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**Perceptions of High School Learners Towards Ability Grouping in an EFL**

**Ecuadorian Private School.**

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Ecuadorian private school.**

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## **Dedicatoria**

A mis amados Padres que me apoyaron incondicionalmente.

A mis alumnos los cuales inspiraron este proyecto

A Jesucristo mi salvador por guiarme a través de los desafíos y permitirme alcanzar mis metas y objetivos.

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## Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación explora el impacto de la agrupación por habilidades en las percepciones y experiencias de los estudiantes en las clases de inglés en Gibson Academy, una escuela privada ecuatoriana que enseña inglés como lengua extranjera. El estudio emplea un enfoque cualitativo y un enfoque de estudio de caso mediante el uso de una encuesta anónima con preguntas cerradas y abiertas para recopilar datos de 58 estudiantes de secundaria en los grados 9 y 10. Los hallazgos brindan información localizada sobre la implementación de la agrupación por habilidades en el contexto específico de Gibson Academy y sus efectos en el autoconcepto académico de los estudiantes y la inversión en el idioma. La investigación revela que bajo ciertos factores contextuales, la agrupación por habilidades puede ser una práctica positiva que fomenta la inversión de los estudiantes hacia un segundo idioma y no afecta negativamente su autoconcepto académico. Este estudio contribuye a la comprensión actual de las implicaciones del agrupamiento de habilidades sobre las percepciones y experiencias de los estudiantes, particularmente en relación con el aprendizaje de idiomas y el autoconcepto académico.

Palabras clave: Agrupación por habilidades, Setting, inglés como lengua extranjera, autoconcepto académico, inversión, percepciones.



### **Abstract**

This research paper explores the impact of ability grouping on students' perceptions and experiences in English language classes at Gibson Academy, an EFL Ecuadorian private school. The study employs a qualitative approach and a case study approach by employing an anonymous survey with both closed-ended and open-ended questions to collect data from 58 high school students in grades 9 and 10. The findings provide localized insights into the implementation of ability grouping in the specific context of Gibson Academy and its effects on students' academic self-concept and investment in the language. The research reveals that under certain contextual factors, ability grouping can be a positive practice that fosters learners' investment toward a second language and does not negatively affect their academic self-concept. This study contributes to the current understanding of the implications of ability grouping for students' perceptions and experiences, particularly in relation to language learning and academic self-concept.

Key words: Ability grouping, setting, English as a Foreign Language, academic self-concept, investment, perceptions.

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## Introduction

Within schools, teachers are often confronted with great variance in students' academic abilities, dispositions, and interests. To address this disparity, schools and teachers often employ a wide variety of strategies and approaches aimed at providing instruction tailored to students' individual needs. One of these approaches is ability grouping, a practice of grouping students based on an assessment of their abilities. Ability grouping can be categorized into within-class ability grouping and between-class ability grouping (Slavin, 1990). Students that are grouped within-class are separated according to their abilities into different groups within a single classroom (Slavin, 1990). This means that students will be paired according to their ability in different groups for different tasks. When students are grouped into different classrooms, they are placed according to between-class ability grouping. One type of between-class grouping is known as regrouping in the US and as a setting in the UK. In this type of group composition students are only grouped for specific subjects into separate classrooms (Hallam & Ireson, 2009).

Ability grouping has been a controversial topic in the field of education with supporters suggesting that it can be a beneficial practice, particularly for high-ability groups (Kulik & Kulik, 1982). Critics have referred to this practice as discriminatory and have argued that it may have only small positive effects. Poor quality of education and unfair treatment overall are some of the reasons why ability grouping is believed to create social inequities for those in the lower levels. These students may not have access to the same resources and opportunities as their higher-level peers, which can hinder their academic progress. Additionally, students in lower-level groups may be stigmatized and treated unfairly by teachers and peers, which can negatively impact their social-emotional well-being. Hence ability grouping is seen by some as

a practice that mostly negatively affects students' academic achievement and social-emotional aspects especially if they are in the lower groups (Slavin, 1993; Oaks 1982).

This practice has been widely explored in the literature yielding mixed results on its effect on student achievement. Research has indicated that on some occasions there is a positive effect (Lui, 2009) or no effect (Sheppard, et al., 2017) for either of the different ability groups. On other occasions, it has been shown that ability grouping can be detrimental to student achievement, especially if the group is a low-ability group. Generally, students in high-ability groups are those who will benefit from ability grouping (Slavin, 1993).

It has also been questioned whether ability grouping has an impact on students' attitudes and how this may affect their academic performance and welfare. In terms of students' motivation, some studies have found that ability grouping may or may not affect the learner's motivation depending on whether they are placed in high, average, or low ability groups (Williams, 1972; Kim, 2012; Saleh & De Jong, 2005). A study on students learning English in a foreign country by Kim 2012 found that a better classwork atmosphere and fewer behavioral issues are some of the reasons explaining why high-ability groups could feel more motivated to learn English while being on ability groups (Kim, 2012). Concerns in terms of self-concept have also produced inconclusive findings in the literature. On one side of the debate ability grouping has been associated with mainly negative effects of low ability grouping on self-concept (Oaks, 1982). On the other side, it has been found that ability grouping does not have a detrimental effect on self-concept (Dyson, 2015). Others found that ability grouping may affect self-concept positively or negatively depending on the level of the group, whether it is high, average, or low (Ireson, et al., 2001; Sheppard, et al., 2017).

Given the inconclusive findings of ability grouping, there is a growing need to gain localized and case-by-case understandings of the effects such practices may have on students' academic achievement and social-emotional well-being. Driven by this call, this study focuses

on better understanding the impact of ability grouping in Gibson Academy, a private middle-class school in a major urban center in Ecuador. Within Gibson Academy, ability grouping was implemented during the current academic year and was viewed as a strategy to address the varying levels of English language proficiency amongst its student body. Currently, ability grouping is offered solely for English language classes from 7th to 10th grade, which corresponds to students aged between 12-16. Considering the different positive aspects often associated to ability grouping, Gibson Academy decided on employing this strategy through as a pilot program to gain a greater understanding of this practice and its potential impact on its students' learning. While ability grouping was implemented and viewed favorably by the administrative and teaching staff, little was known of students' own understanding and perceptions of such practice.

To better understand students' perceptions, this study draws on data collected from an anonymous survey containing both close-ended and open-ended questions. The questions for the survey were constructed in order to elicit students' perceptions and experience within ability grouped classrooms. It is worth mentioning that the survey was constructed in conjunction with the English department at Gibson Academy. Moreover, the survey was administered by Gibson Academy as part of their pilot program for grades 9th and 10<sup>th</sup>. Students also had the option to choose between doing the survey in English or Spanish. For the survey administrations, a web-based application was used, and the surveys were carried out within the school lab during class hours and supervised by teachers from the English department and the ICT department.

