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IN ESMERALDAS**



APPLIED LINGUISTICS SCHOOL

THESIS REPORT

**Influence of Spanish as a First Language in the Learning
Process of English as a Foreign Language in the School of
Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE Esmeraldas, 2017**

**Influencia del español como primera lengua en el proceso de
aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en la Escuela
de Hotelería y Turismo en la PUCE Esmeraldas, 2017**

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AUTHOR

ARLET YAMEL RÚA CASTILLO

ADVISOR

MGT. JAVIER FERNÁNDEZ CRUZ

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

As members of the Dissertation Committee at PUCE Esmeraldas, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by **ARLET YAMEL RÚA CASTILLO** entitled **Influence of Spanish as a First Language (L1) in the Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE Esmeraldas, 2017**, and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Applied Linguistics in E.L.T.

Reader 1

Reader 2

School Director

Dissertation supervisor

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation are contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College. I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Dissertation supervisor

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I, **ARLET YAMEL RUA CASTILLO**, declare that this dissertation is completely original, authentic and personal. Being based on original facts, this investigation is legal and academically belonging to the author and PUCE Esmeraldas.

ARLET YAMEL RUA CASTILLO

CI 0803714773

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Above all, I want to thank GOD the one who deserves all the glory and honor, because he created all the people I love and all things I have. Thank you, my beloved **GOD**, for giving me the opportunity of living such a beautiful life and for giving me the hope of a better tomorrow. Also, I want to dedicate all this hard work to my family: my mom, **Danny Castillo**, my dad, **Victor Rúa**, and my brother, **Daniel Rúa Castillo** for always being so supportive to me and for always find the way to overcome the problems that could have torn us down. It is totally true that I am here right now because of all the hard work that we, as a good family, have done together.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER.....	i
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE.....	ii
STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
TABLE OF FIGURES.....	vi
RESUMEN.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	9
1.1 Problem statement.....	9
1.2 JUSTIFICATION.....	11
1.3 OBJECTIVES.....	11
GENERAL.....	11
SPECIFICS.....	11
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
2.1 Mother tongue and first language.....	12
2.2 Second Language or Foreign Language.....	13
2.2.1 Communicative Competence.....	13
2.3 Issues in Foreign Language Learning.....	14
2.3.1The Critical Period.....	14
2.3.2 Transfer.....	15
2.3.3 Interlanguage.....	16
2.3.4 False Friends.....	16
3. PREVIOUS STUDIES.....	18
4. LEGAL BASES.....	19
4.1 Ecuadorian in-service (English Teacher Standards).....	19
5. METHODOLOGY.....	21
5.1 Type of research.....	21
5.2 Sample and population.....	21
5.2.1 Field description: The School of Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE Esmeraldas.....	21
5.3 Methods.....	22
5.4 Tools and Techniques.....	22
6. RESULTS.....	23
7. DISCUSSION.....	31
8. CONCLUSIONS.....	32

9. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	33
10. REFERENCES	34
11. ANNEXES	37
11.1 Annex 1: Survey.....	37
11.2 Annex 2: Test.....	38
11.3 Annex 3: Picture	40

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1	23
Figure 2	24
Figure 3	24
Figure 4	25
Figure 5	26
Figure 6	26
Figure 7	27
Figure 8	27
Figure 9	28
Figure 10	28
Figure 11	29

RESUMEN

El proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera puede verse muy influenciado por la lengua materna de la persona. Por esta razón, por medio del análisis de la influencia del español en el aprendizaje del inglés se pudo demostrar cuales son las partes del lenguaje español que afectan más. Entre ellas, están los “falsos amigos”, es decir palabras que comparten similar escritura o similar pronunciación en ambos idiomas, pero que no comparten el mismo significado, es más, su significado en muchos casos ni siquiera es parecido. Para determinar los niveles de la influencia del español en el aprendizaje del inglés, se tomó como población a los estudiantes de la escuela de hotelería y turismo de la PUCE Esmeraldas. Los ocho estudiantes pertenecientes al 8vo nivel de la Escuela de Turismo, participaron en la encuesta y el test que determinó cuál era su nivel de inglés y como les ha afectado el español a lo largo de sus estudios. La estructura de esta investigación tiene cinco capítulos. El primer capítulo se refiere a la introducción de los objetivos, la justificación, el marco teórico, las bases legales y los estudios previos. El segundo capítulo examina los diferentes métodos que se utilizaron para obtener los resultados, el universo, la muestra y la información recopilada. El tercer capítulo tiene el análisis e interpretación de los resultados y la descripción de la muestra. Luego, el capítulo cuatro explica la discusión del proceso de investigación. Finalmente, el quinto capítulo describe las conclusiones y recomendaciones.

Palabras clave: Influencia, Idioma nativo, Idioma extranjero, interferencia, falsos amigos

ABSTRACT

The process of learning a foreign language has a lot of influence from the mother tongue of a person. For this reason, through the analysis of the influence of Spanish, while learning English, it could be shown which parts of the speech affect the most in this process. Among them, it can be seen the “false friends”, or words that share the same way of being written or the same way of being pronounced but they do not share the same meaning. To determine the levels of influence of Spanish in the English learning process, students from the Hospitality and Tourism School at PUCE Esmeraldas were taken as population. The eight students who belong to the 8th level of the hospitality and tourism school participated in the survey and the test that determined which their English level was and how they have been affected by Spanish. The structure of this research has 5 chapters. The first chapter refers to the introduction the objectives, the justification, the theoretical framework, the legal bases and the previous studies. The second chapter goes through the different methods that were used to get the results, the universe, the sample, and the information collected. The third chapter has the analysis and interpretation of results and the description of the sample. Then, chapter four explain the discussion of the research process. Finally, the fifth chapter describes the conclusions and recommendations.

Keywords: Influence, mother tongue, foreign language, interference, false friends

1. INTRODUCTION

This investigation has explained how English has been a big influence on students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism in Esmeraldas. In this school, English has been taught as a foreign language and the university uses the same method of teaching the language than the rest of the schools in campus. According to their language teachers, English levels are lower than the average and negative transfer from Spanish vocabulary and lexis is frequent.

Nevertheless, to understand the importance of putting effort to learn and teach English it is necessary to know what mother tongue and foreign language are. And only after knowing that, it will be easy to debunk why it is so important to know the influence of Spanish in the English as a Foreign Language learning process in the School of Hospitality and Tourism.

For instance, this topic also has included the different previous studies done because of the same situation but in different situations and different stages of studies. This helped to learn more about this global situation, in contrast with the situations found in the School of Hospitality and Tourism.

Not surprisingly, the School of Hospitality and Tourism has been struggling historically with their English learning process. The final purpose of this investigation is to observe the influence of, among others, cognates in order to provide further intervention.

1.1 Problem statement

Most of the students from the different schools at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador – Esmeraldas (PUCE Esmeraldas) face difficulties while learning English. One of the main issues that have been observed among the students the School of Hospitality and Tourism has been the influence of their mother tongue (L1). Which are the main difficulties that students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism face because of the influence of Spanish? Spanish and English have many grammatical and lexical similarities, however, facts such as false friends or grammar translation produce interference at the time of producing a foreign language.

