

**UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO USFQ**

**Colegio de Posgrados**

**Formal and Informal Professional Development of EFL Teachers from Quito  
and Guayaquil, 2023**

**Mecanismo de Titulación: Proyecto de Investigación**

**Elisa Paola Morán Rivera**

**M. Res. Janine Berger  
Director de Trabajo de Titulación**

Trabajo de titulación de posgrado presentado como requisito  
para la obtención del título de Magíster en Enseñanza de Inglés como Segundo Idioma

Quito, octubre del 2023

**UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO USFQ**  
**COLEGIO DE POSGRADOS**

**HOJA DE APROBACIÓN DE TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN**

**Formal and Informal Professional Development of EFL Teachers from Quito  
and Guayaquil, 2023**

**Elisa Paola Morán Rivera**

Scott Thomas Gibson  
PhD in English  
Director del programa de Maestría  
en Enseñanza de Inglés como Segundo Idioma.

---

Paolo Moncagatta Alvarado  
PhD in Political Sciences  
Decano del Colegio de Ciencias  
Sociales y Humanidades COCISHOH

---

Hugo Burgos Yáñez  
PhD in Media Studies  
Decano del Colegio de Posgrados

---

**Quito, octubre del 2023**

## © DERECHOS DE AUTOR

Por medio del presente documento certifico que he leído todas las Políticas y Manuales de la Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ, incluyendo la Política de Propiedad Intelectual USFQ, y estoy de acuerdo con su contenido, por lo que los derechos de propiedad intelectual del presente trabajo quedan sujetos a lo dispuesto en esas Políticas.

Asimismo, autorizo a la USFQ para que realice la digitalización y publicación de este trabajo en el repositorio virtual, de conformidad a lo dispuesto en la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior del Ecuador.

Nombre del estudiante: Elisa Paola Morán Rivera

Código de estudiante: 00327478

C.I.: 0924238249

Lugar y fecha: Quito, 1 de octubre de 2023.

## ACLARACIÓN PARA PUBLICACIÓN

**Nota:** El presente trabajo, en su totalidad o cualquiera de sus partes, no debe ser considerado como una publicación, incluso a pesar de estar disponible sin restricciones a través de un repositorio institucional. Esta declaración se alinea con las prácticas y recomendaciones presentadas por el Committee on Publication Ethics COPE descritas por Barbour et al. (2017) Discussion document on best practice for issues around theses publishing, disponible en <http://bit.ly/COPETheses>.

## UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENT

**Note:** The following graduation project is available through Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ institutional repository. Nonetheless, this project – in whole or in part – should not be considered a publication. This statement follows the recommendations presented by the Committee on Publication Ethics COPE described by Barbour et al. (2017) Discussion document on best practice for issues around theses publishing available on <http://bit.ly/COPETheses>.

**DEDICATION**

To Beatriz,

The anchor of my life.

To Eric,

My love and support all the time.

To Abigail,

My new reason to live.

To Fernando,

The angel who takes care of me.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for all the blessings bestowed on my family and I, and for allowing me to complete this step in my career. I am also grateful to my family, especially my husband, Eric. Without his loving support and encouragement, I would have never been able to pursue this master's degree.

My sincere thanks to my cohort for their positive energy and support. I am also grateful to all the professors of this program, especially my advisor Janine Berger. Her encouragement and enthusiasm did not go unnoticed. I am determined to be an inspiring teacher just like she has been for me.

And finally, I am eternally grateful to the fifteen teachers who made some time in their busy agendas to participate in the study. I felt enriched with all the experiences and opinions that they shared with me during those interviews. Their cooperation was a key component to the success of this research.

## RESUMEN

Los profesores ecuatorianos de inglés, principalmente del sistema educativo privado, suelen recibir capacitación como talleres o cursos de preparación para exámenes internacionales. Sin embargo, parece haber una preocupación general sobre su desarrollo profesional. Algunos académicos y autoridades educativas incluso consideran la mala formación de los profesores de inglés como una de las razones del bajo nivel de los estudiantes en el país en este idioma. (Bastida Mafla, 2013; Machado, 2019; Solo 34% de maestros, 2018)

La literatura sobre el dominio limitado del inglés en ciertos maestros y su desarrollo profesional es vasta. Sin embargo, ningún estudio se centra en las ideas de los maestros sobre sus actividades para mejorar su nivel de inglés y sus técnicas de enseñanza. Por lo tanto, esta investigación cualitativa explora las percepciones de quince profesores de inglés de instituciones públicas y privadas de Quito y Guayaquil sobre su desarrollo profesional. Los datos obtenidos de las entrevistas aplicadas mostraron que la mayoría de los profesores de inglés preferían el desarrollo profesional formal para enriquecer sus métodos educativos. Además, algunos de ellos utilizaron capacitación informal para desarrollar sus habilidades en el inglés.

A través de este estudio, el investigador pudo obtener una idea más clara de la calidad de la preparación profesional formal e informal que los profesores de inglés participantes perseguían. También fue una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre la utilidad y el impacto de la capacitación profesional en el rendimiento de los docentes en el aula y los resultados de aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** desarrollo profesional para docentes, profesores de inglés en Ecuador, desarrollo profesional formal, desarrollo profesional informal.

## ABSTRACT

Ecuadorian EFL<sup>1</sup> teachers, mainly from the private education system, usually receive training like workshops or preparation courses for international tests. However, there seems to be a general concern about their professional development. Some academics and education authorities even consider the poor training of EFL teachers as one of the reasons for the low English level of students in the country. (Bastida Mafla, 2013; Machado, 2019; Solo 34% de maestros, 2018)

The literature on the limited proficiency in English of some teachers and their professional development is vast. However, no studies focus on EFL teachers' insights about their activities to enhance their English level and teaching techniques. Therefore, this qualitative research explores the perceptions of fifteen EFL teachers of public and private institutions from Quito and Guayaquil about their professional development. The data obtained from the applied interviews showed that most EFL teachers preferred formal professional development to enrich their educational methods. Moreover, a few of them used informal training to build their English language skills.

Through this study, the researcher could get a clearer idea of the quality of the formal and informal professional preparation that the participant English teachers pursued. It was also an opportunity to reflect on the usefulness and impact of professional training on teachers' classroom performance and students' learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** professional development for teachers, EFL teachers in Ecuador, formal professional development, informal professional development.

---

<sup>1</sup> English as a Foreign Language



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Resumen .....	7
Abstract .....	8
1. Introduction .....	11
2. Literature Review.....	14
2.1. Professional Development .....	14
2.2. Formal And Informal Professional Development.....	15
2.3. The Role of Professional Development and its Relevance for Teachers .....	17
2.4. Self-Perception of Teachers .....	18
2.5. Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador .....	19
2.6. English in Ecuador .....	21
2.7. Ways of Learning English .....	22
2.8. Institutions that Offer Professional Training to Teachers.....	23
3. Methodology and Research Design .....	26
3.1. Research Instrument and Participants .....	26
3.2. Recruitment and Application of Instrument .....	28
3.3. Data Collection Procedure .....	28
4. Data Analysis .....	32
5. Conclusions .....	40
5.1 Limitations and Recommendations .....	43
References .....	45
List of Appendices .....	53

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1. Codebook .....	29
Table 2. Selective Code 1 .....	30
Table 3. Selective Code 2 .....	30
Table 4. Selective Code 3 .....	31

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Professional development for teachers is a lifelong process in which educators obtain "skills, qualifications, and experience" to progress in a career. (MacMillan Dictionary, n.d.) The definition may sound simple, but the overall process is not. For a professional development activity to be successful, teachers should be open to interiorizing the new ideas provided during the training ventures. They should also be willing to self-reflect on their classroom practice, notice what could be improved, and commit to professionally growing and evolving. (Avalos, 2011; Richter et al., 2011; Valenčič Zuljan, 2001; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Wichadee, 2011)

In Ecuador, most teachers from the private education system receive professional development opportunities from the schools where they work. In the case of public institution educators, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education offers them different types of seminars and training in Spanish through a digital platform. (Me Capacito, 2023) However, there seems to be a generalized concern regarding the efficiency or inexistence of training activities for English as a Foreign Language educators. This apprehension may be supported by the fact that in the latest evaluations of English teachers in the country, the results showed that their average level in the language was B1<sup>2</sup> based on the CEFR<sup>3</sup>. (Machado, 2019; Solo 34% de maestros, 2018)

Another situation that fueled this concern was the publishing of some reports by EF Education First, in which Ecuador was ranked as one of the countries with the lowest level of English in the region. (De Angelis, 2023; Heredia, 2018; Machado, 2019; Solo 34% de maestros, 2018) Although some academics consider the research methods used for those reports

---

<sup>2</sup> According to the Common European Framework of Reference, B1 users have an intermediate level in a language.

<sup>3</sup> Common European Framework of Reference

questionable (De Angelis, 2023), the low English level of students in Ecuador cannot be denied. The scholars and education authorities who have analyzed this situation have listed the deficient preparation of EFL teachers as one of the reasons that Ecuadorian high-school students graduate with a poor English level. (Bastida Mafla, 2013; Machado, 2019; Solo 34% de maestros, 2018)

Since it was evident that the quality of the training that EFL educators receive generates hesitation in Ecuadorian society, it seemed necessary to investigate if that uneasiness was well-founded. However, it soon became evident that more time, resources, and sample size of what the researcher could get would be required to get accurate answers to an issue of that magnitude. So, it was finally decided to focus this study on examining attitudes and perceptions of some EFL teachers towards the formal and informal activities they have engaged in to enhance their English level and teaching techniques.

A qualitative method was used to achieve this objective based on an exploratory-descriptive research design. Through a semi-structured interview, non-numerical data about real-world experiences and perspectives from the standpoint of the participants were obtained. (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Mcleod, 2023) The interviewees were fifteen EFL teachers from Quito and Guayaquil whose native language was other than English. They were asked about the formal and informal professional development activities they pursued, their outlook towards those tasks, and their workplaces' role in their career growth.

Since there was limited information available on EFL educators' insights about professional development in Ecuador, the information collected during this research could provide a clearer understanding of the value and influence that the training activities carried out by EFL teachers have on their careers, their classroom performance, and possibly, the learning

outcomes of students. It could also allow other researchers to consider different approaches or actions that might help educators take their teaching production beyond its current level, which would eventually be reflected in the educational results obtained by students.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

For this study, academic journals, newspaper articles, books, college theses, and corporate websites have been reviewed and discussed. The relevant information that was elicited from those sources was grouped into the following key topics: professional development, formal and informal professional development, the role of professional development and its relevance for teachers, self-perception of teachers, teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, English in Ecuador, ways of learning English, and institutions that offer professional training to teachers.

### **2.1. Professional Development**

One of the key terms for this study is professional development. This is a process in which a person obtains "skills, qualifications, and experience" to progress in a career. (MacMillan Dictionary, n.d) It is also seen as a "long-term investment", "a lifelong experiential learning," or "learning opportunities" in which the individual "develops their concepts," grows, and evolves. (Wichadee, 2011, p 14; Richter et al., 2011, p 97; Valenčič Zuljan, 2001, p 9)

This concept applies to most professionals who pursue continuing education activities. However, regarding professional development for teachers, the connotations and outcomes are slightly different. This complex set of steps demands that educators make a cognitive and emotional commitment to review their methodologies and philosophy and decide what should be improved or changed. (Avalos, 2011, Kyndt et al., 2016) In other words, professional training is not a one-time experience for teachers. It is a process that asks for consistency. Furthermore, for it to be effective, educators need to be aware of the importance of continuous self-reflection.

They also need to be able to see what needs improvement and show the disposition to make the necessary modifications to evolve as an educator and as a person.

Several activities could help educators get into the process of growing professionally. Nevertheless, "not every form of professional development, even those with the greatest evidence of positive impact, is of itself relevant to all teachers." (Avalos, 2011, p 10) There are various elements to consider before choosing a learning experience. Educators need to review those activities and check if they suit their needs, their students' needs, the expectations of the institutions where they are employed, their working conditions, and similar. (Avalos, 2011; Pedder & Offer, 2011)

## **2.2. Formal and Informal Professional Development**

Another essential element to know besides the connotation of the term 'professional development' is how it is usually divided by academics. Authors like Richter et al. (2011) and Schwartz & Bryan (1998) give two types of professional development: formal and informal.

Formal professional development refers to traditional, structured education with a specified curriculum, an instructor, and an established period. They are the well-known workshops or graduate courses professionals can take in person or online. One of the appeals of these learning opportunities is the continuing education credits or certifications that can be obtained after completing them. This type of professional development includes seminars, workshops, panels or group meetings with controlled attendance, and conferences. (Richter et al., 2011; Schwartz & Bryan, 1998; The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland, 2022; Villegas-Reimers, 2003)

On the other hand, informal professional development has a more relaxed structure. The learning activities that fit this category rarely need instructors or a prepared curriculum. They can be done individually or in collaboration with others at any time. Everything depends on the teacher's own initiative since their institutions do not offer or require those activities. This means that if educators want to expand their knowledge or reinforce specific skills, they are the ones who need to look for relevant material to read, think of any activity of interest, or search for networks or professional contacts. (Richter et al., 2011; The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland, 2022).

Among the activities for informal professional development are reading books, taking online courses, sharing experiences with colleagues, blogging, reflecting, observing classes, job shadowing, mentoring, learning by doing/through experience, reviewing materials and resources, joining teacher networks and study groups, and participating in forums. (Richter et al., 2011; Kyndt et al., 2016; Macia & Garcia, 2016; The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland, 2022).

Besides these two types of training, action research is another option that can be helpful for teachers as part of their professional development training. This is a process in which educators simultaneously evaluate their teaching methodologies and research strategies and improve their performance. (Cohen et al., 2011; Shanks et al., 2012) However, this process seems difficult to be carried out without self-reflection. According to some authors, teachers must make it part of their daily routines since it creates awareness of any issues that prevent them from becoming better professionals. (Cohen et al., 2011; Wisniewski et al., 2022)



The application that teachers can give to action research is varied. It is not only valuable for targeting unsuitable teaching methodologies. It can be helpful in any setting where a problem or situation needs a newer or better outcome. For instance, it can be used to assess and employ more appropriate attitudes at work, solve affective issues with students, increase abilities of analysis and self-awareness, or improve the efficiency of administrative school life. (Cohen et al., 2011)

### **2.3. The Role of Professional Development and its Relevance for Teachers**

Formal or informal training plays a significant role in any professional's life. They are the paths that need to be followed by anyone who wants to advance in their career. Most professionals see this need, and teachers are no exception. According to authors Pedder & Opfer (2011) and Wichadee (2011), some of the reasons that motivate teachers to participate in professional development opportunities include improving their skills and classroom practice, having a positive impact on student's learning outcomes, following previous professional development activities, to address immediate classroom needs, and to gain a better understanding of national curriculum requirements.

Some researchers agree that the quality of teaching depends on and is enhanced by how prepared teachers are. (Clark & Duggins, 2015; Elliot & Campbell, 2013; Pedder & Opfer, 2011) However, the professional development goal for teachers goes beyond enhancing their knowledge and professional skills. It aims to have an impact on teachers' beliefs and behavior. Authors like Bybee & Loucks-Horsley (2000), Lamb (1995), Mattheoudakis & Nicolaidis (2005), and Villegas-Reimers (2003) state that there is a correlation between teachers' beliefs and their performance in the classroom. This correlation is not static. It is in constant change and

depends not only on the concepts that teachers have been exposed to but also on their previous knowledge and their disposition to assimilate new theories and try them in class. (Villegas-Reimers, 2003)

#### **2.4. Self-Perception of Teachers**

Since growing in a career implies introspection to discard unnecessary concepts and adopt new ones (Avalos, 2011; Kyndt et al., 2016), it is also essential that during this process, the opinion or self-perception that the professional has of him/herself is contemplated. This view or self-image depends on the interpretation that everyone has of their behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and sometimes, other people's opinions of us. Self-perception can be genuine or far from accurate. The self-image could be distorted because of a lack of reflection or mental health issues. (Self-Perception: Definition, Theory, & Questions, n.d.)

In teachers, self-perception seems to be an essential and delicate aspect of their careers. It is considered as the image that they project to their students. It could affect several personality parts, like the type of decisions made, personal beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes. These traits might be reflected not only in the educators' personal lives but also in their work management. According to Moussu (2006), research has shown that "teachers' attitudes and beliefs strongly influenced students' behaviors." (Moussu, 2006) This means that students will probably observe how their teachers behave, and they are likely to follow their example unconsciously.

The impact of self-perception is not limited to the behavioral area. It also controls the way educators teach their discipline. For instance, if an EFL teacher is aware that their language skills or strategies are not strong enough, that will affect their confidence and classroom practice. And students will notice it. (Moussu, 2006) On the other hand, if educators are overly confident

in their teaching strategies, their performance could be altered by biases and misconceptions that might lead them to rely excessively on their knowledge and methodologies and not consider students' needs. (Wisniewski et al., 2022)

In situations like those previously discussed, some procedures like action research and valuable feedback could be beneficial. Educators should constantly evaluate the quality of their delivery in the classroom. Moreover, based on that analysis, look for new methods or activities to help them improve those details that are stopping them from reaching their professional goals. (Cohen et al., 2011; Shanks et al., 2012; Wisniewski et al., 2022) That action research could also be complemented by effective feedback from students and other education community stakeholders. It can be an excellent tool to create awareness of what is usually missed. It can also help teachers look for professional development activities and engage in their learning. (Clark & Duggins, 2015)

## **2.5. Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador**

Although the popularity of learning English in Europe started in the 1850s, Ecuador caught up with this trend in the following century. English as a Foreign Language began to be taught scarcely in some Ecuadorian schools in 1912 during the presidency of Leonidas Plaza. (Macias & Villafuerte, 2020; Rosero, 2014) At that time, EFL educators had to learn English and teaching methodologies independently since the first Language Teaching Program in the country was offered by Universidad Central del Ecuador in 1928. (Duran, n.d.; Macias & Villafuerte, 2020)

Nevertheless, in the 1940s and 1950s, English teaching became more relevant in Ecuador thanks to Galo Plaza<sup>4</sup>. In 1940, he led the foundation of "Colegio Americano de Quito, " the first American-like bilingual school in the country. This inspired the creation of another "Colegio Americano" two years later, but this time in Guayaquil. (Historia – Colegio Americano de Guayaquil, n.d.; Historia - Fundación Colegio Americano Quito, 2021) Then, when Galo Plaza became president, English was officially introduced in the Ecuadorian curriculum as an optional discipline in 1950. (Barre & Villafuerte, 2021; Cannepa et al., 2018; Rosero, 2014)

It could be said that this was the beginning of the actual spreading of English teaching in Ecuador. Some private schools started designating a few hours a week to learn English as a Foreign Language. More private bilingual institutions and language academies were gradually created throughout the country. Furthermore, there were even some public high schools that, depending on their budget, could incorporate English as another discipline to be studied. (Barre & Villafuerte, 2021; Rosero, 2014) Unfortunately, the quality of English teaching in those high schools was limited and could not compete with the private schools. (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; De Angelis, 2023)

This detail made bilingual institutions attractive options for parents who wanted their children to be proficient in a second language. However, the costly tuition of these schools was unaffordable for most of the population in Ecuador, who had to settle for public education despite their poor level of English teaching. (British Council Education Intelligence, 2015; Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; De Angelis, 2023) Even though this is an ongoing situation, formal classes in private schools or academies are not the only way to learn English nowadays. Internet

---

<sup>4</sup> Former president Leonidas Plaza's son. Ecuador's president from 1948 to 1952.

access can allow anyone highly motivated to practice English independently. (Hidayat et al., 2022)

## **2.6. English in Ecuador**

The relevance of English in business, education, tourism, technology, and entertainment is recognized by almost everyone worldwide. (Crystal, 2003) In Ecuador, like any other non-English speaking country, it is the goal of many professionals and students to be proficient in this language. (British Council Education Intelligence, 2015; Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; De Angelis, 2023) They are aware of the impact that English could have on their careers. They see it as a tool to get better job opportunities. Unfortunately, several elements do not allow Ecuadorians to develop a smoother language-learning approach.

For instance, regular citizens have minimal exposure to English in daily contexts. Since their hours of English learning are insufficient most of the time, they are not familiar with the language, making it harder to learn. (Castillo, 2021) That stops them from performing activities in English in education or entertainment. An excellent example is the international movies and programs displayed in local TV channels or theaters, usually dubbed into Spanish. This might seem like a minor detail. However, some countries like Sweden or the Netherlands have a satisfactory level of English because they surround themselves with the language and perform many activities in English, like consuming international media without dubbing them. (Huetter, 2023; Jacobs, 2020)

Unfortunately, there is no easy exposure to English for most of the population in Ecuador. Furthermore, public educational institutions do not seem to guarantee eventual proficiency in this language. For this reason, Ecuadorians look for some alternatives to help them

in their goal of mastering English. (Castillo, 2021) For instance, parents with some financial resources opt to enroll their children in private bilingual schools or language institutions for additional English classes. Moreover, in the case of professionals, they also get enrolled in English academies or apply to study abroad. (British Council Education Intelligence, 2015; Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; De Angelis, 2023)

## **2.7. Ways of Learning English**

Learning a foreign language is a long and complex process that requires commitment and motivation from the student. It might be challenging to reach a communicative or proficient level in a foreign language if the methodologies are inappropriate or if the learning contents focus only on grammar, vocabulary, or translation. That is why it is helpful to learn about the culture, idiosyncrasy, and the way of feeling and acting of the countries where the target language is mainly spoken. (Brown, 2007)

It is not a secret that English has become the lingua franca of the modern world. (Crystal, 2003) For this reason, an increasing number of people want to learn it. Speaking English gives learners a few advantages, such as a broader audience to communicate with, better job opportunities, facilities to do business or access to a broader world of entertainment.

In the past, learning English or any language required attending a formal course, buying a series of books with tapes or discs, or spending a year or more in a country where this language was spoken. Now, the learning strategies are more varied. Learners still have the choices mentioned before but can also study in a virtual setting with a tutor or through self-directed learning. (Gavarrri, 2016) It all depends on the time, the preferences, and the student's budget.

People who decide to learn a language independently have plenty of resources on the internet. (Hidayat et al., 2022) Besides the numerous grammar websites, learners can watch movies and read blogs. Research has shown that these activities help to learn a language and contribute to gaining cultural knowledge, which is as important as grammar and vocabulary. (Albiladi et al., 2018, Aydin, 2004)

Some tips that could help students be more organized and methodic when learning English are contextual guessing, skillful use of dictionaries, note-taking, attention to word formation, oral repetition, and contextual and intentional use of new words. (Gu & Johnson, 1996)

## **2.8. Institutions that Offer Professional Training to Teachers.**

Professional training can have a significant impact on the career of a teacher. Moreover, there are times when the certificate that comes with formal professional training is more appreciated. For this reason, knowing places that provide genuine and efficient tools to grow is crucial. Nowadays, teachers who want to expand their education knowledge or develop innovative teaching skills have many in-person and online options.

The first alternative could be to pursue a master's degree. Most universities in Ecuador have a wide range of graduate programs in Education that could fit most budgets and last approximately two years. However, the offer of master's programs in TESOL<sup>5</sup> is slightly reduced in the country. For instance, as of May 2023, sixteen universities recognized by the SENESCYT<sup>6</sup> were promoting their master's programs in TESOL over the internet. Nine had in-person classes,

---

<sup>5</sup> Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

<sup>6</sup> Secretaría de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación

and the rest had hybrid or online-only courses. It is worth mentioning that there are institutions that help students get scholarships to study a master's program abroad, like SENESCYT, FUNIBER<sup>7</sup>, the United States Embassy in Ecuador, FULBRIGHT®, and the European Union through the program Erasmus+. (Donde obtener becas, 2022)

The second option is taking additional college courses. Some universities have programs and courses categorized as "Continuing Education." Most of them focus on technological or innovative topics. However, some classes could help teachers develop more skills and methodologies in the field of education. Some courses, like the one offered by Euroinnova®, allow teachers to get the B2 level<sup>8</sup> in English and an EFL certification with eight ECTS<sup>9</sup> credits.

The third option is taking in-person or online courses provided by for-profit institutions. English classes and international teaching certifications are the most promoted programs for EFL teachers. For instance, EF Education First offers teachers Continuing Education courses abroad. EIL Ecuador<sup>10</sup> provides in-person SIT TESOL<sup>11</sup> certification courses. Cambridge English offers seminars and workshops for EFL teachers and the preparation course for the Cambridge ESOL<sup>12</sup> certificate. Furthermore, for people who prefer online education, courses are always available on websites like Udemy or Coursera, which also give certificates after completing classes.

Finally, the fourth alternative is applying for government workshops and courses. During this year, the Ministry of Education plans to offer courses for teachers in the public system.

---

<sup>7</sup> Fundación Universitaria Iberoamericana

<sup>8</sup> In the Common European Framework of Reference, B2 users have an upper intermediate level in a language.

<sup>9</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

<sup>10</sup> The Experience of International Living Ecuador

<sup>11</sup> English Teaching Certificate accredited by the School of International Training

<sup>12</sup> English for Speakers of Other Languages



(Castillo, 2023) Even though none of those courses focuses on second language acquisition methodologies, the topics could be helpful for any teacher. In addition, the government has agreed with the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador to create the program "*Ecuador Habla Ingles*.<sup>13</sup>" Through this program, teachers from the public system are trained to improve their English language skills and teaching methodologies. (U.S. Mission Ecuador, 2022)

Since most of the options available for the professional development of teachers have been explained, it is time to see what some educators are doing for themselves to improve their teaching methods and English level. The next chapter of this work will detail the methods used to inquire about the steps some teachers in Quito and Guayaquil take to grow professionally.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ecuador Speaks English

### **3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

This was a qualitative study since it focused on exploring the attitudes and perceptions of some EFL teachers towards the activities they have done to strengthen their English level and teaching techniques. (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Mcleod, 2023) As mentioned before, this topic has insufficient coverage in the existing literature. For this reason, it seemed pertinent to use an exploratory-descriptive research design as a tool to get a broader idea of EFL teachers' insights about professional development. (Reid-Searl & Happell as qtd. in Hunter et al., 2019)

#### **3.1. Research Instrument and Participants**

Once the study's objective and research methodology were established, a pertinent instrument was needed to collect information from the participants. Among the options, the most suitable tool for that task seemed to be interviews since they allowed freedom and flexibility to both the researcher conducting the study and the respondents. (Cohen et al, 2011) The interview was semi-structured with twelve open-ended main questions and some follow-up questions to make it more adaptable for the different answers and personal views on continuing education that teachers could provide. (Cohen et al, 2011; Hammarberg et al, 2016)

That instrument had to be applied to fifteen active EFL teachers from Quito and Guayaquil whose mother tongue was any other than English. The researcher's original plan was to find an equal number of participants from public and private schools to get more ample and contrasting data. However, getting willing teachers from either education system to participate was challenging. Eventually, most of the educators who agreed to be interviewed worked in private institutions and belonged to the researcher's social network.

There are some details about the participants that are worth knowing. They were all adult teachers, five males, and ten females. Their ages ranged between 25 and 50 years old. Six of them lived in Guayaquil, and nine in Quito. Most of them were experienced EFL teachers, although some had just discovered their passion for education and were starting their teaching careers. They had bachelor's degrees, except for one of the teachers who would finish the program the following year. Moreover, according to their comments, their English levels went from B2 to C1.

An additional detail that seems vital to contemplate for a better understanding of the results is the socioeconomic situation of the participants and their workplaces. Although they were not asked about their incomes or financial resources, some details of their lifestyles were familiar to the researcher since they were either coworkers or friends. For instance, three educators were from the public system, and twelve teachers belonged to the private education system. Of those twelve teachers, eight worked in middle-class, non-bilingual schools. Moreover, four worked in upper-class bilingual schools.

Regarding their socioeconomic status, it could be said that the participant teachers had either a middle-class or upper-middle-class lifestyle. This assessment could be made considering elements like the location and characteristics of their homes, access to technology, consumer choices, education level, and proficiency in a foreign language, which are mostly the same that INEC<sup>14</sup> examines to determine social status. (Garcia, 2021; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2011) The relationship between high socioeconomic status and components like speaking another language is also supported by authors like Zaidan (2020) and Cardona-Escobar

---

<sup>14</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos

et al. (2021), who said that in Latin American contexts, mastering English is usually associated with private education and a privileged social status. (as cited in De Angelis, 2023)

### **3.2. Recruitment and Application of Instrument**

Once the candidates were found and contacted, the researcher sent a consent letter through ©WhatsApp a day or a few hours before the agreed time of the interview. The consent letter detailed the study's conditions, purpose, relevance, risks, and benefits. This gave the participants a clearer idea of the topics the interview covered. Nevertheless, before starting the interview, the researcher briefly summarized the content of the consent letter and asked if there were any questions or hesitation about their participation in the study.

The subjects of the investigation were given the choice of answering the questions in English or Spanish. Fourteen teachers accepted their interviews to be in English. The video-conferencing service to conduct the interviews was ©Zoom since both the researcher and the participants were familiar with this platform. However, it is worth highlighting that the cameras were off during the interview. This helped teachers relax and get reassured of the anonymity of the process since the interview would be recorded.

### **3.3. Data Collection Procedure**

After the interviews were done, the recordings were downloaded to a file storage service with an encrypted access code for security purposes. Then, the researcher used a feature from ©Microsoft Word that allows copying and pasting an audio file into a document to be converted into a transcript. Those transcripts, which constituted the data of this study, were evaluated through a *qualitative inductive coding* approach. By generating codes or chunks of new information from the transcripts, the data could have a more relevant meaning, and the

phenomenon in question could be understood faster. (Cohen et al., 2011; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011; Forman & Damschroder, 2007)

The first step in the coding process was reviewing the transcripts, contrasting every answer of the interviewees to each other, and then observing if there were similar details that could be categorized into general themes. Once those categories were identified, the researcher selected the ones that fit the objective of this research. Twenty-five patterns or short units of analysis were chosen as the most appropriate contribution to the study. The tags assigned to those chunks of information will be referred to in this study as *open codes*.

