INTRODUCTION

In our globalized world characterized by international and intercultural interactions, linguistic skills are fundamental for employment and career development. The knowledge of a foreign language, for sure increases job opportunities in areas where being proficient in another language is demanded. The importance and advantages of learning a second language is continuing to increase every day. Our country is not the exception; the amounts of job opportunities for English speakers in our country are even more and better rewarded than those who only speak Spanish language. It depends on the business of the company that English speakers are employed for.

For English Teachers the primary goal is to find a job related to their field. As a result they apply to work in different areas of education such as Primary and Secondary Education, High School, College and Private English Academies. But as in other areas happens some are hired while others are rejected. Understanding the many facets of the teacher employment process is very important for candidates to succeed while applying. Even in a very tight job market, thousands of teachers are hired each year. Teacher candidates who understand the job-search process and properly prepare themselves will be more confident and successful in their efforts to locate and secure teaching positions than candidates who make false assumptions or simply rely on luck.

For English Academies Oral English Proficiency is the main focus of attention or skill considered while hiring a new teacher. In order to evaluate, grade and rate this skill on English speakers there exist different standardized evaluation and grading scales internationally recognized. However each institution follows and implements a different evaluation method developed most of the time by the coordinators of each institution. They take into consideration standardized criteria from generalized evaluations such as TOELF and TOEIC, yet they implement their own criteria. In most of the participants institutions, an oral interview is the method used to rate Oral Proficiency of applicants.

In addition, There are other factors that contribute to be employed or not. Some institutions take into account that the candidate has already graduated or is about to graduate from school, as well as previous experience or international certifications. Nevertheless, some institutions only base their decision on the results of the interview which makes the selection process easier for both coordinators and applicants. This research is a clear overview of the different evaluation methods and stages of the hiring process of the participant institutions.

This research was presented in three chapters. On chapter one it is presented the theoretical framework which is a background of the different participant institutions. On Chapter number two, includes previous researches developed about oral proficiency and recent studies based on the same skill in order to provide the readers with the necessary information to understand how English oral proficiency is

evaluated and rated according to international standards. On chapter number two it is also explained the research methodology as well as the instruments used to gather the information. Finally chapter number three contains the results of this investigation reflected in the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

I.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English academies in El Salvador are growing day by day. Nowadays it is very common to see that a new English academy opens to be a new option for English learners. The demand of people trying to learn English in our country is big enough to keep the business of teaching English growing. The bigger the demand of students is the more teachers these institutions are going to hire.

Teaching English is one of the most fascinating and difficult activities to develop. It should not be done by someone without any teaching background experience. It should be a must to be a professional in both the language and teaching to be considered as a candidate to work in an English academy. However some of these institutions are only taking into consideration the oral proficiency of the candidates rather than any previous teaching background. Yet this is not a generalization since other institutions are very concerned about teaching experience and having a degree based on teaching.

For English teachers or English speakers as a second language, English Academies are one of the sources of work they consider either to have a permanent job or just an additional income. And this is why for the students of the Major of English Teaching of the University of El Salvador these academies are so attractive to work for. Nevertheless there is not any background information available of what is being

demanded from candidates to work as teachers by these institutions. Meanwhile some focus only on the oral proficiency allowing anybody who speaks the language to be a teacher, others are very demanding and request not only the knowledge of the language but also a degree on the area of teaching.

This research clarifies the different procedures academies follow first to evaluate, grade and rate the oral proficiency of applicants as well as providing with an overview of the selecting process. This way the investigation inform the community of English speakers about the type of evaluation and the rating scale used by each institution in a way the reader can take that into consideration before applying in each of the participant institutions.

Some of the most prestigious academies in our country are Centro Cultural Salvadoreño, CENIUES from the University of El Salvador, Language School Ricaldone and ITEXAL. Each of them implements a different type of oral proficiency evaluation and takes different aspects into consideration besides the oral proficiency. They have different levels of English and what they demand from the teachers vary depending on that.

Even though the amount of teachers that apply to work in an English academy is very considerable, some are hired while others are rejected. But what makes a teacher to be rejected if he or she has the same education or English level than those who have

being employed. What is the level of oral proficiency demanded by these institutions? Oral proficiency includes the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations (Omaggio, 1986). So, how do they evaluate and rate this on the applicants? On which of the two rating scales do they base on to tell the level of oral proficiency of a person? This research focuses on the English oral proficiency level required from candidates who want to work in some of the private English academies in San Salvador, El Salvador.

II. OBJECTIVES

A) GENERAL OBJECTIVES.

- To discover the English oral proficiency level required from candidates who want to work in English academies.

- To inform what other factors besides oral proficiency influence private English academies' coordinators to consider aspirants to become part of the teacher's staff.

B) SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

- To describe the different guidelines used to evaluate oral proficiency.

- To identify the parameters which are used to determine the required oral proficiency level.

- To discover why some teachers are hired in private English academies while some others are not.

- To inform about the internal procedure private English academies follow to select their teachers from aspirants.

III.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A) **General question:**

1. What is the English oral proficiency level required from candidates who want to work in English academies in El Salvador?

B) **Subsidiary questions**

1. What is oral proficiency?

2. How do students learning English as a second language acquire oral proficiency?

3. How can oral proficiency be measured?

4. Which are the parameters used to determine the oral proficiency level?

5. What is the procedure to apply to work in private English academies?

6. What other factors do English academies require from candidates who want to work there?

7. What scales are used by English academies to determine if candidates achieve the required oral proficiency level?

8. Why are some students from English employed by English academies while others are not?

IV.   JUSTIFICATION

Even though there are many fields of English teaching, we are going to focus our research on the procedures private English Academies follow to select their educators. It is very important for the community of graduated teachers and those who will graduate in the following years to be informed about what is demanded by those institutions when hiring their teachers. Once they know what academies demand from them, it will be easier for teachers to prepare for what is demanded. And if they do not accomplish those demands, they can easily start to acquire those skills and academic knowledge required to succeed when applying. Oral proficiency is one of the most important aspects considered by these institutions at the time of selecting and hiring a new teacher. So, the main focus of our investigation is to clarify how important oral proficiency is for them when selecting their teachers.

In addition, this research is going to provide the readers with an overview of the two different rate scales used to measure the level of oral proficiency of English speakers. These guidelines specify what an English speaker can do in terms of speaking, writing, listening and reading. For each skill they specify different levels of proficiency. Even though we are not studying the four skills but one in specific, the information of all the skills is going to be included. This way, if an institution states that they base their interviews or instruments of oral proficiency measurement on the Proficiency Guidelines ACTFL or in the Common European Framework (CEFR), the

reader can easily obtain and understand the information of the rate scale used and properly prepare for the interview or evaluation.

Since Oral proficiency includes the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations (Omaggio, 1986). So, how do this institutions rate this ability? There are different instruments and techniques to do so. Oral proficiency assessment allows test takers to show how well they communicate orally. There are a number of oral proficiency assessment, including direct and semi direct-means (Malone 2007). Understanding the difference in assessment and the purpose of each of them is crucial for succeeding while taking them. With this research, they will be given the knowledge they need to get ready according to the instrument or procedures followed by the evaluators.

By utilizing the information in this research, the candidates should have an overview of the selection process, the level of oral proficiency demanded and the rate scale used to measure oral skills as well as the different instruments utilized by the different participant institutions. With our investigation we are going to provide our colleagues with the key tools to succeed when applying for a job position in the work environment of private English Academies.

V.   DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

This research is focused on the oral proficiency level that English academies require when they hire teachers. Since English academies are growing in our country, more and more ESL students are trying to get a job in private English academies; still some of them are hired while others are not.

This study describes the oral proficiency required by English speakers by the time they apply to work in one of the participant institutions in relationship to the oral proficiency level required and the description of the process academies follow to measure it.

Time and place:

This research about Oral Proficiency demanded from English speakers who apply to work in private English Academies took place in the following institutions: CENIUES, ITEXSAL Language School, Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano, and Ricaldone Language School, during the year 2012. More academies were selected, However some of them declined to participate.

Population:

This study was addressed to people who learned English as a Second Language and are currently working at English academies. And furthermore this research had the participation of coordinators of such English academies. Only English speakers as a second language participated. Since the research dealt with different amounts of

teachers in each institution, they were selected according to their schedule availability.

CHAPTER 1

VI.THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Previous research in oral proficiency.

Oral proficiency is one of the most important skills, for that reason there are some previous researchers that have investigated Oral Proficiency, one of them is the research work about the tools that teachers use to measure oral proficiency in which they describe the different instruments and the most popular among the teacher (Oral proficiency instruments that are used for teacher in Foreign Language Department 2006).

On the other hand during the period 2011-2012 there was an investigation about the oral proficiency level required by the main call centers in El Salvador, this research was a descriptive research where the main objective was to find out what is the English Oral Proficiency level required from candidates who want to work as call centers agents in the main call centers in El Salvador and to determine what are the parameters used by the call center's recruitment staff to evaluate their applicants. At the end of this research the results showed that in accordance to the ACTFL guidelines for speaking and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) reviewed throughout this research, an applicant must achieve an Advanced Oral Proficiency level in order to be able to effectively communicate with a Native Speaker, which is

the main requirement for applicants to be integrate within the Call Center Industry. This is equivalent to a Call Center range of Oral Proficiency level from 85% to 100%.(Aguilar Morejon Miriam Concepcion et al, 2008, Analysis of individual oral instruments for testing Oral English Proficiency).

Although these two undergraduate researches were very useful to establish a background for this investigation, it was noticed that there are not previous studies about the English Oral Proficiency level required by English academies in El Salvador. By the way there are previous researches that present English Academies as one of the main source of labor market for the students graduated in the major of teaching English which happen to be one of the main sources for graduates from the Foreign Language Department,(Labor market of the English teaching major graduates from Foreign Language Department of the school of arts and social sciences from the University of El Salvador, Castillo López Gracía María et al 2008), that is why this topic becomes highly relevant for both students from the Foreign Language Department as well as the Head of the Department and teachers who wish to help their students the best way possible.

1.2 History of English academies in El Salvador

Learning English has become very important because it is a requirement to get almost every type of jobs. For that reason in our globalize world we can find

many English academies which are in charge of developing English skills in children, teenagers and adults. El Salvador is not the exception, during the last years different academies have been opened as a resource for those who are interested in learning English as a second language. We can mention some of the most recognize centers, which will be the focus of our research, these are: Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano (CCSA), CENIUES, Ricaldone Language School and ITEXSAL Language School. The history of each English academy is described below:

Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano (CCSA)

One of the oldest English academies is Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano which is an institution focused on education and culture, this institution was founded in 1955, it is directed to Salvadorians community. CCSA is an apolitical, non-religious and nonprofit institution; these precepts are still alive up today. In the present the previous ethics remain unchanged by the current authorities, moreover this institution was strategic and pedagogically designed in order to provide an excellent education in English Language. CCSA is a competitive institution which offers English courses in which each level consist in no more than ten students, in order to bring a good English Learning process.

The main objective of CCSA is to respond and to firm up the different and present necessities in order to make future effective responses, and to maintain and strengthen the commitment to academic excellence, ensuring that this rationale in

every effort with a view of present and future social image for the national and international development.

ITEXSAL Language School.

