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DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENGLISH FOUNDATION COURSE BASED ON THE
COMPETENCY APPROACH TO HELP STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR
LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE TECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY OF AMBATO

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LINEA DE INVESTIGACIÓN: Estrategias de aprendizaje que los estudiantes utilizan
en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje para internalizar el conocimiento (principio
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RESUMEN

Esta Disertación examina las iniciativas basadas en competencias en el desarrollo curricular de Inglés como lengua extranjera. A pesar de que el concepto de Competencia no es nuevo en el estudio de la lengua, en educación este término fue introducido a finales los años 80 como un nuevo enfoque. Este enfoque recientemente ha alcanzado significado e impacto en la Educación Superior cuya misión es la formación integral de profesionales con habilidades, conocimientos, actitudes y comportamientos esenciales requeridos para un efectivo desempeño en el mundo real. Los resultados cuantitativos respaldados por las encuestas aplicadas a los estudiantes y profesores de Inglés de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato, permiten definir la necesidad de que los estudiantes que han sido admitidos en la Universidad Técnica de Ambato nivelen sus conocimiento de Inglés antes de empezar los cursos formales y puedan alcanzar el nivel de Suficiencia en un Idioma Extranjero. En base a la teoría sobre competencias, la autora propone el desarrollo de un módulo formativo por competencias para un curso preuniversitario de Inglés.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the competence-based initiatives in curricular development for English as a foreign language. Although the concept of Competence is not new in the study of Language, in education it was introduced in the late 1980s as a new approach. This methodology has recently reached significance and impact in Higher Education. Its mission is to form integral professionals with essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior required for effective performance in a real world. Quantitative results backed by the survey applied to students and teachers of English at The Technical University of Ambato, enabled the researcher to define the students' needs and to propose their English knowledge tuning before they begin their English formal courses. In that way they could attain the Proficiency Level in a foreign language. Based on the theory about competencies the author proposes the development of a formative module by competencies for a Foundation Course of English.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group (UNESCO, Education in a Multilingual World, 2003). From this context the importance of learning another language emerges, then Education has a key role to play in ensuring that students acquire a foreign language, especially university students who have to be linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a very diverse society and abroad (National Standards for Foreign Language Education - American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

Learning another language opens up access to other value systems and ways of interpreting the world and encouraging inter-cultural understanding. The way languages are taught is constantly changing, but there are some organizations, national or international that provide frameworks for education policy and practice on key and complex issues. As a result, nowadays in Ecuador the new challenge for university students is to reach a proficiency level of knowledge in a foreign language, so that the proposal to develop an English Foundation Course Based on the Competency Approach, to help students improve their language skills for Higher Education at The Technical University Of Ambato, is a novel alternative to bring together new learning approaches like Competency-Based Approach, taking into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and International Frameworks of Reference for Languages adapted

according to needs of adult learners to communicate effectively in English in real situations.

This Dissertation is developed in three chapters. Chapter I refers to the Theoretical Framework. It contains the concepts of competencies, of the competency-based curriculum, and a module by competencies. Also it introduces readers to the topic of teaching foreign languages, especially Teaching English and the communicative competence in the four skills of English.

Chapter II is about the Methodology of research. The techniques and tools used, kind of research and the population subject of study. At the end the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained in the research are shown.

Chapter III refers to the Proposal, which includes the structure and the development of a Formative Module by Competencies to develop the communicative competence in English at a level A2 in the English Foundation course of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato.

This Dissertation looks at some ways for solving the problem set up: The English level of the students who have been admitted to the Technical University of Ambato is not enough for reaching the Proficiency Level in a foreign language as the new law established to complete their study programs.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Competencies

Westera Wim (2001) in his article “Competences in Education: A Confusion of Tongues” noted that the concept of competence is not exclusively reserved for education, but it is widely used in the domains of professional practice, personnel management, and business administration.

1.1.1 Concepts

The term ‘competence’ is being used in many different ways. The Longman Dictionary of the English Language defines the word competence also competency as “the quality or state of being competent.” Being competent means having a requisite or adequate ability. Another idea according to the glossary provided by the Tuning Guide to Formulating Degree Program Profiles is that competence is a synonym of ability, knowledge or skill; it is the object of all educational programs.

The word “competency” in the field of education was first introduced in the late 1980s, as a product of a new context of the knowledge society was acquiring. The interest was the relationship between education and workplace. Complex factors like technology changes, industry restructuring, changes in global trade, capital and labor markets contributed to the incorporation of new aims of education, emerging

the Competency Approach. Its main objective was to improve the educational procedures: learning-teaching-assessment, based on the idea that society requires people to be culturally and intellectually equipped for their present and future (Standards for Foreign Language Education - American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1996).

Competencies, like intelligences, are multiple; its diversity requires acquiring all of them at the same time. In the following chart, a summary of the competencies classification is shown:

Table 1: Competency Classification

KIND OF COMPETENCY	COMPETENCY
BIO PHYSIC	Coordination Equilibrium Spatial location Body Expression
COGNITIVE	Interpretation Argumentation Proposition
COMMUNICATIVE	Listening and speaking Reading and writing To dialogue and to understand
VALORATIVE	To make correct judgments To take on responsibilities To guide by values
SOCIO-AFFECTIVE	Motivation Lidership Self-determination
ESTHETIC	Amazement Contemplation Enjoyment
TECHNIC	Handling tools and machines Handling electronic supplies
SPIRITUALIZED	Truth search Well practice

Adapted from: Maldonado Sonia (2010), "El Currículo Actual del Idioma Inglés y su Incidencia en el Desarrollo de las Destrezas Receptivas y Productivas de los Estudiantes de la Modalidad Regular del DEDI".

Table 2: Other Classification

Labor	Competencies to perform a job
Professional	Competencies for a teacher, for a medical doctor, for an engineer,
Academic	To train students for job performance; to be able to research
Generic	They are indispensable for any career.
Global	They group two or more specific competencies: capacity to understand writing text and to structure them.
Specific	They are indispensable for a particular career.

Adapted from: Maldonado Sonia (2010) “El currículo Actual del Idioma Inglés y su Incidencia en el Desarrollo de las Destrezas Receptivas y Productivas de los Estudiantes de la Modalidad Regular del DEDI”.

Maldonado Sonia (2010) in her work “El Currículo Actual del Idioma Inglés y su Incidencia en el Desarrollo de las Destrezas Receptivas y Productivas de los Estudiantes de la Modalidad Regular del DEDI” remarks that in the field of competencies, it is necessary to distinguish the concepts of standard and achievement. Standard is a criterion, a parameter to determine the level of the development of a competency. It is a curricular goal for each area. From a cognitive point of view, standards are cognoscitive competencies, that is to say the mastery of concepts and basic topics in a knowledge area. Achievement, on the other hand, shows the level of mastery reached in a specific degree. The level of achievement implies the relationship between theory and practice in order to understand the scientific and professional context.

The Competency Approach is concerned with competency areas that people needed for employment: language and communication, mathematical and technological understanding, cultural understanding, interpersonal and problem solving. This Approach is holistic because it brings together a multitude of factors in explaining

and developing successful occupation performance. It links attributes and tasks. It has a normative nature, because people develop the ability to make judgments and to act intelligently and ethically in a variety of situations. There is a relationship between thought and action.

In the field of Teaching English the concept of competencies was established by the American linguist Noam Chomsky (1970) to “denote the unconscious store of linguistic knowledge which enables us to speak and understand our first language properly without having to think about it.” Competence is what we know about the language we speak, whereas performance is what we do with this knowledge in practice. The concept has been extended by theorists of communication, as ‘communicative competence.’

1.1.2 Kinds of Competencies in Higher Education

One characteristic of Higher Education is to be in a constant state of change because of the continually shifting world where employers demand graduates who are able to operate in complex environments. Then the commitment of universities in today’s world in the preparation of effective professionals must stimulate critical thinking and authentic communication, those abilities that enable students to overcome complex situations. To meet the changing needs of students in the modern world, curriculum frameworks currently being implemented in the world such as the Competency-based Model are required.

In Higher Education, Competencies were introduced by the Tuning Project. This is an educational project in Europe that started in 2000 as a plan to link the political

objectives of the European Community to the higher educational sector. The Tuning approach has been developed by and is meant for higher education institutions. The Tuning Project looks for points of reference, convergence, and common understanding in university degrees. It focuses on educational structures, on the content of studies. It combines academic and professional profiles with needs of society, that is, to use the concept of competences as a basis for learning outcomes (The Tuning Methodology Techno TN, 2004).

The name Tuning is chosen for the Process to reflect the idea that universities do not and should not look for uniformity in their degree programmes or any sort of unified, prescriptive or definitive European curricula but simply look for points of reference, convergence and common understanding. (<http://www.unideusto.org>)

By the end of 2003, The Latin-America Alpha-Tuning Project emerged from a context of reflection on higher education at regional and at international level. The idea is the same as the Europe Tuning, but with different actors and impressions given by each reality. By 2007, the Final Report ALFA Tuning America Latina Project: Reflections on and outlook for Higher Education in Latin America was issued. One of its aims established is to encourage, around Latin America, an important level of convergence of higher education through definition of common understanding on professional and learning outcomes.

As part of the methodology, approaches to teaching, learning and assessment were developed for shaping the future of higher education. The Tuning Approach provides a methodology for developing statements of learning outcomes, levels of learning, and desired competences. Moreover, Tuning has developed reference

points for generic and subject-specific competences for nine subject areas. These reference points have been used to define cycle descriptors. Furthermore, Tuning has proposed an approach for measuring student's workload; this shows the relevance of using the concept of competences as a basis for learning outcomes (An Introduction to Tuning Educational Structures in Europe, 2006). Learning outcomes are expectations, what students are able to do at the end of a single course or module; meanwhile, competence refers to the linking of knowledge, understanding and abilities formed in several course units.

From this context, the classification of competencies proposed by Tuning Project is the most appropriate for higher education (Tobón, 2006). It establishes four groups of competencies: Basic Competencies, Generic Competencies, Specific Competencies, and Key Competencies. In general, Basic Competences are for life, they are independent from the profession. With these competencies people are able to communicate in their mother tongue and also in a foreign language; people are able to use information and technology. That is to say competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies is an essential foundation for learning, and learning to learn supports all learning activities (The Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework, 2006).

Generic competences identify shared attributes which could be general to any degree, such as the capacity to learn, decision making, communication abilities, project design, teamwork and management skills. They are common to all or most of the degrees. They are for application in different professions or occupations (Ingenio

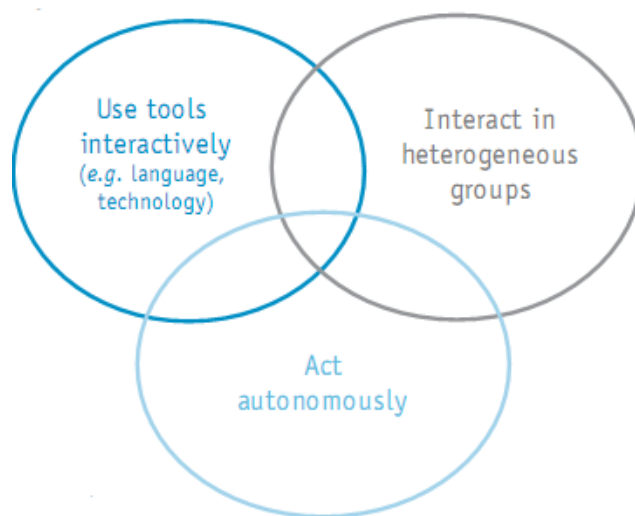
Working Papers, 2009). The Tuning Project distinguishes three types of generic competences: Instrumental competences that are related to cognitive, methodological, technological and linguistic abilities. Interpersonal competences, that allow people to get immersed in social environments. Systemic Competences, a combination of understanding, sensibility and knowledge; prior acquisition of instrumental and interpersonal competences required (Tuning Project, p.70).

There are also skills applied for particular professions called Subject specific competences. They play a crucial role to prepare students for the profession or the type of jobs for which the educational program aims. They are only for a particular profession acquired through programmes for specialization, and through specific educative process in higher education. Besides the three aforementioned groups of competencies, the Key Competences that represent a logically consistent set of attitudes, values, knowledge and skills indispensable for operating effectively both personally and professionally are also vital. Among them self-esteem, motivation, perseverance and initiative could be counted as imperative.

A conceptual framework that classifies the competencies in three broad categories, similar to the concepts and criteria proposed by Tuning is presented in the Executive Summary “The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies” (<http://www.oecd.org>). First, individuals need to be able to use a wide range of tools to interact effectively with the environment. They need to understand such tools well enough to adapt them to their own purposes. Second, in an increasingly interdependent world, individuals need to be able to interact with others, and since they will encounter people from various backgrounds, it is important for them to be able to interrelate in heterogeneous groups. Third, individuals need to be able to take

responsibility for managing their own lives, situating their lives in the broader social context and acting autonomously. Figure 1 shows the interrelation among these three groups of competencies.

