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INTRODUCTION

Hotel Industry in El Salvador has been spreading during last decades. Since its boom at the highest level in the 50s, the industry changes every year. They are always improving not only their facilities but also their amenities, providing guests with better places to stay whether they are Salvadorian or foreigners. Visitors come from different countries around the world, in most of the cases for business matters.

Since English Language has become one of the most spoken languages worldwide, hotel Industry in El Salvador demands to have personnel with a certain level of English to interact with guests. This becomes a better job opportunity for people who study English as a foreign or second language (EFL; ESL) with the aim of being hired in so prestigious companies.

In most of the positions where hotels offer job opportunities, to have some knowledge of English language is a must. To know the different levels of English oral proficiency required for these companies was the main aim of this research. Besides, it was significant to explore other aspects which are relevant when selecting personnel. The methodology hotel Industry uses when evaluating candidates to be integrated into these prestigious companies was investigated as well.

This study has been presented in three chapters. Chapter 1, "Theoretical Framework," which provides a Background and History of Hotel Industry in San

Salvador since it emerged some decades ago up to now that we have some of the most prestigious places to stay in. Chapter 2, "Theoretical Bases," includes theories applied in this research; it presents information about oral proficiency, also guidelines used to evaluate oral proficiency according to international standards. Methodology as well as the instruments used to obtain the data is also presented in this chapter. The last Chapter, "Operative Framework", includes the description of the findings, conclusions and recommendations gathered from all the instruments used in this research.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English is the major language used worldwide in such fields as science, business, aviation and sports. (Cristal 1997). El Salvador is not far apart from this reality. That is why some people decide to study medicine, architecture, laws and some other majors. Besides their major, they decide to study English as a foreign language at the same time, due to the fact that companies are asking for this requirement when selecting personnel. But it would be better to study a major in which English is included and has a job opportunity at the same time. That is one of the most evident advantages that students of the Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza have. They can have a job even without finishing their major. That job does not necessarily have to be related with teaching. Nowadays, students from the Foreign Language Department (FLD) can work in telecommunications, airlines, restaurants and hotels. The world of work is always changing, over time job titles and work settings can change (Lopez Gracia & Castro Gustavo, 2008). Previous research show that a high percentage of students of Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opción Enseñanza choose to work in call centers or in hotels while they continue their studies.

R. Gamero et al. (2007) stated that teaching English as well as working at the hotel industry have become a big business, mostly now that English is considered as an international Language and hotels have guests from different countries.

With the globalized world and the demands of the clients, hotels now have new requirements. Some time ago, it was not so necessary to speak another language to work in a hotel, but nowadays speaking English is one of the requirements hotels have. Thus, the demand of English in the hotels is one of the reasons why people study English. Since practice and real situations help people to get a better level of English, working in hotels may seem as an opportunity to get a better level of English proficiency. English has become a major international language for worldwide communication. That is why proficiency in English is a mandatory requirement for any professional working in a global business environment.

Hotels such as Real Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza, Sheraton Presidente, Marriot and Holiday Inn Hotel are some of the most important hotels in El Salvador according to Gissel M. et. al. (2008). These hotels require people to work in different areas, for example, administrative managers, supervisors, bell boys, supervisors of marketing and promotions, receptionists, waitresses, chefs, maintenance managers, security and others. This represents several job opportunities for English speakers. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the level of English proficiency that the hotels applicants must have for working in a hotel by establishing the responsibilities that different positions demand. Moreover, it is vital to explore some other requirements, such as the hiring process that the applicants must follow, and the tests that are used to evaluate the English proficiency level.

II. Objectives

General Objectives

- To discover the oral English Proficiency level required from applicants who want to work in the main hotels in San Salvador.
- To explore the parameters used by the Hotel industry recruitment staff to assess their candidates.

Specific Objectives

- To investigate what are the levels of oral proficiency level according to American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages ACTFL proficiency guidelines for speaking and Common European Framework of Reference CEFR.
- To find out the measurement instruments used by hotel recruitment staff to determine the aspirants' oral proficiency level.
- To explore the different positions in which applicants are placed according to their oral proficiency level.

III. Research Questions

A. General Question

- What is the English Oral Proficiency level required from applicants who want to work in the main Hotels of San Salvador?

B. Subsidiary Questions

- What is oral proficiency?
- How is oral proficiency acquired by people learning English?
- According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) what are the different levels of oral proficiency?
- According to the American Council for the teaching of Foreign Languages ACTFL, what are the different levels of oral proficiency?
- What are the different levels of oral proficiency required for applicants of hotels?
- How the applicants are classified in different hotels positions according to their oral proficiency?
- What is the procedure followed by hotels to hire people in different positions?
- What measurement Instrument is used by hotels to evaluate the applicants oral proficiency level?
- What other aspects, besides Oral Proficiency, are taken into account by hotels' interviewers when evaluating the candidates?

IV. JUSTIFICATION

Currently, globalization and new technological advances require students to be prepared in different areas. One of the most important areas is speaking the English language as Crystal (1997) points out, “English is now the dominant or official language in over 60 countries and it is represented in every continent”. Consequently, the majority of businesses require bilingual personnel (Sondeo de la situación de la empleabilidad de El Salvador, 2010). The employment survey that USAID carried out in 2010 shows that some of the businesses that have the most demands are: restaurants, hotels, airlines and telecommunications.

