Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Carrera de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

# “Audio material for improving essential level B1 conversations according to the Common European Framework”

**Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación en Lengua y Literatura Inglesa**.

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## Resumen

El presente trabajo se ha realizado con el objetivo de crear material didáctico de audio, para mejorar el nivel B1 en estudiantes de idioma inglés, específicamente en la destreza de la conversación de acuerdo con los estándares del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las lenguas. La investigación fue aplicada en una clase de idioma inglés como lengua extranjera en CG Corporation en Cuenca mediante un análisis crítico de datos medibles. La metodología estuvo enfocada en combinar Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) y Audio Lingual Method (ALM) en la enseñanza del idioma. La combinación de los dos métodos tuvo un gran impacto en los estudiantes de idioma inglés como lengua extranjera. El CLT hizo posible que los estudiantes usaran el idioma para comunicarse, mientras el ALM sorprendentemente les ayudó a ser más competentes en el uso del idioma, mejorando de forma sustancial elementos muy importantes de las macro-destrezas: escuchar y hablar. Cabe recalcar, que los dos métodos aplicados fueron útiles, en cuanto permitió a los estudiantes identificar nuevos sonidos, patrones de entonación y mejorar la fluidez en la destreza de hablar.


Palabras Claves: Audio-Lingual Method, Audio Material, Communicative Approach

## Abstract

The following research has been carried out in order to create audio material and demonstrate its effectiveness to enhance essential level B1 conversations in the English language according to the Common European Framework of Reference. The research was applied in an EFL classroom at CG Corporation in Cuenca – Ecuador. The analysis of the data was carried out through a critical analysis of quantitative data. The methodology was aimed at combining Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM). The combination of these two methods had a great impact on EFL learners: while CLT made it possible for students to use the language communicatively, ALM, rather surprisingly, helped students to become more competent in using the language, and enhance speaking and listening micro-skills allowing them to identify new sounds, intonation patterns, avoid misunderstandings and to enhance fluency.


Key words: Audio-Lingual Method, Audio Material, Communicative Approach

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# *TO*

*My wonderful parents Margarita and Miguel Ángel, to Tatiana and Rafaela who have been my inspiration to keep me going.*

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## Introduction

This work emphasizes the combination of ALM (Audio-Lingual Method) and CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) methods when learning the English language. Therefore, a set of audio material was created to be included in a CLT-based EFL classroom to enhance listening and speaking skills. The audio material recorded has been a tool to reinforce listening and speaking skills as well as help students to train their hearing and sensitize them to new sounds, to present a context, to demonstrate real conversations, debates, world issues or problems that we have nowadays, for example, globalization, wars, crime, and technology focused on creating interesting workshops in class to discuss and develop students' critical thinking.

The tools that facilitators have at their disposal for teaching English as a Foreign Language have increased immensely with the use of information technology. This fact allows people to have more access to first-hand information, to build up business relationships all around the world, to make great contributions in the field of health, education, technology, and so on. Moreover, this international language is giving us the opportunity to broaden our horizons and opportunities in our lives.

Professionals will not be successful if they do not learn the English language and keep their knowledge up to date. The success the learners have in learning

how to use the language to express themselves depends a lot on the kind of effort that the government, institutions, and teachers put in it.

Teachers are expected to facilitate good learning and help learners have more contact with the language. Therefore, a good combination of methods and a creative use of tools, including information technology, will make the difference between having an obsolete, traditional learning environment or an innovative and meaningful kind of learning.

The combination of audio recorded material with other meaningful tools from the CLT can help learners to have a holistic development in their skills and use the English language successfully to communicate in this globalized world. Facilitators can make their own material because they know the specific issues that students need to overcome.

# Chapter I

# The Problem

## 1.1 Topic

The present research has been done in order to determine the effectiveness of combining audio material to reinforce students learning in a class in which the Communicative Language Teaching is applied.

## 1.2 Justification

It is a well-known fact that involving efficient conversational activities for a learner of the English language is very difficult. It becomes even more difficult for an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student. The National Ministry of Education in Ecuador (MED, 2009) states that a B1 student should be able to "enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are familiar, of interest, or pertinent to everyday life within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domain" (p.10). Students are far from reaching this standard because there are problems when holding a conversation about everyday life topics and communicating efficiently. The time that learners dedicate to practice English is really short (an average of 3 hours a week in high schools in Ecuador), and it is really difficult to find a partner to practice within this environment.

An appropriate method to enhance speaking skills is to provide enough input. Therefore, recorded audio materials can be some of the best tools used to

practice speaking and listening. It allows students to develop additional micro-skills like fluency, intonation in questions, and pronunciation. In addition, it helps to keep practicing it almost everywhere. Thus, a learner of the English language can listen to audio recorded material at work or at school; with or without the assistance of a facilitator, in the park while doing exercise, at the gym, in the kitchen while cooking a delicious meal, and so on. It allows the learner to have more contact with the language. Moreover, the material can be played once, twice, three or more times according to the needs the students might have.

Since the topics included in the audio are relevant and practical, it contains everyday conversations according to what the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B1 suggests, such as introducing yourself and asking for personal information in which students will have to practice basic questions about their name, age, and so on. In addition, learners can go over indirect questions like *Do you know how I can find your friend on Facebook?* Each audio recorded unit is directed at improving a specific language structure and a function of the language. In addition, other dialogues will be recorded in context to cover most of the CEFR (2003) requirements, namely, those which deal with past experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, weather predictions, restaurants and hotels, health and illness, clothes and fashion, places to visit in the city, habits and routines, shopping, vacation, reasons and explanations when giving opinions about problems we have all around the world, and future plans (p.33).

Some advantages that a structured dialogue has over an authentic dialogue, is that it is very well organized, has more content to cover student needs of communication, and it is better understood because its complexity increases according to the students' language level. Furthermore, it allows students to practice specific grammar points studied in reading and writing activities. As a result, an EFL learner has an excellent material to practice and improve the two hardest skills to master: listening and speaking.

## 1.3 Problem statement

### 1.3.1 Contextualization

Some observations were done randomly by the researcher while working as a substitute teacher at Daniel Córdoba high school, and doing the pre-professional practice at Cesar Andrade high school in Cuenca, Ecuador and it was noted that there is a wide gap between the B1 students' profile stated in the National Curriculum and what they really learn in high schools.

In addition, students at CG Corporation stated that they hardly ever need English in their everyday lives. Another problem that students encounter is that there is nobody to practice with. Also, the material students have available to them is not suitable for what they really want to practice, and in some cases it is boring because the topic is out of context. Therefore, it is necessary to create alternative tools for improving their listening and speaking skills.

There are many students who are very good at writing and reading. This is because there are a lot of activities which can help them to improve these skills, even when they are on their own. For example, it is easy to find written activities to improve reading and comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, cohesion and coherence when using connectors correctly, and so on. A reason to take into account is that creating writing material is simpler than creating audio material because the procedure of making material to practice writing skills follows fewer steps until having the final product. Audio material costs much more money when having to hire a studio, the voices for performing the characters in the dialogue, editing, adding effects, and mastering the audio material.

## 1.4 Research Objectives

### 1.4.1 General objective

- To create audio material based on the Common European Framework of Reference for improving speaking skills at B1 level.

### 1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- To design and record audio material containing conversations according to the Common European Framework of Reference.
- To apply the audio material in an EFL classroom.
- To evaluate the outcomes of the applied material.
- To create a free blog of audio material for students and teachers.

# Chapter II

# Theoretical framework

## 2.1 Research History

There are several sources in which we can find audio material. However, most of them are very short dialogues; also it is hard to recognize the language function and students cannot cover most of the elements they need to practice in order to talk efficiently when expressing their feelings and thoughts in specific situations. On the other hand, students might find long dialogues that jump drastically from one topic to another. As a result, they may end up not understanding the topic in question.

## 2.2 Basis

Being able to have a conversation without a major problem is the main goal of a language learner. Currently, experts state that the new illiteracy of the 21st century is not being bilingual and not using a foreign language as a powerful tool which can serve as a bridge for mankind to improve our way of interacting among ourselves. Experts from Harvard University (2014) emphasize that learning a foreign language brings more career opportunities and helps people to build international relationships (p. 4). Being bilingual will open new horizons which can profoundly change people's quality of life. Seidlhofer, a researcher from Oxford University (2005), emphasizes the importance of the English language nowadays, since it is considered as the Lingua Franca of the world, as an international language, and as the medium of international communication (p. 339).

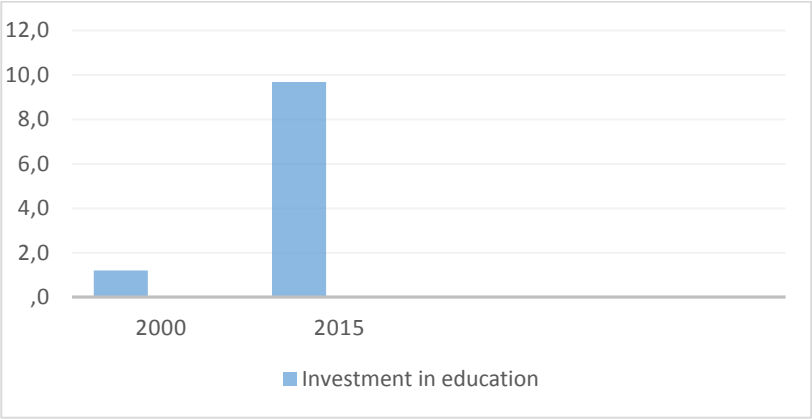
Consequently, when professionals want to be up-to-date about their fields of study, they will be required to know the English language in order to understand the new findings all around the world because most of them are published in the English Language.

## 2.3 Audio Material for Learning English as a Foreign Language

### 2.3.1 Conceptualization

Recently, there have been very important changes in education in Ecuador with the current government. Several educational institutions are well-equipped with books, materials and labs, which facilitators can use to improve students' learning experiences. Graph 1 give us an idea about the increase of the budget designated to cover the needs in all levels of education: elementary, middle, high school, higher education, illiteracy programs and so on.

Graph 1: Percentage of national budget designated to education




**Source:** (UNESCO- UIS, 2014 & Ministerio de Finanzas Ecuador, 2015)

One of the goals set up to be fulfilled by December, 2013, by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MED) was that teachers of the English language must reach at least B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). On the other hand, students are supposed to reach at least a B1 level of the English language once they finish the third year in high school.

The MED recommends applying the Communicative Language Teaching method when teaching the English language in public schools in Ecuador.

"Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a methodology was first proposed in England in the 1970s. This method was regarded as revolutionary since it placed an essential emphasis on communication in language learning classrooms" (Ozevik, 2010, p. 1). Experts say that it arose as a response to the traditional education in which students were passive learners and the teacher the only source of knowledge. CLT is being successfully applied especially in countries in which the language of study is spoken as a second language. However, it has had other results when applied in countries where a language is learned as a foreign language because the time that a student is exposed to the language is very deficient in most of the cases. Calle (2012) reports that students have "limited knowledge and poor performance" in the English language according to a research study carried out in Cuenca-Ecuador (p. 1). Under these circumstances, it can be said that the level of most of the students is very low even after studying the language for more than twelve years. This is because there is a tendency to forget knowledge that people do not use.

It cannot be said that a method, in isolation, can work for every single student; this is stated in the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which is very well known nowadays. CLT works better than other methods when it is applied appropriately and combined with another approach to learn English as a foreign language (EFL). According to Canale & Swain (1980) it can be combined with the Situational Syllabus, which mainly consists of situational dialogues and is included in the communicative approach (p. 2). Teaching and learning activities require a great variety of tools. "Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, trial, and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently." (Richards, 2006, p. 23).

The following scheme is presented to analyze some of the main principles about CLT according to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011, pp. 121-125).

*Basic characteristics of CLT*

a) The main goal is to help students to be able to communicate.
b) The teacher's role in class is to be an advisor. He/She learns from the students as well.
c) Students are communicators.
d) Its basic stages are Information Gap – Choice – Feedback.
    - *Information Gap*: This is the first stage of a dialogue because real communication starts when people lack some knowledge and they

start asking others. As a result, they start to communicate while providing and getting new information.

- *Choice*: When students are asked about something, they will have the option about *what to say* and *how to say it* without being limited to answer in a specific way.
- *Feedback*: The speaker needs to be sure that the message he gave was understood by the listener; otherwise, it is not real communication.

e) The use of authentic material is recommended because it shows the use of the target language in real context.

f) Sharing ideas and opinions are the basis of class activities.

g) The four main skills are very well used in CLT.

h) The function of the language is more emphasized than the form; for example, giving advice instead of focusing on the structure of *should* and *must*.

i) Communicative functions are taken into account when evaluating, as are fluency and accuracy.

j) Errors are a normal part of the process of learning; however, those are overcome later with an accuracy-based activity.

As seen above, errors are part of our learning activity. Therefore, students should not be afraid to make mistakes or commit errors because we can learn a lot

from them. Those errors can be corrected later with another activity like using audio material which provides an accurate model to eliminate those difficulties.

It is a good idea to combine methods when helping students use the language to communicate because it can help them to improve in specific areas, not only the main skills but other essential micro-skills like pronunciation, intonation, fluency and accuracy. In addition, there are some issues concerning phonetics and phonology that students should go over in order to become proficient users. Some of the tools and activities used in the Audio Lingual Method (ALM) are very helpful when performing accuracy-based activities. One of them can be the use of audio material to enhance students' skills in speaking. The scheme below is presented to analyze some of the principles about the ALM according to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011, pp. 44-48):

*The Audio Lingual Method*

a) Students aim to use the language automatically by overlearning it without stopping to think about grammar. Students repeat and learn basic structures and start expressing new ideas based on the previous ones.
b) The teacher is in charge of providing the necessary input. It is a good idea to get relevant and meaningful material for students so that they can learn while talking about interesting topics. The facilitator can make use of the audio material to provide the necessary input the students

need. The material selected should provide real use of the language and a variety of accents so students can be aware of their existence.

c) The language functions and vocabulary are presented through dialogues.

d) The use of minimal pairs: It helps learners to learn to make new sounds which they do not usually have in their native language and, therefore, find difficult to distinguish.

e) Speaking and Listening are the more emphasized skills through this method using dialogues in which students have to ask and answer questions. Nevertheless, other skills and micro-skills can be enhanced by varying the kind of audio material as follows: present news, debates to help students to develop critical thinking and learn how to justify their opinions.

f) Pronunciation, fluency and accuracy are practiced from the very beginning with the model provided by the teacher. It can be done with the help of audio material or by the facilitator.

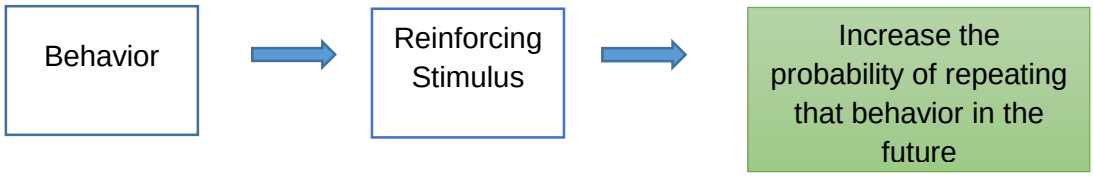
g) The dialogues and the language in use are practiced through drills. Richards (n.d.) recommend the use of meaningful drills because students will have to make significant choices or communicative practice or drill as real information is exchanged (par. 2).