Among the students' main complaints about the difficulty of English grammar use, as it is considered by them as it is one of the most challenging parts of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In addition, apart for grammar, pronunciation is generally considered to be very difficult for the students, especially because students are used to the Spanish spelling system, in contraposition to the English system, where words and phrases are pronounced more similarly to the same way they are written. Another apparent factor that increases the difficulties at the time of learning English is the scarcity of opportunities to practice the language they are acquiring. Students do not continue practicing English after their lessons and when they do, they generally mix their utterances with expressions in Spanish. Literature and teaching practice have provided with techniques that can be applied to determine the underlying interference problems that students may face when learning English. This matter leads us to further interrogations:

The problem of investigation is: Which are the main difficulties the students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism face because of the influence of Spanish?

- What set of theories and methodologies can we find concerning the influence of L1 on the process of learning of a foreign language?
- What is the influence of L1 on the process of learning of foreign language in the students of Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE?
- What techniques can be applied in class do to ease this problem?
- What kind of study techniques can students apply to improve?

The structure of this investigation is divided in five chapters. The first chapter refers to the introduction the objectives, the justification, the theoretical framework, the legal bases and the previous studies. The second chapter goes through the different methods that were used to get the results, the universe, the sample, and the information collected. The third chapter has the analysis and interpretation of results and the description of the sample. Then, chapter four explain the discussion of the research process. Finally, the fifth chapter describes the conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION

In the School of Tourism at PUCE, teachers and students have noticed that they are facing problems while learning English, because of the influence of their first language (Spanish), as it has many differences with the language students' target language.

The importance of this research lies in the detection of problems caused by mother language interference, so the key lexico grammatical confusions that cause students to struggle when learning English are well identified. Moreover, it will help students to find out their mistakes and so, they will work harder to avoid them. Also, the teacher will look for better techniques to adapt each class to the prior necessities of students. For this reason, to know the influences of L1 in the learning process of L2 is very important and essential for both, teachers and students.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

GENERAL

To analyze the main difficulties the students of the School of Hospitality and Tourism face when using cognates because of the influence of Spanish upon English.

SPECIFICS

1. To explore the required theoretical framework that deals with the influence of L1 on the process of learning a foreign language
2. To determine the influence of L1 on the process of learning a foreign language in students from Hospitality and Tourism at the PUCE Esmeraldas
3. To identify the level of influence of cognates during the language acquisition process.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Mother tongue and first language

A mother tongue (hereafter, L1) is the first language that human beings acquire naturally during their childhood. It becomes automatically an essential part of their identity and defines their attitude towards the world. In general terms, the L1 of a subject depends on where the person comes from country, region, ethnicity, familial background, etc. In addition to the mother language, a person who has been exposed to input from more than one language since their birth is able to acquire more than only one mother tongue. This term has been used historically, as Illich, & Sanders (1989) stated that Catholic monks were the first to use the term to differentiate Latin from the *vulgar romance* language they used since their childhood. That is the holy mother or called as well as the Church that introduced this term and, also, the colonies inherited it from Christianity that came with colonialism.

There are some countries, for example Kenya, India, and some East Asian countries, where the term *mother language* or *native language* is used as the language of one's ethnic group as common parlance in detriment of the term *first language* which used to refer to the one person uses daily. In the case of a plurilingual community, like the case of the Republic of Singapore, *mother language* is used to refer to the language of one's ethnicity without taking into consideration the actual proficiency. In this case, it is necessary to differentiate with the term *first language* which refers to English which became the lingua franca for a wide majority post-independence Singaporeans. Even if only one-third of Singaporeans use English at home (where Mandarin, Malay or Tamil may be generally spoken), levels of fluency reach up to 80% because of its use as the language of instruction and workplaces (Love & Ansaldo 2010).

The mother tongue is acquired during the early years, when an individual is exposed to the language at home, without the influence of the community in the case that the vehicular language of the community is different. Nevertheless, full proficiency is expected from mother language speakers of an individual can be performed easily and correctly by the person because it comes from the childhood and was acquired naturally.

2.2 Second Language or Foreign Language

A *second language* (L2) is the one that is not the native one for the person who is speaking or trying to learn it. Since this is a new language for people who must learn, there is not always a guarantee of being successful completing this stage of learning a second language that is why people need to know how to acquire a second language for the use of daily activities.

Some dominant theories and points of research about a second language include *second language acquisition* studies, *verbal behavior* (the view that constructed linguistic stimuli can create a desired speech response), *morpheme studies*, *behaviorism*, *error analysis*, *stages and order of acquisition*, *structuralism* (approach that looks at how the basic units of language relate to each other according to their common characteristics), *First language acquisition studies*, *contrastive analysis* (approach where languages were examined in terms of differences and similarities) and *inter-language* (which describes L2 learners' language as a rule-governed, dynamic system) (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

Instead, a foreign language is a language to be learned by interest or is the one that is taught in educative institutions and its vocabulary includes topics such as politics, entertainment, science, literature, and others. But this language is not widely spoken in the learner's place of residence, for that reason the opportunities of accessing to foreign language input is limited and difficulties are found to achieve a native level.

2.2.1 Communicative Competence

Krashen (1981) differentiated between which the *acquisition of a language* is a natural process and, *learning a language* occurs as a conscious act. The acquisition is produced unconsciously through the natural and non-programmed communicative situations. Learning a language towards *communicative competence* implies the study of lexicogrammatical and social rules isolated from the daily use natural language, where the error-correction is part of the agenda. Some of the traditional methods for second language learning programs developed through the ages include the *Grammar Translation Method*, the *Audio-Lingual Method*, *Suggestopedia*, the *Direct Method*, the *Communicative Approach*, the *Silent Way* and the *Total Physical Response Method*.

Therefore, there is awareness of the roles that other factors play, for instance: environment, age of learners, multiple intelligences, etc. (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)

Communicative competence is based on three components that permit the correct use of L2 in an appropriate way. Learning a second language includes the mastery of three competencies. First, the acquisition of *grammatical competence*, which involves the accurate use of structures in L2. In addition, learning the domain of contextual factors is essential. This is where the role of the *sociolinguistic competence* takes place, non-grammatical factors that determine the influence of Spanish (L1) on the process of learning English. An interesting fact is that some adult learners of English have shown that when they describe some motion events, there are many contextual factors that can cause a deep effect when referring to communication. For example, when we deal with a language with a high rate of hand gestures, i.e. Spanish, people are most likely to use many gestures while speaking or even without speaking. Finally, the *strategic competence* refers to the use of strategies to compensate and overcome any difficulties on the use of L2 (Yule, 2006).

2.3 Issues in Foreign Language Learning

2.3.1 The Critical Period

A key point that in the process of learning a second language (Hyltenstam, 1992; Yule, 1995) is the high difficulty of achieving a native-like level after a Critical Period that happens around puberty. After this age, it is possible to fulfill almost a native level of a second language but the L1 influence will make learners commit some errors that will make a significant difference of performance accuracy between the L1 and L2 speakers. This inability to achieve native-like proficiency must be seen in relation to the age of onset (AO). To sum up, Elis (2015) stated that age is a crucial factor. Adult students generally require a more explicit learning in detriment of the acquisition-centered process before this period.

Foreign Language learners face many difficulties when learning a new language. One of the fundamental issues while learning a second language, is the use of their L1 previous knowledge. Also, people who are in this process, normally do not have the convenient circumstances, but they need to submerge in an all-inclusive L2 environment, and if that is not the case, they need to design a significant framework of context and communication

in the target language. The environment of the foreign language learners must be full of factors that imply the use of the foreign language such as conversations with friends, restaurant menus, the name of streets, and the classroom where they study, a place where the person can have an interaction with the language. But above everything, the main goal of the learner needs to be the balance of accuracy and fluency of the foreign language. This is achieved through the accumulation of coherent structures of knowledge focused on the communication in the target language.