Before detailing the findings and methodological consideration, I will provide an overview of previous studies on ability grouping. The literature review begins by giving further consideration about different types of ability grouping and related studies on this practice. The next section of the literature review focuses on what has been done in the field of language

learning and issues concerning academic achievement as well as proficiency and social-emotional aspects such as motivation and self-concept.



## Literature Review

### Ability grouping as a concept

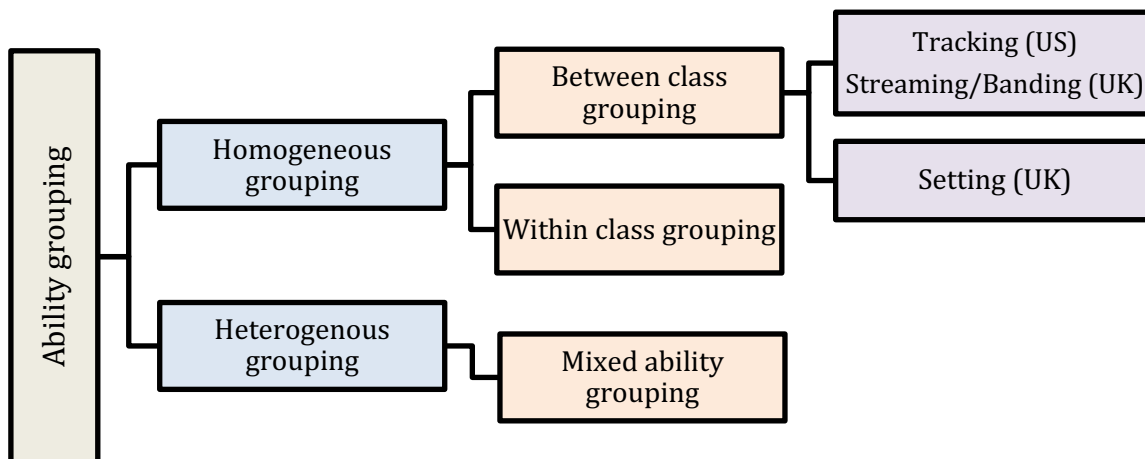
The practice of ability grouping is seen as a way of organizing students into different groups based on their ability with one of the purposes being to provide them with instruction that matches their ability. Ability grouping has been widely used across school systems in many countries and plentiful research has been conducted in the UK and US, although the concept has been used within other contexts. It is important to note that ability grouping is an umbrella term for different types of organizing student within the school system. This includes heterogenous grouping which includes mixed ability grouping, and homogenous grouping which include between ability grouping and within ability grouping.

Mixed ability grouping consists of students being organized randomly by aspects related to age or gender but not based on having similar abilities (Ireson & Hallam, 2001). In this type of classroom organization, there could be great variation of ability levels, and because of this, it is also called heterogenous grouping. In contrast to mixed ability grouping, there is another type of ability grouping where students are placed together based on their ability level. In this type of grouping students can be arranged according to their abilities into different groups within the same class (within-class grouping) or into completely different classrooms (between-class grouping).

Within-class grouping has been implemented in many schools around the US mainly as a way of targeting reading instruction according to students' reading levels (Loveless, 1998). In contrast, Tracking (US) or Streaming/Banding (UK) and Setting (UK) are examples of grouping students between classes. In these types of between-class grouping, the goal is to place students into homogenous groups based on their overall academic attainment or their ability in academic subjects (Sukhnandon & Lee, 2018). Tracking is one of the most extreme forms of

between-class grouping because students are placed in different groups from all subjects and are likely to remain in the same ability group or track for the rest of their academic life. Considering this, a student who has been placed in a low track won't have the opportunity to advance to high tracks or groups which in turn is seen as an impoverishment of that student's education (Loveless,1998). To assign students to different tracks measurements based on their general academic attainment and IQ test are considered (EEF,2021).

In contrast to tracking, *Setting* also separates students into different groups according to their academic attainment or ability assessed by a standardized test in a particular subject but not considering their IQs nor their whole general academic ability. Setting also differs from tracking as it allows for more flexibility because students are only separated according to their abilities for specific subjects but not for all academic subjects. This means that most of the time students will be in heterogenous classes and will only be allocated with students that display comparative abilities for one or two subject areas (Hallam & Ireson, 2001). Despite these differences, within the literature, these terms may be used interchangeably or inconsistently, and categorized as part of ability grouping whether students are placed based on attainment or based on their teacher's perception of the student's ability. A summary of these terms is provided in Figure 1. Within the context of this study, ability grouping will be considered as the broad category in which setting, tracking, and steaming will be classified as part of between-class grouping. Starting from this frame of reference and considering typed of ability grouping implemented by Gibson Academy, the remainder of this literature review will focus exclusively on ability grouping that employs a *Setting* approach.



*Figure 1 Types of Ability grouping*

### **Studies on setting, key findings**

Several studies have explored the effects of setting on pupils' attainment, which has resulted in different implications for learners in this type of ability grouping. The existing literature on ability grouping largely provides inconclusive results. Nonetheless, one common trend suggests that ability grouping tends to favor high-ability groups more than it does average or low-ability groups. For instance, Slavin's (1987) systematic literature review on different types of ability grouping. In relation to regrouping, which is the term used to refer to setting in the US, he analyzed seven experimental studies. For this synthesis, the author explains that regrouping is mainly used in the US for specific subjects such as reading or math. In terms of selecting the studies, Slavin established different criteria. Slavin (1987) considered studies that compared regrouping with heterogenous grouping based on results of standardized achievement tests that were taken before and after the implementation of the ability grouping. Likewise, studies that presented ability grouping as implemented for at least a semester were considered in the review. Five out of the seven studies found that learners had better results when learning in the regrouped classroom. From those five studies with positive outcomes, one found an overall positive effect, three showed greater gains for high-ability groupings, while one showed no effects for high-ability groupings but positive effects for average and low-ability groupings.

In contrast, two studies found that ability grouping did not produce a positive effect on academic attainment with one of those studies showing that students in low-ability groupings were more negatively affected by regrouping. The other study did not specify negative effects according to the level of ability grouping (Slavin, 1987). The different results of these papers show that there is not a consensus on the way ability grouping affects students' academic attainment. What seems to be clearer is that generally ability grouping tends to favor high-ability groups more than it does to average or low-ability groups.