### 2.3.2 Burrhus Frederic Skinner and the Operant Conditioning Theory

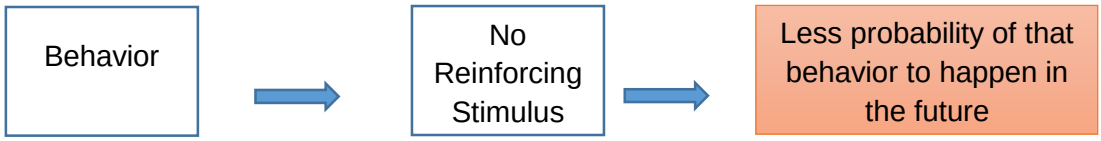
The ALM has its roots in the Operant Conditioning Theory proposed by B F Skinner. He was born in Pennsylvania, USA, and obtained a doctorate in Psychology at Harvard University. He made great contributions to the ALM and to the field of psychology. Boeree (2006) mentions some main principles on which Skinners' theory is based. First of all, organisms will have a reinforcing stimulus after an "operant" (a specific action that is done). It can occur in different ways according to the following diagram (pp. 4-6).

Graph 2: Effect of a stimulus after an operant

*First case*




*Second case*:

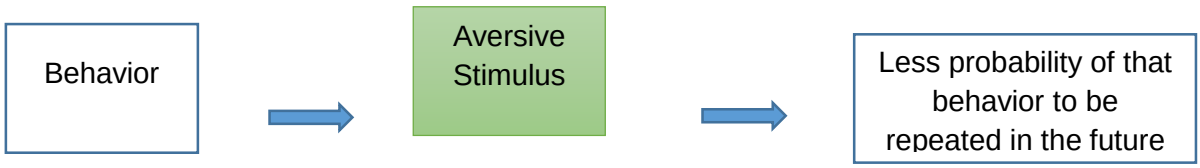



**Source**: Boeree (2006)

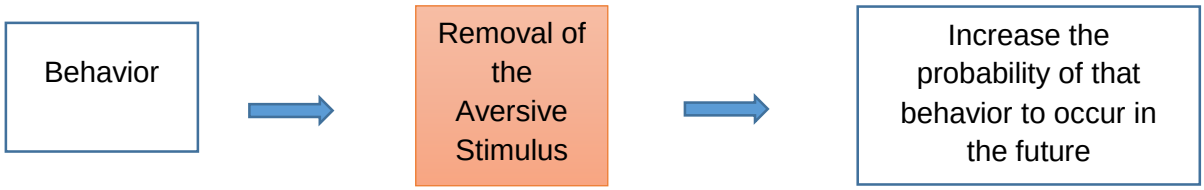
The type of reinforcing stimulus can vary when "shaping" a specific behavior. It can be explained according to Skinner's theory.

Graph 3: Effect of the type of stimulus after an operant.

*First Case*




*Second Case*




**Source:** Boeree **(**2006**)**

Skinner's theory has been applied in several ways to education in Ecuador. Some of them can be present in all levels of education when giving a reinforcing stimulus like giving students permission to finish class early or offering them a scholarship to study at the university of their choice if they work hard in class. Hoque (2013) states that students demonstrated high levels of interest, satisfaction, increased participation and higher weekly quiz grades when using positive reinforcement of the Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory (p. 16). On the other hand, the theory can also be applied to behavior modeling by parents and facilitators to improve students' personality, attitudes, and so forth.

Surgenor (2010) states that “some of the behaviorist approaches for teaching includes breaking the material into small units and providing opportunities for frequent feedback” (par. 7). This approach is highly related to the ALM in the sense that any audio material can be broken down into small parts to practice a specific function of the language when learning a language.

According to Hardwick (2015) the more the students have contact with the language, the more confident they will be when using it (p. 1). She emphasizes that the combination of methodology and the techniques will provide variety in teaching and learning tools and will allow students to become more familiarized with the language.

Isisag (2012) states that the use of ICT has great advantages in language learning because it allows teachers and learners to share audio, video and images. Furthermore, it increases the contact with the language (p. 2). In addition, speaking is directly related to listening and even to other micro-skills. According to Hardwick (2015) “The more you learn, use and practice the language, the more accurate and fluent you become” (p. 1). This requires the learners to keep in touch constantly with the language so it will become more natural for them when using it as a tool for communication.

Audio recorded material provides appropriate input to practice the language in use, pronunciation, vocabulary, and intonation. Certain micro-skills can help students to express surprise, feelings of happiness, sadness, interest and

indifference, which are some of the expectations of the CEFR (2003) about a B1 language learner (p. 76).

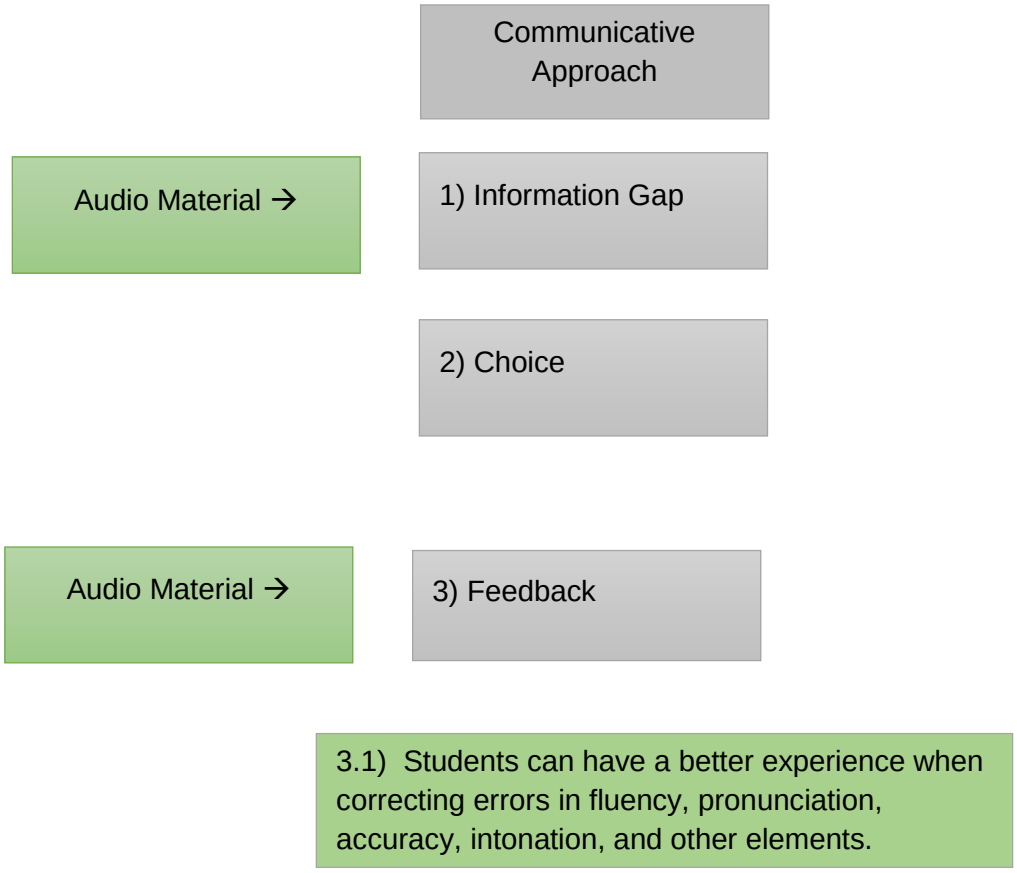
Audio material is highly used in the Audiolingual Method. Richards & Rodgers (1987) state that it appeared at the time when the USA entered the Second World War and there were soldiers that needed to learn the language fast. The army had several people who spoke different languages like German, Japanese, Italian, Chinese, French, and others, to interpret codes in the war. Some of them needed effective techniques to learn English very fast so they could start working for the army. At the beginning, it was called the Army Method. It worked because the learners were exposed to the target language for long periods of time. Later, the method underwent some changes and Nelson Brooks started calling it Audiolingualism or the Audiolingual Method (p. 65).

"New vocabulary and structural patterns are presented through dialogues. The dialogues are learned through imitation and repetition" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 45). Even though it is a good method to improve pronunciation, develop listening skills, and create basic structures to use according to the functions of the language through habit formation, it is not recommended to be used in an isolated way because it can offer better results when it is combined with other methods like the CLT.

The following diagram explains where audio material can be ideally included when applying the *Communicative Approach* so that it can be used to reinforce

some areas which the CLT does not emphasize enough. It is based on a contrastive analysis between the CLT and the ALM's principles.

Graph 4: Stages of the CLT in which audio material can be easily applied.




**Source**: Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011)

### 2.3.3 The Importance of Audio Materials in EFL Teaching and Learning

Professionals from Ohio State University (2006) stress that there are a lot of advantages when using audio materials. For example, it "can help the visually impaired, holds attention better than print, it can be used alone or with other

modalities” (par. 3). Consequently, inclusive education should include audio materials when facilitators work with the visually impaired so learners will have equal opportunities to learn a new language.

When practicing a new language, audio materials have a lot of advantages. Some of them are mentioned below:

- “Today, we can reproduce a wide range of aural experiences and distribute them easily over the Internet to provide students with "anytime, anywhere" exposure to content, along with increased opportunities to practice the skills we'd like them to learn” (Preston & Petricig, 2009, par. 1).
- Students have extra material to reinforce specific language functions.
- When dealing with questions and answers, students can practice authentic intonation models in different types of questions.
- It provides a model for students to practice a real dialogue and how to express themselves clearly.
- Audio materials help learners to improve their pronunciation skills with difficult words and phrases.
- New audio formats allow people to have all types of devices. Therefore, people can keep in touch with the language wherever they go and practice it as long as they can take time to learn English.
- Its portability facilitates people who love exercising to practice the English language while doing exercise.

- Teachers can make use of it as an alternative tool to provide enough input in the engagement stage of a lesson, in the reinforcement phase and at the end of the activation stage when using the CLT in class.

**2.4 Types of audio material**

There are different types of audio materials: audio books, dialogues, short passages or stories or music. Some of the materials mentioned can be authentic, others non-authentic. Nunan in Alijani (2014) defines authentic materials as ones which are produced for purposes other than teaching language (p. 152). Hence, if the materials are too complex to use in class, they should be modified so that they can be used for educational purposes. The audio materials should show the natural use of language. They should not be so limited that people do not usually speak like that in a real situation. Nevertheless, authentic conversations can include several language functions and grammatical issues. It might become a big problem for EFL students to cope with those issues because most of the language features will be new to them.

Romney (2005) states that a "dialogue is focused conversation, engaged in intentionally with the goal of increasing understanding, addressing problems, and questioning thoughts or actions…dialogue, unlike debate or even discussion, is as interested in the relationship(s) between the participants as it is in the topic or theme being explored" (p. 2).

It is essential for learners to have different types of tools to practice listening and speaking because every activity focuses on a specific activity. For instance, it

can contain dialogues, conversations, debates, news about different topics to practice comprehension and develop critical thinking.

**2.5 Teachers can record their own audio material**

Richards (n.d.) states that teacher-derived materials are more relevant for the learners, they give the institutions more reputation, and are more flexible to be updated than commercial materials (p. 1). Facilitators can have genuine materials if they record their own according to the students' need, context, or culture. As a result, the material will be more relevant. It is very important to take into account the budget needed for the audio recording tools that teachers require, such as a studio to do the recording of the voices. Another important element is the people who will develop the characters in the dialogues or other types of audio material. Its producers need to have in mind that having a variety of accents in the audio material will help learners familiarize themselves with different ones.

Some people prefer to have their own studio. Obviously, this will bring some extra advantages by providing access to the facilities provided by a recording studio. However, it should be very well designed to create an excellent product.

The following scheme illustrates the procedure required when recording the audio material according to Deakin University (2014, pp. 10-12).

a) Identify the necessity and the students' weaknesses when using the language to communicate. This must be designed to polish a specific skill or area of the language. Also the material should be designed according to the types of students we have, whether children or adults,

plus different type of activities or professions that people have, the culture, customs, environmental issues, and so on.

b) Set out the main goal and the specific objectives. The procedure will have better results if we can identify specific areas for students to practice and overcome weaknesses.

c) Set up the appropriate context. It needs to be useful, interesting and related to the students' current issues.

d) Elaborate the first draft in which the dialogue must be designed as natural as possible. If possible, practice with a colleague. Make sure the elements to be tackled are all included in the dialogue.

e) After a review, carry out the necessary improvements.

f) Select the voices for the characters for the dialogue or any other performance to be recorded as educational material.

g) Recording: it can be recorded in a professional studio or at home if the necessary recording tools are available. There are lots of free software packages we can use to record our own audio material, like UJAM and CHIRBIT. There are advanced recording software media managers such as CUBASE, APPLE LOGIC PRO X, SONAR PLATINIUM, and so forth.

h) Editing audio and adding effects: Adobe Audition is a good example of software which offers a lot of recording tools like managing multitrack mode, so it is very useful to polish our final product.

i) Finally, it is very important to master the audio material if necessary.

**2.6 In which stage of a class is it recommended to use audio material?**

Harmer (1998) asserts that no matter what approach the teacher applies, the class usually has three main stages: *engagement, study and activation*. Others mention those stages as anticipation, construction of knowledge and consolidation. Furthermore, the three stages can vary in order, depending on the situation, the necessity the students have, the topic, and the class environment (p. 25).

Audio materials can be used according to what the teacher wants to practice with students; if the aim is to practice listening, it can be used at the *engagement or anticipation* stage to provide the necessary input to set up the topic of the discussion. Moreover, they can be used in the *study* phase, such as when practicing intonation questions, pronunciation and so on. Finally, the material can be used in the *activation* phase to show a model about how the language is used in a natural way. It will show learners some special language features which will be better understood with this kind of material. Youman (2003) calls those features suprasegmentals which are stress, length, tone, and intonation. They will help students to have a clearer idea about how the English language is used in the real world (p. 68). Consequently, learners can develop what Hymes (1972) calls linguistic competence and linguistic performance (p. 273).

**2.7 What type of skills can people develop with audio materials?**

Practicing the target language with audio materials can provide a model to enhance pronunciation, intonation, socio-linguistic competence, fluency and accuracy as micro-skills. On the other hand, it helps to improve main skills like listening and speaking. It helps the teacher to present a context to get students involved in meaningful and problem solving activities.

- According to Kaplan University (2013) when learning the English language, it is recommended to become familiar with the English sound system of consonants, vowels, and blends in order to understand what other people try to communicate (p. 1). Pronunciation can be improved throughout an analysis of minimal pairs or words that may require students to learn to make new sounds which are not present in their mother tongue.
- Youman (2002) states that rising and falling intonation helps communicators to emphasize a specific element of an expression (pp. 73-75). Intonation in questions is very important because it can modify the meaning of a question. For example, intonation is crucial in the case of tag questions. Moreover, information questions have a different intonation compared to yes-no questions.
- Dialogues help students to develop sociolinguistic competence by introducing different ways of expressing a single idea which will depend on the context and the relationship between the participants. Even a word can have a different meaning if it is used in a different context.

- Researchers from Kaplan University (2013) state that “listening while simultaneously reading will improve your fluency by helping you to identify the way written words sound and the way spoken words are written” (p. 2). Fluency and accuracy are two indispensable skills to be developed in language learners. Fluency will be developed with the repetition of the main phrases, which will allow students to develop fluent speaking. The form which is provided through a dialogue and meaningful drill exercises help students to become accurate at expressing their ideas.
- According to Scott & Ytreberg “working with dialogues is a useful way to bridge the gap between guided practice and freer activities” (p. 39). Dialogues, combined with meaningful drills will help learners to enhance additional skills related to critical thinking and problem solving. For example, the teacher mentions that he got bronchitis and the students (after the teacher has provided a model) start to recommend solutions as pieces of advice or obligations using ***should*** *(*You *should* wear warm clothes) and ***must*** (You *must not* drink cold water).

# Chapter III

# Methodology

## 3.1 Research Methodology

It is important to mention that this research has a deductive-quantitative approach design. It is because the findings are measured and presented using statistical data such as tables and graphs. The results of Chapter 8 of the audio material employed to prove the effectiveness of the intervention are shown through quantitative statistical analysis. The reasons why the researcher chose chapter 8 to apply to a class are listed below.

a) Students of B1 level of the English language at CG Corporation have serious problems when they talk about past events and get confused with the use of simple past and present perfect.
b) There are problems with the pronunciation of the regular verbs in the past tense.
c) There is a sound in the American English accent that EFL learners needed to learn how to make in order to pronounce the regular verb in its past tense which is the schwa sound.
d) Intonation in questions is not taken into account.

Chapter 8 of the audio material has the necessary exercises aimed to overcome those problems.

Finally, after interpreting the data, recommendations are formulated in order to improve speaking skills.

### 3.2 Type of Research

The research was done in accordance with paradigm 2 which is Analytical-Nomological (Embleton, 2012. p. 20). Hence, it has the following characteristics:

- Experimental Design
- Qualitative Data.
- Statistical Analysis.

### 3.3 Population and Sample

This research project took place at Cg Corporation, which is an English language school in Cuenca, Ecuador and was designed to involve B1 level learners.

**Scope**

Cg Corporation (Cuenca branch).

**Timeline**

Students from June - November 2016 were exposed to the language 240 minutes weekly during the application of the treatment (9 Periods).

Additionally, two hours were dedicated to observing teachers applying the treatment with the students who were part of the treatment group.

**Elements**

Students involved in the treatment group were between the ages of 17 to 40 years old of B1 level of English at Cg Corporation.

**Total Population**

a) Treatment group: There were 17 students taking B1 English Level at Cg Corporation.
b) The survey was applied to a total of 71 students at Cg Corporation, University of Cuenca and Universidad del Azuay.

## 3.4 Data-gathering Instruments and Techniques

A survey, a pre-oral test and a post-oral test were administered to gather the necessary information.

## 3.5 Data-collecting planning

First, a survey was applied to students of B1 English level at Cg Corporation English Institute in Cuenca. Additionally, one group from the University of Cuenca and two groups from Universidad del Azuay also collaborated filling out the survey. It helped the researcher to have a wider idea about students' problems when learning the English language. The survey was made up of five multiple choice

questions. Moreover, questions 4 and 5 in the survey were designed to collect specific data about problems that B1 level learners have in expressing themselves in certain contexts (See Appendix 1). The information gathered provided the researcher with some guidance as to what work was required with individual students to overcome their weaknesses and set up common contexts to develop the audio material for learners to practice and overcome problems. After designing the material and the respective handbook (See Appendix 7), an oral pretest was applied taking into account basic parameters recommended by Cambridge University (2011) which are: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, and Interactive Communication (p. 1). The recommendation was to have two examiners in order to have a more accurate assessment and give the students appropriate feedback. Finally, a post-oral test was applied in order to verify if the hypothesis had been fulfilled.

### 3.6 Data- Processing Planning

It was necessary to follow certain steps in order to process the information correctly. Therefore, the first step was to gather all the information generated through the survey, the pre- and the post-test. Furthermore, it was essential to establish the correct criteria and the parameters to tabulate and interpret the data. At this stage, the CEFR and the National Curriculum was used to contrast and present the results through tables and graphs.

### 3.7 Consideration of Extraneous Variables

There were some issues that was taken into account during this research project. First, students at this school have the chance to cancel their classes. Therefore, some of them did not assisted to class regularly and it took longer time to finish with the application of the treatment. Another variable to be considered was the students' schedule. Most of the students of the B1 level had classes between 6 pm and 9pm and because of this they were sometimes tired in class. Finally, another possible issue that could have affected the research is the fact that tutors at Cg Corporation are prohibited to force students to do any homework and learners may have underestimated the need to practice the language at home.

### 3.8 Operationalization of the audio material production in the research

Since this investigation was aimed at being a useful tool for B1 level language learners, it carefully followed the three basic steps recommended by Deakin University (2014), which are planning, production, and publishing (p.10).

**Step one: Planning and drafting**

- In this stage, a survey was administered randomly to B1 students in some institutions and universities so that ideas about the students' real necessities could be gathered. Furthermore, there was a need to set up important elements, for example, the purpose for doing each section of the work, the recording material, and the voices to record the audio

material. Moreover, the National Curriculum and the CEFR also served as the basis to develop the audio material.

**Step two: Production and audio recording**

- A script and draft material was prepared before getting into the recording studio. Next, recording tools were tested before starting the production. The dialogues were recorded using native and non-native speakers' voices.

**Step three: Publishing**

- The material recorded became available in mp3 and other formats together with a booklet with useful recommendations about how to use the audio product; it can be found on the web, and can easily be downloaded, saved and reproduced in any mp3 player so that students can keep practicing speaking and improving conversational skills at any time and any place.

## 3.9 Hypothesis:

The use of the audio material based on CEFR will enhance the speaking skills of B1 students in the English language.

# Chapter IV

# Results

# Analysis and Interpretation

## 4.1 Results- Analysis and Interpretation

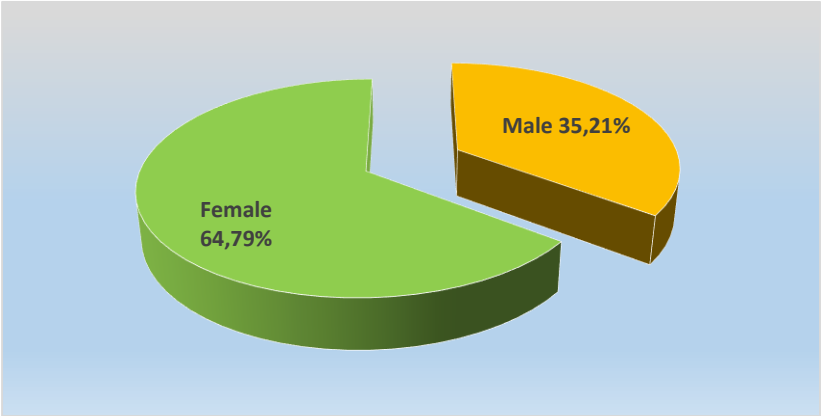
### 4.1.1 Survey outcomes

### Student survey

The survey was administered to 17 students of B1 English level of the experimental group at Cg Corporation (See Appendix 1). However, additional information was gathered through administering the survey to three more groups. The second group was made up of 22 students of second semester of Biochemistry and Pharmacy at the University of Cuenca. The third group was made up of 13 students of first semester of Organizational Psychology at Universidad del Azuay. Finally, the fourth group consisted of 19 students of the first semester of Medicine at Universidad del Azuay. The implementation of the survey to a wider group helped the researcher to gather more accurate information about the students' real problems and needs when learning the English language.

**Item 1: Gender**

Graph 5: Gender




**Source:** Portoviejo

The first result of the survey shows that most of the students who took part in the survey were women. It clearly shows that women have increased their participation in education. It helped the researcher to have an idea about the type of population who the material was meant to be used by.

**Item 2: Age**

Most of the students were between 15 and 19 years old. This is because there were three groups of first-year students from the universities already mentioned which were involved only in the survey. The students over 20 years old are the ones who study English at Cg Corporation institution because it has students of different ages.

Table 1: Age (years)

| Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 15-19 | 45 | 63,38% |
| 20-25 | 16 | 22,54% |
| 26-30 | 5 | 7,04% |
| 31-40 | 1 | 1,41% |
| > 40 | 4 | 5,63% |
| **Total** | **71** | **100,00%** |

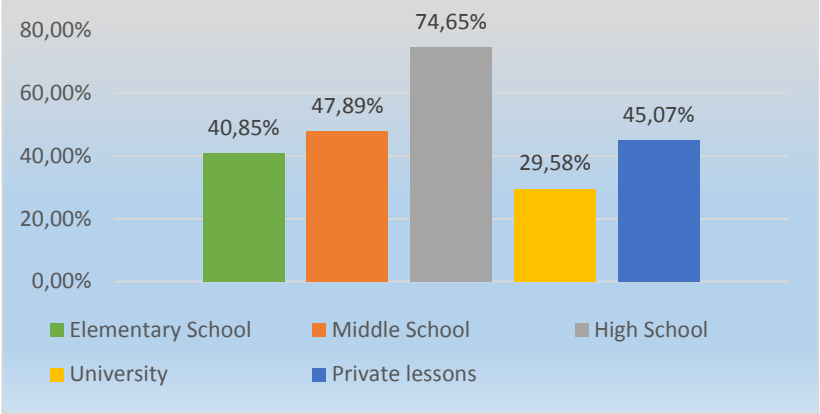
**Source:** Portoviejo

Most of the students who participated in the treatment group at Cg Corporation were already professionals in the age range between 25 and 40 years old.

**Item 3: Mark the boxes with an X according to the level of education in which you have studied English**.

One of the problems that affect EFL learning in Ecuador is that the English language was not mandatory to learn in most of the elementary schools. As a result, we have just 40.85 % of people who have received English language classes during their elementary school years. Graph 6 shows the values of the current item.

Graph 6: Educational institutions in which students learnt English




**Source:** Portoviejo

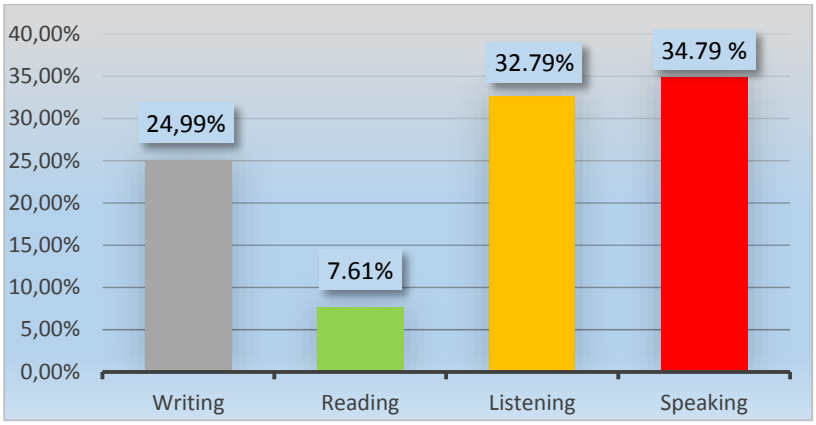
The category *High school* has the highest value of 74.65%. Nevertheless, it has a lower value than can be expected nowadays. Additionally, these days students still have problems with the methodology of how English is taught. The researcher's experience while doing the pre-professional practice was that a math teacher and a Spanish literature teacher were teaching English. Situations like that might have a negative effect on students' learning because there are not enough teachers yet.

It is very important to take into account that the categories *University* and *Private lessons* would have a significant variation if the survey was applied to students further along in their studies, because most of the students who participated in the survey were just taking the first or second semester at the university and some of them had not enrolled in the English language subject yet. However, some students stated that private lessons were preferable instead of

taking English language lessons at the university because the class schedule was a problem as they were studying the subject matter or working.

**Item 4: From your own point of view, which is the hardest skill to deal with?**

Graph 7: The hardest skill to deal with




**Source:** Portoviejo

According to the survey, the hardest skill for the students to master is *Speaking* with 34.79% and *Listening* with the value of 32.79 %, so the results are quite close to each other. This is because they are closely related to one another. For example, students need to be aware of the sounds that the English language has as compared to those of the Spanish language when having a conversation, otherwise their ideas might be misunderstood. Moreover, speaking and listening share similar elements like intonation, automatic management of ideas and the lexicon, and so forth. In both cases, interlocutors have less time to express their ideas than, for example, in writing. In addition, those features play an important

role when maintaining a conversation or a dialogue. The question was open-ended and allowed students to provide further information (See Appendix 2).

The following are the reasons that the students mentioned:

- Pronunciation is very difficult and the American accent is very different from the British accent.
- Native speakers express themselves too fast.
- A word can have different meanings according to the context.
- Lack of investment in education.
- It is hard to improvise in a conversation.
- Lack of vocabulary.
- Linking ideas is fairly difficult.
- New sounds in the English language are difficult to make.
- Pronunciation is different from writing.
- I do not practice speaking enough.
- There are different accents.

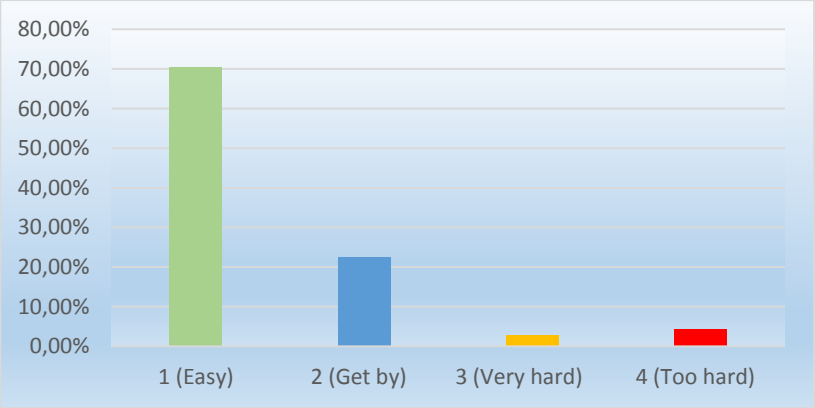
In the case of *Writing,* 24.99% of the students consider that it is the hardest skill to develop when they use the language. Some of them consider that writing is a very hard task because it requires good management of spelling, vocabulary, the use of the correct words when writing in formal language, and so forth. In addition, punctuation, conjunctions, and other grammatical elements are often seen to be a problem in the field of writing.

Finally, a skill that the students mention to have fewer problems with is in the area of *Reading*. It can be due to the fact that learners may have different tools which might help them to understand the ideas expounded in a text. Nevertheless, reading can become a big problem when it is about a specific field of knowledge in which a great number of technical words can be found; therefore, learners need to develop special skills to enhance comprehension.

**ITEM 5: Number the topics from 1 to 4 according to the degree of the problem you have when having to talk about them.**

**5.1 Asking for personal information like name, age, marital status, the place where people live, study and are from, their leisure activities, greetings and farewells and answering them**

Graph 8: Degree of problem when providing and asking for personal information




**Source:** Portoviejo

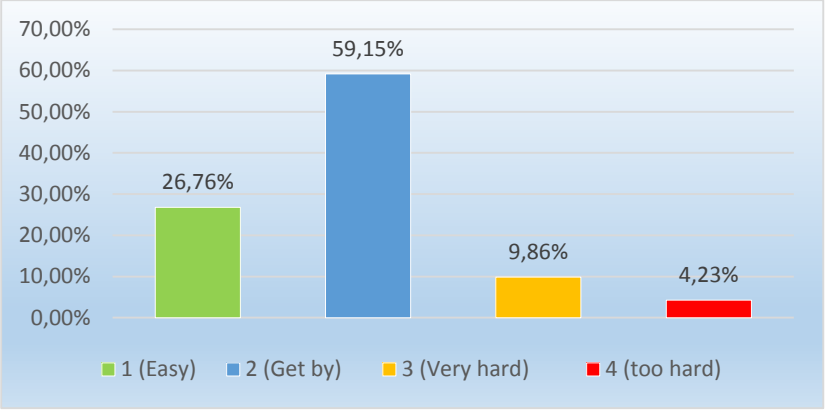
The data shows that 70.42% of the students consider that asking for personal information like name, age, marital status, the place where people live, study and are from, their leisure activities, greetings and farewells and answering them is easy. These types of topics are used every day by people to build new relationships with others. As a result, these are the topics that are more practiced and are easily tackled. Furthermore, we can observe that the variables *Get by* has a value of 22.54%. It is believed that students of the latter category still have problems with the use of the third person, and when to use the simple present and present continuous structure.