It seems more difficult for adults to be immersed in L2 communication as many teaching practice techniques take their mother tongue as a point of departure. This adds to the difficulties with the phonology, vocabulary, and grammar of the new language which are the product of L1 interference.

2.3.2 Transfer

Foreign Language faces many difficulties when learning a new language. One of the main situations for this is because to learn a second language, the learners use the knowledge that they already have the first language. In the same way that children acquiring their L1 produce certain ungrammatical forms in their production of L2, we might expect also overgeneralizations during the L2 learning process. This is the case of the use of i.e. ‘*womans’ instead of ‘women’, as the general morphological rule for plural nouns is transferred from the L1 to the L2. This phenomenon is referred as *creative construction* (Yule, 1995).

Many second language learners’ errors are caused by the transfer of expressions, vocabulary or structures from the L1 to the L2. *Positive transfer* applies to the calque of linguistic knowledge from the L1 which is applied successfully during the L2 communication. *Positive transfer* is frequent in class, where students can find successful strategies for them at the moment of applying successfully grammar patterns sourced from L1 in detriment of L2 structures that have not yet been acquired appropriately. On the other hand, *negative transfer* refers to the unsuccessful appliance of L1 structures in the L2 learning process. ESOL teachers need to pay extra attention to detect this phenomenon in their students. However, these phenomena are frequently eradicated during the deepening of the language learning process (Giezen & Emmorey, 2016).

Interference, on the other hand, is the automatic transfer of the L1 pieces of knowledge created for habits that every speaker uses in their native language for that reason the structure of the L1 can surface in the target language. This can create errors in the use that the learner gives to the target language that leads to the recalling of the mother tongue. It is important to know that the biggest problem that causes interference is bilingualism because of the mother tongue to the target language.

2.3.3 Interlanguage

Interlanguage is a separate linguistic system that is clearly differentiated from the mother and the target languages, but also linked to both through the perception of the learner. It refers to “the interim grammars constructed by second-language learners in their process of learning the target language”. An example of it is the fossilization that is the cease of development in any of its stages. The reason for this to happen are the obstacles that are presented in the way that a second learner goes to obtain a high proficiency in the target language. Selinker (1972)

Interlanguage system is understood as a dynamic system that has a big influence on the first language into the learning process. This is the reason Adjemian (1976) said that the first language makes the learning process slower while learning other languages.

Tarone’s view (1980) is different than Adjemian’s because for her interlanguage is a group of styles that can be useful in different environments. That is why she put emphasis on the use of the target language actively in different stages of the learning process.

Nemser has a supported argument where he stated that interlanguage was an independent system his evidence is that there are some elements that do not need to have an origin neither in L1 nor in L2 (Nemser 1971: 134 cited in Powell 1998: 3). The term he used was ‘approximative system’ because he thought that a person who is learning, faces a process of approximation of the emerging system to the target language.

2.3.4 False Friends

False Friends are words that look similar to two different languages. On the other hand, the meaning of these words is different from what native speakers think it means in their mother language. Also, when a person is exposed to these cognates, these words are not

learned in the same way than other vocabulary, the person acquires them naturally relating them to their native language.

For instance, false friends or deceptive cognates in Spanish-English can represent a bit source of confusion for the learning process if seen constantly. For that reason, if students are in an activity and face false friends they have more possibilities to get wrong the answers than when they face unknown words.

It is very important to notice that students that have less knowledge of the foreign language tend to export element from their native language than those that have a high level of the foreign language. Since, Spanish and English share similarities, founding cognate's words can be used as a valuable tool for those with high proficiency of English and easy to relate with Spanish vocabulary even though it does not happen the same with people with poor knowledge about the target language.

Most (1992) classified four types of *false friends*:

- *Cognates or true friends*: words that have similar pronunciation and have mutual translation. e.g saliva-saliva
- *False cognates or deceptive cognates*: these are words that can be seen in two languages with very similar structure but a different meaning. e.g main/hand/-main.

Further subclassification refers to:

- *Partial cognates*: that can be cognates or false friends that depend on the context. facteur (French)-factor
- *Semantic false friends*. This one look similar to words in more than one language.eg song-son

False friends were classified by with different criteria such as word length, the differences between Spanish and English, the parts of the speech and more.

3. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Previous studies listed here are relevant for the elaboration of this research. For instance, Cook (2013) analyzed the effects of the second language on the first and the influence of middle constructions in French as a mother language. Since English is a commercial language, French students showed how they improved while using his analysis. Cook reflects on how English is used as a source of learning a new language. Other works by Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner (2015) analyze the principles and constructs of an approach to learn a second language, and it shows the best patterns to follow to learn a second language.

Research by Ortega (2014) describes the influences across multiple languages that can facilitate the process of learning for students that will know how the structures of the different languages work, so they will compare them and take advantage of them.

A great number of disciplines provide a complete description of languages at all its levels. Guevara Loor (2016) stated that the Applied Linguistics School at PUCE Esmeraldas, had students that even when they were studying English, that had many problems facing the false friends.

Another important point, in the influence that Spanish as a native language causes when learning English, is the pronunciation of different kind of phonemes for example the /t/ and /d/ sound. Olivo (2016) demonstrated that even when these phonemes are very common in English, Spanish speakers learning English tend to mispronounce them. This mostly occurs when the phonemes are placed at the end of the word. She also pointed how educator instead of emphasizing the pronunciation of the phonemes go ahead with their syllabus.

Yañez-Chillambo (2015) also stated how students from the highest levels of general English have not knowledge about what are idioms and how they are used. But the study of idioms is very important, to lead student to an almost native level of English, but they tend to think that the meaning of the word “idioms” is the same as the word “idiomas” in Spanish, so they don’t give importance when this word comes out.

4. LEGAL BASES

According to the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2012) in its Art. 26 “*La educación es un derecho para todos*” which at the same time means quality education for all students. In the Ecuadorian government, it has been created an online tutorial which includes information about Ecuadorian in-service English Teachers Standards and the English language learning standards. And the main goal of it, is to guide and inform teachers about the current situation and management of English in the Ecuadorian context.

For that reason, Ecuador provides the necessary rights to permit people to educate themselves in a foreign language that could be the aim of a person. In the whole country exist a very wide necessity of learning English because this country has many resources to export to other countries and for that reason Ecuadorians need a lingua Franca to communicate with foreigners and increase the commerciality of the product elaborated inside the country.

Furthermore, in the latest years the government has started to increase the hours of English in schools and high school with the goal that students finish their studies with a minimum English level of B1, what is a very ambitious aim but it can be possible with the increase of English teacher all around the country. That is the reason why for the government to know the results of this investigation must be very important and the legal bases support this statement.

4.1 Ecuadorian in-service (English Teacher Standards)

The Ecuadorian in-Service English Teacher Standards consist on the document written by the English Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) same as part of the organization K-12 ESL Teacher Standards (2009) which used all around the world, to mention some countries as Albania, Paraguay, and the United States. The document itself has five domains that are the following:

The first domain states that Language includes specific domains for the structure of it and for the communication, the acquisition of language and development of fluency in the target language.

It is certainly true that Ecuador is a country with multiples cultures, a lot of Ecuadorian students that are in the process of learning English may descend from indigenous cultures.

The second domain is about the importance of “Culture”. Teachers from Ecuador need to be aware of cultures and realize how it could influence on the English learning process

The third domain takes as main knowledge the “Curriculum Development”, specifically, aspects related to making lesson plans for standards-based English.

The fourth domain takes into consideration the “Assessment” which purpose is to include the different issues that are into it, for learners and for people related to language proficiency.