After the open codes were obtained and organized, the researcher reviewed them again to find a link or relation among them. As a result, seven *axial codes* were drawn from the found connections. Those axial codes with their corresponding descriptions were arranged in the following codebook to have a more organized view.

**TABLE 1.** *Codebook*

	<b>Axial Codes</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Leisure Activities in English	The recreational actions or ventures related to the English language that people pursuit in their free time.
2	Preferred Types of Training	Different kinds of professional preparation or courses that are chosen over others.
3	Formal Professional Development Activities Done by Teachers	Traditional, structured educational training with a specified curriculum that are usually taken by teachers.
4	Informal Professional Development Activities Done by Teachers	Organized and systematic actions or ventures that do not follow a specified curriculum but that are performed by teachers depending on their own initiative.
5	Facilities that Institutions Give to Achieve Professional Goals.	The means that schools as employers provide to their teachers so that they can successfully reach their objectives.
6	Usefulness of Training Provided by Institutions	The practicality of the courses or other types of professional development activities that are offered by schools to teachers as their employees.
7	Things that Institutions Could Do to Improve Teachers' Professional Development.	Actions that schools as employers can take to boost the career growth of their teachers.

Finally, the axial codes were rechecked to identify a core relationship between the short units of analysis and the study's goal. Consequently, three categories were found, identified, and labeled as the *selective codes*. (Cohen et al., 2011; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011) Tables 2, 3, and 4 show the selective codes with their corresponding axial codes and open codes. In these schemes, the open codes are displayed in the order that they appear in the interview transcripts.

**TABLE 2.** *Selective Code 1*

<b>Selective Code 1: Teacher's English Knowledge</b>	
	<b>Axial Code 1: Leisure Activities in English</b>
<b>Open Codes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading books.</li> <li>2. Listening to Audiobooks or Podcasts</li> <li>3. Listening to Music</li> <li>4. Watching TV/Movies/Series/ Documentaries.</li> <li>5. Watching Web Videos</li> <li>6. Playing Video Games or Board Games</li> <li>7. Talking to People Who Speak English</li> </ol>

**TABLE 3.** *Selective Code 2*

<b>Selective Code 2: Professional Development</b>			
	<b>Axial Code 2: Preferred Types of Training</b>	<b>Axial Code 3: Formal Professional Activities Done by Teachers</b>	<b>Axial Code 4: Informal Professional Activities Done by Teachers</b>
<b>Open Codes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Formal Training</li> <li>9. Informal Training</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Seminars and Workshops</li> <li>11. Graduate degrees.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Practicing on Educational Websites</li> <li>13. Keeping a Diary</li> <li>14. Taking Online Courses</li> <li>15. Reading Journals</li> </ol>

TABLE 4. *Selective Code 3*

<b>Selective Code 3: Role of Workplaces in Professional Development</b>			
	<b>Axial Code 5: Facilities that Institutions Give to Achieve Professional Goals</b>	<b>Axial Code 6: Usefulness of Training Provided by Institutions</b>	<b>Axial Code 7: Things that Institutions Could Do to Improve Teachers' Professional Development</b>
<b>Open Codes</b>	16. Classroom Materials 17. Paid Workshops, Courses, or Higher Education Programs 18. Time to Pursue Professional Goals 19. Freedom in Class	20. Useful/Not Useful 21. Enough/Not Enough	22. Workshops About New Educational Approaches 23. Workshops Focused on Second Language Acquisition 24. Interaction with Teachers from Other Schools 25. Financial Support for Courses or Higher Education Programs

In the next chapter, the study's findings will be analyzed based on the previously explained coding process.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data analysis will be presented under each of the seven axial codes that resulted from the coding process.

**Axial Code 1. *Leisure Activities in English.*** When asked if they pursued any English-related hobbies or ventures during their free time, interviewees mentioned activities like watching TV, reading books, listening to music or podcasts, playing video games, and looking for cooking recipes. For most of these teachers, the interest in those activities started early in their lives, coinciding with their second language learning stage. Their desire to perform those hobbies seemed to have prompted an inclination to study English. A few interviewed teachers commented that most of the movies, songs, or reading material they liked when they were younger were in English. That made them realize that learning the language was imperative to keep practicing those hobbies. However, the motivation to do those activities has changed now that most participants reached fluency in English. In their opinion, engaging in any venture involving English was more of a habit than a strategy to practice it.

Other interviewees acknowledged that they pursued those activities to develop their English language skills. They said learning a language through real-life exposure was more effective than taking English courses in traditional settings. In their experience, the teaching methodology in those courses made the learning process tedious. For that reason, they took any opportunity to practice the language. Besides the activities mentioned before, they also liked attending language exchange meetups and keeping a diary to improve their English skills.



**Axial Code 2. Preferred Types of Learning.** The objective of this question was to find out if the interviewed teachers were inclined to either formal or informal professional development activities. However, the researcher was aware that the participants might not know those terms even though they had probably engaged in any of those ventures at some point. So, to avoid confusion, the respondents were given a summarized definition with examples of formal and informal training before the interview question was asked.

The answers revealed exciting details. For instance, some teachers commented that formal and informal professional learning complemented each other and served a purpose. According to them, pursuing any type of learning depended on the teachers' needs. For example, one teacher explained that her job as a college teacher required her to take courses with certifications. This is consistent with the opinion of other participants who also preferred formal professional learning. Some of the reasons that made formal training more attractive to them were the possibility of interacting with teachers from other institutions, getting a certification, and making their resumes more competitive.

On the other hand, some teachers favored informal training. That preference did not mean that they were against formal professional development. They knew the benefits that courses or college programs could offer their careers. Moreover, they pursued those activities when they had the chance. However, some teachers said they learned better in solitude and when no pressure or external factors could distract them. They also said that having the opportunity to select the topic they wanted to study and having more time to review material and resources were the advantages of informal professional development that they treasured the most.

**Axial Codes 3 & 4. *Formal and Informal Professional Development Activities Done by Teachers.*** Participants were asked about the formal or informal training activities they usually did or had done during their careers. In the informal professional development option group, all the participants had read academic articles, or any literature related to education at some point. Nevertheless, only a couple of them did it regularly. Other teachers commented that they sometimes attended language exchange meetings to develop their English skills.

Regarding formal training activities, interviewed teachers said they had done preparation courses for international English proficiency tests, seminars or workshops, and college programs. For the first activity, some participants said that preparation courses were paid for by their workplaces when it became a common requirement for EFL teachers to have a B2<sup>15</sup> level based on the CEFR. Other interviewees commented that they paid for their preparation courses and the proficiency tests. Some reasons for taking that step without financial support were their desire to have their certification despite the unwillingness of their workplaces to pay for it and their aspiration to look more competitive for their job hunting in the case of those who were not employed when taking the test.

The seminars or workshops the participants said they attended were mostly compulsory and usually organized by the institutions where they worked. However, there were respondents whose workplaces offered them seminars in Spanish or did not offer them any professional development opportunities. Although that situation could be an obstacle for many, these teachers said it drove them to continually look for relevant activities to help them grow in their careers, like certified courses or college programs. For instance, a teacher said he was always looking for

---

<sup>15</sup> In the Common European Framework of Reference, B2 users have an upper intermediate level in a language.

scholarships or paid seminars here or abroad. That strategy has taken him to courses and programs in places like the United States, Cuba, and South Korea.

And as to college programs, most of the respondents had undergraduate degrees. However, not all of them studied teaching. Some participants had degrees in unrelated fields like business, economics, or marketing. When asked about that drastic career change, they told different stories about how teaching had impacted their lives. For example, two respondents said that early in their careers, they were hired as teachers even though they had no background in education. One was a book salesman, and the other was a publicist. During their experience, they both had fellow teachers who guided them and eventually inspired them to continue in the field of education. After a couple of years, they decided to enroll in undergraduate education programs to boost their careers.

Like in those cases, other participants realized teaching was their calling. Some interviewees said they were already working in areas that were not education related. However, several circumstances allowed them to tutor kids or adults in English for some time. Those experiences made them resolve to abandon their previous jobs and pursue a graduate degree in teaching. At the time of the interview, only one of those teachers was still working part-time in a job related to her previous career. The others were dedicated entirely to education.

***Axial Code 5. Facilities that Institutions Offered to Teachers to Achieve Their Professional Goals.*** For this question, respondents listed several actions that they considered a suitable help in achieving their professional goals, like paid workshops or courses, financial support for college programs, time to pursue other interests, and freedom to teach the academic contents with their preferred approach.

These facilities seem logical, considering that most of these teachers acknowledged in another question that their goal was to become better professionals. For instance, most participants applauded that their schools organized workshops and courses whose topics were usually interesting. They saw those activities as opportunities to update their knowledge. Even a couple of teachers admitted that their schools had provided them with excellent courses which were not offered to the rest of the staff. One of them even said that her workplace financed her graduate program. That teacher was later given a high-ranked administrative position in her institution.

Other ways in which institutions have collaborated with some interviewees have been by letting them apply their teaching style for their lessons or giving them free time so that they could carry out other interests like studying a graduate program. This last situation was commented on by those teachers who were pursuing a master's degree. They said that authorities usually allowed them to leave earlier or accommodated their work schedule if they had to accomplish something university related. They also remarked that authorities were constantly checking for their needs. They were always asked if they required more time or extra support to achieve their school tasks.

However, not every educator could respond positively to this question. The participants from the public education system confessed that they did not feel supported by their schools in their path to achieving professional goals. Furthermore, they had to pay for classroom materials and professional training to carry forward their students and careers. For instance, one of the teachers said he saw the need for a language laboratory to strengthen the English learning in his students. Since his public school had no resources to set up a lab, he had the initiative to create

one. He painted and decorated an empty room, bought multimedia supplies like headphones and a projector, and used the internet from his phone to provide his students with a functional lab.

**Axial Code 6. *Usefulness of Training Provided by Educational Institutions.*** In this question, the interviewed teachers gave their opinions about the usefulness and sufficiency of the training their schools usually offered them. The participants had mixed feelings about those workshops. Most respondents commented that the seminars their schools organized were productive but not enough. Those who enjoyed the sessions they attended said the learned content was valuable and applicable to their lessons. They also praised the presenters of the seminars, describing them as knowledgeable in their fields. However, they considered that more workshops should be provided. Moreover, the topics needed to be more focused on every discipline.

On the other hand, a group of respondents did not think the courses were practical. Some categorized those sessions as repetitive, tedious, and not insightful. There were different reasons behind those adjectives. For instance, one teacher complained about the lack of follow-up on the topics provided in the one-day seminars she usually had to attend. She said that those seminars' format did not allow attendees to discuss what was exposed. She also felt that a few hours was not enough time to interiorize the amount of content that the presenters explained.

Other teachers thought that the impracticality of those seminars lay in the entity that organized them. Participants commented that educational publishers that aspired to sell textbooks to their schools offered most of the workshops they received as EFL teachers. That created a conflict of interest for them because those companies might have been more interested in selling their books rather than showing them relevant or groundbreaking content. However, interviewed

teachers also acknowledged that there would always be something that could be learned from those types of seminars. So, they tried to get the best of them.

***Axial Code 7. Things that Institutions Could Do to Improve Teachers' Professional Development.*** In the last section, the participants were asked about the actions that, in their opinions, their workplaces should take to boost teachers' professional development. Most interviewees thought that their schools should try to offer more workshops focused on new educational approaches and Second Language Acquisition methodologies. They mentioned that the topics addressed in those seminars tended to be repetitive and not relevant to the needs of modern students.

While answering this question, a few teachers who worked in bilingual and non-bilingual schools expressed their disappointment at their schools for not promoting more workshops for the Foreign Language Department. They said that most of the seminars organized by their institutions were in Spanish and focused on general teaching methodologies. However, there were none on Second Language Acquisition or specific subjects that were taught in English.

Other teachers said that school authorities should consider the chance to interact with professionals from other institutions. One teacher commented that some schools have only one educator teaching a discipline to one specific level. Being the only one, that teacher would not have the chance to share ways of dealing with specific issues or experiences with anybody in the school. That situation could be improved if there were more interaction between institutions. It would be enriching and highly beneficial for everyone.

Another prevalent action among the interviewed teachers was providing financial aid for those who wanted to pursue a master's degree. They said that schools should have a plan to

support those whose economic situation was uncomfortable but who wanted to go to graduate school. However, they acknowledged that it is unlikely that most schools had the resources or the predisposition to carry out a project like that.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

As was established before, teaching professional development is a process that allows educators to acquire updated knowledge, review previous concepts related to the discipline they teach, and evolve as professionals. (Avalos, 2011; MacMillan Dictionary, n.d.; Richter et al., 2011; Valenčič Zuljan, 2001; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Wichadee, 2011) It has a significant role in a teacher's career because it helps them improve their classroom practice and reach their professional goals. Unfortunately, the quality of EFL teachers' training and preparation in Ecuador is uncertain. It has been said that their supposedly limited professional development is one of the main reasons for the poor English level in the country. (Bastida Mafla, 2013; Machado, 2019; Solo 34% de maestros, 2018)

In order to know if there is truth in that statement, this study aimed to explore the attitudes and perceptions that some EFL teachers from Quito and Guayaquil would have towards the formal and informal professional activities they have engaged in to enhance their English level and teaching techniques. Through semi-structured interviews, relevant data were collected, coded, and evaluated. (Cohen et al., 2011; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011; Forman & Damschroder, 2007) The obtained results revealed that the opinions of interviewed teachers on professional development differed from what they did. For instance, most participants said that formal and informal training was necessary for their professional goals and complementary to each other. However, data showed that their preferences leaned towards formal training. Most of these teachers participated in workshops or pursued graduate courses. However, a small percentage of interviewees performed informal learning activities to update their knowledge of methodologies or consciously practice their language skills.



Although that was broadly the main finding, it is essential to carefully analyze the topic's different components to grasp the study better. The first aspect to evaluate could be the interviewed EFL teachers' actions to improve their English. According to their answers, only a few respondents did activities like talking to people in English, listening to music, or reading books or magazines to improve their English level intentionally. Most teachers embarked on those ventures just for enjoyment and with no purpose of practicing any skill. This attitude contradicts what was expressed in another question in which they indicated that some of their language skills needed further development.

This phenomenon could result from being comfortable with the language, lack of continuous self-reflection, or simple neglect to act. (Bybee & Loucks-Horsley, 2000; Lamb, 1995; Mattheoudakis & Nicolaidis, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003) Since the English level of most teachers ranged between B2 and C1<sup>16</sup>, it has been easy for them to communicate in that language and include it in their daily routines. This sense of security might have created the feeling that there was no immediate need to improve or practice their English. Alternatively, it is also possible that they had not thought about any skills or details that needed improvement until being asked during the interview.

The other component of the research topic is the interviewees' activities to boost their classroom practice. As was said before, most of these teachers preferred formal professional training like graduate programs or the workshops their institutions provided them. Many seemed to regard these learning experiences as important tools for improving their teaching performance.

---

<sup>16</sup> In the Common European Framework of Reference, C1 users have an advanced level in a language.

As proof of that, most of the respondents had a college degree, and some were pursuing master's programs.

However, only a few teachers mentioned activities like reading journals or academic books as part of their routine. The only participants who said to engage with academic literature belonged to the teachers whose institutions did not support them with time or paid courses to achieve their professional goals. The lack of involvement in informal ventures related to the learning of teaching methodologies seems to imply that graduate programs and workshops are these teachers' only sources of knowledge. The reasons behind this situation could be being comfortable with the circumstances, having no extra time, or having no real wish to change the status quo. (Bybee & Loucks-Horsley, 2000; Lamb, 1995; Mattheoudakis & Nicolaidis, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003)

The analysis of these elements leads to the following conclusions: 1) The study participants prepared themselves with formal training to get better learning outcomes with their students. 2) Interviewed teachers who were proficient in English stayed in their comfort zone and did not pursue other activities to take their language skills beyond their current level. 3) Respondents who received workshops or were pursuing graduate degrees did not include academic literature in their informal activities. 4) Participant teachers not supported by their institutions tried to look for resources themselves.

To conclude, the quality of the training that EFL teachers receive is still in the spotlight of public opinion. It is a topic that concerns us all since the improvement of second language teaching, and therefore, the growth of the English level in our country depends on it. Moreover, even though it is a big issue whose solution will need collaboration between the government and

teachers, this study shows that some educators are conscious of their role's relevance and impact on students. The interviewed teachers acknowledged and embraced that the success of their classroom practice and their students depended on the high standards of their professional development. (Pedder & Opfer, 2011) That awareness drove them to get academically prepared, almost guaranteeing an improvement in the quality of their teaching delivery. Unfortunately, the study's sample size did not allow an accurate idea of the number of teachers committed to improving the quality of English teaching. However, if more educators with the same passion for teaching and desire to be better professionals as the participants in this study were found in the country, EFL education in Ecuador could eventually advance.

### **5.1. Limitations and Recommendations**

This study presented a few potential limitations regarding the sample. The results of this study suggested that EFL teachers tried to enhance their careers through formal professional development. However, since the sample size is limited, this statement cannot be considered conclusive or applicable to all the EFL teachers in Ecuador. As was established before, it would require a much larger number of participants to get an accurate concept of the teachers' preferences regarding professional development or the quality of the activities in which EFL teachers engage. The sample size in this study only gives us a general idea of these topics that could be used as a hypothesis for a more extensive study.

Another issue was the diversity of the sample, which posed a challenge for this study. The initial goal was to get equal participants from public and private schools. However, only 20% of the interviewed teachers belonged to the country's public education system. Unfortunately, some teachers who worked in public schools did not agree to participate in the study. With such an imbalanced sample, it is impossible to get a precise outlook of how teachers

from public institutions advance in their professional development with or without the support of their schools. This also does not allow the researcher to make a connection between the experiences and insights from public and private school teachers.

For future studies, the researcher recommends broadening the sample size and paying close attention to diversification. The number of participants who work in the public and private systems should be equal. Also, the English level of respondents could be more wide-ranging so that the data reflect the actions teachers with a low and high level of proficiency take to grow in their careers and contrast that information during the analysis.

## REFERENCES

- Albiladi, W. S., Abdeen, F. H., & Lincoln, F. (2018). Learning English through movies: Adult English language learners' perceptions. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(12), 1567-1574. <http://www.academypublication.com/issues2/tpls/vol08/12/01.pdf>
- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in Teaching and Teacher Education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10–20.
- Aydin, S. (2014). The use of blogs in learning English as a foreign language. Online Submission, 4(1), 244-259. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545624.pdf>.
- Barre-Parrales, P. & Villafuerte-Holguín, J. (2021). English as a foreign language instruction in Ecuador: An analysis of the Content and Language Integrated-Learning implementation. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 4(2), 99-112  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1311546.pdf>
- Bastida Mafla, R. A. D. L. (2013) El eslabón débil de la cooperación internacional, una reflexión a partir del proyecto de inglés CRADLE (Tesis de Maestría, Quito: FLACSO Sede Ecuador). <https://repositorio.flacsoandes.edu.ec/bitstream/10469/5994/2/TFLACSO-2013RABM.pdf>
- British Council Education Intelligence (2015). Retrieved February 15, 2023, from [http://obiret-iesalc.udg.mx/sites/default/files/publicaciones/46\\_english\\_in\\_ecuador.pdf](http://obiret-iesalc.udg.mx/sites/default/files/publicaciones/46_english_in_ecuador.pdf)
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. LONGMAN.

- Bybee, R. W., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (2000). Advancing technology education: The role of professional development. *The Technology Teacher*, 60(2), 31-34.  
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=4cfaa69873d9fca22deb386ff3548f11a87c69b1f>
- Cáneppa Muñoz, C., Dahik Solís, C. & Feijóo Rojas, K. (2018). The history of English language teaching in Ecuador. *Revista Pertinencia Académica*, 7(1), 39-52.
- Castillo, L. (2021, November 27) Ecuador mantiene un bajo nivel de dominio del idioma inglés. *El Comercio*. <https://www.elcomercio.com/tendencias/sociedad/ecuador-idioma-dominio-ingles-estudiantes.html>
- Castillo, L. (2023, January 13) Ministerio de Educación abre nueve cursos gratuitos para docentes. *El Comercio*. <https://www.elcomercio.com/sociedad-2/cursos-capacitacion-docente-profesores-ecuador.html>
- Clark, S., & Duggins, A. (2015). Using quality feedback to guide professional learning: A framework for instructional leaders. Corwin Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. R. B. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge.
- Cronquist, K., & Fiszbein, A. (2017). El aprendizaje del inglés en América Latina. *El Diálogo Interamericano*. <https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/English-Language-Learning-in-Latin-America-Final-1.pdf>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press.

De Angelis, A (2023) The EF English Proficiency Index as an international large-scale assessment: A critical cultural political economy perspective, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/14767724.2023.2165477

DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Marshall, P. L., & McCulloch, A. W. (2011). Developing and using a codebook for the analysis of interview data: An example from a professional development research project. *Field Methods*, 23(2), 136-155.

Dónde obtener becas de educación universitaria en Ecuador. (2022, October 25). *El Universo*.  
<https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/ecuador/donde-obtener-becas-de-educacion-universitaria-en-ecuador-nota/>

Duran, J. (n.d.). *Inicios de la Facultad como formadora de Maestros y Maestras*.  
<http://www.revistarupturas.com/inicios-de-la-facultad-como-formadora-de-maestros-y-maestras.html>

Elliot, D. L., & Campbell, T. (2013). “Really on the ball”: Exploring the implications of teachers’ PE-CPD experience. *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(3), 381–397. doi:10.1080/13573322.2013.765400

Forman, J., & Damschroder, L. (2007). Qualitative content analysis. In *Empirical methods for bioethics: A primer* (pp. 39-62). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Garcia, F. (2021, Nov. 17) Sobre estratos, ingresos y percepciones. *Primicias.ec*.  
<https://www.primicias.ec/noticias/firmas/estratos-ingresos-percepciones-reforma-tributaria/>

- Gavarrí, S.L. (2016). El aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras mediado por las TIC: Aprender Inglés con Duolingo. *El Toldo de Astier*, 7 (12), 56-65. En *Memoria Académica*.  
[http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.7199/pr.7199.pdf](http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.7199/pr.7199.pdf).
- Gu, Y., & Johnson, R. K. (1996). Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Language Learning Outcomes. *Language Learning*, 46(4), 643–679. doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1996.tb01355.x
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M. S., & De Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction*, 31(3), 498–501.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334>
- Heredia, V. (2018, December 25) Suficiencia en inglés, básica para seguir con los estudios. El Comercio. <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/ecuador/suficiencia-ingles-basica-seguir-estudios.html>
- Hidayat, D. N., Lee, J. Y., Mason, J., & Khaerudin, T. (2022). Digital technology supporting English learning among Indonesian university students. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 17(1), 1-15.
- Historia – Colegio Americano de Guayaquil*. (n.d.).  
<https://www.colegioamericano.edu.ec/historia/>
- Historia - Fundación Colegio Americano Quito*. (2021, August 10). Fundación Colegio Americano Quito. <https://www.fcaq.k12.ec/historia/>



- Huetter, A. (2023, June 8). Why are the Dutch so good at speaking English? *DutchReview*. <https://dutchreview.com/culture/why-are-dutchies-so-good-at-speaking-english/>
- Hunter, D., McCallum, J. and Howes, D. (2019) Defining Exploratory-Descriptive Qualitative (EDQ) research and considering its application to healthcare. *Journal of Nursing and Health Care*, 4(1). <https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/180272/7/180272.pdf>
- Instituto Nacional De Estadística Y Censos. (2011). *Encuesta de Estratificación del Nivel Socioeconómico*. <https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/encuesta-de-estratificacion-del-nivel-socioeconomico/>
- Jacobs, F. (2020). Do you prefer subs or dubs? Here's a map for that. *Big Think*. <https://bigthink.com/strange-maps/dubbing-map/>
- Kyndt, E., Gijbels, D., Grosemans, I., & Donche, V. (2016). Teachers' everyday professional development: Mapping informal learning activities, antecedents, and learning outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1111-1150. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315627864>
- Lamb, M. (1995). The consequences of INSET. *ELT Journal*, 49(1), 72–80.  
doi:10.1093/elt/49.1.72
- Machado, J. (2019, December 11) Ecuador tiene el peor nivel de inglés de América Latina. *Primicias*. <https://www.primicias.ec/noticias/sociedad/idioma-ingles-estudiantes-convenio-educacion-profesores/>

- Macia, & Garcia, I. (2016). Informal online communities and networks as a source of teacher professional development: A review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 55, 291–307.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.021>
- Macias, Y. & Villafuerte, J. (2020). Teaching English language in Ecuador: A Review from the Inclusive Educational Approach. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(2), 75-90.
- MacMillan Dictionary. (n.d.). Professional Development. In [macmillandictionary.com](http://macmillandictionary.com). Retrieved April 3, 2023, from  
<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/professional-development>
- Mattheoudakis, M., & Nicolaidis, K. (2005). *Stirring the waters: university INSET in Greece*. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 28(1), 49–66. doi:10.1080/02619760500040058
- McLeod, S. (2023, May 26). *Qualitative vs Quantitative Research: What's the Difference?* Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html>.
- Me Capacito (2023) *Cursos*. <https://eva-mecapacito.educacion.gob.ec/course/index.php>
- Moussu, L. M. (2006). Native and Nonnative English-Speaking English as a Second Language Teachers: Student Attitudes, Teacher Self-Perceptions, and Intensive English Administrator Beliefs and Practices. Online Submission.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED492599.pdf>
- Pedder, D., & Opfer, V. D. (2011). *Are we realising the full potential of teachers' professional learning in schools in England? Policy issues and recommendations from a national*

*study. Professional Development in Education, 37(5), 741–*

*758. doi:10.1080/19415257.2011.614812*

Richter, Kunter, M., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., & Baumert, J. (2011). Professional development across the teaching career: Teachers' uptake of formal and informal learning opportunities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27(1), 116–126.*

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.008>

Rosero, M. (2014, March 26) El déficit de profesores de inglés es un problema que viene desde

1950. *El Comercio*. <https://www.elcomercio.com/tendencias/deficit-de-profesores-de-ingles.html>

Schwartz, R. A., & Bryan, W. A. (1998). *What Is Professional Development? New Directions for Student Services, 1998(84), 3–13.* doi:10.1002/ss.8401

Self-Perception: Definition, Theory, & Questions. (n.d.). The Berkeley Well-Being Institute.

<https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/self-perception.html>

Shanks, J., Miller, L., & Rosendale, S. (2012). Action Research in a Professional Development School Setting to Support Teacher Candidate Self-Efficacy. *SRATE Journal, 21(2), 26–32.*

Sólo 34% de maestros con suficiencia para el inglés. (2018, January 23) *La Hora*.

<https://www.lahora.com.ec/noticias/solo-34-de-maestros-con-suficiencia-para-el-ingles/>

The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland. (2022). *Formal and informal CPD.*

<https://www.cgi.org.uk/professional-development/cpd/formal-and-informal-cpd>

- U. S. Mission Ecuador (2022, September 2). El Gobierno de los Estados Unidos llega a todo el Ecuador con su programa Ecuador Habla Inglés. *Embajada Y Consulado De EE. UU. En Ecuador*. <https://ec.usembassy.gov/es/el-gobierno-de-los-estados-unidos-llega-a-todo-el-ecuador-con-su-programa-ecuador-habla-ingles/>
- Valenčič Zuljan, M. (2019) Factors of teachers' professional development. Reaching Horizons in Contemporary Education. Juraj Dobrila University of Pula Faculty of Educational Sciences.: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334250934>
- Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: an international review of the literature*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.  
<http://file.snnu.net/res/20126/18/018526a6-3cbf-4c9d-ac0f-a0740094aa75.pdf>
- Wichadee, S. (2011). Professional Development: A Path to Success for EFL Teachers. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER)*, 4(5), 13–22.  
<https://clutejournals.com/index.php/CIER/article/view/4234/4305>
- Wisniewski, B., Röhl, S., & Fauth, B. (2022). The perception problem: a comparison of teachers' self-perceptions and students' perceptions of instructional quality. *Learning Environments Research*, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-021-09397-4>

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A. Interview 1 .....	54
Appendix B. Interview 2 .....	65
Appendix C. Interview 3 .....	76
Appendix D. Interview 4 .....	90
Appendix E. Interview 5 .....	98
Appendix F. Interview 6 .....	108
Appendix G. Interview 7 .....	119
Appendix H. Interview 8 .....	128
Appendix I. Interview 9 .....	138
Appendix J. Interview 10 .....	146
Appendix K. Interview 11 .....	162
Appendix L. Interview 12 .....	171
Appendix M. Interview 13 .....	183
Appendix N. Interview 14 .....	193
Appendix O. Interview 15 .....	204

**APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW 1**

**Interviewer:** OK! So, before starting the interview, can you tell me what day is it today?

**Interviewee:** Today, it's May fifth. I think Yeah! May the fifth.

**Interviewer:** Yes! Ok! Let's start! Can you tell me something about you? Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I am from Guayaquil, from Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** Where do you live?

**Interviewee:** In Guayaquil.

**Interviewer:** OK, so when you're not working, what do you like doing in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Well, when I'm at home I like to read. I like to watch TV and if I'm on vacation I prefer to... to go abroad, to go out. Yes! To travel out of Guayaquil. Or out of Ecuador. I like to travel when I'm on vacation. But here my free time, I prefer to stay home and read, watch TV, listen to music. That's what I do.

**Interviewer:** OK, and... hmmm. Are any of those activities in English or has it any relation with the English language?

**Interviewee:** Well! Yeah! I like to read books in English. Yeah! I mean, it's difficult to find books because I like to have the actual book, not to read online. Yes! So, when I have the opportunity and get the books that I'm interested in in English, I buy them, and I read them in English. Yes! But I also read in Spanish. The music, the music... Well, I listen to music mainly in English. Most of the music that I, that I listen is in English too. But, when I watch TV, while watching TV, watching series, it doesn't matter if it's in Spanish.

**Interviewer:** Hmm, do you hold any university degree? And if so which one?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I am... How do you say that in English? "Licenciado" That would be...