The categories *Very hard* has a value of 2.82% and *Too hard* has a value of 4.23%, which shows that only very few students struggle with expressing themselves when talking about the topics mentioned in the graph. Students who have been at B1 level when learning the English language say that it is *Very hard* and even *Too hard* to provide or ask for personal information. For these students, a possible reason can be that they find learning a new language to be useless because they do not use the language. However, at some point in the future they might feel the necessity of learning English when they have to travel abroad, or face problems at work because they cannot speak English or when they start their third level studies or go beyond that.

Looking at the whole picture, though, some issues like pronunciation and intonation are often forgotten and this may get in the way of communication.

### 5.2 Talking about past experiences, using simple past and the perfect tenses and pronounce correctly the regular and irregular verbs to express your ideas

Graph 9: Degree of the problem when having to talk about past experiences




**Source:** Portoviejo

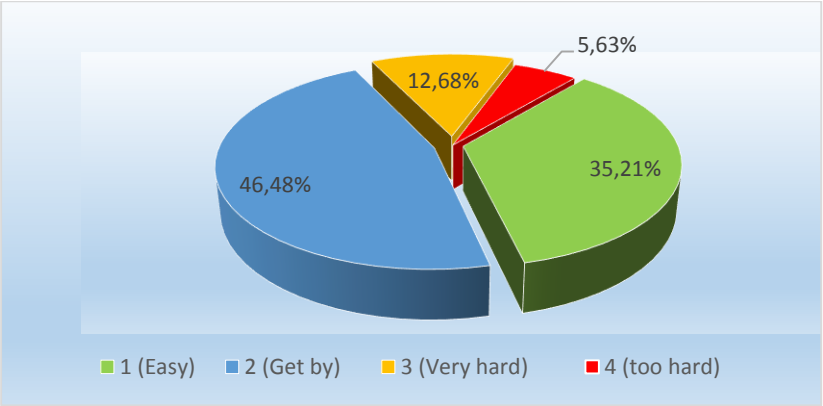
The category *Get by* has the highest percentage, which is 59.15%. Some students have problems with pronunciation, linking ideas, and fluency when expressing their thoughts and how to avoid hesitation. On the other hand, a total of 26.76% of the students consider that maintaining a conversation about past events is easy. However, they cannot deny that they have weaknesses in listening skills and this might affect their performance when having a conversation about past events.

The category *Very hard* has a value of 9.86% while 4.23% said that it is impossible for them to talk about past experiences. The reason why these students may have difficulty expressing themselves might be that talking about past events

requires special skills like the ability to pronounce the past forms of the regular verbs correctly and knowing when and how to use the different tenses. Another factor is that the past forms of irregular verbs are difficult to memorize. The challenge for the researcher was to design audio materials in order to help them to cover most of the issues that can arise when talking about past events in general.

### 5.3 Talking about your everyday activities and habits using connectors and the correct form of the verbs in simple present.

Graph 10: Degree of problem students have when talking about their habits and routines



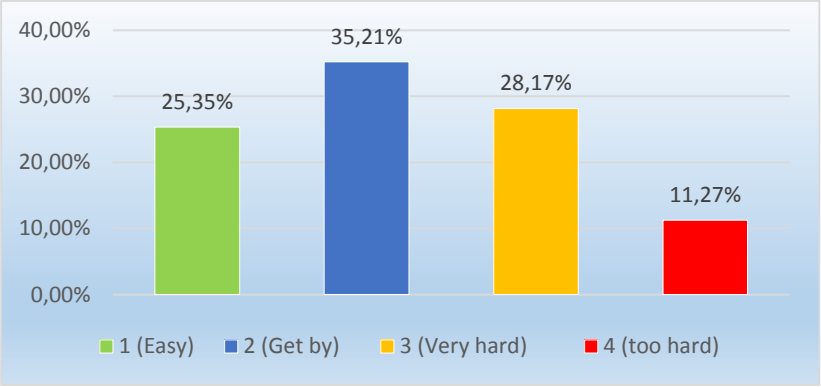

**Source:** Portoviejo

As it can be seen, Graph 10 shows that talking about everyday activities and habits using connectors and the correct forms of the verbs in the simple present have their own difficulties; the highest value of 46.48 % corresponds to the category *Get by*. The areas in which learners of this category report to need some prompting is in the management of vocabulary and pronunciation.

The category *Easy* has a value of 35.21%. A total of 12.68% of the learners have serious problems when using the third person singular. Cohesion is a further problem as students are only rarely taught about this aspect of discourse. Finally, 5.63% have no idea about how to express themselves when talking about their habits and routines, which shows that a small group of students have not been given the linguistic tools to accomplish this task. A further problem may be caused by the fact that students lack the technical vocabulary that they would need in order to talk about their everyday habits and routines. Talking about medicine, engineering or architecture would require training in the specialist vocabulary involved.

### 5.4 Maintaining a conversation about future plans and vacations using transition words (First, Second, Then, Additionally, etc.) without having a major problem with the vocabulary.

Graph 11: Degree of the problem students have when talking about future plans and vacations




**Source:** Portoviejo

In category 5.4, students say that talking about future plans and linking it with transition words is an issue, and 35.21 % of them can deal with this situation with difficulty only. The type of help that students in this category need are related with the use of linking words, vocabulary and they need to improve their speaking fluency as well. A somewhat lower proportion, 25.35 % of the learners state that they do not have any problems with the topic presented in this category.

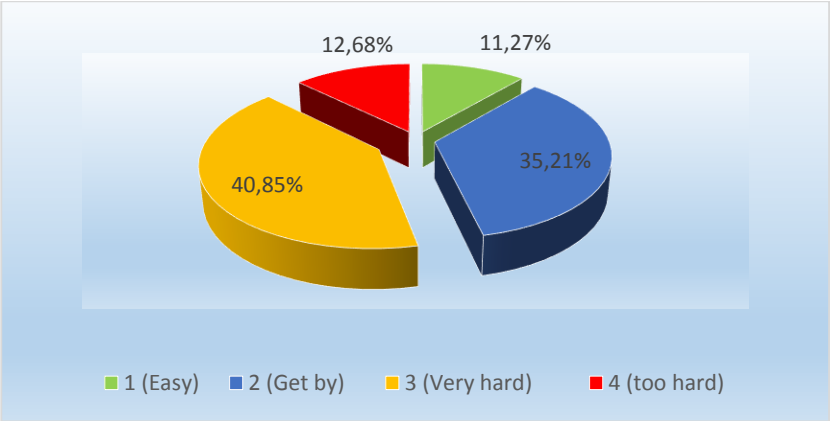
On the other hand, a high percentage, 28.17% consider that it is very hard to talk about future plans, especially when they need to use new vocabulary and contrast the use of basic structures like *will*, *be going to*, and using the present progressive to talk about the future. Additionally, another problem that students may have in this regard is the use of the adverbs of time and connectors. Furthermore, 11.27% of the learners think that it is almost impossible for them to express their ideas to refer to their future plans.

One may think of various reasons why students tend to struggle when needing to talk about their future plans, such as, for example, the use of auxiliaries that refer to the future. Students are sometimes at a loss when they are told that the present progressive can also be used to express actions in the immediate future. On occasion, the auxiliary *would* also causes confusion as it appears to be referring to the future, while in actual fact, it is a conditional.

### 5.5 Providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world.

Graph 12 shows that there is no doubt that providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world like violence, environment pollution, globalization, and so on, requires the skillful management of technical vocabulary, as well as sociolinguistic, grammatical, and other competences that were mentioned in chapter 2.

Graph 12: Degree of difficulty that students have when providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world




**Source:** Portoviejo

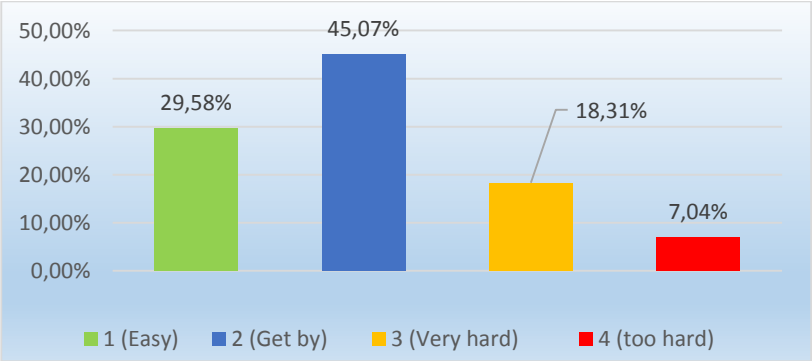
Almost 41% of the language learners consider that it is very hard. It is because there are a lot of factors that can influence performance. First, students need special skills to talk about global concerns. For example, critical thinking will be highly required when talking about globalization, because one needs to contrast advantages and disadvantages of this phenomenon. Moreover, a total of 12.68%

consider that it is almost too big a task to express their opinions about these topics, especially when they have gaps in their vocabulary. In the case of globalization, it will involve talking about additional issues that can be directly related to it, for example, politics, economy, health, education, culture, and so on.

A value of 35.21% of the category *Get by* represents the students who might be able to talk about global concerns. Nevertheless, learners need some prompts related to the vocabulary and special connectors that they might need in order to contrast their ideas, to give and support their opinions, and provide examples. Additionally, underestimating new sounds and pronunciation usually end in misunderstandings when taking part in discussions. Moreover, it is no surprise that only 11.27% of the students consider it easy to talk about the common problems we have all around the world.

**5.6 Expressing feelings and preferences in familiar situations.**

Graph 13: Degree of difficulty that students have when expressing feelings and preferences in familiar situations




**Source:** Portoviejo

Graph 13 shows that 45.07% of the students agree that they can express feelings and preferences in familiar situations with some help. The common problems that these types of learners have are pronunciation, the correct modal to be used, and new vocabulary. On the other hand, 18.31% of the learners consider that it is very hard, and they really need to enhance most of the elements required to speak fluently. For example, question intonation, pronunciation, grammar competencies, and vocabulary are among the usual problems. Nevertheless, a value of 39.58% of the students report that they do not have major problems in expressing preferences in familiar situations.

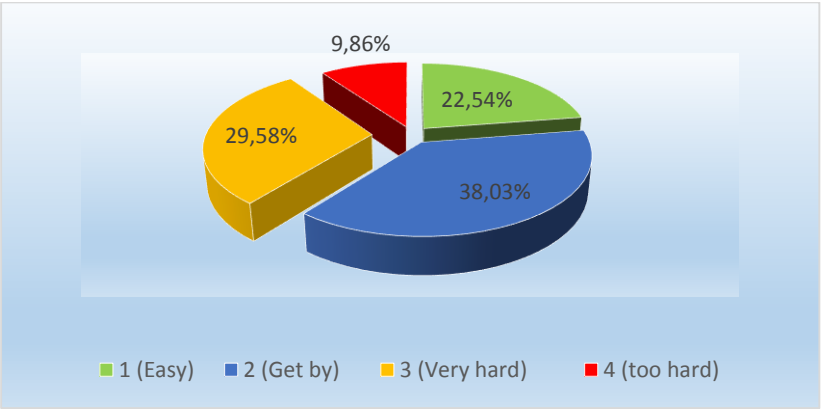
Finally, 7.04% of the learners state that it is too hard for them to talk about preferences. A common problem that students of this category have is with the use of *would rather*, *prefer*, and *would prefer* to talk about preferences. They need more exposure to the language. This would help them to express their ideas in a more natural way.

### 5.7 Dealing with shopping and making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant.

When people travel abroad, one of the problems that they are faced with is shopping; for example, asking about the price of the items they want to buy. Moreover, there might be a problem when asking for a discount, talking about the size, color, material, and so forth. Students need to use the modals of request correctly because it helps them to express their ideas in a better way and avoid

being rude. In some cases, it will be necessary to do some mathematical operations. In addition, making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant may become a nightmare when having to reserve a table for dinner or book a room for a couple of nights.

Graph 14: Degree of difficulty that students have when dealing with shopping and making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant

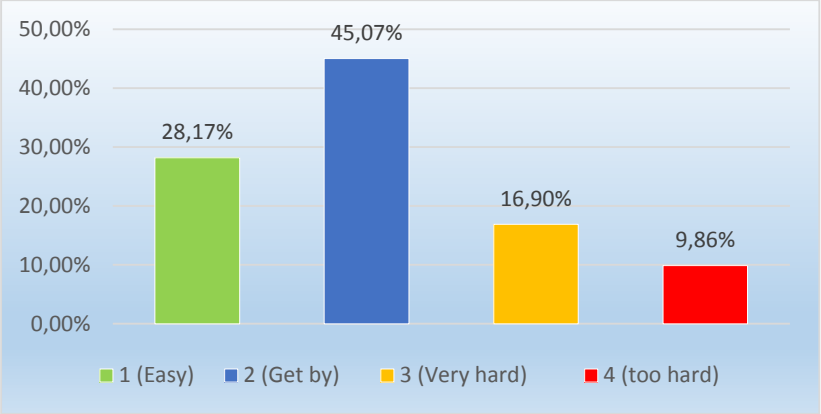



**Source:** Portoviejo

Even though 38.03% of the students consider that they can get by with some help, 29.58% of the learners state that it is very hard. It means that they will require an interpreter to help them. The problem can escalate even further when people speak very fast and this may cause misunderstandings. For instance, if there is a mistake about the type of food ordered, the customer might suffer serious consequences like allergies and so forth. In addition, 9.86% of the students agree that they are unable to deal with those problems. Finally, 22.54% of the students state that it is easy to manage these topics, because presumably they have good listening skills.

### 5.8 Talking about your everyday activities, experiences, aims, or goals related to your job or studies

Graph 15: Degree of difficulty that students have when talking about everyday activities related to their jobs or studies




**Source:** Portoviejo

As it can be seen, 28.17% have no problems when talking about their professional activities, while 45.07 % of the learners agree that they need some prompts related to technical words required to talk about their jobs and to express future goals.

A value of 16.90 % students consider that it is very hard, and 9.86 % think that it is far too difficult to talk about future goals or aims related to their jobs or studies. The last two values mean that students need to learn some technical vocabulary in order to communicate with their colleagues at work. In addition, it will be necessary to use linking words or transition words. Modal verbs may be needed for the right degree of formality, for example, when learners are required to

make a speech in their jobs. Professional relationships may have to be built and that necessitates precise and to the point vocabulary usage.

### 4.2 Pre-test and Post-test outcomes

The pre- and post-test results of the speaking performance were assessed by taking into account four main rubrics, which were Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, and Interactive Communication (See Appendix 3).

In order to measure the outcomes quantitatively, the tests were graded over 28 points. All the items stated in the Cambridge English Language Assessment were observed. Two points were assigned for each category within the rubrics. Grades between 26- 28 were considered Excellent, 23- 25 Good, 20-22, Average 17- 19 Passing, and < 17 failing (See Appendix 4).

The topic dedicated for the research was chapter 8 of the booklet which is Famous Characters. First, the students chose a reading passage to go over. It was about Barack Obama, Jack Nicholson and others. (See Appendix 3). Then, after having a short talk with the facilitator, students were assigned to talk about a famous character that they chose. They were urged to use mainly simple past and present perfect in order to express their ideas and provide basic information about a famous character (See Appendix 5).