Lastly, **the fifth domain** involves the Professionalism and also the Ethical commitment which has as main goal to show teachers new ways of teaching English, and the research that has resulted in the English teaching field for a professional development of the educator.

Those domains are designed to improve the quality of the process of learning English in Ecuador.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Type of research

This research, as object of study, is analytical as it establishes a comparison between variables in a delimited study group in order to verify the propositions of our hypothesis. It is a case study, as the study population is limited. When regarding the levels of measuring, this is quantitative research.

5.2 Sample and population

A comprehensible intentional sampling strategy was followed. The School of Hospitality and Tourism has 51 students. This sample is considered to be reduced, yet representative of the higher ESOL levels in campus. For this research, the seven students from the 8th level of the Hospitality and Tourism School were taken as a sample level. They should have a level equivalent to a CEFR B1 in English according to the six levels they have done in the university. This class is composed of 6 female students and 2 male students.

5.2.1 Field description: The School of Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE Esmeraldas

The School of Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE Esmeraldas is involved in the development of professionals in tourism that must be competent in guiding people from different cultures to know about the most relevant cultural and geographical parts of this country.

Students from this School at PUCE Esmeraldas will obtain degree of Bachelor in Management of Hospitality and Tourism Companies and are expected to be qualified to work in very different environments. Some of them are: Holiday Representative, Tour Manager, Tourism Officer, Travel Agency Manager, Hotel Manager, Customer Service Manager and more. As noticed, all of these jobs have big probabilities of requiring employees with a good level of English as they are going to interact with people of different countries and languages. For this reason, the curriculum expects students to obtain an acceptable level of English which may improve the quality of their work.

Nevertheless, this school does not have a specific and personalized syllabus to provide the necessary knowledge of English that the degree that will be obtained for students

deserves, which is something worrying. This is one of the reasons why current research wants to bring to the educators to the reality that is going to be presented to students when they start working by using the knowledge obtained during their training. English communication skills are indispensable; thus, this document is concerned with the poor level of English students is influenced by the interferences of Spanish as their L1.

5.3 Methods

This investigation followed the quantitative method since a survey was used to determine students' difficulties. In this research, the direct method was used so students will have a good environment for learning English.

5.4 Tools and Techniques

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was elaborated with seven questions in which asked the students about their level of English, how they received their English classes, the reasons for learning English, and other questions related to their learning awareness on the difficulty of using "false friends".

Survey. – A survey consisting on two exercises was applied to students from the Hospitality and Tourism School. The key issue here is contextualized vocabulary. First exercise provided contextualized vocabulary, whereas the second exercise only showed an image to be matched with false friends. First exercise had five vocabulary questions. These questions had basic English knowledge and some false friends to observe if students can discover the differences between some words that might have a totally different meaning. Second exercise dealt with a set of images that had to be matched with a set of words which its spelling is similar to Spanish vocabulary.

Both tools were validated by two experienced language teachers and researchers.

5.5 Data analysis

Data was concisely processed through a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet in order to facilitate interpretation and charts were generated from it.

6. RESULTS

In this part, the analysis of the survey and the test applied to the 8th level of the Hospitality and Tourism School is presented according to the answers they gave in each question with the analysis of data and the quantification where the percentage was used.

SURVEY

Question #1: Why do you think you need to learn English before graduating?

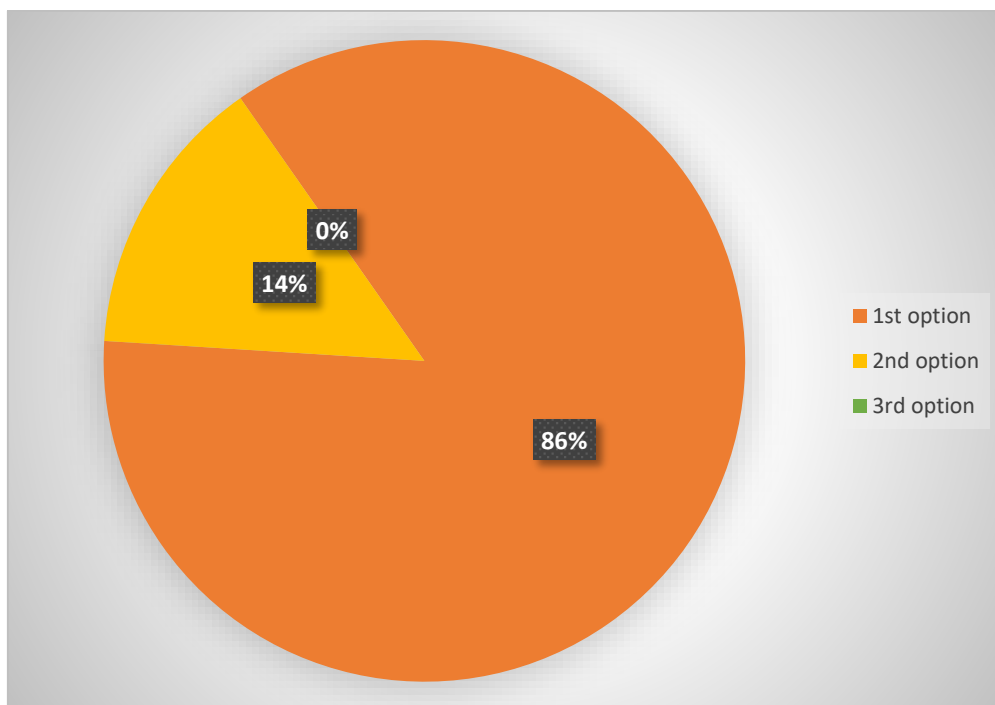


Figure 1

Results show that the 86% of the sample chose Option 2. This means that a big majority of these students are conscious that in their specialty they will meet many people from different countries and it shows that they know the most important language to communicate with foreigners is English.

Question #2: How do you consider your level of English?

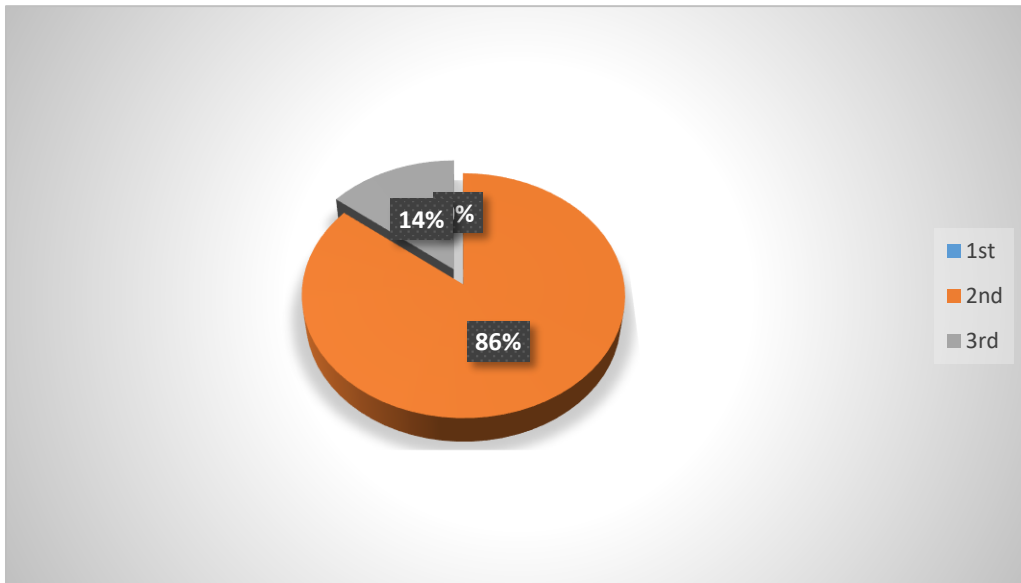


Figure 2

In this second question also most of students agreed to have an intermediate level of English even though they stated that they did not receive English classes constantly. That is the reason why the 86% chose the second option of this question as shown in the following figure but they did not have that level

Question #3: How often do you speak Spanish in your English classes?