There is a considerable amount of students from the FLD working in hotels. Lopez and Castro (2005), state that in 2005 the 7% of the graduate students from the FLD were working in hotels. It is obvious that these students look to work in these places because it is an opportunity they may have to work and study at the same time as well as getting job experience. Many of these students apply to work at a place where they can continue studying and, maybe, have a stable job after graduating. The students studying the major “Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés opción enseñanza” are hired into three areas: Teaching, Call Center Agents and Hotel Personnel.

This research emerged with the idea of exploring the different levels of English oral proficiency that the main hotels of San Salvador require. Being the hotels a source of job for many students from the FLD, it is fundamental to search the level of oral proficiency required by such institutions so that the results can be provided to the FLD in order to adjust, if necessary, the syllabus so that it prepare students in such areas. Also it is important to study some other aspects like the different positions that are available in the hotels and if the level of oral proficiency plays a fundamental role in each position and some other factors that a student who wants to apply to work in a hotel must take into account.

Due to the fact that hotel industry has become one of the most important sources of employments in El Salvador, there is a necessity of investigating about the level of oral proficiency required by applicants to the hotels. Since this investigation will be based on the oral proficiency required in hotels, it is considered important to know what the levels of oral proficiency are according to the American Council for the teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). These standards of oral proficiency have stated the different levels people have when learning English as a second language.

It is necessary to carry out this investigation because it will benefit the people involved. First, it will help the students because in that way they will have access to

more information about the requisites these hotels have and they may look for this information before applying to work in those companies and if they think they do not accomplish those requirements, they can improve until they achieve them.

Second, this paper will be helpful for hotels since it can be a way of investigating if the employees they have or expect to have are competent and fulfill their requirements. Third, even though it is not the main purpose of this research, it is believed it will, as well, help tourists indirectly because through this research they may get a better service.

Finally, it will help the FLD because it can be a mean through which teachers and the authorities in charge of the modification of the curricula readjust it if it is necessary. Looking for research papers about this topic in the library, it could be realized that there is no other research like this and there is a big necessity of investigating this topic which is a boom in the society and that brings benefits to the people involved.

V. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

There are many requirements that hotel Industry in El Salvador demands when selecting personnel. This research was aimed at knowing the level of English oral proficiency required by these prestigious companies within the different positions.

Time and place:

This investigation took place in some of the main hotels of San Salvador: Real Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Sheraton Presidente, Marriot Courtyard and Holiday Inn in the years 2012-2013.

Population:

This research was addressed to people who are working in different positions within the hotel industry. The contribution of two administrators from two of the hotels in study was also of extreme importance. There was also taken into account the participation of some people who applied to work in some of the hotels in study but they did not get the job.

CHAPTER 1

VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. History of hotel industry

Evidence of hotels and the hospitality industry has been recorded as far back as biblical times when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem during the census. As the Bible depicts, Mary and Joseph were refused accommodations because there "was no room at the inn" (Luke 2:7, Holy Bible). At that time, traveling was done due to health reasons, immigration and religion reasons (Vella Nadia, 2009). Therefore; people needed places to stay in. But these places existed even before Christ with the name of taverns. Later, they were called inns and now people know them as hotels. With the passing of time and globalization, hotels have evolved and turned into very luxurious places. Although under another name, the idea of the hotels is antique. However, through times people as well as their demands have changed.

2. History of Hotel Industry in San Salvador

In Central America, El Salvador is one of the most beautiful places to visit (CORSATUR 2012). Hence, hotels have a bigger demand in these days and the growing in the economy of El Salvador plays an important role as well. The boom of the hotel industry occurred at a higher level in the 50s. Lopez E. et. al. At that time the following hotels emerged:

➤ Grand Hotel	1964
➤ Alameda Hotel	1970
➤ Ritz Hotel	1971
➤ Terraza Hotel	1971
➤ Camino Real Hotel	1972
➤ Ramada Hotel	1976
➤ Presidente Hotel	1978
➤ Siesta Hotel	1979

During the following decades, the hotel Industry continued to grow due to the boom of tourism; for that reason it was necessary to create a Ministry of Tourism to ensure the interests that came from this area. This was created on June 1st, 2001, allowing the government to promote tourism.

3. Classification of hotels

According to the Webster Dictionary, a hotel is a commercial establishment providing lodging, meals, and other guest services. In general, to be called a hotel, an establishment must have a minimum of six letting bedrooms, at least three of which must have attached (unsuited) private bathroom facilities.

Hotels are classified into categories, quality standards, geographic zone and other classifications that distinguish a hotel. They are classified according to the service they give to their customers. The accepted and right indicator used internationally is 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 star in ascendant order. It is a scale used to measure the quality of the hotels. This order refers to the quality, service, price and satisfaction of the customers.

This Classification varies worldwide but there is a general guide established by World Tourism organization (WTO) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and they are as follows:

- A 1-Star hotel provides a limited range of amenities and services, but adheres to a high standard of facility-wide cleanliness.
- A 2-Star hotel provides good accommodation and better equipped bedrooms, each with a telephone and an attached private bathroom.