### 4.2.1 Pre-test outcomes

Table 2: Pre-test outcomes

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 1 | 5,88% |
| Good | 2 | 11,76% |
| Average | 7 | 41,18% |
| Passing | 1 | 5,88% |
| Failing | 6 | 35,29% |
| Total | 17 | 100.00% |

**Source:** Portoviejo

In reference to the pre-test, the categories *Failing* with 35.29% and *Average* with 41.18% have the highest values. For instance, the rubrics in which most of students had problems were in *Pronunciation*, and *Grammar and Vocabulary*. In addition, pronunciation had other sub-items to be taken into account which were intonation and sentence stress in which students did not do well. This is because according to the regular methodology applied in the classroom, listening and speaking have not been emphasized as primary skills even though they serve as the basis for communicating ideas. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the students had bad grades, because they were not well prepared. Some specific problems that students had in class were that they felt very shy when having to speak. This might be because learners were worried about making mistakes. As a result, teacher speaking time increased, but the learners' opportunities to participate

decreased, and they did not practice enough. Moreover, it was observed that reading and writing skills were emphasized over listening and speaking. For example, when it was time for language production, most of the drills were performed mechanically in writing instead of giving the students the freedom to express their feelings or opinions about a specific topic facilitated by the teacher.

In the institution, teachers prefer to use drills because it is the easiest way of evaluating the students' ability to use the language. However, when those drills based exclusively on writing are used, students practice only grammar and vocabulary and these elements are easily forgotten because the drills that the teachers are using are not meaningful. That is why students have fewer problems when using the language to perform reading and writing activities. Another problem that affects EFL learners is the fact that most of them think in Spanish first, and then, they try to translate those ideas literally into English.

The category *Excellent* with 5.88% represents the students who had previous knowledge before starting to take English language lessons at the institution, and 11.76% did well. The weak areas of these groups of students were the management of vocabulary, problems with pronunciation and fluency. Finally, the category *Passing* with 5.88% shows that the learners had the basis to be promoted to the next lesson, but there is a considerable problem when important points are underestimated like the speakers' intonation, if their ideas are coherent, and whether they use connectors to link their ideas.

### 4.2.2 During activities

The treatment period was carried out according to its respective unit plan and using the corresponding materials (See Appendix 6). The topic was presented through the audio material, this time the famous character was Tylor Swift. After that, all the activities contained in chapter 8 were done by the students and the teacher using the material designed to improve speaking micro-skills and listening.

### 4.2.3 Post-test outcomes

After performing all the activities in the previous stage, students prepared a final presentation about their favorite music genre and the famous character who represents the genre.

Table 3: Post-test Outcomes

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 1 | 5,88% |
| Good | 6 | 35,29% |
| Average | 3 | 17,65% |
| Passing | 5 | 29,41% |
| Failing | 2 | 11,77% |
| Total | 17 | 100,00% |

**Source:** Portoviejo

The results of the post-test shows that the variable *Good* has a 23.23 percentage points increase, while another significant value of the variable *Failing*

has a 23.52 percentage point decrease. However, the variable *Excellent* did not change its value of 5.88% in the pre and the post-test. The rubrics in which students improved their grades were in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Students also enhanced their discourse management skills. As connectors were emphasized, students' ideas were better understood. Pronunciation improved due to new sounds being practiced, such as the schwa sound ***/ə/***, short I ***/ĩ/***, and other new sounds. Students tend to not hear the difference between a Spanish A ***/ä/*** and the Schwa sound ***/ə/***; therefore, they cannot produce them either.

Intonation in questions and emphasizing any element in their ideas had a considerable positive effect. Additionally, some students learnt to use more complex grammar forms. One may assume that this was the result of the fact that student speaking time increased. The students had more choices to express their ideas orally in most of the activities before and after using the audio material. Also, it helped them to have more ideas about the topics that can be included in their small talk. Moreover, brainstorming activities contributed to building up specific vocabulary needed for their presentations and having the opportunity to ask questions and provide ideas or opinions about the topic in discussion before having to talk about their famous character.

Since students' speaking time increased, a considerable improvement was observed in the avoidance of hesitation, which was an item to be taken into account in the rubric of discourse management. Finally, students felt more freedom

to communicate their ideas and feelings because their teachers were encouraged to help students to understand that the English language is not a subject to study in the classroom, but it is a tool to communicate with one another.

# CHAPTER V

## Conclusions and Recommendations

After designing the audio material to improve essential level B1 conversations and applying chapter 8 to the students at CG Corporation, Cuenca branch, some conclusions and recommendations were drawn in the present research.

### 5.1 Conclusions

- Most of the students at Cg Corp who participated in the experimental group where professionals, they reported to have problems with the time that they have available to practice the language and to attend classes.
- Most of the students considered that they need more contact with the language in order to become more confident about holding a conversation. It could be evidenced at the moment of performing some activities in the class that they preferred to do written activities rather than perform speaking activities because they were afraid of making mistakes.
- The use of audio material when learning English as a foreign language at CG Corporation in Cuenca was a powerful tool to enhance speaking and listening skills. It also helped the students to practice making sounds which are not part of the Spanish language as well as intonation. For instance, students learnt that phonation organs move in a different way in order to make a sound. A specific case was that learners mixed up the schwa sound

**/ə/** of the English language and the vowel “a” present in the Spanish language **/ä/.** Students did not recognize the schwa sound when practicing the pronunciation of regular verbs in standard American English in the past tense. The input provided by the audio material in the booklet helped them to isolate the new sound.

- The students did not have any problem to access the audio material because it was shared through a USB flash drive. In addition, it has a web page from which the material can be downloaded. It is https://englishxp.blogspot.com
- The booklet designed for B1 level students of the English language proved to be effective for the students in practicing the language out of the class. Learners reported that the material allowed them to reinforce the topic revised in class out of it as well.
- One of the issues that could have affected the results of the research is the number of students who took part of the experimental group. There were only 17 students who took part in the research.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- Students should start learning EFL since the very early stages of their lives. Most of the EFL students found that learning English became more difficult when starting to learn the language after they started their professional

development because most of them have problems with time that should be dedicated to practicing the language.

- It is also recommended that teachers at CG Corporation should emphasize oral communication in class rather than grammar rules, they can make use of audio material to practice listening and speaking and to have a guide to create communicative activities which makes learning more meaningful.
- The audio material is highly recommended to be used by EFL students and teachers because they can practice intonation, pronunciation, listening to different accents and other elements.
- Facilitators should always be up to date with ICT's.
- Students should be encouraged to use audio materials to enhance listening and they should use it when speaking outside the classroom as well. This is because these types of materials help them to have more contact with the language.
- When trying to perform a similar research project on this topic, it will be recommended to apply it to a wider range of students in order to have a more accurate idea about the effectiveness of the use of audio materials to enhance speaking and listening skills.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Survey.

Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

Survey

The purpose of the following survey is to gather some information about problems students have in the speaking skill when learning the English language. The information is confidential.

1) Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

2) Age

_____

3) Mark the boxes with an **X** according to the level of education in which you have studied English.

Elementary school ☐ Middle school ☐ High school ☐

University ☐ Private lessons ☐

4) From your own point of view, which is the hardest skill to deal with?

Writing ☐ Reading ☐ Listening ☐ Speaking ☐

Provide some reasons.

_____

_____

_____

5) Number the topics from 1 to 4 according to the degree of problem you have when having to talk about them. **1** (Easy) **2** (Get by) **3** (Very hard) **4** (too hard)

| Topic | Degree of difficulty |
|---|---|
| Asking for personal information like name, age, marital status, the place where people live, study and are from, their leisure activities, greetings and farewells and answering them. | ____ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Talking about past experiences, using simple past and the perfect tenses and pronounce correctly the regular and irregular verbs to express your ideas. | ____ |
| Talking about your everyday activities and habits using connectors and the correct form of the verbs in simple present. | ____ |
| Maintaining a conversation about future plans and vacations using transition words (First, Second, Then, Additionally, etc.) without having a major problem with the vocabulary. | ____ |
| Providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world. | ____ |
| Expressing feelings and preferences in familiar situations. | ____ |
| Dealing with shopping and making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant. | ____ |
| Talking about your everyday activities, experiences, aims, or goals related to your job or studies. | ____ |

**Thank you for your collaboration.**

## Appendix 2: Samples of the applied survey.

**See comments in *Item 4.***

Universidad de Cuenca
Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación
Escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

Survey

The purpose of the following survey is to gather some information about problems students have in the speaking skill when learning the English language. The information is confidential.

1) Gender

Male ☐ Female ☒

2) Age

17

3) Mark the boxes with an **X** according to the level of education in which you have studied English.

Elementary school ☐ Middle school ☐ High school ☒ University ☐

Private lessons ☐

4) From your own point of view, which is the hardest skill to deal with?

Writing ☐ Reading ☐ Listening ☒ Speaking ☐

Provide some reasons.

Because there are a lot of accents which are difficult to understand.

Because of the voice tones

5) Number the topics from 1 to 4 according to the degree of problems you have when having to talk about them. **1** (Easy) **2** (Get by) **3** (Very hard) **4** (too hard)

| Topic | Degree of difficulty |
|---|---|
| Asking for personal information like name, age, marital status, the place where people live, study and are from, their leisure activities, greetings and farewells and answering them. | 1 |
| Talking about past experiences, using simple past and the perfect tenses and pronounce correctly the regular and irregular verbs to express your ideas. | 1 |
| Talking about your everyday activities and habits using connectors and the correct form of the verbs in simple present. | 2 |
| Maintaining a conversation about future plans and vacations using transition words (First, Second, Then, Additionally, etc.) without having a major problem with the vocabulary. | 1 |
| Providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world. | 2 |
| Expressing feelings and preferences in familiar situations. | 1 |
| Dealing with shopping and making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant. | 1 |
| Talking about your everyday activities, experiences, aims, or goals related to your job or studies. | 2 |

**Thank you for your collaboration.**

**Source**: Portoviejo

Universidad de Cuenca
Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación
Escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

Survey

The purpose of the following survey is to gather some information about problems students have in the speaking skill when learning the English language. The information is confidential.

1) Gender

Male ☒ Female ☐

2) Age

20

3) Mark the boxes with an **X** according to the level of education in which you have studied English.

Elementary school ☐ Middle school ☐ High school ☒ University ☐

Private lessons ☐

4) From your own point of view, which is the hardest skill to deal with?

Writing ☐ Reading ☐ Listening ☐ Speaking ☒

Provide some reasons.

Because i don't practice too much my speaking.

5) Number the topics from 1 to 4 according to the degree of problems you have when having to talk about them. **1** (Easy) **2** (Get by) **3** (Very hard) **4** (too hard)

| Topic | Degree of difficulty |
|---|---|
| Asking for personal information like name, age, marital status, the place where people live, study and are from, their leisure activities, greetings and farewells and answering them. | 1 |
| Talking about past experiences, using simple past and the perfect tenses and pronounce correctly the regular and irregular verbs to express your ideas. | 2 |
| Talking about your everyday activities and habits using connectors and the correct form of the verbs in simple present. | 1 |
| Maintaining a conversation about future plans and vacations using transition words (First, Second, Then, Additionally, etc.) without having a major problem with the vocabulary. | 2 |
| Providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world. | 2 |
| Expressing feelings and preferences in familiar situations. | 1 |
| Dealing with shopping and making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant. | 2 |
| Talking about your everyday activities, experiences, aims, or goals related to your job or studies. | 1 |

**Thank you for your collaboration.**

**Source:** Portoviejo

Universidad de Cuenca
Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación
Escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

Survey

The purpose of the following survey is to gather some information about problems students have in the speaking skill when learning the English language. The information is confidential.

1) Gender

Male ☐ Female ☒

2) Age

23

3) Mark the boxes with an X according to the level of education in which you have studied English.

Elementary school ☒ Middle school ☒ High school ☒ University ☒

Private lessons ☐

4) From your own point of view, which is the hardest skill to deal with?

Writing ☐ Reading ☐ Listening ☐ Speaking ☒

Provide some reasons.

Porque la pronunciación es difícil, y no puedo organizar la ideas que deseo expresar.

5) Number the topics from 1 to 4 according to the degree of problems you have when having to talk about them. 1 (Easy) 2 (Get by) 3 (Very hard) 4 (too hard)

| Topic | Degree of difficulty |
|---|---|
| Asking for personal information like name, age, marital status, the place where people live, study and are from, their leisure activities, greetings and farewells and answering them. | 2 |
| Talking about past experiences, using simple past and the perfect tenses and pronounce correctly the regular and irregular verbs to express your ideas. | 2 |
| Talking about your everyday activities and habits using connectors and the correct form of the verbs in simple present. | 3 |
| Maintaining a conversation about future plans and vacations using transition words (First, Second, Then, Additionally, etc.) without having a major problem with the vocabulary. | 3 |
| Providing opinions and advice about typical problems that we have all around the world. | 3 |
| Expressing feelings and preferences in familiar situations. | 2 |
| Dealing with shopping and making a reservation in a hotel or in a restaurant. | 3 |
| Talking about your everyday activities, experiences, aims, or goals related to your job or studies. | 3 |

**Thank you for your collaboration.**

**Source:** Portoviejo

## Appendix 3: Pre-test and Post-test Rubrics

### a) Grammar and Vocabulary

Cambridge English

**Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1**

| Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING<br>GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY | |
|---|---|
| Name of student | |
| Does the speaker use simple grammatical forms with control? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker attempt to use complex grammatical forms? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker use a range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Comments | |

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## b) Discourse Management

# Cambridge English

### Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1

| Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING<br>DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT | |
|---|---|
| Name of student | |
| Are the answers of an appropriate length for the task? Is there much hesitation? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Are the contributions relevant? Is there much repetition of ideas? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker organise their contributions and use cohesive devices? Is there a range? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Comments | |

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## c) Pronunciation

Cambridge English

**Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1**

| Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING<br>PRONUNCIATION | |
|---|---|
| Name of student | |
| Are the answers clear? Can the speaker be generally understood? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Is the speaker's intonation generally appropriate? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker use sentence stress generally correctly? Is word stress correct? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Are individual sounds generally clear? Are they correctly produced? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Comments | |

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## d) Interactive Communication

# Cambridge English

### Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1

| Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING<br>INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION | |
|---|---|
| Name of student | |
| Does the speaker start discussions? Does the speaker introduce new ideas? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker react appropriately to what the interlocutor or other candidate says? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker keep the interaction going? Does the speaker say more than the minimum? Does the speaker involve the other candidate? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Does the speaker try to move the interaction in an appropriate direction? ('develop the interaction and negotiate towards an outcome') Does the speaker need support? | |
| Good | Not so good |
| Comments | |