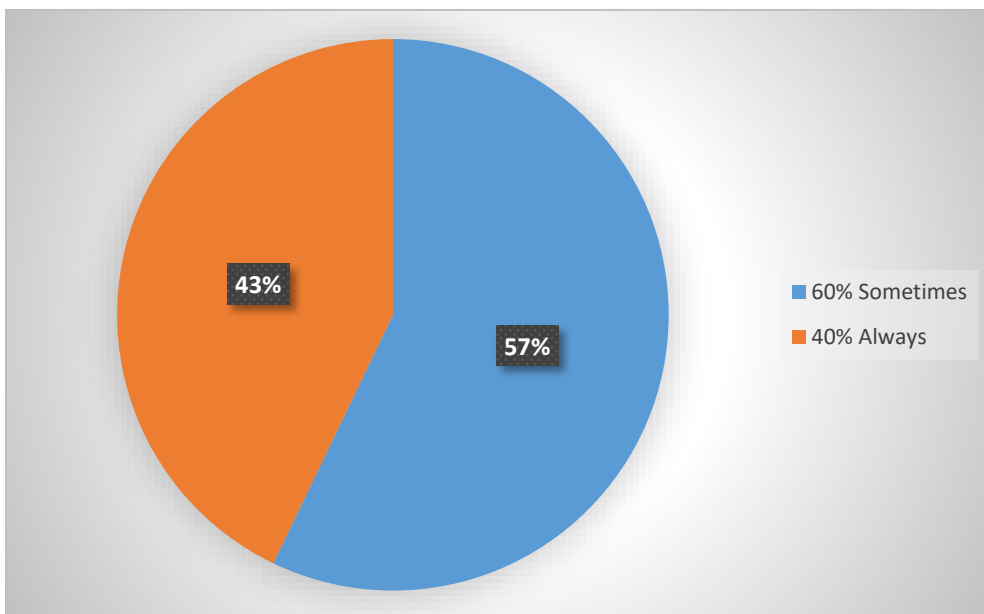


Figure 3

This question shows why these students are very influenced by Spanish in their English leaning process because a 60% of them answered that they use English sometimes in their English classes while the other 40% said that they use Spanish always in their English classes.

Question #4: Do you think Spanish represents a problem while learning English?

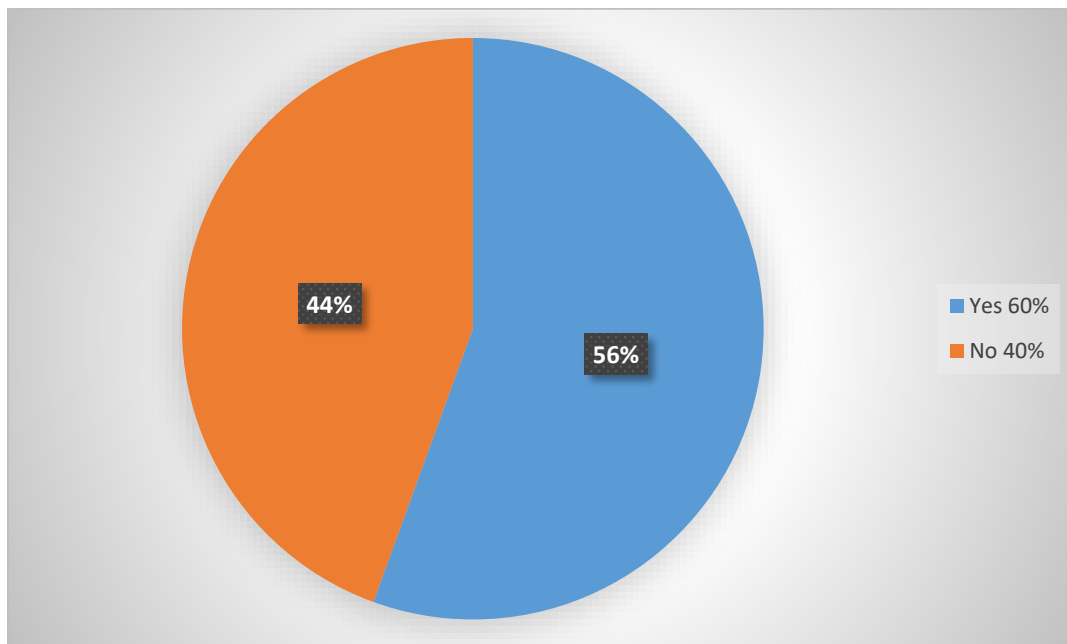


Figure 4

Once again, this survey faces a 60% against 40% because a 60% of students consider that Spanish represents a problem while learning English supporting their answer with a brief comment such as: They can speak a correct English because of the different syntaxes between the languages or because they get confused for the way both languages are performed.

Question 1

Choose the correct word to fill in the blank spaces

The police man was very.....(educated/polite) helping to my grandma.

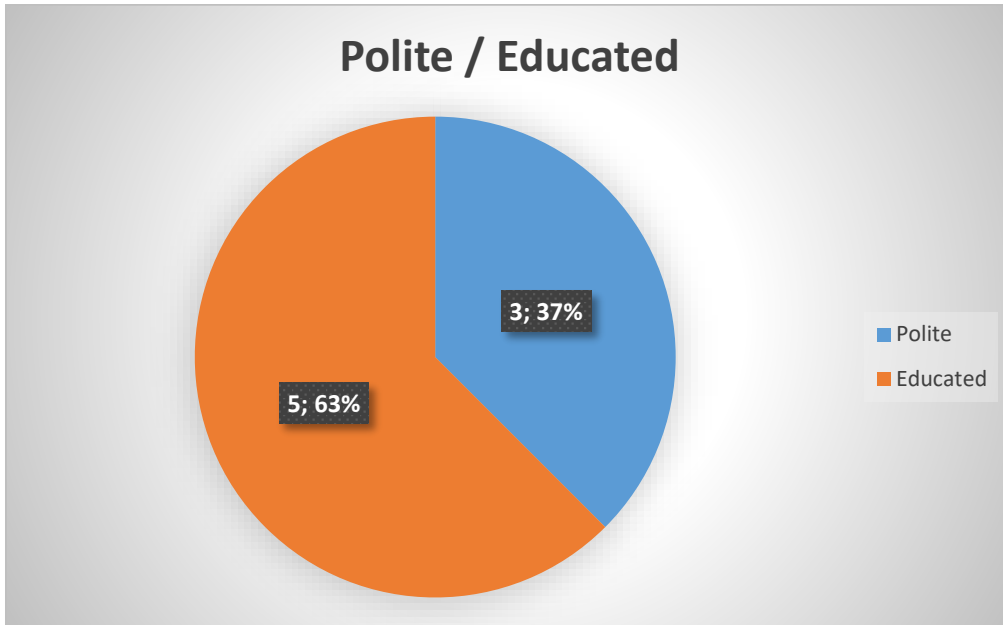


Figure 5

The business man kept the document in a.....(carpet/folder)