- A 3-Star hotel has more spacious rooms and adds high-class decorations and furnishings and color TV. It also offers one or more bars or lounges.
- A 4-Star hotel is much more comfortable and larger, and provides excellent cuisine (table d'hôtel and a la carte), room service, and other amenities.
- A 5-Star hotel offers most luxurious premises, the widest range of guest services, as well as swimming pools, places to practice sport and gyms).

3.1 Requirements to obtain a 5 star category hotel

The requisites to get a determined category are:

- ✓ Infrastructure level
- ✓ Quality and kind of service
- ✓ Accomplishment of all the hotel standards

3.2 The hotels that were involved in this investigation are classified as follows:

NAME	LOCATION	CATEGORY	CHARACTERISTICS
Real Intercontinental	Boulevard Los Héroes Av.Sisimiles	5 stars	- 228 rooms - 5 Junior Suites - 1 Presidential suit. - two club floors Intercontinental - 13 conference rooms - an outdoor pool, sauna and gym - a restaurant and bar
Crowne Plaza	89 Av. Norte, Col. Escalon	4 Stars	- 195 rooms - an outdoor pool, sauna and gym - Business center and a room for small meeting. - a restaurant and bar or lounge.
Sheraton Presidente	Avenida de la Revolución	4 stars	- 225 rooms - Outdoor swimming pool - Business Center - Meeting Rooms - Mini Bar In Room - Family Rooms
Holiday Inn	Urbanización Santa Elena,	3 stars	- 131 rooms - 9 meeting rooms - a Restaurant - An outdoor pool - A fitness Center
Marriot	La Gran Vía Ciudad Merliot	4 stars	- 128 rooms - an outdoor pool, sauna and gym - Restaurant - 5 business center
Hilton Princess	Av.Las Magnolias y boulevard del Hipódromo	5 stars	-205 rooms -A restaurant -An outdoor pool -Spa services -Meeting rooms

CHAPTER 2

VII. THEORETICAL BASES

To reach effectiveness and competence, hotels try to give the best service to their clients, whether they are national or foreigners and in order to do that, it is necessary to have well prepared people. In El Salvador, for example, it is well known that English is now a language that opens doors to new job opportunities. That is why, the universities and academies have the task to give the best preparation possible to people who want to learn English as a foreign language. The context of teaching English in a developing country where resources are limited means that there is a higher dependency on written language and grammar rules, rather than on how language makes meaning in a specific context, i.e. the goal and purpose of language as a socially constructed resource (Martin and Francis 1997). Nevertheless, this research paper did not seek to go deep into this matter, but instead of identifying the oral proficiency level that applicants must have in order to be part of hotel industry staff. And this way establishes ground for future investigation on this matter.

1. Oral Proficiency

Van Lier (1989) expresses that "oral proficiency consists of those aspects of communicative competence that are displayed and rated in oral proficiency interviews". In other words, oral proficiency refers to the features of the language

that need to be improved and those features are revealed when speaking. It can also be taken as the ability to speak fluently with a good pronunciation and without making mistakes; these characteristics of the language can just be noted when communicating. The environment in which the learner is involved is also important. That is why Arely A. et al. (2012) state that it may affect the quality of their oral performance in regards of formality or politeness. Furthermore, the communicative competence involves knowing not only the language code, but also what to say, to whom, and how to say it appropriately in a given situation.

2. How is oral proficiency acquired by people learning English?

According to the concept of oral proficiency, it has been said that it has to do with communicative competence, and Sandra Savignon (1972) defines it as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total information input of one or more interlocutors. So the question is how people acquire this communicative competence. It could be said that by acquiring the target language in the environment where the language is spoken. But in a country where only our mother tongue is spoken, it is something really different. People go to different places where the English language is taught (bilingual schools, academies, universities) but in most of these places they are focused more on the form of the language than its function.

As it is the case of higher education where the language is taught deeply in the different areas (morphology, syntax, grammar) that help learners to know how the

language works and to construct new ideas to communicate accurately. Nevertheless, there is a problem that is easy to appreciate on these places and it is that the classrooms are so crowded that the few resources they have are not enough for all the students to have a chance of participating frequently.

3. Different levels of oral proficiency according to ACTFL and CEFR proficiency guidelines

Since the main aim of this study was related to oral proficiency; it was necessary to investigate how oral proficiency is measured. During the last years, many efforts have been made to test foreign languages proficiency, and such efforts were focused, with particular emphasis, on the evaluation of oral proficiency. Since proficiency testing recognizes the importance of oral communication, nowadays there are two guidelines which have strong effect on evaluating oral proficiency: ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) and CEFR (Common European Framework). These guidelines are acceptable in many countries for many determinations, for instance: Professional certification, hiring and promotional qualification.

3.1 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

Since its conception in 1967, is an internationally recognized authority on language teaching and learning. After years of research ACTFL developed the Oral Proficiency Scale to serve as a common measure of an individual's functional

ability in a given language (NC STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE OP n.d). The oral proficiency has a scale which tells people which level of oral proficiency they have and according to the ACTFL, it is classified in this way: The Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels, which are divided into Low, Mid and High sub-levels. (Oral Proficiency level required by the main Call Centers in San Salvador, 2012)

NOVICE

- **LOW**

Speakers at the Novice-Low level have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, they may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

- **MID**

Speakers at the Novice-Mid level communicate minimally and with difficulty by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may utter only two or three words at a time or an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor's words. Because of hesitations, lack of

vocabulary, inaccuracy, or failure to respond appropriately, Novice-Mid speakers may be understood with great difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics by performing functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence.

- **HIGH**

Speakers at the Novice-High level are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level.

They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects and a limited number of activities, preferences and immediate needs. Novice-High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information; they are able to ask only a very few formulated questions when asked to do so. Novice-High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily, on learned phrases or recombination of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their utterances, which consist mostly of short and sometimes incomplete sentences in the present, may be hesitant or inaccurate. On the other hand, since these utterances are frequently only expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes appear surprisingly fluent and accurate. These speakers' first language may

strongly influence their pronunciation, as well as their vocabulary and syntax when they attempt to personalize their utterances. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but, with repetition or rephrasing, Novice-High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors used to non-natives. When called on to handle simply a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the intermediate level, a Novice-High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence level discourse.

INTERMEDIATE

- **LOW**

They are able to handle successfully a limited number of communicative tasks. Conversations are still restricted to some of the concrete & predictable topics related to personal information or preferences, daily activities or immediate needs (ordering food or making simple purchases) their utterances are often filled with hesitancy or inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary. Pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary are strongly influenced by their 1st Language. Speakers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversations restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information covering, for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal

preferences, as well as to some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate-Low level, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information, but they are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate-Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining into short statements what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors. Their utterances are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language but, in spite of frequent misunderstandings that require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate-Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

- **MID**

Speakers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture; these include personal information covering self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel and lodging.

Intermediate-Mid speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution. Intermediate-Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to make utterances of sentence length and some strings of sentences. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations and self corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. Because of inaccuracies in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, misunderstandings can occur, but Intermediate-Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

- **HIGH**

Intermediate-High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with most routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully many uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests and areas of competence, though hesitation and errors may be evident. Intermediate-High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to

the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance at that level over a variety of topics. With some consistency, speakers at the Intermediate High level narrate and

Describe in major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length. However, their performance of these Advanced-level tasks will exhibit one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to maintain the narration or description semantically or syntactically in the appropriate major time frame, the disintegration of connected discourse, the misuse of cohesive devices, a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, the failure to successfully circumlocute, or a significant amount of hesitation. Intermediate-High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although the dominant language is still evident (e.g. use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations, etc.), and gaps in communication may occur.

ADVANCED

- **LOW**

Speakers at the Advanced-Low level are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks, although somewhat haltingly at times. They participate actively in most informal and a limited number of formal conversations on activities related to school, home, and leisure activities and, to a lesser degree, those related to events of work, current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance. Advanced-Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present and future) in paragraph length discourse, but

control of aspect may be lacking at times. Communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution may be employed in such instances. While the language of Advanced-Low speakers may be marked by substantial, albeit irregular flow, it is typically somewhat strained and tentative, with noticeable self-correction and a certain grammatical roughness. The vocabulary of Advanced-Low speakers is primarily generic in nature. Advanced-Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion, and it can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may be achieved through repetition and restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

- **MID**

Speakers at the Advanced- Mid level are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance. Advanced-Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present, and future). Advanced-Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which

they are otherwise familiar. The speech of Advanced- Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Advanced-Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline. Advanced-Mid speakers are, often able to state an opinion or cite conditions; however, they lack the ability to consistently provide a structured argument in extended discourse.

- **HIGH**

Speakers at the Advanced- High level perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence and competence. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However when they are called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics, their language, at times, breaks down or proves inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.

- **SUPERIOR**

Speakers at the Superior level are able to communicate in the language with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They discuss their interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy. They explain their opinions on a number of topics of importance to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured argument to support their opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities. When appropriate, they use extended discourse without unnaturally lengthy hesitation to make their point, even when engaged in abstract elaborations. Such discourse, while coherent, may still be influenced by the Superior speakers; own language patterns, rather than those of the target language. Superior speakers command a variety of interactive and discourse strategies, such as turn-taking and separating main ideas from supporting information through the use of syntactic and lexical devices, as well as intonation features such as pitch, stress and tone. They demonstrate virtually no pattern of error in the use of basic structures. However, they may make sporadic errors, particularly in low-frequency structures and in some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal speech and writing. Such errors, if they do occur, do not distract the native interlocutor or interfere with communication

3.2 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

According to Carlos César Jiménez a professor from the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, abbreviated as CEFR, is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries (for example, Colombia and the Philippines). It was put together by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing, which applies to all languages in Europe. In November 2001 a European Union Council Resolution recommended using the CEFR to set up systems of validation of language ability. The six reference levels are becoming widely accepted as the European standard for grading an individual's language proficiency.

The CEFR divides general competences in knowledge (Descriptive knowledge), skills, and existential competence with particular communicative competences in linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence. This division does not exactly match previously well-known notions of communicative competence, but correspondences among them can be made.

General and particular communicative competences are developed by producing or receiving texts in various contexts under various conditions and constraints. These contexts correspond to various sectors of social life that the CEFR calls domains. Four broad domains are distinguished: educational,

occupational, public, and personal. A language user can develop various degrees of competence in each of these domains and to help describe them the CEFR has provided a set of Common Reference Levels.

LEVEL						
A		B		C		
BASIC USER		INDEPENDENT USER		PROFICIENT USER		
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	
Breakthrough or beginner	Waystage or elementary	Threshold or intermediate	Vantage or upper intermediate	Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced	Mastery or proficiency	
Description	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local, geography, employment).	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field if specialization	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning.	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
	Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.	Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken.	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.	Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.

	Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.	Can produce clear, detailed text on wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages of various options.	Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.	Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
			Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly gives reasons and explanations for opinion and plans		Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	

4. GLOSSARY

- **ACTFL**

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages is an organization dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction.

- **CEFR**

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries (for example, Colombia and the Philippines).

- **Proficiency**

Mastery of a specific behavior or skill demonstrated by consistently superior performance, measured against established or popular standards.

- **Oral Proficiency**

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1978) proficient is defined as “performing in a given art, skill, or branch of learning with expert correctness and facility”.

- **Hotel**

is a commercial establishment providing lodging, meals, and other guest services. In general, to be called a hotel, an establishment must have a minimum of six letting bedrooms, at least three of which must have attached private bathroom facilities.

- **Client**

The Client is a determined company that hires an outsourcing company to provide their customers with specific services like customer service or technical support.

- **Competence**

The ability of an individual to perform a job properly, it is also related with the knowledge and skills that enable a person to act effectively in a wide variety of situations.

- **Linguistics**

The study of the nature, structure, and variation of language, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics.

- **Proficiency**

Mastery of a specific behavior or skill demonstrated by consistently superior performance, measured against established or popular standards.

- **Front Desk Supervisor**

Front Desk Supervisors work in various fields to ensure that things run smoothly in the hotel. He is in charge of the rest of the staff and duties include overseeing the front office, kitchen and housekeeping staff. The hotel manager is responsible for dealing with any customer complaints as well. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics a 3.5 percent growth in employment is expected from 2008 to 2018.

- **General Manager**

The general manager oversees day-to-day operations. He may assist with check in and checkout during busy times. He is the person to go to with complaints or compliments about hotel staff, food or your room.

- **Bellboy**

(Business / Professions) a man or boy employed in a hotel, club, etc., to carry luggage and answer calls for service; page; porter Also called (US and Canadian) bellhop

- **Hotel receptionist**

Receptionist is the person who will check you in and out. She\he finds your reservation, helps you fill out any necessary paperwork and provides directions to your room. She\he is usually the first hotel position employee you will encounter.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The fundamental aspect of this research was to investigate the level of English oral proficiency required in the main hotels of San Salvador for people interested in working there. The type of model that involves this project is the descriptive research since it led to present facts, concerning the nature and status of a situation, as it existed at the time of the study and it described present conditions, events or systems based on the impressions or reactions of the respondents of the research. This type of research could have been qualitative or quantitative, but since the data gathered from all these places was to get a qualitative analysis, the investigation was conducted through this model.

This investigation has also some characteristics of exploratory research which is a type of research conducted for a problem that has not been clearly defined and seeks to find out how people get along in the setting under question, what meaning they give to their actions, and what issues concern them. The goal is to learn what is going on there, and to investigate a social phenomenon without explicit expectations, (RussellK. Schutt, "Investigating the Social World," 2012, 5th Ed). "Exploratory research examines the relevant factors in details to arrive at an appropriate description of the reality of the existing situation (Brink & Wood 1998:283-286)". What this exploratory research shows is the result obtained

through a sample taken from a group of people to know the oral proficiency required in the main hotels of San Salvador.

B. Types of research study

1. Qualitative research

The present investigation contained data gathered from the main hotels of San Salvador. These results required qualitative analysis since the research is descriptive exploratory and it contained content collected from interviews and questionnaires and qualitative research is a method of investigation that includes patient interviews and detailed case studies (Elsevier 2005).

2. Instruments

2.1 Key Informant

A key informant is a person (or group of people) who has unique skills or professional background related to the issue/ intervention being evaluated, is knowledgeable about the project participants, or has access to other information of interest to the evaluator. This instrument was useful to promote the legitimacy of this investigation. Two key informants were used from the main hotels of San Salvador: Hotel Holiday Inn and Crowne Plaza. The key informants were two administrators who deal with the hiring process, and knew information regarding the administrative area of the hotels in study.

2.2 Individual questionnaire

Rephrasing of some questions was done to clarify the questions and more appropriate alternative response choices were added to provide meaningful information for analysis (Burns & Grove 1993:373). All questions designed in the questionnaire were designed with options and with open questions in order to let the participants free to answer. The language used when formulating the instrument was oriented to be understood by people with a low level of English oral proficiency since the researchers did not know the level Of English of the personnel working in different positions in the hotel industry.

2.3 Interviews

The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what interviewees say (Kvale, 1996). This instrument was used to gather important information about individuals who did not meet the requirements to be employed within the main hotels of San Salvador. These participants provided information about their profile as candidates and their own experiences at the time they were interviewed by the recruitment staff in the company.

3. Participants

The sample taken was 17 people as a total. All of them were selected from the main hotels of San Salvador (Real Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Sheraton Presidente and Holiday Inn). Two of them were selected from the administrative staff that was in charge of selecting bilingual personnel. These employees were asked to fill in a questionnaire that contained open and close questions aimed to know the requisites to be hired in the main hotels of San Salvador and also the hiring process. Thirteen more questionnaires were filled in from people working in different positions in which a level of English oral proficiency is required. The last instrument used in this research was an interview directed to two candidates to work in hotels that had not been hired due to different aspects.

CHAPTER 3

IX. Operative Framework

1. Data Analysis

There were three instruments used to collect the data to be analyzed in this chapter: Two key Informants, one completed by the front Desk manager of Holiday Inn and the second one by the recruitment personnel manager of Crowne Plaza. These employees provided the researches with relevant information about the hiring process in two of the main hotels of San Salvador.

Also the individual questionnaire was completed by 13 participants currently working in different positions within some of the main hotels of San Salvador (Real Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Sheraton Presidente and Holiday Inn). By this means, the researchers were provided owith important information like: experiences to get that position, achievements and most over data about oral proficiency required at the moment they were hired in these prestigious hotels.

The last instrument was the Individual Interview, completed with the contribution of two participants who had the opportunity of being in the recruitment process by the Human Resources Manager of Hotel Camino Real Hotel but at the end they could not be part of the hotel staff. The information gathered from their experiences contributed for this investigation to be more reliable.

2. Results

The findings are presented following the order of the research questions stated in this investigation: Oral proficiency required to get a job, classification of candidates, procedure to hire applicants, instruments used to measure oral proficiency and some other aspects considered important by Hotel Industry during the recruitment process.

2.1 Different levels of oral proficiency required by applicants of hotels

The findings reveal that the Hotel industry does not use any guidelines like ACTFL or CERF when evaluating applicants. Instead they have a scale to measure the Level of English oral proficiency. It is to say, when evaluating applicants levels or percentages like: basic (30%) intermediate (50%) or advanced (80%) are used. The researchers agreed to place candidates in the different levels according to guidelines presented in this investigation. These levels depend on the activities or the tasks required in the different positions within the company.

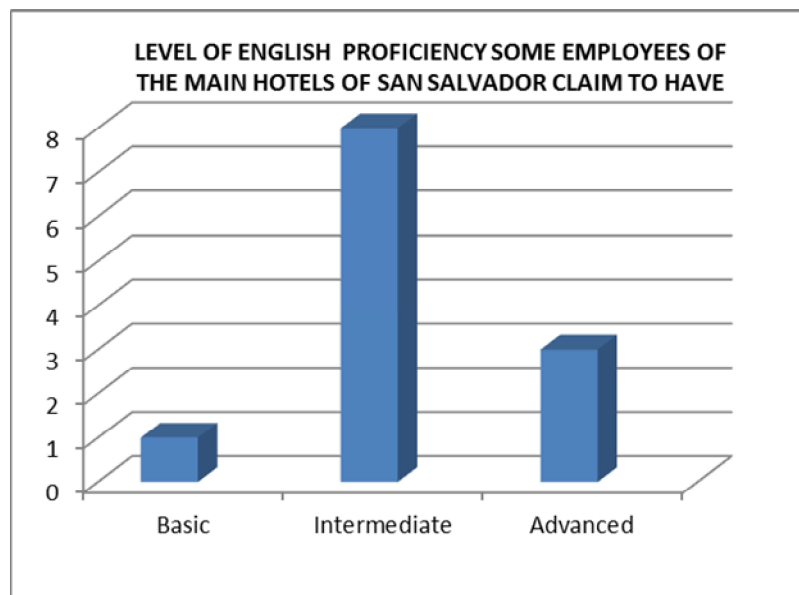
To have a high level of English oral proficiency is not a must in the majority of the positions of the main hotels of San Salvador. There are some positions like receptionist and front desk supervisor, where an advanced level of English oral proficiency is required. In the case of the position of the receptionist who is the person who checks people in and out, finds reservation, helps to fill out any necessary paperwork and provides directions to rooms among others. To develop

all the tasks previously stated, this person has to have ranges equal or higher from 80%, which corresponds to the Advanced Low level according to the ACTFL guidelines for speaking, which means speakers at level are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks, they participate actively in most informal and a limited number of formal conversations on activities related to events of work. This also corresponds to B2 (CEFR) being the individual capable to produce clear detail text on a wide range of subjects and explain a view point on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

The case of front desk supervisor position is also mandatory to have a range of English oral proficiency higher than 80%. The person in this position is in charge of overseeing the front office, dealing with any customer complaints as the main tasks. According to ACTFL, a guideline corresponds to Advanced High Level. People at this level can use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and easy speech. Its equivalent in CERF guidelines is C1. In this level a person is able to use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.

In the rest of the positions like bell boy, front desk agent, supervisor, operator controller and corporate account an intermediate level is enough due to the type of activities they develop. Some people pointed out that when they began working in the hotel they had a basic level but that level of English had evolved to

intermediate or to advance through the experience in those positions. Mr. Alejandro Buendia, Holiday inn manager (2012), mentioned that the employees are prepared with an English course, in which they are taught the vocabulary used in the hotels. In fact, the majority of the employees of that hotel claim to have the intermediate level. The table below shows the different levels of oral proficiency that the employees claim to have within the different positions in the hotels, being intermediate the most spoken level.



2.2 Classification of applicants in different hotel positions according to their oral proficiency

According to the results obtained, it can be said that there are only specific positions where an advanced level of English oral proficiency is required. In the majority of the cases, an intermediate level is enough since they are prepared with a course of English for specific purposes; that means vocabulary that is used and understood only in hotel industry. The table below shows the level of English in the hotels.

LEVEL OF ORAL PROFICIENCY	POSITION
Basic	Corporate account manager
	Corporate account manager
Intermediate	Purchasing manager
	Bell boy
	Front desk agent
	Supervisor
	Operation controller
	Group and convention manager
	Corporate account
	Front desk agent
	Front desk agent
Advanced	Receptionist
	Front desk supervisor

2.3 Procedure followed by hotels to hire people in different positions

The procedure followed to hire candidates to work in a hotel is as follows: First, they check the aspirant's resume. Second, they direct an oral interview, and third, they assess the candidates. When the people in charge of evaluating applicants check the resumé, they see if the candidate has the profile required to apply. Then, they conduct an oral interview to know the competences of the candidate. Besides, the evaluators confirm information and evaluate vocabulary and fluency of the English language. He is in charge of the rest of the staff and duties include overseeing the front office, kitchen and housekeeping staff. The hotel manager is responsible for dealing with any customer complaints as well. Finally, the candidates are assessed. In this stage the interviewers evaluate competences and attitude. Lic Alejandro Buendia, Holiday Inn (2012), said "to hire the personnel of the hotel, we direct an oral interview first. If the candidate does not do it well in that interview, we ask him/her to wait for our phone call, but of course we do not call. When the candidate succeeds the oral interview, we ask our employees to give opinions about the candidate.

When the candidate overcomes all the stages, she/he goes to see the manager to have another short interview with him/her. If the manager says that the candidate is talented enough to be hired, we do so, otherwise the candidate is not hired." In the oral interview they ask personal questions to see if the candidates have some knowledge of English. If the applicants approve that interview, the next stage is a training that lasts some weeks or months depending on the position.

2.4 Measurement Instruments used by hotels to evaluate the applicants

Oral Proficiency level

Another interesting finding in this research is that ACTFL and CEFR measurements scales are not used within the Hotel Industry. They just know the vocabulary and fluency through an oral interview. In that way they establish percentages like 50%, 60%, 80% and so on. There were two applicants who had the opportunity to be interviewed by Mr. Oscar Perez, Human Resource Manager of Real intercontinental Hotel. One of them was Carlos Garcia, a person interested in getting a job as a receptionist. He was told he had an 80 percent of oral proficiency so he was able to be in that position, but he did not have experience in the area of hotel Industry; so Carlos Garcia could not get the job. There was another case of Guadalupe Sanchez who wanted to apply as Administrator Assistant and she was told that her level of English was lower than 50% so she was not the candidate they were expecting to hire.

2.5 Other aspects taken into account by hotels' interviewers when evaluating the candidates.

The last relevant findings gathered through this study were other aspects taken into consideration within the Hotel Industry at the time of the recruitment of personnel. One of them is **voice tone**, as was mentioned by administrators of the two main hotels of San Salvador, who pointed out that one of the most important

aspects besides a level of English oral proficiency is an exceptional voice tone, since most positions demand contact with people.

Another aspect that is of great importance within the Hotel Industry is **the experience in the area**. This aspect was confirmed by all the sources who contributed with this investigation. By hiring people who have experience, Hotel Industry does not spend time and money in training people in general things; they just make emphasis on specific matters of their companies, for instance, vocabulary for specific purposes used in Hotel Industry.

A third aspect stated is **Service attitude**, which was also considered relevant by the recruitment staff of Hotel Industry. Mr. Alejandro Buendia, Holiday Inn manager (2012), mentioned that prestigious hotels like the one he works for, require people willing to collaborate since they have visitors from all around the world... If the guests are satisfied with the services given, recommendations are widespread in the circle they move in, and the result is positive for the hotel.

CONCLUSIONS

In a globalized world, to speak a second language is a must to get a job according to the necessity of each individual. Nowadays, many people go to different places to learn English as a second language to fulfill some of the requirements demanded by prestigious companies like hotels.

In San Salvador, where some of the most prestigious hotels such as: Real Intercontinental, Crown Plaza Hotel, Marriot Court Yard, Sheraton Presidente and Holiday Inn are located. These hotels demand personnel with a certain level of English oral proficiency, since they provide services to people from different nationalities, which require, a considerable percentage of language domains in some positions, for example, front desk, receptionist, administrators and so on.

Based upon the results obtained through the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained with the instruments administered to personnel working in different positions and two aspirants interested in working in the hotel industry, the researchers found that there are few positions in which an advanced level of English Oral Proficiency is required, for instance: receptionist and front desk supervisor. In most of the positions it is necessary to have an intermediate level of English Oral Proficiency to work in such prestigious companies.

These hotels do not use any guidelines like ACTFL or CERF when evaluating applicants. The way they measure the level of English oral proficiency is

by the oral interview aspirants have as the first step during the recruitment process. Based on the results they say it is a basic, intermediate or advanced level.

The teamwork also concluded that there are some other aspects, besides English oral proficiency level, that are considered relevant when selecting personnel within the Hotel industry. Besides the results obtained in the psychological test, individuals are asked to have the same day they have the first interview. Through some questions administrators evaluate voice tone, experience in the area and service attitude, which are aspects they consider also important when selecting personnel.

The researchers can state that to work in most of the positions within the hotel industry, it is not mandatory to have a diploma gotten in Higher Education. Instead, the recruitment staff cares more about the level of English oral proficiency and experience in the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results gathered from this study, which reveals the importance of the Level of English people should have and that it is demanded by prestigious companies like Hotel Industry when selecting their staff, the researches recommend universities to provide students placed in different majors with English courses as mandatory subjects within their career. This would help students to be more competitive within this globalized world.

Since English oral proficiency is a must to get a good job in such prestigious companies, the teamwork suggests Oral Competence should be considered as an important aim during the learning process at the foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. In that way students who cannot conclude their career due to monetary problems, may have an option of being working while finishing their major.

The last recommendation would be for the ones in charge of evaluating the syllabus within the Foreign Language Department. English for specific purposes (ESP) would be a tool for students who want to work in the Hotel Industry. In this way students have advantages over the ones who just speak Common English since the hotels recruitment staff prefer to hire people better prepared in the area.

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APPENDICES

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Language Department

Study on English oral proficiency required in the main hotels of San Salvador

Headed for: Administrators or personnel in charge of evaluating applicants

The present questionnaire is aimed to know the main aspects taken into account when evaluating the candidates.

Name of the person: _____

Position in the company: _____

Related oral proficiency

1. What are the different positions in which English oral proficiency is required?

2. Do you consider important that the candidates applying for the different positions have the same level Of English oral proficiency?

Yes _____

No _____

If your answer is No, please go to question 3

3. In which position is a must to have an advanced level of English oral proficiency?

4. How do you place the candidates in the different levels of oral proficiency? Do you use any international guideline like ACTFL (American Council for the teaching of Foreign Languages), CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) or do you have your own format for evaluating oral proficiency?

a) ACTFL

b) CEFR

c) A different format

In case of having a different format

5. Could you describe what it consists on?

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Language Department

Study on English oral proficiency required in the main hotels of San Salvador

This questionnaire is directed to people who are working in different positions within the hotel industry and where a level of oral proficiency in English is required.

The data obtained in this paper is confidential.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Position in the company: _____

Gender

a) Male _____ b) Female _____ Age _____

For the next questions please choose among the options given.

1. How long have you been working for this company?

a) From 1 to 3 years b) From 4 to 8 years c) More than 8 years

2. Have you been promoted?

a) Yes _____ b) No _____

If your answer is yes please write the different positions where you were promoted in the order they took place.

3. What type of diploma do you hold?

4. Where did you study English?

a) In an academy b) at the UES, In the Major of Lic. en Idioma Inglés
c) At the UES, In the Major of Lic. en Lenguas Modernas d) In a private University

If you did not choose any of the options given please specify where you learned English

5. How long have you been studying English?

Please specify _____

6. Which level of English do you consider you are in, up to this moment?

a)Basic level

b)Intermediate level

c)Advanced level

7. When you were hired, which level of English do you consider you were in?

a)Basic level

b)Intermediate level

c)Advanced level

Procedure for getting the job

1. What was the procedure for getting this job? Could you briefly describe it?

2. Was there an oral interview in English?

a)Yes. _____

b)No. _____

3. What was it a bout?

4. Were you asked to take a written exam on grammar or other aspects related to the English Language?

a)Yes _____

b)No _____

If your answer is yes, please explain what type of exam you were asked to take

5. Did they tell you the level of English you were in?

a) Yes ____

b) No ____

6. Were you asked to have different exams besides English?

a) Yes ____

b) No ____

If your answer is yes, please explain what type of exams you were asked to take

7. Were you asked to take any training?

a) Yes ____

b) No ____

If your answer is yes, please go to question 8

8. How long was it? What was it about?

9. Which Aspects do you consider were relevant for you to be selected in this important company?

a) Your knowledge of English

b) The diplomas you hold

c) Your experience in the area

d) Other _____

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Language Department

Study on English oral proficiency require in the main hotels of San Salvador

Headed to aspirants who apply for a job in different positions within the hotel industry

Objective: to know the experiences of aspirants who look for a job in the main Hotels of San Salvador.

Name _____

Age _____

1. Which type of diploma do you hold?

2. Where did you study English?

3. In which level of English do you consider you are in?

a) Basic

b) Intermediate

c) Advanced

3. What type of labor experience do you have?

4. Why are you interested in working in hotel industry?

Procedure to get the job

1. How did you know that hotels needed to fulfill job positions?

2. What was the first thing you did before the interview?

3. Which position were you interested in?

4. Could you mention the different phases during your experience?

5. Did you have an oral interview?

Yes _____

No _____

If your answer is yes please mention what it consisted on?

6. Was the interview conducted in English or in Spanish?

7. Did they use any guide when having the interview?

8. Did they tell you the level of English required in the position you were applying?

Yes _____

No _____

If your answer is yes please mention what level of English is needed to be in that position?

9. Were you asked to deal with any other test? Which one?

a) Attitudinal test _____

b) psychological test _____

c) other _____

10. Did they ask you about labor experience?

11 Did you conclude all the phases on the same day or they asked you to go another day?

12. According to your experience, what is more important to get a job in the main hotels of San Salvador?

a) Experience in the area

b) to hold a diploma

c) the level of English

d) Other _____