Figure 1: Competencies in Three Broad



Taken from “The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies” Executive Summary, 2005

To sum up, nowadays in higher education, new curriculum frameworks are implemented around the world, such as the Competency-Based Curriculum. This model defines programmes of study based on the notions of social needs, available resources, professional and academic profiles and learning outcomes and competences, showing the relevance of using the concept of competences as a basis for learning outcomes. For this reason the competences can be distinguished in four groups: basic, generic, specific and key competences.

1.2 Competency-Based Curriculum

1.2.1 Concepts

The notion of “Curriculum” in education has changed as the evolution of the society throughout the time. Conceptions could be ambiguous. However, for the purpose of this research, a concept of general understanding has been taken from the definitions by scholars in the field of education. Wojtczak (2002), Coles (2003), Goodlad and Su (1992) agree and define “Curriculum” as an educational plan which describes the general goals for a program of study by indicating an educational-cultural philosophy applied across subjects. It reflects the national and political trends in terms of objectives, key competences, contents, methodology and evaluation criteria to be achieved in a period of time.

1.2.2 Curricular Structure by Competencies

Along with the conception cited above, it could be mentioned that “Competency-based curriculum”, as new teaching/learning paradigm, has competences as a nuclear notion where approaches centered on the learner are increasingly important. It describes academic and professional profiles, defines new objectives in the learning process, enhances learning environments and shifts the concept of learning as accumulation of knowledge to learning as a permanent attitude towards knowledge acquisition. In fact, competence-based education emphasizes the integrated nature of what students need to learn to face not only labor market but also life in general. Competences provide directions to design learning

experiences and assignments that help students gain practice in their use and application in different contexts (Edwards, Tovar, & Soto, 2009, p.3).

Competency Based Education is a functional approach to education that emphasizes life skills and evaluates mastery of those skills according to actual learner performance. It was defined by the U.S. Office of Education as a ‘performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society’ (U.S. Office of Education, Savage, 1978).

In The Tuning Project, competencies are described as reference points for curriculum design and evaluation. They allow flexibility and autonomy in the construction of curricula. The Tuning project has drawn attention to the importance of competencies as the basis for the design, implementation and delivery of study programmes. The key elements to develop a study program such as resources, the learning needs of a particular group of students, a well described degree profile, a set of desired learning outcomes in terms of generic and specific competences, academic content (knowledge, understanding, skills) and structure (modules and credits), appropriate teaching, learning and assessment strategies must be identified and established by a professional group in charge of the curriculum design (Tuning Educational Structure in Europe, 2004).

1.2.3 Professional Profile by Competencies

The Competency-Based Learning Model pretends to link higher education with work market. The term 'profile' is commonly used in human resource administration to define the professional's nature and requirements for a job. It has been adapted to education in order to encourage professionals to become better in their work and to respond to the society with the skilled, adaptable and innovative workforce that government and industry are seeking.

The professional profile guides the curriculum design and the process of students' formation in a degree program. The professional profile includes the competences and the learning outcomes. It is related to the requirements of the professional performance and the global and social context and the potential changes in the future. It links the generic and specific competences with their student's learning outcomes. Nowadays to develop a professional profile is useful in each educational process, especially in higher education where accreditation is increasingly focusing on the learning outcomes at programme level. The profile can be used to evaluate a person's qualification as it provides valuable information to the educational process. For students, the profile can be used as an orientation tool for choosing their studies and for guiding them in the acquisition of competences.

1.3 Module by Competencies

1.3.1 Concepts

In the Competency-based Approach, the learning objectives are structured by modules. The meaning of “Module” in the field of education is a group of lesson plans designed to teach specific concepts (Samantha, 2000). As the basic structure of a curriculum, a module contains measurable goals and complete and autonomous plans. All of these elements allow the learner to gain new knowledge and skills in a specific subject. In Tuning “a module is defined as a course unit or a combination of course units in a system in which each course unit carries the same number of credits or a multiple thereof ” (Tuning Guide Degree Program Profile, 2010).

Using modules in the Competency-Based Approach ensures the quality of educational programs and facilitates the integration of the educational system at national and international level in terms of outcomes and competences. In other words, a set of coherent educational components based on learning outcomes in different universities would improve the students’ opportunities to receive a good education, develop specific competences, and the completion of a learning process.

1.3.2 Content of a module based on competencies

The following structure of a module based on competencies has been taken from the text “Construyendo Futuro”, a guide to develop formative modules at the Technical University of Ambato.

1.3.2.1 Formal Aspects

- Module identification
- Name, code, number of credits
- Pre-requirements
- Teacher's name

1.3.2.2 Formative Procedure: It is a detailed description of:

- Competency to reach
- Parts of the competency
- General problem to be approached
- The context of the module (global competency, problem node, social and academic context).
- Dedication time for teacher and student
- Methodology of formation: Establish the activities to assure the formation of the competency and its effective performance. It includes a resource analysis.

1.3.2.3 Methodology of evaluation: It should be based on the competency principles and it takes into account the criteria of performance, knowledge, field of application and the evidences required in the Formation Plan.

1.3.2.4 Instructional Guides: They are documents with instructions that guide the students through the learning activities in class hours and in autonomous learning hours. They show the competency, the element of competency to be approached,

the instructions for working in learning activities, the necessary resources and the evaluation criteria, for both, student and teacher .

1.3.2.5 Material to support the formation: It is a detailed description of materials needed by students in the learning process by competencies.

1.4 Teaching Foreign Languages

Competence in foreign languages has long been recognized as an indispensable economic and social resource within a culturally and linguistically diverse world. Learning other languages promotes an extended sense of identity, making people feel part of more than one linguistic and cultural community. It also increases people's employment, education and leisure options, which in turn may generate a whole range of personal, social and workplace competencies. (Key Competencies, A developing Concept in General Compulsory Education, Eurydice, 2002).

In the Final Report of the "International Conference on Education 46th Session (2001) the importance of communication, expression and the capacity to listen and dialogue, in the mother tongue as well as in one or more foreign languages is asserted (Education in a Multilingual World, UNESCO, 2003).

There are many agreements and declarations which make reference to language and Education. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, an international organization with an essential role to play in providing international frameworks for education policy and practice on key and complex issues has declared that Language in education is one of its concerns. For that reason,

it has established as a universal linguistic human right of individuals the “access to international languages” and to “other systems of values and ways of interpretation of the world.” (Education in a Multilingual World, UNESCO, 2003). In this same paper it is mentioned that “Language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group.”

Along with the declarations and recommendations from inter-governmental organizations, many agreements at regional level have emphasized the importance of foreign language learning as part of an intercultural education. The European Union, for instance, has established The Common European Framework of Reference for Language. It was prepared by the Council of Cultural Cooperation of Europe Board. It provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, and textbooks across Europe (Directrices para el Diseño Curricular en la Enseñanza del Inglés en el siglo XXI, 2006). One of its main objectives is to intensify the teaching-learning process of foreign languages in order to reach effective international communication that combines the respect for identity, cultural diversity and a better access to information. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language established proficiency levels which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. These levels are: A for Basic Users, B for Independent Users and C for Proficient User. Table 3 describes each category with its subcategories.

Like in Europe, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in America, Preparing for the 21st Century (1996) elaborated by the Secretary of Education of USA, is

another example of competences applied to language learning. It emphasizes the importance of setting access to learning foreign languages for the population and “to own linguistics and cultural knowledge as part of the foreign language studies will be a requirement for the life of a citizen in a global hamlet” (Standards, 1996, p.7). It seeks the intercultural understanding, the reflection between languages and cultures, native and foreigner. It also highlights the needs of students to access to information and mobility. It makes up five curricular cores: communication, cultures, links (target language and culture with other subjects), comparisons (mother tongue and foreign language, mother culture and target culture), and communities (foreign language application inside and outside of scholar context).

In Ecuador, in order to be part of this wide movement, the actual university curricula follow the new “Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior”, where the mastery of a foreign language as a requirement to complete university studies is compulsory (Art. 124). Thus, Ecuadorian Universities have the responsibility to redesign the operative and educative policies, where foreign languages are included as a central element.

There are certain basic guiding principles which have been common to all the documents, agreements and recommendations. Taking into account the Competency-Based Approach as an educative strategy for teaching foreign languages, the challenges of Universities is to offer students foreign language programs that assist them to interact with native speaker of the language, to criticize about differences and similarities between mother tongue and foreign language, and to be fluent in foreign language in national and international contexts.

Table 3: Common Reference Level: Global scale (Framework EN, p.24)

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

1.5 Teaching English as a Foreign Language

English as a Foreign Languages (EFL) in the Glossary of Basic EFL Terms by Brian Tomlinson is defined as English learned by people from a community where English is not normally used. English has become the language mean around different communities belonging to several cultures, for this reason, the study of EFL and its inclusion in the educative plan of any level are important for students from school to university around the world. English immerses students in social, technical and cultural fields different from their own environment.

At the Technical University of Ambato, 70% of the student population takes English Courses, based on the importance that this language helps in their professional and personal development. Our commitment should be to promote research and development programs leading to the introduction of methods and materials best suited for students' needs as to help them attain a communicative proficiency level in English.

The Technical University of Ambato, as many universities in Latin-America, targets its efforts to develop a curricular model to teach English as a Foreign Language, integrating international standards for learning, evaluation, and competence certification, in this case the standards proposed by the European Union.

As the importance of teaching foreign languages is increasing, new tendencies in teaching come into view. For example, an action-oriented approach, which is related to competency-based education, in which , while acts of speech occur within

language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, that on its own should be able to give them their full meaning. Here, the term ‘tasks’ appears to explain that actions are performed by one or more individuals strategically using their own specific competences to achieve a given result. The action-based approach, therefore considers the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the complete range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent (The Common European Framework in its Political and Educational Context, 2001).

Similar to the Competency-based Approach, the action-oriented approach includes as its elements the competences that let students perform actions, in EFL specifically the communicative language competence that empowers a person to act using linguistic means. Other important elements are the context where the acts of communication take place, the text which is the discourse, the goal of the process; the domain that refers to the sectors of social life in which social agents operate; the strategy or action chosen by individuals to carry out a task; and the task, the action developed to achieve a given result in a context (The Common European Framework in its Political and Education Context, 2001).

The process of language learning is continuous and individual. No two users of a language, whether native speakers or foreign learners, have exactly the same competences or develop them in the same way (The Common European Framework of Reference of Languages, 2001). However, The University has to encourage students to reach the proficiency level established by law. For this purpose, it is useful to set up a scale of defined levels to segment the learning process, based on

how a particular educational system is organized and for which purposes scales are established. It will then be possible to institute a foundation level of English.

1.6 Communicative Competence in the Four Skills of English

Communicative competence means the ability to communicate, consequently it implies to define what communication is. Communication comes from a Latin word for “commonness,” that means togetherness, joining, cooperation, and mutuality. Then, communication is “a mutual exchange between two or more individuals which enhances cooperation and establishes commonality” (Language Learning Strategies, p. 7). The term “communicative competence” was introduced by the Sociolinguist Hymes (1972) as a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. In the 80’s Canale and Swain in their work “Communicative Approach to Second Language Teaching and Testing” made reference to the communicative competence, a theory of language as communication. For them, the communicative competence is composed minimally of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence.

Every competency mentioned above takes part in the communication process from the beginning to the end. Grammatical Competence refers to grammatical accuracy required in oral and written communication; it is also known as Linguistic competence. The understanding of the social context, the setting, the topic, the communicative functions, in which communication takes place is the Sociolinguistic Competence. How the messages elements are interpreted in term of interconnectedness is the Discourse Competence, and finally the Strategic Competence is a compensatory communication strategy to be used when there is a

breakdown in one of the other competences, it occurs at the beginning, at the end or help to terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication (Hymes, 1972).

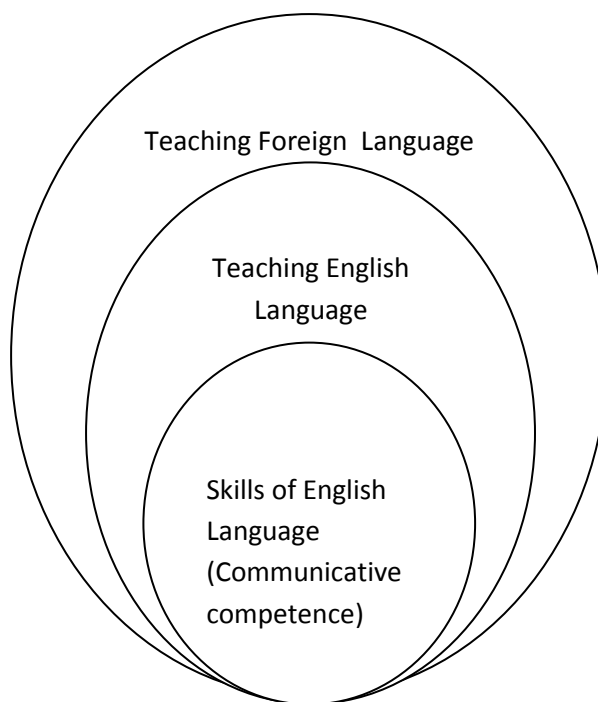
Canale and Swan concluded that a communicative approach must be based on and respond to the learner's communication needs. From that point of view, the communicative competence of a second language is a complex process that includes a wide social element, where the learner does not only speak the target language appropriately, but also acts according to the circumstances. It goes far from the linguistic patterns. Language is used to accomplish functions like arguing, persuading, or promising adapted to a social context (Canale & Swan, 1980).