One of the key areas of interest in the literature on ability-grouping is its influence on students' academic self-concept. Academic self-concept pertains to how learners perceive their academic achievements in relation to their peers. This assessment is often based on social comparisons. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2002), students use various frames of reference when making self-evaluations. The authors identified four potential frames of reference concerning external comparisons, which include school-average ability, class-average ability, selected students in class, and selected students outside of class (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002). The first frame of reference related to self-comparisons between a learner ability his perceptions of how well they are doing compared to the whole school. The next frame reference to the students' comparisons of themselves and their class, while the last two frames refer to within class comparisons and between class comparisons.

Within the literature inconsistent finding have been produced with many studies pointing out the disadvantages of lower ability groupings, while others highlight opposite results. In ability-group classrooms, academic-self concepts can be formed through a process of comparing abilities between students from the same ability group as well as with others from different ability groups. In this line of research, Ireson et al. (2001) analyzed different degrees of setting on the self-concept of 45 secondary schools in the UK. The different degrees of ability grouping included 15 Mix-Ability Schools that only implemented setting for one or two

subjects, 15 Partially Set Schools that implemented setting progressively from two subjects to a maximum of 4 subjects, and 15 Set Schools that had tracking/streaming, or setting for at least for subjects. For the data collection, they included test marks in English, mathematics, and science in primary school and secondary school as well as a Self-concept scale only taken in secondary school. They found that academic self-concept among students was highly correlated with their attainment in English but not in math or science. These results were also related to the degree of setting showing that when schools had moderated levels of grouping there were better outcomes for student's self-concepts. Moreover, it was concluded that arranging students according to ability in the English subject increased the self-concept of low-ability groupings while diminishing the self-concept of high-ability groupings (Ireson et al.,2001).

In contrast, later research by Ireson and Hallam (2009) reveal different results. The authors conducted a longitudinal study where they collected measurements of achievement and a self-concept scale questionnaire that was administered to 1600 students from 23 different schools in the UK. For this study, they also collected data on ability grouping and students' intention to keep studying a specific subject after finishing school. This time they didn't find effects of ability grouping on self-concept based on the specific subject and the number of years they had received the academic subjects with ability grouping. Another difference is that they found that pupils in schools with the highest levels of ability grouping had more negative academic self-concept whereas according to past research, schools with intermediate stratification had students with more positive academic self-concept. Differences in results could be attributed to the incorporation of prior self-concept measures in the model (Ireson & Hallam, 2009). Besides these results, it was also found that students' comparisons of each other were affected by the grouping hierarchy with low ability groupings having lower academic self-concepts. This is significant because low academic self-concept could negatively impact students' intentions to learn in the future and influence their educational choices and career

paths. The researchers suggest that social comparison processes play a significant role in shaping academic self-concept and that ability grouping can negatively affect this process. They argue that schools need to be aware of the impact of such practices on students and work towards creating a positive environment that fosters academic confidence and growth (Ireson & Hallam, 2009). It is relevant to note that as quantitative studies the authors did not consider qualitative data which could provide more insight on how ability grouping is affecting student performance and perceptions.

### **Ability grouping in the EFL context**

#### **Achievement**

The effects of ability grouping have been explored considerably in relation to core subjects such as English, Mathematics, and Science but less attention has been placed to other subjects. In contrast, fewer studies have explored the implementation of ability grouping in other academic areas such as Foreign Languages. Most of the research in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context involves tertiary education and has been done in Asia as ability grouping is a common practice throughout Asian countries (Shepard et al., 2018). In 2012 a study analyzed the implications of ability grouping towards Irani undergrads students' academic achievement. For this study, 320 non-English major undergraduates from an Irani University were selected to participate in this research. The students were divided into two groups. A number of 121 freshmen were placed under ability groupings for low, intermediate and advance groupings with weekly 2,3,4-hour classes, respectively. The other 199 freshmen receive their English class without being placed by ability. By using a placement test and posttest, they concluded that ability grouping had improve students' achievement in a general English course compared to students that were not placed under ability grouping. They also found that in the post test there was no significant differences in the final scores of the ability

groups meaning that the group differences at the beginning of the course had been lessened. Considering these results, the authors concluded that ability grouping together with different levels of exposure can help eliminate the gap between group levels benefiting students' academic achievement from all levels (Khazaeenezhad et al., 2012).

### **Proficiency**

In terms of ability grouping and its effects on English language proficiency, Sheppard et al., (2017) conducted a study with data from 13,000 college students from a Japanese university. Students were placed in different groupings for two English Language courses using a standardized test when they first join the university. The author used the scores of this standardized test as well as the scores from the same test that students took after completing their first year. After analyzing their data, they found that language proficiency was moderated by ability grouping. Moreover, they concluded that there were positive effects for learners that had lower proficiency. For higher proficiency students, they suggested that in the case of this institution ability grouping had been detrimental for this type of learners. Possible explanations for these results were examined by the authors in terms of a greater degree of homogeneity in lower levels, neutral perceptions of students towards teachers, and no curriculum differentiation between the different groups. In previous studies, it has been noted that teachers prefer to teach higher ability grouping as they may not want to teach lower grouping because of behavioral issues, and usually, teachers with less experience are the ones that get assigned to lower ability groupings (Kim,2012). In this program, the authors explained that teachers had not been assigned based on their seniority but rather on their availability. They also explained that self-concept could have played an important role in the perceptions of learners and their academic attainment. Higher academic self-concept could have resulted from the greater class

homogeneity in the lower groupings and more positive attitudes toward their teachers (Sheppard et al., 2017).

### **Students' perceptions and academic self-concept**

Another body of research that examines the effects of different grouping methods on students' perceptions have produce inconclusive findings with some studies suggesting benefits for high-ability groups and others for low- and average-ability groups. Kim (2012) analyzed the perceptions of students and teachers from Korean middle schools. The author was mainly concerned with the perceptions of the helpfulness of ability grouping and variations of perceptions between different levels of ability grouping. For this study, 55 English teachers and 754 students were selected from Korean middle schools from six different regions in Korea. The data collection instruments were two different questionnaires for teachers and students. The questionnaire was administrated by e-mail or phone to the teachers and during regular class time for students. Qualitative data analysis was used for questions regarding ability grouping implementation and related perceptions. The author group answers together to create taxonomies for each of their research questions. Students' responses were also analyzed with descriptive statistics to compare overall patterns that resulted from students' responses among different ability groups. Other responses were analyzed qualitatively to get an understanding of students' personal opinions. In most of the schools, students were divided into lower or higher groups based on their average scores on the mid-term and final exams. Out of the total population of the study, only 3 out of 9 schools were selected to identify the perceptions of ability grouping and if the effect could be sensitive to the specific school context. The author found that in the three schools, the common pattern was that high-group students had fewer negative attitudes than other groups and their mean score was between positive and neutral towards the helpfulness of Ability grouping in their English classes. Negative attitudes in high



