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

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

"The impact of free online language applications for improving the writing skill of students registered in English Composition II of the Bachelor´s Degree of English, Teaching Option at the Foreign Language Department, University of El Salvador, Year 2021"

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MODERN LANGUAGES WITH SPECIALIZATION IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

It is important to emphasize that to this day the English language is a fundamental pillar for the personal and professional development of people, and mobile language learning applications have the potential to transform the traditional way languages are learned. Caused by the global pandemic situation known as COVID-19 the interactions all around the world between teachers and students have changed almost entirely. Now is not possible to have a school or even a classroom full of students, it's something that is definitely not going to happen in a while but thankfully technology offers a variety of solutions to the educational community. This research will examine in detail five of the most popular commercially available language learning applications that students are able to download for mobile devices, and evaluate them according to a series of criteria about how advantageous they can be for improving the English writing skill and if they can be considered as tools and extra resources during classes.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, one of the most popular languages has always been English, there are an infinity of learning methods, however in our university community among students the use of mobile applications is an accessible and reliable option. To this day and due to the global pandemic situation, the student community in the University of El Salvador has increased the use of mobile applications considering them as an accessible and practical option to continue their learning process facing the situation related with global pandemic. It is important to know that improving English skills is an academic and professional advantage. There will be five main applications detailed in this research, those applications will be Grammarly, Tandem, Duolingo, BBC Learning English App, and Oxford Dictionary of English App; the theoretical framework will provide enough information regarding how these applications work, on what devices are recommended to use them, what they focus on, the set of skills that students can improve throughout the use of these mobile applications and also to show the effectiveness and efficiency of language learning applications.

The population that is going to be selected for the research are students of English Composition II courses from the Bachelor's Degree of English, Teaching Option of the Language Department. It is important to know that mobile language learning approaches are clearly increasing, and they will develop more ways to help the users as more people turn to smartphones, tablets and laptops as a primary computing device.

In order to get involved with the new technological developments that are generating a significant social chance affecting the educational area in a direct way, people are trying

to replace the traditional educational system, focusing on that idea this research project is developed in order to demonstrate why students need to increase the usage of language applications to improve and develop the writing skills in the English language. Consequently, they will answer some questions about the use of these mobile applications and, they will provide their opinions regarding this topic expressing their point of view according with their own experience testing the different English language applications suggested for the research team.

I.   RESEARCH TOPIC

The impact of free online language applications for improving the writing skill of students registered in English Composition II of the Bachelor's Degree, Teaching Option at the Foreign Language Department, Year 2021, University of El Salvador.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. Description of the problem.

As one of the most common obstacles in learning a language nowadays is not being able have face to face classes, where students have to use technological resources due to the epidemic COVID-19 in order to do not give up their learning process. Additionally, the contents apparently are not being developed as they are when students are in normal conditions. The number of hours teachers have with students has also reduced dramatically generating a direct impact in the student community. For those reasons many international organizations are worried about the effect of regression that COVID-19 will have in the global economy system, where the official website of the World Bank presents some articles about that problematic and how education is trying to continuous its development by use of ICTS.

Knowing the challenge that this situation represents in the educational area the present research is focused on finding out how the students at the Foreign Language Department can improve their writing skills by using technological resources in this case free online language applications. When students notice that writing is not simple as they thought because having good writing skill means to know and follow the complex process which contains a sequence of steps in order to be logical and coherent while they write. The students not only need to systematize the different steps, but also students need to keep practicing in order to develop the writing skills in a proper way due to its a crucial requirement in an important course like English composition II in the academic research carried out in the Department of Foreign Languages by Muñoz et all (2017).

Additionally, it is very important that students' population can have access to educational technological resources even more in the virtual era where learners require technological resources such as free online language applications in order to improve their skills in the writing stage. Ever since teachers understood that writing paragraphs needed to be a fun activity even when it implies an exhaustive process, they have to apply different strategies to avoid students' stress. Previous research on the website AP English Language and Composition Writing Study Skills shown how complicated it was to have good composition skill, even for the novelist E.M. Foster who thought that the unique way to discover what we have in the mind writing down our ideas to examine and analyze them with the object of comprehend what is missing on the redaction. Students were not able to make proper use of grammar, it is causing them frustration for not being able to structure the phrases they wanted to transmit. To this day; self-learning is becoming an everyday task for students and for them it is important to know how to take advantage of these technological tools or resources.

Many technological tools are being used by teachers in order to cover possible poor students´ learning challenged by the world epidemic. Professors need to use platforms and applications to reduce the impact in the teaching and learning process. One of the most popular applications that are available to this day is: Grammarly, which is focused on the writing skill; then we have Duolingo which is emphasized on the vocabulary and grammatical skills, also BBC Learning English App where the user can find many articles that help them acquire new vocabulary, then we have the Oxford Dictionary of English and finally, but no less important, Tandem, where the users can put into practice all the acquired knowledge with native speakers in an interactive and fun way. By using these

resources, students can overcome all these obstacles, with free online applications, learn and improve a language is a possibility. The creation of applications to learn languages has become very popular, but few students are making use of them. There are a few reasons why this happens: the lack of internet access, due to the fact that students' technological resources are poor or simply students are not autonomous to learn how to use them.

The current academic context brought by the Coronavirus pandemic is making institutions to question students´ learning and professor´s teaching impact. The following question derive from these situations: Are students achieving the writing standards they are expected to develop in their composition courses particularly in times of the pandemic which has reduced the number of teaching hours?   Will students benefit dramatically by implementing the use of writing apps in their composition courses? Where our principal objective is to get some solutions to reduce the weakness in the learning process produced by the lack of resources and classes due to the COVID-19; Moreover, to provide a solution to support teachers and students, the research team wants to suggest a set of apps to reinforce the writing skill in order to get the necessary abilities that students from teaching option require for the composition II subject.

B. Objectives.
General Objective

1. To assess the impact that applications for learning languages have on improving students' writing skills.

Specific Objectives

1. To state which application has benefited students' writing the most in their composition skills.

2. To measure   the frequency on the use of applications for improving students'
   writing skills in the English language that students registered in English
   Composition II make use of.

3. To analyze students' improvement in their English writing skills with the
   implementation of apps.

C. Research questions
General question

- What is the impact that applications to improve the English Composition skills
  have in their writing skills?

Related questions

- Which application has been the most beneficial to improve the English writing
  skill of students registered in English Composition II?

- What is the frequency of the use of learning applications that students
  registered in English Composition II have?

- What are the improvements that students registered in English Composition II
  present in their writing skill by implementing the free online applications?

D. Justification

Today, people live in a society that is increasingly digitalized, and where it is not strange

to see how the emerging of new technologies has gradually replaced traditional working

and learning methods and their application in different areas of our lives. The growth and

incorporation that ICTs are having in our current society makes many people forget the

methods they have been using for a long time, and focus on more current elements that

are able to carry out tasks in milliseconds and reduce work to people in a very significant

way. How could it be otherwise, this digitalization is taking place in an area as important and transcendental for people as education.

People have moved from a pencil and paper to having a variety of resources to work with today. The exponential increase of mobile phones, tablets and computers has made many ways of learning to be carried out through these new technologies, seeking to awake a different interest in students.

Today in the labor sector it is very important to have knowledge of the English language, to understand it and to write it correctly in order to be better professionally; for that reason, people go to specialized language centers to either learn English, to perfect it or simply to receive a diploma that demonstrates their mastery.

One of the greatest complications for most people is learning to write English correctly, structuring the sentences with a perfect grammatical order and syntax, giving a logical sense to the context of the sentences. There are many confusing terms for those who are not fluent in English, which can be challenging for most students. It should also be noted that there are many people who limit themselves to exclusively mastering the spoken language, without worrying about improving their writing, however this is a considerable error that can restrict future opportunities.

According to the reasons mentioned above, this project focuses on integrating the use of mobile applications for learning and improvement the English language, by promoting the use of electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers, thus changing the paradigm of educational centers promoting an ICT educational culture.

E. Delimitation of the problem

The research of the impact of free online language applications for improving the English writing skill is going to be developed at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador and is going to be applied to students registered in English Composition II course of the Bachelor's Degree of English, Teaching Option.

III. FRAMEWORK

A. Historical framework

ICTs

Information and Communication Technologies (computers, personal multimedia devices, mobile devices, social networks, Internet, digital television, digital navigation systems, eBooks) could be defined as technological tools for the elaboration, storage and digitized diffusion of information based on the use of multimedia telecommunication networks. In short, ICTs could be understood as the fusion of three separate technologies that already existed, but now converge in the digitalized production, storage and dissemination of any type of data.

Permanent technological evolution and innovation is one of the signs of our present. Concepts such as cloud computing, smart phones or smartphones, augmented reality, social networks, the internet, digital tablets, which were only recently experimental or science fiction concepts, are beginning to be part of the daily lives of the citizens of this new millennium.

Applications that help to develop writing skills

Duolingo.

Each lesson in Duolingo is made up of a range of activities. New vocabulary is usually taught in pictures, and grammar points are explained in little speech bubbles. There are also listening exercises where you have to type what you hear, and speaking exercises where you have to say what you hear. This can be very funny if you use Duolingo on public transportation. The application does give you the option to deactivate your

microphone if you prefer to skip the pronunciation exercises. Until recently, Duolingo used a "hearts" system where students had to complete each lesson without losing all of your hearts. The latest update has replaced this with a bar that goes up or down as students answer things right or wrong.

Duolingo helps you attack the weakest words.

Once students have completed all the lessons in a module, an additional screen will appear. This shows the weakest words that the application has identified while students were working within the module. Duolingo also gives the option to retake all the lessons, even if students answered everything right the first time. Once students have completed a module, the bar below the module icon shows an estimate of how well they will remember what they have learned. Naturally, if students just took the lesson, the bar will be full. The strength will decrease as the days go by, unless students review.

Help with motivation.

Duolingo recognizes that language learners need to be motivated to make sure they return to the app, and have a little more fun in the language. Duolingo uses different tricks to keep learners hooked. First is the goal setting tool. The goals that students can choose from range from "casual" to "crazy", depending on how serious they are about learning the language and how quickly students want to progress.

Visual learning.

Much of the learning that happens on Duolingo is visual. There are pictures to learn vocabulary, colors to indicate whether students got the answer right or wrong, and highlighted text that students can click to see new words or grammar points.

Grammarly.

Grammarly checks writing against its database of content and style errors as well as anonymously collected data from its daily active users. In use, Grammarly underlines critical mistakes in red (spelling and basic grammar), and advanced errors in other colors; style and best practices. Hovering over any of the indicated words or phrases brings up the option to fix the error directly or read a more detailed explanation of the mistake.

Two other features available are Goals and Performance. Goals launches whenever it imports a new document; it helps Grammarly adjust its edits based on the context of your writing. For example, you can specify your intent (inform, describe, convince, tell a story), audience, style, and emotion. Premium users can choose between different writing domains, including Academic, Business, and Creative. The Performance popup shows the general data such as word count and reading time, in addition to vocabulary and readability metrics. These metrics are calculated based on comparison with other Grammarly users and the Readability score is based on the Flesch reading-ease test. Both additions make Grammarly more useful at a higher level than that of simple error checking.

Tandem.

"Language learning by exchange" or the "Tandem Approach" is based on various systems of teaching exchange students abroad, such as: partner learning, "peer teaching", tutoring models and "Zweierschaften" The "Tandem" concept for two people learning the same language appeared first in 1971 in connection with the "audio-visual method" of Wambach, and from there it was transferred to binational German-French youth

meetings. Since 1983, the Tandem model has been adopted as an alternative way of language learning, whose basic elements of language courses abroad, youth exchange, cultural tours, class correspondence and similar cross-border activities are replicated in selective schools throughout Europe. TANDEM Fundazioa was founded in 1994 for the development of scientific cooperation and educational and advanced training with their head office in Donostia/San Sebastian, Spain. In 2016, Tripod Technology GmbH granted a license from TANDEM Fundazioa to create the Tandem app.

People have been taken by the design and the personalized approach that Tandem took. Open Tandem, connect the profile, and crucially the student will tell the app a few things about himself and his preferences. There is an approval process, so the learner cannot join the app randomly and it's monitored by a staff member.

There are three big sections in the app:

- The Community, where people can search for new people.
- The Tutors section, where people can find and book lessons.
- The Chats, where people can view all your conversations.

Before students can join Tandem, it is necessary to sign up and become approved by one of the staff members. The profile in Tandem will be linked to Facebook. Once students are in, the profile won't be quite as protected as on other apps. Students can enjoy the fact that they can see more photos of new language friends and learn who they are before they chat to them. This can make it easier to find a good match, but be aware that students are also sharing more data with a big community.

The app offers lots of fun and inspiring prompts, or students can make their own conversation starters. These will be seen by others when they find their profile. The partner search is the most important part of any good exchange app. Tandem suggests people for students based on their language, but there's also a search bar. Students can have lots of fun on there, as they can search for anything. The search is automatically limited to those users who are some kinds of match for students' languages, so they save time.

How to chat with people on Tandem?

Chatting to someone on Tandem is straightforward. Students send them a message through their profile. Students can send texts and voice messages, phone them on VOIP or go all out and make a video call. Unlike other exchange apps, there is no in-app dictionary, but students can correct their partner's sentences easily. Chats are a friendly experience, making languages a tool for connecting with people. And the community moderation made students feel more comfortable sharing pictures and voice messages, too. If students find someone who looks interesting and they're feeling shy, students have the opportunity to follow their updates and maybe contact them later.

Find language tutors in the Tandem app.

The inclusion of language tutors in Tandem touches on a really important point: Students cannot expect their language exchange partner to be their tutors. This app gives the option of deciding how students want to be supported in your language learning journey. There is a personal vetting process, so that tutors have to apply and show how they are

qualified and experienced for offering this paid service. The profiles are also reviewed by other users, so students know what you're getting.

It's perfect for aspiring polyglots, because the community is both enormous and very varied. Within minutes, students can start swiping and reviewing dozens of cool people's profiles. Who knows what could be uncovered...a new local friend, an exciting connection around the world? No need to leave their houses, students can strike up a conversation halfway around the world without ever getting off the couch. The tutors as a support network are a really smart idea because they keep students committed.

BBC Learning English.

The official BBC Learning English app brings together all the possible favorite lessons and presenters in one fantastic, simple-to-use package. It's one of the best ways to keep the English up to date. Whether the students want to study grammar, improve the pronunciation, develop the English language through topical news stories or learn the latest phrases to use in everyday conversations, the app has many series for students. Watch or listen to each program without using the text support. Then watch or listen again using the built-in transcripts and subtitles. Once students practiced the listening and reading skills, quizzes are used to test the understanding. The app will remember the scores so students can keep trying until getting the better result. When students are listening to an audio lesson, the program will keep playing in the background even if the screen is turned off.

- Lessons available first on this app – even before the website.
- New lessons daily.

- Notifications to help keeping the learning process.

- Easy-to-find program listed by series name or category: (Everyday English, Learn English with the News, Business English, Grammar, Vocabulary and Pronunciation)

- Follow favorite series.

- Share favorite programs to the social networks.

Some programs that are available:

- The English We Speak.

- 6 Minute English.

- English at Work.

- English in a Minute.

- The award-winning Tim's Pronunciation Workshop.

- Lingo Hack.

- News Review.

- Stories for Children.

- The Teachers Room.

- Dramas and many more.

Oxford Dictionary of English.

Oxford Dictionary of English is a free dictionary app that gives to students access to more than 350,000 words, phrases and meanings. Oxford Dictionary of English app also offers audio pronunciation for 75,000 words, both common and rare, including those words with varying pronunciations. While it's used for understanding the basic meaning of words, this

English dictionary app provides immediate translations, definitions, and several other features.

With the Oxford Dictionary app download, students are always up-to-date with the latest expressions and words. Since the company keeps updating the database on a regular basis, it is always up to speed with relevant changes in meanings, definitions, and pronunciations. With more than 350,000 words in the database, this is the most comprehensive collection of words, meanings, and phrases in the English language.

Oxford English Dictionary download lets students use "camera search" to look for words with the viewfinder. Search results are displayed within seconds! Finally, students can also use the "voice search" feature to look up words without knowing their spellings.

B. Theoretical framework.

Social Interactionist Theory and Affective Filter Hypothesis.

According to the social interactionist theory, caregivers play a critical role in adjusting languages to facilitate the use of innate capacities for language acquisition (1966), **Jerome Bruner.** This theory is geared towards first language acquisition, and also has inspired intuitive and natural learning patterns in second language acquisition. Specifically, interactionists study the language that mothers and other caregivers use when caring for infants and young children, paying special attention to the modifications they make during these social interactions to assist children in communication. Based on the social interactionist theory, a well-designed language-learning app would embody the features of interactive guidance given by mothers or other caregivers. Such an app would provide legitimate and comprehensible input of the target language in order to help

language learners in acquiring a second language. In addition, similar to the gradual development of children's cognitive skills, adult English-language learners' ability can develop over time with massive and intensive interactions. Therefore, the simulation of the interaction process embodied in an app is a key factor to stimulate learners. Such stimulation can engage learners to access and respond to the contextualized input. Thus, it is important to examine whether or not an app is providing feedback or allowing users to self-correct their responses in learning tasks within the app. Based on Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, language learners can be distracted by emotional factors in the language learning process. Krashen suggests that low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety prevent comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is up, it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary for acquisition to take place, but not sufficient on its own. Thus, a well-designed mobile app would lower the affective filter so that users can actively participate in the given tasks. Such interactions can reduce learners' anxiety and self-consciousness, in addition to enhance the likelihood of learning. Thus, motivation is an important aspect to be considered when evaluating the mobile apps for language learning.

Pedagogical Dimension of Mobile Learning.

Mobile apps are designed to provide content to their users, thus the rationale for evaluating such applications would need to be grounded in instructional design theories and frameworks. Reeves (1994) outlined fourteen dimensions in evaluating different forms of computer-based education including: epistemology, pedagogical philosophy, underlying psychology, goal orientation, experiential value, teacher role, program flexibility, value of errors, motivation, accommodation of individual differences, learner

control, user activity, cooperative learning, and cultural sensitivity. In the past two decades, this evaluation framework provided guidelines for researchers and instructional designers to investigate and develop instructional materials for computer-based programs. This evaluation framework has also been adopted into more specific areas such as educational software and programs (Rodríguez, Nussbaum, & Dombrovskaia, 2012), distance education (Eskey & Roehrich, 2013), Massive Online Open Courseware (Admiraal, Huisman, & Pilli, 2015), and instructional apps (Lee & Cherner, 2015).

As Smith and Ragan (2004) pointed out examining the content, task, and context of the instructional materials or programs was important. Thus, evaluating the quality of the content provided by apps is important. Given that the apps are used for learning, it is vital to assess the pedagogy coherence of language skills within the learning activities. Apps are software installed on mobile devices, thus evaluating the usability, customization, and sharing options provided by such apps is valuable. In summary, seven elements are identified to evaluate language-learning mobile apps: content quality, pedagogical coherence on language skills, feedback and self-correction, motivation, usability, customization, and sharing.

C. Definition of key terms.

CTO: A chief technology (or technical) officer, a senior executive with responsibility for managing the technological requirements of a company or other institution.

AI: Artificial intelligence.

Interface: A connection between two pieces of electronic equipment, or between a person and a computer.

Browser Extension: Is a small software module for customizing a web browser.

Cutting-edge technology: Cutting-edge technology refers to technological devices, techniques or achievements that employ the most current and high-level IT developments.

Tandem: People or equipment working together.

Peer teaching: Peer teaching occurs when students, by design, teach other students.

Headquarters: The place or building serving as the managerial and administrative center of an organization.

App: An application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.

Epistemology: The theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity and scope.

Software: The program and other operating information used by a computer.

Massive Online Open Courseware: Is an online course that has open access and interactive participation by means of the web.

Cross-border: Activities assigned to or required or expected of a person or group.

IV.   TYPE OF THE STUDY

A. Descriptive research.

A descriptive study is one in which information is collected without changing the environment (nothing is manipulated). It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. Present trends, beliefs, public mind, their viewpoint and attitudes, their effects or development of new trends are described.

The main objective of descriptive research is to identify the characteristics of various aspects, such as the market potential for a product or the demographics and attitudes of consumers who buy the product. In other words, the research team is using this methodology to know if the students actually know about the apps to learn or improve a language and how often they use them.

The team will gather quantifiable information that can be used for statistical inference on the target audience through data analysis. Using this type of research takes the form of closed-ended questions, which means the results can help an organization better define and measure the significance of something about a group of respondents.

Advantages of descriptive research:

- **Data collection:** Descriptive research can be conducted by using specific methods like observational method, case study method and survey method. Between these 3, all major methods of data collection are covered which provides a lot of information. This can be used for future research or even developing hypotheses of our research object.

- **Varied:** Since the data collected is both qualitative and quantitative, it gives a holistic understanding of a research topic. This causes data that was not planned to be collected, gets tracked and the data is varied, diverse and thorough.

- **Natural environment:** Descriptive research allows for the research to be conducted in the natural environment of the respondent and this ensures that high-quality and honest data is collected.

- **Forms basis for decision-making:** As the data collected in descriptive research represents a specific population and is robust, it is easy to make decisions on the basis of the statistical analysis of that data.

Research objectives identify exactly what the researchers are trying to discover in order to make educated decisions on the issue.

For example, the team wants to know exactly if students are aware of apps to improve their writing skill in the target language (English). Researchers are going to divide the research objectives based on different aspects of their students, such as connectivity, how much they know about using apps, and how comfortable they feel with a new tool to improve what they are learning. Therefore, having defined the research objectives will help us to create what is really needed.

V. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Non-experimental cross-sectional research design.

For this research project, cross-sectional research design will be used since the study will be based on the observations taken from different groups at one time. There will be no experimental procedure, in other words variables will not be manipulated by the researchers, simply information will be recorded. Although cross-sectional research does not involve conducting experiments, it is often used to understand outcomes in the physical and social sciences, as well as many business industries.

This design will also help us since it is a study that can be entirely descriptive, this will allow focused observations to be made to identify the impact that online applications can offer to learn the English language and improve the writing skill as well as, grammar, vocabulary and increasing motivation to continue learning by combining them with the education received at the educational center, that problematic will be study in a temporary moment a certain group of the University of El Salvador in the Bachelor´s Degree of English, Teaching Option in the subject of English Composition II in order to get the properly development for the research project and to be able to have a firm conclusion.

VI.   POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A. Population

The population with which the research will be carried out will be with students of three groups of the University of El Salvador in the Bachelor's Degree of English, Teaching Option in the subject of English Composition II in the department of San Salvador.

For this investigation, the total population of each subject group was taken:

Group	Number of students
1	39
2	29
3	34
Total	**102**

The population size is: **N=102**, that consists of students of English Composition II groups number one, two and three, cycle impair in the third year of the degree.

B. Sample

The sampling used for the present investigation is stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller sub-groups known as strata.

The research sample was obtained through the statistical formula for the finite population using a margin of error of 5%.

Sample calculation:

Finite population calculation formula.

$$n = \frac{N * Z_\alpha^2 * p * q}{e^2 * (N - 1) + Z_\alpha^2 * p * q}$$

Where:

n = Size of the sample

N = Population size (102)

Z = Confidence level (1.03) = (70%)

e = Error estimate (0.05)

p = Probability of success (0.50)

q = Probability of failure (0.50)

Procedure:

n = $\underline{\quad\text{102 * 1.03}^2 \text{* 0.50 * 0.50}\quad}$
$\quad$ 0.05^2 * (102-1) +1.03^2 * 0.50 * 0.50

n = $\underline{\quad\text{102 * 1.06 * 0.50 * 0.50}\quad}$
$\quad$ 0.05^2 * 101 + 1.03^2 * 0.50 * 0.50

n = $\underline{\text{ 27.36 }}$
$\quad$ 0.51

n = 55

The research sample is **55** students.

The next thing will be to reduce the number of members in the subject of English Composition II in order to make fewer people pass the questionnaire but always obtain a feasible result, as the sampling method takes a small, random portion of the entire population to represent the entire data set.

First, the percentages of students will be operationalized:

English Composition II

Group 1: $\dfrac{39 \times 100}{102} =$ **38%**

Group 2: $\dfrac{29 \times 100}{102} =$ **28%**

Group 3: $\dfrac{34 \times 100}{102} =$ **33%**

TOTAL = 100%

Next, the strata sample size will be known with the following process:

Group 1: $\dfrac{55 \times 39}{100} =$ **21**

Group 2: $\dfrac{55 \times 29}{100} =$ **16**

Group 3: $\dfrac{55 \times 34}{100} =$ **18**

TOTAL = 55 students

Finally, obtaining the strata sample size, the researchers will perform the simple random sampling in each stratum to select their survey participants. In other words, 21 students from group number one of English Composition II will be selected randomly, 16 students from group number two and 18 students from group number three, all of them from the entire population and same subject.

Groups	F	%	Strata sample size
1	39	38%	21
2	29	28%	16
3	34	33%	18
Total	102	100%	55

VII.   DATA GATHERING PROCESS

A. Quantitative research technique.

For the purpose of this research, the survey technique will be used. The survey is widely used as a research procedure since it allows obtaining and elaborating data efficiently and quickly.

B. Quantitative research instrument.

For this investigation, the instrument to be used will be the questionnaire, therefore, being the basic document to obtain the information in most investigations and studies. The questionnaire is made up of a set of questions that must be drafted coherently, organized, and structured, in order to obtain answers that offer to the researchers all the information that is needed. The questionnaire will be made up of closed questions since there allow the respondent only two or three possible answers. With these questions it is possible to obtain a greater wealth of detail in the answers.

C. Execution of the data gathering plan.

The execution of the data collection for the present research, the survey technique will be used and the instrument that will be used is the questionnaire that consisted of close questions carried out in Google Forms. The way in which it will be carry out is: The link of the questionnaire will be sent to the institutional emails of the students of the subject of English Composition II of first semester of the year 2021.

Chart and data gathering instrument

Instrument administered	Answered instrument (sample members)	Format	Date of administration of the instrument	Responsible
Questionnaire.	Students Registered in English Composition II of the Bachelor's Degree in English.	Online (due to the global pandemic Covid-19 and the health contingency going on in El Salvador).	In the first cycle of the year 2021 in the subject of English Composition II.	Researchers in charge of this specific research project.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Analysis by questions

First of all, the questionnaire was divided into five sections and forty-six questions which started with part I called "Personal Information".

Question #1. Gender.

First question had to do with the genre of our population, 32 were female and 23 were male, for a total of 55 students who participated answering the questionnaire. Female population made an amount of 58,2% and Male population the remaining 41,8% adding this to a total of 100%. Female students were very dominant in the three composition courses researched.

Table 1.

| Gender	Percentages	Quantity
Women	58.20%	32
Men	41.80%	23
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 1.
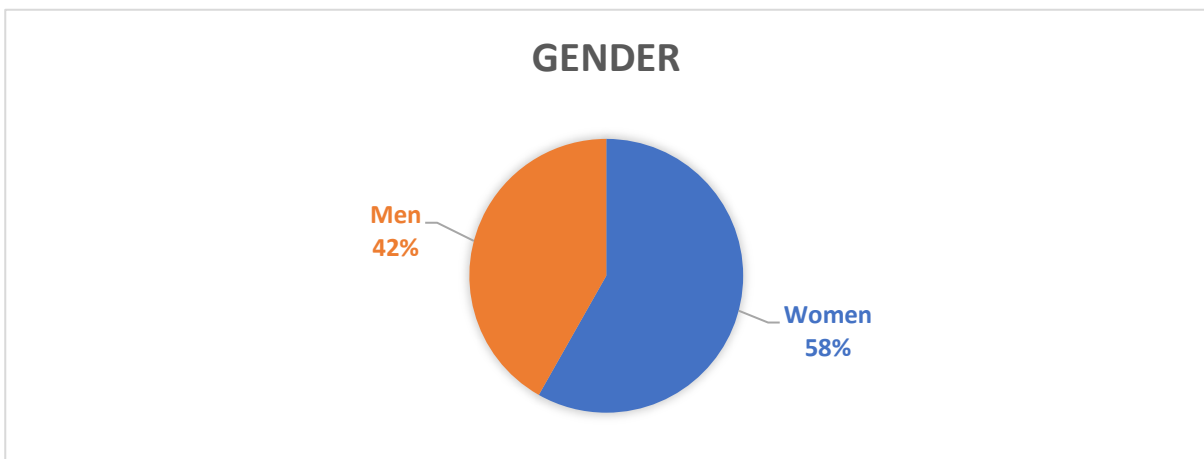
Question #2. Theoretical Group.

As previously stated, the questionnaire was shared with 3 theoretical groups of English Composition II. From the total of 55 students that participated answering the survey, 18 students were from group 01, 15 students were from group 02 and 22 students were from group 03. Group 01 was 32,7%, group 02 was 27,3% and group 03 were 40% adding this to a total of 100%.

Table 2.

| Groups	Percentage	Quantity
1	32.70%	18
2	27.30%	15
3	40%	22
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 2.
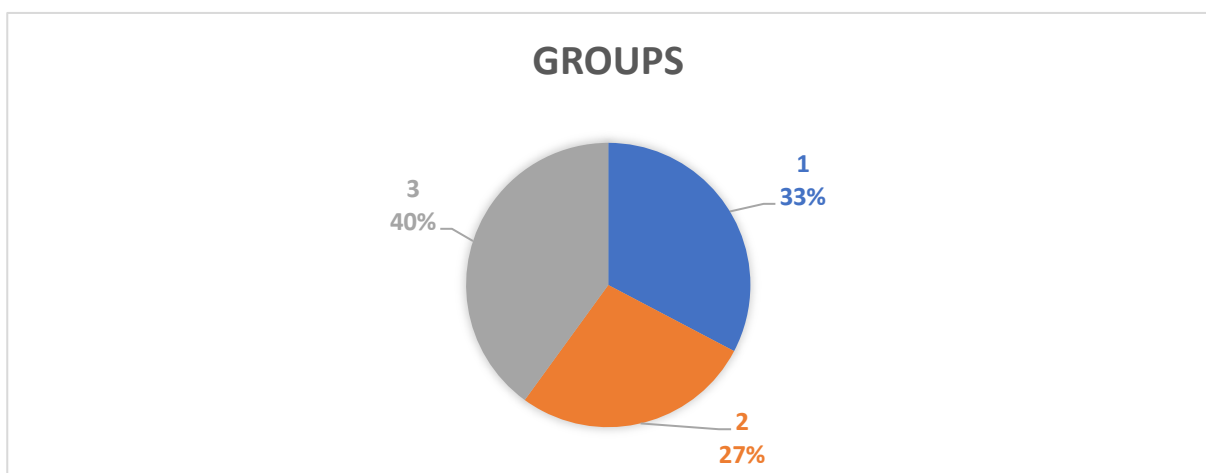
Question #3. Age.

Regarding the age of the population, the questionnaire had 4 different options to measure a wide range of ages. Option a, 17 to 20 years was chosen by 13 students; option b, 21 to 23 years was chosen by 24 students, option c, 23 to 25 years was chosen by 8 students and finally option d, older than 25 years was chosen by 10 students. Option a, was a percentage of 23,6%, option b, was 43,6%, option c, was 14,5% and option d, was 18,2% adding this to a total of 100%. This question allowed to know that the majority of the student's community are young adults, in a typical college age.

Table 3.

| Ages	Percentage	Quantity
17 - 20	23.60%	13
21 - 23	43.60%	24
23 - 25	14.50%	8
Older than 25	18.20%	10
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 3.
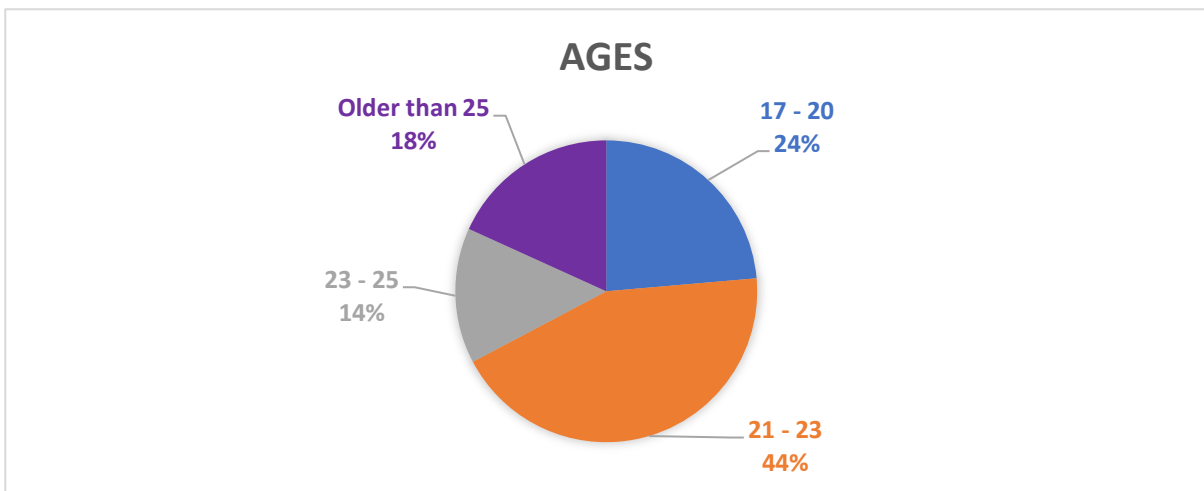
Question #4. Place of Residence.

For the fourth question, students were asked about their place of residence, the objective of this was to have more background information regarding students and their surroundings. From the total of 55 students, 42 live in the city making a 76,4% and 13 live in the countryside making a 23,6% adding this to a total of 100%.

Table 4.

Place of residence	Percentage	Quantity
City	76.4%	42
Countryside	23.6%	13
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 4.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Countryside 24%

City 76%
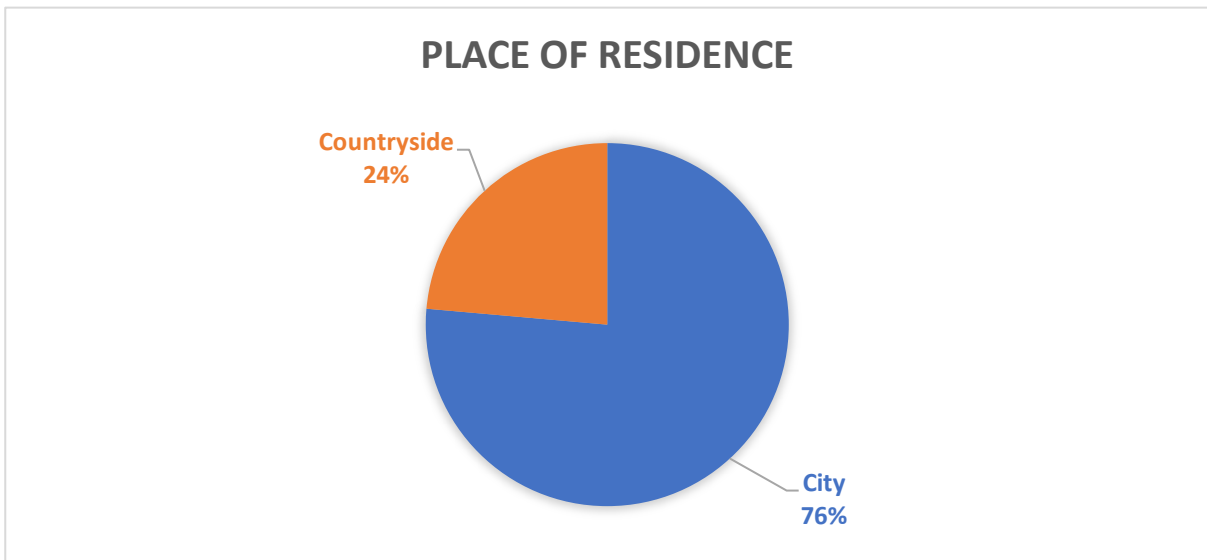
Question #5. Who do you live with?

For question number five, there was a variety of options to choose. Option a, parents were chosen by a total of 44 students, making this an 80% of the answers. Option b, relatives (grandparents, aunt and uncle, etc.) was chosen by 4 students making a 7,3%. Option c, classmates was not selected by students, option d, boyfriend / girlfriend was chosen by 3 students making a 5,5% and finally option e, other was chosen by 4 students making a 7,3% adding this to a total of 100%. This question showed that the majority of students live with their parents.

Table 5.

| Live with	Percentages	Quantity
Parents	80%	44
Relatives	7.3%	4
Classmates	0.0%	0
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	5.5%	3
Other	7.3%	4
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 5 .
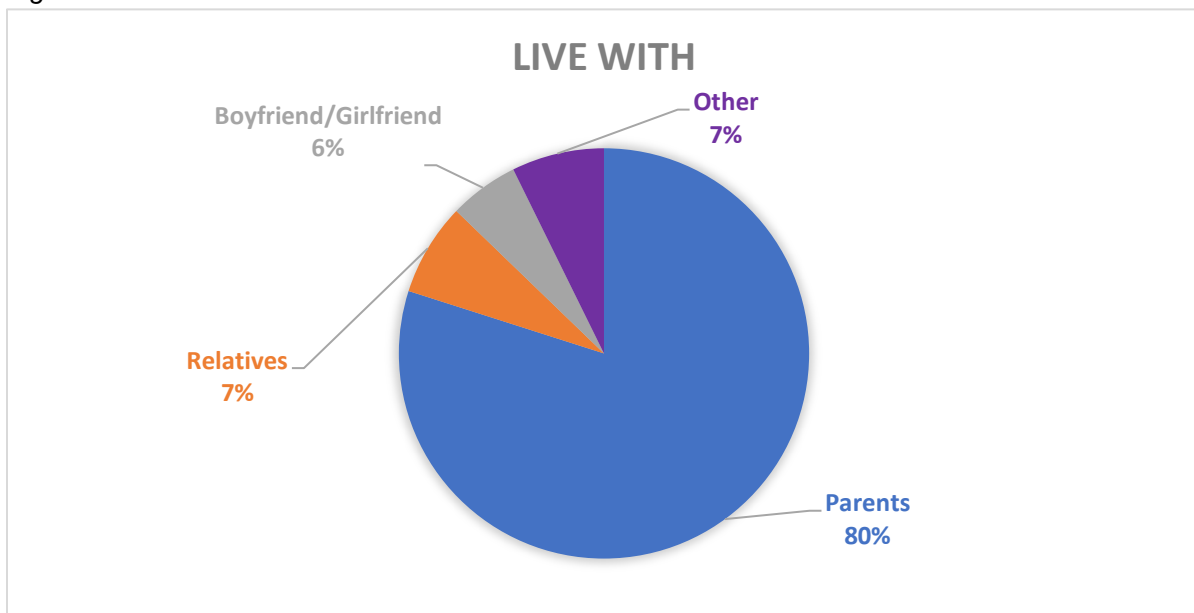
Question #6. Where did you graduate from?

Once again, the objective of this question was to have more background information about the students to get an idea to where they come from regarding their studies. 40 students answered that they graduated from a public school, making a total of 72,7% and 15 students answered that they graduated from a private school, making a total of 27,3% adding this to a total of 100%.

Table 6.

| Graduate from	Percentage	Quantity
Public School	72.70%	40
Private School	27.30%	15
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 6.
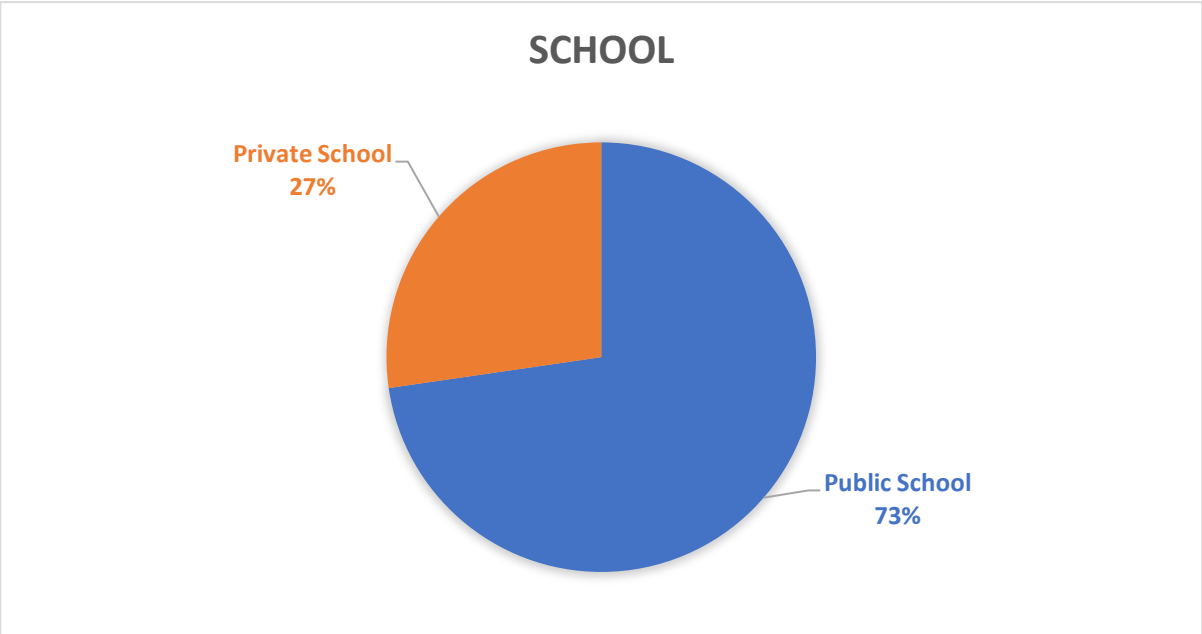
Question #7. Did you study English before entering the University?

The objective of this question was to know if students had a background knowledge of English before the bachelor's degree. Surprisingly this question had very even answers, a total of 30 students answered yes, making a total of 54,5%, and 25 students answered no, making a total of 45,5%, adding this to a total of 100%.

Table 7.

| Knowledge	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	54.50%	30
No	45.50%	25
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 7.
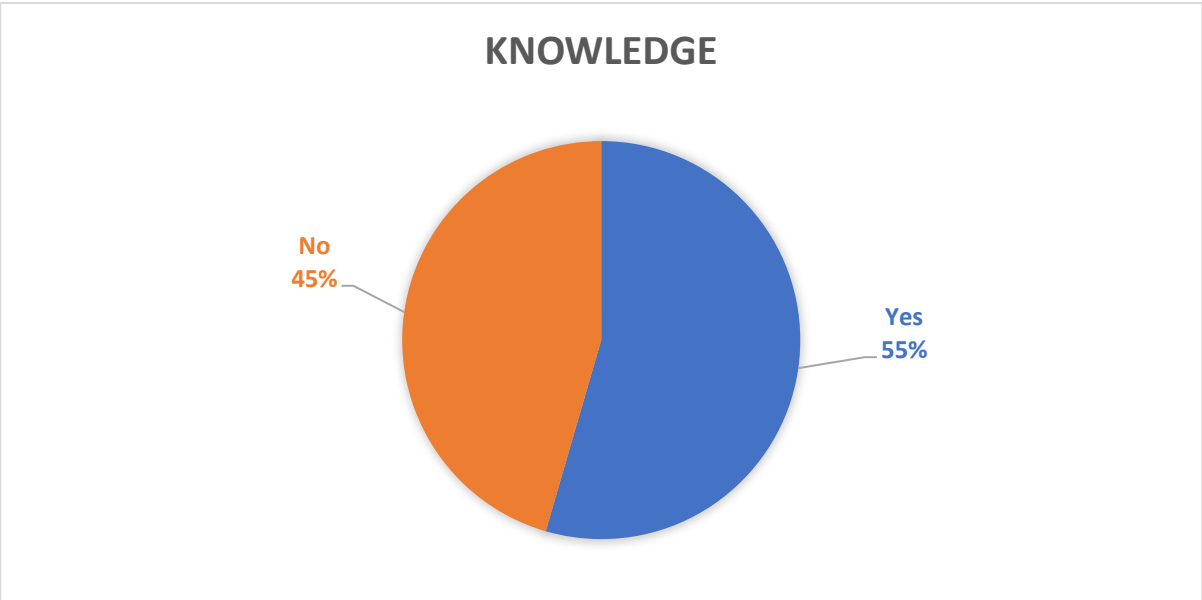
Question #8. If your previous answer was yes, where did you study? If not please select N/A.

This question was a follow-up of the previous one with the idea of knowing where did the population selected studied English, again it was provided a variety of option for students to choose from. Option a, language school (CENIUES, Pro Lingua, etc.) was selected by 9 students making a total of 16,4%. Option b, project sponsored by private sector or embassy was selected by 7 students making a total of 12,7%. Option c, Government educational programs was selected only by 3 students making a 5,5%. Option d, other was selected by 13 students making a 23,6%. Finally, option e, N/A "not applicable" was selected by 23 students making a 41,8% adding all of this to a 100%.

Table 8.

| Sites	Percentage	Quantity
Language School	16.40%	9
Project Sponsored	12.70%	7
Government Educational Programs	5.50%	3
Other	23.60%	13
N/A	41.80%	23
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 8.
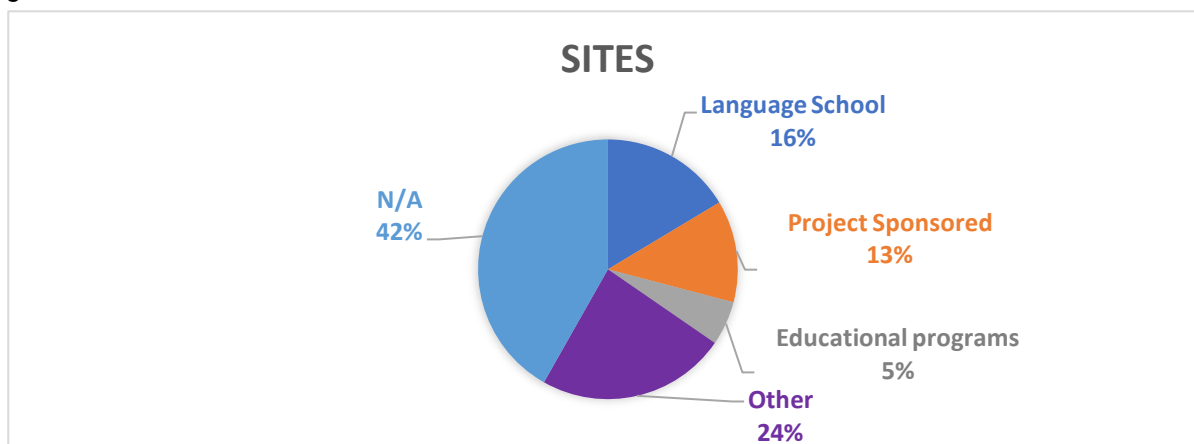
Question #9. Do you have a job?

This question was asked in order to know what percentage or number of students from English Composition II have a job at the time of our research. Surprisingly 44 students said that they did not have a job making an 80% of our population that is only studying, and only 11 students answered that they do have a job making a total of a 20%, completing the total of 100%.

Table 9.

| Job	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	20%	11
No	80%	44
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 9.
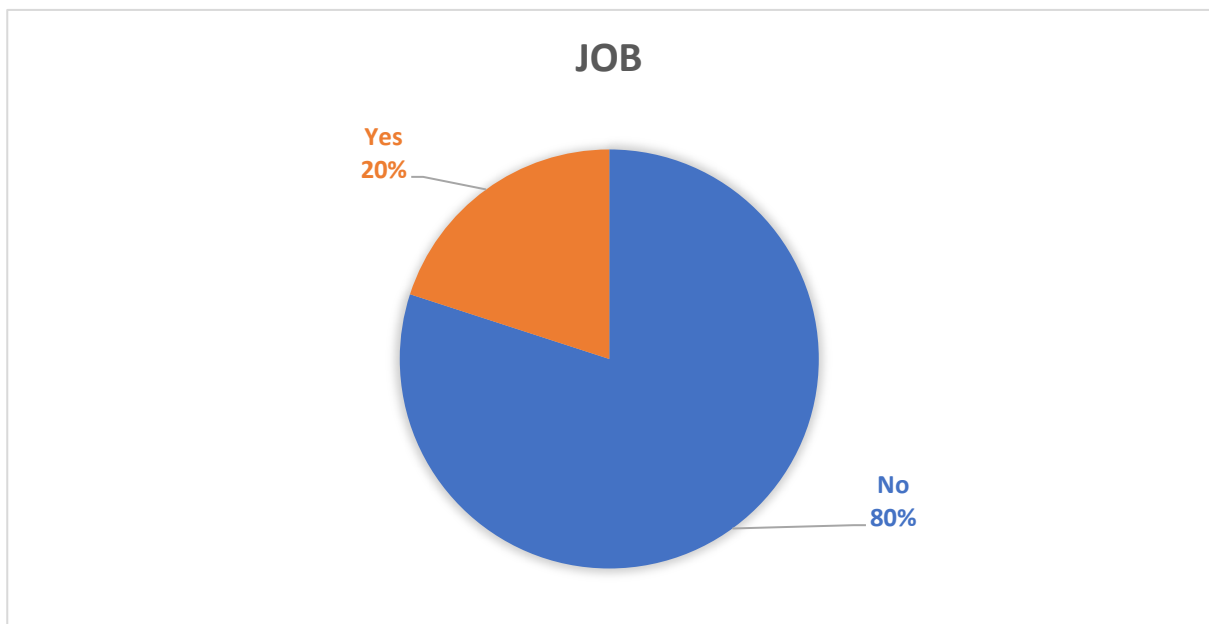
Question #10. If your previous answer was yes, in which field? If not please select N/A.

For question #10 as a follow-up of #9, the objective was to know in which field the students that have a job worked. Question #10 had different options to choose from. Option a, call center was selected by 4 students making a 7,3%. Option b, teaching was selected just by 1 student making a 1,8%. Option c, other was selected by 7 students making a 12,7%. Option d, n/a or "not applicable" was selected by 43 students making a 78,2% of our population, adding all this to a total of 100%.

Table 10.

| Field	Percentage	Quantity
Call Center	7.30%	4
Teaching	1.80%	1
Other	12.70%	7
N/A	78.20%	42
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 10.
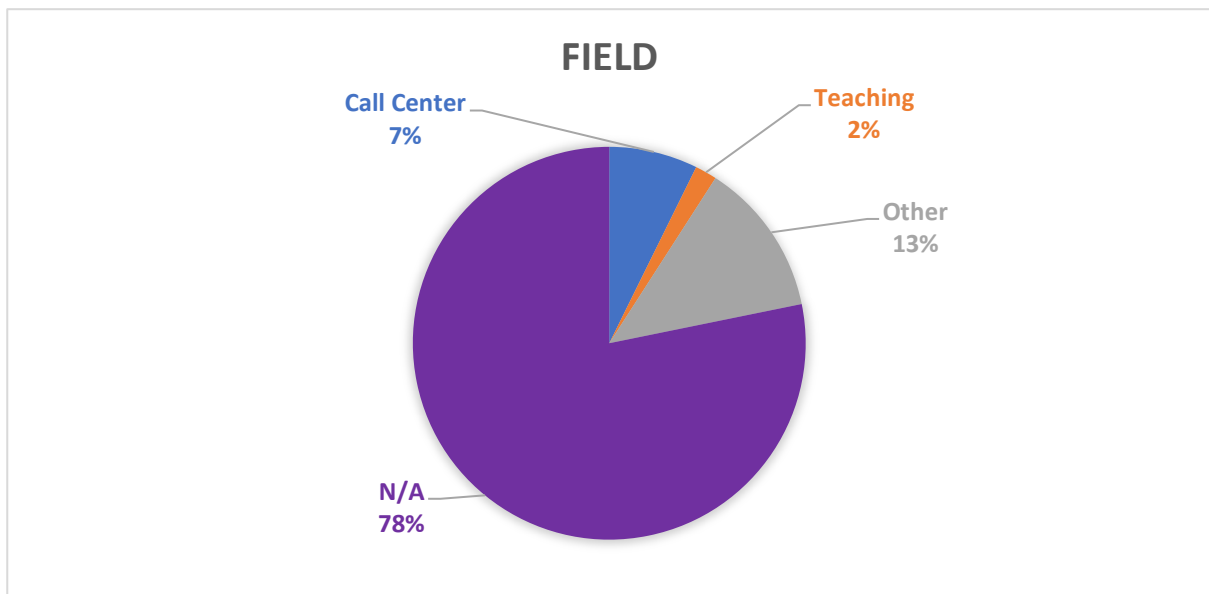
Question #11. What academic level did your parents complete?

Again, with the objective of gathering more background information about the students and their environment at home with the family, this question asked specifically about their parent's academic level providing students with 4 different options to choose from. Option a, junior school was selected by 16 students giving a total of 29,1%. Option b, high school was selected by 19 students giving a total of 34,5%. Option c, technical degree was selected by 6 students giving a total of 10,9%; and finally, Option d, University was selected by 14 students giving a total of 25,5%, adding all this to a total of 100%.

Table 11.

| Academic level	Percentage	Quantity
Junior School	29.10%	16
High School	34.50%	19
Technical Degree	10.90%	6
University	25.50%	14
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 11.
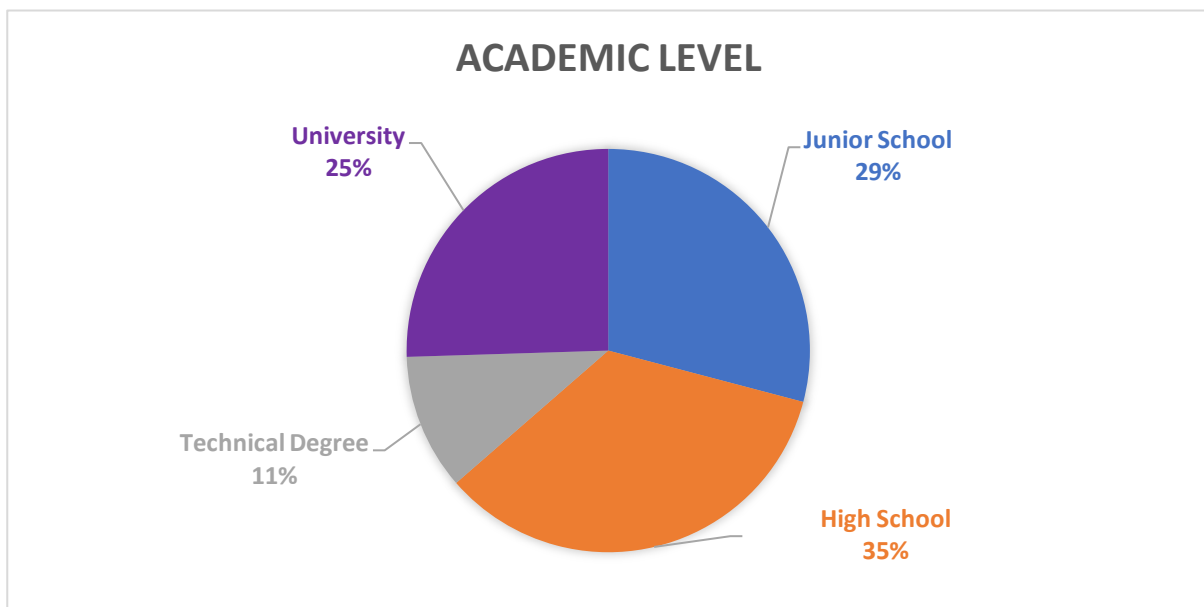
Question #12. Have you ever traveled to an Anglo-Saxon country?

This was asked in order to know if the students had traveled outside of Salvadoran territory to an English-speaking country with the possibility of practicing the language. The response to this question was quite surprising, since 54 students said "no", making this a huge amount of 98,2%; and just 1 student said "yes" making a 1,8% of the total of 100%.

Table 12.

Have you traveled?	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	1.80%	1
No	98.20%	54
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 12.
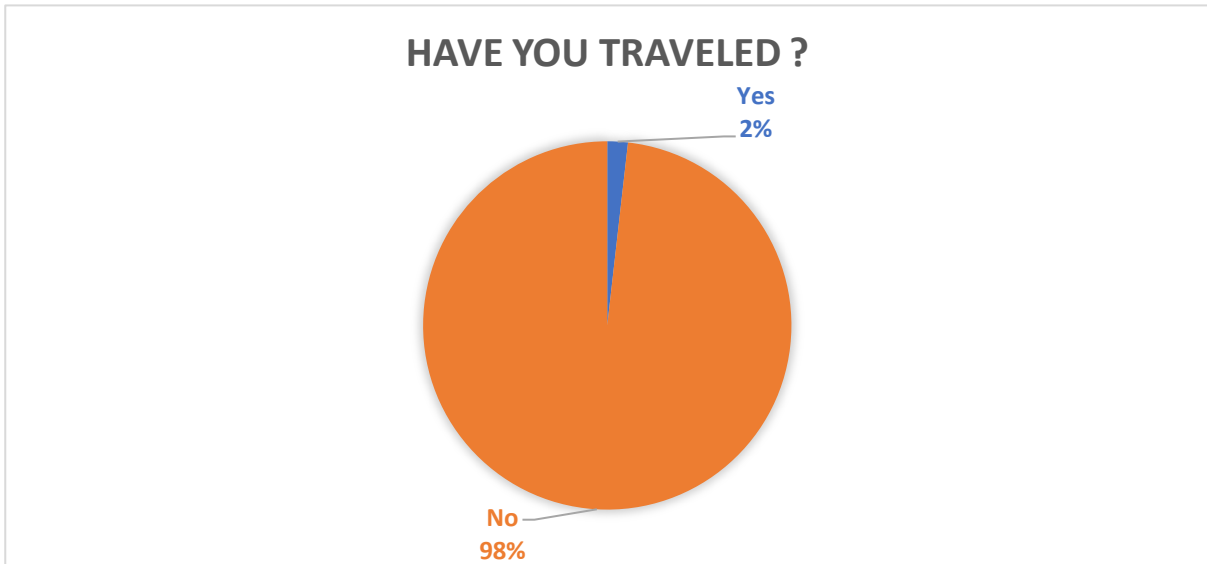
Following the analysis, the questionnaire continued with Part II called "Writing Skills". The objective of this section was to find out the level of confidence in writing that students from English Composition II courses had; and also provide information on the time these students spend practicing English.

Question #13. How confident are you about your English writing skill?

The first question of this section was directly aimed to demonstrate the confidence that the students have while writing in English. Interestingly most of the population interviewed to be precise 36 students (65,5%) said that they are somewhat confident of their writing skills; 15 students (27,3%) said that they are very confident and finally 4 students (7,3%) said that they are not confident at all.

Table 13.

| Confidence	Percentage	Quantity
Somewhat confident	65.50%	36
Very confident	27.30%	15
Not confident	7.30%	4
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 13.
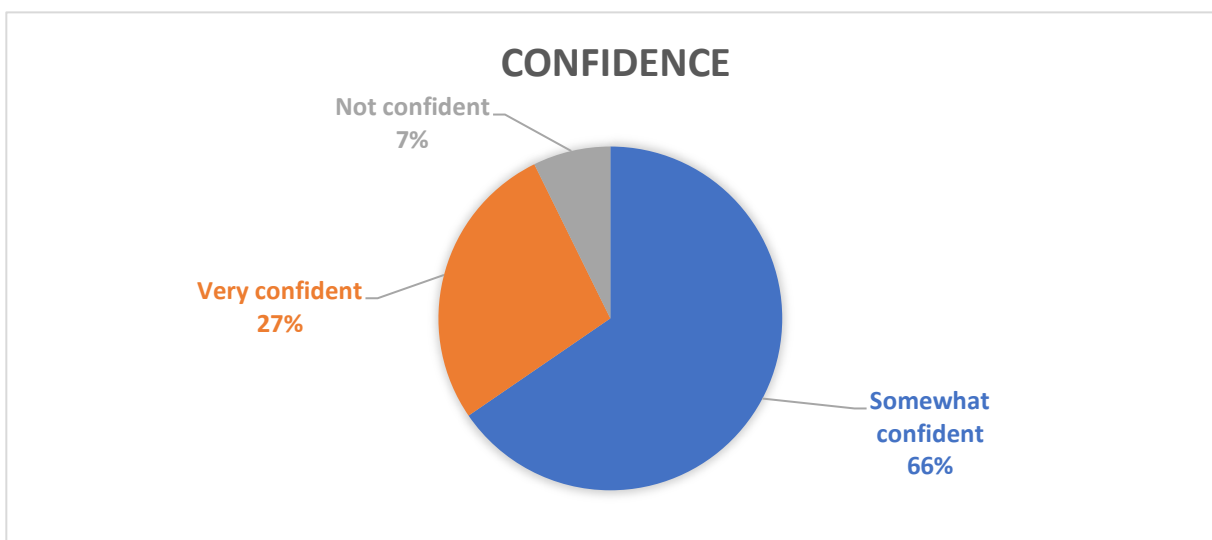
Question #14. How much time a day do you devote to write in English?

The objective of this question was to know how much time during the day the students interviewed spend writing in English. 21 students (38,2%) said that they practice only half an hour during the day; 19 students (34,5%) said that they only spend one hour during the day, and finally 15 students (27,3%) said that they spend practicing more than one hour during the day. The question number fourteen showed how much time devote students from English Composition II to improve the writing skill.

Table 14.

| Time	Percentage	Quantity
Half an hour	38.20%	21
One hour	34.50%	19
More than an hour	27.30%	15
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 14.
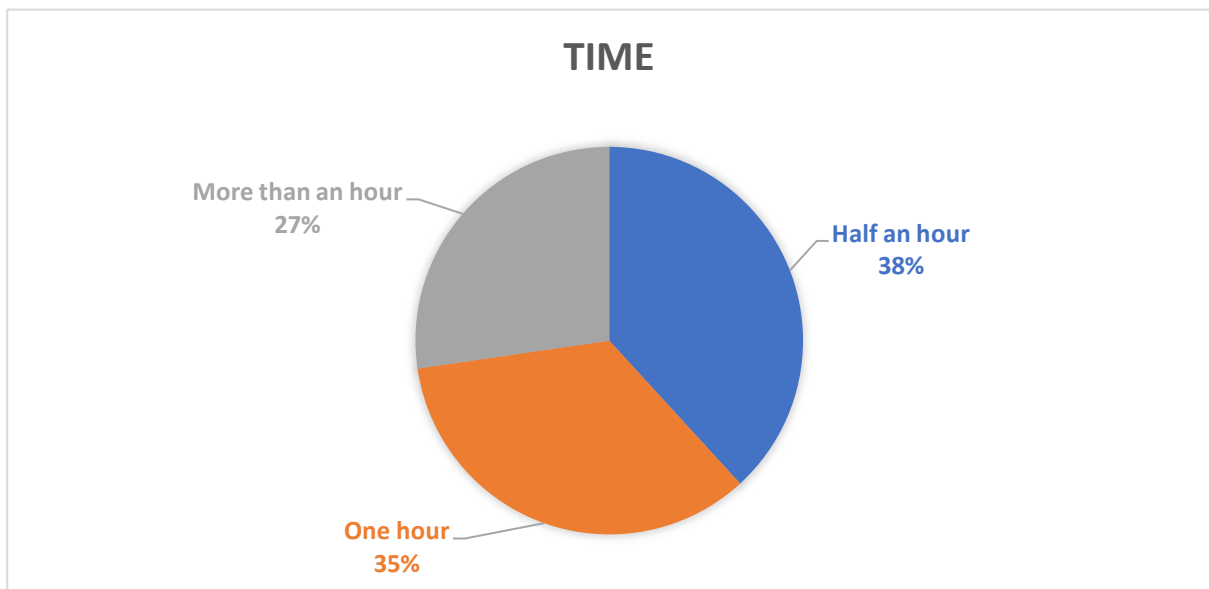
Question #15. Where do you devote time to write in English?

This question was a follow-up of the previous one that was about how much time a day they devoted to write in English, now students revealed where they spent time to write in English. Surprisingly 53 students (96.40%) said that they preferred to devote time to improve their English writing skills practicing at home during free time, and 2 only students (3,6%) said that they practice at work during office hours.

Table 15.

| Place	Percentage	Quantity
Home	96.40%	53
At work	3.60%	2
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 15.
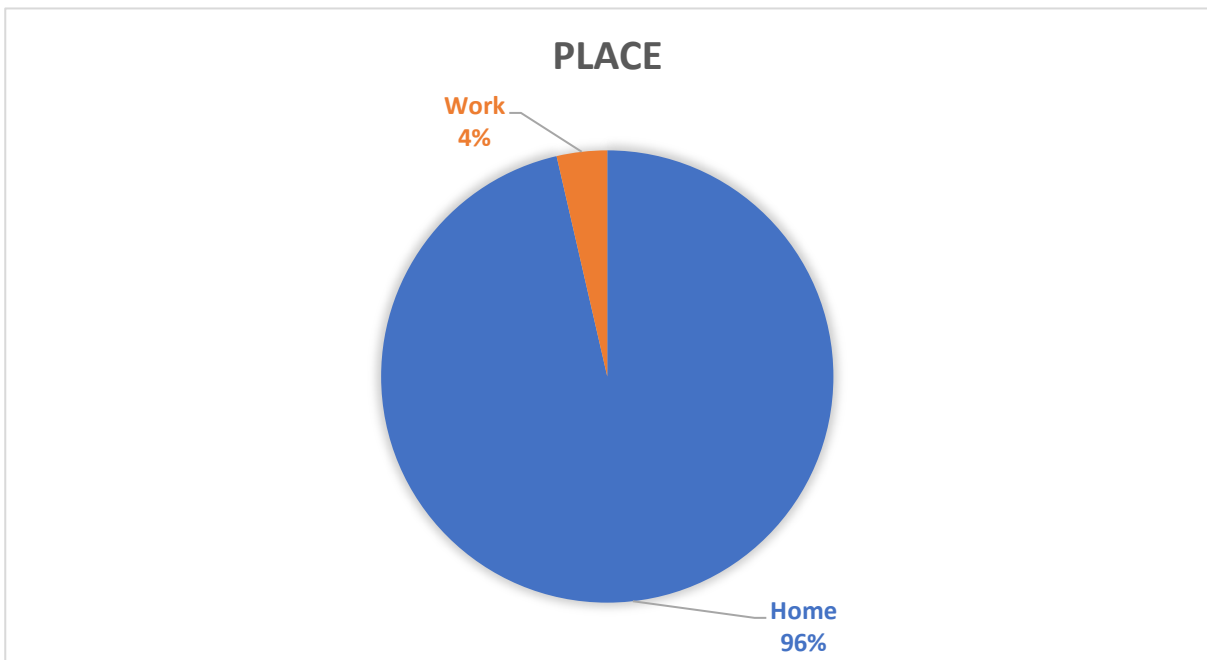
Question #16. How many paragraphs in English do you write per day?

After analyzing the time and place where they practice writing in English, we have quantity that was measured with the question, how many paragraphs do students from English Composition II write per day? where 28 students (50,9%) said that they only write one paragraph per day, 11 students (20%) said that they write two paragraphs in English and finally 16 students (29,1%) said that they write more than two paragraphs in English per day in order to practice.

Table 16.

Paragraph	Percentage	Quantity
One	50.90%	28
Two	20.00%	11
More than two	29.10%	16
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 16.

PARAGRAPH

More than two 29%

One 51%

Two 20%
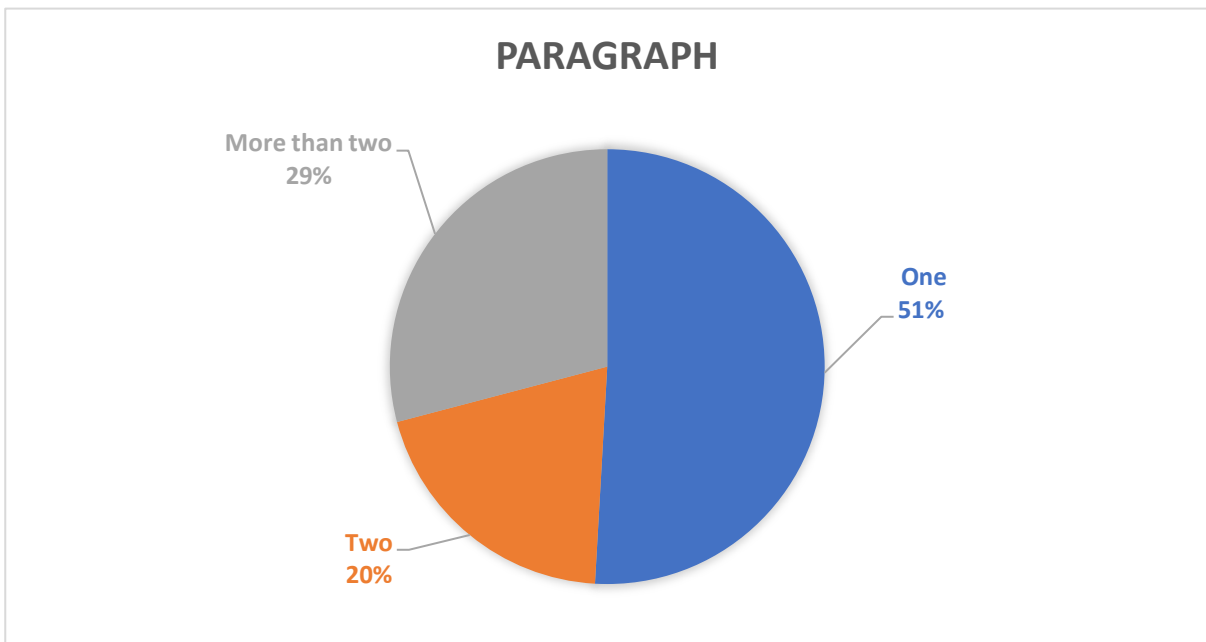
Question #17. Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write in English?

"The objective of this question was to know if the surveyed students felt influenced in any way by Spanish when writing in English, this is something common in English language learners who have Spanish as their mother tongue. Students regularly make some mistakes influenced by Spanish, for example, a phrase like "Querer es poder" can be written like "Want is power" which will be incorrect. Here 39 students (70,9%) said that they do feel influenced by Spanish when writing in English; while 16 students (29,1%) said that they don't feel that influence at all."

Table 17.

Influence	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	70.90%	39
No	29.10%	16
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 17.

INFLUENCE

No 29%

Yes 71%
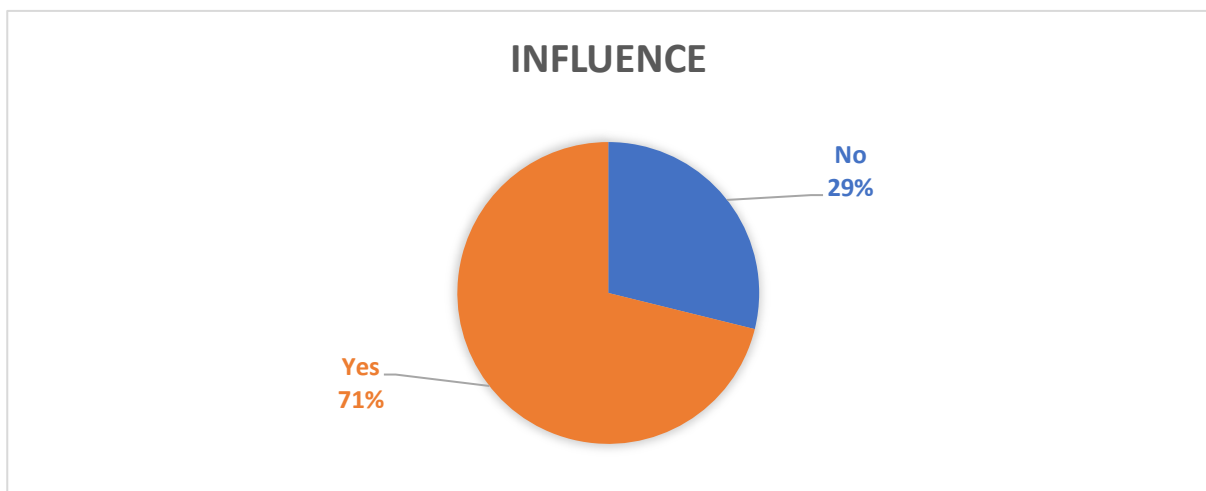
Question #18. Do you consider that writing in English is a difficult skill to develop?

This was a basic question, just to know how students felt about the difficulty of writing in English and how to develop this skill. Of course, 34 respondents (61,8%) said that it was difficult for them to develop writing in English and 21 students (38,2%) said that it was not difficult for them to develop this skill. More than a half of the respondents consider that writing in English is a difficult skill to develop.

Table 18.

Write in English	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	61.80%	34
No	38.20%	21
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 18.

WRITE IN ENGLISH

No 38%

Yes 62%
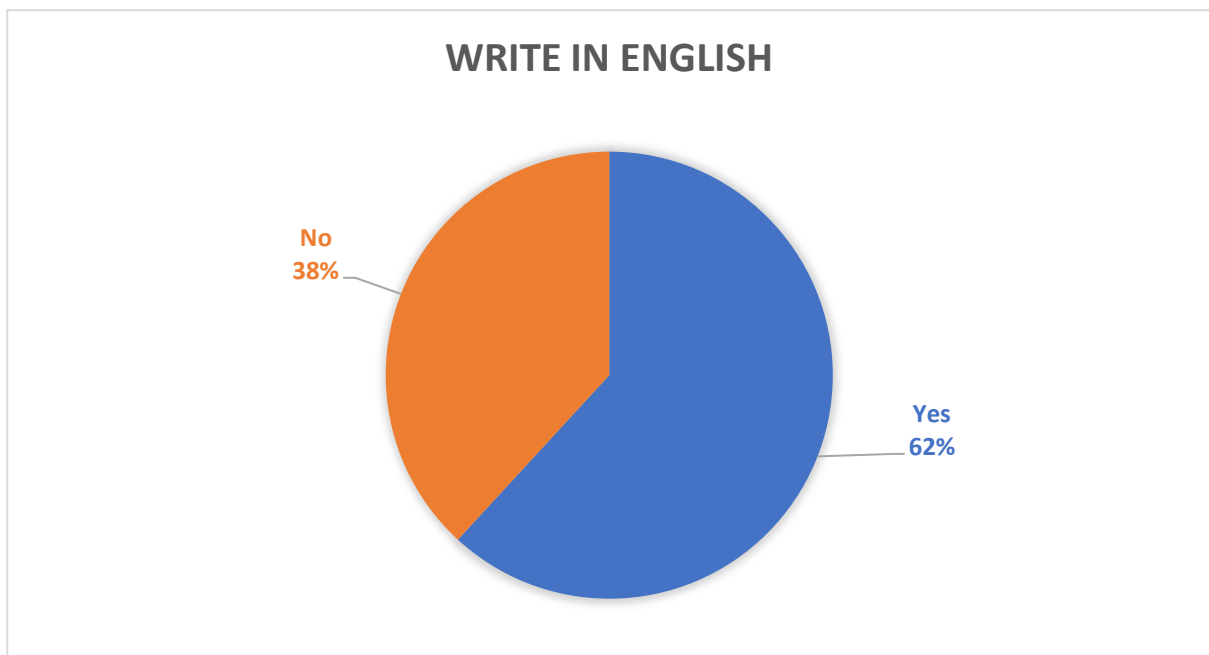
Question #19. Do you feel confident using English grammar?

This was a simple question, with the intention of knowing how many students felt confident using their English grammar. 38 students (69,1%) consider themselves confident enough to use their English grammar, while 17 students (30,9%) do not consider themselves confident enough to use it. Only 17 students do not feel confident writing in English due to its complexity.

Table 19.

Level of English Grammar Confidence	Percentage	Quantity
Confident	69.10%	38
Not confident	30.90%	17
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 19.

LEVEL OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR CONFIDENCE

Not confident 31%
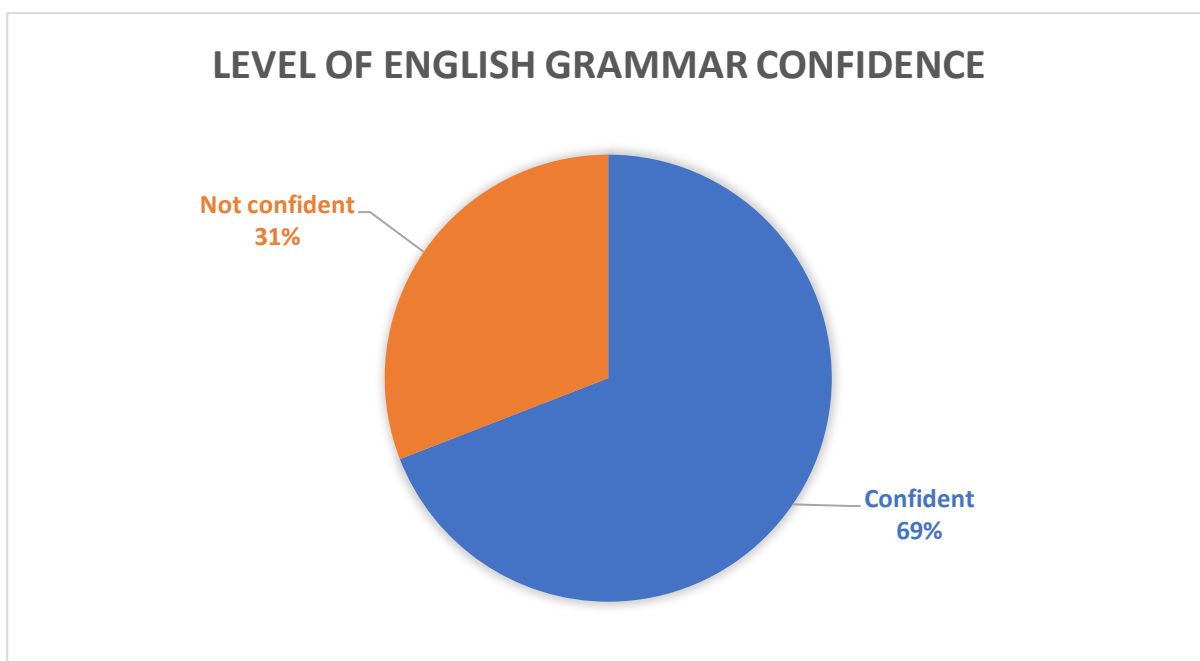
Confident 69%

Question #20. How would you rate your English grammar?

After knowing how confident students felt writing in English, the research team asked them to rate their English grammar. 15 students (27,3%) answered "very good", 35 students (63,6%) answered "average" and 5 students (9,1%) answered "poor". Almost all the population surveyed consider that they have the abilities necessary to get a good writing production.

Table 20.

Rate of confidence	Percentage	Quantity
Very good	27.30%	15
Average	63.60%	35
Poor	9.10%	5
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 20.

RATE OF CONFIDENCE

Poor 9%
Very good 27%
Average 64%
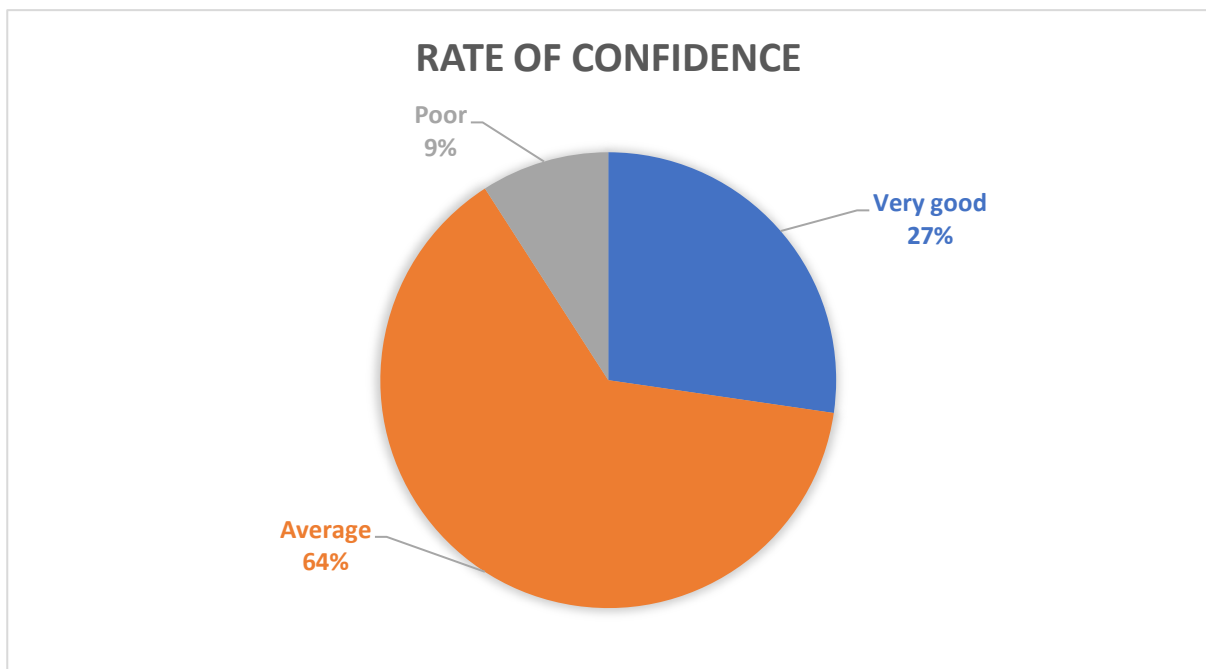
Question #21. How much vocabulary do you have for writing an English composition?

The last question of Part II had to do with the amount of vocabulary that students consider they have for writing an English composition. In this case 15 students (27,3%) consider that their vocabulary is "high", 35 students (63,6%) answered "average" and finally only 5 students (9,1%) answered "poor". As summary it is possible to say that the student community have enough vocabulary for the English Composition II subject.

Table 21.

Vocabulary	Percentage	Quantity
High	27.30%	15
Average	63.60%	35
Poor	9.10%	5
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 21.
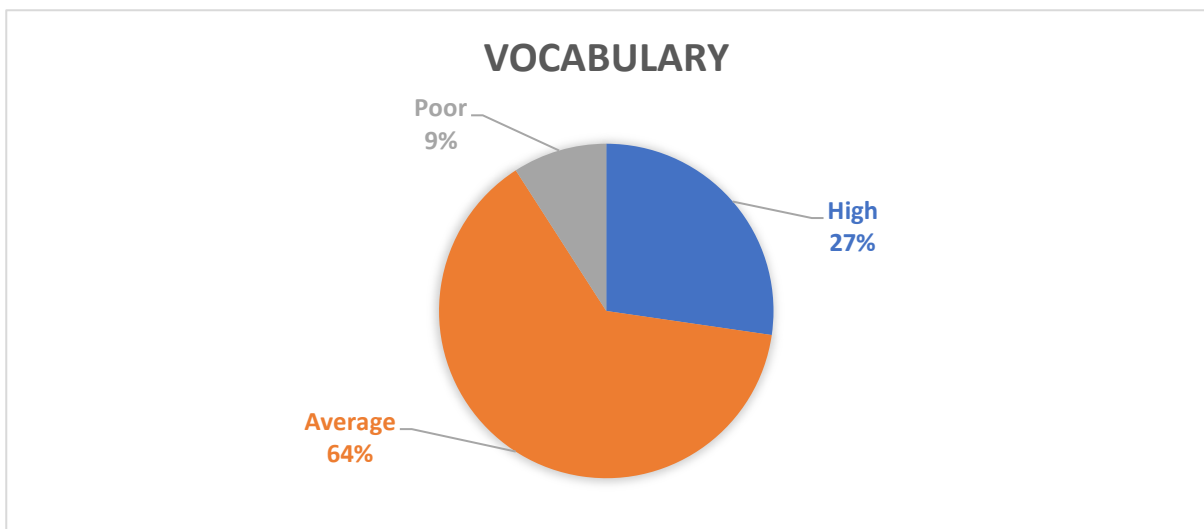
Part III of the questionnaire was called "Technological Resources". The objective of this part was to know if students have access to technology to support them in their learning process, to know the type of internet if in any case they had one, the use they gave to technology if they had it, among other things.

Question #22. Do you have access to a smartphone or a tablet in your daily life?

First question of Part III had to do with basic technological equipment, students were asked if they had a smartphone or a tablet. 53 students (96,4%) answered "yes" and only 2 students (3,6%) answered "no". The student community have access to different technological resources to continue their learning process without obstacles.

Table 22.

Access	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	96.40%	53
No	3.60%	2
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 22.
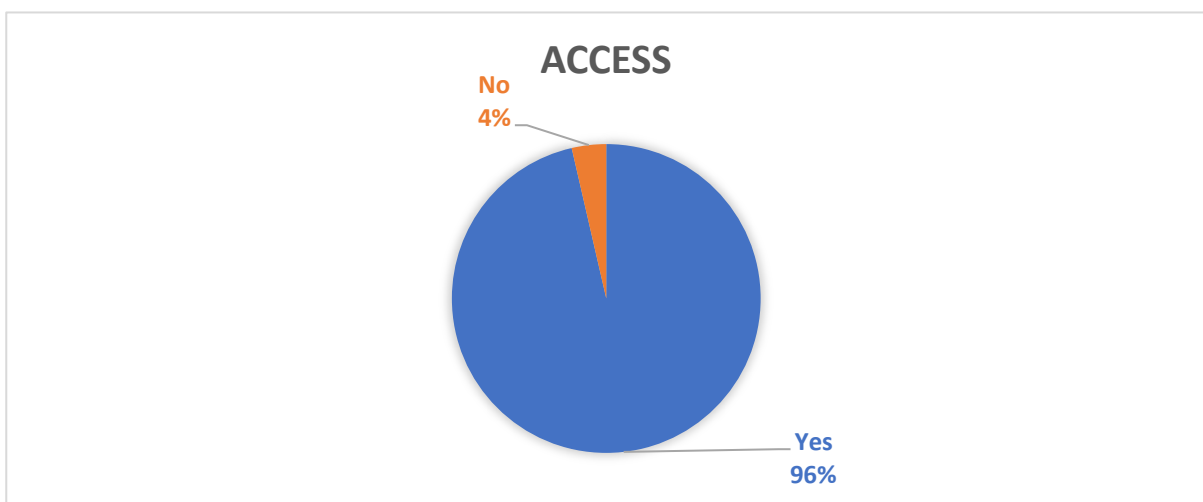
Question #23. What kind of internet services do you have?

This question is somewhat related to the previous one. After asking for the basic technological resources, it was necessary to know if the students had internet services. 38 students (69,1%) said that they only have residential internet. 5 students (9,1%) said that they only have mobile internet for their smartphones, and finally 12 students (21,8%) said that they have both options.

Table 23.

Internet services	Percentage	Quantity
Residential internet	69.10%	38
Mobile internet	9.10%	5
Both	21.80%	12
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 23.
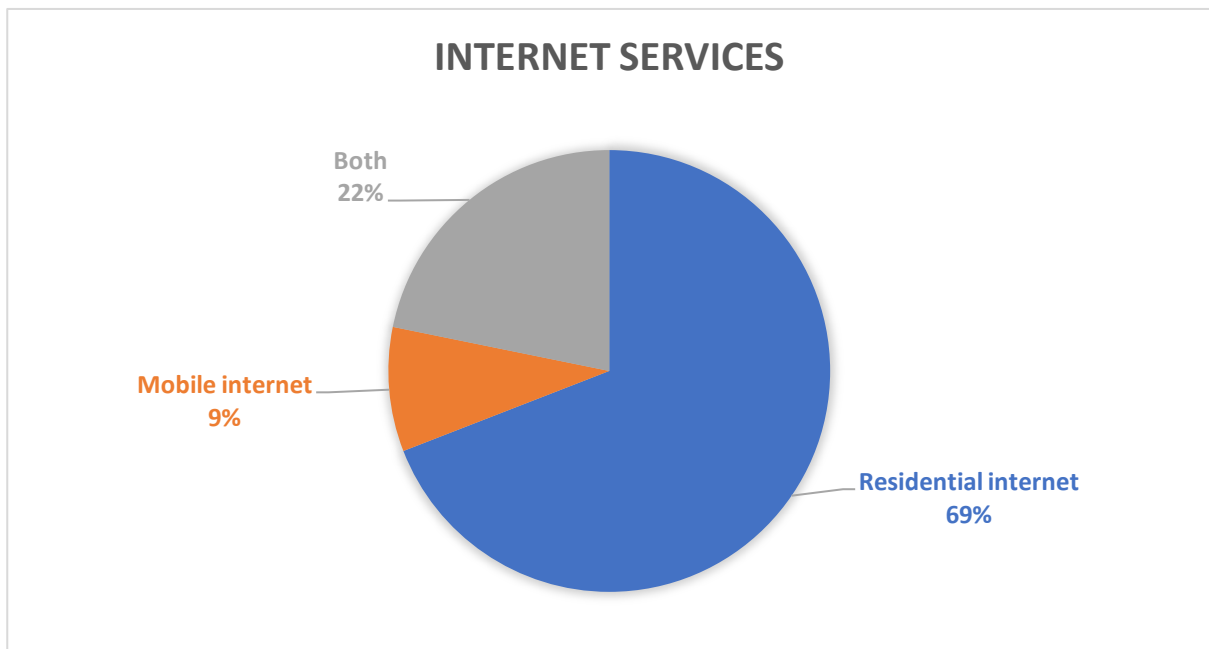
Question #24. How much time on average do you use your cellphone a day?

With this question what the research team looked for ways to gather information about the approximate number of hours of use that a student gives to their cellphone. 6 students (10,9%) use their cellphone approximately 1 to 2 hours a day, 15 students (27,3%) use their cellphone between 3 to 4 hours a day finally there was an equality between the last 2 options, 17 students (30,9%) said that they use their cellphone around 5 to 6 hours a day and another 17 students (30,9%) said that they usually use it from 7 to more hours a day.

Table 24.

Use of cellphone	Percentage	Quantity
1 - 2 hours a day	10.90%	6
3 - 4 hours a day	27.30%	15
5 - 6 hours a day	30.90%	17
More than 7 hours	30.90%	17
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 24.
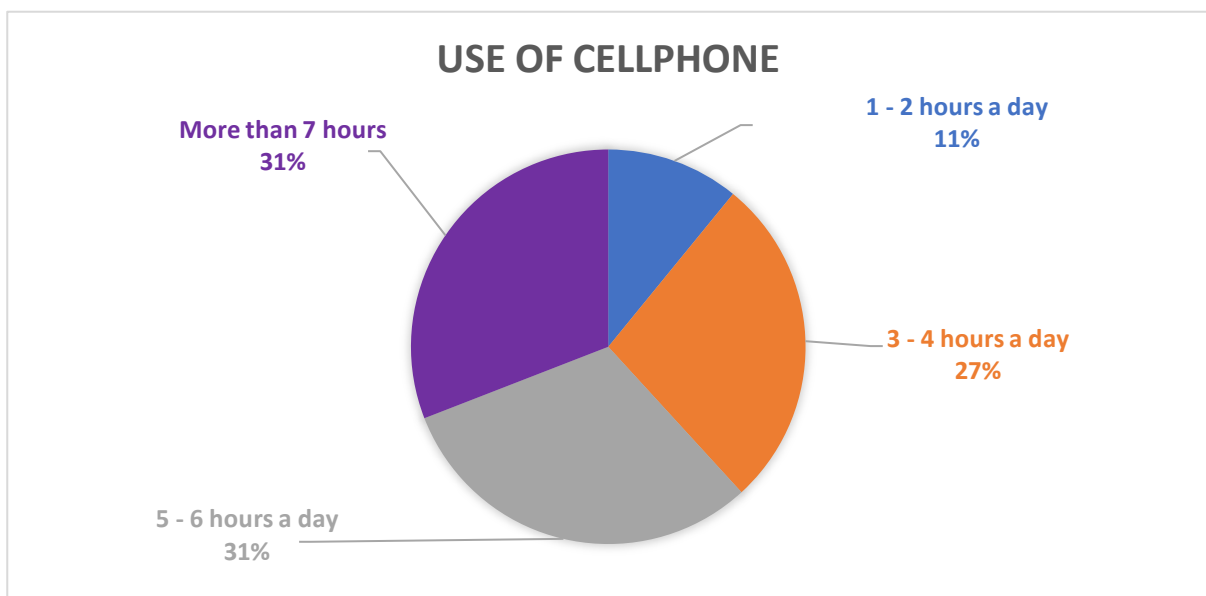
Question #25. Do you use any mobile apps in your mobile devices for the learning purpose?

As a continuation of the previous question, already knowing the time of daily use of mobile devices, the research team wanted to know if the students used applications related to study and learning. Surprisingly most of the surveyed population, to be precise 45 students (81,8%) answered "yes" meaning that they do use apps to study or to learn and the remaining 10 students (18,2%) answered "no".

Table 25.

Mobile apps	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	81.80%	45
No	18.20%	10
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 25.
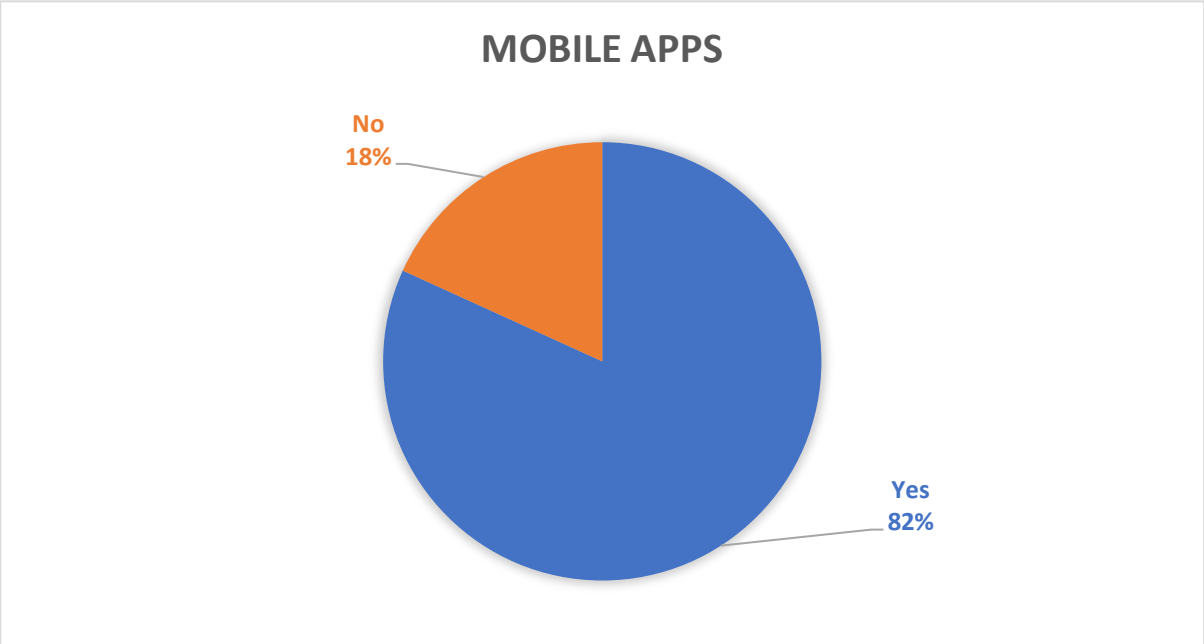
Question #26. How much time do you devote to practice the English writing skill through your mobile apps?

After figuring out that students have applications related to study and learning, the research team wanted to know how much time they use them during the day to practice the English writing. This question provided 3 different choices, the first option chosen by 36 students (65,5%) was 10 to 15 minutes a day, the second option chosen by 13 students (23,6%) was 30 minutes to 1 hour a day and finally the third option chosen by 6 students (10,9%) was more time than an hour during the day.

Table 26.

Time to practice	Percentage	Quantity
10 to 15 minutes	65.50%	36
30 min to 1 hour	23.60%	13
More than 1 hour	10.90%	6
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 26.

Question #27. Do you believe that using mobile apps for improving writing skill will contribute to obtain better results?

This question had the objective of knowing if the students considered that using apps would help them to improve their writing skill and improve their results. 51 students (92,7%) answered that using apps will definitely help them improve the English writing skill and only 4 students (7,3%) said that apps will not help them to improve or get better results in studies. As a result, the majority of students surveyed confirm that it is possible to improve the Writing Skill by using mobile apps in order to obtain better results and grades in the subject of English Composition II.

Table 27.

Apps help to improve	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	92.70%	51
No	7.30%	4
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 27.

APPS HELP TO IMPROVE

No 7%

Yes 93%
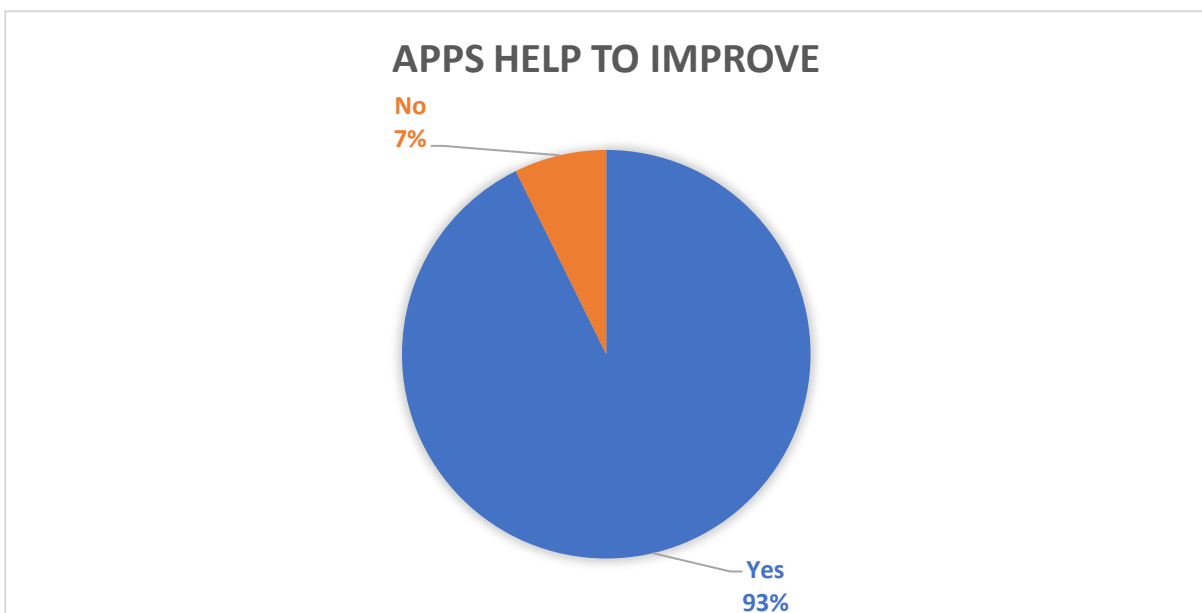
Question #28. Would you like to use mobile apps as part of your English classes at the University?

The opinion of students is very important, for that reason the last question of Part III highlights the interest that students have in using technology to improve their studies and achieve academic progress. 49 students (89,1%) answered that they would like to use mobile apps to learn at the University while only 6 students (10,9%) said that they would not. The student community considers that is important to use free online applications as part of their English classes at the university.

Table 28.

Apps in English classes	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	89.10%	49
No	10.90%	6
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 28.

APPS IN ENGLISH CLASSES

No 11%

Yes 89%
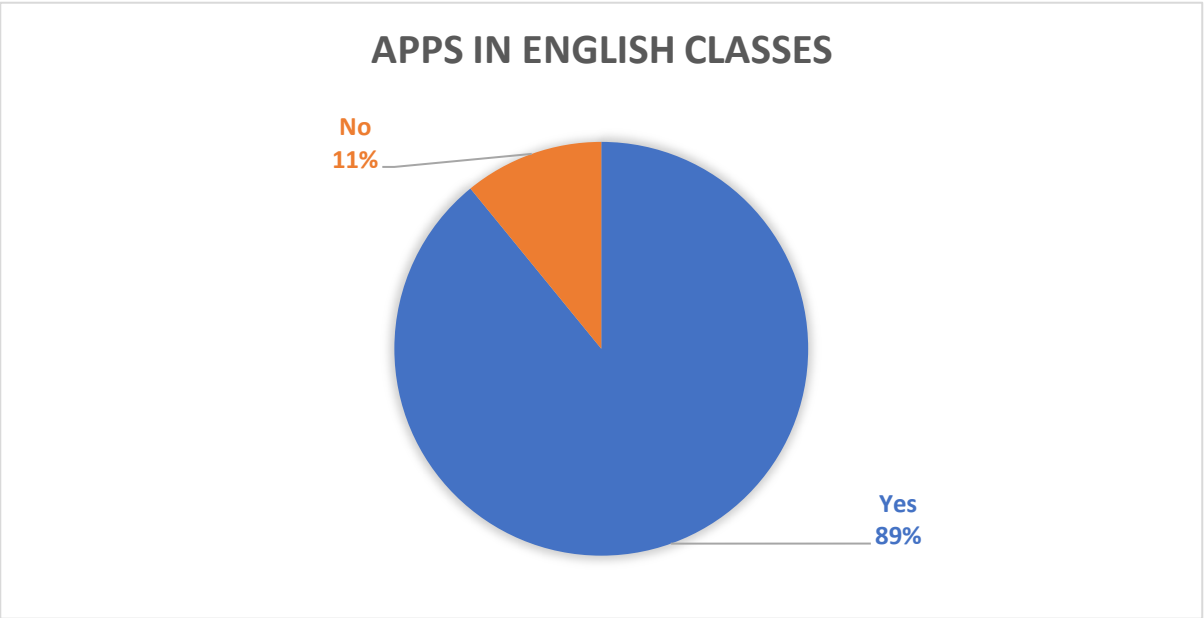
Part IV of the questionnaire was called "Free Online Language Applications Knowledge". As the title says, the objective of this section of questions was to know if the students had prior knowledge of the applications that were being investigated, if they had used any or not and, if so, the frequency of use given by them.

Question #29. Have you heard of any of the following apps before?

In the first question of Part IV, the research team wanted to know if the students had previously heard of the applications that were being investigated, these applications were Duolingo, Grammarly, Tandem, BBC Learning English and Oxford Dictionary. The results of this question were quite interesting since 49 students (81.9%) said they knew and have heard before of Duolingo, Grammarly, Oxford Dictionary and BBC Learning English in that respective order, to this is added that the remaining 6 students (18.1%) said they only knew Tandem. Many students have used the applications before and they got good results using them.

Table 29.

Known apps	Percentage	Quantity
Duolingo/Grammarly/BBC learning English/Oxford Dictionary	81.90%	49
Tandem	18.1	6
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 29.

Question #30. From the apps listed below, which ones have you used before?

The objective of this question was to find out if the students had used any of the 5 applications that were being investigated in the past. The responses of 55 students resulted in a majority that used Grammarly and Duolingo, these being 1st and 2nd place respectively. In 3rd place was Oxford Dictionary, 4th place was for BBC Learning English and finally in last and 5th place was Tandem being this the least known and used app by our surveyed population.

Table 30.

Apps most used	Places
Grammarly	1
Duolingo	2
Oxford Dictionary	3
BBC Learning English	4
Tandem	5

Figure 30.
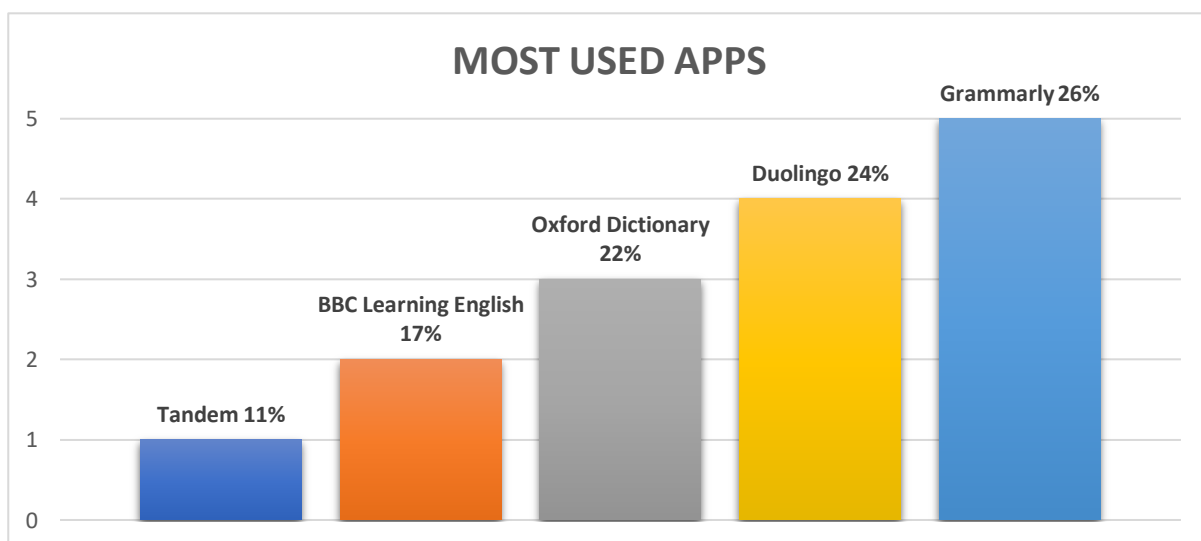
Question #31. Which of the following apps to study do you consider that are the best option to improve the English writing skills?

This question was focused on the development and improvement of the ability to write in English and which applications were considered the most appropriate by the students. They considered Grammarly to be the best option, leaving the application in 1st place. The 2nd place turned out to be for Oxford Dictionary. Duolingo and BBC Learning English came in 3rd place as a tie and once again as the least recommended app Tandem.

Table 31.

Best apps	Places
Grammarly	1
Oxford Dictionary	2
Duolingo - BBC learning English	3
Tandem	4

Figure 31.
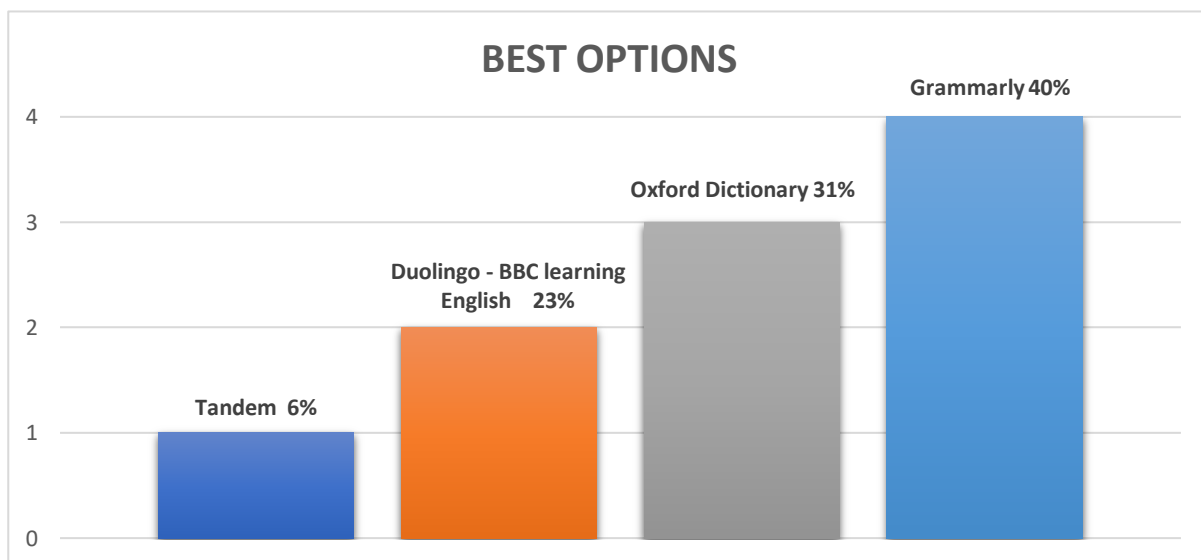
Question #32. Do you consider that having an online dictionary is important for students?

As the question already mentioned, the research team wanted to know about the importance of having an online dictionary for the students of English Composition II. Surprisingly, the 55 students surveyed said that they considered as important, necessary and useful to have this resource.

Table 32.

Important	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	100%	55
No	0%	0
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 32.

IS THE OXFORD DICTIONARY IMPORTANT ?

Yes
100%
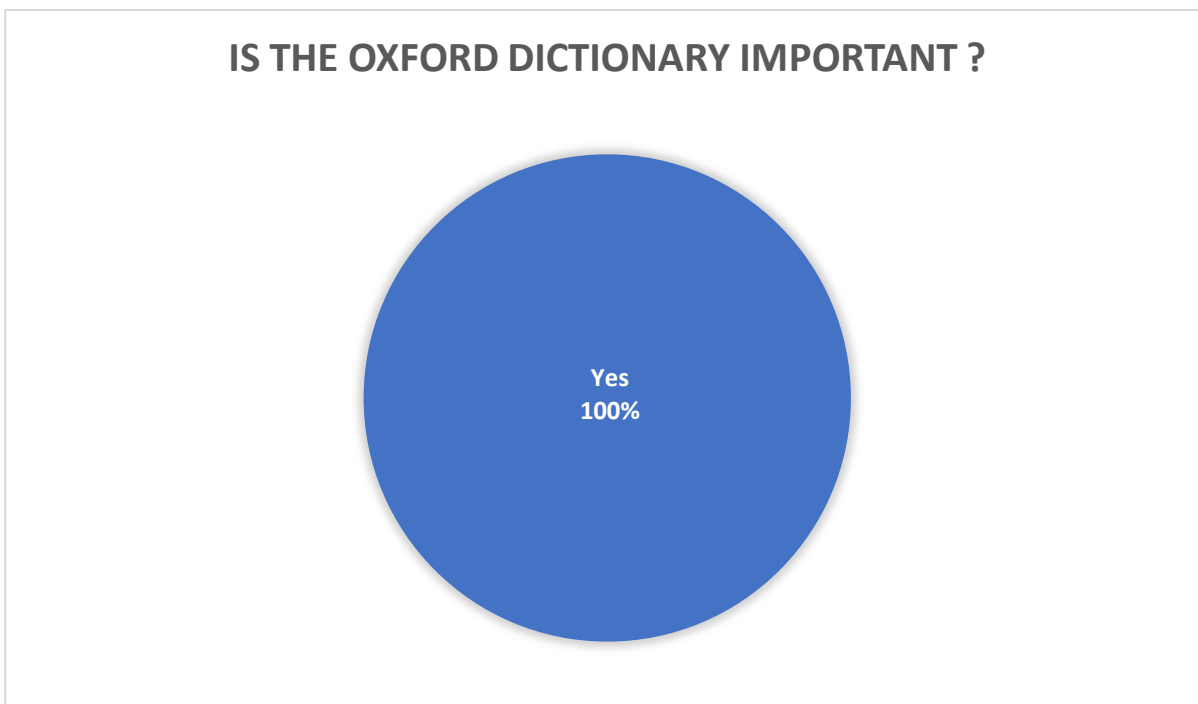
Question #33. How frequent do you use an online dictionary? For example, "Oxford Dictionary".

This question as a continuation of the previous one that was about the importance of having an online dictionary, was referred to the frequency of use that a student gives to an online dictionary. Question #33 had 4 options, the first one "never" was chosen by 4 students (7,3%), "once a week" was chosen by 8 students (14,5%), "twice a week" was chosen by 11 students (20%) and finally "more than 5 times a week" was chosen by 32 students (58,2%). The population surveyed confirms that they give a regular use of the free online application in this case Oxford Dictionary which helps them a lot in their learning process, being this a tool that allows them to create writing productions with a good level of proficiency.

Table 33.

Use an online dictionary	Percentage	Quantity
Once a week	14.50%	8
Twice a week	20.00%	11
More than five times	58.20%	32
Never	7%	4
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 33.

USE AN ONLINE DICTIONARY

Never 7%
Once a week 15%
Twice a week 20%
More than five times 58%
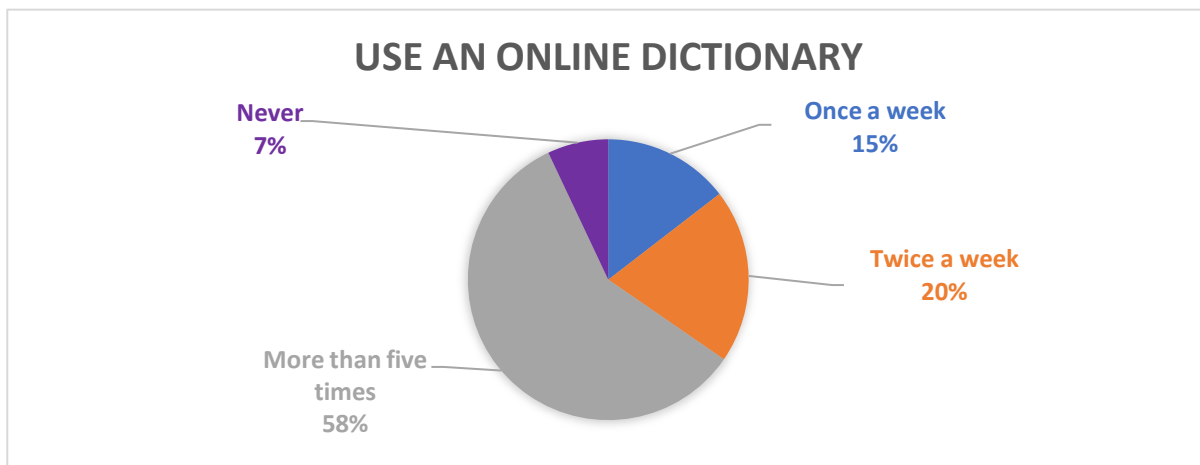
Question #34. Do you consider that Tandem and Duolingo are important tools to improve at the composition course while you write in English?

This question was aimed at identifying whether the students considered Tandem and Duolingo as important apps to use and improve their writing while taking the English composition course. 25 students (45,5%) said "yes", 10 students (18,2%) said "no" and 20 students (36,4%) said that they don't know. Other questions that demonstrate the importance of the use of free online language applications to improve the writing skill in the English Composition II subject.

Table 34.

Tandem and Duolingo as important tools	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	45.50%	25
No	18.20%	10
No idea	36.40%	20
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 34

TANDEM AND DUOLINGO AS IMPORTANT TOOLS

No idea 36%
Yes 46%
No 18%
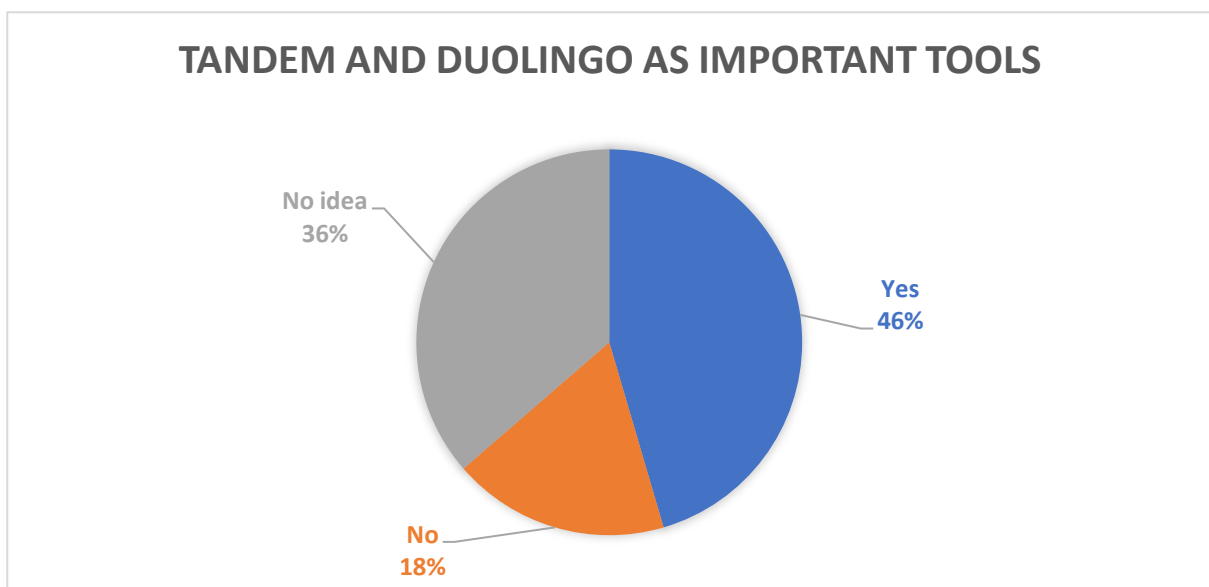
Question #35. Do you know what aspects of English does Grammarly help to improve?

With this question we wanted to know if the students had a basic idea of what aspects of English the app Grammarly helped to improve. 14 students (25,5%) said only grammar, 3 students (5,5%) said only spelling and finally 38 students (69,1%) said that Grammarly helped to improve grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

Table 35.

Aspects	Percentage	Quantity
Grammar	25.50%	14
Spelling	5.50%	3
Grammar, spelling and vocabulary	69.10%	38
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 35.
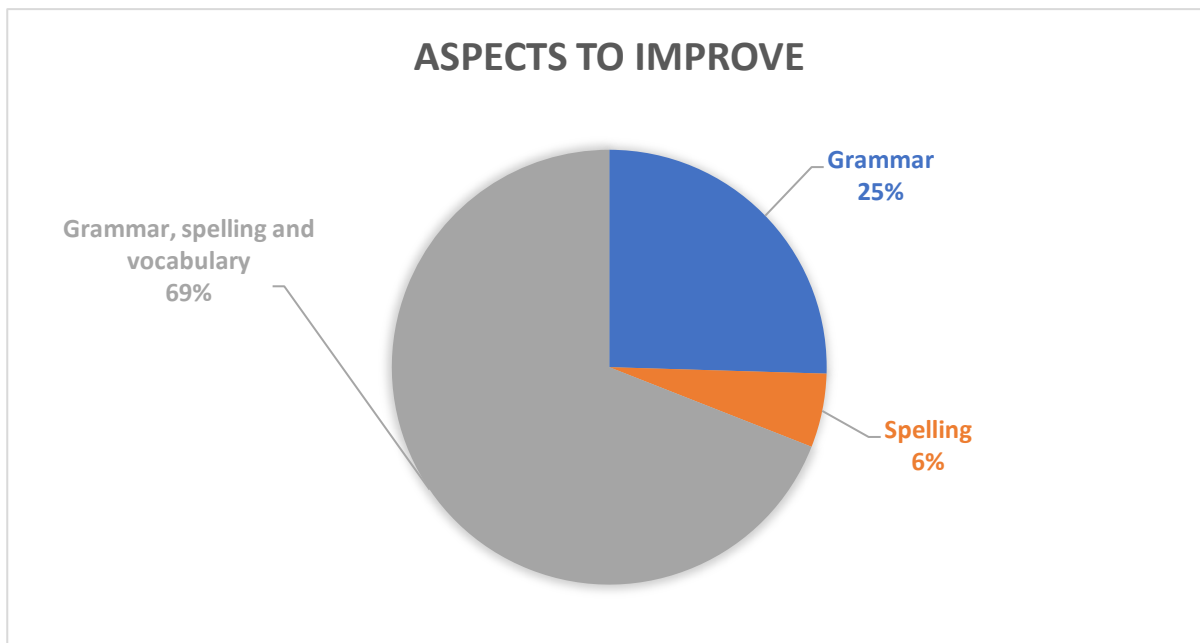
Question #36. Do you know what aspects of English does BBC Learning English help to improve?

Like the previous question, the research team wanted to check if students had a basic idea of what BBC Learning English helped to improve regarding English. 6 students (10,9%) said only listening, 3 students (5,5%) said only speaking, 7 students (12,7%) said only reading, 5 students (9,1%) said only writing and finally 34 students (61,8%) said that BBC Learning English helped to improve all of the aspects previously mentioned.

Table 36.

Aspects of BBC Learning English	Percentage	Quantity
Listening	10.90%	6
Speaking	5.50%	3
Reading	12.70%	7
Writing	9.10%	5
All of them	61.80%	34
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 36.
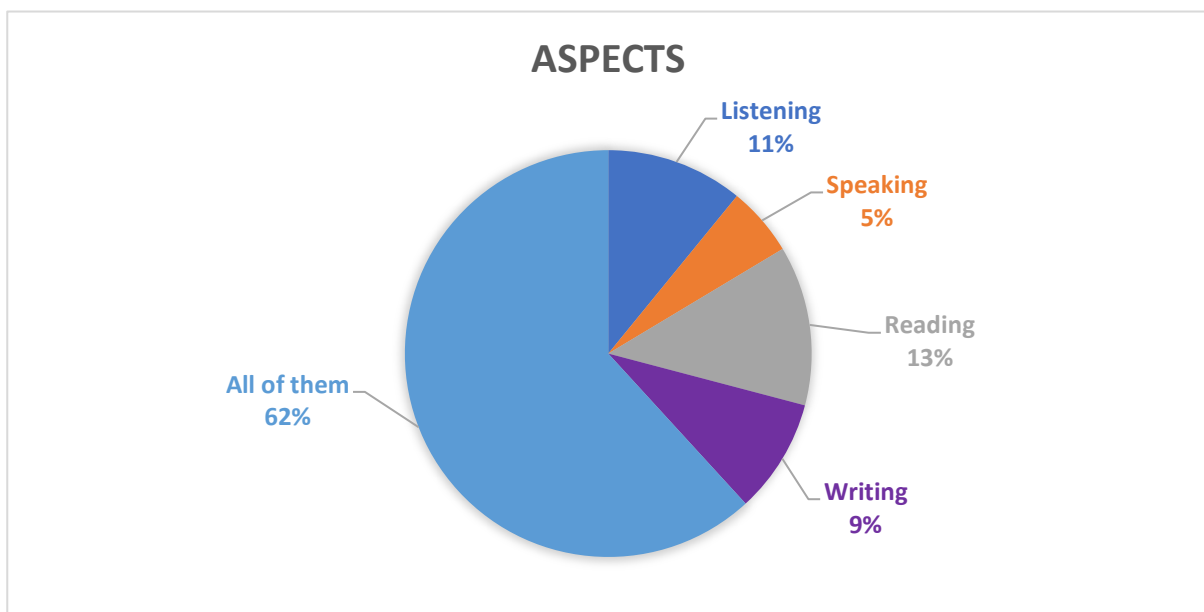
Question #37. Which of the following apps would you be willing to use more often while studying?

The answers to this question gave interesting results, students are determined to use apps more often while studying by leaving Grammarly and Oxford Dictionary as 1st and 2nd place respectively, BBC Learning English in 3rd place, 4th place for Duolingo and 5th and last place for Tandem.

Table 37.

Apps	Places
Grammarly	1
Oxford Dictionary	2
BBC learning English	3
Duolingo	4
Tandem	5

Figure 37.
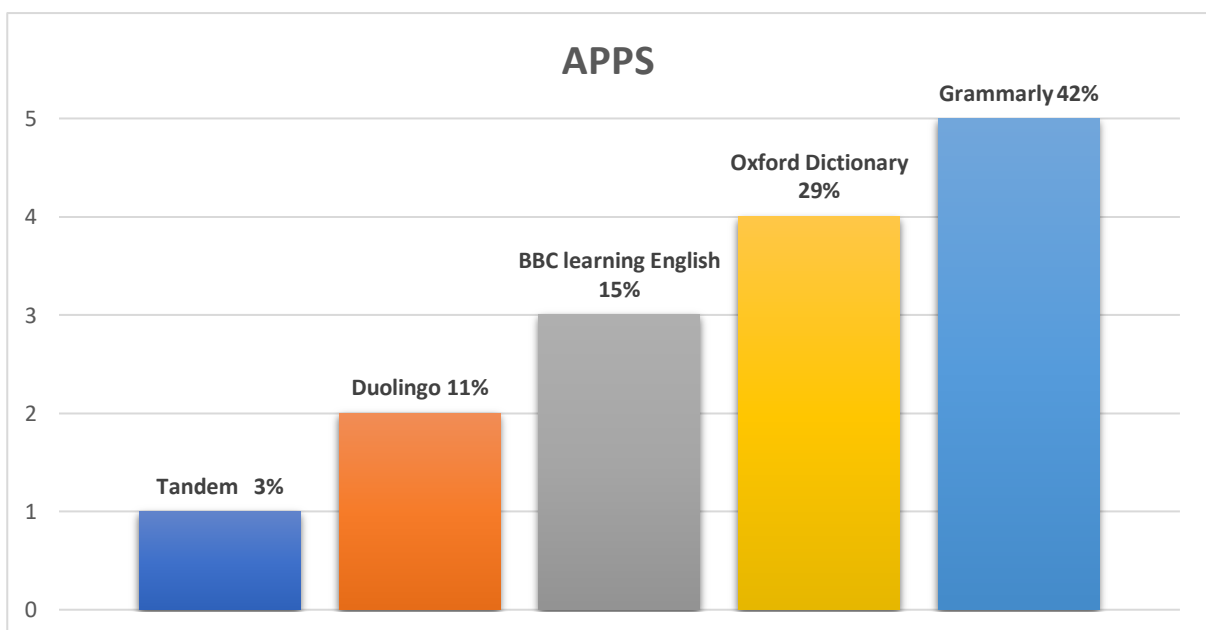
Question #38. If a teacher suggests the use of apps, would you consider that as a resource for the learning and development of English?

As the final question of Part IV all of the students surveyed consider that if a teacher suggests using apps to improve, learn and develop their English, these would be very good resources.

Table 38.

Apps as resources	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	100%	55
No	0%	0
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 38.
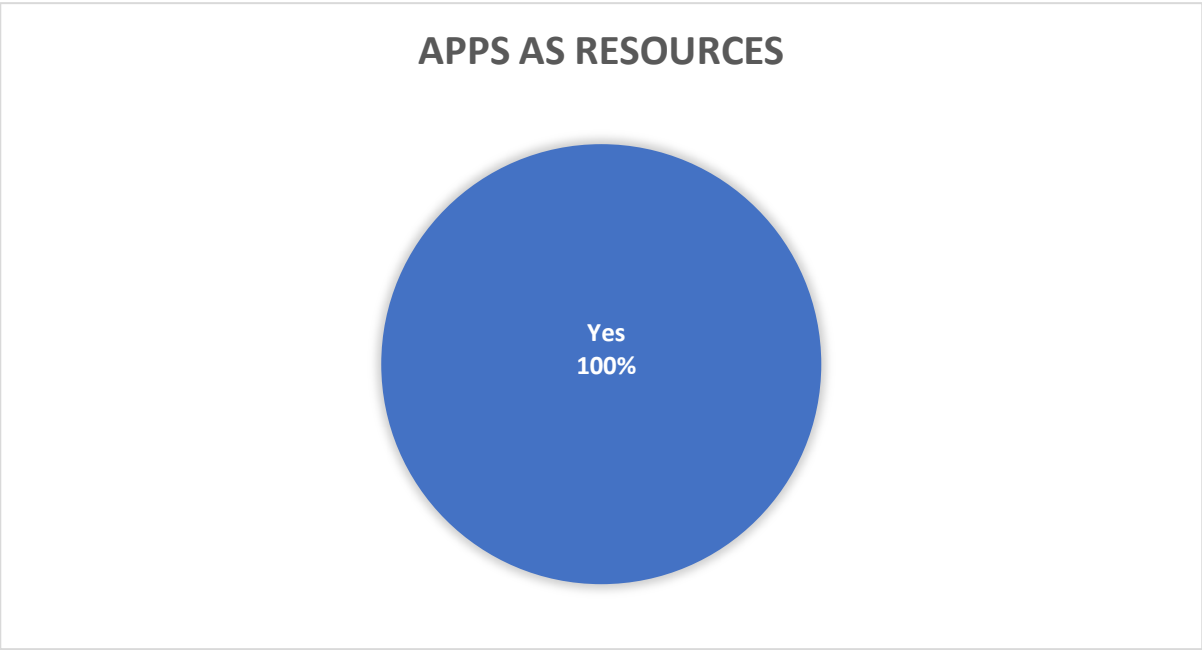
To finish the questionnaire, we have Part V called "Improvements in the English writing skills". The objective of this section was to know if students considered that technology could help them to improve their learning process, if apps could be a possible distraction while learning and if they would recommend the use of apps to others.

Question #39. Do you consider that using applications to study could cause a distraction in the development of the learning process?

First question of Part V gave good results, with this question the research team wanted to know if the use of free online language applications caused a distraction to students while practicing writing in English. Only 12 students (21,8%) considered that these apps could be bad in the development of the learning process, while 43 students (78,2%) said that apps could be beneficial to the development and improvement of the English learning process.

Table 39.

Apps as a distraction	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	21.8%	12
No	78.2%	43
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 39.

APPS AS A DISTRACTION

Yes 22%

No 78%
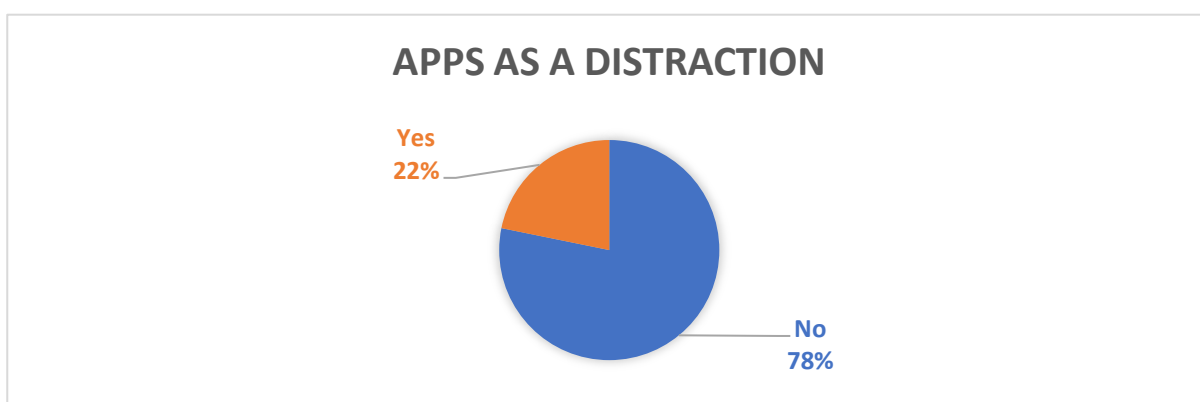
Question #40. Can a student improve the learning experience by using technology?

The majority of the students to be precise 53 (96,4%) believe that the use of technology can help students to improve their learning experience and only 2 students (3,6%) believe that technology will not help at all. An important aspect was gathered by these questions demonstrating the relevance that the use of technological resources like platforms and free online language applications have for the student community.

Table 40.

Improvement through technology	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	96.40%	53
No	3.60%	2
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 40.
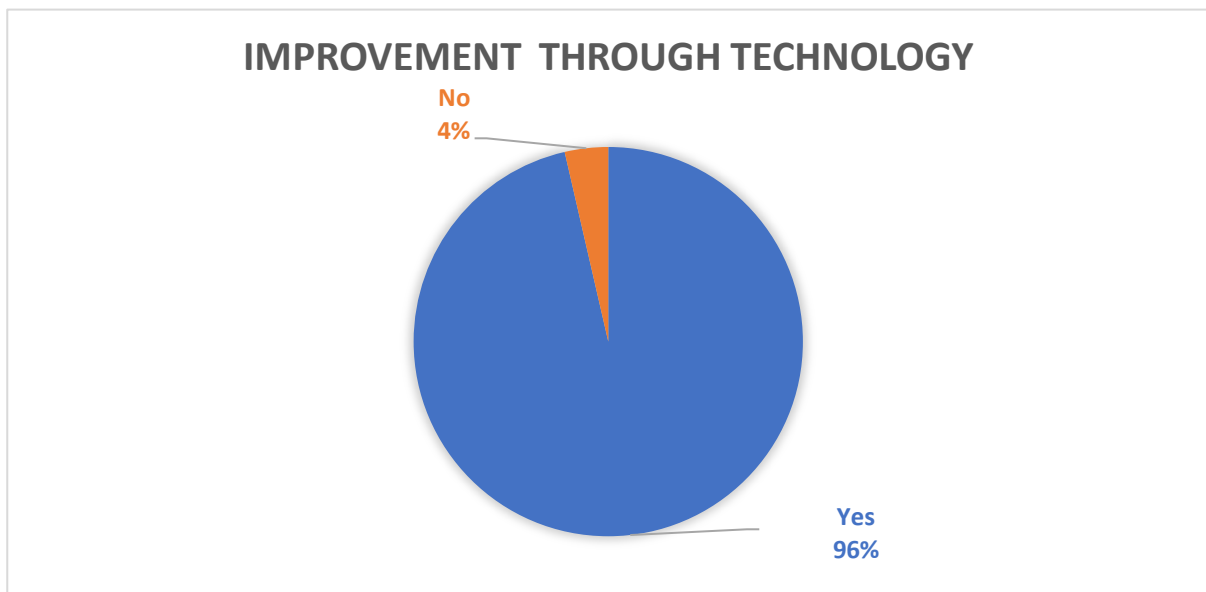
Question #41. Do you consider that it is possible to improve the grammatical skills by using online apps or technology?

The results of this question show that 50 students (90,9%) said that apps and technology will definitely improve their grammatical skills and only 5 students (9,1%) consider that apps and technology can't help them to improve. One more time the survey confirms that it is possible to improve the grammatical skills by using online apps or technology.

Table 41.

Grammar skills	Percentage	Quantity
Yes	90.90%	50
No	9.10%	5
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 41.
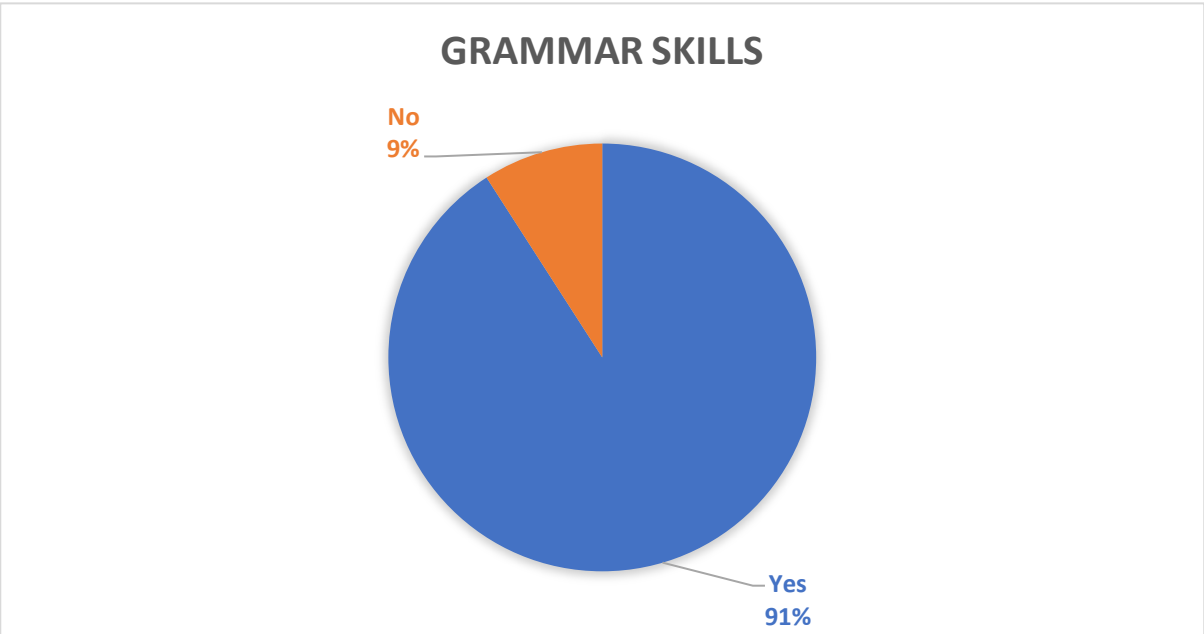
Question #42. In your personal opinion, what is the main reason that students have to improve their knowledge on a language?

This question was related with the reasons that students have to improve their knowledge on a language, students had 3 options. First option "academic development" in case students just wanted to improve their grades was chosen by 14 students (25,5%), second option was related with their own aspirations "personal growth" and it was chosen by 15 students (27,3%) and finally the third option was "career opportunities" if they wanted to have their ideal job in the future, it was chosen by 26 students (47,3%).

Table 42.

Reasons	Percentage	Quantity
Academic development	25.50%	14
Personal growth	27.30%	15
Career opportunities	47.30%	26
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 42.
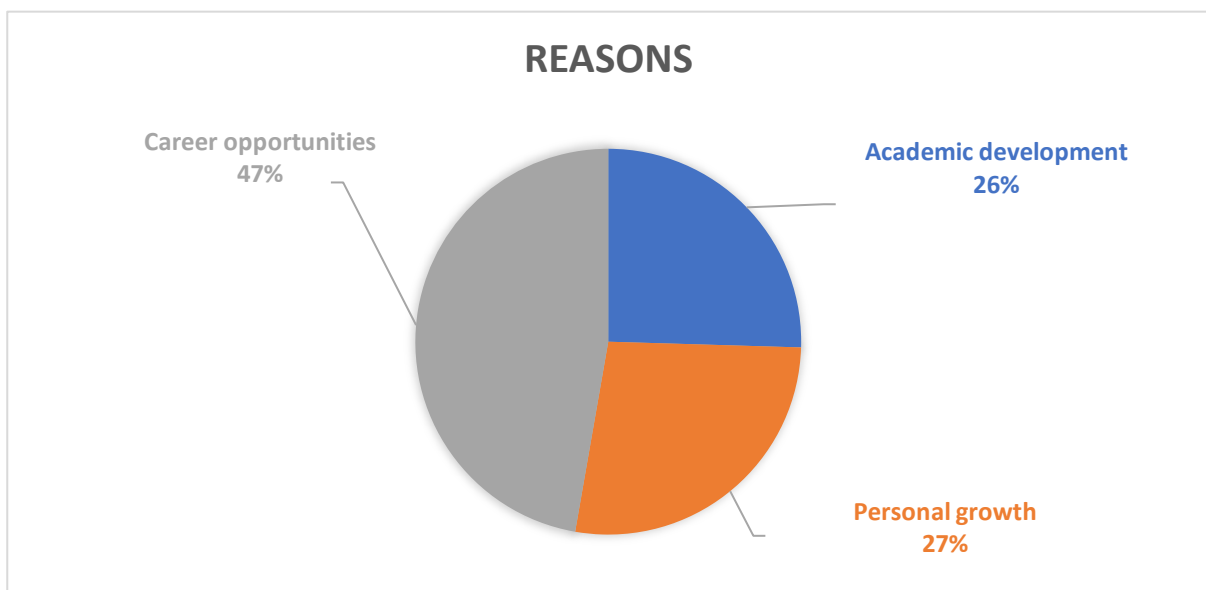
Question #43. Which of the following apps would you recommend to future students and professors to use in composition courses?

The students proposed Grammarly as the main app to use during composition courses, they also chose Oxford Dictionary as a second option. Third and fourth options were BBC Learning English and Duolingo. The least recommended by students was once again Tandem. At the end students recommend the use of free online applications having into account the different benefits that apps offer to them.

Table 43.

Recommended apps	Places
Grammarly	1
Oxford Dictionary	2
BBC and Duolingo	3
Tandem	4

Figure 43.
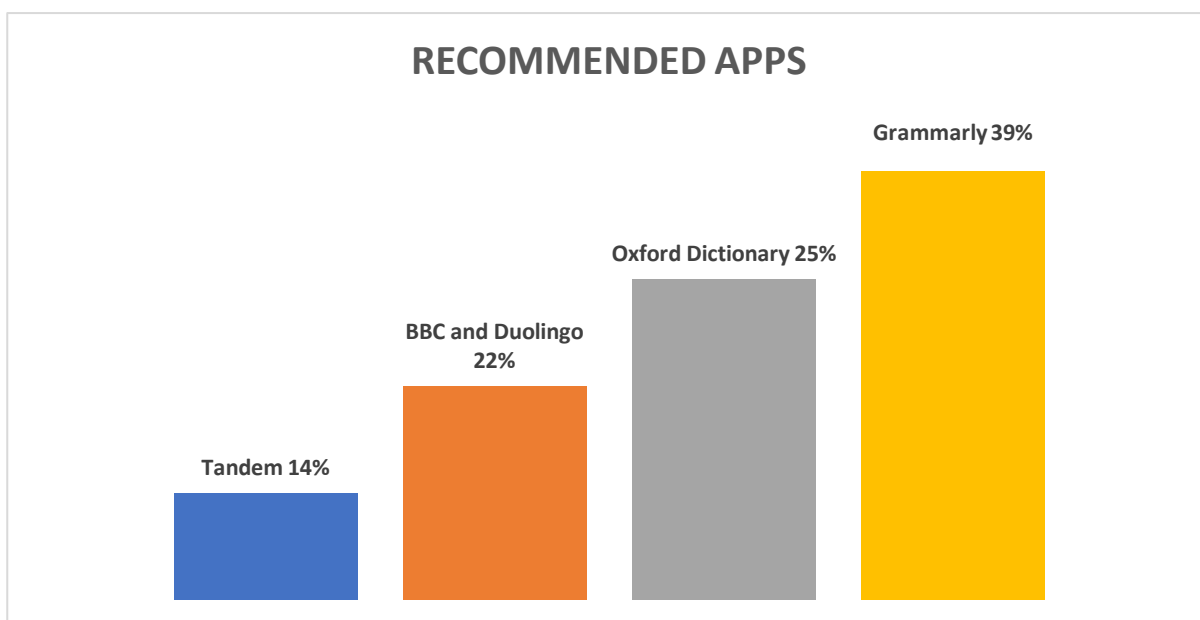
Question #44. Why would you recommend teachers and students to use an app while taking a composition course or an English based course?

First option was "to make English learning easier" and it was chosen only by 6 students (10,9%). Second option was "to improve your grammatical skills" and it was chosen by 26 students (47,3%). Third option was "to practice some aspects of English that you don't feel confident about" and it was chosen by a total of 23 students (41,8%), and finally the last option "to pass the subject without difficulty" was not chosen.

Table 44.

Recommendations	Percentage	Quantity
To learn English easily	10.90%	6
To Improve grammar skills	47.30%	26
To be more confident	41.80%	23
To pass Grammar Subject	0%	0
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 44.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To be more confident 42%

To learn English easily 11%

To Improve grammar skills 47%
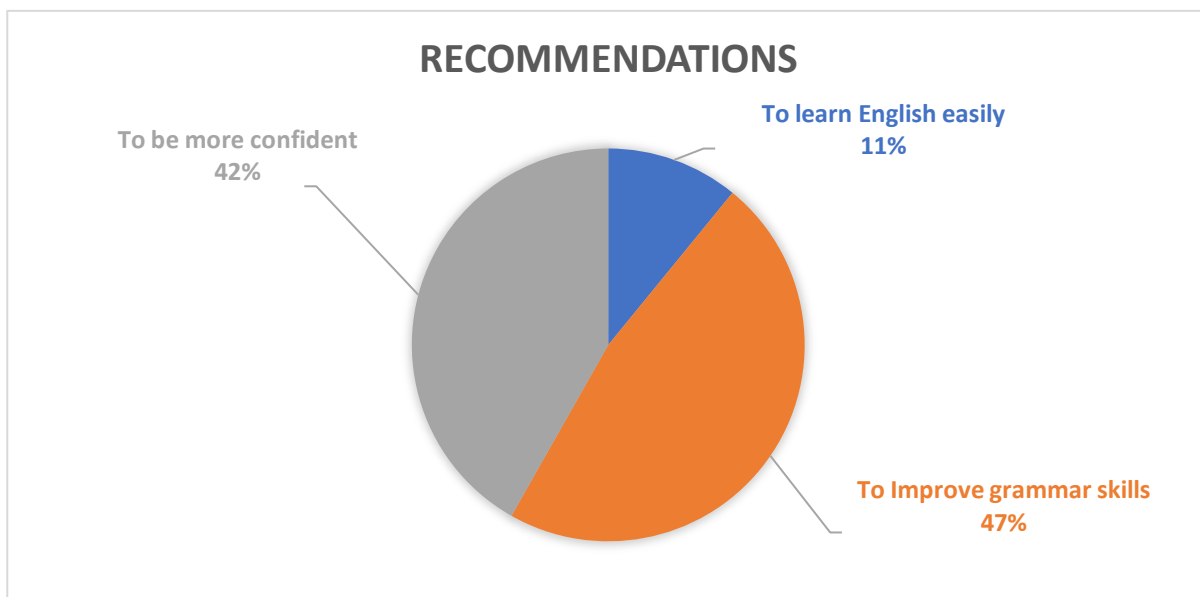
Question #45. If you have used any of the 5 previously mentioned apps, how would you rate the impact of using them on your learning during the composition course?

In this case 13 students (23,6%) said that the impact that apps like Grammarly and Oxford Dictionary had for them was "excellent" and 32 students (58,1%) said it was "very good" resulting in an outstanding approval for the use of free online language applications and the remaining 10 students (18,2%) said that the impact for them was "average". By the previous use of apps students know how beneficial are these technological resources in order to have a better performance for the subject of English Composition.

Table 45.

Impact of using apps	Percentage	Quantity
Excellent	23.63%	13
Very good	58.18%	32
Average	18.19%	10
TOTAL	100%	55

Figure 45.
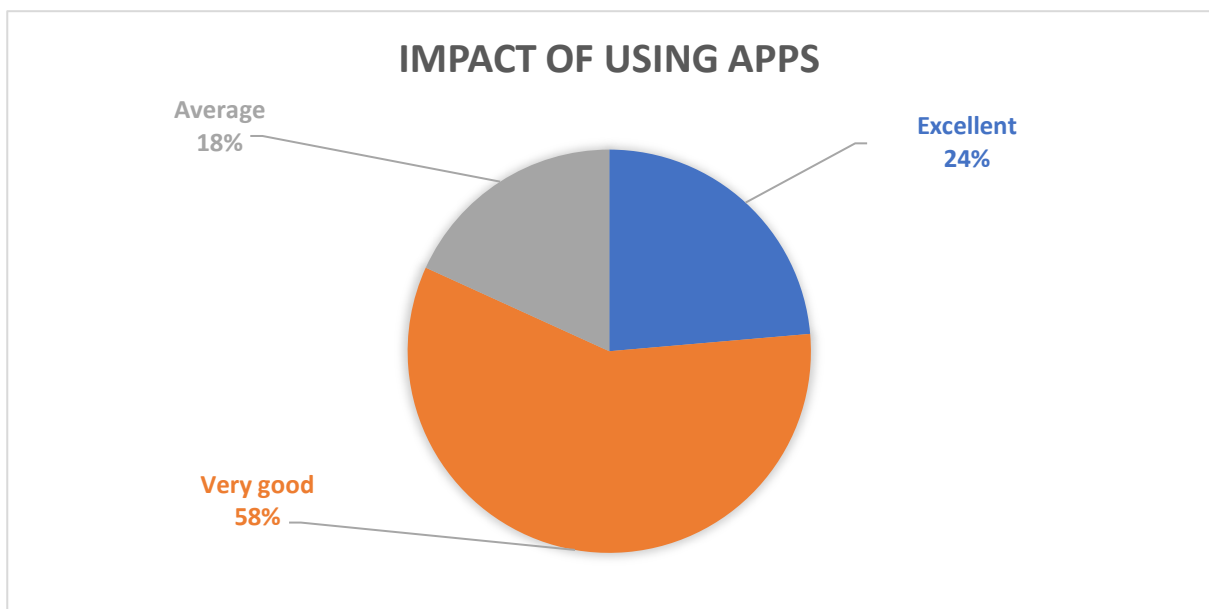
Question #46. Is there another app you know or might have used that you recommend to fellow classmates and professors?

This last question gave us a variety of answers regarding apps students would recommend to other students and teachers, here is the list of apps that were part of the answers.

- Cake (recommended by 4 students)

- Bussu (recommended by 2 students)

- Cambridge Dictionary (recommended by 2 students)

- Linguee (recommended by 2 students)

- Reverso (recommended by 2 students)

- EWA (recommended by 2 students)

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary (recommended by one student)

- DEEPL Translator (recommended by one student)

- SmartCat (recommended by one student)

- English Phrasal Verbs on Google (recommended by one student)

- Dictionary offline (recommended by one student)

These options were given by a total of 19 students while the remaining 36 students said that they would not recommend other apps basically because they don't know any others.

IX.   FINDINGS

A. Answers to the research questions.

What is the impact that free online language applications have in the writing skills of the English Composition II students?

90.09% of the students stated that the use of these online language applications was helping them to improve and develop grammatical and writing skills, which are indispensable to pass the course; thus, assuring the importance and usefulness of the apps for the subject. The answers showed a positive impact in the student community where learners consider the language applications as incredibly versatile recommending its use in the future courses.

The students felt confident by using the applications (Grammarly, Duolingo, Oxford Dictionary and BBC Learning English) as extra resources. As we know the English Composition II course demands good writing skill to be able to produce texts, paragraphs, essays in order to show writing proficiency.

Summarizing the whole information presented before, students recognized that the use of free online language applications like Oxford Dictionary and Grammarly in the English Composition II course was helping them to get better grades on their evaluations due to the extra reinforcements that the apps offered such as: checking spelling, grammar and vocabulary to improve the level of the writing productions. The only exception was Tandem which students apparently did not know what benefits the application provided.

Which application has been the most beneficial to improve the English writing skill of students registered in English Composition II?

According to the results obtained from the research, the students surveyed decided to rate the applications from 1st to 5th place in order to demonstrate which one was the most useful and beneficial for them to develop the English writing skill. They decided to rate the applications in the following order:

Considering that 55 students surveyed make a total of 100%, each application is shown in order of importance with a percentage and number of students who voted for it as the most beneficial.

In 1st place with 42% (22 students) "Grammarly" is considered the most useful, followed by "Oxford Dictionary" in 2nd place with 29% (16 students), "Duolingo" came in third with 15% (8 students) and in fourth place with 11% (6 students) "BBC Learning English", finally the least recommended application was "Tandem" in fifth place with 3% (only 2 students voted for it).

According to the research and its results, Grammarly got the first place thanks to its usefulness and the variety of options that the application has to help different aspects of the English language. The surveyed population discovered the benefits it presents in areas such as grammar, spelling and vocabulary also their writing productions became more congruent and professional.

What is the frequency of the use of learning applications that students registered in English Composition II have?

The average frequency of use of free online language applications such as: Grammarly, Duolingo, Oxford Dictionary, BBC Learning English and Tandem of students registered in English Composition II is more than 30 minutes a day, five times a week. Students were eager to use applications such as "Grammarly" and "Oxford Dictionary" and to check their writing productions. Due to the fact that students took the course during the coronavirus pandemic, the results showed that they utilized the applications and practiced English mostly at home (96.40%), and some of them at work (3.60%).

What are the improvements that students registered in English Composition II present in their writing skill by implementing the free online applications?

In order to know what the real improvements that students registered in English Composition II course had, the survey was divided in different areas. One of them was dedicated to know the benefits and improvements that using the apps provided them. The data collected allowed the researchers to determine accurately what those improvements were. According to students, they liked the applications because these allowed them "to improve their grammatical skills" and "to practice some aspects of English that they didn't feel confident about", 89,1% of the population surveyed gave an approval to the applications (Grammarly, Oxford Dictionary, Duolingo, Tandem and BBC Learning English) and the improvements received in areas such as: Grammar because they were able to develop a variety of coherent English productions; Spelling because they avoided mistakes influenced by Spanish as a mother tongue and Vocabulary because they discovered new words.

Finally, as extra information to reinforce the previously mentioned, the final average grade for the three researched groups was 9.2 which is a very outstanding grade that students achieved at the end of the course. The research team strongly believes that the apps had an effect in efficacy in the English Composition II course.

B. **Most outstanding findings.**

According to the analysis of the results, it can be observed that a majority of the population surveyed for this research to be precise an outstanding 96% consider that students can improve their learning experience by using technology as it brings many benefits to the student population who utilize the applications. These results showed the relevance that the use of technological resources like free online applications have for the student community. Being recognized for the 100% of learners who consider as an important requirement the fact of having a dictionary that can supply their necessities followed for the enormous approval that students gave to the use of free online language applications to reinforce the different areas that they consider as weaknesses with the different functions that the applications offered as a way to increase the proficiency of their writing productions.

Another surprising result was that the majority of the population surveyed; 91% considered that it is definitely possible to develop the grammatical skill by using apps and technology. These results proved that free language applications can be truly considered as important to improve every skill of English. Also, when asked if applications could be a distraction from learning 78% of the students answered that for them this would not be the case.

Finally, after analyzing all the information, a surprising 100% of the students surveyed agreed on considering that if teachers suggest the use of applications, these could be a suitable resource for the learning and development of the English language. It is important to remember that having extra resources while learning can help to improve every aspect of English, not only that but the student's motivation will increase and as a result, they will get higher grades and better learning experience while trying to achieve their goals.

X.   CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the research work was aimed at demonstrating whether mobile language applications are an adequate tool for the learning and lexicon development of students or users who wish to improve in a foreign language. For this, five applications were analyzed: Grammarly, Duolingo, Oxford Dictionary, BBC Learning English and Tandem. The results of the investigation mainly focused on the relevance that technology has while implemented in learning. The majority of the population surveyed, 96% to be precise, believed that using language applications and technology could be beneficial to the learning of English as a foreign language. 100% of the students surveyed also stated that they would like to use applications as extra resources if a teacher suggests them and that they would likely to recommend other classmates to use them. Having more resources will provide students more ways to practice.

Additionally, it was possible to verify an increase in the grades of the 3 groups of English Composition II with an average of 9.2 in the final course grade of all students, who had made daily use of applications such as Grammarly and Oxford Dictionary. The excellent results can be positively correlated to students´ use of these before mentioned applications. The use of mobile applications to improve the learning of foreign languages, in this case English, offers an increase in vocabulary and grammar for students, thus providing the opportunity to carry out written productions with a high level of efficiency either by the use of an online dictionary to gain more vocabulary or an application to help correct common writing mistakes.

It is important to know that due to the Coronavirus pandemic situation face-to-face teaching and learning is changing and digital resources are increasingly being used as

support, especially in language classes where grammar and vocabulary are very important. Self-learning is not a new concept and, in that sense, mobile applications and online platforms can be good allies for students, therefore, these can give students the possibility of learning or expanding their knowledge of English having the willingness to be able to practice each day the weak aspects of the language.

Finally, it is also important to mention the fact that students considered important these apps (Grammarly, Oxford Dictionary, Duolingo and BBC Learning English) as they can be used to help and support them as an extra tool for learning, as they give a boost to grammar and vocabulary thus realizing that they can achieve their goals. Taking into account that teachers have begun to use the tools that technology provides, it is the perfect time to begin to take seriously the idea that one day there may be a variety of language applications which will be capable of being introduced to the university educational system, and that a better and accelerated learning method will be developed for future generations.

XI.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into account the importance of the use of free online language applications to students of English Composition II, the research team presents the following recommendations to students, teachers and authorities of the Foreign Language Department:

To the student community:

- ➢ It is suggested to the student community to use the applications (Grammarly, Oxford Dictionary, Duolingo and BBC Learning English) as they are considered as suitable tools to learn anywhere and anytime by being constantly exposed to the English language.

- ➢ It is suggested to students to inform themselves about the applications and technological resources in order to make an appropriate use of them to have an effective self-learning approach and develop their knowledge in the English language.

- ➢ Students are suggested to share among themselves and among their teachers the knowledge of other applications for language learning, since there are a variety of applications and platforms which can be of help to everyone when learning in this case English as a foreign language.

- ➢ Students are suggested to be willing to try new ways of learning either face to face or online and in the same way to use these tools or applications in order to achieve their goals when studying and thus reduce their deficiencies in the English language especially focusing on the grammar and vocabulary of the students.

To professors:

➢ It is recommended to professors of English Composition II courses to make use of these applications when teaching, as language applications are considered as an extra resource (or support) for students at the moment of learning or developing the English language. As seen on this investigation, these applications helped to improve vocabulary and the grammatical aspect of English as a foreign language resulting in a significant increase in student grades achieving an average grade of 9.2.

➢ It is suggested that teachers of English Composition II look for the didactic and technological resources that they consider most appropriate and useful prior to teaching the subject in the semester, in such a way that they can update and improve their teaching techniques for their own benefit and that of their students.

➢ Professors are recommended to encourage the use of different platforms for learning English in order to provide a variety of tools to the student population so that they can choose according to the situation of each individual and thus achieve a deeper development of English language skills.

To the Authorities:

➢ The authorities of the Foreign Languages Department (FLD) are suggested to provide support and basic courses on how to use the various platforms and applications that are currently on the rise given the modernization of learning due to the coronavirus pandemic situation so that teachers have the knowledge of how to implement them in the study methods of the University of El Salvador.

- ➢ Motivate the student community to use ICTs as a new Language Learning Strategy outside the classroom taking advantage of the technology advances, online platforms and apps that can make easy the learning process.

- ➢ It is suggested that the authorities of the Foreign Languages Department (FLD) review the teaching methods used by teachers so that they can be improved by integrating the modernity of new technologies to have a more dynamic and updated teaching and learning system.

THE RESEARCH REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

"Format for a qualitative research project"

I. RESEARCH TOPIC

II.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
    A. Description of the problem
    B. Objectives
    C. Research questions
    D. Justification/rationale
    E. Delimitation of the problem

III. FRAMEWORK
    A. Historical framework
    B. Theoretical framework
    C. Definition of key terms

IV. TYPE OF STUDY
    A. Exploratory
    B. Descriptive
    C. Correlational
    D. Explicative

V. RESEARCH DESIGN
    A. Non-experimental designs
        1. Cross-sectional or transversal design
        2. Longitudinal design
    B. Experimental designs
        1. Pre-experiments
        2. Quasi-experiments
        3. Pure experiments

VI. POPULATION AND SAMPLE
    A. Population
    B. Sample
        1. Random samples
            a. Simple random sampling
            b. Systematic sampling
            c. Stratified random sampling
            d. Cluster random sampling

2. Nonrandom samples
        a. Convenience sampling
        b. Quota sampling
        c. Purposive sampling
        d. Snowball sampling

VII. DATA GATHERING PROCESS
    A. Qualitative research techniques
    B. Qualitative research instrument(s)
    C. Data gathering plan

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS
    A. Quantitative analysis
        1. Data base
        2. Statistical procedures
        3. Data analysis
        1. Univariate analysis
        2. Bivariate analysis
        3. Multivariate analysis
    B. Qualitative analysis
        1. Summaries
            a) Analysis by questions
            b) Analysis by set of questions
            c) Analysis by instrument
            d) Comparison and contrast charts
            e) Matrixes
        2. Coding (classifying) data
            a) Creating codes
            b) Classifying data
            c) Analyzing relationships (making sense out of data).
            d) Presenting relationships trough visual means (graphs, diagrams….)

IX. FINDINGS
    A. Hypotheses' test
    B. Answer to the research questions
    C. Most outstanding findings

X. CONCLUSIONS
        (1- 5 conclusions)

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS
XII. REFERENCES
XIII. ANNEXES
Annex A. Timetable

XII. REFERENCES.

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The Impact of Free Online Language Applications for Improving the Writing Skill of students.

The following questionnaire has been designed with the objective of studying and gathering information from the students of English Composition II who have been taken as population of the research regarding the English Writing Skill. The investigation aims to proof if students consider as feasible the use of free online language applications to improve or develop abilities when writing in English.

PART I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

   ◯ Male

   ◯ Female

   ◯ Other

2. Theoretical Group

   ◯ "Lic. Miguel Carranza"

   ◯ "Licda. Sendy Villeda"

   ◯ "Licda. Amalia Santana"

3. Age:

   ◯ 17 - 20

   ◯ 21 - 23

   ◯ 23 - 25

   ◯ Older than 25

4. Place of residence:

   ◯ City

   ◯ Countryside

5. Who do you live with?

- ( ) Parents
- ( ) Relatives (Grandparents, Aunt and Uncle, etc.)
- ( ) Classmates
- ( ) Boyfriend / Girlfriend
- ( ) Other

6. Where did you graduate from?

- ( ) Public school
- ( ) Private school

7. Did you study English before entering the University?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

8. If your previous answer was yes, where did you study? If not please select N/A

- ( ) Language School (CENIUES, Pro Lingua, etc.)
- ( ) Project sponsored by private sector or Embassy
- ( ) Government Educational Programs
- ( ) Other
- ( ) N/A

9. Do you have a job?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

10. If your previous answer was yes, in which field? If not please select N/A

- ( ) Call Center
- ( ) Teaching
- ( ) Other
- ( ) N/A

11. What academic level did your parents complete?

- ( ) Junior School
- ( ) High School
- ( ) Technical Degree
- ( ) University

12. Have you ever traveled to an Anglo-Saxon country?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

PART II. WRITING SKILLS

13. How confident are you about your English writing skill?

- ( ) Very confident
- ( ) Somewhat confident
- ( ) Not confident at all

14. How much time a day do you devote to write in English?

- ( ) Half an hour
- ( ) One hour
- ( ) More than one hour

15. Where do you devote time to write in English?

- ( ) At home during free time
- ( ) At the university during classes
- ( ) At work during office hours

16. How many paragraphs in English do you write per day?

- ( ) One paragraph
- ( ) Two paragraphs
- ( ) More than two paragraphs

17. Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write in English?

○ Yes

○ No

18. Do you consider that writing in English is a difficult skill to develop?

○ Yes

○ No

19. Do you feel confident using English grammar?

○ Yes

○ No

20. How would you rate your English grammar?

○ Very Good

○ Average

○ Poor

21. How much vocabulary do you have for writing an English composition?

○ High

○ Average

○ Poor

PART III. TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

22. Do you have access to a smartphone or a tablet in your daily life?

○ Yes

○ No

23. What kind of internet services do you have?

○ Residential internet

○ Mobile internet

○ Both Options

24. How much time on average do you use your cellphone a day?

- ( ) 1 - 2 hours
- ( ) 3 - 4 hours
- ( ) 5 - 6 hours
- ( ) 7 or more hours a day

25. Do you use any mobile apps in your mobile devices for the learning purpose?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

26. How much time do you devote to practice the English writing skill through your mobile apps?

- ( ) 10 - 15 minutes a day
- ( ) 30 minutes to 1 hour a day
- ( ) More time during the day

27. Do you believe that using mobile apps for improving writing skill will contribute to obtain better results?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

28. Would you like to use mobile apps as part of your English classes at the University?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

PART IV. FREE ONLINE LANGUAGE APPLICATIONS KNOWLEDGE

29. Have you heard of any of the following apps before? Please, check the ones you know.

- [ ] Grammarly
- [ ] Duolingo
- [ ] Tandem
- [ ] Oxford Dictionary
- [ ] BBC Learning English

30. From the apps listed below, which ones have you used before?

- ☐ Duolingo
- ☐ Grammarly
- ☐ Tandem
- ☐ BBC Learning English
- ☐ Oxford Dictionary

31. Which of the following apps to study do you consider that are the best option to improve the English writing skills?

- ☐ Duolingo
- ☐ Grammarly
- ☐ Tandem
- ☐ BBC Learning English
- ☐ Oxford Dictionary

32. Do you consider that having an online dictionary is important for students?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

33. How frequent do you use an online dictionary? For example, "Oxford Dictionary"

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Once a week
- ◯ Twice a week
- ◯ More than 5 times a week

34. Do you consider that Tandem and Duolingo are important tools to improve at the composition course while you write in English?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know

35. Do you know what aspects of English does Grammarly helps to improve?

- ◯ Grammar
- ◯ Spelling
- ◯ Vocabulary
- ◯ All of the above

36. Do you know what aspects of English does BBC Learning English helps to improve?

- ◯ Listening
- ◯ Speaking
- ◯ Reading
- ◯ Writing
- ◯ All of the above

37. Which of the following apps would you be willing to use more often while studying?

- ☐ Duolingo
- ☐ Grammarly
- ☐ Tandem
- ☐ BBC Learning English
- ☐ Oxford Dictionary

38. If a teacher suggests the use of apps, would you consider that as a resource for the learning and development of English?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

PART V. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

39. Do you consider that using applications to study could cause a distraction in the development of the learning process?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

40. Can a student improve the learning experience by using technology?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

41. Do you consider that it is possible to improve the grammatical skills by using online apps or technology?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

42. In your personal opinion, what is the main reason that students have to improve their knowledge on a language?

- ( ) Academic Development
- ( ) Personal Growth
- ( ) Career Opportunities

43. Which of the following apps would you recommend to future students and professors to use in composition courses?

- [ ] Duolingo
- [ ] Grammarly
- [ ] Tandem
- [ ] BBC Learning English
- [ ] Oxford Dictionary

44. Why would you recommend teachers and students to use an app while taking a composition course or an English based course?

- ( ) To make English learning easier
- ( ) To improve your grammatical skills
- ( ) To practice some aspects of English that you don't feel confident about
- ( ) To pass the subject without difficulty

45. If you have used any of the 5 previously mentioned apps, how would you rate the impact of using them on your learning during the composition course?

- ( ) Excellent
- ( ) Very Good
- ( ) Average
- ( ) Poor

46. Is there another app you know or might have used that you recommend to fellow classmates and professors? Answer "yes" or "no", if "yes" please mention the app.

TIMETABLE

Activities / Weeks	Feb.		March				April				May				June				July				August				Sep.				Oct.		
	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Advisor assigned	X																																
Selection of the topic.		X	X																														
First profile draft			X																														
Second profile draft				X	X																												
Third profile draft					X	X																											
Making of drafts		X					X	X																									
Profile Presentation										X	X																						
Instruments Design											X	X	X																				
Theoretical framework design													X	X	X																		
Collecting of the data																X	X																
Analysis of data and interpretation of the results																	X	X															
Results presentation																			X														
Elaborating Power Point presentation																				X	X	X											
First final draft																							X										
Handling the document for final revision																								X	X								
Document approved																										X							
Final Work																											X						
Presentation of the final Work with the Advisor																													X	X			
Final report presentation																															X	X	
Periodic meetings with the advisor	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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