1.6.1 Four skills of English

Figure 2 shows the link of categories of the communicative competence. The main category is Teaching Foreign Language, the inside this it is Teaching English with its target to develop the four skills (communicative competence), that means the dimensions of communication: listening, speaking, reading and writing . In other words it calls for the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thought, feelings, in oral and written form in social and cultural contexts.

The proposal to develop an English Foundation course for the students at the Technical University of Ambato has as its main aim to encourage students to incorporate and use the language developing the four basic skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. In that way they will be more motivated to implement the communicative competence in foreign language.

Figure 2: The Communicative Competency in the four skills of English Language



(Adapted from Thesis : El currículo actual del idioma inglés y su incidencia en el desarrollo de las destrezas receptoras y productivas de los estudiantes de la Modalidad Regular del DEDI, Maldonado Sonia, 2010 Categorías fundamentales de la formación por competencias)

A competent language user has developed different abilities for communication, he/she is able to speak on the telephone (speaking), write letters (writing), listen to the radio (listening) or read books (reading). Speaking and writing involve language production, so they are referred as Productive Skills. Listening and reading, involve receiving messages, so they are referred to as Receptive Skills.

Table 4: The Four Language Skills

MEDIUM SKILL	SPEECH	WRITTEN WORD
RECEPTIVE	Listening and understanding	Reading and Understanding
PRODUCTIVE	Speaking	Writing

Taken from: The Practice of English Language Teaching, p. 17

The criterion of the proposal for developing a foundation course is that students that take this course, along their university studies, reach the Proficiency Level. Therefore, this foundation course should provide at least the bases to reach a level A of a Common European Framework for Foreign Language; it means they will become Basic Users before their formal studies at university. In other words, students at the end of the foundation course will be able to use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address; greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet, make and accept offers.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Method of Research

This research is qualitative and quantitative. A qualitative analysis of the learning problem related to the topic will be made and data collected from the survey will be interpreted in order to explain the learning phenomenon in a quantitative form.

2.1.1 Type of Study

The study is based on applied research because it pretends to solve the problem students who seek admittance to the Technical University of Ambato have to attain a minimum level of knowledge and skills in English before they start their university studies.

It will be developed in the field, where the facts take place, with students and teachers that attend the Languages Department in the semester March-August 2011. Descriptive research will also be implemented to illustrate the problem as it is in reality. Its results will be useful for taking decisions about the implementation of the proposed competency-based foundation course.

2.2 Population and Sampling

2.2.1 Population

The population includes English teachers and students of Basic I level of the Languages Department of the Technical University of Ambato, in the semester March-August 2011 according to the following chart:

POPULATION	FREQUENCY
TEACHERS	30
STUDENTS	1.309

SOURCE: Language Department UTA

2.2.2 Sampling

Since the student population is large, the following formula has been applied to obtain the sample for a finite population (the elements of the population are known):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 P*Q*N}{Ne^2 + Z^2 P*Q}$$

N= Population

n= size of the sample

P.Q= 0,25 (Probability in pro by probability against)

e= 0,001 -0,10 (admitted error between 1 and 10%)

Z = level of confidence

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(1.05)(1309)}{(1309)((0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}$$

$$n = 296.99$$

$$n = 297$$

Since each class at the Language Department has at least 30 students, in order to apply the questionnaire it was necessary to take 10 groups. One group per class hour was selected. The class hours are: 07h00-08h30, 08h30-10h00, 10h30-12h00, 12h00-13h30, 12h30-1400, 14h00-15h30, 15h30-17h00, 17h00-18h30, 18h30-20h00, and Saturdays. However, because of the students' desertion, to complete the number of questionnaires of the sample, it was essential to take an extra group in the class hours of 07h00-08h30 and 08h30-10h00, hours with the bigger number of groups.

2.3 Techniques and Tools

A survey was the technique used for this research, some questionnaires were the tools to collect teachers' and students' opinions. The questionnaires were structured in such a way that the data collected could allow the researcher to make a comparison. The students' questionnaire (Annex N°1) contains 11 questions, including personal information. Some questions brought about a general idea of the social environment in the courses. Some others were used to get information of the interviewees' opinions about the English learning process. The teachers' questionnaire (Annex N° 2) contains 8 questions, they ask information about the students' performance. It was designed to be a self-assessment of teachers' performance with the current system. Questions also ask for

possible ideas to improve teaching. The questionnaires helped to establish the needs to create a competency-based module for a foundation course and to identify the competencies and learning outcomes for the English foundation course.

Information about the current situation of English Teaching from authorities of the Language Department has been obtained through a semi-structured interview to the General Coordinator of the Language Department (Annex N° 3).

2.4 Result Analysis and Interpretation

The data obtained after the tools application were processed, organized, coded, tabulated and analyzed statistically. This analysis was the basis to develop a Module based on Competencies for an English Foundation Course to help students improve their language skills for higher education at the Technical University of Ambato.

Excel was the program used to analyze the data collected in the research. The results are shown in frequency charts with percentages. The data are also represented in graphs. At the end of each chart comments about the results are expressed.

2.4.1 Semi-Structured Interview to the General Coordinator of the Language

Department of the Technical University of Ambato

Since Mach 2011, Dr. Sara Camacho is the General Coordinator of the Language Department. She has a Bachelor Degree in Education Sciences, Specialized in English Teaching. She is Master in Higher Education Administration, she has also several postgraduate degrees in Teaching, Technology and in English Teaching as Foreign Languages. She has about 11 years English teaching experience working at High School and University.

The General Coordinator talked in general about the current situation of Teaching English at the Technical University of Ambato. She mentioned that students have to approve 3 levels of a foreign language to fulfill the requirement and obtain the certification before they finish their studies. Nowadays, the academic model based on competencies is followed at the University. The English courses are developed based on the text Interchange Third Edition, but by the semester September 2011- February 2012, the text will be changed, the educators are reviewing five texts of editorials like Cambridge and Oxford. And also she indicated that she proposed a reform of the curriculum of Foreign Languages for students to reach the Proficiency Level required by the law, the proposal pretends to increase the level of study from 3 to 6 semesters. This change will probably take place next year.

About the problems, she said that there are several situations not only in the academic process, even in the management of the courses. The number of classrooms does not

allow executives to open enough courses for all the students. The class time in careers affects the process of registration, because faculties change their schedule without anticipation. The distance between campus Huachi, where the most students are, and Ingahurco, where the English courses take place, is another problem.

Concerning the academic context, students' desertion has lately risen. Many students abandon the courses, even at the beginning of the semester. A lot of students feel disorientated or get lost in the course because of their English knowledge; others have problems with their careers, and some students have economic problems that make them abandon the English courses in order to work.

About the proposal to create a Foundation Course, she thinks that it is a good alternative for students who want to adjust their knowledge. The University has the resources to develop this kind of courses because the University wants to form competent professionals with integral abilities. She believes that to establish an admittance profile for the English Courses is a good idea, because this helps in the students' learning process and at the end every learner will be able to reach the proficiency level required by the law.

2.4.2 Questionnaire Applied to the Students of Basic I Level of English at the Technical University of Ambato

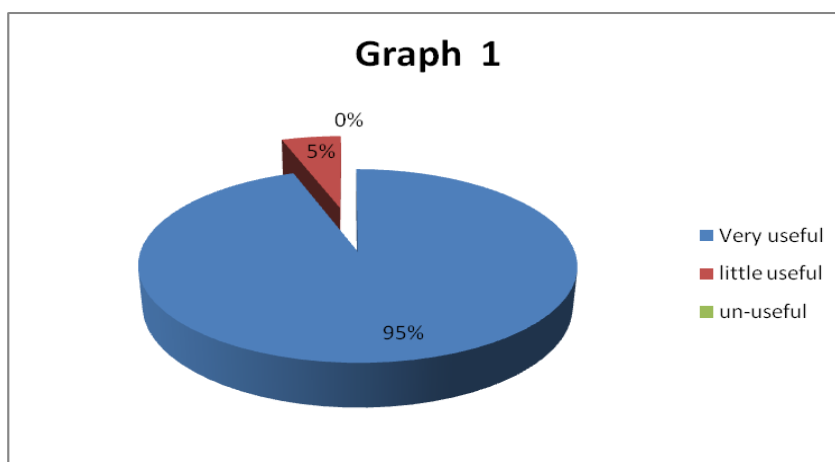
Students' personal information such as age, sex, year of graduation, and their career was asked to know more about their social background. Being Technical University of Ambato a public university, where the access is open to all kind of students, without any type of discrimination, it was necessary to find out if any of the abovementioned aspects had a direct influence on the study.

According to the questionnaire (Annex N° 1), the average age of students registered in the Basic I level of English at the Technical University of Ambato during the term March-August 2011 is 20 years old. The oldest student is 52 years old, and about 3.1% of the population is older than 30 years old. 55% of students that took English courses were women and 45% men. Most of students graduated from High School between 2008 and 2010. Students' careers are diverse so it was difficult to apply percentages to show correspondence.

Questions 5 to 11 collected information about English learning at the Technical University of Ambato. The students expressed their view about the importance of learning English; they assessed their performance during the semester, their problems in language learning and suggested the creation of a pre-university course and the activities that it could include.

Question 5: Do you consider that learning English for personal and professional life is:?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Very useful	282	95%
little useful	15	5%
un-useful	0	0%
TOTAL	297	100

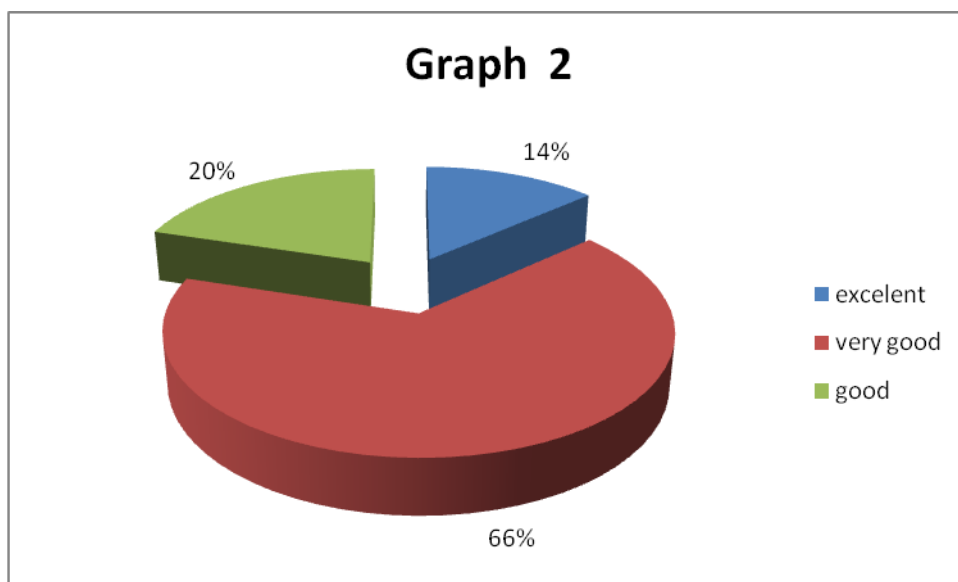


INTERPRETATION

95% of students consider that English is very useful for their personal and professional life. None of them think that English is not useful. That means that students are conscious about the importance of English as an international language, that English is the language of globalization, international communication, commerce and trade, the media, and pop culture. English is not only a subject in higher education, proficiency in English is needed for employees to advance in international companies, and improve their technical knowledge and skills. English is part of the set of generic competencies in the new academic approach: problem-solving and critical thinking skills that are needed to cope with the changing environment of the workplace.

Question 6: *At the end of the first level of English, how do you assess your performance?*

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
excellent	41	14%
very good	196	66%
Good	60	20%
Total	297	100%

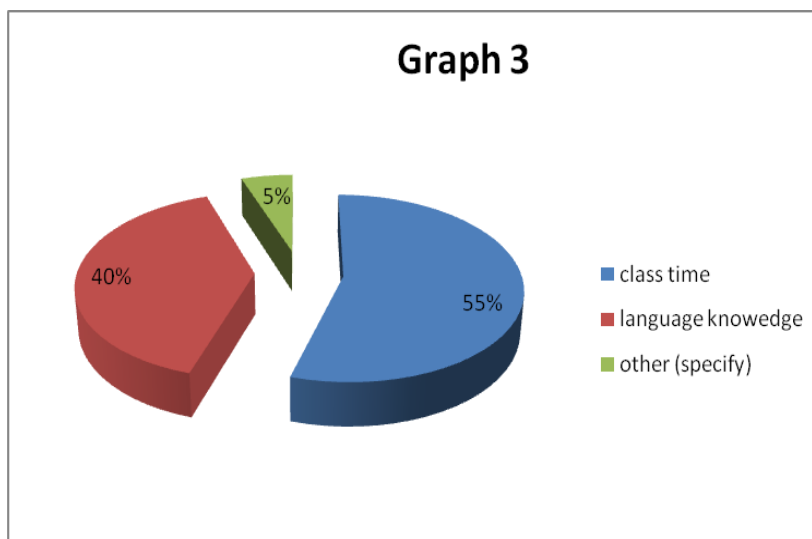


INTERPRETATION

66% of students believe that they are very good in their English course, only a 14% answer that they are excellent. There is a 20% that assess their performance as good.