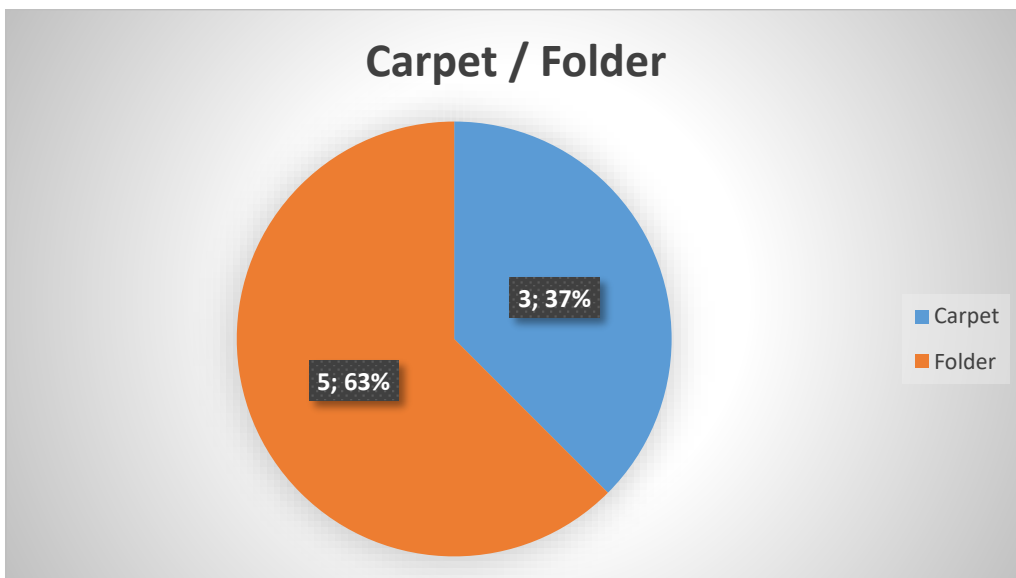


Figure 6

Jay couldn't.....(remember/record) our first date.

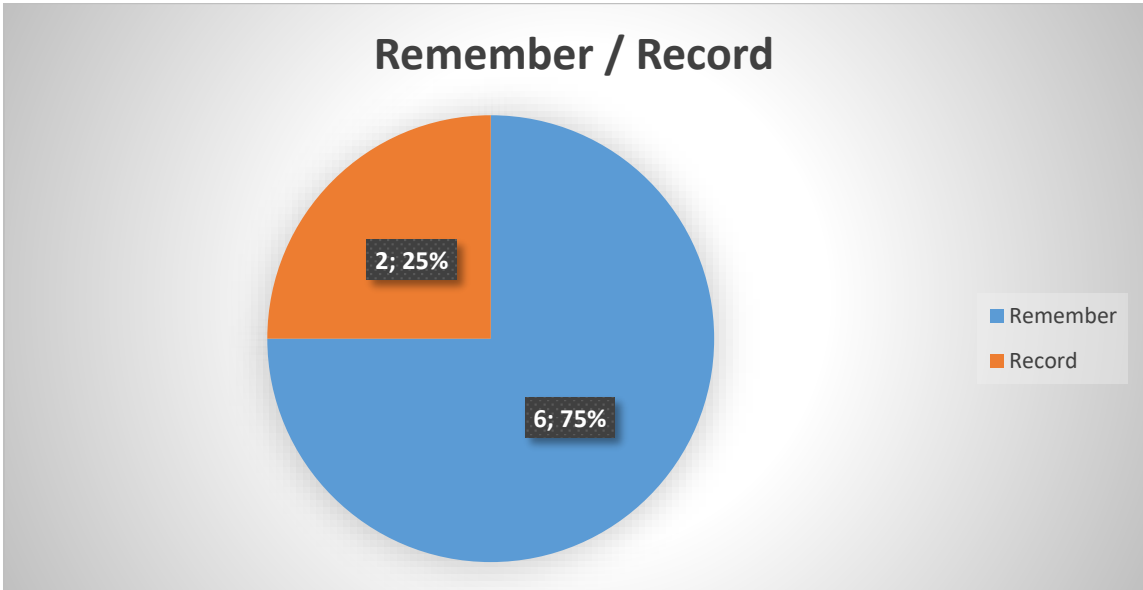


Figure 7

Cereals and fruits are.....(sane/healthy) for your body.

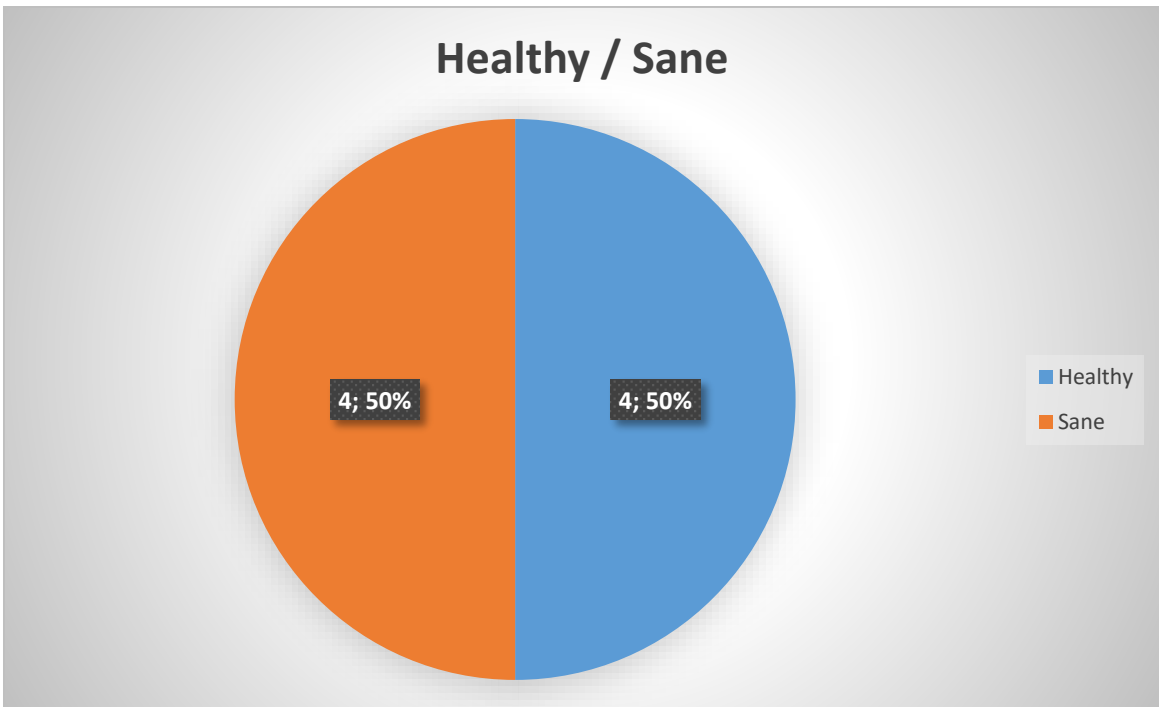


Figure 8

Are you watching the.....(notices/news) right now?

