

**Effectiveness of the Learning  
Assessment Tools that Teachers Apply  
to Test the Linguistic Skills on Pupils  
of High School Institutions in Usulután  
department**

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## INTRODUCTION

Assessment has an essential role in any field and language teaching is not an exemption. The word assessment is very common in the educational context, many people, students or teachers, feel comfortable when talking about this topic in a general way. However, it seems like little attention has been given to the different techniques that can be applied to measure specific areas in language teaching and learning. Students are sometimes exposed to tests or activities that do not match their level or needs; this often leads to misconceptions of the obtained results. Learners might be really good at any macro skill of the English language, but probably the opportunity that he has been provided with to show his proficiency level is not appropriate.

Many authors agree that assessment is a complex process which is composed by many techniques that serve to identify people's ability in specific areas. They also suggest that the teaching-learning process could be more fruitful if those techniques were applied along with a well-structured objective. Furthermore, current trends in education state that students increase their productivity when they are exposed to a variety of activities, when many techniques are being used, there are more and higher chances that the assessment process brings beneficial backwash to our pupils.

Assessment is indeed a vital part in education, In El Salvador, there is still a lot to do to get the best out of it. Teachers need to be up to date with different strategies that can be used to measure students development. That way, they can choose the one that actually measures the level of effectiveness of the techniques, strategies, procedures or methods that are being applied in the classroom.

## CHAPTER I: Problematic situation

When teachers aim to measure how successful their teaching process has been, they have to engage a diverse type of instruments to make evident the effectiveness of the methods, techniques and strategies that they applied in the classroom. Those instruments are designed in order to identify the level of knowledge and competence that the student has reached or developed during the teaching learning process of a particular course.

As everybody knows, teachers tend to use different types of assessment processes, depending on the nature of the subject and the methodology that they are using in the class. It may also assume that some teachers do not use real instruments to assess their pupils

rather than a personal criterion to determine a specific grade upon the student's performance. So, what teachers pretend to elicit from the students on the sunset of a teaching learning process needs to be based on the fact of conducting truthful tests that allow them to know the progress obtained and proof of the achievement goals that are part of the educational curriculum presented by Ministry of Education (MINED, 2008) in the case of the teaching of English as foreign language in high schools in El Salvador.

Nowadays it can be perceived that there is a new generation of English language teachers that are being graduated from several higher education institutions who are upbrought with new and modern trends about teaching. This implies that these new professionals might switch the traditional way of testing that most of current English language teachers use to assess their alumni performance. Moreover, this phenomenon might cause a positive perception from the pupils towards the English subject in the institutions, for the assessment methodology that the new English language teachers would engage with them since that approach would be bond with the language teaching approach proposed by (MINED, 2008), which is the communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT). According to (Richards, 2006), *Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) 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.* This approach contradicts radically the common ways to test that the majority of current teachers apply in the classroom, which are hinged upon the grammar translation method and the audio-lingual method. Therefore, the assessment process is about to suffer a very meaningful change with new ideas and refreshing strategies that will motivate the students towards the assessment itself. These ideas and strategies will be taken by the revolutionary young teachers that will make of the testing process a reason to encourage the pupils to defy themselves through creative and dynamic ways to demonstrate how much they have learnt at the end of each stage of the course or at the very end of it.

What it is stated in the previous passage could create a hostile environment between the traditional teachers' and the new teachers' assessment process, for there will be a constant debate of who is good or right with the procedures applied in assessment. Nevertheless, what will show the effective success of those procedures is the level of outcomes revealed on the students' grades. If some issues emerge from this debate, those issues will be identified in this research beforehand. This way, principals and involved

teachers will reach agreements in the English language teaching scenario to share ideas and mingle important facts between experience (current teachers) and innovations (new teachers) of assessment with the purpose of making the pupils feel motivated towards the testing process. However, if the issues persist, the researcher teachers of this study are compelled to be part of the solution. They will be participating constantly in supporting the principals and teachers to innovate through more accurate and motivating methods to assess pupils' performance.

Hence, through this research project, Universidad Gerardo Barrios seeks to provide solutions to existing problems on the educational system and academic society in general through the development of this study, which is carried out with the purpose of finding out issues in the elaboration, suitability, and standardisation of the different types of instruments that English language educators applied in order to measure the pupils' learning.

Considering some of the indicators mentioned above, Universidad Gerardo Barrios aims to keep institutional presence on the educational institutions that are part of this research through the straight participation and involvement of the researcher teachers by offering solutions to the problems that could be identified. This includes to train and advice high school English language teachers how to create or elaborate assessing instruments **if** this would be necessary.

## 1.1 Research questions

### **What are the assessment criteria implemented by teachers to measure the English language input of student?**

According to what learners manifested, the criteria mostly assessed by their English teachers are pronunciation, comprehension, and fluency. These criteria are mentioned in the sub variable that emerged from the independent variable 1, which is question 1 of the survey conducted to the students (see graph of sub variable of I.V. 1). Therefore, teachers bet more to oral skills rather than written skills when assessing their alumni. This implies that educators are breaking the paradigm of using the classic grammar translation method and they are applying the communicative language teaching (CTL) method or communicative approach, which is the method suggested by MINED in the high schools.

### **What are the types of assessment tests applied by the teacher to assess students' English language output?**

Pertaining to the results, students revealed that the types of assessments that teachers use to evaluate their English language output are final tests, aptitude tests and diagnostic tests. There is something new that is seen here since aptitude and diagnostic tests are kind of tests barely never used traditionally in high schools, especially in public schools.

### **What is the relation between the MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators and the classroom assessment techniques applied by teachers?**

The MINED's syllabus is based on the communicative approach, which is addressed to sponsor students' oral skills development. However, the results of this research reflected that grammar skills improvement (a matter of the grammar translation method) has had an impact on the use of the language not only in a written but also in an oral way, for learners also highly emphasised that they practice dialogues using the English language with their classmates and teachers. In addition, it was discovered that the audio lingual method is still being used in the classroom in the way that there was part of the participants of this study that mentioned that they teachers employ repetition drills in the classroom in order to enhance pronunciation (see graphs I V 3 and D V 3).

## **1.2 Justification**

Assessment in English learning and teaching has been for many years a very important issue to end the students' learning process in general. Hence, specialized and non-specialized teachers who are in charge of teaching the subject in high school institutions are constantly compelled to make use of ideal instruments that reflect the students' academic performance in the classroom.

The instruments to be utilized must respond to the achievement indicators set in the syllabus, according to the Ministry of education of El Salvador (MINED, 2008). Therefore, teachers are free to design the types of instruments that they consider suitable to measure the level of linguistic skill developed by students in the English subject.

This research study is carried out with the aim of inquiring about of the different learning assessment instruments that English teachers use to test cognitive aspects and linguistic skills that students have developed based on the methodology applied by the

teachers, pertaining to the contents established in their plans. Such instruments must be from a quantitative (norm-referenced) or qualitative (criterion-reference) nature.

The methodological approach that best describes this research has a hybrid nature, for the approach is aimed to depict a phenomenon and to improve the existent deficiencies in the process of updating the assessment designs. The geographical scope estimated in this research is Usulután department. The institutions considered in order to carry out this study are those whose population is significant according to the amount of students enrolled in each of them.

### **1.3 Objectives**

#### **1.4.1 General objective**

To inquire about the diverse learning assessment tools that English teachers use to test linguistic skills of students in public and private high school institutions of Usulután department.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

- To identify the assessment criteria that teachers consider to measure the English language input of students.
- To verify the types of assessment tests applied by the teacher to assess students' English language output.
- To corroborate the relation between the MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators and the classroom assessment techniques applied by teachers.

### **1.4 Scopes and limitations of the research**

1.5.1 Geographical: This study was carried out in four high school institutions, two public and two private ones. They were: Instituto Nacional de Usulután, Instituto Nacional de Santa Elena, Colegio San Agustín and Colegio Bautista. They all belong to Usulután department.

1.5.2 Time: The research started in January and ended in October

1.5.3 Bibliographical: Very useful bibliographical resources was included on the theoretical framework, pertaining to the two variables of the research topic: assessment tools and

linguistic skills. Also, research theorists referenced to explain the methodology that sustain the research itself. Some outstanding authors mentioned were: Jack Richards, Lyle Bachman, John Carroll, Michael Long, Stephen Krashen, Merrill Swain, Rod Ellis, Catherine Dawson, Colin Neville, etc.

## **CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ASSESSMENT**

One of the most delicate stages of the teaching process is to know the main purpose of assessment and how this process will offer truthful evidences of the teacher's methodological practices in the classroom towards the pupils' learning. Indeed, it is not a simple or occurring idea to assign a grade to a student while developing a particular task. It is not just a circumstantial number to determine the pupil's range of performance. It is not a shallow perception of what the student responds in a written or oral test. Assessment goes beyond subjective prejudices that teachers might have and lead them to mark their alumni learning effort just for a personal commitment. From this view, teachers must respond to a series of queries to understand the main point of assessment and realise how determinant assessment is in the achievement of the learning goals reflected on the students. One of the questions that educators must ask themselves is: why do we want to assess? According to (Covacevich, 2014), *determining the purpose or goal of assessment involves asking the questions: Why do we want to measure learning? What do we want to measure? And whom do we want to evaluate?* These questions make the teacher reflect on the reasons why assessment is a landmark from the onset through the sunset of a teaching learning process.

However, one of the main concerns of teachers is to know the effectiveness of the gamut of assessment instruments that they use order to measure their pupils' performance, competence and skills. Hence, this leads to validate the fact that a learning assessment tool must be focused on a purpose alignment so that it can have a target goal towards the student's learning. Likewise, an assessment tool may have a variety of purposes, depending on the context where the student's learning process is developing. All types of assessment tools follow a particular objective. Each test is made according to its own nature. So, these tools are not just any circumstantial occurrence by chance that a teacher is going to create overnight. It is a very meticulous procedure to create a test, for it involves an amount of factors that go beyond the merely measurement of cognitive factors, such as: knowledge, competence, or linguistic skills developed by a student.

