

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



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:

“HOW THE STUDENTS’ PROFILE INFLUENCES THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
COMPETENCE AT THE INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE ENGLISH I COURSES OF
THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EL
SALVADOR”

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLÉS OPCIÓN ENSEÑANZA

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at determining how students' profile influences the development of their language competence. It was carried out in order to answer the question "How does students' profile influence the English language competence at the Intermediate Intensive English I courses of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador?" In this research, three main aspects of students' profile were taken into account: extracurricular activities, socio-economic status (SES), and motivation. To collect the data, the instrument selected was a questionnaire, and it was administered to 54 students. Having administered the questionnaires, the students' profile was divided into advantaged and disadvantaged profile. The results showed that the students' profile influences them when developing their language competence.

This research supported that extracurricular activities influence students' language competence when they were actively involved in them. This could be clearly reflected in their GPA, grade point average. All those students who were active religious members, active members of a neighborhood committee, or those who belonged to sports teams, or political parties got lower grade point averages than those who were not involved in one or any extracurricular activities. In the same way, the data collected claimed that the socio-economic status influenced the students' performance since students who had a high family income showed a better language performance. Finally, the study reflected that students who were highly motivated developed a better performance; therefore, there was a clear correlation between students' profile and their language competence.

OBJECTIVES

➤ General Objective

To carry out a research about how students' profile influences the English language competence at the Intermediate Intensive English I courses of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

➤ Specific Objectives

- ✓ To determine to what extent students' extracurricular activities influence Intermediate Intensive English I students in the development of their language competence.

- ✓ To find out how the socio-economic status influences Intermediate Intensive English I students to develop their English language competence.

- ✓ To identify the influence of motivation in the Intermediate Intensive English I students' language competence.

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Empirical evidence obtained by the authors indicates that some students in higher education have higher scores than others, and this happens because they have developed their language competence during the previous years in high school or in English courses they had previously taken. It is claimed that students who have a favorable profile develop their language competence faster than students who do not. Yesim Bektas (2011) claims that there are many factors influencing the performance of students such as economic status, students' educational background, and motivation; these factors are included in the students' profile. The question is how those factors influence students' performance. In order to bring out an answer to this question, different problems that students face when they engage in university studies have been taken into account. This research is focused on how these factors affect students in the development of their English language competence while studying Intermediate Intensive English I at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

1.2 Significance of the problem

There are different factors that affect students' language competence when learning a second language. Some of them are the environment where this language is taught, the size of the class, the location of the university, the region where students are from, among others; still, some major factors have been identified and considered as the main ones; that is, extracurricular activities, socio-economic status, and motivation. The latter are important

in our reality, and departing from this, it is necessary to know if they influence students' language competence at the Foreign Language Department (FLD) at the University of El Salvador. It is important to remember that all the previous issues already mentioned affect students and make a positive or negative impact in their achievement. This research takes into account a sample of students of the intermediate courses from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. It has been noticed that one of the main reasons why some students of Intermediate Intensive English I get higher scores than others is because some of them have developed their language competence successfully before starting university studies.

University students have different profiles that influence them in the development of their language competence. They have to commute every day, and they sometimes do not have access to the internet, books, encyclopedias etc; only, a few of them do have access to them. According to Yesim Bektas (2011), students who have a favorable profile have more advantages when acquiring their language competence. Besides, she states that students who do not have a favorable profile tend to fail in the acquisition of their language competence. Thus, the lack of academic resources can generate discouraged students and they can get low scores.

In this study, the researchers will highlight three important areas of a student's profile, which are extracurricular activities, socio-economic status, and motivation. They will also describe how students' profile influences the English language competence in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. Furthermore, they will explain how students who come from both a high and a low socio-economic status do to succeed in their classes. In order to do

this, they will take into account the place where students come from, rural and urban areas, if they are motivated to study at the university, or if the extracurricular activities influence their English competence. The study of these areas will explain how the students' profile influences their academic achievement. Bowden and Doughney (2009) state that students who come from a high socio-economic status will succeed in their schools, colleges, or any educational institutions. Besides, the researchers, through this investigation, will find out if students with a high socio-economic status succeed more in developing their English competence than those who belong to a low socio-economic status.

The students' socio-economic status is the most important area for succeeding in school, college, or university (Subbhuraam & Ananthasayanam, 2010). According to them, if students come from a high socio economic status, they will reach their goals in their studies. Moreover, they say that if students have access to the internet, books, and magazines, they will get good results in their exams. On the other hand, researchers say that if students come from a low socio economic status, they will not succeed in their schools. Furthermore, Bektas (2011) agrees with Subbhuraam and Ananthasayanam because she says that if students do not have access to new technology, books, magazines, libraries, among others, they will not be able to achieve their educational aims.

Considine and Zappalà (2002) say that students' socio-economic status is the main cause why students do not succeed in their studies. In order to decrease the number of students who do not succeed, they say: "The effect of children's parental socio economic status on children's educational outcomes may be neutralized, strengthened, or mediated by a range of other contextual family and individual characteristics." In this research, they took a sample of 3.329 students who were in the Smith family's Learning for Life (LFL)

program. LFL is a program that helps students to continue with their studies by providing them with financial support. Besides, the students' academic results were classified as poor, average, and outstanding. The results have shown that those students that had a high socio economic status have performed better than those who did not have it.

When students decide to move from rural areas to urban areas to continue their studies, they have to adapt to new lives (Considine & Zappalà, 2002). Moreover, in a research carried out by Bowden and Doughney (2009), they found out that students who come from a higher socio economic status are more likely to achieve their educational goals. Also, they suggested that the educational authorities have to provide students that have low performance at school or college with books, magazines, and access to the internet. In this way, they will reach their aims.

Students' educational background is another problem that affects students to succeed in their studies. Henrik et al, (2003) say that if students come from rural areas, they have problems with their studies. Besides, they claim that when students move to urban areas to continue with their studies, they realize that because of the lack of resources they had in their previous institutions, they have to study harder to become excellent students. In order to do that, they have to adapt to their new environment. In this way, they will achieve their goals. However, some of them cannot adapt to it; as a result, they tend to fail their courses (Considine & Zappalà, 2002). Furthermore, they state that when students come from private schools or colleges, they tend to succeed in their studies. Scientists say this occurs because of the access those students have to new technology, books, magazines, among others.

Students' motivation is another issue that scientists have to take into account when trying to find out why students get bad results in their exams. Some students are not motivated when they engage in college or university studies (Bektas, 2011). She says this because students sometimes do not have a clear idea about what they want. Also, she adds that they go to the college or university just to waste their time. Besides, if they have family problems, they will not succeed in their studies because their problems affect the way they think or act. Bowden and Doughney (2009) say that students have to have aspirations to succeed in their lives. Moreover, not only their parents but also their professors have to help them to increase their motivation. In this way, students will be able to reach their academic aims (Bektas, 2011); she notices that some students have a higher level of motivation in classes, and they try to develop a good language competence.

Benabou, Roland Tirole, Jean (2000) say that there are two types of motivation. The first one refers to how motivated students are; i.e. what their own aspirations for succeeding in their studies are. This is called intrinsic motivation. Scientists say that this leads to high quality of work, meeting challenges, and pursuit of excellence. Furthermore, Benabou and Tirole say that when parents, professors, or friends motivate students to succeed in their courses, they tend to get excellent scores in their exams. This kind of motivation is called extrinsic motivation.

Bektas (2011) says that students' lack of motivation makes them get bad results in their tests. She carried out a research about motivation in which she took a sample of 228 university students; 115 from a public university and 113 from a private one. In her study, she found out that private university students' motivation was higher than public university students'. Bektas suggests that in order to increase students' motivation, students from

public universities have to be helped by their parents, professors, friends and the government. They have to motivate them in a positive way. If students' motivation is encouraged, they will get good results in their schools or in their universities.

Much research has been carried out about extracurricular activities, socio-economic status, and motivation, but it is necessary to continue researching more deeply about these issues. Through future studies, scientists will undoubtedly provide better solutions to the problem described above.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore how students' profile influences their language competence at the Intermediate Intensive English I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. In other words, this research was intended to find out how extracurricular activities, socio-economic status, and students' motivation influenced their English language competence. By finding out about this issue, teachers can have a better notion about students who tend to fail courses or get low grades in comparison with the rest of the class. A deeper explanation of this issue is presented in the next paragraph.

Most of the students perform differently in their academic lives (Linda Owens, 2002). However, most of the teachers ignore the main reasons why some students fail their courses or why they approve them. When students fail subjects, it is very common to blame it on teachers, and it is believed that students that fail subjects are not intelligent. Hence, if teachers know about students' profile, they can change somehow their methodology or apply different approaches to teach them effectively and understand students' behavior better.

Bowden and Doughney (2009) say that students with a disadvantaged profile, pupils that come from poor families, struggle more to succeed in their studies than those who come from middle class families. Furthermore, they say that there is a positive relationship between students' socio-economic background and their aspirations. As a conclusion of the study carried out by Bowden and Doughney, it is very important to know students' profile in order to understand why some students get different scores in a specific class. As this

research shows, students' profile influences students' performance. In the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, there are several students in different English levels. However, there are not any researches carried out about their profile and how it affects or influences their performance in being competent in the English language. Hence, understanding the relation between students' profile and their English competence can lead us to do further research and to adopt alternatives that contribute to understand this phenomenon in the near future at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

- It was not possible to administer the questionnaires to all the Intermediate Intensive English I courses since we were not allowed to survey all the groups; therefore, we took 54 students as a sample.
- Due to the administrative delay to assign the advisor to the undergraduate project, which took more than three months, the researchers started the undergraduate project at the end of April; nonetheless, it should have been started at the beginning of the academic year.
- Another limitation was the access to appropriate bibliography written by well-known researchers that could support this research project.

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Students' profile:

The term, "Students' profile" has different meanings in the education community. In all cases, a student's profile provides information about him/her, but it can be presented and used in different ways. A students' profile can include data submitted by them, as well as information which is added by staff members at an educational institution to provide a complete picture. Besides, the access to many types of students' profiles is restricted due to concerns about security and privacy. Furthermore, the researchers will take into account students' behaviors, age, full/part time study, students study habits, and students' academic family background in order to carry out their study.

Academic Performance:

It is defined as the way how a student meets or accomplishes standards set out by local governments and institutions.