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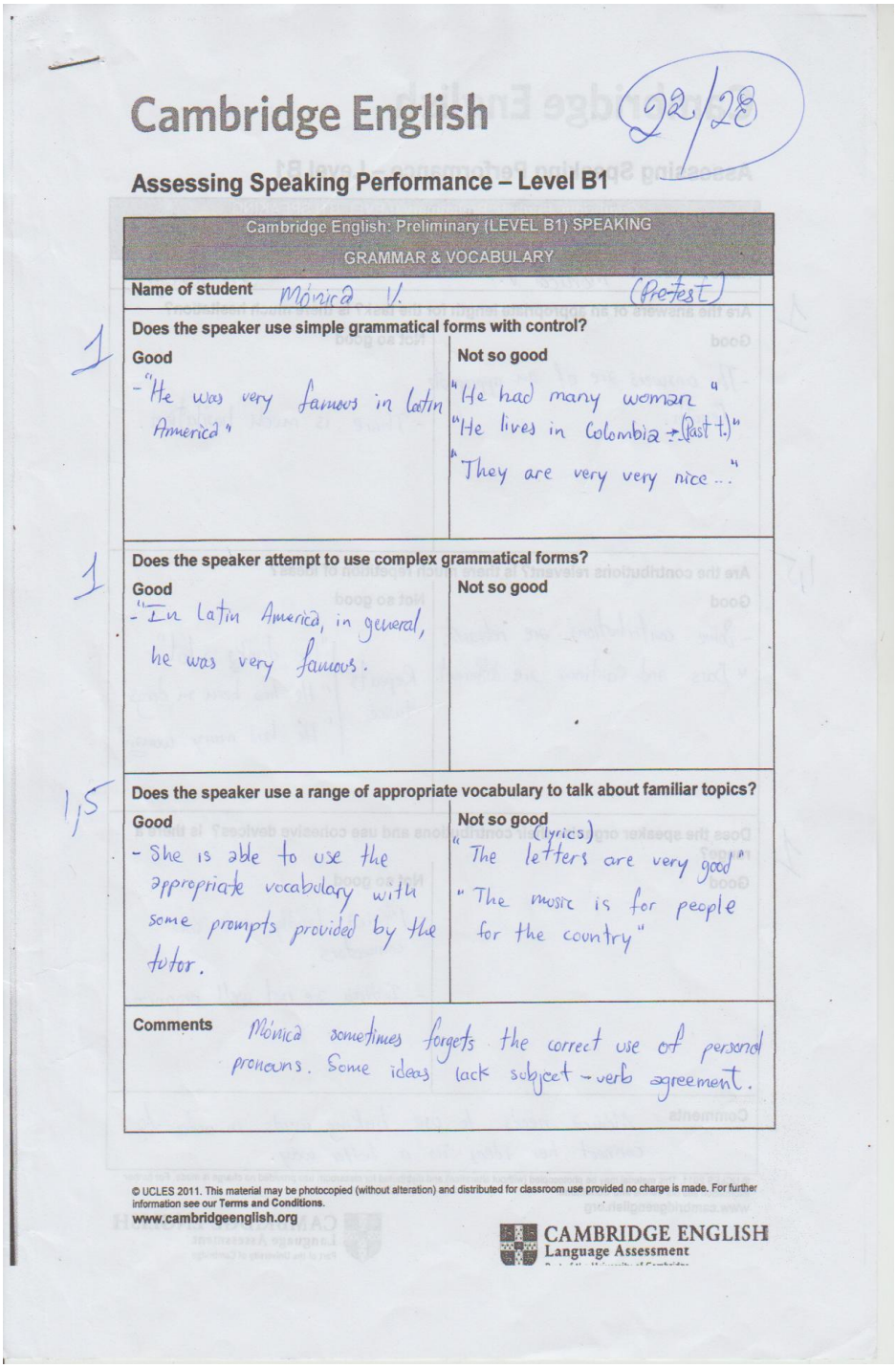
**Appendix 4:** Scoring the rubrics.



Cambridge English

22/28

Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1

Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING

GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY

Name of student Mónica V. (Pretest)

1

Does the speaker use simple grammatical forms with control?

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - "He was very famous in latin America" | "He had many woman" "He lives in Colombia (Past t.)" "They are very very nice..." |

1

Does the speaker attempt to use complex grammatical forms?

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - "In latin America, in general, he was very famous. | |

1,5

Does the speaker use a range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics?

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - She is able to use the appropriate vocabulary with some prompts provided by the tutor. | "The letters (lyrics) are very good" "The music is for people for the country" |

Comments Mónica sometimes forgets the correct use of personal pronouns. Some ideas lack subject - verb agreement.

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# Cambridge English

## Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1

Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING

DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT

Name of student Mónica V. (Pre-test)

1

**Are the answers of an appropriate length for the task? Is there much hesitation?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - The answers are of an appropriate length. | - There is much hesitation. |

1,5

**Are the contributions relevant? Is there much repetition of ideas?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Some contributions are relevant.<br>* Bars and Cantinas are different. | Repeats twice: "He drinks a lot" / "He has been in drugs" / "He had many woman" |

1

**Does the speaker organise their contributions and use cohesive devices? Is there a range?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| | - Mónica hardly ever uses connectors.<br>- Ideas are not well organized |

Comments Mónica needs to use linking words in order to connect her ideas in a better way.

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# Cambridge English

## Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1

**Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING**

**INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION**

2 **Name of student** Mónica V. (Pretest)

**Does the speaker start discussions? Does the speaker introduce new ideas?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Mónica can introduce new ideas with no major problem. | |

2 **Does the speaker react appropriately to what the interlocutor or other candidate says?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Reacts appropriately to what the tutor says. | |

2 **Does the speaker keep the interaction going? Does the speaker say more than the minimum? Does the speaker involve the other candidate?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - The student is able to keep the interaction. | |

1,5 **Does the speaker try to move the interaction in an appropriate direction? ('develop the interaction and negotiate towards an outcome') Does the speaker need support?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Tries to move the interaction in an appropriate direction. | - Sometimes mixes ideas.<br>- Needs some prompts. |

**Comments** Mónica needs to practice how to organize her ideas in a better way.

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CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment

# Cambridge English

## Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1

Cambridge English: Preliminary (LEVEL B1) SPEAKING

PRONUNCIATION

Name of student Mónica V. (Pretest)

2 **Are the answers clear? Can the speaker be generally understood?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Ideas are generally understood. | |

2 **Is the speaker's intonation generally appropriate?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Shows a good level in the use of intonation. | |

2 **Does the speaker use sentence stress generally correctly? Is word stress correct?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Word stress is good. | - sú̲ccess |

1,5 **Are individual sounds generally clear? Are they correctly produced?**

| Good | Not so good |
|---|---|
| - Individual sounds are generally clear. | - society<br>- drugs<br>- famous<br>- Short I sound in the English language is not pronounced. |

**Comments** Mónica needs to keep practicing the Short I sound and the Schwa sound.

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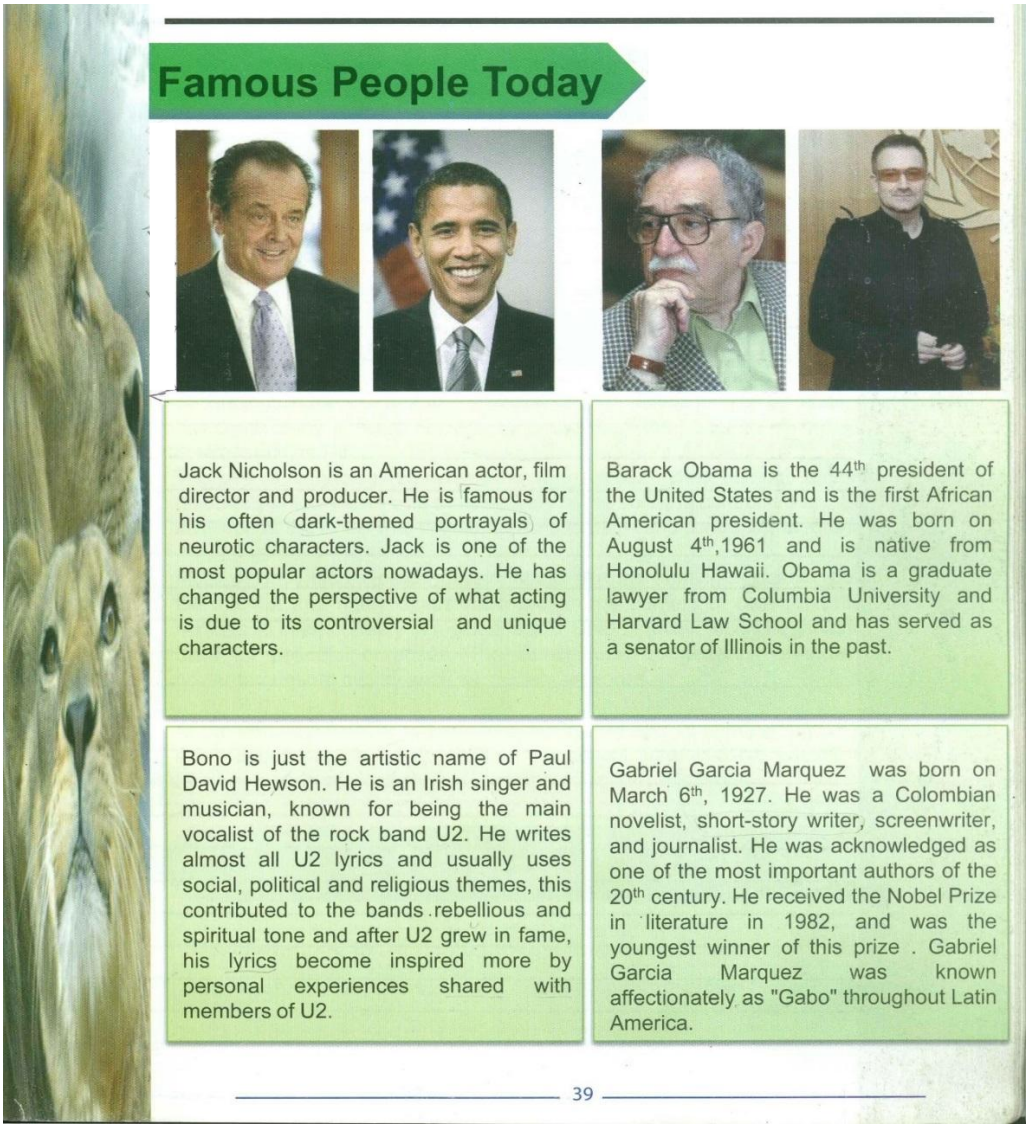
**Source:** Portoviejo

## Appendix 5: Pre-test material

### Reading.

Read the following paragraphs about the Famous People Today and answer the following questions.



**Famous People Today**

Jack Nicholson is an American actor, film director and producer. He is famous for his often dark-themed portrayals of neurotic characters. Jack is one of the most popular actors nowadays. He has changed the perspective of what acting is due to its controversial and unique characters.

Barack Obama is the 44th president of the United States and is the first African American president. He was born on August 4th,1961 and is native from Honolulu Hawaii. Obama is a graduate lawyer from Columbia University and Harvard Law School and has served as a senator of Illinois in the past.

Bono is just the artistic name of Paul David Hewson. He is an Irish singer and musician, known for being the main vocalist of the rock band U2. He writes almost all U2 lyrics and usually uses social, political and religious themes, this contributed to the bands rebellious and spiritual tone and after U2 grew in fame, his lyrics become inspired more by personal experiences shared with members of U2.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born on March 6th, 1927. He was a Colombian novelist, short-story writer, screenwriter, and journalist. He was acknowledged as one of the most important authors of the 20th century. He received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1982, and was the youngest winner of this prize . Gabriel Garcia Marquez was known affectionately as "Gabo" throughout Latin America.

39

**Source**: Cg Corporation (n.d.)

**Speaking:**

a) *According to the book,* why has Jack Nicholson changed the perspective of what acting is? Has Barack Obama served as a Senator of California in the past?

b) Mention 3 famous Ecuadorians nowadays, why do you think they are famous?

c) *Over to you*

Prepare a small oral presentation about your favorite character, remember to use mainly past tense and present perfect tense to express your ideas.

## Appendix 6: During activities

### a) Unit Plan

| UNIT PLAN | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **General Information** | | | |
| **Unit Title:** Music Genres | | **Classroom Level:** B1 | |
| **Subject Area: EFL** | | | |
| **B. Communicative Competence Components:** | | | |
| - To express and support our opinions about music genres and their most famous representatives. | | | |
| **C. Unit rationale:** | | | |
| It is very important for learners to know about how to support their opinions or ideas using the appropriate connectors when having a discussion or expressing themselves about music preferences. In addition, it is essential for students to be aware that there are different ways of expressing ideas about past events. | | | |
| **D. Goals:** | | | |
| - To learn how to use connectors correctly.<br>- To learn how to make the Schwa sound.<br>- To distinguish de difference between the use of the present perfect and the simple past tense when using them to express ideas. | | | |
| **Objectives** | **Content** | **Learning Activities** | **Periods** |
| - To introduce the topic for discussion and practice the listening and speaking skills. | - Vocabulary | - Students listen and follow the news (audio material and its handbook, Chapter 8: lesson 8.1). | 9 |
| | | - Students and the teacher work on the vocabulary related to the listening section. | |
| - To help the students to develop comprehension skills. | | - *Speaking*<br>Students answer the questions in the handbook and the audio material lesson 8.2 to make sure the students understood the listening section.<br>-The teacher gives feedback. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - To help the students with basic vocabulary used to talk about music and genres. | - New vocabulary | - Students read about Music Genres, Students book page 17. | |
| - To pronounce the words correctly. | | - The tutor helps the students with the Vocabulary and pronunciation activities related to the text. | |
| - To know about music and diversity in Ecuador. | | - Students are asked about famous music genres in Ecuador and all around the world and give their opinions about them. | |
| - To connect the ideas correctly. | - Linking words | - While students talk, the teacher provides some connectors so that students can use them in order to express their opinions. | |
| - To help the students to make sounds in the English language. | - The Schwa sound | - The students practice making the Schwa sound in the *–ed* ending pronunciation of some regular verbs in the past tense (Standard American Accent). | |
| - To pronounce the regular verbs -ed ending correctly. | - Regular verbs pronunciation (-ed ending) | - The teacher present some tips to practice the pronunciation of some regular verbs in the past tense using the exercise 8.3 of the handbook and the audio material. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | – The students identify the regular verbs in the lesson 8.1 of the handbook and try to pronounce them correctly.<br>- Students practice pronunciationusing the list of regular verbs in the past tense. | |
| | - Present perfect vs simple past | - The tutor provides the students some useful tips to differentiate between the use of the simple past and the present perfect. | |
| | - Contractions<br>- Pronunciation | - The students practice the contractions in the use of present perfect tense using the audio material and the handbook: lesson 8.4. | |
| - To use the appropriate intonation in questions. | - Intonation in questions. | - The students practice basic intonation in questions using the handbook and the audio material: lesson 8.5. | |
| - To evaluate the students' progress in talking about music genres. | | - **(Evaluation):**The students prepare a final presentation about their favorite music genre and the famous character who belongs to the genre. | |

| |
|---|
| **E. List of resources:** https://educacion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/09/Planning_Guidelines_anual_unidad_lecci%F3n-EFL_100913.pdf |
| **F. List of Materials:** Audio material for improving essential level B1 conversations according to the Common European Framework, The audio material handbook, CG Corporation Teacher's book, MP3 player, markers and whiteboard. |
| Tutor  Director  CG Corporation  Firma Autorizada |

**Source:** Portoviejo

**b) Materials:**

- **Handbook (Chapter 8)**

**CHAPTER 8**

**FAMOUS PEOPLE**

**Learning goal:** To be able to talk about past events using different grammatical structures.

**Lesson 8.1 Listen and follow the news.**

**Famous Characters Nowadays**

*(The announcer)*

The American singer and songwriter of country music, Tylor Swift, **won** two Grammy Awards this year. The young singer of only 26 years **has gathered** ten Grammy Awards. The successful lady **was born** in Pennsylvania. She **debuted** with her first album in which *Love Story* and *Teardrops on my Guitar,* when she **was** 16, **had sold** more than 2.5 million of copies. She **has won** several music awards like the MTV music awards for the Best Female Video "Love Story", 1 Emmy Award,

7 Country Music Association, 10 Grammy Awards, 13 BMI awards and more. Several songs by Tylor Swift **have been** on the top ten Billboard chart. She has records in selling her songs all around the world. She is the first woman to win two Grammies at the same time and it **happened** in February 2016. Congratulations to Tylor Swift once more.

**Source**: BIO.com (2016)

**Lesson 8.2 Comprehension.**

**Speaking**

a) Mention three awards that Tylor Swift has won.
b) What does a songwriter do?
c) Mention 7 things your favorite character has done in order to become a successful professional.

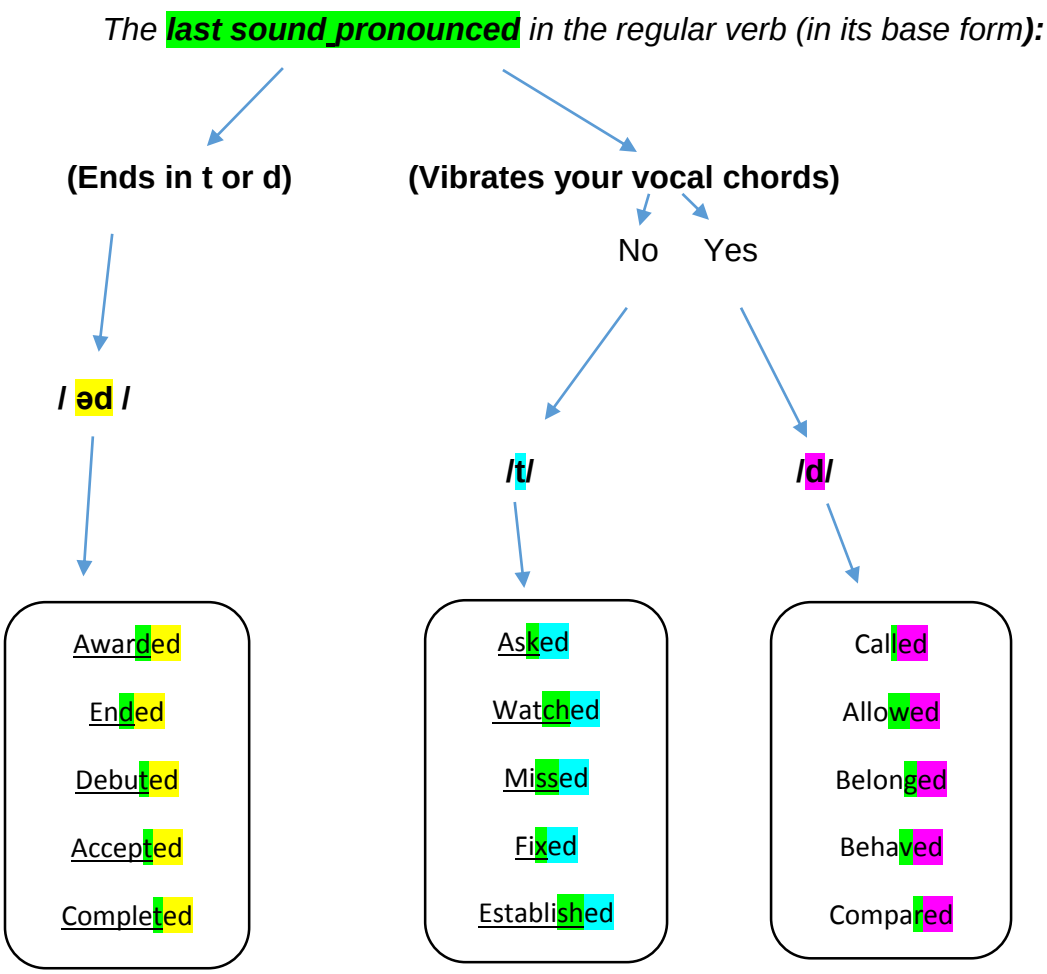
d) Discussion:

Do you think people are famous because they have been lucky?

Make arguments in favor of your ideas.

**Lesson 8.3: Listen and Repeat.**

Regular verbs (– ***ed*** ending)




**Lesson 8.4 Contractions**

She**'s** won ten Grammy Awards**.**

I**'ve** worked here for three years.

They **haven't** done it yet.

Kevin **hasn't** done the dishes.

**Lesson 8.5 Intonation in questions**

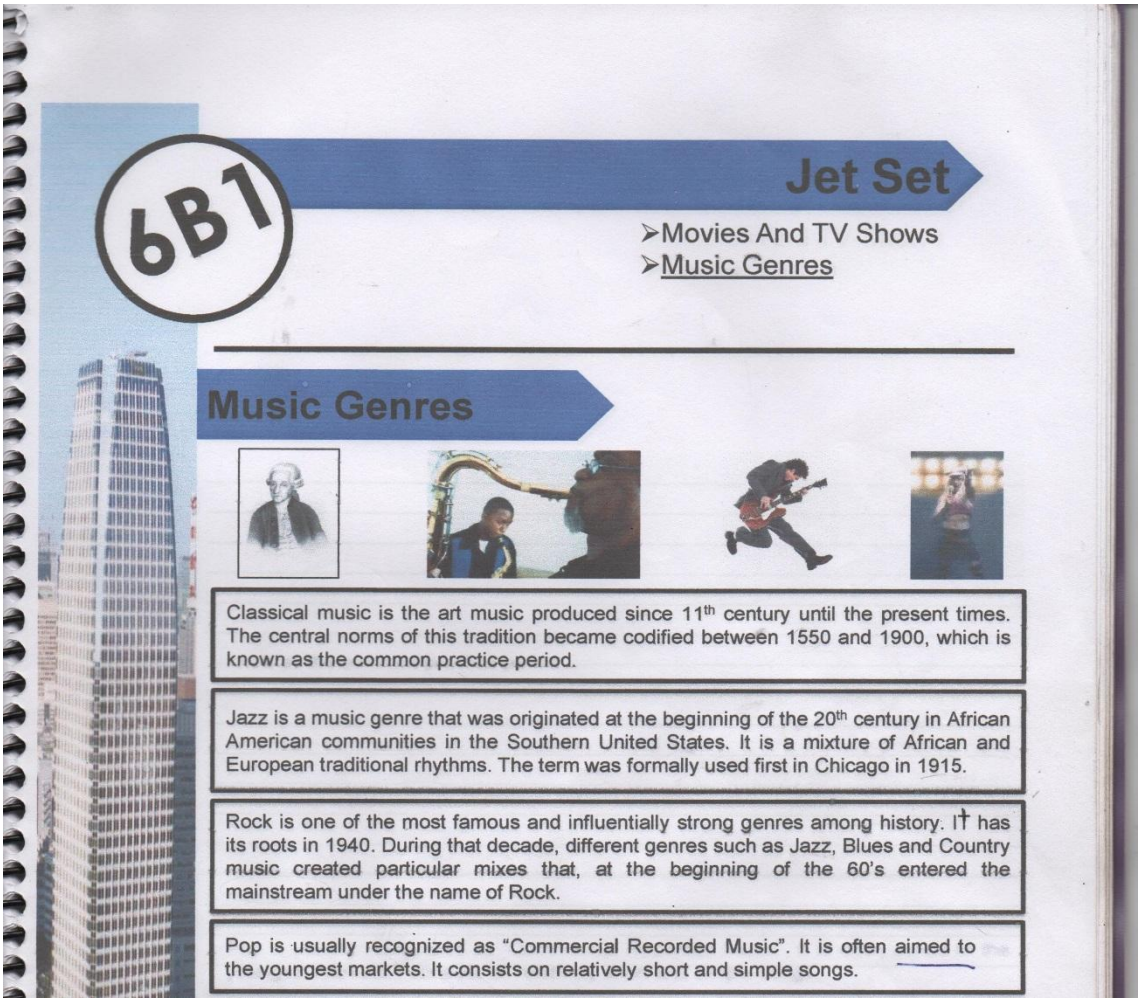
**Rising Intonation (Yes-no questions)**

Have you bought another computer?

**Falling intonation (Information questions)**

Why have you bought another computer?

## Music and Genres (Reading material)



6B1

Jet Set

- Movies And TV Shows
- Music Genres

Music Genres

Classical music is the art music produced since 11th century until the present times. The central norms of this tradition became codified between 1550 and 1900, which is known as the common practice period.

Jazz is a music genre that was originated at the beginning of the 20th century in African American communities in the Southern United States. It is a mixture of African and European traditional rhythms. The term was formally used first in Chicago in 1915.

Rock is one of the most famous and influentially strong genres among history. It has its roots in 1940. During that decade, different genres such as Jazz, Blues and Country music created particular mixes that, at the beginning of the 60's entered the mainstream under the name of Rock.

Pop is usually recognized as "Commercial Recorded Music". It is often aimed to the youngest markets. It consists on relatively short and simple songs.

**Source**: CG Corporation (n.d.)

## Common Linking Words

**Worksheet B1: Search for the meaning and fill in the blanks.**

| **To add information** | **To contrast information** |
|---|---|
| First of all _____ | However _____ |
| Secondly _____ | On the other hand _____ |
| Then _____ | Although _____ |
| Next _____ | Even though _____ |
| After That _____ | Nevertheless _____ |
| Moreover _____ | |
| Additionally _____ | |
| Furthermore _____ | |
| **To show a consequence** | **To conclude** |
| Therefore _____ | Finally _____ |
| Hence _____ | To summarize _____ |
| As a result_____ | In conclusion _____ |
| As a consequence _____ | In short _____ |
| Currently _____ | Cg Corporation |

- **Some students of the experimental group using the audio material.**

**Source**: Portoviejo

**Source:** Portoviejo

## Certificate

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Cuenca 29 de Noviembre del 2016

**CERTIFICADO**

**CUENCA**: Calle Guayas 551 y Morona
**GUAYAQUIL**: Cdla. Albatros, calle Miguel H Alcivar, solar 6, villa # 5.
**LOJA:** 24 de Mayo 10-15 y Miguel Riofrio

**GUAYAQUIL**: Teléfonos : 04 2296720
**CUENCA**: Teléfonos: 07 421 3626 / 07 2815215
Celular :098 258 7895 / 0998076306
**LOJA** Teléfonos: 072577585

www.cgcorporation.org

Correo: info@cgcorporation.org

Por medio de la presente certifico que:

El señor Xavier Alejandro Portoviejo Guachún, con número de cédula 010475647-3 realizó exitosamente su trabajo de investigación "Audio material for improving essential level B1 conversations according to the Common European Framework" realizando contribuciones muy importantes para la institución y el programa "Easy for All" en el periodo Junio – Noviembre del presente año.

Es todo cuanto puedo decir en honor de la verdad, pudiendo el interesado hacer uso de este documento como estime necesario.

Ing. Christian García.
Jefe RRHH
Telef 0998076306 / 2815215
Cc: 070122616-9
cgarcia@cgcorporation.org

Easyforall

**Source:** Portoviejo

**Appendix 7: Audio Material for Improving Essential Level B1 Conversations According to the Common European Framework of Reference**

Universidad de Cuenca
Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación
Escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

"Audio material for improving essential level B1 conversations according to the Common European Framework"
[Handbook]

**Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación en Lengua y Literatura Inglesa.**

Autor: Xavier Alejandro Portoviejo Guachún

Director: Jean-Paul Jara Villacreces

Cuenca-Ecuador
2017

***To our dear EFL learners***

The present audio material has been designed to help EFL learners to have more contact with the English language. The dialogues are designed to reinforce speaking and listening skills. Therefore, they should be accomplished orally. After listening and covering the dialogue, try to listen to it again and identify the ideas exposed in the dialogue. The most important part of all, avoid translating word by word, but aim at interpreting ideas. Most of the chapters present pronunciation exercises and it is indispensable to practice those lessons a lot. It will help you to learn how to identify new sounds and to produce them. Moreover, remember to practice intonation in questions. It is important, because it emphasizes a natural way of asking questions.  Finally, remember to use connectors or linking words, when you talk about the different topics exposed in this booklet. Linking words help your ideas to have cohesion and coherence. Keep in mind that a language is a tool to communicate our feelings and ideas, not just another subject to study in class.

# CHAPTER 1

## MAKING FRIENDS

**Learning goals:** To be able to provide and ask for personal information and use the correct intonation in basic questions.

### Lesson 1.1. Listen and follow the dialogue

***My first day of class***

**David:** Hey hello!

**Amy:** Hi!

**David:** How is your first day of class going?

**Amy:** Well, it is ok. I'm really excited about the next class we are going to have. You know, it is Anatomy.

**David:** By the way, I'm David, what is your name?

**Amy:** I am Amy. You look so young, how old are you?

**David:** I don't know why everybody is saying the same thing. I'm 20.

**Amy:** Really! You look as if you were 16.

**David:** Oh, please! Don't say it. What about you, where are you from?

**Amy:** I am from Cuenca, Ecuador.

**David:** That is great! What is Cuenca like?

**Amy:** It is a beautiful city. It has wonderful places to visit. So… Where are you from?

**David:** I am from Canada, but I live here in Guayaquil with my parents. My dad is Colombian and my mom is Canadian. What do you do in your free time?

**Amy:** I do my assignments or sometimes I play the piano, and what do you do after classes?

**David:** I help my parents part time in our store. OK, I'm gonna skip Anatomy see you then. Oh, how can I find you on Facebook?

**Amy:** Well you can find me as Amy Alves.

**David:** Ok, it was nice meeting you.

**Amy:** Bye bye! God bless you.

**Lesson 1.2 Comprehension**

**Speaking**

Answer the following questions.

a) Is David 16 years old?
b) What is Cuenca like?
c) How can you find Amy on Facebook?

**Lesson 1.3 Listen and repeat.**

**Short I vs Long E**

| **/ĭ/ Short I** | **/ē/ Long E** |
|---|---|
| Live (Verb) | Leave |
| It | Eat |
| Will | Wheel |
| Ship | Sheep |
| Sick | Seek |

**Lesson 1.4 Intonation**

***Rising Intonation (yes-no questions)***

Do you study?

***Falling Intonation (Information questions)***

Where do you study?

# CHAPTER 2

# WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

**Learning goal: To be able to talk about our routines using the appropriate verb tense and transition words.**

**Lesson 2.1:** Listen and follow the dialogue.

**Weekend Activities**

**Alex**: Hey! Where are you going?

**Karen**: Hi! I am going to the bakery.

**Alex**: Oh! Do you think you are going to get something? It is 10:00 pm.

**Karen**: Don't be an augur ill, come with me! Let's buy some bread!

**Alex**: Mm, you win, Ok so, what do you have for this weekend?

**Karen**: The same thing I do on every weekend, ***first of all***, on Saturday, I usually wake up around 9. ***Secondly***, I prepare breakfast.

**Alex**: Oh! You can cook. I can imagine it.

**Karen**: I'm serious. Ok; ***next***, I brush my teeth and take a bath. ***Moreover***, I often go to the gym. ***Then*** my parents and I go

out to have typical food and everybody does the activities we have to do at home in the afternoon.

**Alex**: What about Sunday?

**Karen**: On Sunday, I wake up and have breakfast around the same time. ***In addition***, I go to church at 11:00 am. ***Furthermore***, I do my homework in the afternoon. ***Finally***, I go out with my boyfriend around five.

**Alex**: Karen! …So you have a boyfriend.

**Karen**: Did you say something?

**Alex**: No, let me open the door for you.

**Karen**: Thank you!

**Lesson 2.2: Comprehension**

**Speaking**

Which day does Karen go to church?

When does Karen's family go out to have typical food?