## 2.1 ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment of the language learning process implies the use of a variety of types of tools to measure or quantify the progress and consolidation of the students' competence, performance and linguistic skills during and at the end of a teaching process. Those tools most of time are designed by the teacher who follows personal or systematic purposes or parameters in order to explore his/her students' cognitive world.

From the assessment tools, a set of instruments are derived, which are used to assess someone's performance after following a certain process. *An assessment 'instrument' is part of an assessment tool — it includes the checklists (or other 'instruments') and instructions needed to conduct one part of a competency-based assessment (e.g. written test with answer key, observation checklist, verbal questioning instrument, log book, etc.)* (Learning, s.f.). Assessment instruments required of a careful elaboration, for they are designed to test in an objective or subjective way the level of knowledge, performance, competence or linguistic skills reached by learners during and at the end of their learning process.

### 2.1.1 TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT TOOLS

A common concern for teacher is to bear upon the assessment tools to use in order to test the students learning process. *Teachers' assessment tools are an important part of judging the capabilities, progress and development of students* (Leo, s.f.). The target of assessment focuses on show the effectiveness and reliability of the students learning is reflected through those tools utilised by the teacher. However, what is important to consider is who is in charge of carrying out the assessment process in the classroom, the teacher. Teacher's assessment is classed as follows:

#### 2.1.2 Formative assessment

*Formative assessment tools are used to evaluate a student at the beginning or middle of a class, semester or subject* (Leo, s.f.). Amongst some of these assessments tools we have: placement tests, interviews, observation lists, worksheets, pop quizzes and feedback are formative assessment tools that are engaged by teachers. Likewise, (Conway, s.f.) defines formative assessment as *a term for any type of assessment used to gather student feedback and improve instruction*. He also says that this process happens during the learning process, often while students are engaged in other activities. (Conway, s.f.)

mentions that there are some other examples of formative assessment, such as: anecdotal records, periodic quizzes or essays, diagnostic tests and in-class or homework assignments are all types of formative assessment because they provide information about a student's progress.

### 2.1.3 Summative assessment

*Summative assessment tools are used to gauge the outcome of the learning process* (Leo, s.f.). This assessment tool depends on the learning units and contents and they are used in order to test whether or not a learner was successfully taught in a peculiar lecture. Some examples of this teacher's assessment tools are: graded test, final exam, quiz, thesis paper and midterm exam. These are the only assessment tools that can be graded.

### 2.1.4 Objective assessment

*Teacher's assessment tools, whether formative or summative, can be further divided into two other categories: objective and subjective* (Leo, s.f.). Objective assessment tools are used to test specific patterns of the contents pertaining to a unit, which are selected by the teacher as parameters to realise about the learning indicators, goals and scopes of a subject. In this type of assessment tools, right and wrong answers are clearly defined. True/false and multiple-choice questions represent examples of this special assessment. In short, *objective assessment tools are the easiest to design and grade and, therefore, are the more common type of assessment tool* as (Leo, s.f.) cites.

### 2.1.5 Subjective assessment

*Subjective assessment tools require a little more creativity and opinion on the part of the student* (Leo, s.f.). Through this assessment tool, the students are tested by oral presentations and analytical papers where the teacher considers to compensate the quality of the students' work through performance instruments (rubrics, checklists, observation sheets, etc.) to assign them a worthy grade. Some examples of this assessment tool are: essay questions, research papers and argumentative speeches. Sometimes the nature of subjectiveness of this assessment is questioned, for some pupils feel compelled to memorise the information that they are going to share during an oral presentation owing to they use precise information, which a revealing characteristic of an objective assessment.

## 2.2 CONVENTIONAL TYPES OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

These are the most typical tools that have been used by teachers for many years in order to evaluate successfully their learners' linguistic skills and performance in the language classroom. (Ruckdeschel, s.f.) classifies them as *traditional types of tests like multiple-choice, short answer essays or constructed responses, and standardized tests such as those districts administer to all students.*

### 2.2.1 Multiple-choice tests

(Ruckdeschel, s.f.) defines multiple-choice tests as *tests that require students to recognize correct answers from among several choices, usually three to four with all but one choice wrong.* Teachers have to be careful in order to create this type of tests because it is necessary to generate a balance from the right answers through the wrong answers. However, these tests tend to be a bit easier to respond by the students, for they only have to create relationships between the examples or characteristics with a concept or definition given.

### 2.2.2 Short-answer essay tests

*Educators design short-answer essay tests to evaluate what can't be articulated through multiple-choice questions* (Ruckdeschel, s.f.). These tests defy the students to emphasise on certain topics or subtopics where they are required to use critical thinking, proving personal and reasonable points of view according what the instructions and criteria suggest to respond in the section of a test where these questions appear. These questions can also be considered as open questions which might start with any of the following words or phrases: "explain," "how would" "describe" and "assess."

### 2.2.3 Constructed-response tests

*Constructed-response tests require short answer or fill-in-the-blank questions, and require a blend of factual knowledge and higher-order reasoning* (Ruckdeschel, s.f.). The information asked to be provided in these tests is not very specific. The answers are not factual. Moreover, this type of assessment becomes a useful instrument for teachers in order to check, observe, or correct students' writing mistakes.

#### 2.2.4 Standardised tests

The last of these types of assessment tools to present here are the standardised tests. *Schools use standardized tests widely on a national level, and they are part of every school district's accountability design* (Ruckdeschel, s.f.). It is true that these type of tests are not commonly carried out in high schools as they are defined by (Ruckdeschel, s.f.); however, teachers can create them in order to assess the students at the end of every school trimester, school semester or school year. Teachers just have to follow the patterns from original tests and adapt them to their own convenience.

### 2.3 LANGUAGE OR LINGUISTIC SKILLS

*Classroom activities can be divided into two main categories: those that give the students language input, and those which encourage them to produce output* (Sárosdy, 2006). Learning and acquisition processes require a very close attention and the development of both processes imply that the language assimilation must occur in the students' brain. If learners are skilful enough to deal with these issues, they will be capable to use the language they have learnt or acquired through their experience. In order to attain the goals of learning a foreign language, the students must develop the four macro skills, which are the key to master the target language: listening, reading, speaking and writing.

#### 2.3.1 Classification of language skills

*The process of language teaching can be subdivided into two major stages: the input stage and the output stage* (Sárosdy, 2006). Firstly, we have input (the receptive skills), which are those ones in which the learners have to extract meaning when they are exposed to sources to listen and read. Secondly, output refers to the skills related to production, which the learners engage when they read and write.

#### 2.3.2 Receptive skills

*The two receptive skills are reading and listening... There are several similarities between teaching them so the general description to be given here applies both to listening and reading* (Sárosdy, 2006). One example of those remarkable similarities is that as reading and listening implies an active participation in communication.

Among all the receptive skills, we can find a list of subskills that perfect the characterisation. The processes we go through when reading a short story or listening to a poem are likely to be different from those we use when we are looking for some data in a manual or we want to know how to operate a machine. The use of these different skills will depend on what we are reading or listening for (Harmer, 2003) . He classifies them as follows:

- *Identifying the topic – readers and listeners are able to identify the topic of a text very fast with the help of their techniques of how to get into the idea of what is being talked/written about. This identifying ability makes it possible for them to process the text more effectively.*
- *Predictive skills – having identified the topic both readers and listeners guess what is being written or talked about. They try to predict what is coming. Their subsequent reading or listening helps them to confirm their expectations of what they have predicted.*
- *Skimming – this term means to get a quick idea of the gist of a text while running your eyes over it. It is very useful for the teachers to ask their students to have a quick look at the text before plunging into it for detail to get some specific pieces of information.*
- *Scanning – this term means reading or listening for specific information. In contrast to reading and listening for gist we often read or listen to a text because we often need specific details. For example, we want to read about the weather or we want to extract some facts from the news.*
- *Extensive reading – means reading/listening for pleasure. We use this type of reading/listening while reading an interesting model or a short story or an article taken from a popular paper etc.*
- *Intensive reading – means reading/listening for detailed information. Sometimes we read/listen to a text in order to understand everything we are reading in detail. We use this technique when we want to understand instructions or directions or when we are preparing for an exam.*
- *Interpreting texts – this sub-skill is used by readers/listeners if they want to understand the meaning of words beyond the literal meanings. Successful interpretation of this kind depends on shared schemata between the speaker and the listener and the writer or the reader. The question ‘Can you tell me the time?’ is not to be answered in the following way: ‘Yes, I can.’ but the reply must refer to a time expression such as ‘It’s nine o’clock.’*

- *Inferring opinion and attitude – a good reader/listener will know from various clues he receives, whether the writer or speaker approves of the topic he is discussing, or whether his opinion of the person he is describing is favourable or not. It is based on the recognition of linguistic style.*

### 2.3.3 Productive skills

The productive skills in the English language are speaking and writing. According to (Sarosdy, Farczadi, Poor , & Vadnay, 2006) Language production means that students are supposed to use all or part of language at their disposal to achieve a communicative purpose. They state that the speaking skill can be developed following the bottom-up approach consisting of the following sub-skills:

1. *Organic basis of skills (articulation basis) – from sound formation to accurate respiration*
2. *Rapid speech – to achieve fluent speech at the required speed*
3. *Parts of speech, tenses, sequence of tenses, word order and other grammatical rules – for a speaker it is necessary to have language competence including the categories mentioned above*
4. *Collocations – a competent speaker has to be aware of the collocations used in the target language e.g. expect a baby, wait for the bus*
5. *Stress, intonation, rhythm – belong to the pronunciation close to that of native speakers language learners are supposed to acquire, native like pronunciation which makes their speaking comprehensible*
6. *Speech functions – students are expected to be aware of language patterns used in various communicative situations such as greetings, introduction, inviting guests, finding the way, etc.*
7. *Gestures, non-verbal means – in addition to verbal communication a person who wants to communicate, is supposed to use non-verbal means as well such as gestures, facial expressions, etc.*
8. *Compensation strategies – while focusing on developing speaking skills teachers are expected to prepare students for compensating their lack of knowledge in the act of speech, for example, using synonyms, antonyms, circumlocutions, etc.*
9. *Cohesion, coherence – if the speaker wants to deliver a speech, an oral presentation, he is expected to connect the sentences and the paragraphs to make the text cohesive.*

One of the greatest differences between speaking and writing according to (Sarosdy, Farczadi, Poor , & Vadnay, 2006) is the degree of accuracy that writing requires. When developing this skill, the teacher cannot provide immediate feedback, so it should be more precise and accurate than speech. In their book, they also mention some language sub skills regarding writing.