Question 7: Which was the main problem that you had at the beginning of the English course at the Technical University of Ambato?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
class time	163	55%
language knowledge	119	40%
other (specify)	15	5%
TOTAL	297	100%

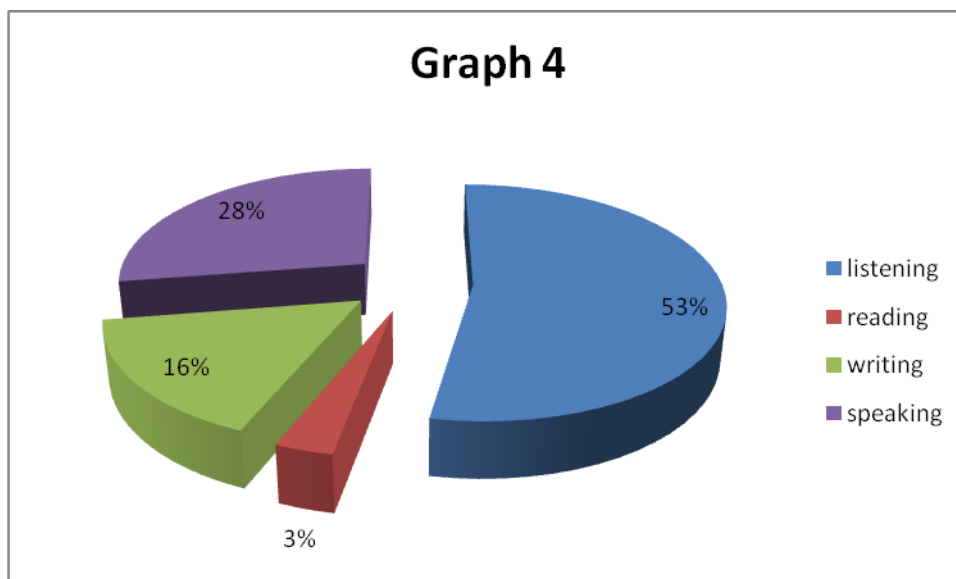


INTERPRETATION

For students, the main problem or conflict at the beginning of the course was the class time, 40% of students said that they had problems with the level of knowledge in English. Other problems that students mentioned are related to the time that has gone since they left the high school and their academic background. However, they have also had problems related to the course administration such as the system for registration and the place where they take English classes and the place where they study.

Question 8: Which is the most difficult basic skill that you have problems with?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Listening	157	53%
Reading	9	3%
Writing	48	16%
Speaking	80	27%
TOTAL	297	100%
PEOPLE WHO WROTE MORE THAN 1 CHOICE	39	13%

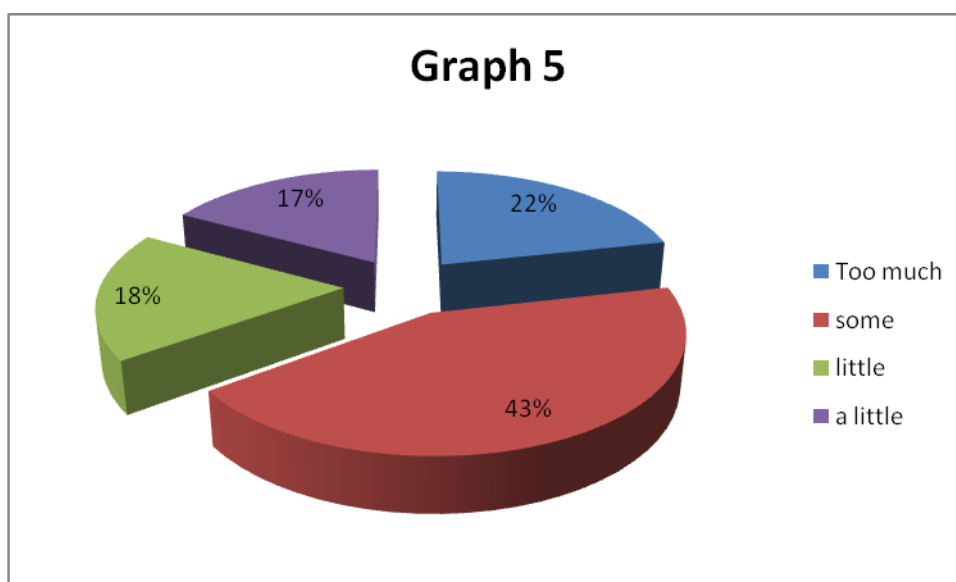


INTERPRETATION

For this question, some students did not choose only one alternative, about 13% of students mentioned that they had problems in more than one skill. 53% of students believe that the most difficult skill to develop is speaking whereas reading is the least difficult. 16% of students have problems with writing.

Question 9: Do you consider that in High School you learned English adequately in order to continue your learning at University?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Too much	65	22%
Some	128	43%
Little	54	18%
a Little	50	17%
Total	297	100%

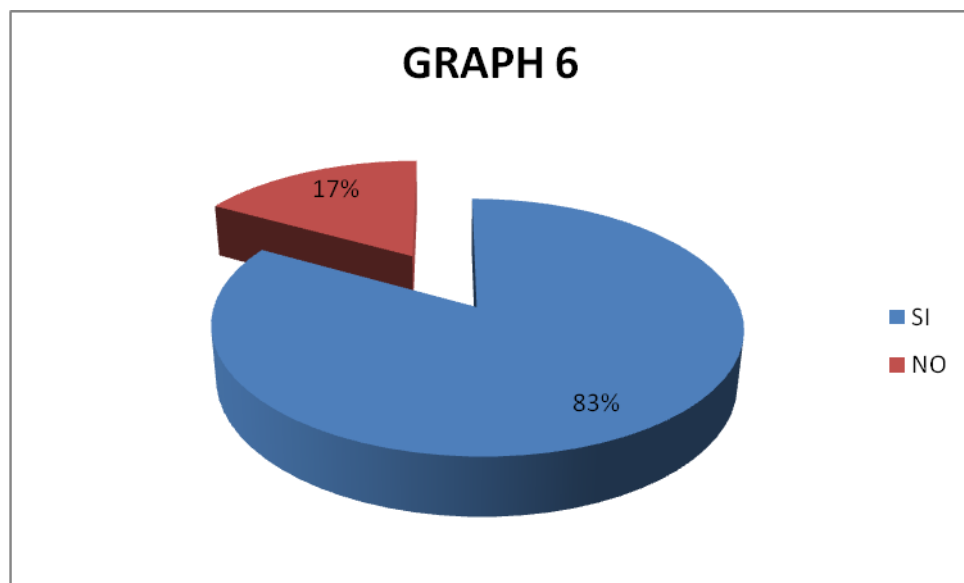


INTERPRETATION

43% of students consider that the English learned at High School is somehow useful in their studies at University. Only a 22% of students think that their knowledge in English acquired at high school is really useful. Between 17.5% and 18% of students consider that what they learned at high school is not useful enough in order to continue their learning at University.

Question 10: Do you consider that a preparation course in English will be useful for your admission at University?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
SI	247	83%
NO	50	17%
Total	297	100%



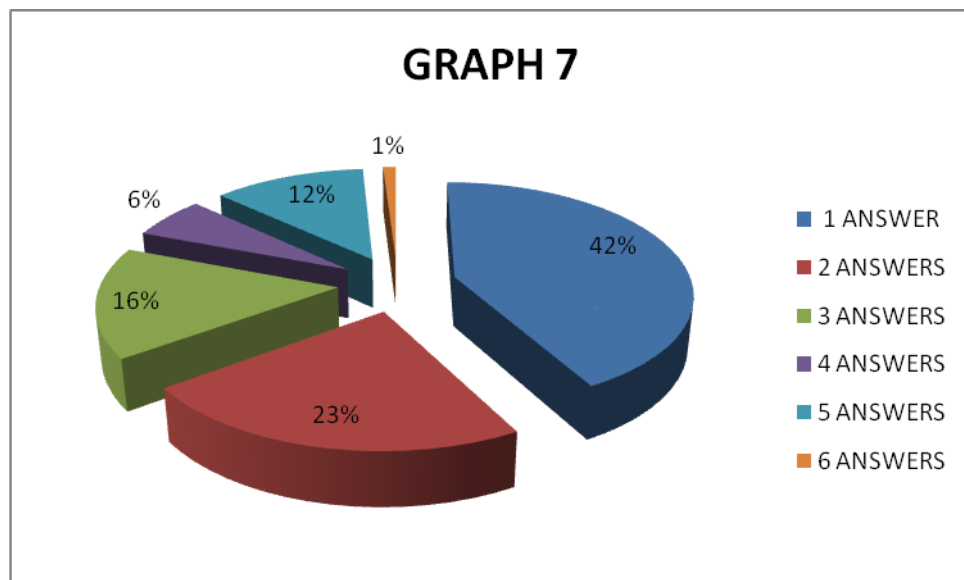
INTERPRETATION

83% of students consider appropriate to take a preparatory course before their admission at University. Only a 17% said that it is not necessary.

Question 11: Which activities do you believe that are appropriate to include in a preparatory course?

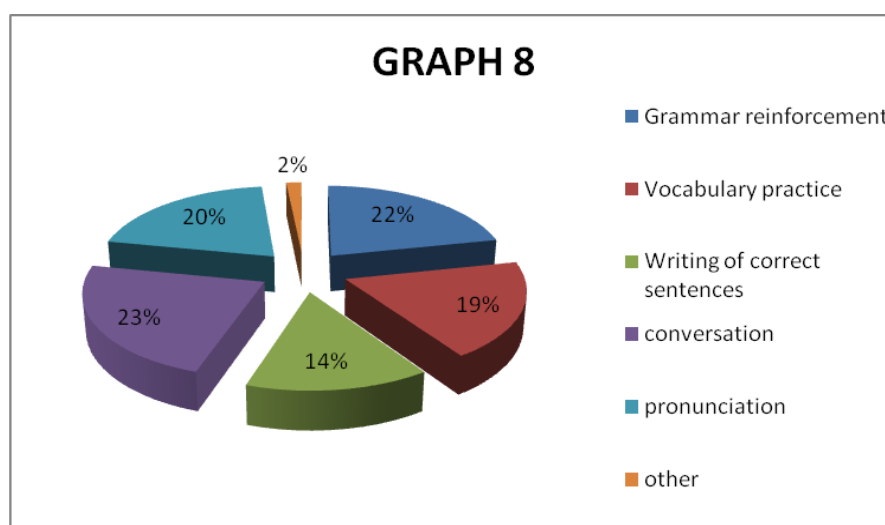
For this question, only 42% of students chose one activity to be included in the course, the other 58% of students gave more than one suggestion as shown in the chart below:

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
1 ANSWER	125	42%
2 ANSWERS	68	23%
3 ANSWERS	47	16%
4 ANSWERS	18	6%
5 ANSWERS	36	12%
6 ANSWERS	3	1%
TOTAL	297	100%



The preferences for the activities to be included in the preparatory course are shown in the following chart:

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Grammar reinforcement	109	22%
Vocabulary practice	95	19%
Writing of correct sentences	73	15%
Conversation	116	23%
Pronunciation	102	20%
other	8	2%
TOTAL ANSWERS	503	100%



INTERPRETATION

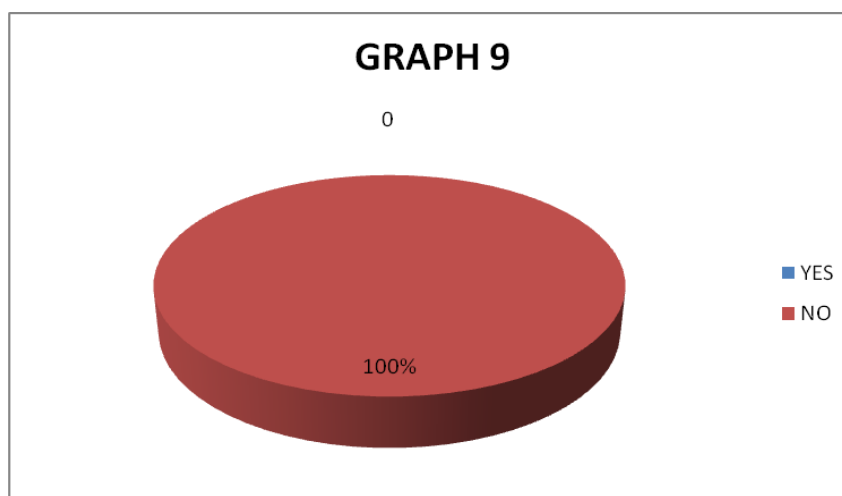
Between 19% and 23% of students suggested that activities like grammar reinforcement, vocabulary practice, pronunciation, and conversation would be a good idea to be included in the preparatory course. Only a 14% of students suggested integrating writing skills for the preparation course. Other activities recommended by students are: listening, comprehension, translation, and to be in contact with the language