**Interviewer:** Bachelor. A bachelor's degree.

**Interviewee:** A bachelor's degree, and also a master's degree that I got from an American University. Yep!

**Interviewer:** OK, why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** That's funny because I didn't, ... That was not my plan even though both of my parents are teachers. I didn't think about being a teacher and when I was... when I finished school, I decided to study advertisement and marketing. That was my major at the university. When I... when I finished school, my last year of that mayor at the university, I received the opportunity to be a substitute teacher for a few months. I needed the money. I didn't have a job, but I knew English because I studied in an academy. This person who offered me this... this job knew me because I, ... I was a volunteer in this organization. I worked there for free, I was volunteer there. So, this person knew me, so he offered me the job at a school for a few months. I accepted the job. I went there and I liked it at that moment. I liked being a teacher, being in front of students. I also met a very good, uh, teacher who was my boss. She was the area coordinator, and she was a very wise lady. I learned a lot from her and that made me realize that I wanted to do that for my life. So, I quit marketing and I took the challenge of starting a new career like education, philosophy, and English. Yeah! So, my decision why I decided to be a teacher. Because I liked it when I experienced it.

**Interviewer:** Thanks! How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I started in the year 2001, so it would be like 22 years. This August, this August will be 22 years.

**Interviewer:** So, since you... since you have another degree. May I say that if you were not a teacher, your career will be in the marketing and advertisement...

**Interviewee:** In business. Yes! In business and administration.

**Interviewer:** OK! OK! So, your current institution. Is the school where you work at public or private?

**Interviewee:** It's semiprivate. We call it here in Ecuador "fiscomisional" That means that one part of the staff has a particular contract. And the other part of the staff have to do with the government.

**Interviewer:** OK! How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you work at?

**Interviewee:** The philosophy? It follows the thoughts of "San Juan Bosco" who had this philosophy of educating the young people in order to avoid them to be bad people. I mean, he wanted to educate with the system that he called the 'Preventive System.' Yeah! And the idea is to teach, to educate young people but with love and affection. Right! That's what we follow in the school. We try to be friends with our students.

**Interviewer:** Good! Have you worked in an institution from the other educational system? So, since you are in a semiprivate school, have you worked in a public school?

**Interviewee:** No! No, I don't have the experience. My experience is in this school. I started at this school in the year 2001 until now. Then, I worked in an academy which was completely private. And then, the university. The university is public. Maybe, ... I don't know if this fits what you are what you're asking me.

**Interviewer:** Ohh, the university is public? Yeah! OK, do you find any difference between both educational systems in your case?

**Interviewee:** Well, the thing is that there are different levels. At the school, I work with teenagers and at the university I work with adults. At the school, I teach English as a foreign language to all the students, to all the teenagers. But, at the university I teach English too but



they are adults and they want to be English teachers. So, it's... uh... it's harder for them because they have more periods of English. 13 in a week versus 4 hours in a week at the school. So, it's different. It's different so I cannot compare both. I don't know what you want me to compare because...

**Interviewer:** I meant mostly the environment or the resources, are they...?

**Interviewee:** OK! OK! OK! Well, the university is public as I told you. We don't have too much technology there. Yeah! We... we still use the whiteboard and markers. For example, we teachers, we need to take our resources to the classroom. If we want to work with computers and projectors, for example. Or even a recorder, a CD player. We have to go with our own things to the university. At the school... the school is semiprivate, but we have in each classroom the projector, the computer. We also have audio system, and a laboratory. Well, the university has a laboratory too. Ehh, but now, since the pandemic situation, the university is offering some semesters online. Yes! Online education and I'm working for that. So now, for online education, the university provided us with platforms. Zoom for video conferences and the platform for the materials, for uploading materials for the students. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** And what educational system do you prefer?

**Interviewee:** Both have their appealing. I'm not sure if I would be comfortable in a public high school but I'm ok in a public university.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Moving on! Let's see! Um! How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well, I like this language since I remember. When I was a child. But I started to study English, uh, seriously in my teenage years. When I was 15 years old, I entered in an Academy. I finished the program, but I also prepared myself by reading. I always liked to read. And, at that time, we didn't have the Internet. So, I remember buying magazines and newspapers

from the USA. I bought them to read, to learn about the things that I was interested in. I'm interested in music, in movies, in show business in general. So I bought those magazines like "Rolling Stone" or "Hit Parader." Those magazines that were American magazines and in them I read about my favorite artists, my favorite movies. In that way, I practiced. Music was very important in my life. I wanted to learn the lyrics of the songs that that I listened to. And with the vocabulary that I was learning in the academy, I listened to the songs, recorded tapes, and tried to understand what the singer said. So, that's how I learned English before the internet. At the academy and by myself

**Interviewer:** Would you say that music and movies were your motivation to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, especially music!

**Interviewer:** Um, did you say that you started learning English when you were a teenager?

**Interviewee:** Yes, yes! I mean, before that I just had the school classes that were not really, you know now that I analyze it, they were not enough. It was just vocabulary and verb to be, and those things. Yeah! But, I don't think that I would have learned English if I hadn't entered in an academy.

**Interviewer:** OK! What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** The easiest part for me was probably... Um, it was easy for me to use the grammar. Yeah! It was easy. I didn't have to study. Yeah! That would have been the easiest part. Yeah! Because I just took the book, the textbook. I saw examples and I could easily finish the exercises with no further explanation. So, I think that was the easiest part for me when I was learning. And since I was motivated to learn English, I mean, everything was really easy. There was nothing really difficult for me. Not even pronunciation of certain words. Probably listening,

to recognize different accents could have been a little more complicated. But difficult, difficult?

Nothing, because I was motivated for learning.

**Interviewer:** OK, so do you think there is an area of the English language that you need to improve right now?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! I think the vocabulary element. Vocabulary, I think, it's the one area that I need to reinforce.

**Interviewer:** Um, what do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** Well, I think that motivation is the most important thing when learning English as a foreign language. Because when you are in a country like Ecuador where English is not the official language, the necessity of English doesn't exist. Yeah! You don't need English here in Ecuador, so you need to motivate yourself. You need to find a way to get motivated. Once you find that way to motivate yourself, then you go in that way, and you can find activities that helps you to learn English. In my case it was music, so I would say that listening to music is a good way to learn English. But, what if a person doesn't like music in English? It wouldn't be a good idea for these people. But if they are motivated by movies or watching what is very on demand now, the streaming services. And if they like watching those series, maybe that could be a good way for this person. So, I mean, motivation is the best, the most important thing that you need to develop in order to learn English in a country where English is not the official language. And the motivation is personal. You have to find a way to motivate yourself to learn.

**Interviewer:** OK! Moving on! What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** Could you repeat the question, please?

**Interviewer:** What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** Satisfaction? Satisfaction? Well, I like when my students return after some years, or some months. Or, they recognize me on the street. And they tell me their progress in the language. Yes! When they tell me they have found their motivation for learning English, that makes me proud. Or when they told me they have been doing this or that and they are also studying English. That makes me, that gives me satisfaction. When those students tell me they have understood the importance of English. Maybe, I started to give them that motivation to learn. That makes me proud of myself and that gives me satisfaction.

**Interviewer:** Nice, what are the difficulties that you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** To make my students understand the importance of English. As I told you, English is not necessary in Ecuador so the usual difficulty that I face is to make them understand that English is important. I always tell them that it's important for their lives because you need to learn English for academic purposes. Yeah! So, that's difficult! To make them understand the importance of learning a foreign language like English.

**Interviewer:** Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** In one way, yes. Sometimes, I want to quit. Yes! Because this job is hard. And sometimes, I can't make students understand the importance of English. Especially after the pandemic. Coming back to them and see the attitudes that they had in class. They just wanted to use a translator, the computers, or just copying what other classmates were writing. So, that makes me want to quit. But then, as I told you, there are some other students that come here, they talk to me after classes and I feel motivated again. Because I see that some of them want to learn. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** To make my students understand the importance of English. Sometimes I get it, sometimes I don't.

**Interviewer:** And what do you do to achieve that?

**Interviewee:** I try to find new ways to motivate them. I try to be up to date with what could interest students because I work with teenagers. I try to keep them motivated in my class. So, I have to keep reading about the new trends, about what's new in social networks like Tik Tok or Instagram. That is something that motivates them. So, yeah! I am always like: Why don't we record videos? Why don't you record videos in English? Those are the things that I'm doing now with them. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Interesting! And, does your school or university give you the facilities to do that? Although, that depends just on you, I suppose.

**Interviewee:** Yes! The school provide me with the materials, with textbooks. But really when I do that, it's up to me. The goal is to keep my students motivated for learning English. To make them understand the importance of it. So, my job is to read, to perceive, to analyze what the students are interested in. Yes! What's in their world. The school gives us some speeches about the new generations, but it's not enough.

**Interviewer:** OK, so you mentioned that in your classes, to motivate students in your classes you use social media and music, too. Are there other activities that you prefer applying in your classes to motivate them?

**Interviewee:** Well, in my classes I make them understand the importance of English with music. Also, with those things that you mentioned. But also I make them work in pairs, in groups. Yes! So they learn from the peers. That's what I do a lot. I also do a lot of competitive games because they like to compete. They like to win. Yeah! So, I use games for that. Yeah! But

I like to keep them engaged. I don't want to frustrate them, so I try to make the exercises easy until they feel confident with their achievements. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Based on your observations, what language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** Writing! Writing because of the time. We don't have enough time for developing writing. So, we tend to assign it as homework, and we don't really know if the students write their essays. But, when they take tests, they usually fail in that part.

**Interviewer:** Where do you research your lesson activities?

**Interviewee:** OK! We have the textbook and the teachers' book. They give us some ideas and some other ideas I find them on the Internet. In some websites for teachers where they give some ideas. And also, based on my experience because I use my mind, my brain to create activities. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** So, you know, in order to grow in a career people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. So, have you taken part in any of those professional development activities?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! I have taken part in c. I also have my master's degree. So, now what I do is to attend to conferences and symposiums for English teachers. The school also send us to workshops. For example, like two weeks ago before starting classes, the school sent us to some conferences dictated by Cambridge. I know that this is an editorial and that their objective is to sell books. Yes! But you learn from some other teachers. And it's good to go to this kind of activities. The university is now organizing some conferences and I like to attend to those ones, too.

**Interviewer:** Are you attending the workshops and conferences that your institutions send you, or do you research conferences and you go?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yes! Sometimes I do that. Mostly the ones that are organized by my institutions or the institutions that we have relationship with. But, I have gone to workshops on my own.

**Interviewer:** OK! So, since you have participated in both formal training which is workshops and conferences, and also you listen to music, watch series, documentaries, etc. Which one is your preferred English training?

**Interviewee:** OK! For learning or training English the language, obviously, music, TV series, movies. All those things because that's for English development. But for English teaching, the conferences and the workshops.

**Interviewer:** Um, so you already mentioned that your institution organizes conferences, right? So, do you find those conferences useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** It's never enough! It's never enough! Sometimes the people who speak in the conferences don't know the real environment of the schools. Yes! They are probably very idealistic. Not realistic! Yeah! But, of course, it helps you. You cannot say it's totally a waste of time. It helps you in a certain way. Yeah! I guess you can learn. You can always learn. You can always get ideas that you can apply because you know the environment where you work.

**Interviewer:** OK! And what do you think your institution could do to improve your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** I think that my school and my university must... Um, I mean, we as teachers need to know more about the methodologies, and techniques, and approaches that are trending around the world. Yes! We are just focused in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). All the

conferences and workshop have to do with methodologies and techniques based on that approach. But, there are some other approaches. There are some more modern ways to teach English. And the schools and the universities should present those approaches to the teachers. I have seen in my in my school that some teachers claim that they follow the CLT but they are still in Grammar Translation.

**Interviewer:** OK, so just to wrap up, please tell me about a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work.

**Interviewee:** Well! When I organize some activities or contests with the students. That's fun! That's something that I really like to do with my students because they see that they use the language. They feel motivated to present their work to people in events like fairs. Yes! Before the pandemic situation, in 2019, with my team, my colleagues at school, we prepared a Hard Rock Café. The students researched about different classic rock stars like Elvis Presley, David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, etc. They made a presentation about them. They dressed up like these legends of music. They talked about them to people and there was also a band behind them that played the music of these stars. So, preparing everything was really a nice experience. And I felt that the students that were involved got motivated to use their English and to learn about these people. For some of them, it was the very first time that they listened to an Elvis Presley song. Yeah! And they liked it so I was glad.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I hope you felt comfortable all the time. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know.

**Interviewee:** No problem!



**APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW 2**

**Interviewer:** OKAY! Before I start, could you tell me today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is May 7, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! So, let's start with general information about you. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** Ecuador, Guayaquil.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! And where do you currently live?

**Interviewee:** In Ecuador

**Interviewer:** OKAY! When you are not working, what do you like to do in your spare time?

**Interviewee:** Well, I'm a documentary addict. I like to watch television. Watch documentaries. I like the internet and information, not only about education but in general. But information that is very common to us, that we cannot see on a daily basis.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! And what is the preferred language in which you watch those documentaries?

**Interviewee:** In English. I also watch in Spanish, but I think 80% is in English.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! What would be your favorite activity in the English language?

**Interviewee:** Speaking of skills, well, talking and chatting. For example, in the institution where I work we have conversation groups. Because? Because not all of us are at advanced levels. There are teachers who work in primary school and their speaking skills are not developed on a daily basis. Those of us who work in secondary school have students who force us to further develop our speaking skills in our classes. So, we make conversation groups. Not

daily due to schedule issues, but twice a week for a minimum of half an hour. And we talk about general topics, and we try to maintain that conversation time. Sometimes it is quite difficult because of our work.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any college degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, Bachelor of Foreign Language Education and Linguistics.

**Interviewer:** Why did you choose to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, now I realize that it was by vocation. But, at first it was out of necessity. The first job I had after graduation was as a salesperson. Since I knew some English, they gave me the English area. I began to visit schools showing the books in the English area. Thus, I arrived at a school where an uncle of mine worked. The director of the school asked me why I had not brought books in Spanish and I explained that I had studied some English and that I was thinking of going to university to study linguistics. That's where the conversation ended. I sold my books and left. Time passed, less than 1 year, and the director of that school called me because he wanted to do an evaluation to see if I could become a teacher. They told me they needed a grade teacher, that is, teach all the subjects. Since at that time I did not have a job, I accepted. By fate, in those days they needed an English teacher. The director remembered that I was studying languages, so he hired me as an English teacher. Over time I realized that this was my vocation. I come from a family that is mostly educators. But, as I already told you, it was out of necessity that I accepted that job.

**Interviewer:** And how long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** 28 years

**Interviewer:** And if you were not a teacher, what other career would you have chosen?

**Interviewee:** I think I would have stayed in sales.

**Interviewer:** Because you like it or because you didn't have another career in mind?

**Interviewee:** Well, at my job as a salesperson, they sent us to a sales school. The teachers were Colombians. They taught you to talk, to walk, to converse with customers. I liked that. I definitely have the gift of conversation. I love to talk. I have many friends and acquaintances. When I was a sales agent, I did very well. I met a lot of people and in sales I was doing super well. I did not continue in sales because they had 2 work sections: mountains and coast. I was on the coast, but just when I had enrolled in the university, they wanted to send me to the mountains. But I wanted to study, so I had to quit. I stayed here in Guayaquil and lost my job.

**Interviewer:** Is the institution where you currently work public or private?

**Interviewee:** Private

**Interviewer:** How would you describe the way of working of the institution where you are working?

**Interviewee:** Innovative. They don't like something traditional. They like to innovate. Now we are working with projects. But they always try to change their system and they don't stay static. They are always investigating.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Well now you are working in the private sector, but have you worked in the public sector?

**Interviewee:** Well yes, but as a replacement teacher. I worked in some public institutions about 4 years in total.

**Interviewer:** What differences have you perceived between public and private education?

**Interviewee:** First, the social media. Students from public institutions are more conformist. Also, there are good students in public institutions, but they are a low percentage. In private schools, the same parents sometimes have a good level of English and want their children to have a better level of English. That is why they ask the institution to have a slightly stronger education. So higher goals are set. Then we have the infrastructure. The infrastructure of the private school is phenomenal. They have speakers, they have internet, they have laboratories, they have many things that public schools do not have. Another difference is the type of training. I know that they are trained in the public system, but in private schools they force you to train more. You must have an average of seminars and courses held annually. The institution offers you the courses and you have to approve them. If you don't approve them, you are obligated to pay them. Those are the differences I've found.

**Interviewer:** Well, since you've worked on both systems and now you're working on the private system, would you like to work on the public system?

**Interviewee:** For convenience, maybe yes. Why do I say for comfort? The private system makes you work harder . You are under more pressure. And there comes a time, in my case it's 28 years of service, when one gets tired. I tried to enter the public system last year, but it failed. If I'm very honest with you, it is my goal to finish my career in the public system. For comfort and even for economic purposes. I think my salary would go up a lot since they validate the years of service to education.

**Interviewer:** Ok, how did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well, that was also by chance. When I was in fourth grade, my aunts gave me the study of English so that I would have more options in the future. At first it was fun for me. I studied in an all- boys public school. In the English academy, there were boys and girls. So, I started having friends. I liked that. It was fun for me. And little by little I began to like English, the teachers, being able to speak another language.

**Interviewer:** So, was your experience studying English good and motivating?

**Interviewee:** Yes, totally.

**Interviewer:** Was there something extra that motivated you to learn the language?

**Interviewee:** At that time, just that. When I got to university, the motivation was professional. In the afternoons, he already worked as an English teacher. So I wanted to perfect my knowledge.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! When you were learning English, what was the easiest thing to learn?

**Interviewee:** The easiest was grammar. Writing and applying grammar was the easiest. Also the ability to listen was something that developed in me. Perhaps because of the music I listened to. The difficult thing was always the ability to speak. I didn't have many opportunities to develop that skill.

**Interviewer:** So, was the speaking skill the most difficult thing in learning English?

**Interviewee:** Yes Yes! Definitely.

**Interviewer:** And with your current level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to develop more?

**Interviewee:** Definitely the speaking ability. That is why in the institution where I work we have conversation circles. We choose any topic to develop speaking skills. I work with tenth grade. And, although we have many hours of English, the English level of the boys is not that high because the school is not bilingual. On the other hand, the high school classmates do have some students with B1 or B2 levels. So, they do develop more speaking skills. That's why it's good to have those study circles to develop speaking skills.

**Interviewer:** What other activity that you think would be good for people who want to improve their language?

**Interviewee:** Maybe have foreign friends. Native speakers of the English language. That helps you a lot because you can improve your pronunciation, improve your listening skills. It improves certain skills that perhaps among Latinos, or Latino teachers we cannot develop because we have our limitations.

**Interviewer:** Perfect, what gives you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** That the students remember me after many years. Or also having had some positive influence on them. Two days ago, a 15-year-old girl who was a student of mine told me that I should write about someone they admired and who had chosen me because I always gave her and the boys in her class advice. That made me feel good. Also, when I go downtown, and I meet people I don't recognize but they greet me and tell me that they were my students. Those are things that fill me with pride. That they remember me for something positive negative. That brings me a lot of satisfaction.

**Interviewer:** What are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** As a teacher, the salary. The educator here in Ecuador does not have such a high salary. Second, it could be the medium. The social situation is quite difficult with teenagers. Although I consider that the institution where I work, there are good guys. But there are other kids with difficult attitudes. So, the teacher has to adapt. Must be up to date with technology. You always have to innovate, research so as not to be left behind and to be able to talk about topics that interest the kids. For example, I can talk to the kids about a television program that perhaps bores them. Or I can show them a video that motivates me a lot to learn English or even teach, and they get bored. That is quite difficult, always being updated.

**Interviewer:** Are you still motivated to work as an English teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes, still. If I am motivated to guide them, I am motivated to teach them. See how they develop. See how they improve their level of English at the end of the school year. That excites me, because I feel that I have done my bit so that they can develop. That fills me a lot with happiness and that motivates me to work.

**Interviewer:** What is your goal as a professional?

**Interviewee:** Well, as an English educator, I want the kids to get a good level of English. As a guardian, let them be good human beings. I always tell them that we need, today, many good human beings.

**Interviewer:** What kind of activities do you do to achieve these goals?

**Interviewee:** Well, first I try to figure out what are the language skills in which they fail the most. But usually, it's always the ability to speak. However, the classes we had 2 years ago due to the pandemic were online. There the ability to speak was greatly developed. The boys forgot a

little about grammar. But the year and a half that we were with online classes, it was the best production of speaking skills we had.

**Interviewer:** Interesting! Do you think that your educational institution provides the facilities for students to develop all these skills?

**Interviewee:** Not 100% because there is always something missing. But I believe that 95% do support us so that the children can develop.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! So, would you say that "speaking " is the most difficult language skill to develop in class?

**Interviewee:** That's how it is!

**Interviewer:** OKAY! And how do you overcome this challenge of developing speaking skills.

**Interviewee:** Well, trying not only to speak to them in English inside the room. Sometimes, during recess, they come and I speak to them in English. Or they ask me something and I answer them in English. I always ask them basic questions and try to have conversations with them in English. This way they are motivated to talk more. It's hard, it's complicated. I'm not in a bilingual institution so it's even more complicated. Also, the number of students in the classroom is sometimes not an ideal number to develop speaking. 25 students per classroom is not ideal, but you do the best you can. The age of my students also complicates their oral production a bit since, as they are teenagers, they are often terrified of looking bad in front of their peers. They fear that they will be mocked, that they will be bullied. So, sometimes they don't participate, not because they can't, but because they're afraid. Obviously, I tell them that in class no one makes



fun of anyone because we all learn every day. But yes, they are afraid of being teased and they are nervous about speaking in public.

**Interviewer:** Where do you look for activities for your classes?

**Interviewee:** The publisher that offers us the books gives us a platform. So, on that platform we have diverse material and activities that can be done with the students.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! Well, as you know, to grow in a professional career, people usually take workshops or follow a master's program. Have you taken part in any of these forms of professional development?

**Interviewee:** Workshops, yes. I have not followed any master's degree yet. It's very likely that in a few years I'll do a master's degree, but not yet.

**Interviewer:** Are there any factors that prevent you from pursuing the master's degree?

**Interviewee:** Economic. And also a lack of time because the master's degree requires time and now I don't have it.

**Interviewer:** Okay! To get trained, do you prefer seminars or watching documentaries?

**Interviewee:** Well, in the seminar you can develop various skills. Today, most seminars are not just the presenter doing the talking. There is also a time when attendees participate.

Documentaries don't develop many skills. I think workshops or courses are much better.

**Interviewer:** How does your institution contribute to your professional development?

**Interviewee:** They contribute financially with seminars, certifications and courses. The other day, I took an international exam and the institution paid for it. Obviously, if we approve. If we

don't approve it, we have to pay for it ourselves. It's like a punishment. But it also forces you to prepare and do your best, so you don't have to pay.

**Interviewer:** OKAY! And do you think what the institution does for your professional development is useful or sufficient?

**Interviewee:** It's quite useful, but it's never going to be enough because there are always going to be other things we want to train on. For example, the institution supports teachers who want to do a master's degree with a percentage of the value. However, it would be nice if one day he supported with 100% of the value of the mastery.

**Interviewer:** Clear! And what do you think the institution could do to contribute to your professional development?

**Interviewee:** Cover 100% of the value of a master's degree. At the moment, I think it is impossible. Hopefully in a few years they will.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Finally, could you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience you have had at work?

**Interviewee:** What I told you a moment ago. When the boys are left with a positive example of you as an educator, a piece of advice. Or when I meet them on the street after several years and they recognize me and greet me. Or for example, the other day was my birthday. I had not told any student. But the course where I tutor surprised me with a birthday celebration in the classroom. It was a nice surprise. I don't know how they found out about my birthday, but they surprised me with that detail. It was very nice.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I hope you felt comfortable the whole time. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know.

**Interviewee:** You are welcome.

### APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW 3

**Interviewer:** OK! Before we start, could you please tell me today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is May the 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OK! Let's start by talking about yourself! Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I am from here, from Quito. I was born here and lived here most of my life.

**Interviewer:** And are you still living here in Quito?

**Interviewee:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** When you're not at work, what do you like doing in your free time?

**Interviewee:** I should be studying, ha, ha, ha! But other than that I like playing video games. I like watching videos on YouTube, listening to audio books, as well. When I have time I like baking, as well. Then, I go to the gym.

**Interviewer:** OK! Are any of those activities in English?

**Interviewee:** OK! All of the video games I like playing are in English. The books I read. The audio books are also in English, most of the time. And if I read like an actual book or a digital one, most of the time it will be in English, as well. And the videos I watch on YouTube are in English. Even the recipes that I make.

**Interviewer:** And among all those activities that you do that are in English, which one would be your favorite one?

**Interviewee:** Probably, the video games.

**Interviewer:** Video games! OK! Do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I studied my undergrad in a university in Australia. I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in applied linguistics and creative writing.

**Interviewer:** Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I didn't choose to become a teacher. The teacher life chose me. Ha, ha, ha! I had a scholarship from the Ecuadorian government to go to Australia and to get my degree. Part of the conditions for that scholarship was that I had to come back to Ecuador and work here for twice as long as it took me to get my university degree. So, my undergrad lasted for three years which meant I had to come back, find a job, and sustain it for six years. And the only thing that I was able to think of and find relatively easily was teaching. So, I started teaching in a private school in Quito. I'm still teaching in that same school, and I'm almost done with my scholarship payment.

**Interviewer:** So, how long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** For those six years. Almost six years, now.

**Interviewer:** Almost six years. OK! So, if you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen? And why?

**Interviewee:** I mean, the thing I wanted to do, like, really, really, was to be a translator. Especially, like, a literary translator. I would have loved to have the opportunity to translate books from English to Spanish. Like novels, short stories, and poetry. All that sort of things. I would have really liked to do that. And then, I guess I still can if I manage to find something like that. Also, when I was in high school, I was thinking that maybe I could study something with

biology. Like, maybe becoming a researcher. I guess, I didn't go that deep into that path. But I really like biology and chemistry and those kinds of things. So, maybe something on that.

**Interviewer:** OK! And the institution where you work at right now, is it a public or private institution?

**Interviewee:** It's a private institution.

**Interviewer:** OK! How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you work at?

**Interviewee:** The philosophy has changed, uh, when there was a change of management. Like, wait! Let me pull that back! So, when I started working there, there wasn't much of a philosophy. It was just kind of like going to work, uh, teach the kids, speak English all the time, blah, blah, blah, blah! We used textbooks and everything and there wasn't much to it. But in 2019, they hired a new principal, and he brought in a lot of philosophy into what we do on a general level. Not only for English teachers. So, there's a couple of mantras that we follow. We follow, we follow things like positive discipline and, what's this thing called? ... growth mentality, I think. Growth mindset! Yes! Growth mindset! So, that's kind of what the school wants from us and from the kids. That we remember that we're a work in progress. That practice is better than perfection. That having something done is better than having it perfectly. And that we can improve, and we can make mistakes. So, that's kind of the growth mindset. So, yeah! It's been really liberating. It's been really nice to work under that philosophy.

**Interviewer:** OK, so I assume that you have not worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** No! No, I haven't.

**Interviewer:** Would you like to work in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** I'm interested in the salary, um, because they have been paying, like, a little better than some of the private institutions. But the bureaucracy scares me. I've heard from people who have worked in the public sector, and, or have tried to get into the public sector and it's really hard. Like, there's a lot of nepotism, there's a lot of people who just use their influence to get what they want. There's like one day you have a job where they're going to hire you for something, and then the next day turns out that there's somebody better suited for the job than you are, and you just get kicked out. And it's so hard to get into. They ask you for a lot of paperwork, as well. And there's a lot of bureaucracy. And more in terms of education. Like, that's a general problem with public institutions. But, in terms of curriculum, the Ecuadorian curriculum sounds amazing. It looks great and everything. But I think, in practice, it could be really difficult to keep up. And honestly, after working at the school where I have been, I do not like teaching ESL as ESL that much anymore. We have been teaching English language and literature starting in 2020 and it's been a lot better. I have really seen the progress in the kids. So, I don't know if I could go back to teach pure ESL, which is what the ministry does. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** OK! How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** I learned English when I was a little girl. It was never like, I mean, I took classes when I was about six years old, very young. But I kind of knew English before. I don't know. It's just weird. It feels like it's always been there because we used to watch movies in English, like cartoons and everything with my brothers. Listen to music. And I never understood anything of what that song was saying. You know, it was in English. But, by the time I got into school, into elementary school, I never felt like I had any struggles in the subject. It all came very easily to

me. Um! So, I kind of started struggling with it when I was in in year 11. Then, I took classes before university. I took two levels of academic English. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** OK! What motivated you to enter those English courses?

**Interviewee:** Well, when I was little I didn't have any say in it. My parents just, like, put me in that course and they were like, "Yeah! You're doing this!" I remember having fun. But, about the academic English courses, it was because I was about to go to university in Australia and I was really nervous. Like, I knew I had a good level of English and they didn't request for a proficiency because I had the IB. Like, I had the subjects that they required and the grades that they desired. So, they didn't even ask me for a proficiency test. But, I was nervous because I knew that being able to speak English, like, at home or in regular life was going to be completely different than studying in English. So, that's why I took the academic English courses.

**Interviewer:** OK! So, it seems that your case is special. It's different from other people who usually go to a course, you know, from early in life. So, when would you say that you started learning English?

**Interviewee:** Learning as in consciously?

**Interviewer:** Yeah!

**Interviewee:** Maybe when I was, like, as young as in second or third grade. But I can barely remember those classes from back there. I know I had a teacher that I thought was cool. He was teaching us how to sing in English. But that's what I remember. Yeah! After that, I do remember some of the classes in 5th grade. If you want to look at it from the effort standpoint, when I was in "Primero de Bachillerato" not only I changed schools, uh, but also, I was submerged into a



completely different system that I was used to. They taught me English but in a way that I have never learned before. Like I knew how to use them but they would tell us how to make the first conditional, the zero conditional, the second conditional. And I knew how to use it but I never knew that they had a name. And the school also taught history, and business and management. That was pretty difficult. I had to take in a lot of vocabulary from different subjects and get used to the new rhythm of English at school. Maybe that would be a good moment to say, yeah, this is when I started to actively study English, not just absorbing it but studying it.