1. *Spelling – is a difficult sub-skill for Hungarian learners as pronunciation does not coincide with the various ways of spelling.*
2. *Punctuation – in English is completely different from the system in Hungarian as commas have special functions, for example, in relative clauses.*
3. *Orthography – observing orthographical rules is very important in writing, whenever we teach a new language structure we are supposed to teach the necessary orthographical rules simultaneously with it.*
4. *Writing at the required speed – writing as motoric process must be done at the required speed.*
5. *Linguistic competence – which means ‘knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology’ (Canale and Swain 1980:29).*
6. *How to make a text cohesive, well-structured – so as to achieve this aim we need discourse competence which is the ability to connect sentences, to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances .*
7. *How to focus on the relevant message – a writer should be able to choose the most significant parts from a lot of pieces of information.*
8. *How to write in the expected style and register – while writing a text the author is expected to be aware of the features of various styles and registers so as to make an appropriate piece of writing (Savignon 1983: 40-41).*

## **2.4 THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Assessment is more than just designing items and giving instructions to work on them. Teachers think of the sequential spine of depictions, behaviours or traits that are part of a scoring assignment where they have to determine in a subjective way the mark that a

pupil deserves pertaining to his/her performance or the quality of task presented as part of the assessment process.

#### 2.4.1 How to communicate the assessment criteria

There is a defining point that makes learning assessment a clear process that motivates the pupils to know beforehand the aspects, factors or indicators to be assessed when they are going to perform an oral performance or hand a written assignment. This point is called criteria. *It is crucial for teachers to share the assessment criteria with learners to promote the chances of learning taking place* (Jones, 2005). The students must be informed in details about the criteria and the type of assessment tool that the teacher will consider to test their performance in a particular task. If teachers want to obtain satisfactory results from their learners, they have got to let them know about the preliminary indicators so that the pupils prepare themselves and do their best to get excellent scores. Likewise, (Jones, 2005) emphasises that *the assessment criteria should be clear and should not be added after learners have generated the work for a given task*. It does not make sense to provide a group of learners a performance assessment test (rubric, check-list, observation lists, etc.) a couple minutes before they are going to make an oral presentation or not even when they are presenting a written report to be assessed. What makes output learning assessment be successful is when criteria are concisely given in the right time. According to (Jones, 2005), some of statements that all teachers need to know about communicating the assessment criteria to their alumni are:

- *Use appropriate language and terminology which learners have developed, communicate the learning goals and assessment criteria, and check learner understanding*
- *Demonstrate how the assessment criteria can be met by use of examples.*
- *Encourage peer assessment through effective use of assessment criteria.*
- *Promote self-assessment through effective use of the assessment criteria.*

## 2.5 ENGLISH LANGUAGE OUTPUT

Speaking is the most difficult macro skills to develop by L2 learners. It is a very demanding process, in which the student has to handle the language learnt with the appropriate lexis and grammatical structures to convey clear messages to the rest of

interlocutors. Therefore, the amount of vocabulary that a learner has is determinant to fulfil the basic requirements and performance of oral communication. At this point, output becomes the main defiance for every L2 learner. *Output hypothesis' [which] argues that comprehensible output facilitates acquisition...[and] by pushing learners to produce coherent and appropriate output, learners are encouraged to move from semantic/top-down processing to syntactic/bottom-up processing, thus promoting interlanguage development* (Swain, Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in its Development, 1985). What Swain says is that after students have passed through a long process of English output, they have the opportunity to reflect how much they have evolved in the system of rules and the overwhelming of the transfer (L1 influence) to have a natural domain of L2, which result in the use of the target language unconsciously. All linguistic rules, that learners have to memorise at first, disappear in time and they finally are successful in communicating in L2.

Another prominent contributors of this topic are: (Long, 1996) and (Ellis, 1999). Long sees oral language interaction as *useful...because it elicits negative input and encourages analysis and grammaticization*. The learners develop the capacity to analyse their own errors and correct them on the spot. Likewise, Ellis outstands that issues related to monitoring are pretty relevant to the output hypothesis. He bases his thesis on (Kormos, 2006) who says that *monitoring involves both attention and conscious processing as well as producing output, it can enhance the efficiency of acquisition*.

Finally, (Mackey, 2007) *synthesises that producing language gives learners opportunities to notice the difference between their interlanguage and the target, to test their hypotheses about how the target language works, and to consciously reflect on their learning*. At this stage, pupils are quite competent to master and discriminate the target language. They are conscious about the errors that they commit and how to correct them.

## 2.6 THE TYPES OF ASSESSMENT TESTS

### 2.6.1 Formal assessment

There is a debate amongst different writers whether if there are four or six types of tests in relation to their purposes. Those types of test can be carried out before course (aptitude test), during course (placement, diagnostic, progress, and achievement tests) and after course (proficiency test).

### 2.6.2 Language attitude tests

*These are designed to predict who will be a successful language learner, and are based on the factors which are thought to determine an individual's ability to acquire a second language or foreign language (rather than an individual's ability to use a language at the time of testing)* (Lennon A. , 2016). There are some factors that are discovered when assessing with this type of tests from the very beginning of a certain course. As (Carroll, 1981) states, *theories of language aptitude hypothesise that cognitive abilities such as a rote memorization, phonetic coding, and the recognition of grammatical analogies, are related to an individual's ability to learn a second or foreign language.* So, these are the factors that mostly have to be considered and tested in common aptitude tests since they are the usual and typical patterns shown by the students before a course starts.

In time, aptitude factors tend to grow and mutate, and this makes a little bit complex the assignment of the tests that aim to measure learner's language reliability at first. For this reason, (Carroll, J., & Hall, P., 1985) wrote *a list of factors that affects language aptitude that runs to eighteen factors, many of which may not be easy to measure precisely.* The factors that these two researchers identified are: age, travel, latent learning, personality, social setting, educational level, job aspirations, language background, cultural/religious outlook, verbal intelligence, language learning attitudes, teacher efficiency, language aptitude (micro), communicative aptitude (macro), teaching-learning style, programme specificity, programme feedback, language medium or environment.

### 2.6.3 Placement tests

These tests are pretty common nowadays in many schools and language academies all over the globe. However, it is unknown if they are engaged in high school institutions of our country in order to determine the level of the English language that each student has got before starting the English language subject. More general information is provided by (Lennon A. , 2016) in the following text.

*Students are often put into homogenous groups for language study according to their present language ability, language use needs, professional specialisation, etc. The tests that are used to make decisions regarding their placement into appropriate groups are called placement tests. Placement test can be based either based on a theory of language proficiency or on the learning objectives of the syllabus to be taken. They are usually administered at the start of a new language course or the start of a new phase of a language course. They tend to be quick to administer and to mark, for ease of institutional use. They are often not particularly reliable, a fact that in this context does not matter too much as students can be moved between levels at a later time. One of the most well-known placement tests is *The Oxford Placement Test* (Allan, 1992).*

#### 2.6.4 Diagnostic tests

Diagnostic tests are used to determine students' areas of strength and weakness in order to make decisions on appropriate types and levels of teaching and learning activities. These tests include a set of items that deepen into a particular topic in order to identify on the spot the learning or acquisition issues the learners have to improve during the sequence of the course in which these pupils are or will be enrolled. This assessment can be based on whether theory or syllabus contents.

#### 2.6.5 Progress tests

Feedback on the effectiveness of the student learning can be gathered through progress tests. This feedback forms part of the formative evaluation of the courses, that is, for providing continuous feedback to both the teacher and the learner for deciding on appropriate modifications to the programme. These tests help the teachers monitor their students' evolution on the course during the period of time that this course lasts to measure achievement goals of selected sections of the curriculum. These tests can also be used for diagnosing strengths and weaknesses. There are some authors that score these tests as informal assessment instruments.

#### 2.6.6 Achievement tests

*A distinction can be drawn between progress tests, with their relatively short time reference, and achievement tests, which are those which come at the end of a relatively long period learning, and whose content derives from the syllabus that has been taught over*

*that period of time* (Lennon, A., 2016). So, there is a remarkable difference between these two types of tests. Progress tests allow the educators to make amendments during the students learning process in order to make more effective the arrival of input into the learner's mind. These tests tend to be rather subjective. Nevertheless, achievement tests are more objective and reliable, for they are not easy to be biased while scoring them.

### 2.6.7 Proficiency tests

*Where progress and achievement tests are based on a syllabus of language study, proficiency tests are based on a theory of language proficiency and the specific language abilities postulated to constitute language proficiency* (Lennon, A., 2016). Proficiency tests measure the development of the linguistic macro skills. Therefore, these tests are not based on assessing knowledge or competencies, but input and output tasks where the language is required to be used in target situations. (Bachman, 1990) remarks this point in the following statement:

*Whether or not the specific abilities measured by a proficiency test actually differ from those measured by a given achievement test will depend, of course, on the extent to which the theory upon which the proficiency test is based differs from that upon which the syllabus is based. For example, a language proficiency test based on a theory of grammatical competence is likely to be quite similar to an achievement test based on a grammar-based syllabus, but quite different from an achievement test based on a notional-functional syllabus.*

Proficiency tests are large-scale tests because important academic and career decisions are based on them. *They are often used for selection (for example as university requirements), alternatively they might form part of a final qualification for a professional course* (Lennon, A., 2016). Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a sheer example of these types of tests.

## 2.7 ENGLISH LANGUAGE INPUT

There is no doubt that English language teachers always pursue to make their alumni develop the four macro linguistic skills required to be successful in handling the foreign language taught. However, it is quite relevant to mention that from the four macro linguistic skills, there are two of them that are needed to be worked at first on the students so that

these can acquire and accrue the basis of the language in order to produce it. Listening and reading skills are considered as the first two macro skills needful to develop on the students since these skills allow them to assimilate the lexis and its usage in the context. As everybody knows, humans are conditioned or exposed to the environment in order to increase the verbal repertoire necessary to communicate in a particular language, in this case English. That is why, input plays a very important role in communication at the very beginning of a language learning process. There is a hypothesis that explains the importance of input and how this affects negatively or positively the effectiveness of processing the lexical patterns provided by the teacher or the contextual situation where a learner is learning a new lingo: comprehensible input. (Krashen, 1985) exposes that *comprehensible input is the essential ingredient for second language acquisition*. Students must be exposed to the target language that they are interested to learn. Interaction will never be successful if pupils do not develop an acceptable level of input.

It is pretty necessary to remark that a second or foreign language acquisition needs to be consistent and fluent and this is achieved when the input accrued by a learner has all the elemental and linguistic lexical structures to be quite competent in the use of the language. (Krashen, 1985) claims that *humans acquire language in only one way: by understanding messages or by receiving "comprehensible input*. So, when lecturers teach a foreign language, they must be clear with the vocabulary or lexical patterns that they are using in order to make effective and meaningful the input of the information given to the students.

### 2.7.1 Input vs intake

There is also a confusion about the understanding of the difference between input and intake. (Corder, 1967) sets a mild contrast that makes these two receptive phenomena more understandable. He says that *input is seen as what the learners is exposed; however, intake as what the pupil actually takes in*.

## 2.8 ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Achievement indicators are defined as variables that reveal the attributes, qualities, properties, conditions, requirements, to be checked for each result to determine if it has been achieved or not (TrainCom, n.d.).

MINED's syllabus for high school has 6 units and an average of 14 achievement indicators that are linked with concepts, procedures and attitudes. In many cases those achievement indicators are not carefully read by teachers, breaking the connection between what is being taught and what is being assessed. Not paying attention to those indicators is like going on a trip with no destination or objectives set. How can a teacher know if their methodology is being effective or not if they are teaching specific topics and creating random assessment criteria?

### **2.8.1 Evaluation**

According to (MINED, 2008) syllabus, achievement indicators *prove the expected outcomes in relationship with objectives and contents of each unit*. They represent the core of evaluation, for the assessment of the student's competence and learning process are considered the main elements to prepare the students through the development of language and for life competencies. Each indicator is stated in the form of an objective.

### **2.8.2 Contents**

Contents constitute part of the students' interest and they are selected pertaining to the learner's needs, which is related to the communicative goals that is aimed to develop in the students. Contents have various ways to be defined and this is the statement provided by (Zavala, 2008)

*Set of skills, attitudes and knowledge needed for development of competencies. They are categorized in three large groups depending on how they are related with knowing, knowing what to do or to be, that is to say, conceptual contents, deeds, concepts and conceptual systems, procedural contents (skills, techniques, methods, strategies..etc.) and attitudinal contents (attitudes, norms and values).*

## **2.9. CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES**

*Set of specific activities that instructors can use to quickly gauge students' comprehension* (Center, 2015)

Assessment represents a vital part in education since it allows us to take decisions on the type of methodology that we, as educators, should use. Unfortunately, this process is not always taken seriously in El Salvador. In some cases, teachers just copy exercises directly from a book, put them together on a sheet of paper and the exam is "ready".

The techniques teachers use to assess students learning may define the success of the teaching process. For that reason, it is necessary for us to be in constant training and do the best we can to avoid turning assessment into something frightening for our students.

There are four macro skills in the English language, but how to check that our students are actually improving in each of them? This is a question that most teachers ask at some point in their careers, especially those that are beginning. In most cases, this question remains unanswered for a long time and students pay the price by being exposed to tests that lack validity and that may lead them to bad results. There are many types of techniques to measure students' development in second language learning, some of them will be mentioned in the following pages.

### 2.9.1 Techniques for assessing Listening.

*Designing appropriate assessment tasks in listening begins with the specification of objectives or criteria. Those objectives must be classified in terms of several types of listening performance.*

*There are many types of listening performance, each of which comprises a category within which to consider assessment tasks and procedures.*

- 1. Intensive. Listening for perception of the components (phonemes, words, intonation, discourse markers, etc.) of a larger stretch of language.*
- 2. Responsive. Listening to a relatively short stretch of language (a greeting, question, command, comprehension check, etc.) in order to make an equally short response.*
- 3. Selective. Processing stretches of discourse such as short monologues for several minutes in order to "scan" for certain information. The purpose of such performance is not necessarily to look for global or general meanings, but to be able to comprehend designated information in a context of longer stretches of spoken language (such as classroom directions from a teacher, TV or radio news items, or stories). Assessment tasks in selective listening could ask students, for example, to listen for names, numbers, a grammatical category, directions (in a map exercise), or certain facts and events.*
- 4. Extensive. Listening to develop a top-down, global understanding of spoken language. Extensive performance ranges from listening to lengthy lectures to listening to a conversation and deriving a comprehensive message or purpose. Listening for the gist, for the main idea, and making inferences are all part of extensive listening.*

(Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010)

As educators we have to understand that there must be an objective for every assessment technique we intend to use. For example, if we try to identify student's ability to get main ideas from any audio resource, the test should be highly oriented to get specifically those results. If there is a mismatch between the test objective and the items included, the analysis of the results might not lead to accurate conclusions and the decision taking on the methodology to be used in future classes would be compromised.

### 2.9.2 Techniques for assessing speaking.

(Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010) Also include in their book some Basic types of listening that must be studied to understand and choose the best assessment technique.

#### *BASIC TYPES OF SPEAKING*

- 1. Imitative. At one end of a continuum of types of speaking performance is the ability to simply parrot back (imitate) a word or phrase or possibly a sentence. While this is a purely phonetic level of oral production, a number of prosodic, lexical, and grammatical properties of language may be included in the criterion performance. We are interested only in what is traditionally labeled "pronunciation"; no inferences are made about the test-taker's ability to understand or convey meaning or to participate in an interactive conversation. The only role of listening here is in the short-term storage of a prompt just long enough to, allow the speaker to retain the short stretch of language that must be imitated.*
- 2. Intensive. A second type of speaking frequently employed in assessment contexts is the production of short stretches of oral language designed to demonstrate competence in a narrow band of grammatical, phrasal, lexical, or phonological relationships (such as prosodic elements-intonation, stress, rhythm, juncture). The speaker must be aware of semantic properties in order to be able to respond, but interaction with an interlocutor or test administrator is minimal at best. Examples of intensive assessment tasks include directed response tasks, reading aloud, sentence and dialogue completion; limited picture-cued tasks including simple sequences; and translation up to the simple Sentence level.*
- 3. Responsive. Responsive assessment tasks include interaction and test comprehension but at the somewhat limited level of very short conversations, standard greetings and small talk, simple requests and comments, and the like. The stimulus is almost always a spoken*

*prompt (in order to preserve authenticity), with perhaps only one or two follow-up questions or retorts:*

*4. Interactive. The difference between responsive and interactive" speaking is in the length and complexity of the interaction, which sometimes includes multiple exchanges and/or multiple participants. Interaction can take the two forms of transactional language, which has the purpose of exchanging specific information, or interpersonal exchanges, which have the purpose of maintaining social relationships. In interpersonal exchanges, oral production can become pragmatically complex with the need to speak in a casual register and use colloquial language, ellipsis, slang, humor, and other sociolinguistic conventions.*

*5. Extensive (monologue). Extensive oral production tasks include speeches, oral presentations, and story-telling, during which the opportunity for oral interaction from listeners is either highly limited (perhaps to nonverbal responses) or ruled out altogether. Language style is frequently more deliberative (planning is involved) and" formal for extensive tasks, but we cannot rule out certain informal monologues" such as casually delivered speech (for example, my vacation in the mountains, a recipe)*

Speaking is believed to be one of the most challenging macro skills to be assessed and the selection of appropriate procedures to measure that skill is even harder. In El Salvador, some common techniques to test students' proficiency in speaking include: Asking pupils to learn a set of dialogues, recite a poem, sing a song or perform in a play etc. But here comes the big question: to what extent are those techniques giving the teacher accurate results? Maybe it is convenient to say that if a student does well in any of those activities previously mentioned, the methodology is working just fine and it should not be changed, but the results can be observed from a different angle and it can be said that those techniques are more focused on how much students can memorize chunks of information and not too much on measuring speaking proficiency in a real context. The truth is that every activity should be carefully planned, taking into consideration students' level, size of the class and the purpose of the activity. That will help us to obtain accurate information to improve our teaching methodology.

### 2.9.3 Techniques for assessing reading

As mentioned in previous sections of this research, reading involves a series of sub skills that must be considered when designing an assessment technique. (Brown &

Abeywickrama, 2010) State that each of those sub skills can be assessed in many different ways. In their work, they mention the following:

**Reading Aloud:** *The test-taker sees separate letters, words, and/or short sentences and reads them aloud, one by one, in the presence of an administrator. Since the assessment is of reading comprehension, any recognizable oral approximation of the target response is considered correct.*

**Written Response:** *The same stimuli are presented, and the test-taker's task is' to reproduce the probe in writing. Because of the transfer across different skills here, evaluation of the test taker's response must be carefully treated. If an error occurs, make sure you determine its source; what might be assumed to be a writing error, for example, may actually be a reading error, and vice versa.*

**Multiple-Choice:** *Multiple-choice responses are not only a matter of choosing one of four or five possible answers. Other formats, some of which are especially useful at the low levels of reading, include same/different, circle the answer, true/false, choose the letter, and matching.*

**Picture-Cued Items:** *Test-takers are shown a picture, such as the one on the next page, along with a written text and are given one of a number of possible tasks to perform.*

As in the assessment of any other macro skill, reading techniques can be discriminated by the instructor according to the objective of the course that is being intended to reach.

#### 2.9.4 Techniques for assessing writing.

Designing a speaking assessment technique is not always an easy task. It involves many factors to consider such as: time, number of students, level of students etc.

(Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010) Mention the following types of listening:

1. *Imitative. To produce written language, the learner must attain skills in the fundamental, basic tasks of writing letters, words, punctuation, and very brief sentences.*

*This category includes the ability to spell correctly and to perceive phoneme-grapheme correspondences in the English spelling system. It is a level at which learners are trying to master the mechanics of writing. At this stage, form is the primary if not exclusive focus, while context and meaning are of secondary concern.*

2. *Intensive (controlled)*. Beyond the fundamentals of imitative writing are skills in producing appropriate vocabulary within a context, collocations and idioms, and correct grammatical features up to the length of a sentence. Meaning in context are of some importance in determining correctness and appropriateness, but most assessment tasks are more concerned with a focus on form, and are rather strictly controlled by the test design.

3. *Responsive*. Here, assessment tasks require learners to perform at a limited discourse level, connecting sentences into a paragraph and creating a logically connected sequence of two or three paragraphs. Tasks respond to pedagogical directives, lists of criteria, outlines, and other guidelines. Genres of writing include brief narratives and descriptions, short reports, lab reports, summaries, brief responses to reading, and interpretations of charts or graphs. Under specified conditions, the writer begins to 'exercise some freedom of choice among alternative forms of expression of ideas. The writer has mastered the fundamentals of sentence-level grammar and is more focused on the discourse conventions that will achieve the objectives of the written text. Form-focused attention is mostly at the discourse level, with a strong emphasis on context and meaning.

4. *Extensive*. Extensive writing implies successful management of all the processes and strategies of writing for all purposes, up to the length of an essay, a term paper, a major research project report, or even a thesis. Writers focus on achieving a purpose, organizing and developing ideas logically, using details to support or illustrate ideas, demonstrating syntactic and lexical variety, and in many cases, engaging in the process of multiple drafts to achieve a final product. Focus on grammatical form is limited to occasional editing or proofreading of a draft.

## OPERATION OF VARIABLES AND INDICATORS

RESEARCH TOPIC	OVERALL OBJECTIVE	VARIABLES	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	INDICATORS	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Effectiveness of the learning assessment tools that teachers apply to test the linguistic skills on pupils of high school institutions in Usulután department.	To inquire about the diverse learning assessment tools that English teachers use to test linguistic skills of students in public and private high school institutions in Usulután department.	<b>Independent Variable</b> Assessment tools	An instrument that is typically used in the evaluation of ability, achievement, interests, personality, psychopathology, or some other factor (Dictionary, s.f.).	The assessment criteria  The types of assessment tests  MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators	<b>I. ASSESSMENT</b> 1.1 ASSESSMENT TOOLS 1.2 TEACHER'S ASSESSMENTS TOOLS 1.2.1 Formative assessment 1.2.2 Summative assessment 1.2.3 Objective assessment 1.2.4 Subjective assessment 1.3 CONVENTIONAL TYPES OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

					<p>1.3.1 Multiple-choice tests</p> <p>1.3.2 Short-answer essay tests</p> <p>1.3.3 Constructed-response tests</p> <p>1.3.4 Standardized tests</p>
		<p><b>Dependent Variable</b> Linguistic skills</p>	<p>Linguistic skills are the capacity of individuals to understand and express themselves, both in written and oral form (Galega, s.f.).</p>	<p>English language output</p> <p>English language input</p>	<p><b>II. LANGUAGE OR LINGUISTIC SKILLS</b></p> <p>2.1 Classification of language skills</p> <p>2.2 Receptive skills</p> <p>2.3 Productive skills</p>

RESEARCH TOPIC	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1	VARIABLES	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	INDICATORS	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
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Effectiveness of the learning assessment tools that teachers apply to test the linguistic skills on pupils of high school institutions in Usulután department.	To identify the assessment criteria that teachers consider to measure the English language output of students.	<b>Independent Variable</b> The assessment criteria	The statements that express in explicit terms how performance of desired learning outcomes might be demonstrated (IG Global, n.d.)	Assessment indicators  Peer assessment  Self-assessment	<b>III. THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>  3.1 How to communicate the assessment criteria
		<b>Dependent Variable</b> English language output	The outcome of what the student has learned (Swain, 1985)	Lexis  Grammar structures	<b>IV. ENGLISH LANGUAGE OUTPUT</b>

<b>RESEARCH TOPIC</b>	<b>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2</b>	<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>
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Effectiveness of the learning assessment tools that teachers apply to test the linguistic skills on pupils of high school institutions in Usulután department.	To verify the types of assessment tests applied by the teacher to assess students' English language input.	<b>Independent Variable</b> The types of assessment tests	Forms of assessment designed to measure the students' linguistic skills, performance, achievement, and proficiency at different levels (this is a connotative definition)	Diagnostic test Proficiency test	<b>V. THE TYPES OF ASSESSMENT</b> 5.1 Formal assessment 5.1.1 Language attitude tests 5.1.2 Placement tests 5.1.3 Diagnostic tests 5.1.4 Progress tests 5.1.5 Achievement tests 5.1.6 Proficiency tests
		<b>Dependent Variable</b> English language input	Input refers to the exposure learners have to authentic language in use (Council, 2009).	Understandable messages Reading techniques (skimming and	<b>VI. ENGLISH LANGUAGE INPUT</b> 6.1 Input vs intake

				Scanning)	
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<b>RESEARCH TOPIC</b>	<b>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3</b>	<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>
Effectiveness of the learning assessment tools that teachers apply to test the linguistic skills on pupils of high school institutions in Usulután department.	To corroborate the relation between the MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators and the classroom assessment techniques applied by teachers.	<b>Independent Variable</b> MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators	Variables that reveal the attributes, qualities, properties, conditions, requirements, to be checked for each result to determine if it has been achieved or not (Traincom, n.d.)	Grammar skills  Pronunciation  Macro skills  Methodology (techniques, methods, and strategies)	<b>VII. ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS</b>  <b>7.1</b>
		<b>Dependent Variable</b> Classroom assessment techniques	Set of specific activities that instructors can use to quickly gauge students' comprehension	Dialogues  Translations  Cloze (true/false/fill in the blank, and multiple choice tests)	<b>VIII. CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES</b>  8.1 Techniques for assessing listening

			(Carnegie Mellon University, 2015).	Repetition drills	8.2 Techniques for assessing speaking 8.3 Techniques for assessing reading 8.4 Techniques for assessing writing
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## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This research was developed under the paradigm of a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach, considering the fact of the collection of data expected to be provided by the surveyed people involved as a part of the population. The quantitative approach is defined by (Kothari, 2004) as the one that *involves the generation of data in quantitative form which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid fashion*. This information is emptied into charts or graphs in order to perceive the results statistically so that the researchers can make the respective analysis and interpretation of them. *This usually means survey research where a sample of population is studied (questioned or observed) to determine its characteristics, and it is then inferred that the population has the same characteristics* (Kothari, 2004). Moreover, this study has a qualitative approach, for some behavioural aspects, such as attitudes and opinions were considered from the population that was part of this research. *Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour* (Kothari, 2004). Moreover, techniques, such as the interview, belong to the nature of this approach. *Generally, the techniques of focus group interviews, projective techniques and depth interviews are used* (Kothari, 2004).

### 3.1 POPULATION

The population selected in order to execute this project was composed by students enrolled in four high school institutions of Usulután. However, so that the research could be based on reliability and equality, two public and two private high schools were selected. *Population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate* (Sekaran, 2003). The institutions that participated in this study are: 'Instituto Nacional de Usulután', 'Instituto Nacional de Santa Elena', 'Colegio San Agustín' and 'Colegio Bautista'.

### 3.2 SAMPLE

*A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole* (Webster, 1985). Samples are very useful in research studies, for they help the researchers select equally the people to whom the instruments will be addressed and conducted. Nonetheless, it is very important to be specific and certain about

the type of sampling to apply when the population has been already defined. The researchers decided to use a probabilistic sampling method and determined the cluster sample type as the selected one. Therefore, this sampling method was applied to the individuals (students and teachers) belonging to the institutions. *A cluster sample is obtained by selecting clusters from the population on the basis of simple random sampling* (Fridah, 2002). In this case, the clusters were formed by the students of the four institutions picked to carry out this research. According to (Fridah, 2002), the researcher decides which institutions to select as clusters. So, those schools are the ones aforementioned already. Another outstanding detail to recall is the sample size. In order to calculate the correct sample, the researchers used the following formula so that the inquirers could show the degree of reliability of the results expected to obtain.

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

(Feedback Networks, 2013)

According to the formula exposed above, each of the following symbols below represents:

N: the population or universe size

k: the degrees of reliability

e: the sampling error

p: the proportion of individuals who possess the studied characteristic on the population

q: the proportion of individuals who do not possess that characteristic, it means, 1-p

n: the sample

Considering the above formula, the sample taken per each institution is described in the above chart:

Institutions	Population	Students sample	Teachers sample
Instituto Nacional de Santa Elena	334	132	1
Instituto Nacional de Usulután	1499	151	1
Colegio 'Bautista'	58	12	1
Colegio 'San Agustín'	90	17	1
<b>Total</b>	1981	312	4

### 3.3 TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

Since this research was based on a mixed approach, it comprises of both quantitative and qualitative features. Being the interview a qualitative representative and the survey the quantitative counterpart. Therefore, the combination of both techniques and instruments defines the nature of this study as it is explained below.

#### 3.3.1 INTERVIEW

It is one of the most common techniques used for researchers in order to elicit important data from the interviewees in a specific study. *An interview is a conversation for gathering information. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions* (Easwaramoorthy, M. & Zarinpoush, F., 2006). Nevertheless, the type of interview chosen by the inquirers was semi-structured. *In this type of interview, the researcher wants to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews* (Dawson, 2002). Teachers were the target interviewees. They were asked questions that were related to the independent and dependent variables of all the objectives.