2.4.3 Survey Applied to Teachers of Basic I Level of English at Language

Department of the Technical University of Ambato

Question 1: At the beginning of the semester, did students have a homogeneous level of knowledge in English?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
YES	0	0%
NO	30	100%
TOTAL	30	100%

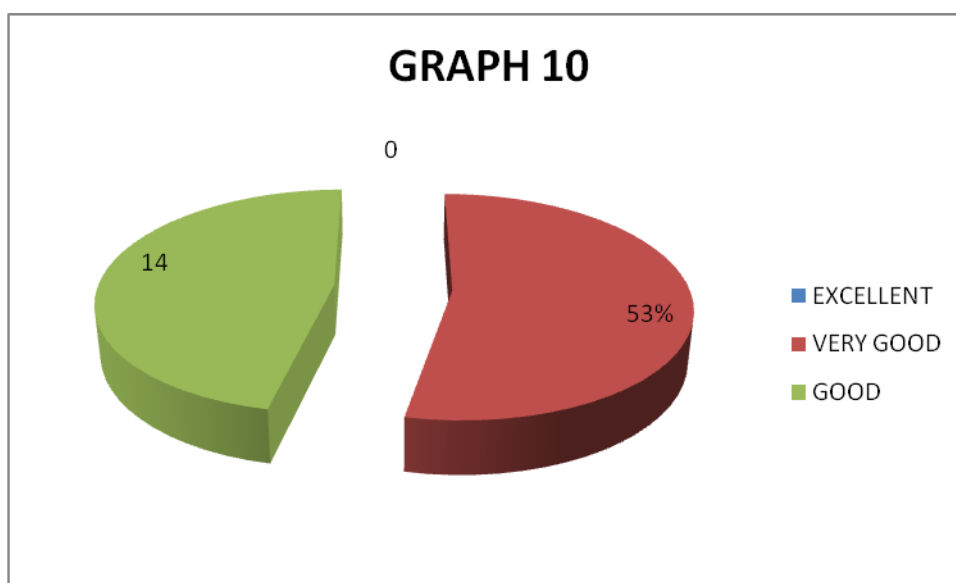


INTERPRETATION

100% of teachers said that students did not have the same level of knowledge in the language at the beginning of the course. That means, educators could not develop the program of Basic I, while the students reach a similar level.

Question 2: At the end of the first level of English, how do you evaluate the students' performance?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
EXCELLENT	0	0%
VERY GOOD	16	53%
GOOD	14	47%
TOTAL	30	100%

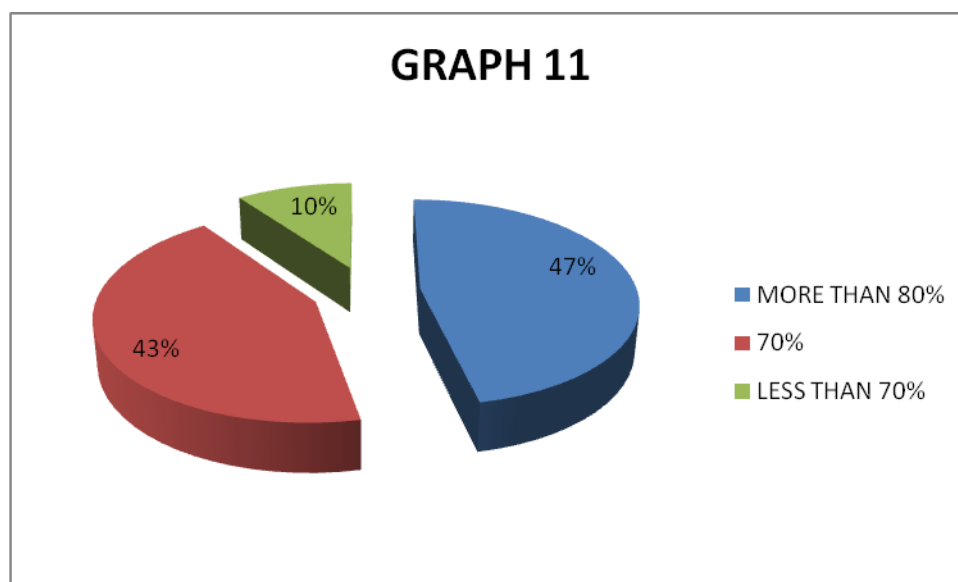


INTERPRETATION

In spite of the different level of knowledge that students have at the beginning of the semester, teachers consider that the performance of students at the end of the semester is between very good and good. No one said that the performance was excellent. Nevertheless, in comparison to the criteria of students, 13% of them assessed their performance as excellent. 66% of students said that their performance was very good.

Question 3: *In what percentage did you reach and fulfill the academic programs of level Basic I of English?*

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
MORE THAN 80%	14	47%
70%	13	43%
LESS THAN 70%	3	10%
TOTAL	30	100%

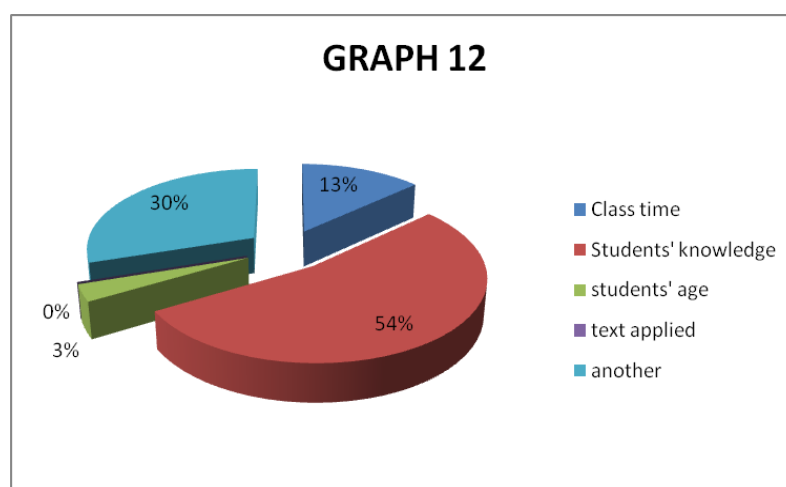


INTERPRETATION

For the fulfillment of the academic program of the level Basic I of English, 47% of teachers almost reached the objectives. The 43% of them reached more than 70% of the programs. However, there was a 10% of educators that could not complete the programs.

Question 4: Which of the following factors do you consider that affect the development of the subject?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Class time	4	13%
Students' knowledge	16	53%
students' age	1	3%
text applied	0	0%
Another	9	30%
Total	30	100%



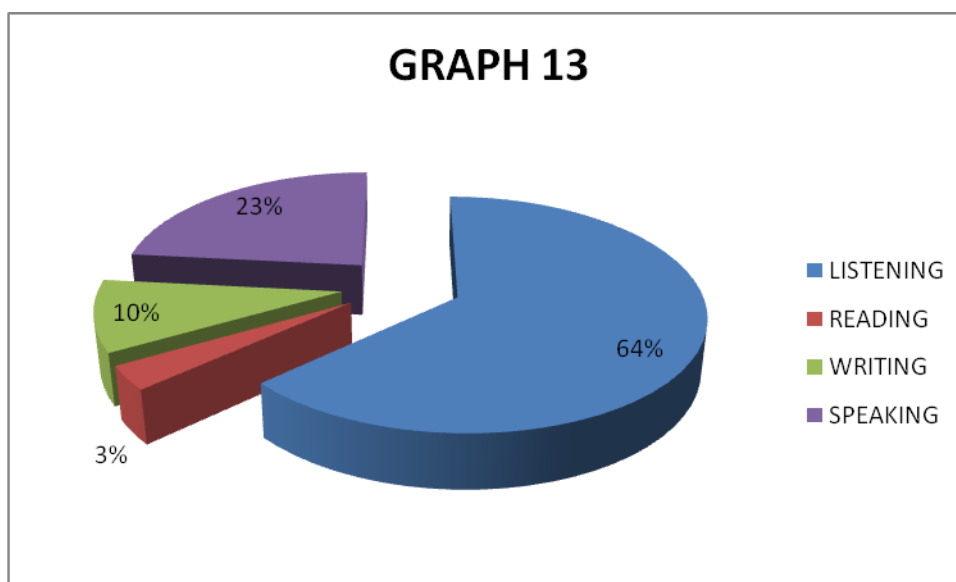
INTERPRETATION

In contrast to the view of students, 53% of teachers consider that the main problem in the development of the subject is the level of knowledge of students. At the beginning of the semester every student has a different level of knowledge. Only 13% of the teachers see the class time as a problem. 30% of teachers viewed other problems to develop the English class efficiently, such as the frequent absences of students to the class, the breaks for training, for holidays, the number of students in class, the time established to cover each unit, personal situation of students that work and study at the same time. The incidence of the students' age for teachers is not important, only 3%

consider it as a problem. No one has problems with the text applied in the learning process.

Question 5: During the semester, which was the most difficult skill for students?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
LISTENING	19	63%
READING	1	3%
WRITING	3	10%
SPEAKING	7	23%
TOTAL	30	100%

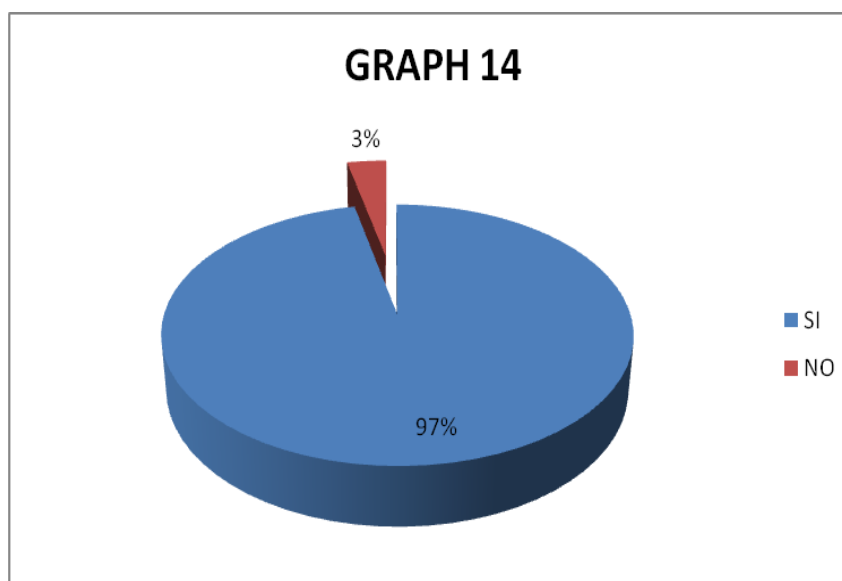


INTERPRETATION

As for most of the students, 63% of teachers think that the most difficult skill to develop in class is listening. Speaking is also difficult to develop, 23% of educators said it. Reading is the least difficult. Only 10% of the teachers consider that writing is difficult for students. But it is important to say that in this question, there were 27% of teachers that checked two or more alternatives.

Question 6: Do you consider that an English Preparation Course would be useful for admission to the University?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
SI	29	97%
NO	1	3%
TOTAL	30	100%

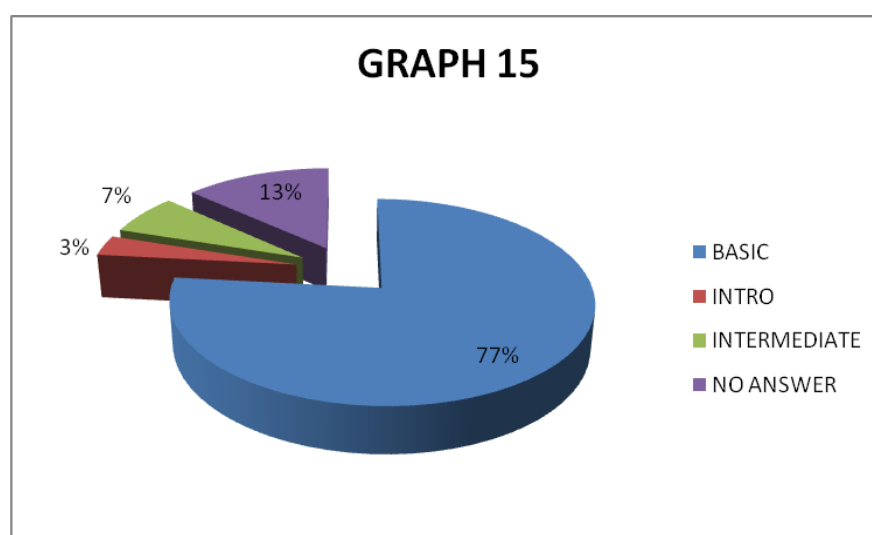


INTERPRETATION

97% of teachers agreed that an English Preparation course would be useful for students that have been admitted to the University. Only a 3% of them considered that this kind of course was not necessary. There is a coincidence with the students' view, 83% of them regard a preparation course as useful.