**Interviewer:** OK! Uh, what do you consider the easiest part of the language? For you?

**Interviewee:** I don't know, I would say either speaking or reading. Okay! Listening is hard for me. Grammar is easy although English grammar is a little weird. Um, listening, reading. Writing gets easier as you do it, so... And same thing with the grammar, but I would say the easiest for me are speaking. (For me, it's very natural to do so) and reading. Then, the most difficult part will be listening. Yeah! Even in Spanish, sometimes I don't understand what the song is saying or what somebody's saying.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Right now, with your level of English, do you think that there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Um, I know that my pronunciation could be a little better. Um, I know that it also kind of varies between, like, if I'm in class or if I'm speaking to someone. So, I would say that and maybe vocabulary. I mean, there's always vocabulary to be learned. And there's still like little words that I have found that I didn't know before as I read or as I find videos or video games. Maybe those two areas.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Uh, what do you think will be a good activity for people who want to practice English, like outside of an institution.

**Interviewee:** Something that I found really useful myself was to watch movies. Especially movies that I really liked. So, that! I knew by heart what they were saying. But to watch it in English. And it could be, like, at first with subtitles in Spanish and then subtitles in English. Um, and yeah, because that helps you pick up new vocabulary a lot. You pick up new expressions. And, especially as you get older and you're not just watching cartoons, you may pick up on a lot of social cues, as well. If you're watching like, I don't know, other kinds of series that feature people. So, that is one activity that I found really, really useful. And the same thing with reading. Read a book in English that you have already read in Spanish. You know the story. That also helps a lot because you pick up on a lot of vocabulary. You see how the language works and because you know what the book is about. Even if you don't understand parts of the book, you're not going to be completely lost.

**Interviewer:** So, you said that you do those activities yourself, right?

**Interviewee:** I started doing that. It's embarrassing! The first book that I read in English was Twilight. Okay! Yeah! But after that, uh, I started to, you know, dip my toes into the Harry Potter series. And like, I had those books in Spanish, as well. And then, the thing about watching series on TV kind of came about out of this necessity because... Do you know those series like Smallville, Friends? The ones that used to be on the Warner channel?

**Interviewer:** Uh-Ha!

**Interviewee:** Okay! A long time ago, we were watching those, but we never got to, like, watch till the end. Or we had missed some episodes. So, my brother got, like, these DVDs that they

used to sell, like, back in the day with the whole series, with the whole seasons. And most of those CDs did not have a Spanish audio, they only had subtitles. So, we had to watch them in English if we wanted to know the story. So, it's something that I actually did and that I found very, very helpful. Like, it helped me kind of push through the threshold to feeling comfortable in English.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Moving on! What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** When the kids get it. When the kids get it. So, we don't teach grammar at the school. But obviously, you cannot ignore it. And, I mean, there's... some kids are going to get it, like, they're just going to absorb it automatically. Some kids are not. And because of those kids, you kind of have to, at some point, teach some grammar points explicitly but within the context of the books that we read. And today we were looking at past tense and the kids found it. Like, they found the pattern. You know, most of these words are written with DD at the end and blah, blah, blah. So, they kind of, like, noticed it. And, since they were working in groups, it's not like I told them. They got it independently. Like, this group got it first, and then this other one, and this other one, and this other one. So, that was really great!

**Interviewer:** Uh! What are the difficulties that you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Parents. Parents and burnout. Like, sometimes academic. No, no! Like, administrative. You know, sending emails, checking emails, putting up grades, and responding to parents, meetings with parents, complaints from parents. Those things are horrible. And parents can be really mean, sometimes.

**Interviewer:** Yes! Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I think I am. I think I am. I'm trying to kind of find myself again. After the pandemic and, uh, having been a teacher, a high school teacher for a couple of months, I think I kind of lost myself as an elementary school teacher. And I have found like bits of me, but I'm still struggling with that.

**Interviewer:** What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** I would like to eventually teach at the university level. I think that would help with the parents' issue because they are not as involved or not involved at all in some cases. Yeah! So, I think I would really like that.

**Interviewer:** And how do you plan to achieve that?

**Interviewee:** Well, the first step was to get a master's degree which I'm hopefully getting this year. And then, I don't know, start applying. Seeing what they say. But I would still like to stay at the school where I work for a, maybe, one or two more years. I know I don't want to be there for a long time. But first of all, it's a little scary to leave, you know, job security and all. And second of all, I want to build something. Like, something that will stay there and be permanent. Some form of tradition that will stay until after I leave. So, I think I still need a little bit of time to do that. So maybe one or two years.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Um! What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** Um! We do lots of writing. We do lots of writing, like, kind of free writing. Like, fluency writing. Uh, we also, depending on the unit, we may look at other types of texts. Like, I don't know, maybe poetry, maybe short story letter, uh, article informative paragraph. Those kinds of things. Um! We also, obviously, do a lot of reading because the curriculum is based on

literary works. So, we have to do a lot of reading. A lot of reading analysis and everything. Um! And yeah! So those are, like, the very basic ones that I do. And within those is when I want to put, like, add more interactive things. I like to do a lot of group work, as well. And we have started doing more like incorporating role plays into the classes. So yeah! I want to see how that goes. I want to see how that goes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what language skill do you think is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** I mean, if you have a school with resources, they should be about the same in difficulty. All of them, because you can get access to all the materials that you need. And you can develop your own materials or find them. Find worksheets or things like that. So, that's not an issue for me right now or my classes. However, the most challenging could probably be speaking. But, usually for personal reasons. So, we always encourage the kids to speak English. And most of them are happy to do so. And they have really improved a lot. But, sometimes, they are too shy. Sometimes, they feel insecure. Sometimes, they are too perfectionists, as well. So, that prevents them from speaking. If you don't speak, you don't practice. So, for me in particular, I think it would be speaking. But for personal reasons rather than, you know, that the environment.

**Interviewer:** Well, but it seems that you are trying to overcome those challenges, right? To make them speak more in class,...

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Through role plays. They have fun. They see that other people also are a little ridiculous when they do this. So they let loose a little bit.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Uh! Where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** From the internet. We have two places. One is a reading platform with books, with resources, with worksheets, with lesson plans. And there's also this other one which is focused on resources but it also has wonderful ideas. It's called Twinkle. We have an account that is shared by a couple of teachers because it's not free.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Um, well as you know in order to grow in a career people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. So, what other type of professional development for your career are you aware of?

**Interviewee:** Usually seminars, seminars or online classes. Or courses that are offered by certain universities online.

**Interviewer:** Have you taken part in any of those professional development activities?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so I am going tomorrow to this seminar about Dynamic classes.

**Interviewer:** Did your institution ask you to go or are you going on your own?

**Interviewee:** The info was sent to the vice principal, and she actually forwarded it to us.

**Interviewer:** So, does your institution make it an obligation for you to attend a certain amount of seminars or workshops?

**Interviewee:** No, it used to be the case that we were told that we should attend XYZ professional development session. And, during the pandemic, that also became mandatory. You know, courses on how to use zoom, platforms from the institution, how to use Nearpod, how to use Google Meet, how to use Google classroom. Things like that. Those were kind of mandatory. And even if they hadn't demanded that we attended, we would have still gone because we needed that at the time.

**Interviewer:** Right! So, in order to put into practice your language skills and also to learn more about teaching methodologies, would you prefer a formal training like university courses or seminars or informal training like watching documentaries or just going to a workshop by yourself?

**Interviewee:** I would prefer something more formal but practical. Yeah! I'm not good at documentaries and things like that.

**Interviewer:** What does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, lately not that much. When we started this literary analysis program, we did have a lot of sessions for professional development. Those usually happen at the beginning of the year. We're still kind of trying to get back on our feet after the pandemic. But, yeah, sometimes there are things that...

**Interviewer:** You don't consider it enough?

**Interviewee:** Before it was good. It was a lot better before. Like, they even helped us with time to take a course preparation. The school's involvement was a lot, like, a lot better before. So, I hope that we will have the time for it this year.

**Interviewer:** What do you think your school should do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, I think more training. Because what happened with the kids was this. We used to focus so much on grammar that we were forgetting the context and, you know, actually communicating. But ever since we started with the bilingual program, it feels like we went completely the other way and we kind of forgot about grammar. And we do not want to be that school that just focuses on grammar or anything. But in order for things to make sense and for

them to write proper English, there needs to be a certain level of grammar. So I think what the school should do right now is set up or hire someone to set up courses that could help us like find that middle ground where we still focus on analysis and the most important part is the content. But we can also teach to write proper English. To write and use proper English without calling it first conditional, second conditional, simple past, past continuous, etc. That's something I would really like.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Good! And just to wrap up, uh, can you tell me a fun or rewarding experience at work?

**Interviewee:** Recently? Or in general?

**Interviewer:** In general

**Interviewee:** Um! Rewarding experience...

**Interviewer:** If you don't have anything, don't....

**Interviewee:** I'm trying to think because it's not like I never have fun in class. Sometimes I feel like, like... and it's really sad to say but sometimes as teachers I feel like our role sometimes is better, or more memorable, or more relevant outside of the class. So, um, so I took the kids outside to play, right! Because they had... they had earned it as part of our reward. And the boys, obviously, wanted to play soccer. And not all the boys but the great majority of boys. And I do not like soccer. And I'm not supposed to... Well, no, no! It's not even that. I just do not like soccer. And I was not going to leave the other group like just, you know, away from the rest. So, I asked them: "Okay, kids! Do you know how to play "avanzadas." A couple of them said: Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! "I kind of know" But the majority said: "No!", or "I don't even know



what that is” So, I taught them how to play. And they were so into it that they asked me for the ball to play the next day in recess, like, outside of my class time. And, they asked me to play again at the end of that class that we had the following day. Like, the day after they played in recess. So, I was really excited that something that I used to enjoy. Because that was, like, something I enjoyed as a kid. That they get to play it, as well. And that they liked it and, you know, they searched for it. More academically, we were teaching poetry. I was teaching poetry last unit. And one of the kids got so into that she started writing poetry on her own. She got this really beautiful notebook, like, with the cover of a bunny and everything. And she started writing her own poetry there. And she even gave me a poem for my birthday. So, it was... I was so proud of that girl.

**Interviewer:** In English?

**Interviewee:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Wow!

**Interviewee:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Well, thank you so much for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I hope you felt comfortable all the time.

**Interviewee:** Yes!

**Interviewer:** If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know.

**Interviewee:** Ok, I will!

**Interviewer:** Thanks!

**APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW 4**

**Interviewer:** Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today, it's Monday 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 2023.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Let's start a little bit of info about yourself. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Ecuador, Quito.

**Interviewer:** Do you live here in Quito?

**Interviewee:** I do. I live in Tumbaco.

**Interviewer:** Okay! When you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** In my free time, I like to watch movies or read books. Or even go out with friends.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Are any of those activities in English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I only watch movies in English, and I only read books in English, too.

**Interviewer:** Okay! And, between those activities, what will be your favorite one?

**Interviewee:** Probably, watching movies. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Okay! Do you hold any University degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I do have a bachelor's in economics.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, because I've always had amazing English teachers. And English has been always my favorite subject since I was a child. And, I've had the opportunity to travel to

English-speaking countries. So I guess, um, because of those experiences, I decided that I wanted to pursue something related to English.

**Interviewer:** Okay! How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I've been teaching for about four and a half years.

**Interviewer:** Okay! If you were not a teacher, what career will you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** Well, probably I would have stayed in the field of Economics. So, maybe something related to, um, accounting or business. Something similar to that field. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Okay! Do you work in an elementary school? Or Junior High? High School? University?

**Interviewee:** Well, I work. Um, I think it's a school. It has a primary. It has Elementary Primary. It has high school. Yeah! So, I work in primary and High School.

**Interviewer:** Okay! Is your institution public or private?

**Interviewee:** It is a private institution.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How would you describe the philosophy of the institution that you work at?

**Interviewee:** I would probably say that it is focused on values. So, students that learned there will develop certain values such as Justice, um, critical thinking, environmentally aware of issues, and also how to treat others.

**Interviewer:** Um! Ok! So your current school is private. Have you worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** No! I have not.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Would you like to work in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** Um! I don't think so because I haven't heard great things about the public system in our country. So not right now.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** I learned it in school since I was probably like four or five.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Can you tell me an experience that you had while learning English? Something fun or something, I don't know, traumatic?

**Interviewee:** I remember that one time we had to participate in a play. And I was one of the main characters of the play. So it was fun because I got the chance to showcase my speaking skills to the rest of the high school. And it was a really nice experience when I was growing up and learning English.

**Interviewer:** Nice! Uh, what motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well, I didn't choose to learn English, but I would say that it was cool. I connected with the language because of the, um, the things that I wanted to consume, for example, media. Because I wanted to watch movies, series, and all of that. My favorite ones were only in English. So, I sort of had to learn outside of school in order to understand them. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Um, ok! So you said that you started learning English when you were four, right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** Um! Probably, listening. For me, it has always been easier for me, listening. And then, I would say... maybe, um, reading. Yeah! Those are the easiest skills I would say.

**Interviewer:** And the most difficult part?

**Interviewee:** Probably, uh, speaking and writing with correct grammar.

**Interviewer:** Right now, with your level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Yes, definitely! I would say that in all of my skills. But mainly I would say that writing is one of the skills that I should be more aware of and try to improve it. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** What do you think will be a good activity for people who want to practice or to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Um! Probably find something that you enjoy. For example, in my case, I was watching movies. So, if you like that type of entertainment, maybe you can do it. You can find an alternative to do it in English, so that can help you to be engaged with the language.

**Interviewer:** All right! And you do that activity, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** I would say to feel that my students have learned what I want them to learn, or what they need to learn. So, whenever I see a kid or a student show their progress, that brings me happiness and fulfillment in my career.

**Interviewer:** Nice! What are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Um! I would say... Um! That's a good question! Maybe they can be related with the size of my class. Sometimes, I have to teach two classes that are between 25 and 30 students. So that can be overwhelming. Even though it is a private school. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I am motivated and I will probably be doing this for a couple of years. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** My professional goal right now would be to finish my master's degree in teaching English and maybe pursue another Master related to the field of Education, too.

**Interviewer:** Ok! And does your institution give you the facilities to achieve this goal?

**Interviewee:** Um! The facilities? Maybe time. Sometimes in the afternoon they might have some activities, or you might have extra work to do, and they give you extra time or let you go early. Things like that. Or money, credit... Things like that! Well, if we're talking about time, we only have a school until 1:30. But we are supposed to have it until 3 P.M. But they have decided that we can use that time to work on our lesson plans. So maybe that can help me, as well when I need to practice my English or pursue, um, a degree or something related to a goal.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** What kind of activities? Well, in my classes, and especially with young learners, I like to use physical response. (TPR) And that helps a lot because they need to move. So I try to, I don't know, implement at the beginning of a lesson "Simon says" or a lot of, um, answering and callings and responding. Yeah! So, associating movement with content. nice

**Interviewer:** Um! What language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** With my students?

**Interviewer:** Yes!

**Interviewee:** Probably speaking because sometimes the students do not want to practice or speak in English. Or maybe because we have different levels of abilities, students may not feel comfortable speaking. And then, they just prefer to speak in Spanish.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um! How do you do to overcome this challenge? When students don't want to speak in English or practice. Is there something special that you do?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Sometimes what we do in class is, um... I have specific lessons planned for speaking. So, what I do is that I divide it in different groups based on what I think their abilities are. So, maybe I would put the most confident students in one group and then like that so that they can practice at their own level.

**Interviewer:** Ok! And where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** Uh, well! We actually work with material that is provided by the school. So, I make my lessons based on my textbooks. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** So, as you may know, in order to grow in a career people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. Are you aware of any other type of professional development activities for your career?

**Interviewee:** Professional development? Maybe some certifications. For example, I did one that was offered by a U.S University that it was maybe six months long. And, yeah, it was in teaching. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! So, would you prefer a formal training like seminars, university courses or informal training like watching documentaries, practicing with other people in order to develop your English level?

**Interviewee:** For my English level, I would say that both. I think a balance is important. Sometimes, you need the formal training. For example, right now, I'm doing a course in Cambridge assessments for the level C1. But I also like to practice on my own. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! And what does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** They sometimes provide workshops in the afternoons. But this is not really usual. Maybe once a month or maybe once, two or three months. Yeah, it's not very usual!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Did you find it useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** Maybe not! No, because they are not kind of related to teaching English, but they are more general to teaching. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! So, what do you think your institution should do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Definitely, provide more workshops or opportunities to, maybe, interact with other teachers that are not from my school. So that maybe we can grow and learn from each other.

**Interviewer:** Nice! Ok, just to wrap up, can you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** At work? Um, I would say the fair that we did for Thanksgiving. So, we had a bunch of our students talk about different countries and the different celebrations or traditions



that they do for Thanksgiving. And one of our students is from the US. So, she got the opportunity to showcase her country. And it was very interesting. And all of the students were surprised to hear about the US from a native speaker. So yeah! That was rewarding because I organized the whole program. The event!

**Interviewer:** Nice! Well, thank you so much for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I hope that you felt comfortable all the time and if you have any questions just let me know, okay?

**Interviewee:** Ok!

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much!

**APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW 5**

**Interviewer:** So, before we start the interview, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Ok! So, today is May the 8th of 2023.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Let's start with a little bit of information about you. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I am from Quito, Ecuador born and raised.

**Interviewer:** Do you live here in Quito?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I currently live in Quito.

**Interviewer:** Ok! When you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Well, I actually enjoy a lot going out with friends. I also exercise and I read a lot. So, yeah! Maybe those are my three favorite hobbies.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um, do you read in English?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I usually do one book in Spanish and one book in English.

**Interviewer:** A book per month?

**Interviewee:** Um, yeah! I try to read a book per month. So, maybe I read six books in English per year and six book in Spanish per year.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Good! So, would it be safe to say that your favorite activity in English is reading? Reading books?

**Interviewee:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you hold any University degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have an undergrad in conservation and restoration of cultural heritage. That was from Spain. And I am currently studying a master's in arts in teaching English as a second language. But I don't have a degree yet.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Um, so when I graduated from my undergrad, I realized that the workshop life was very lonely. And I think I am a very extroverted person and a social person. So, I wasn't really enjoying it. And my cousin, she's a teacher. And I had many talks with her about how she enjoyed her profession. And how you grow as a person too because you learn to interact a lot with different kinds of students. And I think that was what actually drove me into it. Plus, I really love English, so I saw the opportunity to start the Masters in art and I took it. And I've been very happy since.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I started recently so six months.

**Interviewer:** Six months! Ok, if you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** Uh! I would have actually wanted to be a professional ballet dancer because I've been dancing ballet since... since I was four years old. But I think that lifestyle in Quito is very, very hard so...yeah! I wasn't very supported into that.

**Interviewer:** Ok! I understand! Um, where do you currently work in a school, elementary school, high school, university?

**Interviewee:** I'm working at a university right now.

**Interviewer:** Is it public or private?

**Interviewee:** Private university.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you currently work at?

**Interviewee:** Ok! So, this is a very Innovative institution. And they manage the liberal arts system which is not very common in the world. But I think that it actually allows students to get

to know a lot about different fields and themselves. So, yeah! Basically, they managed to deliver a large philosophy where you can be free. And you don't have this sort of division between teachers and students but rather there's a lot of confidence and safety between each other. So, yeah! I really like it.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um! So, since you work in a private institution. Have you worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** No! No, I haven't worked in a public institution.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Would you like to work in a public Institution?

**Interviewee:** I don't know. I think it would be interesting to actually go to public institutions and make a change. But I don't know if a system would really allow us as English teachers to be like this free. That's, like, as I am at the university right now. And yeah! I just have different methods to teach but rather follow whatever that they have been working with. So, I don't know. It's like mixed feelings.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Uh, I went to a bilingual school, so I've been learning English since. And I don't really remember how I learned it. So I guess it's by sort of immersion at school.

**Interviewer:** Ok! So, how has been your experience learning English? Although you don't remember when you started. But, how has been the experience?

**Interviewee:** I remember...What I remember is that it was hard for me at the beginning. So, maybe in Kinder I had some trouble, and I couldn't fully understand things. Uh, and also in first grade I remember having some trouble like... but very, very specific days. And from then on, it has been great. I love it. So, those are basically my two bad memories about learning English. And then, uh, I really enjoyed it.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** So, basically, uh, status in school. So, the better you spoke, the better chance you had to go to, maybe, a university in the United States. Aha, we were very interested in developing skills in English because our school, my school, targeted American universities. So, basically... Yeah! That future development!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um! What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** I think that speaking for me, definitely. Speaking because as I mentioned earlier, I'm a very extroverted person and I really like to talk. So, every time I had the chance to talk, I was going to talk. So, yeah! Speaking!

**Interviewer:** And the most difficult part?

**Interviewee:** Writing. I think that writing is hard because, um, it varies a lot from Spanish and my L1 is very strong. So, sometimes, it's very phonetic for me to write in Spanish. But in English it's not. Yeah! Sometimes I'm like: "Oh my God, how do I write this word?" But yeah! Writing, definitely!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um! With your current level of English, do you think there is an area that you could improve? That you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Um! I am very confident with my level right now. But definitely there's like, uh, much, much more that we could actually develop in the different skills. So, yeah! To reach proficiency, you can get much deeper into the language. And all of these scientific and professional terms that we don't currently use in our daily lives. But I think that, yeah, you can never stop learning or improving skills, right?

**Interviewer:** So, specifically you would say vocabulary?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Vocab, yes! I'm sure there are many words that I don't know.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** Uh! I think that getting yourself immersed into a language is very important. So, changing your habits for example, putting your phone in English, or watching TV in English, weathercasts, movies, series. Now you have that like Netflix or Disney plus. They are super, super easy to work with and they allow you to listen to movies and series in very various different languages. So, yes! I think this would be, like, a first step for immersion. And to get your, like, your skills more into it.

**Interviewer:** Good! Do you practice any of those activities?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I actually have my phone in English. So, even when I open Google Maps and it reads names of streets, it sounds really funny because it mixes English and Spanish. Oh my God! And I watch everything in TV that I can in English. Plus, I do reading in English and I also listen to a lot of music in English.

**Interviewer:** What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** I think that, um, I feel joy and very, very happy. Fulfilled, basically when I see my students enjoying their learning process.

**Interviewer:** Nice! What are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Uh! Sometimes, group management. Because, I've had kids with, um, attention disorder issues. So, their minds just leave and, like, bringing them back it's pretty hard. So, yeah! Or keeping them engaged, actually, it's hard. So, yeah! That's hard! Or also, since they do not feel so confident about their skills, it's like, they search for these excuses that are like: "Oh, okay! I'm getting distracted because I don't really know how to speak" Or, they say whatever they want to say and I'm like: "Okay! Try again! So, yeah! That both things.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Well, I know that you just started being a teacher. You just mentioned that. So, are you still motivated to be a teacher? To continue being a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I'm in love with it, right now. So, I don't know if it's because I just started but I really like getting to know students and being able to track from their experiences in order to generate significant knowledge for them. So, yeah! I really enjoy my classes.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** I think that I want to help students learn English in a way they can remember it. That it's not just like, uh, I want to pass the class and that's it. But rather create some meaningful experiences for them. And English's been like, uh, one of the most spoken languages in the world. So, at any moment, it will come in handy for them and I think that I've been trying to make them see this. And most of them get really motivated. So, yeah! Basically, that!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um! So, do you have any plan to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** I keep structuring my classes in a way in which they do not feel this gap between me being the teacher and them being students. But rather that we are all together there, uh, walking towards the same goal which is for them to pass. So, yeah! I try to understand them, their needs, their goals, too! And whatever is going on with their other, like, subjects in uni. Because English is a mandatory subject, and it is a pass or fail class. So, they are basically forced to be there. And yeah! Some of them really don't like it and some of them do. But what I try to do is change their perspective. And yeah! Make it enjoyable.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Does your institution give you the facilities to achieve this goal?

**Interviewee:** Yes! They do so. They are very liberal, and they allow us to plan our sessions however we want. We can organize our schedules but within the class schedule. But we can

organize when to give each theme and how to do it. So, it doesn't matter if you introduce topics through games, or through literature, or through activities. They allow us to do it. So, yeah!

**Interviewer:** What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** Uh! I usually start with icebreakers where I've seen students having lots of fun. So, they start gaining confidence. I also try to make everyone learns everyone's name. So, through the icebreakers, we practice names. Um, I have reading activities So, group readings, individual readings. I also make them do projects. Individual and group projects about topics that are very interesting for themselves as people. So, individually they can choose whatever they want to work on. That's related to the topic we are watching. And some very, like, meaningful event that has been happening for them. I also do listening activities, speaking activities, interaction by either writing skills or speaking skills. Um! And writing. Uh-huh! Yes!

**Interviewer:** Ok! And what language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** I think that, for them, it's listening. Which I find very curious because they tend to understand whatever I tell them. But when there's, like, that the listening is in an audio recording. It's very hard for them to get used to it. I don't know if it's like the speed or maybe accent or maybe that the sound is not as good as listening to someone in person. But yeah! I find that curious. They tend to have, um, a little difficult with that. Much more than the other skills.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Uh, did you do something to overcome those challenges?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! I always ask for feedback. And, yeah! As I told you, what they have told me is that it is hard for them because they don't... they don't hear, like, the audios in a clear way. And sometimes it is too fast. So, I tend to search for things that are more appropriate for them.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Where do you research your lesson activities from?



**Interviewee:** Uh! My...colleagues actually share materials with me because they have access to a book that we were using before. And otherwise, uh, I think that I've gone to look for researches. Well, resources in Cambridge, Grammarly, also. And yeah!

**Interviewer:** Yeah! Ok! So, as you may know, in order to grow in a career people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. Are you aware of any other type of professional development activities for your career?

**Interviewee:** They share a lot of workshops at Uni. So, I think we had one last Friday. But they just told us the day before so I couldn't go. But yeah! I think they are constantly trying to train us at the uni. And also, yeah, external programs. So, I've done courses in Coursera and some other pages like this to develop different skills in teaching or strategies. And I think they are pretty, pretty good.

**Interviewer:** Ok! So, in order to develop your teaching strategies and your English level if you wish, would you prefer formal training like seminars, university courses. Or informal training like watching documentaries, practicing with other people, etc.?

**Interviewee:** Um! Ok! I think this is very complementary. So, informal training can be very useful if you are very willing to do it. I actually do it daily. So, I mean finally training myself all the time. But I like verbal instruction because I can gain access to resources that I don't have informally. And I really, really take profit of it because I love reading. So, anytime that I can read some paper or something that will not be reachable otherwise than through an institution, through a formal institution. I really try to take advantage of it.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Um! So right now, they offer seminars. They've offered, uh, gatherings. So, we can actually gather with other teachers and share our experiences and advice. Like, share advice in different topics that have been going on for us. And yeah! Basically, seminars and gatherings.

**Interviewer:** Do you find it useful or enough?

I think that, uh, it is enough for me. I don't know if other teachers would feel it is enough. Since I am also studying a master's TESOL, I think that I have been able to find or develop plenty of skills that I didn't know of before. But that's like apart!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Um! Do you think your institution could do more for your professional growth?

Yeah! I think they could, like, offer maybe weekly sessions. Or gatherings. Or meetings for updates. Or to talk about issues or things like that.

**Interviewer:** Ok! And just to wrap up, can you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience that you had at work?

Uh! Yeah! So, they are very aware of us. I think that they gave us a Christmas present. So, it's...

**Interviewer:** Who gave you a present?

The university!

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay!

So, it is cool. Like, they are very attentive through our needs. And whenever there's something that I have doubts with, I can directly talk to my boss. And he's always very attentive with me and he's very, very nice, also. Uh! His assistant. She's the best. She's super sweet and, uh, she's always celebrating these different things like Teachers Day or things. So, every time we come to the DLE department she will give us some sweets or treats, and it's cool. And then, in terms of

students, they are very sweet too. So, yeah! Uh, they bring me different things. Sometimes, like, coffee or candy and I'm like: "Oh, my God! I'm happy!" So, yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Thank you so much for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I hope that you felt comfortable all the time. And, if you have any questions, please let me know.

No, I'm good! I felt comfortable!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Thanks!

**APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW 6**

**Interviewer:** OK. Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** OK, today is May 13, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OK, thanks. Let's start a little bit talking about yourself. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Ecuador, Guayaquil.

**Interviewer:** OK. And where do you live?

**Interviewee:** In Guayaquil

**Interviewer:** OK, perfect. Uh, when you are not working, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** I like to watch movies. In English, of course, read books. Or play with my grandchildren.

**Interviewer:** OK, so you already said that you liked watching movies, and that the movies that you watched were in English. What about the books? Do you read books in English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, of course. Yes!

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** I have a lot of books from the editorials. Shakespeare's novels. I love them.

**Interviewer:** OK, so between those activities, what would be your favorite one?

**Interviewee:** My favorite... Watching movies. Yes, it shouldn't be, but you know, I also teach at the university. So, I have to read a lot. So sometimes I need, like, a spare time. Time for me. And I don't have much time. Not much free time so I watch movies, but of course, sometimes documentaries. Interesting documentaries.

**Interviewer:** Perfect. Perfect. OK. Do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have a master's degree in management. That's the last one I had. And of course, other degrees that I've been collecting along the way as an English teacher.

**Interviewer:** Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** At first, that wasn't my choice. My first choice was computer programmer.

**Interviewer:** Oh, OK.

**Interviewee:** Yes, that was my first choice. Because by that time, I lived in the United States. So, I had the opportunity here to go to college and learn computer programming. But things changed, and I had to go back to Ecuador. I was 17 years old, so I had to see what I could do. So, before becoming a teacher, I was a bilingual secretary. I was a bilingual secretary for two years. And then I said to myself: "It would be really interesting being a teacher." Because I had English classes, and my teachers were pretty nice. We had a nice connection. And well, to become a computer programmer in Ecuador... It wasn't, like, too advance at that time. So I said: "Well, first I'm going to become an English teacher and then I'll see if I could do that as a second career." But as I was in... the classes... being a teacher... I liked it. I liked working with children because I started in preschool. So, I liked it and I also liked listening to the kids. When they had, like, little problems. I was, I don't know, I liked to be close to them so I could help them. I liked that part. And I fell in love with teaching.

**Interviewer:** OK. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** 20 years.

**Interviewer:** 20 years, OK.

**Interviewee:** No! 30 years.

**Interviewer:** Ok! So, would it be safe to say that if you were not a teacher, the career that you had chosen would have been computer programmer. Right?

**Interviewee:** Yes, of course! Yes, of course! And maybe afterwards, maybe, I would have become a teacher. I don't know.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you work in an elementary school, Junior High, High School or university?

**Interviewee:** In a high school and university.

**Interviewer:** OK. Were they public or private?

**Interviewee:** Private.

**Interviewer:** OK. How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you work?

**Interviewee:** Well, the philosophy of the institution... It is wonderful! Because you have to teach by heart. You really have to love it. To get involved with the strategies that you are going to use. The methodology. Because not everybody's the same. You cannot teach everybody the same way. Even though if you have, for example, uh... let's say 11th grade. Three 3 courses. You cannot teach the three courses the same. You cannot apply the same methodology for all the three courses. Because you have diversity.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, have you worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** Well, actually my high school is half public and half private.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** So we have to combine both private and public laws. But, nevertheless, we can say we apply more private than public laws.

**Interviewer:** Right. OK. So, you have never worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** Public? No. No, I'm sorry. Yes, I did. I did at the beginning of my teaching career. I worked in a public school. And I worked there in the afternoons. And it was pretty, pretty hard.

Pretty hard to work with the youngsters. Many of them were in gangs. Many of them had family problems.

**Interviewer:** Was it a high school or a school?

**Interviewee:** It was junior and high school that I worked with. Yes! And they were not interested in learning. So I had to find a way to get them involved. I had to get them to like me so they could enter the class. Yes! Yes! It was pretty hard, but I got to them. And well, I was kind of sorry I had to leave them, but I had to look for a better income?

**Interviewer:** Of course, yeah. OK. So, what differences did you perceive between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** In the public. I could say that there are teachers and real teachers. A real teacher gets involved with their students. A real teacher has to find a way to teach them so they can learn. Nowadays, they just, like, give evaluation, evaluation, evaluation. That's not the thing! What is wrong with giving an evaluation and telling a student hey, open the book so you can find the answers? Nothing wrong with that. Yes, because if they don't start at home. There must be a way that you can make them study. At least, they're reading. They're doing an exercise and they're answering. What do you want? To evaluate, or do you want your students to learn?

**Interviewer:** Students to learn. Of course, yeah!

**Interviewee:** That should be the main reason why you become a teacher.

**Interviewer:** So since you have worked in both systems. What do you like the most? And why?

**Interviewee:** OK! In the public school, I liked that the kids were sincere.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** They don't hide what they are. And on Fridays, I made, like, a little festival in the classroom. In the public school. And they acted out what they worked as. One of them used to

sell candies on a bus. And he acted out what he did for a living. While he worked in the morning, in the afternoon he went to school. He had no choice. In the private school, the kids... OK, they're sincere. But they are... Some of them, not all of them. They're overprotected by parents. If a kid called the other one names. It is not necessarily bullying, you know. Just you know, just fooling around. They get affected. I don't understand that part. And the parents are very, like, very demanding just because they pay for the school. They want to demand everything. All kinds of comfort for their children. Sometimes it's not possible. To get 100% comfort, you will have to go to school where you pay, what, \$1000 a month? It's not possible. The kid has to grow up. The kid has to fall down and get up. And defend themselves. He has to get acquainted with all of that because they have to learn how to solve problems.

**Interviewer:** OK, moving on. How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well, it's a long story. I came to the United States when I was 11 years old. And I studied high school there. Well, I finished primary school in the United States and then started high school here. Then I went back to Ecuador. And then, I came back to the United States again, worked here for four years, and went back to Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** So basically you didn't take any English course?

**Interviewee:** No, no, no! But, of course, I had to go to the university because to become a teacher is not only knowing how to speak. You have to learn strategies, methodology, and the language in which you're going to teach.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. So like linguistics? Applied linguistics?

**Interviewee:** Exactly! Exactly! Exactly!

**Interviewer:** OK! So, when you started high school over there in the United States. What was the easiest part when learning the language?



**Interviewee:** Speaking. I was surrounded by native speakers. Yes! I was in a public school, so I had to speak or speak. It's not like now they have special programs for immigrants if you don't know how to speak English. No! I directly went to a classroom. Oh my God! And I had to learn to read. And I had to learn very fast. In those days, we didn't have Internet. So I was with a big, fat dictionary. So, I had to learn that way. In six months, I started speaking. And in one year, it was a lot better.

**Interviewer:** OK, OK! And what was the most difficult part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** Oh my God! The most difficult part was... I was bullied.

**Interviewer:** Oh, OK.

**Interviewee:** Yes, because I didn't know how to speak. So, that made me learn faster.

**Interviewer:** OK! Right now, with your English level, do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** I think... Since I have lived in Ecuador for so many years. Like, I use Spanish everyday. And now, as a principal, I really don't give classes that much. Only at the university. So the level tends to lower. I need to practice more speaking.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** For people who want to practice English... surround with people that speak English. If you speak Spanish, all day. All day you read in Spanish. At what time do you practice?

**Interviewer:** And do you do that activity? Do you surround yourself by native speakers or people who speak English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, yes! At work with my colleagues from the English Department. We speak in English all the time.

**Interviewer:** OK! So, what brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** My God! When I am recognized as a good teacher. Not because I say it. Not because my coworkers tell me I am a good teacher. But when my students say it.

**Interviewer:** OK. What were the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, when students are discouraged. When they do not like English because previous teachers made them dislike the language. So before teaching the language, I have to make them fall in love with it. Motivate them. And then, teach English.

**Interviewer:** Right! Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes, because I love my students. I really love them.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** My professional goal was to be the best English teacher I could be. But life showed me another path. I never asked for it. But they took me by that path and now I am the principal of the high school. But I still teach at the university, so...

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you think you achieved it?

**Interviewee:** I think I did. Yes, I did! Because I started teaching first grade. And then, I went to primary. And then, to high school. And then, to the university. It's not, like, I started in high school. And if you can give classes in first grade, you can give classes to anybody, to any level. Because first grade is the hardest.

**Interviewer:** OK. And, does your institution give you the facilities to achieve your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** In my case, yes! I don't know what they saw in me, but they saw something. Even my master's degree. I got it because of them. They paid for the master course.

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** OK, activities.... Sometimes when you enter a classroom, you notice that the kids don't want to learn. Or they don't want to do anything. So, that's when you think, or you have to be ready with plan A and plan B and plan C. So, if you're ready with plan B and C. Then, you play a game. They can also learn English with a game. Or maybe a crossword? Or maybe, uh, draw a picture and name all the parts of what you drew in English. Sometimes they had math. They had science, they had language. Wow! Now comes English. My God! Another language! OK, but let's do something. And of course, you got the book. You have to continue with the book. Yeah, open the page.... because we have to finish the book now. You can do that the next class. OK, let's do this together. OK. What do you think the answer is? OK, what do you think the answer is? I know it could be this. OK. Yes, it's alright. Things like that. You have to engage the students.

**Interviewer:** What language skill do you think is the most challenging to practice class?

**Interviewee:** Listening and speaking.

**Interviewer:** OK. How do you overcome those challenges?

**Interviewee:** With songs.

**Interviewer:** Where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** The editorials, sometimes they give you materials. You also have the books that you have used from other editorials. Sometimes you have to not only use what you have, but you have to use other resources. The Internet, for example. There are many things you can do in the internet.

**Interviewer:** So as you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue master's degrees. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** Well, you can take courses. It's not necessary to... because master's degrees. They are really, like, just to apply what you know. Where you really learn is when you get your first diploma as an English teacher. Whereas, what you learn in the master is just a confirmation of what you know. And, uh, workshops, yes. But sometimes the workshops... I don't know. They leave you with many questions. Sometimes they don't give you the answers. Sometimes they tell you what you have to do. And they give you, like, one or two examples. But it's, like, a little empty in my opinion. I always thought that, but I couldn't say: "OK, you left me a little empty!" So you can take courses and sometimes you look on the Internet. And you can practice there. But you got to practice what you want your students to learn.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you like taking part in professional training? Do you like going to workshops and courses and things that help your professional development?

**Interviewee:** I really don't like workshops, but I go anyway because as I said before they leave me with many questions.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** It is just, like, part of the editorials. Like a small gift... those workshops to the teachers.

**Interviewer:** OK! So, since you don't like workshops and seminars that much, do you prefer the informal professional training like something you do by yourself? Watching documentaries, practicing English with other people? Or, I don't know, reading things by yourself?

**Interviewee:** I think that's better and also interact with all the teachers. Sometimes we have, like, little reunions, and we discuss methodologies. What did you do in this case? And you, what do you do in this case? That's even better.

**Interviewer:** Yes, OK! And what does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, yes! This institution has sent me to good seminars. Courses in English and in Spanish. The ones in Spanish were when I became a principal. But they have sent me to very good courses. Yes!

**Interviewer:** Do you find them useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** Yes, they were useful. Yes, yes!

**Interviewer:** And enough?

**Interviewee:** Maybe.... maybe not enough! But to make it enough, I have to, like, complement them with a little more research on my own.

**Interviewer:** OK! Do you think your institution could do something else for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** I think so. Well, as I said before, they gave me a lot for my professional growth. But they didn't really pay attention to the to the English department. So when I became principal, I started looking after that department. I am very interested in that department. And I do follow up. And I work with them. But yes, I think the institution could do more for that.

**Interviewer:** OK. Just to wrap up. Can you tell me a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work.

**Interviewee:** Well, the other day I was at the supermarket. And I met with the mother of a kid who used to be my student in primary and then secondary school. And she was very happy to see me. She said: "You are the best teacher my son ever had. He likes English because of you." And

a lot of students that I find along the way when I'm on the street. They remember me with love. And that feels very good. Feels nice. Working as a teacher has been the best experience of my life.

**APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW 7**

**Interviewer:** OK. Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is Sunday, May 14th, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OK, so let's start with some information about yourself. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** OK, where do you live?

**Interviewee:** In Guayaquil.

**Interviewer:** So, when you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Well, to be honest, I like to watch movies. Or read a book.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are any of those activities in English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, most of them.

**Interviewer:** OK. Between those two, what will be your favorite activity in English?

**Interviewee:** Watching movies.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I'm actually graduating this October. I'll have my bachelor's in early child education.

**Interviewer:** OK, why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, I like to see how kids learn, and I want to be part of their learning. That motivated me to get my degree. And prior to my degree, I got some experience, and I really enjoyed it. So, that was the field I wanted to get into.

**Interviewer:** OK. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, I've been a teacher for about... maybe 10 years.

**Interviewer:** OK, if you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** Maybe I would be a social worker. Because I like to help people who need the extra support and people who are in need.

**Interviewer:** OK, good! Right now, do you work in an elementary school? Junior High, High-School, university?

**Interviewee:** No, I work in a preschool.

**Interviewer:** OK! Is it public or private?

**Interviewee:** It's private.

**Interviewer:** Right! How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you currently work at?

**Interviewee:** So, we go by curriculum that actually goes by the interest in kids. So we don't go... we don't follow, like, the lesson plan. We're actually, like... we could motivate, we could update it and we could make it towards the kids' interest. And that will help them into their learning. So we have to see what they like to do and according to their interests and needs, we go into the lesson plan.

**Interviewer:** OK, Have you worked in an institution from the other educational system? In this case public?

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** OK! Do you know any differences between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** OK! So what I've seen and have experienced as a mom is that when you have a kid in the private school, the supplies, the materials, the teaching is different and there's actually less kids in the classroom. So when it's public, you know, due to people who have low income, many kids are placed in one classroom. So maybe 40-50 kids and only one teacher. So, you know, that's a big thing when it comes to learning. Because there are kids that might even have a



special need into the learning. So they just get left behind and they think that they just don't... learn. But what they don't know is that it's because they have, they need actual support.

**Interviewer:** Right! Would you like to work in the public system?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, it will be a challenge, but I could take it.

**Interviewer:** OK! And how did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well, I went to the US when I was about 8 years old. So, my dad took me there and I lived there for, like, 15 years.

**Interviewer:** OK. Can you tell me about your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** Well, when I got to the US, I was placed into a classroom where I was doing English only. There was no Spanish because my dad was, like, if you go into an ESL classroom, you're not going to learn English as fast as if you were in an English class. It was hard. Yes, it was tough! I felt left out at times because I didn't understand what people were telling me. But as the time pass on, your ear just get used to it. And you just you go with, you know, with people talking to you. And you just get used to like the languages because basically you're in the US. That's the primary language, English. It was hard. But it's not... impossible to learn a new language.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Did you feel motivated to learn English or was it just because you had to learn?

**Interviewee:** It was both. I was... I was pressured by my dad because he was, like: "You need to learn English by 3 months. I really need you to start talking in English." And then, I also felt motivated even if I was a girl because I wanted to be part of my friend's conversations. So it was actually both.

**Interviewer:** OK. What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** So it wasn't... that easy because my dad... After school, my dad put me and my sister to listen to English music. So I didn't get a break from English. It's not like I got home, and I would speak Spanish now. He always had, like, another activity for us to do. So I can't say that it was easy because it was kind of, like, a struggle because of my dad. The easy part came actually when I started talking and, you know, we just started learning and going with the language. So I could say that it wasn't easy.

**Interviewer:** So the difficult part when learning the language was speaking? For you?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Because sometimes I would say things, like, in the wrong way. And, you know, English has so many pronunciations, like, one pronunciation could be one that's like a whole million things. So it's, like, you needed to learn how to pronounce the word correctly.

**Interviewer:** Right! OK! Well, with your level of English, do you think that there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, always! You know, I need to, like... I feel like I need to expand my vocabulary a little bit more when it comes to, like, sophisticated words. And I feel, like, every day I'm learning a new word.

**Interviewer:** OK! What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** The best practice is to start talking. Even if you get the word wrong. It's always good to start practicing pronunciation. Don't be afraid that you might say the word wrong because it's going to happen. But they need to start practicing. And listening. Listening to anything helps you a lot.

**Interviewer:** Right. I assume that you did that when you were learning?

**Interviewee:** I did! Yeah! I did both, actually. My dad would have me and my sister listening to, like, music, movies in English. In the car, he would play only English music. And then he would start talking to us in English.

**Interviewer:** OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** OK! My satisfaction is when I see my kids' progress. When I see my student's progress. That's just it. It's something I can't even explain. It just fills me up as a teacher. Even when I see them, like, just doing something that for their level, for the age level, they haven't developed yet, but they're doing it. It's just... it's just satisfying. Like, it makes my day.

**Interviewer:** What are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** When I don't have the supplies. That is a big issue, supplies.

**Interviewer:** Does it happen right now?

**Interviewee:** Not now! No! Actually last year, I had a bad experience in my old job. We were lacking supplies, so I was just, like... I can't do this as a teacher. I would take money out of my pocket and buy stuff.

**Interviewer:** Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I don't see myself doing anything else.

**Interviewer:** What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** So my first professional goal is... to get my degree. And to continue getting my certifications as a teacher. And, you know, always keep going. Never stop at one goal because there's so many goals you could achieve in this life. But you have to motivate yourself to do it.

**Interviewer:** OK! Does your current institution give you the facilities to achieve your goal?

**Interviewee:** Yes, they do. They actually, you know.... I told them when I started working with them. I was honest. I was, like, I'm working on my bachelor's degree. I'm going to graduate this

year. And actually, last Friday, we had a meeting and they asked me how I was doing and if I needed anything just to let them know. Like if I needed... sometimes we have meetings with our professors, so they always tell me: "If you need to step out of the classroom and go, just go." So they don't want me to, you know, get behind with my school work.

**Interviewer:** What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** Well, I apply a lot of hands-on activities because I feel, like, when the kids are, you know, experiencing and they're doing things with their hands, they're learning. And it actually engages them in the activity.

**Interviewer:** OK, what language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** Speaking the language. Yes!

**Interviewer:** OK. How did you overcome those challenges?

**Interviewee:** Well, at one point we were told not to speak Spanish in the classroom, that it was just English. But sometimes I feel like the students are lost and they have no clue of what I am saying. So, I have no other choice but to talk in Spanish, even though I wasn't supposed to. And then, when I explain to them, I translate to them what I am saying. I get them all engaged into what I am trying to teach them.

**Interviewer:** OK, where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** Well, we follow curriculum. So, they actually give you activities. But I still try to Google some activities because there's so many pages that you could go to and get information from.

**Interviewer:** OK, well, as you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** Yes, my job actually offers a lot of workshops. So, they give us the link and we could do it anytime we want. Like, there's no pressure to do it this time. They always give you, like, a whole week to get it done and it's actually based on teaching.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. Have you taken part in any of them?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, of course.

**Interviewer:** OK. What do you prefer, the formal training, which is workshops, seminars, university courses? Or the informal training which is something you do it by yourself like watching documentaries or talking to other people, practicing with other people, reading. What do you prefer?

**Interviewee:** I have experienced both and I prefer the informal training.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Because sometimes I feel like the formal doesn't give you the... the time that you probably need to go over the information. So, it just goes by quick. But when you have the time to do it by yourself, you could go back whenever you have the time to and then, you know, get more knowledge on it.

**Interviewer:** OK, nice! What does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** We always have meetings. We always have observations. So they always tell us, you know, what you need to improve or what they think it's good. They always motivate us. They're not judging us. They're always motivating us.

**Interviewer:** Do you find it useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** Yes, because sometimes we could do something... maybe do something better. So, they tell us to do this instead of that. They're not judging you. They're supporting us.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you think your institution could do something more for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I feel like, yes, they could. They could.

**Interviewer:** Like what?

**Interviewee:** Maybe, offering more, like, workshops inside the... classroom. Like, you know, just be in the environment. Where we work. Instead of, like... in front of a computer.

**Interviewer:** OK, like, in person workshops, you mean?

**Interviewee:** Ohh, yeah! Like, for example... A workshop to show us what to do with the materials that we have in the classroom. How could we use them in a different way!

**Interviewer:** OK, I understand! Um, just to wrap up!... Could you tell me a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Well, yeah! It happened a couple of years ago. It was a challenge for me to teach high school kids. Because that was actually the first time I was going to teach high school kids. I've always been in the preschool area. So, they told me that I had to teach high school. My legs were shaking and everything. I was so scared. As a teacher, you always need to know all the different age range groups because not all the kids are the same when it comes to age. By the end of the school year, those kids that I was afraid to teach became, like, my kids too. And they would come... They would come to tell me: "Hey, miss! You are a great teacher. And thanks to you, I learned this. Thanks to you, I learned this way." Sometimes, like, it's not just about following a curriculum, it's becoming friends with your students. And let them know that you're there, not just as a teacher, but also as a friend. So that just, you know, that was like, wow. And I'm not scared to teach high school students, anymore. So, it was good! It was good. And then these were kids who were just learning the language, the English language. They had no clue

what English was. Maybe some of them did have some knowledge, but most of them not. And it was good to know that, you know, those kids saw you as a good teacher. So yeah, I could say that it was... It was satisfying.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for your time.

**Interviewee:** Welcome, it was a pleasure!

**APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW 8**

**Interviewer:** OK! So before we start. Could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is Monday, May 15, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OK. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** Where do you live?

**Interviewee:** I live in Guayaquil.

**Interviewer:** OK. When you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Well, when I'm not working, I love reading. I like drama, drama books and horror books stories. Well, sometimes I look for new information on technology and education. I also watch YouTube videos based on new resources, or surf the web for learning resources. In addition, something for hobby, I like playing basketball. Like a sport.

**Interviewer:** OK, so do you read in English?

**Interviewee:** I read in English, I read in Spanish, but I would rather read it in English instead of Spanish.

**Interviewer:** OK. And between those two activities, watching YouTube videos and reading, what would be your favorite activity in English?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, the first one, reading.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, well here in Ecuador, I got my degree in English, like, as an English teacher. And then my master's degree in Casa Grande University.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, I think I got 14 years teaching.



**Interviewer:** If you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** I would like to be a veterinarian. Because I love any kind of animals. I love animals and every time I'm looking to see if I could adopt any. I have a tortoise; I have two cats. I remember when I was a child I got a snake and a monkey. That's why I always thought of being a vet. But, one day I was working in front of the University of Guayaquil. Well, a good friend of mine told me that there was kind of an English career, to be a teacher. I got admitted with him at the university. And here I am.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** Yeah! I never would have thought to be an English teacher. But things happen for a reason.

**Interviewer:** Yeah! OK! Do you work in an elementary school? Junior High? High School? University?

**Interviewee:** I'm working now in a high school and a college at night.

**Interviewer:** Ok! And the high school. Is it public or private?

**Interviewee:** Public. And the night college is private.

**Interviewer:** OK. And....in both institutions... do you teach English in both institutions or not?

**Interviewee:** English in both, yes! In addition, I teach other Spanish subjects at college.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, but English is the main one.

**Interviewer:** OK. How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you currently work at?

**Interviewee:** Both of them or....?

**Interviewer:** Let's focus on the high school.

**Interviewee:** On the high school. Well, the philosophy.... Well, first you need to know it is a public school. So they are working for the good of the community. And trying to work all together. Now, we are working based on projects in which parents, students, and the school community are involved. Everyone in the community can learn. That's the big challenge of this project. To get everyone involved.

**Interviewer:** OK. So what difference have you perceived between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** Well, one time I was working in the same level in a public and a private high school. So, I can say there is a big difference. In public schools, some parents didn't like when teachers sent homework. Yeah!!! Because some of them had activities after school like soccer, music lessons, etc. So parents didn't like homework and teachers got in trouble for that. While in the... in the private education, students were more responsible because they paid... every month. And parents didn't want to fail a course because they would lose money.

**Interviewer:** And what educational system do you like working at? Or which one would you prefer?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, maybe the public. Well always... I always say something, there is... no wrong answer. And I think the public education is more challenging. Students in the public system do not have a good level of English because they are not able to attend an English academy whereas most kids in the private system have that chance. Or they are able to travel every year to the United States, or England, or other different countries. So I like to motivate students to do something else, to ... do their best in order to get something better for their future. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Nice! Ok! How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Uh, well! I didn't learn English at the University of Guayaquil, believe me! Yeah! But I really did my best when I was in the New Mexico State University through the Go teacher program. I did my best. Yeah! And I try to do my best every day. I try to watch movies in English. I keep talking on Facebook with people in English. I'm doing my best. Yeah, because I know that I'm in front of students and they need a good teacher. Yeah, I love reading. But every day I'm doing something different in order to improve my English. With music, books in English, any series on Netflix with subtitles in English.

**Interviewer:** So, you never took English classes, like, courses.?

**Interviewee:** Well, yeah but not many! I hate them. I hate those books or activities in which I need to complete the blanks. I hate it. That is why when I practice with my students, I do the Communicative Approach in order that they communicate with activities about real situations. When they go to the supermarket, when they go to a specific place. And that's the way I learned a little. With real situations. That's why I prefer to work with students in that way. But I hate English Academies.

**Interviewer:** OK! OK! What motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Books! Because English was the key to get to read good books. Reading was my best motivation because I tried to read everything I could. And I spent my time reading. Hours and hours at the school library.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, when did you start learning English?

**Interviewee:** I don't remember. No, I don't... don't remember, really.

**Interviewer:** OK, what was the easiest part when learning English?

**Interviewee:** Maybe listening, speaking. Because I was speaking all the time with my friends and good classmates. They gave me the... enough support to speak every day. Always... They

pushed me to speak in English. Then, I think this is the order, speaking then reading. I love writing. But listening is the last one. It has always been my last score. Yeah, in any test. Then, probably grammar because I hate it. And finally vocabulary. I don't know.

**Interviewer:** So, for you the most difficult part is vocabulary?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Vocabulary and grammar.

**Interviewer:** OK! And do you think there is an area of the English language that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** You mean a skill?

**Interviewer:** Yes!

**Interviewee:** Well! I would like to improve my listening, totally my listening. Because sometimes I listen to people everywhere or maybe on Facebook speaking with others from different parts of the world. Some colleagues. And sometimes, ... I try to do my best effort because they speak a little bit... fast. But it's hard. And around me, there isn't anyone who speaks English so.... In addition, all the English teachers in my high school don't like to speak English. They run away when someone wants to speak to them in English. Sometimes, Peace Corps volunteers offer some workshops. And they do not go. And I'm the only one sitting in the auditorium alone with them. Can you believe that? We are around 12 teachers. And I'm the only one who stays for workshops. They always have to go. There is always something that they have to go. But the truth is that they don't stay because they do not understand when the volunteer is talking.

**Interviewer:** All right. OK. What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** Well, I have many, really. I have many. But let me tell you one I learned when I was in Boston as a Fulbright scholarship student. I saw an African colleague taking short parts from movies. Famous movies like Batman, Avengers, Fast and Furious, and many others. But he chose probably 15 minutes of every movie. And then, he asked students to make the subtitles. But the students were allowed to change the subtitles. They created the subtitles according to their creativity. And they put their voices in the video. Yeah, I love it. I love it. And I already do it in my classroom. It's amazing because they enjoy it. I show all the presentations during a week. It's like a cinema week with all of them. I love that strategy.

**Interviewer:** OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** To look at my students being happy. Also, when they come to me and greet me in English. Yeah, a simple greeting makes me really happy.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's nice! Ok! What are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, parents! As I told you, when I send homework or tasks at home, parents don't like it. They are not always watching, or they are not aware about students' duties or homework. Because they are pretty busy all the time. All the time. They're pretty busy, yeah. At night, with the college participants, it's time. Sometimes they have two jobs, and they get there late. They always beg me to let them in or to give them more time with assignments. Some teachers do not do it, but I do.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, of course! And every day I enjoy. I love to be in class. All the time. From the first hour class up to the seventh hour class. I try to do my best. I try to make students feel happy. When they have problems at home, I try to talk with them. I really enjoy doing what I do.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** My professional goal? Well, let me tell you a secret. My professional goal was to work at the Ministry of Education in order to give more support to English teachers. I got the opportunity. I got the chance. I was in the ministry for one week. But there were many, many things that I didn't like. A lot of corruption. So I said no. After that experience, I don't want the same. Now my goal is totally different. My goal is to do my best in the classroom. I'm doing my best every day. In the morning shift and at night. I'm having a simple life, working, being with my family, and going to the beach on the weekends. That's my goal!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Does your institution give you the facilities to achieve your goal?

**Interviewee:** Uh, not at all. Not the public institution. They still have the computers from 10 years ago.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I tried to do my best. With my money, I set up a laboratory. I asked for a big classroom to the principal. I painted it myself. I got some desk... long desk and chairs. I bought some headphones with my own money. I spent around \$3000. Unfortunately, little by little, headphones were disappearing. Students were stealing the headphones. And now I got just three of the 45 headphones. I work with my laptop. The projector is mine. I got my own projector. But there is no Internet. So, I have to pay for a good internet plan in order to share the connection in the lab. When I have classes in the lab. I already asked for internet. But they have not given it to me. So I prefer to pay \$25 every month in order to pay for the Internet from my cell phone. But I'm thinking in my students. Believe me, I try to do my best every day during class.

**Interviewer:** I... I am so amazed!

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Probably you didn't hear about it but last year my lab got the third place in Ecuador. The third best English lab in public education run by a teacher. So I got a personal learning environment which is my site. Every year I can share the link with students. I have my own YouTube channel in which I have all the classes that I was teaching during COVID. I have like... 300 videos. I always try to do my best.

**Interviewer:** I can see that!

**Interviewee:** Yeah, yeah!

**Interviewer:** OK, let's see! What skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** To practice in class.... Speaking. Because students listen to music, but they have nobody to speak English with. Students love writing. They don't have good grammar, but they still like writings. Reading. They hate reading because, you know, Ecuador doesn't have a reading culture. OK, but I try to motivate them because I love reading. Although students are going to agree. Yeah, but in that case, it's speaking.

**Interviewer:** So what do you do to make them speak?

**Interviewee:** They are not allowed to speak Spanish in the classroom. Just in English. Also, the activities that I give them are pretty simple so that they can speak. And they are usually based on routines. Things that they do in their daily life. Simple expressions. In that way, they start speaking and gaining confidence in speaking. Sometimes I allow them to speak in Spanish, but not all the. They should speak English at least 70% of the time.

**Interviewer:** Where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** From the internet. There are many good resources there. The Ministry of Education also provides materials as well.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you have a book? I mean, do the students have a textbook?

**Interviewee:** Unfortunately, no. Three years ago, it was the last year in which the government provided books, hard copy books. Now they are all digital. For this year, all of them, all the subjects. In Spanish and English.

**Interviewer:** OK. As you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or do a master's program. Do you know of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** Well, I don't like to be on workshops, but I always look for any English training in which I will be able to learn something else, something new. I always look for scholarships and programs for teaching training. Thanks to that, I have been in Boston, in South Korea, in New Mexico, in Cuba and I have learned a lot. Some teachers are just worried about getting the B2 certificate. But they just want to approve that test and stay there. I think that they must move forward and practice what they learn. And look for more programs and teaching training. Not just what the ministry puts them as a requirement.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you prefer formal training like seminars, university courses, or do you like the informal training, like watching documentaries or practicing with other people?

**Interviewee:** Both! But I usually choose the training based on the topic. For example, if it's the presentation of a book. Editorial books that are going to be launched. No, I don't go. But if it's something in which there is research involved or training for a test. Wow! I love it. I love it. I love it. I love it. Yeah, I go and it doesn't matter the money. I go. Yeah! So, that's independent, formal or informal. It's more based on the topic.

**Interviewer:** OK, what does your institution do for your professional growth? Do they pay for courses?



**Interviewee:** Yeah, they do. Well, in English, no. Not much in English. They are more in Spanish. But I look for teaching training on my own. And I go on my own.

**Interviewer:** What do you think the government, or your institution should do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Provide more workshops. Provide more scholarships. I remember five years ago, there were options for English teachers. Workshops about innovation, technology, methodologies, different strategies, or for students with special needs. But now there is nothing. Yeah, nothing! They should do that again!

**Interviewer:** OK. OK! Just to end the interview. Can you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience that you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Well, I have many. Let me see. Well, I have fun every day with the students. However, let me tell you one which is special. When I was in a classroom last year, someone asked me if I remembered him. I didn't remember but he said: "Mr. I saw you five years ago when you were in Cuba. With more English teachers. I remember that you were teaching in a school because I was in that school. I never thought you were going to be my English teacher once again. I never thought that I was going to be again in front of the best teacher of my life." Everybody looked at me like...Wow! And I was like... Wow, too! And I was trying to remember this who he was. But I couldn't. But anyway, his words felt so great!

**Interviewer:** Yeah, so nice. Well. Thank you. Thank you for your time.

**Interviewee:** No problem!

**APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW 9**

**Interviewer:** OK. Thank you for agreeing to be part of this interview. Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is May 15th, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OK. So where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I am from Venezuela.

**Interviewer:** OK. And where do you live now?

**Interviewee:** I live in Quito, Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** OK, when you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** I like, as a hobby, I like cycling. On Sundays, cycling. Going on a bicycle. I like to do that.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you do any activity in English or that is related with the English language in your free time?

**Interviewee:** I also like to hang out at the English Learning Library. Maybe you have heard about this library before? I like the board games and all of the activities that they have.

**Interviewer:** So, do you practice English in that place.?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, there's... there's a lot of people from other countries in there. There's an American woman. There's a woman from Libya. So yeah, you got most of the time speaking English in there.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I have a bachelor's.

**Interviewer:** The bachelor's... Is it in teaching?

**Interviewee:** No, It's in international trade, actually.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. OK. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** That was very. I don't know. It's instinctive to me.... To teach and to work with children. I've always loved working with children. That was my first job before I even started college... and... and knowing what I really wanted which is mostly working with children. And then I also got better at teaching. So I started teaching adults as well, which I find also pretty simple. And yeah, I'm an open person and I feel like I can. If I know a little bit more than the other person, I can teach... pretty much anything.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Let's see, I was only 20. I don't want to reveal my age, but... Yeah, 15 years. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** If you were not a teacher. What career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** Child psychologist, I would have love to.... know more about that subject.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you work in an elementary school, university, or academy?

**Interviewee:** So I work at an elementary school. And I also freelance teaching business English.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is the school public or private?

**Interviewee:** Private.

**Interviewer:** OK. How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you are working?

**Interviewee:** Very open minded. We're teaching the kids to be balanced. To really reflect, be really reflective individuals and yeah, very focused on. High quality. Yeah, that will be kind of the mission vision of my school. To be very open-minded to the total types, very inclusive. And yeah, focus on equality too.

**Interviewer:** OK. Have you worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** No, I haven't.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you know any difference between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** I've always worked in private businesses.

**Interviewer:** OK, how did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** I feel like I picked it up on my own. But it was easy for me when I was a kid. My dad always spoke in English too. He... he knows both languages. But I kind of learned as a kid and picked it up like a sponge, but yeah. Then I had to study too, just to perfect grammar and things like that.

**Interviewer:** So you did courses?

**Interviewee:** I did courses at some point, yeah.

**Interviewer:** How was your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** It was great since it was very intuitive. I feel like it was harder for me when I couldn't do that with other languages because I thought that when I studied French. That it was going to be the same, you know. So it was for me very, very easy. Very intuitive. I just listened to, like, music and TV shows and things like that. And my dad helped me.

**Interviewer:** Right! Since you learned, basically since you were a kid in your house. Was there something that motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, you mean, why would I learn English?

**Interviewer:** Something that motivated you, or maybe you didn't have any motivation? Maybe it was not your choice?

**Interviewee:** At the time, I feel like most of the information that I wanted and the things I wanted to investigate about and learn about were basically in other languages. So, you couldn't

find information in Spanish when maybe... like in high school. To graduate. I couldn't find any information in Spanish. And yeah, I just always been into other cultures and researching those things.

**Interviewer:** OK. So you said you started learning English when you were a kid. What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** So it's been the easiest. OK. I'm very good at grammar. And I also like to read in English. So... and writing. But speaking is my strong point, I feel.

**Interviewer:** OK. And the most difficult part?

**Interviewee:** Difficult while learning English? Yeah, probably the grammar. Maybe just, like, proper grammar.

**Interviewer:** OK! Right now, with your level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to improve.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I was eight points short from getting C2. I almost got C2. Yeah, I would like to have that C2 certificate. I have C1.

**Interviewer:** Ok! But is there an area or skill that you need to improve or it's just in general?

**Interviewee:** All of my areas are like 2-3 points short of C2. Yeah! I feel like I'm pretty.... Balanced. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** OK. What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** So we started doing with some of my students, language exchanges. And I feel like speaking to people who are really native speakers so you can't resort to Spanish. That helped me, too. And when I was studying, when I was learning. And so, yeah! Speak to a native speaker.

**Interviewer:** OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** Well, I really like working with people who struggle and making their lives, you know, kind of easier. Even if it's, well, the business students. The business English students really need it for their work. And they... when they start picking up, I don't know, phrases, hyper frequency vocabulary, things like that. They feel, you know, more confident with their job and with whatever it is that they need to learn English for. So yeah, boosting that level of confidence. I think would be the best for me.

**Interviewer:** OK, what are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Difficulties I face?... When I work with older people who have been taught, like, in the 80s. I don't know. Like, they feel, like, they have to write a bunch of exercises and read about, you know, things like that. Like, really focus on homework and things like that. And not so much on now.... speaking to me and telling me in person: What do you need? How can I help you? And things like that. But they feel like.... Like older people are focused on another way of learning that doesn't really work anymore.

**Interviewer:** OK! Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Yeah! I'm very motivated to be a teacher.

**Interviewer:** OK, what is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** Well, my professional goal... I would like to do a master's. And yeah. And I would like to be a main teacher. Maybe for a higher grade that I am right now.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you plan on pursuing the master's degree in the near future?

**Interviewee:** I just don't have the time now. I work a lot, you know. Yeah, I'm planning on, maybe, next year or the year after.

**Interviewer:** OK, does your institution give you the facilities to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** So, I could.... Because a lot of people do study. But I don't have the time for personal reasons.

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** OK, so with my students, my business English students. We are very focused on speaking. Picking tasks and picking up vocabulary from there. That is basically what our classes are. Uh, we do activities from books, and we have all the... all the skills we have, the skills with the listening, with all .... all of that. But it's mainly focused on speaking which is where they really need to.... have a better level.

**Interviewer:** OK! What language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** For my English business students is listening. Listening to other people beside me because they are used to my voice, but when we do speaking with different accents or different people. Then it's when it gets tricky. Even though I teach them vocabulary first and then they go to the... to the listening part.

**Interviewer:** How do you overcome those challenges?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, you gotta focus it. I mean, I got them listening to it first and focus on words that I don't... I know that they don't know. So teaching vocabulary first. And... and have it at base basically and then we just got a lot of practice. You gotta listen to a lot of Irish or if you are going to, I don't know pass... have B2 tests, they are going to put a lot of British accents and Irish, Scottish. So yeah, I try to, like, mix it up and find those type of real hard accents. So they practice with everything.

**Interviewer:** OK, where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** I have a book.... that I have been working with. This is where I focus most of my activities. It is very complete regarding business English and has what my students actually need.

**Interviewer:** OK. As you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue master's degrees. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career? And if so, which ones are these?

**Interviewee:** I mean, I would... like to focus... if I were going to continue also teaching business English, you know, pursuing another business degree. Learning more about that so I can help more with real vocabulary. So and yeah. And for my kids, I could, I don't know, like, do something Montessori focused. I do have a bunch of courses I can take it whenever I can.

**Interviewer:** OK. So do you prefer a formal training like seminars, university courses, or do you prefer the informal training like watching documentaries, practicing with other people, reading things on your own?

**Interviewee:** OK, I learned informally more... more than formally. So I think informal training.

**Interviewer:** OK! And what does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** So I have taken a lot of courses. Yes, we... get a lot of people invited to do speeches. We also do meetings with the principal who's a very knowledgeable person that can help us with any topic, basically. And yeah, I feel like what I... really have learned more is just by being with the kids, but those are the real the.... That's where you really learn!

**Interviewer:** About the courses and things that your institution has done for you, for your professional growth, do you find them useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** Montessori courses. I have literacy for really, really young age. It's just basically, like, different strategies because you're supposed to know kind of how to teach them. But look at this in a different way. Can you help kids that maybe are not learning. This is a new thing and it's very current. We have things that were invented maybe five years ago and... and that... that they seem to be working. And they do courses about those.



**Interviewer:** OK. Do you think that your institution should or could do something else for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** For my professional growth, hmm, maybe I don't know. What's called scholarships will help me, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yes, would work! OK. Just to wrap up. Could you tell me a fun or rewarding experience that you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Yeah! Well, just to see my... my kids speaking in English, like, fluently for the first time. When they need to use it. We had a kid from Belgium starting the year later. And they... all the classes are in English. But since they're very young, they speak in Spanish and it's OK at this level. But when this kid that doesn't speak Spanish arrive, then you could see all the kids using English fluently and... and this was very rewarding because, you know, they learned it in like the six previous months.

**Interviewer:** OK. Well, thank you so much for your time and your willingness to participate in this interview. I hope you felt comfortable, comfortable all the time. If you have any questions, please let me know.

**Interviewee:** Not for now

**Interviewer:** Thanks!

**APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW 10**

**Interviewer:** OK. Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is May 15th.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK, where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I am originally from Venezuela.

**Interviewer:** OK, where do you live?

**Interviewee:** I currently live in Quito, Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** OK, when you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Mostly I read, but sometimes I go out. I play board games and I do crafts.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are any of those activities in English?

**Interviewee:** Board games and reading are definitely in English. The majority of the time for sure.

**Interviewer:** OK. And between those two, what will be your favorite activity?

**Interviewee:** Uh, reading is something that I've been doing for many, many years since I was a child. And I've been reading mostly in English since I was a teenager, so I'd probably say reading. It's something that you can do on your own. Board games, you need other people.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have.... I graduated with a degree that is called "*Licenciado en Idiomas Modernos*" It's an equivalent to a bachelor's diploma for five years.

**Interviewer:** OK. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Uh, it kind of chose me. I never thought about becoming a teacher. My idea was to be a journalist or a... or an editor, or something to do with language. Because I did like language and reading. I already spoke some English when I was a teenager. And it turned out

that I met a woman on the street, and she only spoke English in my city, my hometown. And I helped her with something, and she was working in a school teaching, and she took me there so I could take a test. And they hired me as a teacher because they like my accent. And I started working. At the beginning I wasn't very happy with it. When I was, like 18, I was very young, and I didn't know how to do many things. But then I suffered for a little while. And I when I went back, when I was 21, I was way more prepared, and I really enjoyed it. And then I really decided to continue teaching. Because I found it very rewarding.

**Interviewer:** OK. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I started teaching when I was 18 and then I've been doing it on and off for... since then. I am 36 now. So like... around 16 years maybe.

**Interviewer:** OK. If you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** I think, well, you know... I think that, eventually, I would have probably become some sort of researcher. Which would still be related to, maybe not teaching, but academia. Just because I've always been interested in books, research, learning, knowledge, that sort of thing. And well, probably, what I wanted to study instead of modern languages. So I probably would have been some sort of... researcher... related to that. Or a journalist. Something similar.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you work in a school, university, or an academy?

**Interviewee:** I work in an academy currently.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is it a public or private institution?

**Interviewee:** It's a private institution.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you currently work at?

**Interviewee:** Uh, it's actually interesting because it's a philosophy that I didn't agree with at the beginning. Because they have this idea that only native speakers can teach a language. And it so happens that they had to make an exception to their own philosophy because of how their clients and customers were. The requirements that their customers. Uh, so to me now, it's very interesting and I am very happy to be working here. Because I can, you know, show that not only native speakers can teach a language. And besides that, they are very customer centered. And they are very proud to have a process that make people communicate and speak and not just learn the language passively.

**Interviewer:** OK. And have you worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** No, I've never worked in the public system.... Actually yes! But not as a.... I worked as a teacher's assistant when I was in university. I worked for the university as an assistant in academic writing. So... I was kind of, like, a teacher's assistant. So it was kind of like tutoring.

**Interviewer:** OK. Did you perceive any differences between the public and the private institutions?

**Interviewee:** Depends on the institution. I think that... generally speaking, public institutions. Or at least the one that I worked for, which was a higher-level institution, and it was a very good university, a public university. They prided themselves in being more academic-centered. And caring more about their knowledge. And then, in some of the academies that I have worked at, they care more about the business aspect of things. But not all of them. I have worked in a couple of academies where they really, really care about the academic side and they don't say, oh, you know, the customer is always right or that kind of thing.

**Interviewer:** OK. Would you like to to work in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** Uh! Probably. I mean, I wouldn't mind. I would like it only if it were at a higher education level. Not high school. Or elementary school. But it doesn't have to do with the environment, precisely. But it's more of a personal preference regarding the age groups that I like to work with. So, it's a personal thing.

**Interviewer:** OK. How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well! So, I am a twin. And my twin and I... Well, my parents played a lot of music in English. And my twin and I... They always say that twins develop their own language. So we kind of used English to communicate with each other. At a very rudimentary way. When we were about ten or so. And then we started using music and... and singing. I really like singing as a way to practice some things. And then when I was starting high school, I asked one of my teachers, like, how do I make sentences? So she's playing all the tenses to me. And after that, I started just keeping a diary. Then, also, I used the Internet a lot. Mostly for reading. I like reading stories and things like that. So I used it for reading. I read a lot. And I started meeting people online, so I would chat with people, which meant that my level was fairly advanced at reading and writing level. But my pronunciation was not as good, and I made a lot of mistakes. And then, teaching helped me with that because some of my coworkers, they were more experienced than me. All of them were older than me because I was only 18 when I started. It was mostly self-taught until I got to a certain level. Then after that I started teaching and then when I stopped teaching I learned more by going to university.

**Interviewer:** OK. How was your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** I don't remember that much about the early process. I must be honest because it was a long time ago. But it seems to me, like, it always felt fun. But I was doing it on my own and I was doing it as a way to make friends. It was mostly like a hobby at first. Then, when I was

studying, sometimes it was very frustrating. And then, when I was in university, it was mostly fun. But I already had a very high level when I was in university. There were things that I struggled with. Things that were related to the theory, not so much the language itself.

**Interviewer:** OK, what motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** I think mostly music and talking to people I really liked when I was fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen. I had.... I was using a lot of websites and I was meeting people from other countries in these websites. And then, I wanted to talk to these people because they were interesting. It was different. It was a different type of experience. Uh, I didn't have a lot of friends and I.... my computer was my friends. So I used that. And then also music, of course.

**Interviewer:** OK. So you started learning English at 10, right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, more or less.

**Interviewer:** OK. What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** Uh, I would say, for example, how repetitive some things were. Uh, for example, when you look at music, if you think about pop songs, I listen to a lot of Backstreet Boys and Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears. If you listen to the songs, you have a lot of the same. Constructions that were repetitive and the choruses were repetitive. So how certain structures were very repetitive. And an initial level, of course, we know that English becomes more complex when you start seeing tenses that are combined and stuff. But, at the beginning, it seemed very repetitive... the structure. So I would say that was the easiest.

**Interviewer:** OK. And the most difficult part when learning English?

**Interviewee:** Even now, I think the most difficult part is to pronounce certain sounds. Especially sounds that are supposed to be voiced that I don't voice. Because I just... It's too

much effort. So there are a couple. There are about three sounds in English that I still don't pronounce properly. But I pronounced them close enough. So I'm OK with that.

**Interviewer:** OK. With your current level of English. Do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** I'm not sure. Probably... probably being more exposed to certain accents. That was probably the... because, you know, I have a very high level of vocabulary which, I think is the thing I'm.... yeah! I'm most proud of is that I have a high vocabulary, but it has to do just with reading. You know, it's something that you can achieve with reading so it's not impossible. It takes time but it's not impossible. But I would say getting acquaintance with many more accents. Because I am very familiar with many types of different accents. But, like for example, if... I imagine that if I went to an area where it's a little bit more rural. Or if you're listening to people who are being interviewed on TV and it's not like a journalist or an anchor speaking and they have, like, a more natural way of speaking. If someone is Australian or from New Zealand, or from certain parts of the UK, I will probably have trouble understanding them. And definitely, people from Africa. When they speak English, I have no idea what they're saying. OK, so probably just accents.

**Interviewer:** OK. What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** Umm, well! My favorite thing to do for... so... Listening I think is very important. Because, well, you know, I learned a lot by reading and writing and also a little bit by listening. But when I talk to students or when I have students, no matter their level and their experience, usually they are very afraid of not understanding. And what happens is they already think that they will not understand. So they don't expose themselves to English a lot. Mostly

reading or if they watch a movie or something like that. So what I like to do is... I like to use very short audios because if you use a very long audio, the listener gets very tired very fast. So there are two websites that I use for this. One of them is ELLLO. It has very short audio clips that are, like, little interviews with people where they answer just one question. And then, in this website, they have people from many different countries. So what I do usually is I play the video, or I play the audio for the student. Or I tell them to do that and then they have to summarize what they understood. And then, after that, they have to answer the same question that the person in the video answered with their own personal answer. The other thing that I do is I use Ted Ed. I love Ted talks, but I think that they are too long for students. One Ted talk is usually, like, at least 12 minutes. So with Ted Ed, actually their videos are on average about four minutes long. They don't have people speaking, but they have animations which I like because the students cannot, like, look at mouths. They don't get distracted and then they have very technical topics in a way that is very clear. So they can have more technical vocabulary that is something that you don't hear every day. So I use ELLLO for more conversational topics and I use Ted Ed for more technical topics. And it's usually listening and then summarizing.

**Interviewer:** OK. But for yourself? Do you do any of those activities or it's just for your students?

**Interviewee:** It's just for my students. For myself, I almost never... I almost never study consciously anymore. Just because I've been using English for a very long time. I've been using English for about... And I have it very included in my daily life, you know. I watch a lot of things in English myself and it's in English. I have friends who live in other countries, and I video chat with them at least once every two weeks. So English is very much already in my daily life. So I don't consciously study. If I need to do it... Hmm, for example, if I have to prepare for



a test or something like that, I will probably use exercises that are similar to the tests that I'm going to take.

**Interviewer:** OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** Hmm! When the students realize themselves, on their own, that they are advancing. That they are progressing. Because usually students have a very negative view of the process. Not always. Some students really love English and practicing and speaking. But the majority of the students that I work with. They have a certain trauma surrounding English. They see this as something that is very foreign, that is very difficult. That is something that they will not be able to do it but that they need to do. But they don't like it. This is their perception. So they have a very negative perception of this process. So over time they realize: "Ohh, you know, I used to this word in this way and now I say correctly." Or "I used to not know how to answer this question and now I understand." So when they notice their own progress. And they celebrate that I feel satisfied.

**Interviewer:** OK, what are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Usually when... So I have different types of difficulties. When I'm working with adults, the most difficult is.... Because it can become their enemy, it can become their enemy. When they get very frustrated, it can be very difficult to advance even if everybody is doing their best. And it is easy in these types of situations for students to want to stop. Or to give up. So I think that when they are frustrated that is the most difficult thing to be able to get out of that headspace. And then, for younger people, usually dealing with their parents and the expectations of their parents.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes! Actually that's a really good question because sometimes I have to take, you know.... Right now, I don't feel that way. Probably because I recently had a part time job that was very different from teaching. So, now that I'm going back into teaching, I am very happy. I feel very motivated. But every once in a while, when I'm working a lot or when I have a lot of different students. Or when I have a couple of students that make the process very difficult, I want to stop.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** Uh, my professional goal is to eventually work with language at a level of research. Specifically social linguistics research in a university and teach at a university level.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are you carrying out any plan to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** Yes, recently I realized that I have to get a master's degree. So, you know, I've been looking into different master's programs. And right now I am currently applying to a master's at a university here in Ecuador to study sociology.

**Interviewer:** OK. Does the institution where you work give you the facilities or might give you the facilities to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** Well, yeah! In the sense that the working hours are very flexible. I don't really have to, technically, let them know that I'm doing this. It will really.... It won't.... Another type of degree won't really change my position in that company. They evaluate other things. But it doesn't give me any trouble in terms of hours or availability now.

**Interviewer:** What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** Uh, well! There are different ones depending on whether I am working with private students that I tutor or whether I am working with the students that are from the company that I work for, in the institution that I am working for. They have a set of... they give you a

group of slides. And you are not allowed to use any other type of materials. And, in these slides, they have already establish topic, exercises that you can practice, and activities that you can do which range from role plays, filling out exercises, and other type of group discussions. These activities are adapted to the level of the students that you are going to teach. And they have their own system of leveling up. The students.... with my private students, I am way more flexible. And I mostly do activities that promote fluency because they want to speak fast.

**Interviewer:** What language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** I think listening because students get very frustrated. Uh, speaking can take a little bit of time for students to get used to in the beginning. Especially when they come from an environment that has been very traditional. Where they only receive information. So they feel very resistant to the idea of speaking. But if you have a class that is centered in fluency, in communication, and speaking. Eventually the student will get used to it and it doesn't take that long. I would say... Oh, actually, now that I think about it, writing. Because it takes too long, it takes too long. It takes so much time. And many people, because they are so focused on the idea of, "Ohh, I want to speak. I want to speak English. I want to communicate. I want to travel and talk to people," they don't really pay attention to writing that much. And you have a lot of people, especially young people, who learn English and they speak very well because they have been speaking for a long time. And now they want to take a test to go study somewhere else, and the writing is atrocious. They don't really know how to do anything. So you need, like, if you want to practice writing, you have to be very focused with it. You have to have very specific exercises and you have to do a lot aside of class.

**Interviewer:** OK. Yeah, OK. Uh. Where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** I use Google. But every once in a while I have like... Well, you know, for the company that I work for, they give me all the materials. They have a teacher portal where you have not only the materials that you are going to use for class, but also those years of trainings that you can use to improve yourself. And they give you a lot of different things. You have a forum where you can talk to other people about how to teach your class and how to go about doing certain activities. But when I'm working with my tutoring, I have a few websites. Eventually overtime I have a few websites that I have liked and that I use a lot. So I use YouTube and I use ELLLO for audio most of the time. Then I use news in levels which is a website where you can read the news and it has... You know, the person who runs this website. They select a piece of news and then they rewrite summaries of this in three different levels. Basic, intermediate, and advanced and it's very good. I use that a lot when I'm practicing reading and reading out loud. And then besides that, for grammar and things like that, I use the British Council websites and I use a website where you can have exercises for tests specifically because sometimes I have to work with tests.

**Interviewer:** OK, well, as you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue master's degrees. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** Well, you know. Mostly for English as a foreign language or English as a second language, what people do or what is most required is getting a TEFL certificate. That is the most common thing. I don't have one. But I know that it is an option. You can also get at TESOL certificate and there are a couple of preparation courses. Some of them can last two months. Some of them are only online. Some of them are in person and they can last up to six months, and they have more hours of preparation. Of course, depending on the course you're taking, the

certificate is going to have, you know, more prestige I suppose. When I was in my first job back in 2000, I took the British Council TKT test, which is the teacher knowledge test. And it's a certification as a teacher. So you have a few different certifications that are considered specialized for teaching English as a foreign language. And in some cases they do require a diploma in education. Or they do require a degree, but in some other institutions.... Well, you know, depending if it's public, private, what type of goal they have. But in some cases they just require, like, a language certificate.

**Interviewer:** OK. So you said that you took part in one teaching certification, right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I had, yeah. I had a teacher certification. I took it in 2008, but this expired in 2012.

**Interviewer:** OK. So do you prefer formal training like seminars, university courses, or informal training, like watching documentaries, practicing with other people, reading papers, articles?

**Interviewee:** I think it depends a little bit on what your goal is as a teacher. For example, I think that formal education is necessary and very important. If you also plan to teach at a level where formal education, like a higher education level. Of course you can have formal education and teach at a high school level or teach in a private language institute. But the way that you will go about teaching would be different. Like for example, I have situations where I know a couple of people who have complained that the tutor that they have for language learning or for practicing English is too technical. You know, so I think that this can also be a negative thing. Maybe not having the preparation but using it differently. I think definitely it is necessary to have. Well, so I started learning on my own and by the time that I got to university, my English was pretty advanced. But I still didn't understand a lot of things or how to explain certain things,

you know. And in university I learned how to explain some things through my experience. I learned how to explain, explain other things. I do think that preparation is good. Because it will teach you or it will give you the tools to know how to explain things to people. And not just, you know, have them repeat. It's OK to have them repeat. They will learn something, but sometimes they will want to know why things are like that. And it gives you more... uhm. Yeah, it makes you look better as a teacher that the student will trust you more if you are able to explain why.

**Interviewer:** What does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, you know... They are....they have this thing that I thought was really, really interesting. It's my first time having... You know, in the previous institutes where I have worked and I have worked in about 5 different institutes, private institutes previously, specifically focused on.... They always give you like a review, like a quality review. Like somebody would sit in your class, you know, every once in a while, maybe once a year or twice a year, you know. The way that they do it where I work now is absolutely amazing. I really love it. First of all, they do it once a month. So they record all the classes and then somebody will watch your class and they will give you a document when you start working there, where they specify all the areas in which they will evaluate you. And then somebody will watch your class and will tell you what you did well. And will give you feedback on what to do better according, of course, to their guidelines, you know. Of course it will also help your teaching in general. I like the way that they do it because I feel like, you know, somebody is reviewing my work. They are giving me feedback that I feel is very useful. And they are grading me on a scale, on a percentage scale. And then that grade has an impact on how much you make.

**Interviewer:** OK. But do they offer you training course?

**Interviewee:** They have training, they do have a lot of trainings. They have those .... like .... Like I mentioned before, they have a teacher portal where you can go, but it's not. You can have a coaching session, sessions, sorry, Coach, coaching sessions with other teachers. But mostly they have trainings that are, you know, videos. For example, what happened recently in my most recent review, which was this at the beginning of this month was that they told me.... Hey, when you are practicing pronunciation or when you're trying to correct pronunciation, especially in which part of the syllable the emphasis goes, you need to write this on the screen because I just make them repeat it loud. I don't write anything and they were like you should write it on the screen and I was like I've only transcribed things with the... the phonetic alphabet, so I'm not sure how to do this. So I asked a teacher and she told me oh hey, we have a training for that. You can find it here. They gave me a link and they gave me some ideas on how to transcribe the words in this.... into sounds in a way that will make sense to Spanish speakers. Because I was like, I don't know how to do it. So they have this type of videos and then the training that they link me to. It's like a couple videos and some lists and some suggestions on how to do this.

**Interviewer:** And all these sessions and trainings that they offer. Do you find them useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** I think that... I think that they are very useful. Some of them are more useful to people that have less experience, I will say. So I think that it is a good like... for example for.... somebody who is starting. They have a very good platform suggesting a lot of things, you know. I mean, I did.... I did, I did learn a couple things, but many of these courses, just from the title, I don't need to... I know that I don't need to do it.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that your Academy, your institute, could do something else for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, it would be nice, for example, if they... if they contribute it somehow. I mean, if they had like other types of programs, for example, there are places in which if you do certain type of studies, they do give you a certificate. So maybe it would be nice if based on the trainings that they have there, if you complete a certain amount of courses that they give you a certificate that would be interesting. But I guess that just because what they have is so specific to their own company. Maybe that's why they don't do it. But it would also be nice if they could contribute to getting to helping you get a certificate. Yeah, like a TEFL or something like that. Some... some institutes pay for you to get that.

**Interviewer:** Right. OK. Just to wrap up. Can you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Well, a lot. But I guess for me, whenever I think about this, I always think about a couple of years ago. Actually it was, it was after the pandemic. But it was early after the pandemic. So I would say probably like in February or March of 2021. Or something like that. I remember that I had a student online. That was a six year old girl. And you know, I was very nervous because I was like, oh my God, this is a child. How am I gonna teach her? And she was such a sweetheart, and it was very rewarding because she ended up advancing a lot. Like she could have.... she could hold a conversation without having any, like, previous English experience at all. Just because, well, the institute that I was working for at the time, which is a different one, they gave me the resources that I needed in order to.... We had... we had a program installed. We had a program installed in the computer that would have all the same activities that she had in her book and it was very like.... you could do the same activities, but I also needed to do other things because what happened was that the book.... She ended up learning so fast that the book we still had to do it, but she wanted to do more things because she



would finish the exercises so fast. So then I had to get very creative in this class. Because we had one hour, two or three times a week and she got so excited. And then I had to quit that job. And she was so sad when we stopped having classes. But I was very excited about, you know, just the way that she improved and it was crazy because I had other children that I used to zoom with and she was the only one that really, really advanced.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Thanks for your time and your willingness to participate in this interview. I hope you felt comfortable all the time. If you have any questions, please let me know.

**Interviewee:** Not for now

**APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW 11**

**Interviewer:** OK, so before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today's date is May 17.

**Interviewer:** Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Ecuador. From Quito, Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** OK. And where do you live now?

**Interviewee:** I live in Quito.

**Interviewer:** OK, when you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Well, I like to learn because I am an entrepreneur. I am part time teacher and part time an entrepreneur. So I like to learn, and to work out, to do some yoga too.

**Interviewer:** OK. So you said reading, right? So do you read in English? Things in English?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I read in English, and I do a lot of my things in English, too. And I love looking for information. Reading books in English.

**Interviewer:** OK, So what would be your favorite activity in English?

**Interviewee:** For me.... I'm a huge fan of podcasts.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** So that's one of my main activities. I love to listen to podcasts about different topics like teaching, my hobbies, etc.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you hold any university degree? And if so, which one?

**Interviewee:** I studied "Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros." And also I hold one certificate with the Arizona State University.

**Interviewer:** Perfect. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** For passion. I love languages. Even though I'm still improving my English, as a teacher. But I've always liked it... the idea to teach a language and learn a language.

**Interviewer:** Perfect. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I started my teaching career officially in 2016.

**Interviewer:** 2016, OK. So nine years. More or less. OK. OK, if you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** I can say that an actor or dancer. I love this kind of thing, but... And I love the things about marketing. About entrepreneurship, which is what I'm doing, too.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you work in a in a school, university, academy...?

**Interviewee:** In a school.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is it a public or private school?

**Interviewee:** Private

**Interviewer:** How would you describe the philosophy of the institution?

**Interviewee:** OK, to make it shorter. They try to teach all that they could.

**Interviewer:** Have you worked in a public institution?

**Interviewee:** Yes!

**Interviewer:** OK. What differences have you perceived between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** Well, with the public... I'm going to try to be polite, but I see.... That the public is a little bit chaotic. And I feel like, uh, teachers, they are..., at least the English teachers, they are there just to complete that curriculum. Not all of them, but I can say that in public schools, teachers are a little bit burned out. It's like they're like: "OK, I don't see myself doing this

longer.” And it's a little bit chaotic...to have a lot of students and in one classroom, which is not pedagogically correct.

**Interviewer:** So basically, teachers in the public school, in your opinion that just go and teach because they have to. It's just because of the money?

**Interviewee:** Basically! In my experience it's like that. On the other hand, in private schools obviously they got the money. Students are paying for it. So that's the reason that teachers are a little bit more, like, creative. Or sometimes they feel free to do some stuff. It's like: “OK, this is the curriculum. OK, this is what we need to follow, but I can do this. I can create this.” And sometimes the director says: “OK, yeah, you can do this!” But in the public system, in my experience, it's not like that. They always want you to follow the curriculum, to do what they say, and do what the textbook say. That's where it's kind of different. If I can explain it that way.

**Interviewer:** OK! And since you have worked in both educational systems, which one do you prefer working in and why?

**Interviewee:** It doesn't matter. It depends of how open the school is. How they make teachers grow as professionals. How they take advantage of the talent, the skills to do something better for students. For me, that's what I want. It's not a problem for me if it's public or private. I just want a place where I see that I could grow as a professional.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Good question! All of them are good, but this is very interesting. I started learning English by working with foreigners. I worked as a tour guide. That's the reason that I considered that I had the chance to improve my English. And then... by myself with podcasts, reading, English music.

**Interviewer:** So you have not taken any English course? In an academy or anywhere?

**Interviewee:** Well, at the university. The whole career was in English, but before that just one English course. But I can say that it's not because of that course that I can communicate in English now.

**Interviewer:** How has been your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** At the beginning, it was so hard because.... I remember that I took one course, the only English course that I took in my life as a student. And I paid a lot of money. And I consider it was a waste of money. Because I consider that when you're learning a language, you need to be involved. You need to... create a habit where you can practice. And in this Ecuadorian methodology about teaching English, you are not involved in learning, in practicing the language. And it was hard because I had to write in a book, write in a book, write in a book. Now as a teacher, I'm looking for other options to improve that.

**Interviewer:** So, what motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Because I wanted to travel. I wanted to...have the chance to discover new cultures.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** I'm very passionate about traveling and discovering new cultures.

**Interviewer:** OK. When did you start learning English?

**Interviewee:** I can say it was in 2008. I took my first English course. But practicing, learning, it was in 2016.

**Interviewer:** OK. What was the easiest part when learning English?

**Interviewee:** I could say that... it was grammar.

**Interviewer:** OK. And what was the difficult part when you were learning English?

**Interviewee:** I think speaking.

**Interviewer:** OK! Right now, with your level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Of course! All of them!

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** To create a space where they can live the language. Where they can be involved in the language. Where you can feel that you are not just studying it but you're practicing.

**Interviewer:** OK. So I assume that you did that? Did you try to get involved with the language? Did you try to live the language?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I did. I have a place where I always talk to teachers and students. I learn from them. In this place, I have the chance to improve and teach.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** When I see results. And when I see motivation in my students. When they say: "Teacher, I could talk with a gringo last weekend." And I'm very happy. Because that's one of the things that personally fulfills me as a teacher.

**Interviewer:** OK, what are the difficulties that you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I have two answers for this.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** The first one is working for public schools. My experience was kind of hard because I didn't have the freedom. I consider that English teachers... we have something extra. I don't want to say that the other teachers don't. No! But as an English teacher, we are more like... artists. And sometimes working in a public school is, like, they don't let us be free. The other difficulty is to see how some teachers can't communicate in English and they do not do anything

about it. I'm not sure how this is in the city but... I work in the rural area. In rural schools. And some teachers, they have been teaching for years, and they can't have a conversation in English. And they are teaching in high school. For me, it's not completely their fault. The government is not doing something for them. That's sometimes very hard because if I can communicate in English well is not because of the government. As teachers, we need to do something extra. Because if we wait for the government or some institution, we are not going to improve the learning.

**Interviewer:** Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I love teaching. But I can tell you that I'm not motivated at all. For the reason that I explained to you before. But I love teaching. But motivated right now, as I see how the system is. Not at all.

**Interviewer:** So the reason will be the system that doesn't allow you... doesn't give freedom to teachers, right?

**Interviewee:** Right!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** My professional goal is to have a place... my own school. My own program where I can create or follow a modern methodology. Where I can involve the teaching area and the exploring area with my students. But, by living, you know. Like having the experience practicing. That's one of my goals to have my own place.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are you doing something right now to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** I am doing it since 2008. I have my own brand. I'm offering online courses. And I had a place where I was carrying out some activities involving students and teachers where they can practice English.

**Interviewer:** So right now you are the.... principle of that online school, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes!

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** OK, it depends on the level. In terms of the level. I love role plays. I love when a student can stand up, and move, and practice it. And me as a teacher leading that activity and showing them how to do it. Students have a lot of fun.

**Interviewer:** OK. What language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** Speaking.

**Interviewer:** OK. What do you do to overcome that challenge? To make them speak?

**Interviewee:** At the beginning of the class, I tell them the objectives of the lesson. For example: "Today, you are going to have the chance to speak about this." Students receive the message and then, they are motivated. And if not, I try to motivate them and give them confidence to speak. It is mostly how you sell the idea of the speaking activities.

**Interviewer:** Where do your research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** OK, there's a lot of resources that you can find on the Internet. They are very useful for me to apply in my classes.

**Interviewer:** Well, as you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I am. The first is like to pursue a master's degree. The next is reading a lot. And there are also certifications that you can get.

**Interviewer:** OK, OK. So. So have you taken any certifications?

**Interviewee:** No. Only my bachelor's degree.



**Interviewer:** OK, Do you want to pursue a master's degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** May I ask why you have not pursued a Master's degree yet? Is it a financial problem or time?

**Interviewee:** Time. But I should add that I don't want to pursue a master's in education. I want to learn about management. About leading groups. About project management. That's what I want to do. A master's focused on that. Because that would be helpful for my business.

**Interviewer:** OK, perfect! So. Do you like to participate in formal training like seminars, university courses? Or do you prefer the informal training, which is watching documentaries, practicing with other people, or reading by yourself? Which one do you prefer?

**Interviewee:** It depends on what you want and what you need. Sometimes you need the formal preparation. But, I'm the kind of person that learns informally.

**Interviewer:** OK, so what does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, they offer some in-person workshops.

**Interviewer:** Do you think they are useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** They are useful but not enough. I want to connect with other teachers and learn as a community. So I try to do that on my own. I also try to learn things on my own. Right now, I'm learning on how to be an entrepreneur. Because as I told you, I want to offer my own teaching program based on modern methodologies.

**Interviewer:** OK. And just to finish the interview, can you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience that you ever had as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** It was like two months ago. I used to work in a foundation.... a cultural center. And I was working with English teachers from all over the globe. We were preparing student to

get the Cambridge certificate. Then, I had to quit. But they recognized my work. And they invited to the graduation ceremony where students got their A2 certifications. That was really rewarding for me. To see them achieving their goals.

**Interviewer:** Ok, thanks for your time and for participating in this interview!

**Interviewee:** No problem!

**APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW 12**

**Interviewer:** So before we start, uh, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** OK, today's date is May the 17th.

**Interviewer:** OK. Let's start with some information about yourself. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** OK, I was actually born in London, but when I was two years old, I moved to Ecuador and I have lived here ever since.

**Interviewer:** OK, so you live in Quito, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I live in Quito.

**Interviewer:** OK, so when you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** It all depends if I'm stressed out, I will actually relax myself by lying on the bed, having some snacks, watching a movie that takes my mind off things. Sometimes I do listen to music or podcasts. It all depends on my mood. I also like to be in contact with the nature. So I often go to my favorite park, which has a lot of big trees, and I can go out with my dog.

**Interviewer:** Are any of those activities in English or have any relation with an English language?

**Interviewee:** None of them. I haven't got the opportunity to get in contact or join any kind of club where you can actually get in contact with people that speak English or that are from English speaking countries and then you can have that kind of interaction. Which I think is a good idea. I'll have to look around and probably join a club or something.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Uh, yes. Well, my first degree has to do with English teaching. Then I have two Master's degree. The first one that has to do with educational management and leadership. And

then the last one that I just finished and graduated from last year, which is a Master's degree in English teaching.

**Interviewer:** OK, why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** OK, when I was young I started doing some volunteering jobs related to teaching, related to helping the community or helping children. And then, uh, I continued doing that.

When I went back to London, I lived there for almost three years or something. I was studying and working in things related to business or things related to accountancy, but then also on the side I started doing some voluntary job there. And I had the opportunity to work with a foundation that helps children that come from different social status, and they were immigrants whose first language was not English and they were already in the school. And they had some problems learning problems, obviously, because they were not familiar with the language. So I started helping them. And then I felt connected with that. So I fell in love with teaching by doing those kind of things. So I decided to change my major. I started working at different language institutes here in Quito which gave me also the freedom to have my afternoons free so I could be with my son. And so that's how everything is started.

**Interviewer:** OK. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I've been a teacher for 17 years.

**Interviewer:** OK, if you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** I love business. So I will have finished my career in business. I think that I would have gone more to work for companies that were related with communities. Or more related and work... working and helping others. Instead of only sitting in an office, right!

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you work in a school? A high school? University?

**Interviewee:** University. Yes, higher education.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is it a public or private institution?

**Interviewee:** OK, so my morning job is a public university. And then on the side, I have a class in the afternoon which I work for a private university there.

**Interviewer:** OK, so how would you describe the philosophies of the institutions where you're working?

**Interviewee:** Well, they're quite different. Uh, the public university. Connections and politics are very important. They will focus or they give more importance or relevance to things that are going to help them in the public eye instead of focusing on what is important for the students, or what is important for the educators there. Because if you have a very good environment where you work, then you can do your job better. But if you feel limited somehow, then obviously you restrict also yourself. You tend to do what is asked from you to do which shouldn't be, right?

You should be the best you can. You're free to empower not only your students, but yourself. To accomplish bigger goals, right? If you know that you are restricted by the authorities and you're not going to give your best, you're just going to do what you need to do in order to go by. And that is sometimes sad. Or that is sometimes discouraging when you work for a public institution. And then in the afternoon, that's when I feel more myself. Because then it is the way that you, uh, can work there. I mean, the way that you can actually connect with the students. It helps you a lot, because then you're no longer talking about just numbers, you're talking about humans. You're talking about the connections, the real connections that you do as a teacher and you help your students to learn not just in my case, right. Not just a language, but to let them know that they... that this is useful. You can actually connect and be more like the person that you are. So those are the different philosophies that I can say between a public institution and a private one.

**Interviewer:** OK. Have you noticed any more differences between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** Well, well, in the public education I have a lot of students, so I do not get to know them. Uh, first of all and second, uh, we haven't go back yet. We haven't gone back to face to face or presential classes yet. So we still have our virtual lessons. So like for example, I work three times a week from my home where I provide my own things, right, like my own Internet, my own computer, with my own things. I have to teach my students from home. Because the university do not have the resources to cover that. If I go to my place of work, let's say I have to go on Tuesdays and Thursdays there. And I have some, uh, virtual tutoring classes together and the Internet connection fails, so that's why they send us home for the heavier working schedule hours, which are Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays. And we teach from our home. Right, so resources are not enough to cover what they are asking us to do. So, we have to cover ourselves. So there's not that kind of backup or support that you're supposed to have from the place that you work for. Especially an institution that receives money from the government, right? As I already mentioned at the very beginning, sometimes politics gets in the way of the academic. So we have to look for resources ourselves in order to do our job.

**Interviewer:** OK. So between those two educational systems, which one do you prefer to work for?

**Interviewee:** OK, so I would prefer to work for a private one. If I had the opportunity to actually have, like, a tenure there, I would prefer the private one. But I have a tenure already in the public institution. And it is very hard to get in public institutions. It is very hard to get tenure. So I consider myself lucky. So I do the best that I can with what I have. And if the institution does not provide it, then I look for better ways to do my job. That's what I do.

**Interviewer:** OK. Would you prefer to work in the private system because of the resources?

**Interviewee:** Of course! Resources and also because, even though I work only there part time, they have a lot of courses and a lot of training. They are always taking care of you as a teacher. And not just as a professional but as a human being. So they have a variety of training in general. Not just to learn the typical stuff related to methodology or the latest techniques or the latest activities that you can apply in your classroom. But it's also related to your well-being because if you feel great, if you are OK, then you can deliver the very best of yourself to your students.

**Interviewer:** So how did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** OK, so I finished high school here in Ecuador and then I had to move to the United States. I went to New York and that's where I learned English. I lived there for like a year and a half. And that's where I actually learned English.

**Interviewer:** Did you take an English course in New York?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I went to a Community College there. I took some courses at night. Well, evening classes.

**Interviewer:** OK! So, how was your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** Ohh, I loved it. My English teachers were American. I did not have uh teachers that were from other countries and I liked it because they did not translate anything to me. So I actually had to speak in English. I had to figure it out. Yes, everything in English. So that's why I enjoyed it. Because as I already mentioned, I enjoy challenges. So as it was expected from me to do a big effort to actually learn, right? It's it was not just given. So I started enjoying myself.

**Interviewer:** OK, what motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** It motivated me.... I think the fact that I could learn about different people from different countries with one language. Because in New York, as you know, there are people from

different countries, not necessarily from Spanish speaking countries. And it was so interesting. So the way that you can expand your horizons, your mind changes as well because you learn from different people from different experiences. You learn about cultures and with one language that you can actually communicate.

**Interviewer:** Right. So you basically started learning English when you were 18, right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What was the easiest part when you were learning English?

**Interviewee:** The easiest skill was probably reading. Because I'm kind of an introvert. I think that one was the easiest one for me to actually learn. And then it was listening because obviously I didn't have to speak. I just had to listen, pay attention, understand, right. OK. Writing and speaking were the most difficult things, and writing is still a little bit of a struggle for me because I do not go.... I don't do that. As an English teacher, you tend to.... do more speaking than writing.

**Interviewer:** OK. So the most difficult part when learning English were speaking and writing?

**Interviewee:** Speaking and writing. Yes!

**Interviewer:** OK. With your level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** There's always room for improvement. For example, there are some technical words that sometimes they use in movies and TV shows that I have to figure it out from the context. I would love to keep learning more and more every day. But also I would love not to forget what I have already learned, right. Because I do not have the contact or enough resources probably to get in contact with English speakers.



**Interviewer:** OK. What do you think will be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** I think apart from surrounding yourself with English, it will be to join a club. And I think that's the one that I have to do. I have to follow my own advice, join a club where you surround yourselves with English speakers and you actually have the opportunity to practice and meet people and learn more about culture.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Right. And, may I ask why don't you join a club, for example?

**Interviewee:** Probably because I have been concentrated a lot on my family, But now they have grown so they are older and then I have more time for myself. So then that's why that will be a very wise step to do right. But I couldn't do it before because I was working or raising my family.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** The fact that I could actually share some stuff with my colleagues. When I am able to help them out with activities or strategies. Second biggest thing that I could say of being a teacher is when you can connect with your students in class. I love that.

**Interviewer:** OK, what are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I could name few. The first one will be when students are not willing to learn. I think that's frustrating. That you need to actually work extra to motivate them to learn. I think that's the biggest thing. Yeah, because the other things I can manage, I don't mind it. But when the students who are the ones who should see the benefits of learning and do not seeing anything at all. And that's the hardest part, I think, of the difficulties that now I have to face as a teacher.

**Interviewer:** Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I lost it. I have to say, when I was working at the public institution. There was a time when I felt very sad, demotivated. And it was not related to education. It was mostly related to politics. So it was hard. It was hard. And I lost that touch. That thing that makes me go to work. It was lost for, like I don't know, 2-3 years, but then. I found it again and I'm very happy. I'm so happy where I work. I don't mind. I mean like external factors do not influence me anymore. I think that I have built myself. My inner motivation is bigger than everything else. So that's why I'm very happy as a teacher.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** Probably start doing research. I want to focus on that and to actually change things where I work. It is difficult because as I already said, politics influence a lot more than the academics. But I hope that I can find a way. And if I don't find a way where I work, I hope that it can help to find ways to others. So I think that would be my contribution for the rest of English teachers.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are you doing something now to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I'm going to start writing something related to how teachers should be empowered and do not feel down.

**Interviewer:** Does your institution give you the facilities to achieve the goal of researching? Or writing paper?

**Interviewee:** No, I have to do it on my own. Yes, the institution has given support to others. But it hasn't happened with me. You have to have connections. There I don't have it, so I do it on my own.

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** Well, I use a lot of picture descriptions. I use Padlet where I can see the writings of everybody at once and I can correct it. I use audios or podcasts with different accents, so they are familiarized with different English speakers. I try to use real ads and menus so they can actually make the effort to understand, and they can get connected to real things. Sometimes I use some short videos from sitcoms that I like. So it all depends on the topic. I get something that is real, that are made for native speakers and then I use it in my class.

**Interviewer:** What language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** Speaking. You do not have enough time for it. And also students are very conscious if they make a mistake. They don't want to be observed by all the students.

**Interviewer:** How do you overcome those challenges? How do you make them speak more?

**Interviewee:** Well, I go little by little. I use role plays where you already have some guidance. I pronounce first how the phrases go. And then, I pair them to practice pronunciation and get confidence. So you go step by step. I think the technique is called scaffolding. I do a lot of activities that have to do with group work where they have to interact a lot and communicate a lot and then present something.

**Interviewer:** Where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** Ohh! I have different resources. I like BBC or the British Consul. Then I like to use different varieties of websites. It all depends on what kind of activities you want to do. Right? I just browse over the net and then I get connected.

**Interviewer:** Right. OK. So as you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue a master's degree. So are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** I know that you can go in, like, kind of an exchange that you go and work overseas for like a year or two and then you come back and definitely you will have to work for a public high school or a public primary school in order to do that. I know that one which is with the government, I think. I know that there are kind of “Teachers without Frontiers” or something like that.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** I mean, I would have loved to do it if I didn't have my children. But I can no longer apply for those.

**Interviewer:** OK! So, do you prefer formal training like seminars, university courses or informal training, like watching documentaries, practicing with other people, reading things on your own? Which training do you prefer?

**Interviewee:** I like both. They serve different purposes. So I like both. I like to go to seminars and sit there and learn from other teachers and also do some network in there, meet some other colleagues right, and hear from their experiences. And also I like informal kind of training where you can actually relax and you can, you know, expand your area of expertise in another setting. So, definitely both. Because they serve different purposes.

**Interviewer:** Uh, what does your institution or institutions do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** OK. The public institution doesn't do anything. I mean, as I already said, it has to do with connections. I do not have connections there, therefore it's hard for me to get into those kinds of training courses. We do organize, though, some training courses inside the Language Institute. And it has to do mainly with different teachers who would like to present something to the rest of us. And then we take a training course and that is nice. That is nice because we're sharing and we're growing together. So, like, the big umbrella that's supposed to support us...

No! But the immediate one, right among us, that's what we do when we finish our semester and we have, like, a week off or a week and a half off. Then there's a small group. A Commission in our area, that is the Commission that is in charge of training. And we organize those kinds of informal courses. Sometimes they do call others to give us training, and if they accept, they come and they train us for like 2 hours or something. And that's fine. That is fine. If we wanted another kind of training, like formative training or formal training, we would have to pay for it and it would have to be an external kind of thing. Because now the university does not pay for those kinds of things.

**Interviewer:** OK. And what about the private university?

**Interviewee:** As I already mentioned, they give a lot of training, but I'm not able to join because it's a conflict of schedule. Right. Some of them are free, some of them are paid. Yes, they do also have some paid training there.

**Interviewer:** So do you think the support of the private university for your professional growth is useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** Well, it's not enough. It could be better, but as I already mentioned as well, I have looked for ways to improve myself because at the end it's my career. At the end it's me as a professional. It's me getting better in what I do. So I haven't been stopped by the lack of support or resources. Yeah, I'm no longer waiting for them. To help me develop myself as a professional, I'm doing it myself because I care about what I do, and I love what I do, and I do not like to be in a comfort zone. I'm not that kind of that person. So I do not depend on whether my primary job supports me or not. I mostly rely on me.

**Interviewer:** What do you think your institutions could do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** OK, in the case of my morning job.... Well, it has to do with equal opportunities. Right!. So if they actually do not only favor the ones that they like or have connections.... Like, it has to be with equal opportunities. If they are actually willing to do the same for everyone. And it's open and it doesn't have a hidden agenda, so it would be great because in public institutions you could get your training, you could have your free hours. They could actually give you that. But unluckily, you have to be part of the groups, or you have to meet someone from the group in order to get those benefits. In my case, I don't.

**Interviewer:** To wrap up, can you tell me a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work?  
Fun or rewarding experience at work?

**Interviewee:** I'm going to tell you one that just happened before the pandemic. Yes, I remember that I was giving a course. And then we were going to have sort of a presentation. It was about countries and culture and traditions and facilities. Well, my students actually dressed up right for the part. So they rented costumes. They actually brought real food. They actually decorated everything. They were very, very prepared. And they were willing to take an extra effort, right! To stand out. And so I loved that. Yes, I liked that I got the pictures of that group where we actually had fun, enjoyed ourselves, and we used the language. And we learned about different cultures because I remember that they presented about Japan, Mexico, Colombia... different countries. I was so happy because I felt their energy. And they were actually enjoying what they were doing. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** OK. Thank you so much for your time.

**Interviewee:** Anytime!

**APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW 13**

**Interviewer:** Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today is Wednesday May 17th

**Interviewer:** Ok, let's start with some information about yourself. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Ecuador, from Guayaquil

**Interviewer:** Where do you live?

**Interviewee:** I live in Guayaquil

**Interviewer:** When you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** I like watching documentaries. I like reading. I like playing with my kid.

**Interviewer:** Are any of those activities in English?

**Interviewee:** Yes! Most of the documentaries I watch are in English. And I do not only watch documentaries. I also watch TV shows, shows from the streaming networks. Also, because I am at the university, I read a lot of articles in English. Articles and journals. Academic articles, books, and journals. But I would say that's not for fun. It's mostly a duty. But I read those in English, of course. And when I have the time. Because I don't really have much free time, I do like to read.... novels about crime.

**Interviewer:** Between watching TV and reading, what would be your favorite activity in English?

**Interviewee:** I would say watching TV.... because I have to read a lot for the university, so I need something to do,... something different and watching TV is something different. So it helps me relax!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have a bachelor's degree in education. In applied linguistics. And now I am pursuing a master's degree in TESOL.

**Interviewer:** Perfect! Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Well, when I was about to finish high school, I used to talk a lot with a priest who was a friend, too. He was asking me what my strengths were and what I wanted to do in the future. What I wanted to study at the university. So, I said: "I don't know!." And then he told me: "Well, I see you have specific characteristics that could be very useful in a teaching career. Since you like languages, specifically English. Why don't you follow a career in English teaching. And then, since I was not very sure what I wanted to do, I said to myself: "Well, I should try teaching!" So I started the teaching career at the university. Then, I got my first job as a teacher while I was at the university. It was not a really good experience. But I... did learn a lot. And then I continue with the career at the university. And that's what I ended up doing. I like teaching. Maybe I am not passionate about it. But I do like it.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Probably,... 15 years.

**Interviewer:** If you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen? Why?

**Interviewee:** Archaeologist. I love history. I think that that career might not be very profitable. At least not here in Ecuador. So I don't know.... I would probably be doing something related with history. Like a... history teacher! Ha, ha ha! I don't know!

**Interviewer:** Do you work in an elementary school, a junior high, high school, or university?

**Interviewee:** Elementary School

**Interviewer:** Is it a public or private institution?



**Interviewee:** Semi private. It's mostly private but it has some teachers who are paid by the government.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you currently work at?

**Interviewee:** I would describe it as... accompanying students. They always ask teachers to not be so severe and old fashioned with students. To be more empathetic with them. To be ready to listen to them. Of course, when they do something not appropriate, you need to say something. But they believe that... teachers need to show students love so they understand that whatever correction we make is for their own good and not just an imposition.

**Interviewer:** Umm, have you worked in an institution from the other educational system? In your case, a public institution?

**Interviewee:** No, I have not!

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you know of any differences between public and private education?

**Interviewee:** Well,... mostly resources, I think. As I said, I don't have experience in the public sector. But you hear things on the news or from colleagues that actually work there. You usually hear, um, that schools, public schools do not have enough resources. That the classrooms are full of students. Like 40-50 students per class. That there are not enough teachers to cover the demand. Like, one time... I heard a horrific thing.... That there are not enough staff to control specific places in the school. Like bathrooms. And sometimes students get beaten or... get... sexually molested. That's awful! And I suppose that could also happen in private schools, but it probably depends on how organized the school is. Or the resources they have. Because... there are private schools that look more like public schools. Because parents do not pay a lot for the tuition and therefore, they don't have many resources. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! And... Would you like to work in the public system?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, maybe! Sometimes I have that desire of changing education. And... being in a public school would be, like, a great opportunity to do so. But I also think of my comfort. And I don't know if I would like to be sent far. Like, to a school or high school in the outskirts of the city. I'm kind of lazy when it comes to... travel and commute to other places.

**Interviewer:** Understandable! Ok, how did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Hmm! Well, I started attending courses. English courses. In an academy. A school language in Guayaquil. I did all the courses, all the levels. I ended up being a teacher there. So, I learned English there. But I wouldn't say I was fluent. I knew a lot of grammar and stuff. But speaking and listening were not my ... strengths. Then, I went to the US and lived there for two years. There I learned English. Well, not that I learned English. I take it back. I would say I have... had the chance to practice it and,... you know, become fluent.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How was your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** Hmm! Well, it was fun! I liked it. I like studying, you know,... anything. So going to the academy was fun for me. Not because of my classmates. I mean, they were ok. But... that was not my motivation. My motivation was to learn. I'm kind of a nerd. Ha, ha, ha!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, I don't know! English was not a very important part of my life when I was a kid. I ... got good grades but... that was it. When I was in seventh grade, I had a teacher who taught us a lot of vocabulary. Now that I think about it, ..hmm, her method was not probably the best if... you wanted to ...if you wanted students to learn English. But, somehow... she motivated me to learn more and more. It's weird! Then, my parents did the... sorry, made the effort to put me in a language school to learn English. And I liked it.

**Interviewer:** When did you start learning the language?

**Interviewee:** Learning, really learning. When I was fourteen or fifteen.

**Interviewer:** What was the easiest part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** Vocab. Learning new words. Grammar was also super easy for me.

**Interviewer:** What was the most difficult part when learning the language?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, probably listening. Listening to tapes with different accents was hard.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Now, with your current level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Of course! Everything. I always say that nobody is perfect at anything. And, in my case, hmm, I think I need to improve in all the areas. But,.. if you ask me to choose one,.. I would say... listening and speaking. Understanding other accents, like, accents from Ireland, Scotland, Australia, countries from Africa. And even parts of the US, southern US. It's tough for me. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Yes! Ok! What do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** Probably...Hmm, watch TV programs in English. Listen to music or podcasts in English. Look for something that interests you and do that but in English. I always say, it's better to play your strengths. And more if you don't like something. For example, there are some people that do not like English. So, they,.. in order to get motivated, they should look for something that they like and do it in English. And, if your level allows you to do that, join a conversation club or a language exchange meeting. Things like that.

**Interviewer:** And, do you do any of those activities?

**Interviewee:** Well, I do watch TV shows in English. I have some friends who are foreigners so,... I practice with them. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** Hmmm! When my students show progress. When they say,... when they are able to say a phrase or answer a question in English. When they don't see English as a boring subject. When I notice that they are having fun. Because, you know, that means they will be motivated to study. And progress. And, at some point, they... might see the importance of English.

**Interviewer:** Yeah! Ok! What are the difficulties you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Uff! When parents are too... what's the word! When they complain too much. When they want their kids to have the best grades. But they don't deserve them sometimes. That's frustrating. Also, when they meet, like, a bunch of parents to talk bad about you or to complain about you. Ughh! Also, when they go to the principal without having talked to you first. Ughh! That's annoying! So, yeah! For me, parents are the worst thing I have to face.

**Interviewer:** So, are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes! Sometimes I get tired! Sometimes parents make me want to quit. I mean, the frustration with them. But then, I see progress with kids and I get motivated again.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** My professional goal? Hmm, well, right now! To finish my master's program. I still have one more year of that. Then, maybe, study another master's program but... something that helps me get into an administrative job. But in the field of education.

**Interviewer:** Are you doing something to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** Not really. Well, I am studying this master and then I would have to study the other master. Then, I would... you know, be more prepared to look for a job as an academic director or principal. Something like that.

**Interviewer:** Does your school give you the facilities to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** Well! Since my classes are online, I don't have issues with schedule. The school schedule. There is no interference in that regard. But, if there are meetings that coincide with my classes, I am allowed to not go to school so I can attend my classes. My classes for the master's program, I mean. Also, when I get the master's diploma, they will increase my salary.

Apparently... Ha, ha, ha!

**Interviewer:** Ok! What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** Hmm! I try to practice a lot of speaking in class. And to make the learning more practical. More... applicable to real life. I ask a lot of questions. Orally, of course. I make them do role plays. I teach them grammar too but with real life examples. In that way, they can practice with things they see or do everyday.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** Hmm! I would say.... Listening. They are not very used to listen to things in English. They mostly watch TV in Spanish or listen to those, you know, horrific things like reggaeton, Bud Bunny and those atrocities. But, ...that's when I try to introduce them to other types of music. Like... rock and roll, pop, things like that.

**Interviewer:** Ahh! Ok! Are there other ways that you try... so you can overcome those challenges?

**Interviewee:** Mostly through music. Thank goodness they like the music I play in the class. we do a lot of activities with music. When we go to the lab, we watch some cartoons or scenes from movies and then work with that.

**Interviewer:** Where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** Well, mostly from the internet. The book, the textbook we use also have some activities and ideas. I also... I have also...stole... some ideas from coworkers. You know, things that I have seen and I have liked.

**Interviewer:** Ok! As you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue master's degrees. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** Hmm! Well,...maybe.... I don't know! Going abroad, take a course there. Perfect your English. Or maybe taking a course online to.... increase your knowledge of... about strategies and academic stuff.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Have you taken part in any of them?

**Interviewee:** Well, I have gone abroad. I had the chance to go and stay there for two years. I took a couple of English courses there. I learned and practiced a lot. But... I didn't take any courses for teaching.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What do you prefer, a formal training like seminars, university courses, etc. or informal training like watching documentaries, practicing with other people who speak English, reading things on your own...?

**Interviewee:** I think both are important. But... I think I prefer formal training because, you know, they usually give you a certificate which you can use and add to your resume. That's useful, you know!

**Interviewer:** Yes! Ok! What does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, they offer... they organize workshops and stuff before the school year starts. But they are in Spanish. The editorials offer some workshops but.... they are a little boring. I don't like them too much.

**Interviewer:** Ok! Do you find that useful or enough?

**Interviewee:** Kind of useful. Not enough. Definitely not enough. Although,... they paid for the Cambridge preparation course and the exam. So, that's something.

**Interviewer:** Ok! What do you think your institution should do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Well, I wouldn't mind if they pay for my master's Ha, ha, ha! Yeah! But seriously... they should pay for a degree. And they should, you know, organize more things for the English department. I know my school is not bilingual. But they should work towards improve the level of English of teachers and students. you know, increase the standards.

**Interviewer:** Yes! Ok! Could you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Fun! Well,... ha, ha, ha! One day, I was walking around the classroom. And, there was a stage kind of thing in front of the classroom and then a lower level where students are. I don't know how.... I was trying to step down from that stage, but it seems that I got... tangled with students backpacks that were on the floor. And I fell. All the kids were standing from their seats. They didn't know if they should laugh or not. But I just started laughing and then, everybody started laughing too. That was funny and also a moment of connection between them and me. They learned that... I think they learned that.... That they should laugh at themselves too. Instead of complaining or being mad, they should laugh. That's what I tried to show them. Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Yeah! Ok! Thank you so much for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I hope you felt comfortable all the time. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know.

**Interviewee:** Ok! No problem! You are welcome!



**APPENDIX N: INTERVIEW 14**

**Interviewer:** Before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** Today's date is Monday 22nd of May 2023.

**Interviewer:** Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I am originally from the Netherlands.

**Interviewer:** OK. And where do you live now?

**Interviewee:** I currently live in Tumbaco.

**Interviewer:** When you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** Alright, I love to have like a morning routine with an extensive walk. I like to go to the gym as well. I also like to do "Do it yourself" projects. Working with Woods and painting. So you know my creative side is definitely there. And yeah, what else? I like to spend time with the family, going out for lunches, you know, like, the good Ecuadorian family life.

**Interviewer:** Do you do any activities in English during your free time?

**Interviewee:** I do actually. So I have two good friends here, one from Germany, one from the United States. So meeting up with friends, have quality time, we do everything in English. I'm also working on some projects; you could call it a side hustle.

**Interviewer:** What would be your favorite activity in English?

**Interviewee:** Probably, I would say, all kinds of activities that contribute to self-growth or personal growth activities. Or workshops or seminars. Reading books on different topics, spirituality, meditation, those things. So I do all these things in English.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I have a bachelor's in international development management.

**Interviewer:** OK, why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Mostly opportunistic because I wanted to be in Ecuador. I wanted to live here, work here. I couldn't immediately find something in my own field. And then I decided... Also because the idea of being a teacher appeals to me. I did the TOEFL course like level five of the TOEFL course. And afterwards, I could find a job as a teacher. Mostly online so.... And actually, I love it. You know, because being a teacher is.... I really like that you have your own micro-verse where you can share with your students all the things that you yourself find interesting, right? So I not only try to teach English, but also try to share wisdom and like.... Life in science, right? Like.... How to... next to learning English and to develop other skills as well. That's what I really like about transferring knowledge.

**Interviewer:** OK. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I've been a teacher for one and half year.

**Interviewer:** OK. If you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, that's a difficult, difficult question. Because OK, I think for.... part of my life I've been like, struggling with finding my real purpose. Like, what do I really want to do? So I can't really answer that yet. I still feel that I am looking for that higher purpose of something I want to do. But, I would say I would like to have a job that involves community. Right. So it's like working with a community.

**Interviewer:** OK, so do you work in a school, High School, University Academy, freelance?

**Interviewee:** So I work.... I'm contracted by a university.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is it public or private?

**Interviewee:** I think public.

**Interviewer:** OK. How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you are working at?

**Interviewee:** Yeah. So they strive to be the major institution for teaching English and other foreign languages. So they want to be, like, the best institution in Ecuador. Where people could learn a foreign language. And the philosophy... what I've noticed is people are very helpful, communicative so I think they really try to grow together, right. They try to train teachers and, you know, that the level of education improves every year.

**Interviewer:** OK, so since you are working in a public institution, have you worked in a private?

**Interviewee:** Not an institution. Some tutoring. Private tutorings, but not an institution.

**Interviewer:** How did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Well, being Dutch, I think we get exposed at a young age to English, right? Like we don't dub our movies or television series, so we get offered everything in English with subtitles. So that's I think one thing growing up with American pop culture. You know, you pick up a lot. Later, in high school, of course we have mandatory English. And yeah, then when I started doing these studies in International Development, the whole study was in English. It was an international study, so. That kind of... forces you to develop English to a more academic level, right?

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Interviewee:** And then it becomes just, you know, second nature.

**Interviewer:** Ok! How was your experience learning English?

**Interviewee:** I don't think I've ever, like, very consciously been busy with learning English. It was a very smooth organic process for me. I mean, high school was a long time ago. So, I probably forgot about the ways I learned English. But I kind of feel it was like semi effortless or something like it. Just, you know, it just came just speak up on English.

**Interviewer:** So that means that besides the exposure that you had with English and the English that you received mandatorily in school, you never took an English course?

**Interviewee:** After high school... Now that I think... English courses come in a lot of ways, right? So for example, I really love basketball, and when I was like 12, I really started to follow everything basketball-related from the NBA and, you know, I bought magazines imported from the United States about basketball. So I consumed a lot of English through my passion, which is basketball. So that's, you know.... You could also say it's sort of like a course because you want to understand everything that's being said.

**Interviewer:** Interesting, so that was probably your motivation to learn more English?

**Interviewee:** Yes! And, once the Internet really took off and you realized that all the relevant information is mostly offered in English. You know, if I didn't level up on my English, I would miss out on a lot of useful information and wisdom. So yeah, it was logical that I just get better in English.

**Interviewer:** OK. So you started learning English when you were 6 or 7 years old?

**Interviewee:** I don't... I don't remember whether they offered it in a primary school, actually. Maybe we started there with some basic English. Yeah, it could be.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. What is the easiest part of the English language for you? What was the easiest part?

**Interviewee:** The easiest part... Like Dutch, of course, is a very different, but there are some similarities, too! Like, some words are pronounced a little bit different. But, especially in the last two decades, English is everywhere, so we adapted a lot of words from English. So they became, yeah, part of the Dutch language, as well. So I guess it's sort of like the low threshold between

Dutch and English. It's what makes it easier, right? If I would have to learn Mandarin for example. I would have a problem.

**Interviewer:** Yes, OK. And... Is there something difficult for you in English, like, uh, understanding other people or reading or writing?

**Interviewee:** Honestly, sometimes I feel that it's easier. I prefer actually, like... if I have a... if I'm writing a journal or something or notes, I automatically do it in English. You know, maybe it's subconscious. I kind of feel like I'm slowly losing my Dutch already. A little bit.

**Interviewer:** OK. Right. And is there an area of the English language that you think that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Uh, yes, definitely! So what I've noticed as a teacher is that my grammar is really my weakness. Sometimes when I have to teach grammar to my students, I would need to prepare it by actually investigating. How does this grammar work? Because I have no clue. Like, sometimes I don't understand. I've never learned that. Maybe in high school. My grammar is definitely my Achilles' heel when being a teacher and I don't know the rules. So that's tricky.

**Interviewer:** OK, what do you think would be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** I believe a lot in Gamification or game-based learning. So, instead of having a static listening class, only the teacher speaking, I think people should really experience the languages themselves, expose themselves. And through role play, conversations, being exposed to a native speaker who introduces new slang or new words. Yeah, like, also everyday situations, right? It has to be related to real life, not just a classroom situation where people learn static material.

**Interviewer:** Do you do any of those activities that you just mentioned?

**Interviewee:** So, my American friend.... Actually sometimes his English is worse than mine. He's from New York and also, like, he kind of.... sometimes he pronounces words incorrectly and I have to correct him. But yeah, another thing I do a lot is exchange voice messages with my friends who live all over the world. You know, friends in Ethiopia, Germany... So keeping up with voice messages, I think is also a good speaking exercise for myself, right.

**Interviewer:** OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** I think... when I can see progress during the course. So I try to identify, at the start of the course, what is the weakness of my students. And oftentimes in Ecuador, I've found that this is writing. Writing an essay, writing a simple text. Ecuadorian students seem to not have... or like they lack some basic knowledge of how to write a good text. You know, like the whole sentence structure. Sentence topic and so on. That and then if I see at the end of the cycle that they have improved on that, then I feel really proud because I want to... That's the one thing that me as a teacher in that cycle can help them with. So yeah, so if I accomplish that objective, I'm happy.

**Interviewer:** OK, what are the difficulties that you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I think it's having to teach some material that I don't master yet. Again grammar. So, explaining grammar, like, the logic of it, like the reasoning, is really difficult because... OK, I try to prepare myself. I internalize how the grammar works but then actually being able to explain it... And when they have extra questions.... That's really challenging for me.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** I would say yes and no. I really like it. It gives me a lot of satisfaction and energy, but I also feel that I got into teaching as an opportunity. To basically have a living here in

Ecuador, a livelihood. And I do feel I am meant for something else. I do want to do something else afterwards.

**Interviewer:** OK, what is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** Transferring the language, of course, knowledge. I always try to create a very good atmosphere in my class. I want students to stay motivated to continue learning English. I start to keep in my head like how I keep my students involved. That they are part of this... container that I create. That their enthusiasm never fades That's for me is very important.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you have a plan to achieve this goal?

**Interviewee:** I don't have, like, a pre written plan. I think it's just part of my nature. I do consciously think about how I can improve my classes. How I can make them more fun. Original, creative ways I can think of to let students learn more and also really enjoy the classes that they pay for. Because that's also a thing, you have a big responsibility. To offer them a really good lesson because they pay for these classes.

**Interviewer:** OK. Does your institution, the university where you work, give you the facilities to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** So as I mentioned before, what they do and it's actually very neat. They offer workshops for the teachers to follow. Certain topics to improve. The university is definitely putting an effort in helping their teachers improve their classes.

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** It kind of depends on the students. I had a lot of students who were quite introvert, so it's really difficult to make them talk. It's also online, right? So it's kind of a different space that you have to work with. I tried to do a lot of conversation exercises. They really enjoy talking about a topic conversation I introduced, sometimes a debate. I put people in teams to choose

different side. Let them formulate arguments in English. I do Kahoots, you know, games. So I designed my own Kahoot games. I use mirror board. I don't know if you've heard of that. It's like an online facilitation tool.

**Interviewer:** OK.

**Interviewee:** So I designed a virtual world online and they can click on the invitation link and then they come into that space and on the website and they can just like create all kinds of things. They can put posters with text. Write a short story on cultural activities. Or let them collect pictures that go with reading passages. You know, so it's basically an online collage port, you could say.

**Interviewer:** OK, what language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** I think it's writing because I can only give so much feedback on their writing. And it's really hard to teach them because we have a short time basically. So it's just two months cycle to really structurally improve the writing skill. It's hard. And I give them feedback and tips and count and pointers and everything. But yeah, they keep on making the same mistakes because they are conditioned to write in a certain way. Speaking uh is OK. I think reading. I think most students are OK in that skill so. I think they're also improving there. Listening is also pretty good. So I would definitely say writing is the most difficult skill.

**Interviewer:** How do you do to overcome this challenge?

**Interviewee:** I really challenge them. I give them increasingly difficult tasks. And the university gives them a framework that they have to use to build a better text. So just step by step. And emphasizing what is good, what can be improved. So I give them homework as well. On writing I always tend to push it a little bit more, so I really challenge my students a lot.

**Interviewer:** OK. And where do you research your lesson activities from?



**Interviewee:** Well, I have to follow the outline of our book that we use and certain topics, grammar and vocabulary. Mostly they really have to be covered within a cycle before the next exam. So sometimes that leaves me with a lack of freedom to actually pursue topics that I find very interesting. So it's kind of a balance between covering what is from the book and the need to learn and doing things that I like.

**Interviewer:** So as you may know, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue master's degree. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for the teaching career?

**Interviewee:** I would probably have to admit not too much. I haven't looked into it too much.

**Interviewer:** OK. Would you like to take part in a professional training? Like a workshop, seminars?

**Interviewee:** I think, yes. I mean, I love learning. As a teacher, you're also a student. So to be more confident teaching, I would definitely follow a workshop. You know, like how to teach grammar better. And that topic, for example, how do I let my students talk more? You know, how do I become more facilitated and less of a classic teacher? Because it really helps the quality of your classes. But also, I would feel more relaxed during my class, you know, like I don't feel I need to orchestrate the whole show for two hours.

**Interviewer:** OK, so do you prefer formal training like seminars, university courses, or do you prefer informal training like watching documentaries, practicing with other people who speak English or reading journals?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I like both. I would probably prefer like a more informal workshop. Maybe play out a scenario or like a role play. You know because you're actually practicing. And I feel like getting information from my official seminar is nice. You can learn theory, but do you really

integrate it? You know, that's like a second question. Are you immediately able to apply it to your classes? But yeah, I would say both.

**Interviewer:** OK, what does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Like I said, they offer workshops sometimes.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you find useful or enough what your institution does for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Not always. I have followed some of these workshops and I didn't always find them very useful or insightful. I have to say, you know, they were.... a bit too obvious. And I kind of expected a little bit more. I don't know, but a higher level of educational workshops.

**Interviewer:** OK. What do you think your institution should do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** Oh, good question. I would really prefer it if they would have more teacher contacts meetings. So because I do everything online and the same with people who work remotely in office, like you don't have contact with your peers. So it means you have less personal growth opportunities, I feel. You can kind of get isolated as an online teacher. It would be really nice if teachers would come together and share more experiences. Share more ideas. And so you can really learn from each other. That would be great.

**Interviewer:** And just to wrap up, can you tell me about a fun or rewarding experience that you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Like... Ok! Rewarding for me has been the way that the staff guided me. Especially in the beginning as you start teaching. Yeah, I built a really nice, almost like a friendship relationship with one of these guys. So they've been very helpful. Other teachers' coordinators, you reach out and you get a very nice reply, you know. So yeah, that has been

rewarding. And fun, you say? I mean, I'm kind of still waiting for more fun. Yeah, there could be more fun or something.

**Interviewer:** OK. Thank you so much for your time.

**Interviewee:** My pleasure!

**APPENDIX O: INTERVIEW 15**

**Interviewer:** OK, so before we start, could you please say today's date?

**Interviewee:** OK, so today's date is May 26th, 2023.

**Interviewer:** OK, let's start with some information about yourself. Where are you from?

**Interviewee:** I'm from Quito, Ecuador.

**Interviewer:** OK. And where do you live now?

**Interviewee:** I currently live in Quito, Ecuador as well.

**Interviewer:** OK, when you are not at work, what do you like to do in your free time?

**Interviewee:** OK, so when I'm not at work I usually like.... I usually enjoy going to coffee shops. I like hanging out with friends. I also enjoy doing some reading, like.... mainly related with psychological topics or self-improvement topics. Yeah, that will be what I like to do outside of work.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are any of those activities in English or have any relation with the English language?

**Interviewee:** I mean... I usually opt for... English books. I mean books that are in English. And also something that I would like to add would be watching series. So, when I watch series, be it on Netflix or movies, I would rather watch them in English with English subtitles.

**Interviewer:** Do you hold any university degree?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I hold a business administration degree. And I'm currently pursuing a Master's degree in teaching English as a second language.

**Interviewer:** OK. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

**Interviewee:** OK, uh, so I decided to become an English teacher.... because I consider that I have had the ability for the English language as long as I can remember. And I also enjoyed

learning the language. So as I grew up, I tried to improve myself on the language by getting into English courses besides school and it was something that I liked for a very long time. And after I lived for a period in a foreign country, I decided to pursue English as a teaching career in a more formal way. So that's why I decided to get into the master's program.

**Interviewer:** OK. How long have you been a teacher?

**Interviewee:** OK, so I've been a teacher for, like officially, for one year and a half now. Yeah, that's the time.

**Interviewer:** OK, if you were not a teacher, what career would you have chosen and why?

**Interviewee:** OK, so I'm basically... I didn't pursue pedagogy or teaching as my first major, so I think I would.... If I weren't a teacher right now, I think I would have continued with my business career.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you work in a school, high school, university, or freelance?

**Interviewee:** I work as an ESL teacher at a university. At a private university, and we teach English lessons from A1 to B2 levels.

**Interviewer:** OK. How would you describe the philosophy of the institution where you currently work at?

**Interviewee:** So, the philosophy of the institution that I currently work at is uh, based on freedom. Also, they look for critical thinking. They focus on the learning of the study. And in an innovative way rather than the traditional way. So, for instance, for the ESL lessons, we don't have books, we don't have a book to follow or workbook. So, it's up to the teacher, based on the syllabus, how we prepare lessons or the material that we choose to give to the students. So it's kind of like.... free option. Free option for both the teachers and the students. And even though at the beginning this was kind of challenging for me, because I think a book can be helpful as a

guide for the teacher. But as the lessons went by, and as you start familiarizing with the philosophy of the institution, you get why we are not having books. And as part of their curriculum for English is that they probably look for teachers to be innovative and to offer the resources that they can find without, for example, without giving written printed papers to the students. It can be digital if you choose to, or you can mix both. So that's basically the philosophy of the institution.

**Interviewer:** OK, have you worked in an institution from the other educational system? In your case, in the public system?

**Interviewee:** No, no, I haven't worked in the public system.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you know of any differences between the public and the private education?

**Interviewee:** No, actually I don't know the differences. Probably... what I have heard is that uh, public institutions, uh are based in books. And I don't know if this is true but I think they use books from... that are provided by the government.

**Interviewer:** OK. And would you like to work in the public system at some point?

**Interviewee:** Uh! Actually, yes! I think I would like to experience the public education system at any moment. Uh, maybe the payment wouldn't be, uh, the best choice, but I think my desire would be to observe and to improve the system itself. So even if it's in... a voluntary program, I would definitely like to do it because I think it would be an option to make a diagnosis and then, uh, analyze how it actually works. And then maybe provide with some advice to these kinds of institutions.

**Interviewer:** OK, how did you learn English?

**Interviewee:** Uh, OK, so I've been learning English since I was five years old. I studied in a private Catholic school in Quito all my life. Uh, so I studied there from kindergarten until high school. And I think that was the main source for me to learn English. They pursue a lot of Cambridge certifications. So, in 7th grade, we started with the A2 Key, then the PET. Then the Business English certificate and then we finished at senior year with the certificate in First and FC. After that I didn't have the necessity to study English at university because I had already the level that they required. So that was good for me. But besides that, I decided to keep learning the language. So, I started at Fulbright, more or less from 2014 until 2016, when I graduated from Fulbright in Ecuador. And I think it was a great opportunity to improve the language. Especially some skills like writing, mainly writing. Their objective was for students to learn the skills, especially with writing in an academic way. And then, when I went to live in London, England, I thought I would kind of practice the language, but to my surprise not so much as I would have expected to. The city where I lived, it was full of foreigners and the pronunciation and other factors influenced for me to not actually practice the English language that much. So yeah, that would be my trajectory with the English language.

**Interviewer:** OK. How was your experience learning English? Was it fun, difficult...?

**Interviewee:** For me it was always.... It was always interesting. And yeah, I would describe it as fun. It was never boring for me. I was always interested in the language. It actually never represented a challenge. Uh, besides getting prepared for the standardized tests, I think that, uh, well, that kind of puts a little bit of a stress on you. But then I would describe it as a fun process for me.

**Interviewer:** OK, what motivated you to learn English?

**Interviewee:** So as a kid, I wouldn't say I had a motivation because it's kind of mandatory in schools. Uh, but then... Uh, when I had the... consciousness about learning the language, I would say what motivated me was future opportunity options. And also market... job market opportunities as well. And one of my objectives was to study outside the country. So, I did that to live and study outside of the country. So, I think those were my main motivations.

Professional development and also personal development, yeah!

**Interviewer:** OK! So you said that you started learning the language when you were five, right?

**Interviewee:** Right.

**Interviewer:** So, what was the easiest part when learning the language? The easiest skill?

**Interviewee:** OK. So, the easiest skill.... I would say for me it was probably reading. Yeah, reading! Speaking and listening have always been a challenge. Kind of, like, a little bit more difficult. So, I would say for me the easiest one was reading.

**Interviewer:** With your level of English, do you think there is an area that you need to improve?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I would say I would like to improve, uh..... and actually for teaching purposes, I would like to improve my fluency more. So maybe my speaking skills in a more formal way. And my writing skills. Writing skills for academic purposes.

**Interviewer:** OK, so, what do you think will be a good activity for people who want to practice English?

**Interviewee:** Uh, OK, so I think there are various activities that people can do to improve their English outside of work, of course, and or even outside the formal institution for learning the language. Um... and I think it depends on the person, but mainly it would be if you watch series or a movie, any kind of audio, video, YouTube, Netflix. And I would suggest watching them in



English and with subtitles in English. Also, to join groups. Like social groups. Uh, if there is the option at your city or the place where you live. Uh, I've seen a lot of options here in Quito. So maybe groups where people join to practice the language. Maybe even meeting foreign people. So, you can practice the language. And if you have the opportunity to travel outside to an English-speaking country. And reading in English. Reading and listening in English as well. So, basically, I think opting for reception activities in the English language would help a lot.

**Interviewer:** And do you do any of those activities?

**Interviewee:** So, uh, for instance, I like to read in English. I like to watch things in English or listen to any kind of... podcasts or songs or music in English. Probably my writing, I don't practice it that much in the English language unless I'm preparing myself for any standardized exam. But yeah, I would say I do practice reception activities in English.

**Interviewer:** OK. What brings you satisfaction as a professional?

**Interviewee:** So, as a professional and as an English teacher, I think what brings me satisfaction is the possibility... to open that desire and their motivation for learning English. Even if it's a little thing that they learn at your classroom. That they would get the curiosity to keep learning so that they can keep searching for themselves. My main goal is to motivate them and to make them see that English is not just a mandatory requirement as part of the curriculum and that they have to learn it because they have to, but rather it will be useful for them in the future.

**Interviewer:** OK, what are the difficulties that you face as a teacher?

**Interviewee:** OK, so I would say... Yeah, motivation. As I mentioned on the previous question sometimes the student, based on my experience, they tend to see English as a mandatory subject, and they don't get interested anymore in the language. So, I would say motivation. Another one would be... engagement and concentration with the subject itself. And another one would be...

when they don't succeed in any of the skills, they kind of get disappointed. And... they tend to stop. So, they don't try anymore to keep improving their skills.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are you still motivated to be a teacher?

**Interviewee:** Yes! I'm still motivated to keep working as a teacher. I have some projects in mind and... so I think that as long as we prepare ourselves, we can continue to grow. And as a result, help our students.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is your professional goal?

**Interviewee:** So, my professional goal would be to keep teaching English as a second language, at first. Probably in the future go into other subjects related with English. And also, to go into private tutoring. In the modern world, so, for instance, uh through social media like TikTok, Instagram or so. And, basically, giving choices for students or even if they're not your students, for the public so that they can get interested in the English language. And yeah, just actually see it as a good resource for them to learn.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you have any plan, either in mind or in action, to achieve that goal?

**Interviewee:** Oh, OK! So my first goal is to graduate from the master's I'm pursuing right now. That would be my first goal and then maybe look for options to keep teaching the English language. And also, look for.... international opportunities. And yeah, and also, put into reality some projects in... social media related with English. Those would be my future goals.

**Interviewer:** OK. Does your institution, your university, give you the facilities to achieve your goals?

**Interviewee:** I would say yes. And because they have given me the opportunity to teach at this institution. And that helps me to have the knowledge and hands-on work with students. Um... however, I think there might be some aspects that can be improved. For instance, training.

Further training for the teachers once you're in... I mean, at the job. And probably more organization, more communication between teachers. Uh, probably common goals between teachers and students as well. So yeah, I think they do give me an opportunity by working there. There are also things that can be improved.

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of activities do you apply in your classes?

**Interviewee:** So, I try to work according to the syllabus that we are supposed to follow. I try to work on the five skills, on the five main skills, so that's reading, listening, writing, speaking and interaction. And according to their level, I try to include some reception and production activities. So that's basically readings, writing, uh, how to do the proper writing. For example, an e-mail. How to write a letter, how to write an invitation, how to get to a place. Um... and also I like to include activities outside of the classroom. So, for example, if we're looking at food, I would send them to the food court at the shopping mall and make them look for the food options that the place offer. Or make them discuss about the options that they found. Or if we're talking about directions, for example, to actually put into practice, how can I get to a place using that vocabulary. So, I like to mix a little bit of the theory, of course, because it's important that they learn the grammar, but also to practice. And also we do include exams as a final step for any English course.

**Interviewer:** OK, what language skill is the most challenging to practice in class?

**Interviewee:** I would say grammar. I mean it's not basically a skill. But it's grammar. I've seen that it's challenging for the students because it tends to be a little boring. Probably they have learned it before and they are used to the usual structure like subject, verb, complement. So, I would say grammar. But the skill that is also challenging for them is listening. It make students get really stressed out because if they don't understand one kind of pronunciation, or vocabulary,

or the whole context of the audio, they tend to get disappointed. And I've seen that listening... is one of the skills that they get lower grades at. And, also writing I would say. After listening, writing.

**Interviewer:** OK. And what do you do to overcome those challenges?

**Interviewee:** During the last course, I observed that they had, uh, a real challenge with, uh, the British pronunciation. Because they usually like to include audios for these standardized exams in the British pronunciation. So, for the final exam, I mixed uh American English with British English. So, I could observe that with the American English they were more comfortable. They even understood better the whole context. And with the British they still had problems. But I think it's important that they learn both. So, what I tried to do is to mix different pronunciations, different topics, different kinds of activities, you know, not just multiple choice, but also for example, fill out the blanks or answer questions, etc.

**Interviewer:** Right. And where do you research your lesson activities from?

**Interviewee:** So, usually... I research on the Internet, and I try to work with... web portals that I've seen. There's a page that is called Lingua. I think the name is lingua.com and I really like the material on that web page. Also, I have a book that I use as a guide and as a resource. It's called Top Notch. And then I would say, yeah, mainly the Internet. So, YouTube, social media news, newspaper portals...

**Interviewer:** OK, in order to grow in a career, people usually take workshops or pursue master's degrees. Are you aware of any other type of professional development for your career?

**Interviewee:** So, besides the master and the courses that I have pursued, I would probably like to work on... a foreign preparation course. Maybe kind of like an internship. If there's the

opportunity. Yeah! But here in the country, I think it depends 100% on the professional to improve your skills.

**Interviewer:** So, when you said foreign course, you meant a course based on the English language or based on teaching methodologies?

**Interviewee:** I would say in teaching methodologies in English... in a foreign country. OK, so I actually haven't searched for them. But if there is a kind of like a summer course for improving your teaching methodologies in England, I would be really interested in it to observe how that works.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, do you prefer formal training like seminars, university courses, or informal training like watching documentaries, practicing with other people, reading journals by yourself?

**Interviewee:** OK. I do like both, so I think both options complement each other. I'm the kind of person that actually talks in English with their friends. So it's like.... Yeah. That's why I like uh, both formal and informal. Uh, training and.... I think both are important because formal training gives you the resources and the tools in new knowledge. So, you can put that into practice. And the informal training is a way to keep practicing... just to keep practicing the language. I would say it's also a sign of your motivation for the language, because if you look for videos in English, uh series in English.... I think that means that you're really interested in the language.

**Interviewer:** OK. What does your institution do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** So, my institution.... Well, it has given me the opportunity to teach at the university level. But... I think there is a lack of, like, training. For example, further information on how to work at the classroom. Give us a guide on how to work better with the syllables and

the topics that we should follow for each level. But I think there is a.... There's a lack of probably training for teachers.

**Interviewer:** OK. What do you think your institution should do for your professional growth?

**Interviewee:** I would say they could offer seminars. Seminars on how to work on special conditions. So, if you get a student that does not fit into the normal aspects of a classroom, then how to...

**Interviewer:** With special needs?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, like how can you work with that? On teamwork and organization. And probably standardize some aspects like assessment. And more communication and to open communication spaces between teachers. So, if you get a student, for example, I should know how that student has performed before. Maybe on the previous level if that student had any problem or any observation. And I think that's something that is lacking right now.

**Interviewer:** OK. And just to wrap up. Can you tell me a fun or rewarding experience that you ever had at work?

**Interviewee:** Uh, OK! So, I would say it is... rewarding for me when my students tell me that they are grateful for the knowledge that I have shared with them and for the patience. I have many students who have told me that I'm really patient and sweet. And I think the most rewarding experience is to hear them saying that they have a motivation for the language and that they want to continue learning the language. And that they see it as a resource rather than something that is for obligation.

**Interviewer:** OK. Thank you so much for your time and willingness to work. I hope you felt comfortable all the time and if have any questions, let me know.

**Interviewee:** No problem! It was an interesting interview.