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OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**TITLE OF PAPER**

**ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF  
VOCABULARY, AND AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPEAKING COMPETENCE OF EFL  
7<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS AT SANTIAGO MAYOR SCHOOL OF  
GUAYAQUIL.**

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**SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
OBTAINING THE BACHELOR DEGREE IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE WITH A MINOR IN EDUCATIONAL  
MANAGEMENT**

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FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
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**CERTIFICATION**

We certify that this research project was presented by **Mercedes Margot Minchala Ríos** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Bachelor Degree in English Language with a Minor in Educational Management**.

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**I, MERCEDES MARGOT MINCHALA RÍOS,**

**HEREBY DECLARE THAT:**

The Senior Project: **Analysis of the influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors in the development of the speaking competence of EFL 7<sup>th</sup> graders at Santiago Mayor School of Guayaquil** prior to obtaining the **Bachelor Degree in English Language with a Minor Educational Management**, has been developed based on thorough investigation, respecting the intellectual property rights of third parties regarding citations within the corresponding pages whose sources are included in the bibliography. Consequently, this work is of my full responsibility. Under this statement, I am responsible for the content, truthfulness and scientific scope of the aforementioned paper.

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## **DEDICATED TO**

**This research paper is dedicated to my family,  
especially my mom who has been always with me. Thanks  
mom, I love you very much.**





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## **ABSTRACT**

This project was carried out because of the noticeable inefficient speaking competence of seventh graders at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Santiago Mayor. It was extremely important to determine what performance displays were not well developed and what were the factors that negatively influenced on the learners' ability to communicate effectively. Two issues were studied as the ones that were affecting the speaking skills of the learners. They are: The influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors. Several sources as books and articles were consulted and relevant information was obtained to create the literature review of this project. A quantitative research was used to examine the research problem. The rubric to assess students' speaking skills along with learners' and parents' surveys that helped determine what hinder seventh grader students' speaking skills were used as instruments of evaluation for further analysis as well as for building the conclusion of this study. It was determined that the major aspects affecting their speaking competence are the limited knowledge of vocabulary and the influence of affective factors.

***Keywords: vocabulary, affective factors, speaking competence, instruments of evaluation, quantitative research.***

## INTRODUCTION

It is well known that English is the international language of communication which grant learners the opportunity to find a better job, to meet new people and to know of their cultures, to travel for entertainment and for business, to study abroad, etc. However, the development of learners' speaking skills can signify a tremendous challenge for many non-native teachers of the English Language. The major objective of all English language teachers should be to facilitate on learners the ability to use English accurately and fluently in verbal communication. However, not all English language learners can speak effectively even after many years of studying maybe because of their lack of knowledge or because of other aspects that may affect them. Seven graders at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Santiago Mayor use their mother tongue frequently in the English class and they seem to not feel confident using the target language. Therefore, it was necessary to make an exploratory investigation of the reasons why this was happening with this group of students. Since no research had been conducted in this school about this issue before, it was essential to define what was hindering their speaking competence. In the future, the teacher could deal with these factors and help students.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Communicating implies the use of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The last one represents a big challenge for a foreign student. At Santiago Mayor School, specifically in 7<sup>th</sup> grade; it was found several aspects like using Spanish when addressing to the teacher, asking for instructions or clarifying a question. Also, seventh graders do not make grammatical sentences correctly to express what they want to convey. On the other hand, vocabulary is the key to communication, so the ultimate goal of learners should be being able to interact with other people; nevertheless, seventh graders have a big difficulty finding the right words to express a message. As a matter of fact, it could be said that it is difficult for these students of Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Santiago Mayor to communicate orally. Finally, because learning a second language mainly involves cognitive and affective factors, it is very important for teachers to be aware not only of the way students learn, but of the way they feel about learning a new language. The influence of several affective factors like shyness, anxiety, empathy, self-esteem and self- efficacy may affect their ability to express themselves in the target language.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

It is essential to determine the factors that hinder the ability of seventh graders of Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Santiago Mayor to communicate verbally. This research project will be one of importance specially to the English department, its staff, and mostly for students.

This work is going to be useful for the English department of the school since they can make the necessary changes or modifications of the way vocabulary and affective factors are carried out inside the classroom.

This work may help teachers to implement strategies and other types of activities to teach vocabulary effectively which could be based on learners' needs or their level of learning in order to make the class appealing and in that way, ensure that the vocabulary taught has been learnt and that would be used when any circumstance demands the student to use it. Also, recognize when a student does not feel comfortable when asking to produce into the target language.

Finally, students are going to get benefitted from this work since the awareness of this problem can make their teachers more concerned about the pedagogical strategies being used for enforcing speaking skills.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

- To analyze the influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors in the development of the speaking competence of EFL 7<sup>th</sup> graders at Santiago Mayor School of Guayaquil.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- To identify the vocabulary strategies being used by teachers.
- To recognize the affective factors that influence on students' willingness to communicate orally into the target language.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the characteristics of the seventh grade students' speaking ability being used at Santiago Mayor School?
- How is the teaching of vocabulary characterized in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Santiago Mayor School?
- What affective factors affect seventh graders' second language learning at Santiago Mayor School?



# 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the important theories of learning that have influenced second language acquisition is Constructivism, which is based on the research work of Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey (Richards & Rodgers , 2014)

According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 88) “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them.” He also added “language arises initially as a means of communication between the child and the people in his environment” (p. 89). Therefore, culture and the society as well as the language help learners to be active builders of their knowledge so mental processes could be enhanced.

Linguists have considered how learners construct their knowledge individually and have socially contributed to exhaustive studies of language as communication; thus, different approaches of second language acquisition have been proposed and several methods have been used through the history of English language teaching. One of the approaches that have proved to be effective and have been the base to the implementation of several other approaches as Cooperative Language Learning, Task-based Language Teaching, Content-based Instruction and others, is Communicative Language Teaching. (Richards & Rodgers , 2014)

“The Communicative Approach is currently the most recognized, accepted norm in the field of language teaching and learning worldwide because it comprises a theoretically well-informed set of principles about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching” (National

Curriculum Guidelines, 2012, p. 5). Understanding the characteristics of the approach is essential because they are the clue for the development of the students' communicative competence.

Canale and Swain (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) state that the dimensions of the communicative competence include grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. The first one is about the management of grammatical structures and lexis. The second takes place in a social environment in which there must exist a communicative purpose for the interaction between one or more senders and receivers to share pieces of information (opinions, suggestions, feelings, etc). The third refers to written and spoken discourse based on the grammatical system and the meaning given to a sentence or utterance. The last one refers to the strategies the speaker uses to communicate. Just to mention some examples: paraphrase, circumlocution, transfer and others.

Other researchers such as Savignone, (as cited in Brown, 2014) group the four elements of communicative competence defined by Canale and Swain in three: linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence. The first is related to the knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like; the second is associated to know about the different functions of the language and how to make sentences cohesive; the last one is linked to the social knowledge of how and when to use the language appropriately. In other words, language learners should be able to

use grammatical forms correctly, understand social settings and interact socially with other learners, and finally they should be able to recognize and use the pragmatic functions of language.

In addition, Brown (2014) adds that it is essential to consider that fluency and accuracy are two equally important elements to develop in the process of second language learning. In his words, sometimes it will be more significant to encourage learners' fluency especially at the productive stage of a lesson, and other times it will be more imperative to focus on the effectiveness of grammar constructions as when the students are practicing new structures presented in class. Another characteristic of communicative language teaching is that the students are given the chance to be autonomous and build their own strategies for a better progression of their own learning performance. This is crucial when trying to provide a comfortable environment for developing communication. According to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011), equally important in this approach is the role of the teacher and the role of the student. The teacher, who in a communicative class facilitates and monitors the students' learning processes, guides learners to create meaning and to use linguistic forms for interactive communication. The role of the students on the other hand, is of active participants who work in cooperation with classmates to create their own experiences; this practice makes them responsible of their own learning. Along with the importance of being communicatively competent and with the significance of being fluent and accurate, comes the need of integrating the

four skills of language of reading, writing, listening and speaking in activities that simulate real life settings as much as possible (Nunan, 2003).

According to Saville-Troike (2012) developing the reading skill is useful not just for acquiring academic competence but for participating in conventional situations in which reading abilities are required. Scrivener (2011) claims that skimming and scanning are two reading strategies that people use when reading. The first one is performed when reader read quickly to figure out the general idea(s) of the text, meanwhile the latter is performed when they again read quickly but to look for a determine piece of information. Scrivener also refers to two types of reading: extensive and intensive reading. Intensive reading is practiced mainly inside the classroom to develop reading sub skills, whereas extensive reading is free reading done especially at home for entertainment or pleasure. Scrivener marks out that there is evidence that prove that if people do lots of extensive reading, they can gain a large repertoire of lexis and grammar structures that can increase students' language knowledge and that are not necessarily gotten consciously. He finally proposes some activities to do to enhance the development of learners' reading skills, for example, the provisioning of a library equipped with reading materials, training lessons about the selecting process to follow when choosing any reading materials as well as how to read them, the creation of a book club and the conditioning of time for reading.

The listening ability can improve once learners have contact with the target language. As stated by Lynch (as cited in Saville- Troike, 2012), listening can involve reciprocal and non- reciprocal communication. The first occurs when there is oral communication and the listener can assume the role of a speaker for the interaction. The latter happens when the listener is limited to listening and cannot ask for repetition or clarification, for example when listening to the TV news broadcasts. The listening skill is divided in general and selective. General listening occurs when listeners have to listen to get the general idea of the message while selective listening is about listening to get the most relevant ideas of the message (Nida, as cited in Saville- Troike, 2012).

The exposure to input that comes from real life sources and classroom practice, prepare learners for the production of language. After the students have practiced language in the controlled settings of reading and listening, they should be able to pronounce words correctly, produce logical sentences, know part of the lexicon of the language and be able to use it appropriately according to the rules of discourse of the target language (Saville-Troike, 2012). This means students now should be able to interact with other people in speaking and writing.

When talking about the speaking skill, Nunan (2003) remarks that speaking is the most difficult of all four language skills since it demands oral communication in real time. There are some principles that language teachers must consider when planning speaking lessons for learners. Nunan

first claims that teachers must be aware that speaking can take place in foreign language or second language settings. He also asserts that accuracy and fluency are the two aspects that must be regularly practiced specially in beginner and intermediate classrooms. Tasks that provide opportunities for learners to work in pairs or groups will increase their oral production in performing tasks that involve negotiation and meaning. He finally claims that speaking activities must be planned in accordance to interactional and transactional speech.

In relation to writing, Saville-Troike (2012) reports that L2 learners find writing to be easier than speaking since it gives them time to think and edit ideas. According to Scrivener (2011), in preparation for writing, students have to brainstorm ideas, select and reject thoughts, sort and order details, write outlines, and compose drafts before the final work is ready to be delivered. Meanwhile, Langan (2012) indicates that there are some points that must be taken into consideration when preparing a paper for an instructor. Two of those are about the use of punctuation marks and mechanics. On one hand, he mentions capitalization, numbers and abbreviations as well as apostrophes as the mechanics in writing. On the other hand, he mentions quotation marks, commas, end marks and others as the punctuation marks. Certainly, learning how to write appropriate texts of different kinds should be a language objective (Saville-Troike, 2012).

In the end, teachers must be aware of how effective instruction can be if they aligned with a scientific approach and teach using techniques that will

help their students develop their communicative competence. Becoming an effective teacher is part of our responsibility as teachers.

## **1.1 Vocabulary**

The acquisition of vocabulary plays an imperative role in learning a second language. English teachers are faced with the challenge of how to help students store and bring back words in conversations in the target language.

Vocabulary can make students' speaking and writing more powerful and more effective, and help them say exactly what they mean. This important tool will help students choose the best word for every task and avoid ambiguous words that do not give a good sense of their meaning. Having a good repertoire of vocabulary plays a big role when expressing ideas or thoughts in any form of communication.

Scrivener (2011) makes a distinction between vocabulary and lexis. He mentions that vocabulary refers to single words and sometimes two-or three-word combinations, whereas lexis refers not only to single-word vocabulary items, but also to collocations and chunks. Ur (2012) also agrees with Scrivener's perspective, and suggests that to say that we know a word, there are several things we should distinguish. When we teach a new word, we should make its form (pronunciation and spelling), meaning (denotation) and grammar (linguistic form) familiar to the students. In addition, we should emphasize on words collocations (how the words are linked together and cannot be changed), connotation (if it has a positive or a negative feeling),

appropriateness (writing, speech, formal and informal verbal exchange) meaning relationships (synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, coordinates, etc.), and word formation (affixes). Ur also claims that the constant reinforcement of lexical items is crucial since the learners can easily forget new words. As stated by Zahar et al (as cited in Ur, 2012) students need among six to sixteen re-encounters with that/those lexical item(s) to be properly learned. On the other hand, Scrivener (2011) remarks that an effective remembering of what have been learnt will occur if it is put and kept in the memory, retrieved and used. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2013) suggest that when selecting words that are going to be taught, teachers must take into consideration the learners' needs, their level of learning, their academic and professional goals as well as word's frequency, the word's salience in the course content and corpus use.

According to Nunan (2003), the selection of the words to be taught in class should be based on how frequently these words are used as well as on the learners' goals. He emphasizes that it is better to teach high frequency words first, the most useful ones, and then the less useful. Low frequency words could be learned using strategies like guessing from context, using word cards, using dictionaries, and getting familiar with the processes of word formation. By knowing much of the high frequency words, learners can infer the meaning of the unknown low frequency words from context. Having word cards is very helpful since the learner can calmly check vocabulary words that could be written in the target language on one side and in the



mother tongue on the other side. Finally, Nunan mentions that dictionaries are very helpful for the students, but that they must be trained on how to use them.

Meanwhile, Ur (2012) indicates that there are different strategies that can be used to present vocabulary to students and make words memorable and easier to remember. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2013), Ur (2012) as well as McCarten (2007) coincide that having a vocabulary notebook is a good strategy for learners. In addition, McCarten (2007) claims that this vocabulary notebook can be carried out outside the classroom too. All the authors suggest having the meaning of the vocabulary item in English and if it is necessary in the students' mother tongue. Nevertheless, Ur argues that insisting on writing too many details next to the definition of words, like their part of speech, synonyms, sentences, could make the students feel this work is uninteresting and exhausting. In any case, Ur (2012) proposes that what teachers can do to encourage learners to learn vocabulary is requesting them to have key words that help them remember the lexical items. Another vocabulary strategy practice proposed by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2013) and Ur (2012) is 'word cards'. The target word can be written on one side of the card and the translation on the other. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2013) also propose the use of dictionaries as well as reflections in which learners' main task is to think about the function of the word (a noun, a verb, etc).

Ur also proposes teachers some activities that can be done in the classroom. For example, she proposes new vocabulary to be displayed on the walls, new words to be reviewed at the end of the lesson and words learned in past lessons to be brought back and practiced as part of new lessons.

Scrivener (2011) proposes some useful tasks that can help pupils keep in mind the lexical items studied in class.

The following chart shows different categories that students can fill in every time they learn new important words. This type of activity works like a mnemonic learning trick because of the visualization of pictures, sentences, and other details related with the new piece of vocabulary.


Lexical item	Pronunciation	Translation	Grammar	Collocations	Example	Idea
<i>motorcycle</i>	<i>/ˈməʊtəsaɪkəl/</i>	<i>pikipiki</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>ride a~, get on my~, ~ maintenance, ~ race, ~ courier</i>	<i>She's just bought a 600cc Suzuki motorcycle.</i>	

Figure 1: Alternative lexical item list. Taken from Scrivener (2011)

Another activity to practice vocabulary items families is to draw a word web, where students can write all the words related to a central word that is the object of study.

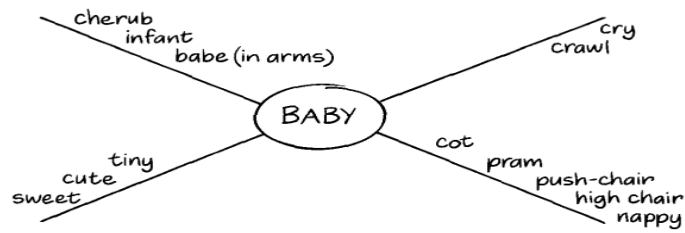


Figure 2: Word Web. Taken from Scrivener (2011)

A different task that can also be done consist of providing a picture where students label objects that belong to a certain category (in the example things that can be found in a kitchen)



Figure 3: Kitchen vocabulary. Taken from Scrivener (2011)

One effective practice consists of drawing charts of inflections and derivations to form new words. The students will have to write all the possible new words that can be formed using prefixes and suffixes under the correct lexical category to which they correspond.

<b>Noun</b> (thing)	<b>Noun</b> (person)	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b> (present-past-past participle)	<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Phrases</b>
happiness	---	happy	---	happily	Happy birthday! I'm not happy.

Figure 4: Lexical item page: lexical item collector. Taken from Scrivener (2011)

In addition, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2013) claim that vocabulary activities can be divided into three levels: word level, sentence level and discourse or fluency level.

At word level, activities that can be useful are *phrasal verb practice* and *ranking*. Ranking is an activity where the teacher selects from five to eight target words and ranges them in any of the following categories: difficulty in pronunciation, spelling or grammar structure, frequency, learners' needs and related words. In Phrasal verb practice, the teacher asks learners to work in pairs and fill a chart of phrasal verbs with at least one item.

	<b>on</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>off</b>	<b>Up</b>	<b>Down</b>
Turn			the lights		the volume
Bring		rules		a child	
Take	a challenge				the address

Figure 5: Sample of phrasal verb chart. Adapted from Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow (2013)

Strip stories are sentence level activities that are very useful to practice ordering sentences. A story must be chosen and the sentences must be separated. Learners are put in groups and receive sentences that must be memorized. Later they will retell their sentences to the students in their groups. All of them will work to put the story together.

<i>Sandy and Gregory walk to the gym.</i>
<i>Sandy comes out and says hello to Gregory.</i>
<i>Gregory falls on the icy gym steps.</i>
<i>Gregory walks to Beth's house.</i>
<i>Gregory leaves his house.</i>
<i>The nurse helps Gregory into the medical department.</i>
<i>Gregory gets ready to walk to the gym.</i>
<i>Sandy runs to the gym office for help.</i>

**Figure 6: Strip stories. Created by the author**

*Dictation* is an exercise that is at discourse or fluency level. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow suggest reading a text at a normal pace the first time for the students to get familiar with the content; the second time the story will be read at a slower pace for students to take notes. The third time the teacher reads the story again so the students check their texts and make corrections if necessary. The learners can then interchange their paper with other classmates to compare their texts with the original. Finally, the whole class could discuss the aspects that caused more difficulty.

On the other hand, incidental learning is also a source of facing new vocabulary items. As mentioned before, extensive reading is free reading done especially at home for entertainment or pleasure. There is evidence of a connection between incidental vocabulary learning and extensive reading. Krashen's comprehension hypothesis (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013) claims that comprehensible input is necessary for language development,

and extensive reading provides this circumstance. Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua (2008) suggest that providing English learners with appealing language-learner literature, extensive reading programs may develop reading fluency, and reading skills in general. Additionally, grammatical structures and vocabulary will be consolidated by the same practice.

Finally, it is important to mention that nowadays there are several computer-assisted vocabulary learning (CAVL) applications created to assist students to learn vocabulary more effectively. In the past computer-assisted language learning programs were very simple and were not based on any learning theory specific to vocabulary learning. Today, CAVL applications propose learning activities that provide the learners with opportunities to notice word form, meaning, linguistic information, incorporate or link to electronic dictionaries and focus on the target items so that learners can operate lexical information (Levy, 1997, as cited in Ma, 2013).

Studies have shown that vocabulary knowledge is the key to how well students comprehend texts, how well they read, and how well they communicate orally. Reading will help improve vocabulary, but direct instruction of vocabulary can contribute to the learning of new words to become better at reading and at communicating orally and in writing. Direct vocabulary instruction is useful for students of all proficiency levels, but it is particularly important for beginning students who know a limited number of words in English and who will not be exposed to incidental vocabulary

learning outside of school because English is learned in Ecuador as a foreign language.

## **1.2 Affective factors**

There is a lot of evidence of the relationship between language learning and affective traits. Attitude, anxiety, motivation, shyness are among the factors that affect second and foreign language learners.

Pilkonis defines shyness as “a tendency to avoid social interaction, to fail to participate appropriately in social situations” (as cited by Pawlak & Waniek-Klimczak, 2016, p. 86). indicates that the learner needs love, patience and understanding for his willingness to communicate (WTC) can emerge. He claims that a way to avoid learners' reluctance to communicate into the target language is by working on activities that encourage them to lose shyness when trying out the new language. He also emphasizes that Language Teaching Approaches have changed over the years with the purpose of encouraging learners to take risks, for their inhibitions that may appear when trying out the new language can be overcome. On the other hand, Ur (2012) states that personality, attitude and motivation of the learners play an important role in the classroom since they greatly influence in the learners' process of learning as well as on the relationship they can build with their classmates and teachers. She indicates that while some students are willing to learn, others may not, for reasons like having bad learning experiences in the past.

Brown (2014) adds that making mistakes is a necessary part of learners' interlanguage process until they reach proficiency; nevertheless, for shy people, corrections may mark their ego and affect their performance. This could create a defense mechanism that might interfere their learning process. Baker & Westrup (2003) propose a way to make students feel confident when trying to speak in the target language; she suggests that before learners communicate orally, they should write down what they want to say, therefore they can make corrections before speaking. Baker & Westrup also highlight the fact that the students must feel that they are learning in a warm atmosphere, that they can make questions when they do not understand, and that they can make mistakes.

Brown (2014) arguments that there are some other affective factors that are immersed in second language acquisition like self- esteem, anxiety, self-efficacy, and empathy. He claims that self-esteem is the value a person has towards himself and that it can be influenced by the teacher's enrollment in both learner's emotional side and his linguistic competence. Piechurska-Kuciel & Szymańska-Czaplak, (2013) indicate that self esteem can mark students' success or failure in their learning process. They claim that self esteem is built by the respect, consideration and the good treatment a person receives from others; in a classroom, self esteem can be influenced by the teacher as well. Based on the appraisal teachers give to learners, they can know their worth. On the other hand, Scovel (as cited in Brown 2014) alleges that "anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt,



apprehension, or worry” (p.161). Piechurska-Kuciel & Szymańska-Czaplak (2013) indicate that communication apprehension, and fear of evaluation derive from language anxiety are closely connected to self-esteem. If the student has a low self-esteem and a high communication apprehension, the learner would be inhibited to speak and it would cause more language anxiety. Meanwhile, fear of evaluation can develop at the same time because the learner feels fear of speaking due to the judgment he may receive from the other speakers.

Self-efficacy is the confidence you have on yourself to achieve a task. The teacher must provide opportunities for students to develop a high self-efficacy (Brown, 2014). According to Piątkowsk & Kościółkowska-Okońska (2013) students develop a high self-efficacy when they have had a good experience when learning the foreign language and also from the chance of having observed his successful classmates. Finally, empathy is the intellectual ability of every human being to experience the way the other feels. Baker & Westrup (2003) exclaim that learners must receive lots of praise from the teacher when trying to speak into the target language since students need to know that their communication is recognized and that they were comprehended.

Attitudes are very powerful determinants of behavior. It is evident that when learners have to learn a new task, they experiment different reactions towards the new stimulus. Attitudes are related to a certain frame of reference, so if in a classroom, the environment is friendly it should not

generate a negative reaction. If students understand the importance of the English language in our globalized world, and if the classroom is not a fearful place to be, they will lower their defense mechanism and will eventually feel confident of communicating. Therefore, it takes a positive attitude to upturn students' competence in foreign language classes.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The present research design is an exploratory model, since nobody has conducted a study about the influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors in the development of the speaking competence at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Santiago Mayor. The methodology approach used is quantitative.

Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle (2010) remark that “all quantitative research approaches summarize results numerically” (p.12). Creswell (2010) adds that the instruments that are used to collect quantitative data are “survey questionnaires, standardized tests, and checklists that you might use to observe a student's or teacher's behaviours” (p.14). Creswell (2010) indicates that once the researcher administers any of these instruments to his/her participants, the collection of data is going to be in the form of numbers.

Participants of this study were surveyed through questionnaires that provided numeric data presented in pies, whose results were analyzed.

It was also assessed the oral production of the students by using a rubric. This rubric contained five criteria as grammar, pronunciation,

vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. Each criterion counted with a performance level (needs improvement, satisfactory, good and excellent) as well as a descriptor for each one and which were evaluated through a scale of points.

### **2.1. Instruments of evaluation**

Three instruments were used to gather data for the completion of this research project, two surveys and a rubric. One survey was applied to the target group of students, and the other to their parents. The rubric was designed for the students to evaluate their speaking competence.

The survey applied to the students contains multiple-choice questions related to the students' perception of difficulty of the different language skills, to the kind of techniques used to learn the language, and to the language functions that are practiced in class. In addition, questions related to vocabulary learning, and the way the students feel about learning English were included.

The survey applied to the parents contains questions that were somehow similar to the ones asked to the target group. The instrument pretended to get the parents' perception of their children's process of language acquisition.

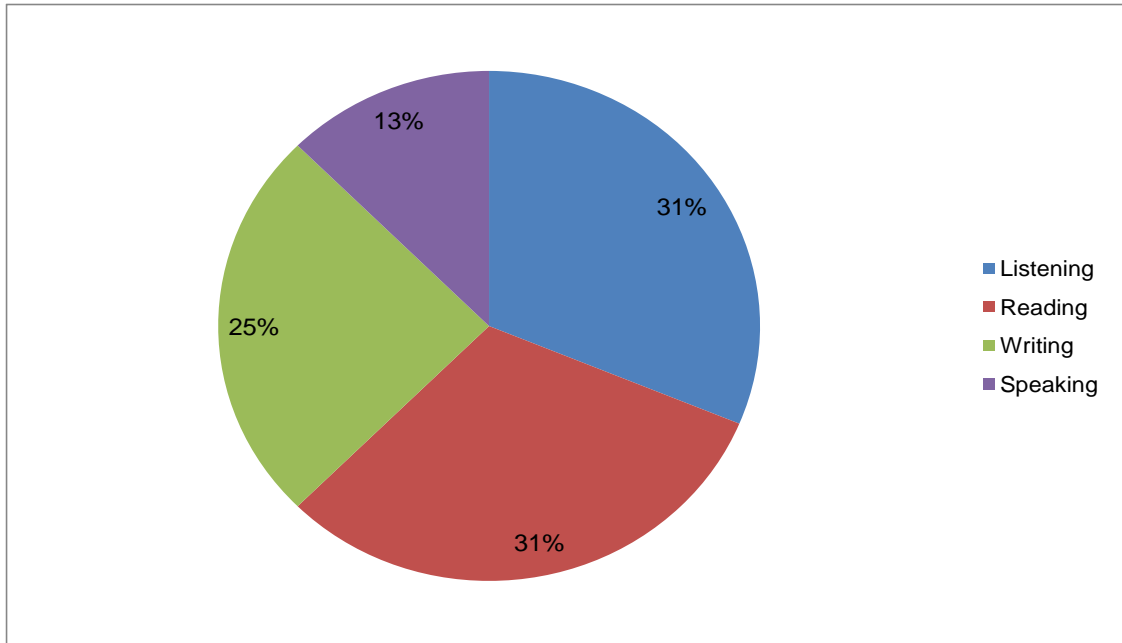
The rubric contains a coherent set of criteria to evaluate students' ability to communicate orally. The indicators present in the rubric are grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency.

The instruments were applied to 19 students and their parents at the beginning of the school year with the purpose of evaluating the teacher and students 2015-2016 school year practices.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Results of students' survey:

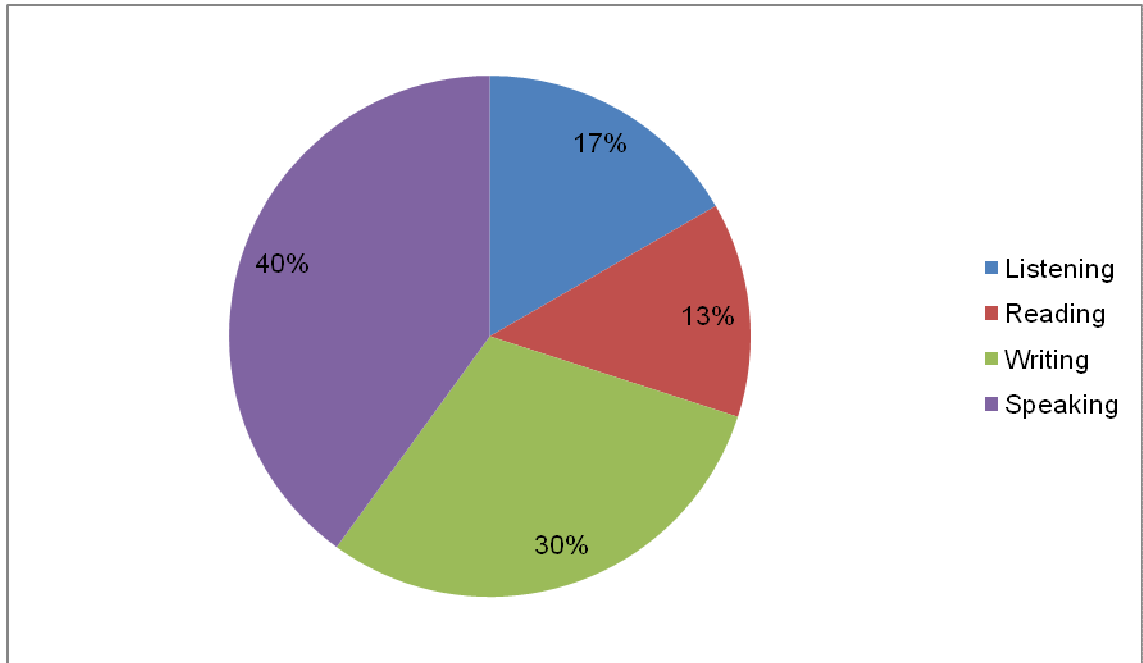
##### Question 1: At what skills are you good?



Created by the author

This pie chart shows that a high number of learners consider themselves to be good at listening and reading rather than in writing and in speaking. The listening and the reading skills were selected by a similar number of students as the abilities they feel confident using, whereas the writing skill was chosen by 25% and the speaking skill was selected by only 15% of the students surveyed. As the teacher of the interviewed group of students, I have noticed that the most difficult skill for the students to develop is speaking which is shown in the results of this question. They have difficulty communicating in English and they constantly use Spanish as the language to engage in conversation with peers.

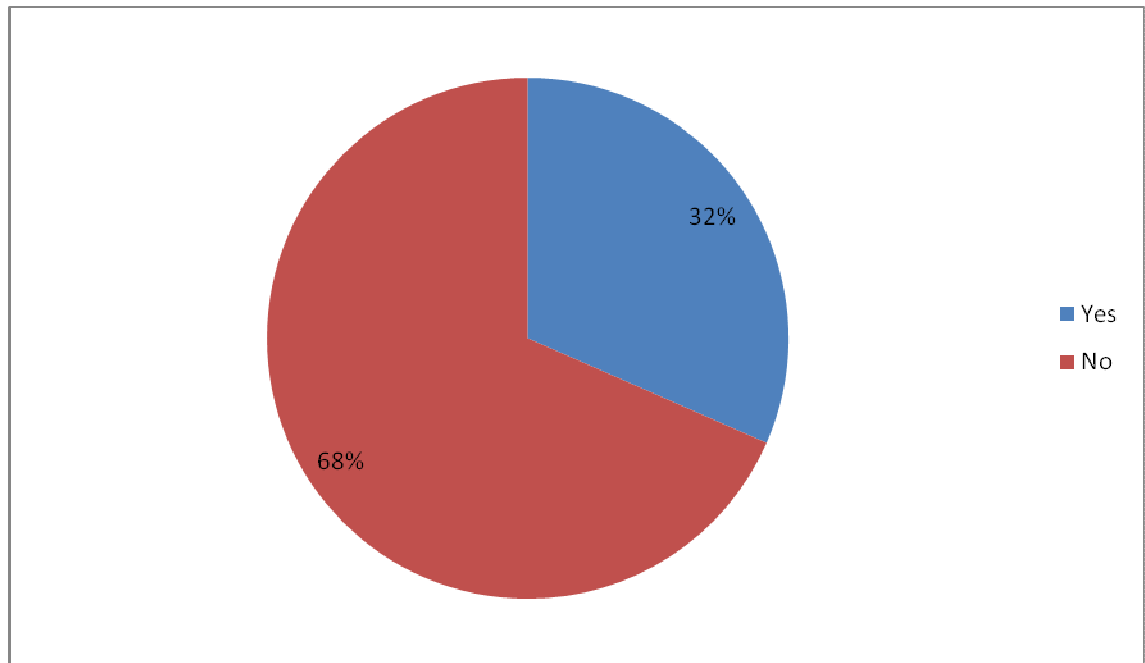
**Question 2: Select the skill or skills that are more difficult for you**



Created by the author

The answers given to this question prove that most of the students (40%) find the speaking skill to be the most difficult to develop over the other three language skills. According to the results gotten, it can be inferred that the seventh grade students at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Santiago Mayor find it difficult to communicate in English due to the inefficient development of their speaking ability. Communication is achieved through speaking and writing, but speaking is obviously the most difficult skill for learners because it demands immediate response to interaction.

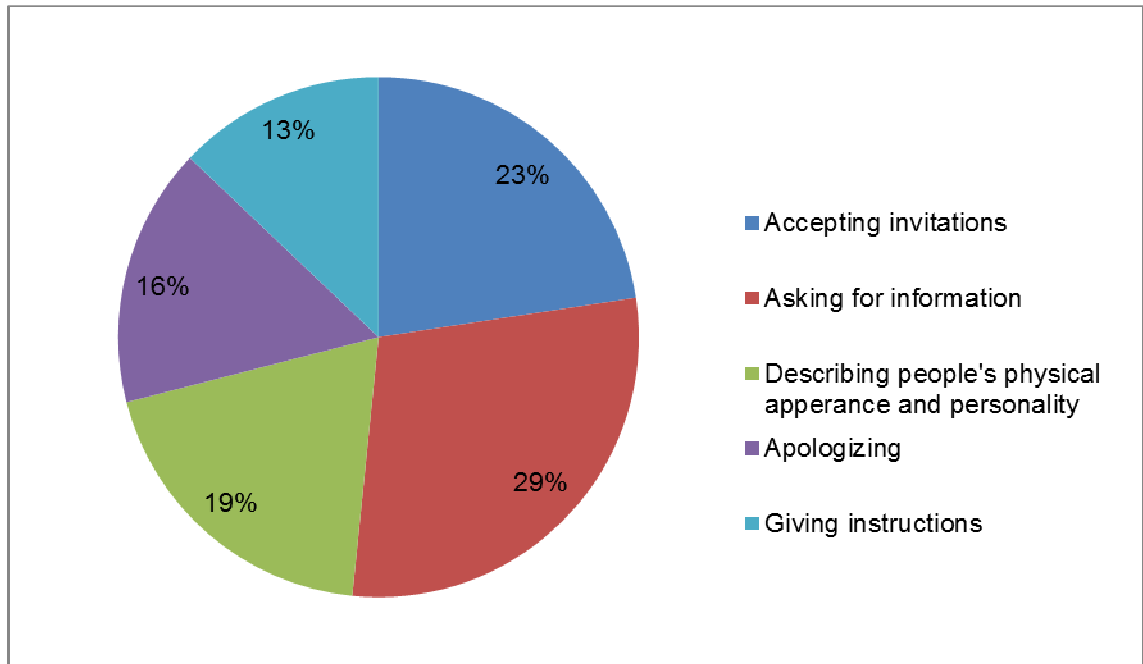
**Question 3: Did you work in pairs or groups with your classmates?**



Created by the author

68% of the students claim pair work and group work were not techniques they used in class. Collaborative work is clearly a communicative way of using the language, and not doing this type of activity in class results in the inability of students to communicate. What is more, the learners also find it difficult to understand spoken language. When students work in pairs or groups, learning can be enriched since pair or group work contribute to maximize students' skills. Group work is also more productive, creative, and really motivates students to keep on.

**Question 4: Which of the following language functions did you practice in class?**

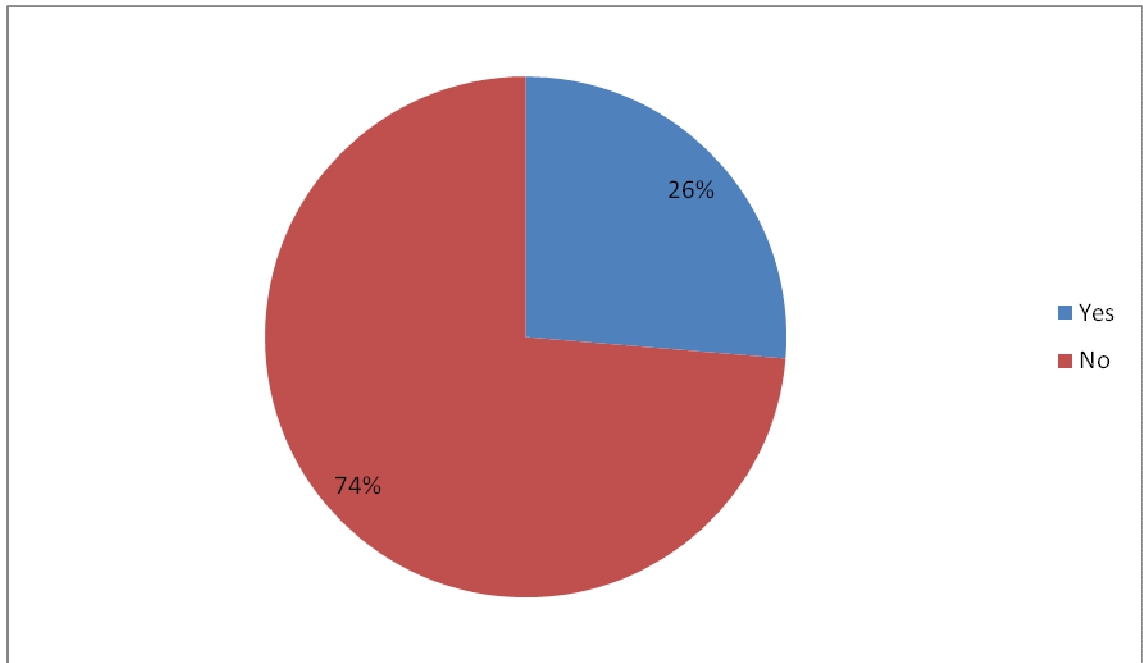


Created by the author

The highest percentage of students responded to this question signalling that they mostly practice asking information orally in class. The other activities are all functions of the language, and they are practiced in the framework of a communicative approach, where functions and notions are part of communication. Apparently, the students did have some practice on sharing ideas and interacting with the other students. Nevertheless, they are not fluent or accurate. I can assume that there was not enough reinforcement and recycling of structures and vocabulary.



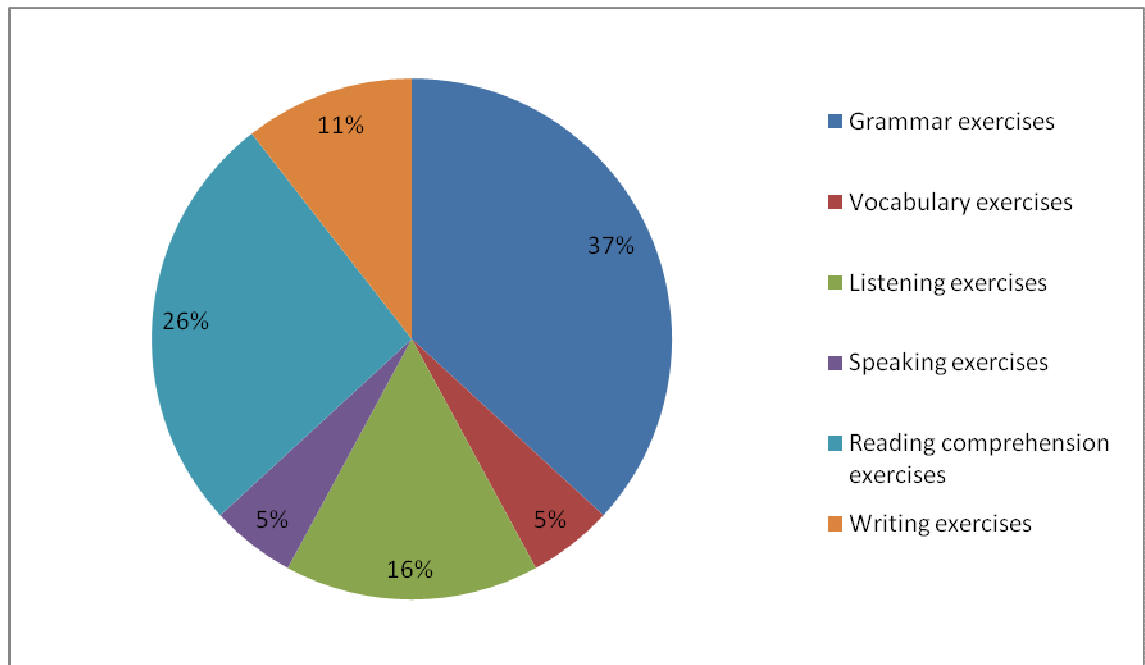
**Question 5: Did you engage in activities that simulate real life settings?**



Created by the author

74% say that they did not engage on activities that simulate real life settings. This is an overwhelming discovery since these types of activities must be developed in current English classes. Simulating real life settings to enhance students' communicative competence are quite meaningful since learners can see the point of learning a certain topic in class that can be useful outside the classroom. They would employ certain expressions or lexis that are appropriate in real life settings of asking for a taxi, asking for directions, asking for permission, ordering in a restaurant, etc.

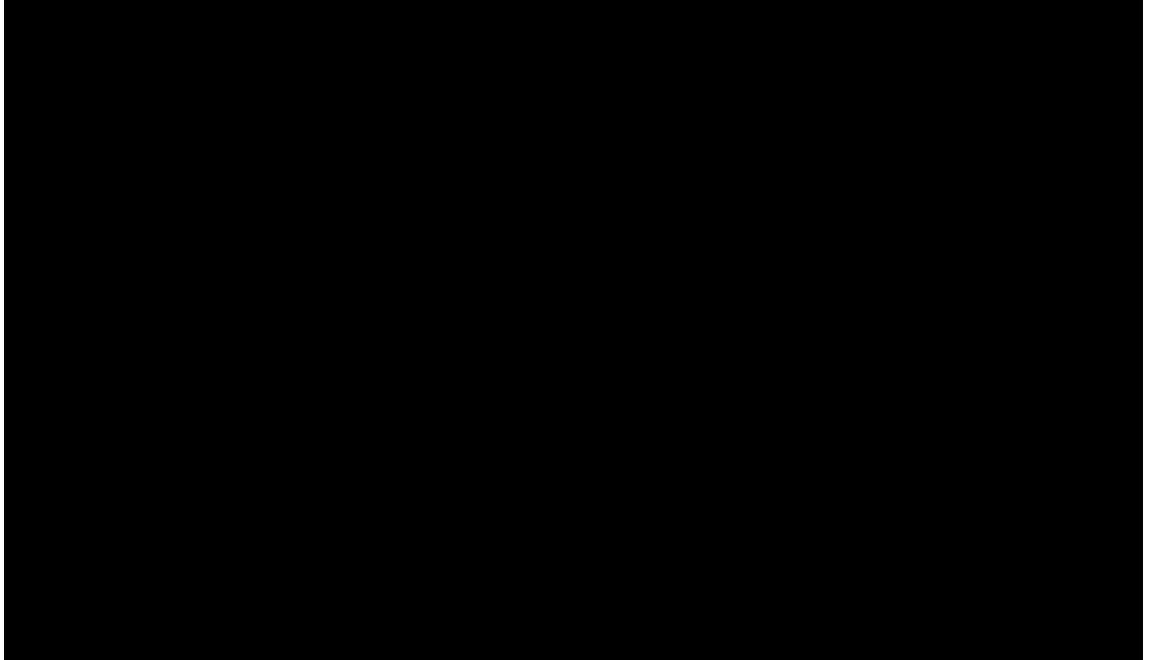
### Question 6: What did you practice more in class?



Created by the author

37% of the students responded that grammar is the activity they mostly do in class, and 26% responded they do reading comprehension questions. 16% consider they worked on listening exercises, and the other skills have an even smaller number of students choosing them as activities they practiced more in class. The results clearly show that grammar was the focus of previous years. It is well known that developing only accuracy and leaving fluency and communication skills aside result in a lack of ability to use the language in real life settings.

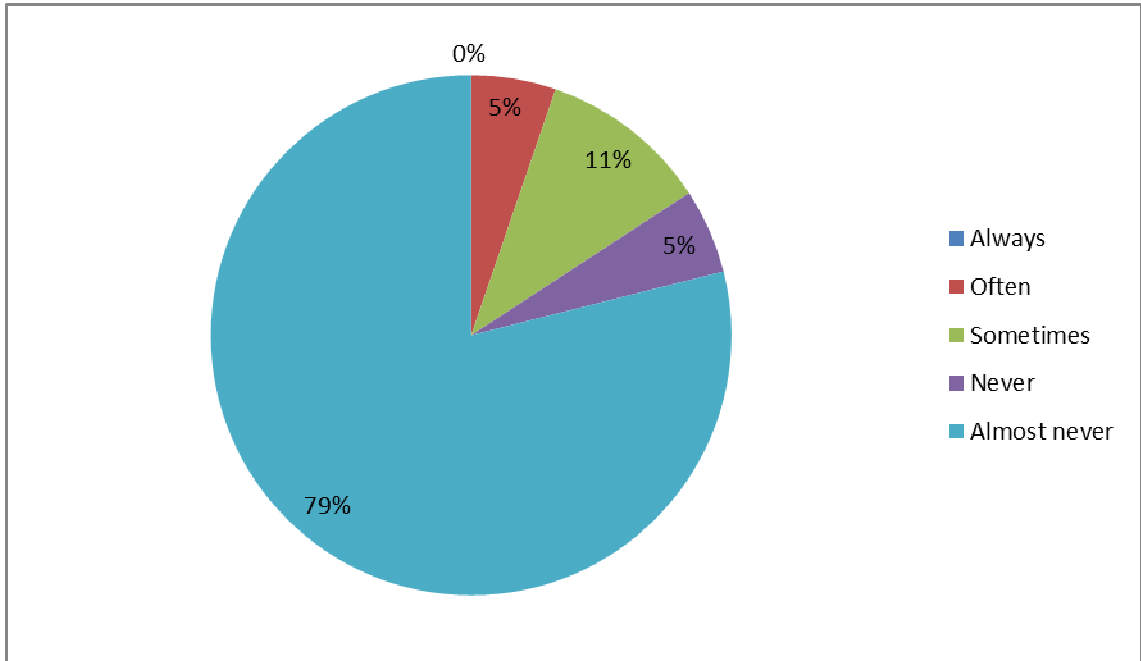
**Question 7: Did your teacher teach vocabulary and design activities to practice new words?**



Created by the author

79% of students claimed that the teacher neither taught vocabulary nor designed activities to practice new words. This is clearly shown in the language production of these students who find it very hard to say what they think in English or to interact with classmates and the teacher due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge they have. They use the mother tongue for communication so it is necessary to dedicate time for the specific teaching of vocabulary, and for using effective techniques that help students improve their vocabulary knowledge.

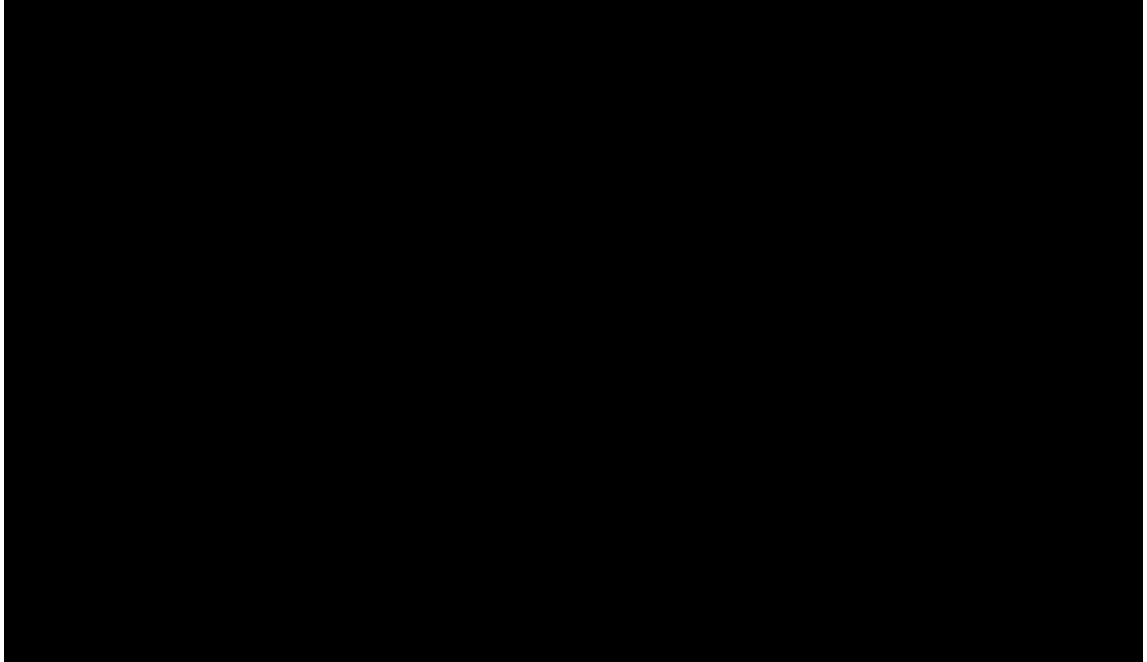
**Question 8: How often did your teacher use techniques as matching, bingo, recognizing the opposite or inferring to teach vocabulary?**



Created by the author

79% of the students said that the teacher almost never used varied strategies for teaching vocabulary. The rest of the students agreed on saying that sometimes they learned vocabulary with the techniques mentioned. The use of these practices are helpful for the learning of vocabulary since they fit with learners' multiple intelligences. These techniques could contribute to the development of vocabulary knowledge making vocabulary lessons significant if applied with regularity in the classroom.

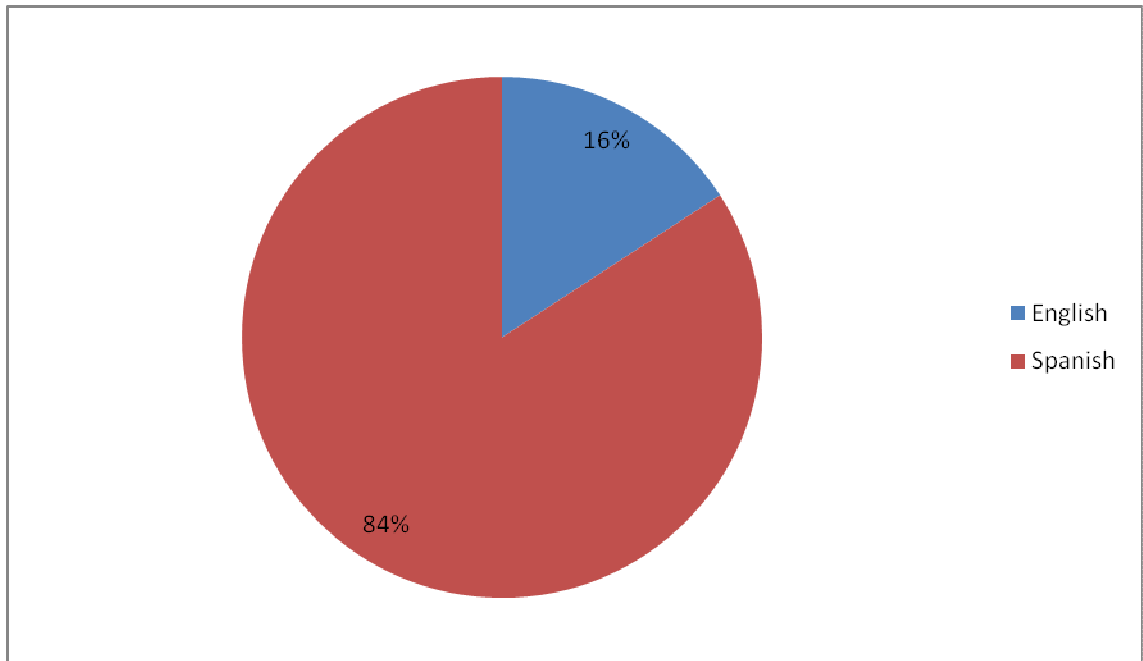
**Question 9: Which of the following statements describe the way you feel when communicating in the English class?**



Created by the author

39% of the students consider they cannot communicate because they are shy, 26% think people may make fun of them when speaking in English. Meanwhile, the others think they feel frustrated or are afraid of making mistakes. These affective factors influence the students' attitude towards the language, so it becomes very important for the teacher to pay attention and try to help learners overcome their barriers by being supporting and friendly.

**Question 10: What language did you mostly use when communicating with the teacher and classmates?**

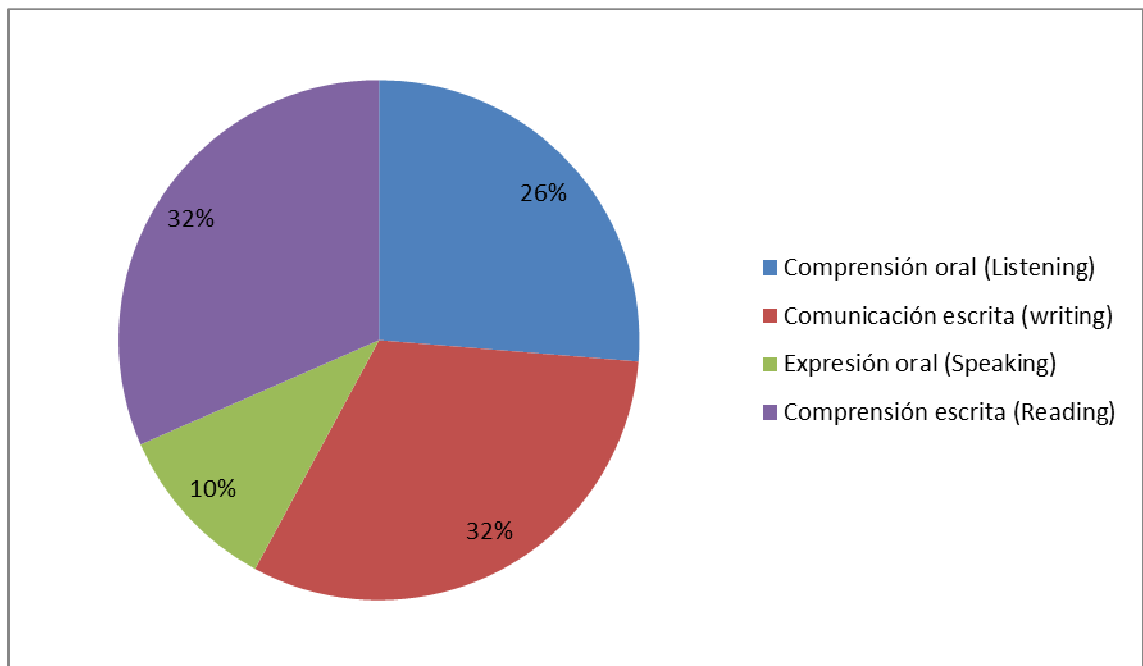


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This chart shows that 84% of the pupils used their mother tongue to talk to the teacher and classmates and just 16% used English. It can be assumed that if students communicated with the teacher in Spanish, they also communicated with their classmates in the same language. This is probably the reason why instruction was not effective for this group of students. The activities necessary to fix information and make it meaningful were not used and the communicative competence was not developed. Spanish was the prevalent language in the English class.

### 3.2. Results of parents' survey:

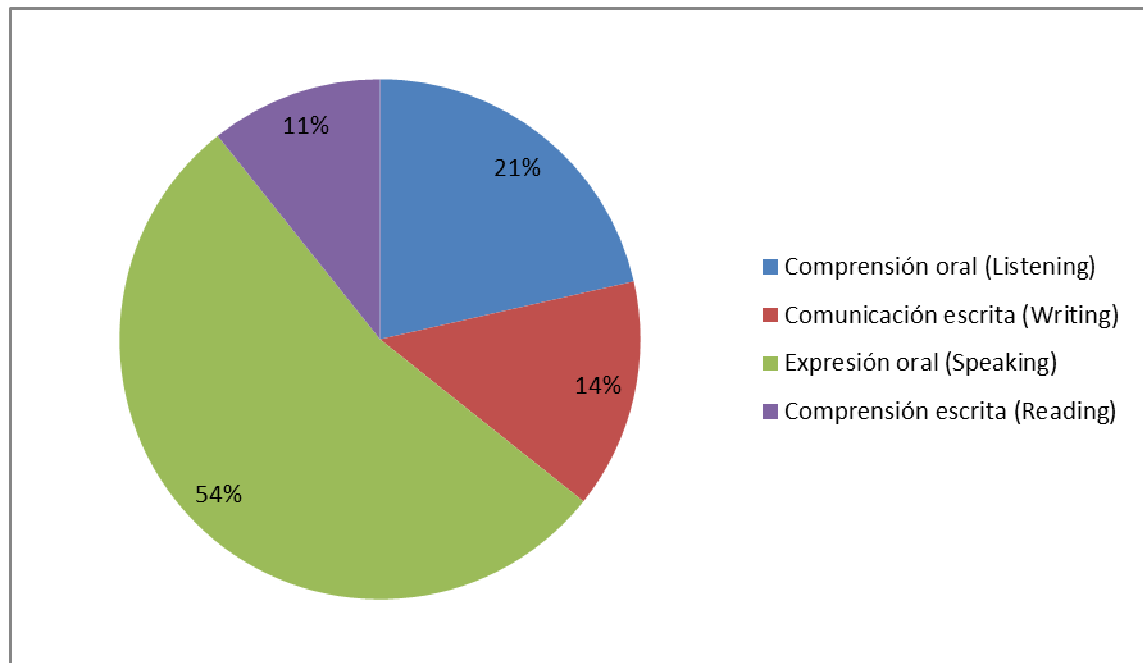
**Pregunta 1: ¿En cuáles habilidades considera usted que su hijo/a es bueno?**



Created by the author

32% claim that their children are good at reading and writing, meanwhile a smaller number of parents believe that their children are good at listening and speaking. It can be said that parents are aware that speaking and listening are complicated skills for their children to develop since they imply a complex knowledge of the language. Parents are also probably conscious that at home they do not show that type of competence.

**Pregunta 2: ¿Cuáles habilidades considera usted que son más difíciles para su hijo/a?**

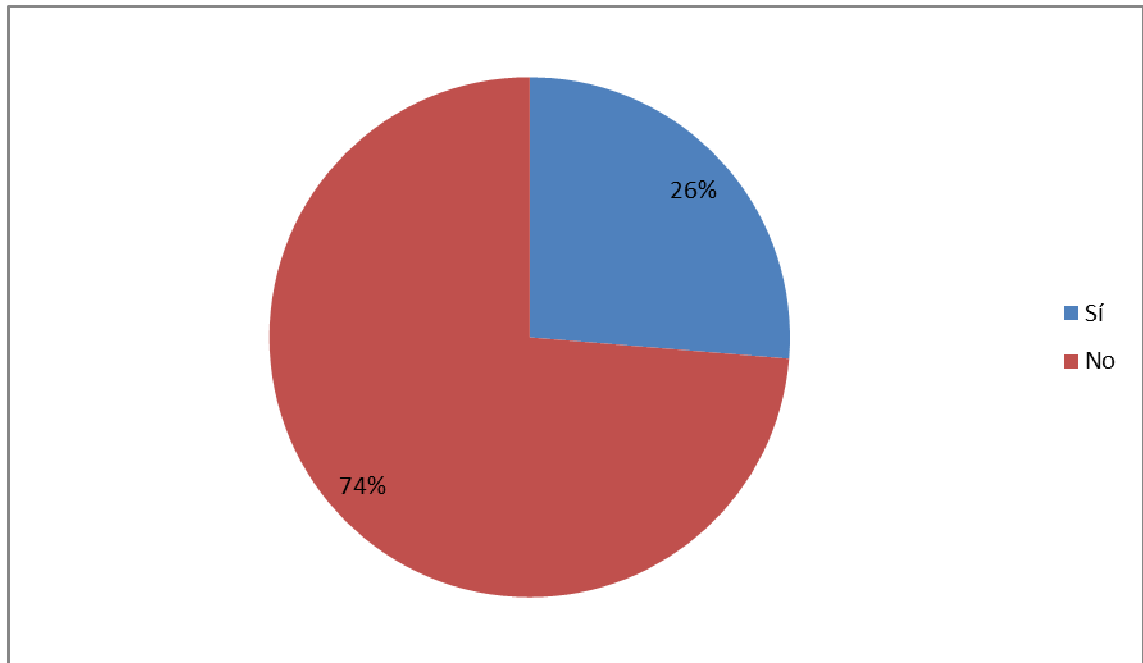


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The results of this pie chart show that parents consider the speaking skill to be the most difficult for their children among the other three language skills. It can be assumed that parents have observed that their children find verbal communication as a complex activity to do when trying to produce the language. Speaking happens in real time and therefore students' competence must show up to communicate effectively with others.



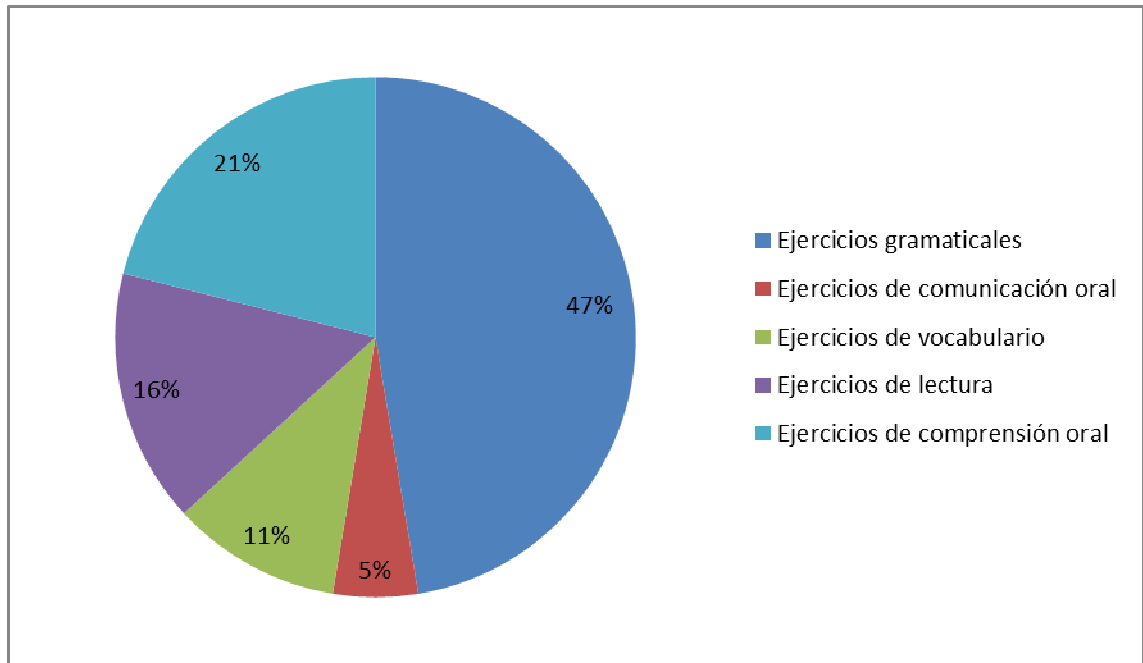
**Pregunta 3: ¿Cree usted que su hijo/a se involucraba en actividades que simulan la vida real?**



Created by the author

The majority of parents surveyed (74%) think that their child did not engage in exercises that simulate real life settings. Some of them said that students do not find the purpose of studying English because there is not a connection with real life settings where spoken language is used in different contexts. When non-native speakers have the experience of being into a real-life setting, they know how to proceed, therefore, students need to practice English simulating situations that are likely to happen outside the classroom.

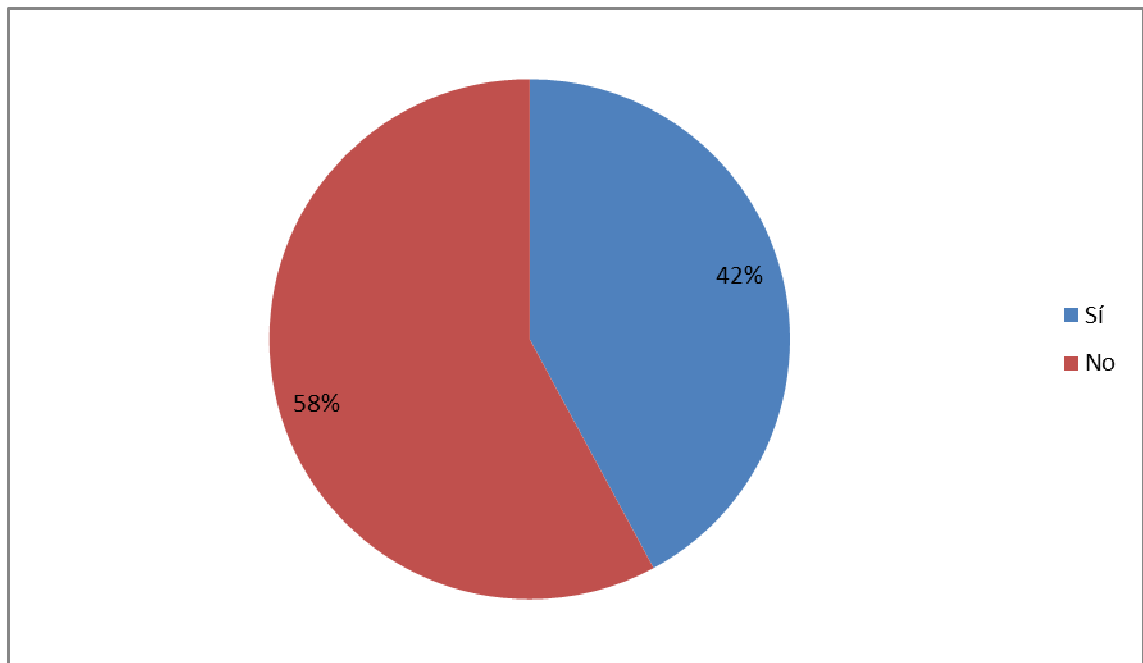
**Pregunta 4: ¿Qué actividades notó que su hijo/a realizaba en clases con más frecuencia?**



Created by the author

It is clearly seen that the linguistic competence was the most developed inside the classroom according to 47% of parents surveyed. They noticed that grammar exercises were the most frequent activities their children did in class. Meanwhile, speaking, vocabulary, reading and listening were the exercises the parents think were practiced with less frequency. These results show that seventh graders have not been immersed in a communicative environment where the integration of all the language skills should be present in all the activities that are planned for teaching the language.

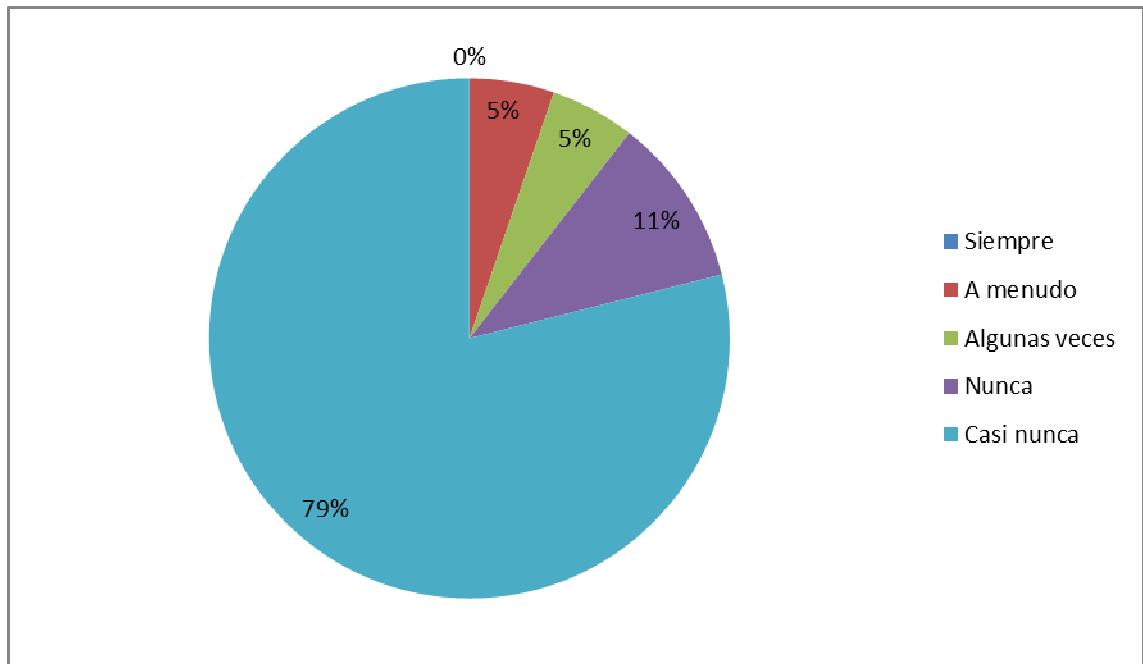
**Pregunta 5: ¿Piensa usted que el profesor enseñaba vocabulario y diseñaba actividades para que su hijo/a practique las nuevas palabras?**



Created by the author

58% agreed that the teacher did not teach vocabulary nor designed activities to practice the new words. Meanwhile 42% thought that the teacher taught vocabulary and designed exercises to practice the new lexis. It can be assumed that parents' perception is that their children cannot end an idea or a sentence because they do not know enough English words. The teacher must design vocabulary activities based on strategies that help learners store new words in their long-term memory to use them whenever communication is necessary.

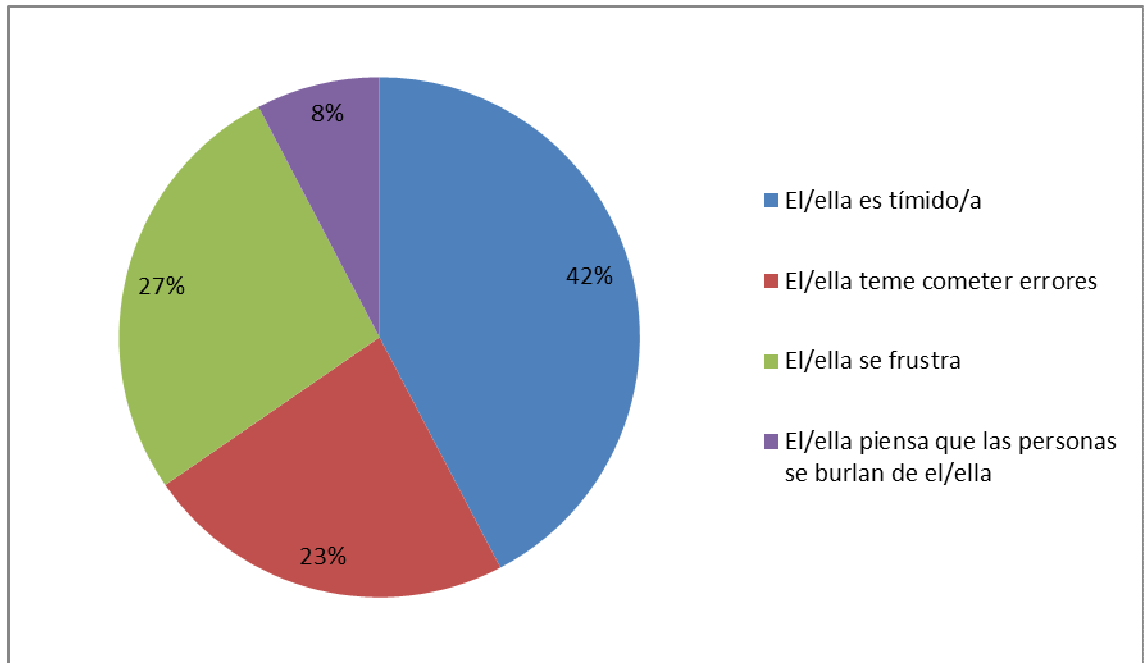
**Pregunta 6: ¿Con qué frecuencia piensa usted que el profesor utilizaba técnicas como emparejar, bingo, reconocer el antónimo o inferir para enseñar vocabulario?**



Created by the author

79% said that the teacher almost never used these techniques for teaching vocabulary to their children. They probably checked their children's textbooks and notebooks and have noticed this reality.

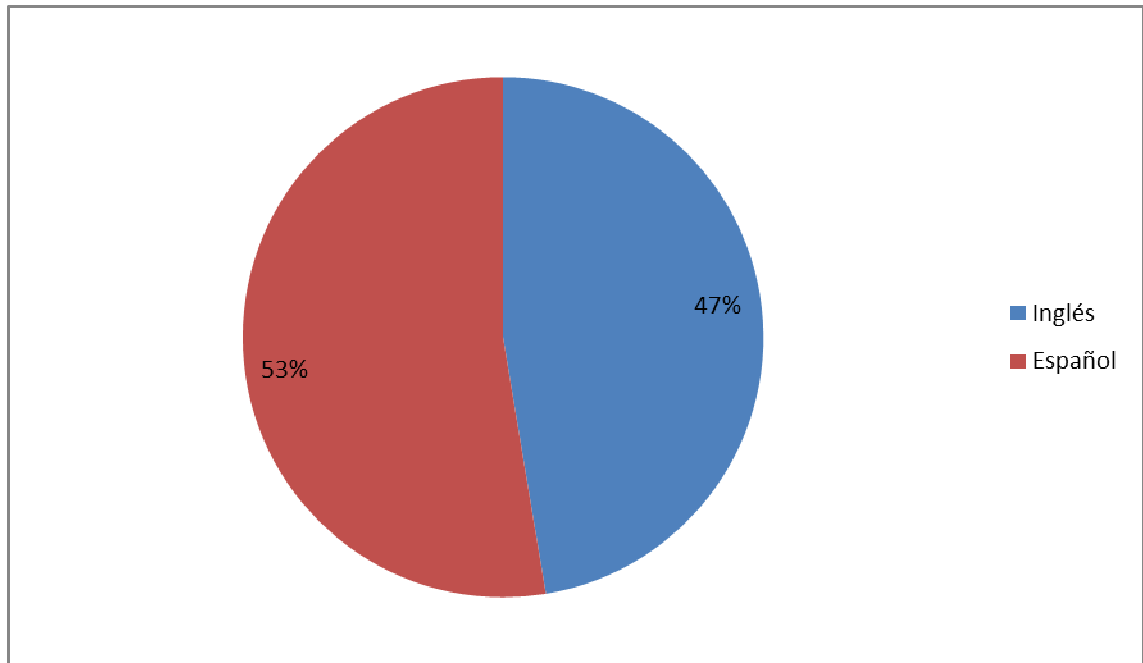
**Pregunta 7: ¿Qué factores afectivos impiden que su hijo/a se comunique en inglés?**



Created by the author

42% of parents think that shyness hinders their children's ability to communicate in English and 27% say that their children feel frustrated. Other 23% say that their children are afraid of making mistakes and 8% consider children believe that people make fun of them. Affective factors can definitely interfere with the students' ability to acquire the new language. Therefore, teachers must employ strategies that help learners to overcome their fears and improve their speaking competence.

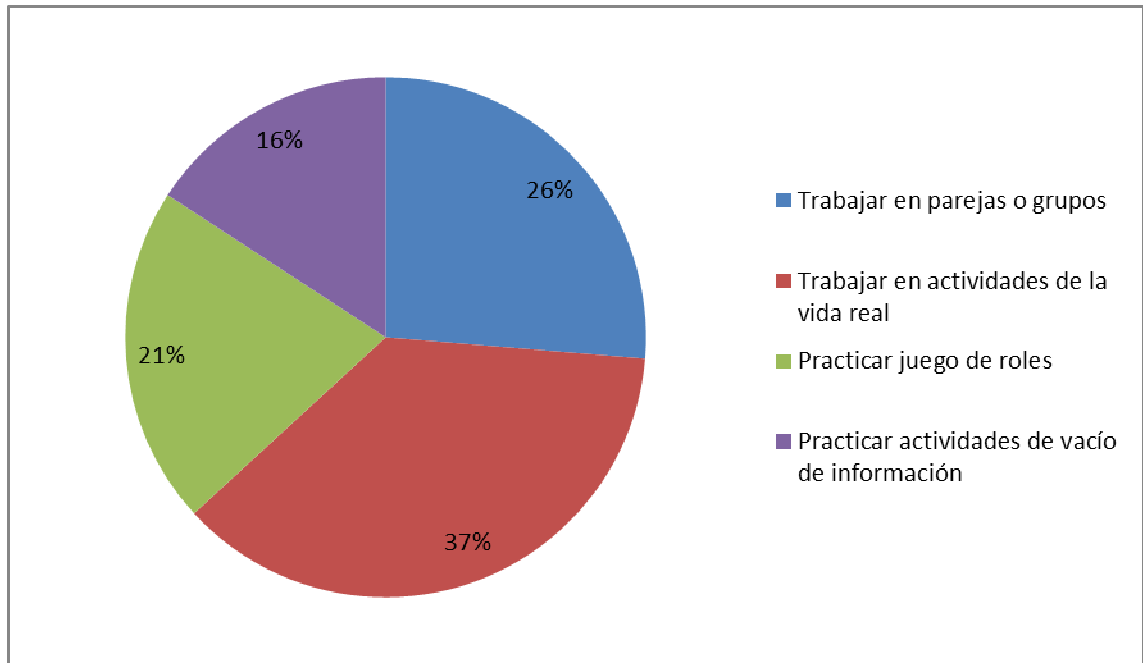
**Pregunta 8: ¿Cuál idioma piensa que su hijo/a utiliza en clase para comunicarse con el profesor al igual que con sus compañeros?**



Created by the author

53% of the parents think that Spanish is the language their kids used in the English class to communicate with the educator and the classmates as well. This is a misfortunate situation since the institution is a bilingual school where students are supposed to be learning English. It can be inferred that students did not feel comfortable speaking in the target language and therefore they preferred to speak in their mother tongue.

**Pregunta 9: ¿Qué estrategias podrían ser útiles para mejorar la comunicación oral de su hijo/a?**



Created by the author

37% of the parents surveyed claimed that working on real life activities would be helpful to improve their children's communicative competence. It is definitely ascertained that learners need to practice on activities that simulate real life settings, because this way they will be prepared to function in settings that demand the communication of ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc. from them.

### **3.3. Results of the rubric:**

The observation rubric contains four indicators: grammar, pronunciation, use of vocabulary, comprehension and fluency.

In the activity used to observe the speaking competence of students, pairs had to describe two similar pictures to each other using their language knowledge to find the differences without looking at each other.

From the process, it could be concluded that:

In grammar, 84.21% of the students need improvement since it is difficult for them to comprehend and convey their ideas. The other 15.79% have a satisfactory grammar usage since they can express their ideas and answers tolerably. However, they often make mistakes when formulating sentences and using tenses.

In terms of pronunciation, 78.95% need to improve it since it is imprecise and difficult to understand. 21.05% have a satisfactory pronunciation.

In vocabulary production, 84.21% need improvement because their vocabulary is inefficient and they cannot convey their ideas clearly. 15.79% have a satisfactory level of vocabulary.

78.95% of the students' comprehension need improvement, since it is difficult for them to understand what the activity is about and therefore their answers to the questions asked were not correct. 21.05% somehow understood the task but they could not give effective answers to the questions asked. Finally, the fluency of 78.95% needs improvement. It was



definitely difficult to follow up with what these groups of students were trying to say. Meanwhile, 21.05% make sentences but they are not complete.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade of Santiago Mayor School, students find it hard to communicate using the target language and mainly communicate in Spanish.
2. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students consider speaking is the most difficult skill to master.
3. Pair work and group work were not techniques students frequently used in class.
4. Learners did not commonly engage on activities that simulate real life settings.
5. Speaking exercises were not practiced mostly in class.
6. Teachers did not teach vocabulary and design activities to practice the new words either.
7. The implementation of varied strategies to teach vocabulary was something that was not practiced in the English class.
8. The most influential affective factor that affected seven grade students' attitude towards the language was shyness. Therefore, their willingness to communicate into the target language did not flourish.
9. It is essential to implement speaking activities that simulate real life settings for students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important for the institutions' quality to assure that all English Teachers know what is happening with the students' English skills, specially speaking.

It is recommended that:

1. This research project be socialized by the English Department and its teachers as a great starting point.
2. Teachers develop a plan with speaking exercises for students to develop their speaking abilities.
3. Teachers be aware that they need to use varied strategies and activities to teach vocabulary.
4. Teachers implement techniques to help learners lose the fear to speak in the target language.

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# ANNEXES

## SURVEY

Read the following questions and tick the answer that best fit with your criteria.

**1. At what skills are you good?**

- Listening       Reading  
 Speaking       Writing

**2. Select the skill or skills that are more difficult for you**

- Listening       Reading  
 Writing       Speaking

**3. Did you work in pairs or groups with your classmates?**

- Yes       No

**4. Which of the following language functions did you practice in class?**

- Accepting invitations  
 Asking for information  
 Describing people's physical appearance and personality  
 Apologizing  
 Giving instructions

**5. Did you engage in activities that simulate real life settings?**

- Yes       No

**6. What did you practice more in class?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar exercises    | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking exercises              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension exercises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening exercises  | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing exercises               |

**7. Did your teacher teach vocabulary and design activities to practice new words?**

Yes

No

**8. How often did your teacher use techniques as matching, bingo, recognizing the opposite or inferring to teach vocabulary?**

Always

Often

Sometimes

Never

Almost never

**9. Which of the following statements describe the way you feel when communicating in the English class?**

I am shy

I am afraid of making mistakes

I feel frustrated

I think people make fun of me

**10. What language did you mostly use when communicating with the teacher and classmates?**

English

Spanish



## ENCUESTA

Por favor lea las siguientes preguntas y seleccione la respuesta o respuestas que apliquen según su criterio.

1. ¿En cuáles habilidades considera que su hijo/a es bueno?

- Comprensión oral (Listening)
- Expresión oral (Speaking)
- Comunicación escrita (Writing)
- Comprensión escrita (Reading)

2. ¿Cuáles habilidades considera usted que son más difíciles para su hijo/a?

- Comprensión oral (Listening)
- Expresión oral (Speaking)
- Comunicación escrita (Writing)
- Comprensión escrita (Reading)

3. ¿Cree usted que su hijo/a se involucraba en actividades que simulaban la vida real?

- Sí                                       No

4. ¿Qué actividades notó que su hijo/a realizaba en clases con más frecuencia?

- Ejercicios gramaticales
- Ejercicios de vocabulario
- Ejercicios de comunicación oral
- Ejercicios de lectura
- Ejercicios de comprensión oral

**5. ¿Piensa que el profesor enseñaba vocabulario y diseñaba actividades para que su hijo/a practique las palabras nuevas?**

Sí

No

**6. ¿Con qué frecuencia piensa usted que el profesor utilizaba técnicas como emparejar, bingo, reconocer el antónimo o inferir para enseñar vocabulario?**

Siempre

A menudo

Algunas veces

Nunca

Casi nunca

**7. ¿Cuáles factores afectivos impiden que su hijo se comunique en Inglés?**

El/ella es tímido/a

El/ella teme cometer errores

El/ella se frustra

El/ella piensa que las personas se burlan de el/ella

**8. ¿Cuál idioma piensa que su hijo/a utilizaba en clase para comunicarse con el profesor al igual que con sus compañeros?**

Inglés

Español

**9. ¿Qué estrategias podrían ser útiles para mejorar la comunicación oral de su hijo/a?**

Trabajar en parejas o grupos

Practicar juego de roles

Trabajar en ejercicios de la vida real

Practicar actividades de vacío de información

## SPEAKING ACTIVITY

*Spot the difference*



### RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

	<b>Needs improvement</b> <b>1 point</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> <b>2 points</b>	<b>Good</b> <b>3 points</b>	<b>Excellent</b> <b>4 points</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	It is difficult for him/her to comprehend and convey their ideas and answers due to grammar mistakes	He/she can express his/her ideas and answers tolerably. However, he/she often makes mistakes when formulating sentences and using tenses.	Although he/she sometimes makes mistakes with the tenses, he/she can evoke his/her ideas and answers very well. He/she can correct him/herself	He/she can evoke his/her ideas and answers with effortlessness without making any type of mistakes when formulating sentences and using tenses.
<b>Pronunciation</b>	His/her pronunciation is imprecise and complex to understand	His/her pronunciation is somewhat incomprehensible at times but generally speaking, it is clean	His/her pronunciation is good	His/her pronunciation is understandable and clear
<b>Vocabulary</b>	He/she has a deficient vocabulary therefore, he/she cannot convey his/her ideas and answers clearly	He/she has a limited vocabulary so he/she cannot expand beyond of what he/she wants to evoke	He/she has the sufficient vocabulary the task requires	He/she has an impressive vocabulary which overstep what is required

<b>Comprehension</b>	It is difficult for him/her to understand what the activity is about and therefore, his/her answers to the questions asked are not correct.	He/she somewhat understands what the activity is about but he/she cannot give effective answers to the questions asked.	He/she understands what the activity is and he/she can answer to some questions	He/she understands very well what the activity is and he/she can answer to all questions.
<b>Fluency</b>	Student's fluency is very slow and indecisive except when recalling short or memorized expressions. Difficult for an auditor to figure out what the speaker is saying.	He/she makes sentences but they are incomplete. Fluency is slow and frequently indecisive but he/she is able to move on.	Fluency is mostly fluent but with some indecision	Fluency is effortless and fast such as the one from a native speaker

Adapted from: Rcampus TM

<http://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?sp=true&code=L47B4>

**Results of the rubric:**

	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>GRAMMAR</b>	<b>PRONUNCIATION</b>	<b>VOCABULARY</b>	<b>COMPREHENSION</b>	<b>FLUENCY</b>
<b>1</b>	Aguilar Karla	1	1	1	1	1
<b>2</b>	Aguilera Nicole	1	1	1	1	1
<b>3</b>	Alvarado Luis	1	1	1	1	1
<b>4</b>	Blanco David	1	1	1	1	1
<b>5</b>	Borbor Ma. Daniela	1	2	1	1	1
<b>6</b>	Carvajal Aaron	2	1	2	2	2
<b>7</b>	Córdova Juan	1	1	1	2	1
<b>8</b>	García Albhy	1	1	1	1	1
<b>9</b>	Garrido Arianna	1	1	1	1	1
<b>10</b>	Manzo Xavier	2	1	2	2	2
<b>11</b>	Matamoros Matías	2	2	2	2	2
<b>12</b>	Molina Ma. Camila	1	1	1	1	1
<b>13</b>	Moncayo Daniela	1	1	1	1	1
<b>14</b>	Orellana Ivanna	1	1	1	1	1
<b>15</b>	Orellana Rafaela	1	1	1	1	1
<b>16</b>	Pino Enzo	1	1	1	1	1
<b>17</b>	Suarez Romina	1	1	1	1	1
<b>18</b>	Toledo Santiago	1	2	1	1	1
<b>19</b>	Zurita Alejandra	1	2	1	1	2



## DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, **MINCHALA RÍOS MERCEDES MARGOT**, con C.C: # 092337441-7 autor/a del trabajo de titulación: **Analysis of the influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors in the development of the speaking competence of EFL 7th graders at Santiago Mayor School of Guayaquil** previo a la obtención del título de **Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa con mención en Gestión en Educación Bilingüe** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

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Guayaquil, 21<sup>st</sup> **day of March of 2017**

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## **REPOSITORIO NACIONAL EN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA**

### **FICHA DE REGISTRO DE TESIS/TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN**

<b>TEMA Y SUBTEMA:</b>	Analysis of the influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors in the development of the speaking competence of EFL 7 <sup>th</sup> graders at Santiago Mayor School of Guayaquil.		
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<b>FACULTAD:</b>	Artes y Humanidades		
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<b>ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS:</b>	Speaking skill, vocabulary, affective factors		
<b>PALABRAS CLAVES/KEYWORDS:</b>	vocabulary, affective factors, speaking competence, instruments of evaluation, quantitative research.		
<b>ABSTRACT</b> This project was carried out because of the noticeable inefficient speaking competence of seventh graders at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Santiago Mayor. It was extremely important to determine what performance displays were not well developed and what were the factors that negatively influenced on the learners' ability to communicate effectively. Two issues were studied as the ones that were affecting the speaking skills of the learners. They are: The influence of limited knowledge of vocabulary, and affective factors. Several sources as books and articles were consulted and relevant information was obtained to create the literature review of this project. A quantitative research was used to examine the research problem. The rubric to assess students' speaking skills along with learners' and parents' surveys that helped determine what hinder seventh grader students' speaking skills were used as instruments of evaluation for further analysis as well as for building the conclusion of this study. It was determined that the major aspects affecting their speaking competence are the limited knowledge of vocabulary and the influence of affective factors.			
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