Question 7: What level of knowledge do you consider that the students should reach at the end of a preparatory course?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
BASIC	23	77%
INTRO	1	3%
INTERMEDIATE	2	7%
NO ANSWER	4	13%
TOTAL	30	100%

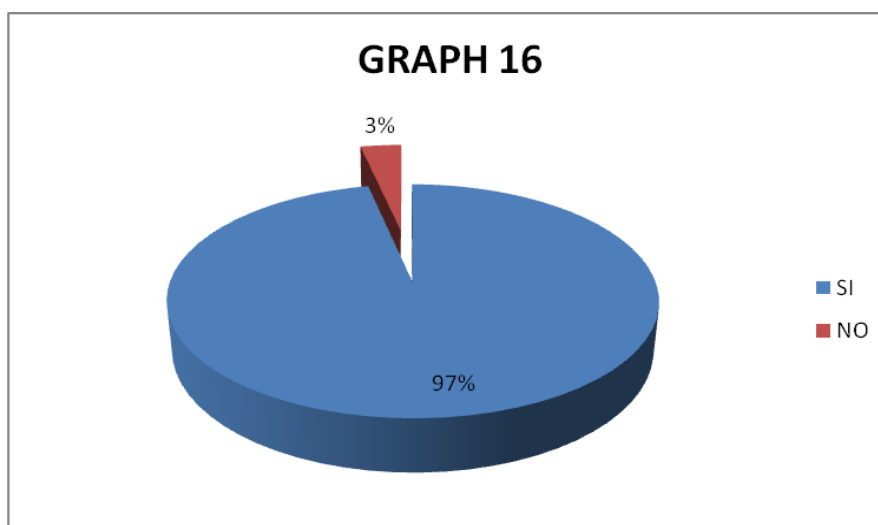


INTERPRETATION

This question was opened, the teachers were free to write their view. Most of them, 77%, think that students in a preparatory course would reach a Basic level. One important thing to rebound is the terminology that they use. Many of them used the terms according to structure in the program, as Basic I or Basic II, others refer to the level of starters, A1-A2, as in the Common European Framework. In spite of the terminology used, they agree with the level to reach. A 3% said that students would reach an Intro Level. Only 7% of the people said that students should reach an intermediate level. And there is a 13 % of teachers that did not write a concrete answer.

Question 8: Do you consider convenient to develop a pre-university course of English based on the Competency Approach?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
SI	29	97%
NO	1	3%
TOTAL	30	100%



INTERPRETATION

As the approach to be followed in this kind of course, 97% of teachers agreed on the Competency based approach as the best, because it is the model that the Technical University of Ambato has established for their academic purposes and as a response of the new tendencies in the teaching-learning process.

In general, the methodology applied in this research illustrates how students and teachers feel about their performance in the English Courses at the Technical University of Ambato, and it was developed to establish the need to create an English Foundation Course based on the Competency-Based Approach. However, when the Foundation Course runs, teachers will be able to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the approach.

CHAPTER III

PROPOSAL

3.1 Informative Data

<i>Name of the Project:</i>	Formative Module by Competencies to develop the communicative competence in English at a level A2
<i>Location:</i>	Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato.
<i>Participants-beneficiaries:</i>	Educators and students
<i>Responsible of the project:</i>	Sendy Solís Solís
<i>Kind of project:</i>	Educative development

3.2 Presentation

The results of the survey and the interviews applied to students, educators, and authorities of the Languages Department of the Technical University of Ambato lead to make a proposal in response to the academic needs of the new students of the institution. The development of a foundation English course pretends students to reach a communicative competence in English at a level A2 (Basic User) in order to improve their language skills for higher education. To do this, it will be necessary to design a formative module by competencies as a tool for a better language learning process.

3.3 Justification

Many students who are admitted to the Technical University of Ambato, where they have to reach a proficiency level of a foreign language at the end of the degree, do not have sufficient language skills, oftentimes, they have only experienced teacher-centered instruction, where they were passive learners or rules memorizers; they have not had the opportunity to develop metacognitive strategies for learning languages. Due to these reasons, the development of an English foundation course based on the Competency Approach is proposed to help students improve their language skills before they take the regular English program.

The current policies and regulations of the Technical University of Ambato demand the design or creation of new academic programs. The Academic Provost of the Technical University of Ambato, has edited the text “Construyendo Futuro”, which summarizes the educational model, the pedagogic model, the academic development policies, the research policies and the curricular model by competencies of the institution. It is a guide to develop academic programs according to the needs of the organization.

Nowadays, the educative model of the Technical University of Ambato, is socio-constructivist, that means that the “knowledge” is a social construction, where the students interact with the reality, it is a social process. The pedagogic model is based on the socio-constructivist approach to propitiate the change in academic plans and programs, in the teaching practice, and in the design of the teaching-learning strategies

to transfer, construct and generate knowledge. An important part of this text is the Academic Development Policies, especially policy number 4, which is related to this proposal, it says: “Support to the preparation of study program proposals according to the regulations and policies of the area”.

The target point of “Construyendo Futuro” is the Curricular Model by Competencies because the Technical University of Ambato pretends a formation with novel conceptions associated with social, economic, educative, cultural, politic, and scientific aspects.

In this model, nine generic competencies have been established: Research, NTIC’s, verbal and non verbal communication, integral health and life quality, ethic project of life, complex thinking, proficiency in English with internal accreditation, work group and project management.

As it is established, one of the generic competences is the Proficiency in English, which means that students at the end of their studies will be able to use English in order to communicate with expertise in their daily life and professional practice.

The existence of the policies, models, and regulations for designing study programs, justify the development of the formative module for the foundation English course by competency based approach.

3.4 Objectives

3.4.1 General Objective

Design a formative module by competencies for the English foundation course to the new students of the Technical University of Ambato.

3.4.2 Specific Objectives

- Define the students' admission profile of the foundation course.
- Define the students' degree profile of the foundation course.
- Define the structure of the module to apply
- Prepare instructional guides for class management

3.5 Aim of the project

To adjust the English knowledge of new students of the Technical University of Ambato so that they can reach a proficiency level.

3.6 Goals

To promote the formation by competencies and the use of formative modules in a 90% of the beneficiaries.

3.7 Beneficiaries

- Educators of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato.
- New students admitted to the Technical University of Ambato.

3.8 Products

- Educators and students trained by competency based models with an integral formation in knowledge, skills and values.
- A formative module designed by competencies to apply in the English Foundation course of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato.

3.9 Background

At the Technical University of Ambato, The Languages Department is in charge of teaching Foreign Languages. It is an academic unit created in 1992. It supports the professional formation of students, it is not a career. The Languages Department prepares students in the acquisition of a foreign language as part of their integral formation. Nowadays, English, Italian, French, German, Portuguese, and Japanese are the choices students have for learning foreign languages.

Since 2007, students have taken and approved three levels of languages: Basic I, Basic II and Pre-intermediate, in order to reach the competence in Language established in the internal academic regulation for students at the Technical University of Ambato.

According to the Reglamento del Régimen Académico del Sistema por Competencias para el Pregrado, students have to complete 30 credits of a second language.

At the Technical University of Ambato, there are 12,000 students registered in different careers. These students take foreign languages each semester. The Language Department registers around 3,500 to 4,000 students in its classes. Students receive a two-hour class (each class hours is 45 minutes) a day, and during the semester they complete 200 hours.

At the Languages Department there are 22 main teachers, but they are not enough for the number of students that take language courses, so that each semester at least 50 extra teachers are hired.

Besides the languages program for students of the Technical University of Ambato, the Languages Department manages the open courses, a program of teaching English opened to the community. This program includes 8 levels to learn English. Nowadays 1,200 students attend this program. According to the files of Open Courses Program, about 100 students that finished the regular courses (approved Preintermediate level) ask permission to continue in fourth level in open courses of English.

There is the proposal to redesign the curriculum of foreign languages at the Technical University of Ambato, it establishes as a requirement 6 levels of learning. This proposal is in the analysis stage by the Department of Academic Development of the Technical University of Ambato.

3.10 Design of a Competency- Based Module

The proposal will be designed according to the procedures contained in the book “Construyendo Futuro”, November 2007.

The modules by competencies are designed based on the professional profiles and the curricular structure of the institution. Educators are responsible for the module design and management, but they are evaluated by other educators and students. The modules guide students in the competency to reach, how to do and how to verify the information; link teaching-learning activities and evaluation with other modules; and they help to verify and to evaluate the actions performed by educators.

The first step in this procedure is to identify the global and specific competencies. After that, the standard competency is designed to let students know the competency they will attain. The standard competency includes: The unit of competency or elements of competency which specify the field of application; the performance criteria; the field of application related to the place, materials, and organizational environment; the guide of evaluation, which identifies evaluation methods of evidence of knowledge and performance and describes the evidence of knowledge and comprehension.

Another important component of a formative module is the evaluation competency. Through this process evidence of performance is collected by comparing the students’ performance with the standard; the knowledge is measured by judgment “is competent” or not yet. The interest is to know the results demonstrated in the performance. The

evaluation methods could be: performance observation, simulation, test of abilities, written and oral test or exams. The competency certification is a public recognition of the competencies demonstrated by students; it is made based on the established standard.

On the other hand, for the development of this module, it was necessary to refer of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the documents related to it, like “A Guide to Formulating Degree Programs Profile”, “the CEF a Teacher’s Guide to the Common European Framework” that provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc.” (CEF: 2001: 1). The CEF (Common European Framework) uses ‘can do’ statements to describe the abilities of learners of English at different levels.

The elements of competency were determined according to the Common Reference Levels-global scale from the Common European Framework, and the levels of achievement were mapping based on the document “A bank of descriptors for self-assessment in European Language Portfolios” (2004), prepared by Peter Lenz & Günther Schneider, University of Fribourg/Switzerland, all of them were adapted to the needs of the Technical University of Ambato.

3.10.1 Formative Module by Competencies

Following the structure described in this dissertation, a proposal for a module by competencies to develop the communicative competence in English at a level A2 in the English Foundation course of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato has been built and its format is shown in the next pages.

THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF AMBATO

LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH FOUNDATION COURSE

“Formative Module by Competencies to develop the communicative competence in English at a level A2 in the English Foundation course of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato.”

CONTENTS

1. Basic Data
2. Formative method of procedure
3. Formation Methodology
4. Evaluation plan
5. Instructional guides
6. Support material to the formation

1. Basic Data

CODE: EFC-DEDI-UTA (English Foundation Course of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato).	
KIND OF MODULE: Formative DURATION: 1 trimester	LEVEL: Pre-universitary SUPPORT: English
CLASS HOURS 15 hours weekly	
PRE-REQUIREMENTS Motivation to learn English	CO-REQUIREMENTS Knowledge of New Technologies of information

2. Formative Method of Procedure

COMPETENCY:

To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY

1. Understanding phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of very basic personal and family information, shopping at local area, employment, catching the main point in a story, clear, simple messages and announcements.
2. Reading very short, simple texts; finding specific predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectus, menus, timetables, short simple personal letters
3. Talking about simple and routine tasks requiring simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities, very short social exchanges. Making simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; getting simple information about travel; using public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, asking for basic information: ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask for and provide everyday goods and services. Using a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.
4. Writing short, simple notes, and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. Writing a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something
5. Participating in conversation given some assistance and certain limitations, initiate, maintain and close simple, restricted face-to-face conversation; understanding enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; making him/herself understood and exchanging ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations, provided the other person helps if necessary

SUPPORT COMPETENCY

Application of New Technologies of Information
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CREDIT ORIENTATION

Hour of direct counsel in the classroom:	
Class hours (theory and practice)	130 H
Team work hours (presentations, role play)	30 H
Other hours (diagnostic, checking)	20 H
TOTAL	180 Hours
Out-room hours	
Lab Hours	60
Self study hours	60
Personal tutorial hours	60
TOTAL	180 hours
TOTAL	360 hours

PROBLEM NODE

General Problem:

The English level of the students who have been admitted to the Technical University of Ambato is not enough for reaching the Proficiency Level in a foreign language as the new law established to complete the study programs.

