teens that comprehend from 13 to 17 years old and, adults from 18 years old to up. This comparative study will provide an overview about the influence of the age factor upon the success when acquiring a foreign language and its skills, especially in writing. There may be teens that have a high proficient level in writing while adults do not or vice versa. So, it is important to find out how real is this statement in the English courses at CENIUES.

In a nutshell, this research will help to know if writing process was implemented, even if the age factor is an indicator in the differences of writing proficiency between these two groups. This research will provide an important feedback to the Institution and teachers involved about their students' needs in the writing. So, this study will give answers to the next questions: Does English writing proficiency of students at CENIUES depend on the quality of the writing process that instructors teach? If not, what other factors influence over their writing performance? Do students apply any writing technique when composing an academic task? How can the age factor affect the English writing proficiency of students from the twentieth level at CENIUES?

2. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL

To identify the differences of the English writing proficiency between adults and teens students from the 20th level of English morning and afternoon regular courses at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas de la Universidad de El Salvador*.

SPECIFICS

- ✓ To verify if the age factor really influences the English writing proficiency of students from the 20th level at CENIUES.

- ✓ To reveal the principal and coordinators main concerns over their students English writing Proficiency at 20th level.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

General

Do factors such as teaching and age affect having the different levels of the English writing proficiency between adults and teens programs from the 20th level of English morning and afternoon regular courses at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas de la Universidad de El Salvador*?

Related Questions

- ✓ Does English writing proficiency of students at CENIUES depend on the quality of the writing process that professors teach?

- ✓ How can the age factor affect the English writing proficiency of students from 20th level at CENIUES?

- ✓ Do adults and teens students reach the English writing proficiency expected by the CENIUES authorities at the end of the program?

4. JUSTIFICATION

Writing has always been an important skill in English language acquisition. This importance is since it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary that educators strive to teach their students. It is the area in which learners need to be offered adequate time to develop their writing skill, so that they will be prepared to effectively communicate in real life as well as academic situations. However, without this skill, learners will not be able to communicate their thoughts with accuracy and effectiveness. But for reaching a good proficiency in writing it is necessary to learn how to excel in this area. It is for that reason that the researchers decided to investigate this situation at CENIUES.

This research is centered in determining the differences of the English writing proficiency between adults and teens that are studying the 20th level of English courses at CENIUES. The researchers decided to carry out this study in order to verify if the writing skill has been taught effectively or if there is a lack of awareness from teachers because, sometimes writing has been the most neglected skill developed in the different English courses. In addition, researches pretend to find out if the age factor can affect the English writing proficiency of the students from the 20th level.

Moreover, researchers want to contribute the institution to sort out the gaps presented by the students concerned to the writing skill, given that this type of research has never been done at CENIUES. So, the institution and teachers will be conscious about the findings obtained during this research. As a result, they will be able to implement the most suitable techniques for writing in order to help students; working on their weaknesses and strengths.

This study is important for the following reasons:

- Researchers will verify if the English writing process has been taught effectively or not in the CENIUES' English courses.

- Researchers will verify the influence of the age factor over the English writing proficiency of students from the 20th level at CENIUES.
- This research will benefit CENIUES' students and teachers to improve students' English writing skill.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

5. Historical Framework

The autosuggestion of the Foreign Language Department through the Special Academic Projects, such as Free Courses of English, French, German and Japanese, was born because of the need in the School of Arts and Sciences, to project itself academically to the Salvadoran society and at the same time, to obtain own capital in view of the needs that there were in the University. For that reason, it was taken the lead to offer a program of *Cursos Libres de Inglés*. The project began with a low number of groups in 1980 because of the initiative of Lic. Pedro Antonio Salazar. As the program got recognition inside and outside the university community because of its excellent quality, it increased in a way that led out to the creation of a new project named *Cursos de Inglés para Profesionales*.

In this project two type of students collaborated. Those who were doing their Social Service, and for that reason, they did not receive any salary or bonus. Also, those students that had already done their Social Service and have reached some experience, so the School through the agreement of the Board of Directors, hired them in the quality of direct support to the teaching with a modest salary.

The *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador* (CENIUES) began its activities at the end of the nineties with a group of professors from the Foreign Language Department as an initiative of the principal's Department. At that moment, the project was named: *Cursos libres de Inglés*, then *Cursos de Inglés para Profesionales* until the year 2000, when the Foreign Language Department took control of the administration of the project. In that year, the project was renamed with the agreement of the Board of Directors as: *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador*. The person in charge to restructure the project was Lic. Nicolás Ayala. He wrote the program and had the help of Licda.

Sara Méndez and Lic. Pedro Salazar. Their work in the project consolidated new foundations to a better functionality of the project. The very first professors to give English classes were Lic. Jorge Aguilar, Lic. César Guzmán and Lic. Matthew Alvarado. Moreover, they were in charge of many logistic aspects such as cleaning, reception, local (they imparted classes in small cabins belonging to Odontology building).

While the Project consolidates, the number of aspirants to join the courses grows; reaching a significant registration of three thousand during the period of 2000 to 2005. Nevertheless, the project faced some difficulties due to the lack of staff. At that time, workers were performing different charges. For example, while they were not teaching they had to register new students, keep the books, etc. During 2005, the project suffered a crisis due to some work-related problems. This situation obliged the temporal suspension of the courses, generating an environment of instability and a desertion of students. Situation that similar institutions profited.

At the beginning of April 2006, the Project was reopened. New coordinators took control of the administration with an approximated population of 700 students, distributed within the three categories that the Project has (Children, teens and adults). From then on, CENIUES has been growing, and now, the student population registered properly reaches an approximated of 6,000 students that are guided by 90 teachers. Moreover, the Project counts with a General Coordinator and 5 Deputy Coordinators in charge of each category.

This is, without any doubt, one of the biggest projects that the University of El Salvador possesses, directed by a staff with vision, which provides a positive image to the School of Arts and Sciences, at the University, and to the Salvadoran society. This project provides a space to the big social groups that do not have the opportunity to study a second language due to the lack of economic resources.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FREE COURSES AT CENIUES

El Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador offers Free Courses of English, French and Japanese. The English Courses are composed by 20 levels for adult and teen students, and 15 levels for kid's category. The French and Japanese courses have programmed coverage of 15 levels. The Center offers 5 modules per year and each one has duration of 32 hours provided with schedules from Monday through Thursday, the intensive courses, and Saturday with morning and afternoon sessions and Sunday courses with morning sessions.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF LEVELS THAT COVERS EACH CATEGORY (KIDS, TEENS AND ADULTS) OR A SPECIFIC LANGUAGE.

- English Program, kid category (from 8 to 12 years).

The program comprises 15 levels. It is provided one level per module that has duration of 2 months distributed in 8 weekends of 4 classroom hours to sum a total of 32 hours. The program is completed in a period of 3 years.

- English Program, teen category (from 13 to 17 years).

The program comprises 20 levels. It is provided one level per module that has duration of 2 months distributed in 8 weekends of 4 classroom hours to sum a total of 32 hours. The program is completed in a period of 4 years.

- English program, adult category (from 18 to up).

The program comprises 15 levels. It is provided one level by module, which has duration of 2 months distributed in 8 weekends of 4 classroom hours to sum a total of 32 hours. The program is completed in a period of 3 years.

- French program.

The French program is designed for teens and adults. The Program comprises 15 levels. It is provided one level per module, which has duration of 2 months distributed in 8 weekends of 4 classroom hours to sum a total of 32 hours. The program is completed in a period of 3 years.

- Japanese Program.

The program comprises 20 levels. It is provided to teens and adults in the modality of intensive courses or weekend courses. The weekend courses are provided one level per module, which has duration of 2 months distributed in 8 weekends of 4 classroom hours to sum a total of 32 hours. The program is completed in a period of 3 years. The intensive courses are provided with 2 levels per module from Monday through Thursday, with 2 classroom hours. The program is completed in a period of 2 years.

- Italian courses.

The program comprises 10 levels. Nowadays, it is provided only to adults with the modality of intensive courses. The program is completed in a period of 1 year.

6. Previous Research

If writing in the mother tongue is not easy, writing in a foreign language is not any easier. Therefore, reaching a high writing proficiency is not simple; it requires time and dedication from the writer. In writing, there is no room for misunderstanding and the message has to be clearly structured and organized. But what does proficiency means? What are the elements that linguistic proficiency consists of?

Particularly this concept is not easy to define. In the 70's proficiency was considered as the mainly equal to grammatical and lexical competence and that these two elements where enough to enable communication (Harley, Cummings, Allen & Swain, 1990:7-8). Whereas in our days proficiency can be understood as the interaction of a multiple set of elements such as grammar, vocabulary and sociolinguistically, communicative and cognitive skills in order to achieve communication. Hernández-Chavez, Burt and Dulay (Cummins, 1980:176) support this concept, thus they divided proficiency into three areas including linguistics components (phonetics, syntax, semantics and vocabulary) modality (comprehension and production) and sociolinguistic components (style, function, variety and domain).

However, after careful evaluation of the literature, it was found that there are few researches related with writing proficiency.

One of the studies that can be mentioned is the “International comparative study on English Proficiency in two secondary school settings” made by the University of Gavi. The main goal of this study was to compare the English writing proficiency of one class in the Basque Country and one in Sweden at the end of their compulsory education. Both classes took an essay test in which verb use, conjunction use, spelling and text length were measured. The findings were the expected because the Swedish students outperformed their Basque counterparts in almost every measured area.

Likewise, in China was performing another study in order to establish the relationship between University students' Chinese writing Proficiency and their English writing proficiency. The purpose of this study was to investigate the positive transfer of Chinese to 26 first- year University students English writing holistically and segmentally in the use of words grammar, coherence, content and organization. The result of the Pearson 5% significance level, indicating a

positive relationship between the Chinese writing and the English writing. Thus, it was concluded that the positive transfer of mother tongue can facilitate English writing.

Furthermore, the University - Souissi, Faculty of science of education, Rabat, Morocco has presented another study concerned with the study of the effect of English writing proficiency in the type and amount of errors produced by Moroccan EFL students. The participants in this study are first year letter Moroccan EFL students enrolled in “IbnBattouta” high school for the term 2008. Therefore, to meet the objectives of this study, 97 students participated in this study. The written test was the only instrument used. The results of the paper showed that the English proficiency in writing affects deeply the amount and type of errors made by Moroccan EFL students.

7. The writing Process

Writing is one of the four Macro-skills that help English learners to become proficient in a language, but it is necessary they learn how to excel in this area. According to Jules Renard (1864-1910) “writing is a way of talking without being interrupted” so learners have to know how this skill works; if not it will be difficult to reach a good writing proficiency.

Since, the need for communication has increased at an unimaginable speed due to the globalization process, EFL students are supposed to be able to write letters, e-mails, curriculums, text messages, etc. Nevertheless, writing has been defined as a complicated process that not only requires organization and review of ideas but also demands the correct use of grammar, vocabulary and rules of the written language.

According to many specialist writing is a process that involves five steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Each of these steps plays an important function through the writing process.

Pre- writing

In this step, the writer must think and brainstorm to get ideas. That’s where prewriting techniques come in, since are different methods of brainstorming that help to discover ideas. For instance: listing, clustering, fast writing and journaling. All these techniques help to generate topic ideas and support to develop those ideas. As Linus Pauling (1990) said “The best way to get a good idea is to get lots of ideas.”

Drafting

Drafting occurs when the writer put his ideas into sentences and paragraphs in order to have the topic sentence, the supporting details and concluding sentence. But it does not mean the draft will be perfect given that it can be modified if it is necessary. At this stage writers do not pay attention to spelling and other grammatical features.

Revising

At this stage writers are concentrated about their readers' needs and expectations. They make sure that the thesis statement is clear and they have clear topics sentence. They should revise their ideas and make the needed arrangement. They also have to check the unity and coherence.

Editing

In this step the writer looks at the fine points like capitalization, punctuation, verb use, spelling, quotations, organization, sentence fluency and word choice. The writer must be sure that the language is exact, concise and fresh.

Publishing

It is the last step; in here the author will share his work with an audience or a teacher.

As it can be expected, each of the previous steps is very useful at the moment of writing. Every step includes important information so, the writer can write a good composition.

The age factor

The question of whether there is an age factor in language development is a topic which gets wide interest and generates many opinions and debates. It can be considered to have an important influence on students when learning a second language.

With regard to popular interest, everyday conversations about child language continually refer to implicit age norms. How often does one hear remarks like “Talks very well for her age, doesn't she?” or “Nearly three years and he can hardly put two words together”. As for the age factor in second language learning, differences between younger and older L2 learners appear “...young children in suitable environments pick up a second language with little trouble, whereas adults seem to struggle ineffectively with a new language and to impose the phonology of their mother tongue on the new language (Nacnamara, 1973).

This assumption often derives from a distinctive element in the study of the age factor, the so-called Critical Period Hypothesis (henceforth CPH), predicting that if the acquisition of a foreign

language starts between the age of 2 and 12-13 (i.e. puberty), the process will be straightforward and the product will be complete, while individuals who begin their learning after this point will find the process considerably difficult and the final outcome will be incomplete. Even though the CPH constitutes a strong and recurrent research line within the SLA, at the same time it is a changing and controversial area in practice.

The original formulation of the CPH is based upon the work of the German-born American neurologist Eric Lenneberg (1967). This hypothesis implies that children have a special innate propensity for acquiring language that is determined by biological factors. This is based on the biological observation that the brain of a child is plastic whereas the brain of an adult is rigid and set. According to Lenneberg, during early childhood, language appears to be more spread out across both brain hemispheres, but as the child grows older the two hemispheres become increasingly specialized for certain functions, language gradually relocates, settling in the left one.

So it is tempting to believe children are better second language learner than adults because their brains are specially organized to learn language, whereas those of adults are not. This is the explanation of the Critical Period Hypothesis.

Thus, it has been prevalently assumed that age itself is a predictor on second language proficiency. The influence of age is assessed to be not only significant but even decisive on the degree of second language acquisition competence and performance attained.

If age indeed is a factor which determines upon the success in SLA- is there an optimal age to start learning a foreign language? It is often claimed that children are superior to adults, that is, that the younger the learner of a foreign language, the more effective the learning process and the better the outcome obtained.

8. HYPOTHESES

This research is conducted in order to verify or reject the following hypotheses.