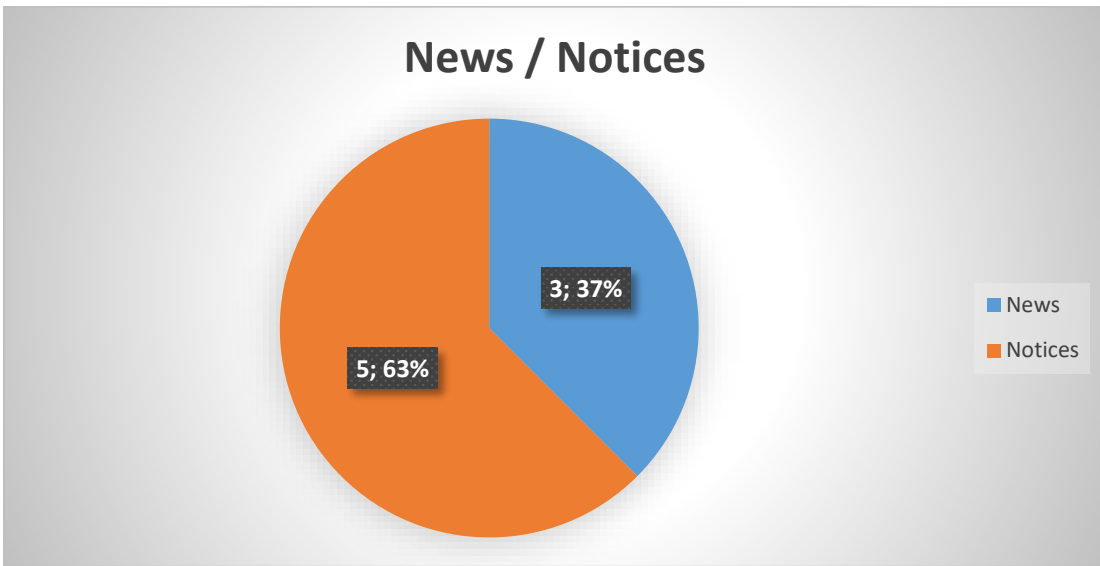


Figure 9

Let me(present/introduce) you my older brother, his name is Daniel.

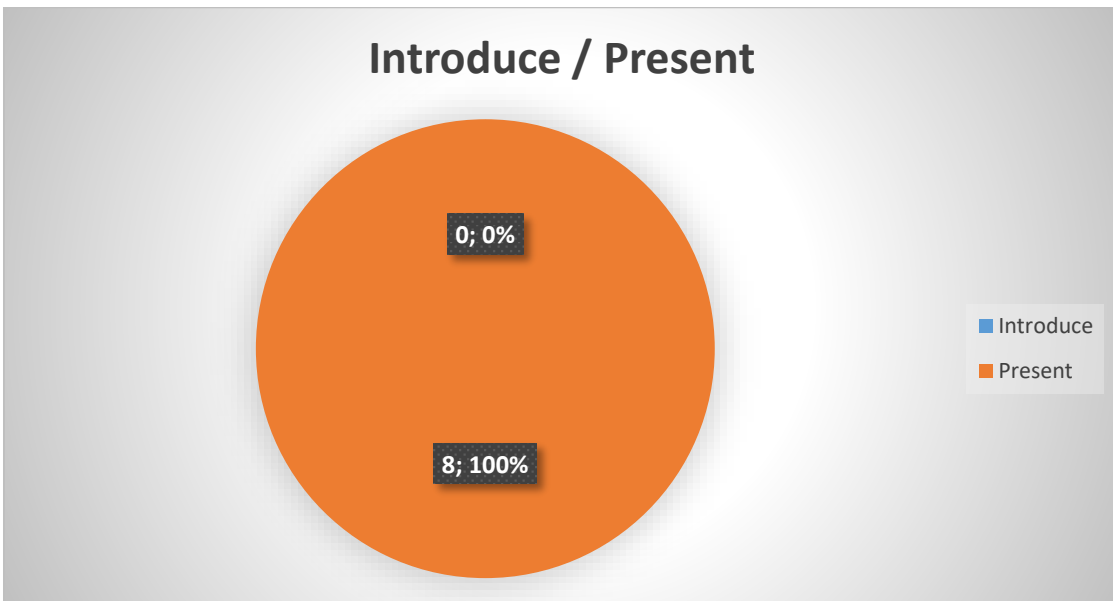


Figure 10

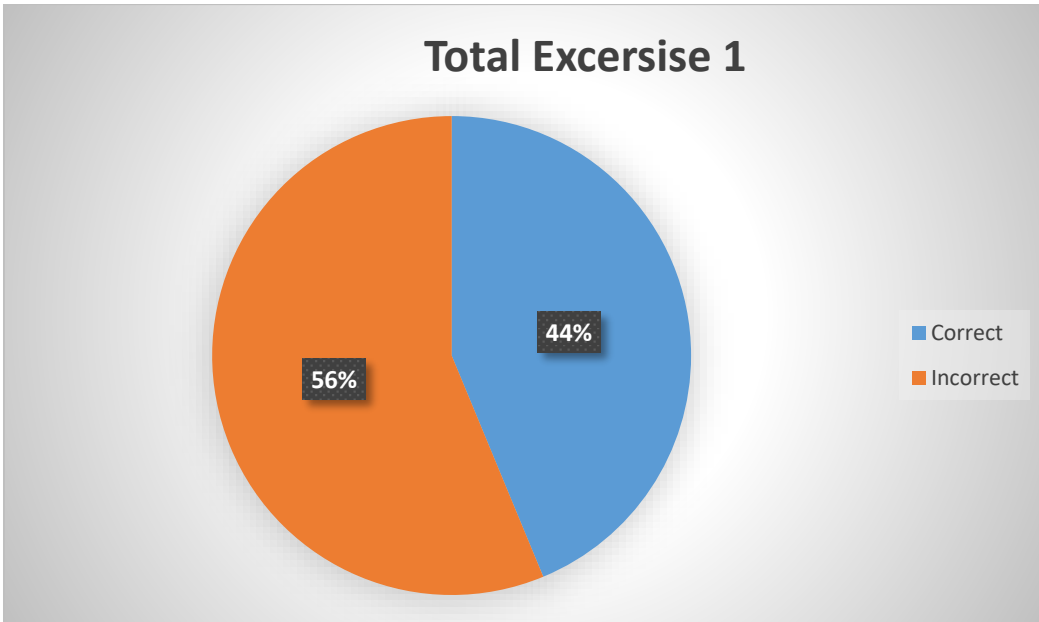


Figure 11

In sum, 56% of phonetical false friend vocabulary answers were incorrect which illustrates that Spanish interference still represents an issue in higher levels. Thus, it shows that even with simple vocabulary selections, they get confused easily and choose the wrong answer just because that the way the expression is used in Spanish.