NODES OF THE MODULE

Formative Module by Competencies to develop the communicative competence in English at a level A2 in the English Foundation course of the Language Department of the Technical University of Ambato

3. Formation Methodology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Didactic Focusing • Communicative method • Pair, group work • Laboratory work • Use of Internet • Audio and video methodology
<p>COMPETENCY</p> <p>To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.</p>

N°	ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY	COGNOSCITIVE CONTENTS	PROCEDURE CONTENTS	AFFECTIVE-MOTIVATIONAL CONTENTS	DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES	TIME
1	Understanding phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of very basic personal and family information, shopping at local area, employment, catching the main point in a story, clear, simple messages and announcements.	Subject pronouns and possessive adjectives Can for ability Possessive 's and s' Be present Be past A, an some Present Simple – Positive Present Simple-negative Present simple-questions Subject and object pronouns	Listening: Understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable every day matters which are delivered slowly and clearly. Listen to people talk about their past, childhood memories; listening for information about local area, about events.	-Getting to know better other people - Sharing memories - Learn from others	Warm up Completing conversations Completing charts Completing words maps Completing statements Group work Matching words with the corresponding illustrations Performing a role play Practicing pronunciation Grammar focus Using flashcards	72

		<p>Singular and plural nouns Past Simple There is / there are Countable and uncountable nouns Present progressive Have got Comparatives and superlatives Present progressive-future arrangements Articles Giving advice with if Present Perfect Future-be going to, would like to</p>	<p>Pronunciation for understand natural spoken English, it is based around a short extract drawn from a listening sequence. Learners are encouraged to notice a language feature and then practice it, syllables, word stress, sentences stress, the schwa sound and basic consonant-vowel linking. Recognizing spelling patterns.</p> <p>Speaking From listening activity, produce monologues, topical conversations, phone calls and interviews to introduce people. Explain what students like or dislike about something. Describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences. Talk about present and past jobs.</p>			
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N°	ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY	COGNOSCITIVES CONTENTS	PROCEDURE CONTENTS	AFFECTIVE-MOTIVATIONAL CONTENTS	DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES	TIME
2	Reading very short, simple texts; finding specific predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectus, menus, timetables, short simple personal letters	Subject pronouns and possessive adjectives Can for ability Possessive 's and s' Be present Be past A, an some Present Simple –Positive Present Simple-negative Present simple- questions Subject and object pronouns Singular and plural nouns Past Simple There is / there are Countable and uncountable nouns Present progressive Have got Comparatives and superlatives Present progressive-future arrangements Articles Giving advice with if Present Perfect Future-be going to, would like to	Reading To read for identifying specific information in simpler written material students encounter such as letters, brochures, advertisements, prospectus, menus, timetables, and short newspaper articles describing events. For skimming main ideas, for scanning specific information, or for specific details Speaking Discuss learners' opinions about topics of reading. Writing Using ideas from reading learners practice freer writing.	To be aware of the information in advertisements, prospectus, menus, timetables, simple personal letters Learn to get information from simple everyday material	Warm up Completing conversations Completing charts Completing words maps Completing statements Group work Matching words with the corresponding illustrations Performing a role play Practicing pronunciation Group work: Creating paragraphs and letters Checking correct information Answering questions Grammar focus Homework assignments Using flashcards	72

N°	ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY	COGNOSCITIVES CONTENTS	PROCEDURE CONTENTS	AFFECTIVE-MOTIVATIONAL CONTENTS	DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES	TIME
3	<p>Talking about simple and routine tasks requiring simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities, very short social exchanges. Making simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; getting simple information about travel; using public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, asking for basic information: ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask for and provide everyday goods and services. Using a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.</p>	<p>Subject pronouns and possessive adjectives Can for ability Possessive 's and s' Be present Be past A, an some Present Simple – Positive Present Simple-negative Present simple-questions Subject and object pronouns Singular and plural nouns Past Simple There is / there are Countable and uncountable nouns Present progressive Have got Comparatives and superlatives Present progressive-future arrangements Articles Giving advice with if Present Perfect Future-be going to, would like to</p>	<p>Speaking: Tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Talking about transportation, city services, asking for and giving information. Talking about vacation plans, giving travel advice, planning a trip. Describing holidays, festivals, and special events Talk about cities and neighbourhoods, describing places Get information in places you visit Listening and understanding stories, descriptions or information for main ideas and details, give opinions, and share information. Pronunciation Learners are encourage to notice a language feature and then practice it, syllables, word stress, sentences stress, the schwa sound and basic consonant-vowel linking. Recognizing spelling patterns.</p>	<p>Understanding changes over time Understanding the life style in the city and neighborhoods Respect other people's like and dislikes, Experiences you can gain from traveling to and living in other cities or countries Finding creative solutions to difficult problems Guide foreign people in our city or neighborhood</p>	<p>Warm up Completing conversations Completing charts Completing words maps Completing statements Group work Matching words with the corresponding illustrations Performing a role play Practicing pronunciation Homework assignments Games Gap crossword Collage Using dictionary Spelling patterns Hand writing guidelines Phonic strategies Portfolio of worksheets developed in the classroom</p>	72

N°	ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY	COGNOSCITIVES CONTENTS	PROCEDURE CONTENTS	AFFECTIVE-MOTIVATIONAL CONTENTS	DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES	TIME
4	Writing short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. Writing a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something	Subject pronouns and possessive adjectives Can for ability Possessive 's and s' Be present Be past A, an some Present Simple – Positive Present Simple-negative Present simple-questions Subject and object pronouns Singular and plural nouns Past Simple There is / there are Countable and uncountable nouns Present progressive Have got Comparatives and superlatives Present progressive-future arrangements Articles Giving advice with if Present Perfect Future-be going to, would like to	<p>Writing Copy short sentences on everyday subjects – e.g. directions how to get somewhere, Write a description of a journey Write an e-mail telling information about a journey, where to start, where you go, timetables, Write a greeting card, for instance a birthday card Write a simple postcard (for example with holiday greetings)</p> <p>Reading Students look at writing models before they begin writing. Read the model text for meaning</p> <p>Speaking Students use their ideas and experiences in writing and then share their writing with their classmates. Learners generate ideas in pairs or groups orally, and then organize them into paragraphs.</p>	To encourage learners to identify problems in an example of unformed handwriting Examine handwriting to see problems Help learners regulate the size and positioning of letters To develop learners' awareness of basic punctuation and how to use it Encourage learners to focus on accuracy or spelling Develop habits for learning the spelling of new words	Worksheets Explore writing Information gap activity Matching Writing blogs Writing letters Completing conversations, charts, words maps, statements Group work Homework assignments Games Using dictionary Spelling patterns Hand writing guidelines Portfolio of worksheets developed in the classroom	72

N°	ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY	COGNOSCITIVES CONTENTS	PROCEDURE CONTENTS	AFFECTIVE-MOTIVATIONAL CONTENTS	DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES	TIME
5	Participating in conversation given some assistance and certain limitations, initiate, maintain and close simple, restricted face-to-face conversation.	Subject pronouns and possessive adjectives Can for ability Possessive 's and s' Be present Be past A, an some Present Simple – Positive Present Simple-negative Present simple-questions Subject and object pronouns Singular and plural nouns Past Simple There is / there are Countable and uncountable nouns Present progressive Have got Comparatives and superlatives Present progressive-future arrangements Articles Giving advice with if Present Perfect Future-be going to, would like to	Speaking Handle very short social exchanges, using everyday polite forms of greeting and address. Make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc. Listening Listening to conversations, to people accepting and declining requests, to people making plans, asking for a favour and giving an excuse; to concerns about issues and problems; people talking about their experiences living abroad; to explanations, for the best solutions; listening several people make small talk at a party; people tell interesting news.	To learn how to address to people politely Being sympathetic with others Respecting individual differences To meet people and make new friends	Warm up Completing conversations Completing charts Completing words maps Completing statements Group work Matching words with the corresponding illustrations Performing a role play Practicing pronunciation Games Gap crossword Collage Using dictionary Spelling patterns Hand writing guidelines Phonic strategies Portfolio of worksheets develop in the classroom	72

			<p>Reading A biography, news article about outdoors activities, about customs in your country and other countries, a narrative paragraph</p> <p>Writing write very simple personal letters expressing thanks and apology, write a short letter using simple expressions for greeting, addressing, asking or thanking somebody</p>			
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4. Evaluation Planning

EVALUATION SCALE

COMPETENCY

To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT	ACHIEVEMENTS
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can understand everyday words and phrases related to areas of personal interest (e.g., hobbies, social life, holidays, music, TV, films, travel). • Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her, when it is conducted slowly and clearly. • Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. • Can understand short, clear and simple messages at the airport/railway station etc. • Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport. • Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly. • Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents etc. where the visual supports the commentary. • Can follow changes of topic of factual TV news items, and form an idea of the main content.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language and understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items. • Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics. • Can understand short simple personal letters.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables. • Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the ‘Yellow Pages’ to find a service or tradesman). • Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings. • Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events. • Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language. • Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts. • Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list. • Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. • Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience. • Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities. • Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences. • Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions. • Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something. • Can describe his/her family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. • Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms. • Can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements of predictable, learnt content which are intelligible to listeners who are prepared to concentrate. • Can give a short, rehearsed presentation on a topic pertinent to his/her everyday life, briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. • Can make simple transactions (e.g., in shops, post offices, railway stations) and order something to eat or drink. • Can provide basic information about times, dates, quantities, prices to a customer either directly or on the phone. • Can order something to eat or drink. • Can deal with common aspects of everyday living such as travel, lodgings, eating and shopping. • Can get all the information needed from a tourist office, as long as it is of a straightforward, non-specialised nature. • Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like ‘and’, ‘but’ and ‘because’. • Can write about everyday aspects of his/her environment, e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences. • Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. • Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people. • Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words from the context. • Can write very simple personal letters expressing thanks and apology. • Can take a short, simple message provided he/she can ask for repetition and reformulation. • Can write short, simple notes and messages related to matters in areas of immediate need • Can briefly introduce myself in a letter with simple phrases and sentences (family, school, job, hobbies). • Can write short simple messages in notes, SMS messages or postcards.
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. • Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; • Can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations. • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. • Can establish social contact: greetings and farewells; introductions; giving thanks. • Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters directed at him/her, provided he/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest. • Can express how he/she feels in simple terms, and express thanks. • Can use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address. • Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions and apologies. • Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her when it is conducted slowly and clearly. • Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions, asking for and giving directions. • Can indicate when he/she is following and can understand what is necessary, if the speaker takes the trouble. • Can ask for and provide everyday goods and services. • Can get simple information about travel, use public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, ask and give directions, and buy tickets. • Can give and follow simple directions and instructions, e.g. explain how to get somewhere. • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information. • Can exchange limited information on familiar and routine operational matters.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time. • Can make him/herself understood in an interview and communicate ideas and information on familiar topics, provided he/she can ask for clarification occasionally, and is given some help to express what he/she wants to. • Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements in an interview.
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EVALUATION PROCESS

COMPETENCY	EVALUATION OF DIAGNOSTIC	FORMATIVE EVALUATION	PROMOTING EVALUATION		
			PROCESS	KNOWLEDGEMENT	PRODUCTS
To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.	<p>Appreciation of the needs of learners and of society, on the tasks, activities and processes that the learners need to carry out in order to satisfy those needs, and on the competences and strategies they need to develop in order to do so.</p> <p>To detect previous knowledge of students</p> <p>To Identify specific vocabulary related to daily life and the environment</p> <p>To identify</p>	<p>pair and group work exercises; free conversation (in class or during pupil exchanges); Exposure to authentic language</p> <p>Drama in the classroom</p> <p>presenting words accompanied by visuals (pictures, gestures and miming, demonstrative actions, realia, etc.</p> <p>memorization of word-lists.</p> <p>equivalents</p> <p>Oral and written quizzes</p> <p>Oral and written exams</p> <p>projects</p> <p>presentations</p>	<p>Students have to develop the competences and strategies and carry out the tasks, activities and processes needed to participate effectively in communicative events.</p> <p>Most learn reactively, following the instructions and carrying out the activities prescribed for them by teachers and by textbooks</p>	<p>Know the language for conversations and presentations related with daily life situations, using appropriate vocabulary and expressions at a Basic A2 level.</p> <p>Understand written language at Basic A2 Level</p> <p>Produce written documents using correct grammar structures to a Basic A2 level</p> <p>Know the stress and intonation patterns for words and sentences</p> <p>pronunciation</p>	<p>Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way.</p> <p>Can socialize simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges, using everyday polite forms of greeting and address.</p> <p>Can adapt well rehearsed memorized simple phrases to particular circumstances</p>

	grammar structures				through limited lexical substitution.
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					<p>Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.</p> <p>Can communicate what he/she wants to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations he/she generally has to compromise the message.</p> <p>Students' Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.</p>
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5. Instructional Guides

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE N° 1

<p>COMPETENCY</p> <p>To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.</p>
<p>ELEMENT OF COMPETENCY</p> <p>Understanding phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of very basic personal and family information, shopping at local area, employment, catching the main point in a story, clear, simple messages and announcements.</p>
<p>PRODUCT</p> <p>To develop skills in listening for main ideas and details using common everyday language, simple everyday conversations and details; following directions, discussions.</p>
<p>Instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Set the scene- Play the audio program- Students listen and check the topic- Give instructions- Play the audio program again- Go over answers with the class- Students form groups and use the topic to express their opinions, extract main ideas and details, using common everyday languages. Then present by reading the opinions, suggestions about topics related to areas of very basic personal and family information, shopping at local area, employment
<p>Resources:</p> <p>New Interchange Textbook 2; English Unlimited Textbook A2 Audio Script, CD ROM, CD Player, paper, pencil, markers</p>