Students' level of proficiency:

It is the level of proficiency that students must have at a certain point of the learning process according to the ACTFL guidelines (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

Motivation:

It is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Besides, it is what causes us to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge (Benabou and Tirole, 2000). There are

three major components of motivation: activation, persistence, and intensity. Activation involves the decision to initiate a behavior, such as enrolling in a psychology class. Persistence is the continued effort toward a goal even though obstacles may exist, such as taking more psychology courses in order to earn a degree although it requires a significant investment of time, energy, and sources. Finally, intensity can be seen in the concentration and vigor that goes into pursuing a goal. For instance, one student might understand something without much effort, while another one will study regularly, participate in discussions and take advantage of research opportunities outside of class to do so. Besides, Benabou and Tirole (2000) say that there are two types of motivation extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation:

It leads to high quality of work, meeting challenges, and pursuit of excellence. This is the students own motivation for reaching or doing an activity. Also, intrinsic motivation is the one that arises within the student, such as doing a complicated cross-word puzzle purely for the personal gratification of solving a problem.

Extrinsic motivation:

It is defined by the researchers as the external factors that can influence students positively or negatively. Extrinsic motivation arises from outside of the individual and often involves rewards such as trophies, money, social recognition or praise.

CHAPTER II

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Students in the entire world have a profile that takes into account different aspects like extracurricular activities, socio-economic status, and motivation, among others. Considine and Zappalà (2002) say that students who have a low socio-economic status are more likely to have low levels of literacy, numeracy, comprehension, and retention rates to exhibit levels of problematic school behavior and so on. That is why the socio-economic status is one of the biggest problems that students face when they go to college. This is often the reason why they cannot finish their majors. Students often have to drop out because they do not have the resources that higher education demands.

The students' socio-economic status (SES) is the most important aspect for succeeding at school, college, or university (Subbhuraam & Ananthasayanam, 2010). According to them, if students come from a high SES, they will reach their academic goals in their studies. On the other hand, they say if students come from a low SES, they will not succeed in their schools. Bektas (2011) agrees with Subbhuraam and Ananthasayanam. They say that if students do not have access to technology, books, magazines, and libraries, among others, they will not be able to achieve their educational aims.

Liu and Lu (2008) say that students' socio-economic status is an extreme factor that makes students not have a good academic performance. They carried out a research based on the students' SES. Then, the scholars could realize that if students came from a high family status, they had the possibility to get good results in their college or university. In order to identify which students belonged to a high socio-economic status, the researchers asked questions related to their parents' educational background, occupation, and income, among others.

Geoffrey and Rachuba (2001) say that if students have a low socio-economic status, they will not succeed in their classes. They also say that if students do not have access to the internet, books, or magazines, they will not be able to have a good performance in their classes. Spratt et al (2004) agree with them. They say that there is a strong relationship between students' achievements and the socio-economic status of their parents. Researchers believe that if students have a high SES, they will get good scores in their exams and if they have a low SES, they will get bad results in their tests.

Considine and Zappalà (2002) say that there is a relationship between family socio-economic status and the academic performance of children. The majority of studies that have been done about students' socio-economic status (Liu & Lu, 2008) indicate that children who come from families with a low SES do not perform as well as they could do at school compared to children from high SES families. Considine and Zappalà concluded that students with a low SES are more affected regarding their educational outcome.

Another important factor to take into account in students' profile is motivation. Benabou and Tirole (2000) define motivation as the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. They focus on two types of motivation; these are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Scholars say that intrinsic motivation leads to high quality of work, meeting challenges, and pursuit of excellence. Also, they note that this is part of students own motivation that encourages them to perform a specific activity or action. Furthermore, extrinsic motivation was defined as the external factors that can influence students positively or negatively. Extrinsic motivation arises from outside of the individual and often involves rewards such as trophies, money, social recognition, or praise.

Bektas and Cetinkaya (2011) claim that when students have a good economic status and, therefore, enough resources to study, they are more motivated and get better scores;

they also tend to participate more. Furthermore, it is important to take into account what Nonis and Hudson (2006) state “A student with very high ability but low motivation is unlikely to perform well, whereas a student with low ability but high motivation is likely to perform well.” And this is true since, as this study shows, a student who is motivated will get higher scores than others who are not.

Bektas (2011) acknowledges that motivation is very important for succeeding at college. Taking this issue into consideration, it is necessary to mention that students differ from one another in many characteristics such as age, culture, educational background, and students’ socio-economic status. However, one characteristic that plays a very important role in succeeding at college is motivation. Bektas (2011) mentions that motivation is closely related to students’ socio-economic status. From this, it can be inferred that if a student has the money to buy brand-new books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and new technology, that student will be more motivated than other students that do not have all these tools for achieving their academic goals. One might think that there is no relation between parents’ socio-economic status and their children’s level of motivation. However, there is an influence of the socio-economic status of parents on their children’s achievement motivation (Adsul & Kamble, 2008). They say that the economic background strongly affects children’s cognitive and social development. As a result, a student who is not motivated will struggle a lot trying to succeed academically. Furthermore, higher and middle socio-economic status families provide better facilities to their children such as better residential areas, good home libraries, periodicals, and newspapers, among others, which lead them to high achievement motivation. On the contrary, low socio-economic status families cannot provide such type of facilities, which leads to low level of achievement motivation (Adsul & Kamble, 2008). This article clearly shows that there is a

great relation between parents' socio-economic status and their children's level of motivation.

Martin Andrew (2003) states that motivation is seen as a dimension that engages the relevant students' outcomes in their academic lives. This research reports that there are three important areas of engaging motivation. The first area is self-belief. The author explains that it has to do with the personal confidence in the ability to understand and to do well in academic tasks, to feel optimistic to try hard and to enjoy what is being done. The second aspect is valuing school. Also, he explains that valuing school is the belief students have about how much of what they are learning is useful for them in everyday life. That means if a student values what he/she is learning, that person will persist doing that activity even if it is hard or difficult. The last area mentioned in this study is learning focus. It means to be interested in developing new skills. In the case of the learning of English as a foreign language, the learning focus would be on the development of the four macro-skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These three areas of engaging motivation can be drastically affected or influenced by the student-socioeconomic status (Martin Andrew, 2003).

Barrer (2005) says that motivation is closely-related to family background because students are influenced at home about school and academic success. Also, students that live with only one parent, either the mother or the father, tend to score lower grades than those students that come from a household with two parents. "Single parents are able neither to motivate their children nor to have great expectations about them" (Barrer, 2005).

Then, James O'Dea (1994) says that there are extracurricular activities that can have a possible impact on students' academic achievement; one of them is that students have to work. According to Nonis and Hudson (2006) "Today's college students are less prepared

for college-level work than their predecessors. Once they get to college, they tend to spend fewer hours studying while spending more hours working part time, some even full time.” This is true, it has been noticed in colleges that many students have to work in order to pay their studies (Nonis and Hudson, 2006). This is part of the students’ profile; therefore, it influences in the acquisition of their English competence since they spend their time working instead of doing homework or practicing their English language competence.

When students do extracurricular activities, they have less time to study; as a result of that, they get low grades. Nonis and Hudson (2006) claim that “Today’s college students are spending less time studying.” Since students are doing more extracurricular activities like belonging to an athletic, football, or softball team, they spend less time studying and this is one reason why they sometimes get low scores. Another trend that is emerging is the increasing number of college students who are employed either part time or full time (Nonis and Hudson, 2006). This is real because many companies hire undergraduate students and pay them low salaries. These students have less time to study; therefore, the development of their language competence becomes really difficult.

CHAPTER III

3.1 METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out the present study and answer the research question, it was necessary to follow some steps and apply some research methods that are described in this chapter. First, a topic for this study was selected (Cognitive Psychology and Students Performance). Then, it was narrowed down to two variables which are students' profile and students' language competence since the main goal of the study is to determine how the first variable influences the second one. Three out of eight Intermediate Intensive English I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador were selected by the researchers to gather the information to do this study. 54 students from these groups were chosen randomly as a sample of the study.

In the second step, bibliographical information related to the topic being studied was gathered to come up with a literature review. For that reason, previous studies, magazines, and books were selected in order to write the theoretical framework that would support the theory of this research. Thus, important authors that have developed similar researches in different universities around the world were selected. After that, the theoretical framework was developed by using different opinions, findings, and results of the authors selected and by including the researchers' own opinions.

In the third step, the research methods to be applied in this study were selected. The survey research method was selected since it involves the use of interviews or questionnaires to obtain quantitative information in fields such as marketing, politics, and social science. Using surveys is considered an efficient way of collecting data from a

large number of respondents. By using this method, the researchers gathered the expected information from the students that answered the questionnaire. Then, to analyze the information, quantitative research was selected since it refers to the systematic and empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Quantitative research provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships (Olsen, Wendy, 2004). Qualitative research was another research method used in this study which aims at gathering an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior (Savenye et al. 2005). Therefore, in order to gather, analyze, and interpret the information for this academic work, the three research methods already mentioned were combined and used in this research.

In the fourth step, a questionnaire with 21 questions was designed and administered to 54 participants in order to get the students' information. In this step, a letter was sent to each teacher in charge of the Intermediate Intensive English I courses in order to get the authorization to administer the questionnaire. As a result, an average of 15 minutes was given to the researchers in order to administer the questionnaire to 18 students in each group. Before answering the questionnaire, a brief explanation about the investigation was given to the students.

Finally, the information gathered by means of the questionnaire was studied, analyzed, and tabulated in order to answer the research question. The three research methods already mentioned were applied to provide a suitable answer to the question: How does students' profile influence the English language competence at the Intermediate Intensive English I courses of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador?

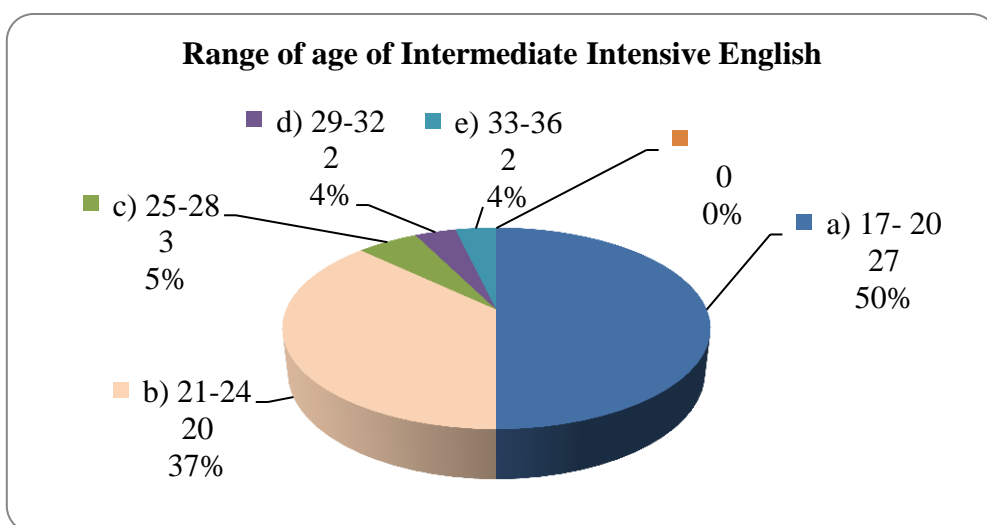
CHAPTER IV

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The information collected was analyzed question by question. First of all, the data was presented in pie charts. This was interpreted in a quantitative way. Then, it was analyzed in a qualitative way as well.

Range of age of Intermediate Intensive English I

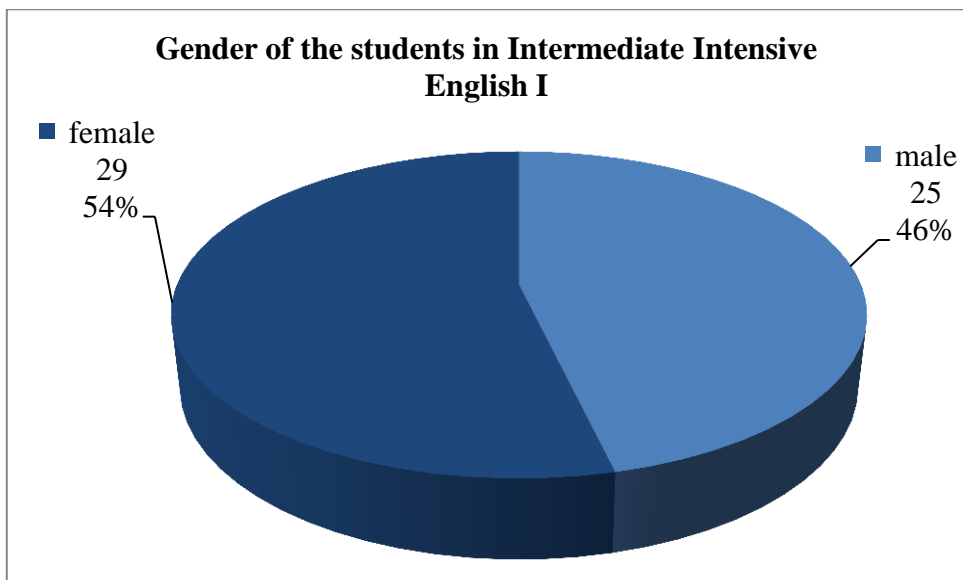
Range of age	Number of students
a) 17- 20	27
b) 21-24	20
c) 25-28	3
d) 29-32	2
e) 33-36	2
Total	54



According to the pie chart, students of Intermediate Intensive English I courses begin their studies at ages 17-24; this represents 87% of the whole population that was surveyed. There are some exceptions; in the chart, it is shown that 13% of the students begin their studies at the university older than others (25 to 36 years old).

Gender of the students in Intermediate Intensive English I

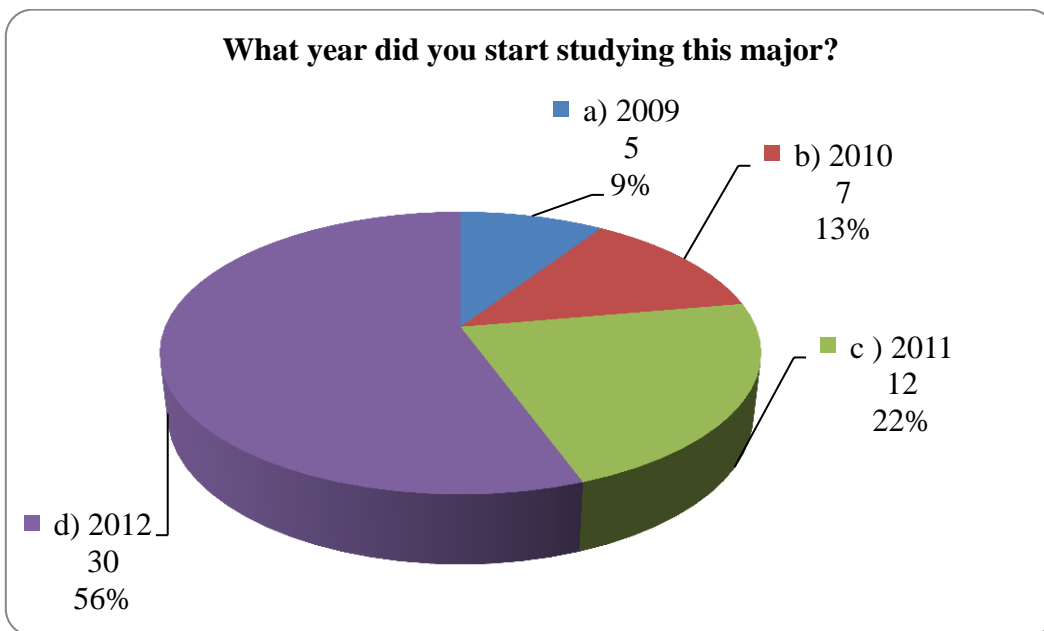
Gender	Number of students
male	25
female	29
Total	54



As shown in the chart, the researchers could realize that in the Intermediate Intensive English I courses in which the study was carried out, there were more women than men. From 54 people that were surveyed, 54% were women, and the rest 46% were men; these represent 29 women and 25 men respectively.

1. What year did you start studying this major?

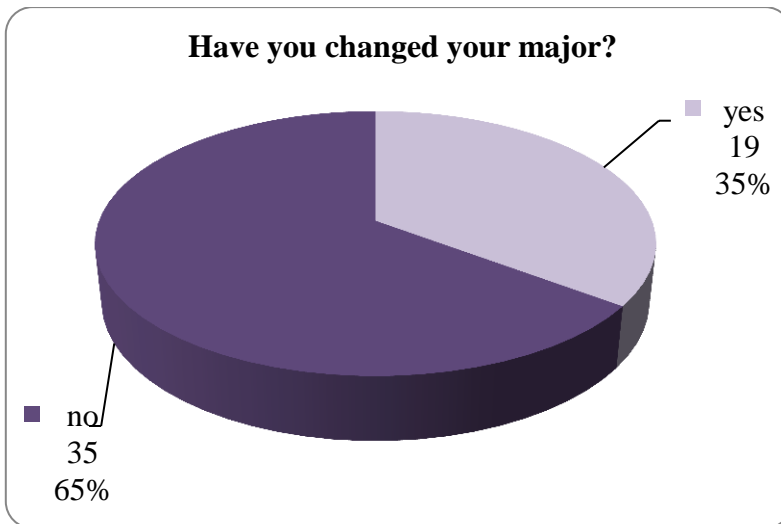
Year	Number of students
a) 2009	5
b) 2010	7
c) 2011	12
d) 2012	30
Total	54



The pie chart shows that in 2012, 30 students started studying Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opcion Enseñanza in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador; this represents 56% of the whole population. In 2011, 12 students started studying ; this stands for 22% of the sample taken. In 2009 and 2010, 9% and 13% of the students respectively started this major; these makes a total of 22% Of students who took the survey.

2. Have you changed your major?

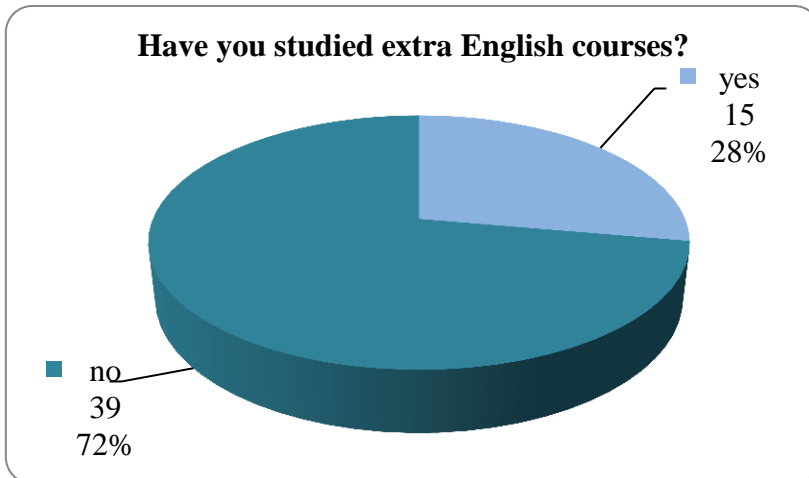
Choices	Number of students
yes	19
no	35
Total	54



This chart shows that 19 students of Intermediate Intensive English I have changed their major; this represents 35% of the sample taken. According to the survey, 35 students had not changed their majors; this represents 65% of the whole population.

3. Have you studied extra English courses?

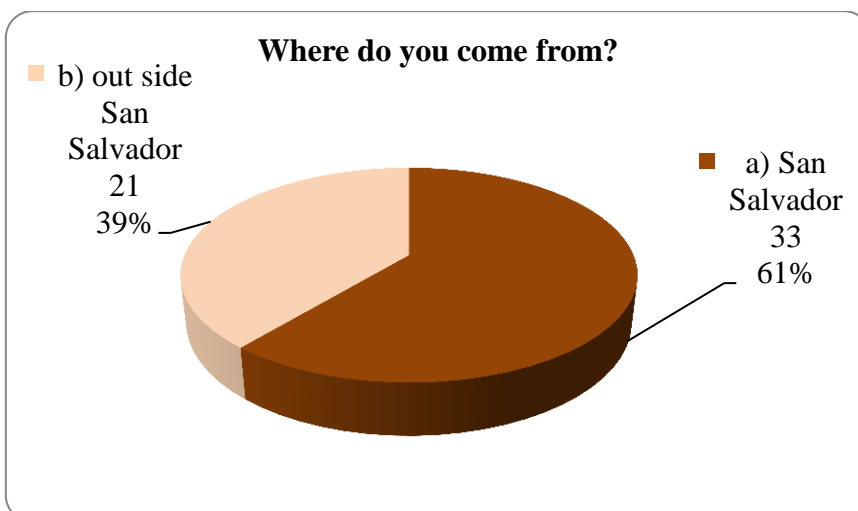
Choices	Number of students
yes	15
no	39
Total	54



The pie chart shows that 15 students have studied extra English courses; this represents 28% of the sample taken. Most of the participants, 39, which represents 72% of the whole sample have not studied them.

4. Where do you come from?

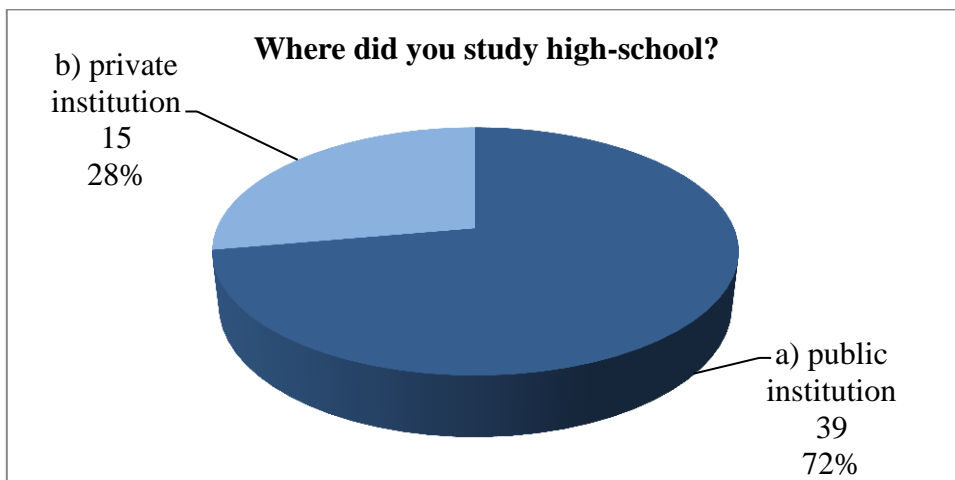
Choices	Number of students
a) San Salvador	33
b) outside San Salvador	21
Total	54



The pie chart shows that 33 students come from San Salvador; this represents 61% of the population that was surveyed. 21 students come from outside San Salvador; this stands for 39% of the sample taken.

5. Where did you study high-school?

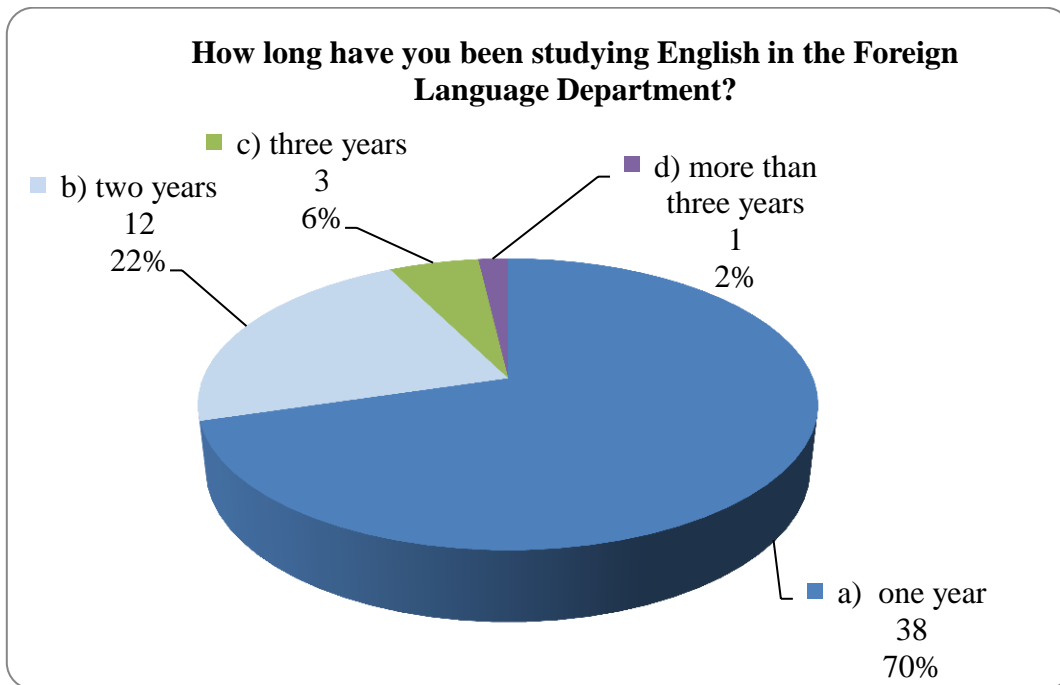
Choices	Number of students
a) public institution	39
b) private institution	15
Total	54



According to the pie chart, 15 students of Intermediate Intensive English I attended high school in private institutions; this represents 28% of the sample population. 39 participants that were surveyed come from public institutions; this represents 72% of the whole population.

6. How long have you been studying English in the Foreign Language Department?

Choices	Number of students
a) one year	38
b) two years	12
c) three years	3
d) more than three years	1
Total	54

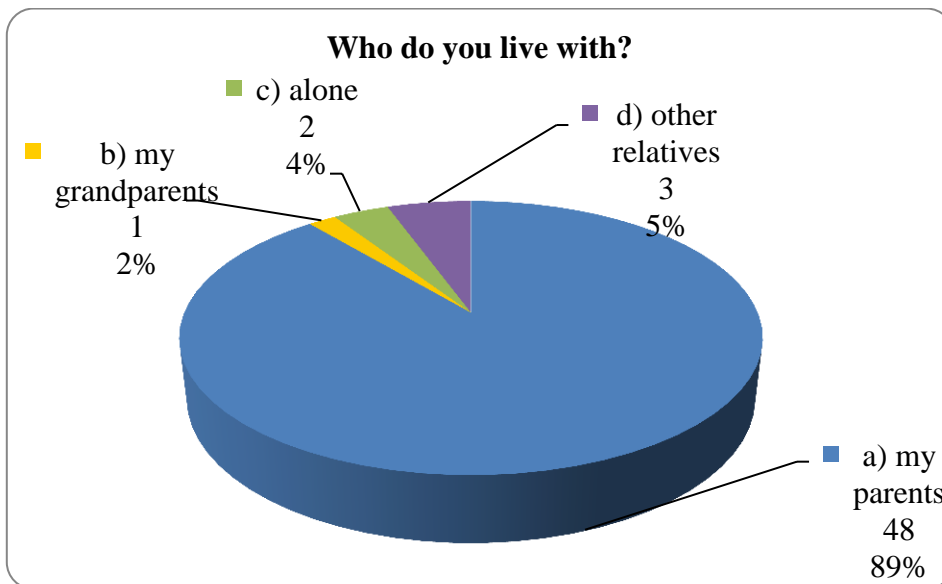


This pie chart shows that 38 students out of 54 have been studying English at the Foreign Language Department for a period of 1 year; this represents 70% of the sample. In addition, 12 students that represent 22% have been studying for two years. Three students, who represent 6%, said they have been studying for 3 years. Finally, the chart shows that

only 1 student has been studying English for more than three years, which represents 2% of the whole sample.

7. Who do you live with?

Choices	Number of students
a) my parents	48
b) my grandparents	1
c) alone	2
d) other relatives	3
Total	54

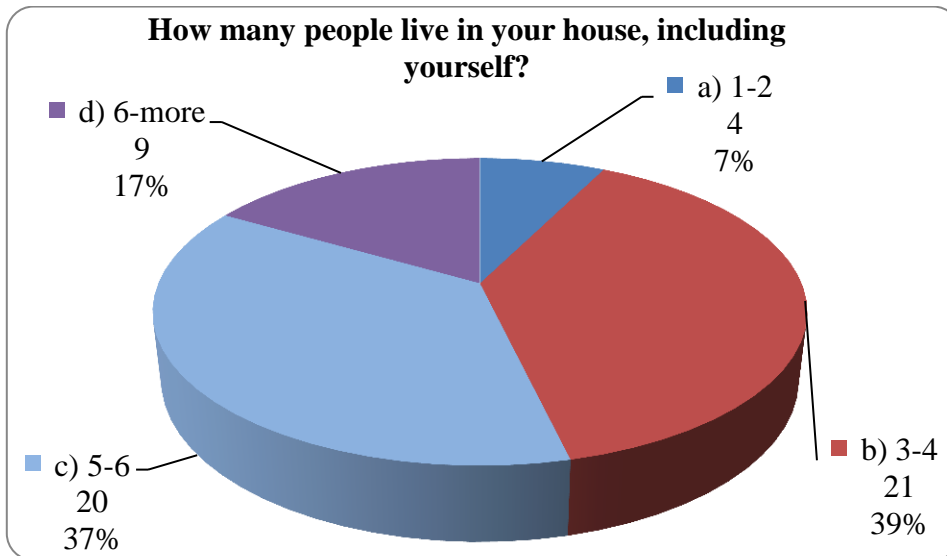


This pie chart represents who the students live with. 48 students live with their parents; this represents 89% of the sample. It is clearly noticed that most of the English Intermediate I students live with their parents. However, there are some other students who live with their grandparents, and this represents 2% (1 student) of the sample taken in this research.

Only a few students live alone, 4% (2 students). Finally, 3 students, 5% said to live with some other relatives.

8. How many people live in your house, including yourself?

Choices	Number of students
a) 1-2	4
b) 3-4	21
c) 5-6	20
d) 6-more	9
Total	54

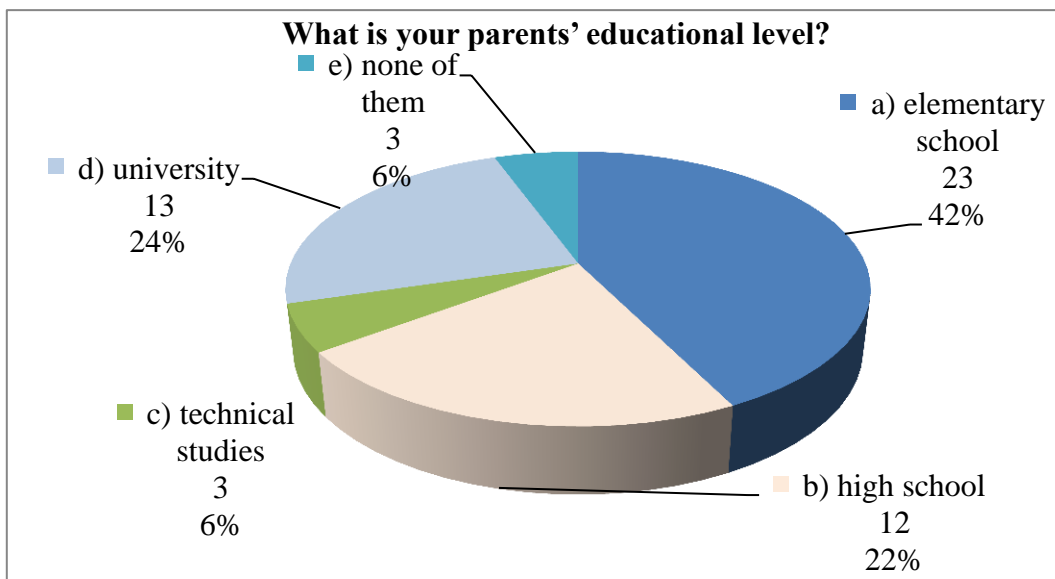


This pie chart represents the number of people who live in the students' houses, including themselves. The chart shows that 4 students that represent 7% of the sample population live with one more person. Most of the students, 21 in total, chose option b, which means they live with 3 to 4 people in the same house; this represents 39% of the sample taken. 20

students affirmed that 5 to 6 people live with them in their house; this stands for 37% of the sample taken. Just 9 students said to have a big family composed by more than 6 members, which is represented by 17%.

9. What is your parents’ educational level?

Choices	Number of students
a) elementary school	23
b) high school	12
c) technical studies	3
d) university	13
e) none of them	3
Total	54

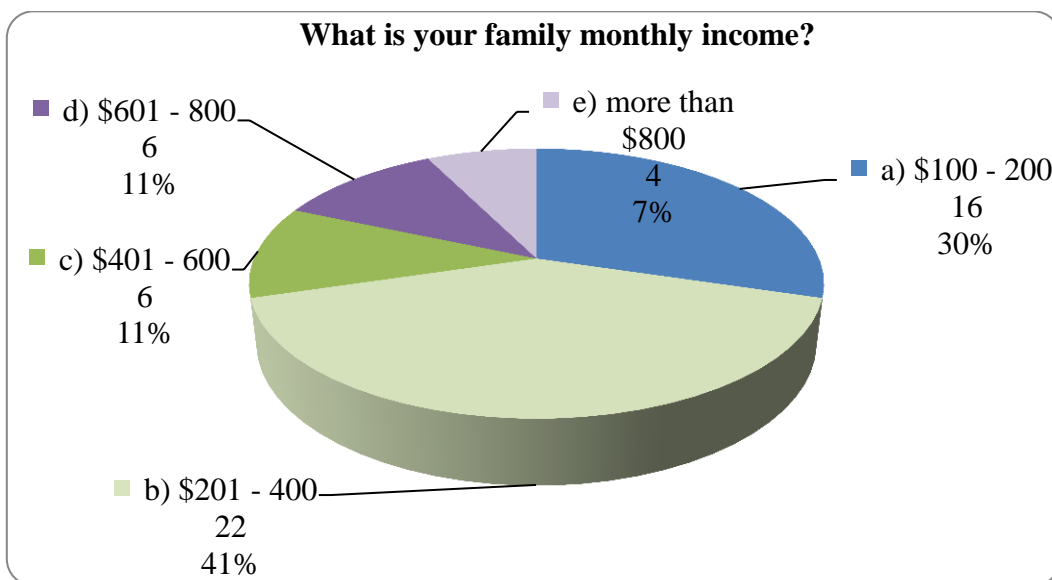


This chart shows the students’ answers to the question; “What is your parents’ educational level?” 23 students stated their parents studied elementary school; this represents 42% of the sample taken. 12 students said their parents studied high school; this

represents 22%. The pie chart shows a big difference between parents who studied elementary school and the parents who took technical studies. 3 parents meaning 6% of the population took technical studies only. However, 13 parents attended university to study a major; that means that 24% have university studies. Finally, 3 students said that their parents had not studied any type of academic studies. This represents 6% of the sample taken.

10. What is your family monthly income?

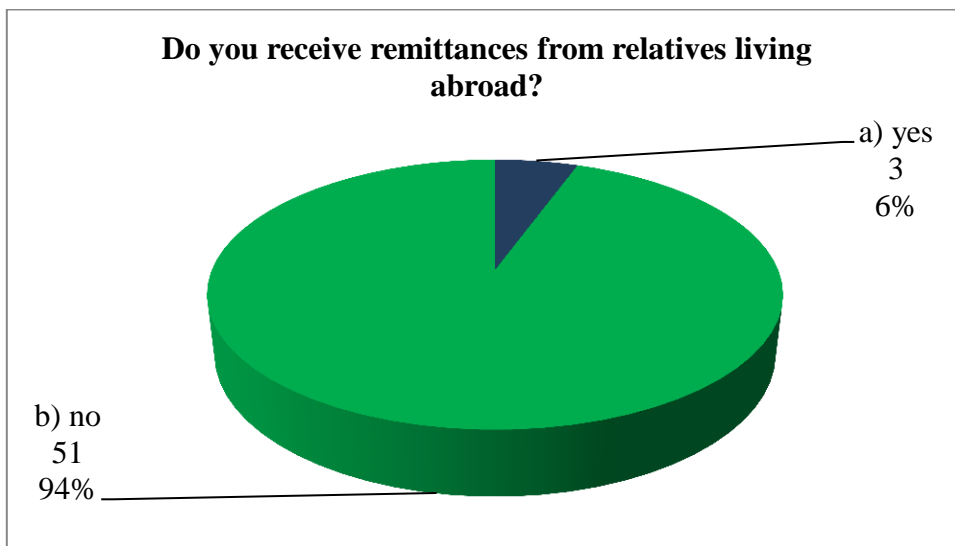
Choices	Number of students
a) \$100 - 200	16
b) \$201 - 400	22
c) \$401 - 600	6
d) \$601 - 800	6
e) more than \$800	4
Total	54



According to the pie chart, 16 out of 54 students had a family income ranging from \$100 to \$200. This represents 30% of the sample population. 22 students assured their family income ranged from \$201 to \$400; this represents 41% of the surveyed population. 6 students said their family income was higher than \$400 but lower than \$601; this stands for 11% of the sample taken. Similarly, 6 students (11%) said their income ranged from \$601 to \$800 per month. Finally, just 4 students said to have a family income higher than \$800. That means that only 7% of the sample had a decent economic status to afford their studies.

11. Do you receive remittances from relatives living abroad?

Choices	Number of students
a) yes	3
b) no	51
Total	54

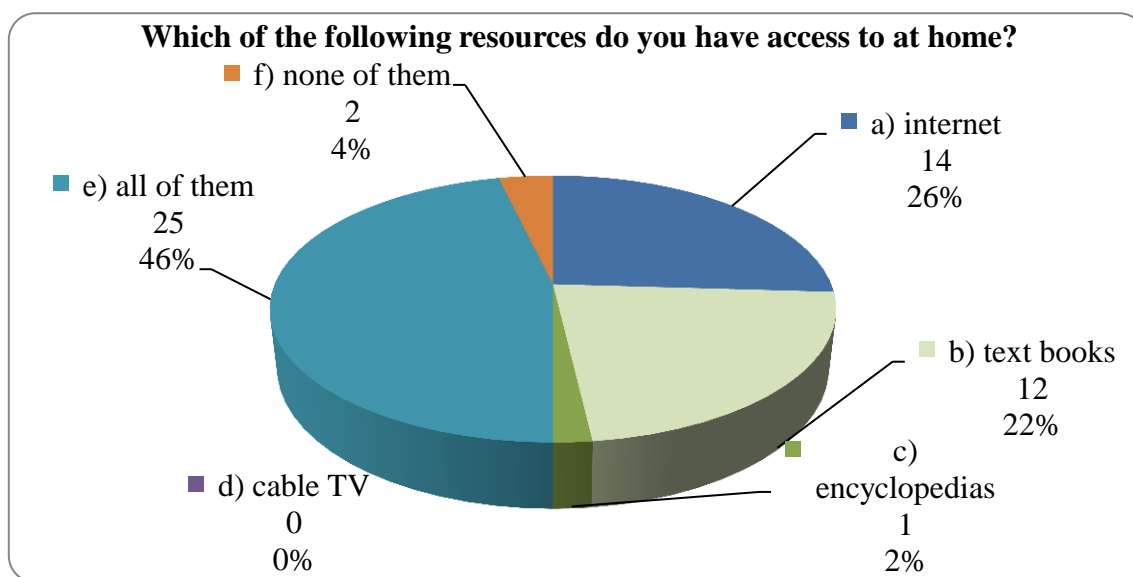


According to the chart, most of the Intermediate English students (51) do not receive remittances from relatives living abroad. This represents 94% of the sample population. On

the other hand, 3 students out of 54 said that they received remittances, which represents 6% of the sample taken.

12. Which of the following resources do you have access to at home?

Choices	Number of students
a) internet	14
b) textbooks	12
c) encyclopedias	1
d) cable TV	0
e) all of them	25
f) none of them	2
Total	54

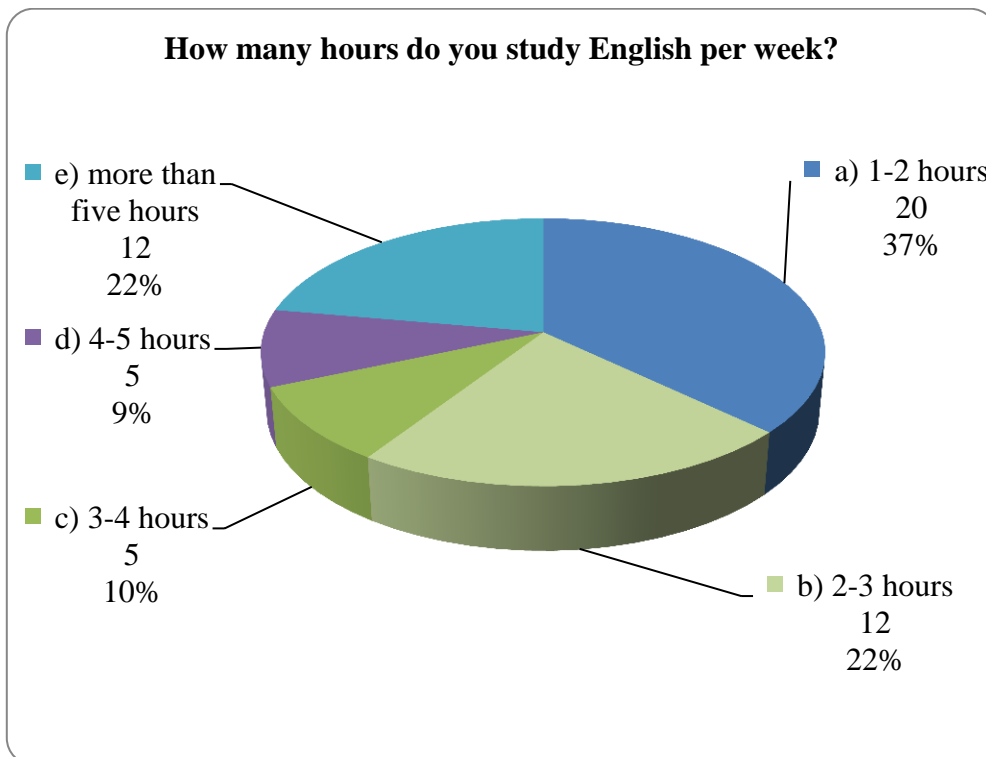


According to the pie chart, 14 students, which represent 26%, have access to the internet. Besides, 12 students that represent 22% of the surveyed population have access to

textbooks at home. The chart also shows that 1 student has access to encyclopedias; this represents 2% of the sample. It can be emphasized that 25 students that represent 46% of the studied population have access to all the sources mentioned in question 12.

13. How many hours do you study English per week?

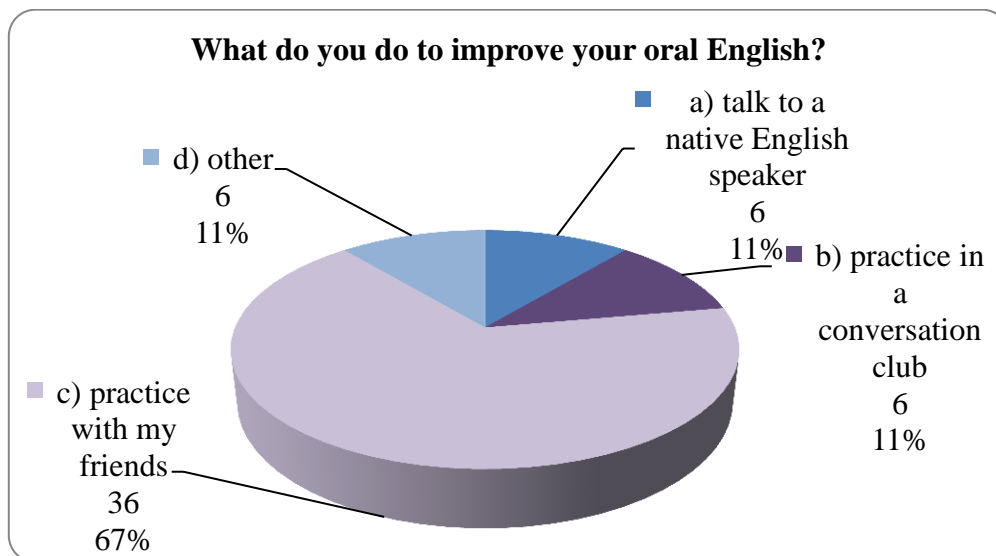
Choices	Number of students
a) 1-2 hours	20
b) 2-3 hours	12
c) 3-4 hours	5
d) 4-5 hours	5
e) more than 5 hours	12
Total	54



The pie chart shows that 20 students that represent 36% of the sample population study from 1 to 2 hours per week. Besides, 12 students that represent 22% of the surveyed population study from 2 to 3 hours per week. It can be said that 5 students that represent 10% of the researched population study from 3 to 4 hours per week. Furthermore, it can be identified that 5 students that represent 10% of the sample taken study from 4 to 5 hours per week. Finally, it can be emphasized that 12 students that represent 22% study more than 5 hours per week.

14. What do you do to improve your oral English?

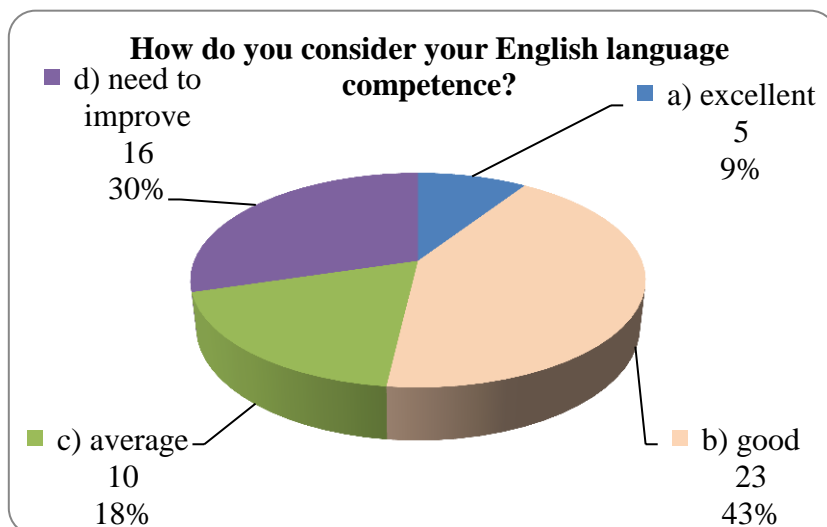
Choices	Number of students
a) talk to a native English speaker	6
b) practice in a conversation club	6
c) practice with my friends	36
d) other	6
Total	54



This chart shows that 6 students that represent 11% of the sample talk to a native speaker in order to improve their oral English. Moreover, it can be identified that 6 students that represent 11% of the sample practice in a conversation club for improving their oral English. Furthermore, it can be emphasized that 36 students that represent 67% of the sample improve their oral English by practicing with a friend. Finally, 6 students that represent 11% of the sample practice by doing other activities in order to improve their oral English.

15. How do you consider your English language competence?

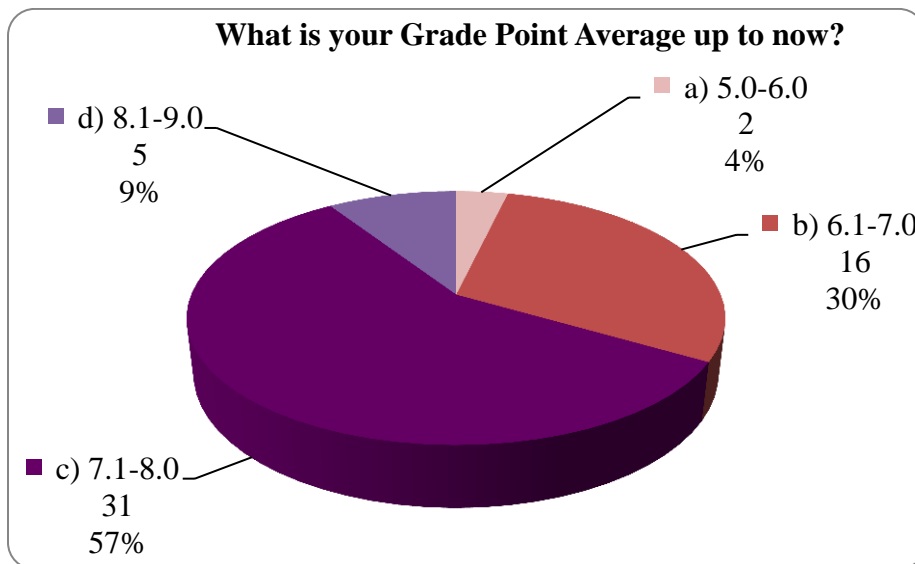
Choices	Number of students
a) excellent	5
b) good	23
c) average	10
d) need to improve	16
Total	54



The pie chart shows that 5 students that represent 9% of the sample consider their English language competence excellent. Besides, it can be noticed that 23 students that represent 43% of the sample consider their English language competence good. Moreover, 10 students that represent 18% of the sample consider their English language competence average. Finally, it can be noticed that 16 students that represent 30% of the sample taken consider their English language competence needs to be improved.

16. What is your Grade Point Average up to now?

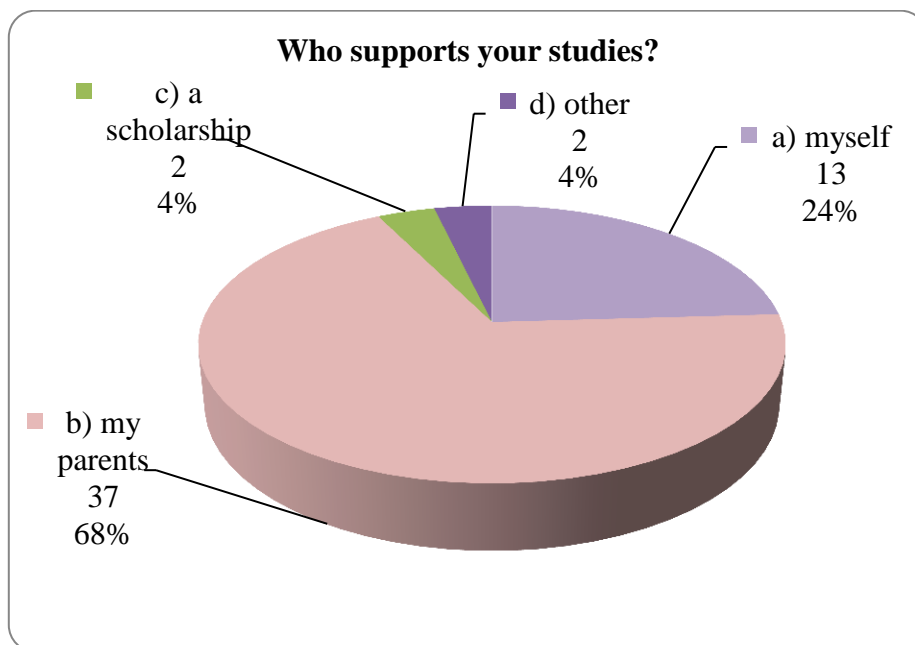
Choices	Number of students
a) 5.0-6.0	2
b) 6.1-7.0	16
c) 7.1-8.0	31
d) 8.1-9.0	5
Total	54



The pie chart shows that 2 students which represent 4% have a Grade Point Average (GPA) ranging from 5.0 to 6.0. 16 students that represent 30% have a GPA of 6.1 to 7.0. The chart shows that 31 students have a GPA of 7.1 to 8.0; this represents 57% of the sample taken. Finally, 5 students have a GPA of 8.1 to 9.0; this stands for 9% of the sample population.

17. Who supports your studies?

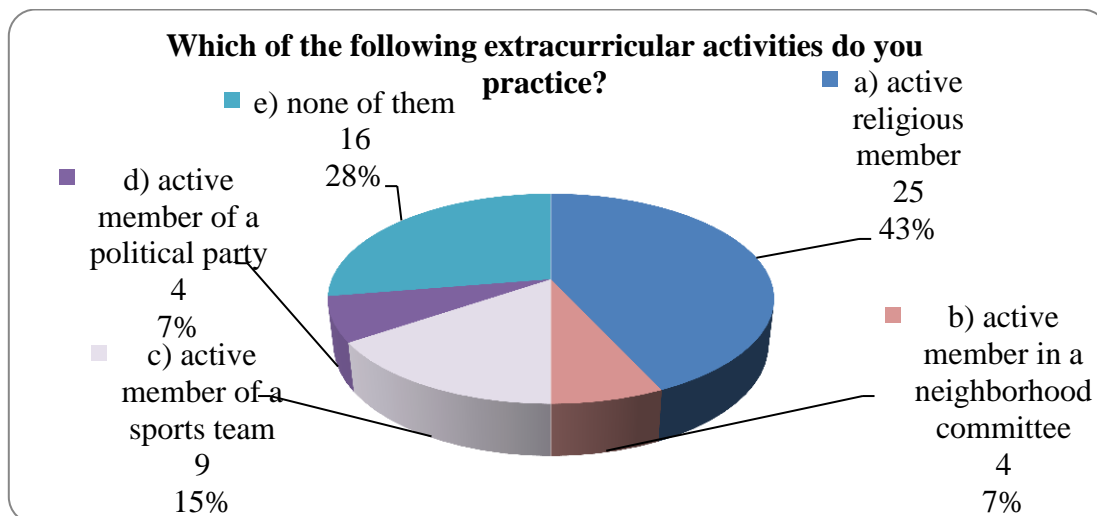
Choices	Number of students
a) myself	13
b) my parents	37
c) a scholarship	2
d) other	2
Total	54



According to this chart, 13 students that represent 24% of the surveyed population pay their studies by themselves. Besides, 37 students that represent 68% of the sample have their studies paid by their parents. The chart also shows that 2 students have scholarships. It can also be noticed that 2 students pay their studies by other means; this represents 4% of the sample.

18. Which of the following extracurricular activities do you practice?

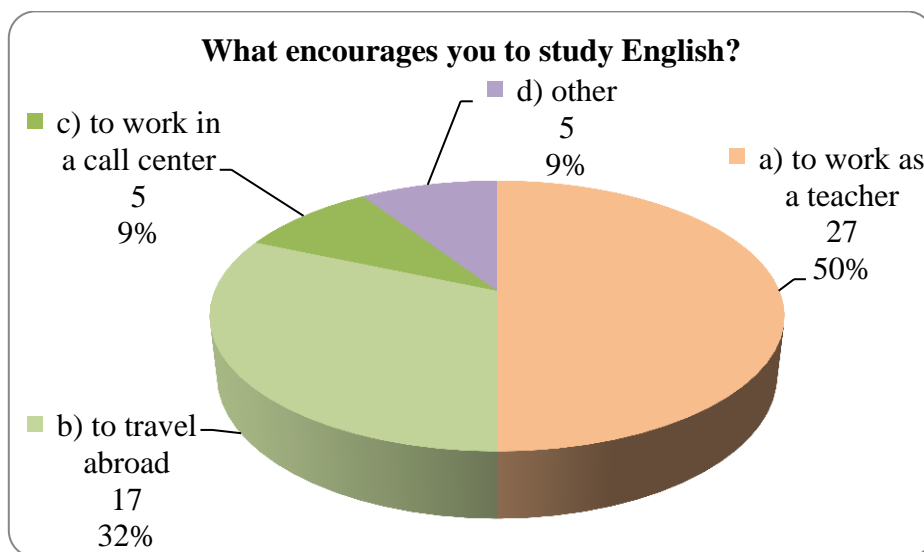
Choices	Number of students
a) active religious member	25
b) active member in a neighborhood committee	4
c) active member of a sports team	9
d) active member of a political party	4
e) none of them	16
Total	54



The pie chart shows that 25 students that represent 43% of the surveyed population are active religious members in different churches. Besides, it can be noticed that 4 students that represent 7% are active members in a neighborhood committee. It can be said that 9 students are active members of a sports team; this stands for 15% of the sample taken. Moreover, 4 students are active members of a political party; this represents 7% of the sample population. Furthermore, it can be identified that 16 students that represent 28% of the sample studied do not get involved in any extracurricular activities.

19. What encourages you to study English?

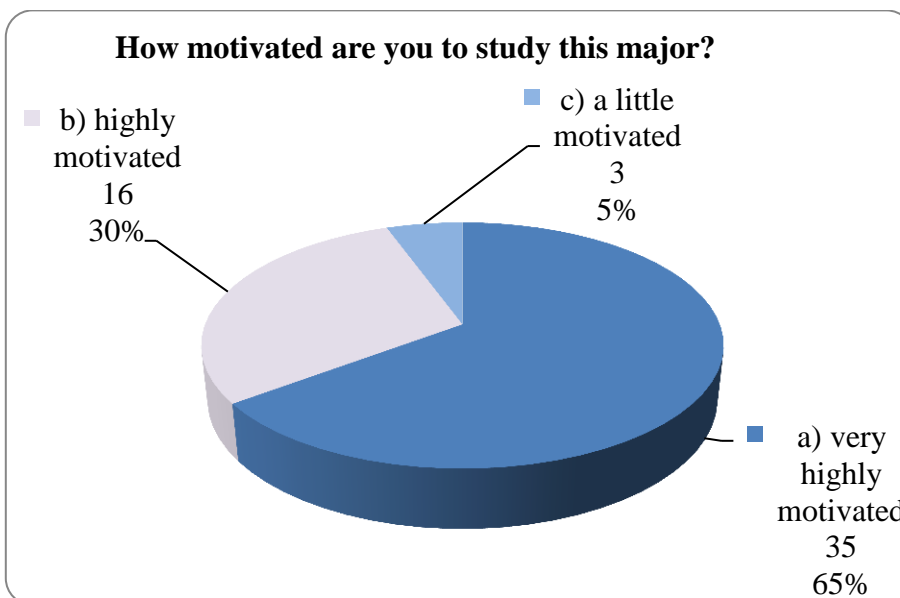
Choices	Number of students
a) to work as a teacher	27
b) to travel abroad	17
c) to work in a call center	5
d) other	5
Total	54



According to the pie chart, 27 students that represent 50% of the surveyed population want to work as teachers. Besides, 17 students want to travel abroad; this stands for 32% of the sample taken. The chart also shows that 5 students want to work in a call center; this represents 9% of the surveyed population. It can also be noticed that 5 students are encouraged by other means; this stands for 9% of the sample taken.

20. How motivated are you to study this major?

Choices	Number of students
a) very highly motivated	35
b) highly motivated	16
c) a little motivated	3
Total	54

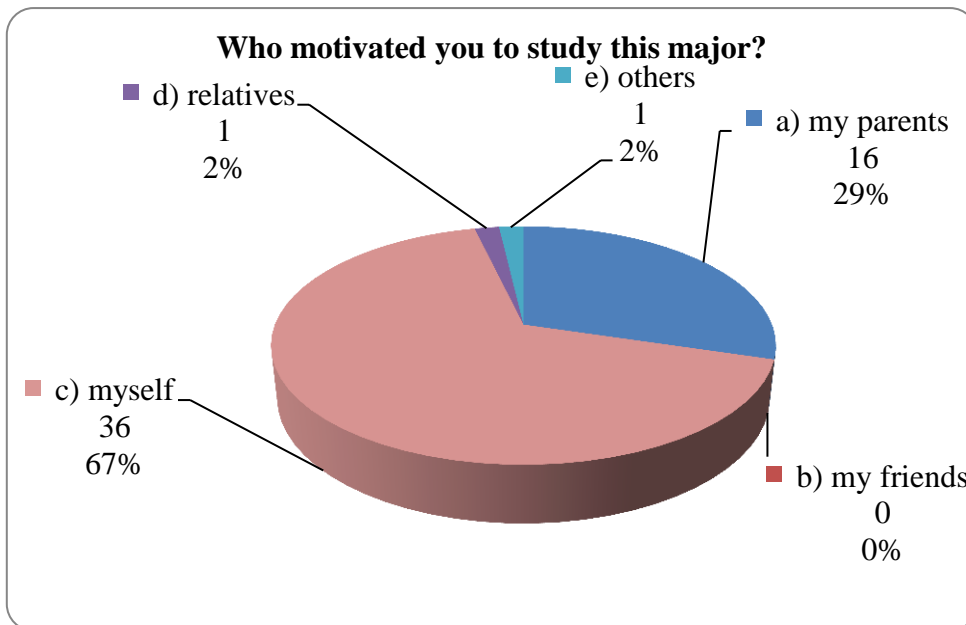


The pie chart shows that 35 students that represent 65% of the sample are very highly motivated to study this major. It can be noticed that 16 students are highly motivated; this

represents 30% of the participants that took the survey. In addition, 3 students that represent 5% of the sample taken are a little motivated.

21. Who motivated you to study this major?

Choices	Number of students
a) my parents	16
b) my friends	0
c) myself	36
d) relatives	1
e) others	1
Total	54



According to the pie chart, 16 students that represent 29% of the surveyed population were motivated by their parents. Besides, it can be seen that there were not any

students motivated by their friends. Furthermore, it can be emphasized that 36 students were motivated by themselves; this represents 67% of the sample taken. The chart also shows that 1 student was motivated by relatives, which represents 2% of the sample. It can be emphasized that 1 student that represents 2% was motivated by someone else.

CHAPTER V

5.1 MAJOR FINDINGS

In order to analyze the data collected, the researchers took into account the following steps. First of all, the researchers selected twelve questions out of twenty one that were part of the instrument; these questions were the most important to classify the students' profile into two groups. The first group was named Group A, and the second one, Group B. Group A, represents the students who have an advantaged profile. On the other hand, Group B represents students who are part of the disadvantaged profile. To classify the students into these two different profiles, the following aspects were considered: Students' extracurricular activities, their socio economic status, and their motivation. These aspects were found in questions 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 (See annex A).

The students that were selected in group A, were those who accomplished at least 7 aspects of the 12 questions already mentioned. On the other hand, students selected in group B were those students who accomplished less than 7 aspects contained in the chosen questions. In order to find a parameter on how students' profile influences their English language competence, the students were classified in these two groups by taking into account the Grade Point Average. This information was obtained from question 16 in the instrument.

In order to answer the research question, "How does students' profile influence the English Language Competence at the Intermediate Intensive English I courses of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador?," all the grade point averages were added and divided into two groups respectively. In Group A (advantaged

profile), there were 33 students who represent 53% of the sample taken, and they have an average grade of 7.67 (See the charts below). On the other hand, in Group B, there were 21 students who represent 47% of the surveyed population; they got an average grade of 6.93. These results show that students who have an advantaged profile have higher grades than those students who have a disadvantaged profile.

Grade Point Average of advantaged Profile

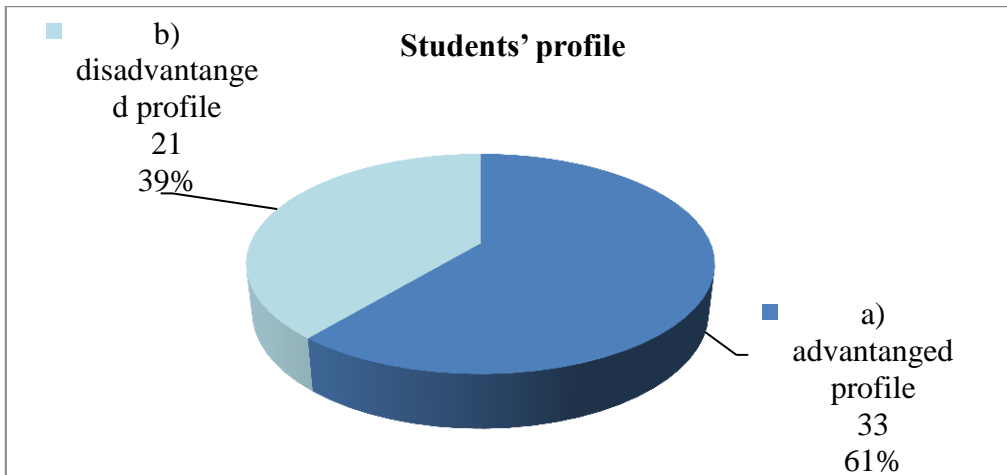
	Number of students	GPA of students	Average of advantaged profile
Advantaged Profile	33	7.8+ 7.5+8.2+ 8.75+ 7.8+ 7.6+ 8.5+ 8+ 7.9+ 7.8+ 7.15+ 8+ 7.2+ 7.5+ 7.5+ 8.3+ 7.8+ 7.8+ 7.66+ 7.83+ 7.1+ 8+ 7.5+ 8+ 7.48+ 7.4+ 7+ 7+ 7+ 7+ 7+ 8.2+ 8	253.27/33
Total	33	253.27	7.67

Grade Point Average of disadvantaged profile

Disadvantaged Profile	Number of students	GPA of students	Average of disadvantaged profile
	21	6.9+6.86+6.57+7.4+7+ 6+7+7+6.9+7.2+6.73+7.2+ 7.1+7.4+7+7+7+7+7.7+7.6+5	145.56 /21
Total	21	145.56	6.93

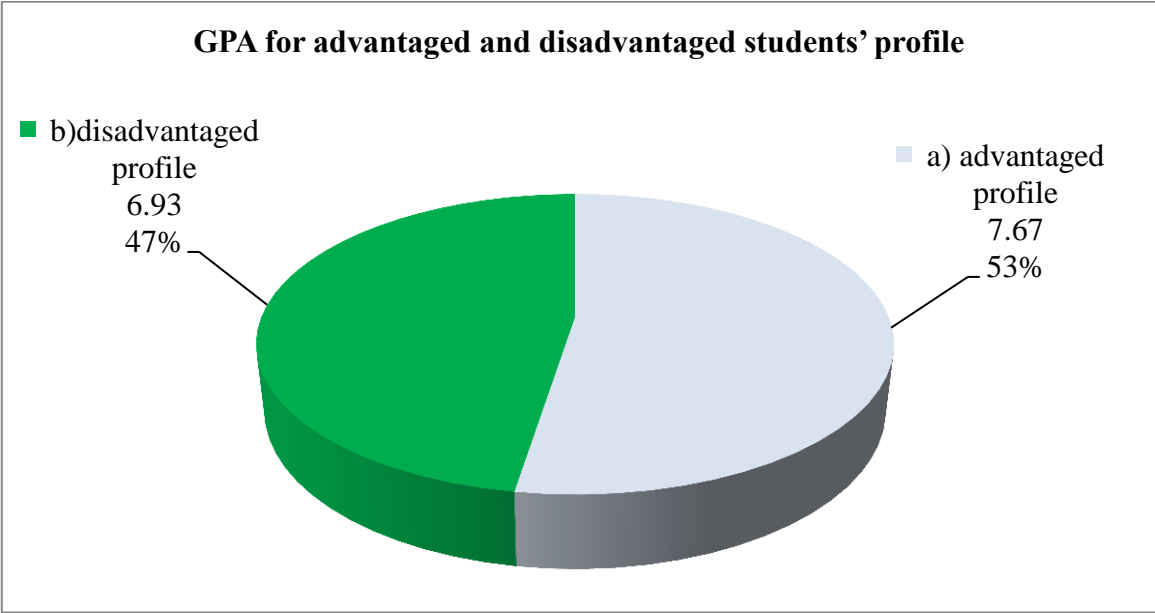
Students' profile

Profile	Number of students
a) advantanged profile	33
b) disadvantaged profile	21
Total	54



Grade Point Average for advantaged and disadvantaged students' profile

Students' profile	GPA
a) advantaged profile	7.67
b) disadvantaged profile	6.93



5.2 FINDINGS

- ✓ Students who had higher family incomes had access to resources such as textbooks, internet, and encyclopedias, than those students whose family incomes were low.
- ✓ According to the data collected, the students who had high family incomes studied extra English courses before pursuing studies at the university, and that helped them to succeed in their studies. On the other hand, the students with low family incomes had to struggle to succeed in their required courses.
- ✓ The results showed that students who were involved in more than one extracurricular activity were the ones who got lower grades than those students who were involved in one or none.
- ✓ The data collected showed that students who supported their studies by working got lower grades than the students who did not, because the students who worked spent more time working than studying.
- ✓ According to the study, students who were highly motivated got better results than those students who were not.
- ✓ The data collected showed that students whose main goal was to work as teachers got a higher grade point average than those students who studied for different purposes.
- ✓ According to the data collected, students who selected this major by themselves got better results than the ones who were encouraged by others.
- ✓ The data collected showed that parents who had a higher educational level had higher incomes than those parents who had a low educational level.

- ✓ The study showed that students who came from private institutions got better results than those who came from public institutions.

CHAPTER VI

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this study, the researchers got the following conclusions:

- The data collected claimed that students who have a high family income had the opportunity to attend English Courses, to have access to the internet, textbooks, and encyclopedias. Besides, most of the advantaged students studied in private institutions; as a result, their grades were higher than the grades of those students who had a low family income.
- The findings of the study supported that extracurricular activities influence students' language competence because the more involved they were in these activities, the less time they invested in their academic studies. This can be clearly reflected in their grade point averages. The study shows that all those students who were active religious members, active members of a neighborhood committee, sports teams, or political parties had a lower grade point average than those who were not involved in one or any extracurricular activities. Besides, the findings show that students who work and study at the same time get lower results than those students that only study.
- The study also reflected that motivation influences students' performance. The research shows that students who decided to study the major by themselves and were willing to work as teachers were highly motivated; therefore, they get higher grade point averages

than those who were not motivated and studied English for different purposes, but teaching.

CHAPTER VII

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

After finishing the undergraduate project, the researchers recommend:

- ✓ Students who are doing their community outreach and taking Practice Teaching I and II should help disadvantaged students reach a better language competence by means of conversation clubs, tutoring, and workshops delivered in different schedules.
- ✓ The Central Academic Administration should not take a long time to deliver academic documents, and it should work more efficiently in order that students start the undergraduate project at the beginning of the academic year.
- ✓ Due to the fact that there are students who do not have access to the internet at home, the Foreign Language Department should provide them with enough technological equipment to improve their language performance.
- ✓ The Foreign Language Department should provide the students with well-equipped libraries, textbooks, dictionaries, and magazines, among others.
- ✓ The Foreign Language Department should include a motivational course in the first semester of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza. This course should include a motivational module, Learning Strategies, and Students' benefits while

studying at the Foreign Language Department (scholarships, medical help, among others).

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ANNEXES

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

This questionnaire is addressed to students who are taking Intermediate Intensive English I from the major Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza.

Objective: To gather information from students of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza related to their profile in order to answer the research question.

How does students' profile influence the English Language Competence at the Intermediate Intensive English I courses of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador?

Directions: Based on your personal information, provide an accurate answer to each question

Age: _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Questions

1. What year did you start studying this major? _____

2. Have you changed your major?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Have you studied extra English courses?

Yes _____ No _____

4. Where do you come from?

a) San Salvador b) outside San Salvador. Where? _____

5. Where did you study high-school?

a) public institution

b) private institution

6. How long have you been studying English in the Foreign Language Department?

a) one year

b) two years

c) three years

d) more than three years

7. Who do you live with?

a) my parents

b) my grandparents

c) alone

d) other relatives

8. How many people live in your house, including yourself? _____

9. What is your parents' educational level?
- a) elementary school (1st grade to 9th grade)
 - b) high-school
 - c) technical studies
 - d) university
 - e) none of them

10. What is your family monthly income?
- a) \$100 - 200
 - b) \$201 - 400
 - c) \$401 - 600
 - d) \$601 - 800
 - e) more than \$800

11. Do you receive remittances from relatives living abroad? Yes_____ No _____ If your answer is yes, select one option
- a) \$100 - 200
 - b) \$201 - 400
 - c) \$401 - 600
 - d) \$601 - 800
 - e) more than \$800

12. Which of the following resources do you have access to at home?
- a) internet
 - b) textbooks
 - c) encyclopedias
 - d) cable TV
 - e) all of them
 - f) none of them

13. How many hours do you study English per week?
- a) 1-2 hours
 - b) 2-3 hours
 - c) 3-4 hours
 - d) 4-5 hours
 - e) more than five

14. What do you do to improve your oral English?
- a) talk to a native English speaker
 - b) practice in a conversation club
 - c) practice with my friends
 - d) other: _____

15. How do you consider your English language competence?

- a) excellent
- b) good
- c) average
- d) need to improve

16. What is your Grade Point Average (CUM) up to now? _____

17. Who supports your studies?

- a) myself
- b) my parents
- c) a scholarship
- d) other: _____

18. Which of the following extracurricular activities do you practice?

- a) active religious member
- b) active member in a neighborhood committee
- c) active member of a sports team
- d) active member of a political party
- e) none of them

19. What encourages you to study English?

- a) to work as a teacher
- b) to travel abroad
- c) to work in a call center
- d) other: _____

20. How motivated are you to study this major?

- a) very highly motivated
- b) highly motivated
- c) a little motivated

21. Who motivated you to study this major?

- a) my parents
- b) my friends
- c) myself
- d) relatives
- e) others: _____