# Language Objectives for English Language Learners

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## Rationale

- Language objectives are necessary when writing lesson plans for English Language Learners.
- English language learners (ELLs) account for 10.4% of the student population of public schools in the U.S (NCES, 2022). They are 11% of the students in Horry County Schools (HCS Report Card, 2022).
- All teachers –elementary, secondary, special education, art, music, content areas can expect to have ELLs in their classrooms.
- ELLs are required to attain the same level of academic achievement as their English only peers, but they must do so while also learning a new language. They are required to listen, speak, read, and write about topics that are sometimes abstract and decontextualized which causes the learner to rely on the language to construct meaning.
- Schools must use effective teaching strategies to provide language supports to help ELLs learn English (Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981)
- Many teachers think of themselves as inadequately prepared to teach ELLs. (Balconni & Spitzman, 2021).
- ESOL methods class provides instruction on how to write and use language objectives to target how to use the language of the content areas.

## Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to analyze the quality of language objectives written by current practicing teachers.

## Research Question

- What are the characteristics of the language objectives written by teachers in an ESOL methods class?
- What types of challenges do teachers have in writing language objectives?

## Participants

| Participants | Gender | Race | Level of teaching | Classroom setting |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | F | White | k-8 | ESOL - 1st yr |
| P2 | F | African American | high school | Gen Ed |
| P3 | F | Hispanic | elementary | Gen Ed |
| P4 | F | White | middle | ESOL middle |
| P5 | M | Hispanic | high school | Gen Ed |
| P6 | F | White | elemary | SPED |

## METHOD

### Design

Descriptive study with qualitative and quantitative elements

### Procedures

#### Data Collection:

- Learning objectives were collected from lesson plans and class activities written by teachers enrolled in an ESOL methods class.
- Guided by the research questions, researchers created an Excel spreadsheet to categorize the language objectives.
- Both researchers coded each objective independently by modality (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing), and language function (e.g. compare, justify, identify).
- Objectives were also coded for whether or not they incorporated language supports and instructional supports.
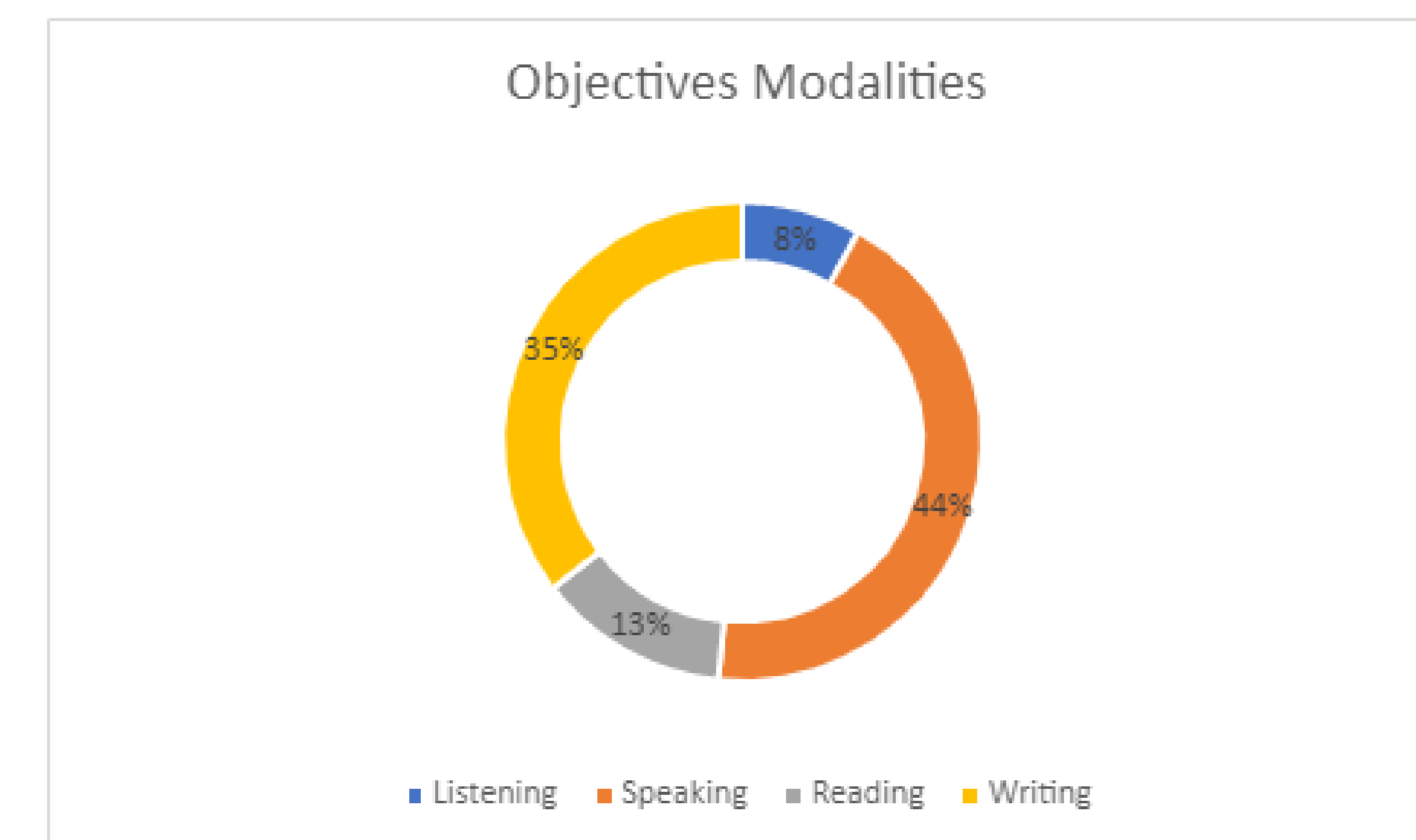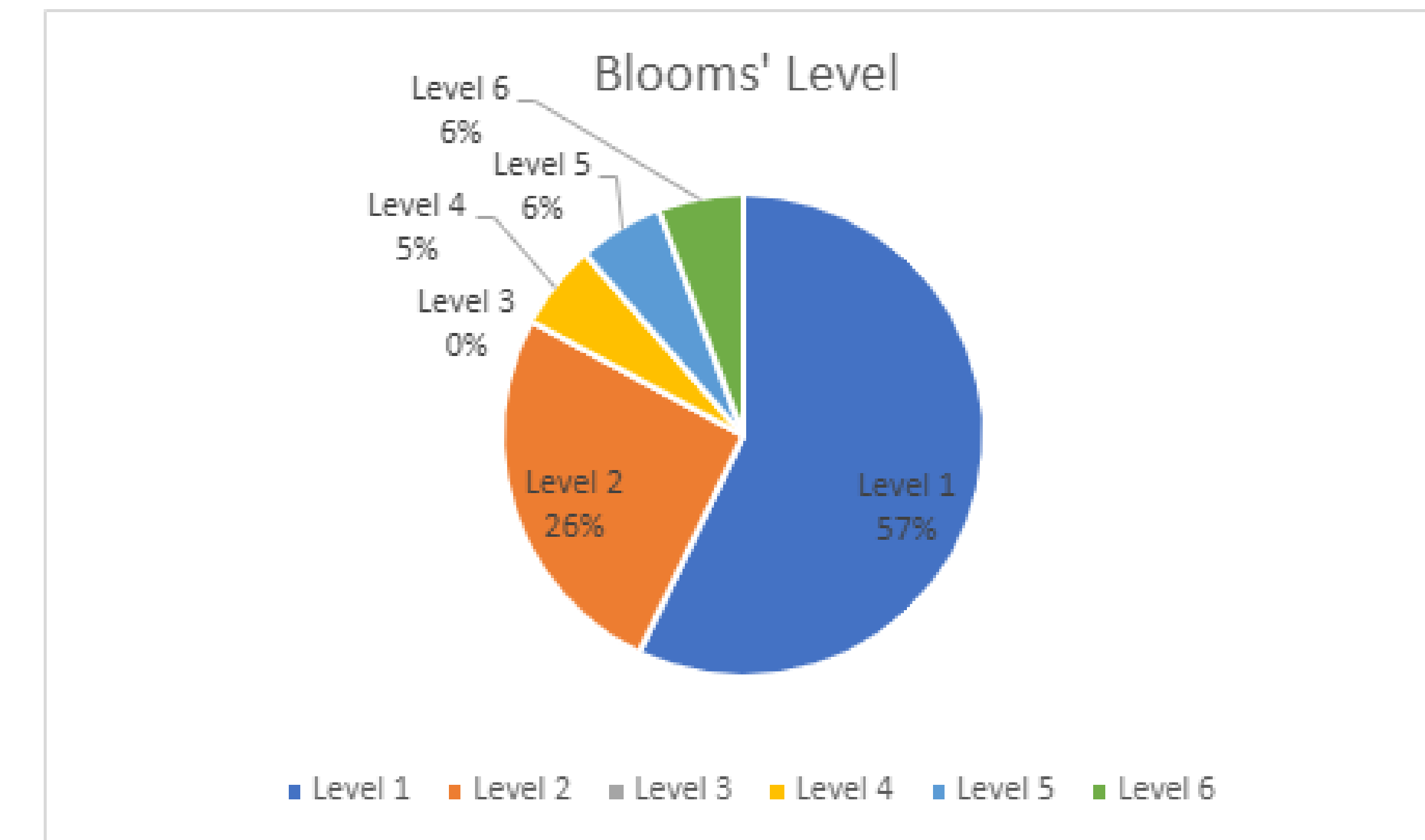
### Preliminary Results

- 85% of language objectives supported content objectives.
- 11 objectives were not true language objectives with 1 being an activity.
- 7% of expressive language objectives supported students with language structures.
- 35% used instructional supports.

### Discussion

- Teachers were overall successful in aligning language objectives with content objectives.
- Most language objectives were not supported with language structures.
- The most commonly used Blooms taxonomy level was level one.
- The most commonly used modality was speaking and the second most common was writing.



Raymond Hickey
December 2005

## Preliminary Results



Blooms' Level

Level 1 57%, Level 2 26%, Level 3 0%, Level 4 5%, Level 5 6%, Level 6 6%



Objectives Modalities

Listening 8%, Speaking 44%, Reading 13%, Writing 35%

## Implications for Research

- Examine undergraduate's ability to write language objectives.
- Examine the delivery of language objectives and student outcomes.
- Examine student outcomes for students diagnosed with a specific learning disability.

## Implications for Practice

- Teacher in SC need more training on how to support ELLs in their classroom.
- Teachers need more details on what makes a learning objective.
- More emphasis should be put on providing students with language structures and instructional supports.
- Receptive language (Reading and Listening) vs Expressive language (Writing and Speaking)