Question #2

Write the corresponding meaning under the picture

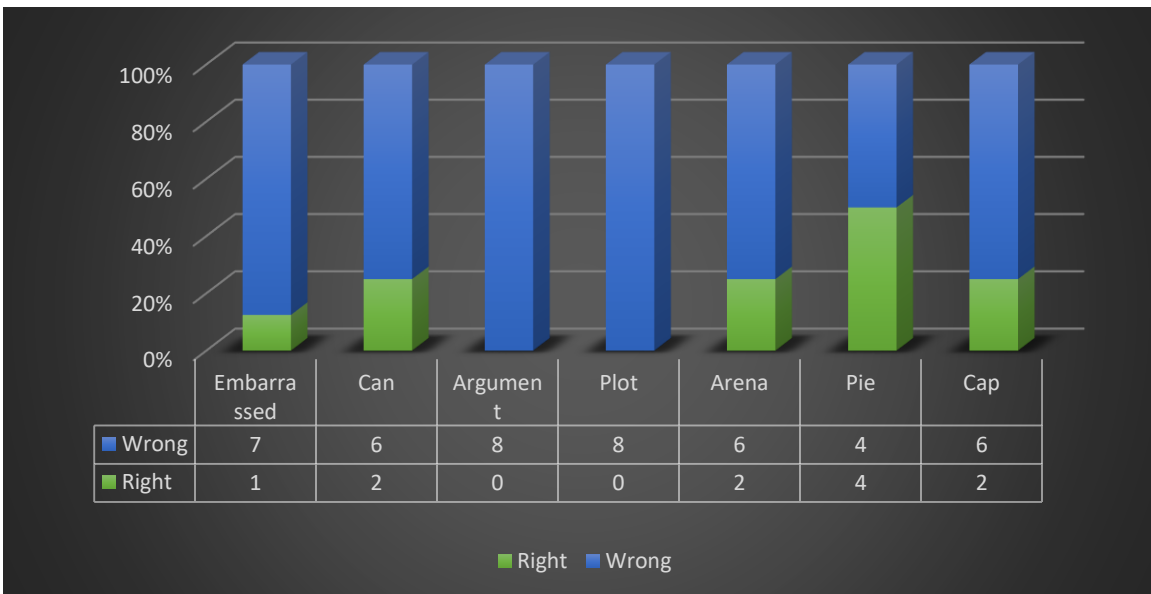


Figure 12

Second exercise dealt with a set of images that had to be matched with a set of words in isolation which its spelling is similar to Spanish vocabulary. Incorrect answers rose to 80% when shown in a context-free environment, which is 24 points higher when compared to results in Exercise 1. All in all, a clear majority of the higher ESOL levels still face important L1 interference issues when approaching false friends in vocabulary.

7. DISCUSSION

This research was done with the goal of determining the big influence that Spanish language has in native Spanish speaker people, when they try to learn English, making it a bit more difficult because of the differences between these two languages. Also this investigation wanted to take into considerations students from the Hospitality and tourism school at PUCE Esmeraldas, because in that way it will be seen how students, that should have a good level of English for being part of that school, are facing big problems trying to understand easy sentences and words of that language.

For instance, to be aware of the difficulties that English has for native Spanish speakers is very important and helpful to get strengths so the improvement will increase in a very noticeable way. In addition to that, the objectives proposed in this investigation showcased the necessities that most of English teachers know at PUCE Esmeraldas referring to low level of English in most of the students.

Results indicated a clear difference between the correct vocabulary selection when dealing with false friends, as contextualized vocabulary offered better results, yet poor, than non-contextualized exercises. Also, it is very remarkable that even in higher levels, the influence that Spanish as a L1 is still very relevant and still causes many interference errors. Nevertheless, this influence does not mean that these people cannot learn the language, more than that, it means that if students are more exposed to the second language the influence that the first one has will decrease, facilitating to students to master this second language.

Guevara, D. (2016) stated that when students were in front of many false cognates they have many problems selecting the correct words and that it was because of the nature of the false friends. However, even if students know their language learning issues and the influence that Spanish has in their performance, awareness is essential as higher levels of interest are necessary in learning how to deal with their mistakes.

Olivo, K. (2016) stated that English students were not capable of completing a simple sentence in English even though the teacher gave them keywords and that it was very difficult for them to produce the sound of the phonemes /d/ and /t/ put at the end of words because of the influence they have of their L1, and that even the minimum output they produced presented a enormous mispronunciation errors. What she presented and what

this investigation has determined is that, because of interference, they have big problems in pronunciation, writing, reading, and identification of vocabulary without getting confused between different words that may sound similar to Spanish words.

In addition, Guevara (2016) found in his research that most of students struggled to give the definition of the words without asking somebody for the meaning, and the real issue in that situation was because of the different false friends. Similarly, this investigation proved that students still do not have proper vocabulary use in their target language. The main reason seems to be that they misunderstand the meaning of English words that are written almost identical than Spanish words, which leads them to think that those words share the same meaning even if they are aware of the existence of false friends.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- All along the development of this research, it was determined that students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism face remarkable negative transfer issues because of the influence that Spanish represents in their learning process. Since the structure of Spanish has obvious vocabulary and grammatical differences, it is very difficult for students to learn English without errors.
- As both languages have an important influence of words of Latin origin, the constant presence false friends in the process of learning English increases the difficulties of providing accurate input. Furthermore, the influence of Spanish can lead to many misunderstandings concerning to the new language and also it can influence a lot in the motivation of students.
- Even if data return low levels of false friend distinction, it is important to remark that errors rose to 80% when the vocabulary was shown in a context-free environment in contrast with vocabulary in context from Exercise 1. However, still more than the half of the sample faced L1 interference issues when approaching false friends in vocabulary.
- The final issue here is the possibility of obtaining access to realistic input materials. An important number of students state that they use Spanish all the time in the English classroom, even if they also state that English is relevant for their future professional development they do not normally have native English

speakers, nor realistic communicational problems, that may allow students to acquire lexis and structures which would allow them to overcome negative transfer issues. Furthermore, what this investigation develops is how difficult for a person who speaks Spanish is to learn English without an exhaustive learning regime to attack problems in English learning such as the confusion with false friends, pronunciation interference, the understanding of the language by listening, and more.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Even if negative transfer problems figures tend to decrease with time, results provide evidence that contextualized exercises provide better returns.
- On the other hand, since Spanish structure is different from English, it could be a good way to speak correctly if they try to develop drills to teach patterned structures such as present simple –*Subjet+Verb+Complement-*, past simple – *Subject+Verb in past simple+Complement-*, present continuous –*Subject+Verb To Be+Verb with ing form+Complement-* and others.
- As a degree in Hospitality and Tourism requires, especially, a good level of English (B1) as it is essential for their professional competences, the campus should introduce some English for Specific Purposes topics in their ELT curriculum.
- Moreover, if the university implements academic exchanges with foreign universities with similar programs where English is the principal language, students can have opportunities for internships in order to practice their professional skills in context.

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11.ANNEXES

11.1 Annex 1: Survey

Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas

This survey will detect Hospitality and Tourism students of 8th level knowledge of English and the influence Spanish as a first language has into their learning process.

Please, read carefully and answer all the questions

- **Why do you think you need to learn English before graduating?**
 - Because of my specialty I will relate with people of other countries
 - Because all the places where I am going to work need somebody who speaks English
 - I do not think that I need to learn English

- **How do you consider your level of English?**
 - High
 - Intermediate
 - Low

- **How often do you speak Spanish in your English classes**
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Never

- **Do you think Spanish represents a problem while learning English?**
 - Yes
 - No

11.2 Annex 2: Test

Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas

This survey will detect Hospitality and Tourism students of 8th level knowledge of English and the influence Spanish as a first language has into their learning process.

Please, read carefully and answer all the questions

1.-Choose the correct word and fill in the blank spaces

The police man was very.....(educated/polite) helping to my grandma.

The business man kept the document in a.....(carpet/folder)

Jay couldn't.....(remember/record) our first date.

Cereals and fruits are.....(sane/healthy) for your body

Are you watching the.....(notices/news) right now?

Let me(present/introduce) you my older brother, his name is Daniel.

2.- Write the correspondent meaning under the picture

Balloon-Cap-Can-Arena-Argument-Embarrassed-Pie-Plot-Sand



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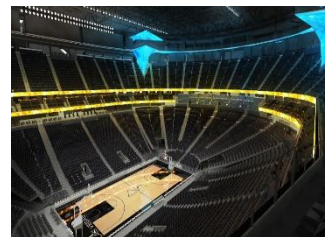
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11.3 Annex 3: Picture