ITEXSAL languages school is a very young English academy. It was founded on June 2005 as an answer to help the family and students from ITEXSAL who are interested in developing their English skills in the competitive world in which we are immersed. It started to run on September 3, 2005. The initial population was 103 students from different areas of El Salvador. The main objective is to train competent people to express themselves in English through the development of language skills.

Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros (CENIUES)

Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros (CENIUES) began its activities by the end of the nineties and at the beginning of 2000 with a group of teachers of the Foreign Language Department, with the initiative of the Head of the Department.

CENIUES is an academic project of the Science and Arts Faculty at University of El Salvador. The aim of CENIUES is to guarantee to children, teenager and adults the opportunity to learn a foreign language. Their objective is to be a national academy of foreign languages with the best offer in academic excellence, accessible fees and compromise oriented to the strengthening and development of society.

Instituto Tecnico Ricaldone Language School.

The Language School of the instituto Tecnico Ricaldone was born on September 2nd, 2000. Its creation obeys to the necessity of contributing to the globalization of our country, offering the community the opportunity to learn a second language in a dynamic environment, professional personnel and affordable prices, so that everybody is able to study English.

The Language School has the mission of offering quality services favoring the integration of youngsters, especially the ones in a difficult economic situation and in risk, through a solid cultural, scientific and technological education.

CHAPTER 2

VII. THEORICAL BASES

2.1. Oral Proficiency

Oral proficiency includes the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations (Omaggio, 1986). For Stern (1983), proficiency means the actual performance of a learner in a given language, and it involves the mastery of the forms, the linguistic, cognitive, affective and sociocultural meanings of those forms, the capacity to use the language with focus mainly on communication and minimum attention to form, and the creativity in language use. Based on the definitions above and on Llurda's review about the aspects of language competence (2000).

We may interpret communicative language ability (or communication by means of language use) as constituted of two components: linguistic proficiency and communicative proficiency. The concept of proficiency would then represent a process-like ability to use language competence, as well as a theoretical construct strictly dependent on the aims for language development and in accordance with the approach adopted in teaching and learning a language. In addition, Fluency implies the ability to converse without apparent difficulty, especially about familiar

academies topics and routines and by using a varied academic vocabulary without halting pauses and stumbles or searching for words.

Now, the term accuracy relates to correct use of linguistic structures (grammatical accuracy), appropriate use of register (sociolinguistic accuracy), precision of vocabulary (semantic accuracy), and proper use of cohesive devices (rhetorical accuracy) (Omaggio, 1986). Making form-meaning connections can be described as the language learners' ability to attend to or notice the linguistic structure while they interpret or express the meaning of an utterance (Schmidt, 1990). So, oral proficiency is the combination of both, language knowledge and productive skill.

2.3 How ESL students acquire the oral proficiency.

In recent years, there have been major changes in educators' conception of how second language is acquired and how this acquisition is best promoted in elementary and secondary classrooms. There has been a major paradigm shift away from grammar- based approaches to language acquisition and toward those we call communicative. This change has been particularly apparent in the second language acquisition of English language learners. (Freeman & Freeman, chapter 2, English reaching the highest level learners of English literacy, 2005).

Krashen (1982) offers five important hypotheses that underlie current practice in most communicative approaches to second language acquisition. The first hypothesis is THE ACQUISITION LEARNING HYPOTHESIS; in this hypothesis Krashen describes the difference between the infant's subconscious acquisition of the primary language and students' conscious learning of a second language. According to Krashen we acquire language subconsciously, along with a feel of correctness. Learning a language on the other hand, is a conscious process that involves grammatical rules. Of course, infants are almost successful in acquiring language, while adults learners usually are not.

Gee (1992) expands Krashen's concept of acquisition to incorporate a social factor that encompasses Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and also the

concept of approximation. According to Gee Acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching. It happens in natural settings that are meaningful and functional in the sense that acquirers know that they need to acquire the thing they are exposed to in order to function and that they in fact want to function.

The second hypothesis is the NATURAL ORDER HYPOTHESIS that according to Krashen is acquired in a predictable sequence, with certain elements usually acquired before others. He has concluded that the orders for first and second language acquisition are similar, but not identical. Krashen does not conclude, however, the sequencing the teaching of language, according to this natural order is either necessary or desirable. The content of grammatical approaches to second language acquisition is organized of grammatical structures, and when infants acquire the primary language, by contrast the content is whatever they need and is interested in the time.

The third hypothesis is THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS; Krashen describes how learner's conscious monitor or editor function so as to make corrections as language is produced in speaking or writing. According to Krashen, several conditions are necessary for the application of monitor:

1. Sufficient time for applying it, rarely present in most ordinary discourse, especially in classroom settings.

2. A focus on the form or correctness of the message, rather than on its content.

3. Knowledge of grammatical rule to be applied.

The previous conditions serve to illustrate why so few students learn to understand and speak another language in a grammar translation or audio-lingual high school or university foreign language.

The fourth hypothesis is the most important contribution of Krashen, and this hypothesis is the INPUT HYPOTHESIS, in which Krashen concludes that progress in a development occurs when we receive comprehensible input, or input that contains structure at a slightly than per level, what we already understand. The Input Hypothesis corresponds to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal development. The context of the input provides clues that maintain the integrity of the message. According to the input hypothesis, a grammatical sequence is not needed, and grammatical structures are provided and practiced as a natural part of the comprehensible input that the learner receives, much as it occurs with infants acquiring their primary language. Krashen characterizes this comprehensible input as: "Caretaker speech" about "here and now".

And the last hypothesis is the affective FILTER HYPOTHESIS. According to Krashen, there are several affective variables that are associated with success in

second language acquisition. These include high motivation, self-confidence and a positive self-image, and low anxiety in the learning environment. Krashen (1982) relates the input hypothesis to the silent period, the interval before speech in either primary or second language, in which learners listen to and develops an understanding of the language before beginning to produce the language.

2.3. CERF PROFIENCY GUIDELINES

2.3.1 HISTORY OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The oral proficiency level can be measured by using different oral proficiency scales or parameters; one of them is the Common European Framework of Reference, abbreviated as CEFR. This is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages, across Europe and other countries (Council of Europe, 2011). It was put together by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing which applies to all languages in Europe. In November 2001, a European Union Council Resolution recommended using the CEFR to set up systems of validation of language ability, moreover the CEFR provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc.

Besides it describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop, so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Common European Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners 'progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.

2.3.2 CEFR Proficiency Guidelines

The CEFR adopts an action-oriented approach that, according to Carlos César Jiménez of Universidad National Autónoma de México, can be traced back to theoretical proposals made by philosophers of language such as Ludwig Wittgenstein in the 1950s and sociolinguists such as Dell Hymes.

The approach regards language users as social agents who develop general and particular communicative competences while trying to achieve their everyday goals. The CEFR divides general competences in knowledge (Descriptive knowledge), skills, and existential competence with particular communicative competences in linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence (Jimenez, Carlos César ,2011. El Marco Europeo Común de Referencia para las Lenguas y la comprensión teórica del conocimiento del lenguaje: exploración de una normatividad flexible para emprender acciones educativas. (Essay) Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. p. 9). This division does not exactly match previously well-known notions of communicative competence, but correspondences among them can be made.

General and particular communicative competences are developed by producing or receiving texts in various contexts under various conditions and constraints. These contexts correspond to various sectors of social life that the CEFR

calls domains. Four broad domains are distinguished: educational, occupational, public, and personal. According to the CEFR guidelines, a language user can develop various degrees of competence in each of these domains and to help describe them the CEFR has provided a set of Common Reference Levels.

The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers of communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe. It provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, and teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and coordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible. By providing a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and methods, the Framework will enhance the transparency of courses, syllabuses and qualifications, thus promoting international co-operation in the field of modern languages (Council of Europe 2011).The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency will facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning contexts, and accordingly will aid European mobility.

The taxonomic nature of the Framework inevitably means trying to handle the great complexity of human language by breaking language competence down into separate components. This confronts us with psychological and pedagogical problems

of some depth. Communication calls upon the whole human being. The competences separated and classified below interact in complex ways in the development of each unique human personality. As a social agent, each individual forms relationships with a widening cluster of overlapping social groups, which together define identity. In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favorable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture. It must be left to teachers and the learners themselves to reintegrate the many parts into a healthily developing whole.

The Framework includes the description of 'partial' qualifications, appropriate when only a more restricted knowledge of a language is required (e.g. for understanding rather than speaking), or when a limited amount of time is available for the learning of a third or fourth language and more useful results can be attained by aiming at, say, recognition rather than recall skills.

2.3. CEFR LEVEL REFERENCE

The Common European Framework divides learners into three broad divisions which can be divided into six levels. There are presented in the following table

LEVEL					
A		B		C	
BASIC USER		INDEPENDENT USER		PROFICIENT USER	
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Breakthrough or beginner	Waystage or elementary	Threshold or intermediate	Vantage Or upper intermediate	Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced	Mastery or proficiency
Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning.	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.	Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.	Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.	Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.	Can express him/herself spontaneously , very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
		Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans		Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	

2.4 HISTORY OF THE ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

During the last years have existed many efforts for testing foreign language proficiency, and such efforts were focused with particular emphasis on the evaluation of oral proficiency, because proficiency testing recognizes the importance of oral communication. Today the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines have a strong effect on the content and the teaching methodology of many foreign language courses. These guidelines are used to evaluate foreign language proficiency of teachers in a number of countries, and they have been accepted as a standard measure to evaluate candidates' suitability for various purposes such as: Academic placement, student assessment, program evaluation, professional certification, hiring and promotional qualification.

ACTFL stands for American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. It is an organization dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction. This organization has more than 9,000 foreign language educators from different countries around the world. Its main goal, when was first founded, was to design standards that could help educators to facilitate and empower the teaching-learning experience.

Those Standards provide a clear direction in the classroom and good evidence that students are learning what is expected by design rather than by accident. ACTFL

is now synonym of innovation, quality, and reliability in meeting the changing needs of foreign educators and their students. In November 1982, the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guideline was the first attempt by the foreign language teaching profession to define and describe levels of functional competence for the academic context.

The history of the development of these guidelines has been outlined by Liskin-Gasparro (1984), who traces the "quest of proficiency" from its antecedents in the ancient world to the modern conceptualizations of the 1970's (p. 13). It was during this decade that a convergence of events led to a series of projects that would give birth to a significant new movement in language education (p. 13). Prior to the development of the ACTFL, many instructors and curriculum specialists had attempted to set goals and define outcomes for language learning to improve communication in the teaching learning process.

However, by the late 1970's it was becoming increasingly clear that the focus of curricular planning and testing would need to shift from a micro-analysis of what was being *taught* to a macro-analysis of what students could actually do with the language before any real progress could be made (Scebold 1992). According to Paul Simon, a congressman from Illinois, with the help of language professional organization, He pointed out that it was urgent to establish a special presidential commission to excellence the educational standards. This initiative was supported by

the President Jimmy Carter and, by April 1978, the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies was formed. Due to this, the academic community was ready to look for some consensus on defining more clearly proficiency standards for second language programs. The projects that were developed for professionals educators brought as outcome the proficiency guidelines.

The ACTFL proficiency guidelines main goal is to define and measure language ability in the four major skills when learning a foreign language: speaking, listening, writing and reading. By the 1950's, the Foreign Service Institute of the United States developed a scale in order to describe and measure the speaking abilities of candidates for Foreign Service positions. In addition to the proficiency scale, during the 1970's the Foreign Service Institute had created an interview- based evaluation procedure which was known as the *Common Yardstick*. The outcome for this project was an adoption of the government scale, known by then as the IRL (Interagency Language Roundtable) Scale. Such scale involved an expansion of the lower levels to allow greater precision in describing proficiency.

The Common Yardstick project was continued in 1981 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and other associations under a grant entitled "A Design for Measuring and communicating foreign language proficiency". By 1981 the ACTFL executive council targeted language proficiency as one of the organization's priority areas. By 1989, the ACTFL Oral proficiency Interview Tester

Training Manual presented the Inverted Pyramid which intended to explain the development of the proficiency levels of a foreign language learner. The ACTFL, Oral Proficiency Guidelines describe five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The major levels are: Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice which are divided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels."(American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, proficiency guidelines, 2012).

2.4.1. ACTFL PARAMETERS

The ACTFL originally categorized three parameters or assessment criteria in order to evaluate interviewee's performance, but more recently these parameters were expanded to five, and they are: Functions, context, content, accuracy and text type. Consistent with the ACTFL:

- **Functions:** Refers to the speaker's ability to list, enumerate, ask questions, communicate information, conduct conversation, describe and narrate in major time and aspect frames, compare, abstract, express opinions and support them, hypothesize.

- **Context:** Refers to circumstances or settings in which language is used, starting from highly predictable common daily settings for the

novice, through informal settings at the intermediate level, informal settings and some formal ones at the advanced level, to most formal and informal settings, including unpredictable change in setting, at the superior level.

- **Content:** Refers to the subject matter which the interviewee is expected to talk about, write about, and understand. For example it can include common discrete elements of daily life at the novice level, self and immediate environment at the intermediate level, and concrete and factual topics of personal and public interest at the advanced level, and a wide range of general interest topics and some special field of interest and expertise, including concrete, abstract and unfamiliar topics, at the superior level.

- **Accuracy:** It refers to the acceptability, quality and precision of the message contained, including the sub-areas such as: Fluency, grammar which includes the averages of morphology and syntax, pragmatic competence which is the ability to use discourse devices and to compensate for imperfect control of the language, pronunciation, sociolinguistic competence which includes appropriate use of register, cultural references, idioms and vocabulary.

- **Text type:** Refers to the quantity and organizational aspects of speech produced by the interviewee from single words and phrases at the novice level, to sentences at the intermediate level.

According to previous research, these parameters are essential for two reasons, one is to allow for deviation from the generic evaluation procedure so as to accommodate individual features of particular languages; the other is to provide the tester with a sufficient number of specific clues, so as to minimize variation in tester interpretation about the applicant. This claim seems to be supported by Thompson, Thompson and Hiple (1987).

These Guidelines can be used to evaluate speech that is either Interpersonal (interactive, two-way communication) or Presentational (one-way, non-interactive). According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the oral proficiency guidelines may be used for non-profit, educational purposes only, provided that they are reproduced in their entirety, with no alterations, and with credit to ACTFL.

The ACTFL rating scales are describing in the next chart:

2.4.2. ACTFL REFERENCE LEVELS

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">NOVICE</td><td>HIGH</td><td>ACTFL REFERENCE LEVELS

Speakers at the Novice High sublevel are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level. They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects, and a limited number of activities, preferences, and immediate needs. Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few formulaic questions.

Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombination of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their language consists primarily of short and sometimes incomplete sentences in the present, and may be hesitant or inaccurate. On the other hand, since their language often consists of expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes sound surprisingly fluent and accurate. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax may be strongly influenced by the first language. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but, with repetition or rephrasing, Novice High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors used to non-natives. When called on to handle a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the Intermediate level, a Novice High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence-level discourse</td></tr>
<tr><td>MID</td><td>Speakers at the Novice Mid sublevel communicate minimally by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may say only two or three words at a time or give an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor's words. Novice Mid speakers may be understood with difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics and perform functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence.</td></tr>
</table>

	LOW	Speakers at the Novice Low sublevel have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

| | HIGH | **ACTFL REFERENCES LEVELS**

Intermediate High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with the routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to their work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence.

Intermediate High speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. Intermediate High speakers can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length, but not all the time. Typically, when Intermediate High speakers attempt to perform Advanced-level tasks, their speech exhibits one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to carry out fully the narration or description in the appropriate major time frame, an inability to maintain paragraph-length discourse, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary. Intermediate High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident (e.g., use of code-switching, false cognates, literal transla-tions), and a pattern of gaps in communication may occur. |
| **INTERMEDIATE** | MID | Speakers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture. These include personal information related to self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel, and lodging. Speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices, and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using |

		communicative strategies, such as circumlocution.
		Intermediate Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to produce responses typically consisting of sentences and strings of sentences. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations, and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. In spite of the limitations in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, Intermediate Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. Overall, Intermediate Mid speakers are at ease when performing Intermediate-level tasks and do so with significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language.
	LOW	Speakers at the Novice Low sublevel have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

ADVANCED	**HIGH**	**ACTFL REFERENCE LEVELS** Speakers at the Advanced High sublevel perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence. They are consistently able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They may provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely. Advanced High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics,

		their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.
	MID	Speakers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance. Advanced Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future by providing a full account, with good control of aspect. Narration and description tend to be combined and interwoven to relate relevant and supporting facts in connected, paragraph-length discourse. Advanced Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. Communicative strategies such as circumlocution or rephrasing are often employed for this purpose. The speech of Advanced Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Their discourse may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language. Advanced Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline.
		Speakers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities. They can also speak about some topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest. Advanced Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be

	LOW	handled separately rather than interwoven. They can handle appropriately the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events. Responses produced by Advanced Low speakers are typically not longer than a single paragraph. The speaker's dominant language may be evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times their discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More generally, the performance of Advanced Low speakers tends to be uneven. Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution. Advanced Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may require some repetition or restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

SUPERIOR	**ACTFL REFERENCE LEVEL** Speakers at the Superior level are able to communicate with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They discuss their interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy. They present their opinions on a number of issues of interest to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured arguments to support these opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities. When appropriate, these speakers use extended discourse without unnaturally lengthy hesitation to make their point, even when engaged in abstract elaborations. Such discourse, while coherent, may still be influenced by language patterns other than those of the target language. Superior-level speakers employ a variety of interactive and discourse strategies, such as turn-taking and separating main ideas from supporting information through the use of syntactic, lexical, and phonetic devices. Speakers at the Superior level demonstrate no pattern of error in the use of basic structures, although they may make sporadic errors, particularly in low-frequency structures and in complex high-frequency structures. Such errors, if they do occur, do not distract the native interlocutor or interfere with communication.

DISTINGUISHED	**ACTFL REFERENCE LEVEL** Speakers at the Distinguished level are able to use language skillfully, and with accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness. They are educated and articulate users of the language. They can reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner. Distinguished-level speakers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse for representational purposes, allowing them to advocate a point of view that is not necessarily their own. They can tailor language to a variety of audiences by adapting their speech and register in ways that are culturally authentic. Speakers at the Distinguished level produce highly sophisticated and tightly organized extended discourse. At the same time, they can speak succinctly, often using cultural and historical references to allow them to say less and mean more. At this level, oral discourse typically resembles written discourse. A non-native accent, a lack of a native-like economy of expression, a limited control of deeply embedded cultural references, and/or an occasional isolated language error may still be present at this level.

2.5. INSTRUMENTS FOR TESTING ORAL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

2.5.1 Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)

The ACTFL proficiency guidelines present the assessment criteria for speaking proficiency tests. These criteria are interrelated with the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). According to Buck, Byrnes and Thompson (1989) "It addresses a number of abilities simultaneously and looks at them from a global perspective rather than from a point of view of the presence or absence of any given linguistic feature" .

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) is a standardized procedure for the Global Assessment of functional speaking ability, or oral proficiency, ACTFL Inc 1989. This is a globally used instrument due to the fact that it measures the language production by identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses that eventually lead to the establishment of the speaker's level of consistent functional ability as well as the clear limitations of that ability. There are four categories of assessment criteria: The global tasks or functions performed with the language; the social context, which are the areas where the language can be used; the accuracy features which define how well the speaker performs the task and the oral text types, from individual words to extended discourse.

Oral proficiency test is one of the most important and difficult instruments to prepare administer and evaluate, so "Oral English proficiency is a degree or level of a person´s control of a skill of the foreign language at a particular time". (Mary Finocchiano and Sidney Sako 1983). This skill is tested through Oral presentations, Oral interviews and Oral performance; those instruments have their own advantages, disadvantages and different criterion by the time of being administered to students.

In this assessment it is not important how the speaker learned the language, instead, the OPI measures the speaker's ability to use the language in real-life situations, the OPI is not something that the speaker will be prepared for. The OPI form might take from 10 to 30 minutes recorded conversation between a trained interviewer and the speaker, whose oral proficiency is being assessed. The OPI however needs to be developed as a natural conversation. There are two aspects involved in the ACTFL, OPI. The Elicitation, which is the mandatory four-phases structure of the OPI; Warm-up, level check, probes, wind-down; and Rating, which is a two- step ongoing process during the OPI and at the conclusion of it when the interviewer listens to the recording to assign a final rating. In each stage, the Speech is first compared to the criteria for each major level (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior) of the rating scale and then assigned a sub level rating (Low, Mid, High) by comparing the Interview with the descriptions in the ACTFL Guidelines.

During the interview, both steps need to be taken into account, because we cannot rate without proper elicitation, and we cannot have an elicitation without rating, so the speaker's oral proficiency must be continuously evaluated during the OPI itself. Although this preliminary process must take place during the interview, a final rate can't be assigned until the conversation is finished. This gives the interviewer an opportunity to concentrate in assigning the correct rating. Ideally, the recording only reconfirms what the interviewer slightly assesses during the OPI.

The measurement of the OPI's structure is standardized, but since it needs to be developed as a natural conversation its context is basically unique for each interview and the interviewee responses about individual background, life experiences, interests and opinions. The OPI is individual-criterion referenced, meaning that the results got from an interview are not to be compared with performances of other speakers. Although the OPI is not a fixed series of questions, the prescribed structure is the same used OPI and it mainly reflects the functional language skills as they exist at the moment. One reflection of this goal is that the rating is based on determining a level of performance which the speaker can consistently maintain during the interview.

The OPI is used to predict speaker's performance in a situation where a particular level of functional language is required, such as a job, language class or the country where the language is spoken. It can be used for diagnostic placement,

evaluation and research purposes since is both, time and labor intensive, the applications may be limited when dealing with larger number of speakers. The ability to assess oral language use depends on the existence of criteria by which use can be judged, the simplest form of assessment is one which indicates that one speaker uses language differently from another.

The Oral Proficiency Interview is an integrative test; it addresses a number of abilities simultaneously and looks at them from a global perspective rather than from the point of view of the presence or absence of any given linguistic feature. Linguistic components are viewed from the wider perspective of their contribution to overall speaking performance.

2.5.2. Oral presentation

Oral presentation is an oral activity where the candidate is asked to master in a given topic. This test is performed individually, in pairs or in groups depending on the number of people, available time, setting topics and objectives.

For the candidates, this technique has a lot of advantages; for example, they have time to organize this in terms of content domain, conveying of ideas, use of resources and answering questions, and get ready with vocabulary. Another advantage is that it saves time in large groups. This conclusion was according to teachers from the FLD in charge of intermediate Intensive English. (Aguilar Morejon, Miriam, 2008, Analysis of individual oral instruments for testing oral proficiency)

There are some constraints that affect seriously the development and result of the oral presentation, for instance the ongoing noise and the inappropriate conditions in the place where the oral presentation is going to be developed. Another disadvantage is when the presentation is being held in groups, that is, that the evaluator can get lost if she/ he does not know the member of the group performing the oral presentation.

This oral instrument does not only involve passing to the front to speak about a topic, but it also demands other activities such as: debates, speeches, monologues, panel discussion and oral reports which the evaluators affirm they apply to measure English proficiency.

2.5.3. Oral Interview

The oral interview is an oral conversation, in which the evaluator examines the speaking ability, by asking the interviewee to answer open-closed questions: It is mostly an individual test where the candidate interacts face to face with the evaluator. As the previous test, this oral instrument has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Some advantages are: The results are more accurate because they are gotten individually, the candidate feels more comfortable, because they are in front of only one person. The evaluator can assign a determined time for the evaluation, and be flexible helping students by guiding through the interview; however there are some

disadvantages such as: The candidate can feel under pressure, anxious, nervous and afraid.

Some difficulties of this oral instrument are: It is time consuming, so that it works only in reduced groups; it can become a simple questions and answers guide, for that reason the evaluator should be prepared with a guide of about 10- 20 items which must contains the general information. However, despite all difficulties, an oral interview keeps being an excellent method to test accurately students' oral proficiency level.

2.5.4. Oral Performance

An oral performance is the verbal behavior of a speaker which can be represented in dramas, role plays, debates and storytelling. For instance, they can use different settings, characters and sceneries applied to a creative context in real spoken language using gestures, mimics, pictures and costumes allowing the candidates to explore their abilities at acting and creativity. This kind of oral instrument is productive with outgoing personalities. There can be some disadvantages, for example it is time consuming, it requires enough space and extra material from the candidates, and it does not work with shy candidates (Harold S. Madsen. 1983). It can also represent a challenge for the evaluator, since it takes more concentration to grade two or more students acting at the same time and measure the English level of each examinee can be a somewhat complicated.

3.5.5 The Computerized Oral Proficiency Instrument

The Computerized Oral Proficiency Instrument *(COPI)* is a computer-adaptive oral proficiency test for postsecondary students administered via CD-ROM. Its design stems from the ACTFL OPI and from CAL's *Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI),* a tape-mediated assessment. From 1998 to 2000, CAL conducted a study to determine the feasibility of a computer-administered oral proficiency test (Kenyon & Malabonga, 2001). This study confirmed that the *COPI* could reliably elicit language from examinees and produce results comparable to those elicited from the ACTFL OPI and CAL *SOPI* (Kenyon & Malabonga, 2001). The *COPI* design capitalizes on the strengths of technology. Test takers are able to control a great deal of the test, including how much time they take to plan and give their responses.

Based on the feasibility study, CAL received funding to operationalize the *COPI* so that it can be used by language programs. *COPI* tasks have been evaluated and revised based on feedback from the feasibility study. During 2007, the new version of the *COPI,* available in Arabic and Spanish, will be field-tested with examinees in both languages. The field test will provide information on the *COPI's* reliability. Following the field test, CAL will develop rating procedures for the *COPIs following* the field test, CAL will develop rating procedures for the *COPI* via distance-learning technologies.

The *COPI* reflects the need for versatile applications of technology to oral proficiency testing. The CD-ROM technology will enable programs to assess large numbers of students simultaneously in a cost-efficient manner, and digitized responses can be easily transferred to raters. Rating time for the *COPI* is three times faster than for the *SOPI* (Malabonga, Kenyon, & Carpenter, 2005). This will provide a cost-efficient scoring program, as raters are not needed to administer the exam individually and can score the responses at a later date.

3.5.6. The Computer-Assisted Screening Tool

The Computer Assisted Screening Tool (CAST) Framework investigated the characteristics of oral proficiency tasks that best elicit oral proficiency samples from test takers. This project involved a consortium of language testers from ACTFL, Brigham Young University, the Defense Language Institute, and San Diego State University. By examining more than 50 examinees' responses to the Arabic and Spanish OPI, *SOPI,* and *COPI,* researchers at CAL determined the characteristics of oral proficiency tasks that most efficiently elicit responses from test takers. The results have been compiled into a framework, or description, of the characteristics of optimal oral proficiency assessment tasks.

During the CAST project, ACTFL-certified OPI testers reviewed and rated hundreds of samples from OPIs, *SOPIs,* and *COPIs* in Arabic and Spanish. Raters evaluated the tasks and responses to determine whether each task elicited the

appropriate level of speech. CAL staff analyzed the data and wrote item specifications for task development for level-specific tests at each of the four ACTFL levels (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior). Based on these task specifications, partners at San Diego State University developed Web-delivered tests of Arabic and Spanish. These tests were piloted during 2006.

3.5.7 BEST PLUS

BEST PLUS is a computer-adaptive assessment on CD that is administered as a face-to-face oral interview. The computer prompts the test administrator to ask specific questions that appear on the computer screen. After listening to the examinee's answer, the administrator rates the response. The computer then uses that information to choose the next test question. This computer-adaptive test combines a face-to-face approach to testing with the ease of computerized administration and scoring. This means that the test questions are generated based on the test administrators' ratings as the interview progresses.

All these instruments have been used and proved worldwide by examines and teachers use them. And there is no doubt that they provide valid and reliable results to those who use them whether they are teachers of English evaluators from prestigious companies such as the English Academies from this research.

2.6. GLOSSARY

❖ **Oral proficiency:** Implies having the ability to use the linguistics knowledge to new contexts and situations and at the same time communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language (Omaggio, 1986).

❖ **Initial Interview**: Conducted by the company human resources department, outsourcing or recruitment staff to test the oral skills, attitude and how confident the applicant responds to the questions.

❖ **Communicative competence:** It may be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input of one or more interlocutors. (Sandra Savignon).

❖ **ACTFL Guidelines:** Were designed to describe learners' "functional competency, that is, their ability to accomplish linguistic tasks representing a variety of levels" Breiner-Sanders, Lowe, Miles, and Swender (2000)

❖ **The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)**: Is a standardized procedure for the Global Assessment of functional speaking ability, or oral proficiency, ACTFL Inc 1989.

❖ **Competence:** The ability of an individual to perform a job properly, it is also related with the knowledge and skills that enable a person to act effectively in a wide variety of situations.

❖ **Proficiency***:* Mastery of a specific behavior or skill demonstrated by consistently superior performance, measured against established or popular standards.

❖ **The Oral Proficiency Test**: Is an assessment of your overall ability to communicate in your second language in both professional and social settings. This assessment is carried out by way of a 20 to 40 minute conversation with an evaluator. The conversation is recorded for record-keeping purposes.

❖ **Language proficiency:** Is not a monolithic concept representing an amorphous ideal that learners rarely attain; rather it is comprised of a whole range of abilities that must be described in a graduated fashion to be meaningful" Omaggio Hadley (2001, pp. 8–9).

❖ **Global proficiency:** the ability to function within specific contexts in the TL with a certain level of grammatical accuracy.

❖ **The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (** **CEFR):** Is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other country (Council of Europe,2011)

❖ **Acquisition:** Is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching. It happens in natural setting that are meaningful and functional in the senses that acquirers know that they need to

acquire the thing they are exposed to in order to function and that they in fact

want to so function. (Gee, 1992).

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the research methodology of the study, including the research design, setting, population, sample and data-collection instrument.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Polit and Hungler (1999:155) describe the research design as a blueprint, or outline, for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results. The research design is the researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions guiding the study. Burns and Grove (2001:223) state that designing a study helps researchers to plan and implement the study in a way that will help them obtain the intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation.

This study was developed to identify, analyze and describe factors regarding to the selection process that some of the most prestigious private English academies in San Salvador, El Salvador follow to hire or not a teacher, based on the oral proficiency level of the applicants. Due to the nature of the study a qualitative exploratory descriptive design was implemented for that purpose.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a method of investigation that includes patient interviews and detailed case studies (Elsevier 2005). This study qualified factors considered by private English academies regarding to oral proficiency when hiring new teachers. Since the research was descriptive explorative it dealt with phenomena that were difficult or impossible to quantify mathematically, such as beliefs, meanings, attributes, and symbols. Since it involved content analysis and no numbers, qualitative research was used.

Characteristics of qualitative research

According to (Chenail, R.J. 1995) Qualitative research has the following characteristics:

1. Qualitative data

• Data are collected in the form of words, rather than numbers.

2. Naturalistic inquiry

• Non-manipulative and unconstructive.

3. Researcher as the key instrument

• Researcher's personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry.

4. Concerned with process.

• Researchers are interested in how things occur. Also, they assume change is ongoing.

5. Inductive reasoning for data analysis

• Researchers explore open questions, rather than testing hypothesis.

6. Context sensitivity

• Places findings in a social, historical, and temporal context.

Exploratory descriptive design

The study explored factors contributing to the selection process that some of the most prestigious private English academies in San Salvador, El Salvador follow to hire a teacher or not, based on the oral proficiency level of the applicants. Exploratory research studies what has not previously been studied and attempts to identify new knowledge, new insights, new understandings, and new meanings and to explore factors related to the topic (Brink & Wood 1998:312; Brink 1996:11).

The research design was exploratory because it meets the criteria described by Polit and Hungler (1999:17), namely that this research attempted to investigate the full nature of the phenomenon and the manner in which it becomes manifested as well as related factors that could influence these procedures. Results of exploratory studies are not necessarily generalizable to a larger population but provide a better

understanding of the sample being examined (Burns & Grove 1999:296). The research provided an overall view of the selection process, the level of oral proficiency demanded and the rate scale used by each studied institution in order to provide our colleagues with the key tools to succeed when applying for a job position in the work environment of private English Academies.

Exploratory research examines the relevant factors in detail to arrive at an appropriate description of the reality of the existing situation (Brink & Wood 1998:283-286). Descriptive research provides an accurate account of characteristics of a particular individual, event or group in real-life situations (Polit & Hungler 1999:189). A descriptive design may be used for the purpose of developing theory, identifying problems with current practice, justifying current practice, making judgments, or determining what others in similar situations are doing (Waltz & Bausell 1981:7). The purpose of a descriptive design is to provide the perceptions and views of the respondents about the phenomenon studied (Burns & Grove 1993:293). This study attempted to identify and describe factors about the hiring selection process of teachers that private English academies follows in relation to Oral Proficiency. It provides the perception of the teachers about their hiring process as well as the explanation of the process provided by each academy coordinator.

Characteristics of an exploratory descriptive research design

According to Uys and Basson (1991:38), an exploratory descriptive research design has the following characteristics

• It is a flexible research design that provides an opportunity to examine all aspects of the problem being studied.

• It strives to develop new knowledge.

• The data may lead to suggestions of hypotheses for future studies.

• It is usually a field studied in a natural setting.

RESEARCH SETTING

The research setting refers to the place where the data is collected. In this study, the information was collected at four different private English academies already mentioned in the delimitation of the study.

RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Polit and Hungler (1999:43, 232) define a population as the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results can be generalized. LoBiondo-Wood and Haber (1998:250) describe a sample as a portion or

a subset of the research population selected to participate in a study, representing the research population.

Population

The research population for this study comprised people who learned English as a Second Language and are currently working at English academies as well as the coordinators of each institution. Eligibility criteria specify the characteristics that people in the population must possess in order to be included in the study (Polit & Hungler 1999:278). In this study, the participants were only English speakers that learnt the language as a second language; they could be either English speakers or professionals with a degree on language.

Sample

Non-probability or convenient sampling was used. The subjects were selected according to their English language background. Only English speakers as a second language participated. Since the research dealt with different amounts of teachers in each institution, they were selected according to their schedule availability. De Vos (1998:191) states that convenience sampling is the rational choice in cases where it is impossible to identify all the members of a population. Consequently, there was not a sampling frame from which a sample could have been drawn randomly to ensure that

every teacher was included in the sample. Hence the researcher used non-probability or convenience sampling.

Since a total of five teaches were chosen from each of the four participant institutions, thirty participants collaborated within the individual interview about their selection process and the type of evaluation they were asked to complete in order to be hired in the English academy they work for. The Focus Groups were as well developed in each institution. From each Academy the coordinator facilitated the information regarding to the selection process and the oral proficiency rating procedures they follow while interviewing a candidate for the position. To gather this information with the coordinators, the instrument used with them was a key informant interview.

Characteristics of non-probability sampling

Brink (1996:134-135), Brink and Wood (1994:135-138), Burns and Grove (1999:238) and Welman and Kruger (1999:61-62) point out the following characteristics of non-probability sampling:

• Every person who meets the criteria is asked to participate. In this study, for example, all the teachers that are available on a specific schedule previously arranged with the academy coordinator.

• It is a less complicated and more economical procedure than random sampling.

• The researcher's judgment is used to select individual subjects who meet the eligibility criteria.

DATA COLLECTION

Polit and Hungler (1999:267) define data as "information obtained during the course of an investigation or study". In this study, two types of interviews (an individual interview and a key informant interview) and a focus group were administrated to obtain the information relevant to the study's objectives and research questions. The purpose of the study was to provide an overall view of the selection process, the level of oral proficiency demanded and the rate scale used by private English Academies when hiring a new teacher. Every participant academy received a letter from the university asking for permission to develop the investigation. The participants were chosen from a meeting previously organized by the coordinators of each institution for us to handle the questionnaires and develop the focus groups.

Data collection instrument

Data collection instruments refer to devices used to collect data such as questionnaires, tests, structured interview schedules and checklists (Seaman 1991:42). Due to the type of research, interviews and focus groups were administrated to gather the information. Interviewing is a way to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from Individuals (Kvale 1996, p. 14).

- **Interviews**

Interviews are ways for participants to get involved and talk about their views. In addition, the interviewees are able to discuss their perception and interpretation in regards to a given situation. It is their expression from their point of view. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 267) explain " the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human attached is inescapable."

There are many reasons to use interviews for collecting data and using it as a research instrument. Gray (2004, p. 214) has given the following reasons:

• There is a need to attain highly personalized data.

• There are opportunities required for probing.

• A good return rate is important.

Characteristics of an Interview

According to Patton, MQ.(2001)Though all qualitative interviews contain the same basic elements of discussion, detail, and description, they vary with respect to how much control the interviewer has over the informant's answers. According to this the interviews are classified in:

Unstructured Interviews

They are useful for explanatory investigations of new topics and ideas, or when the topic is not well known. The goal is to permit to the informants to express themselves freely with minimal control, in order to gain the most information possible.

Semi-structured Interviews

In contrast to unstructured interviews, a semi-structured interview is more controlled by the interviewer. Instead of a checklist, interviewers work from a script of proscribed questions, called an "interview guide," which sometimes has prompts that allow for limited flexibility. The interview guide allows the interviewer room to follow new leads while also demonstrating that she or he is prepared and has the situation under control.

Structured Interviews

In this type of interview, carefully and fully worded questions are developed before the interview is conducted. Each informant gets asked the same questions in the same way with the same probes. Structured interviews facilitate cross-comparison of answers across time and can compensate for variability in research skills across different interviewers.

Structured interviews are best used when a lot of information about the topic is already known, perhaps collected via previous open-ended interviews. The weakness of the standardized approach inherent to structured interviews is that it does not permit the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that were not anticipated when the interview instrument was written. Structured interviews also reduce the extent to which individual circumstances and differences can be explored.

Key Informants

Key informants are people who have much knowledge about their culture and are often well connected within their communities. The term "key informant" does not mean the same thing as "educated person" or "authoritative official." In fact, the best key informants may not be persons of authority at all, but rather unofficial experts who know what's really going on.

Other Informants

Other informants are selected for interviews because they represent in some way a larger group of individuals the interviewer is trying to understand.

Development of the Interview

In order to gather the data for the investigation two different types of interviews were administrated. Interviews vary with respect to how much control the

interviewer has over the informant's answers. The interviews used in this research are classified in: Unstructured and semi-structured.

Depending on the type of informant it is the type of interview that is going to be managed. The research included two types of informants: other informants and key informants. For Other Informants, an individual unstructured interview style was addressed. This way the informants were able to express themselves and to provide the most information as possible. The Individual Interview is an instrument used to explore in a more specific manner the subjective knowledge, personal opinions and beliefs on an individual.

The individual unstructured interview (other informants)

It was based on previous studies done about oral proficiency evaluations and the theoretical framework. It consisted of seventeen open-ended questions. This instrument was addressed to teachers that work in private English academies regardless the level they were teaching. What was considered as a must was that all the participants in this type of interview must have learnt English as a second language. The teachers who participated were provided by the academies on a specific day in order for us to gather the information and for them not to be affected in their academicals responsibilities.

The interview questions for other informants were about their selection process, the steps they followed to be hired, the type of interviews, evaluations taken

and their knowledge about Oral Proficiency evaluations and rating scales. This way the research provided the way employees see the hiring process.

The individual semi-structured interview (key informants)

For this type of instruments the researchers worked with coordinators since they are the ones who possess access and knowledge of the information regarding to the type of evaluation used and the rate scale the academy base on to measure the level of English Oral Proficiency of the applicant, they were considered as key informants. The type of interview was individual and a semi-structured interview. It consisted of eighteen questions divided in four sections regarding to the evaluation, rating of the oral proficiency of the applicants and the hiring process. This interview with the key informants provided a detailed explanation about each step of the hiring process, according to the coordinators' point of view.

- **Focus Group**

    A focus group is a qualitative data collection method in which one or two researchers and several participants meet as a group to discuss a given research topic. These sessions are usually tape recorded, and sometimes videotaped. One researcher (the moderator) leads the discussion by asking participants to respond to open-ended questions – that is, questions that require an in-depth response rather than a single phrase or simple "yes" or "no" answer.

A second researcher (the note-taker) takes detailed notes on the discussion. A principal advantage of focus groups is that they yield a large amount of information over a relatively short period of time. They are also effective for accessing a broad range of views on a specific topic, as opposed to achieving group consensus. Focus groups are not the best method for acquiring information on highly personal or socially sensitive topics; one-on-one interviews are better-suited for such topics. Mack, Woodsong, Kathleen M, Guest and Namey (2005).

Characteristics of a Focus Group

A focus group could be defined as a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interactions as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue Seymour (2004).

According to Seymour (2004) a focus group has the following characteristics:

1. **Group Size**

The research on focus groups generally recommends six to twelve participants as optimum for impact. The larger the size of the group; the more difficult the group interactions are to manage.

2. Length of Group Discussion

Most focus groups encompass 90 minutes to three hours of discussion. If focus group sessions are longer, it is necessary to build in breaks to allow participants time to relax and refresh.

3. Group Participants

In traditional focus groups, participants are randomly chosen in a manner that seeks homogeneity among participants, in order to elicit opinions from a "like" representative group. Depending upon the focus group goals, sponsors may wish to:

- Seek complete homogeneity in participants.

- Seek variety in participants based upon how their backgrounds, insights, perspectives and diversity by culture, gender and geography will contribute to goals and outcomes.

- Conduct simultaneous focus groups where two different groups of participants respond to the same discussion guide questions, then are brought together to share responses and provide further opportunities for a combined group discussion.

A decision to participate in a focus group sometimes dependent upon whether or not strict confidentiality is offered to all participants, focus group sponsors should be clear about confidentiality guidelines and restrictions, and document such restrictions in writing.

Development of the Focus Group

A total of five teachers were gathered in a meeting room per academy to develop the focus groups. The time allowed by the academies with the teachers was half an hour. The instrument consisted of twenty-one questions regarding participant beliefs and knowledge toward Oral Proficiency, English academies' evaluation methods and rating scales. This focus group provided a group perspective of the hiring process, evaluations taken and the impact of the level of oral proficiency when applying to work in a private English Academy. Besides that, it included information about their English learning background and some of the different things they did to achieve the Oral Proficiency they have.

Reliability of the research instrument

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency or accuracy with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure (Polit & Hungler 1997:296; Uys & Basson 1991:75). If a study and its results are reliable, it means that the same results would be obtained if the study were to be replicated by other researchers using the same method. A pretest in one of the participant academies with similar characteristics to the study sample was conducted to determine the clarity of the items and consistency of the responses. This way the instrument warrantee that it measures what it is intended to.

Validity

The validity of an instrument is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Polit & Hungler 1993:448). Content validity refers to the extent to which an instrument represents the factors under study. (Polit & Hungler 1993:250). To achieve content validity, questionnaires included a variety of questions on the knowledge and information about the hiring process and oral proficiency evaluations and rate scales.

Questions were based on information gathered during the theoretical framework and previous studies analysis to ensure that they were representative of what the hiring process, oral proficiency evaluation and rating scales used by private English academies to hire their teachers. Content validity was further ensured by consistency in administering the questionnaires. All questionnaires were distributed to subjects by the researcher personally. The questions were formulated in simple language for clarity and ease of understanding and clear instructions were given to the subjects.

All the subjects completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. This was done to prevent subjects from giving questionnaires to other people to complete on their behalf. Rephrasing of some questions was done to clarify the questions and more appropriate alternative response choices were added to provide meaningful information for analysis (Burns & Grove 1993:373).

Some of the academies selected to participate declined the request. However, with the information gathered from the subjects who agreed to participate it was possible to present an overall view of the selecting process the academies follow to hire their teachers individually.

PRETESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A pretest refers to a trial administration of an instrument to identify flaws. When a questionnaire is used as a data gathering instrument, it is necessary to determine whether questions and directions are clear to subjects and whether they understand what is required from them. This is referred to as the pretesting of a questionnaire (Polit & Hungler 1995:38, 711).

The researchers pretested the questionnaire on another private English academy that was not taken into consideration for the study. Five teachers were selected as well as the coordinator. This pretest clarified some gaps founded on the instruments. After the pre-test, the changes were applied to the instruments.

CHAPTER 3

IX Findings

In this chapter, the data was analyzed using the results obtained from the different instruments: One Key Informant, in order to have access to more confidential administrative information about the hiring process in the different English academies. As well, the Focus Group, completed with a total of 5 participants in each English Academy, currently working at different academies in our country involving: CENIUES, ITEXSAL SCHOOL, CENTRO CULTURAL, RICALDONE.

And finally, the individual interview, completed with the contribution of five participants to gather information about the hiring process.

The analysis followed the same structure as the research questions. To begin with, each question was answered individually. In the end, a general conclusion linking common patterns is presented.

- **Oral Proficiency level required by English academies in our country**

Oral proficiency is the main factor a candidate has to fulfill, when applying to an English academy. Coordinators look for the ability to communicate ideas in a fluent way, in order to be understood in the topics that the teachers are going to teach, the coordinators take care of measuring the candidate's English oral proficiency.

According to Ommagio, a high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations. So the English coordinators measure the English oral proficiency of the candidates by evaluating some main aspects like intonation, grammar, pronunciation, listening, fluency, ability to perform a class etc. They measure the oral proficiency through a personal interview, a multimedia program, and a written exam; in this way those English academies evaluate and determine the level of English.

Every English academy has created their own scale to determine the oral proficiency level a candidate performs. This is mainly based in the English academies requirements depending on their needs. The advanced is the English level that an English academy requests from the candidate to be ready to get the job. The percentage or level assessed to a candidate is given by a personal interview.

According to Lic. Guadalupe Martinez (English coordinator), CENIUES mentioned " I can say that oral proficiency is also one key aspect that we consider in a candidate" In most of the English academies interview is an important stage, because in this stage they detect if the English oral proficiency level is the one they were looking for. According to Lic. Maria Eugenia Rodriguez (English coordinator) Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano Mentioned "If the teacher doesn't have the language proficiency that's it, the process doesn't continue"

Since the majority of the coordinators have a major in English teaching, they are able to know when a candidate is competent to fulfill the oral proficiency level the English academy is looking for. This research showed the main English academies in our country; do not use any international guideline such as the Common European Framework or the ACTF, but instead they have created their own instruments according to their needs.

As a result of this investigation, this research have found out that the Oral Proficiency level demanded by the main English academies in our country ranges from advanced to superior level, (measured with their own guidelines created by the different academies for speaking), meaning that the English academies teachers are able to communicate and teach in an effective way in the English classes.

According to the ACTFL guidelines the advanced speaker is able to discuss concrete topics to particular interests and special fields of competence and can also support opinions, explain in detail and hypothesize. The Advanced level speaker shows fluency and eases of speech under demands at a complex level and can be understood without difficulty by different students. Advanced High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration.

On the other hand, according to the CEFR the advance level speakers express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. They can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Moreover they can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. They can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

On the other hand speakers at the Superior level are able to communicate with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They discuss their interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy. They present their opinions on a number of issues of interest to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured arguments to support these opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities.

So this research shows that English academies need to have teachers who are able to talk about different topics with the students by using different vocabulary. For

that reason English academies require teacher who has an advanced level or superior level.

The parameters used to determine the oral proficiency level by English academies

English coordinators look for the abilities to communicate information, conduct a conversation, describe, narrate different topics in different settings in a fluency way**.** So the parameters that English coordinators evaluate are: accuracy, text type, context, content and function, which are the 5 parameters of the ACTFL, even though they mention that they do not use any international scales, English coordinators take into account these parameters to measure the candidate´s oral proficiency during the interview.

These findings present that English academies use the ACTFL parameters in an unconscious way, because some of the English coordinator do not know about the ACTFL parameters, even though they described some of them through their answers.

- **Procedure followed by candidates to become a teacher in an English academy**

On the other hand, the hiring process is classified in different stages in each English academy. For instance, according to the data collection, English academies mention that for applying to their institution the first thing candidates need to do is

send their resumes. In this way, those academies look for previous studies, teaching experience, personal information and other studies (e,g. certifications from international institutions). After that, candidates have a personal interview, and in this interview the coordinators ask some questions to gather specific information from the candidate as well as to test his or her knowledge in the English language and methodology. Most of the teachers confirmed this when they mentioned that they followed to get the job included on interview and a written exam, as the coordinators said.

Furthermore, during the interview, the coordinator is able to perceive how competent the candidate is to communicate thoughts and or ideas in the language, if he or she uses appropriate word structure, if they answer in a correct way simple Yes/ No Questions, if their level of grammar, fluency, and pronunciation is high etc. Moreover, this interview allows the coordinator to know about the candidates´ skills and background such as family, work experience, studies and age, among others.

Finally the candidates take a proficiency test or a multimedia test. If the candidates are proved to be proficient after the interview and the test, he or she will be requested to start teaching in the level and category that the coordinator assigns to them.

Other factor that English academies require from candidates who want to work there.

According to English academy´s coordinators an outstanding oral proficiency is the most important key for applicants for being hired as a teacher, because it is the area in which English academies develop students. However, during the hiring process there are some other aspects taken into account to measure applicant's potential before being hired. These additional attitudes influence individuals performance during the hiring process, in which coordinators evaluate prospective teachers as a unique model for identifying successful profiles for effective future teachers, these individual's aspects of success are applied for every candidate and it can impact their results either positively or negatively. During the hiring process, coordinators look for some relevant aspects, such as: Personality, candidate´s future expectation, personal appearance, self-confidence, classroom management, tone of voice, the way a candidate speaks, the way a candidate sits. According to teachers´ answers, there are also some others important aspects that English´s coordinators take into account. And they are: Empathy, creativity, responsibility; which are related to personality.

Through the information gathered from the Focus Group, participants agreed that the personal interview is the most significant and important aspect during the hiring process, as it gives the interviewer a chance to measure candidates' oral proficiency level, self-confidence and personality. They concluded that besides the

oral proficiency, English coordinators evaluate other aspects, which are taken into account by the coordinators. They mention aspects such as: previous job experience, background studies, classroom management, likes and dislikes etc. Nevertheless, teachers stated that out of all these additional aspects monitored during the interview, the mastery of their oral skills was one of the most important aspects, because teachers are in charge of developing this skill in other people.

Why some candidates are employed by English academies while others are not.

Personality and tone of voice during the interview can typically describe an individual's behaviors towards people. This is helpful for the coordinator as they are always looking for positive personality types and qualities such as: willingness to help, self-confidence, patience, good relationships, values etc.

Most of the coordinators state that a candidate can have an excellent oral proficiency, but during the interview they can detect when a candidate is not really interesting in teaching the language or does not have the patience, or values that a teacher needs to have, as well if a candidate shows a lazy behavior. So, if the coordinators observe these negative attitudes they will probably decide not to take into account this type of people for working as a teacher in their English academies.

IX.CONCLUSIONS

English academies in El Salvador have become one of the main sources of job for graduates of the Foreign Language Department because of the growing quantity of people attending such academies with the purpose of learning this valuable language. English academies have provided many employments for English teachers, and even students who have not finished their major. Given the important role English academies play, it was decided that this research addressed the issue of the requirements that teachers are expected to fulfill in order to apply for a job in these academies, and more specifically the level of oral proficiency that is demanded by these institutions. In order to get reliable information, it was decided to take into account four English academies located in San Salvador and which are some of the most prestigious academies in our country. These academies were: Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano, Centro de Enseñanza de Idiomas Extranjeros CENIUES, ITEXSAL Language School, and Instituto Tecnico Ricaldone Language School.

The main purpose of this research was to find out the Oral Proficiency level demanded by Academies, which made it important to first establish what Oral Proficiency is. In accordance to theoretical bases, oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to new contexts (topics) and situations (Omaggio, 1986). English teachers are expected to develop this ability since they have to be able to talk about any topic that may come up in an English class, whether it is a basic, intermediate or advanced.

In order for an employer to find out if the candidate to be hired has the appropriate level of English, he has to establish a way to measure the applicant's speaking abilities. A speaker's oral proficiency level can be measured by using different scales or parameters; one of them is the Common European Framework of reference, abbreviated as CEFR. This is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages, across Europe and other countries (Council of Europe, 2011). Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing which applies to all languages in Europe as well as to set up systems of validation of language ability. Another important international guideline according to the theoretical bases is the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which have a strong effect on the content and the teaching methodology of many foreign language courses. These guidelines are used to evaluate foreign language proficiency of teachers in a number of countries, and they have been accepted as a standard measure to evaluate candidates' suitability for various purposes such as: Academic placement, student assessment, program evaluation, professional certification, hiring and promotional qualification. This research intended to find out the oral proficiency level required in English academies in San Salvador based on these international guidelines.

Through this investigation it was possible to establish that the main academies in El Salvador demand a level of English that allows their teachers to talk about any subject that might arise in a class setting, explain their points of view on a variety of topics without hesitation or influence of mother tongue, as well as to discuss articles,

programs or any type of material written or spoken in the target language. All these characteristics required by the English Academies correspond to the level advanced high of the ACTFL guidelines for Speaking, which means that the speaker is able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They may provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.

Such characteristics also match the description corresponding to the level B2 upper intermediate which describes its speaker as someone who is able to understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization and can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning.

It is important to mention that the fact that academies demand an advanced high (ACTFL) or the B2 (CERF)level could only be determined after comparing the data collected by the group with the tables describing each set of guidelines. The

group found out which characteristics and abilities employers look in their aspirants, and then analyzed how they matched the descriptions of each level of the international guidelines. This had to be done this way after realizing that English Academies do not use any international parameters to measure their candidates, but they create their own instruments according to their necessities. Some coordinators even claimed to be unaware of the fact that there were such guidelines. However, it was noted that the instruments created and used by each academy actually contain some domains of both ACTFL and CEFR guidelines.

According to the results, the procedure that English academies follow to hire teachers usually consists of two steps. The first one is an interview to evaluate the oral proficiency level. This interview is developed like a natural conversation; during the dialogue, the interviewer identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses that eventually lead to the establishment of the candidates' oral proficiency level, so this stage of the process is very important. The second step of the process is to take a written exam which can vary in each academy. The test aims to evaluate the candidate's performance in writing, reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary etc. However, according to the coordinators, if the candidate does not do well in the oral interview, he/she is not likely to be hired by the academy.

Through this research it was also detected that there are other factors which are relevant for each academy in the hiring process. Some of these aspects are related

with personality, since coordinators look for teachers who are responsible, patient, creative, and that have values as well. Some other factors they consider strong have to do with personal appearance, experience, classroom management, and methodology. However, even though these are important aspects, oral proficiency is the key to continue with the hiring process for working in a prestigious academy in our country, because if a candidate does not show the oral proficiency which is required by the company; he or she does not get the job.

Finally, it has been proved that a candidate's oral proficiency level is essential during the hiring process. Even though there are other aspects related to personality and experience that are considered relevant by coordinators, an Advanced High oral proficiency level is the main requisite to continue the hiring process for working in a prestigious academy in our country. A candidate may have experience, a good education, good knowledge in grammar and methodology, a good physical appearance, etc., but at the end the most important aspect taken into account by English academies is the applicant's ability to speak accurately showing mastery of the language.

XI RECOMMENDATIONS

The results gathered from this investigation show that English academies are well-established companies that are quickly spreading all over the country. They represent an important source of employment for both graduate and under-graduate students from the different majors the Foreign Language Department offer. This situation makes it essential to pay attention to the requirements these academies have for candidates to be hired and become part of their teachers' staff.

Through this research it was possible to establish that the main academies in El Salvador look for qualified teachers with strong English speaking skills. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that Oral Competence becomes the main choice in the learning process for ESL students of the Foreign Language Department. It is important that professors implement different strategies with emphasis on how to speak better English.

It is also advised that the Foreign Language Department takes into account the descriptions given in the ACTFL and CEFR guidelines when preparing subjects' programs and choosing the textbooks that will be used in different courses. Both guidelines are internationally recognized and making an effort to reach the level described on them might result in great benefits for future graduates.

Finally, it is recommended that for future investigations, students from the Foreign Languages Department continue to do this type of research out of the classroom. Some might consider it is not directly related to the Department, however, if the information found in the process benefits future graduates or provides evidence that will allow professors to improve teaching methodologies, then the results highly concern the teaching-learning process followed at the Department.

XII. REFERENCES

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X. APPENDIX

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Languages Department

Research regarding Oral Proficiency Level required by English Academies in El Salvador 2012.

Individual Questionnaire

Objective: to get an insight from people currently working at English Academies about the process they had to follow and the aspects they consider were most important to get the job.

1. Could you please write the English Academy's name you work for and the time you have been working there?

   _____

2. How many stages did your hiring process consist on?

   1- ☐   2- ☐   3. ☐   4. ☐   Other_____

3. Could you describe these stages please?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Were these stages conducted by different people or did the same person follow you through all the process?

Yes ☐   No ☐

5. Did you have a personal interview?

Yes ☐   No ☐

6. What kind of questions were you asked?

_____

7. Were you told by the interviewer if you were considered to be at a certain English level, e.g. Intermediate High, Advanced, etc.?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. If the previous question is yes check the oral proficiency level in which you are considered.

Novice ☐   Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐   Superior ☐   Distinguish ☐

8. What do you consider is the oral proficiency level demanded by English Academy in our country?

Novice ☐   Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐ Superior ☐ Distinguish ☐

9. Do you believe that the candidate's oral proficiency level is the most important element involved during the English Academy employment application? Why?

Yes ☐   No ☐

_____

_____

10. What are other aspects that English Academies take into account when hiring someone?

Personal appearance ☐

Management in the classroom ☐

Attitude ☐

Personality ☐

Others_____

_____

11. Which of these aspects do you think are the most and least relevant?

_____

12. In which oral proficiency level do you consider you were before getting the job?

Novice ☐   Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐ Superior ☐   Distinguish ☐

13. In which oral proficiency level do you consider yourself now?

Novice ☐   Intermediate ☐   Advanced ☐   Superior ☐   Distinguish ☐

14. Where did you study English?

_____

15. What have you done to reach that current level?

_____

16. Based on your personal experience, what strategy do you think it might be favorable to

implement before applying for a job at an English Academy?

_____

17. Why did you decide to apply to this job and which advantages and disadvantages can you

mention?

_____

_____

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Languages Department
<u>**Research regarding Oral Proficiency Level required by English Academies in El**</u>

<u>**Salvador 2012.**</u>

Objectives:

Interview to Key Informant

To find out which are the parameters used by English academies to determine if a candidate achieves the required oral proficiency level to work at the company

To identify which other aspects are taken into account when hiring a candidate for English academies.

Regarding Oral Proficiency

1. How important do you consider English oral proficiency is in a candidate for your academy?

2. How do you measure your candidates' oral proficiency level?

3. Is there any international scale you use to determine the levels of English at your institution, eg ACTFL Guidelines, CEF, etc. or have you created your own set of characteristics of each level?

4. Do you use technology to measure oral proficiency in a candidate?

5. How many levels of oral proficiency are there in your academies?

6. Do you have a list of specifications a candidate must fulfill in order to consider he "belongs" to this or that level?

Regarding the hiring process

Stages of the process

1. How many stages does your hiring process consist on?

2. Could you describe these stages please?

3. Are these stages conducted by different people or does a same person follow the same candidates through all the process?

Other aspects

1. What are all the aspects that you take into account when you evaluate your candidates?

2. Which of these aspects are more relevant?

3. Do you assign a percentage to each aspect? What is it?

4. What makes you determine that percentage?

Interviewers

1. Do interviewers use any type of manual or a specific set of questions when they conduct an interview?
2. Was this manual (or set of questions) created by your company or do you use any type of international manual?
3. Do the questions or requisites for the candidates change in different situations?
4. What factors influence those requisites?
5. Can you tell us the amount of candidate that applies in your academy each moth?

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Languages Department

Research regarding Oral Proficiency Level required by English Academies in El

Salvador 2012.

Focus Group

Objective: to get an insight from people currently working at English Academies about the

process they had to follow and the aspects they consider were most important to get the job.

1. Could you please tell us your names, the English Academy that you work for and the
   time you have been working there.

2. How many stages did your hiring process consist on?

3. Could you describe these stages please?

4. Were these stages conducted by different people or did the same person follow you
   through all the process?

5. . Did you have a personal interview?

6. What kind of questions were you asked?

7. Were you told by the interviewer if you were considered to be at a certain English
   level, e.g. Intermediate High, Advanced, etc.?

8. What do you consider is the oral proficiency level demanded by English Academy in
   our country?

9.   Do you believe that the candidate's oral proficiency level is the most important element involved during the English Academy employment application? Why?

10. What are other aspects that English Academies take into account when hiring someone?

11. Which of these aspects do you think are the most and least relevant?

12. In which oral proficiency level do you consider you were before getting the job?

13. In which oral proficiency level do you consider yourself now?

14. What have you done to reach that current level?

15. Did you study a major? Or where did you study English?

16. Based on your personal experience, what strategy do you think it might be favorable to implement before applying for a job at an English Academy?

17. Why did you decide to apply to this job and which advantages and disadvantages can you mention?

18. Which were the factors that help you to get the job?

19. Which was the stage of the process that you consider the most difficult?

20. Why do you prefer to work in an English academy than in a call center or a hotel?

Data Collection Process

(1) In the following pictures, you can see the English Coordinators from each English Academy in the interview.

English Coordinator in ITEXSAL Language School Lic. Juan Zavaleta

Ricaldone English School Co-coordinator Jose Julian Cea

Ricaldone English School Co-coordinator Jose Julian Cea

CCSA English Coordinator Licda. Maria Eugenia Rodriguez

CENIUES English Coordinator Licda. GuadalupeMartinez

CENIUES English Coordinator Licda. GuadalupeMartinez

2- Focus group:
In the following picture, you can see the participants of the Focus Group

3- In these pictures, Individual Interview was being completed.

INTERVIEW

CENTRO CULTURAL SALVADOREÑO AMERICANO

COORDINATOR

Regarding Oral Proficiency

1. How important do you consider English oral proficiency is in a candidate for your academy?

I think is a very important issue, because oral language proficiency, it's the area in which we are develop students in this institutions. If teachers have an excellent oral proficiency it's what they are going to transmit to the students.

2. How do you measure your candidates' oral proficiency level?

We have an institutional exam and then we have an interview, that's giving to a candidate during the first stage, then during the second stage the candidate has more interviews in English.

3. Is there any international scale you use to determine the levels of English at your institution, eg ACTFL Guidelines, CEF, etc. or have you created your own set of characteristics of each level?

No we use a key questions about the teacher's background, teacher professional development, and about his or her expectations; so depending of the answers that we get. That's something that we consider in a teacher

4. Do you use technology to measure oral proficiency in a candidate?

Sometimes when we do written examinations, sometimes we do, some other times we give them a paper base exam and they have the oral interview.

5. How many levels of oral proficiency are there in your academy?

Yes, one thing that we consider is that she or he has a graduated paper; she or he is already graduated from a university or is a fourth or fifth year student. An experience is a plus and that's what I think. Our teachers are required to take a training course, it could be before the enter or during the first month and they must take the TOEFL examination.

6. Do you have a list of specifications a candidate must fulfill in order to consider he "belongs" to this or that level?

Yes

Regarding the hiring process

1. How many stages does your hiring process consist on?

In the hiring process, the candidate comes, brings the resume, then we check the resume, and that's when we decide if we call the teacher or not, depending of the education background, experience and so on.

2. Could you describe these stages please?

Ones we decide that we want to talk that we want to talk with the candidate, we ask them to come, take an examination, and there we have the written exam and the interview. When we ask or we need teachers, what we do is that we check the data base, and then we call them for a second interview, which consist in two different

interviews, and then we decide that we want to hire the person, we ask them to complete the paper work and an application form, and bring all the documents that they need and so on.

3. Are these stages conducted by different people or does a same person follow the same candidates through all the process?

 Yes

Other aspects

1. What are all the aspects that you take into account when you evaluate your candidates?

First language proficiency, that goes along with their background or experience. Then during the interview, we can find about their attitudes, personality and that's something that we evaluate are values. We ask questions such as their previous experiences with different ages, how long they work in a certain institution.

2. Which of these aspects are more relevant?

I think I will say 3. Language competences, educational background and the attitude that they show.

3. Do you assign a percentage to each aspect? What is it?

No necessarily, because if the teacher doesn't have the oral proficiency that's it, the process doesn't continue.

4. What makes you determine that percentage?

 We don't assign any percentage, first we look for the oral proficiency level.

Interviewers

1. Do interviewers use any type of manual or a specific set of questions when they conduct an interview?

We don't have a set of questions, we follow a manual, and we don't have certain questions. What we ask in a candidate and that goes with the areas: language proficiency, methodology, experience and educational background.

2. Was this manual (or set of questions) created by your institution or do you use any type of international manual?

It's institutional.

3. Do the questions or requisites for the candidates change in different situations?

Not exactly, the same, we can phrase them differently, but we want to find the same things it's not that we have a questionnaire.

4. What factors influence those requisites?

What we want to ask them, depending of the answers that they give us; that would be the next question to the candidate

5. Can you tell us the amount of candidate that applies in your academy each month?

We don't have statistics.

6. Why are some students employed by English academies and some are not?

Well, I can tell you the reason why we don't hire candidates, it's because they don't fill the requirements. They have to have, good competences, language proficiency, teaching experience, educational background and attitude.

INTERVIEW

CENIUES COORDINATOR

Regarding Oral Proficiency

1. How important do you consider English oral proficiency is in a candidate for your academy?

I guess Oral Proficiency is the most important aspect that we consider in a candidate because we don't have to confuse the Oral Proficiency with the way a person or a teacher communicate, we also consider teaching skills also and experience which is also important because I don't care if a person knows how to speaks or speak the language perfectly but if he doesn't know anything about teaching will that candidate probably won't be consider so is one of the most important but not the most important, it is important, we consider it hiring.

2. How do you measure your candidates' oral proficiency level?

Once we are in the process of hiring a person or anew teacher or a new applicant are going to do a test that everybody knows the TOEFEL test, so the TOEFEL test has not exactly an oral area but we interview every single candidate a group of coordinators interview every candidate

3. Is there any international scale you use to determine the levels of English at your institution, eg ACTFL Guidelines, CEF, etc. or have you created your own set of characteristics of each level?

Not really, we have created let say…. A personal scale what we consider different aspects that that language has like: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, grammar etc.

4. Do you use technology to measure oral proficiency in a candidate?

No because we only interview a person face to face.

5. How many levels of oral proficiency are there in your academy?

Here the levels are numbers, we have the adults programs has 20 levels the kids programs has 15, the teen program has 20, and there are other languages such as Japanese, French, Italian that have well, in this case Japanese and French has 20 levels too, only Italian has 10.

6. Do you have a list of specifications a candidate must fulfill in order to consider he "belongs" to your academy?

You mean like a profile right? Yes, we do, so we consider this aspect or these characteristic for hiring these person. M/ if they are in advanced or if they are in novice level? No, we refer to the European framework, you know that? Yes.. in fact some teacher and some coordinator of these center have been "how do you call that? How do you say that?" we are certify already by the London, Trinity College of London. There is a group of about 10 or 11 people who were certify last year so for example in my case I was like B2, other were B1, I don't know if you have seen that A1 A2 we have been certify by Trinity College of London.

Regarding the hiring process

Stages of the process

1. How many stages does your hiring process consist on?

2. Could you describe these stages please?

first of all their come for a meeting to let it know which let say documents there are supposed to bring, second they are interview by a group of coordinator and we decide if the person fulfill the requirements or not, there are a specific set of questions that candidates are asked, and then they need to do the TOEFEL test.

3. Are these stages conducted by different people or does a same person follow the same candidates through all the process?

Different people, sometimes I am in charge, sometimes others, any coordinator can do it.

Other aspects

1. What are all the aspects that you take into account when you evaluate your candidates?

2. Which of these aspects are more relevant?

We divide the questions into 3 sets like methodology, personality trains and experience, and there are other aspects such as identification with the institution, like that feeling of belong it you know? That you have, for example if the person doesn't know about the project, they won't be probably be hiring because we want people who are identify this project, with teaching, that love their job etc., but basically what we really look for in a candidate is that he has let say; that skill in teaching you know,

not only English Proficiency, but the person that has also values, I mean we consider a lot of things, you know from values to personality traits, if he is projected in 5 years, if a person for example wants to make a carrier here, so there are many aspects M/ but those are the most relevant? Yes, teaching experience and also Oral Proficiency, yes of course it is one of the most important aspects.

3. Do you assign a percentage to each aspect? What is it?

Not really we don't even give any percentage, percentage right? Yes

4. What makes you determine that percentage?

As I said before we have created and we also modify it every year or every certain period we modify those set of questions or those questions.

Interviewers

1. Do interviewers use any type of manual or a specific set of questions when they conduct an interview?

Yes

2. Was this manual (or set of questions) created by your institution or do you use any type of international manual?

I did it myself.

3. Do the questions or requisites for the candidates change in different situations?

4. What factors influence those requisites?

No, the same they not change that much unless, we add a certain aspect for example there are a certain aspects students from the other major (Modern Language) we consider those people, they don't receive too much teaching methodology so we need to see that, we send this people to training, so they can you know get familiar with that, I know some of them do, but is not the same of your major.

5. Can you tell us the amount of candidate that applies in your academy each month?

A lot of people, under graduated and graduated people, not only from this University but from different Universities, from different majors, like you know, Account, Engineering, people who speak the language, because nowadays not only teachers speak the language, so that is the case there was a process who was working in a call center, he speaks perfectly English but he have not experience, and we had a person that graduate from this University but in English is not pretty good, so that all of them was hiring, so we better hiring a person that has a good level of English and if he had graduated from this University much better, not much better but the University tells the authorities let say is a good reference the one who graduated from this University even though there are a few graduated from a different University.

6. Why are some students employed by English academies and some are not?

There are many factor, because I think a director in other academies so I can tell different reason because there are different aspects that we consider in a job

interview, if a person is insecure, so it has to deal with personality, with your teaching experience and also deals with your objective of a teacher, or as a person, and also the different skills that person has in this case the one is that you are researching is Oral Proficiency is really important, but teaching methodology and experience are also important and also the personality treats every single human being has are also important so we see the behavior of the person the way he speaks, the way he look, the way he moves his hands, well in my case I am very pikey in that way so if a person is sitting like this when thought speaks good English that means, I mean I can easily detect if a person is a lazy one, is going to have problems you know with the entrance, with time or he won't probably work on his planning etc. so if a person for example tells me that he is just here just to pass by its mean that he is waiting for a better job he keeps them out, and there are some people who comes like that, I mean, " I just applying because, I just graduated but I really want to work in the University, I really want to work in the department, probably this can help me to go there" I mean we don't tell them but they are not selected so there are different things as I said and just to finish I can say the Oral Proficiency is also one key aspect that we consider.

INTERVIEW

RICALDONE LANGUAGE SCHOOL CO- COORDINATOR

Regarding Oral Proficiency

1. How important do you consider English oral proficiency is in a candidate for your academy? Oral proficiency is important however is not the only element that we look for, we are looking for English methodology, didactics experience and it's important to know how to express their ideas that's the main thing that we are looking for.

2. How do you measure your candidates' oral proficiency level?

We have our own scale; we have low, intermediate and advanced.

3. Is there any international scale you use to determine the levels of English at your institution, eg ACTFL Guidelines, CEF, etc. or have you created your own set of characteristics of each level?

We don't use the international as ACTEL but we are looking for implement this ACTEL scale, however we created our own scale as I said for characteristics for each level for example, all this stuff we ask. A couple of questions about, not only for oral proficiency but also we book for example all the skills in English we look for English proficiency writing, speaking grammar everything.

4. Do you use technology to measure oral proficiency in a candidate?

We use technology but not exactly for oral proficiency, but we use technology for the test method that is a little exam that the entire teacher has to finish in order to work here.

5. How many levels of oral proficiency are there in your academy?

Three that I mention already low, intermediate and advanced.

6. Do you have a list of specifications a candidate must fulfill in order to consider he "belongs" to this or that level?

We have a little scale but is not an specific scale but we have everything we evaluate this stuff when we are mocking the oral exam.

Regarding the hiring process

1. How many stages does your hiring process consist on? four

2. Could you describe these stages please?

first step people that is interested to work here must bring the résumé to the office, then the applicant that fulfill the characteristics, then come for a - schedule interview, a technological test, the third one is an interview with the coordinator and number four if the applicant fulfill all the requirements of personalities we call him or her to apply for the sob.

3. Are these stages conducted by different people or does a same person follow the same candidates through all the process? By different people, in language school we management like interview with the coordinator of the school and the technological test that, is another interview with the psychologist.

Other aspects

1. What are all the aspects that you take into account when you evaluate your candidates? A lot of things didactics teaching methodology, appearance because we have a record here.

2. Which of these aspects are more relevant?

Everything, maybe in teaching methodology because is important to express the ideas for me and for the language school is very important teaching methodology.

3. Do you assign a percentage to each aspect? What is it?

We don't have like a percentage but it I have to give a percentage but if I have to give a percentage for teaching methodology will be 60. %

4. What makes you determine that percentage?

When new people come here with the resume, we make a little interview, after that, they are asked because is important for us the management of the class, so the people come here and we evaluated with a large group teaching class, at least 16 students, so we evaluated is not a large group, because we have groups of 25 more or less 26 on the Saturday program, so 16 students is like a medium group.

Interviewers

1. Do **interviewers use any type of manual or a specific set of questions when they conduct an interview?**

We evaluated the teaching methodology with 3 evaluators they have to approve that in order to work here, is not difficult.

2. Was this manual (or set of questions) created by your institution or do you use any type of international manual?

By our company 100% Ricaldone.

3. Do the questions or requisites for the candidates change in different situations?

We don't have a specific requisite but, if I have to say a factor, if you are good enough in your English proficiency and in the four skills we evaluate.

5. Can you tell us the amount of candidate that applies in your academy each month?

We don't have like a big amount candidates every month but is around, maybe like an average 5 people monthly.

6. Why are some students employed by English academies and some are not?

Here we are looking for people who study their career at least in their four or year.

INTERVIEW

ITEXSAL LANGUAGE SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Regarding Oral Proficiency

1. How important do you consider English oral proficiency is in a candidate for your academy?

We consider very important, because if a candidate has enough oral proficiency he is able to express himself in a fluency way, remember is you are an English teacher you need to have fluency English conversation in order to be understandable in the one that you are g etc.

2. How do you measure your candidates' oral proficiency level?

Most of the time when teachers comes to the school they have an oral interview and also they do some exercise, something by using a computer throw multimedia program and them we try to measure , how much they know and how much they are able to express themselves in a proficiency.

3. Is there any international scale you use to determine the levels of English at your institution, eg ACTFL Guidelines, CEF, etc. or have you created your own set of characteristics of each level?

Well, we try to measure in two ways, levels of learning and levels of teaching for example if the one who is going to evaluate is a teacher sometimes I ask them to take the TOEIC or the TOEFL may be a university degree in order to know how much they are certify.

4. Do you use technology to measure oral proficiency in a candidate?

We use technology because when the teachers take an exam in order to measure their capacity we use the computer, we use internet and also multimedia programs, as I said in this way we are using technology.

5. How many levels of oral proficiency are there in your academy?

Well, three levels, the basic level, the intermediate level and the advance level.

6. Do you have a list of specifications a candidate must fulfill in order to consider he "belongs" to this or that level?

Yes, we do, first we try to measure the capacity in speaking, writing and listening, but the most important is to check the fluency and vocabulary.

Regarding the hiring process

Stages of the process

1. How many stages does your hiring process consist on?

2. Could you describe these stages please?

Well, first we check the resume we see the studies that they have taken and also we ask them for an interview and finally the internet exam that they do.

3. Are these stages conducted by different people or does a same person follow the same candidates through all the process?

Well, sometimes I do them, but in some other cases somebody else can help me it depends on the time that we have, also it depends if I am not able to evaluate them or there are many people or different people waiting for being evaluated.

Other aspects

1. What are all the aspects that you take into account when you evaluate your candidates?

Well, sometimes the impression that we can get at the first time when we see them and also as I said the capacity they have in order to express themselves, we try to check the vocabulary, the pronunciation, we try to take into account the academic experience, they have that is something very important because, somebody is improvising, sometimes they do not do an excellent job.

2. Which of these aspects are more relevant?

In my case I consider speaking is the most relevant aspect because most of the time there are many people who knows how to write, how to read.

3. **Do you assign a percentage to each aspect? What is it?** No

4. What makes you determine that percentage? No we do not have a percentage.

Interviewers

1. Do interviewers use any type of manual or a specific set of questions when they conduct an interview?

 Yes, we use some specific set of questions, first we start with questions for example about their experience , studies, preferences, names, ages then we ask for their interests for working here or what they do for teaching an specific topic.

2. Was this manual (or set of questions) created by your institution or do you use any type of international manual?

Well, I can say that we use different kind of information as source in order to get information sometimes we take them from an international manual and sometimes we adopt the one that we need in order to prepare the questions that we want to ask them.

3. **Do the questions or requisites for the candidates change in different situations?**

Well, sometimes we can say that yes, it changes for example, suppose that I interview a teacher maybe we have 15 interviews and they get the work but when we start working we discover that this person is not able to do an excellent job.

4. What factors influence those requisites?

Well, sometimes the students because there is not the same if you are talking to somebody that you know or when the students are not paying attention in the classroom, sometimes the attitude of the person can changes and become like there is a different person, so that is one of the factors that influence in our requisites.

5. Can you tell us the amount of candidate that applies in your academy each month? One teacher every month.

6. Why are some students employed by English academies and some are not?

Well, as I said before it depends of the interest, because we interview people who want to work as a teacher here in the school but in some other cases we interview

students who are interested to study in a different module, in a different level in the school.