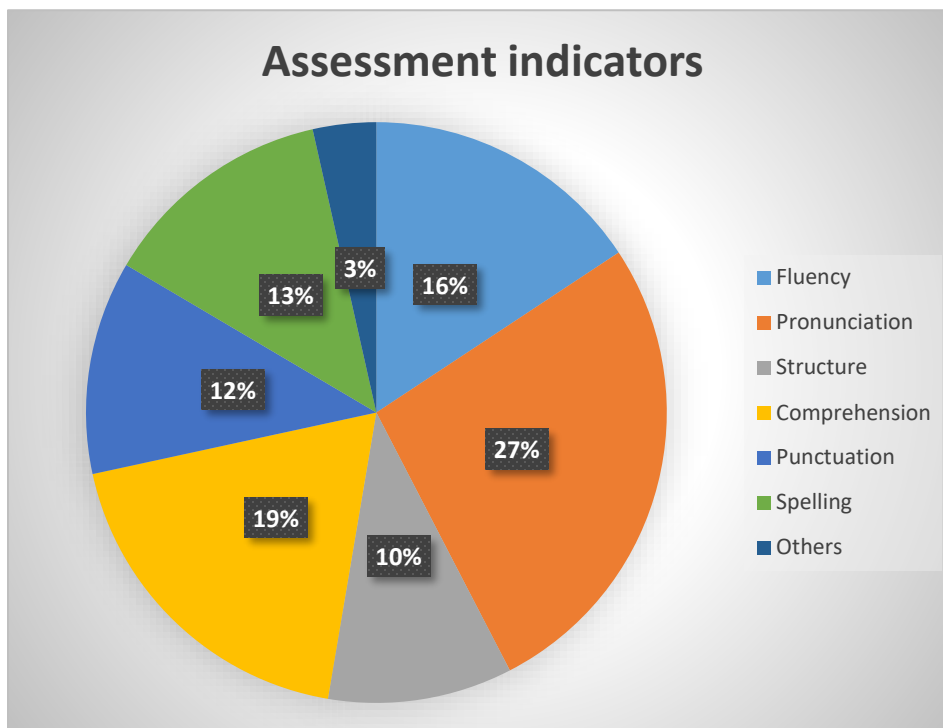
### 3.3.2 SURVEY

The element that constitutes the factor to measure the results in a quantitate form on this research is the survey. *A survey is a data collection tool used to gather information about individuals* (Cherry K. , 2017). Surveys are mostly made of the list of indicators considered by the researchers to include in a specific questionnaire whether with open-ended or closed-ended questions. *Surveys involve selecting a representative and unbiased sample of subjects drawn from the group you wish to study* (Neville, 2005). In this case, opinions were asked to the pupils according to the nature of the research topic where the researchers applied a closed-ended questionnaire, consisting of a multiple choice test. Nevertheless, the researchers took into account the reliability and validity of the survey to avoid bias or confusion on the pupils' understanding. *A test is considered reliable if we get the same result repeatedly* (Cherry K. , 2016). This was proved when most of the students provided the same answer to the questions of each questionnaire. On the other hand, validity is essential to determine the effectiveness of the survey. *Validity is concerned with the accuracy of our measurement, and it is often discussed in the context of sample representativeness* (Mora, 2011). Nonetheless, it is quite considerable to be specific with the type of validity included in the survey. Therefore, the survey consists of three types: content, internal and external validity. (Mora, 2011) *Coins that content validity was related to our ability to create questions that reflected the issue we were researching and made sure that key related subjects were not excluded.* Subtopics derived from the contents belonging to the theoretical framework were the basis of the multiple choice test to use as a survey. Internal validity is about asking *whether the questions we pose can really explain the outcome we want to research* (Mora, 2011). Through internal validity was pursued to identify the factors that the teacher considers in order to structure the assessments and what criteria motivate them to pick those factors. Also, the survey had the nature to compare and contrast both students' and teachers' opinions in order to get more accurate results. *External validity refers to the extent to which the research findings based on a sample of individuals or objects can be generalized to the same population that the sample is taken from or to other similar populations in terms of contexts, individuals, times, and settings* (Lavrakas, 2011). The context and nature of the population involved in this research determine the expectations of reliable results, which were generalised and seen as the common opinions of all the interviewees. The characteristic of the issue in concern depicts influenced of the coincidence of the results.

## CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

### Sub variable of I.V. 1: Assessment criteria

Sub Variable			
Question 1	Fluency	156	50.0
	Pronunciation	265	84.9
	Structure	102	32.7
	Comprehension	188	60.3
	Punctuation	118	37.8
	Spelling	129	41.3
	Others	35	11.2

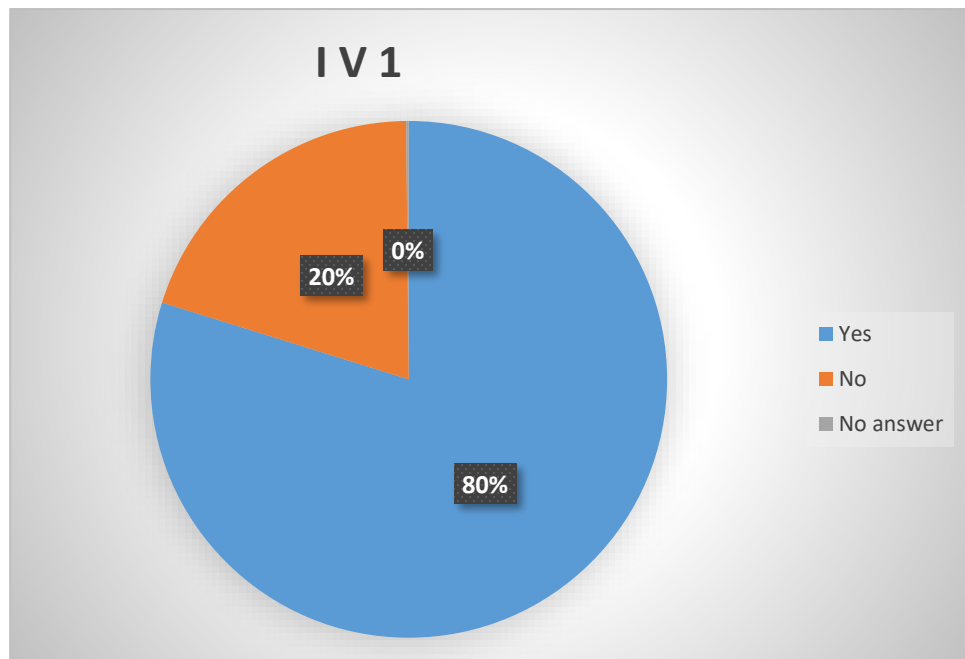


The graph above depicts the answers provided by the students related to question one, which, at the same time, it turns into a sub variable of the research because it contains a set of choices that delve into the question itself. The sub variable is about assessment indicators used by teachers when scoring students' performance, being described in

percentages as follows: 16 % of pupils expressed that their educator assessed fluency. Besides, 27% of these learners manifested that pronunciation is assessed. Also, 10% of these alumni answered that their teacher considers structure as one element in the assessment criteria. 19% detailed that comprehension is other of those indicators evaluated by their lecturer. 12% said that punctuation is considered by the teacher. Moreover, 13% of these learners revealed that their educator assesses spelling during the English language class. Finally, just a 3% of the pupils concludes that there are other elements that the lecturer takes to evaluate their class.

### I.V. 1: Assessment criteria

I V 1 (questions 2 and 3)		
Yes	498	79.8
No	125	20.0
No answer	1	0.2

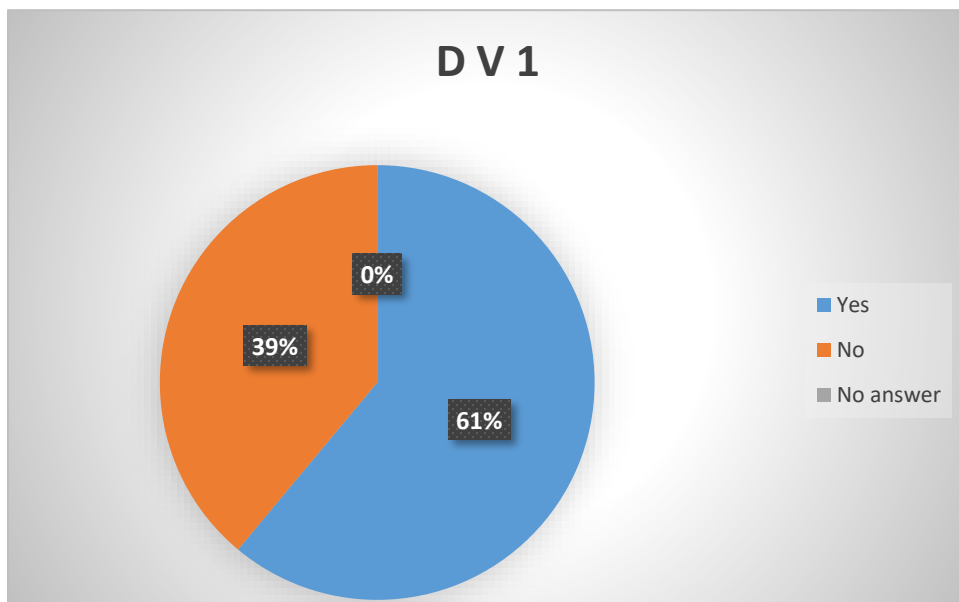


This graph describes the indicators of the independent variable, assessment criteria, which are **peer-assessment** and **self-assessment**. It can be perceived that 80% of the

interviewees answered that the teacher makes use of peer-assessment and self-assessment in the classroom. Also, there was a 20% expressed that the teacher does not apply any of those criteria at the moment of evaluating. However, the chart that provides the discriminated data shows that there was one interviewee that did not answer one of the questions. Nevertheless, this person did not determine the course of this variable.

### D.V. 1: English language output

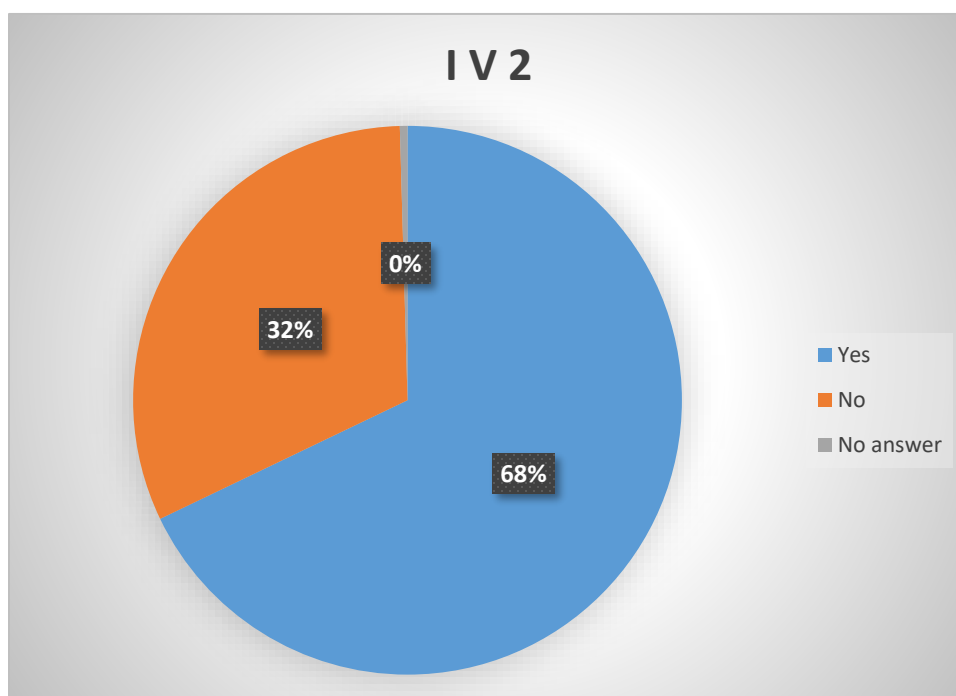
D V 1 (questions 4 and 5)		
Yes	381	61.1
No	243	38.9
No answer	0	0



This graph exhibits the indicators of the dependent variable, English language output, which are **lexis** and **grammar structures**. It can be read that 61% of the learners answered that the teacher assesses lexis and grammar structures in the tests. In addition, a 39% expressed that the teacher does not evaluate any of those mentioned indicators in the different exams developed in the English class.

## I.V. 2: The types of assessment tests

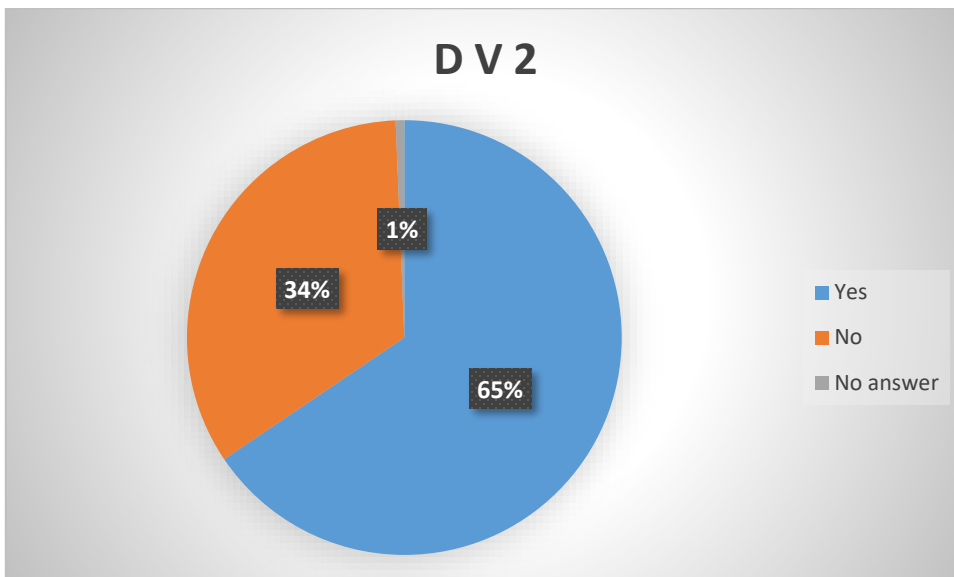
I V 2 (questions 6 - 10)		
Yes	1059	67.9
No	494	31.7
No answer	7	0.4



This graph explains the indicators of the independent variable, types of assessment tests, which are **diagnostic tests**, **aptitude tests**, **proficiency tests**, **final tests** and **rubrics or checklists**. It can be observed that 68% of the pupils marked that the lecturer evaluates lexis and grammar structures in the tests. In addition, 32% argued that the teacher does not consider any of those tests during the English class. Nonetheless, the chart that displayed the collected data proves that there were seven interviewees that did not answer one of the questions. These seven subjects did not determine the course of this variable.

## D.V. 2: English language input

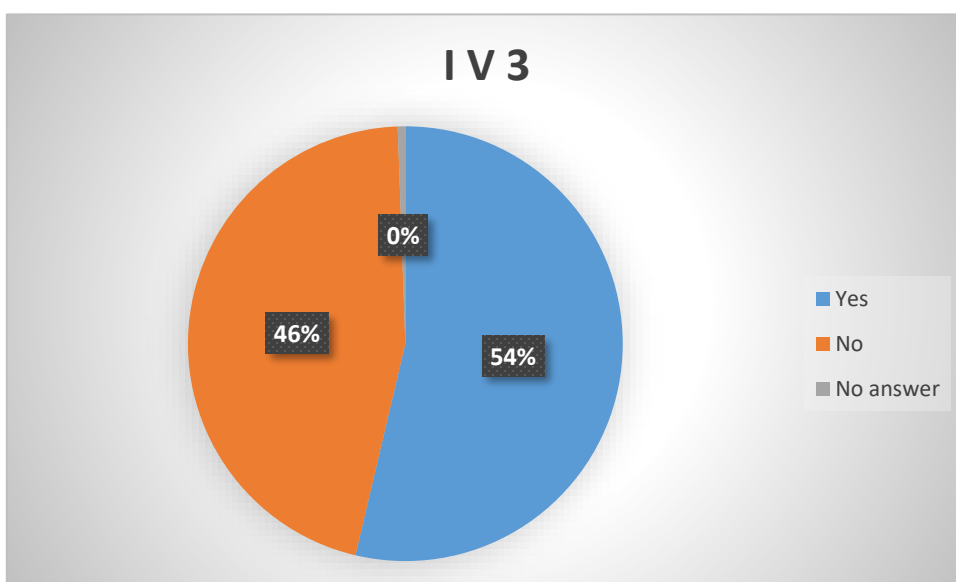
D V 2 (questions 11 and 12)		
Yes	409	65.5
No	211	33.8
No answer	4	0.6



This graph reveals the indicators of the dependent variable, English language input, which are **understandable messages** and **reading techniques**. It can be seen that 65% of the alumni marked that they are good at comprehending messages when speaking or reading texts. Besides, 34% mentioned that they do not comprehend the English language input. There was 1% of the students who did not provide any answer to questions related to this variable.

### I.V. 3: MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators

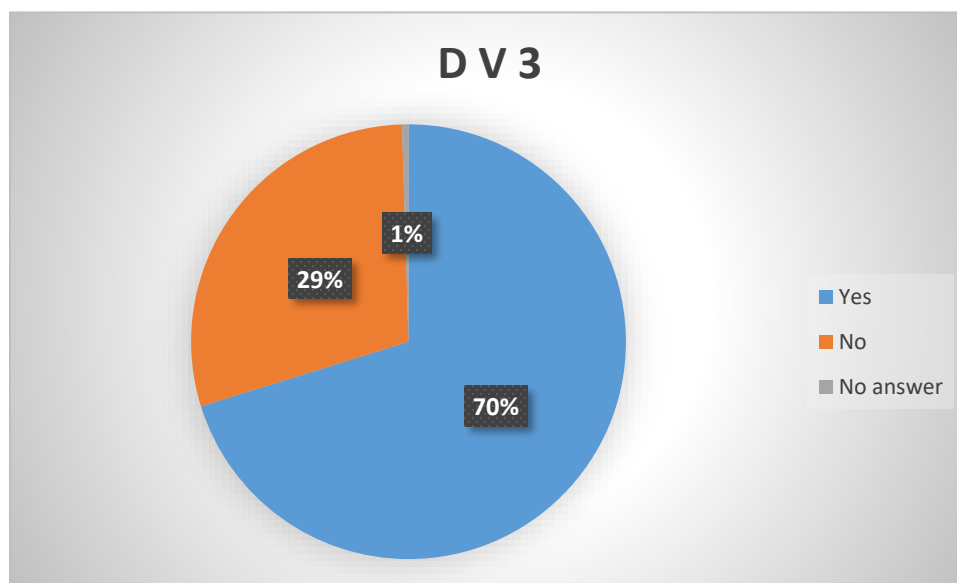
I V 3 (questions 13 and 16)		
Yes	670	53.7
No	571	45.8
No answer	7	0.6



This graph portrays the key words considered pertaining to the independent variable, MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators, which are **grammar skills**, **good pronunciation**, **macro skills** and **methodology**. It can be diagnosed that 54% of the students agrees that the indicators that MINED sets on the syllabus are being reached regarding with their grammar skills, pronunciation and development of macro skills. Notwithstanding, 46% concludes that those indicators are not attained by them. At once, the chart that demonstrates the gathered data exposes that there were seven interviewees that did not answer one of the questions. These seven individuals did not change the course of this variable.

### D.V. 3: Classroom assessment techniques

D V 3 (questions 17 and 20)		
Yes	876	70.2
No	366	29.3
No answer	6	0.5

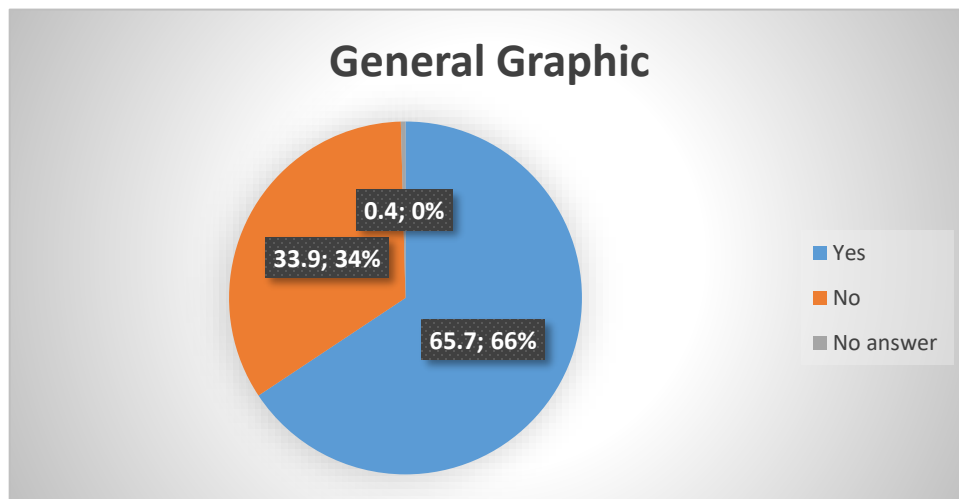


This graph displays the indicators of the dependent variable, classroom assessment techniques, which are **dialogues**, **translations**, **cloze** and **repetition drills**. It can be noticed that 70% of the pupils ticked that they developed the aforementioned activities during the English language lesson. However, 29% revealed that they do not work on those activities while being in/out the classroom. 1% of the alumni who did not give any answer to questions regarding with this variable.

## Overall analysis

General chart								
Yes/No questions	Yes	%	No	%	No answer	%	Total	
2	249	79.81	62	19.87	1	0.32	312	
3	249	79.81	63	20.19		0.00	312	
4	182	58.33	130	41.67		0.00	312	
5	199	63.78	113	36.22		0.00	312	
6	224	71.79	88	28.21		0.00	312	
7	224	71.79	88	28.21		0.00	312	
8	176	56.41	135	43.27	1	0.32	312	
9	302	96.79	8	2.56	2	0.64	312	
10	133	42.63	175	56.09	4	1.28	312	
11	179	57.37	131	41.99	2	0.64	312	
12	230	73.72	80	25.64	2	0.64	312	
13	243	77.88	68	21.79	1	0.32	312	
14	131	41.99	179	57.37	2	0.64	312	
15	83	26.60	227	72.76	2	0.64	312	
16	213	68.27	97	31.09	2	0.64	312	
17	250	80.13	61	19.55	1	0.32	312	
18	199	63.78	111	35.58	2	0.64	312	
19	208	66.67	102	32.69	2	0.64	312	
20	219	70.19	92	29.49	1	0.32	312	
Total	3893		2010		25		5928	

General data chart		
Yes	3893	65.7
No	2010	33.9
No answer	25	0.4



This general graph depicts all the data collected, taking into account the affirmative and negative answers provided by the learners from question 2 through 20 since question 1 emerged as sub variable of the independent variable 1. The information presented in the graph is explained as follows: 65.7% of the students surveyed are in agreement that the assessment tools applied by the teacher to evaluate their learning process is effective. The tendency of positive answers can be examined through the whole analysis and interpretation of the previous graphs. Nonetheless, 33.9% argued that those assessment tools are not effective to evaluate their learning progress in the English language course. 0.4% of the learners interviewed did not answer the questions reflected on the survey.

## Conclusions

It can be concluded that:

According to what students express in the first question of the instrument it can be seen that teachers use a variety of assessment indicators to test student's proficiency in the English language. However, some areas such as structure, spelling and punctuation are being neglected.

Results show that a great majority of the teachers currently working with the subject of English in the private and public institutions selected to carry out this study use peer-assessment and self-assessment as a way to measure students' development. Only 20% of the surveyed population agreed that the teacher does not use the methods previously mentioned to assess their learning.

Analysis of the information obtained shows that aspects such as grammar and lexis are being given some attention by the teachers when it comes to assessment. However, 39% of the students express that these areas are not being assessed by the teacher.

Most of the students surveyed agree that the teacher in charge of the English subject applies different types of tests to assess pupils' English proficiency. This suggests that instructors are using different techniques to match the variety of needs and learning styles that students present in every language classroom, by doing so, they ensure that the results obtained in any test are accurate and suitable to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.

English teachers are using different techniques to assess the receptive skills of the English language. Nevertheless, there is a high percentage (34%) of students who believe that listening and reading are not receiving enough attention. So, it can be said that there is not an appropriate balance in the assessment of the macro skills.

Although the majority of the surveyed population agree that the MINED's Syllabus achievement indicators are being reached at the time of applying any type of assessment instrument, 46 percent still believe that it is not true. This shows that there is a mismatch between what is being taught and what is being assessed.

70% of the students taken into account for this study express that activities such as dialogues, translations, cloze and repetition drills boost the development of their skills to use the English language. However, not all of those techniques are being practiced outside the classroom, when the class ends, students' practice is over.

## **Recommendations**

Teachers must take into account different assessment indicators that suit the type of activity and objective. There are many techniques that can be applied to test students' comprehension in different areas. If the objective of an oral activity is to reach a specific level of fluency, then indicators such as punctuation and spelling might not be useful, but if the activity requires students to write an essay, punctuation and spelling are really important.

Teachers should continue using peer and self-assessment to test students learning. These types of assessment techniques guarantee that information obtained in different activities is being considered from different angles and the results might be more reliable.

Teachers should use different types of assessment techniques to make sure they are giving every student opportunities to obtain good grades. It must not be forgotten that people learn in different ways and have different needs; hence, they should be assessed using different methods. For example, one student might be really good at expressing their ideas in an oral way, but not in a written form. If we only apply written exams, we are not being fair to all students.

Every type of assessment teachers apply in a classroom should be created based strictly on the contents that were taught before. If tutors assess things that were not addressed during the class, the achievement indicators will not be met and the test would neither be valid nor reliable.

Language teaching and learning should not stop after the class is finished. Activities such as dialogues, translations, cloze and repetition drills are very effective, but to get the best out of them, a teacher must go beyond. Every assignment should represent a challenge for students in and out of the classroom. It is not only about memorizing long lists of vocabulary, it is about internalizing what is being learned to be used in a real life context. To do so, students and teachers must be aware of the objective of every activity to be developed.

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# ANNEXES





## SURVEY AIMED TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Aim:** to research about the instruments that the English language teachers use to assess the English language learning in the classrooms, considering the students' perceptions.

**Instructions:** Dear student, your viewpoints to improve high school education are very important. Please, answer the inquiries being very honest. Mark with an 'X' in the blanks next to the answers. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. Thanks for your support.

1. Which of the following **assessment indicators** does your English teacher use to measure your progress in the English course?

Fluency		Comprehension	
Pronunciation		Punctuation	
Structure		spelling	
		Others	

2. Does your English teacher use **peer-assessment** to check your activities in the classroom?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does your English teacher apply **self-assessment** as an important part of your learning process?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. ¿Do you make use of the **lexis** learnt in the English class when talking to your classmates and teachers?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Can you write sentences by using **grammar structures** in English?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your English teacher commonly engage **diagnostic tests** at the beginning of the year, unit or topic?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does your English teacher utilize **aptitude tests** while developing the English course?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
8. Does your English teacher apply **placement tests** at the beginning of the course?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does your English teacher develop **final tests** at the end of each learning period?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
10. Does your English teacher use **rubrics** or **checklists** to assess your English language performance?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
11. Can you communicate conveying **understandable messages** using English?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you apply **reading techniques** when reading texts in English?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you think that you have improved on the management of your **grammar skills (punctuation, spelling, tenses, word order, and collocations)** in the English subject?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you think that you have a good **pronunciation** in English?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you know the **macro skills** of the English language?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you consider that the type of **methodology** used by the teacher is appropriate to meet your needs?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you write or practice **dialogues** using the English language?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you write **translations** in texts or paragraphs from English to Spanish or vice versa?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you develop **cloze (true/false, fill in the blank, and multiple choice tests)** to assess your own English skills?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you practice **repetition drills** in English when receiving the class or working in teams?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



UNIVERSIDAD GERARDO BARRIOS  
CENTRO REGIONAL DE USULUTÁN

ENCUESTA DIRIGIDA A ESTUDIANTE DE BACHILLERATO

**Objetivo:** Conocer sobre la actualización de los docentes en el uso de los recursos didácticos para impartir las clases de inglés en el salón de clases.

**Indicaciones:** Estimado estudiante, sus puntos de vista para mejorar la educación media son muy importantes. Favor contestar las interrogantes muy honestamente. Para efectos de conclusiones y recomendaciones del estudio se le grabará en audio sus valoraciones en cuanto a las interrogantes. La entrevista es ANÓNIMA. Muy agradecido por sus aportes.

1. ¿Cuál/cuales de los siguientes **indicadores de evaluación** son utilizados por su maestro para medir su progreso en inglés?

Fluidez		Comprensión	
Pronunciación		Puntuación	
Estructura		Deletreo	
		Otro	

2. ¿Su maestro utiliza la **co-evaluación** para la revision de actividades en el aula?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. ¿El docente aplica la técnica de **auto evaluación** como una parte importante en su proceso de aprendizaje?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. ¿Utiliza usted el **vocabulario** aprendido en clase cuando se comunica con sus compañeros y maestros?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Puede usted escribir oraciones utilizando **estructuras gramaticales** en inglés?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. ¿El docente comúnmente aplica **exámenes diagnósticos** al inicio del año, unidad o tema?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. ¿El docente utiliza **pruebas de aptitud** durante en la materia de inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
8. ¿El docente utiliza **exámenes de nivel** al principio del curso?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. ¿Su maestro aplica **exámenes finales** al término de cada periodo?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
10. ¿El maestro utiliza **rubricas o listas de cotejo** para evaluar su desempeño en inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
11. ¿Puede usted transmitir **mensajes entendibles** en inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
12. ¿Aplica usted **técnicas de lectura** cuando trabaja en textos en inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
13. ¿Considera usted que ha mejorado sus **habilidades de gramática (puntuación, deletreo, tiempos y orden de palabras)** en el idioma inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
14. ¿considera usted que tiene una buena **pronunciación** en inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
15. ¿Conoce usted las **macro habilidades** del idioma inglés?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
16. ¿Considera usted que el tipo de **metodología** utilizado por su maestro es la apropiada para cubrir sus necesidades?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
17. ¿Escribe o practica **diálogos** en inglés con sus compañeros o maestros?  
Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

18. ¿Puede usted realizar **traducciones** en artículos o párrafos de inglés a español y vice versa?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

19. ¿Desarrolla usted **ejercicios (falso/verdadero, llenado de espacios vacíos y exámenes de opción múltiple)** para evaluar sus habilidades en inglés?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

20. ¿Realiza usted **ejercicios de repetición** durante la clase de inglés?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_