groups were related to studying with unfamiliar students and moving to different classrooms. It was also reported that mid-groupings and low groupings had low self-concepts as they express a feeling of embarrassment because their scores were public due to ability grouping and they felt that ability grouping was separating students in terms of intelligence. A small number of students in the mid and low grouping that express positive attitudes feel that the instruction that they were receiving was appropriate for their level of proficiency. Overall, it was found that the benefits of ability grouping were related to receiving appropriate instruction for the learner's level (43% of learners), better classroom atmosphere (high groups), and more motivation because of higher peer pressure (high groups). Ability grouping was also identified as detrimental in terms of self-concept (32% learners) as learners felt that there was unequal treatment from teachers, and they were not being present with challenging concepts (low and mid groups) compared to high-ability groupings. Behavioral issues were also identified as an issue in low and mid groups as students had a hard time concentrating because of the classroom atmosphere.

Focusing on academic self-concept Lui (2009) states that there hasn't been much research on the relationship between English self-concept and language-related ability. The study analyses academic self-concept and foreign-language achievement as well as whether and how academic self-concept changes in ability-grouped classes. This research was done with 126 college students from a private university in Taiwan that had been placed in basic, intermediate, and advanced English classes. The author used an academic self-concept scale to measure academic confidence and academic effort, questionnaires were also used to collect data, and pretest scores and post-test scores were also taken to measure academic achievement. From this data, the author found that high-ability groups showed higher levels of academic self-concept for both pretest and post-tests, but low and middle groupings' self-concept increased over time whereas for high-ability groups there was no significant difference in this regard.

These results could be explained by the relation between academic self-concept and academic achievement. By looking at the results, it can be argued that student's prior academic achievement influences students' academic self-concept. In this way, low and mid-ability groups had lower self-concepts because they had a lower academic achievement in English before entering their ability groups. Therefore, according to the author the positive changes in the academic self-concept of low and mid-grouping were fostered by ability grouping. Lui (2009) also argues the importance of helping students to develop a positive academic self-concept so that they feel better motivated and in turn make progress in their coursework. Constant support and encouragement in the form of positive feedback are suggested ways of promoting a better academic self-concept (Lui,2009).

### **Summary of Literature Review**

Ability grouping is a common practice in education where students are placed into groups based on their ability level. The idea behind this practice is to maximize student learning by grouping students with similar abilities together. However, as the literature shows there isn't universal agreement on the utility and perceptions of students towards ability grouping. The varying results could be explained by understanding this practice as to being context specific. This study aims to explore the perceptions of students regarding ability grouping and the contextual factors that may influence their perception of its usefulness in the Second Language learning process.

Additionally, it's been observed that the majority of studies on ability grouping have been conducted in the US and the UK, with research primarily focusing on first-language curriculum subjects like Mathematics, English, and Science. However, in the EFL context, the exploration of ability grouping has been somewhat limited to Asian countries such as Korea, Iran, and Taiwan. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research on ability grouping in developing nations like Ecuador, and even less on the topic of ability grouping and second language

learning. One of the purposes of this study is aiming at filling this gap by providing valuable insights into the implementation of ability grouping in a private school in Ecuador and its overall practice and value in the country as well as outside of it.

## Methodology

Analyzing students' perceptions towards ability grouping may provide insights as to the contextual factors in which this practice may facilitate or hinder students' willingness to learn a second language. This study aims to provide insights into how ability grouping has been implemented in a private school in Ecuador and what these findings can say about the practice and value of ability grouping in the country. Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to the current understanding of ability grouping at the high school level by looking at the perceptions of students of ability grouped classrooms. For the purpose of this study the following research question was proposed:

- How do EFL Ecuadorian high-school learners perceive the role of ability grouping in their academic self-concept and investment in learning the language?
- What contextual factors explain these perceptions?

This research analyzes learners' perceptions of ability grouping and external factors that affect their academic self-concept. The research focuses on comparing within and between ability group differences, similar to the study conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2002). To understand the complicated relationship that language learners have with the target language and their perhaps conflicted desire to learn it, Bonny Norton makes the case for a theory of investment rather than My use of the concept of investment draws on Bonny Norton's understanding that a learner's decision to engage in learning a language is influenced by their investment or lack of investment in a particular imagined community. According to Bonny Norton (2001), every student envisions a fictional community that they aspire to become a member of in the future. This mental image significantly influences the amount of investment the student puts into learning English as a means of gaining acceptance into that community.

Furthermore, a learner's investment in a second language is influenced by their perceptions of the language's potential future benefits (Norton, 2001). For example, some learners may choose to invest in English due to its status as a global language that can increase their employment opportunities or social standing. Others may invest in the language spoken in a country they plan to visit or work in. Thus, learners' investment decisions are often motivated by their personal goals and expectations, which are shaped by their perceptions of the target language and its associated communities. For individuals learning English as a second language, the scope of their imagined communities goes beyond the classroom, extending into the real world. Some learners may already be part of these communities through their interactions with friends living in English-speaking countries or by following social media content related to their interests. At Gibson Academy investment in the language could be mediated by the ability groups. Therefore, in this study investment is understood and utilize to refer to the extent to which students engage with the English Language outside of school and for achieving their future goals. Moreover, this study aims to explore how students' perceptions of the language's usefulness in achieving future goals and aspirations can reveal about their level of investment in learning English within the practice of ability grouping.

Considering the research question of this study, a qualitative approach was deemed the most suitable research method as it allows to explore individuals' experiences based on personal perceptions (Hammarberg et al.,2016). A case study approach was used in the effort to provide an in-depth analysis on ability grouping aiming to serve as the basis for further research in developing countries like Ecuador as well as in the private education system.

## Site

To best address the research questions, the study was conducted at Gibson Academy (a pseudonym), a private school in a large urban center in Quito, Ecuador. Gibson Academy was selected due to its recent implementation of ability grouping. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2014) was used in this process to gain a deep understanding of how the phenomenon being explored manifests itself in this particular school and to provide insight into the implications of ability grouping on classroom dynamics and students' academic engagement. Upon contacting the school principal, it was expressed that Gibson Academy was open and willing to participate in the study. Therefore, Gibson Academy was chosen for the present study.

Gibson Academy has provided education since the year 1949 when a group of evangelical missionaries from a US organization came to Ecuador. The school caters to a middle-class population and levies tuition rates that are considered relatively low for a private institution within the region. At the time this study was conducted, around 340 students were enrolled at Gibson Academy. This private school works under the Ecuadorian National Curriculum offering education from elementary to secondary education similar to K-12 in the US. The school has a history of implementing ability grouping beginning from the middle years. In 2008, the school utilized ability grouping in their ESL classes but discontinued the practice around 2013 when they began offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) as an option alongside the National Curriculum. Due to financial issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the IB program was discontinued. Presently, the school offers Science and Technology courses taught in English, as well as English as a Foreign Language. Until the current school year, prospective students were only required to take an entry exam for core subjects, apart from those applying for the IB program. As a response to the diversity of students coming from different schools around the region, Gibson Academy has implemented a pilot program using ability grouping in the school years where they receive a higher number of new students.

Currently, newcomers applying to 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade (E.G.B) are required to take an English proficiency test in addition to the core subjects entry exam. Based on their English proficiency results, students are placed into three distinct levels, with level 1 representing the low-ability group, level 2 the middle-ability group, and level 3 the high-ability group. While students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade are grouped together and placed into three different levels, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders are grouped together and then divided into three different ability groups. While this is not the first instance of ability grouping at the school, it is the first time that a comprehensive analysis of the practice had been conducted.

### **Data Collection**

To analyze the perceptions of ability grouping, an anonymous survey was created that contained close-ended and open-ended questions. The survey was written in both Spanish and English. For the closed-ended questions focus was placed on demographics such as age, gender and ability level. Open-ended questions focused on students' family background (i.e., Do your parents speak English?), language use (i.e., Describe the different ways (if any) that you use the English language outside of the classroom.), future aspirations (i.e., In what ways, if any, do you think knowing the English language will help you accomplish your goals) self-concept (i.e., How would you describe students assigned to your ability-grouped classroom?), and motivation (i.e., Since joining your ability-grouped classroom, do you feel more or less motivated to learn English? Explain your reasons). Once the survey was created, access was given to the English department of Gibson Academy who administered the survey over a period of two weeks in the school lab. Students were taken to the school lab during their English classes by their teachers. Each student completed the survey on a computer and was given the option to complete it in English or Spanish. A total of 58 students from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades participated in the survey. Out of the total amount of students, 25 students belonged to the level

1 (low-ability group), 19 were in level 2 (middle-ability group), and 14 were from the level 3 (high-ability group). Results were gathered by the researcher through Microsoft forms, an online survey program, and then data was exported and organized using a spreadsheet program.

### **Data Analysis**

Survey results were analyzed through two distinct steps. The first step consisted of creating frequency tables for close-ended demographic questions such as grade, ability group, years at the schools and whether students' parents spoke English. Once this was accomplished, the open-ended questions were addressed through an abductive approach which consisted of: writing analytical memos aimed on identifying key patterns within the data; creating a codebook reflecting the patterns identified within the analytical memos; formally engaging with deductive coding through a line-to-line reading of the dataset. As I coded, I looked for confirming and disconfirming evidence. Upon completion of the coding process, I attempted to establish relationships between my codes in the effort to identify core themes. For example, codes associated to students' post-high school plans and their long terms goals were combined within the theme of students' future aspirations and expectations. Meanwhile, codes associated to students' description of their classes, their perceptions of their peers enrolled in other ability grouped classrooms, and their own assessment of their English language proficiency were combined under the theme of student's self-perception. Through these themes, I was able to write a series of assertions that served as the basis of my findings.



## Findings

### Demographic Differences among Ability levels

The study included a total of 58 students who took part in the survey. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the demographics of the participants. The age of the students who participated in the survey ranged from 13 to 15 years old. The majority of the participants belonged to either the low ability group (25 students) or the mid ability group (19 students). The high ability group was composed of only 14 students. Of note are the gender differences observed across the ability groups. While the overall number of male and female students was nearly equal, the study revealed that there were almost an equal number of female students in each group. However, the lower the ability group, the higher the number of male students present in that group. These patterns are consistent with previous studies in which females have been found to have overall higher scores on second or foreign language proficiency tests than males (see Boyle,1987).

Another finding that ought to be mentioned relates to the number of years that students have been enrolled at the school. According to the survey data, 33% of ninth and tenth graders are relatively new to the school being there for two or less than two years. Out of that percentage a little more than a quarter of students are placed in the low ability group. This aligns with one of the reasons why the school's officials decided to employ ability grouping aiming to face the disparities in English proficiency, particularly in secondary school.

*Table 1. Demographic Differences among ability groups*

	No. of students	Age			Gender		No. of years at Gibson Academy			
		13	14	15	F	M	< or =2		> 2	
							%		%	
Low	25	12	12	1	10	15	8	32%	17	68%

Mid	19	6	13	0	11	8	7	37%	12	63%
High	14	4	7	3	10	4	4	29%	10	71%
Total	58	22	32	4	31	27	19	33%	39	67%

### Familiar Background and Language use

Aside from demographic differences, variations in learner's experiences with second language exposure at home were also found. Considering these differences becomes relevant as they can provide some understanding on the different perceptions that students may have towards the language and ability grouping. To explore students' experience with the English language at home, an open-ended question was included in the survey to elicit background information such as parents' English language proficiency (see Table 2). Students were asked whether one, both, or neither of their parents spoke English, and to explain their answer. Out of the 58 students, 71% reported having at least one parent who spoke English, while 29% did not. Among mid- and high-ability groups, little difference was found as 79% reported having at least one parent who spoke English. Moreover, some students reported at least one of their parents had a good level of English because they had either studied abroad, or they traveled abroad because of their job. One student from the mid group explained: *“My dad speaks English because he studied in the US and my mom speaks it because of her job as she has to travel a lot”*.

For low-ability groups, 60% of the parents did not speak English, while some students reported that their parents understood English but could not speak it fluently or knew the basics but did not use the language frequently (e.g., *“Only my dad knows English but he's not very fluent because he doesn't practice it, even though he can speak and read in English”*). These results suggest that ability grouping may be associated with differences in exposure to English at home, with students having at least one English-speaking parent more likely to be placed in higher-ability groups.

Table 2. Familiar Background

Parent's Language Proficiency	Only the mother		Only the father		Both		None	
		%		%		%		%
	Low	5	20%	6	24%	4	16%	10
Mid	5	26%	5	26%	5	26%	4	21%
High	2	14%	2	14%	7	50%	3	21%
Total	12	21%	13	22%	16	28%	17	29%

An additional question was included to explore language use outside the classroom. This question prompted students to describe whether they used English outside of the classroom, and if so, how. Table 3 shows frequency counts based on students' language use. It was found that in general, the majority of students use language outside the classroom. Indeed, only 22% of students in 9th and 10th grade expressed that they don't use English on their own. The most common way that the students use the language was for entertainment purposes (e.g., watching series, listening to music, playing video games, reading books) and to communicate with native speakers or to use it for social media. In the high-ability group, all participants answer that they use English outside their class. One student that answered the English version of the survey commented:

*My siblings, my mom and I speak English, so we are used to watch, read, play games, do things in English. Most of the things we do if we have the change, we do it in English, my mom tached us that is one of the best ways to learn a language since we were children. I also used to talk with some friends that I had outside the country and the only way to talk was by using English (high ability-level 3 student).*

Students that reported not using the language were mainly from the low ability group. On the reason why they didn't use it, some wrote that they simply don't use it or they haven't had the opportunity to use it outside the school. Others explained single and isolated occasions when they had used it such as *“once when I travelled to an English-speaking country”* and *“when a foreign family friend was visiting”*, or *“when I used to play video games”*.

*Table 3. Language use outside the classroom*

Language use outside the classroom				
	Yes		No	
		%		%
Low	16	64%	9	36%
Mid	15	79%	4	21%
High	14	100%	-	-
Total	45	78%	13	22%

Upon analyzing the data, it became apparent that there is some relation between exposure to the language outside of the classroom and the level of proficiency in the language. Students who have had more exposure to the language, whether due to their parents speaking it or their own use of the language in their spare time, are more likely to be assigned to higher ability groups. Likewise, students in the mid and high ability groups seem to be more invested in the language as they use it more frequently outside the classroom walls.

### **Aspirational Differences**

Aspiration differences were taken into account in order to better understand students' perceptions towards ability grouping. This is because these differences can provide insight into the degree of investment students have towards the language. For instance, if students believe

that English will be relevant to their future goals, they are more likely to be invested in learning the language as compared to students who do not see the value of English in their future. The survey hence included questions about the students' future aspirations, including their plans and goals after graduating high school, as well as their perception of the importance of knowing English in achieving these goals.

The results show that many students expressed a desire to travel abroad before pursuing a career. Additionally, regardless of their ability group, most students expressed a desire to pursue undergraduate studies as they see it as necessary for obtaining their dream job. While some students expressed a preference for studying abroad, others preferred to study locally, and for some, the location of their studies was not relevant. Moreover, students who expressed an interest in studying abroad also stated that they would only do so if it were possible. A student from the mid ability group (level 2) wrote: *“Studying abroad is a high goal that I want to reach, but if it is not possible, I would study here so that I can travel later.”*

In relation to the second question, the great majority stated that English will help them to achieve their future goals. They regard English as being important in three areas: for obtaining job opportunities, studying opportunities, and traveling abroad. A student mentioned: *“English is the most spoken language in the world which makes it easy to get good job offers or get into good universities. It would also allow you to travel to other countries only by speaking one international language, the most widely known language in the world”* (A student from the high ability group or level 3).

Students also expressed that English could prove to have advantages whether in their country or internationally:

*“Yes, since in some jobs it is necessary to speak other languages and if you know English it can give you an advantage since it is a universal language.”* (Low ability-level 1 student)

*“Because as my mom says, English takes you everywhere and if I want to study in the US or in another country, I would have to know very good English to be able to communicate.” (Mid ability-level 2 student).*

Students aspire to have successful futures, and English is seen as a tool for obtaining better studying and work possibilities, both locally and overseas. This aspiration could reflect what they have heard from older people, such as their parents.

### **Perceptions of academic self-concept**

Before delving into students' academic-self-concept, two questions were included to examine student perceptions of themselves and others and how this relates to their self-concept. Differences towards perceptions of peers within and across groups were also found. When describing their peers within their groups and among the other groups, positive and negative perceptions were observed. Positive perceptions involved adjectives such as studious, funny, friendly, good at English. Negative perceptions were associated with behavioral issues as being noisy or too loud. Students in the low ability group describe their classmates with partially positive perceptions such as good people and fun to be around, but they also expressed that most were a little mischievous and noisy which sometimes made it difficult to concentrate, as shown in this comment: *“They are good people, but some don't let us work, they aren't quiet, and some don't do anything”*. There were some students that expressed feeling that their classmates had a better level than them and that they should be in a higher level. For this group, students in the mid and high ability groups were perceived as calm, quiet, responsible, studious, good at English, and intelligent.

Students in the mid-ability group share similar perceptions within their groups. Mostly their perception towards other groups was neutral: *“Most of them are quite friendly and cool, the rest I don't know them very well”*. Some students at this level had mixed views toward the

low and high-ability groups. Students at the low ability group are either perceived as too noisy and disrespectful with their teacher or as having a better level of English and hence they should be at a higher level. In relation to students in the high ability group, they were perceived as having a good level of English, being more studious, and calmer than mid and low ability groups. Negative perceptions towards the high ability group were only expressed by one student from the mid ability group: *“I would describe level 1 and level 2 as incredible students at each level, their personality is good but level three for me is like they think they are better than the others”*.

The students placed in the high ability group (level 3) perceive each other as responsible, good learners, and that *“they can and want to speak English”*. They stated that regardless of the level students are all intelligent “. These students also commented that the mid ability students are studious, but that maybe these students don’t want to use English as much as the high ability students want to. About the low ability group, they perceived them as noisy and that they are making progress but that this is quite slow.

Generally, students have mixed perceptions within their groups and across groups, but perceptions related to the low-ability group tended to be associated with bad behavior while perceptions towards levels 2 and 3 were more positive. Students seemed to perceive that no matter the level all students are intelligent and capable. They do not make comparisons between proficiency and intelligence, as shown in the following comment: *“I get along with many students from other levels, and I think they are all smart since the level you get to decide the level of English you have not your IQ”* (High ability group student).

An additional question related to self-concept asked students whether they agreed about the level in which they had been placed. This question elicited students’ perceptions of their academic self-concept as it prompted them to compare themselves with others in relation to their English proficiency. A significant majority of the low ability students expressed

satisfaction with their current English level. According to their self-assessment, they believe that they were accurately placed in accordance with their English proficiency. However, a small portion of students felt that they may not be proficient enough, leading to their placement in the low ability group. Five students disagree with being placed on the lower level. Two expressed feeling that they should be in the mid ability group: "*I have more to give*". Two more said that they got into that level because they didn't do their best on the placement test. For these students, their academic self-concept seems to be higher than the majority of students in the lower-ability group.

Based on the feedback received, it appears that the majority of students in the mid ability group are satisfied with their placement. They tend to describe themselves as being average at English. However, there were a few students who expressed concerns about their placement. Out of the total number of students surveyed, seven students did not agree with their placement. Three of these students felt that they were not ready for the mid ability group due to their perceived lack of proficiency in English. On the other hand, four students believed that they were better at English than their peers and felt that they should have been placed in the high ability group. One student in particular stated:

*I'm not comfortable. When I started to study in level two, I was thinking why I didn't enter the 3rd level. I think I do some things better than the other students, and sometimes the others tell me why I am on this level (mid ability-level 2 student).*

Except for one student, all students at the high ability group agree with the level they were placed. Nevertheless, most students expressed that sometimes they felt that they were not good enough for their assigned level. Some commented that maybe they should be at a lower level. For instance, one student said, "I'm bad at the higher level and I'm good at the lower level, so I should be at an intermediate level no more no less". Students in the high ability group



seem to generally have a lower academic self-concept towards their proficiency in English as they see themselves as not capable enough to be on the level into which they were placed.

### **Perceptions of ability grouping**

After exploring students' academic self-concept and their perception of themselves and others, the subsequent findings shed light on how ability grouping is perceived in this particular school and how students' beliefs about themselves and their peers influence their perception towards this practice. To gain more insights into students' perception of ability grouping, students were asked if they would like to be in ability groups for the following school year. Out of the 58 students surveyed, 84% expressed interest in continuing to learn English in ability groups (see table 4). The primary reason for this preference was the belief that ability grouping allows for better instruction tailored to students' English proficiency and learning pace. A high ability group student explained, "Not everyone learns at the same pace and that can make learning English more difficult, so I think that these levels should be maintained". Conversely, 16% of students would prefer to return to regular English classes, with half of those students coming from the low-ability group, 33% from the mid-group, and only 11% from the high-ability group. The most common reason for not wanting ability grouping was that students feel more comfortable when they are with their friends from regular classes. Only one student mentioned that they feel ability grouping places students according to their intelligence and that they don't like it because of it. Overall, ability grouping is perceived as beneficial as it helps students learn according to their English proficiency.

Overall, students perceived ability grouping as beneficial for tailored instruction, which could potentially lead to greater academic success in the long run.

*Table 4. Perceptions of keeping ability grouping at Gibson Academy*

Perceptions of keeping ability grouping at Gibson Academy					
	No. of students	Positive		Negative	
			%		%
Low	25	20	80%	5	20%
Mid	19	16	84%	3	16%
High	14	13	93%	1	7%
Total	58	49	84%	9	16%

## Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

### Overview of the Findings

1. The level of Proficiency is connected to the familiar background and outside use of the language.

Overall English is used by the majority of students outside the classroom but exposure to English outside of the classroom was linked to a higher level of English proficiency as those students who have had regular exposure to the language outside the school are mainly from the mid. According to the findings 60% of parents from the students in the low ability don't speak English, and those who do only know the basic and don't use it very frequently. Conversely, 79% of parents from students in the mid and high ability groups speak English and some use it regularly in their job occupations. These findings suggest that regular exposure to English outside of plays and important role in the English proficiency among students. The absence of English-speaking parents in the low-ability group may be a factor contributing to their lack of English proficiency. Therefore, it is important to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to English outside of the classroom, particularly for those in the low-ability group.

2. English is a valuable tool regardless of the ability group

Perceptions towards the target language are positive given that students view English as an important tool for achieving future goals such as traveling abroad, finding a job, and pursuing undergraduate studies both locally and abroad. Moreover, positive views of the language relate to the usefulness of knowing English in a globalized world. Students regard English as an international language that can be relevant if you want to

work abroad but also for some jobs within the country. As one student mentioned, “Yes, since in some jobs it is necessary to speak other languages and if you know English it can give you an advantage since it is a universal language.” (Low-group student).

3. Ability grouping is mainly not associated with self-concept, and it is perceived as a positive measure

In general, comparisons both within and across groups were mostly positive and neutral. Those in the low ability group were viewed as good people who had made progress, while those in the mid and high ability groups were also viewed as good people but were also seen as studious. However, there were some exceptions to this trend. Some students noted that those in the low ability group could be noisy and mischievous, and one student in the mid group perceived that those in the high ability group thought they were better than others due to their placement. Except but one student, no student used adjectives related to intelligence to compare themselves or their peers indicating that learners do not make comparisons between proficiency and academic or intellectual worthiness. Given that self-concept is not being compromised as a result of ability grouping, this practice is seen as positive measure that can help students learn according to their English proficiency and at their own pace.

### **Implications**

While this study does not endeavor to provide a definitive answer about the value of ability grouping in English language education, it does showcase a number of contextual factors that may enable the success of this practice.

Firstly, the positive reception of ability grouping within Gibson Academy was largely based on the way the language was perceived within the institution. At Gibson Academy

English is circumstantial which is shown by the varying levels of investment exist across ability groups. The degree of investment in English language learning is influenced by students' experiences with the language outside school, and particularly at home. Research has shown that parents play a significant role in their children's acquisition of a foreign language (Zhou, 2020). Factors such as their attitude towards the language, socio-economic status, educational level, and cultural background can all contribute to either a positive or negative effect on their children's language learning. In the low ability group, greater differences in investment have been observed compared to the mid and high ability groups. This could be because students in the latter two groups may be more exposed to English language at home due to their parents' use of the language or their own use of it.

Azzolini, Caviglia, and Taddia (2020) conducted a study that found that formal instruction of a second language at schools can positively influenced the development of English skills, particularly in countries whose native languages are more distant from English. However, the study also found that informal exposure outside the classroom environment can played an even more significant role in the development of English skills the EFL context. The study highlights the strong influence that informal language learning opportunities available through various types of media have on adolescents' language proficiency. Additionally, family background and use of the language by other members of the household is more influential in countries with languages that are more distant from English, suggesting that family support is needed more when interacting informally with a foreign language it is not easily accessible (Azzolini et al., 2020). This supports the notion that regular exposure to English outside of the classroom can provide learners with practical and enjoyable ways to enhance their language skills and understanding of English-speaking cultures, leading to increased interest and hence a higher degree of investment in the language (Chen & Lin, 2019).

Therefore, students in the mid and high ability groups seem to be more invested in learning the language as they not only encounter it at school but also use it regularly at home. Investment in the language could be facilitated by grouping students according to their abilities, particularly for those at higher level who may already share common practices related to the use of the language outside school.

Secondly, English is seen as a prerequisite for certain aspirations but not all aspirations. While students at Gibson Academy acknowledge the importance of English for their professional and academic pursuits, learning a second language is not considered a high priority. Consequently, students at Gibson Academy believe they can still achieve successful futures, regardless of their English ability group. When it comes to English proficiency, Gibson Academy, a middle-class school, has stark differences with local Elite schools. While Gibson Academy does not place a significant emphasis on English, Elite Schools mandates that its students become proficient users of the language to gain entry to Ivy League schools, which is expected by their social circle (Bittencourt, 2021). In addition, at elite schools studying abroad is perceived as a sign of success, while attending a prestigious local university is not highly praised. Conversely, at Gibson Academy, pursuing higher education locally is the norm, and studying abroad is viewed more as an aspiration than an expectation. Learners may choose to invest in learning a second language because they anticipate that doing so will expand their access to a broader range of cultural and symbolic resources. By increasing their cultural capital and social power, learners may hope to enhance their opportunities and achieve greater success (Darvin & Norton, 2017). Students at Gibson academy are invested in the language up to a certain degree which is reflected by their understanding of English as an important means of achieving certain aspirations, but it is not necessarily a primary objective of its own. Subsequently, at Gibson Academy knowing English is viewed as an extra skill that students

may acquire and use it in the real world rather than an indispensable skill that they will need to succeed in the future.

Additionally, according to the study only a small number of students in the mid and high-ability groups had slightly negative perceptions. Some students in the mid group questioned whether they belonged to a higher level, while a few high-ability students doubted their skills for their assigned level. These results are consistent with the findings of Ireson et al. (2001), who concluded that high-ability students may have lower academic self-concepts due to their comparisons with others, an effect known as the Big-Fish-Little-Pond Effect (BFLPE). Nevertheless, for most students at Gibson Academy, group placement does not define their self-worth or academic potential. Instead, ability grouping is viewed as a positive practice that allows students to receive tailored instruction that caters to their proficiency and work pace while learning English.

Thus, the findings suggest that ability grouping could be a beneficial practice that may have no significant impact on students' perceptions of their academic self-concept and investment. However, in order to foster a positive classroom environment while employing ability grouping, teachers must address the concerns of learners with low academic self-concept. To do so, teachers should provide feedback that encourages positive academic self-concept, particularly for those students who may be experiencing a lower academic self-concept. Trautwein and Möller (2016) suggest that teachers' feedback can mediate the effects of BFLPE. Teachers can also help students identify areas in which they feel less competent and provide interventions that aim to develop their skills. Additionally, teachers can promote positive self-concepts by encouraging supportive relationships among students. Collaborative learning and teamwork can help students feel valued and appreciated. Teachers can also provide opportunities for students to give and receive feedback, which can cultivate a growth mindset

and help students view mistakes as opportunities for improvement rather than failures (Manning, 2007).

### **Limitations and further lines of inquiry**

Although this research provides valuable insights into the implications of ability grouping on students' self-concept, there are some limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the study solely relied on anonymous surveys as a method of data collection. Future research could benefit from the use of additional methods such as interviews and classroom observations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Moreover, while the present study focused on students' perceptions of ability grouping, it is recommended to expand the sample to include other stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and supervisors. This will help to gain a holistic understanding of the practice and its implications.

In addition, future studies on this topic could benefit from a longitudinal approach, which would allow for the analysis of students' perceptions over time. Lui (2009) found that students in low ability groups had lower academic self-concept due to their lower academic achievement prior to entering the groups. However, the author also found that academic self-concept became more positive over time in the low ability groups after the implementation of ability grouping. Therefore, a longitudinal study could offer insight into how students' perceptions of the practice may change over time, as well as how ability grouping affects students' academic self-concept and investment in learning English in the long term.

Finally, it is worth noting that the present study was conducted at Gibson Academy, which may not be representative of other educational institutions within and outside Ecuador. Therefore, future studies could benefit from investigating the implications of ability grouping



in a variety of settings to determine the contexts and conditions in which ability grouping proves to be advantageous or disadvantageous and why this may occur.

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## Appendix

APPENDIX A. ....52 pp.

APPENDIX B. ....53 pp.

**Anexo A: QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)**

Directions: Please complete the following questions.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender (choose one): Female Male
3. Grade (choose one): 9th 10th
4. How long have you been studying in this school? \_\_\_\_\_ year (s)
5. What is your favorite subject at school? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do your parents speak English? Both speak English/Only mother speaks English/Only father speaks English/neither
7. Describe the different ways (if any) that you use the English language outside of the classroom.
8. Which English level class were you assigned to?
9. Do you agree with the level of English you were assigned to? Why or why not?
10. How would you describe students assigned to your ability-grouped classroom?
11. How would you describe students assigned to the other ability-grouped classrooms?
12. Since joining your ability-grouped classroom, do you feel more or less motivated to learn English? Explain your reasons.
13. How does your ability grouped class differ from your previous experiences in English classes? Please provide a specific example which highlights these differences.
14. Would you like your school to keep the ability grouping system for the next school year? Why/Why not?
15. What are your plans or goals after finishing high school?
16. In what ways, if any, do you think knowing the English language will help you accomplish your goals?

**Anexo B: QUESTIONNAIRE (SPANISH VERSION)**

Instrucciones: Por favor completa las siguientes preguntas.

1. Edad: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Genero (elegir uno): Femenino Masculino
3. Grado (elegir uno): 9º 10º
4. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas estudiando en esta escuela? \_\_\_\_\_ años
5. ¿Cuál es tu materia favorita en la escuela? \_\_\_\_\_
6. ¿Tus padres hablan inglés? Ambos hablan inglés/Solo la madre habla inglés/Solo el padre habla inglés/Ninguno
7. Describe las diferentes formas (si las hay) en las que usas el idioma inglés fuera del salón de clases.
8. ¿A qué clase de nivel de inglés te asignaron?
9. ¿Estás de acuerdo con el nivel de inglés que te asignaron? ¿Por qué o por qué no?
10. ¿Cómo describirías a los estudiantes asignados en el nivel en el que te encuentras?
11. ¿Cómo describirías a los estudiantes asignados en otros niveles?
12. Desde que estas en el nivel que te asignaron ¿te sientes más o menos motivado con aprender inglés? Explica tus razones.
13. ¿En qué se diferencia tu clase de inglés por niveles de tus experiencias previas en clases de inglés? Proporciona un ejemplo específico que resalte estas diferencias.
14. ¿Te gustaría que tu escuela mantuviera el sistema de niveles para el próximo año escolar? Explicar tus razones.
15. ¿Cuáles son tus planes o metas después de terminar la secundaria?
16. ¿De qué manera, si es que hay alguna, cree que conocer el idioma inglés te ayudará a lograr tus metas?