- At the end of the 20th level teens students will reach the intermediate -high level based on the ACTFL writing proficiency guideline.
- At the end of the 20th level adults students will get the intermediate-mid level.
- The younger the learner is the more effective writing process obtained.
- Students use writing techniques while performing academic writing task.

9. VARIABLES

Independent

English writing proficiency

Proficiency can be understood as the interaction of a multiple set of elements such as grammar, vocabulary and sociolinguistically, communicative and cognitive skills in order to achieve communication. (*Villanueva, A. A comparative study on English writing proficiency*)

Dependent

20th level from CENIUES English program

Is the last level of English that CENIUES offers to the students and the expected English proficiency is the advance mid-level. (Guadalupe Martínez).

II. METHODOLOGY

10. Type of study

The research is based on the quantitative and qualitative study, since in a descriptive research both elements might be present. The research is quantitative because researchers measure the number of students that belongs to each of the levels in the ACTFL guideline in order to quantify the data as statistics; and qualitative because it is concerned with the quality of the study. The data were analyzed first qualitative and them quantitatively in terms of frequency orders.

11. Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive study. This type of study involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation. In this case, researchers determined the English writing proficiency between adults and teens program from the 20th level of the English courses at CENIUES. The researchers administrated a writing composition task in order to identify their proficiency. Also, researchers used the observation to have a complete view of the situation. After that, researchers made a comparison between the performance of teens and adults. The study reflects the level of writing proficiency that teens and adults get when they are about to finish the English program at CENIUES. The results were used as a statistic representation of the findings in the study.

12. Population

The population is the students that belong to the regular courses at CENIUES. In other words, those are the students who come to the English classes on Saturdays or Sundays. According to CENIUES register, 18 teen students were enrolled in the Saturday morning English courses. The other group of teen students was composed by 13 students that belong to Saturday afternoon. On the other hand, the adults group from the Saturday afternoon was composed by 21 students. Moreover, 10 adults students were signed in Sunday morning English courses. All these groups

were taken up the 20th level of English and the population was 31 students from the teen category and 31 students from the adult category, making 62 students as the total population.

13. Sampling

Since the researchers' purpose is to know the difference of English writing proficiency between adults and teens of the twentieth level of the English program at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas de la Universidad de El Salvador* (CENIUES), it is required to take a sample population of adults and teens from the English regular courses. It means the courses imparted on Saturdays and Sundays. So, the two existent groups of adults and the two unique groups of teens that are coursing the 20th level have been taken as the total sample. It means that the whole universe was studied according to the stated objectives. Nevertheless, while taking the samples not all the groups were completed. Some students were absented the day of the composition task. For instance, teen students from Saturday afternoon originally were 13 but only 12 students were present during the sampling. The same phenomenon occurred with adults since in the group of Saturday afternoon 4 students missed the composition task, and 1 student from the Sunday morning was absent. Despite this, the total population of teens Saturday morning could be tested completely. To sum up, the total sampling was 56 students; 30 students from teen's category and 26 students from adult's category. Teen students are between 13 and 17 years old and adult students from 18 years old to up.

14. Sampling technique

This research uses a type of Non-Random Sampling Design, named Consecutive Sampling. This type of sampling seeks to include all accessible subjects as part of the sample. This sample technique is considered as the best of all non-random/ non-probability samples because it includes all subject that are available that makes the sample a better representation of the entire population.

15. Research techniques and instruments

The collection of data is a very important part of a research project. In this research, it has been taken as an instrument a writing composition task. This instrument is an activity which let us to know about the English writing proficiency of adults and teens of the twentieth level of the English program at CENIUES. Researchers provided students a piece of paper containing three different topics, so they could choose the one they felt more comfortable with. This instrument was carried out in the students' English classroom.

The researchers will focus on ACTFL Writing Proficiency Guidelines, to determine the English writing proficiency of adults and teens from the last level of English courses at CENIUES. This guideline provides the criteria from the different levels of writing proficiency and is divided into the following way: distinguished, superior, advance, intermediate and novice. Moreover, these levels are subdivided in low, mid, and high. Each level describes the tasks that writers must handle at each one, such as task and function, accuracy, text type and sentence type. It also presents the limits writers encounter when attending to function at the next higher major level. In addition, this guideline is used to describe written texts either presentational (essay, reports, letters) or interpersonal (instant messaging- email communication, texting)

Besides, it was useful to implement an interview to the principal and coordinators of this institution to find out about the expectations on the students' English writing skills. This interview was structured with semi-open questions.

16. THESIS PLAN

- 1- The researchers organized the data into two different categories: teens and adults.
- 2- The analysis of the writing English composition task was focused on function and task, accuracy, text type, and sentence type. These elements were taken from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which provides a general overview about the students' performance for the different English writing proficiency level in the guideline.
- 3- Each writing composition task was carefully reviewed in order to check grammar, lexicon, orthography, punctuation, coherence and unity. Researchers started by analyzing classifying teen's data, so that they could be located in one of the English proficiency level according to their writing performance. Then, researchers analyzed and classified adult's data using the same process of teens.
- 4- Since researchers are working with the population of the 20th level they should divided it into the correspondent class groups. The first group was teen students belonging to Sunday course from 8:00am to 12:00pm. The second group was teen students pertaining to Saturdays course from 1:30pm to 5:00pm. The third group was adult students fit in Saturday course from 1:30pm to 5:00pm. The last group was adults students allied to Sunday course from 8:00am to 12:00pm.
- 5- Having arranged the groups, the researchers started by counting the amount of the students that belongs to each of the English writing proficiency levels. In this case, novice high, intermediate low, intermediate mid, intermediate high and advanced low.
- 6- The results were presented as statistic by using graphics. They showed the precise quantity of students for each writing proficiency level in every single group. They also showed some difference and similitudes between the groups.

- 7- An interpretation of the data was made after having the data. So that, researchers explained the reasons why they obtained that result.
- 8- Furthermore, each of the components in the evaluation criteria was measured through the use of graphics, in order to quantify the students English writing proficiency level in the categories; task and functions, accuracy, text type and sentence type.
- 9- Then researchers analyzed the results to determine the strengths and weaknesses presented by the students in their writing compositions.
- 10- The researchers then, provided some explanations and suggested some hypothesis as to why these students were placed in a particular level of the evaluation criteria.
- 11- Finally, a comparison between adults and teens was made in order to verify if the age factor and the quality of the writing process affect the English proficiency level of the students.

III. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Adults Saturday Afternoon

The instruments were given to every student. Then researchers read aloud the respective instructions to be followed. Even it was asked if everything was clear or if they needed to be explained again. In order to accomplish the task, it was given 35 minutes. The task consisted on writing 3 paragraphs about one topic selected by the student. Three different topics were given: What are the reasons you decided to study English? If you won the lottery, what would you do? And, your plans after graduating from the English program. One paragraph would be the introduction, the second one would be the body and the third one would be the conclusion. Each paragraph should contain at least eight sentences related to the chosen topic. In this way, it would be possible to evaluate their proficiency when writing according to the ACTFL proficiency guideline.

Immediately, after students were given the paper task, they started to work on it. They chose a topic and wrote 3 paragraphs. While writing only 1 student asked about if it was needed to write one paragraph by each topic or one topic would be for the three paragraphs. Most of the students comprehended the instructions and 20 minutes were enough for them to complete the composition task.

Some relevant aspects to be mentioned are: One student's attitude was a little bit negative demonstrating a certain lack of interest in participating in the composition task. However, most of them were willing to help. Also, while accomplishing this activity, it was observed that the majority of students used free- writing as a technique. Another important point is that none of the students checked their compositions before handing it in to researchers. Moreover, it was seen that some students were asking for help to their classmates next desk related to vocabulary or any other doubt.

Adults Sunday morning

The first thing that researchers did was to introduce themselves to the students and explain the reason why they were there. Then, the instruments were given to every student. After, researchers read aloud the respective instructions to be followed. Even it was asked if everything was clear or if they needed to be explained again. To accomplish the task, it was given 35 minutes.

Immediately they started to work on it. They chose a topic and wrote 3 paragraphs about it. Most of the students comprehended the instructions and 30 minutes were enough for them to complete the composition task.

Most of the student used the free writing technique since they went straight to write. Besides, some of them looked confused about what to write and how to develop their ideas in the composition. Even though, other students used electronic dictionaries. On the other hand, the attitude showed during the activity was positive.

Teens Saturday morning

In this group, researchers started by introducing themselves to the students and exposing the intention of the activity. The instruments were given to every student. Then researchers read aloud the respective instructions to be followed. Even it was asked if everything was clear or if they needed to be explained again. In order to accomplish the task, it was given 35 minutes.

Immediately they started to work on it. They chose a topic and wrote 3 paragraphs about it. Most of the students comprehended the instructions and 20 minutes were enough for them to complete the composition task.

During the activity, one student approached to the researcher to notify she made a mistake and she would start the composition again. Moreover, students asked each other about doubts related to the composition and vocabulary. Besides, 4 students seemed to be thoughtful during the composition task trying to find the right way.

Teens Saturday afternoon

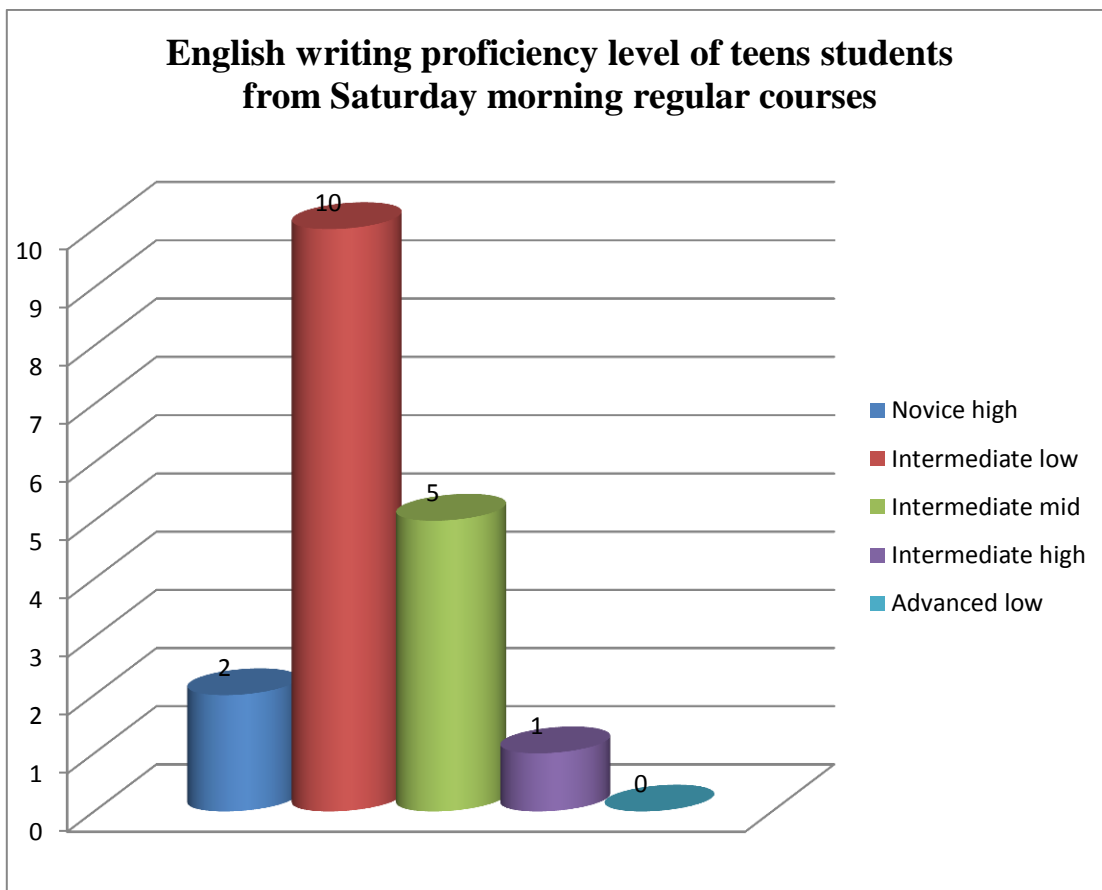
Researchers began by introducing themselves and giving the purpose of their presence in the classroom. The instruments were given to every student. Then researchers read aloud the respective instructions to be followed. Even it was asked if everything was clear or if they needed to be explained again. To accomplish the task, it was given 35 minutes. Immediately they started to work on it. They chose a topic and wrote 3 paragraphs about it. Most of the students comprehended the instructions and 25 minutes were enough for them to complete the composition task.

During the task, some students requested some help to their teacher in charge about vocabulary and others made use of dictionaries. In addition, the teacher asked when researchers would provide the grades to the students but they clarified to him that the composition task was not evaluated. On other hand, students were willing to collaborate with the researchers since they thought they would be evaluated.

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

To continue, it will be exposed the presentation and analysis of the results. These are presented in graphics that contain the different levels of the English writing proficiency of adults and teens students from the twentieth level of English courses at CENIUES.

The first four graphics refer to the English writing proficiency level reached by two teens students groups and two 2 adults students groups. Then, one graphic has the general comparison of the English writing proficiency level between adults and teens students. Moreover, there are two more graphics related to the writing proficiency criteria used by researchers which provide the comparison between the two groups of teens and other two that display the comparison between the two adults group. The last graphic illustrates a general comparison between teens and adults' category referring to the aspects immersed in the English writing proficiency criteria likely task and functions, accuracy, text type and sentence type.



The graphic shows that 2 students reached the novice high sub-level of the English writing proficiency. Meanwhile, 10 students got the intermediate low sub-level. Furthermore, 5 students arrived to the intermediate mid sub-level. Also, 1 student achieved the intermediate high sub-level. Finally, no one was able to attain the advanced low sub-level.

There were two students who were placed in the novice high sub-level. Given that, their compositions presented problems in sentence structure, lack of vocabulary, basic errors in punctuation and spelling. One of the biggest problems was the coherence because they could partially communicate their ideas to readers showing some difficulties to write them in a coherent form.

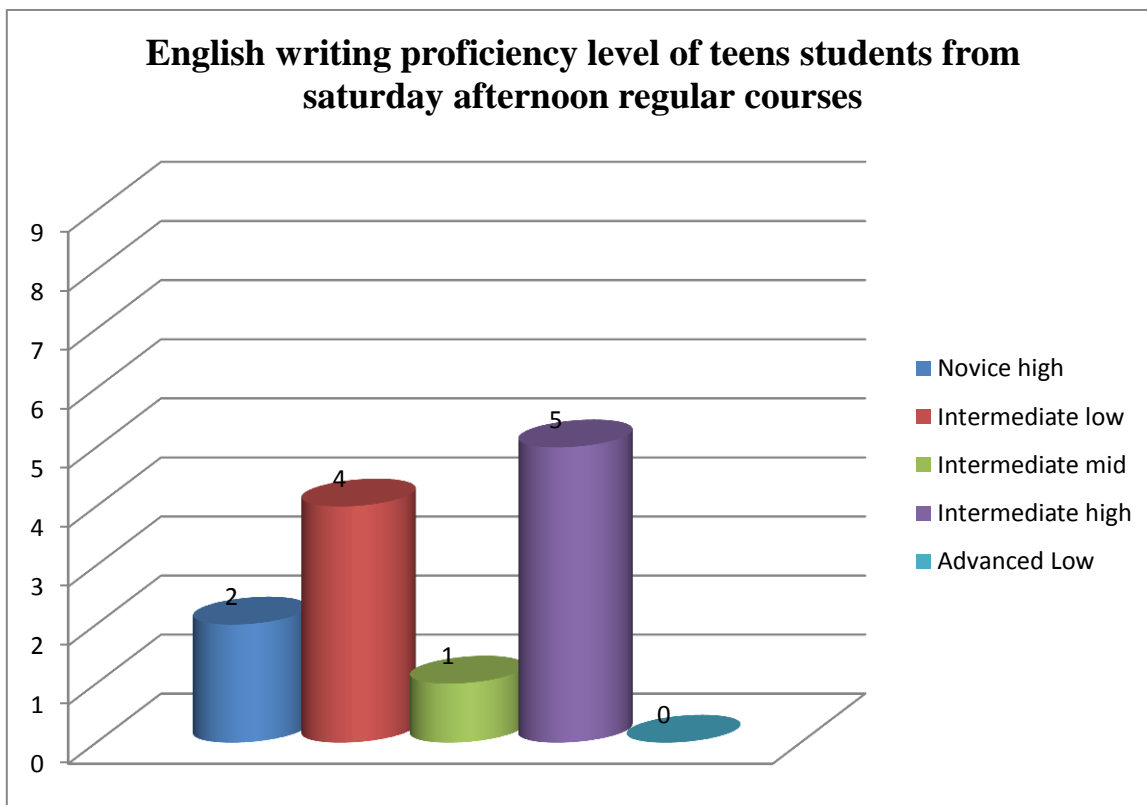
Ten students were able to attain the intermediate low sub-level. According to it, they were able to create simple statements based on familiar topics, use of simple and compound sentences, basic use of vocabulary and sentence structure. But, as it was previously mentioned, researchers found

some basic mistakes in their writing product such as misspelled words, grammar errors, word choice and punctuation. These mistakes made them to remain at this sub-level and not to past to the next one.

Furthermore, five students could arrive to the intermediate mid sub-level. These students made a good use of different time frames through their compositions, use of connectors, use of first and second conditional and simple and compound sentences. Despite this, there were some few errors in accuracy (grammatical errors, spelling and punctuation) that led them to get this sub-level.

Moreover, only one student could reach the intermediate high sub-level. This student wrote coherent ideas related to his own experience by using the appropriate time frame. Since the writing composition does not have too many mistakes that can affect the quality of the writing product he could get the current sub-level.

Lastly, none of the students could get the advanced low sub-level, so that the requirements for achieving it were highest and more complex to the students.



The results indicate that 2 students got the novice high and 4 students attained the intermediate low sub-level. While, only 1 student could arrive at the intermediate mid sub-level. 5 students obtained the intermediate high sub-level. In the case of the advance low sub-level, none of the students was able to reach it.

The results of this group indicate that few students reached the novice high sub-level, since the compositions presented by the students showed remarkable errors. These errors were mostly about: inadequate use of time frames, problems in sentence structures, basic error in spelling and wrong use of capitalization. All these errors caused that the ideas were hardly to understand causing that researchers placed their compositions in this sub-level.

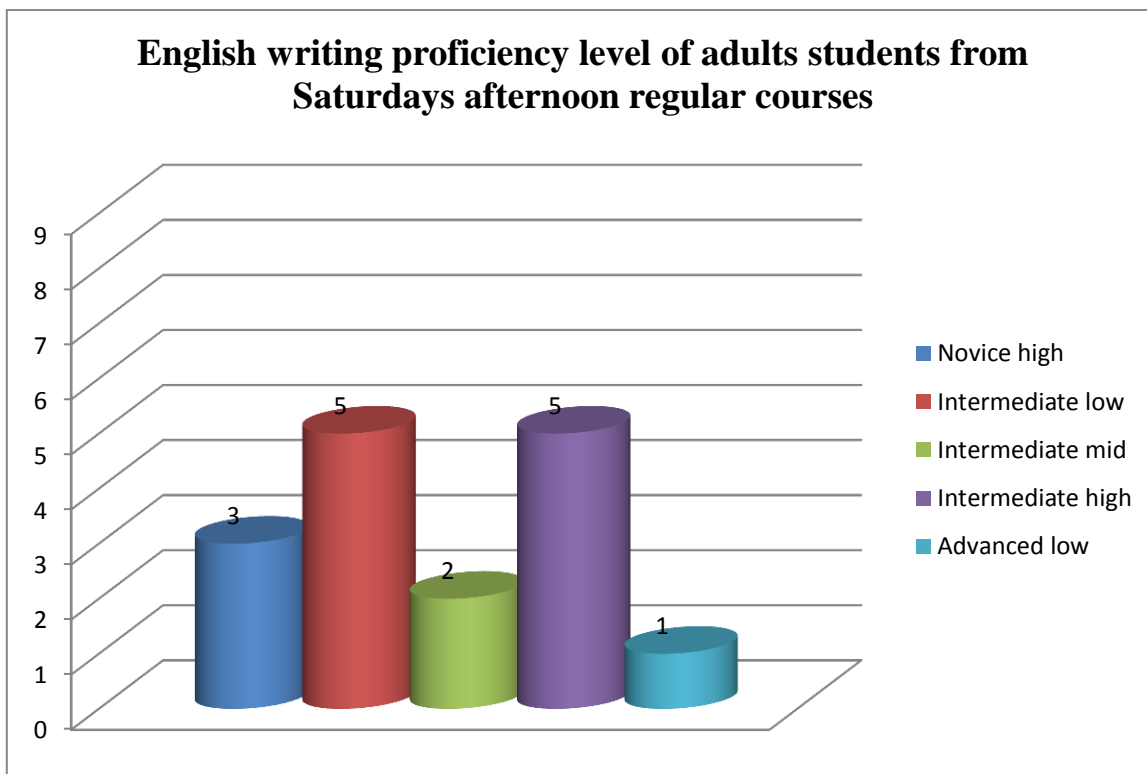
Furthermore, one of the sub-levels with most students was the Intermediate low. The students from this group were placed there, since their compositions presented basic control while writing statements about familiar topic. Nevertheless, their compositions showed some errors such as:

basic errors in grammar, spelling, lack of vocabulary and the inadequate use of punctuation marks.

On the other hand, only one student attained the intermediate mid sub-level. Her writing composition task, although was good, it still had some mistakes. For example: it exposed clearly the ideas of the writer, making evident that she was able to talk about personal preferences and familiar topics. Also, the student could produce simple, compound and complex sentences. But, the composition displayed a couple of errors like: the use of false cognates, spelling mistakes and few errors related to the inappropriate use of time frames.

In contrast, the sub-level with the largest number of students was the intermediate high. These students could communicate very clear their ideas. They showed ability while talking about familiar topics and the use of simple, compound, complex and loose sentences. Nevertheless, they still presented some error in the use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and word order.

Finally, no one from this group could get the advanced low sub-level which was the highest level of English writing proficiency criteria.



The graphic data represents that 3 students from this group obtained the novice high sublevel. While, 5 students reached out the intermediate low sub-level. Moreover, 2 students got the intermediate mid sub-level. In addition, 5 students achieved the intermediate high sub-level, and only 1 student could attain the advanced low sub-level.

Since it is showed in the graphic, it is notable that the most highlighted sub-levels are the intermediate low and the intermediate high. But it is important to analyze why these students were placed in the sub-levels they got.

The graphic data shows that four students got the novice high sub-level. Through their compositions was possible to observe the use of simple ideas and vocabulary, also the difficulties to communicate their ideas to the reader, many word order errors, misspelling of words, incoherence and punctuation. They could manifest basic writing needs but the mistakes mentioned before made their compositions be evaluated in the novice high sub-level.

In addition, five students were placed in the intermediate low sub-level. These students could perform some writing skills such as creation of statements, simple and compound sentences, use

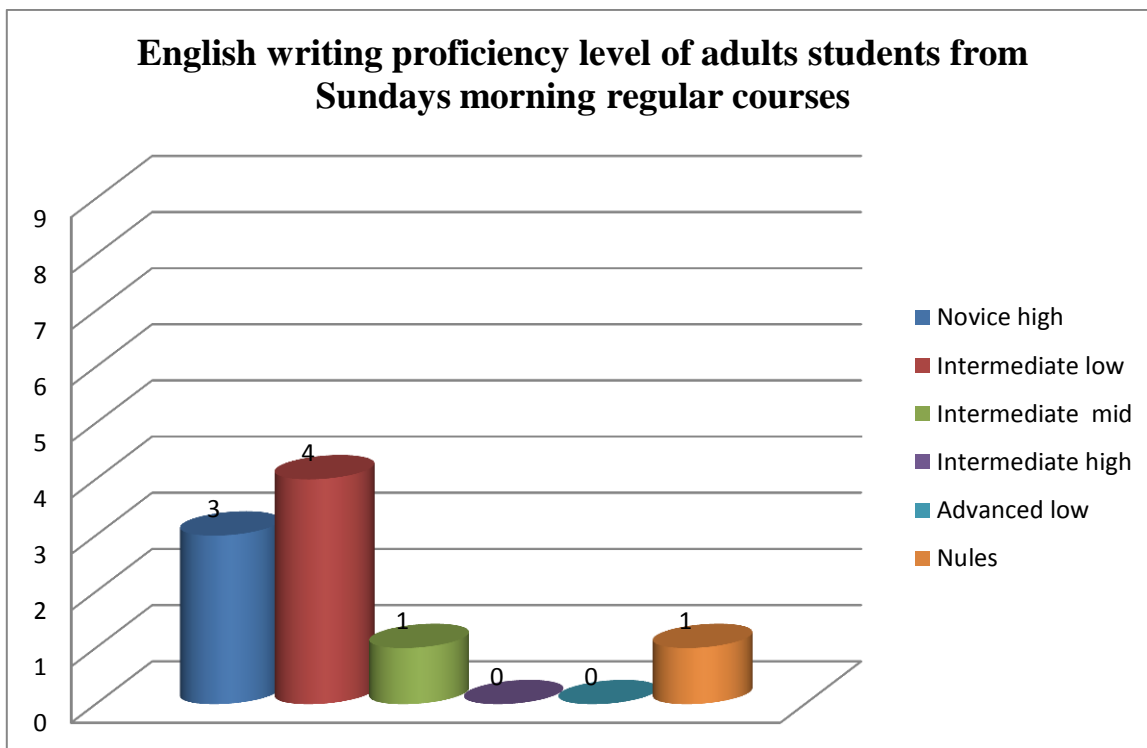
of learned vocabulary, basic word order; however, there were some basic errors in grammar, word choice, misspelled words, punctuation and in some cases, losing ideas that led researchers to place them in this sub-level.

Also, we find two students evaluated in the next sub-level, the intermediate mid. In their writing, they proved they can write short and simple compositions and different time frames, use of basic sentence structure, vocabulary and more coherent ideas to be understood by any reader. Even that they could present some mistakes related to accuracy like spelling, word choice, punctuation and grammar but they were less than others.

The graphic represents five students who were able to reach the intermediate high sub-level. Most of them showed a more substantial composition task. They were able to attain a simple summary related to their own experiences (related to the topics), use of different time frames, use of strong and connected ideas, they followed the given instructions correctly, few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. Since they could make a good development in their writing, they were evaluated in this sub-level.

Nevertheless, it was possible for one student, from this group, to deserve the advanced low sub-level, according to the criteria used by researchers, the highest sub-level. The writing sample indicates a better use of major time frames, better control of ideas, coherent and contrasting sentences, limited cohesive devices, no redundancy between lines, vocabulary, grammar and style like the spoken language, use of the most type of sentences (simple, compound, complex). The intention through its lines can be well understood by readers.

In a nutshell, this manifests that the major sub-levels performed in the English writing proficiency of adults from Saturdays afternoon regular courses were the intermediate low and the intermediate high since these were the ones that got the highest number of students (5 students at each one). The other notable sub-level was the novice high which points a high number of errors in their writing task. Whereas two students performed an intermediate mid and only one from this group could get the advanced low sub-level demonstrating a good control in their compositions.



The data demonstrate that 3 students got the novice high sub-level. Also, 4 students reached the intermediate low sub-level. In addition, 1 student arrives to the intermediate high sub-level. Moreover, none of the students obtained the intermediate mid sub-level and in the same way nobody was able to get the advanced low sub-level. However, in this group 1 student instrument was taken as null since the student did not follow the instructions correctly. Besides, the writing product was not related to any topic provided by researchers

As it is presented, the major sub-level obtained in the adult students from Sundays morning regular courses in the composition task was the Intermediate Low sub-level. But it is useful to find out why these students have reached the sub-level they have.

The graphic shows that, three students got the Novice High sub-level. This sub-level suggests students are able to meet basic practical writing needs, communicate their intentions and write ideas in a simple form. But, most of the mistakes done by these three students were misspelled words, word order choice, errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, lack of vocabulary and capitalization. In addition, it was notable there were some difficulties to write and organize

coherent ideas through their compositions presented which let researchers to place them in the current sub-level.

Four students obtained the Intermediate Low sub-level from the same adult group. According to this sub-level, students are aimed to create statements, use of basic vocabulary, sentence structures, basic word order and they can handle simple and compound sentences. All these criteria were demonstrated by these four students but, it appeared some basic mistakes in accuracy (grammar, word choice, spelling and punctuation) that placed them in this sub-level.

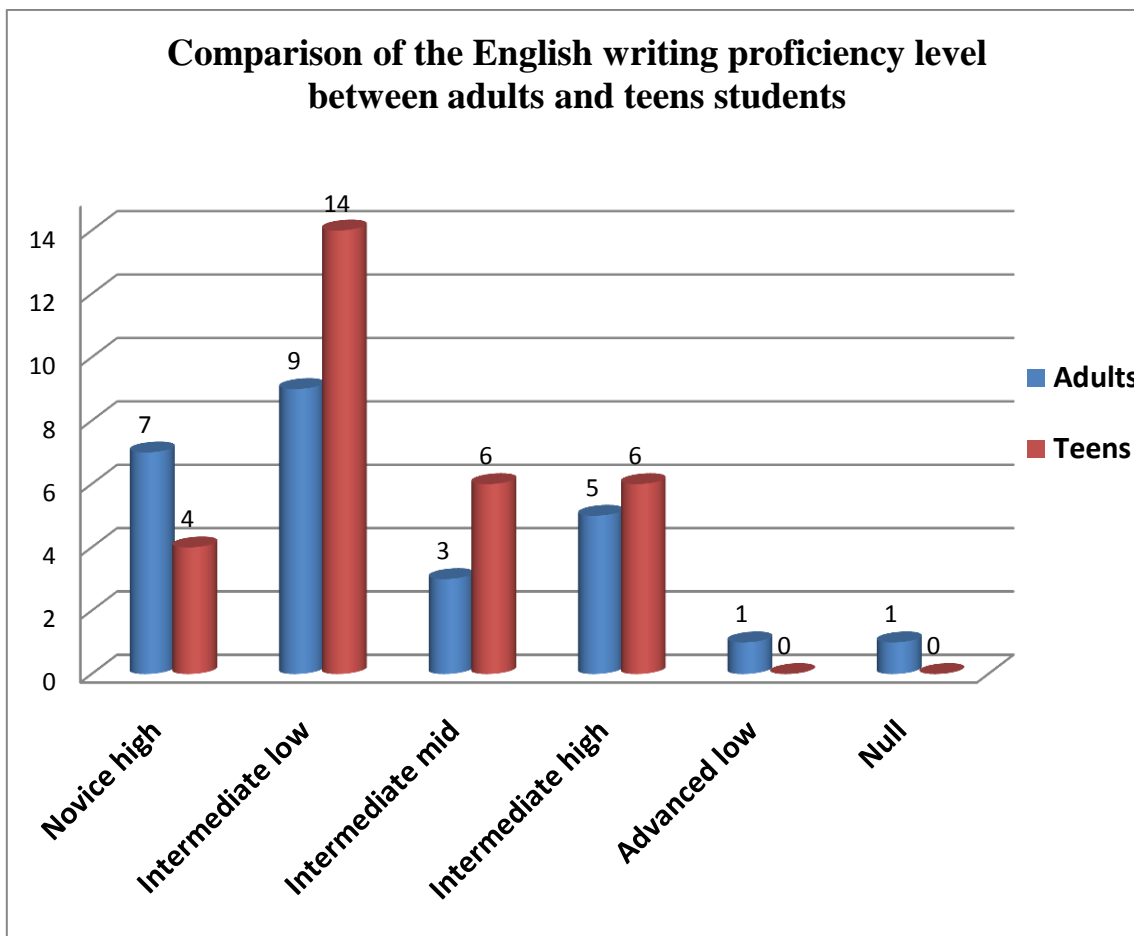
Only one student was able to reach the intermediate mid sub-level. It means that this student could perform a short and simple composition using present tense and some other tense frames, a basic sentence structure, the vocabulary and writing style like the spoken language. These points were important, even, he could have reached the next sub-level but, there were some basic mistakes and deficiencies in accuracy and sentence type criteria that led researchers to place him in this sub-level.

Moreover, as it is seen, nobody was able to attain the intermediate high and advanced low sub-levels because any student was able to demonstrate the respective requirements expected at each sub-level. For instance, the intermediate high sub-level suggest that the student should write compositions and summaries related to his/her experiences; his vocabulary, grammar and style make reference to the spoken language and, the use of different sentence types (simple, compound, complex, so on) in their composition tasks. Whereas, in the advanced low, students would demonstrate the ability to use major time frames with a good control of aspect; use of cohesive devices, avoid redundancy, use of coherent sentences to combine them into texts of paragraphs and, use of major sentence types correctly.

However, it was identified an instrument which did not fill the requirements to be taken into account as a sample. This was annulated due to the student did not follow the given instructions correctly. He might not be interested in helping researchers to accomplish the activity. Therefore, this student paid more attention in finishing the assignment than in writing a good and structured one.

So, the majority of students have the intermediate low and novice low sub-levels, given that they presented more common errors in their compositions. In contrast, other students showed a better

writing proficiency in their compositions since one of them got the intermediate mid. Nevertheless, none of this group was able to obtain the intermediate high and the advanced low sub-levels. Finally, there was one student instrument which was taken as null.



The present results are the final total of the four sampling groups. Two belong to the teens' category and the other two groups to the adults' category. Having an overview of the total results from the categories, it is possible for researchers to analyze the probable causes which made students to arrive to a certain sub-level.

One of the first things that can be highlighted is that either adults or teens have the majority of students in the intermediate low sub-level. This could be due to the lack of application of writing techniques. Since the majority of students went straight to write without making use of any writing technique such as brainstorming or check list, that could help them to arrange their ideas in a logical sequence. Another important point is that none of the students checked their compositions before handing it in to researchers. Consequently, they were not able to realize if they have committed mistakes related to grammar, spelling, punctuation and so on. These types of mistakes were identified by researchers which let them to place those students in the respective

level. If they had revised their compositions before handing them in, they would have gotten a better writing proficiency.

Another relevant aspect is that more adult students have obtained the novice high sub-level than teen students. This was because of the lack of vocabulary presented in their composition tasks. Researchers observed when some students were asking for help to their classmates or, in other cases, they made use of dictionaries to look for a determined word that can fit with their ideas. However, it does not mean that teen students were excluded of doing these mistakes, but they did them less than adults. Besides, referring to the coherence, both groups presented difficulties for developing their ideas. Some of them looked confused about what to write and others did not write coherent paragraphs. As a result, it was harder for researchers to understand the message what students wanted to transmit.

Something else to mention is that both groups almost get the same percentage in the intermediate high sub-level. It seemed that their composition tasks filled in a certain way, the parameters needed at this sub-level. These two groups were able to show a better control of grammatical aspects, organization of ideas; time frame and vocabulary which need to be handle at this sub-level.

It was reflected that some students who have reached this current sub-level have already received some type of English teaching or have studied in other places (according to what some students shared in their writings). This factor could have been an influence over their results, given that they have acquired a better lexical fields and reinforcement on grammatical topics previously. Despite of showing a good control of these aspects, they also demonstrate some failures that were not so significant but without these one, they might pass to the next sub-level.

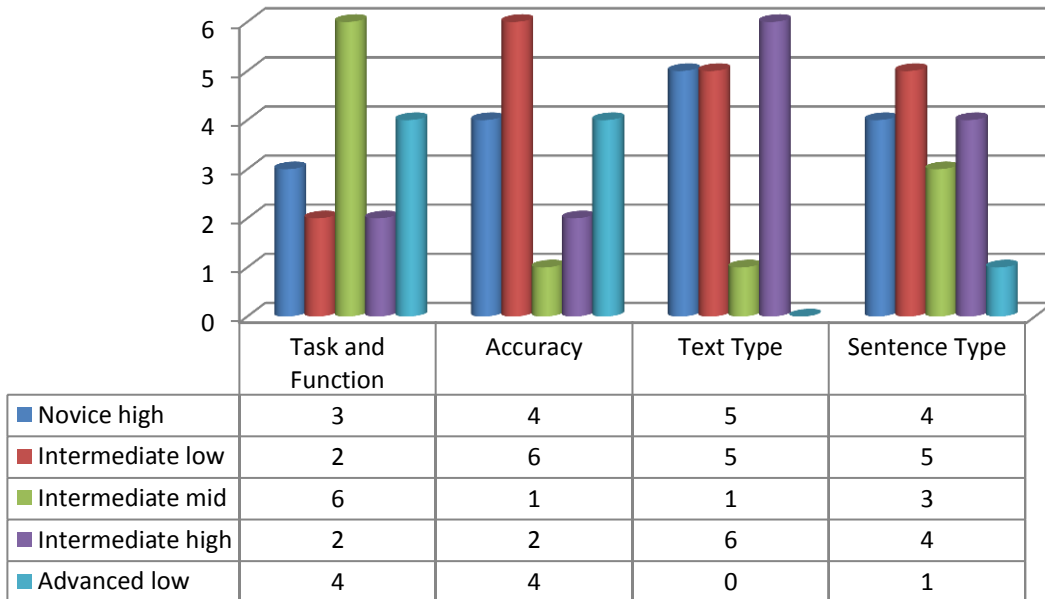
A particular point to take into consideration is that in the teens' category, they obtained the same percentage in the intermediate high (20%) and the intermediate mid (20%) sub-levels. In contrast, adults' category reached a lower percentage in the intermediate mid (11%). The students sampling denoted some deficiencies that probably were adhered to the students since schooling years. One of these students manifested that he has a lot of problems in the English subject at high school, so he failed many times, that issue motivated him to start studying English at

CENIUES in order to improve and get better grades. Spite of all, they possess certain abilities in translating thoughts into words and most of their ideas could be understood by researches.

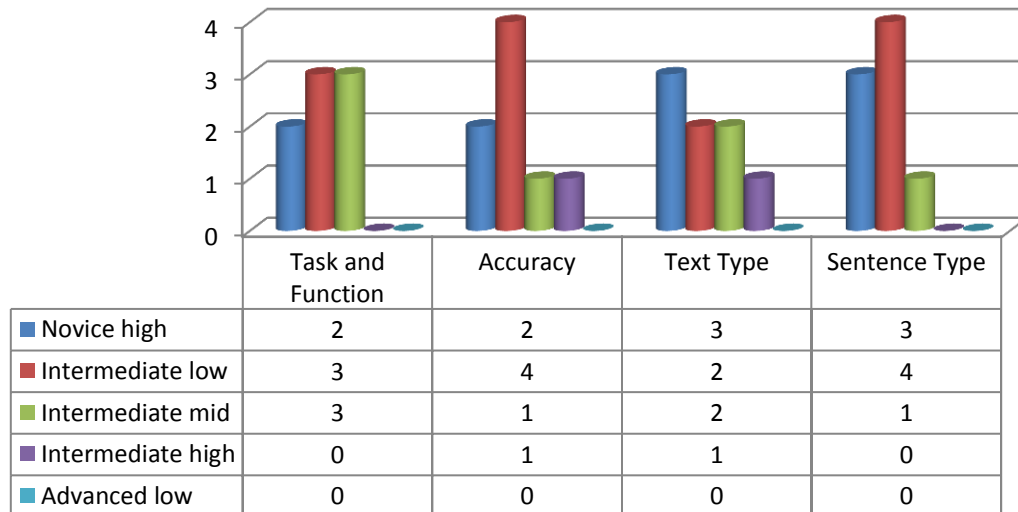
It is necessary to remark that only one student who belongs to the adult category was able to reach the advanced low sub-level, whereas anyone from the teen category was not. The advanced low student`s sampling did a very good job on writing. She made use of well-organized ideas; her composition has a recognizable introductory, body and concluding paragraphs with contrasting thoughts. She presented few mistakes in spelling that did not affect her writing performance.

The last aspect to point out is that one of the instruments sampling from the adults` category was annulated due to the student did not follow the instructions correctly. Besides, the writing product was not related to any topic provided by researchers. In fact, he wrote the first thing that came to his mind. This student not only was disrespectful with researchers but also with the institution he represents. His instrument said that he loved Batman, that if you want to buy Pokémon toys you can go near El Salvador del Mundo because in that place there is a store that sells those toys, even he told researchers not to be upset because of what he wrote in the writing. In that way, he wrote many others incoherent things that did not contribute to the research.

Proficiency criteria of adults students from Saturday afternoon English courses



Proficiency criteria of adults students from Sunday morning English courses



As it was explained before, these graphics show the aspects of the proficiency criteria as well as the number of the students that belong to each of the criteria with the respective level of English writing proficiency.

Through the study of the results, researchers found some irregularities that were noticeable to point out. It is interesting to see how adult students from Saturday afternoon course reached different sub-level in task and function and text type, intermediate mid and intermediate high respectively. Nevertheless, in accuracy and sentence type, students got the same sublevel, intermediate low. Meanwhile, adult students from Sunday morning course arrived to the intermediate low sub-level in task and function, accuracy and text type. The only criterion which had the novice high sub-level was text type. These differences between both groups make researchers think about possible factors that influenced the performance of each group since their results differed among them.

Concerning to task and function criteria, the two groups could get the intermediate mid as the highest sub-level. However, something relevant to mention is that Sunday students got the same number of students in the intermediate low and intermediate mid sub-levels. But, they could not arrive to the major level, those students stayed in the lower ones. On the other hand, in the case of Saturday morning group, they got a considerable number of students in the major sub-level as intermediate high and advanced low, placing them as the group with the best performance. For this reason, researchers consider that those who obtained better results are the ones that have practiced with topics related to personal experiences, daily routines and personal preferences in classes. Although, those topics are more practiced in the speaking area than in writing. This indirectly helped them to become aware about what and how to express their ideas while writing.

Related to Accuracy, the results displayed in the graphic exhibit that both adult student groups got a highest representation in Intermediate Low sub-level. In view of this fact, most of the half demonstrated to be in a low level with respect to this criterion since they still present some basic errors in grammar, word choice, spelling and punctuation in their writing compositions. Even though, the two groups performed the same low sub-level (Intermediate Low), it is important to remark that Saturday afternoon students could get better results placing some of their students in the major sub-levels (Intermediate High and Advanced Low); however, some of the Sunday

morning students could arrive only to the Intermediate Mid and Intermediate High with the same representation, except for the Advanced Low, in which nobody could get to.

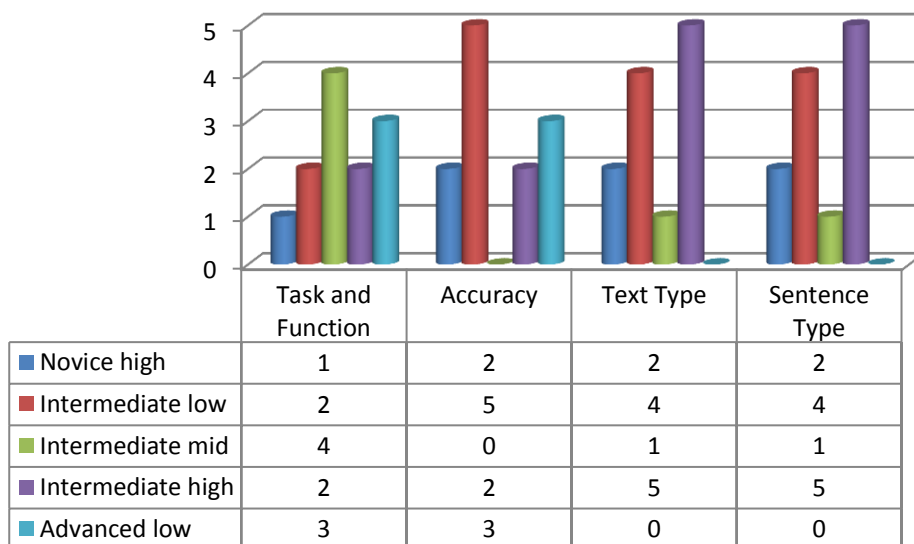
It is interesting for researchers to see, among these results, there was a better control of accurate aspects by Saturday afternoon students than Sunday morning students. So what could be some aspects that influenced in this notable difference between these two groups?

Possibly, students do not have enough practice in writing what would help them to develop and master different aspects, in this case, accuracy. If these students are not motivated to write, they might avoid doing it and if they do not do it, they would write without taking care about the mistakes presenting in their tasks. Moreover, if students do not have a control of their writing tasks they will continue making the same mistakes instead of improving.

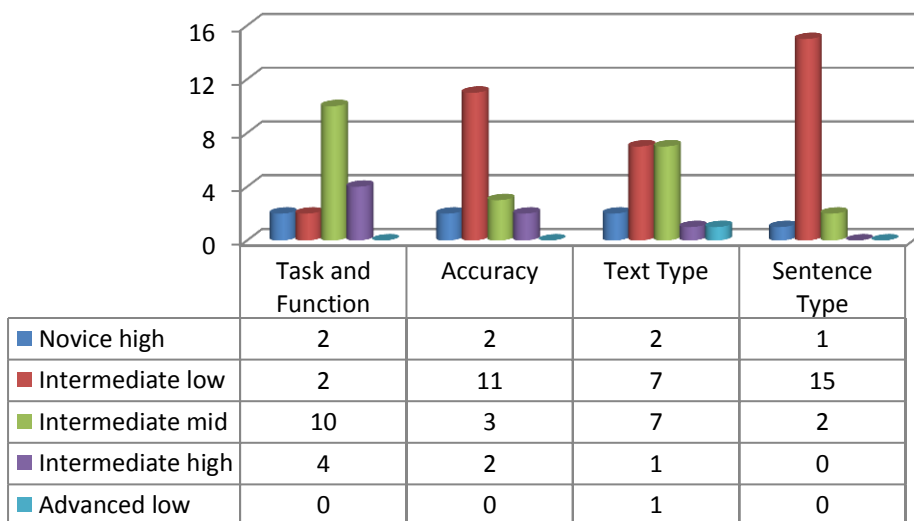
In the text type criterion, the results denoted that none of the groups could arrive to the advanced low sub-level. Even, the Saturday afternoon group could reach the intermediate high sub-level as the highest. In contrast, the Sunday group got as the highest sub-level the novice high. It makes researches believe that the writing skill is not being taken as important as it should be since most of the teachers focus their classes mostly in speaking. It does not mean that they do not work the writing skill, but nowadays speaking has increased its importance due to the globalization. Therefore, writing has been place in a second or third range in the teaching field.

The last criteria is the sentence type, it is evident the variety of the results in these groups because the adult group from Saturday afternoon obtained the advanced low sub-level as the highest but the adult Sunday group got the intermediate mid sub-level. This suggests that the group with better results were able to use a variety of sentence types that were correctly punctuated and that allows the passage of the message sent by the writers.

Proficiency criteria of teens students from Saturday afternoon English courses



Proficiency criteria of teens students from Saturday morning English courses



These graphics exhibit the aspects of the proficiency criteria that were taken as the parameters to know the English writing proficiency of students from teens' category. It contains the number of students that belong to the task and functions, accuracy, text type and sentence type criteria. Each of these criteria are divided in; novice high, intermediate low, intermediate mid, intermediate high and advanced low sub-levels. In other words, students were placed in the respective sub-level in concordance to what they wrote in their composition tasks.

Researchers noticed some remarkable aspects that called their attention. It was observed that teen students from Saturday afternoon got better results in text type and sentence type criteria reaching the Intermediate high sub-levels. But, what about task, function and accuracy criteria? Related to those, they got different results, performing two sub-levels which were not the same. In task and function, they obtained the intermediate mid sub-level and in accuracy the intermediate low sub-level. While, teen students from Saturday morning demonstrate to have a constant balance among the criteria's aspects. In accuracy, text type and sentence type criteria, students acquired the intermediate low sub-level and only one in the task and function criteria arrived to the intermediate mid. According to these, researchers wonder why these two groups differ in their results. What could have influenced on this?

Making reference to the task and function criterion, researchers found out those teen students from Saturday afternoon had obtained the highest sub-level, in this case intermediate high and advanced low. In contrast, the teen students from Saturday morning had gotten the intermediate high sub level as the highest, given that nobody was able to accomplish this criterion at the advanced low sub-level. That let researchers know that those students from the afternoon group exposed a better development in writing, particularly compositions related to personal preferences, daily routines or personal experiences by using the appropriate time frame with some control. It exists the possibility that some of these students may present a better control of this aspect, because as they shared in their composition, they had a previous knowledge about English.

Talking about accuracy, researchers could observe that the same phenomenon happened because teen students from Saturday afternoon got a higher representation in the intermediate high and advanced low sub-level than teen students from Saturday morning. Even though, morning students group showed an important percentage in the intermediate mid sub-level that was not

enough to over pass the afternoon students group. Concerning to the above results, researchers speculate that probably these students do not receive the required emphasis in the writing skill, but in speaking. According to CENIUES adults' coordinator, the teen program has some writing assignments for the students, however it is not as deep as it could be, because what the students need is mostly to communicate orally but of course it does not mean that teachers do not assign writing homework. Thus, researchers considered that the book used in the teens program could limit the practice of the writing because through the practice students would be aware about grammar, spelling, word choice and punctuation mistakes that consequently affect their writing performance.

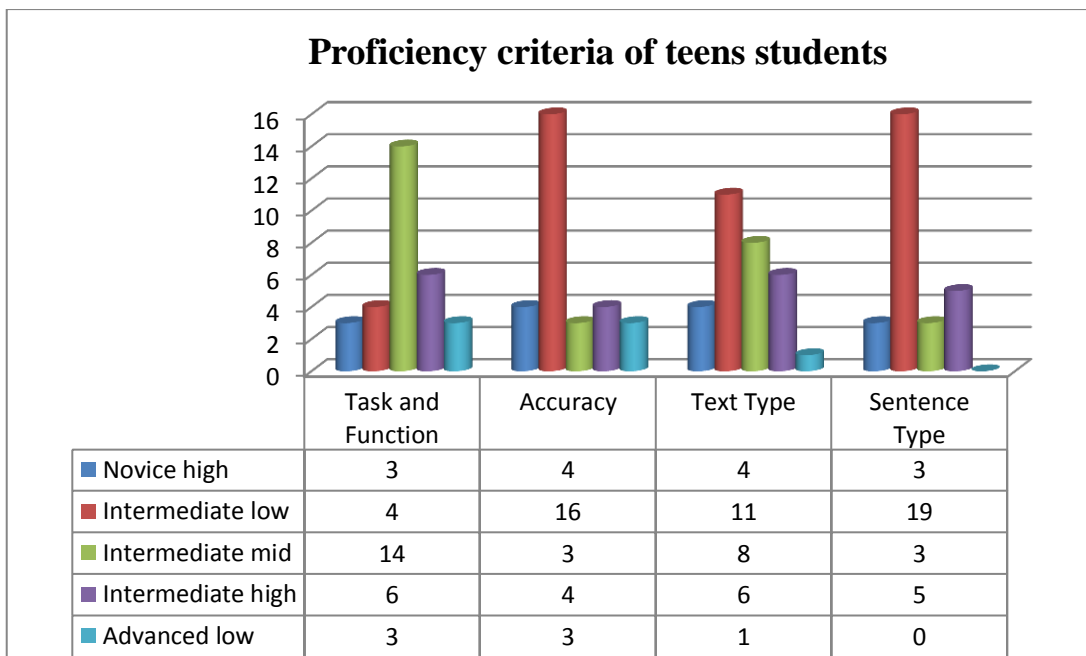
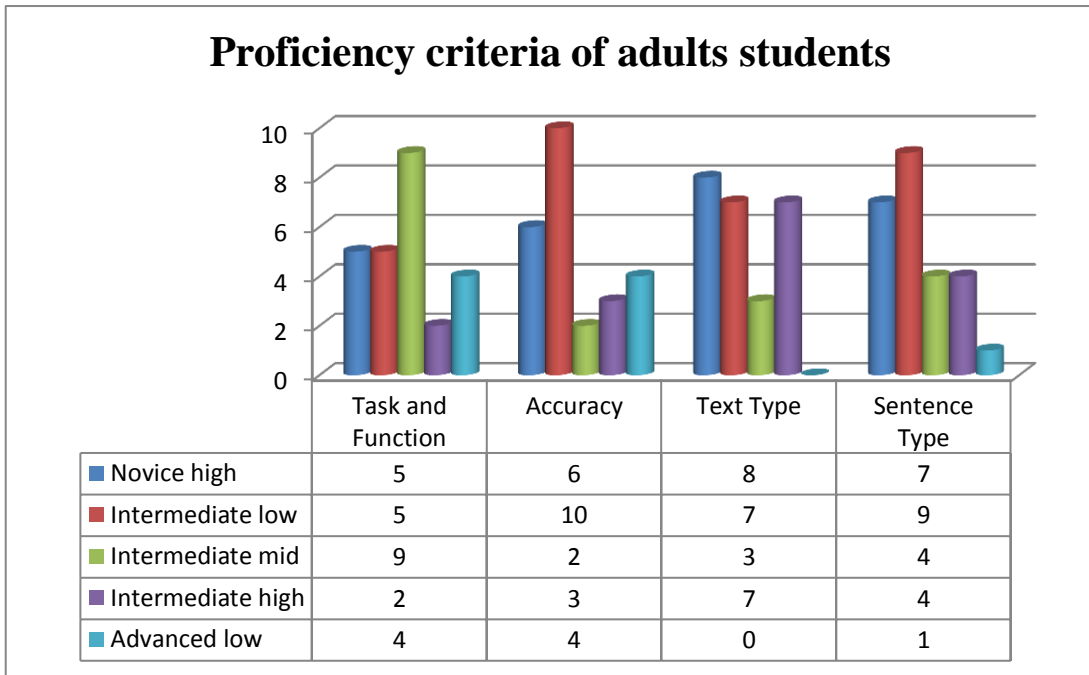
Continuing with the text type criterion, something specially to mention is that both teens groups presented similarities in the domain of linking sentences between paragraphs. Nevertheless, only the half of each group indicated to have accomplished the intermediate mid and intermediate high sub-levels and only one student from the teens morning group could obtain the advanced low. The other half of them has gotten the lower sub-levels as the novice high and intermediate low. It makes evident that at the twentieth level of the English program, not all the students have mastered the use of the combination and linking sentences into text or paragraphs length and structure. Possibly, it could be due to the poor writing process guidance provided during the courses or because of the few writing activities and exercises assigned by CENIUES teachers.

Related to the sentence type criterion, it is evident that there is a huge margin between teens Saturday afternoon and teens Saturday morning groups. As it is displayed in the graphic, teens afternoon group got a certain number of students in each sub-level, except the advanced low. It showed that the 50% of them gained the higher sub levels and the other half stayed in the lower ones. On the contrary, the majority of morning students group reached the intermediate low sub-level. Only one student could get the intermediate mid sub-level and no one could be able to get the intermediate high and advance low sub-levels. This can be as a result of gaps in sentence type and structure which come from basic levels and maybe were never clarified by the teachers or the student did not learn to master it. Therefore, it is difficult for some students to find the right path to make an accurate use of sentence type.

To conclude, researchers discovered that both groups made a similar performance in the majority of the aspects from the proficiency criteria. Whereas, students from the afternoon courses

achieved a higher level than students from morning courses in some aspects of the evaluation criteria. Due this, the teen group from the afternoon regular courses is considered as the one with the best English writing proficiency in task and functions, accuracy, text type and sentence type.

Comparison of the proficiency criteria between adults and teens students from the 20th level of English regular courses at CENIUES.



The two graphics show the sum of the results of the different elements from the evaluation criteria. The data was taken from the four groups belonging to the twentieth level of English courses at CENIUES, divided in the categories of teens and adults.

Talking about task and function, researchers noted that in both categories the sub-level with the highest number of students was the intermediate mid, indicating that within the two categories the majority of students were able to write simple compositions about common events using different time frames. However, in adults' category there were more students placed in the novice high and in the intermediate low sub-levels. One of the reasons of this phenomenon could be that, even, in both categories teachers assign assessments related to the narration of work/ school experiences and other familiar topics, students from the adults' courses do these with more frequency orally. According to the adults' coordinator, the book they use in the course emphasizes more the oral expression than the writing expression. The teens' book instead has more writing exercises, which help teens to become more skilled while writing about their preferences.

In the case of the accuracy criterion, the results obtained by both groups were very similar. Both groups got the intermediate low sub-level as the highest one with more students. This demonstrate that, even though teachers and coordinators encourage their students to improve their grammar, vocabulary and spelling through readings or exercises, it is evident that a big part of students from the twentieth level still present some errors when writing. The reason might be that they do not practice the necessary, or that they are not aware about the importance of these elements for having an effective communication. Nonetheless, in both groups there were some students that through their compositions proved having a better use of language control, making that the writing compositions were understood by the readers. Some of the students who got the two highest sub-levels in this criterion mentioned that they have been studying English since they were younger. Others indicated that they discovered to have easiness for learning this language. These might be some grounds why these students got a higher sub-level than the rest of the group.

Continuing with the comparison, researchers found that in the text type criterion the results between the groups were uneven. Since, in the case of the adults the sub-level with the biggest number of students was the novice high, but in the case of teens students the sub-level with the largest number was the intermediate mid. In addition, more students from the teens category

reached the intermediate mid, intermediate high and advanced low sub-levels. One of the probable causes might be that the majority of teens are still studying at school which means, at least in their native language, they still work with academic writing reports, essays, tasks, etc. This might be an advantage because they are more familiar with the elaboration of paragraphs, the length and structures. On the other hand, even there are some adults that are still studying (at high school, university), there are some others that are just working and have stopped practicing the writing of paragraphs or essays, causing that they become unfamiliar with the structures of a text. Moreover, as it was previously mentioned, the teens book has more exercises related to writing that the adults book which is more focused on speaking exercises.

Related to the sentence type criterion, in both groups the sub-level with the biggest number of students was the intermediate low. This indicates that, despite the fact they can write simple or compound sentences, they still struggle with the writing of sentences with a higher grade of difficulty. Researchers consider that one reason is that through the courses students only focus on mastering the basic sentence structures. Centering their attention to more complex sentence structures only when they study them in classes. However, while in the teens category most of the half of the students reached the intermediate low sub-level, leaving the other sub-levels with a fewer number, adults got more students in the intermediate mid, intermediate high and advanced low. This means that adults did a better performance in the criterion of sentence structure. Since in their compositions they made not only use of simple and compound sentences, but also, they showed good control while using complex and loose sentences.

As a conclusion, it was not simple for researchers to determine which of the two students' categories had the best performance in the different aspects of proficiency criteria, since they exposed having almost the same performance; given that, both groups presented strengths and weaknesses. For instance, adults showed up to manage accuracy and sentence type criteria. Then, teens handled the task and function and text type criteria better than adults. As the teens coordinator expressed, "in some cases teens get a better proficiency, but in some others, adults as well as teens get a good proficiency in writing".

Conclusions

Through the development of this research, and according to the gather information from CENIUES' students, coordinators and the observation method, the following conclusions were made:

- Some of the students from the twentieth level of the English Program at Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador (CENIUES), still present basic gaps in the English writing area that inhibit them to acquire better proficiency.
- The age difference between the two students' categories was not an important factor as it was previously thought, since the results show that both categories did a parallel performance. In some cases, teens got better proficiency, but in some other cases adults as well as teens got a good proficiency.
- As the coordinators of adults and teens students from CENIUES expose in the interview, adults book emphasizes more on speaking than writing which demonstrates the low performance in this area.
- The students who have already received English formation in recent years demonstrate to have a good ability when using the language which helped them to achieve better results.
- When writing, the majority of the students did not apply at least two of the writing techniques, indeed they only used the free writing technique in their composition tasks even if they do not use it appropriately.

- The researchers found similar opinions provided by CENIUES' Coordinators and principal interview because, according to them, students should reach the B2 level (advanced low) and few of them may stay in the B1 level (intermediate high). Nevertheless, only one of the students reached the expected level. The rest of the students obtained a lower level than the expected.

- As the coordinators expressed, they do not have any preparatory course for teaching writing. They have academic liberty to teach and evaluate writing as they consider convenient, but it is noticeable that something is happening there, given that students seem to know little about the writing process

RECOMENDATIONS

After carrying out this Research about the writing proficiency of adults and teens students at the twentieth level of the English regular courses at *Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador* (CENIUES) the following recommendations have been stated:

To students

- ✓ Teens and adults students from CENIUES must apply the writing techniques every time they write a composition.
- ✓ Students need to dedicate instructional time to learn the skills and techniques necessary to become effective writers, as well as the time to practice what they learn.
- ✓ Students should encourage other people to read or comment on their writing in order to have observations for peers.
- ✓ Students should ask teachers when they do not understand aspects related to grammatical point, accuracy, sentence type and text type.
- ✓ Students should comprehend that to have a good writing is very important as the other skills for learning a second language.

- ✓ They should practice and learn new vocabulary in order to have a better lexical production in their writing compositions to avoid an overuse of the same words.
- ✓ They should follow the writing process learned in class to present a clear and coherent written work.
- ✓ Students should improve and master grammatical, spelling and punctuation aspects since these ones are part of accuracy that help to demonstrate a better written work quality.
- ✓ They should try to read more because this habit will help them to create and develop creative and substantial ideas about any topic when writing.
- ✓ Students should be assigned more written activities in order to practice it at any time. It would be useful for them to write a journal about their everyday experiences so that they practice and master their writing skills.
- ✓ When working on a written activity, students must check and correct their papers before handing it in.

To teachers:

- ✓ Adults and teens English teachers should emphasize more the writing skills in order to help students to become proficient in that area.
- ✓ Teachers need to assign more writing tasks so that the students can be able to manage the writing process.
- ✓ Teachers must demand for courses that prepared them better in the four macro skills.
- ✓ To promote students' success in writing through carefully monitoring students' writing teaching specific skills and techniques according to students' needs.
- ✓ Students' motivation to write must be improved. Many students have little self-confidence when they write because teachers and partners are quick to point out their errors instead of praising their ideas first. So, it would be useful to make students to share their writing product in a positive, conversational environment classroom that focuses only in the content of their writing, with no correction of errors.
- ✓ To teach students the use of the different writing techniques to make easier their writing production. Teachers should develop written samples to show how they are applying so that students can observe, follow and practice them.
- ✓ To give careful feedback that will reinforce newly learned skills and correct recurring problems.
- ✓ To identify strengths and weaknesses, planning instruction to fit diagnosed needs, evaluating instructional activities, giving feedback, monitoring writing performance and reporting progress.
- ✓ The teachers' feedback should be given judiciously: generous in the encouragement of ideas and improved skills, but cautious in correction.

To CENIUES Institution:

- ✓ Authorities must be conscious about the level of English writing proficiency that students reach when they finish the English program.
- ✓ Teens and adults coordinators should monitor the teachers' classes to evaluate their efficiency while teaching writing.
- ✓ Authorities should provide teachers with extra material or a preparatory course in which they can be oriented on how to teach writing in an efficacious way.
- ✓ The English program should contain more written activities so that the students' writing skills can be reinforced and improved.
- ✓ To identify strengths and weaknesses, planning instruction to fit diagnosed needs to create an appropriate assessment of writing

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Jules Renard (1864-1910) “writing is a way of talking without being interrupted”

Linus Pauling (1990) “The best way to get a good idea is to get lots of ideas.”

Eric Lenneberg (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis (henceforth CPH)

Nacnamara (1973) “...young children in suitable environments pick up a second language with little trouble, whereas adults seem to struggle ineffectively with a new language and to impose the phonology of their mother tongue on the new language”

APPENDIX

Tomado de:

PROYECTO: "CENTRO DE ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR-CENIUES." (Unidad De Extensión del Departamento De Idiomas)

II. ANTECEDENTES

La autogestión del Departamento de Idiomas a través de los Proyectos Académicos Especiales, tales como Cursos Libres de Inglés, Francés, Alemán y Japonés, nació de una necesidad de nuestra Facultad, por proyectarse académicamente a la sociedad salvadoreña y a la vez para captar fondos propios, en vista de las necesidades que se tienen en esta Universidad; por lo que se tomó la iniciativa de ofrecer un programa de **Cursos Libres de Inglés** a personas interesadas en el aprendizaje de este idioma. Dicho proyecto es iniciado con un reducido número de grupos en 1980 a iniciativa del Licenciado Pedro Antonio Salazar y a medida que logra reconocimiento dentro y fuera de la comunidad universitaria por su excelente calidad, se incrementa de tal manera que da paso a la creación de otro proyecto **llamado Cursos de Inglés para Profesionales**.

En el primer proyecto, colaboraban dos tipos de estudiantes, aquellos que realizaban su Servicio Social, y como tales no recibían ningún salario o bonificación y aquellos que ya habían realizado sus Servicio Social y adquirido cierta experiencia, por lo que la Facultad mediante acuerdo de Junta Directiva, los contrataba bajo la figura de apoyo directo a la docencia con un salario modesto (\$ 5.65 la hora clase, equivalente a \$406.80 al mes por un grupo intensivo semanal y \$ 226.00 al mes por un grupo de sábado ò domingo).

En el segundo proyecto, participaban docentes del Departamento, quienes además de tener sus funciones académicas, entre las cuales figuran: atender dos o tres materias, ser miembros de comisiones o equipos Ad-Hoc, participar en otras actividades en el ámbito de la Facultad o de la Universidad; así mismo tenían a su cargo un grupo de Cursos de Inglés para Profesionales en los días de semana o sábados. Dichos cursos eran atendidos en horas que interferían con las funciones académicas medulares: de 6:45 a 7:45 a.m., de 12:45 a 1:45 p.m., de 6:00 a 7:00 p.m. y los días sábados de 8 a 12 m. ó de 2:00 a 6:00 p.m. El salario extra devengado era el 25% sobre el salario base que por ley corresponde a un Profesor nombrado a Tiempo Integral. Dichas actividades realizadas en horarios extremos implicaban un esfuerzo de trabajo y tiempo de los docentes por darle una imagen diferente a nuestra Facultad, y en particular a nuestro Departamento, ante la sociedad salvadoreña quien poco a poco recuperaba la confianza en esta casa de estudios y se

Tomado de:

PROYECTO: "CENTRO DE ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR-CENIUES." (*Unidad De Extensión del Departamento De Idiomas*)

abocaba para solicitar sus servicios, lo cual permitía generar fondos y una buena imagen a la Facultad.

Por medio de este proyecto especial de autogestión, la Universidad en su totalidad se benefició. Muchos salvadoreños, al asistir a los cursos de Inglés, encontraron una Universidad muy diferente a la de los tiempos de la guerra. Además de una calidad igual o mejor al de otras instituciones que ofrecen este tipo de cursos, también tienen un costo muy accesible (260 colones por 40 horas clases = 1 nivel), lo cual genera confianza - credibilidad y rescata el componente histórico de servir a la sociedad . Otro asunto digno de mención es que los docentes de todas las facultades, así como hijos y trabajadores en general de esta Alma Mater tendrán becas para estudiar en estos cursos sin costo alguno. Esto es una ayuda concreta en la superación de nuestros cuadros y en el presupuesto familiar de nuestros compañeros. Es decir, que aparte de ser un proyecto de autogestión, es una oportunidad para personas que no pueden costearse este tipo de cursos un tanto onerosos en academias especializadas.

También, por medio de los fondos generados con estos cursos se ayudaba a las diferentes unidades de nuestra Facultad en la compra de equipo, mobiliario, bibliografía, contratación de profesores a tiempo parcial, compra de materiales y en la actualización del personal docente y administrativo.

Ante la situación presupuestaria actual de la Universidad y la arremetida del neoliberalismo que nos indica optimizar los recursos humanos y financieros, modernizar los procesos administrativos y académicos, reconvertir esquemas mentales y de trabajo, todo esto acompañado de una nueva y ágil legislación interna, la Universidad tiene dos opciones: seguir como hemos venido hasta ahora dependiendo del bajo presupuesto que básicamente solo alcanza para gastos de salarios y funcionamiento o retomar iniciativas que nos permitan coexistir armónicamente con la filosofía universitaria y las políticas de la nación. De tal forma que se generen fondos propios a ser usados como un apoyo efectivo y oportuno a la labor académica a través de construcción de infraestructura, compra de equipo, bibliografía, capacitación, etcétera.

Tomado de:

PROYECTO: "CENTRO DE ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR-CENIUES." (*Unidad De Extensión del Departamento De Idiomas*)

En conclusión, recurrir a la autogestión por medio de los Proyectos Académicos Especiales en forma racional, sin descuidar el hacer académico medular (docencia, proyección social e investigación), es un fuerte apoyo para la materialización de tantos proyectos que actualmente descansan en un archivo porque no existen fondos para su ejecución.

El Departamento de Idiomas en esta segunda versión de Los Cursos Libres de Idiomas Extranjeros ratifica el empeño en seguir aportando y apostando al desarrollo profesional de la comunidad universitaria, internamente y externamente, y de continuar trabajando en esta dirección con una visión futurista. Ante lo planteado anteriormente existen al menos dos caminos: sentarse a criticar este tipo de iniciativas, en lo cual algunos miembros de esta comunidad tienen una amplia experiencia, ó hacer algo concreto y constructivo que trascienda el mero discurso abstracto y la lucubración mental.

Hoy en día, hasta los más acérrimos detractores de estas iniciativas no pueden negar el aporte que los proyectos académicos especiales han proporcionado a la administración para salir adelante con gastos no contemplados en el presupuesto, la construcción de infraestructura, inversión en equipo y mobiliario, capacitación de personal, contratación de personal a tiempo parcial, financiamiento del 6% al sector docente entre otros.

**RESEÑA HISTORICA DEL PROYECTO ACADEMICO ESPECIAL DENOMINADO:
“CENTRO DE ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE EL
SALVADOR.”**

El Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros, (CENIUES) inicia sus actividades a finales de los años noventa con un grupo de docentes del Departamento de Idiomas a iniciativa de la Directora del Departamento. Entonces se les llamo Cursos Libres de Ingles al proyecto, nombre con el cual se mantuvo hasta el año 2000 año en el cual el proyecto es renombrado con acuerdo de Junta Directiva como Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros de la Universidad de El Salvador.

En la medida que el proyecto se consolida crece el número de aspirantes a ingresar a los cursos libres alcanzado una matrícula muy significativa de tres mil estudiantes promedio durante los años del 2000 al 2005. Sin embargo, a finales del 2005 el Proyecto se ve afectado por conflictos laborales que obligan a suspensiones temporales de clases, situación que genera inestabilidad y fuga de estudiantes hacia otras instituciones similares.

A partir del mes de abril de 2006 se re- apertura el Proyecto, Nuevos coordinadores asumen la administración del proyecto con población aproximada de 700 estudiantes, distribuidos en las tres categorías que se atienden, Niños/as, Adolescentes y Adultos. desde entonces el proyecto CENIUES ha ido en escala y a la fecha, la población estudiantil debidamente registrada alcanza hasta la fecha un poco más de 6,000 estudiantes quienes son atendidos por un total de 90 docentes; además de un Coordinador General y 5 Coordinadores Adjuntos encargados de cada categoría.

Este es sin duda alguna uno de los proyectos más grandes que la Universidad posee, dirigido con personal con visión el cual da una imagen positiva a la Facultad de Ciencias y Humanidades y a la Universidad misma a la sociedad Salvadoreña y sobre todo que da un espacio a los grandes grupos sociales que no tienen la oportunidad de estudiar un segundo idioma por falta de recursos económicos.

El proyecto tiene más de 10 años de existir, en la actualidad cuenta con 96 docentes, dos secretarias, un contador y un ordenanza.

La población estudiantil atendida por CENIUES ha incrementado del 2010 al 2014, de 3,438 a 4,742. En ese mismo periodo, los estudiantes graduados ascienden a 3,500 estudiantes aproximadamente.

MARCO FILOSÓFICO

5.1 Misión Garantizar a niños, jóvenes y adultos el acceso para el aprendizaje de idiomas extranjeros en condiciones ambientales adecuadas, con bajos costos, metodologías y contenidos actualizados, moderna tecnología y profesionales con visión social.

5.2 Visión Ser el Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros a nivel nacional con la mejor oferta académica en el área de aprendizaje de los idiomas, cuotas accesibles y compromiso social.

5.3 Fines · Garantizar la oportunidad de aprendizaje de idiomas extranjeros a la población salvadoreña por medio de los programas académicos de diferentes idiomas con calidad académica, condiciones ambientales apropiadas, atención digna y cuotas

accesibles. · En el marco de la Proyección Social ampliar en un futuro el otorgamiento de exoneraciones a niños y jóvenes con escasos recursos económicos para pagar estudios de esta naturaleza.

5.4Valores · Brindar un servicio sin fines lucrativos con proyección social a la comunidad universitaria y no universitaria en el área del aprendizaje de los idiomas extranjeros a bajo costo y con horarios flexibles, basado en la utilización de técnicas pedagógicas y metodológicas de excelencia académica que se adaptan a un mundo cada vez más exigente y competitivo. · Hacer del aprendizaje una experiencia agradable y significativa para que nuestros alumnos adquieran las habilidades lingüísticas que les permitan hacer uso del nuevo idioma en situaciones diversas, abriendo así, la ventana a una nueva cultura, una forma de pensar y una forma distinta de ver y por ende, de comprender nuestro mundo.

Nota: La persona encargada de escribir el programa de inglés luego de crearse CENIUES fue el Lcdo. Nicolás Ayala, quien contó con la ayuda de revisión de la Lcda. Sara Méndez y el Lcdo. Pedro Salazar. Sus contribuciones en este proyecto consolidaron nuevas bases para un mejor funcionamiento de dicho programa. Los primeros ejecutores de dicho proyecto fueron Lcdo. Jorge Aguilar, Lcdo. César Guzmán and Lcdo. Matthew Alvarado. Además, ellos estuvieron encargados de aspectos logísticos como el local donde se impartirían las clases (se impartían clases en las antiguas cabañas del edificio de Odontología) la recepción, su mantenimiento, limpieza, entre otros.

NUMERO DE ESTUDIANTES DEL PROGRAMA DE INGLES PARA ADOLESCENTES

El total de estudiantes inscritos hasta este último modulo (Modulo V-2016) es de 1,551.

- Cursos Sabatinos matutinos: **631**
- Cursos Sabatinos vespertinos: **543**
- Cursos Dominicales:**377**

Total: **1,551** estudiantes

20	Relative clauses and noun clauses, simple and complex indirect questions, present unreal conditional with unless/only if/and even if, wishes and regrets, future perfect and future perfect continuous, mixed conditionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing everyday irritations • Describing complaining styles • Making and responding to complaints • Identifying solutions to problems • Giving advice • Discussing hypothetical situations • Describing personal characteristics • Explaining decisions • Comparing and contrasting customs • Predicting the future • Making hypotheses • Giving advice • Explaining preferences
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El curso cubre las cuatro macro habilidades del idioma, las cuales son: audición, habla, lectura y escritura poniendo énfasis en gramática y vocabulario pero practicando ambos componentes en forma comunicativa.

METODOLOGIA.

Se utiliza una metodología ecléctica en el salón de clase,. Debido a la hiperactividad de ellos y ellas es necesario utilizar los diferentes métodos para enseñar el idioma extranjero. Estos son acompañados de diferentes actividades comunicativas y tópicos reales y contemporáneos que son relevantes para la vida de los estudiantes; todo esto para poder alcanzar el objetivo del curso. Por supuesto que la metodología empleada se centra en lo comunicativo dando mas énfasis a la habilidad oral.



Lic. José Luis Salinas

PROGRAMA DE ESTUDIO DE CURSOS LIBRES DE INGLES
CATEGORIA ADOLESCENTES.

OBJETIVO: Al final de este curso, el estudiante será capaz de comunicarse en inglés en una forma real y efectiva de manera oral y escrita así como leer y escuchar efectivamente en el idioma extranjero.

DESCRIPCION DEL CURSO.

Es un curso comunicativo que comprende 20 niveles, comenzando desde el nivel básico hasta el avanzado. Cada nivel comprende 32 horas clase las cuales se desarrollan en ocho jornadas de cuatro horas cada una sean estas sabatinas o dominicales.

El curso cubre las cuatro habilidades de audición, hablar, leer y escribir poniendo atención a gramática y vocabulario pero practicando ambos componentes en forma comunicativa.

METODOLOGIA.

Se utiliza una metodología ecléctica en el salón de clase, tomando en cuenta la edad de los y las adolescentes. Debido a la hiperactividad de ellos y ellas es necesario utilizar los diferentes métodos para enseñar el idioma extranjero. Estos son acompañados de diferentes actividades comunicativas y tópicos reales y contemporáneos que son relevantes para la vida de los estudiantes; todo esto para poder alcanzar el objetivo del curso. Por supuesto que la metodología empleada se centra en lo comunicativo dando más énfasis a la habilidad oral.



20	<p>Relative clauses and noun clauses, simple and complex indirect questions, present unreal conditional with unless/only if/and even if, wishes and regrets, future perfect and future perfect continuous, mixed conditionals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing everyday irritations • Describing complaining styles • Making and responding to complaints • Identifying solutions to problems • Giving advice • Discussing hypothetical situations • Describing personal characteristics • Explaining decisions • Comparing and contrasting customs • Predicting the future • Making hypotheses • Giving advice • Explaining preferences
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ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES 2012 — WRITING

Preface

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing describe five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The major levels Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice are divided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels.

The Guidelines describe the tasks that writers can handle at each level as well as the content, context, accuracy, and

discourse types associated with the writing tasks at each level. They also present the limits that writers encounter when attempting to function at the next higher major level.

These Guidelines can be used to describe written text that is either Presentational (essays, reports, letters) or Interpersonal (instant messaging, e-mail communication, texting). Moreover, they apply to writing that is spontaneous (immediate, unedited) or reflective (revised, edited). This is possible because the Guidelines describe the product rather than the process or purpose of the writing.

The written descriptions of writing proficiency are accompanied online by writing samples illustrating the features of each major level.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Writing may be used for non-profit, educational purposes only, provided that they are reproduced in their entirety, with no alterations, and with credit to ACTFL.

DISTINGUISHED

Writers at the Distinguished level can carry out formal writing tasks such as official correspondence, position papers, and journal articles. They can write analytically on professional, academic and societal issues. In addition, Distinguished-level writers are able to address world issues in a highly conceptualized fashion.

These writers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse as representational techniques, allowing them to advocate a position that is not necessarily their own. They are also able to communicate subtlety and nuance. Distinguished-level writing is sophisticated and is directed to sophisticated readers. Writers at this level write to their audience; they tailor their language to their readers.

Distinguished-level writing is dense and complex; yet, it is characterized by an economy of expression. The writing is skillfully crafted and is organized in a way that reflects target-culture thought patterns. At the Distinguished level, length is not a determining factor. Distinguished-level texts can be as short as a poem or as long as a treatise.

Writers at the Distinguished level demonstrate control of complex lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic features of the language. Discourse structure and punctuation are used strategically, not only to organize meaning but also to enhance it. Conventions are generally appropriate to the text modality and the target culture.

SUPERIOR

Writers at the Superior level are able to produce most kinds of formal and informal correspondence, in-depth summaries, reports, and research papers on a variety of social, academic, and professional topics. Their treatment of these issues moves beyond the concrete to the abstract.

Writers at the Superior level demonstrate the ability to explain complex matters, and to present and support opinions by developing cogent arguments and hypotheses. Their treatment of the topic is enhanced by the effective use of structure, lexicon, and writing protocols. They organize and prioritize ideas to convey to the reader what is significant. The relationship among ideas is consistently clear, due to organizational and developmental principles (e.g., cause and effect, comparison, chronology). These writers are capable of extended treatment of a topic which typically requires at least a series of paragraphs, but can extend to a number of pages.

Writers at the Superior level demonstrate a high degree of control of grammar and syntax, of both general and specialized/professional vocabulary, of spelling or symbol production, of cohesive devices, and of punctuation. Their vocabulary is precise and varied. Writers at this level direct their writing to their audiences; their writing fluency eases the reader's task.

Writers at the Superior level do not typically control target-language cultural, organizational, or stylistic patterns. At the Superior level, writers demonstrate no pattern of error; however, occasional errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures. When present, these errors do not interfere with comprehension, and they rarely distract the native reader.

ADVANCED

Writers at the Advanced level are characterized by the ability to write routine informal and some formal correspondence, as well as narratives, descriptions, and summaries of a factual nature. They can narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future, using paraphrasing and elaboration to provide clarity. Advanced-level writers produce connected discourse of paragraph length and structure. At this level, writers show good control of the most frequently used structures and generic vocabulary, allowing them to be understood by those unaccustomed to the writing of non-natives.

Advanced High

Writers at the Advanced High sublevel are able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and detail. They can handle informal and formal correspondence according to appropriate conventions. They can write summaries and reports of a factual nature. They can also write extensively about topics relating to particular interests and special areas of competence, although their writing tends to emphasize the concrete aspects of such topics. Advanced High writers can narrate and describe in the major time frames, with solid control of aspect. In addition, they are able to demonstrate the ability to handle writing tasks associated with the Superior level, such as developing arguments and constructing hypotheses, but are not able to do this all of the time; they cannot produce Superior-level writing consistently across a variety of topics treated abstractly or generally. They have good control of a range of grammatical structures and a fairly wide general vocabulary. When writing at the Advanced level, they often show remarkable ease of expression, but under the demands of Superior-level writing tasks, patterns of error appear. The linguistic limitations of Advanced High writing may occasionally distract the native reader from the message.

Advanced Mid

Writers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe with detail in all major time frames with good control of aspect. They are able to write straightforward summaries on topics of general interest. Their writing exhibits a variety of cohesive devices in texts up to several paragraphs in length. There is good control of the most frequently used target-language syntactic structures and a range of general vocabulary. Most often, thoughts are expressed clearly and supported by some elaboration. This writing incorporates organizational features both of the target language and the writer's first language and may at times resemble oral discourse. Writing at the Advanced Mid sublevel is understood readily by natives not used to the writing of non-natives. When called on to perform functions or to treat issues at the Superior level, Advanced Mid writers will manifest a decline in the quality and/or quantity of their writing.

Advanced Low

Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to meet basic work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in major time frames with some control of aspect. They are able to compose simple summaries on familiar topics. Advanced Low writers are able to combine and link sentences into texts of paragraph length and structure. Their writing, while adequate to satisfy the criteria of the Advanced level, may not be substantive. Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel demonstrate the ability to incorporate a limited number of cohesive devices, and may resort to some redundancy and awkward repetition. They rely on patterns of oral discourse and the writing style of their first language. These writers demonstrate minimal control of common structures and vocabulary associated with the Advanced level. Their writing is understood by natives not accustomed to the writing of non-natives, although some additional effort may be required in the reading of the text. When attempting to perform functions at the Superior level, their writing will deteriorate significantly.

INTERMEDIATE

Writers at the Intermediate level are characterized by the ability to meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes. In addition, they can ask and respond to simple questions in writing. These writers can create with the language and communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely connected sentences on topics of personal interest and social needs. They write primarily in present time. At this level, writers use basic vocabulary and structures to express meaning that is comprehensible to those accustomed to the writing of non-natives.

Intermediate High

Writers at the Intermediate High sublevel are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level. Additionally, they can write compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences. They can narrate and describe in different time frames when writing about everyday events and situations. These narrations and descriptions are often but not always of paragraph length, and they typically contain some evidence of breakdown in one or more features of the Advanced level. For example, these writers may be inconsistent in the use of appropriate major time markers, resulting in a loss of clarity. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of Intermediate High writers essentially correspond to those of the spoken language. Intermediate High writing, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not used to the writing of non-natives, but there are likely to be gaps in comprehension.

Intermediate Mid

Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts about personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other personal topics. Their writing is framed in present time but may contain references to other time frames. The writing style closely resembles oral discourse. Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel show evidence of control of basic sentence structure and verb forms. This writing is best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together. There is little evidence of deliberate organization. Intermediate Mid writers can be understood readily by natives used to the writing of non-natives. When Intermediate Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear.

Intermediate Low

Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order. They are written almost exclusively in present time. Writing tends to consist of a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information. Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols. Their writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required. When Intermediate Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete.

NOVICE

Writers at the Novice level are characterized by the ability to produce lists and notes, primarily by writing words and phrases. They can provide limited formulaic information on simple forms and documents. These writers can reproduce practiced material to convey the most simple messages. In addition, they can transcribe familiar words or phrases, copy letters of the alphabet or syllables of a syllabary, or reproduce basic characters with some accuracy.

Novice High

Writers at the Novice High sublevel are able to meet limited basic practical writing needs using lists, short messages, postcards, and simple notes. They are able to express themselves within the context in which the language was learned, relying mainly on practiced material. Their writing is focused on common elements of daily life. Novice High writers are able to recombine learned vocabulary and structures to create simple sentences on very familiar topics, but are not able to sustain sentence-level writing all the time. Due to inadequate vocabulary and/or grammar, writing at this level may only partially communicate the intentions of the writer. Novice High writing is often comprehensible to natives used to the writing of non-natives, but gaps in comprehension may occur.

Novice Mid

Writers at the Novice Mid sublevel can reproduce from memory a modest number of words and phrases in context. They can supply limited information on simple forms and documents, and other basic biographical information, such as names, numbers, and nationality. Novice Mid writers exhibit a high degree of accuracy when writing on well-practiced, familiar topics using limited formulaic language. With less familiar topics, there is a marked decrease in accuracy. Errors in spelling or in the representation of symbols may be frequent. There is little evidence of functional writing skills. At this level, the writing may be difficult to understand even by those accustomed to non-native writers.

Novice Low

Writers at the Novice Low sublevel are able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases, form letters in an alphabetic system, and copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they can reproduce from memory a very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected.

THE WRITING COMPOSITION TASK



UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCE
FOREING LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
MODERN LANGUAGE MAJOR

SEX: _____ AGE: _____

Day	Course	Schedule	X
Saturday	Teens	8:00-12:00m	
Saturday	Teens	1:30-5:30pm	
Saturday	Adults	1:30-5:30pm	
Sunday	Adults	8:00-12:00m	

Objective: To compare the English writing proficiency of adults and teens from the twentieth level of English courses at CENIUES.

Indications: You have to write a three-paragraph composition (1 paragraph will be the introduction, the second will be the body, and the final paragraph will be the conclusion). Each paragraph should contain at least 8 sentences. You will have fifty minutes for completing the task. Choose one of the following topics.

- What are the reasons you decided to study English?
- If you won the lottery, what would you do?
- Your plans after graduating from the English program.

PROFICIENCY CRITERIA BASED ON THE ACTFL WRITING PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

PROFICIENCY LEVEL	NOVICE HIGH	INTERMEDIATE LOW	INTERMEDIATE MID	INTERMEDIATE HIGH	ADVANCED LOW
TASKS AND FUNCTIONS	Student is able to meet basic practical writing needs. They can recombine learned vocabulary and structures to create simple sentences.	Student creates statements and questions based on familiar material	Student is able to write short and simple compositions, about personal preferences, daily routines and common events using present time and sometimes other time frames.	Student can write compositions and simple summaries related to work/school experiences.	Student is able to demonstrate the ability to narrate in major time frames with some control of aspect.
ACCURACY	Student writing may only partially communicate the intention of the writer, due to the inadequate vocabulary and grammar.	Student writing presents basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation and spelling. She/he recombines learned vocabulary and structures in sentences.	Student can use basic sentence structure and verb form. She/he can write short and simple compositions in loosely connected test.	Student writing can show some evidence of breakdown and inconsistency in the use of appropriate major time markers.	Incorporate a limited number of cohesive devices and may resort some redundancy and awkward repetition.
TEXT TYPE	Student can write simple sentences structured	Student uses short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order.	Student is able to handle discrete sentences and questions loosely strong together.	Student vocabulary grammar and style is like the spoken language.	Student is able to combine and link sentences into texts of paragraph length and structure.
SENTENCE TYPE	Student writes simple sentences.	Student handles simple and compound sentences.	Student produces simple, compound and complex sentences.	Student composes simple, compound, complex and loose sentences.	Student creates simple, compound, complex and loose sentences. She/he has basic control of complex-compound sentences.



UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
MODERN LANGUAGES MAJOR

Graduation project:

“The different levels of English writing proficiency between adults and teens program from the 20th level of morning and afternoon regular courses at CENIUES in 2016.”

Interview addressed to CENIUES principal and coordinators.

Objective: To get to know the writing techniques the principal, coordinators and teachers from CENIUES do to improve the English writing proficiency of adults and teens from the 20th level of morning and regular courses.

1. Which level do you think adults and teens from the 20th level of the Saturday and Sunday courses get when they finish the English Program?
2. Are there differences between the English writing proficiency that adults and teens from the 20th level of the Saturday and Sunday courses get when they finish the English Program? Which ones? Mention some of them.
3. Do teachers of the different levels teach their students about writing techniques?
 - If the answer is yes, what and how do they teach it?
 - If the answer is no, why don't they do it?
4. What writing techniques do you consider students use the most?
5. What does CENIUES authorities do in order to improve the students writing skill?

RESULTS

ADULTS SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Novice High

I decided studying English because in my house all family had to student English and my parent's never could given studie English. also because is necessary in the life. you can know people that speaking English or you can traveling in other countries and is some interesting meet with person in particular or for working in call center. or giving class English. you are most important in all places the your life.

Intermediate Low

I further studied English because now is very important learning English.

I studied Engineer. I have studied for 5 years and I think that what happened after graduating, what will do, is maybe possible that I find a job or good job global, or nivel global is very important because is the idiom Interbationally.

☆

This day if you have good job is necessery know English, because many company you need to comunicated with someone. So if you want to travel one day is many important know English. lack of unity

When you taken up air plan, you need to know English. if you live a life comfortable is important to know it. if you lose in the air port is important to know it. if you will talking someone is important to know it. but any away, the English is many import. if you don't speak English is now you can learning English. is your future, is your life.

if you want to find a good job trying learning English.

The EL Salvador, is important that you speak English. also someone who can't speak English take up \$500 for month. that someone who can speak English take up \$1000 for month. you will have more oportunity in your job, in your life. you have more oportunity to travel around world, know many place, people.

The EL Salvador is difficult learning English because we don't have time because you need to working, studying or you be marry, is difficult when you have family, you trying to make time and studied English.

Intermediate High

What are the reasons you decided to study English?
When I was a child, I was living in Canada for 3 years when my parents and I returned to El Salvador, but I never spoke English in those days because my parents always ~~speak~~ spoke ^{to} me in Spanish. They had believed that I didn't learn a foreign language because we are Salvadorians, and it's supposed ^{to} I had to learn my real language or my native language.

2) 5 years ago, I decided that I had to learn English, I was thinking that ~~that~~ I will ^{have} probably returned to Canada in 10 years from now and I will be living there the rest of my life. So, I started my English class at Nacional University ^{UES} 4 years ago, and I was studying very hard ~~since~~ until now.

3) Nowadays, in one month from now I will have finished my English class at University, but I ~~am~~ thinking that I need to learn more English, I have to take ~~at~~ English classes in other place because I have to improve my speaking, and I will be ready to travel Canada and living there.

Advanced Low

If you won the lottery, what would you do?

To win the lottery can be one of a person's biggest dreams cause everybody wants to have a big amount of money to live comfortable by a long period without working. But researches say that your probability of winning lottery is just 1 in a million of opportunities, so don't dream with that! Maybe you won't have the car or the house of your dreams by winning in this game. You'd be a very lucky person for this.

If I won the lottery, I'd like to save most of the money in the bank. Maybe a half of the prize and the rest would be for me and my family. If I have the change of buying a new house I'll do it :) and three cars also XD - but not ordinary cars - I land cruiser, an Honda Civic and a Cadillac. I would to help animals too: those who live in the streets, cause they deserve to have love and a great treat in their lives! And finally I'll spend the money in my studies because I've always wanted to travel to Mexico to study Anthropology and History :) but by the moment I need to focus in my actual major that is Medicine, so I could go to another country to study more. Maybe, after all of that wishes I could have enough money for my own entertainment, you know: clothes, shoes, food, etc.

Finally I think everybody can spend their lives dreaming about winning this kind of games but just the lucky one can have this amazing opportunity. But IF you work so hard, you can win your OWN money and spend it in the things you like the most, you know in ~~the~~ one of that you can meet with a Hollywood superstar and live your dreams!

ADULTS SUNDAY MORNING

Novice High

The reasons why ^{subject} decided to study English were.

Because I needed ^{to} learn more about this language.

Nowadays is necessary ^{to} speak and know English ^{example?} because ^{if you} need ^{to} travel to another country. This language is the second language ^{to} the best ^{most} important in the worldwide.

Other reason is because if I am searching a good job you can have better opportunities if you can speak English.

The language is interesting for me because when I was in the school I not could nothing about English and ^{subject missing} was embarrassing not knew nothing nothing. when I finished my career in this university I decided with my friend Diana learn about this language. Now I can explain, talk and listen and understand better.

So I think is very important this language.

I love English ↓ is my life
something missing.

Intermediate Low

If I win the lottery I would like to buy a house and put a school to learn another languages I like help people to do new, good and wonderful - punct. things & maybe I want people have a better life doing something that they like to do and winning money for their own life and for their family too.

I think with new thing and good actions the world can change and I want help people to be honest and work hard for whatever they want. another thing that I would like to do if I won the lottery is start an own bussines I would like to have my own salon and work doing something that I like to do.

Well I have many dreams and first God and working hard I will realized them. I need to trust in my self to got all my dreams and I would like people can be better doing good thing and for being persons successful.

Intermediate Mid

Nowadays, in this competitive society is so difficult to be alive; if you lack necessary skills, you won't be a winner... yeah right... that's exactly that "they" want you have to think.

This system becomes you in slave of the same system's requires. I decided to take my chances and study many languages, not for be a rich person; other wise I'm a rich because I have feelings, desires and mostly I love my freedom. I'm not looking for better chances, obviously they come to you when you are prepared, but I'm not stressed. I learn to live,

So, nobody gonna getting out alive from here, take your chances; but you gotta realize that stuff you choose makes you happy and don't get chains. Eat delicious food, travel, smile enjoy the life. This the reason why I decided study English; after this another one; because makes me happiest and support me in my travel

Null

~~It's a~~ Introduction
I'm Batman, that's the only
thing that you have to know.
// // // // // // // // // // //
my best wish should be:
Burn everything... Zelda :v
Why all my partners come really
really late I hate that from them :v
Zack Snyder movie
Rule! Int

What are the reasons you decided
to study English?

- Cause my parents told me, that
I have to do it :v.
- Cause I liked animals.
- Cause I'm pokémon trainer.
- Cause I don't have something
to do on Sunday's morning.
- Because I hated my life, ~~And~~
I just to learn a second language
- Because I'm hungry.
- Because you only life once :v

TEENS SATURDAY MORNING

Novice High

The reason that I decided to study English ~~becas~~ because the carerra that I like is nesesary to learn English, because I would like to work in other country I will studied vet and I like to travel to United States or other Country and improve my carerra and my English, another reason is because had more oportunite in my life, I help my parents when I work, another reason is that I like English.

running sentences

IF I learn English, I would like to work in anothe country, English help my life, I love animal but in this country I don't have more oportunite to find a job because people don't care animals and I would like to help my parents with their economic and work in callcenter and pay me my studies in the university. I like to know about different culture

In conclusion learn English is best, because you can travel, your job are better and you can to know about different culture around the word, and if you carerra like to mech need to improve and study.

No good punctuation

Intermediate Low

What are the reasons you decided to study English?

My mother inscripted me to start study in kids, and she didn't say me nothing about, one saturday she gave me a backpack with one notebook and pencil but I didn't ask nothing to her, and this is the truth reason that I start to study in the University. First I didn't want to coming and I reprovved the level qm in kids two times because I ~~thas~~ thought that my mother stopeed pay the class and no!

When I started to speak well the English, I thought that this is a good and big opportunity for me, for found work or includer, in my school class, I'm the best of my class and is interesting to learn other language and practice with people to others countries so I thought that one day I have the opportunity to travel at other country for whatever reason, I would talk well with these people and would be so cute, and is the reason that I'm here today.

I like learn languages now, and I'm here now because I like no an obligation and when I end this courses I would go to otrer sites to practice maybe and saturday I want to continue study other languages for example French and italian, and others and I do it because I like this and I think that this are a good opportunity now and for my future.

Intermediate Mid

In this essay, I'm going to talk about what I will do after the English course, in fact, I took it because my Parents told me, and well I liked the idea.

In order to improve my linguistics, maybe I will take a French or a German course, it depends on money, and also in time, something that is sure is that I'm not going to wait for take another course, obviously I'm going to continue in my school, but yes, as I said, I would like to improve my linguistics, I wish I could learn at least 3 more languages apart from Spanish and English.

I'm not sure what course am I going to take, but I think that I will continue studying another language.

TEENS SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Intermediate Low

Topic: what are the reasons you decide to study English?

English is a language that is very important because in the world many countries^{ies} speak that language also here in El Salvador many places, call centers or officines needs that you speak English because will be better for you, you will be payed better. Also ^{it will be} ~~is~~ in our life will be easier for us to find a job, ^{so} travel to another country, ^{and to} applied for a scholarship to many places in the world.

Three years ago my parents decided that I should study english because many things will be easier for me, I didn't like it because I'm very lazy, but now I'm very thankful with them because English ^{help} helped me a lot in the school. I study in CCSA and is a kind of easier to me because I understand a lot the classes, I think that in the future this will help me a lot.

I want to applied in a scholarship in Taiwan, that's why I continued study english, also I need to improve my grammar because is a little difficult for me, but I know that this classes will help me in many things in my life, I'm teaching english to my younger brother. In my opinion in the future english will be like our second language, ^{so} in many companies is necessary learn that language.

Intermediate Mid

what are the reasons you decide to study English

One of the most popular languages ^{is} the English and also the universal language, and if you want to go outside of ^{country} the country is necessary to know or is important that you could communicate with another people. Also learn another language opens you many doors, in your work for example. Some people could say that if you have the skill to talk another idiom it's probably that you get a lot of money, and right now is easy for everybody learn this important language.

In my opinion, I choose to study this because I need to pass English when I was on school and actually I want (I have the dream) to travel to another country, not America, I want to go to Europe, another reason was that I want to know or understand what the lyrics of the song said, Right now I know that I can. It was one of the best decision that I had taken, learn this language, as what I said before, opens me a lot of door, I hope that this help me in my future work. and if it is possible I would like to learn another language ??

Learn another language is not easy but it is possible all of us could. and I think that it will be better if everybody take the chance to learn it something that will help us a lot. Also for give skills, culture it's a good option. I feel proud about it, I know that right now this language it will help me a lot.

Intermediate High

• what are the reasons you decided to study English?

• English have become one of the most important languages in the world, and companies in this days are searching people who have a high level of english to give them job. so, if you want a real nice job with a very good salary you have to be upgrade, and study new things. Is important that people know a lot of things, because in this way they won't be ignorant. but on the other hand the real reason why im studying english is:

• First because I want to know another language and when I was a child I liked to listening music in english and I wanted to know what the song says so when I was 13 I decided to study english to know what the songs says and to talk with people; another reason why I study english is because I wanted to study to the European University so I have to know english to communicate me with them.

and when I started to study in CENIVES, I liked the way they give us the classes so I continue studying here, I think that english is no a luxury is a real necessary in these years because now is not everything to have a certificate of the university because now a days companies are searching people who are graduated and also have a high knowledge of english.