**Lesson 2.3 It is your turn to talk about your routines on weekends**

Remember to use some transition words like First,… Secondly,… Next,… Then… After that,… Moreover,… In addition,… Finally,… (If it is needed, take some notes to have a guide).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Lesson 2.4 Pronunciation**

**Listen and repeat**

***Third person singular (special cases)***

***/əz/***

Katy wat***ch***es TV on Sundays.

My dad fi***x***es cars when they break down.

Kimberly wi***sh***es to travel to the Galapagos Islands next summer.

Albert mi***ss***e***s*** her girlfriend a lot.

# CHAPTER 3

# AN APPOINTMENT WITH DOCTOR RADAX!

**Learning goal: To be able to give pieces of advice or to refer about mandatory actions.**

**Lesson 3.1 Listen and follow the dialogue.**

**An appointment with Doctor Radax!**

**Clerk:** Hi!

**Mr. Williams:** Good morning. I have an appointment with Dr. Radax at 9:00 am.

**Clerk:** Ok, may I have your ID and your health insurance card please?

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you I really appreciate it.

**Clerk:** Ok, come with me please.

**Dr:** Hey, welcome! Come in please.

**Mr. Williams:** Good morning.

**Dr:** Ok so, how can I help you?

**Mr. William:** Well, I'm afraid I got bronchitis.

**Dr:** How did that happen?

**Mr. William:** First, I got a flu; then I got soaked because it started to rain cats and dogs when I was going home on Friday night.

**Dr:** Ok first of all, let me check your lungs, take off your jacket. Now, breathe deeply, ok, once again. All ready! You have some phlegm in your lungs. Now, I'll give you these pills and you must take them every 8 hours. Also I will give you this inhalator you ***must*** have 2 puffs with an interval of 12 seconds. Remember, you ***must not*** drink cold water, otherwise you might die. Additionally, you **must** avoid approaching the freezer too much. Plus that, you ***should*** drink hot tea and wear warm clothes. Do that and we will see in a week, ok?

**Mr. William:** Yeah, thank you very much. Have a nice day!

**Dr:** You are welcome! Take care Mr. William.

**Lesson 3.2 Comprehension.**

**Speaking**

a) What happened to Mr. William?
b) Should Mr. William take a shower in cold water?
c) Does Mr. William have to take his medicine?

d) What else do you recommend Mr. William to do?

**Lesson 3.3 Pronunciation of some words which contains CH.**

| **/k/** | **/ch/** | **/sh/** |
|---|---|---|
| Bron**ch**itis | Brun**ch** | **Ch**ef |
| **Ch**emistry | Arm**ch**air | **Ch**ampagne |
| Stoma**ch**a**ch**e | House **ch**ores | Ma**ch**ine |
| **Ch**iral | **Ch**eap | Musta**ch**e |
| Me**ch**anic | **Ch**urch | Para**ch**ute |

**Lesson 3.4: Modals' Pronunciation**

**Listen and repeat.**

*Affirmative sentences.*

You **should** drink green tea.

Katy **must** wear the uniform.

*Negative sentences*

Erica **should not** go out now.

Students **must not** misbehave in class.

*Contractions*

Kevin **shouldn't** go out.

People **mustn't** drive when they are drunk.

# CHAPTER 4

# WILLIAM'S WEDDING!

**Learning goal:** To be able to talk about family and relationships.

**Lesson 4.1 Listen and follow the dialogue.**

**William's Wedding.**

**William**: Hello!

**Gabriel**: What's up man …congratulations!

**William**: Thank you! It's been a long time.

**Gabriel**: Yap! Ten years to be precise.

**William**: Ok, come with me, let me introduce you to my relatives.

**William**: Hey Anne, how are you doing?

**Anne**: Hi!

**William:** Well, Anne. This is Gabriel, He is my cousin.

**Anne**: Oh! Let's see. Are you Mrs. Adams' son?

**Gabriel**: Actually, she is my aunt. My mother's name is Claudia.

**Anne**: Oh I'm sorry.

**Gabriel**: Don't worry. By the way, nice to meet you.

**William**: Hey wait! Look, Vicky is there.

**Anne**: Who is her?

**Gabriel**: She is my uncle-in-law's daughter. She is with her step-siblings.

**Anne**: What about the other guy in black suit, who is standing on the left?

**William**: He is Charles' teacher's nephew. Come on Anne! He is not even 15.

**Anne**: Wait! Don't misunderstand me! I was just asking!

**Lesson 4.2 Comprehension**

**Speaking**

Is Mr. William Gabriel's son?

Who is Teacher Andrew to Charles?

What kind of a party are they having?

**Lesson 4.3 Listen and repeat**

Mike is Charle**s's** friend.

Gaby is Ma**x's** sister.

William is Lui**s's** uncle-in-law.

**Lesson 4.4 Pronunciation**

**/ə/ and /ă/ (very frequent in American standard accent)**

| **/ə/ Schwa (neutral sound)** | **/ă/ Sheep "A"** |
|---|---|
| **U**ncle | **a**nkle |
| B**u**t | b**a**t |
| L**u**ck | l**a**ck |
| B**u**s | B**a**ss |
| C**u**t | C**a**t |

# CHAPTER 5

## A TRIP TO THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS!

**Learning goal:** To be able to talk about planned activities in the future**.**

**Lesson 5.1: Listen and follow the dialogue.**

**A trip to the Galapagos Islands!**

**Husband**: Do you already have our trip planned to go to the Galapagos Islands?

**Wife**: Yap, I'll tell you and please give me an opinion about it. Ok, we will spend three days there, so it will be perfect. We can be there from Thursday to Saturday.

**Husband**: Ok, what do you think we can do on Thursday?

**Wife**: You know, ***First of all***, we will take a flight to Baltra Airport from Guayaquil at 8:10. ***Secondly***, we will find a hotel in Santa Cruz, take a shower, rest a little bit, and eat. ***Next***, we can visit Charles Darwin Foundation in the afternoon. There we can see amazing projects about conservation of the environment and biodiversity. At night, we will have a trip to Cabo Douglas. The next day, we will take diving lessons and take some pictures underwater.

**Husband**: Fantastic, ***then*** we will go to the North shore of Santa Cruz to see the giant tortoises in the afternoon. However, we won't be able to land on the island because is prohibited.

**Wife**: Oh good! On Saturday, we will have breakfast at Mariscos de George. There you can chose different kinds of seafood and other typical food from the Galapagos. ***Finally***, we will have to take our flight at 1:15 pm at Baltra's airport back to Guayaquil. Honey! Is your mom coming with us?

**Lesson 5.2: Comprehension**

**Speaking**

Which day will they visit Cabo Douglas?

Will they visit Charles Darwin foundation in Cabo Douglas?

What will they do on Saturday?

What is Charles Darwin Foundation in charge of?

**Lesson 5.3 Pronunciation**

**a) Listen and repeat.**

Andres **will** have typical food at Mariscos de George.

Steven will not come with me.

***b) Contractions***

I**'ll** help you.

We **won'**t pay for the tickets.

**Lesson 5.4 Plan a trip for your next vacation.**

It will be useful to take into account the following questions.

a) Where will you go?

b) When will you go there?

c) Who will you go with?

d) How long will you spend there?

e) Mention 3 activities you will do there.

f) Now tell your partner everything about your trip again. Take some notes if it is necessary (remember to use linking or transition words).

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# CHAPTER 6

## THE CITY & SAFETY

**Learning goal:** To be able to talk about global concerns and give opinions about them.

**Lesson 6.1: Listen and follow the dialogue.**

### Burglars!

**Thomas**: Good morning Ash.

**Ash**: Hello!

**Thomas**: What's up! Are you ok?

**Ash**: Mm I'm… so-so, you know why, some burglars entered Isabel's house.

**Thomas**: Oh my gosh! When did it happen?

**Ash**: It happened last night. ***If*** she ***had returned*** home 20 minutes earlier, she ***would have*** caught the burglars red-handed.

**Thomas**: Wow! I think we should be really careful because ***if*** we ***leave*** our houses following the same routine on weekends, they ***will*** already know when to give the strike.

**Ash**: You're right. They stole a flat screen, two computers, a bike, some jewelry and money, I am tired of having such problems. ***If*** muggers ***don't*** rob you in the streets, burglars ***get*** into your

house. ***If*** you ***don't*** lock the doors, anybody can get into your house.

**Thomas**: Don't think like that. The best thing that we can do is to protect one another.

**Ash**: Yeah, you are right! Ok, I gotta go! I will see ***if*** she ***needs*** any help.

**Thomas**: Ok, let me know ***if*** there **is** something that I can do, ok. Take care!

**Lesson 6.2: Comprehension**

**Speaking**

a) What happened?

b) Did some murderers enter Isabel's house?

c) What would have happened if Isabel had returned 20 minutes earlier?

**Lesson 6.3 Listen and repeat.**

**Conditionals**

(*Zero conditional: facts, laws, etc.)*

- **If** you **heat** ice, it **melts**. (*if clause* at the beginning)
- Ice **melts if** you **heat** it**.** (*the main clause* at the beginning)

*(First Conditional: Real events*)

- **If** you **finish** your job early, you **will** go out with your friends.

*(Second Conditional: Unreal events*)

- **If** Jason **ate** less junk food, he **would** be thinner.

*(Third conditional: Impossible events*)

- **If** Harry **had worn** a helmet, he **wouldn't have** died.

# CHAPTER 7

## A RESERVATION AT JC RESTAURANT

**Learning goal:** To be able to make a reservation.

**Lesson 7.1: Listen and follow the dialogue.**

**Husband**: Hey, Sarah, I'm back, would you like to go out for dinner?

**Wife**: Oh that sounds great!

**Husband**: OK, can you get ready? I will make a reservation at JC restaurant.

**Wife**: All right. I'll be ready in five minutes.

**Husband**: Oh! Yes, as it is "always".

**JC**: JC restaurant, may I help you?

**Husband**: Hi. My name is Franklin Ramos, may I book a table please?

**JC**: Yes, of course! How many people is it for?

**Husband**: It is just for two people at 8:30 pm and one more thing, could I have a table outside please?

**JC**: Sure. You will have table number 83 ok.

**Husband**: Thanks my friend.

**JC**: Ok you are welcome.

**Lesson 7.2: Comprehension**

**Speaking**

a) Who made the phone call?
b) According to Mr. Franklin, how long does his wife take to get ready and how do you know?
c) What table are they having?

**Lesson 7.3: Pronunciation**

**Modals of request**

Listen and repeat.

Excuse me Sr., **could** you tell me where the Museum of Modern Art is?

Hello! **May** I have three pieces of bread please?

Excuse me teacher, **may** I go to the bathroom please?

Hey Jack! **Can** you help me please?

# CHAPTER 8

# FAMOUS PEOPLE

**Learning goal:** To be able to talk about past events using different grammatical structures.

## Lesson 8.1 Listen and follow the news.

### Famous Characters Nowadays

*(The announcer)*

The American singer and songwriter of country music, Tylor Swift, **won** two Grammy Awards this year. The young singer of only 26 years **has gathered** ten Grammy Awards. The successful lady **was born** in Pennsylvania. She **debuted** with her first album in which *Love Story* and *Teardrops on my Guitar,* when she **was** 16, **had sold** more than 2.5 million of copies. She **has won** several music awards like the MTV music awards for the Best Female Video “Love Story”, 1 Emmy Award, 7 Country Music Association, 10 Grammy Awards, 13 BMI awards and more. Several songs by Tylor Swift **have been** on the top ten Billboard

chart. She has records in selling her songs all around the world. She is the first woman to win two Grammies at the same time and it **happened** in February 2016. Congratulations to Tylor Swift once more.

**Source**: BIO.com (2016).

**Lesson 8.2 Comprehension.**

**Speaking**

e) Mention three awards that Tylor Swift has won.

f) What does a songwriter do?

g) Mention 7 things your favorite character has done in order to become a successful professional.

h) Discussion:

Do you think people are famous because they have been lucky?

Make arguments in favor of your ideas.

**Lesson 8.3: Listen and Repeat.**

Regular verbs (– ***ed*** ending)

***The last sound pronounced in the regular verb (in its base form):***

**(Ends in t or d)**

**(Vibrates your vocal chords)**

No

Yes

***/ əd /***

***/t/***

***/d/***

Awarded
Ended
Debuted
Accepted
Completed

Asked
Watched
Missed
Fixed
Established

Called
Allowed
Belonged
Behaved
Compared

**Lesson 8.4 Contractions**

She**'s** won ten Grammy Awards**.**

I**'ve** worked here for three years.

They **haven't** done it yet.

Kevin **hasn't** done the dishes.

**Lesson 8.5 Intonation in questions**

*Rising Intonation (Yes-no questions)*

Have you bought another computer?

*Falling intonation (Information questions)*

Why have you bought another computer?

# CHAPTER 9

# MY GOALS!

**Learning aims:** To be able to talk about the activities that are related to our professional life and express future aims and wishes about our profession.

**Lesson 9.1 Listen and follow the dialogue.**

**Ion's internship**

**Jack:** Hey, how is your first month of *internship* going?

**Ion:** Oh man it has been so exhausting and I have to do a lot of things in the hospital.

**Jack:** So tell me, what are the things you do there as an *intern*?

**Ion:** Well, first of all, I have to check in 10 minutes before 7 am. Then I have to attend the *change shift* at 7:30. After that, I help the *physicians* with their *appointments* until 4 pm. Furthermore, I switch to the *cardiology* department and finish the rest of my *shift* there.

**Jack**: It sounds exhausting.

**Ion**: Yeah, but I like my job and you know what, cardiology is interesting but I prefer the field of *surgery*.

**Jack:** What kind of specialization **would** you like to do in the future?

**Ion:** Mm! That is a good question, I **hope to** do a PhD program in general surgery. By the way, I **would like to** study it at Columbia University. I also dream of having my own *doctor's surgery* at Saint Thomas Transplant Center.

**Lesson 9.2 Answer the following questions.**

**Speaking**

What does a physician do?

What does the intern do after 4 pm?

What does Ion dream of?

Now, talk about your profession (include important information like the name of your profession, what you are in charge of, the activities you do, and the future goals of your profession ( take some notes to have a guide).

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**Lesson 9.3 Pronunciation.**

**Listen and repeat.**

**does → / dəz /** **doesn't → / dəznt /**

What **does** your aunt do in the hospital?

Why **does** Alex study Medicine?

Lili **doesn**'t like working with children?

It **doesn't** work anymore.

# CHAPTER 10

## WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE IN CUENCA?

**Learning goal:** To be able to talk about the weather.

**Lesson 10.1: Listen and follow the dialogue.**

What is the weather like in Cuenca today?

**Andres:** Hey Brenda! I'm gonna ride my bike to go to work. Can you take a look at the weather forecast please and tell me what we have for today please?

**Brenda:** Let me see if you are lucky! Today in the morning, it will be partly cloudy, a little bit cold and windy. However, we are going to have showers and thunderstorms around 4:00 pm. You**'d better** put on a sweater and I **recommend** you do not ride your bike to work because it is so cold outside and will rain in the afternoon. We have 3 °C now. By the way, the highest will be 23 °C and the lowest 2 °C.

**Andres:** Ok thank you honey. I'll take the bus. See you then.

**Brenda:** Bye darling.

**Lesson 10.2: Comprehension and discussion**

**Speaking**

a) According to Brenda, is it going to be partly cloudy and foggy?

b) What is the difference between weather and climate?

c) It is your turn to do a weather forecast. Take a look outside and try to report the weather.

d) What do you recommend people to do according to the weather we have for today? (Use *should/ must/ had better*/ I recommend people to…, etc.)