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE N° 2

<p>COMPETENCY</p> <p>To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.</p>
<p>ELEMENT OF COMPETENCY</p> <p>Reading very short, simple texts; finding specific predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectus, menus, timetables, short simple personal letters</p>
<p>PRODUCT</p> <p>To read short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language, to find specific information.</p>
<p>Instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Whole class: look at pictures related to the topic, read a web posting together, look at the title of the article and ask the students what it means.- Ask questions to a few students round the class- Introduce the topic- Ask follow-up questions to encourage discussion- Pre-reading task- Reading for main idea, give learners time to read the texts, then ask for main ideas- Reading for details, students read the texts again and complete activity (answer questions, complete information, answer true or false)- Ask question to check that students have understood the text- Discussion. Students in groups make a list of things they agree and disagree with and discuss
<p>Resources</p> <p>New Interchange Textbook 2; English Unlimited Textbook A2 Work sheets, paper, pencil, markers,</p>

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE N° 3

COMPETENCY To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
ELEMENT OF COMPETENCY Talking about simple and routine tasks requiring simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities, very short social exchanges. Making simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; getting simple information about travel; using public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, asking for basic information: ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask for and provide everyday goods and services. Using a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.
PRODUCT To practice using language for getting simple information about travel, shops, post offices or banks
Instructions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preparing for speaking: Ask questions to develop a conversation. Get learners to ask you the questions- Starting a topic: How are you....?, Did you see.....? What did you.....? Learners ask each other questions- Developing a topic: What happened? , What did she/he say? Learners talk about a topic. Students tell the class where she/he lives, and why she/he likes or doesn't like it. Tell the class where he/she would like to live and work, and why.- Changing the topic: Anyway,so,...- Pronunciation: Consonants and vowel sounds; stress and weak forms, linking consonants. Students practice saying them, they follow models.
Resources New Interchange Textbook 2; English Unlimited Textbook A2 Work sheets, markers, CD Player

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE N° 4

COMPETENCY To develop the receptive and productive skills of English to facilitate the communication in English at a Basic A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
ELEMENT OF COMPETENCY Writing short, simple notes and messages related to matters in areas of immediate needs. Writing a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something
PRODUCT To write a very simple text (a note, a messages, an e-mail, a personal letter, a postcard)
INSTRUCTIONS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduce the topic (ask few questions to students)- Learners read some notes as examples, in groups they decide who they are to.- Learners complete sentences using information in the messages- Learners read the messages and underline the key phrases- Build up phrases like: Remember to....., Can you.....- Make sure students understand the phrases- Writing messages: in groups, students choose people to write to and things they want them to do. They make brief notes- Write examples notes/messages on the board- Learners share messages with each other, work in pairs, and guess who they are for- Teacher check the texts and makes a note of common errors- Suggest ways writing could be improved.
Resources New Interchange Textbook 2; English Unlimited Textbook A2 Work sheets, piece of papers for notes, stickers, pens, dictionary

6. Material that supports the development of the Module

Bibliography

- Grammar In Use. Reference and Practice for Elementary students of English, Raymond Murphy. Cambridge University Press.

In this book you find exercises for every level. This book is useful for practicing grammar.

- Magazine English Teaching FORUM.

A magazine published quarterly by the United States Department of State for teachers of English.

This is useful for lesson planning, each lesson emphasizes the four skills of English, it recommends activities to increase the knowledge of students .

Documents related to the contents of the module

Interchange 2, Richards Jack C., Third edition

It is a series for adult and young adult learner of English.

- Teacher's Book, includes detailed lesson plans
- Student's Book, contains 16 six-page units. Every two units there is a Progress check section and a there is a self study section.
- Work Book provides students with more practice in grammar, vocabulary, and writing.
- CD ROM provides engaging activities for students to do at home or in self-study . Include Video Program and progress test.

English Unlimited A2, Doff Adrian and Lloyd Mark,

It is a practical, an authentic, an international, and a flexible course. It is designed to help learners achieve specific communicative goals taken from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF).

It includes: the teacher's pack with DVD ROM, the student's pack, and the work book.

3.10.2 The Admittance Student Profile for the Foundation Course

- To register in the “English Foundation Course” the students should be admitted to any career of the Technical University of Ambato.
- Students should be motivated to learn English.
- Students should need to adjust their knowledge in English.
- Students should have availability to take the course 15 hours per week.
- Students should have a basic level of NTIC’S.

3.10.3 Degree Profile of the Foundation Course

At the end of the “English Foundation Course”, the students should be able to use the English Language at a Basic A2 level of difficulty in order to perform the following functions:

1. Understanding phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of very basic personal and family information, shopping at local area, employment, catching the main point in a story, clear, simple messages and announcements.
2. Reading very short, simple texts; finding specific predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectus, menus, timetables, short simple personal letters
3. Talking about simple and routine tasks requiring simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities, very short social exchanges. Making

simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; getting simple information about travel; using public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, asking for basic information: ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask for and provide everyday goods and services. Using a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.

4. Writing short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. Writing a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.

5. Participating in conversation given some assistance and certain limitations, initiate, maintain and close simple, restricted face-to-face conversation; understanding enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; making him/herself understood and exchanging ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations, provided the other person helps if necessary

Students should be able to handle the following grammatical points in order to perform the functions above:

- Subject pronouns and possessive adjectives
- Can for ability
- Possessive 's and s'
- Be present

- Be past
- A, an some
- Present Simple –Positive
- Present Simple-negative
- Present simple- questions
- Subject and object pronouns
- Singular and plural nouns
- Past Simple
- There is / there are
- Countable and uncountable nouns
- Present progressive
- Have got
- Comparatives and superlatives
- Present progressive-future arrangements
- Articles
- Giving advice with if
- Present Perfect
- Future-be going to, would like to

Nowadays, Teaching English does not focus only on the development of the four skills of languages, but also on the creation of the linguistic competence, the development of communicative, intercultural, interdisciplinary and critical thought skills, so that the idea of an English Foundation Course developed through the Competency Based Approach pretends to adjust the knowledge of English of new students of the Technical University

of Ambato, as well as to get students immerse in this new methodology. They will be able to understand the new challenges of higher education to ensure their personal, professional and social development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from students and educators of English at the Technical University of Ambato, and from the interviews to the authorities of the Language Department and the review of the documents, it is possible to emit the following conclusions:

1. English language is important to master in a globalized world. For these reasons, most of students at the Technical University of Ambato prefer to take English courses as part of their professional career, specially who wish to take advantage of opportunities of studies abroad, because many postgraduate programs required Proficiency in English.
2. Diversity is the main characteristic in the population of the Technical University of Ambato. Its condition of public university, where not only the social or economic status changes drastically, but also the educational disadvantage of students who return to university after a period of extended absence, older people, people with disabilities and people with low basic foreign language skills, makes it difficult for curriculum developers to take the aforementioned issues into account in academic and administrative planning.

3. According to the new Higher Education Regulation in Ecuador, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior (LOES), valid since October 2010 university students have to master a foreign language. It means that students at the Technical University of Ambato at the end of their studies should reach an English Proficiency level. However, the current curriculum of English as Foreign Language at the Languages Department requires students to reach only a Pre-intermediate level (B1, Intermediate user).
4. The curricular model followed by the Technical University of Ambato is the Competency Based Curriculum that pretends an integral formation of students not only for their profession, but also for personal and social development.
5. Students of English courses think that their English learning is satisfactory, but it is likely to improve. The main problem for learners is to develop the listening and speaking skills in English. This becomes worse when they do not have a good language learning background. They believe that a level to adjust the knowledge of English before beginning their formal studies is a good alternative, with the expectation to reach a proficiency level.
6. Educators and students affirm that an English foundation course based on the Competency Approach will help students to improve their language skills for higher education. With this preparation, students will reach at least a Basic Level of knowledge.

7. Nowadays, in higher education, the new educational model is the Competency-Based Approach that pretends to form students in an integral way. Competences are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. In foreign language teaching, the target is to develop the communicative competence. That is to say, students do not only require knowledge of vocabulary and functional grammar, they also have to reach the ability to understand, express, and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts according to one's wants or needs.

Recommendations

Today, English is the language of globalization. It plays an increasingly important role, for that reason it is recommended that the Technical University of Ambato promotes English as a tool that will assist with educational and economic advancement. Universities should prepare specialists not just supplying them with professional knowledge, but also encouraging them for self-development and self-realization in a global, multicultural environment, implementing all available resources, including language.

It is recommended to build diverse individual competences in students. The different learners' needs should be met by ensuring equality and access for those groups who, due to educational disadvantages caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfill their educational potential.

The new law demands a proficiency level in foreign language to complete university studies, so it is important that authorities of the Technical University of Ambato support the Language Department work by ensuring that by the end of the English Programs students would have developed the communicative competence in foreign language.

According to the educational model followed by the Technical University of Ambato, it would be better that the Language Department redesigned its English curriculum, having

as the main objective that students at the end of the program could reach a Proficiency level in foreign language.

Students need support, in the university environment they are expected to think, to reason, to communicate. For that reason, the University should offer foundation or pre-university programs to help students improve their language skills. However, this program should be designed based on competencies, where the curriculum included the integration of speaking and listening, teaching grammar in context and to spur authentic communication, because the Technical University of Ambato is working with this model.

According to the conclusions and recommendations obtained from this research, it is feasible to create a module by competencies for a foundation course of English at the Technical University of Ambato.

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Otro (especifique).....

8. En el desarrollo de la clase con qué destreza básica del idioma inglés tiene mayor dificultad?

Escuchar

Leer

Escribir

Hablar

9. Considera usted que en el Colegio recibió preparación adecuada en la asignatura de inglés para poder continuar sus estudios del idioma en la Universidad?

Mucho

Algo

Poco

Muy poco

10. Considera usted que un curso de preparación en el idioma inglés sería útil para el ingreso a la Universidad?

SI

NO

11. Qué actividades creería usted apropiadas incorporar a un curso preparatorio a básico I

- Refuerzo gramatical

- Práctica de Vocabulario

- escribir oraciones bien estructuradas

- Conversación

- OTRA (especifique)

ANNEX N° 2

SURVEY APPLIED TO TEACHERS OF LEVEL BASIC I OF ENGLISH OF THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF AMBATO

Universidad Técnica de Ambato

Departamento de Idiomas

La presente encuesta permitirá conocer la necesidad de implementar un curso preuniversitario de inglés para los estudiantes que ingresan a la Universidad Técnica de Ambato

1. Al inicio del semestre todos los estudiantes tenían el mismo nivel de conocimientos del idioma inglés?
 SI NO

2. Al finalizar el primer nivel de Inglés, cómo evaluaría el desempeño de sus estudiantes?
 Excelente Muy Bueno Bueno

3. En qué porcentaje considera usted que alcanzó y cumplió con los programas de estudios del nivel Básico I de Inglés?
 Más del 80%
 70%
 Menos del 70%

- 4.Cuál de los siguientes factores, considera usted, que afectaron el avance de la materia?
 Horario de clases
 Nivel de conocimientos de los estudiantes
 Edad de los estudiantes
 Texto utilizado
 Otro (especifique).....

5. Durante el semestre, los estudiantes con qué destreza básica del idioma tuvieron mayor dificultad en el aprendizaje?
 Escuchar
 Leer
 Escribir
 Hablar

6. Considera usted que un curso de preparación en el idioma inglés sería útil para el ingreso a la Universidad?

SI

NO

7. A su criterio qué nivel de conocimientos deberían alcanzar los estudiantes al finalizar el curso preuniversitario?

.....

8. Considera conveniente que el curso preuniversitario de inglés sea desarrollado utilizando el modelo educativo basado en competencias?

SI por qué?

NO por qué?

ANNEX N° 3

QUESTIONS APPLIED IN THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TO AUTHORITIES OF THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF AMBATO

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE AMBATO

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS

ENTREVISTA SEMIESTRUCTURADA DIRIGIDA A LAS AUTORIDADES DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE
IDIOMAS PARA DETERMINAR LA NECESIDAD DE CREAR UN CURSO PREUNIVERSITARIO DE
INGLÉS

PERSONA ENTREVISTADA:

CARGO:

PERFIL PROFESIONAL

1. ¿Los estudiantes de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato para su egresamiento, que nivel de conocimientos de un idioma deben acreditar actualmente?
2. ¿Cuál es la estructura actual de los cursos de Inglés en el Departamento de Idiomas?
3. ¿Qué metodología de enseñanza se está aplicando actualmente en la enseñanza de Inglés?
4. ¿Qué dificultades existen para que los estudiantes no puedan alcanzar el dominio de un idioma extranjero como lo determina la nueva LOES?
5. ¿Sería posible crear un curso preuniversitario de Inglés para los estudiantes que ingresarán a la Universidad Técnica de Ambato?
6. ¿Cuenta el Departamento de Idiomas con recursos suficientes para impartir un curso preuniversitario de Inglés?
7. ¿Cree usted que un curso preuniversitario de Inglés sería conveniente organizarlo en base a la metodología por competencias?
8. ¿Qué nivel de conocimientos del idioma deberían alcanzar los estudiantes en este curso?
9. ¿Cree usted que el establecer un perfil de ingreso en idiomas para los estudiantes que ingresan a la Universidad Técnica de Ambato facilitará el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje?