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English for Ecuadorian Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Students

Masters Thesis

A requisite for being awarded the degree of

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**Declaracion Expresa**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this research work was to identify, analyze and interpret the factors affecting the English language achievement of Ecuadorian undergraduate Entrepreneurship students.

Guided by four research questions, this work was a descriptive case study involving qualitative and quantitative methods.  The target population was three cohorts of students from the senior semesters and one cohort in the process of graduation. The tools for collecting data were the course and formal examination scores analysis, questionnaires for teachers and students and class observations.  The study also involved an analysis of the formal and operational curriculum of the Entrepreneurship Degree Program.

Findings revealed that the factors contributing to low achievement are a mismatch in some aspects of the curriculum between both the English and Business areas plus other factors such as motivation and students' perception of the Program.

Based on these findings, some recommendation made include the development of a well-articulated Degree Program curriculum that meets the demands from both the English courses and business subjects as well as the improvement of communication and teamwork spirit between the two areas.  In general, the entire Faculty should pay more attention to students' attitudes towards the Program, and find ways to motivate them in order to get more effective learning outcomes.

**Resumen**

El propósito de este trabajo de investigación es identificar, analizar e interpretar los factores que afectan los logros en el aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en los estudiantes ecuatorianos de Pregrado en Emprendimiento. Guiada por cuatro preguntas de investigación, este trabajo es un caso de estudio descriptivo que involucra métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos. La población en estudio fueron tres promociones de estudiantes de los semestres superiores así como también una promoción en proceso de graduación. Las herramientas para recoger los datos fueron el análisis de las calificaciones de los cursos y de los exámenes formales, cuestionarios para profesores y estudiantes y observaciones áulicas. El estudio también involucró un análisis formal y operacional del Programa de la Carrera de Emprendimiento. Los resultados revelaron que los factores que contribuyen al bajo rendimiento son un desajuste en algunos aspectos del currículo entre las áreas de Inglés y Negocios más otros factores como la motivación y la percepción de los estudiantes acerca del Programa. Basado en los resultados, las recomendaciones incluyen el desarrollo de un currículo articulado del programa de la Carrera que permita satisfacer las demandas tanto de los cursos de Inglés como de las materias de Negocios, así como también mejorar la comunicación y el espíritu de trabajo en equipo entre las dos áreas. En general, todos los miembros de Carrera deben prestar más atención a las actitudes de los estudiantes respecto a la Carrera y buscar formas de motivarlos con el fin de lograr más efectivos resultados de aprendizaje.

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## Definitions

**Business English Certificate (BEC)**. Certificates that have been created specifically for individual learners who wish to obtain business-related English Language qualification. (Univeristy of Cambridge, 2006)

**Common European Framework (CEF)**.  This framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc across Europe.  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 to be able to act effectively.  The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set.  The Framework also defines levels of proficiency, which allows learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. (CEF)

**Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**.  It can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom (Richards, 2006, p. 2)

**Content Based Instruction (CBI)**.  The teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught (Nicole, 2002)

**Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).** any form of multilingual education is a meaning-focused learning method where language knowledge is not the ultimate aim but rather a vehicle for instruction. The aim of CLIL is twofold: learning subject matter together with learning a language (Marsh, 1999)

**English for Academic Purposes (EAP)**.  The teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach in that language. (Flowerdew, 2001, p.8)

**Likert Scale**:  A method of asking questions about attitudes, developed by Likert, an American psychologist and researcher on management styles (Spratt, 2004).  In Likert scales, people are asked to rate their degree of agreement with a series of statements, often on a scale of 1 to 5.

`**Non-participant Observation**:  It is where the researcher stands to one side and views the experience or environment (Slack, 2001).

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

**General Background of a Private University**

One of the most important private universities of a major Ecuadorian city has been running higher education services and other academic and technical programs for over 50 years with great success.  Its outstanding performance and spiritual approach have positioned it among the most well-recognized and prestigious educational institutions in the whole country.  This is why it is one of the universities with the highest number of students from other provinces.

One of the oldest faculties is the Business Administration Faculty, with its recently inaugurated ten story-building that include several facilities such as parking lots, lifts, toilets and vending machines on every story, snack bars, comfortable offices for every Degree, free internet, technological tools and spaces for resting.  This Faculty offers the following engineering degrees:  Tourism, Sales, International Commerce, Marketing, Entrepreneurship and the most recently launched degree, E-Commerce.  It has about 3000 students of which almost 50% come from other provinces.

**The Entrepreneurship Degree**

The Entrepreneurship Degree is relatively new in the Business Administration Faculty. It has around 230 students, 20 professors, 1 director, 1 dean, 1 academic coordinator, 4 area coordinators and about 3 people who comprise the administrative staff. Despite being small in number of students compared to the other degrees in the faculty, it has significantly grown in the last two years.

This Bilingual Degree is attractive for most high school-graduates and even for people who are already working in the business market.  The main reason for that is the curriculum itself, which combines both theoretical and practical approaches in a very innovative way.  The

intention of the program is that it provides students with the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to run their own businesses, even before the completion of the degree.  It also offers the possibility to get a bilingual professional title, something that is considered a plus in the very competitive world of business

Due to the existence of similar degrees in other universities, the curriculum in Entrepreneurship is constantly revised by academic experts and has been modified and improved since it started in 2005.

**The English Department and the Language Program**

The Entrepreneurship degree program has its own English Department.  It is made up of four professors, one of whom is also the coordinator.  Besides their professional degrees, all of them have academic qualifications in Business English.  One of them has a master's degree, and the other three are in the process of earning it.  Regarding formal teacher training, one of them is a certified teacher whereas the other three have experience in the field and have taken some on the job training.

The English Department holds meetings on a regular monthly basis in order to discuss academic aspects and make suggestions for enhancing the program when necessary.  Class observations are carried out at least once a semester.  Assessment, grade reports, remedial plans, student performance appraisals, updates of the syllabus and training sessions are also part of the Department activities.

The English Language Program consists of five language courses, fully oriented to the business area, which students are expected to pass during the first five semesters of the Entrepreneurship Program.  However, it is accepted that sometimes students delay their registration in the English Program for later semesters.  From the fourth to the eighth semester,

students are taught business-content subjects in English.  At this point, they are supposed to have gained the English knowledge and skills required to deal with the course content successfully.

The English Program involves the following language courses:  Basic, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced.  They focus on the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) within business contexts in accordance with the Common European Framework from the University of Cambridge.  Students attending the courses are assessed and evaluated through formal exams (midterm and final), class work (different class activities, tests and homework), and a tutorial (a project students have to present based on all the material learned in a semester).

Some students, who have graduated from bilingual schools or have learned English before, usually register for credit by exam.  Such recommendations are made according to the results of the English Placement test that is administered to all the students during the pre-course, before starting the 1st semester. The exam-takers must demonstrate proficiency in order to pass every course except the advanced one, which is mandatory for all.

Table 1 Elaborates the curriculum and schema of the English Program for the Entrepreneurship

Degree

Curriculum and Schema for English in the Entrepreneurship Program

| Activities | Content and Learning Activities |
| --- | --- |
| <ul><li>Basic communication skills, necessary for the learning of a language (reading, speaking, listening and writing</li><li>Vocabulary that business people use.</li><li>The particular language skills that learners require in order to do business in English</li><li>Grammar applied to business and reading material related to the area.</li></ul> | <ul><li>A wide range of the main topics and skill areas required by those working in a business environment</li><li>Grammar through discussion</li><li>Role-play activities</li><li>Authentic reading articles</li><li>Debate</li><li>Discussions with peers and professors</li><li>Presentations on Business topics</li><li>Listening materials</li><li>Varied exercises in a business context.</li></ul> |

Table 2

Entrepreneurship Program Applications

| Professional | Application |
|---|---|
| • The English Program facilitates getting and participating actively in business contexts. <br><br> • It helps develop the necessary skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing) to communicate effectively in senior semesters and in their professional future life. | • It allows students to use the language as a professional tool focusing on the essential language to socialize and work. <br><br> • It builds important general business vocabulary. <br><br> • As the economy grows, companies from different countries work, trade and communicate with each other. English is the language used for this communication. |

**Assessment**

Another element of the English Program in the Entrepreneurship Degree is the evaluation.  This is how the Program breaks it down in terms of percentages:

In every course, the partial grade of the subject is calculated considering the following criteria:

Classroom management (class work and quizzes)   25%

Tutorial                                                                   25%

Exams (Mid-Term and Final)                                 50%

The final grade of the subject is the average of the grades of both partials (Mid-Term and Final).

**The Entrepreneurship Program Faculty**

The Bilingual Business Department consists of seven professors, one of whom is the Director of the Entrepreneurship degree.  All the professors hold a professional degree in different business areas, have work experience and even run their own businesses. Only one of the professors has a Master's Degree, and the others are in the process of studying.  Regarding teaching experience, four of them have several years of experience as teachers whereas others have less than two years in the field.

The Bilingual Business professors belong to different areas such as Finance, Commerce and Entrepreneurship.  Nevertheless, the common factor among them is the fact that all the subjects they teach are in English.  These are the following: Opportunity for the Global Impact, E-commerce, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Finance, The Entrepreneur in Corporations, Community Consultancy, International Trade, Distribution Channels, International Relations and Strategic Planning

**Current Situation**

Considering that, the EDP has a bilingual curriculum, students who pass all the courses from the English Program are supposed to have reached language proficiency at a certain level, which enables them to succeed in the rest of the business subjects, taught in English. Nevertheless, the latest formal evaluations, examinations, class observations and teachers' reports reveal that some students have not fully achieved the desired level and others have not even reached an intermediate or basic level.  The low English level of the senior semester

students is a great concern for all of us in the English Department because many of them have already completed the five-course Language Program required in the curriculum.

The aim of the English Program is to prepare students for much more demanding English subjects in which the focus is on understanding the business course content, participating actively, discussing pertinent content with peers and professors, holding debates, and doing class presentations in the target language.  In other words, the focus stops being merely the English language.

Most of the professors teaching Business subjects have reported on a variety of problem areas for students regarding their English proficiency. The students lack language knowledge, and manifest low levels of participation.  The professors assert that some students appear to have interest in the subject but cannot communicate their ideas effectively while others are mostly passive listeners who do not even try to interact with their professor or their peers unless they are asked to do it.

Similarly, most students from sixth, seventh and eighth senior semesters also complain about the quality of teaching in the Business subjects.  They claim that some professors do not have pedagogical skills or effective methodology to teach them in a way they can understand and learn properly.  This is why most of these students constantly request to be taught in the L1 rather than in L2 in order to have a clear idea of what the class topics are about.  Through the formal institutional teacher observation form, one of the categories is the use of English by the teachers.  More than one of the academic coordinators have documented that many of the target professors resort to L1 in their lectures and even allow students to do the same when they have difficulties communicating in English.

The English Department faculty and administration is currently working on the problems that relate to the last formal English language evaluation given to the students who already finished the 8 semesters of study.  A new policy of the Director of the Entrepreneurship Degree states that all of the students in the graduation process have to register for the BEC Higher Exam from the University of Cambridge.  It is administered twice a year (June and December) by an authorized center in the city.  This examination has a C level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The level C student is considered a proficient speaker depending on the examination grade:

C1  Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced (grade B or C)

C2  Mastery or proficiency (grade A)

The CEFR describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level.

At C1 level, students are able to:

- Understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognizing implicit meaning.

- Express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.

- Use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.

- Produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

At C2 level, students are able to:

- Understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.

- Summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.

- Express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades even in the most complex situations. (CEF )

Most students were in total disagreement with the evaluation and even complained about it.  However, all of them paid the exam fee required for the graduation seminar.

The students in the graduation process had to take an English Language Proficiency exam designed by the English Department of the Entrepreneurship Program as a diagnostic test two weeks before the official BEC examination.  The results were not satisfactory at all.  Most students showed very weak skills and poor knowledge in most areas especially reading and listening

The English Department designed a tailor-made course (BEC exam preparation) for the students in the three senior semesters.  It consisted of practice from previous exams and techniques to be used in each of the sections.  This course lasted two weeks.  Fifty per cent of the students attended classes, from which only 20% attended regularly.  The attitude of the students towards the exam was negative.  Many of them left before completing the class or did not even attempt to do the exercises.

Regarding the BEC Higher examination, out of 27 registered students, only 18 took the exam, from which 12 students completed all the sections.  The results were that three students passed with the minimum score (band C) and nine failed.  The University of Cambridge sent the Director the results with details of the grades in every section.

**Rationale**

Taking into consideration the importance of the English language in the curriculum of the Entrepreneurship Degree and the unsatisfactory achievement of many students from the senior semesters, the English and Business faculty, authorities and especially the students need to identify and analyze the factors that are influencing the language learning process and performance of the target group. At the same time, it is necessary to take some preventive and remedial actions in order to improve the current situation.

Among the possible reasons for students' underachievement in the use of the English language in business contexts, the following are possible:

1. I identified An apparently weak evaluation system during the five-course program. Many students from the cohorts 2007 and 2008 who were not fully prepared, managed to pass the courses with the minimum required scores.

2. The lack of consistency among the objectives, contents and teaching methodology from both English and Business Departments.

3. The design of the Entrepreneurship Degree Curriculum, gives the students the flexibility to register in English content subjects in senior semesters without completing the English Program before.

4. Professors teaching English or other subjects based on expertise but without a teaching degree or sufficient training or work experience in the field.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to analyze and evaluate the English Curriculum of the EDP, and to explore and evaluate the current state of the program, as well as to offer an informed path

towards improving the overall English language achievement in the senior semesters of the Entrepreneurship Degree Program.

I   hope that this research will positively impact the English Department, the Entrepreneurship Degree, the Business Administration Faculty and for the university itself.  Our students have quite high expectations about the curriculum we offer them, the professors, the quality of teaching ,and the opportunity to get a bilingual title which will certainly open doors to them in the labor market locally or internationally.   Consequently, once we have spotted problems with the language achievement of learners in senior semesters, it is part of our academic, ethic and professional commitment to aim for success.   This means the learning community must look for the most adequate ways to reach the objectives and goals proposed as a department.

**Research Questions**

In this research study, I have sought to answer four research questions.   In order to address the current situation of the senior semester students from the Entrepreneurship Degree effectively, to get to the roots of the existing problems, and to recommend suitable changes, I have defined the following questions:

1. What has been the English language learning achievement of the students from the cohorts 2007 and 2008 from the Entrepreneurship Program?

2. What are the factors influencing the English language teaching-learning transactions of the students from the Entrepreneurship Degree in senior semesters, and how they are described?

3. What are the formal and operational aspects of the Entrepreneurship Degree Program and how do they interact with the English Program?

4. What remedial actions or changes could be implemented in the future in order to improve the current learning achievement of the target students?

**Proposed Themes for Research Exploration**

I set out to explore the following themes within the data collected for this study:

1. To analyze the level of English language learning achievement of the last three cohorts from 2007 and 2008 of the Entrepreneurship Degree.

2. To deeply analyze the current curriculum of the Business English Program including: the course syllabi, course objectives, teaching materials, content resources, resources, horizontal and vertical articulation of the courses, the teaching activities, the technology resources, and the articulation with the business course.

3. To analyze the resources from the Business English Program and the activities carried out by the English Department.

4. To identify and describe possible factors limiting the achievement level of students from the Entrepreneurship Degree in senior semesters.

5. Based on the findings of the study, suggest improvements in the curriculum of the English language program in the Entrepreneurship Degree Program.

The results from the present study may provoke some controversy among the professors of the EDP because the program designed and implemented for several semesters will be analyzed and tested; and this may lead to changes in the contents, methods, teaching approaches and the organization of the English Program and curriculum.

This research work will also have some limitations, which I explain as follows:

- Part of the sample, the cohort from 2007 (semester A) is not currently attending classes and most of them are in the process of completing the graduation requirements, so it will

not be possible to get as much information from them as from the other cohorts.  Apart from the grades from previous semesters and the records of formal examinations, no questionnaires or class observations were used with them.  This is a constraint because such group has seriously complained about their language proficiency level and had problems to pass the BEC examination.

- A significant number of students from senior semesters have not completed the English Program but still were evaluated as part of the sample because they have been reported for their low language level and usually have problems in most of the Business subjects.

## Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

In the last few decades, learning the English language has gained importance not only for the wide spread popularity it has around the world but mainly for the emerging and growing need to communicate in specific contexts.

English is more widespread in its distribution compared to many other spoken languages.  It is an official language in 52 countries as well as former colonies and territories.  It is estimated that there are 300 million native speakers who use English as a second language and a further 100 million use it as a foreign language.  It is the language of science, aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism.  English plays a part in the cultural, political or economic life of many countries. (O'Neil, 2011).  Harmer (2007) comments on the global status of English;

> We live in the era of globalization, in which people coming from all parts of the world need to exchange information on a daily basis. For various reasons, such as Britain's colonial history, the economic power of the United States, the popularity of American films and music, English has become the main medium of international communication (p.107).  Consequently, there is an ever-increasing need for quality English Language Teaching, which has brought about many changes. One of these is the division of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) into General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hutchinson and Waters, 1994, p.16)

**The Emerging of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

The field of English for Specific/Academic Purposes has developed rapidly over the past 40 years and become a major force in English language teaching and research (Savas, 2009). The idea of including content of a subject under study into a language classroom was first introduced in the 1970s by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They stated that the content of a

subject, for example economics or management, should be used for teaching a foreign language. The emphasis of ELT has always been on practical outcomes. It has always focused on the needs of learners and it has been preparing them to communicate effectively in the tasks required by their field of study or profession (Bojovi, 2006).

The idea of "natural" language acquisition promoted by Krashen (1981) supported this approach as both claim that the best way to learn a language is to use it for "meaningful" purposes. These meaningful purposes change greatly so various applications of ESP have arisen in terms of the field or the approach of teaching specific English; i.e EAP (English for Academic Purposes), CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), CBI (Content-based Instruction) and TBL (Task-based Learning).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) gave three reasons for the emergence of ESP, the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics and a new focus on the learner. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) attempted to apply a series of characteristics to resolve arguments about what ESP is.  They defined absolute and variable characteristics.

Absolute characteristics

- It meets specific needs of the learners.

- It makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.

- It is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

Variable characteristics of ESP

- May be related to or designed for specific disciplines

- May use in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English.

- Likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation.  It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level

- Generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. (p. 4).

**The Aim of ESP**

The great demand from professionals has brought about the need for ESP specialisms. All of them share common characteristics; such as specific needs, technical specialized vocabulary and documentation, specialized texts and interaction, an identifiable working environment and more. In order to meet this subject-specific need s in English teaching/ learning ESP mostly focuses on language skills, structures, functions and vocabulary that are needed by the members of the target group in both professional and vocational environment. (Harding, 2007).   Nevertheless, it should be stressed that, as Hutchinson and Waters (1994) emphasize, ESP "is not a particular kind of language or methodology" but "an approach to language learning, which is based on the learner need" (p. 19).  In this regard,   Belcher (2006), states that "ESP assumes that the problems are unique to specific learners in specific contexts and thus must be carefully delineated and addressed with tailored to fit instruction" (p. 135).

ESP concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures.  It covers subjects varying from accounting or computer science to tourism and business management.  The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world (or wishes); instead, it is integrated into a subject matter are important to the learners. (Fiorito, 2005).

Fiorito (2005) points out that as ESP is usually delivered to adult students, frequently in a work related setting, that motivation to learn is higher than in usual ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts.

The most important difference between ESP and EFL teaching lies in the learners and their purposes for learning English. For instance, ESP students are usually adults who already have some acquaintance with English and content knowledge in L1, and learn the foreign language in order to perform their professional skills and a set of particular job-related functions (Far, 2008).

What makes ESP unique and in demand, according to Dudley-Evans (1998), is that it is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions related to content and method are based on learners' reasons for learning. ESP courses bridge the gap between learners' basic English proficiency and their mainstream courses while helping students develop language, study, and research skills appropriate for study in a particular academic discipline or profession. The primary aim of an ESP program is thus to present a holistic English learning program for all students.

**Content-Based Instruction (CBI)**

The Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is one of the applications of ESP, which focuses on the teaching of academic English through content knowledge. Language learning and content of subject matter could be brought together because a foreign language is most successfully acquired when learners are engaged in its meaningful and purposeful use of the language. The integration of language and content involves the incorporation of content material into language classes. Content can provide a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning since it is interesting and of some value to the learner (Brewster, 1999).

Kasper (1997) has greatly strengthened the evidence for the effectiveness of content-based courses. She has reported both improved language and content performance among students exposed to content-based English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs and they

have higher scores in reading proficiency and higher pass rates in the ESL (English as a Second Language) courses.

Factors that demonstrate its success include high teacher and student interest, program enrollment, and student adjustment to future academic contexts (Grabe & Stoller, 1997).

**ESP Today**

For some time now, English has been the main language of international communication, which has become an integral part of most modern professions. To be able to communicate successfully in English, students of different professions are thus taught ESP, whose overriding characteristics are "the sense of purpose and the sense of vocation" (Harding, 2007, p.6). These characteristics predominantly focus on what students will need in their working environments, or, as puts it: "in ESP – English for Specific Purposes – the purpose for learning the language is paramount and relates directly to what the learner needs to do in their vocation or job" (p.6).

Nowadays, ESP is more widespread than ever considering the great number of terms created to fit the increasing range of occupations that require knowledge of the L2 in working environments.  It seems with increasing globalization and mobility of the world's workforce that the demand for specific courses will rise. (English for Specific Purposes Journal, year?).

**The ESP Practitioner**

As ESP teaching is extremely varied, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) use the term "practitioner" rather than "teacher" to emphasize that ESP work involves much more than teaching. According to Schleppegrell (1991) the practitioners' tasks are to analyze students' needs, outline objectives, select and adapt teaching materials, design lessons, create an adult-oriented learning environment, and assess students' progress.  ESP practitioners can have several

roles.  Dudley Evans (1998) describes the true ESP teacher or ESP Practitioner as needing to perform five different roles. These are teacher, collaborator, course designer and materials provider, researcher and evaluator.

**The ESP practitioner as a teacher**

ESP is a practical discipline with the most important objective of helping students to learn. However, the teacher is not the primary knower of the carrier content of the material. The students, especially where the course is specifically oriented towards the subject content or work the students are engaged in, may know more about the content than the teacher may. The teacher has the opportunity to draw on students' knowledge of the content in order to generate communication in the classroom.

**The ESP practitioner as course designer and material provider**

Since it is rarely possible to use a particular textbook without the need for supplementary material – sometimes no suitable published material exists for identified needs -            ESP practitioners often have to provide the material for the course. This involves selection of published material, adapting material if it is not suitable, or writing it.

Evaluation of course design and teaching materials should be done while the course is being taught, at the end of the course and after the course has finished, in order to assess whether the learners have been able to make use of what they learned and to find out what they were not prepared for.

**The ESP practitioner as research**

ESP teachers need to be in touch with the research. Teachers carrying out a needs analysis, designing a course, or writing teaching materials need to be capable of incorporating

the findings of the research, and those working in specific ESP situations need to be confident that they know what is involved in skills such as written communication.

**The ESP practitioner as collaborator**

It is believed that subject-specific work is often best approached through collaboration with subject specialist. This may involve cooperation in which ESP teacher finds out about the subject syllabus in an academic context or the tasks that students have to carry out in a work or business situation.  On the other hand, it may involve specific collaboration so that there is some integration between specialist studies or activities and the language.

**The ESP practitioner as evaluator**

The ESP practitioner is often involved in various types of evaluation - testing of students, evaluation of courses and teaching materials. Tests are conducted  to assess whether students have the necessary language and skills to undertake a particular academic course or career  and to assess the level of their achievement – how much learners have gained from a course.

In order to meet the specific needs of the learners and adopt the methodology and activities of the target discipline, the ESP Practitioner must first work closely with field specialists.  Orr (1995) states that when team teaching is not a possibility, the ESP Practitioner must collaborate more closely with the learners, who will generally be more familiar with the specialized content of materials than the teacher him or herself.

**Theories of Learning related to ESP**

ESP programs are content-based, task-based, interactive programs, which provide cooperative learning. Small groups of students work together to accomplish meaningful tasks in this approach to L2 learning so both cognitive and socio-cultural processes are at work together

(Mitchell & Myles, 2004).  Therefore, there are several theories of learning in general, learning L1 and L2, which all-together account for the reason why prospective ESP teachers should have training different from that of general English teachers.

As one of the socio-cultural approaches to second language acquisition (SLA), Vygotsky's Social Development theory says that children learn language first to meet their social needs but then they internalize it, which leads to the development of higher-order thinking and cognitive skills. This phenomenon is called the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky describes it as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Cawford, 1996).

Constructivist Learning Theory of Bruner (1983) is also compatible with proximal learning. He says language and content-area learners construct their own knowledge based on interaction with their environment. Effective teaching/learning enables learners to be in dialogue, to collaborate in the composition of knowledge and to share results of their inquiry (p. 60)

Anderson and Pearson's (1984) Schema Theory accounts for the mutual scaffolding process taking place during interaction. According to the theory, prior knowledge is essential for the comprehension of new information within a given text or context. Readers' mental stores are divided into two main types: "content schema" (reader's background knowledge of the world) and "formal schema"(readers' background knowledge of textual structure). Readers develop a coherent interpretation of text joining these two types of knowledge during reading. In the learners with formal schemas of academic language through academic content, they are already familiar with through their present and previous academic studies (Savas,2009).

Some theories account for the processes through which students accumulate scientific knowledge and competence in their L1 and then in L2 and the reason why Cooperative Learning (CL) is the most widely used approach to ESP teaching is that it is potentially beneficial for second language learners in a number of ways especially when performed through content.  First, CL can provide more opportunities for L2 interaction and improve L2 proficiency (Swain, 2001). It can also help students draw on their first language (L1) while developing L2 skills (Cohen, 1986).  It can also include opportunities for the integration of language and content learning. Content-based, collaborative and interactive ESP teaching, therefore, helps both the teacher and students scaffold each other as the students have stronger content schemas about a given text depending on their previous science training in their L1 provided that he/she has got training special to ESP teaching.

**The Achievement of Learners**

The starting point for all language teaching should be an understanding of how people learn, but it is too often the case that "learning" factors are the last to be considered. (Munby, 1978, p. 217)

The most proper way to understand the nature of "language" comes from the human thought processes.   Language is conditioned by the way in which the mind observes, organizes and stores information.  This means that the key to successful language learning and teaching does not consist in analyzing the nature of the language itself, but in understanding the structure and processes of the mind.  If we aim to improve the techniques, methods and contents of language teaching, we must base our work in the classroom on sound principles of learning. (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987)

Learning a second language is a process that undoubtedly takes time and effort. In this process, there are students who learn more quickly and easily. This is due to several factors that sometimes teachers do not notice or consider but have a great impact on their general achievement.

Student achievement is one of the main goals of education. Through decades, researchers and educators have conducted hundreds of studies and experiments in order to determine the factors that affect positively and negatively the achievement of learners. There are many studies on the factors influencing the English language achievement of learners and their impact in different contexts and levels. Most of them concur that these factors can be classified into internal factors such as age, personality, motivations, experiences, cognition and learners' own native language; and external factors such as curriculum, instruction, culture and status, motivation and access to sources of practice. Some researchers believe that students' characteristics, their living and learning environments and instruction activities contribute to student achievement (House, 2002). Similarly, Patrick (1991) found that achievement has been associated with the following factors: high educational attainment of parents, a home environment where reading and discussions of ideas are valued, limited television, significant amounts of time spent on homework assignments, and stable family structures. The author believes that student achievement is positively influenced by:

> A challenging subject matter; in-depth investigations of topics; discovery of alternative solutions to the problems; active learning and thinking; multiple resources and media for teaching and learning; use of technology; high expectation of student performance; a safe school climate; and authentic on-going assessment (p.2).

Many other researchers also believe that students learn best when they have an opportunity to discover and investigate  as well as to make connections between their studies and real life (House 2002; NAAEE & NEETF 2001, WDFD 1999; and Krynock and Robb 1999).

**Learning styles and achievement**

Kolb (1976) described learning styles as the individual's preferred method for assimilating information; it is an integral part of an active learning cycle.  They are also referred to as an individual set of differences of personal preference for instruction or an association with a particular form of learning activity (Riding & Rayner, 1999).  Learning styles are determined by different groups of style models based on the learning process, the orientation of study, instructional preference, and cognitive development. Understanding learning styles also helps to provide learning material guidance tailored to a learner's style of learning which may lead to more effective learning (Claxton & Murrell, 1987). Experiments performed by Schmidt (2004) revealed that targeting the right learning style could aid a learner's ability to expand his or her learning strategies.  These experts concur that knowledge of learning styles can positively affect learners' performance.

Klavas (1994), Thomas (2000) and others found that students show better achievement when teachers take into account students' varied learning styles. When teachers offer varied learning environments, students are more motivated, interested and engaged.  This makes sense because most students learn at their own pace, in an individual single manner, which usually differs from their peers in a same classroom.   The level of learning achieved by a learner is one of the most important factors which indicate the success of a learning environment.  In order to ensure the effectiveness of teaching environments, it is important to take account of

characteristics, abilities and experience of learners as individuals or as a group when beginning to plan a learning environment (Kemp, Morrison, Ross, 1998).

Planners, researchers and curriculum experts should consider how group or individual learners' characteristics, competence and experiences influence teaching the process of planning learning environments (Kemp, Morrison, Ross, 1998).  However, all human beings have common bio-psychological and social characteristics in learning process, individual preferences concerning the ways of giving meaning and acquiring information may vary.  In the literature, there exist numerous learning styles and learning style models.  The differences among definitions and models result from the fact that learning is achieved at different dimensions and that theorists define learning styles by focusing on different aspects.

Shuell (1986) explains that according to learning styles, individuals use different ways to process and organize information or to respond to the environment.  Jensen (1998) defines learning style as a sort of way of thinking, comprehending and processing information. To Kolb (1984), learning style is a method of personal choice to perceive and process information. In this sense, learning style is, on one hand, sensory and, on the other hand, mental.

**The Affective Factors:  Learners as Emotional Beings**

Brown (2000) asserts that studies of motivation of second/foreign language learners often refer to a distinction between two types of motivation namely, instrumental versus

integrative motivation.

Deci and Ryan (1985) found that one of the factors influencing English language learning is intrinsic motivation.  It is related to basic human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Intrinsically motivated activities are those that the learner engages in for their own

sake because of their value, interest, and challenge. Such activities present the best possible opportunities for learning.

**Other Factors Influencing Achievement**

There are individual differences in second-language learning.  Language attitudes in the learner, the peer group, the school, the neighborhood, and society can have an enormous effect on the second language learning process, both positive and negative. Students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs and goals (Skehan, 1989)     Almost all research studies name socio-economic status as one of the factors that affects student learning (Howley 1989; House 2002).   Some of them believe that students learn better if they are from above-average or average income family, with well-educated parents who participate in their education processes and encourage them to learn.  When parents are involved in their children's education, they get better grades and test scores, better attitudes and behavior (Brown 1999; Peterson 1989, etc.).  In addition, as argued by Harris and Mercier (2000), student achievement is affected not only by the family environment but also by the neighborhood where the student lives. Safe neighborhoods that value education and participate in school events and projects can provide additional reinforcement for students.  According to the literature, the method of instruction also affects student-learning achievement. Hitz and Scanlon (2001) have stated that students who attended traditional teacher-centered classes showed better results immediately after the program. However, students who were taught using project-based methods had a greater level of retention and an ability to use received knowledge and skills over time.

**The Elements of Language Curriculum**

**Needs Analysis**

An English for Specific Purposes Program such as the one currently existing in the Entrepreneurship Degree starts with the question "why do these learners need to learn English?" The aim of the Program is not only to address the need itself but mainly to create awareness of it among the learners.  Many authors have classified the target situation in terms of necessities, lacks and wants.

**Necessities**

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), necessities are the type of needs determined by the demands of the target situation; that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation.  For example, a businessperson might need to understand business letters, to communicate effectively at sales conferences, or to get the necessary information from sales catalogues and so on.

**Lacks**

To identify necessities alone, however, is not enough, since the concern in English for Specific Purposes is with the needs of particular learners.  It is necessary to know what the learners know already, so that it is easy to identify which of the necessities the learner lacks.  The target proficiency in other words, needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of the learners.  The gap between the two can be referred to as the learner's lacks.  (Hutchinson, Waters & Breen, 1979)

**Wants**

**A** relationship between learners needs, as perceived by the sponsor or teacher, and what the learners want or feel they need may not exist.  Bearing in mind the importance of learner motivation in the learning process, learner perceived wants cannot be ignored (Mead, 1980).

Objective and subjective views of needs can, and do, conflict, with a consequent de-stabilizing effect on motivation.  What should the teacher do in such situation?  There can be no clear-cut answers.  Each situation must be judged according to the particular circumstances and context.  What is important is that the course designer or teacher be aware of such differences and take them into account when making decisions about materials and methodology. (Davies & Currie, 1971)    In view of the complexity of needs, it is desirable to use more than one method.  The choice will obviously depend on the time and resources available.  It is also important to remember that needs analysis is not a once-for-all activity.  It should be a continuing process, in which the conclusions drawn are constantly checked and re-assessed (Drobnic, 1978, p. 53)

**The Teaching of the English language**

Teaching a language is an interesting and exciting occupation.  Since the nature of language and its complex operations is still a matter of controversy and since the psychologists have still much to learn about how language is acquired –the native language as well as second or third language – teachers have an open field.  Teachers are free to experiment and innovate.  They can appropriate what has proved successful in other times and places.  They can repeat and refine what they have found to be effective in their own circumstances with their students (Rivers, 1978).

Learning to use a language freely and fully is a lengthy and effort process.  Teachers cannot learn the language for their students.  They can see their students on the road, helping them to develop confidence in their own learning powers.  Then they must wait on the sidelines, ready to encourage and assist, while each student struggles and perseveres with autonomous activity. (Temperly, 1978).

**Communicative Language Teaching**

The communicative approach has its origins in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s and more generally in the developments of both Europe and North America. This approach varies from traditional approaches because it is learner-centered (Altenaichinger, 2003)    Linguists state that there is a need to focus on communicative proficiency in language teaching and that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can fulfill this need (Meister, 2002, p. 34).

There are many reasons for the expansion of Communicative Language Teaching.  One of them is the work of the Council of Europe in the field of communicative syllabus design; the theoretical ideas of the communicative approach applied by textbook writers; and there was a great acceptance of these new ideas by British language teaching experts and curriculum development centers (Meister, 2002).

Proponents of CLT state that the goal of language teaching is communicative competence.  Another aim is the development of procedures for the teaching of the four language skills (writing, reading, speaking, listening).  Moreover, the four skills build the basis of the interdependence of language and communication (Richards and Rodgers 1986).        One of the most important aspects of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language.  Learners should work in pairs or groups and try to solve problematic tasks with their available language knowledge (Littlewood, 1981).  Howatt (1984) distinguishes between the weak and a strong version of Communicative Language Teaching. "The weak version, which seems to be standard by now, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes.  The strong version claims that language is acquired through communication (p. 279).

**Teaching Business English**

Given the role English plays around the world, it is not surprising that a substantial and growing number of schools choose English-medium instruction at the secondary and tertiary level.  Moreover, the increased number of emigrants to English-speaking countries and the demand for MBA courses in all parts of the world have increased the demand for professional and business English, vocational English, and English in the workplace programs. (The Journal of international Social Research, 2009).

Similarly, following the *Bologna Declaration*, a document issued by Education Ministers  from 29 European countries which provides a framework for higher education across Europe, many universities in non-English speaking countries in Europe started offering English-medium programs with the intent of  removing language obstacles and increasing student and staff mobility (Radu, 2006).  Now, students seek a full foreign degree, among other reasons, to enhance their employability and increase their opportunities for professional mobility (Marginson & Mc.Burnie, 2004).

**Materials**

ESP learners often feel more affinity for materials that they find relevant to their area of speciality. The use of subject-specific textbooks is also more in line with the realization that students are individuals with different needs, styles, and interests and with some central traits of cognitive theory, which, as Skela (2008) points out, are the following:

- It focuses on purposeful learning;

- The learner is seen as an active processor of information;

- Learning is the process by which the learner tries to make sense of the information by imposing a meaningful interpretation or pattern on it;

- One of the basic teaching techniques is problem-solving;

- Recently it has been associated with a focus on deliberate acquisition of a language as a logical system;

- The importance of carefully selected rules, which can provide an important

  shortcut in learning process  (p. 159).

This chapter summarizes the review of literature, which explores the importance of the English language particularly ESP and CBI and their influence in professional life and in the business world in general.  This report on the literature explored the theories of learning related to ESP as well as learning styles and factors that influence the achievement of learners.  Finally, it provides useful information related to the Elements of Language curriculum addressing particular attention          to          the          teaching          of          Business          English.

**Chapter 3 - Methods**

This research work is a descriptive case study in which I have done an intensive analysis of the English Program and the factors influencing the language learning achievement of the senior semester students from the cohorts 2007 and 2008 in the Entrepreneurship Degree.

The methods used are both quantitative and qualitative.    The quantitative approach was valuable in order to explore the subjective experiences of the individuals from the population and the quantitative approach facilitated the development of quantifiable information.

The qualitative researched involved the analysis of data such as words from interviews, classroom observations, etc whereas the quantitative research dealt with the analysis of numerical data such as test scores, surveys, etc.

I carried out the study in the Entrepreneurship Degree Program from the College of Business Administration in a private university in Ecuador.  Since the creation of the EDP in 2005, 3 cohorts of students (about 20 in each) have graduated and obtained their professional title in the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively.  Due to changes in the administrative and academic staff, Director of the Program, evaluation system, as well as the fact that many of the graduated students are not reachable because they are studying abroad, it is difficult to have access to all the required data related to them.  That is why my study is based on students who are currently enrolled in the Degree in senior semesters ($6^{th}$, $7^{th}$ and $8^{th}$ semesters). I have made the choice to do my research on the achievement of such students because they are the ones who are experiencing all the problems explained previously.

**Participants**

The participants include a total of 20 senior students from the cohort enrolled in the first semester of 2007, those who have already completed all the curriculum (including the English

Program), projects, seminars, and internships required in the Degree; leading them to the graduation process.

A total of 12 students from the cohort enrolled in the second semester of 2007, who expect to complete or almost complete the English program and are currently attending business courses taught in English in the eighth semester. A total of 24 students from the cohort enrolled in the first semester of 2008, those who have are expected to have completed the English program and are currently attending business subjects taught in English in the seventh semester of the Degree. A total of 27 students from the cohort enrolled in the second semester of 2008, those who expect to complete the English Program, and are currently attending business courses taught in English in the sixth semester of the Degree.

**Sample Design**

Considering that the number of students in the EDP is manageable and the arrangement of the classes is easy to handle, I have decided to choose all the population described above. A total number of around 83 students in the three selected cohorts were taken as the sample of the present study. An additional 15 faculty members participated as well, from the English Department and from the business courses in senior semesters.

Data and information were also collected from institutional curriculum documents, faculty files, and grade books. The administrative staff, director, coordinators, professors and student population are both men and women.

**Presentation of the sample cohorts**

**Students enrolled in 2007 (semester A):** There are about 20 students in this cohort. Many of them graduated in schools from different provinces of the country, as well as from bilingual schools from Guayaquil. They are currently attending graduation seminars, doing

practices, completing the community service part of the program and presenting final projects. In the second quarter of 2011, they were evaluated through the English Language Exam to validate their competencies in the use of business English before taking the official BEC Higher examination from the University of Cambridge.   Most of them could not pass.  They were then required to take a 30-hour tailored-made course as preparation for the exam.   Very few students attended these classes and many of them had a very low language level plus negative attitude towards their own learning.  Only three students passed the official exam with the minimum required score.

**Students enrolled in 2007 (Semester B):**   They are about 12 and many of them graduated in schools from different provinces of the country.  They are currently attending classes in the 8th semester of the Degree or have almost completed the curriculum.  They are about to start the graduation process. In this cohort, there are students who have completed the English Program as well as those who did not take the courses on time and are currently attending them in junior semesters. Most of the students who complain about their lack of knowledge and skills on the language belong to this cohort.  Professors teaching business subjects also reported difficulties in comprehension and communication with these students. All the 8$^{th}$ semester students had to shift from a non-bilingual to a bilingual curriculum.  Many of the subjects that are now taught in English were taught in Spanish to them.   The English Department also had several changes, such as new Coordinator, professors, textbooks and grading criteria.

**Students enrolled in 2008 (semester A)**:  There are about 24 students and some of them graduated in schools from different provinces of the country.  During the time of this research

study, the students from this were attending classes in the $7^{th}$ semester (or in more than one of the senior semesters).

All these students have gone through a bilingual curriculum from the beginning of their enrollment. They have taken the business courses in the L2, and have gone through the English Program under the supervision of the Coordinator and most of the professors that are currently in charge. They are familiar with the use of Cambridge textbooks and the Common European framework criteria. In this cohort, there are fewer but still significant number of students with language proficiency problems.

**Students enrolled in 2008 (semester B)**: They are about 27. Many of them graduated from non-bilingual schools from different provinces of the country. They are currently attending classes in the sixth semester. Most of these students started the Degree with very basic or no knowledge of the English Language. Several of them have improved considerably but still struggle with the use of L2 in business subjects. A significant number of students have not completed the English Program because they have failed the courses.

## Data Collection Instruments

For the effectiveness of the research, I gathered data from both primary and secondary sources. I used the following primary sources: classroom observation documents, student questionnaires, English teacher questionnaires, Quantitative data sources included BEC test scores and English course grades.

**Observation:** This was non-participant observation. The cohorts from 2007(B) and 2008(A and B), who are the ones currently attending classes were observed in three different Business classes in order to analyze the level of participation, involvement and interest, as well as the teaching techniques and approaches used by the professors in charge of them. The

Coordinators of the English Language Program and Business Department were in charge of observing the target classes without interacting with the students. The observation format was adapted from Danielson's Framework for Professional Practice.  The recording of the observation was in categorical Likert format in order to classify various aspects of the interaction (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree

I tabulated and measured the results and then drew conclusions. The observation form can be found in Appendix C .

**Questionnaires:**  Two types of questionnaires were designed for the present study: a questionnaire was especially designed for students participating in the study.  It consisted of questions addressing their personal and academic background.  Questionnaires targeted information about English language skills at admission in the Degree, family level of education, former and current teachers in the university, school where they graduated, textbooks, evaluation system, family and faculty support, attitude towards learning and others.  Students will tick the option that best describes their answer.  The category "other/explain" will also be given.

A second questionnaire was designed for the teachers from the English Department in which issues related to their own teaching experience and interaction with the students in the classroom.  A set of open-ended questions were set up regarding techniques, language proficiency of students, textbooks, formal and informal evaluations, resources, ways to improve the current situation and the layout of the English Program itself.

Results from both questionnaires were discussed in a faculty meeting including professors from both the English and business areas.

Among the secondary sources, the following were used:

**Analysis of test scores (skill-wise achievement)** from the English language Program of Ss. enrolled in 2007 and 2008. In this section, the passing grades of each of the courses as well as remedial exam grades are taken into account. The grades were entered, tabulated and placed in a scale of four categories (outstanding, very good, good, fair) in order to compare results and measure the proficiency level of the students throughout the Program for each semester.

**Analysis of the score of formal examinations (Business English Proficiency Test and BEC Higher)** the grades of the Business English Proficiency Test administered to the target groups were collected and analyzed. The results will be classified into four categories (Incomplete, absent, fail, pass). In the case of the BEC Higher, the results are sent by the University of Cambridge and analyzed according to the Common European Framework criteria

**Chapter 4 - Results**

This research aims to identify and analyze the factors influencing the students' performance and achievement in a Bilingual Business Degree and its impact in senior semesters. The data collected confirm the fact that there are several factors affecting the teaching-learning process of the target students.

Two types of data were collected for the objectives of the study: primary and secondary.

**Findings**

**Observations:** They were carried out using the institutional Class Observation Format (Appendix C) adapted from Danielson's Framework for Professional Practice (1996)

English Program classes (students attending courses 1 to 5)

Business subject classes taught in L2 (senior semester students) the formal observation form has evaluation criteria that include:

- Stages and flow of the lesson: The teacher has planned the lesson carefully. All stages are clearly observed (Presentation, Practice, and Production)

- Teaching methodology: Methodology is appropriate for the lesson in terms of level and the subject being taught.

- Active participation: T. successfully engages virtually all Ss. in instructional activities. Most Ss. appeared to be motivated and willing to work. Off-task behavior is rarely observed.

- Effective feedback: T. is updated with contents to be taught. T. uses a variety of question types to stimulate discussion, anticipates to Ss' concerns and is prepared to explain lesson features at an appropriate level of understanding.

- Contents are related to reality: T. stimulates students to use critical thinking. Contents are directly related to real-life situations, Ss' own interests and pre-professional training.

- General class procedures:  T. encourages Ss. to follow class procedures (avoid the use of mobile phones or other electronic gadgets, use of L2, original textbooks, discipline, punctuality, respect, etc)  If not, T. takes steps to improve the situation.

Each of them has clear and concrete indicators of what should be observed and a format of the five-level Likert item:

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neither Agree nor Disagree

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

The teachers I observed were 3 from the English Area and 7 from the Business Area. The number of students per classroom was around 15.  The length of each class observation was about 50 minutes, followed by a 30 minute-feedback session. Each of the coordinators kept records from every observation.  These were documented and filed as part of the process of university accreditation.

Table 3 Class Observations results (English and Business area classes)

**English Area Observations**

Regarding the stages and flow of the lesson, most of them were clearly observed except for the production stage, which was quite weak in almost all the classes.   In general, the methodology applied by the teachers was student-centered, communicative, and skills-oriented apart from teacher one's class in which several activities was teacher-centered and too controlled at all stages of the lesson.

Apart from Teacher one, all the others tried to highlight students' active participation through different class activities such as games and mini-presentations. However, students' talking time was sometimes too short compared to the teachers'.  In most classes, students' opportunities to produce language were limited and taken over by those who tend to dominate or liked to participate in a volunteer way.

Most teachers used a variety of question types to stimulate discussion and explained lesson features at an appropriate level of understanding.  Students were provided with a lot of feedback, except in one of the classes where the teacher did not respond to students' queries and avoided giving them the results of their class presentations. Regarding critical thinking, it was not strongly stimulated in all the classes.  Most class topics were appropriate for discussion. However, teachers did not give students' the chance to express their opinions and ideas beyond the textbooks.  One of the classes observed was merely a grammar lesson in which there was a lot of controlled practice and very little content related to real-life situations.          Class management seemed to be effective in one of the classes whereas in the others some aspects such as punctuality and use of L2 were weak.  Nevertheless, these did not really interfere in the flow of the lesson itself.

**Business Area Observations**

I observed the stages and flow of the lesson in some of the classes, while in others, I only observed the presentation and practice stages, while production was not achieved at any stage of the lesson. Most activities were student-centered and communicative. There was quite a lot elicitation and peer correction. On the contrary, in other classes, almost all the activities were teacher-centered; there was little teacher-student interaction and almost no student-to-student interaction. Classes were lectures where teachers provided all the information, and students were passive listeners.

Concerning students' participation, it seemed to be good in many of the classes. Teachers engaged students in most instructional activities such as presentation, debates, teacher-student/student-student interaction, discussion and debates. Most students appeared to be willing to work. In some classes, off-task behavior was observed at times, lack of motivation and interest, which were reflected in the poor participation of some students and too much teacher talking time. Interestingly, in one of the classes with the lowest class participation, the problem did not seem to be motivation but the use of L2. Almost all the students seemed to have very low levels of English and could not communicate in English well. Almost all the students seemed to have very low level of English so they resorted to the L1 very often. They appeared to be interested in the class topics but when it came to express their opinions, they were unable to do it. This is why one or two students usually take over the class and interact with the teacher most of the time. I observed often, that almost all the Business Area teachers interacted only with those who wanted to participate freely and avoided asking weak students to speak English in class. Students who seemed to lack language knowledge and skills rarely talk in these classes. They did not see bothered by not being asked anything. In some cases, the seating arrangement

did not help.  Some students preferred to sit far from the teacher so the opportunities to interact were even fewer.  All except one of the teachers generously provided feedback in all the Business Area classes.  They seem to be up-to-date with the instructional content.  They used a variety of question types to activate students' prior knowledge. Some of these questions were:

- What did we talk about last class?

- Can anybody give some examples about…?

- Did you study this before?  What do you remember about it?

All the business teachers appeared to be prepared to explain the lesson features at an appropriate level of understanding, even for weak students.  Evidently, though there was a lot of an input, student were taught in a clear and coherent way.  Another thing I observed in almost all the classes was the use of content related to real-life situations, students' own interests and pre-professional training.  Since all the Business Area professors are quite experienced, it was easy for them to come up with their workplace experiences and even anecdotes in order to explain topics in a more realistic way.  There was only one class where critical thinking was not observed because the teachers focused on explaining math operations and did not relate them to practical business issues.  Class management was good in half of the classes whereas in the others many students did not seem to be aware of some procedures such as the use of mobile phones, punctuality and the use of L2.  Most teachers did not notice the problems and the others just took them in stride.

The use of the L2 was not encouraged in several classes.  Many students used the L1 most of the time, with the teacher and with other students.  It seemed that they were used to doing this on a regular basis without being corrected at all.  In other cases, the L2 was not used due to language proficiency problems.  Apparently, such students were not able to communicate

either in English or in Spanish.  In this respect, teachers said that they were aware of the lack of knowledge of those students and that was why they had not taken any steps to make them participate.

**Questionnaires**

In this Figure 1, we can observe the types of schools where the target group of learners studied and graduated. As noted, in most of their schools were English was taught only three times a week.  However, there is small difference compared to the number of students who graduated in bilingual schools and those where English was taught 5 times a week.

Figure 1: English Language Background of the Students
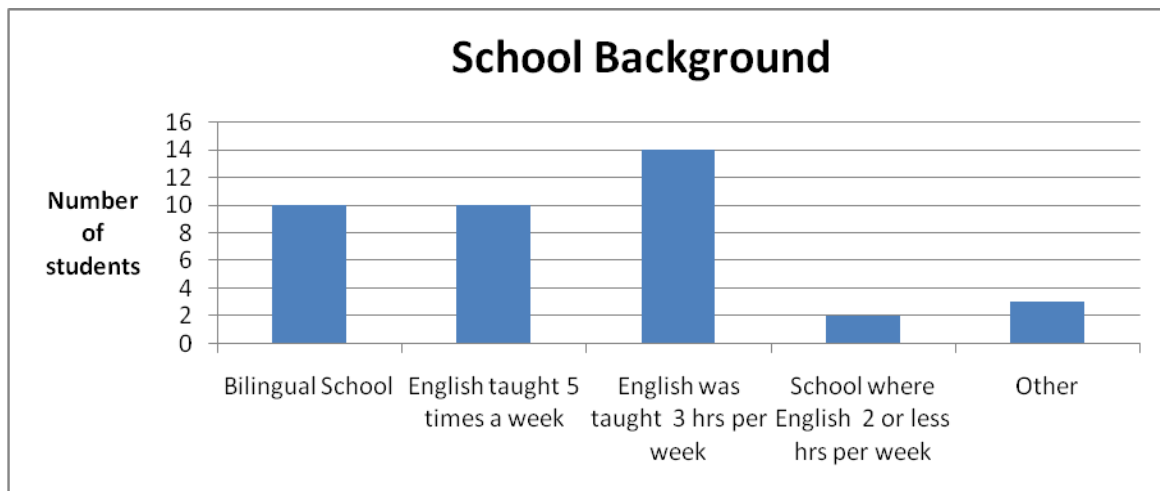


Figure 2 indicates that most students from senior semesters had a Basic English language level at admission to the Degree.  This number is followed by those students who had low and upper intermediate skills.  According to the results shown, nobody had an advanced level.

Figure 2: English Language Skills at Admission

## English Language skills at admission

Number of students

(bar chart: Basic 17, Low Intermediate 13, Upper Intermediate 9, Advanced 0, Other 0)
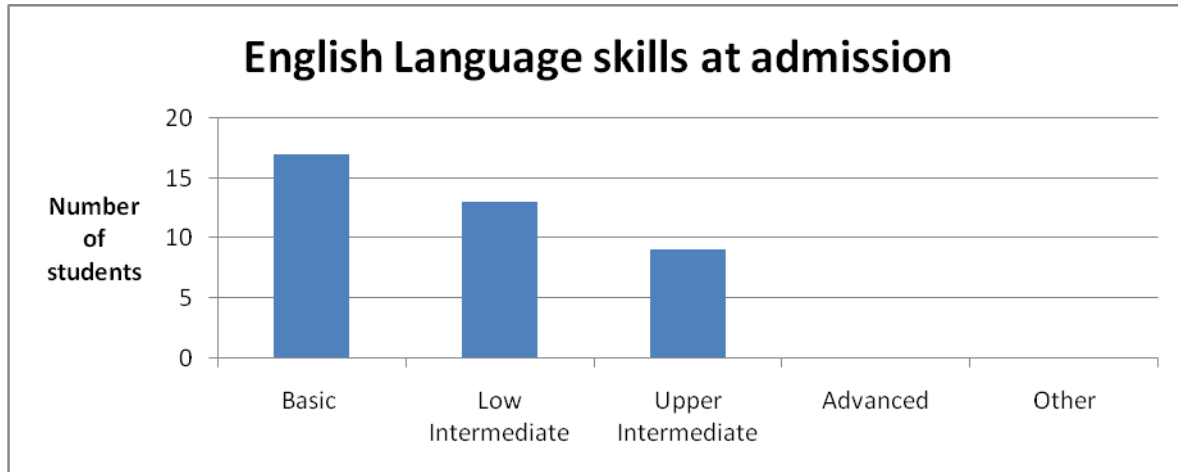
According to the results, most of the students thought of themselves as having an upper intermediate English level at the time of admission.  There was a considerable group of students with a low intermediate level.  The minority of the students had either basic or advanced language skills.

Figure 3:  Current English Language Skills

## Current English Language skills

Number of students

(bar chart: Basic 2, Low Intermediate 14, Upper Intermediate 21, Advanced 2, Other 0)
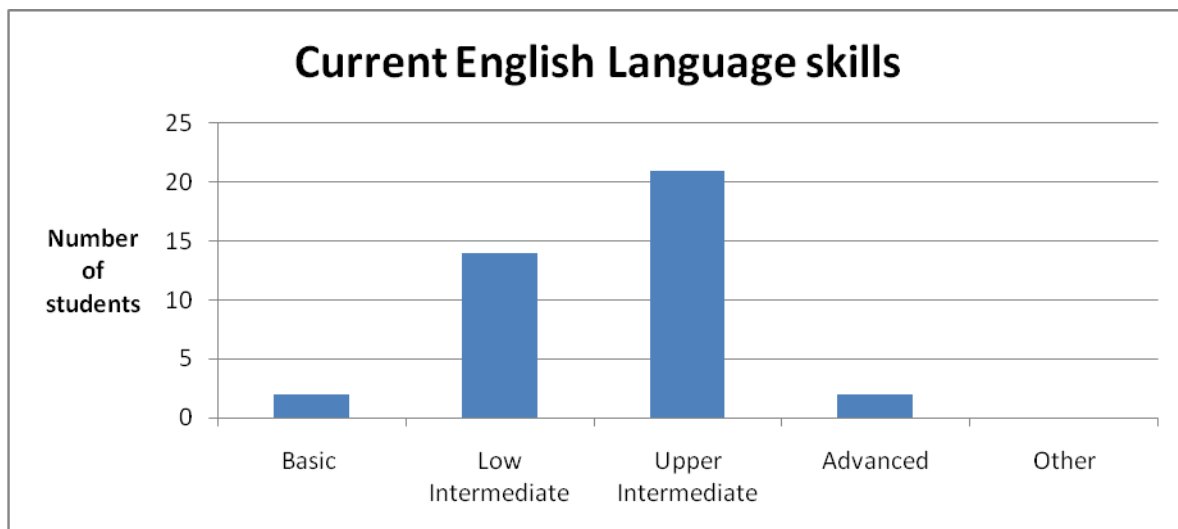
The data in Figures 4 and 5 show that, there is an equal number of students whose fathers have professional degrees and do not have it.  Few fathers have a Master's or PhD Degree. Most mothers from the target group of learners do not have a professional degree.    There are a considerable number of mothers with a professional degree similar to fathers in the Figure 4 below. Very few have a Master's or PhD Degrees.  Among the group "other", students usually

referred to some technical studies or other non-professional training their mothers have gotten or will get soon.
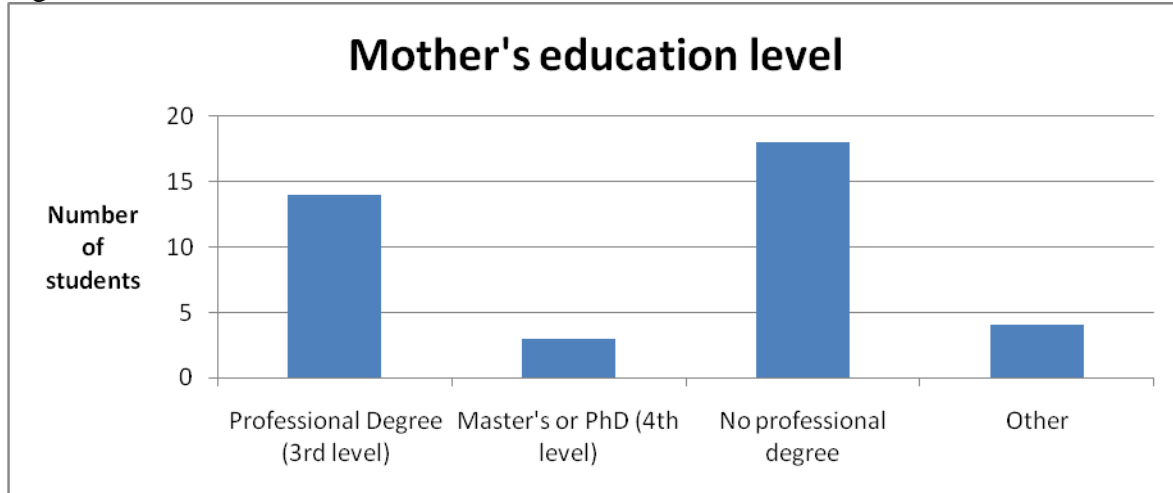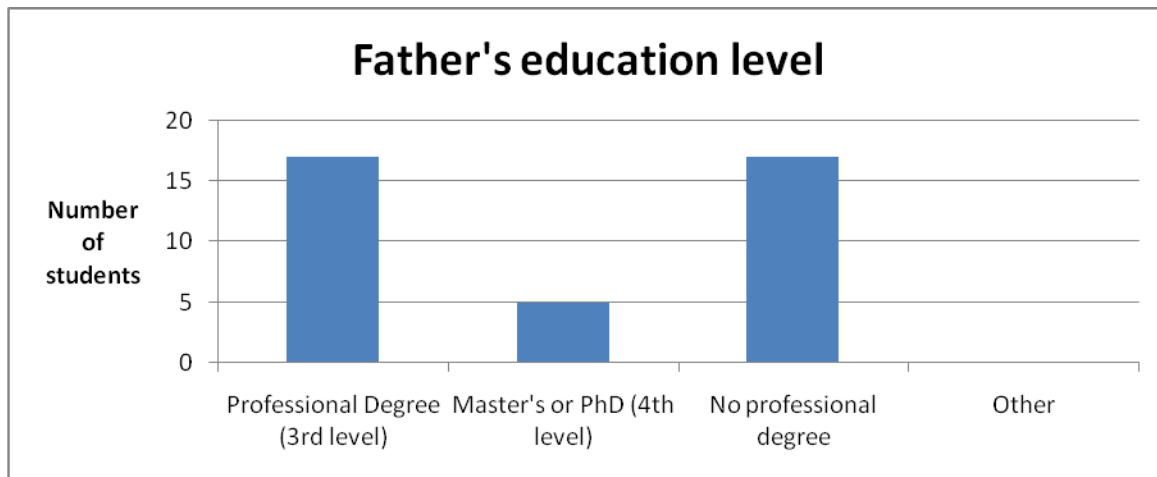
Figure 4:  Mother's education level



Figure 5:  Educational Background.



As shown in Figure 6, most of the participants in the research study live with both parents, followed by those who live only with one of the parents and the ones who live with siblings or friends.  Very few students live alone.  Among the group "other", some students explained that they live with other relatives such as aunts, grandparents, or cousins.

Figure 6:  Family Situation
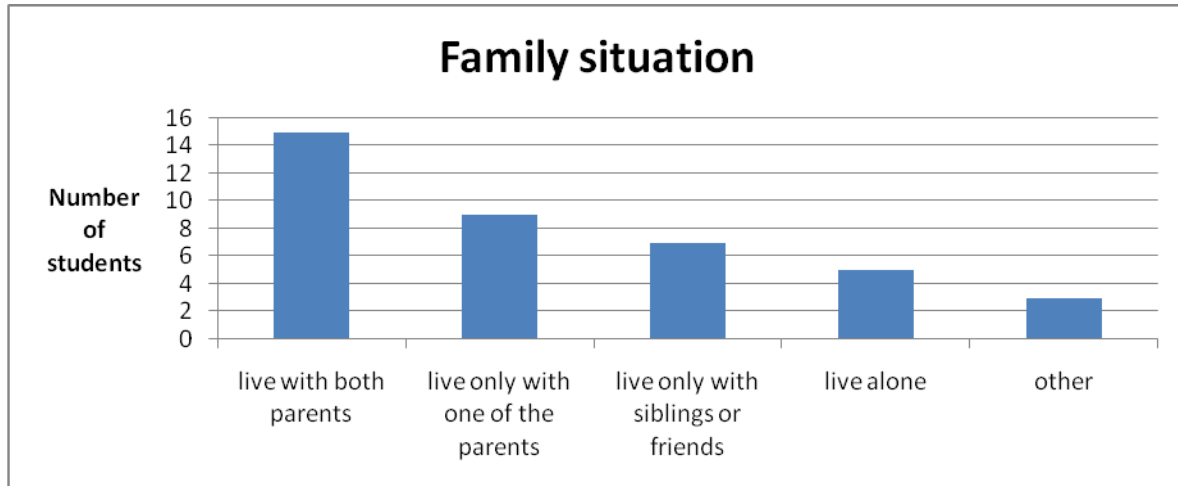
Figure 7 shows that most of the participants in the study refer to belonging to the middle class group.  There is a quite significant difference compared to the ones who belong to the upper-middle-class.  In contrast, the number of students that belong to the lower-middle class is quite small and no students have reported to be part of the upper class group.

Figure 7:  Family Economic Status
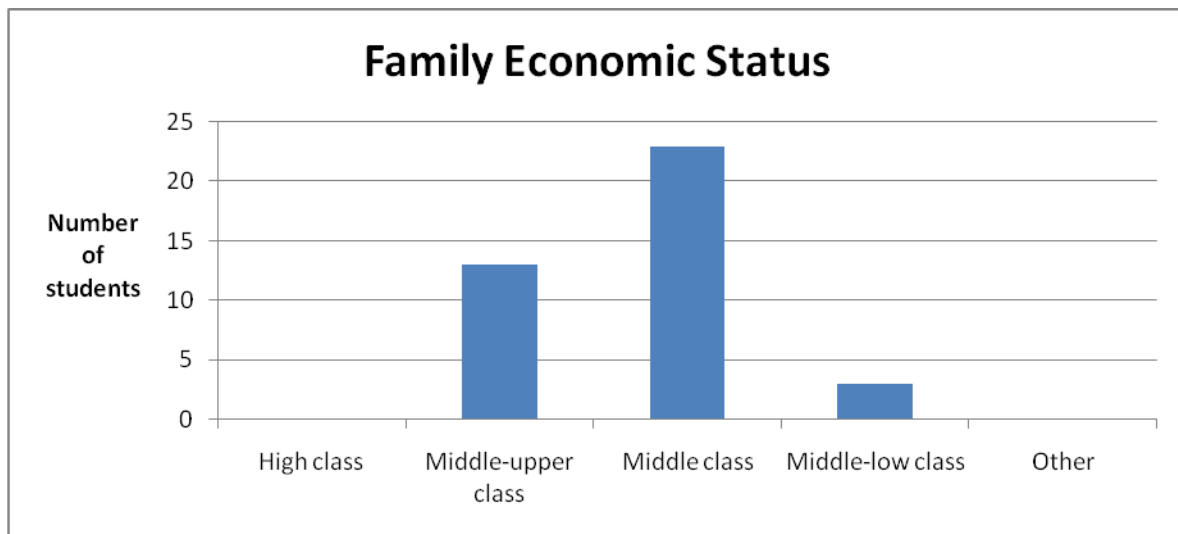


**The English Language Program**

The data in the Figure 8 show that more than 50% of study participants think that the number of courses in the English Language Program is okay.  Similarly, the same percentage of

learners thinks that they are not enough.  This means that opinions are clearly divided between both options.  On the contrary, almost no one thought that there are too many English courses.

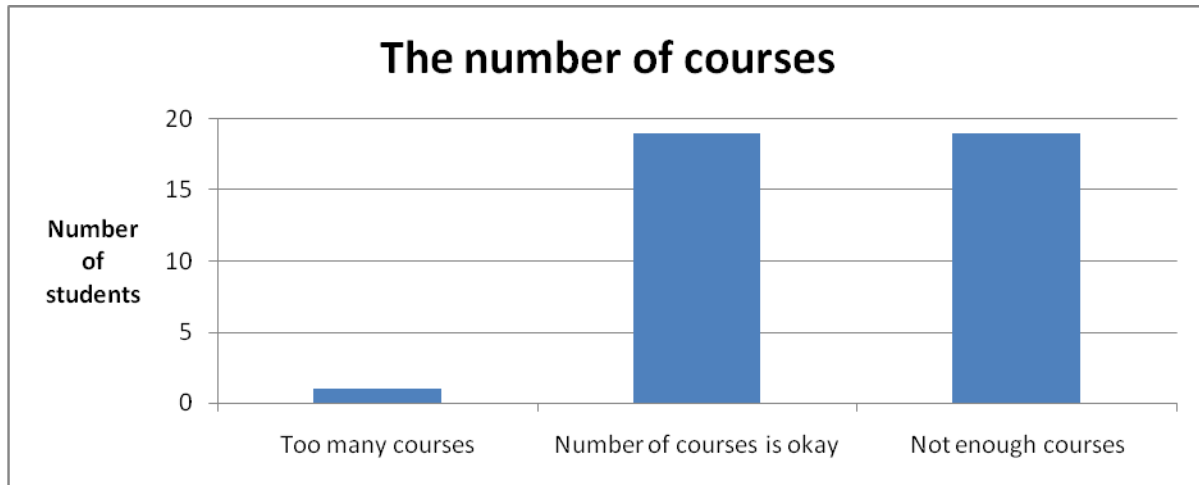Figure 8:  The number of courses in the English Program



Figure 9 shows that many students from the target group consider that most English program teachers were helpful.  A smaller number of learners think that only some of them were helpful.  Only a small minority indicated that none of the teachers was helpful.

Figure 9:  Helpfulness of the Teachers in the English Program
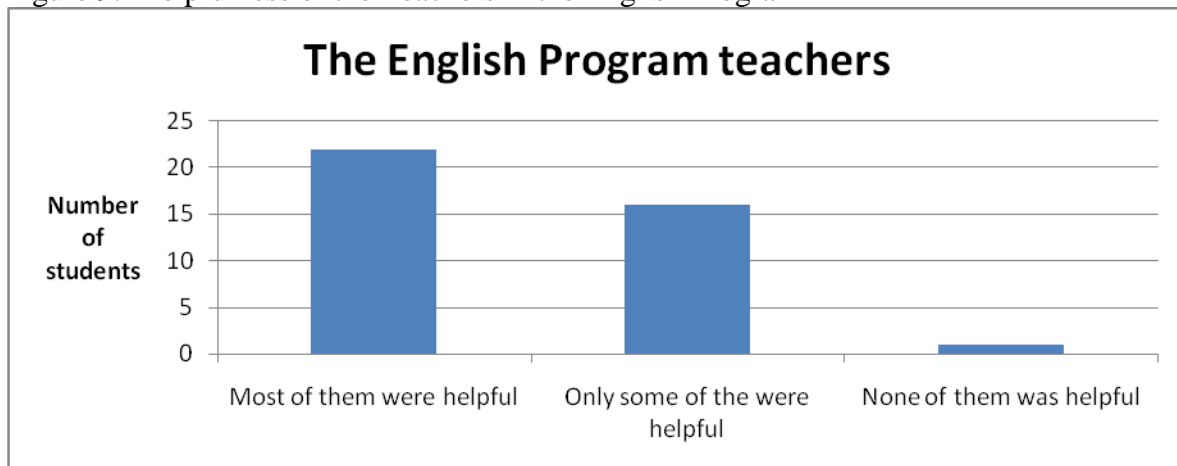


According to the results shown in Figure 10, the students in the study found most textbooks quite useful.  On the other hand, there were a similar number of students who found the textbooks either somewhat useful and not useful.

Figure 10: Student's Perceptions of the English Language Textbooks.
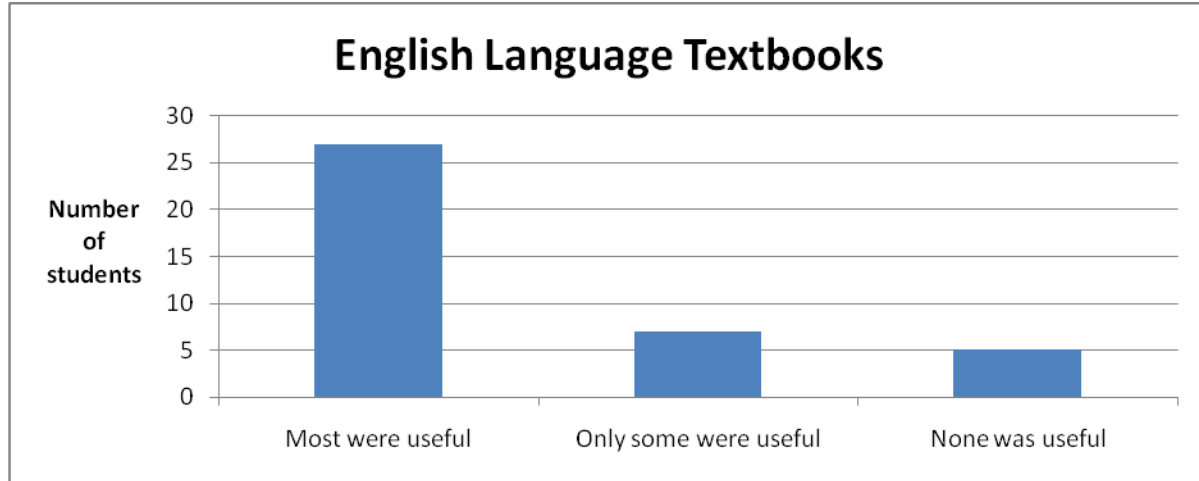


According to Figure 11 most of the student participants reported that they have learned throughout the Program but are not completely satisfied with it. Few learners think the EDP has helped them to learn Business English, and they have learned quite a lot. A small number of students reported learning very little, whereas a minority did not learn anything new.

Figure 11: Learning Achievement
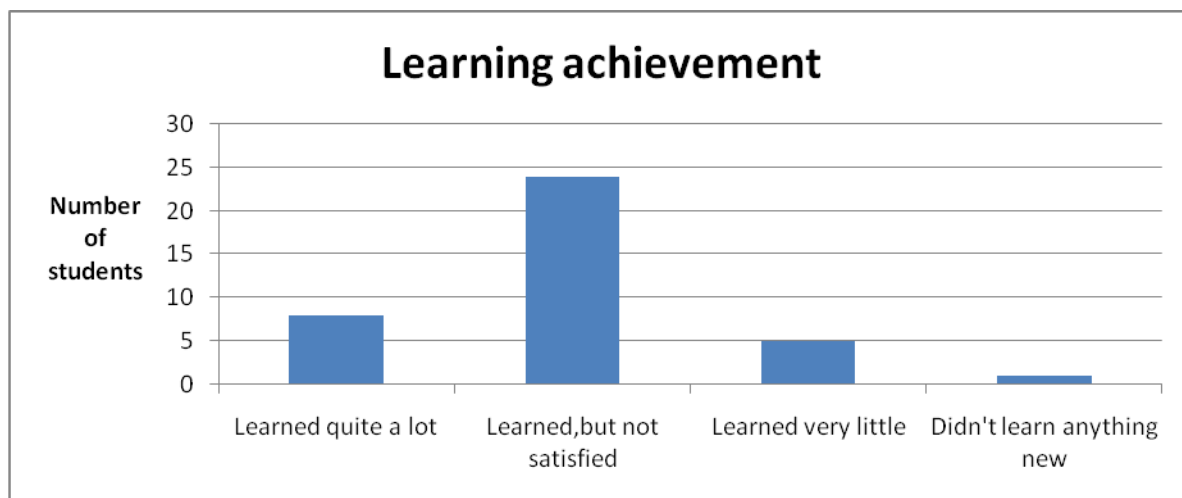


As observed in Figure 12 most students reported that although only some Business subject teachers are prepared, they have learned. Fewer students report that all the teachers seem to be well prepared and they have learned a lot. A smaller number of students think that teachers are

probably prepared but they have not learned much.  Almost no one reported that teachers are not as prepared as expected.

Figure 12:  Former and Current Business Subject Professors
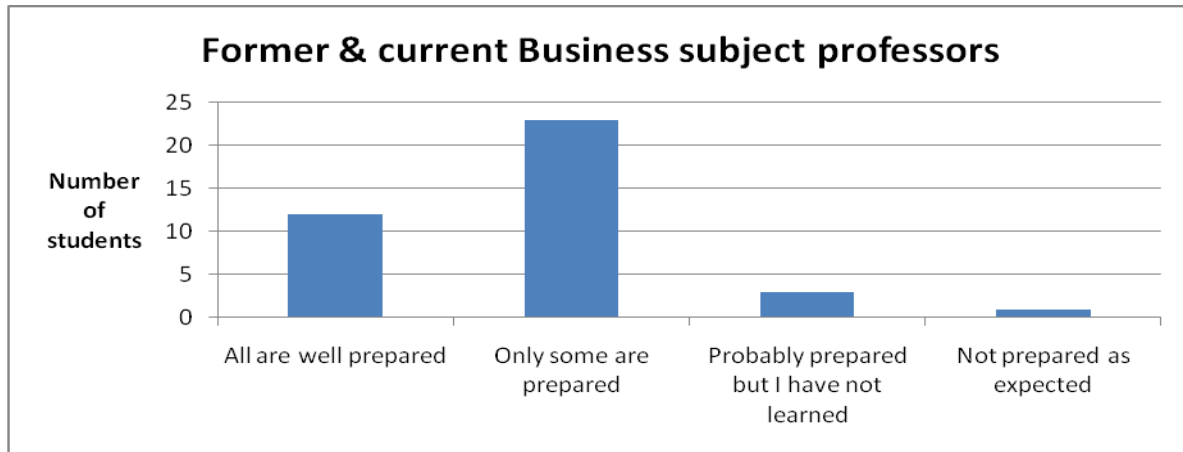


As shown in Figure 13, in general there is quite positive attitude in the English classes. Most target students refer to be motivated although they sometimes do not fully understand. There is a small difference compared to the learners who feel a lot of motivation and willingness to participate in the classroom.  On the other hand, very few students do not feel motivated.  No one is usually negative or not motivated at all.

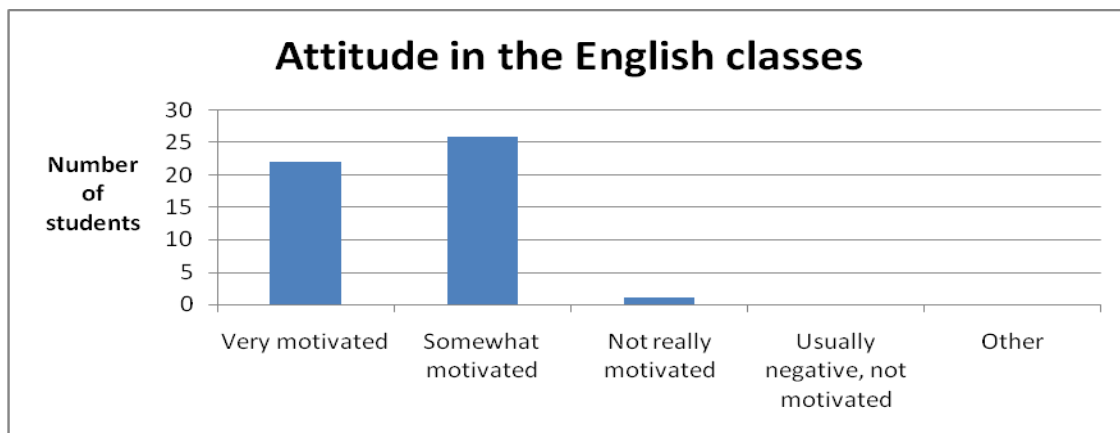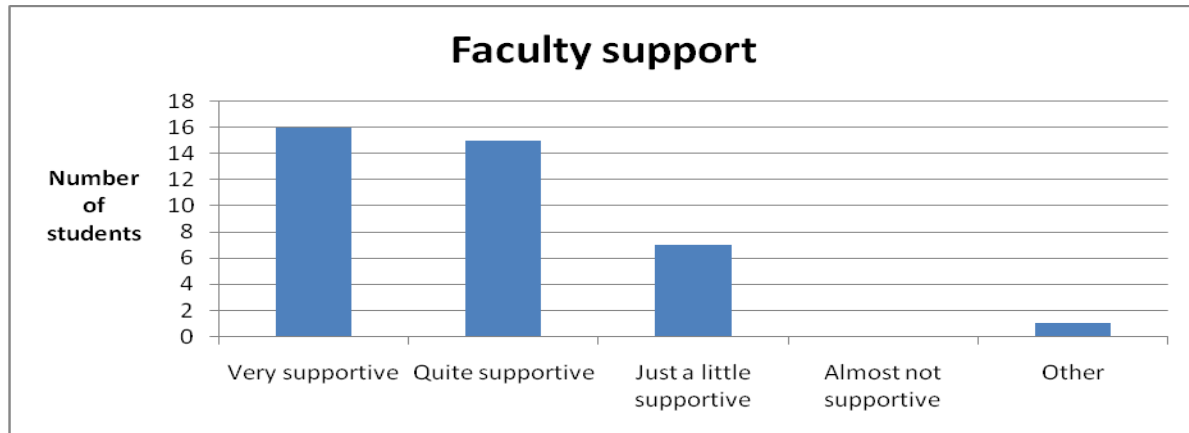Figure 13:  Attitude in the English class



Figure 14 shows that almost the same number of student participants feel quite supported by the faculty regarding problems they might have with the English Program.  No one reports

feeling no support. Among the option "other", one student has never asked for any kind of faculty help.

Figure 14: Faculty Support



**English & Business Area Questionnaire**

In this section, I report on the findings of the questionnaire designed for the English Area teachers. It consisted of 7questions regarding the existing English language tests, the possibility of having an admission test for admission to the EDP, the number of courses, the main reasons why students have difficulties, teaching techniques and strategies used in the classroom, feedback on textbooks, the evaluation system, and suggested changes in the current Business English Program. The main aim of this questionnaire was to analyze the factors influencing our students' achievement in the English language in senior semesters. The following is a summary of the results provided by the English Program and Business subject professors. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

All the English Area teachers agreed that having an admission test would be helpful considering that the EDP is marketed as a bilingual program. The faculty members also reported that it is necessary for students to have some prior English language knowledge before starting the Basic level. They commented that without such knowledge, most students could manage to

pass some courses with minimum grades.  However, they hardly succeed in the use of the language in senior semesters.

Among the Business Area teachers, opinions were varied.  Half of them felt that an admission test should be mandatory.  The others wrote that this could be a limitation for potential entrepreneurs who would like to study with us, but do not know the language.  Instead, students with low L2 levels should be supported by the English Department in order to overcome their weaknesses.

Two of the teachers from the English Area agreed that the five course-Program would be enough if students really studied by themselves or if they had at least a basic language level from the beginning.

On the contrary, another teacher considers that the length of the Program is absolutely not enough for students to reach an English language level that allowed them to handle Business subjects in their L2 in senior semesters.  She even found the Program weak regarding the number of courses, compared to the other Degrees from the Faculty, in which students have to take 8 English courses from the start until the last semester of their studies.

All the Business course teachers agreed that a 5-course-Program is not enough.  They strongly recommend extending it to 8 courses, one per semester.  They emphasized the fact that students should be accompanied and supported by English teachers while taking business classes in senior semesters.  In the English Area, two teachers out of four agreed that students who have difficulties in senior semesters have passed the English courses with the minimum grades so they clearly lack knowledge.  The lack of knowledge is reflected in the Business English classes, where they are not able to express themselves in the requested topics.  Some of the professors' comments were:

- "I feel my students would like to participate in my class but communicating in English is a limitation",

- "I am aware that several students understand the content but they cannot talk about it", "…more than being afraid of asking questions in class, students are afraid of making mistakes in English",

- "It is difficult to teach in a class where almost no one interacts with me"

- "I can deal with English language difficulties and even correct them.  However, I cannot really focus on my subject".

Regarding the reasons why some students have more difficulties than others, one of the teachers says that it depends on the students' background.  Some of them have a better English level at admission.  This is why by the end of the Program they have reached quite good language proficiency.  Interestingly, the other teachers commented that, besides the language level, it also depends on the type of student they are.  Senior semester students usually work and do not have time to study.. Those who still do not have a job, may have the time but do not take classes seriously and others do not like reading texts, something that is highly required in business subjects.

In the Business Area, all the teachers agree that most students' problems with the use of English occurs because of the existing knowledge gaps they have, lack of skills to deal with content that require analysis and discussion and poor previous L2 learning at school.  One of the teachers also highlighted the fact that some students are allowed to take bilingual business subjects without passing all the courses from the English Program.

What they do in order to improve the language difficulties is to make students work in class, investigate, have tutors, discuss and participate more on presentations and workshops.  I

did not observe such techniques  in most of these classes.  There was little space for students' production and a lot of teachers' talking time.  The use of L1 was also noticed at times when it was not even requested. There was a common agreement among the English Area teachers regarding pair and group work as an effective class strategy.  All of them encourage students to make presentations about business matters.  In general, they say that they try different activities in order to avoid boring or repetitive classes.  However, one of the teachers said that some groups are extremely difficult to motivate because they do not like anything.

Two of the teachers use games related to Business matters.  The other teacher says that any technique could work well if students receive incentives such as extra points.   Nevertheless, I only observed only observed games plus incentives in one of the classes.

All the Business Area teachers say that they use different techniques such as, role-playing, problem-solving workshops, case studies discussions, presentations, writings, elicitation and vocabulary reviews.  However, during the class observations, few of them were put into practice.  Most of these teachers spend a lot of time explaining business content and student production could not be effectively assessed because they participated very little.

**English Teachers Reactions to the Texts**

**Start up 1 & 2: (textbook and workbook used for Basic and Pre-intermediate courses)**

In the English Area, two teachers out of four reported that the textbooks lack vocabulary, writing activities and reading practice.  In addition, according to these two teachers, the texts do not encourage students to produce language.  Nevertheless, one of the teachers wrote that the student book does not include an answer key, an advantage for the teacher because learners cannot cheat with homework.  She also wrote that some listening activities are quite challenging.

On the other hand, the other teachers wrote that these books are good except for the Grammar, which needs to be reinforced.

**Business Benchmark (Preliminary, Vantage & Higher, used for Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced courses**).  All the teachers from the English Area agreed that the Business Benchmark series is good because the materials provide enough practice and preparation for the BEC exam.  They also think that the contents are relevant, fully business language-oriented, meaningful and challenging.   However, they also indicated several disadvantages.   One of the teachers, for example wrote that the technical vocabulary used in the book was not helpful for students in senior semesters.  Another teacher commented that the grammar sections are weak, there is too much reading, too many units to cover, and the answer key is provided at the end of the book, from where students can easily cheat.  Due to the level of difficulty of the book, two teachers agreed that students coming from the beginning courses might find the series too difficult.

Business Area teachers were not requested to answer this question because they do not use the textbooks mentioned above.  The books are only used in the English Area.

All the English Area teachers agree that midterm & final exams and class tests are good to evaluate students.  In their view, tutorials are not reliable ways of assessment.  Since they are done in groups, some students work more than others do.  This is why weak and lazy students usually succeed despite not having done much effort.  The three teachers think that tutorials do not reflect students' knowledge and skills.  They are good because learners must present in public and prepare material.  However, most of the time, the grades of tutorials are quite high and this increases the final grades at the end.  This is why many students manage to pass, even though they have not achieved mastery of the competencies for the next level.  Business Area

teachers did not comment on this point because they were allowed to use different evaluation tools focused on content rather than language.

Regarding improvements in the English Department, two teachers agreed that changing the current textbooks is necessary in order to improve students' language proficiency. The teachers also suggested getting more teachers training, for example obtaining international certificates. Another recommendation was to change the way tutorials are evaluated because they did not reflect what students have learned, and instead hide weaknesses.

An interesting suggestion was to have a program of extra classes in order to reinforce the work of teachers in the classroom. This teacher also suggested not allowing students to take business subjects before completing the English Program. The current curriculum does permit it.

The Business Area teachers also suggested more professional training for the teachers in order to improve the English language level in both areas as well as to learn more effective classroom techniques and pedagogical approaches to teaching. Five out of seven teachers also recommended adding more courses to the English Program. Most teachers highlight the importance of having access to more educational resources for learning business contents in L2.

**Secondary Sources**

Among the secondary sources, two types of data were analyzed:

5. Analysis of test scores (skill-wise achievement)

6. Analysis of scores of a formal examination (Business English Proficiency Test)

**Analysis of test scores (skill-wise achievement)**

These data refer to the passing grades of the student participants in all the 5 English courses of the Program (Basic, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate and Advanced). This information was taken from the historical records for every student from the 1st

semester to the 5th semester.  In the case of students who delayed their enrollment in the courses, it was necessary to collect information from latter semesters.  There are also students from senior semesters who have not taken all the courses and are currently attending them.

For this analysis, I use histograms in order to show results per English course. The total number of students was 25.  Figure 15 shows that about 65% students passed with satisfactory grades whereas around 35% got fair scores.  In student participant group, no one failed the Basic Course .

Figure 15:  Sixth Semester Students' Basic English Course Grades
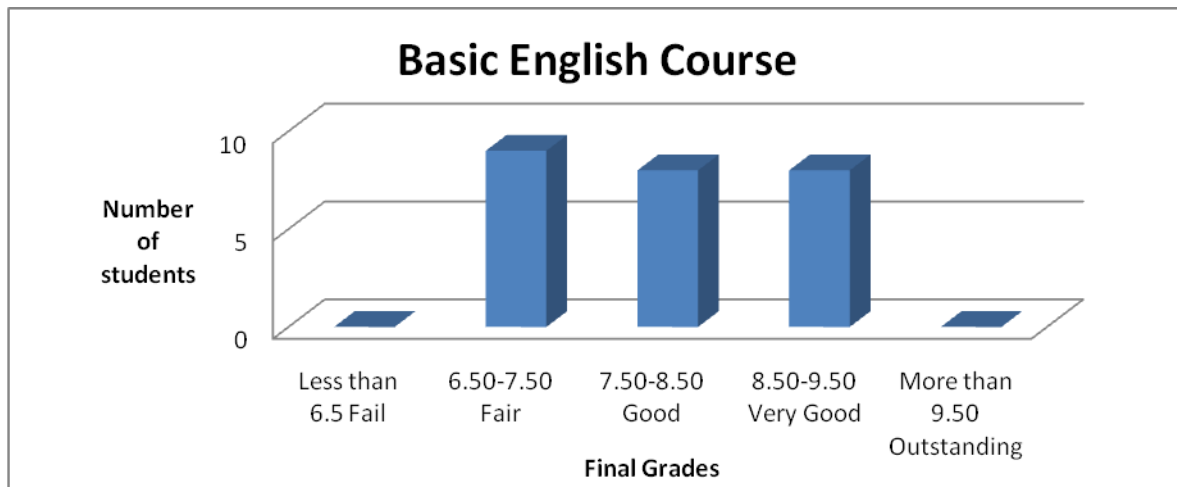


Total number of students:  24.  As shown in Figures 16 and 17 for the Pre-intermediate and Intermediate courses, to pass with the minimum required scores were a common trend also followed by the target students in the Intermediate English course.  Very few students got outstanding grades.

Figure 16:  Sixth Semester Students' Pre-intermediate English Course Grades
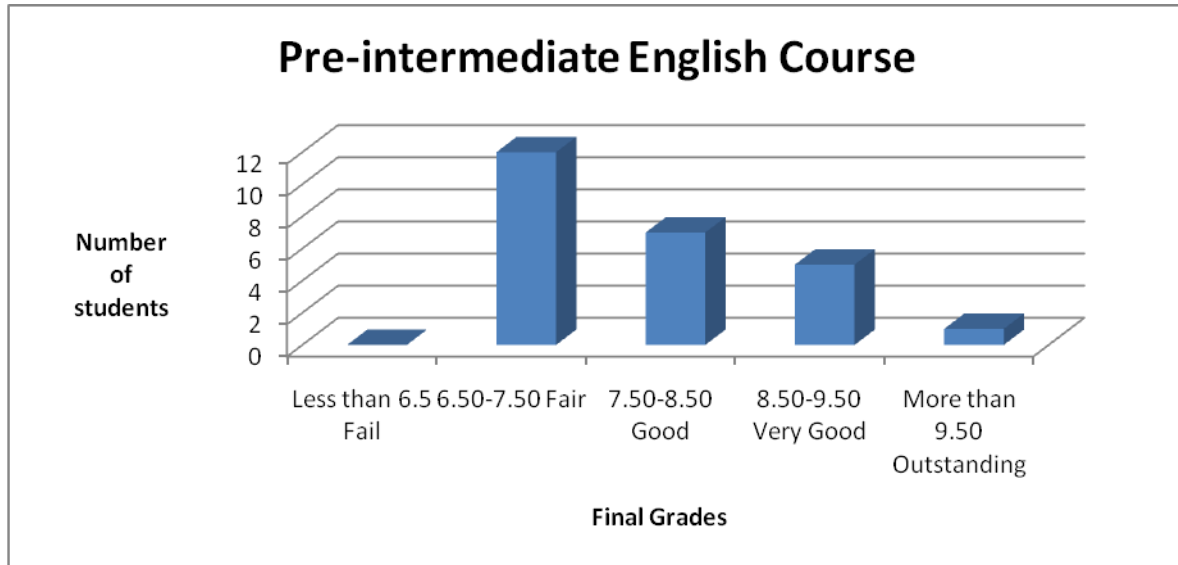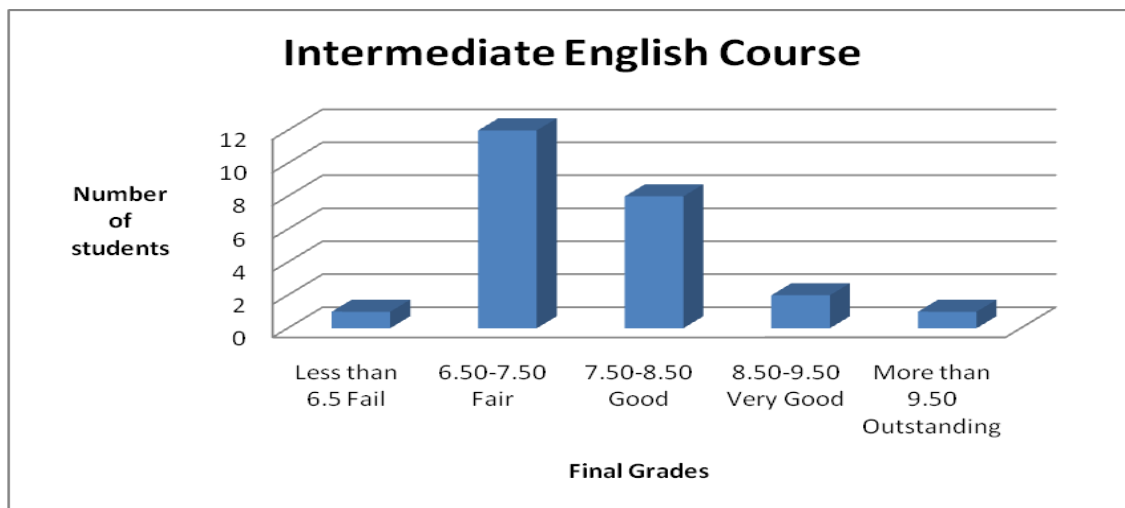
Figure 17:  Sixth Semester Students' Intermediate English Course Grades



Total number of students:  11.  It is noticeable that the number of students in this group has decreased.  There is an equal percentage of students whose grades are fair and good.  The fact that two students failed is significant considering how small the group is.

Figure 18:  Sixth Semester Students' Upper Intermediate English Course Grades
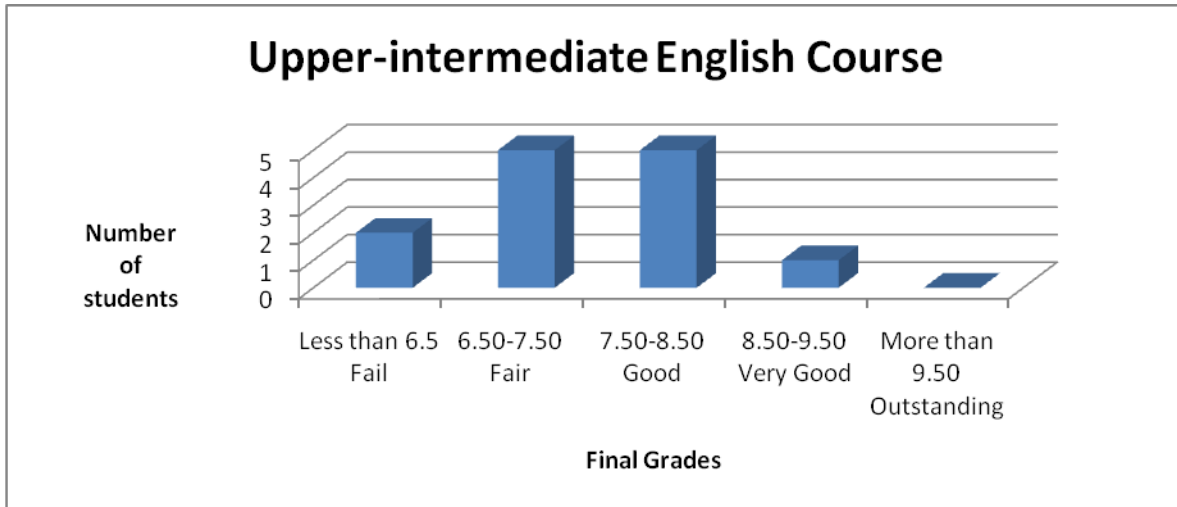
The total number of students was 8. As shown in the Figure19, the participant group became smaller at this level.  About 65% students passed with fair grades and very few reached high scores.  Given these data, we infer that most students from sixth semester have not completed the English Program.

Figure19:  Sixth Semester Students' Advanced English Course Grades
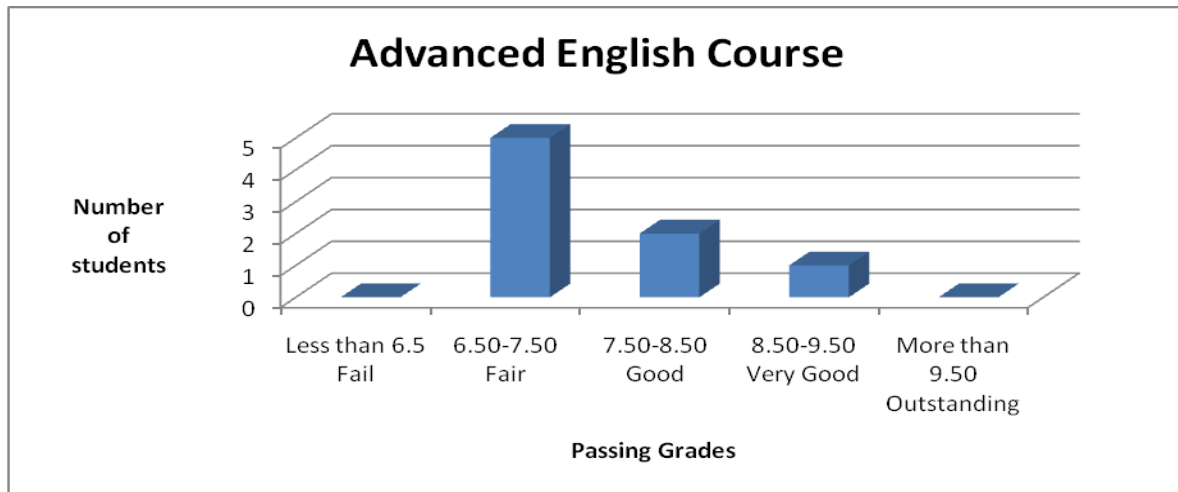


**Students from 7ᵗʰ semester**

The total number of students: 26. The Figure 20 below shows that more than 60% of students passed this course with grades between good and very good.  There is also a small percentage of students with outstanding scores.  No one failed.

Figure 20: Seventh Semester Students' Basic English Course Grades
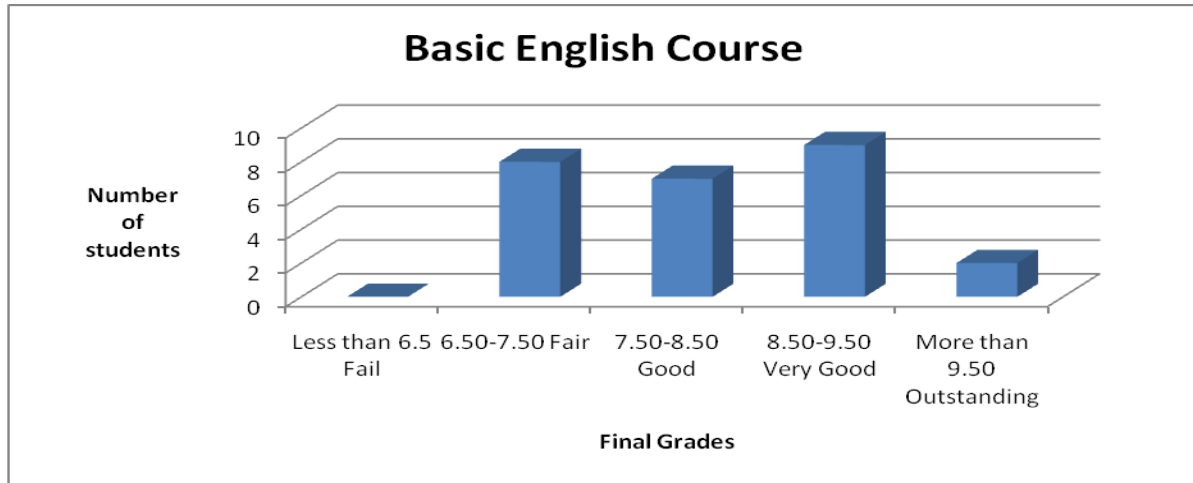


The total number of students was 26. As seen in the Figure 21, there is around 80% of students who passed with fair and very good grades. A low percentage of outstanding grades were observed. As in the previous Figure 19, no one failed.

Figure 21: Seventh Semester Students' Pre-intermediate English Course Grades
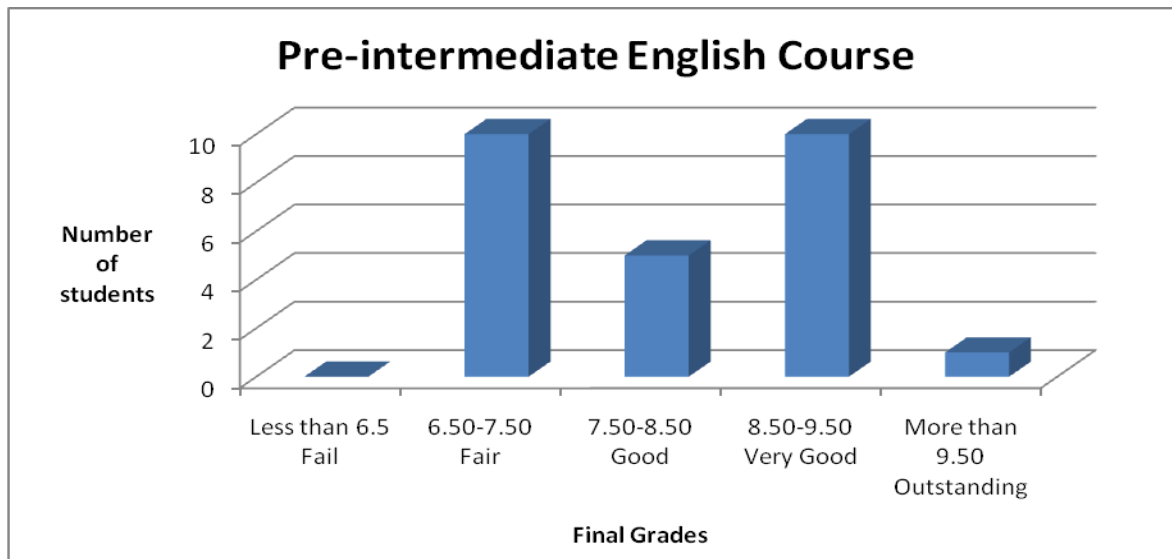


The data indicates that 10 students out of 15 passed the Intermediate course with good grades. This represents 40% followed by 9 students who got good scores which is 36%. Low percentages of students passed with fair and outstanding grades.

Figure 22: Seventh Semester Students' Intermediate English Course Grades
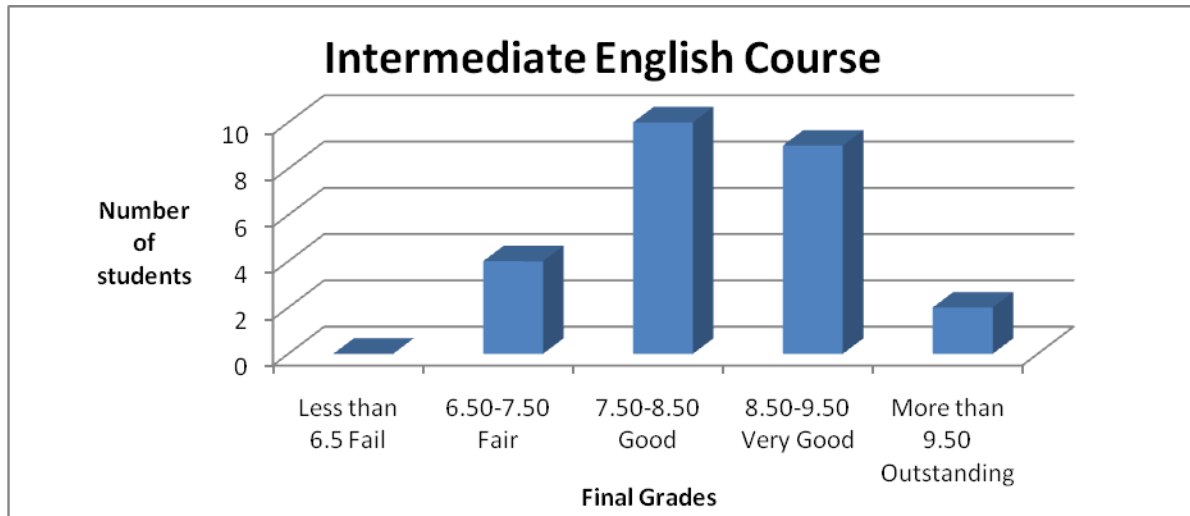
The Figure 23 shows that 18 students (78%) out of 23 passed the Upper Intermediate course with fair and good scores.  Only 4 students got very good grades (17%) followed by 1 student who failed (4%).  No one passed with outstanding scores in this target group.

Figure 23:  Seventh Semester Students' Intermediate English Course Grades
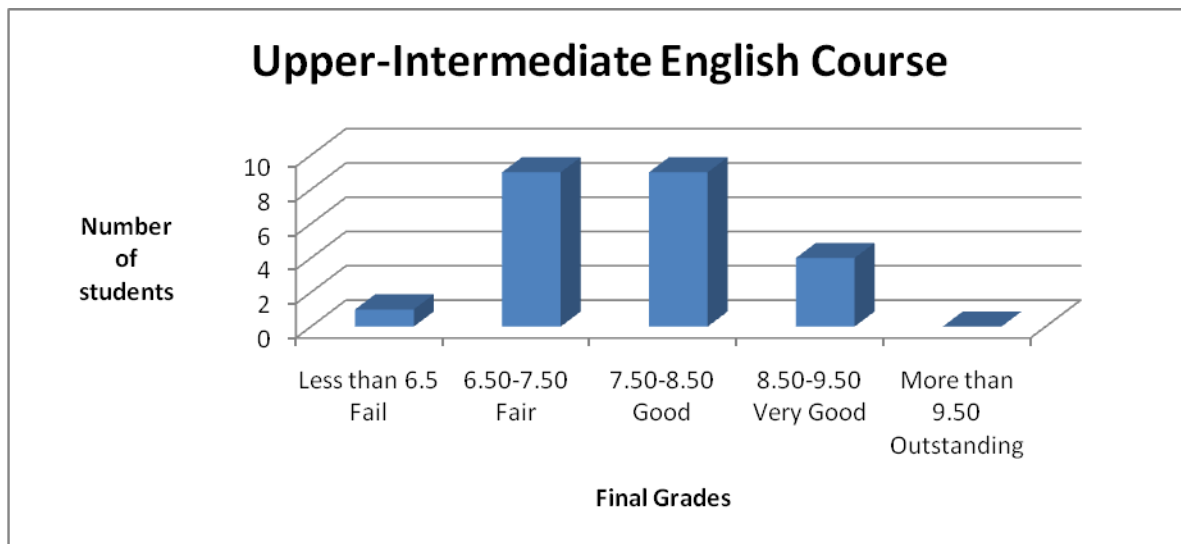


As observed in the Figure 24, most students passed with good and very good grades. They represent about 73% of the target group, followed by 17% of students who passed with fair scores.  Only one student obtained an outstanding passing grade.  In addition, a minority failed the course.

Figure 24:  Seventh Semester Students' Pre-intermediate English Course Grades
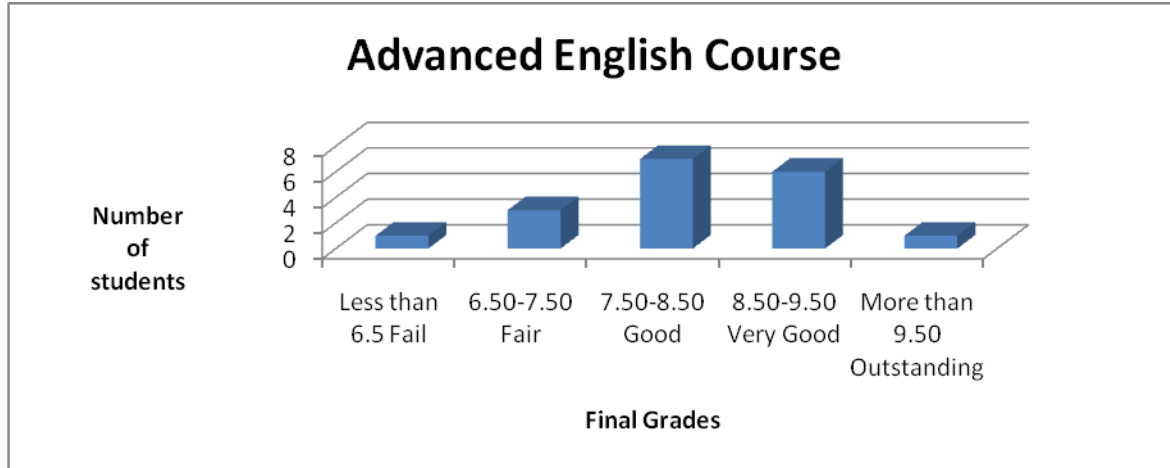


**Students from 8ᵗʰ semester**

The Figure 25 above shows that the same number of students passed the course with fair and good grades.  This represents 93% from the total target group.  A minority got very good scores (about 7%) and no one got an outstanding grade or fail the course.

Figure 25:  Eighth Semester Students' Basic English Course Grades
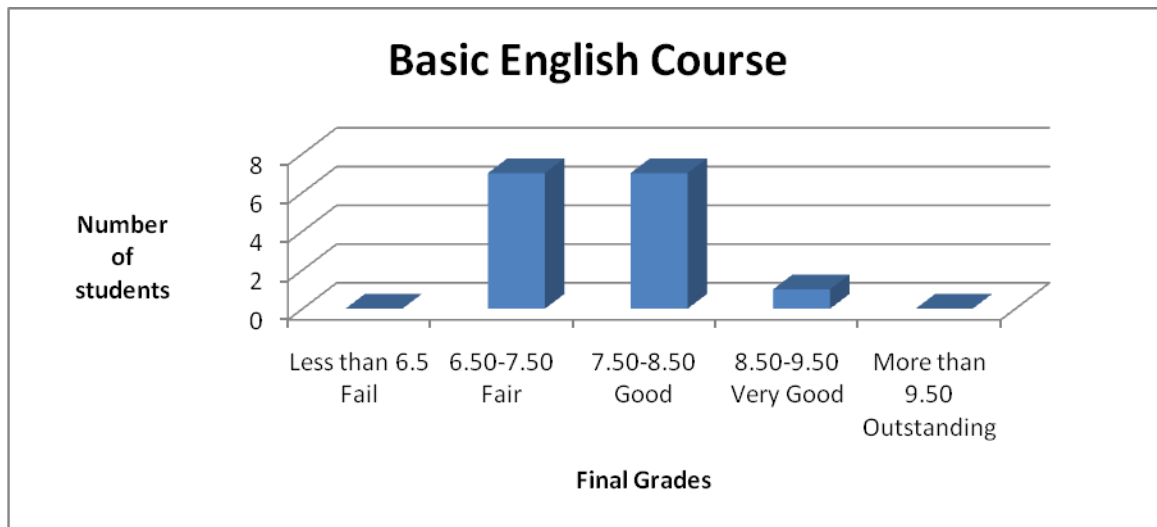


As observed in the Figure 26, 8 students out of 14 passed the Pre-intermediate course with fair grades.  This represents 57% of the total number of students, followed by around 43% and 14% of students with good and very good scores respectively.  No one obtained outstanding scores or failed the course.

Figure 26:  Eighth Semester Students' Pre-intermediate English Course Grades
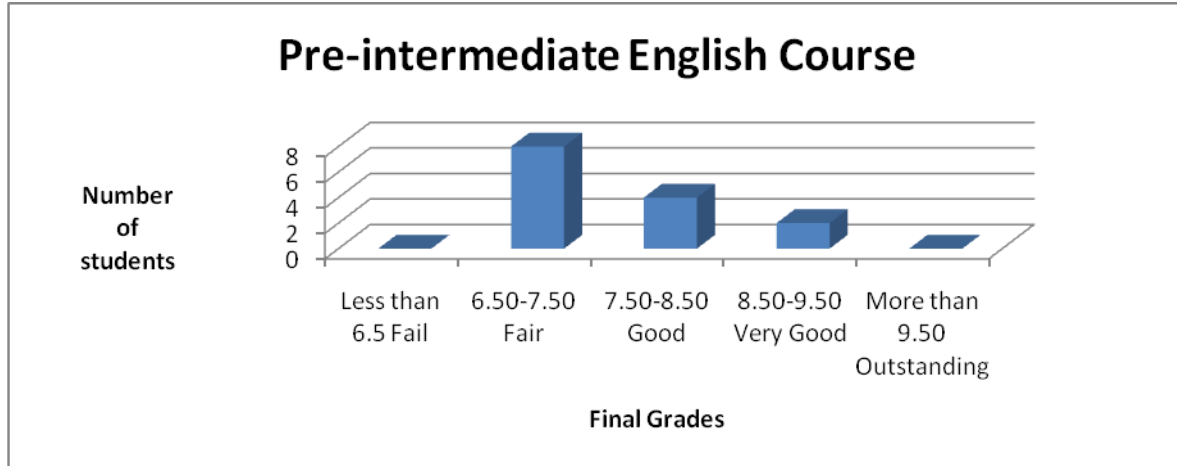


Figure 27 clearly shows that 6 students out of 13 passed the Intermediate course with good grades.  This represents around 46% of the total number, followed by 4 students who passed with fair scores (31%), with very good (8%) and 2 who failed (15%).

Figure 27:  Eighth Semester Students' Intermediate English Course Grades
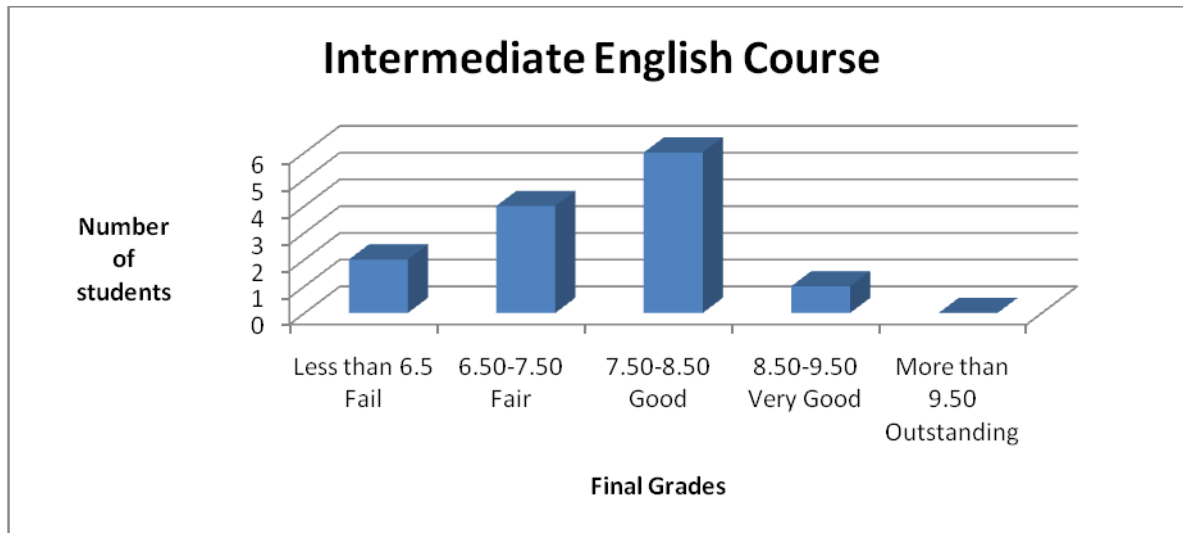


Figure 28 shows that the number of students in this target group has considerably decreased to 4.  All of them passed with fair scores.  The reasons for this will be analyzed in depth later in this research.

Figure 28:  Eighth Semester Students' Upper-intermediate English Course Grades
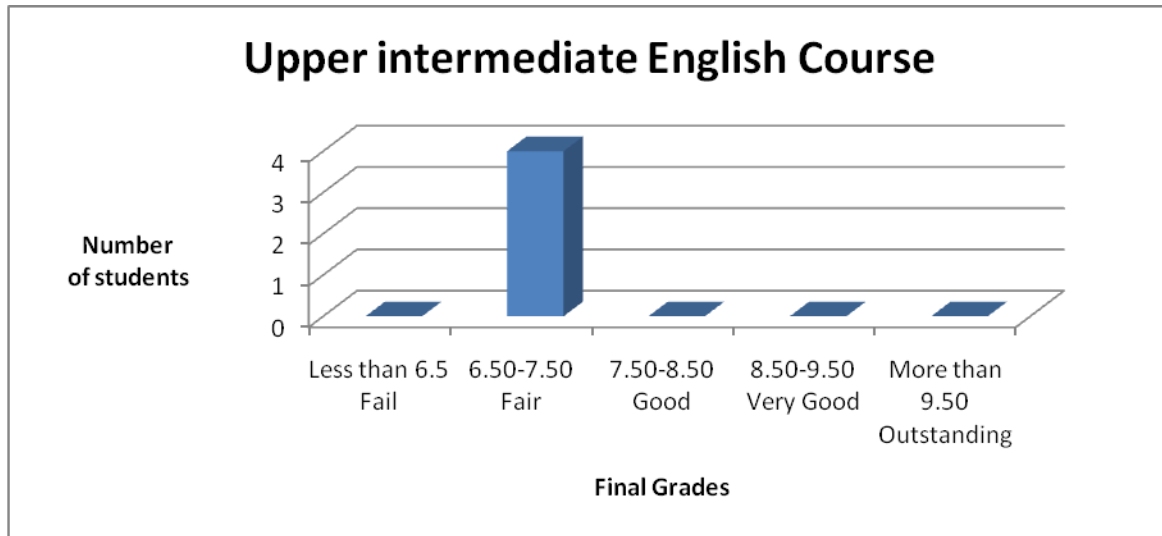
As shown in Figure 29, only 1 student out of 15 has passed the Advanced English

Course.  This represents 7% of the target group.  The rest of students either have dropped out or

not taken it yet.

Figure 29:  Eighth Semester Students' Advanced English Course Grades
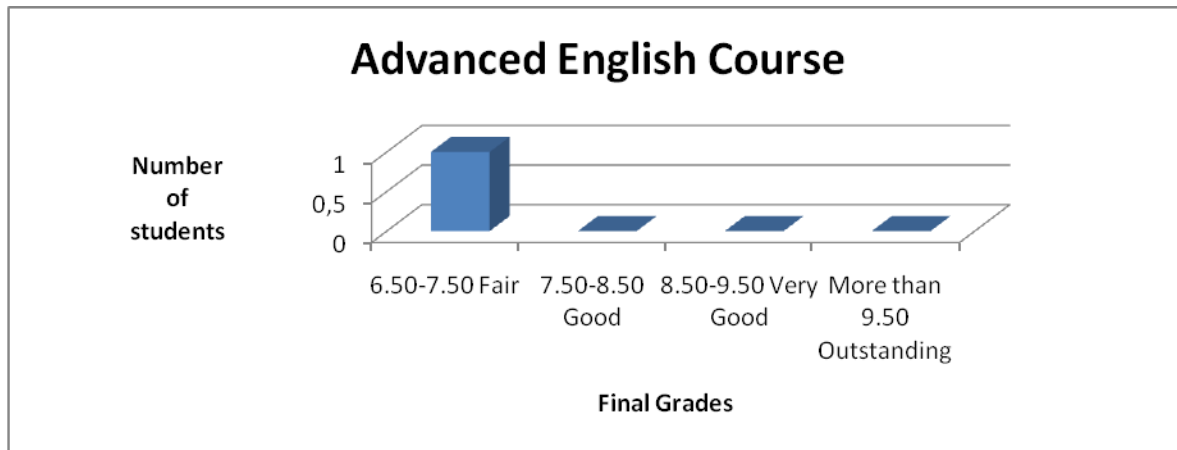


**Analysis of the scores of a formal examination (Business English Proficiency Test**

**and BEC Higher)**

The Business English Proficiency Test designed by the English Department was

administered to the senior students at the end of the semester A2011.  A BEC higher practice

exam plus a Grammar test were both compiled in order to evaluate competencies in the Business

English language in each of the skills.  The exam consisted of the following sections:

Reading    :  6 tasks    1 hour

Listening   :  3 tasks    40 minutes

Writing     :  2 tasks    1 hour 10 minutes

Speaking  :  3 tasks    15 minutes

Grammar   :  3 tasks    40 minutes

The times required for every section and the criteria for evaluation were both taken from

the official BEC higher exam from the University of Cambridge.  The minimum score to pass

was 65% (average of all the sections).

The aim of this examination was to assess the target students' abilities in the use of the

English language within business contexts.  At the same time, the results of the exam were a

diagnostic tool, which let us measure the possibilities for success in the official exam that will

take place next June.  The idea was to provide students with feedback and suggest ways to

overcome language difficulties.  As a remedial plan, we planned to offer them the additional

training based on their needs.

For the analyses of the grades of the English Language Proficiency Exam, I have used the

following  figures 30, 31 and 32 which show the final results (pass / fail) as well as the number

of students not taking the complete exam (either because they left or arrived late) or not

attending in every target group.  The number of absentees was quite high.

As shown in the Figure 29 the number of students not taking the test was very high

followed by those who failed.  They represent the 77% and the 19% respectively.  About 4% of

students did not complete all the sections of the exam. In this target group, no one got 65% or more as result.

Figure 30: Sixth Semester Students' Business English Proficiency Test Scores
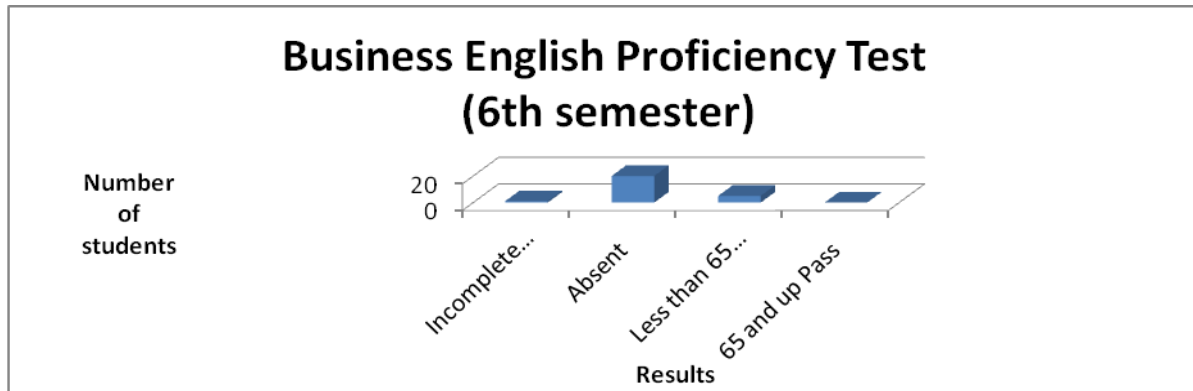


The given Figure 31 indicates that the highest number of students did not attend the test. They represent 37% of the target group, followed by almost 30% of students whose final score was less than 65. Around 26% students missed one or more sections of the exam and only 7% managed to pass with the required score.

Figure 31: Seventh Semester Students' Business English Proficiency Test Scores
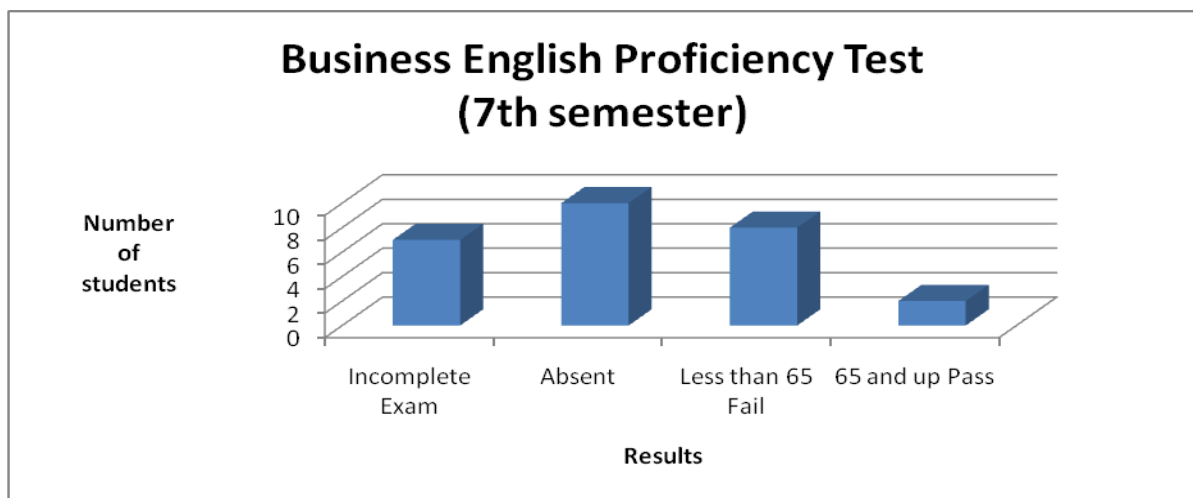


The data in the Figure 32 show that 7 students out of 15 got scores under 65%. They represent around 47% of the target group, followed by 40% of absent students and 13% of those

who did not take all the sections of the exam.  No one managed to pass the test.  In general, all the final scores were very low.

Figure 32:  Eighth Semester Students' Business English Proficiency Test Scores
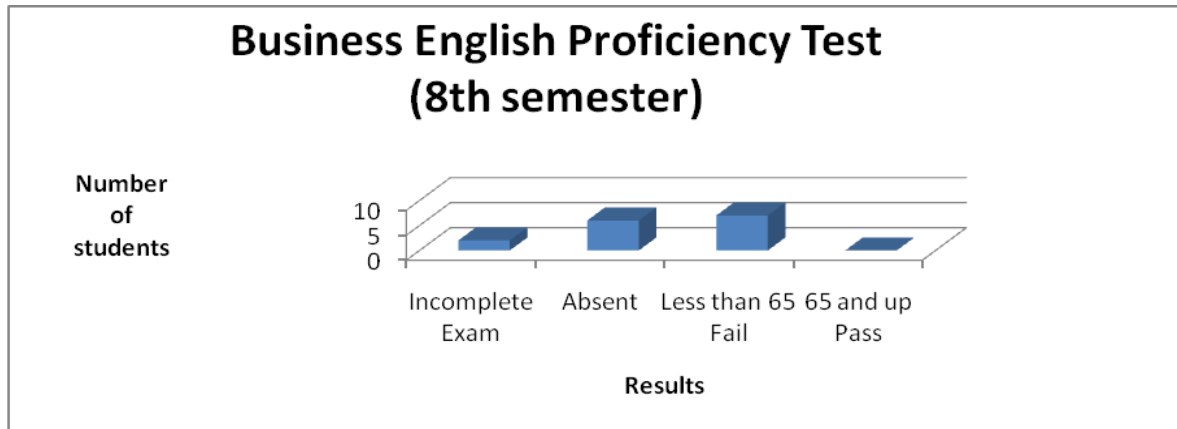


In comparison with the students from cohort 2007 semester A, who are currently in process of graduation, the results of the Business English Proficiency Test, taken as a diagnostic tool, was the following:

As noted in Figure 33 below, 74% of students failed the exam.  This means that most of them were not able to reach 65 as a minimum final score.  The rates of the students who did not complete all the sections of the exam and those who were absent are around 11% and 7% respectively.  Only 3 students out of 27 managed to pass the exam with borderline grades.

Figure 33:  Eighth Semester Students' Business English Proficiency Test Scores
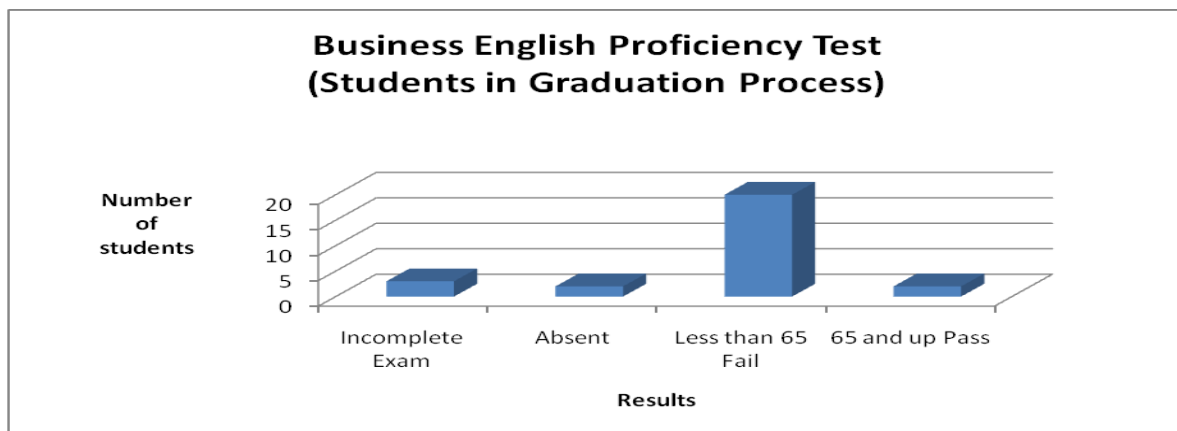
The official BEC Higher Examination was administered to the students who are currently in graduation process in the Entrepreneurship Degree.  It was run in a major Ecuadorian city under authorization of the University of Cambridge Press. The target groups of students were requested to register and pay for this exam as a graduation requirement in order to validate their language proficiency.   The sections and times for the exam were the following:

- Reading:  6 tasks  1 hour

- Writing:   2 tasks  1 hour and 10 minutes

- Listening: 2 tasks  40 minutes

- Speaking: 3 tasks   16 minutes

After a month, the results were sent directly from the University of Cambridge Press following the criteria detailed below:

Pass at Grade A     80 to 100
Pass at Grade B     75 to 79
Pass at Grade C     60 to 74
Level B2            45 to 59
Fail                 0 to 44
X                   The candidate was absent from parts of the examination.
Z                   The candidate was absent from all parts of the examination.

**Results**

Figure 34 shows that 18 students failed the exam (58%), followed by those who were absent from part or all parts of the exam (around 16% and 10%).  Two students out of 31 got level B2 scores, only 3 passed the exam at grade C (6.5%) and no one got grades A or B.

Figure 34:  BEC Higher Scores of the Students in the Graduation Process

**BEC Higher
(Students in Graduation Process)**

Number of students

20
15
10
5
0

Grade A Pass | Grade B Pass | Grade C Pass | Level B2 | Fail | X | Z

**Results**
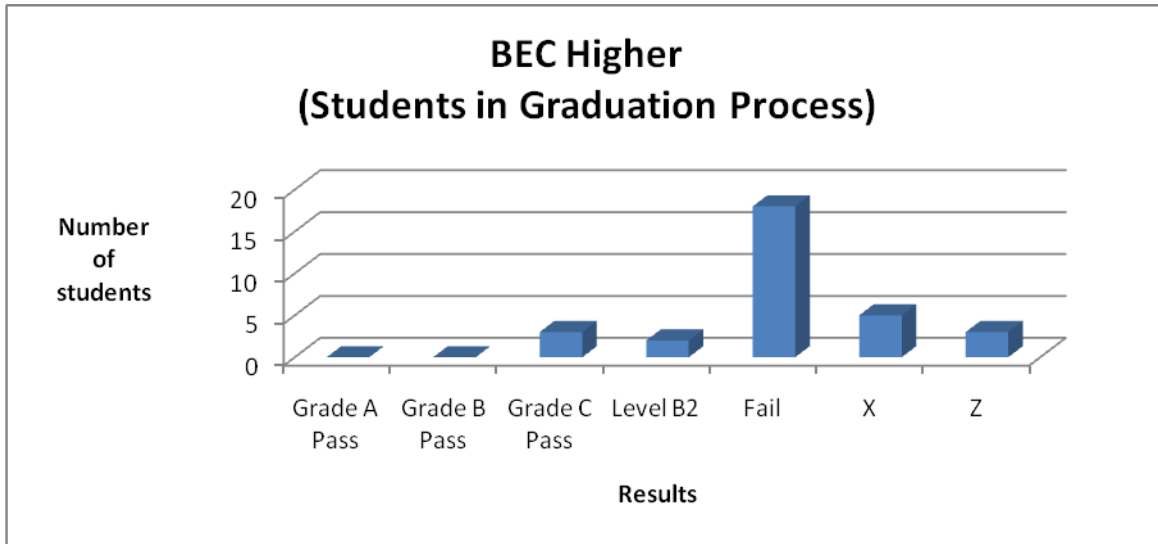
**Chapter 5 - Discussion**

The Entrepreneurship Degree Program in a private university in Coastal Ecuador has gone through several difficulties regarding the proficiency English level of most students, particularly in their senior semesters.  In this study, I have analyzed the factors influencing language achievement and students' performance in both English and Business areas (Entrepreneurship and Finance)

In this chapter, I have detailed my results according to the research questions proposed at the beginning of the study.

**Research Question 1:   What has been the English language learning achievement of the students from the cohorts 2006, 2007 and 2008 from the Entrepreneurship Program?**

In order to analyze the language learning achievement of the senior semester students in both cohorts, two types of data were collected:

1. Analysis of test scores (skill-wise achievement)

2. Analysis of scores of a formal examination (Business English Proficiency Test)

The test scores (passing grades) of the students who are currently enrolled in 6th, 7th and 8th cycle were analyzed during the five-course English Program from the Degree.

The results showed that most students from 6th and 8th cycle who started their studies in the Semester B of the EDP (October to February 2007 and 2008 respectively) got fair and good passing grades.  Very few of them obtained very good grades and almost no one passed with outstanding scores.  On the contrary, a significant number of students from 7th cycle, who started their studies in semester A (April to August 2008), passed the courses with good and very good scores. A few of them even got outstanding final grades.

In terms of scores, the students from 7th semester were the most proficient ones from the very beginning while the students from 6th semester were considerably weaker.  The 8th semester

students were the ones with the lowest scores in all the courses. This trend remained constant in all of the target groups throughout the whole Program.

Only 7% of the 8th semester students have completed the Language Program.  The others are still in the process of doing it or have just started.  It is evident that most of them will finish the 8th semester without completing the English Program.  This means that they will have to extend their studies to one or two more semesters.  This is certainly a strong reason for their low achievement:  dealing with Business subjects taught in L2 without having completed the language program that is supposed to prepare them for such challenge. There are students enrolled in 8th semester who have only passed the Basic and Pre-intermediate courses.  However, they have continued with their business courses in senior semesters.  The former curriculum and administration allowed students to do this.

According to the questionnaire administered to the Business Area professors, all of them agree that the 6th and 8th semester students are the ones with the lowest language proficiency level.  Mainly, they lack vocabulary, writing skills in business matters and general language knowledge. These do not allow them to participate actively and express their ideas in class.  With regard to the 7th semester students, their achievement has been notably higher.  Around 90% of them have completed the English Language Program with satisfactory grades and the remaining 10% belong to former promotions where students have delayed their enrollment in some business subjects or have not taken all the English courses.

Regarding the scores of a formal examination (Business English Proficiency Test), the results show another common trend:  a high rate of absenteeism in all the target groups.  On average, it reached 52%, being higher in 6th and 8th semesters.

In 6$^{th}$ semester, no one passed the exam as well as in 8$^{th}$ semester, the group with the highest rate of failure, which was 60%.    Similarly, the scores from 7$^{th}$ semester students were also low, 56% of them failed the exam.  As it was expected, due to their past performance in the English courses, it was the only group where at least few students succeeded, 7% passed with the minimum required score.

From these results, we can infer that, in the first place there was a generally negative attitude of students towards the exam.  The lack of information about its benefits as a diagnostic tool and their individual awareness about their own weaknesses in language proficiency were the main factors for such a high rate of absenteeism.  The fact that the examination was relevant for students without any visible immediate reward also contributed to the lack of attendance. Interestingly, the highest rate of attendance was 63% of the 7$^{th}$ semester students, the ones with the best proficiency language level among the target groups.

In the case of the students who are in the process of graduation, the results were similar in both formal examinations:    Business English Proficiency Test and BEC Higher.  In the first case, almost all students got grades under 65%, which clearly shows that they are not proficient enough or prepared to take the BEC Higher successfully.  Around 74% of students failed and only 7% passed.  The remaining 19% were either absent from part or all the parts of the exam. The results of the BEC Higher exam were predictable.  Out of 31 students, only 3 passed, 2 got level B2 and the rest failed.

The attitude of most students towards both examinations was quite negative.  They were reluctant to take the BEC Higher and had to accept it just because it was required for graduation.

The main reasons for the low achievement of the participant group of students are the low English language level, which was confirmed through the first formal examination and the improvised preparation (2 week-course) for the BEC higher.

Considering that most students were not proficient, time for preparation was too short, the material provided was not enough and the rate of attendance and cooperation from the students was very low. Another important factor was the lack of knowledge about the type of examination they were going to take. All Cambridge exams require a certain number of hours of preparation in order to develop exam skills through practice. Asking students to obtain the BEC higher without being prepared to provide high-quality training and having time constraints was an unsuccessful decision not only for students but also for the English Department and the Entrepreneurship Degree in general.

**Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing the English language teaching learning of the students from the EDP in senior semesters, and how can they be described?**

Different factors were identified among the student participants as individual learners, the learning environment itself and the quality of teaching in the EDP

**Students' Personal Background.** Most of the participants in the study came from schools where English was taught at least 3 times a week, followed by those who graduated in schools where English was taught five times a week as well as bilingual schools. According to students' own perception, around 44% and 33% had basic and low intermediate English Language skills at admission in the EDP. In comparison to the current skills, 39% have remained low intermediate and 54% have improved to upper intermediate. Only 5% considered that their language proficiency has reached an advanced level.

All the English Area teachers agree that an English language test should be given to all the students at admission.  They highlight the fact that at least basic language knowledge and skills are required in a bilingual business degree.  On the contrary, half of the Business Area professors think that it could be a limitation for potential entrepreneurs.  Instead, they must be supported by the English Department through courses or tutorials that help them reach a basic language level.

Regarding parents' education level, for both father and mother, the rate of those with a professional degree (3rd level) as well as those without it, is quite high.  In the case of mothers with no professional degree, the rate is 46%, being even higher than the rate of professional mothers, which is 36%.  On average, only 10% of parents have obtained a master's degree.
In relation to family situation, 60% of students live with both parents whereas around 40% live only with siblings, other relatives or alone.  The general economic situation of most students is middle class. From this part of the analysis, we can infer that even though many students state that English was taught to them at school, their proficiency language level at admission in the EDP was low and has improved little throughout the English Program in most cases.

The implementation of an English language admission test has advantages and disadvantages.  It would assure that most students have more or less the same language level from the very beginning and could probably avoid serious difficulties in senior semesters.  On the other side, it would be a financial impediment to the institution and to the number of enrollments in the EDP Degree.  The implementation of an English language admission test would have a positive effect in the assessment and evaluation process.  It would allow the English Department to measure the students' language abilities and needs in a more accurate and reliable way in order to take remedial actions during the first semester of the Degree.  The only

disadvantage would be that an English Language admission test might be an impediment for many students and a limitation for the institution in the number of enrollments in the EDP Degree.

Taking in consideration the great number of business degrees offered nowadays, students would surely prefer the one that gives them more opportunities and fewer impediments. Language constraints in the EDP can keep newcomers away.

In connection to the level of education of most parents, in most cases they have obtained  a professional degree of third level, something that nowadays is not very competitive in the society.  All these factors, plus the fact that many students especially from the countryside, live with friends, relatives and in some cases alone, have contributed to poor achievement.  Parents who live away are not able to monitor students' academic performance.

**The English Language Program**

The number of courses in the English Language Program has always been an issue because of the different opinions students and professors have about it.  A total of 97% of students think that the number of courses is okay as well as those who consider that they are not enough.  Almost 57% of students have described their former English teachers as helpful and the textbooks used in the Program as useful.

Regarding learning achievement, around 74% of students state that they have learned very little or are not satisfied with the amount of learning they have achieved.  Only 3% of students consider that they have not learned anything new throughout the Program.

Half of the English Area teachers agree that the number of courses could be enough if students really studied or at least had a basic language level at admission.  In the Business Area, all the professors consider that the length of the English Program is definitely too short.  They all

think that the number of courses should be the same as the number of semesters in the Degree, this is 8.

The English language Program of the Entrepreneurship Degree has both strengths and weaknesses. Among the strengths, of the program, most students have a positive opinion about their teachers and textbooks. This is relevant because of the impact of the emotional factor in the learning process. Such affective factors such as satisfaction with who is teaching you a language and with the material you are using for such purpose can be of help in the teaching-learning process here. According to Krashen (in Towell & Hawkins, 1994), the learners' subconscious screens L2 language input based on affective factors such as individual needs, motives, attitude and emotional state (p.27). Williams & Burden (1997) reinforce the idea of working on affective factors in language teaching when they affirm that education must focus on the learner as a developing individual making sense of and constructing meaning in his/her own world. In their model, the learner is an individual with affective needs and reactions, which must be considered as an integral part of learning, as also must the particular life contexts of those who are involved in the teaching-learning process (p. 28)

Positive emotions seem to have an effect on the learning experience, both in the classroom, and in a target language environment. Warm feelings about the teacher, the other students and one's own security may support learning, while anxiety, particularly about negative judgments when performing in the TL, may inhibit learning (Yokochi, 2003, p. 14).

On the other hand, the fact that many students do not agree with the number of courses in the English Program, reflects that they are not getting enough preparation for business subjects in senior semesters. According to their own perceptions about their learning, the data has shown

that they feel that in five courses they have not learned or are not confident enough in the use of L2.

Taking into account that the English Program cannot be extended in number of courses due to curriculum constraints, the current length must be fixed in a way that it could be enough time for getting students ready to face language challenges in senior semesters.  However, the data suggests that the content and skills have not been covered and developed effectively throughout the five courses.

**The Business Area and the level of motivation**

Regarding the Business Area, almost 60% of students indicated that only some of the professors are well prepared to teach their courses, followed by 31% of the students who think that all of them are quite well prepared.  The rate of negative answers, from students who state that most Business professors are not as prepared as they expected, nor that  they have not learned much, reached around 10%.

The level of motivation in the Business subject classes was expressed in the following way:  almost 67% of students are somewhat motivated followed by 56% who feel very motivated.  The rate of not really motivated students was only 3%.

Business Area professors indicate that they use several strategies and techniques in order to engage and motivate students in the classroom.  They mentioned role-playing, discussion, pair and group work, cases of study, problem-solving workshops, vocabulary reviews and elicitation among others.  However, almost none of them were put into practice during the regular class observations within the semester. I observed a teacher-centered approach and very little production on the side of the students were observed instead.

Besides the low language proficiency level of most EDP students, another factor affecting motivation in the classroom is the students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and expertise of most Business subject professors, which the data shows is only acceptable but not excellent. The teaching techniques and approaches used by most professors do not foster participation, language production and thus the development of skills that students required to succeed in Business subjects.  On the other hand, the professors also claim that it is hard to work with students that have such a low L2 language level.  They consider that some of the EDP students should learn the language before taking business subjects or at least self prepare for them. The low language proficiency of many students is a limitation in the classroom and a disadvantage for those who have achieved the required skills to communicate, understand, read and write without difficulties.

**The evaluation system of the Entrepreneurship Degree and Faculty support**

All the English Area teachers think that the evaluation system of the EDP is, in general, weak.  Though the formal exams are objective and seem to be a good evaluation tool, the tutorials (group presentations based on what students have learned in every partial of the semester) are the ones that apparently help students to pass with at least borderline scores despite their lack of proficiency in the language.  According to the English teachers, this is the main reason why weak students have managed to pass all the courses in the English Program with the minimum required scores.

In connection to Faculty support, almost 80% of students consider that there is enough support regarding academic problems, learning difficulties, and even personal matters.

 In this part of the analysis, we can state that it is true that most students with problems in the use of L2 try to do their best when it comes to tutorial presentations because they are aware

of how much they can improve their final scores. In terms of scores, it is an advantage for the students. However, it is also positive in terms of learning. By working on tutorials students have the opportunity to put all the knowledge and skills together in a way that can be appreciated and evaluated by the professors. Therefore, tutorial presentations are necessary learning tools that can be of great benefit for students. It depends on the teacher to find a reliable and fair way to evaluate learners' work because there is no rubric for this purpose.

**Research Question 3: What are the formal and operational aspects of the Entrepreneurship Degree Program and how do they interact with the English Program?**

Comparing the curriculum of the English Language Program from the Entrepreneurship degree and the common basis for the elaboration of language syllabi, curriculum guidelines, examinations and textbooks across Europe provided by the Common European Framework (CEF), there are clear differences among them. In the first place, the EDP Language Program must follow the syllabus format, guidelines and evaluation system imposed by the university whereas the CEF has its own. However, the textbooks, grading criteria and recently one of the formal evaluations such as the BEC Higher from the CEF have been adopted as part of the English Department curriculum. It means that there is no match between some aspects of the curriculum. This mismatch is one of the reasons for the unsuccessful results many of the target students have obtained at the end of the English Program and persist over senior semester.

The English Program intends to be a real ESP program but the truth is that, it has not reached that level due to different reasons. First, the low proficiency level of many students who have managed to pass the courses sometimes does not adequately allow them to cover business topics in depth. Instead, most English teachers have to go back to basic language and teach them what was not learned on time. Consequently, covering several units from textbooks and trying to

do extra business related activities such as case studies has become a big challenge, due to time constraints.

Another reason that does not lead the English Program to become an authentic ESP programs is the lack of resources.  Most English classes focus on the use of the given textbooks rather than on other material such as business articles and videos.  This situation does not only affect the English Department.  Many Business professors also request to have access to other technological educational resources in order to get students more familiar with the business world.

Most English teachers disagree with the current textbooks for the Basic and Pre-intermediate courses because they do not encourage students to produce language, something that is surely required in senior semesters.  As students have expressed, they do feel a gap between the Language Program and Business subjects.

Regarding the textbooks for Intermediate, Upper-intermediate and Advanced courses, most teachers see the content of these texts as relevant, business-oriented and challenging enough.  Nevertheless, they also find disadvantages such as the fact that the grammar sections are too weak and the vocabulary used throughout the units is artificial and not used in practical business life.  They also have an excessive number of units, an obstacle when working with low language proficiency level students.

**Research Question 4:  What remedial actions or changes could be implemented in the future in order to improve the current learning achievement of the target students?**

In order to prepare students for the BEC higher, it is necessary that the English Department provide teachers and students with exam practice books and CDs, which currently they do not have.  This shortfall affected students in the process of graduation, who had to take the

mentioned exam.  There was not enough material to give them an effective preparation course. This was one of the main reasons for their failure.

Regarding methodology, the results of the class observations and questionnaires reveal that both English and Business Area teachers walk on different paths.   While most English classes encourage students' participation, interaction and language production, Business classes tend to be more teacher-centered and lecture-type.  Students go from one approach to a completely different one.  This is definitely because of the fact that almost all Business teachers have professional degrees in that area, not in the teaching field.  The lack of appropriate training and experience as teachers, affects the methodology used in the classroom.

 On the other side, English classes do not prepare students for senior semester classes effectively.  This is because the teaching methodology used in Business classes is more focused on discussion, reflection, analysis of cases, interpretation of results and reading comprehension; things that most English teachers try to do but not in sufficient way.  It is definitely another mismatch affecting students' transition to senior business classes.

With regard to other activities developed by the English Department, there are: monthly meetings, workshops and short training programs.  English and Business area professors consider that more training is necessary in order to improve the general language level of all of them as well as to learn new classroom techniques and more effective teaching approaches.  Most English teachers indicate that they would like to increase communication between both areas English and Business.  In the program, there is no regular official meeting in which both parts of the faculty can discuss academic issues related to the students and the Program.

Training students to take international certifications without being properly trained first, could be a great difficulty in future semesters, as the aim of the EDP is to continue fostering such certification process in most graduate students.

**Chapter 6 - Conclusions**

The low English language proficiency and consequently, unsatisfactory learning achievement of the EDP students have been confirmed through formal examinations in which the bad results were expected.  It is not surprising that such students were not able to succeed on the tests due to the background almost all of them have in common.  Passing the English Program courses with the minimum required scores and sometimes with a second or third remedial exam, having difficulties with the language from the very beginning and not completing the English Program before taking business subjects in senior semesters are some of the factors affecting the affecting language achievement.

Among the students who obtained good results in the English courses and formal evaluations, those who had some knowledge of the language at admission to the EDP and consequently have completed the Language Program on time.

Another group of general factors that contributed to low achievement in all the EDP student groups was the students' negative attitude towards formal examinations, the apparent lack of purpose they perceive from them and the poor or no previous preparation.

Regarding the possible implementation of an admission test, would probably not be beneficial for the Entrepreneurship Degree because it would surely decrease the rate of enrolment, which would in turn negatively affect the economic stability of the EDP and thus the hiring of teachers, investment in training and resources and other benefits for the students.

The English Language Program consists of five courses and according to administration regulations no changes can be made in it.  There is a general feeling from students and professors, that it is too short, not very challenging and does not provide enough preparation for senior semesters.

Even though most EDP students have a positive opinion of the Language Program teachers and textbooks, they are not completely satisfied about how much they have learned. In general, they still have knowledge gaps after completing the five courses.

The level of motivation and participation is quite low in the Business subject classes. This is not necessarily due to of a lack of interest in the content, but because of kind of methodology used by the professors. Students do not have meaningful opportunities to produce language and most of the classes are teacher-centered. Teachers' talking time is also excessive compare to the amount of participation of students. There are complaints on both sides: students claiming to receive high teaching quality classes and professors justifying their poor methodology with the low language proficiency of learners, which is could be a limitation sometimes. In both cases, they may be partially right. However, the priority in any educational institution is, according to the official curriculum, the student. Therefore, low proficiency level students deserve to have access to best possible quality education in order to overcome their deficiencies.

`In connection to the evaluation system of the Entrepreneurship Degree, it might not be the perfect, but it is the one officially accepted now. The fact that some ways of evaluation such as tutorials or other projects may help the student to improve his final score should not be a threat for the teacher. On the contrary, it should be considered a potential strength in the sense that it enhances students' general achievement. Different means of assessment are necessary in order to evaluate effectively students with different learning styles.

The English Language Program of the Entrepreneurship Degree has some weaknesses in the development of the curriculum. It has adopted guidelines, formal evaluations, grading criteria and textbooks from the Common European Framework. However, the objectives and

competencies elaborated by the teachers in accordance to the Faculty parameters do not match them.  This has led to unsuccessful results in our students.  Evidently, after completing the 5 program courses most of them are not prepared for language challenges in senior semesters.  On the other hand, it also depends on the students who should be responsible for their own learning and at least try to cope with the difficulties in the use of language and try to find help when needed.

Having enough teaching and learning resources in the English Department has been another problem.  There are almost no books for the use of teachers in order to develop meaningful activities beyond the textbooks.  Other educational resources are also needed in Business classes.  This can certainly help professors to improve their methodology.

With regard to teaching methodology, there is also a mismatch.  On one side, English language teachers mostly use techniques and strategies that encourage students to participate in class and produce language at certain level.  On the other side, Business teachers, many of them without teaching training, provide knowledge in a lecture style with very little or no participation from students.  As a result, there is no consistency in the way students are taught.  This is why those learners, who produce little in class, do not produce anything in senior semesters.  Besides, most EDP students are not used to discussion, interpretation and analysis of cases, and data, as frequent class activities, an aspect of the curriculum that the English Program has not fostered effectively.

Teacher training programs in the Entrepreneurship Degree are somewhat developed and have had a good start in the last months.  However, there is a lot more to be done not only in the English but also in the Business areas, where most professors are to be hired only when they are

be highly trained in both the use of the English language, ESP techniques and approaches and general teaching methodology.

**Recommendations**

Overall, everybody in the Entrepreneurship Degree is concerned about the students' low English language achievement in senior semesters. This is why, through the analysis of factors, interpretation and discussion of results and meetings with the Director, professors and students, the following suggestions and actions are suggested:

**Entrepreneurship Degree students:**

1. Should be aware of their English language proficiency level. If they have decided to study a bilingual degree such as Entrepreneurship, they must assume that it would be necessary to improve their L2 knowledge and skills. This could be achieved by taking courses or private classes before enrollment or during vacation time in order to be at an appropriate level in which they can communicate effectively.

2. Especially those who live alone or with friends should get their parents involved in their studies more closely. In this way, they could support them in case of difficulties in L2 achievement

3. Take English classes more seriously, because it would be of great benefit in their senior semesters and in their future in general. Avoid passing with the minimum score and aim higher in the development of language skills. Keep in mind that they are responsible for their own learning and do not blame others for failure.

4. Communicate well and often with the English Language Program, and the EDP faculty, in general. Give them constructive feedback, which may lead to good results.

**For the English Language Program:**

1. Develop a well-articulated English Language curriculum that matches the demands of business subjects in senior semesters and in general, the competitive business world that graduated students will face in the future.

2. Assume the fact that it is not possible to extend the number of courses in the Program. Instead, revise the objectives, contents, competencies and activities in every course in order to maximize students' learning. The purpose is that all the students could feel satisfied at the end of the Program and prepared to succeed in senior semesters.

3. Update the resources used in the Department. Analyze the results of using the current textbooks, and feedback from students and teachers' opinions. Make changes if necessary. Look for material that truly enhances students' language proficiency and matches the requirements of the Business subjects in senior semesters.

3. Get the most from the current evaluation system. Develop grading criteria or adapt the one from the Common European Framework in order to evaluate students in a more reliable way. Do not complain about activities that might help students to improve their grades such as tutorials. Instead, take advantage of what could be learned from them.

4. Meet regularly and often with the English Area teachers as well as the Business Area ones. The purpose is to work cooperatively and achieve mutual goals. The English Program must prepare learners to deal with the language and the kind of activities students will have to be involved in.

5. Develop training programs for students and teachers. In the case of students, they must be prepared for international certifications in an organized way. Students with language proficiency problems at admission throughout the courses or in senior semesters also need careful assistance

from the English Department.  In the case of professors, training on a regular basis can motivation, knowledge, qualifications and be of great impact for students.

**For English and Business Area professors**

1. English teachers should identify students' language proficiency problems from the very beginning and take remedial actions in order to help them not only at admission but also during and after completing the Language Program.  Similarly, Business subject teachers should inform the English Department about students with serious language difficulties that could be a limitation for them and the rest of the class.

2. It is recommended that Business Area teachers are aware of their lack of teaching methodology or teaching experience, and try to find support in the English Department and in the Faculty itself.  Be willing to get the necessary training from certified tutors.

3.  Both English and Business area should work together towards the successful achievement of their students.  The English teachers should know the methodology used in the senior semester classes, the types of activities and what is expected from students in terms of the use of ESP.Be supportive and at the same time demanding with students.  They must feel that most activities are challenging and meaningful and that the use of Business English in (Krahnke, 2001) the classroom is a must rather than an option.  This is necessary because many students always try to do things in the easy way with minimum efforts.

4.  Make the best use of the evaluation system.  There are many obstacles to changing it, but teachers can make it more reliable and fair.  It must be a genuine assessment tool.

**For the Entrepreneurship Degree and Faculty**

1.  Provide enough support to both students and colleagues.  In the case of students, continue helping students in difficult situations, academic or personal.  Regarding teachers, it is a good

idea to give them a voice in the development of tools for evaluation, assessment and feedback. All of them can contribute to improving the Language and Business programs.

2. Assure the selection and hiring of highly qualified professors not only in Business areas but also in the teaching field.  Due to the lack of certified professors in both Business and teaching areas, it is advisable to train them properly through courses, workshops, seminars and other programs.  In this way, it may be possible to reduce the rate of complaints from students about the quality of teaching and at the same time improve achievement and motivation.

3.  Allocate budget to fund training programs, international certifications or short courses that professors might need or be interested in taking as part of their professional development.  This could be of great benefit to students.

4. Make a careful revision of the curriculum especially in connection to the English Program and Business subjects in senior semesters.  Students should complete the Program.  It should be a requirement for enrolment in Business classes.

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**Appendix A**

Questionnaire

Hometown: _____          Age: _____          Semester: _____

Please read the following questions.  Then tick the option that best describes you.

1.You studied and graduated in a:

☐ Bilingual school

☐ Not bilingual school but English was taught every day.

☐ School where English was taught at least 3 hours per week.

☐ School where English was taught 2 or less hours a week.

☐ Other/ Explain _____

2.  Your parents' education level can be described as follows:

 Father

☐   Has a professional degree (3rd level)

☐   Has a Master's or PhD (4th level)

☐   Does not have a professional degree.

☐   Other/ Explain _____

Mother

☐   Has a professional degree (3rd level)

☐   Has a Master's or PhD (4th level)

☐   Does not have a professional degree.

☐ Other / Explain _____

3.  Your family situation is the following:

☐ You live with both parents.

☐ You live only with one of your parents.

☐ You live only with siblings or friends.

☐ You live alone.

☐ Other / Explain _____

4.  Your family economical status is:

☐ High class

☐ Middle-upper class

☐ Middle class

☐ Middle-low class

☐ Other / Explain

5.  How would describe your English language skills at admission in the Entrepreneurship

Degree?

☐ Basic

☐ Low Intermediate

☐ Upper Intermediate

☐ Advanced

☐ Other / Explain _____

6.  How would describe your current English language skills?

☐ Basic

☐ Low Intermediate

☐ Upper Intermediate

☐  Advanced

☐  Other / Explain _____

7.  Please provide us with your feedback about the English Program in the Entrepreneurship

Degree.

A.Our 5 English courses:

☐ Too many courses, the program is long.

☐ Just the right number of courses.

☐ Not enough courses, more preparation is needed.

Comments (optional): _____

B. English teachers:

☐ Most of them were very helpful.

☐ Only some of them were helpful.

☐ None of them was helpful.

Comments (optional): _____

C. Textbooks used (Start-up, Business Benchmark)

☐ Most of them were very useful

☐ Only some of them were useful

☐ None of them was useful

Comment (optional): _____

D. Once completed the 5 courses, your learning experience can be described as follows:

☐ I learned quite lot, the Program helped me to learn Business English.

☐ The program somewhat helped me.  I feel I didn't learn that much.

☐ I learned very little.  The Program did not reach my expectations.

8. Please tell us your opinion about your former and current English content-subject teachers:

☐ All of them seemed to be quite well-prepared. I have learned a lot.

☐ Although only some of them are well-prepared, I have learned.

☐ They are probably well-prepared for the subject but I have not learned much.

☐ They are not prepared as I expected and I have learned very little.

☐ Other / Explain _____

9. In general, what is your attitude in the English classes in the Entrepreneurship Degree?

☐ Very positive, usually motivated, willing to participate.

☐ Quite motivated although I sometimes do not fully understand.

☐ Not really motivated because I do not understand or do not like them.

☐ Usually negative, not motivated at all, I do not like them.

☐ Other/ Explain: _____

10. The Faculty support regarding problems related to English Program (classes, teachers, textbooks, students' learning difficulties, etc) has been:

☐ Very supportive, they have always helped in a way.

☐ Quite supportive although they did not help me a few times.

☐ Just a little supportive. Most times, I have solved problems on my own.

☐ Almost not supportive. I find my own solutions.

☐ Other / Explain : _____

Thank you very much for your collaboration. You are really helping us to improve our work!

The English Department

**Appendix B**

# English Department Questionnaire

The English Language Achievement of the Entrepreneurship Degree Students

Name: _____

English course currently teaching: _____

The present questionnaire is designed in order to analyze the factors influencing our students' achievement in the English language in senior semesters.  Please read the following questions and answer them in the given space.

1.Students attending Pre-Universitario course can take an English language Placement test but there is not an Admission test in the Entrepreneurship Degree.  Do you consider it would be necessary or helpful?  Why/Why not?

_____

_____

2.  Our English Program consists of 5 courses.  In your opinion, is this enough time for the students to learn Business English at a level in which they can handle English-content subjects in senior semesters?

_____

_____

**3**.  What do you think are the main reasons why some students may have difficulties in the English-content subjects in senior semesters?  Why do you consider that some students have more difficulties in L2 than others?

_____

_____

4.  Please explain some of the teaching techniques and strategies used in your classes in order to engage and motivate students to learn.

_____

_____

5.  Please provide us with some feedback on the textbooks we use with our students.  In your view, are they useful, meaningful, content-relevant and effectively business language-oriented?

Start up 1 & 2: _____

_____

Business Benchmark (Preliminary, Vantage & Higher) _____

_____

6.  Tell us our opinion about our evaluation system.  Do you consider the current tools we use (midterm & final exam, class tests, tutorials, class work and exam for the validation of competencies) are reliable to measure students' language achievement

_____

_____

7.  What changes could you suggest in order to improve our students' language proficiency, achievement and our own performance in the English Department?

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your collaboration.  Your feedback will surely help us to do a much better job!

**Appendix C**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
**FORMAL OBSERVATION FORM**

Date: _____     Semester: _____

Teacher: _____  Observer: _____

Level Observed: _____ Time: _____ Observation No. _____

Grading Scale:  (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (2)Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree.

| Criteria | Indicators | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Stages and flow of the lesson. | The teacher has planned the lesson carefully.  All stages are clearly observed (Presentation, Practice, Production) | | | | | |
| 2. Teaching Methodology | Methodology is appropriate for the lesson in terms of level and the subject being taught. | | | | | |
| 3.  Active Participation | T. successfully engages virtually all Ss. in instructional activities. Most Ss. appeared to be motivated and willing to work.  Off-task behavior is rarely observed. | | | | | |
| 4.  Effective Feedback | T. is updated with contents to be taught.  T. uses a variety of question types to stimulate discussion, anticipates to Ss' concerns and is prepared to explain lesson features at an appropriate level of understanding. | | | | | |
| 5.  Contents are related to reality. | T. stimulates students to use critical thinking.  Contents are directly related to real-life situations, Ss' own interests and pre-professional training. | | | | | |
| 6.  General class procedures | T. encourages Ss. to follow class procedures (avoid the use of mobile phones or other electronic gadgets, use of L2, original textbooks, discipline, punctuality, respect, etc) If not, T. takes steps to improve the | | | | | |

| | situation. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total score** | | | | | | |

**Comments:**

| |
|---|
| |

**Area Coordinator**                                    **Teacher**

_____                    _____

Portions adapted from Danielson's Framework for Professional Practice.

# Appendix D

## English Program in the Entrepreneurship Degree

### Overview and Objectives

A good knowledge of English is required to succeed in international business and commerce. Business English helps business people worldwide to be able to trade and work together.  Having relevant language skills will give students a great advantage in the job market.

The English Language Program of the Entrepreneurship Degree intends to prepare students either for a career in business or those already in employment who need to enhance their English communication skills. It aims to develop English language skills at an appropriate standard in business contexts.  It provides practical reading, speaking, listening and writing skills for people who need English as a professional tool.

The Program meets a wide range of needs and wants which students have in the different areas of interest and specialization, and provides skills for developing business projects.

The English Program is made up of five courses:  Basic, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper intermediate and Advanced.  It also includes a preparation course for the BEC (Business English Certificate) Higher examination.

The courses mix contemporary ideas from the world of business and employ a task-based and student-centered teaching methodology.  Students are expected to use their own experience and critical thinking in order to maximize involvement and learning.

### Requirements for Admission

No Admission Test is required in the Pre-course

English Language Placement Test is required in the Pre-course:  According to the results of this test, students are suggested to take exams by credit instead of registering in the courses.  Exams

by credit from Basic to Upper Intermediate can be taken once in the semester.  There is no exam by credit for the advanced course, it is mandatory.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

Classroom activities are graded on a regular basis.  These include debates, presentations, role-playing, writing compositions, writing for business purposes, reading emails, reports, articles, information on the internet, grammar exercises, business videos, case studies, problem solving exercises, etc.

Tutorials are projects in which students put together everything they have learned throughout the semester.  They consist on a written work plus the oral presentation in class (midterm) and in the auditorium (final).  These projects covered the contents from several subjects according to the cycle (integrated tutorial)

There are two exams:  Midterm and Final.  They consist of five sections:  Reading and Vocabulary, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Grammar.

The exams from the Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced courses have BEC (Preliminary, Vantage and Higher) type exercises.

Class Work:  25%

Tutorials:      25%

Exams:        50%

**Material**

The textbooks used in the English Program of the Entrepreneurship Degree intend to be an interesting and stimulating course for lower to advanced students of Business English.  They

provide a general Business English course both for students who have not working experience in business and for people who are already working in business environments.

Basic English Course:  Start Up 1 student book and workbook.

Pre-intermediate English Course:  Start Up 2 students book and workbook.

In both Basic and Pre-intermediate English courses, the student book contains 12 units of three lessons each.  The workbook provides additional self-study practice and the accompanying CD-ROM can be used at home or in class.

Intermediate English Course:  Business Benchmark Preliminary student book

Upper Intermediate English Course:  Business Benchmark Vantage student book

Advanced English Course:  Business Benchmark Higher student book

In the Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced courses, the student book contains 24 units for classroom study.  These units are organized in groups of four around a theme:  company profiles, production and selling, etc.  In each group of four, two of the units have a vocabulary focus and two have a grammar focus.  Each unit gives training and practice in a variety of skills such as different reading strategies, listening for gist and specific information, writing business letters and emails, accuracy and fluency in speaking.

**English Courses in detail**

| Courses | Competencies | Length | Pre-requirement |
|---------|--------------|--------|-----------------|
| Level 1 Basic English | Business English Program aims to develop the following competences in the students: | 128 hours First semester (or later) | Placement Test |
| Level 2 Pre- | • Being able to communicate in | 128 hours Second | Basic English Course |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intermediate English | written form: write proposals, recommendations, emails, memos, letters and reports.<br><br>• Being able to communicate orally. Give business presentations, conferences, speak fluently in a business environment.<br><br>• Being able to apply the correct business vocabulary when needed.<br><br>• Being able to interact and relate with people involved in business.<br><br>• Being aware of the importance of the language as one of the first languages all over the world, of extreme importance for future entrepreneurs of independent businesses.<br><br>• Being able to listen and speak | semester (or later) | |
| Level 3<br><br>Intermediate English | | 128 hours<br><br>Third semester (or later) | Pre-Intermediate English Course |
| Level 4<br><br>Upper-Intermediate English | | 128 hours<br><br>Fourth Semester<br><br>(pre-requirement for Business English subjects) | Intermediate English Course |
| Level 5<br><br>Advanced English | | 128 hours<br><br>Fifth semester<br><br>(pre-requirement for Business English subjects) | Upper Intermediate English Course |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | during normal business activities such as interviews, meetings, telephone conversations or negotiations. | | |
| Diagnostic English Proficiency Exam | • Being aware of the proficiency language level of the students<br>• Taking actions in order to improve students' skills. | 4 hours | Advanced English Course |
| Preparation for BEC course | • Being able to get an international business English certification. | 40 hours | Graduation Process Seminar registration |

**English teachers**

**Qualifications**

- Bachelor in Education or Business (with a postgraduate qualification in education or teaching)

- Master's Degree in Education or Business areas.

- Minimum of 2 years of teaching experience

- English Language Proficiency certification (TOEFL or CAE)

- Preferably BEC certified (Vantage or Higher)

- Training in the Business field (certificates or diplomas from conferences, seminars, courses)

**Profile**

Teachers working at the English Department of the Entrepreneurship Degree need to have the following characteristics:

- Excellent communication skills

- an interest in the Entrepreneurship Degree activities and projects

- imagination, energy, creativity, patience, enthusiasm, commitment and  adaptability

- the ability to work well with students with different English proficiency levels.

- the ability to create an environment in which students feel comfortable and participate

- the ability to make classes relevant to the needs and interests of the students.

**Work activities:**

- Planning, preparing and delivering lessons to a range of Business English classes;

- Preparing and setting tests, examination papers, and exercises;

- Marking and providing appropriate feedback on oral and written work;

- Devising, writing and producing new materials,

- Organizing and getting involved in social and cultural activities related to the Entrepreneurship Degree;

- Coordinating information and preparing teaching materials, supervising and evaluating student progress.

**Appendix E**

**Business Courses from the Entrepreneurship Degree in detail**

| Subject | Overview and Competencies | Length | Semester |
|---------|---------------------------|--------|----------|
| Introduction to Entrepreneurship | This course intends to improve and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit, developing skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, business plan design, by addressing issues both from the theoretical and the practical side of the business environment<br><br>This subject aims to develop the following competences in the students:<br><br>• Have an understanding of Entrepreneurship as a science<br><br>• Design a competitive business model and build a solid strategic plan.<br><br>• Conduct feasibility analysis and crafting a winning business plan. | 96 hours | Fourth |
| Marketing for Entrepreneurs | This course will introduce students to all areas of Marketing for Entrepreneurs and the environment in which business transactions take place.  The main topics | 96 hours | Fifth |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | covered in this subject shall provide students with an understanding and appreciation of strategic marketing planning to develop their business and keep growing. This subject aims to develop the following competences in the students: <br><br> • Learn about specialized marketing for entrepreneurs and cost-effective strategies to develop their businesses. <br><br> • Establish the difference between marketing, strategic marketing and marketing for entrepreneurs <br><br> • Analyze the environment in order to determine the market conditions, identify the target market and the best niche, catch and opportunity and solve a problem | | |
| Finance | This course aims to show that the economic evaluation of investment | 96 hours | Sixth |

| | projects is a systematic process that define, regulate and assess the cost policies in organizations and the significant benefits that are linked to the process of decision-making in the field of investment, evaluation and financing. This subject aims to develop the following competences in the students:<br><br>• Define the financial situation of the industrial and commercial models and service in a state of initiation and / or expansion.<br><br>• Assess the real and financing value of different investment options.<br><br>• Determine the impact of the investment project analyzed from the perspective of capital and financing. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| International Relations | This course intends to explore business, financial, political and legal issues affecting systems by which corporations are directed and controlled both in | 48 hours | Sixth |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | industrialized and developing countries, the nature of the corporation, as well conceptions of social responsibility, and capital market development and international cross-listing of shares.<br><br>This subject aims to :<br><br>• Introduce students to all areas of International Relationships and the environment within which business transactions take place.<br><br>• Provide students with an understanding and appreciation of Global Capitalism, Business Relationships, and the Changes in Business Relationships, The Nature of These Changes and Their Effects in International Business. | | |
| Distribution Channels | This course aims to help students understand that a channel must be designed following the unique goal which is related to satisfy customer's needs such as delivering a level of value | 48 hours | Sixth |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | to the customer that creates a sustainable competitive advantage for the supply chain.<br><br>This subject aims to develop the following competences in the students:<br><br>• Be able to identify, design and restructure and implement different types of distribution chains according to the necessity of both the company and their consumers.<br><br>• Handle an organized network of agencies and institutions which in combination perform all the activities required to link producers with users to accomplish the marketing task.<br><br>• Consider the part that supply chains play in delivering value to end customers. | | |
| International Trade | The main purpose of this subject is to identify, analyze, and execute rules, procedures and documents related to | 96 hours | Sixth |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | exports and imports as part of the international commerce.<br><br>This subject aims to develop the following competences in the students:<br><br>• Analyze and make decisions related to international commerce management.<br><br>• Integrate within and international area in a company or organization.<br><br>• Identify sources of economical and business information regarding international commerce. | | |
| Strategic Planning | This course intends to provide students all the information needed to create a strategic plan and this become strategic managers considering internal and external factors of the companies where they are working.<br><br>The students will be able to:<br><br>• Recognize the theoretical | 96 hours | Seventh |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | concepts of Strategic Planning in order to propose effective and consistent solutions to the different possible variables related to business situations. <br><br> • Learn how companies worldwide use the strategic planning process and its applicability inward and outward in all organizations. | | |
| Opportunity for the Global Impact | Global Impact and Opportunities has the mission to achieve understanding of international globalized situations that will help students develop a keen interest in the upbringing of their own social skills to develop a strategy that is aligned with the current situation. <br><br> By the end of the course, students will be able to: <br><br> • Identify, design, relate and command instances in which the international process is implicit. <br><br> • Have tools to defend and compete without issues in the | 96 hours | Seventh |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | formation or expansion of companies with market-share based current regulations and terms. | | |
| The Entrepreneur in Corporations | The course refers to the importance of a true basis of knowledge on different areas for the individuals to become torques of change in their own ventures. The subject aims to develop the following abilities in the students: <br><br>• Learn how to be an effective communicator, a planner, a strategist and a complementor. <br><br>• Skills in business-related fields such as planning, organizing, human resources management, Entrepreneurship, coaching, controlling, values, ethics and corporate responsibility. | 96 hours | Eighth |
| Community Consultancy | This course intends to help students understand and handle all aspects of a consultant's practice at their | 96 hours | Eighth |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | beneficiary's highest aspirations, creating visionary improvement to the quality of life in their clients' communities. This subject aims to develop the following competences in the students: <br><br> • Be a business consultant by developing skills in obtaining and processing information and search for solutions to business problems. <br><br> • Learn about the role of the professional consultant <br><br> • Analyze the environment macro and micro economic enterprises, develop strategic options. | | |
| E-Commerce | The future of Trade relations between businesses and consumers is directly related to the use of either technology is the internet and others that are being developed students learning process. This course intends to teach the | 80 hours | Eighth |

| | strategies and develop skills to be more competitive in the business of the future. At the end of the semester, students will be able to: <ul><li>Adapt traditional marketing strategies to online business.</li><li>Analyze the current E-commerce law and its impact in the society.</li><li>Identify the most used methods to do online transactions.</li></ul> | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |