

# Investigating Beliefs, Motivations, And Satisfaction In English Language Teaching For Elementary School Students In The Municipal Education Network Of Fortaleza, Ce

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## Abstract:

**Background:** This study examined the beliefs, motivations, expectations, and satisfactions of elementary school students in the municipal education network of the city of Fortaleza, CE, in their pursuit of learning the English language. To initiate the exploration, we delved into the increasingly significant role of English as a global language and the challenges students encounter when acquiring a new language.

**Materials and Methods:** The research conducted a comparative analysis of perceptions over time in two successive cohorts. Structured questionnaires were employed to address specific motivations, perceived challenges in different language skills, and the assessment of satisfaction with English instruction. Data were collected over two consecutive years, facilitating a long-term analysis of student beliefs.

**Results:** The primary aim of the study was to understand why students were interested in learning English, identify which skills were considered more challenging, and evaluate initial satisfaction with the teaching. Results revealed that the majority of students were motivated by social activities, such as making friends from other countries. They also acknowledged the importance of learning English for their careers and studies. Speaking skills were frequently perceived as the most challenging. The initial level of satisfaction with teaching was surprisingly high, highlighting a lack of comparison with previous experiences.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, despite acknowledging challenges, students maintained a positive outlook on English instruction. This study provides valuable insights for educators and researchers interested in enhancing foreign language teaching practices in Brazil.

**Keywords:** English language teaching; student motivation; language skills; satisfaction with teaching.

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## I. Introduction

The instruction of the English language (EL) is increasingly prevalent in diverse settings due to the significant reach of this language as an international medium. However, despite this reality, a considerable gap is evident between the expectations of learners and the perspectives of teachers regarding the teaching and learning of English. In an effort to bridge this divide, the study of students' beliefs emerges as a tool to align these two viewpoints on what, why, and how it is necessary to learn and teach English in Secondary Education II.<sup>1</sup>

Analyses of beliefs associated with student learning are gaining more attention from the educational community as they represent a tool enabling teachers to broaden their perspective on the need for implementing a more expressive and effective education<sup>10</sup>. Grounded in the knowledge of learners' aspirations and their beliefs

about learning, educators may possess an additional tool to assess students' performance throughout their years of schooling. The study of beliefs can also provide teachers with valuable feedback on their own educational practice and aid them in seeking solutions to overcome obstacles and challenges.

Given the importance of quality education, the relevance of this investigation is justified, understanding the need to comprehend the various factors influencing the teaching and learning processes, whether related to students' or teachers' beliefs, assisting in establishing goals for the improvement of the educational system. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate, intervene, and attempt to modify the uncomfortable situation of low proficiency among students in English. It is noteworthy that this scientific article is derived from the author's Master's Dissertation defended at the University Del Sol in 2019, as a partial requirement for the Master's degree in Educational Science, with the title: "Study of Students' Beliefs about the Teaching and Learning of English in Public Elementary Education."

This scientific article is organized into four sections. The first is the introduction, providing a brief contextualization and outlining the study's proposal. The second section explains the methodological procedures. The third section is dedicated to the analysis and discussion of results, while the fourth and final section presents the study's conclusion.

## **II. Material And Methods**

Various research approaches exist for studying beliefs about language learning. Barcelos (2004) outlines three approaches for investigating beliefs, providing definitions, methodologies, and the relationship between beliefs and actions. These are classified into three types: normative approach, metacognitive approach, and contextual approach<sup>4</sup>.

According to the normative approach, beliefs are analyzed using Likert-type scale questionnaires, consisting of predetermined statements for learners to express their level of agreement. The commonly used questionnaire in this approach is the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), developed by Elaine Horwitz<sup>4</sup>. Barcelos (2004) emphasizes the use of interviews as a means of validating the questionnaire. However, in this approach, beliefs are considered decontextualized, disregarding the context in the analysis of beliefs, thereby limiting learners from expressing their own beliefs<sup>4</sup>.

In the metacognitive approach, Barcelos (2004) explains that beliefs are conceptualized as metacognitive knowledge, implying the need to recognize learners' beliefs as an integral part of their reasoning process. In this perspective, beliefs are inferred through the use of semi-structured interviews, self-reports, and semi-structured questionnaires. Learners reflect on their language learning process, articulating their beliefs, and beliefs are inferred through learners' intentions and verbal statements<sup>4,7</sup>.

Barcelos (2004) notes that, despite recognizing the relationship between beliefs and context in this approach, the influence of this relationship on learners' beliefs is often ignored in the analysis<sup>4</sup>. In another document, Barcelos (2004) characterizes the metacognitive approach to researching beliefs about language learning, associating it with the investigation of learning strategies<sup>4</sup>.

The contextual approach, as characterized by Barcelos (2007), results from a diversification of employed methodologies and various ways of conducting research on beliefs. In this approach, the context is explored in research on beliefs, marking a departure from earlier studies that did not relate verbal statements to learners' actions and behaviors<sup>5</sup>.

According to Barcelos (2004), the methodology employed in the contextual approach includes interviews and classroom observations, among other methods. This methodology, rich in detail, broadens the understanding of beliefs associated with language learning. The relationship between beliefs and actions is not merely suggested but is investigated and analyzed within the context in which students are immersed<sup>4</sup>.

Given the significance of all three approaches in defining, investigating, and analyzing beliefs, this study adopts the contextual approach, inferring beliefs from the context in which participants operate. It is argued that understanding beliefs requires consideration not only of verbal statements but also of the conditions that the school offers for the teaching and learning of the English language. In this context, the study embraces the qualitative-quantitative research method with the research-action strategy. This type of social investigation, based on empirical evidence, integrates research and action with the aim of collaboratively seeking solutions to real-life situations. The author's interaction with the researched school community as an educator played a pivotal role in choosing this methodology.

Marconi and Lakatos (2017) highlight that qualitative research investigates behavioral events and does not demand complete control of the researcher over the studied object. Given the nature of the research questions and the types of data collected, the qualitative approach is justified, examining contemporary events directly observable by the researcher<sup>6</sup>.

Research in the educational field traditionally utilizes participatory research methods, such as action research and participant observation<sup>9</sup>. However, the use of participatory research methods in the educational

context has been subject to controversy, with debates surrounding the distinctions between participation, collaboration, and cooperation.

The term "action research" is often used synonymously with "participant research," but Thiollent and Oliveira (2016) argues that they are not entirely synonymous. Action research implies a planned form of social and educational action that may not always be present in proposals for participant research. Historically, action research had psychosocial and therapeutic purposes post-World War II<sup>9</sup>.

However, in the 1970s, it underwent changes in its assumptions, influencing Europe, America, and Australia. According to Bastos (2007), researchers in action research behave as active agents, initiating actions, evaluating them based on the involved population, and explicitly observing rather than employing the technique of participant observation<sup>5</sup>.

Action research is socially grounded and empirically based, directly related to a cooperative action in which researchers actively participate. It goes beyond data collection, involving researchers in the school environment during the intervention through differentiated activities based on the analysis of students' initial beliefs. The goal is to overcome adverse conditions in a specific classroom context, with the analysis grounded in facts. The main purpose of action research is intentional behavioral change in individuals and proposing a corrective action to the problem faced.

In this study, the basic action research framework presented by Stringer (1999) is adopted, divided into the stages of look, think, and act. The "look" stage involves collecting crucial information for situational mapping<sup>8</sup>. The "think" stage encompasses exploration and analysis, leading to the interpretation that informs action development. The "act" stage highlights action plan development, implementation, and process evaluation. Stringer's (1999) straightforward and objective framework provides the necessary structure to achieve the proposed objective in this research. It allows for significant participant involvement, learning, and autonomy<sup>8</sup>.

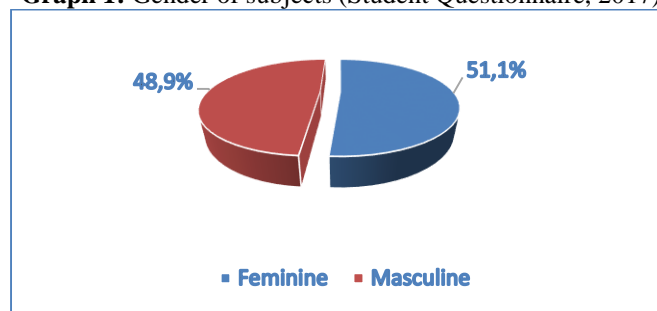
### III. Result

To gain a deeper insight into the beliefs and aspirations of novice students concerning the process of teaching and learning a foreign language (FL) in schools E1, E2, and E3, the results of the investigation were presented. This presentation was based on the analysis of their responses in the administered questionnaire, taking into account its four sections and specific temporal segments.

#### Student Beliefs at E1 and E2 - Temporal Segment 2017

Graph 1 depicts the gender distribution of the research participants in the last quarter of 2017.

**Graph 1: Gender of subjects (Student Questionnaire, 2017)**



Source: Researcher's data

The data reveals that out of the 174 surveyed students, 85 (48.9%) are male and a slightly higher number, 89 (51.1%), are female. Therefore, there is not a significant difference between the number of boys and girls, indicating mixed-gender classrooms. The research demonstrates that in School 1 (E1), out of the 86 surveyed students, 81 (94.1%) of them stated that they do not take any courses outside of school, while 5 (5.9%) mentioned having access to a foreign language (LI) in a course outside of school. A similar situation was observed in School 2 (E2), where out of the 88 surveyed students, 81 (92%) stated not taking any courses outside of school, and only 7 (8%) mentioned having access to a foreign language (LI) in a course outside of school. In other words, out of the 174 surveyed students, only 12 (5.8%) have exposure to this foreign language in an environment outside of the school.

#### First Part

Table 1 presents data related to the students' responses regarding the role of the teacher and the students in the English teaching and learning process.

**Table 1 - The Role of the Teacher and the Student**

Question	Statement	Classes 2017							
		Sixth-grade				Eighth-grade			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
04	To successfully learn English, it is not necessary to study at home. The crucial factor is to attend classes, pay attention, and follow the teacher's instructions in the classroom.	58.1	16.3	22.1	3.5	35.2	17	44.3	3.4
07	A diligent student should not settle for merely what the teacher imparts.	47.7	14	23.3	15.1	64.8	11.4	14.8	9.1
08	The teacher bears the primary responsibility for facilitating my learning.	62.8	23.3	10.5	3.5	47.7	25.0	22.7	4.5
16	To acquire proficiency in English, a high level of interest is imperative.	88.4	2.3	7.0	2.3	75.0	17	5.7	2.3
18	The teacher plays a pivotal role in motivating students.	55.8	20.9	15.1	8.1	54.5	27.3	13.6	4.5
19	I am the principal agent accountable for my own learning.	88.4	7	3.5	1.2	68.2	13.6	14.8	3.4
26	If the teacher is effective, I am inclined to be interested in English classes; conversely, if the teacher is ineffective, I become demotivated.	47.7	15.1	26.7	10.5	39.8	23.9	27.3	9.1

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

According to Table 1, it can be asserted that, for sixth-grade students, 50 (58.1%) believe that to learn English, one must pay attention in class and complete the practices assigned by the teacher. Conversely, the majority of eighth-grade students, 39 (44.3%), disagree with this assertion. Regarding learning, both sixth-grade students, 41 (47.7%), and eighth-grade students, 57 (64.8%), agree that an excellent student is one who does not settle for what is taught by the teacher alone.

Concerning the belief that the teacher is the primary responsible party for one's own learning, the majority of sixth-grade students, 54 (62.8%), agree, while in the eighth grade, 42 (47.7%) express agreement. Regarding the crucial role of the teacher as a motivator, 48 (55.8%) of sixth-grade students attribute this role to teachers, as do 48 (54.5%) of eighth-grade students. In this context, 41 (47.7%) of sixth-grade students, as well as 38 (39.8%) of eighth-grade students, state that their interest is influenced by the teacher, being motivated if the teacher is good and demotivated if the teacher is not. Both sixth-grade students, 76 (88.4%), and eighth-grade students, 66 (75%), consider it very important to have interest in order to learn English. Sixth-grade students, 76 (88.4%), and eighth-grade students, 60 (68.2%), attribute to themselves the responsibility for their own learning.

**Table 2 - Motivation to Learn English**

Question	Statement	Classes 2017							
		Sixth-grade				Eighth-grade			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
17	The students at my school have little interest in learning English.	60.5	18.6	10.5	10.5	61.4	13.6	14.8	10.2
23	Learning English is more interesting than I expected.	69.8	17.4	7	5.8	42	35.2	11.4	11.4
24	I do not enjoy studying English. I only study because I will need it for work or further studies.	17.4	12.8	59.3	10.5	33	14.8	43.2	9.1
25	I have had some negative experiences with the English language.	38.4	18.6	33.7	9.3	40.9	14.8	25	19.3
29	I do not enjoy studying English. I only study to get good grades.	19.8	10.5	58.1	11.6	25	15.9	51.1	8

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

Table 2 shows that the sixth and eighth-grade students agreed that students in their schools have little interest in learning, with the respective percentages of 52 (60.5%) and 54 (61.4%). The majority of sixth-grade students, 60 (69.8%), affirmed that learning English is more interesting than they had imagined, while a smaller number of eighth-grade students, 37 (42%), also expressed this opinion.

Regarding not liking to learn English, only studying because it will be needed for future work or studies, the majority of sixth-grade students, 51 (59.3%), stated that they disagree with this assertion, and similarly, 38 (43.2%) of eighth-grade students also disagreed. Likewise, in terms of not liking to study English but studying only to get good grades, there was disagreement in both classes, with 50 (58.1%) for the sixth grade and 45

(51.1%) for the eighth grade. This is considered a positive aspect, as students do not wish to study solely out of necessity. Thirty-three of the sixth-grade students (38.4%) reported having had some negative experiences with English, and 36 (40.9%) of the eighth-grade students also shared this experience.

**Table 3 - Reasons for Studying the English Language**

Question	Statement	Classes 2017							
		Sixth-grade				Eighth-grade			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
11	Studying English is important for success in life.	55.8	25.6	11.6	7	48.9	20.5	22.7	8
12	Knowing how to speak English will give me more chances of getting a good job.	62.8	20.9	9.3	7	73.9	17	6.8	2.3
13	I would like to learn English to converse with foreigners.	69.8	11.6	9.3	9.3	81.8	8	2.3	8
15	My parents and relatives think it's important for me to learn English.	47.7	22.1	17.4	12.8	35.2	14.8	17	33
22	I would like to learn English to understand movies and songs.	80.2	9.3	9.3	1.2	73.9	15.9	3.4	6.8
27	English is one of the most important subjects I have in school.	32.6	29.1	26.7	11.6	18.2	28.4	39.8	13.6
28	English is a bridge that leads me to learn about other cultures and peoples.	79.1	10.5	7	3.5	67.0	15.9	8	9.1
31	I believe it is more important to learn to speak English.	47.7	26.7	17.4	8.1	43.2	33	13.6	10.2

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

According to Table 3, 48 (55.8%) of sixth-grade students and 43 (48.9%) of eighth-grade students agree that studying English is necessary for success in social and work life. Similarly, they also believe that knowing how to speak English will secure them a good job, with 54 (62.8%) in the sixth grade and 65 (73.9%) in the eighth grade. Both sixth-grade students, 60 (69.8%), and eighth-grade students, 72 (81.8%), express a desire to learn English to converse with foreigners. Additionally, they agree that their parents and relatives consider it important for them to learn English, with 41 (47.7%) in the sixth grade and 31 (35.2%) in the eighth grade. The majority of students stated their intention to learn English to understand movies and songs, with 69 (80.2%) in the sixth grade and 65 (73.9%) in the eighth grade.

While the majority of sixth-grade students, 28 (32.6%), agreed that English is one of the most important subjects they have in school, eighth-grade students, 35 (39.8%), disagreed with this assertion. In this context, sixth-grade students, 68 (79.1%), agree that learning English can be a path that leads them to explore cultures and peoples adopting the English language. Despite not assigning the same importance to English as sixth-grade students, eighth-grade students, 59 (67%), also recognize that learning English can be a pathway to understanding cultures and peoples who adopt the English language. Both sixth-grade students, 41 (47.7%), and eighth-grade students, 32 (43.2%), express confidence that the most important aspect is to learn to speak English.

**Table 4 - English Learning**

Question	Statement	Classes 2017							
		Sixth-grade				Eighth-grade			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
1	To learn English, one should translate everything.	62.8	10.5	19.8	7	60.3	30.7	4.5	4.5
2	To learn English, one should study a lot of grammar.	33.7	18.6	29.1	18.6	28.4	26.1	28.4	17
3	To learn English, it is necessary to memorize a lot of vocabulary.	54.7	20.9	16.3	8.1	51.1	19.3	17.0	12.5
5	To learn English, I must repeat and practice a lot.	68.6	14	16.3	1.2	80.7	13.6	3.4	2.3
6	I can study English the same way I study Portuguese.	22.1	19.8	50	8.1	30.7	21.6	37.5	10.2
9	English is more difficult than Portuguese.	52.3	18.6	19.8	9.3	56.9	9.1	26.1	8
10	I can successfully learn English here in Brazil. I don't need to go to another country.	73.3	15.1	5.8	5.8	59.1	17	9.1	14.8
14	I find it easy to learn English.	27.9	37.2	27.9	7	9.1	26.1	48.9	15.9
20	The textbook is very important.	70.9	11.6	10.5	7	59.1	22.7	5.7	12.5
21	Pictures, songs, games, and movies spark my interest in learning English.	55.8	22.1	15.1	7	64.8	15.9	11.4	8

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

The data from Table 4 indicate that 54 (62.8%) of sixth-grade students and 53 (60.3%) of eighth-grade students agree that translating everything is necessary to learn English. Sixth-grade students share the same opinion, with 29 (33.7%) also agreeing that they should learn a lot of grammar. However, for eighth-grade students, there is a tie between those who agree with this statement (25 or 28.4%) and those who disagree (25 or 28.4%). Regarding the requirements for learning English, 47 (54.7%) sixth-grade students and 45 (51.1%) eighth-grade students agree that memorizing a lot of vocabulary is necessary. Similarly, they also agree that repetition and practice are crucial, with 59 (68.6%) in sixth grade and 71 (80.7%) in eighth grade.

As for studying English in the same way as Portuguese, both sixth-grade students (43 or 50%) and eighth-grade students (33 or 37.5%) disagree with this assertion. Regarding the belief that English is more complicated than Portuguese, 45 (52.3%) sixth-grade students and 50 (56.8%) eighth-grade students agreed with this statement. Concerning the assertion that it is possible to learn English in Brazil without going to another country, the majority of sixth-grade students, 63 (73.3%), and a significant portion of eighth-grade students, 52 (59.1%), agree that it is possible. Regarding the ease of learning English, the majority of sixth-grade students (32 or 37.2%) partially agreed with this assertion, with an equal split between agreeing and disagreeing (24 or 27.9%) each. On the other hand, the majority of eighth-grade students (43 or 48.9%) disagreed with this assertion. Both sixth-grade students (61 or 70.9%) and eighth-grade students (52 or 59.1%) consider the textbook to be very important for learning. Additionally, the majority of sixth-grade students (48 or 55.8%) and eighth-grade students (57 or 64.8%) fully agree that illustrations, music, games, and movies stimulate their interest in studying English.

**Table 5 - Future Expectations**

Question	Statement	Classes 2017							
		Sixth-grade				Eighth-grade			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
30	I believe I will learn many things in English	88.4	5.8	2.3	3.5	70.5	13.6	10.2	5.7

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

As for expectations regarding learning English, the students are quite optimistic. Both sixth-grade students, 76 (88.4%), and eighth-grade students, 62 (70.5%), asserted that they have confidence in learning many situations that English learning can provide.

**Second Part**

Table 6 presents the main reasons provided by students for wanting to learn English. These data can be compared with Table 3, which outlines some of the reasons for studying English.

**Table 6 - Reasons for Wanting to Learn English**

Question	Statement	Classes 2017							
		Sixth-grade				Eighth-grade			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
1	I would like to have friends in other countries.	40.7	25.6	16.3	10.5	7	29.5	33	13.6
2	I will need English for work or study.	55.8	23.3	12.8	7	1.2	56.8	26.1	10.2
3	I need English to secure a spot at the university.	47.7	22.1	10.5	15.1	4.7	47.7	28.4	14.8
4	I want to communicate on the Internet with people who speak English.	38.4	18.6	15.1	11.6	16.3	33	23.9	19.3
5	I would like to read magazines, books, and websites in English.	34.9	15.1	32.6	8.1	9.3	34.1	20.5	14.8
6	I would like to visit other countries without difficulties in communication.	64	15.1	10.5	5.8	4.7	70.5	11.4	6.8
7	I want to acquire more knowledge through the English language.	61.6	20.9	5.8	8.1	3.5	56.8	20.5	10.2
8	I have an interest in understanding movies, music, and games.	44.2	25.6	11.6	11.6	7	54.5	22.7	12.5
9	I want to learn about the culture of other peoples.	48.8	23.3	12.8	7	8.1	44.3	19.3	17
10	I want to have good grades in school.	77.9	10.5	3.5	7	1.2	64.8	21.6	5.7
11	I would like to speak English well.	75.6	10.5	3.5	8.1	2.3	68.2	23.9	3.4

<b>12</b>	I want to be a global citizen, and for that, I need to know the language with the widest international reach.	52.3	27.9	9.3	8.1	2.3	50	20.5	12.5
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Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

In analyzing Table 6, it can be affirmed that the majority of sixth and eighth-grade students consider all 12 statements as highly necessary reasons for wanting to learn English. For instance, 35 (40.7%) sixth-grade students find the desire to have friends in other countries very important, with only 06 (7%) stating that this reason is not important. On the other hand, eighth-grade students, with 29 (33%), assigned less relevance to this reason, categorizing it as only important, and 03 (3.4%) mentioned that it is not important for them to want to learn English. Regarding the need to learn English for work or study, 48 (55.8%) sixth-grade students also identified this reason as very important, with only 01 (1.2%) stating that they do not consider it important. Similarly, 50 (56.8%) eighth-grade students consider this assertion very important, and only 01 (1.1%) gave little importance to it.

Concerning the need for English to secure a spot at the university, 41 (47.7%) sixth-grade students identified this reason as very important, with only 04 (4.7%) stating that they do not consider it important. Additionally, 42 (47.7%) eighth-grade students consider this assertion very important, and only 08 (9.1%) affirmed that this assertion is not important for them to want to learn English. Thirty-three sixth-grade students (38.4%) mentioned the desire to interact on the Internet with other English speakers as a very important reason for wanting to study English. However, a significant number, 14 (16.3%), stated that this assertion does not matter.

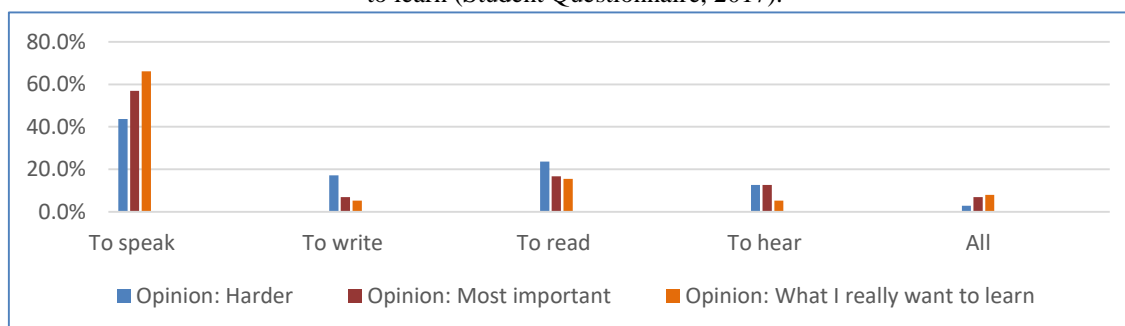
In comparison, 29 (33%) eighth-grade students also gave great importance to this reason as a motivator for learning English, and a substantial number, 12 (13.6%), mentioned that this assertion does not matter. Thirty-six sixth-grade students (34.9%) consider it very important to want to learn English due to the interest in reading magazines, books, and websites in English. Similarly, 30 (34.1%) eighth-grade students also attached great importance to this assertion.

The statement "I would like to visit other countries, without difficulties in communicating" was classified as very important by both 55 (64%) sixth-grade students and 62 (70.5%) eighth-grade students. Concerning the desire to acquire more knowledge through the English language, this statement was identified as very important by 53 (61.6%) sixth-grade students and 50 (56.8%) eighth-grade students. Thirty-eight sixth-grade students (44.2%) pointed out as very important the interest in understanding movies, music, and games, while 48 (54.5%) eighth-grade students also assigned great importance to this assertion. Regarding the desire to learn about the culture of other peoples as one of the reasons for wanting to learn English, 42 (48.8%) sixth-grade students identified this reason as very important, while 39 (44.3%) eighth-grade students did the same. Sixty-seven sixth-grade students (77.9%) considered as very important the interest in achieving good grades in school. Similarly, 57 (64.8%) eighth-grade students also attached great importance to this reason. "I would like to speak English well" was one of the reasons identified as very important for 65 (75.6%) sixth-grade students wanting to learn English and for 60 (68.2%) eighth-grade students. Forty-five (52.3%) pointed out the desire to be a global citizen and for that needing to know the language of the widest international reach as a reason for wanting to learn English. Similarly, 44 (50%) also identified this assertion as very important. It is observed that despite the age difference, there is a certain congruence between the collected elements, as the contexts are very similar. Additionally, there is a slight decline in the expectations attributed to English by eighth-grade students.

### Third Part

Graph 2 presents the students' opinions regarding the English language skills they consider most challenging, most important, and the ones they genuinely want to learn.

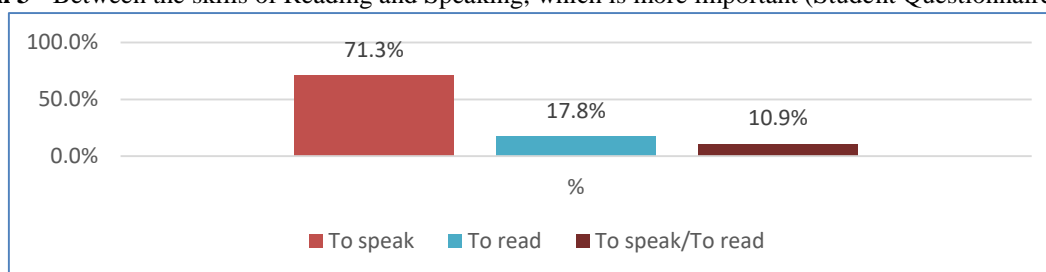
**Graph 2** - Comparison between skills: the most difficult, the most important, and the ones students really want to learn (Student Questionnaire, 2017).



Source: Researcher's Data

Regarding question 1, out of the 174 surveyed students, 76 (43.7%) asserted that the most challenging skill in English is speaking; 41 (23.6%) considered reading as the most difficult skill; 30 (17.2%) identified writing; 22 (12.6%) mentioned listening, and 05 (2.9%) believed that all four skills are difficult. Concerning question 2, where students were asked to indicate the skill they considered most important, out of the 174 surveyed students, 99 (56.9%) stated that speaking is the most important skill, 29 (16.7%) chose reading, 22 (12.6%) selected listening, and 12 (6.9%) pointed out that writing is the most important skill. An equal number of respondents considered all four skills to be very important. In the case of question 3, which focused on the skill they truly want to learn, the collected data are as follows: 115 (66.1%) mentioned speaking, 27 (15.5%) indicated reading, 14 (8%) expressed a desire to learn all four skills, and the same number of students (9 or 5.2%) stated they want to learn both writing and all four skills. Graph 3 illustrates the skill that students consider more important between reading and speaking, along with the reasons for their choice.

**Graph 3 - Between the skills of Reading and Speaking, which is more important (Student Questionnaire, 2017).**



Source: Researcher's Data

Regarding question number 4, in which students were asked to indicate what they consider more important between the skills of reading and speaking, the majority, 124 (71.3%) out of the 174 surveyed, stated that speaking is more important. Meanwhile, 31 (17.8%) affirmed that the skill of reading is more important, and 19 (10.9%) expressed that both skills are important because they are equally necessary. The main reasons provided for giving more importance to speaking include: the ability to communicate, understanding what others say, it being more challenging, the research potential enabled by reading, the universal need for speaking, the enjoyment of speaking, the desire to learn, the belief that the entire world will use the English language, the showcasing of personal development through speaking, the widespread use of English making speaking important, speaking being the most crucial aspect of language, communication occurring through speech, the necessity of establishing conversations with foreigners, and the enjoyment of communication.

For those who chose the skill of reading, justifications included: the ability to understand various things, comprehension of texts, the discovery of new information through reading, ease of understanding, the importance of knowing how to read, a personal interest in reading, the acquisition of more information, and the assistance of reading in the learning process.

Students who indicated that both skills are important gave the following reasons: the need for both in the future, the fundamental nature of both for learning, the desire to learn both, the dependence on the desired form of communication, the recognition that both are important, difficult, and necessary, and the acknowledgment that reading and speaking complement each other. Students' responses reveal that, in studying English, they envision the ability to communicate, which is why they attribute greater importance to the skill of speaking. This contradicts some studies that suggest students lack interest in communicative skills.

**Table 7 - Countries that Students Know Speak English (2017)**

Country	School 1	School 2	Total	%
Africa/South America/North America	6	0	6	3.4
South Africa	4	12	16	9.1
Germany	3	0	3	1.7
Australia	3	12	15	8.6
Brazil	1	2	3	1.7
Canada	17	27	44	25.2
United States	50	68	118	67.8
Europe	7	4	11	6.3
England	37	42	79	45.4
Jamaica	11	10	21	12
I don't know	10	2	12	6.8
New York	4	0	4	2.2
Orlando	4	1	5	2.8
Pakistan	0	10	10	5.7

Source: Compiled by the researcher



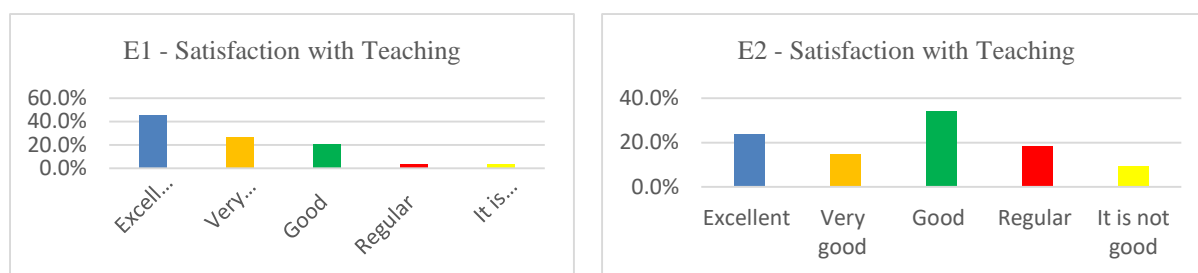
The data from Table 7 reveal that out of the 174 surveyed students in 2017, 118 of them, corresponding to 67.8% of the total, are aware that English is spoken in the United States. England was mentioned by 79 students, accounting for 45.4%, Canada was indicated by 44 students, representing 25.2%, Jamaica was mentioned by 21 students, accounting for 12%, while South Africa was cited by 16 students (9.1%). Australia, in turn, was mentioned by 15 students, corresponding to 8.6% of the sample, and 15 students mentioned Pakistan (5.7%).

The table also shows that some students mentioned continents (Africa, America, Europe), while others mentioned city names (New York/Orlando), demonstrating a deficiency in geography, specifically in distinguishing between continents, countries, and cities. A significant number also responded by stating they did not know, with 12 students (6.8%). Upon analyzing the table, it is evident that even as beginners in the English language, eighth-grade students demonstrate more geographical knowledge, as they mentioned more countries, fewer cities and continents, with only 2 stating that they did not know, compared to 10 in the sixth grade.

**Fourth Part – Satisfaction with English Teaching**

Graph 4 reveals that out of the 86 students from School 1 (sixth grade) who responded to the questionnaire, the majority, accounting for 39 (45.3%), express satisfaction with the English teaching they receive, rating it as excellent. 23 (26.7%) rate the teaching as very good, 18 (20.9%) rate it as good, 3 (3.5%) rate it as average, and another 3 (3.5%) consider it weak.

**Graph 4 - Students E1. (Student Questionnaire, 2017) Graph 5 - Students E2. (Student Questionnaire, 2017)**



Source: Researcher's Data

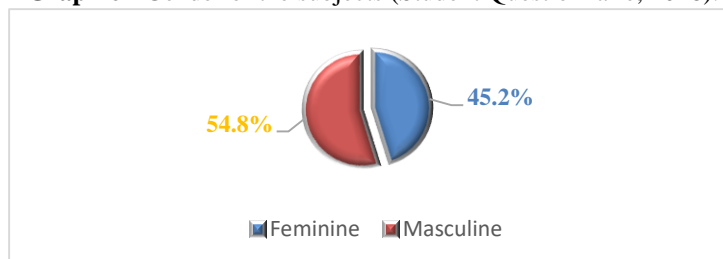
According to Graph 5, it can be asserted that out of the 88 students from School 2 (eighth grade) who responded to the questionnaire, the majority, corresponding to 30 (34.1%), claim to be fully satisfied with the English instruction they receive, rating it as excellent. 21 (23.9%) rate the teaching as excellent, 16 (18.2%) rate it as average, 13 (14.8%) rate it as very good, and 8 (9.1%) consider the teaching as weak.

Comparing the elements of Graphs 4 and 5, it is evident that students, when starting the study of the English language, are still very optimistic and, having not had access to the study of this language, do not yet have a benchmark for comparing the quality of the instruction received. However, it can be perceived that despite being in beginner English classes, eighth-grade students demonstrate more critical thinking when answering questions, as they have more world knowledge and, therefore, are more demanding in their evaluations.

**Student Beliefs from Class E3 – Temporal Cut – 2018**

In the first semester of 2018, due to a new assignment, it was necessary to investigate the students in Class E3. It is noteworthy that out of the 62 students in Class E3 (seventh grade), 30 are from Class A (Action Research) and 32 are from Class B (Control). Graph 6 shows that out of the 62 surveyed students, 34 (54.8%) are male, and 28 (45.2%) are female. It is observed that, as in the classes surveyed in 2017, there is no significant difference in the number of boys and girls.

**Graph 6 - Gender of the subjects (Student Questionnaire, 2018).**



Source: Researcher's Data

It is worth noting that, just like in E1 and E2, in E3, out of the 62 students who participated in the research, 59 (95.1%) of them stated that they do not take any courses outside of school, and 03 (4.9%) mentioned having access to English through a course outside of school. Thus, the school is the main avenue for these students to engage with the English language.

First Part

Table 8 presents the students' responses regarding the role of the teacher and the students in the teaching-learning process of English.

**Table 8 - The Role of the Teacher and the Student**

Question	Statement	Classes 2018							
		Class A				Class B			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
04	To successfully learn English, it is not necessary to study at home. The crucial factor is to attend classes, pay attention, and follow the teacher's instructions in the classroom.	53.3	23.3	20	3.4	34.4	21.9	43.8	0
07	A diligent student should not settle for merely what the teacher imparts.	50	23.4	13.3	13.3	59.4	25	12.5	3.1
08	The teacher bears the primary responsibility for facilitating my learning.	56.7	20	10	13.3	46.9	31.3	18.8	3.1
16	To acquire proficiency in English, a high level of interest is imperative.	70	30	0	0	84.4	12.5	0	3.1
18	The teacher plays a pivotal role in motivating students.	40	33.3	16.7	10	31.3	46.9	21.9	0
19	I am the principal agent accountable for my own learning.	80	10	6.7	3.3	81.3	15.6	3.1	0
26	If the teacher is effective, I am inclined to be interested in English classes; conversely, if the teacher is ineffective, I become demotivated.	46.7	20	13.3	20	40.6	31.3	28.1	0

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

Upon analyzing the data, it can be affirmed that for students in Class A, 16 (53.3%) believe that to learn English, it is important to focus on the lessons and complete the activities presented by the teacher. In contrast, the majority of students in Class B, 14 (43.8%), disagree with this assertion. Regarding learning, both Class A students, 15 (50.0%), and Class B students, 19 (59.4%), agree that a good student is one who is not content with only what the teacher teaches.

Concerning whether the teacher is primarily responsible for their own learning, the majority of Class A students, 17 (56.7%), agreed, and in Class B, 15 (46.9%) also agreed. Regarding the teacher's role as a motivator, 12 (40%) of Class A students attribute this role to the teacher, while 15 (46.9%) of Class B students only partially agree that this role belongs to the teacher. In this context, 14 (46.7%) of Class A students, as well as 13 (40.6%) of Class B students, mentioned that if the teacher is good (in their understanding), they are interested in the classes, but if the teacher is perceived as bad (also in their understanding), they become demotivated. Both Class A students, 21 (70%), and Class B students, 27 (84.4%), consider it essential to have an interest in order to learn English. Students in Class A, 24 (80%), and Class B, 26 (81.3%), attribute the responsibility for their learning to themselves.

**Table 9 - Motivation to Learn English**

Question	Statement	Classes 2018							
		Class A				Class B			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
17	The students at my school have little interest in learning English.	13.3	26.7	30	30	28.1	28.1	18.8	25
23	Learning English is more interesting than I expected.	60	33.4	3.3	3.3	59.4	25	12.5	3.1
24	I do not enjoy studying English. I only study because I will need it for work or further studies.	13.3	23.3	56.7	6.7	21.9	12.5	62.5	3.1
25	I have had some negative experiences with the English language.	26.7	23.3	33.3	16.7	31.3	15.6	37.5	15.6
29	I do not enjoy studying English. I only study to get good grades.	23.4	13.3	50	13.3	15.6	15.6	65.6	3.1

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

According to Table 9, students in Class A, 09 (30%), stated that they disagree that students in their school have low interest in learning English, and the same number, 09 (30%), said they did not know how to respond. On the other hand, students in Class B, 09 (28.1%), stated that they totally agree that students in their school have low interest in learning English, and the same number, 09 (28.1%), said they agree partially with this assertion. The majority of students in Class A, 18 (60%), said that learning English is more interesting than they imagined, and those in Class B, 19 (59.4%), also expressed this opinion. Regarding not liking to study English, only studying because it will be needed for work or study, the majority of students in Class A, 17 (56.7%), stated that they disagree with this assertion, and those in Class B, also 20 (62.5%). Similarly, in relation to not liking to study English, only studying to get grades, there was also disagreement in both classes, with 15 (50%) for Class A and 21 (65.6%) for Class B. Just like in the 2017 classes, students stated that they do not want to study English only out of necessity. Eight students in Class A (26.7%) stated that they have had some bad experience with English, and 10 (31.3%) of the students in Class B also had similar experiences. However, it is worth noting that the majority of students in both classes disagree with this assertion, with 10 (33.3%) in Class A and 12 (37.5%) in Class B.

**Table 10 - Reasons for Studying English**

Question	Statement	Classes 2018							
		Class A				Class B			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
11	Studying English is important for success in life.	36.7	23.3	13.3	26.7	37.5	50	9.4	3.1
12	Knowing how to speak English will give me more chances of getting a good job.	50	33.4	13.3	3.3	62.5	25	12.5	0
13	I would like to learn English to converse with foreigners.	73.3	20	6.7	0	84.4	6.3	9.4	0
15	My parents and relatives think it's important for me to learn English.	53.3	26.7	6.7	13.3	59.4	18.8	15.6	6.3
22	I would like to learn English to understand movies and songs.	73.3	20	6.7	0	81.3	18.7	0	0
27	English is one of the most important subjects I have in school.	20	40	26.7	13.3	28.1	31.3	37.5	3.1
28	English is a bridge that leads me to learn about other cultures and peoples.	73.3	13.3	6.7	6.7	71.9	21.9	3.1	3.1
31	I believe it is more important to learn to speak English.	40	36.7	3.3	20	43.8	34.4	21.9	0

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

According to Table 10, 11 (36.7%) of students in Class A totally agree that studying English is important to achieve success in life, while 16 (50%) in Class B only partially agree with this assertion. Similarly, they believe that if they can speak English, they will be able to get a good job, with 15 (50%) students in Class A and 20 (62.5%) students in Class B. Both students in Class A, 22 (73.3%), and those in Class B, 27 (84.4%), wish to learn English to converse with foreigners. They also agree that their parents and family members consider it important for them to learn English, with 16 (53.3%) in Class A and 19 (59.4%) in Class B.

The majority of students stated that they would love to learn English to understand movies and English songs, with 22 (73.3%) in Class A and 26 (81.3%) in Class B. While the majority of students in Class A, 12 (40%), partially agreed that English is one of the most important subjects in school, students in Class B, 12 (37.5%), said they disagreed with this assertion. In this context, students in Class A, 22 (73.3%), agree that English is a bridge that leads them to learn about other cultures and peoples.

Although not giving the same importance to English as was given by students in Class A, students in Class B, 23 (71.9%), also recognize it as a bridge between knowledge. Students in Class A, 12 (40%), and also those in Class B, 14 (43.8%), trust that it is essential to learn to speak English.

**Table 11 - Learning English**

Question	Statement	Classes 2018							
		Class A				Class B			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
1	To learn English, one should translate everything.	50.0	43.4	3.3	3.3	78.1	18.8	0	3.1
2	To learn English, one should study a lot of grammar.	33.3	36.7	20	10	40.6	25.0	18.8	15.6
3	To learn English, it is necessary to memorize a lot of vocabulary.	60	26.6	6.7	6.7	31.3	31.3	28.1	9.4

5	To learn English, I must repeat and practice a lot.	90	3.3	6.7	0	90.7	3.1	3.1	3.1
6	I can study English the same way I study Portuguese.	20	26.6	46.7	6.7	15.6	34.4	46.9	2.1
9	English is more difficult than Portuguese.	60	16.7	16.7	6.6	59.4	9.4	18.8	12.5
10	I can successfully learn English here in Brazil. I don't need to go to another country.	53.3	26.7	10	10	59.4	25.0	12.5	3.1
14	I find it easy to learn English.	43.3	23.3	26.7	6.7	21.9	37.5	40.6	0
20	The textbook is very important.	80	13.4	3.3	3.3	84.4	12.5	3.1	0
21	Pictures, songs, games, and movies spark my interest in learning English.	53.3	16.7	16.7	13.3	59.4	31.3	9.4	0

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

The data from Table 11 indicates that 15 (50%) students in Class A and 25 (78.1%) in Class B agree that translating everything is necessary to learn English. Among Class A students, 11 (36.7%) partially agree that they should study a lot of grammar, while the majority of Class B students, 13 (40%), fully agree with this statement. Regarding the requirements for learning English, 18 (60%) Class A students fully agree that memorizing a lot of vocabulary is necessary. For Class B students, there is a tie between those who fully agree and those who partially agree with this statement, both at 10 (31.3%).

Similarly, both Class A (27 students, 90%) and Class B (29 students, 90.6%) agree that repetition and extensive practice are necessary. Regarding the possibility of studying English in the same way as studying Portuguese, both Class A (14 students, 46.7%) and Class B (15 students, 46.9%) disagree with this assertion.

Concerning the belief that English is more difficult than Portuguese, the majority of students in both classes fully agree with this statement, with 18 (60%) in Class A and 19 (59.4%) in Class B. Regarding the assertion that it is possible to learn English in Brazil without traveling to another country, the majority of Class A students (16 students, 53.3%), as well as Class B students (19 students, 59.4%), fully agree with this statement.

Regarding the ease of learning English, the majority of Class A students (13 students, 43.3%) fully agree with this assertion. In contrast, the majority of Class B students (13 students, 40.6%) disagree with this assertion. Both Class A (24 students, 80%) and Class B (27 students, 84.4%) fully agree that the textbook is essential for learning. Additionally, Class A students (16 students, 53.3%), as well as Class B students (19 students, 59.4%), fully agree that illustrations, music, games, and movies stimulate their interest in learning English.

**Table 12 - Future Expectations**

Question	Statement	Classes 2018							
		Class A				Class B			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
30	I believe I will learn many things in English	80.0	13.3	0	6.7	81.3	12.5	6.3	0

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

Table 12 demonstrates that regarding expectations for learning English, students are quite optimistic, with both Class A (24 students, 80%) and Class B (26 students, 81.3%) expressing full agreement that they will learn many things in English.

**Second Part**

Table 13 presents the main reasons given by students for wanting to learn English. These data can be compared with Table 3, which outlines some of the reasons for studying English.

**Table 13 - Reasons for Wanting to Learn English**

Question	Statement	Classes 2018							
		Class A				Class B			
		%4	%3	%2	%1	%4	%3	%2	%1
1	I would like to have friends in other countries.	36.7	33.3	20	10	0	31.3	34.4	21.9
2	I will need English for work or study.	70	10	13.3	3.3	3.3	62.5	15.6	12.5
3	I need English to secure a spot at the university.	66.7	16.7	10	6.7	0	46.9	18.8	21.9
4	I want to communicate on the Internet with people who speak English.	23.3	23.3	26.7	10	16.7	31.3	18.8	31.3
5	I would like to read magazines, books, and websites in English.	46.7	36.7	6.7	3.3	6.7	31.3	15.6	18.8

6	I would like to visit other countries without difficulties in communication.	73.3	10	0	13.3	3.3	71.9	15.6	6.3
7	I want to acquire more knowledge through the English language.	53.3	36.7	3.3	6.7	0	46.9	25.9	12.5
8	I have an interest in understanding movies, music, and games.	50	23.3	13.3	13.3	0	40.6	28.1	15.6
9	I want to learn about the culture of other peoples.	23.3	30	20	23.3	3.3	37.5	21.9	21.9
10	I want to have good grades in school.	83.3	6.7	10	0	0	62.5	15.6	12.5
11	I would like to speak English well.	70	20	0	10	0	59.4	12.5	9.4
12	I want to be a global citizen, and for that, I need to know the language with the widest international reach.	46.7	33.3	10	10	0	40.6	18.8	15.6

Source: Researcher's Data

Legend: 4 - Strongly Agree; 3 - Partially Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Unable to Respond

Analyzing the previous table, it can be affirmed that the majority of students in both Class A and Class B consider the 12 assertions as fundamental reasons for wanting to learn English. For Class A students, 11 (36.7%) point out the desire to have friends in other countries as very important, with only 03 (10%) stating that this reason is of little importance. On the other hand, Class B students gave less significance to this reason, with 11 (34.4%) classifying it only as important, and 01 (3.1%) stating that this reason is not fundamental for wanting to learn English.

Regarding the need for English for work or study, 21 (70%) Class A students also pointed out this reason as very important, with only 01 (3.3%) stating that they do not consider this reason important. In Class B, 20 (62.5%) students consider this assertion very important, with only 01 (3.1%) giving little importance to it.

Concerning the need for English to secure a place at the university, 41 (47.7%) Class A students also indicated this reason as very important, with only 04 (4.7%) stating that they do not consider this reason important. In Class B, 42 (47.7%) students consider this assertion very important, with only 08 (9.1%) stating that this assertion is not important for wanting to learn English. Eight Class A students (26.7%) stated that the desire to communicate via the Internet with English speakers is somewhat important, while a significant number, 07 (23.3%), affirmed that this assertion is very important, and an equal number found it important. In contrast, for Class B, there was a tie between the options, with 10 (31.3%) of students classifying this reason as very important and 10 (31.3%) as somewhat important.

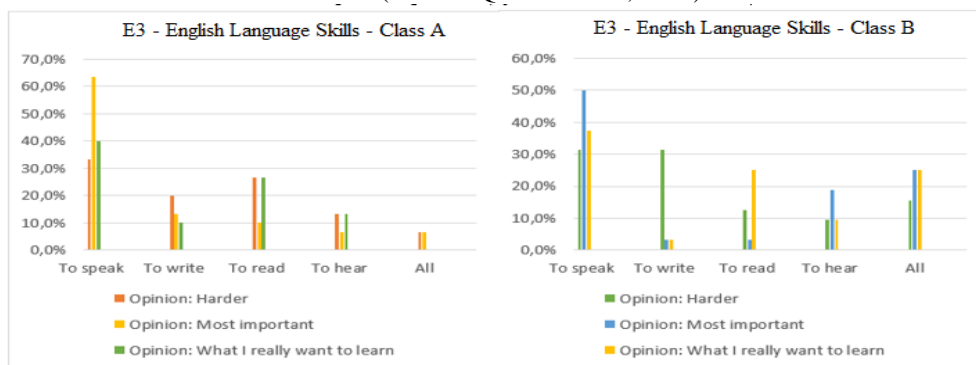
Fourteen Class A students (46.7%) consider it very important to want to learn English to read magazines, books, and websites in English. Ten Class B students (31.3%) also gave considerable importance to this assertion. The assertion "would like to visit other countries without difficulty in communicating" was classified as very important for both 22 (73.3%) Class A students and 23 (71.9%) Class B students. Regarding the desire to acquire more knowledge through English, this assertion was deemed very important by 16 (53.3%) Class A students and by 15 (46.9%) Class B students. Fifteen Class A students (50%) consider it very important to want to learn English to have an interest in understanding movies, music, and games, while 48 (54.5%) Class B students also attached great importance to this assertion. As for wanting to learn about the culture of other peoples as a reason to want to learn English, 9 (30%) Class A students pointed out this reason as important, while 12 (37.5%) Class B students stated that it is very important.

Twenty-five Class A students (83.3%) consider it very important to want to learn English to aspire to have good grades in school, and 20 (62.5%) Class B students also gave great relevance to this reason. "Would like to speak English well" was one of the reasons pointed out as very important for 21 (70%) Class A students to want to learn English and for 19 (59.4%) Class B students. Fourteen Class A students (46.7%) pointed out as a reason to want to learn English the desire to be a cosmopolitan citizen and for this, needing to know the language of the most internationally influential. Meanwhile, 13 (40.6%) Class B students also considered this assertion very important. It is worth noting that there is considerable congruence between the responses, given that the context is the same.

### Third Part

The Graph 7 presents the dataset obtained from the students' responses to questions 1, 2, and 3 regarding language learning skills.

**Graph 7** - Comparison between skills: the most difficult, the most important, and the ones students really want to learn (Student Questionnaire, 2018).



Source: Researcher's Data

The students da Class A indicated the speaking skill as the most challenging, with 10 (33.3%) students justifying that this skill is difficult because the English language has different sounds and a very extensive structure, requiring effort from the student as the language is complex and challenging. They mentioned difficulty in understanding and pronouncing words correctly. The second most challenging skill was reading, with 8 (26.7%) students pointing out that letters and words are different and difficult compared to Portuguese, making it seem as if they are scrambled. They also mentioned not learning many words and needing more knowledge, finding the language strange. Writing was ranked third, mentioned by 6 (20%) students. Listening was chosen by 4 (13.3%) students who stated difficulties in understanding spoken English, the pronunciation being hard to comprehend, and the disparity between spoken and written language. Finally, 2 (6.7%) students ranked all skills as difficult<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, students from Class B identified speaking and writing as equally challenging, with 10 (31.3%) students each. They explained the difficulty in speaking by feeling tongue-tied, as words are challenging to read, and the language seems unfamiliar. Writing, on the other hand, was considered difficult due to the presence of unfamiliar words not used in Portuguese, the difficulty in remembering words, and the challenge of learning. The second most challenging category was all skills, with 5 (15.6%) students stating that every skill is complicated. Reading was ranked third, mentioned by 4 (12.5%) students. Listening was chosen by 3 (9.4%) students who found it complicated due to difficulties in understanding spoken English, and pronunciation seeming different. Finally, writing and reading were ranked least relevant by 01 (3.1%) student each<sup>2</sup>.

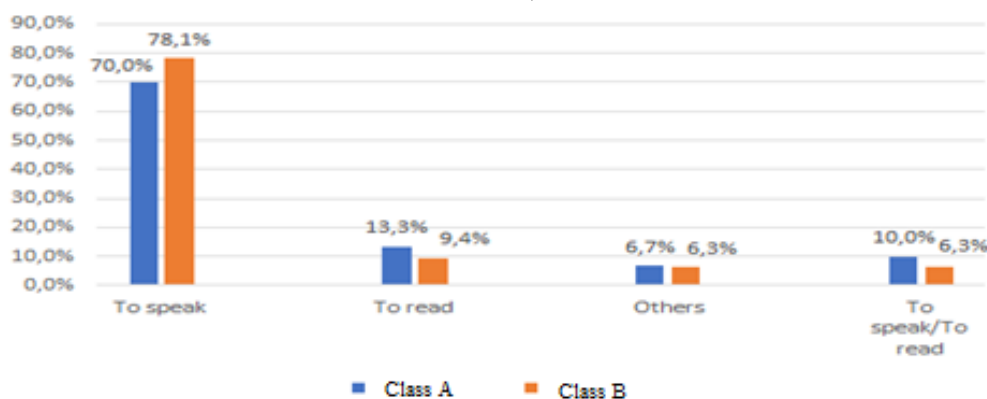
Concerning the most important skill, Class A students identified speaking as the top priority, with 19 (63.3%) students considering it crucial for not getting confused in other countries, effective communication, enhancing their résumé, and as an essential skill for travel. Writing was the second most important skill, pointed out by 4 (13.3%) students who emphasized its importance for personal satisfaction and learning. Reading was ranked third by 3 (10%) students, who mentioned the importance of understanding games and acquiring more knowledge. Listening and all skills were ranked fourth, with 2 (6.7%) students each, with reasons such as the difficulty in understanding others, the practicality of listening, and the relevance of learning all skills for a comprehensive understanding of English.

Similarly, Class B students identified speaking as the most important skill, with 16 (50%) students emphasizing its importance for travel, deepening knowledge, communication with people, pronunciation learning, and future benefits. All skills were the second most important, with 8 (25%) students finding it more interesting and essential for future learning. Listening was ranked third, with 6 (18.8%) students emphasizing its importance for understanding others, enjoying words, and practicing listening and repetition. Writing and reading were ranked least important, with 01 (3.1%) student each, who mentioned the ability to read and write in English.

When asked about the skill they would like to learn the most, Class A students expressed a preference for speaking (40%), reading (36.7%), listening (13.3%), and writing (10%). Reasons included the desire to translate, the complexity of learning, the importance of communication, the interest in understanding movies and games, and the simplicity of performing tasks, exams, speaking, and others.

Class B students, when asked the same question, expressed a preference for speaking (37.5%), reading (25%), all skills (25%), and listening (9.4%). Reasons included the desire to communicate with people from other countries, enjoyment, the dream of learning correct pronunciation, the ability to answer questions instantly, understanding subtitles, and the excitement of learning.

**Graph 8** - Between the skills of Reading and Speaking, which is the most important (Student Questionnaire, 2018).



Source: Researcher's Data

Regarding question number 4, in which they were asked to indicate what they consider more important between the skills of reading and speaking, the majority, 21 (70%) out of 30 respondents from Class A, stated that speaking is more important, 4 (13.3%) chose reading, 3 (10%) indicated both skills, and 2 (6.3%) pointed to other skills. On the other hand, 25 (78.1%) out of 32 students from Class B asserted that the speaking skill is more important, 3 (9.4%) chose the reading skill, 2 (6.3%) selected both skills, and the same number, 2 (6.3%), opted for other skills. The information from Graph 8 reveals that the results are very close, which is justifiable given that students from both classes are of the same age and are also students who are having their first contact with the English language in the same context.

**Table 14** - Countries that Students Know Speak English (2018)

Country	E3 Class A	E3 Class B	Total	%
America	1	0	1	1,6
Argentina	0	1	1	1,6
Asia	0	1	1	1,6
Australia	1	6	7	11,2
Canada	9	12	21	33,8
China	1	1	2	3,2
United States	22	24	46	74,1
Europe	3	0	3	4,8
England	11	17	28	45,1
Jamaica	0	3	3	4,8
Japan	0	4	4	6,4
Paris	1	0	1	1,6

Source: Researcher's Data

The data from Table 14 reveals that out of the 62 students surveyed in 2018, 46 of them, corresponding to 74.1% of the total, are aware that English is spoken in the USA. England was mentioned by 28 students, accounting for 45.1%, Canada was indicated by 21 students, accounting for 33.8%, while Australia was mentioned by 7 students, corresponding to 11.2% of the sample. The table also shows that some students mentioned continents (America, Asia, Europe), and some mentioned city names (Paris), indicating a relative deficiency in geography when it comes to distinguishing continents, countries, and cities.

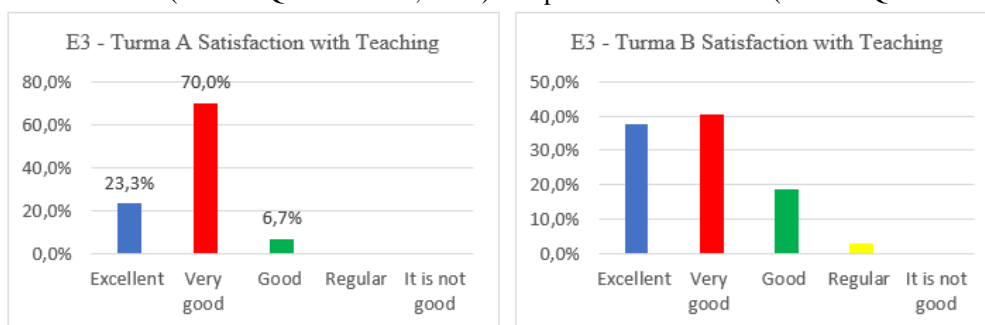
#### Fourth Part - Satisfaction with English Teaching

Graph 9 presents the set of responses from students in Class A: When responding to the questionnaire, the majority of them, corresponding to 21 (70%), claim to be satisfied with the English instruction they receive, rating it as very good. 7 (23.3%) rate the teaching as excellent, and 2 (6.7%) rate it as good. It's noteworthy that no student chose the options regular or weak.

Meanwhile, Graph 10 brings the responses from students in Class B: Out of the 32 students who participated in the survey, the majority, 13 (40.6%), stated that they are satisfied with the English instruction they receive, rating it as very good. 12 (37.5%) rate the teaching as excellent, and 6 (18.8%) rate it as good. 01 (3.1%) rate it as regular. In this class, no student chose the weak option. This demonstrates that students, upon starting the study of the English language, are still very optimistic, and since they have not had access to the study of this language, they do not yet have a benchmark for comparing the quality of the teaching received. However, there is

a certain homogeneity in the responses since the students are in the same context, attend the same school year, and are of the same age.

**Graph 9** - E3 –Class A (Student Questionnaire, 2018). **Graph 10** - E3 – Class B (Student Questionnaire, 2018).



Source: Researcher's Data

When comparing the total sample in the years 2017 and 2018, the results show that in the investigated classes, there was a higher presence of male students. Out of the total of 236 students investigated, 119 (50.4%) are male, while 117 (49.5%) are female. It is observed that the numbers are very close, with no significant difference in the number of boys and girls. Analyzing the initial beliefs of the students, it can be noted that, despite being in different grade levels, their beliefs are quite similar.

#### IV. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the motivations, expectations, and satisfaction of students in learning the English language in two different classes observed over consecutive years. The results reveal students' perceptions of English language learning, providing valuable insights for educators, researchers, and language teaching professionals.

Examining the reasons why students want to learn English, it is evident that a majority of them exhibit a strong interest in social themes such as communicating through the internet, making friends in other countries, and expressing a clear desire to travel to other countries without language barriers. Additionally, students recognize the essential role of English in academic and professional success, demonstrating an understanding of the strategic importance of the language in various aspects of life. Analysis of English language skills indicates that speaking is often considered the most challenging skill, followed by writing and reading. Students' perceptions of the specific challenges associated with each skill reflect the inherent complexities of learning a foreign language, including pronunciation differences, extensive structure, and the novelty of vocabulary.

Regarding satisfaction with English teaching, the majority of students provided a positive evaluation, rating it as very good or excellent. This optimism can be attributed to the novelty of the learning experience, initial motivation, and a lack of comparison with previous English teaching experiences. Comparing classes from different years revealed notable homogeneity in students' initial beliefs, indicating continuity in perceptions and attitudes towards English teaching. The lack of significant differences between classes suggests that initial experiences may play a crucial role in shaping students' expectations regarding foreign language instruction.

Based on the results, several suggestions are presented to enhance English teaching and increase student engagement: **Integrated Approach:** Develop teaching methods that balance listening, writing, reading, and speaking, acknowledging the difficulties students face in each of these skills. **Focus on Oral Communication:** Recognize the importance of oral practice for students. Overcoming perceived difficulties in speaking can be facilitated through interactive activities and conversation practice. **Cultural Contextualization:** Incorporate cultural elements into English teaching methods, establishing a connection between language learning and cultural understanding to provide a more immersive experience. **Continuous Assessment:** Establish continuous assessment systems to observe and evaluate changes in students' perceptions over time, adjusting teaching methods as necessary. **Social Skills Development:** Explore ways in which students can enhance their social skills, such as promoting interaction with peers from other countries and practicing English in social situations. These suggestions aim not only to address students' challenges but also to improve the learning experience, making it more meaningful and aligned with students' expectations. A more stimulating and effective English learning environment can be created through innovative, student-centered methods.



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