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DEGREE PROGRAM IN:

“TEACHING ENGLISH AS A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE”

“A DIDACTIC PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING CLASSROOM
COMMUNICATION AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL”

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I. ABSTRACT

This study brings forward the fact that some teachers in higher education consciously or unconsciously neglect the students' interests, needs, participation and contribution to the development of an effective learning. It is framed within the big concept of T.T.T. (teacher talking time) in which teachers control most of the class time, leaving very little or no room for the students' use and production of the target language causing a considerable drop in the students' motivation and thus an unnecessary delay in the acquisition of it.

T.T.T. is analyzed here as the qualitative and quantitative input provided by the teachers during their performance in the classroom. Qualitative is understood as the knowledge that the teachers must possess such all domain of the language, full mastery of the competences, and the learning strategies and learning styles of their students.

The study provides a set of communicative activities used as vehicles to stimulate the natural interaction of the students in the classroom. It also presents a theoretical framework that goes from the verbal to the non-verbal communication, plus an analysis of the different results obtained along the study.

Finally, it offers a brief comparison between the Baseline Study and the Impact Study carried out in Nicaragua by Michele and Tony Luxon from 1993 to 1996 and the current research.

II. INTRODUCTION

This research presents an analysis of the current situation of English language teaching in Nicaragua at higher level education, more concretely at a number of private universities in Managua. The study attempts to offer an alternative to improve the acquisition of the English language through communicative activities by means of using the necessary strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, social/affective, and a combination of them) and taking into consideration the different learning styles of the students (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) with the purpose of helping every student in the classroom. At the end, it provides a concise comparison between a previous thorough research implemented in this country almost a decade ago.

1. English and the globalized world of today

In the last ten years there has been an increasing interest to improve the level of education in Nicaragua. The need to improve the quality of education is obvious in any developing country that is struggling to move towards a globalized world.

Crystal (1997:732)¹ considers English as the lingua franca of the present world, that is, the “global language used not only as a language of prestige, but also as the language for business, science, technology, academic production, and international communication.” He estimates that English is fulfilling a functional need all over the world, as “up to 1,800 million people - 30% of the world population- are ‘reasonably competent’ in English, of whom 670 million have a native or native-like command” of the language and about one billion people are actually learning it.” He goes on to say that the use of English is advancing at an “unprecedented world-class status”. In synthesis, in most countries and industries, some knowledge of English is an invaluable asset on the labour market.

Thus, it is important for the future professionals to be able to communicate orally because they will be inserted in this globalized world, and somehow they will be using English as a lingua franca for business nationally or internationally. Since English is the lingua franca of much of the modern globalized world for entering the international market and accessing to modern technology, most

¹ Crystal, David (1997:732) in Vincent Buck’s One World, One Language.
(http://www.aic.net/ViewPage.cfm/Page_732.htm)

educational institutions in this country offer English as one of the mandatory subjects in their academic programs.

We believe that in the “small” world we live in now, the importance of using English for communication, specially oral English, grows at a very fast rate, and our school system is not moving at the same speed as the demand is. In academic institutions in Nicaragua, most of the emphasis is placed on reading, grammar, translation and, writing to a lesser extent, on the assumption that most of the information that students need in their careers is available in English and so it is of paramount importance for the students to develop these skills in English.

Although we think that this is true, we also believe that spoken English is as necessary as, and even more important than just to be able to understand written English. We have to prepare our students to be active subjects and be able to use the language orally. That is, to be competent in the use of the language, not simply passive readers. At one point or another during their professional lives, they will be taking part in international communications of some kind. They will be left out if they don't become competent in English.

Language teachers should have an understanding of this fact, and for this reason, most public and private universities in Nicaragua include English as part of their instruction. The range of this instruction goes from as little as two courses per career to a maximum of twelve courses in different academic programs. Some universities have divided their offer in two parts, the first one (two levels) of ESL, called in Nicaragua “general English” and the remaining second part (two levels) as ESP, known in Nicaragua as “technical English” or English for Specific Purposes. Others simply offer general English. For example, another distribute its four courses in two of general English and two of technical English. Yet, others only offer technical English. So, as we can see, there is no general consensus in this respect among private universities in Nicaragua.

We are going to present this research that was developed in three private universities between the months of March and June of 2004 in Managua with the purpose of determining if cooperative learning was taking place, specifically communicative activities which imply students interaction through pair work, group work, discussion, and other types of dynamic to facilitate and lead to the acquisition/learning of the English language at higher educational level.

2. The students' background

Nicaraguan university students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, usually from state high schools where they have received three to five years of English instruction. It is important to note that the rate of language instruction in high schools in Nicaragua is three hours per week through semesters of 16 weeks. This means that at best, students in high school receive some 48 hours per semester, 96 hours per year (in three years that would add up to 288 hours, or 480 hours in five years).

That would seem a reasonable number of hours of instruction to begin communicating in the second language, but this does not seem to be the case. In many public high schools a lot of holidays are observed: local patrons' day, teachers' or principals' birthdays, local festivities, evaluations, teachers meetings, planning, important visitors, heavy rain, and sickness. All of these are reasons or acceptable excuses to miss classes, which seriously affect the learning or acquisition of the language and the students hardly achieve even a little bit of English. Now, the level of English of students coming from remote rural background, where it is more difficult to get English teachers, the situation is still more critical.

In contrast to that, in private high school the above situation does not occur as frequently because of many reasons. Teachers' salaries in private schools are a little bit higher and schools directors in this schools supervise them more closely, and students are more demanding, so attendance to class is more rigorous on the part of the teachers as well as on the students, thus, the language instruction program is covered to a larger extent.

The three universities where the research was carried out receive mostly students from private high schools and many of these students had studied or lived in an English speaking country, mainly the United States. In consequence, they had a higher level of English.

3. The objects of the Study

From the above diversity of students' backgrounds, there are some that have taken additional English instructions either in the form of evening or Saturday courses. However, many students still complain with frustrations that after taking all these English lessons, they are unable to communicate effectively in English. For all of the above reasons, we felt the need to research and try to find out what exactly was happening in the English classrooms and to come up with some

ideas that would help the students achieve their goal, be competent in the spoken English and help our colleagues, the teachers in private universities in Managua, regain and reinforce their feelings of professional success as well as of personal satisfaction and pride by doing their job well.

We strongly believe that in order to achieve our goal, that is, to make possible for the students to acquire the oral ability in the English the language, the teachers need to go through a gradual change in their “behaviour”, application of methods, by internalizing some of the concepts necessary for a good performance in their occupation. For these reasons the current research was designed, to offer university English teachers some basic pedagogical options in the form of communicative activities to be included in their classes with the purpose of promoting classroom communication.

4. Hypothesis

We believe that students’ oral proficiency can be substantially improved if T.T.T. is diminished in the classrooms and students’ ideas, interests, needs and opinions are taken into consideration during the planning and implementation of the lessons. These lessons should include more dynamic oral activities to involve students actively in meaningful or real communications (communicative competence). TTT which is often associated with teacher-centred classroom should yield to be more ST (student talk) which is related to student-centred classroom.

5. Teacher talk

We understand that teacher talk is the most valuable resource that a teacher possesses. It is the input that teachers provide the students with the classroom. In their talk, teachers show their knowledge of English, their care for their students, their planning, their pedagogical knowledge, their experience, and their inner self. A classroom may lack everything: textbooks, technology, good classroom conditions, but if the teacher talk is appropriate, it will cause a positive result in the students’ achieving of the language. However, teachers have to control their TTT because if this is overdone it might represent a risk to our teaching process: it might cause the opposite result: students might get bored and thus, lose interest. This is a danger that should not be underestimated.

We want to look at Teacher Talk (TT) from two different perspectives: quantitative and qualitative. We want to refer to the Luxon’s the Baseline study (1993-1996) which says that “Classes were mainly lengthy explanation of grammatical rules without the necessary production”. In secondary

schools as well as in universities, teachers exceed their control of the lesson by explaining, giving instructions, giving examples, modelling, telling anecdotes, stories about their own experience, reading, and explaining again. All these lengthy TT may bore and confuse the students. During all this time, students simply listen without having the slightest opportunity to say anything. The amount of TT is way too much and unnecessary. Students yawn, talk about other things, and a few of them in the back of the class are chatting with their cellular phones or studying for another class. Actually, this practice is quantitative and qualitative opposite to the desired and effective situation of a classroom.

We agree that T.T. is an important input, and we also accept that it is indispensable in early stages, but we advocate that it is more an attitude that anything else in the sense that they make use of it with the same intensity at all levels of teaching instead of gradually decreasing it to their give room for the students` use of the language. They do not follow the process of eventually becoming a facilitator.

Lynch (1996:6-7) clarifies TT in the following manner: “Teacher talk is the language typically used by teachers in the foreign language classroom...Teachers vary widely in their attitude to `teacher talk` (both the term and the behaviour it refers to). Some accept that it is a useful device for communicating with students at all levels except the most advanced; others regard it as an important part of the early stages of learning, but we believe that it should be abandoned as soon as possible.”

He (1996:39) continues supporting his definition of Teacher Talk by claiming that “there are at least three main reasons for the growing interest in the way teachers talk to language learners. The first is that people have recognized the vital link between comprehension and progress in the foreign language. The second is that studies of classroom language have shown that certain aspects of teacher talk, such as the way we ask questions, influence the way learners use the language. The third is the realization that it is not easy for the learners to understand what the teacher is currently trying to focus on. Each of these three reasons relates to a different role played by the teachers: as provider of input, as facilitator, as facilitator of communication.”

Richards (1992:375) understands TT as the “variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of foreign talk and other simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners.”

Osborne² sees it from sociolinguistic point of view. She says, “Teacher Talk” in second language classroom is defined as the speech used by teachers that is characteristically modified in four areas: phonology, lexis (consisting of morphology and vocabulary), syntax and discourse”. In the glossary we will include the definitions of these concepts, according to Chaudron (1988) cited in Osborne.

6. Student talk

Student Talk, on the other hand, has to do with the different ways in which students engage in communication, including negotiation of meaning, filling in the gaps, etc., in the classroom during communicative activities. In other words, it refers to the opportunities that the students have during the classroom, to interact, either among themselves or with the teacher.

For Rudder³, “Student talk is the free practice that enables learners to use the language outside the artificial` context of the classroom”. In other words, students talk is any kind of talk that is done in class that contributes to nurture confidence in the students and serves to scaffold their knowledge of the language as to enable him to use it outside the classroom.

² Debora Osborne. Forum Vol.37 No. 2 Apr-Jun 1999:24

³ Rudder. Forum Vo. 37. No. 2 Apr-Jun 199:24

III. OBJECTIVES

1. General objective

To demonstrate that using communicative activities regularly in the classrooms and giving the students more opportunities to interact with the teacher and among themselves will enhance students' ability to communicate orally.

2. Specific objectives

- To assess how much of the class time is devoted to teacher talk (TT), how much to student talk (ST), and if the principle of initiation-response-feedback (IRF) takes place in the classroom.
- To determine through direct observation of classroom in three private universities in Managua, Nicaragua whether English language teaching is developing communicative competence or not.
- To assess the effectiveness to evaluate if the implementation of communicative activities in the classroom would lead to improve communication among the students.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because teaching and learning a language involves communication, we would like to mention some of the most relevant approaches that deal with this aspect of language. Our main concern is, thus, oral communication. Consequently, most of our efforts will be devoted to oral interaction among students and between students and teachers in the classroom and how to create a proper atmosphere so that communication can indeed happen, which will in turn generate communicative competence.

In this process of analysis we will also refer to communicative competence (CC), insofar as it is the necessary skill or knowledge we possess to be able to perform the language. To begin, let us present some linguistic definitions related to the topic:

1. **Language** is a natural but complex phenomenon that human beings acquire or learn by being exposed to it

in different ways. Children learn or acquire the mother tongue by imitating their caregivers in sounds and in gestures. It is well known that if a child is placed in a jungle only with animals, he will learn the language of the jungle and will utter sounds that we will never understand because we are not familiar with those sounds. In the same way, we understand each other because we are familiar with the same language, that is, the same structured system.

According to Seiler (1996:89) "Language is a structured system of symbols that allow people to express ideas and feelings to others. Language is one means by which we communicate."

2. **Symbols** are words or morphemes that are used as a system not arbitrarily, a language follows a pattern, it is structured. It has a lot of rules.

Owen (1992:10) conceives language as a social fact by saying that "Language is a shared code that enables users to transmit ideas and desires to one another. It is shared by these language users because they wish to communicate ... language is influenced by its environment and, in turn, influences that environment. Overall, language reflects the collective thinking of its societal base and influences that thinking ... for example, certain words, such as *democracy*, reflect certain meanings and emotions and influence our concepts of other forms of government."

3. **Speech** are utterances delivered by a person, it is the vehicle by which we transmit language.

4. **Communication.** As it was mentioned earlier, this research deals with oral interaction and interaction is

based on communication, so let us discuss what we understand by this term. One of the most simple ways to explain communication is by saying that it is the sharing of information in which two or more speaker participate and that it requires a sender and a receiver, a message and a channel. In the interaction, the sender becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the sender. See picture below.

Chart No. 1 Schematic Model of the Essential Components of Communication
(Taken from Human Communication of Rudolph F. Verdeber)

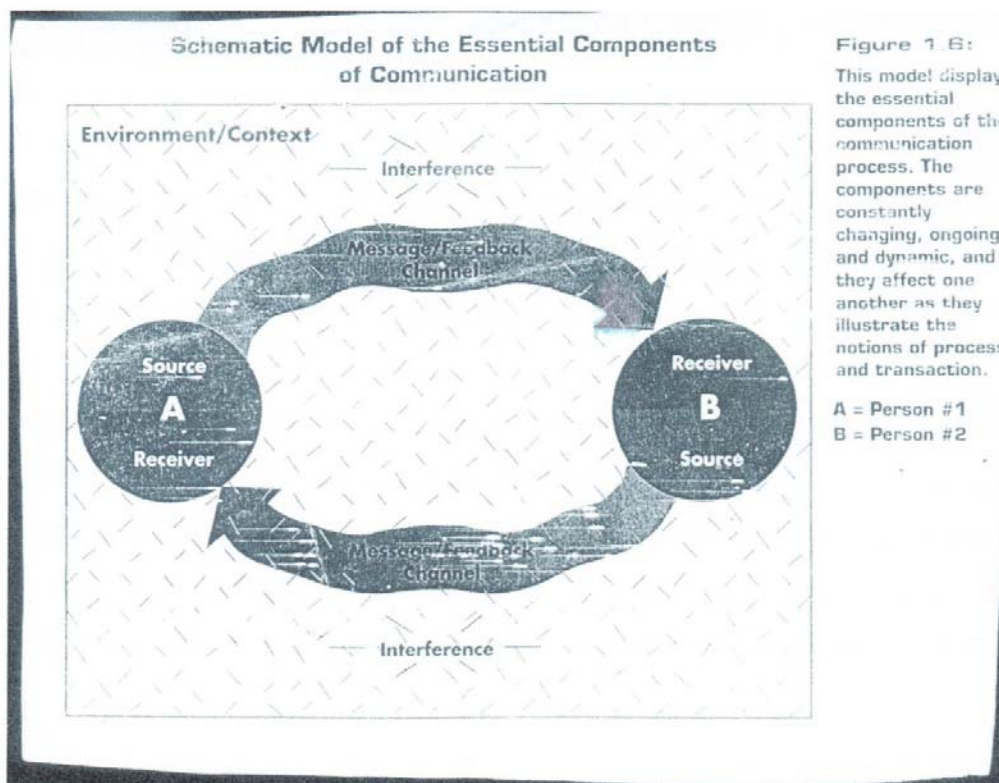


Figure 1.6:
This model displays the essential components of the communication process. The components are constantly changing, ongoing, and dynamic, and they affect one another as they illustrate the notions of process and transaction.
A = Person #1
B = Person #2

Verdever (1996:12) provides a very complete picture of what communication is when he defines it as “the simultaneous sharing and creating meaning through human symbolic actions”. He explains that communication lies on three fundamental principles: (1) communication is a process, (2) it is a system, (3) is both interactional and transactional, and (4) can be intentional or unintentional. He comments that it is a process because it is a series of actions with no beginning or end and it is constantly changing. It involves some variables such as environment, skills, attitudes, status, experiences and feelings. It is a system because it occurs when all the necessary components interact. It is transactional because there is interaction and “interaction is the exchange of communication in which people take turns sending and receiving messages similar to sending and catching a ball. One person at a time sends a message, while another person or several persons receive and another one takes turn in sending another message related to the same topic, agreeing, disagreeing, adding, etc. (negotiating meaning). In a face-to-face interaction the partners (members of a conversation) take turns sending and receiving messages. It can be intentional when the message is purposely sent and expects a reaction from the receiver and it is unintentionally when it happens without any expectation from the sender. For example, when someone makes a noise, another person unintentionally directs his/her attention to the person making the noise.

Verdever states that the components of communication are the source (the partners), the message, interference, channel, feedback, environment, and context.

Richards et al (1992:64), add a new thought to communication by stating that “communication is the transactional process of creating meaning...the process occurs over a period of time, meaning (content, intention and significance) takes place, and it is transactional because the parts involved are mutually responsible for the meaning that each internalizes during and after the interaction”.

Seiler (1996:89) discusses communication as the exchange of meaning. He states that “the fact that we process language does not automatically mean that we can communicate, but we can not communicate without language, and language would be useless if it did not convey meaning.” So as we can see meaning is the key word to communication. That is, beside the above mention elements of sender, receiver, message, and channel, communication necessarily has to take place in a social context to convey meaning, to be real, to be of use, and to have an effect on the participants.

5. Communication in the language classroom.

For Lynch (1966:5), “it is the need to clarify a word or expression which is correct or appropriate, but happens to be unfamiliar to the other person... is a communication problem understood as negotiation of meaning. The negotiation highlights the give-and-take between conversational partners.”

Because communication is based on language, let us take the element of language again to analyse some functions of the language. Language has three basic functions.

The three basic functions of language are defined by Halliday (1970:143) in Savignon (1983: 14, 15) as basic functions that correspond to general categories of needs met by language: 1. Language serves for the expression of *content*: That is, of the speaker’s experience of the real world, including the inner world of his own consciousness. We may call this the *ideational* function....In serving this function, language also gives structure to experience, and helps to determine our way of looking at things, so that it requires some intellectual effort to see them in any other way than that which our language suggest to us. 2. Language serves to establish and maintain social relations.... Through this function, which we may refer to as interpersonal, social groups are delimited, and the individual is identified and reinforced, since by enabling him to interact with others language also serves in the expression and development of his own personality. 3. Language has to provide for making links with itself and with features of the situation in which it is used. We may call this the textual function, since this is what enables the speaker or writer to “construct” texts.

6. Language acquisition.

We want to analyze the term language acquisition in some detail to later develop communicative competence since our research is basically intended to develop precisely the acquisition of the language, in this case, a second language. We understand that to acquire a language is to grasp, to absorb, and to internalize all the linguistic components that make up a language (phonology, morphology, syntax, grammar, etc.) and place them in a part of our brain where they can be retrieved and used in the form of meaningful utterances. Krashen and Terrel (1983:55) in their Input Hypothesis analyze it in the form or comprehensive input. They advocate that for acquiring the language the focus should be on **what** is being said rather than on how it is said. They emphasize the importance of visuals since they supply the extra linguistic context that helps the acquirer to understand and thereby to acquire. At the same time, they outline the importance of vocabulary by saying that more vocabulary leads to more comprehension and more comprehension leads to more

acquisition and that teachers in giving their input need to be concerned with the students' understanding of the message and not with their using of correct grammatical structures. For Elliot (1981) and Fletcher (1985) in Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992:197), "language acquisition is the learning and development of a person's language,...but the term acquisition is referred as learning because the latter is sometimes linked to a behaviourist theory of learning.

Going back to Krashen and Terrel (1983:27), they provide some differences that help distinguish between acquisition and learning. They say that *acquisition* is similar to child first language acquisition, is "picking up" a language, is unconscious, the knowledge is implicit, and formal teaching does not help, whereas *learning* is knowing about the language, involves formal knowledge, is conscious, is explicit and formal teaching helps.

For Richards (1993:197), language acquisition is understood as the processes used in learning a language, to help identify stages in the developmental process and to give a better understanding of the nature of language... and focus on the study of the development of phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and communicative competence.

7. Communicative competence.

This linguistic component is the core of our study, it is closely related to acquisition and it is what we intend to provide our students with.

We believe that the systematic practice of communicative activities in the classroom will considerably improve the oral skill of our students. In order for a students to become communicative competent, they need to consciously and unconsciously assimilate or internalize the language to be able to send and receive meaningful messages. That is, in order to be able to communicate effectively with others, they have acquired/learned the language consciously and unconsciously. Coulthard 1985 and Hymes 1977 in Richards, Platt, and Platt explain communicative competences as "the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom. It includes knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary; knowledge of the rules of speaking (e.g. knowing how to begin and end a conversation, knowing what topics may be talked in different tapes of speech; knowing which *address form* to use with different persons and in different situations; knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks, and invitations, and knowing how to use language appropriately."

The best theory of CC that we have come across with is that of Hymes (1972) in Richards and Rodgers (2003:159), in which he opposes Chomsky's theory of competence. For Richards and Rogers the goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes refers to as "Communicative competence". Chomsky's theory was concerned more with grammatical correctness. Hymes, on the other hand, advocates that the cultural element is crucial to be communicative competent. He claims that "CC is what the speakers need to know in order to be communicative competent in a speech community". In his view, "a person who acquires CC acquires both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to whether something is possible, feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available, is appropriate, in relation to context in which it is used and evaluated and in fact done."

Savignon (1983:8-9) provides five distinctive characteristics of competence in communication. She says that it is a dynamic rather than a static concept. It depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons who share to some degree the same symbolic system, so it is interpersonal; it applies to both written and spoken language; it is context specific, that is, it takes place in a particular situation or context, it requires choices of register and style depending to where, when, and to whom you are talking; a difference must be made between competence and performance, the former is what one knows, the latter is what one does. Only performance is observable. And finally, communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved.

"Competence is a presumed underlying ability, and performance is the overt manifestation of that ability. Competence is what one knows. Performance is what one does." Savignon (1983:36). However, many times performance can be affected by external factors, such as shyness, fear, stress, tiredness, etc.

Prior to achieving communicative competence, other competences are necessary as well. For example, knowledge of grammatical competence, which is the knowledge of rules on how the language works, and syntax which is the order of the different elements in a sentence. Savignon (1983:36) points out that "grammatical competence is mastery of the linguistic code, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of a language and to manipulate these features to form words and sentences. Grammatical competence is not linked to any single theory, nor does it assume the ability to make explicit the rules of usage. A person demonstrates grammatical competence by using a rule, not by stating a rule." Sociolinguistic competence is related to the social cultural context in which the communication takes place. That is, the use of appropriate utterances depending on the situation. This involves knowledge of what to

say, how to say it and even when to remain silent. Savignon (1983:37) defines it as “an interdisciplinary field of inquiring having to do with the social rules of the language use.” Discourse competence has to do with the coherence of the discourse. In other words, the connection of the sentences to make meaning, the proper order in which the utterances have to be arranged to present a logical, orderly thought depending on the purpose of the communication. Strategic competences are those used to supply for our imperfect knowledge of the language in certain situations to get our message across or to keep the conversation going. For example, paraphrasing, hesitation, circumlocution, repetition, etc.

8. Linguistic Competence

It is essential for the teachers since this will show during their T.T and it will become the students` input. Linguistic Competence, as Owen (1992:82-84) states it, “is the user’s underlying knowledge about the system of rules. His knowledge of the operating principles is essential for him to be a user of a language. They are multichanneled, give more insight into emotional states, and their meanings are culturally determined.”

Vilma Perez Paez in her article “The Teacher of Languages: his qualities and competences” claims that beside all the above competencies, a teacher must make use of the following competences: methodological competence, which is the ability to guide the learning according to individual and collective necessities of the students; professional competence, which has to do with the ability of planning and teaching a lesson, use a textbook, produce own’s materials, and elaborate evaluation instruments; communicative competences, which has been already discussed, psychologic, and socio-linguistic competences among others.

9. Effective communication.

It is the type of interaction in which the partners involved send and receive messages that have meaning for all of them. It is when all the participants contribute in different ways, even silently or with non-verbal features, to the interchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings. Seiler (1996:6) proposes that “it is one of the most important abilities that a person in a society can possess. This ability may be learned but it requires ambition, hard work, and an appropriate learning environment.” In regard to the importance of effective communication, this scholar considers

that the most crucial reasons to become an effective communicator includes saving time, making life more enjoyable, establishing a relationship, and fulfilling our goals.

All of the above discussed concepts or elements of language are interrelated and serve as scaffolding for English teachers to reach communicative competence, because in turn, they will pass it on to their students. However, we are going to continue discussing other topics that are equally necessary in the acquisition of a language. Some of them have to do with knowledge and other with natural, cultural, intentional and non-intentional messages.

10. Interaction.

To develop the oral skill of our students, and thus make them communicative competent, interacting among themselves and with the teacher is essential. Interaction is sharing, exchanging ideas, conveying meaning, sending and receiving messages, and showing feelings. For interaction to take place, all the participants involved in the conversation have to contribute. That is, they have to take turns to add to the meaning of the communication. As Rivers (1987) in Richards and Rogers (2001:21) claims “there is interaction when in a communications the attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages (that is, messages that contain information of interest to both speakers and listener in a situation of importance to both).”

For Lynch (1966:3) partners are the persons involved in a face-to-face conversation, and the social role

of listening involves a considerable amount of talking and when in this process the partners reach an agreement, this is interaction and in interaction there is a great deal of collaboration to achieve communication.

We have to be aware not to make the mistake of thinking that all students have to be interacting with each other. Sometimes one or two students are not active but they are involved. As M Lewis and J. Hill (1992:20), propose “students can be silent, but still be involved.” They call our attention to the fact “that even though teachers tend to talk too much, it is the students who need the practice. Also, they recommend teachers to avoid falling in the other extreme as to believe that all students have to actively participate in all activities. They clearly state that students should not be left listening to the teacher all the time and that they should be encouraged to participate, and should be given plenty of opportunities to speak, but that is very different to exercise pressure on them to speak, particularly if they are adults.

11. Non-verbal communication.

If verbal expression is absolutely necessary to communicate meaningfully, it is also true that many times verbal communication alone does not always convey the intended message. As Seiler (1996:115) points it out “In a normal two-person conversation, 60 to 93 % of the communicative meaning is transmitted through non verbal behaviour. Non verbal communication supplements words such as when tones of voice, volume or facial expressions are used to add emphasis to the meaning of a word. ... Research indicates that in most situations we spend most of our time communicating non-verbally than verbally and that our non verbally messages carry more meaning than our verbal messages.”

Seiler (1996:129) continues saying that “... non verbal communication adds life to our exchange by complementing, repeating, regulating and substituting for our words. In addition, sometimes we even use it to deceive others.”

According to Seiler (1996:51) “facial expressions are configurations of the face that can reflect, augment, contradict, or be unrelated to a speaker’s vocal delivery.”

For Owen (1992:86) “Facial expressions involves the arrangements of facial muscles to communicate

emotional states or reactions to messages. The three sets of muscles that we manipulate to form facial expressions are the brow and forehead; the eyes, eyelids, and root of the nose; and the cheeks, mouth, remainder of the nose, and chin. Normally, our facial expressions mirror our thought or feelings.

For Owen (1992:85), “eye contact involves looking directly at the person or people with whom we are communicating...it enables us to monitor the effect of our communication.”

Rate is another non-verbal communication that adds life to our conversation. Owens (1992:90-91) says that it is the speed at which we talk. Volume is the loudness of the tone we make, and Pitch is the highness or lowness of the voice.

According to Yoder Hugenberg, and Wallace (1993:153) “eye contact serves several functions in communication...it opens a channel of communication, shows concern, receives feedback, and reduces anxiety.”

For Seiler (1996:122-123) “Physical attractiveness has an extremely powerful influence on everyday communication. In our society, attractive people are generally treated more positively than those who are not; it appears that both males and females are strongly influenced by attractiveness, though males seem to be more responsive to appearance than do females. Numerous research studies have indicated that attractive people, when compare to unattractive people, are perceived to be more popular, successful, sociable, persuasive, sensual, and happy; attractiveness affects credibility and plays a strong role in a person`s ability to persuade others, to get a job, and to gain a higher salary. Handsome males are perceived as more masculine, while beautiful females are seemed as more feminine, in comparison to those perceived as less attractive. On the other hand, attractiveness can also be disadvantages. Although attractiveness was found to be an asset for men throughout their executive career, one research study found that been attractive can be a liability for women managers. Attractive females can be judged by some to be vainer, more materialistic, and less faithful to their husbands.”

For Owens (1992:94) clothing says a lot about a person. It communicates a message. A person is judged by the way he/she dresses. We can easily tell the persons´ attitude and behaviours depending on the cloth worn.

12. Punctuality

This type of non-verbal communication also tells a lot about a person and his/her culture. A person can be judged by his/her punctuality, especially in the job field. However, in some cultures, like in most Latin American countries, to be an hour late for an appointment is a perfectly accepted behaviour whereas in other places like in The United States or Europe this will be an absolutely unacceptable way of presenting oneself. Owens (1992:95) states that “chronemics is a study of how we used and structure time. Its significance for nonverbal behaviour is that people perceive actions and reactions in the context of when they occur. Thus, how we manage time and how we react to other`s use and management time are important aspects of self-presentations.

13. Proxemics

Space varies from person to person and from culture to culture and this is another non-verbal communication that sends a message as well as the previous ones discussed. Some individuals may feel very uncomfortable with people that get to close. They may feel like their territory is invaded and may think that his/her interlocutor is too aggressive. Yoder, Hugenberg, and Wallace

(1993:161-163) state that people use space to communicate. People unconsciously structure the space around them. Space is divided into three major areas: fixed-feature space, semi-feature space, and informal space. Fixed-feature space includes immovable areas that people claim as their territory. Semi-feature space involves the use of movable objects such as furniture. Informal space is defined as physical distance between people. Informal space is a “bubble” that surrounds us into which no others may enter without your permission. Different cultures have various rules about the use of personal space.

14. Temperature, lightning, and color

These contribute to create an appropriate atmosphere for the acquisition/learning of the language. It is difficult for the students to be alert or attentive to a lesson when the classroom is too hot or too cold or when it is dark. Owens (1992:100) considers that “temperature, lightning, and color act as a stimulant or deterrent to communication. Differences in color seem to have a particularly significant effect on how people behave, since we react to color both emotionally and physically.”

15. Touch

All human beings react to the touch of another person. A soft touch in the shoulder, for example can create a special affective relation between a teacher and a student. Too much touching, on the contrary, can create a sense of uneasiness or discomfort, and if it is of opposite sex can create some problems. Yoder, et all (1993:164) provide their considerations of touch. They say that it “send messages to others about the kind of relationship we have with others. Touching is generally an indication or expression of closeness or interpersonal involvement...it occurs only within the personal or intimate distances of informal space.”

16. Kinesic

It is equivalent to say that body talks. It is probably the most complete non-verbal language. It involves gestures, movements of the body, facial expressions, and showing feelings. Some people say that we send more messages with our body than with our words.

17. Gestures

Gestures are ways of communicating; they vary from person to person and also from culture to culture. They can be conscious or unconscious. Yoder et all (1993:156) believe that “gestures is the

natural and unconscious, and sometimes conscious, moving of the arms and hands, pointing of the fingers, clenching of fists to enrich or distract the meaning of the verbal messages.”

18. Postures.

Owens (1992:86) provides a very interesting explanation of postures when he states that “posture involves the positioning of the body. Changes in posture can also communicate. For instance, suddenly sitting upright and leaning forward show intensity of attention, standing up may signal ‘I am done now,’ and turning one’s back shows a cutting of attention.”

19. Cultural and Gender variations.

For Owens (1992:86.87), “people of different cultures show considerable variations in their use of gestures, movements, and facial expressions. Eye contact, for example, is considered a sign of interest in some cultures whereas in other is viewed as impolite. Women are believed to smile more than men in some cultures.”

20. Body movement / Motion

Owens (1992:86) also covers this aspect of non-verbal communication by saying that it serves important communication functions: may be used to take the place of a word or phrase, may be used to complement what the a speaker is saying, can argument the verbal expressions of feelings, may be used to control or regulate the flow of a conversation or other communication transaction.

So far, we have been speaking about some concepts to establish requirements on the part of the teacher and some of the characteristics for effective communication. However, there are also some conditions that need to be present for effective communication to take place. The first and probably the most important is the emotional state of the students. They must be relaxed and motivated to be able to learn. For this, Krashen and Terrel (1983:38) in their Affective Filter Hypothesis claim that “the best situation for language acquisition seems to be those which encourage lower anxiety levels”. They point out (59-60) that there is no method that will completely eliminate the affective filter, but it is possible to reduce it by doing several practices. For example, avoiding demand for early speech production so students can concentrate on one skill at a time, allow them to decide, individually when to start using the target language, accept in a positive manner whatever type of response they can provide, reward positively any attempt for production and finally avoid doing

direct correction since this practice, which they call Monitor Hypothesis may slow down the communication process and delay acquisition. In other words, they suggest to lower anxiety to the point where students can learn and/or acquire without pressure.

21. Vocal pauses

Vocal pauses help to the understanding of our utterances. If we speak without pauses our communication may sound monotonous and might be misinterpreted. Yoder (1993:160) however considers pauses as habitual and serve little purpose in competence communication.

22. Error correction

Error correction should not be done in early stages of production. Teachers should be aware that there is a natural order of errors and these will be gradually corrected as students progress in the learning of the language. Again Krashen and Terrel (1983:59) give some recommendations for error correction in their Monitor Hypothesis. They consider that error correction should be done in written work, prepared speech or assignments, but never in the oral communicative activities in the classroom.

23. The Role of First Language (Interference)

We believe that the first language can be of positive use if done properly, especially in early stages of the teaching/learning process, when teachers can use it as a useful resource to help students that have difficulties in acquiring simple structures. That is, to illustrate the subject, verb, object structure of a sentence. For example, I speak English or even a little more complex sentence. For instance, she goes to school everyday. However, not in all cases this comparative analysis will work. In some wh questions, this comparison may lead to disaster, thus, Where are you from might confuse students. Here is when we believe some brief incidental brief grammar explanation can be given. We agree with Krashen and Terrel (40-41) when they contradict the **interference** role of the first language as getting in the way to speak a second language by clarifying that “the cure for interference is simply acquisition and that pedagogy does not need to help the acquirer fight off the effects of the first language, it need only help the acquirer acquire the language.”

24. Negotiation (*In conversation*)

Negotiation takes place when the persons involved in a communication send and receive messages that they understand and give different signals, such as that they want to continue or stop the communication, they agree or disagree, they add new information, they help each other to convey meaning, correct each other, which is called by some authors as repair. Richards et al (1992:244) advocate that there is negotiation where there is feedback.

25. Co-operative Learning (also collaborative learning)

If teacher talk is of paramount importance as a form of input for the students, especially at early stages, cooperative learning is also of great value to develop oral communicative skills and can be implemented at early stages as well. By cooperative learning we mean activities in which students have to work in pairs or in small groups around a variety of topics, discussing, analyzing, agreeing, disagreeing, giving opinion, adding information, showing concern, and any other type of reasoning they feel comfortable with. Cooperative learning has many advantages to achieve communicative competence since they give plenty of opportunities to students to practice they target language freely in a real or almost real situation. It lowers the affective filter since they are working among themselves and not with the sometimes intimidating figure of the teacher. The teacher has more opportunities to help individual students in small groups than in the whole class. Pair work or small group interaction reverses the teacher-centred classroom into a more student-centred classroom, thus, providing students with more opportunities to take responsibility of their own learning. Cooperative learning is an approach that can take many forms from simple discussion to role-play, jigsaw, projects, group presentations, debate, etc. Richards et al (1992:87) describe five distinct types of co-operative learning activities: 1. Peer tutoring: students help each other learn, taking turns tutoring or drilling; 2. Jigsaw: Each member of a group has a piece of information needed to complete a group task. 3. Co-operative Projects: Students work together to produce a product, such as a written paper or group presentation. 4. Co-operative/Individualized: Students progress at their own rate through individualized learning materials but their progress contributes to a team grade so that each pupil is rewarded by the achievements of his or her teammates, and 5. Co-operative Interaction: Students work together as a team to complete a learning unit, such as a laboratory experiment.

26. Para-language

It is the global view of a language. It includes not only words but all types of sounds human beings can possibly produce in a communication. For Seiler (1996:127-128) paralinguistics includes sounds or silence, other than the content of words themselves. Paralinguistics includes not only speech sounds, but also speech rate, accent, articulation, pronunciation, and silence. Sounds such as groans, yawns, coughs, laughter, crying, and yelping, which are non symbolic but can communicate very specific messages. We often rely more on paralinguistics than on the words themselves when interpreting another person's message.

27. Meta-language

For Richards et al (1992:227) is the "language used to analyze or describe a language. For example, the sentence: In English, the phoneme /b/ is a voiced bilabial stop is in meta-language. It explains that the b-sound in English is made with vibration of the vocal cords and with the two lips stopping the air stream from the lungs".

28. Communicative language teaching

It is the ability that teachers have to blend the different methodologies, knowledge, strategies, and competencies to plan, develop, guide, and manage communicative activities in the classroom to develop oral in the students, more specifically interactive skills. Nunan (1992:24) states that communicative language teaching "is more a cluster of approaches than a single methodology, which grew out of the dissatisfaction with structuralism and the situational methods of the 1960's." He advocates that it simulates target performance. In what he (26) calls the strong version of communicative language teaching, he states that "class time should be spent not on drills or control practice leading towards communicative language use but in activities which requires learners to do in class what they will have to do outside." For considering of great importance, we want to include the table that provides the 11 distinctions between traditional and communicative approaches to language pedagogy as follows:⁴

⁴ Taken from Quinn .in Savignon, J. S. 1983. "Communicative competence: Theory and classroom Practice".

Traditional approaches

1. Focus in learning:

Focus is on the language as a structured system of grammatical patterns.

2. How language items are selected:

This is done on linguistic criteria alone.
language items

to get things

3. How language items are sequenced:

This is determined on linguistic grounds.

4 Degree of coverage:

The aim is to cover the `whole picture` of particular phase, only
Language structure by systematic linear important progression.

5. View of language:

A language is seen as a unified entity with accepted, and seen
Fixed grammatical patterns and a core of basic particular Words.

6. Type of language used:

Tends to be formal and bookish.
emphasised.

Communicative approaches

Focus is on communication

This is done on the basis of what

The learner needs to know in order done.

This is determined on other grounds, with emphasis on content, meaning and interest.

The aim is to cover, in any

what the learner needs and sees as

The variety of language is

as determined by the character of Communicative context.

Genuine everyday language is

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>7. <i>What is regarded as a criterion of success:</i>
 Aim is to have students produce formally communicate effectively correct sentences. context they</p> | <p>Aim is to have students
 And in a manner appropriate to the
 are working in.</p> |
| <p>8. <i>Which language skills are emphasised:</i>
 Reading and writing. at least as</p> | <p>Spoken interaction are regarded as
 Important as reading and writing.</p> |
| <p>9. <i>Teacher/Student roles:</i>
 Tends to be teacher-centred.</p> | <p>It is student-centred.</p> |
| <p>10. <i>Attitude to errors:</i>
 Incorrect utterances are seen as deviations utterance
 From the norms of standard grammar. `wrong`.</p> | <p>Partially correct and incomplete
 Are seen as such rather than just</p> |
| <p>11. <i>Similarity/dissimilarity to natural language learning:</i>
 Reverses the natural language learning learning
 Process by concentrating on the form of utterance
 Utterances rather than on the content.</p> | <p>Resembles the natural language
 process in that the content of the
 Is emphasised rather than the form.</p> |

29. Methodology and communicative languages teaching

According to Nunan (1988:78) “there is not one but a cluster of approaches which parade under the general label “communicative”, all of which characterize language learning as the development of communication skill. This means that in teaching with a communicative purpose, an eclectic method is necessary in order to make students communicative competent.

30. Approach, method, and technique

These three concepts are usually treated as interrelated concepts. Cerezal (1966:163-164) considers approach as a strategy and provides a rather complete explanation saying that it is the most abstract concept of the three and that it refers to the linguistic, psycho- and sociolinguistic principles underlying method and technique. For him a technique is the narrowest of all the three; it is just one single procedure for use in the classroom and methods are placed between approaches and techniques, as the mediator between theory (the approach) and the classroom practice. He points out that other authors consider method as composed of approach and principles, design (objectives, linguistic content, tasks, teaching activities, the roles of teachers and learners, and the roles of instructional materials) and procedure as an interrelated system. Di Pietro (1987:1) in his “scenarios” of strategic interaction coincides with Cerezal in that approach is a strategy and gives further implications stating that a strategy is a way of solving a real situation. Richards defines approach as the different ways or methods of teaching a language. Here Richards claims approach as method, while method is understood as the sum of different techniques, being techniques the different kinds of classroom activities.

Anthony in Richards and Rodgers (2001:19) states that approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified; method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented; techniques is the level at which classroom procedures are described.

31. Linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics

These three concepts are very clearly presented by Owen (1992:10) as follows.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. The “two specialized areas of linguistics – psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics– combine the study of language with other disciplines.

32. Psycholinguistics

It is the study of the way in which people acquire and process language. Of particular interest is the relationship of language to thought or of language to attention, perception, storage, and retrieval.

33. Sociolinguistic

It is the study of language and cultural or situational influences. Context, both situational and linguistic, determines the language user's communication options.

34. Communicative approach

It is the whole idea about the students being more involved contributing to the planning and implementation of what takes place in the classroom and by having the opportunity to use language in activities that simulate real situations, the students interact in a meaningful way. (Rudder in Forum, Vol 37 No.2 April-June 1999:24)

Widdowson (1978) in Nunan (1992:25) advocates that "a basic principal underlying all communicative approaches is that learners must learn not only to make grammatical correct, propositional statements about the experiential world, but must also develop the ability to use language to get things done."

35. Strategies

In carrying out any task, in solving any problem, in developing a project, in preparing for a presentation, in studying for a lesson even to face a household problem, one has to mentally prepare, make use of some mental processes "to attack", or to give solution to a situation. In simple words, it is "the how", to do something or solve a problem. This how involves different types of skills.

In the previous paragraph, we mentioned that communicative approach promotes, among other things, autonomy or independency in the students learning. It is well known that students learn best when they learn by themselves and it is also well known that the most successful students are those that consciously or unconsciously apply learning strategies in their studies. Learning strategies can be defined as the different mental processes or intellectual resources that students put into practice to "attack and solve" any problem in learning.

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) in Megias (2003:7) define learning strategies as "the behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding` process. For Megias (2003:9) "learning strategies is of singular importance to offer

learners the opportunity to develop independent language learning skills while at the same time learning a first or second language.” For Chamot (1987:71) also in Megias “learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information.” O`Malley and Chamot (1990) in Megias provide four types of strategies as follows:

1. cognitive strategies
2. metacognitive strategies
3. social strategies
4. affective strategies

They explain that **cognitive strategies** are sort of subconscious things. Their more obvious characteristics are that they are direct, difficult to articulate, non-evaluative, primary and natural. “They are those that students develop on their own to learn vocabulary”(O`Malley & Chamot 1990 cited by Megias); **metacognitive** are more conscious, indirect, controlled, easier to articulate, evaluative, and can be taught. Among the metacognitive we can mention for example, planning, organizing, and evaluating the process; **social and affective strategies** have to do with “interaction with another person or the control of one`s feelings with regard to language learning. Thus, co-operation on a language task, seeking help from the teacher, discussing your feelings with someone else or convincing yourself that you can do a language task.” Some of them overlap between the conscious and the subconscious.

The importance of devoting attention to learners strategies is due to the implementation of communicative language teaching that aims to make students communicative competent through the developing of oral skills. The focus is on acquiring the target language by using it and for this to happen, students necessarily need to be able to use strategies.

Megias supplies a Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as follows:

Cognitive strategies: Repetition (imitating a language model aloud or silently), Key word (remembering a target item by choosing an L1 word which is acoustically similar to the new word and making mental images linking it with the new word), Comparing, Classifying (grouping), Developing an awareness of visual and audio clues, Predicting, (inferencing), Note taking, Deduction/induction, Organizing work, Using reference materials (resourcing), Elaboration, Summarising, Translation, Transfer, Inference, Risk-taking,

Among the metacognitive strategies, he offers:

Planning, Directed attention, Selective attention, Self-management, Self-monitoring, Problem identification, Self-assessment/evaluation

In the social/affective strategies, he provides

Social: Co-operation (working with fellow learner to compare notes, solve a language problem or get feedback on a task), Questioning for clarification (asking the teacher or a native speaker for repetition, explanation and/or examples), Verification (Rephrasing), Problem, and Model. Affective: Self-task (Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques to make oneself feel competent to do a learning task) and self-reinforcement (encouraging or reassuring oneself about one's ability to perform a task by making positive statements).

The **Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning** is divided in four processes: **planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating**, which cover the following strategies: set goals, direct attention, activate background knowledge, predict, organizing and planning, predicting, self-management, asking if makes sense, selective attention, deduction/induction, personalize/contextualize, note taking, use of imagery, manipulate/act out, talk to yourself through it (self-talk), cooperate, inference, substitute, asking questions to clarify, verifying predictions and guesses, summarize, check goals, evaluate yourself, evaluate your strategies, imagine with keywords, group/classifying, and transfer/cognates.

36. Learning styles. What are learning styles?⁵

Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning.

There are basically four learning styles: auditorial, visual, kinesthetic, and a combination of the three.

● Auditory Learners:

Learn through listening...

⁵ [http://www.Idpride.net/learning styles.mi.htm#what%20are](http://www.Idpride.net/learning%20styles.mi.htm#what%20are)

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

● **Visual Learners:**

Learn through seeing...

These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (e.g. people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

● **Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners:**

Learn through, moving, doing and touching...

Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

37. Second language acquisition.

There are two discrete psycholinguistic processes operating in second language development: conscious learning and subconscious acquisition –the input hypothesis. Long term is central in subconscious and it occurs when the learner understand a little beyond his competence and focus on meaning rather than form. The learning is conscious, short term, peripheral. (Krashen in Nunan 1981:79-82).

SUMMARY OF THE FLT METHODS USED IN THE CLASSROOM

Due to the need of the implementation of effective methods of teaching in the classroom in order to make the students competent, in this section we are going to talk briefly about the most well known methods applied from the 19th century to our days.

Regarding to EFL methods as a relevant aspect of our research, it must be stated that this component is considered as “a process in which teaching is not static but that it changes in response to new trends and demands as teachers, applied linguists and educationist can testify”. (Cerezal, 1996)

The Grammar Translation Method consists of the use of translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning process. Within this method of class, the presentation of grammatical rules, a study of lists of vocabulary, and a translation of exercises take place. As it can be seen, this method emphasizes reading rather than the ability to communicate orally.

As a result of the method mentioned before, there was a reaction for this teaching style, so a new method focused on the teaching of spoken language was born. In the 19th century a new term used for a number of language-teaching methods appeared. It was the Natural Approach (also known as the Natural Method).

This new trend of teaching concentrated on the use of spoken language, the use of objects and actions in teaching meaning of words and structures, the need to make language teaching follow the natural principles of first language learning. These methods lead to the Direct Methods, an approach which emphasizes natural communication rather than formal grammar study, tolerates learner’s errors and let the students acquire the grammar rules in an informal way.

Another wide used method in many parts of the world was the Audio lingual Method (also known as the Aural-oral Method), which consists of teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing, the use of the dialogues, drills, promotes only the use of the target language , and often makes use of “Contrastive Analysis”. According to Richards and Platt, the Contrastive Analysis developed and practiced between the 1950 and 1960, was based on the comparison of the linguistic system of two languages. Among the assumptions, it can be stated that the main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from the first language, that these difficulties can be predicted by contrastive analysis, and that teaching materials can make use of contrastive analysis to reduce the effects of interference.

The core of the Audio-lingual method contains the following theory about language and language learning: a) speaking and listening are the most basic language skills; b) each language has its unique structure and rule system; and c) a language is learned through forming habits.

As an opposition to the grammar-based approaches such as the aural-oral approach, a new language method was developed, the Communicative Approach which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence. This method outlines the following: to teach the language needed to express and understand different kinds of functions such as requesting, describing, expressing likes and dislikes; to emphasize the process of communication such as using language to perform different kinds of tasks, for example: to solve puzzles, to get information, and using the language for social interaction with other people.

For communicative competence it is understood the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom. (Coulthard, 1985 cited in Richards, 1992).

Another relevant method of foreign-language teaching was developed by Gattegno, and this was called the “Silent Way”. It consists of making use of gestures, mime, visual aids, wall charts, and in particular colorful wooden sticks to help the students to talk. The name of this method was taken from the relative silence of the teacher during the implementation of these techniques.

The Community Language Learning is another important method developed by Charles Curran. It consists of an application of counseling learning to second and foreign language teaching and learning. In the implementation of this method techniques performed in group counseling are used to help people with psychological and emotional problems. The method makes use of group learning in small or large groups. These groups are called the “Community”. The method places emphasis on the learner’s personal feelings and their reactions to language learning. Learners say things which they want to talk about in their native language. The teacher, known as the counselor translates the learners sentences into foreign language, and then the learner repeats this to another student.

The Bulgarian Lozanov proposed the method Suggestopaedia as a most effective method for foreign language teaching. It consisted of the use of dialogues, situations, and translations to present and practice language, and in particular, by making use of music, visual images, and relaxation exercises to make learning more comfortable and effective.

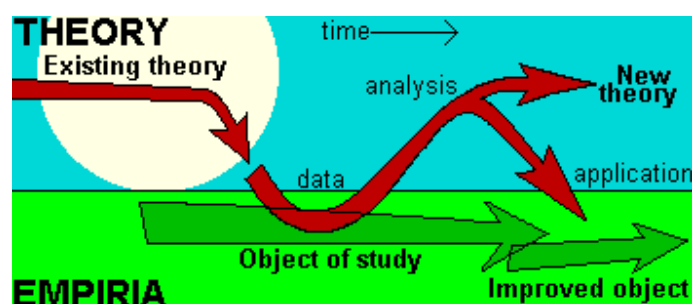
Total Physical Response can be added to this list of methods for language teaching developed by Asher. It consists of giving orders, commands, and instructions requiring a physical response from the learner.

V. TYPE OF INVESTIGATION

We believe this research is exploratory in the sense that very little has been done in the field of oral communication through cooperative learning and thus through communicative activities at university level in the Nicaraguan context.

1. **Exploratory research** is defined as “a type of research in which hardly anything is known about the matter at the outset of the Project. You then have to begin with a rather vague impression of what you should study, and it is also impossible to make a detailed work plan in advance.”⁶

Chart No. 2 Illustration of the theory of exploratory research.⁷



In the preliminary data collection -informal conversation with students in which they expressed their frustration for not being able to communicate orally in English and the teachers, because the teaching was not being effective- nothing was found in the higher level of instruction in the field of English teaching specifically in the methodology of communicative approach. For this reason a provisional plan was developed to find out what was going on in the classrooms in private universities in the country.

We took a holistic view of the process to obtain as much information as possible of the subjects under study and the context where these circumstances were taking place so later we could focus on our object of study. In other words, we decided to carry out the implementation of a plan of action to have a complete understanding that, in fact, something was lacking in the process of teaching-learning: the students were not fully benefiting from the English lessons because they were not

⁶ <http://exchange.State.gov//forum>

⁷ The illustrations of the Exploratory Research was taken from <http://exchange.State.gov/forum>

using the language in the classroom and they were not developing the social/affective strategies (questioning for clarification, cooperation, model, self-task, self-reinforcement) so necessary for oral communication, which is one of the essential components of communicative competence, which in turn is of paramount importance for the overall acquisition of the second language.

2. Context of the research

Our research was developed between March and June, 2004 in three private universities in Managua. Our main purpose was to determine whether co-operative learning was taking place at these institutions; that is, communicative activities which imply students interaction through pair work, group work, discussions, and other types of dynamic actions leading to the acquisition of the language.

In this section, the researchers present the current situation of English teaching in Nicaragua at university level, in the light of the characteristics of the institutions involved in the research. Among others are the types of English courses offered by such higher level institutions according to the different majors; their different plans of study in which English is part of the curriculum; the number of hours of English taught weekly, quarterly or per semester; the selection of textbooks for the different classes, etc. Other important aspects to be considered, of course, are the target population or subjects of the study, involving teachers and the students of the above mentioned institutions.

As mentioned earlier, this research is based on the assumption that teacher talk is used in excess in the English classroom in private universities in Managua. This obviously makes the classes teacher-centered and affects negatively the students' acquisition of the target language- English in this case. It is important to mention here that this study has been supported by the Baseline Study carried out in state secondary schools in Nicaragua in 1993 by Tony and Michelle Luxon⁸ with which it will be compared. The Luxon's study was the first of its kind carried out nation-wide at high school level. The current study is the first one of its kind at higher level education, although with a definitely more limited coverage than the Luxon's.

Luxon M and T. Baseline study 1993-1996 Managua

However, there are obvious similarities in these two studies and the main reason why we are comparing them is because in both cases the innovation introduced was communicative activities. Another important similarity in the two studies lies in the final results: both pursue the improvement of the effectiveness in students's acquisition of the target language.

In order to find out the object of study, the researchers prepared a 52-hour in class project, to be carried out in three private universities in Managua from March to July 2003, in which the target population were four teachers and 96 students.

3. About the institutions in which this study was carried out

The first institution is Universidad Americana, a private university that offers English in eleven careers. Plus the Business Administration that in completely in English. According to the plan of study, it is part of the curriculum in all the careers in which the students have to take four courses of general English, except in Diplomacy and Tourism and Hotel Management, where they have to take two additional courses of English for Specific Purpose.

Among their majors are Diplomacy, Tourism, Architecture, Business Administration, Law, Medicine, Odontology, Marketing, Civil Engineering, Industrial Engineering, and System Engineering. The students have to attend 4 hours of English weekly, a total of 64 hours per semester. For a total of 256 hours in nine careers and 384 in two careers.

Chart No.3 Number of English courses offered per career at Universidad Americana.

CAREERS	GENERAL ENGLISH		ESP	
	I	II	I	II
Diplomacy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tourism and Hotel Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Architecture	✓	✓		
Business Administration	✓	✓		
Law	✓	✓		
Medicine	✓	✓		
Odontology	✓	✓		
Marketing	✓	✓		
Civil Engineering	✓	✓		
Industrial Engineering	✓	✓		
System Engineering	✓	✓		

Even though the emphasis is put in grammar, for which Betty Schramper Azar's English Grammar of Longman is used, for reading in the first two levels of English, at the moment of the research "American Headways"⁹ was used. This text book is designed to teach communicative functions, and presents exercises in which the four skills are put into practice. For the ESP course different communicative text books oriented to each field of study are used, as well as a wide variety of readings taken from various sources. One of the courses observer in this university was in the marketing field and they were using Market Leader of Longman, which contains a variety of communicative activities also.

The second institution is Universidad del Valle, a private university that offers seven careers, and English is part of the plan of study according to the curriculum. The students attend only general English in a weekly session of three hours during a quarter of sixteen weeks which means they have 48 hours of English per course. There are three quarters in a year which represents a total of 576 hours in three and careers. The next chart illustrates the different careers offered by this institution, as well as the level of English that are part of the plan of study.

Chart No. 4. Number of English courses per career at the Universidad del Valle

CAREERS	LEVELS OF ENGLISH											
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Business Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
International Relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tourism and Hotel Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communication (Journalism)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Computing Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Law	✓	✓	✓									
Architecture												

⁹ Liz and Soars, *American Headways*, Oxford 2001.

The text book used in this institution at the time of the research was “Streamline”¹⁰, a three-level series (Departure, Connection and Destination). These colourful texts have a communicative function geared to the interest and needs of adults and young adult students of English as a second or foreign language. In their units they present apart from the language, American Culture, colourful pictures, and humour that makes the class more interesting for the students. Each text book consists of eighty units, a workbook to practice and reinforce functions of the language, grammar parts, and strategies, and a cassette or Cd containing recording of the material in the student book.

Departure is the initial text book of the series designed from low to high beginner students. This text features communicative and listening activities as well as up-dated art and designs. It combines lively, natural language with everyday situations, short dialogs, telephone conversations, basic vocabulary, and allows learners to develop their skills and sub skills and learn new strategies. Connection is a text designed from low to high intermediate students. This material may be used both to follow Departure, consolidating and building upon the oral / aural skills introduced there, or as an independent series. Destination is designed for advanced students and may be used to follow connection.

The third institution is Universidad Evangelica de Nicaragua Martin Luther King, another private university that offers seven majors as follow: Tourism and Hotel Management, Economy, Public Accounting and Finance, Marketing, Banking and Finance, Computing, and System Engineering. The English program includes General English and ESP. Based on the plan of study all of the students have to attend three courses of general English, which represent 204 hours except the students of Tourism who have seven courses for a total 476 hours; and the students of Computing and System Engineering that attend three courses of ESP which amounts 288 hours. In this university, teachers are free to choose and use the text book and contents of the classes they consider most appropriate to the level and type of course they are teaching. At the moment of the research, the teacher observed was using the text book Cambridge which is designed to teach communicative English.

¹⁰ *Hartley Bernard & Viney Peter, New American Streamline. Oxford 1995.*

Chart No. 5 . Number of English courses per career at the Universidad Evangelica de Nicaragua “Martín Luther King”.

CAREERS	GENERAL ENGLISH							ESP		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III
Tourism and Hotel Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Economy	✓	✓	✓							
Public Accounting and Finance	✓	✓	✓							
Marketing	✓	✓	✓							
Banking and Finance	✓	✓	✓							
Computing	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
System Engineering	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓

4. About the subjects of the investigation (The Target Population)

It is important to mention here the subjects that participated in the process of this research. The number of people involved in this project were the following: A number of three academic and administrative authorities of private universities in Managua, four university teachers, 96 university students from different careers, and four authorities in charge of the institutions involved in the ODA ELT Project, among them Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua-Managua (UNAN), Ministerio de Educación (MED), and Asociación Nicaraguense de Profesores de Inglés (ANPI).

See chart No. X in the appendices

5. About the teachers

In this report we are going to identify the teachers by using some codes, for example: Teacher A, B, C, and D. Their ages range from 36 to 40 years old. Three of the observed teachers are male, that represents a 75% of this sample, and only one teacher was a female that is a 25%. The participant teachers of this research are Licenciados, all of them are university graduated. Only teachers A and C obtained a major in this field; teacher D studied to be a translator, and teacher B is a Biologists. Some of them have taken a post graduate course, and teachers A and D have studied in the United

States or in another country. All of them have a good command of the language, as well as enough teaching experience, the rate is between ten to fifteen years. They are not full-time teachers, they are paid by the hour and in the majority of the cases, they work in different institutions.

6. About the students

The students considered as the subjects of this research belong to a cross section of socio-economic background, from lower-middle class to upper –middle class. 1. Many of them come from private secondary schools where they have had five years of English; 2. Some have studied or lived abroad in an English speaking country like the United States and Canada and now they are enrolled in private universities. These are a especial case: they speak English fluently, but do not have any knowledge of grammar (street language). 3. From these five years they have achieved some good theoretical knowledge of the language which they show when asked to perform in English. The skills obtained from this training are the following:

They can understand some English from listening and they manage to answer “yes” and “no”, they identify some grammar elements in the written form of the language, they read and can basically get the main idea and some details in simple readings, depending on the level, and they can also make use of some reading skills such as inference of vocabulary.

Chart No.6 Number of students that took part in this research

Total number of Students	Level of English course	Career	Year of the career	Ages	Sex Female	Sex Male
24	II	All careers	1 st	17-20	9	15
26	III	Marketing	2 nd	19-23	12	14
36	III	All careers	3 rd	17-22	14	22
10	X	International Relations	4 th	24-45	4	6

VI. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this section is to present and explain step by step all the information concerned to the research process. First, it shows the type of research developed in this study, as well as the methodology implemented. Second, it describes and presents the aims of the instruments or the tools used to collect the data, considered as the core of the study to be organized, processed, and analyzed afterwards.

As it was previously stated, this type of research was exploratory. It took us a considerable amount of time to realize that there was not such a thing as TTT. In other words, there is no literature under this huge concept. Moreover, we just had a vague impression based on our own experience about the object of the study. Due to this fact, we tried to find out previous studies carried out at higher level in Nicaragua based on our theme, but almost nothing was found. This situation led us go back and search information related to this study but at a lower level, and effectively, we found the baseline study done by the Luxons. This research helped us to have a better understanding of the problem at an initial phase (state secondary school in Nicaragua in 1993). From the importance and similitude between both studies, we borrowed some ideas of some of their instruments for data collection and conceived the idea of a comparative analysis to close our research, comparison that will presented at the end.

After reading the work carried out by the Luxons, we felt more motivated, more secure and were even more eager to develop our project. To our amazement along the process of data collection, we were gathering basically the same information. The different instruments used during the process of data collection are mentioned in detail in the following section of this study.

1. Initial stage of the methodological work

As it has been stated before, the purpose in developing this research was to establish the reasons why the students were not achieving an acceptable level of English to enable them to communicate with fluency and appropriateness in a specific context in the classroom and out of the classroom. In addition to this, we wanted to demonstrate that by introducing a different methodology, they would eventually develop strategies and skills to help them acquire the target language. The first step we took was to design a schedule of the activities for the research. See Annex 5.

The research process was carried out from March 2003 to July 2004. The first activities were meeting of the researchers to define the object of study based on a number of informal oral surveys we have had with students of different levels within the institution we work at with the objective of analyzing the current context of English teaching at university levels and the methodology being used by English teachers.

We devoted the next step to the gathering of literature related to our field or research. This was a very difficult task because we did not know exactly which specific terms we were looking for. We thought we should look under teacher talk and we did so. This was very hard to find since there is not literature available under this topic. Besides, teacher talk was too wide of a term and took us nowhere.

Teacher talk deals with many things. So we went a few steps back and revised our initial idea to find out why students were not acquiring the language, why students were not able to use the language orally after a few or a lot of English courses? And little by little we were narrowing down our thoughts. We started to relate our object of study to other terminology that had to do with what we wanted, and we discovered that it was related to communication, competencies, strategies, learning styles, teacher-centred classes, students-centred classes, and the magic words appeared: Students Interaction. That was the answer to our concern.

But before our team could figure out those related topics to review, we started to draw a plan to visit the universities in which this research would take part. We started by holding meetings with directors of English departments, and teachers who became part of the target population. After the agreement with the authorities and the teachers of the institutions, we planned and designed the instruments to begin with the pre-stage of our research. See Annex 6. To do this, we prepared a survey for the students to be implemented as a diagnosis instrument. Annex 7. We also elaborated a calendar to carry out the timed-classroom observation.

The classroom observations extended from March 19 to July 29 2003. At the pre-stage (from the point the problem is identified to the end of classes observation) of this activity, the researchers took notes of the classroom development in order to time how much talking teachers did and how many opportunities to talk the students had. However, what we were actually doing, besides trying to keep record of the time the teacher spent talking, was jotting the kind of participation the students were doing. That is, if the students were contributing in any way to the development of class. Remember that our research is qualitative and quantitative.

The next phase of this data collection was the implementation of the plan of action, in which a number of communicative activities were put into practice in the classroom, and the students took

an active role. It is important to note that it was at this point that we finally began to obtain some literature. This was after we had finished observing classes and were half way through with the implementation the plan of action. See Annex 19 for examples.

The plan of action consisted of warm up and main activities for different sessions. After the performance of each class during the plan of action, students were asked to write their impressions in order to know their opinions.

In the post-stage phase (implementation of the plan of action, surveys to students and teachers, analysis of the results, review of additional literature, writing of the rough draft of the document) teachers and students were asked to fill out separate surveys after the plan of action. The results of both surveys were processed, graphics were elaborated, and the data collected from the instruments were analyzed and compared to establish the difference with previous studies.

Another source of information that we considered of particular importance was the interviews and surveys to the authorities in charge of the institutions involved in the ODA ELT Project, for example the directors of the English departments of UCA, UNAN Managua, MED, and a former ANPI director.

Finally, writing of the final report and meetings with the tutor.

2. Techniques and Instruments used in the investigation.

The instrument of measurement implemented to gather the data consisted basically of the following:

- ❖ Questionnaires fill out by the students at the pre-stage of the data collecting.
- ❖ Timed classroom observations. (40 sessions observed)
- ❖ Observation sheet of the behavioural of class development during the period from March to June 2003.(Format)
- ❖ Students' comments after the implementation of the Action Plan.
- ❖ Students' surveys after the Action Plan.
- ❖ Teachers' open-ended surveys (Four teachers)
- ❖ Interview to the institutions involved in the ELT ODA Project. (Four interviews)

A questionnaire filled out by the students at the pre-stage of the data collection was prepared in order to know the teacher's classroom management, use of teacher talk, classroom conditions in which the students attended their classes, and students' attitude toward the class.

The objective to carry out timed classroom observations was to measure how much time of the class the teachers took and how much of it was allowed to the students' talk. Second, to observe if there was any turn taking, and if the initiation-response-feedback principle took place during the classes. In this fifty-hour process, four teachers were observed during the teaching time in three different private universities in Managua.

3. Procedure

The researchers, arrived to the classrooms about ten minutes before the hour, sat at the back of the room, and waited for the teacher and the students to come. Usually the teacher arrived on time, and sometimes waited for a few minutes after the hour to start the class with the purpose of not having to explain twice the same thing, and so most of the students would be present when he/she initiated the lesson.

It is important to mention here, that by the end of the observation phase, the researchers required a technique to group the great amount of data with the purpose of analysing it. Due to this, a format of observation sheet of the class behaviour was designed to be able to categorize as much ongoing information as possible. To have real numbers of the findings and to quantify the information, tallies were used.

The students were asked to write their comments after the implementation of the Plan of Action with the idea of obtaining their feedbacks and reactions about their considerations related to communicative activities. We specifically wanted to know if they thought that they were useful and effective to develop communicative competence or if these were just a waste of time.

Another important instrument to compile information was a survey applied to the students after the Action Plan. The aim to do this was to know if they view the implementation of such activities as a good teaching technique to contribute to their acquisition and oral practice of the language.

Teachers' were asked to fill out open-ended surveys with the objective of knowing, from their perspective, if the implementation of these activities was successful to promote classroom communication.

To conclude this part of the research and with the purpose of comparing the current work with that of the Luxons, the researchers designed an interview to the ODA-ELT beneficiaries, who took part in the baseline study and who are now holding administrative positions, with the purpose of getting current information about the sustainability of this project, and to know if they had taken an active participation in such sustainability to honor their compromise signed in the letter of intention. This interview was answered by the authorities from the Ministry of Education, UCA, UNAN Managua, and ANPI.

VII. ANALYSIS OF THE CHARTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED TO THE STUDENTS AT THE PRE-STAGE PHASE OF THE RESEARCH.

This questionnaire was presented to the students at the beginning stage of this research, before putting into practice any of the activities of our plan. The objective was to gather information about three of the components of the teaching/learning process in the universities involved in the study: the teacher, the students, and the physical conditions.

In the first section called “About the teacher”, we wanted to know what the role of the teacher was in relation to: 1) his/her competence of the English language, 2) his/her class management abilities, and 3) if he/she had a mastery of some kind of methodology.

In relation to the first part, competence of the English language, specifically, if the teacher was linguistically qualified, or, if his/her level of English met the standards from the point of view of the students. In summary, if they spoke English well.

In addition, we wanted to have information about how the students viewed the teachers from an affective perspective, that is, if the teachers were friendly with the students. And thirdly, we wanted to have a notion of what methodology, if any, was used by the teacher and how the students judged it. All of the above can be illustrated in questions one to seven of the questionnaire.

In this first section (questions 1 to 7), it can be seen that there is a rather favorable assessment of the teachers from the part of the students. The percentages range from a lowest 71% to the highest 89%. In other words, they considered their teachers as having good level of English, good command of classroom management, and the ability to communicate with them affectively. The following seven charts illustrate this point.

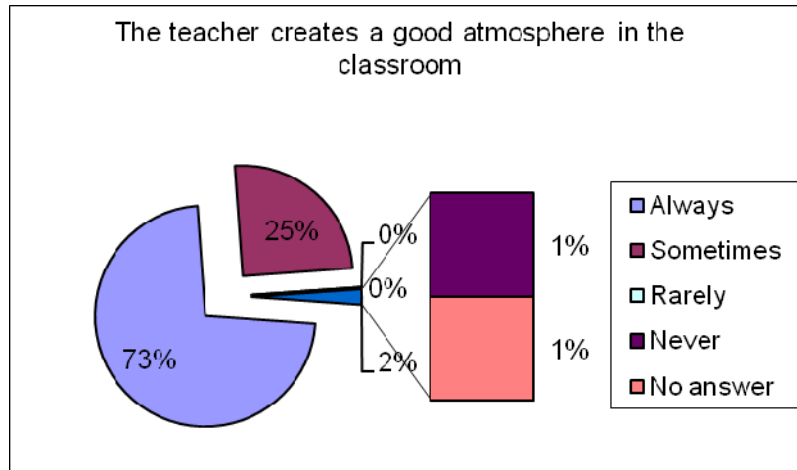


Chart 7

Almost three fourths of the whole class thinks that the teacher always provides an appropriate learning conditions, in contrast to one fourth that thinks that only sometimes the teacher provides adequate atmosphere in the classroom. This constitutes an alert sign to prepare us to what might be the upcoming results. It tells us that, in general, there is good rapport between the teacher and the students; the teacher is not intimidating, he/she might be open, friendly, respectful, considered, etc. On the other hand, we must not look lightly at the fact that a good 25% needs to be improved. From here it might be safe to predict, on the basis of those results that about 75% will be willing to participate actively in the process and 25% might not be that willing to participate.

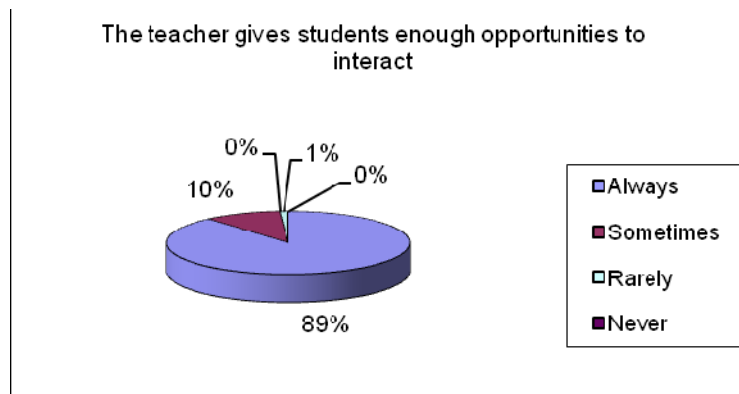


Chart 8

Here the percentage of the “always” response is very high in comparison to the “sometimes”, “rarely”, or “never” responses. Actually it is the highest of all the 16 questions of this questionnaire. This strongly contradicts our assumption that in some private universities the teacher talk is high and that it prevents students from using the target language, thus keeping them at the recognition level of learning, not giving them the opportunity to do the practice (reinforcement) and even worse, preventing them from reaching the production stage.

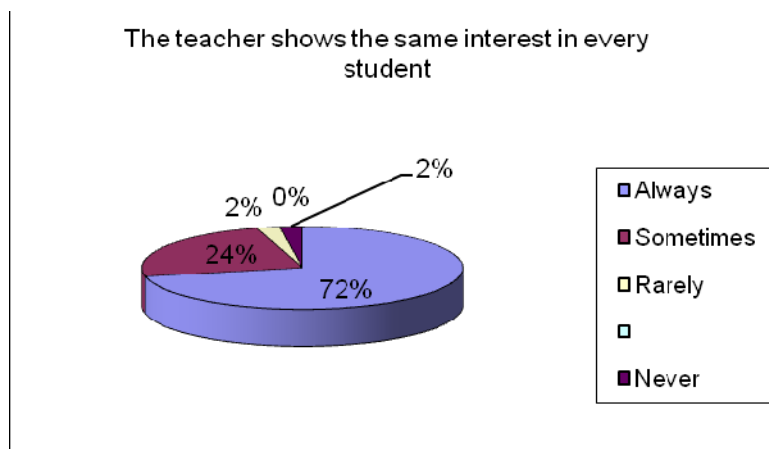


Chart 9

These results are congruent with those of chart No. 1, in which almost exactly the same three fourths of the students say that the teacher shows the same interest in every student. The analysis of these two graphs makes us believe that the data are reliable. From these data we continue to expect basically the same 75% of “happy” students versus a 25% “unhappy” ones.

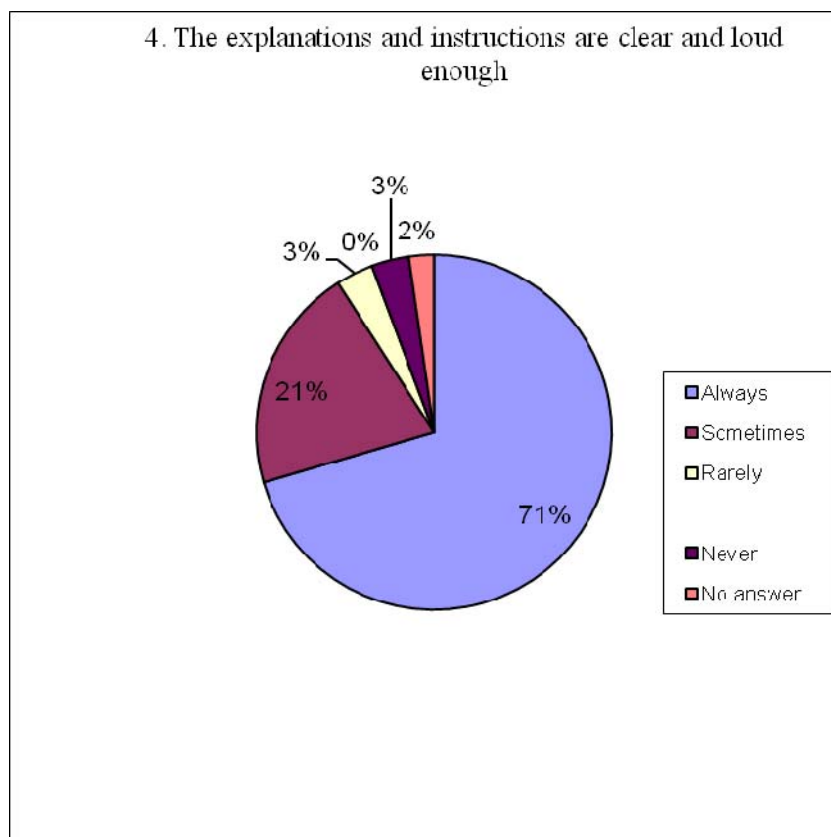


Chart 10

The majority of the students, 71% (almost the three-fourths), can hear and understand the teacher's instructions and probably belong to the same three-fourths of questions 1 and 3. This information leads us to believe that the students are basically content with the teacher's personality, and whatever failure on the students' ability to develop communicative skills is solely the responsibility of the lack of a communicative teaching approach, in other words, the lack of teacher's training in different methodologies especially communicative methodology.

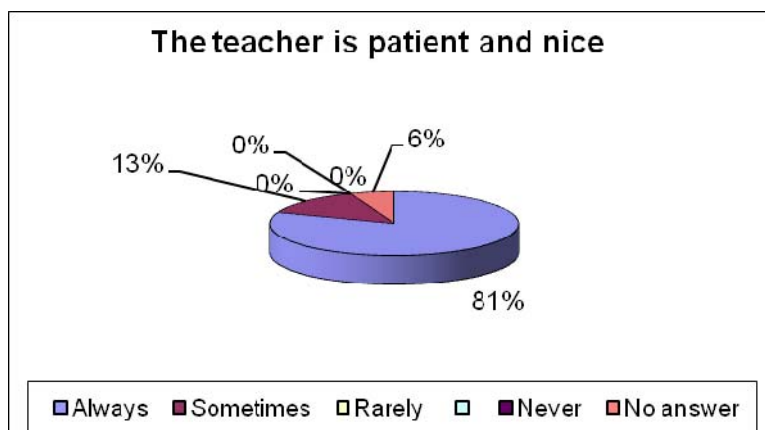


Chart 11

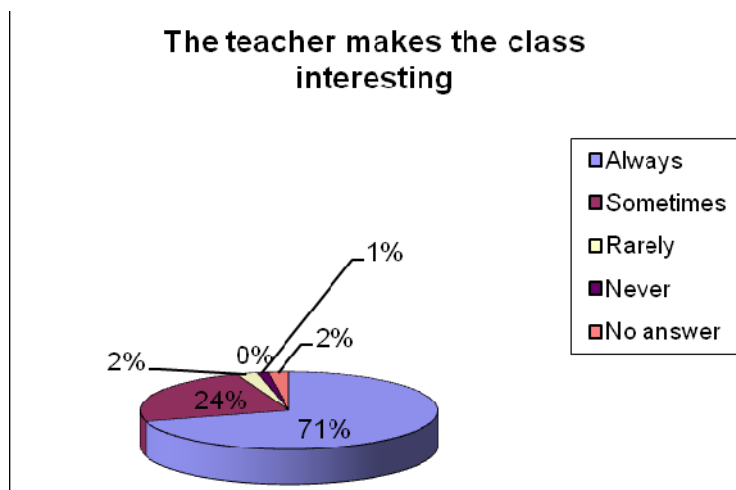


Chart 12

This is a rather shocking finding because the opposite was expected. Several possibilities can be suspected: one, that the students assumed that when teachers ask them individual questions or yes / no questions that is interaction, because that is the only kind of interaction they know and they have not experienced any other kind of interaction. In fact, its T-S interaction, but it does not include S-S interaction. This makes us think that the following: 1) the question was not well elaborated as to make clear that what was wanted to know was if there was real interaction, that is, negotiation, peer correction, in other words, if meaningful communication among students was taking place; 2) it could have been that the students felt that they should not speak bad of their teacher because they like him and did not want to hurt him or cause any trouble with authorities; 3), students did not want

to speak bad about their teacher because they were afraid of consequences; and 4) they did not understand the question. Additional research would be recommended in this respect.

This is the only question that relates to methodology in the whole questionnaire. The students believe that the teacher actually makes the class interesting, but we failed to ask how. We assumed that he/she does it by being the center figure, telling them stories, explaining, telling them what he/she knows, but not making them think, solve problems or carrying on tasks.

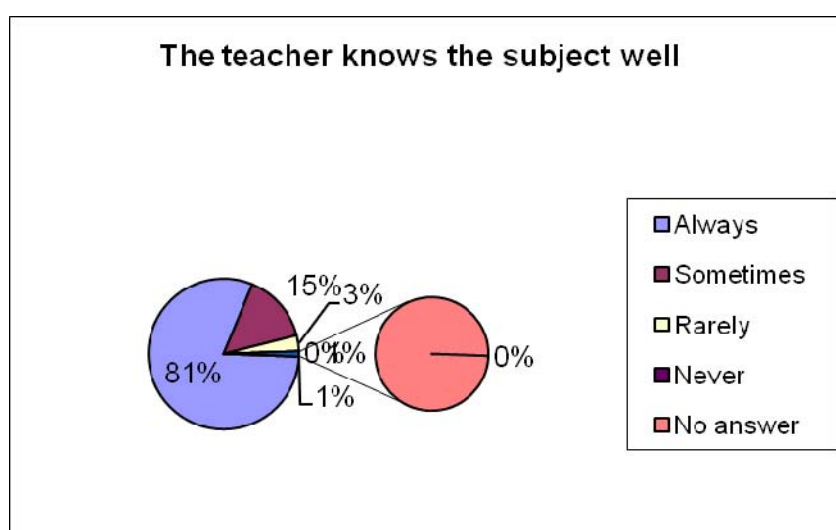


Chart 13

More than four-fifths of the whole class thinks that the teacher has a good command of the English language. We tend to believe that these results are reliable since the majority of the students in private universities have a good background in English from the analysis done in the section **students background**. From here we discard two probable reasons why students fail to develop communicative skills: teacher' personality (affective filter) and level of English. At this point we are certain that the only reason left is lack of an appropriate methodology.

1. About the physical conditions of the classroom

The next two questions deal with physical conditions of the classroom and the results are not very fortunate. More than half of the students agreed that the learning conditions are not the best, and a little less than half agreed that there are some external noises in the classrooms that affect the smoothness of the class. Our concern here is that if this is the case in private schools, the situation in state universities may be even worse, and this added to the lack of appropriate strategies, activities, and methodologies on the part of the teacher, the learning process may be even more difficult, lower, and inefficient.

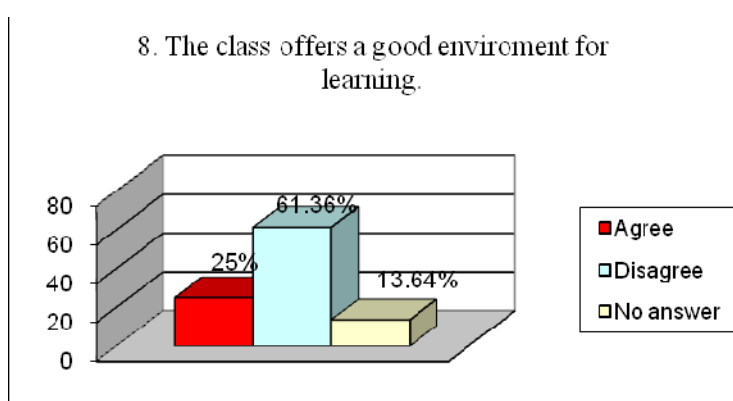


Chart 14

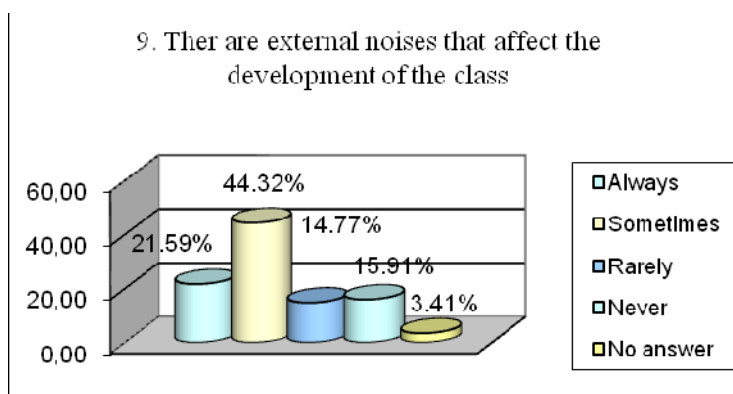


Chart 15

The next seven questions are related to how students view themselves, their motivation, responsibilities towards the class, punctuality, respect for classmates, and cooperation among themselves. We can anticipate that we believe that their responses are honest because they do not range themselves with high marks, from 44.32% to 59.09%. Only in question number 14 they wrote 82.95 for teacher, classmates and class respect, but this does not mean that they are not honest.

In Chart 16, question 11 “I come to class on time”, they marked themselves with a 65.91% Our belief is that they come to class on time because they are full time students and they remain in the university all day.

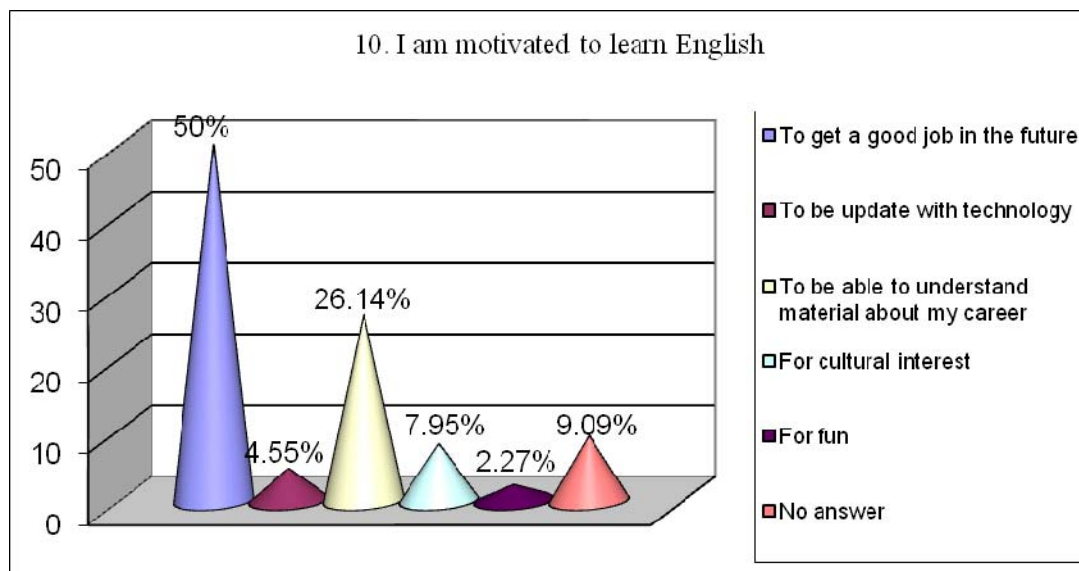


Chart 16

These results agree with what was said earlier that the students are aware and highly interested in learning English basically to have better job options as half of the students answered to the first question, and consequently to be able to understand literature related their field of study.

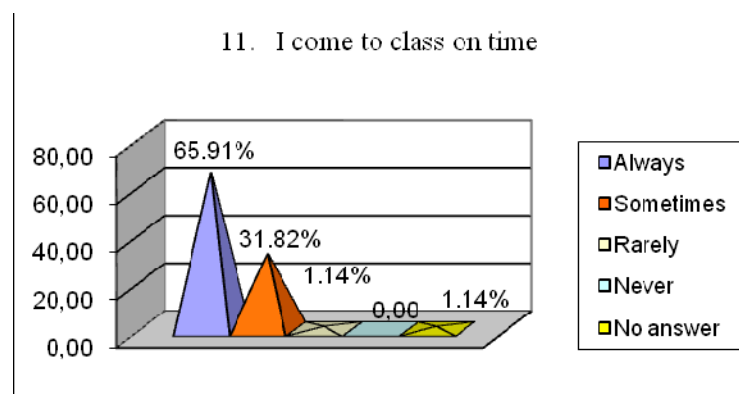


Chart 17

To judge from these results, a considerable amount of time (1/3) is wasted in the English classroom due to students' tardiness. We consider this a serious problem for accomplishing the goals of the program and for carrying out any collaborative learning since collaborative learning needs a lot of time for negotiating, peer correction, practicing and production.

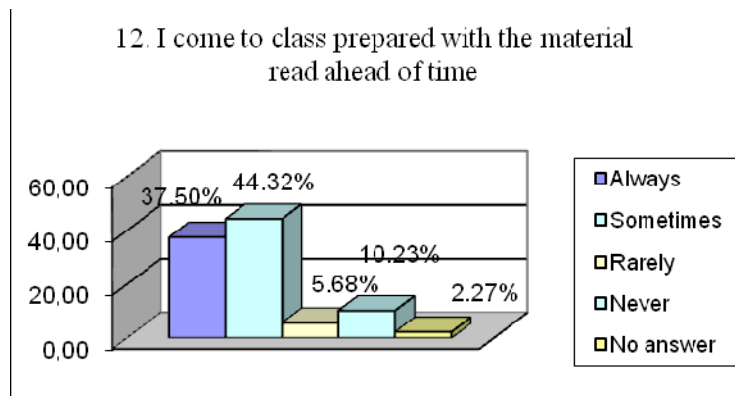


Chart 18

More than half of the students come to class with no knowledge of the content of the class. This is a handicap, weakness that affects the optimum benefit of the lessons. It needs to be overcome in order to achieve the most of the program.

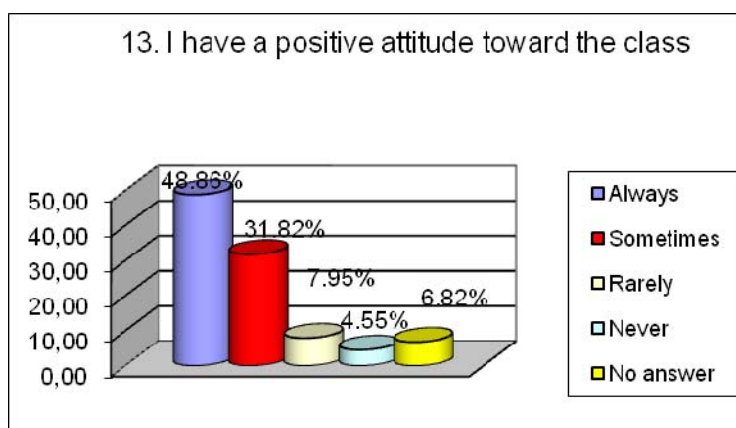


Chart 19.

This results show that not even half of the students come to class with a positive attitude in spite of the fact that they are fully aware of the importance of learning the language. Two things can be assumed, that either the methodology is acting as a demotivating factor and thus is causing students to loose interest in the subject, or there are other factors that are interfering in the demotivation in general of the students. It would be interesting to compare with the level of interest in other subjects.

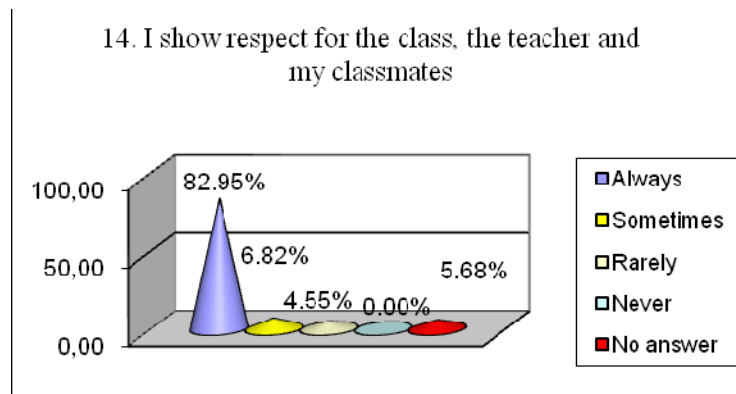


Chart 20

High level of respect, friendliness and comradeship was observed among students and teachers in all classes observed. This is condition that would make it easy for the teachers to introduce a change in methodology, techniques, strategies and that is not being aprovechada. These results could be associated with those of Charts 1 and 3 where students speak well about the teachers.

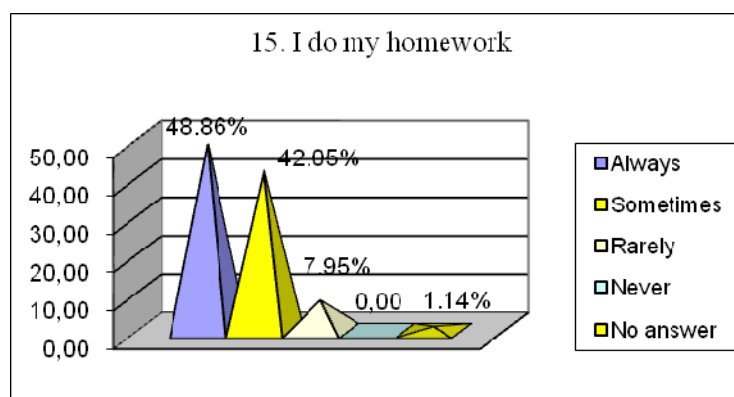


Chart 21

This is a serious handicap. It simple reveals that teachers do not demand the students do their homework or do not check it, and of course, do not give them marks for it. This shows that an important part of the process is being wasted since students are not consolidating what is learned in class and are not becoming independent learners.

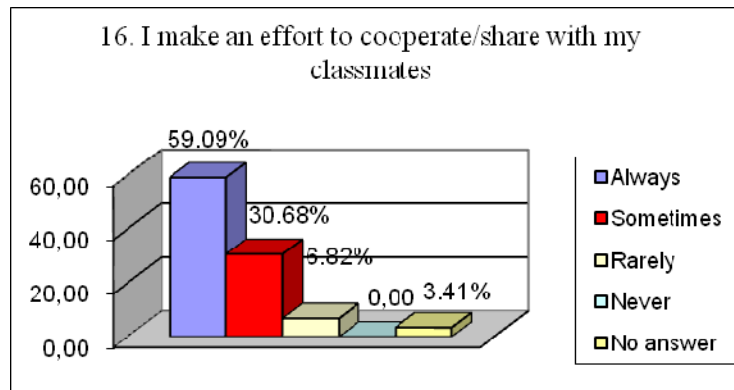


Chart 22

According to these results only slightly more than half of the students are willing to cooperate with each other, but for what we observed in the development of the plan of action, this figure can easily be incremented, students really share, discuss, take turns, help each other, laugh with each other and at each other in a friendly way.

VIII. INTRODUCTION OF ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONS

1. Seating arrangement:

Traditional.

Seating arrangement refers to the position in which seats are placed in the classroom. There are several ways to arrange the seats, depending on the type of classes you execute.

Traditional refers to seats placed in rows facing the teacher and the board. In this type of sitting arrangement the students are next to each other and do not see each other faces easily. This is the most common way of sitting arrangement for conference and lecture-types of teaching.

Non Traditional

This refers to pairs, small groups, big groups, semi circle, and circle type of seating arrangement where the students` seats are individual, light weighted, movable and are proper for classrooms where students need to work cooperatively.

2. Analysis of Museum Presentation (Opening Activity)

This museum presentation was chosen as an opening and closing activity to be implemented even before the observation of regular classes, with the purpose of having an instrument of measurement from the beginning to the end of the process to be able to see if there was an improvement in the developing of the oral skill. Another objective of this particular activity was to find out if there was any genuine communication. That is, real production of the English language according to a social context, along the four months that the current research lasted, which included the plan of action with 10 communicative activities of various types, (pairs, small groups, big groups, and whole class).

The implementation of this opening activity took several meeting with the teachers before the actual realization of it with the purpose of making them carry out the activity. During these meetings they were fully explained the procedure of it. Sadly, at the moment of carrying it out, only one out of four teachers, (25%) did it because the other three could not handle it. In face of these circumstances, we, the researchers had to take command. Two of the other three teachers had some participation, and one of them did not participate at all.

The aspects observed in the Museum Presentation were: 1) **Role of teacher**, stating of the objective, attitude, behaviours, competence, performance, classroom management, and interaction with students. 2) **Role of the students**: motivation, attitude, skill practiced, strategies used, interaction among students themselves, behaviour and performance.

As it can be seen in the chart that follows, Chart 23, there was some T – S interaction, about (30%) in the opening activity. (This is when the teacher addresses all the students to give instructions or explanations.) It was due to the fact that students were very confused with the teachers` instructions. They were puzzled about what to do and kept asking the teacher question for clarification. It was until, we, the researchers took control of the class that the activity went smoothly.

The T – S interaction (This is also when an individual students asks a specific question to the teacher.) was pretty high here too, 18%, for this type of activity. And finally, the group work, although the highest of all, 52%, is not as high as it should have been. These percentages: 30, 18, and 52, although not desirable, did not surprise us, considering that this was maybe the first time these students were engaged in cooperative learning.

This activity lasted 100 minutes and was divided in four phases: stating of the objective and giving instructions for the activity (T-S interaction); students working in small groups (S-S interaction with the monitoring of the teacher); presentation (S- S); and Socializing (S with the whole class).

Now we are going to present with some detail, class by class, teacher by teacher what actually happened in the classrooms..

Teacher A, General English, Level II

Phase I

Teacher had little difficulty explaining the activity, but he managed. After the students grasped the idea of what they had to do, they spontaneously organized themselves in groups of four and started to brainstorm topics for their presentation.

Phase II

The students showed great enthusiasm, but there was also a great deal of Spanish. The teacher walked around helping them with words. The questions most frequently asked were: “Teacher, how

do you say... in English?" or "Teacher, how do you put (a phrase or sentence) in English?" The teacher without hesitation provided the English version of the questions asked. He often provided even more than one way to say what students asked. The teacher stopped in every one of the groups and was very resourceful. However, they were very resourceful among themselves, and not only within a group but also between members of different groups. A very positive participation was when the teacher encouraged them in various occasions to use English to communicate.

At some point the noise was so loud that the teacher had to intervene to make them lower their voices. The level of enthusiasm had grown very high. The students worked for about 50 minutes in the preparation of their cardboards to put up on the wall with the teacher giving full support to the students. During the 50 minutes, there was a great deal of laugh, joking, and work

Phase III

Teacher gave instructions for the beginning of presentations and still some students were not ready. About 30% of them wanted to continue discussing. Anyways, presentation began with the most fluent students taking the lead to present. The students had the opportunity to introduce, present their topics, explain, give background information, give reasons, give opinions, persuade, discuss and conclude. The teacher was fully involved visiting every presentation, asking about the topics of the presentation, never correcting pronunciation, grammar, or any linguistic aspect, but making comments on the topics. In other words, there was genuine communication.

In this particular class there were two shy students who did not talk at all and frowned, expressing discomfort with the activity although they were attentively listening and following the process. Later, in the comments, they said that they liked the activity and they liked the topics, but they were shy and unable to speak in English because they had never taught to talk. At the time of the switching of roles, the less advanced students took their turn to present and they used a lot of "spanglish".

Phase IV

This was the socialization stage and students were asked to give their opinion about the activity. The majority of them expressed their liking and enjoyment of it. Even the slower and the shy ones already mentioned said that it was a very effective way to learn and get rid of the fear and raising self-confidence and self-esteem.

3. Conclusion of this class

Even though it took quite a lot to get organized and there was a lot of Spanish used as well as asking to the teacher for meaning of words, we consider that this class was a great success since the atmosphere was very relaxing and that of comradeship and, the motivation was high to the point that about 90% participated, a lot of different strategies, such as organization, ordering, taking turns, distributing, etc. and skills were used, causing a wonderful amount of sharing. Speaking and listening was constant, and some reading and writing to a less extent also took place.

Teacher B, ESP, III level

This teacher did not to get involved in the activity. It was shocking when he introduced the researchers to the students and said that we were going to carry out an activity with them and asked them to pay attention and participate. After saying this, he sat on his desk and busied himself in something else.

Phase I

From the beginning stage of the class, we had to take charge and after explaining the objective and giving the instructions, a few students asked questions to clarify, organized in groups of four and they started to work.

Phase II

The students in this class had a higher level of English compared to the previous one and were even more ready for action! They understood the instructions well and faster than the above group and after a few questions, started to work in their groups right away. They took about 60 minutes for discussion and taking notes and came up with a variety of current and interesting topics such as the war in Iraq. They used more English and were very enthusiastically involved. There were big laughs and the enjoyment was obvious. The S-S interaction was intense, motivation was high, alertness was one hundred per cent, error correction was among themselves, and negotiation also was seen. A variety of strategies were observed.

Phase III.

Instructions were given for the presentation, which students understood without problems. They proceeded to put up on the wall their cardboards with the outline of their topics. They started the

presentations by deciding who was going to start first and the visiting began. In all cases students did their best to explain their peers the content of their work.

It was notorious how the teacher from his desk once in a while glanced and smiled at the class signalling approval. The level was high, but it did not seem to disturb the teacher who was working on some papers. At the time of the switching, when the second part of the class was going to present, it could be seen how willing the students were to explain their part.

Comments: In the presentation phase, the students showed responsibility, seriousness and respect for each other. They tried hard to make their point and to convey their message.

Phase IV

In the comments section of the class, the students wrote that it was a wonderful class, they expressed how much

they have enjoyed it, it helped them be better friends, it encouraged team work, helped them to overcome fears, raise their self-esteem, and asked for more activities of this type.

Teacher C, General English, Level III

Phase I

This was a large class, 36 students. The teacher gave instructions on how to proceed, but failed to state the objectives. Students were confused and for a little while did not know what to do. Teacher got a bit nervous and showed sign of being insecure. Nevertheless, he was willing to conduct the class and did it. He showed good domain of the English language, had good attitude, had very clear pronunciation and was very well articulated. He lacked classroom management and experience in carrying out communicative activities and did not know how to be a facilitator. He was used to conduct teacher-centred classes.

Phase II.

Students got together in the groups and started to brainstorm topics. At first they did not seem to come to an agreement on what topic to choose, they spoke basically in Spanish, some of them were focused on the task, others were not. The teacher intervened again, this time in Spanish to put students in track and make them work. After some seven or ten minutes, students were all on task. They wrote their cardboards with the definitions, concepts, and aspects they were going to cover. Teacher was helping in all the groups. After 40 minutes of preparation, teacher told them to stop and start putting up their cardboards. They followed teacher`s instructions and started the

presentations. These went on smoothly, with the more advanced students taking the lead. The teacher visited all the groups, participating by asking questions and giving support and comments. The students took him as another student and did not seem to be bothered by the teacher taking a back up stand. On the contrary, they seemed to enjoy being the main characters of the picture.

Phase III

Summary: The class started slowly, but after a few minutes students were on track, brainstorming a variety of topics, although in Spanish. The teacher failed again to encourage the use of English. As the class developed, every one was contributing and the use of English increased so the use of Spanish diminished. In the written part of the students, they expressed their enthusiasm. In general, the students felt comfortable and felt like as if they were the protagonists or the centre of the class. On the other hand, there were a few that said they got confused, and because of that they did not get involved. Based on what we observed, we can say that the attitude of these students that did not participate was due to the lack of practice in interacting with others in the English classes, to express their opinions and feelings.

Observation: Despite the fact that this particular teacher had attended some workshops (He had told this to the researchers) oriented to teach communicative English, he did not show confidence to manage this activity successfully. This means that the teacher theoretically knew about communicative activities, but in the practice he was afraid of implementing them.

Of the students, we can say that they enjoyed sharing with their peers and by the end of the activity they had somewhat lost their shyness and reluctance to participate. More comments can be seen in Annex 16.

Teacher D

Phase I

Instructions were clearly given by the researchers to the teacher observed, but at the moment of the execution of the activity she didn't collaborate as it was expected. She left the observers to carry out the development of the activity. She didn't transmit any enthusiasm or desire to help. She became an observer.

Phase II

Once the students were oriented about the procedure of the activity, they chose their topics based on their interests, for example: one group decided to talk about the way their university campus has

changed since they started their careers, another group talked about fashion, and so on. The students showed a positive attitude to participated, and to ask questions for clarification eventhough they use some Spanish for new words while they were preparing their charts.

Phase III.

Thirty minutes later the students started the activity, They were ready to present their posters on the walls. Their presentations took part, and until that moment their homeroom teacher showed interest in the development of the activity. She got involved as a visitor of her students and participated actively asking questions and making comments.

Conclusion:

The lack of motivation on the part of the teacher becomes a negative consequence that could diminished the level of participation and interest of the students toward the class. As we could observe in this session, at the end of the activity the teacher realized the effectiveness of this type of activity, and that the students enjoyed to learn by taking an active role in the learning process.

IX. PLAN OF ACTION

1. Objectives and analysis

The Plan of Action was the implementation of ten communicative activities of various types.

The purpose of it was to test the validity of our hypothesis. The duration of these activities ranges from 10 to one-hundred minutes and were oriented to involve students with different learning styles (oral, visual, kinesthetic, and combined) and which intended to demonstrate that by increasing students talk and diminishing teacher talk in the classroom, students can eventually improve their oral skills and thus become competent in the target language, in this case English.

In the activities selected for this purpose, we included the use of various learning strategies, from cognitive (unconscious), to metacognitive (conscious), social, and affective. The activities chosen for the plan of action had been proven in our classrooms and showed to be highly motivating, involved students of various learning styles, and made students incorporate different learning strategies. Hence they favoured production or genuine communication.

2. The ten activities of the Plan of action

- 1- Museum presentation (opening activity), lasted 100 minutes and it was a small group and whole class activity.
- 2- Clapping hand and changing partner, lasted 15 minutes and it was a pair work activity.
- 3- Guessing the name of a famous person, lasted 15 minutes and was a whole class activity.
- 4- Words association, lasted 25 minutes and it was a big group activity.
- 5- Opposite cards, lasted 30 minutes and was pair work activity.
- 6- Categorizing occupations with degrees of importance and profitability, lasted 40 minutes and it was individual, pair, small group, and whole class.
- 7- Ranking, lasted 40 minutes and was individual, pair, small group, and whole class activity.
- 8- Board game, lasted 100 minutes and it was small group and whole class.
- 9- Role play, lasted 100 minutes and it was small and big groups, and whole class.
- 10- Another ranking, lasted 50 minutes and it was individual, pair, small group, and whole class.
- 11- Museum presentation (closing activity used as a measurement instrument)

How they are used

Clapping the hand

- 1- Teacher gives instruction for students to stand up and make two rows facing each other.
- 2- Teacher explains that he will clap his/her hand and will give a topic for them to speak about for two minutes.
- 3- Students talk for one or two minutes
- 4- Teacher claps his/her hands and explains they have to move one step to the right when he gives another topic.
- 5- This procedure is repeated four times, after the students have talked about five different topics and have changed five partners.
- 6- Teacher is supposed to walk around monitoring and being resourceful.

3. Analysis of the above Activities:

Objectives

Clapping of the hands

The purpose of this activity was basically to prepare students for what was going to come. It was to send them a message that a great change in methodology was going to take place in the few coming days.

Procedure:

Teacher made students form two rows, one in front of the other (students had to face each other in pairs) and

as the teacher clapped his/her hand and announce the topic. For example “food”, they had to start talking about food. For example, what kind of food they prefer what kind of food they can cook, etc. The teacher allowed one minute for them to speak and then he/she clapped his/her hand again announcing a different topic.

It took the teachers about five minute’s average to make the students understand and follow the instructions. Two of the four teachers got involved.

This was a pair work activity and with it we confirmed that if the teachers are enthusiastic, the affective filter lowers considerably and the students participate more easily and are more willing to cooperate with one another. Also, we learned that even with not so-enthusiastic teachers, the students still participate. There was a lot of laughing in all the groups. It was obvious that never before, the students have had any opportunity to talk because when the activity ended, the students were asking for more.

By the enjoyment and interaction, we think that the objective was fulfilled. We did not find any negative in this activity.

This is good for students with auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles and the strategies used are metacognitive and social/affective.

Guessing the name of an important person

From here on, the purpose was to make the students of different learning styles interact using various strategies.

Procedure:

This was a whole class and it was done at the beginning of the class. Teacher explained that he/she was going to stick name tags on their backs, and they were going to make a big circle with one person in the centre at a time in such a way that everyone was going to know who everyone was except himself. The people in the circle were going to shout features of the people inside until this person guessed who he/she was. At first, students would not move, and then they made a lot of noise making room to form the circle. Girls were more hesitant than boys to go in the circle. In one class the game did not work because students shouted very obvious features and the name was quickly guessed. In two classes the students lacked vocabulary to express what they wanted to say, even for very simple utterances and they would say, for example: "You have a bigote", "You cantas muy bien and you are of Mexico". Of course, this provoked a lot of laughs.

And maybe because it was a whole class, with individual participation, students did not seem to enjoy as much as in the first activity. Some students were smiling and others were frowning and were eager for the activity to end.

Some students in all the classes were arriving late, which caused disorder and confusion, mainly because the classrooms were too small for this type of activity. The late comers did not know what was going on so they went to sit in their seats and merely watched as spectators. Others joined the activity.

The pace of this "game" was so fast that the teachers did not bother to force the late comers to join. The more advance did most of the talking and did not try to help the slower one. These slower students were either embarrassed or somewhat at discomfort for not being able to participate.

We think that this activity was not successful as far as interaction was concerned, but it helped us to confirm that students perform better in "private", that is, in either in pairs or in small groups. Teacher did not model, and some pre-teaching of vocabulary should have been done.

It fits students of all learning styles and the strategies used are metacognitive and social/affective.

Words Association

The objective was to reinforce vocabulary and structures already studied by participating in collaborative work.

Procedure:

Teacher explained the students to divide themselves in two teams and choose a secretary to keep the score of each team. Then the members of each team would go to the board to write words in two columns, one with occupations and the other with objects.

In three of the classrooms observed, the students slowly went to the board, and not all participated. When the lists were completed, the teachers explained that teams would take turns making questions with the words on the board. For example: “What can a pilot do with a table?” Any member of the other team could answer the question within one minute. If the team fails to provide a good answer, it would miss a point. Students, in general, showed a good deal of difficulties formulating the questions and providing the answers. It was until the teacher gave several examples that they could do the activity, and even so it was only partially successful.

Again, for our purpose, it was successful because we could see that the students, with the methodology currently used, students are unable to communicate even in simple language.

This applies to students of all learning styles and the strategies used were metacognitive and social/affective.

Opposite cards

The objective here was to make each student to interact with as many partners as possible by sharing the information he/she had in his/her card with the others until he found the card with similar information and later debate (discuss, agree, disagree, convince, persuade, correct each other and finally speak to the group as a whole class) on the topic of the card.

Procedure:

Teacher distributes 5” x 3” cardboard, colour cards with opposite statements of each topic.

First, students had to read their cards and understand what his/her statement said. Individually he had to think for arguments to defend his/her point of view.

Second, students stand up to look for his/her partner, the one that has the opposite statement of the same topic. Students work in pairs.

Third, once they have found their partners, they start to discuss. Each one tries to convince his/her partner that what he/she says is right.

After some 20 minutes, teachers made the students come to an agreement.

Each pair comes in front of the class to explain their point of view about the topic.

Comments: The activity was very successful. Students perform better than expected. They work individually, in pairs, and in a whole class. There was a lot of interaction. Teacher was just a helper and a monitor.

Students used a lot of strategies and the activity was for all kinds of learning styles.

Opposite cards is good for all learning styles and strategies of the three types are applied.

Categorizing occupations with degrees of importance and profitability

Objective: Stimulate students' thinking skills by deciding according to their individual reasoning (self-correction) what occupations were more important. Also to encourage discussion (practice known vocabulary, reinforce vocabulary, expressing likes and dislikes), sharing and cooperation work (peer correction and cooperation).

Procedure:

Teacher gave students a handout with five columns, five occupations, and five degrees of importance and five levels of profitability.

Students individually decide order of importance and profitability of each occupation.

Then they discuss in pairs their order and try to come to an agreement.

After a few minutes, they discuss in groups of four.

Finally each group comes to the board and writes their grid.

After all grids are written on the board, students see what is the most important and profitable of all occupations.

Comments: It was a great activity. It generated a wonderful cooperation among students. There was a lot of interaction. Students were involved at all times. Teacher was a facilitator and a monitor.

Different learning styles as well as different strategies were used.

Ranking: Are you a good lover?

Objective: To stimulate students' thinking skills by providing them with a set of statements with which they had to agree or disagree giving a solid argument. Also to encourage use of the

oral language by discussing in pairs and then in groups until one person convinced the others of his/her ideas.

Procedure:

Teacher gave the instructions and the handouts with 10 questions for the students to answer individually. Students took a few minutes to answer.

Teacher then gave instructions for the students to get in pairs and discuss their answers trying to come to an agreement. Students took some time to do this discussion.

Teacher gave instructions for students to get in groups of four to discuss their answers and come to an agreement as a group.

Finally the teacher drew a grid on the board to be filled with the students responses.

Students came to the board and as a whole class they completed the grid.

This class was very successful. Everyone participated. There was a one hundred percent student-student interaction during the whole period of class. Affective filter was at its lowest point. It was clear that the students enjoyed it because everyone was involved and able to express their opinion on the different questions of the topic. The teachers acted as facilitators.

For our purpose, the activity was the first great success. It was now that we had the opportunity to compare the different kinds of activities and decide which ones were more suitable for all types of learning styles, for the students to put different strategies, practice different skills: reading, writing, and speaking.

The students were better prepared to participate in a whole class activity because they have had plenty of good peer practice, peer and self-repair, reinforcement from themselves and from the teacher.

From our point of view this has been the best activity so far.

Suitable for all learning styles and strategies of the three groups are necessary for this activity.

Board game

Objective: To provoke oral practice by making students work in teams and to promote creativity through finding solutions to problems similar to real life.

Procedure: The teacher asks the students to get in small groups. He/she provides a handout, a dice and a token for each group. They he/she explains that one person at a time has to throw the dice and where the dice lands, the student has to create the solution for the students to understand what is expected from them.

Some examples of the situations from the handouts are: “I ran out of gas and I don’t have any money with me.” Another example is “My rent is due on Thursday.”

For this specific examples, the students have to make up a story about where to get the money from, if they had to borrow it from a friend, a brother or use a credit card, etc. In the second case, they have to say something like moving to a more economic place, or sharing expenses with a roommate, etc.

Conclusion of Board Game.

Three of the four teachers participated. This activity is good for students of all learning styles and the strategies used were from the three groups.

4. Analysis of the Museum presentation (closing activity used as instrument of measurement)

The objective of this closing activity was to measure qualitative and quantitatively if there was any improvement in the oral use of the target language from the beginning to end of the research, if the students were involved and what strategies were used in the implementation of the task. We also wanted to observe to what extent the students were enjoying what they were doing and thus acquiring the language in a relaxed atmosphere when they have decided on what to speak , what degree of turn taking was taking place, confirm that this communicative method, and specifically that this type of activity integrates all the four basic skills

In the observation of this last activity, the same aspects of the first one were observed: Role of teacher: stating of the objective, attitude, behaviours, competence and performance, classroom management, and interaction with the students. Role of the students: motivation, attitude, skills practiced, strategies used, interaction among themselves, behaviour and performance.

What was observed in this final phase of the plan of action was that teachers had a better domain of the process of carrying out a communicative activity. They acted more as facilitators and resourceful than as lecturers. They could state the objective more clearly than at the beginning, they were more confident and showed a better classroom management. Their explanations were brief and concise and they were prepared with the materials needed (cardboard, markers, masking tape).

The students, on their part, did not need as much explanation, they organized in groups faster, the flow of topics was greater and more diverse than the first time, they still used Spanish and they still asked the teachers for translation of words.

This time the students were not confused, they did not ask as many questions as the first time, and the researchers did not have to take control.

As the students knew from the beginning what they had to do and what was expected from them, they organized themselves more quickly and began to do their brainstorming of topics. The discussions were of very high level even in the lower level (English II). They showed a great deal of responsibility, growth, respect for each other`s ideas and opinions and a lot of sense of humour. The student-student interaction was constant, the student helping each other was also constant, and contribution of ideas as well as the struggling on how to say it at the time of the presentations was amazing.

The strategies used were of all kinds, from metacognitive, to cognitive to social/affective. They took turns presenting. By comparing chart No 23 of the opening with chart No.24 of the closing activity, we can clearly see that there was an important increment in students` interaction among themselves.

Chart No. 23 Classroom interaction during the opening Museum Presentation.

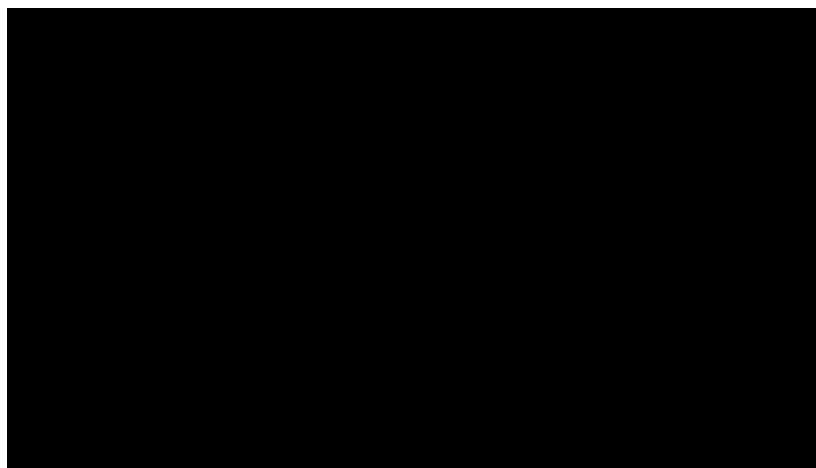
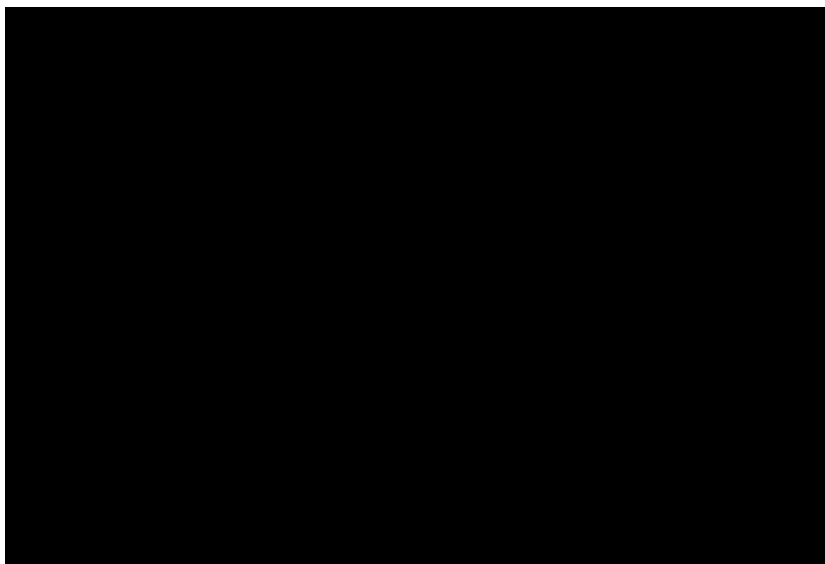


Chart No. 24 Classroom Interaction during the closing Museum Presentation.



5. Aspects that were more relevant during the implementation of the Plan of Action

In some classes, the teacher began by calling the role. This was done basically to wait for the late comers. This was kind of nonsense because at the end of the class teacher marked present or absent anyways. Normally, the classes began by the teacher asking for the homework, which basically consisted of students individually reading at home and doing exercises on their books (answering comprehension questions based on the readings, doing matching exercises, filling out or grammar exercises). One teacher used to assign written work and collected it, but never discussed or corrected in the class with the participation of the students. There was never a warm up as never there was any assignment in which students had to investigate in the library, internet, interview out of the classroom, or work in a project either.

Only in one class out of 20, the students had to speak, and this was done individually as an oral exam. They had to speak about a country of their preference and this speech was as long as they wanted to speak. The participations took anywhere from five to 25 minutes. This was very interesting because during the development of the class observation period, there was never observed one instance in which the students had to speak in English.

The checking of the homework almost always consisted of the teacher asking individual students to answer a question at a time. While one student was answering the questions, the rest of them were either doing the homework in a rush and getting ready for the next question, in case they were asked or, if they had already done it, talking in Spanish (even though many of them could speak English) with the nearest classmate. The teacher never realized or did not care about this. Some students in the back of the class were sometimes speaking in their cell phones. In many cases, it was noted that some students volunteered to answer the questions, but these were the same students that always participated.

In the only class where ESP was taught, the students used a book with a communicative approach, discussions, study cases, and the like, but still, the teacher did not take advantage of it. He asked a few questions always to individual students and then merely concentrated on vocabulary and grammar. Whenever there was a chance for cooperative work, he did make the students organize themselves in pairs or groups to discuss or give opinions. The only case in which the teacher allowed the students to pair up was when someone had not brought his/her book to class and needed to share it with his/her peer to do the exercises of the book.

In the initiation of classes, we already said that there was never observed any kind of warm up, but neither we saw motivation or praising. On the contrary, a lot of threatening was observed. Teachers sometimes scolded the students by saying that if they did not know the meaning of certain words or the past and present perfect tenses of the verbs, they would get very low grade.

During the development of a lesson, one teacher in several occasions insisted on the students to make a list of one hundred verbs in the present, the past and the present perfect tenses, and memorize it! He even told them repeatedly that the mid-term exam was going to be exactly that, that he would allow 30 seconds for the writing of each verb, so they could do it easily in one hour. (We never verified if he did it.) He spent two days making the students go to the board to contribute with the list. It is good to notice here that this was one of the two only times that the students went to the board. In the other one, they went to do a grammar exercises).

The students were so happy to get up from their seats that they volunteered to go to the board even if they did not know the answer. This teacher was very energetic, spoke constantly in the class (he even had to out of the classroom to take a sip of water from the corridor fountain, his throat got so dry), told stories, jokes, anecdotes, and sometimes, when he made the students read a paragraph

from the book, he would correct pronunciation right away, insisting that it was very important to pronounce correctly. At one particular point he said that Nicaraguan migrants to the United States had no possibilities to get a good job because they did not pronounce correctly and did not know grammar well.

X. ANALYSIS OF THE GRAPHICS OF THE SURVEY APPLIED TO THE STUDENTS AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

The objective of this survey was to know students' opinion on the effectiveness of the plan of action for the acquisition, competence and oral performance of the English language.

The survey contains six questions all related to....

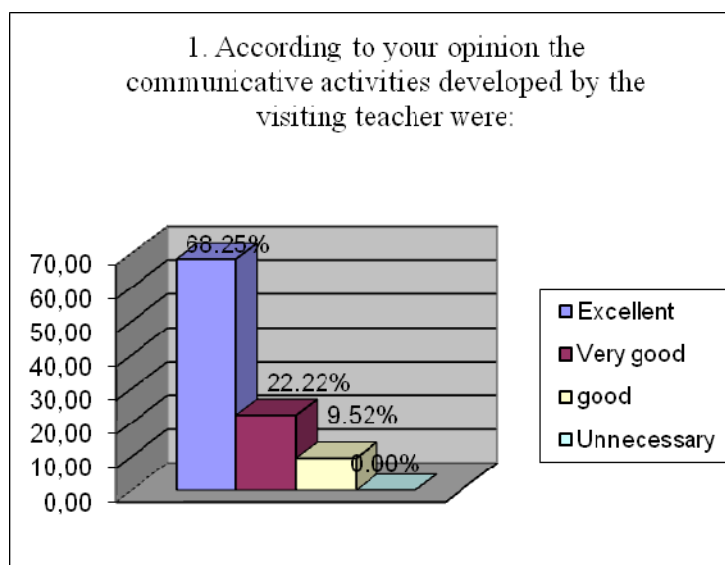


Chart 25

The response of this question reveals that the majority of the students feels at ease or prefers communicative activities carried out in the classroom (student-centered classes rather than teacher-centered classes). Probably the main reason is that they feel satisfied and successful when they are involved and can transmit the message. As the graphic shows 68.25% of the students expressed their liking of activities in which they are active subjects in their learning process.

However, a factor that can not be discarded is that students might have been in some cases over grateful with us for bringing into the class a new methodology in which they felt involved, and tried to show it by giving us an excellent grading. There is a possibility that their comments are not absolutely objectives, but it is clear that there is an obvious acceptance of this methodology from their part.

As reflected in the chart below, a total of 84.13% expressed that communicative activities are not a waste of time. This confirms what they expressed in their written comments that they could increase their self-esteem and thus, they could express themselves better in front of their peers in contrast with only 12.70 that disagreed with this approach (there is a 71.67 difference). We observed that when doing the activities, the students were not concerned with accuracy but with fluency. In other words, they were interested in conveying their meaning according to the context. Hence, the communicative activities were of great importance in the improving of the language acquisition.

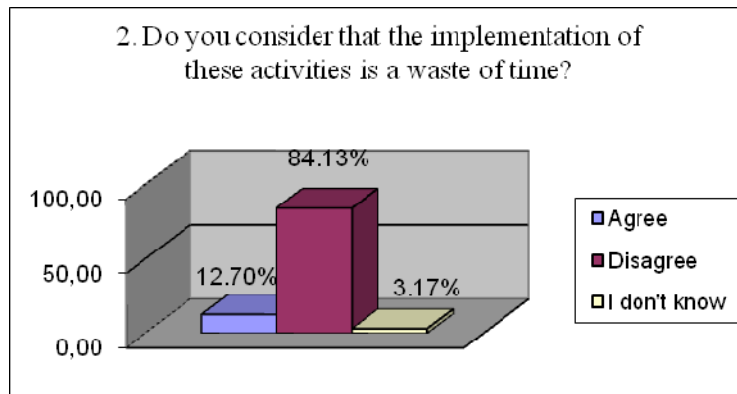


Chart 26

As it can be seen in the in the chart that follows, almost the total number of students manifested their agreement that communicative activities are an effective vehicle in improving their oral skill. The reason being could be that they are constantly and without pressure subjects of their own learning and they feel responsible of the process, with the teacher only helping occasionally and basically monitoring the task.

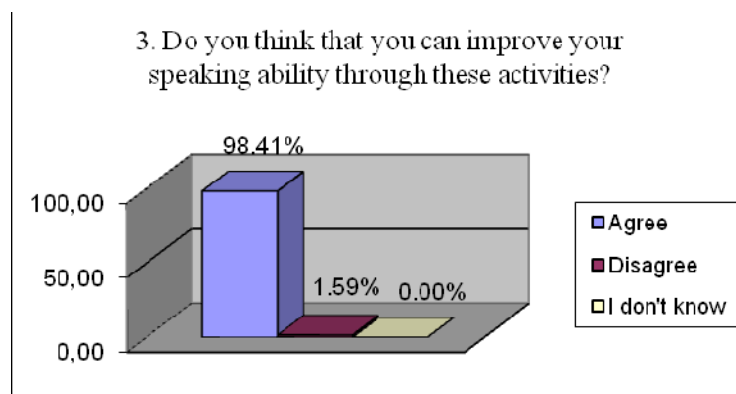


Chart 27

The intention of this question was to find out if the students were satisfied with just listening to the teacher speak and if they thought they could actually develop their speaking ability. Also, we want to make sure that they could see the difference between a “establish” TT approach and the one where students participated actively. The difference was 45.09%, which somehow contradicts in almost half. However, the previous results still establish that there is a general understanding among students that by merely listening they will not develop their speaking ability. The result of this question support and corroborates that students agree that they enjoy, want, need, and believe that communicative activities can help them improve their acquisition of the target language.

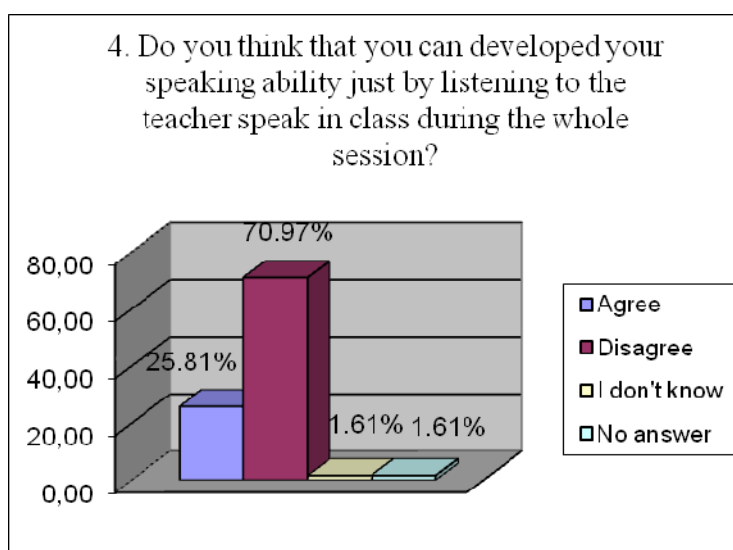


Chart 28

In this case the comparison is between grammar and communicative activities and the table shows a positive difference of 85.72% in favor of communicative approach. Again, this graph reveals that the subjects, when given the opportunity, can perform well, and are capable of carrying out a meaningful and understandable communication. This also confirms our hypothesis that students oral proficiency can be substantially improved if teacher talk (TT) is diminished in the classroom and students ideas, interests, needs, and opinions are taken into consideration.

5. Do you consider that you learn better only the teacher explaining grammar and exercise on the book Or by practicing interactive activities in pairs, groups, etc. (talking with your classmates during games, small conversation, role-plays, etc)

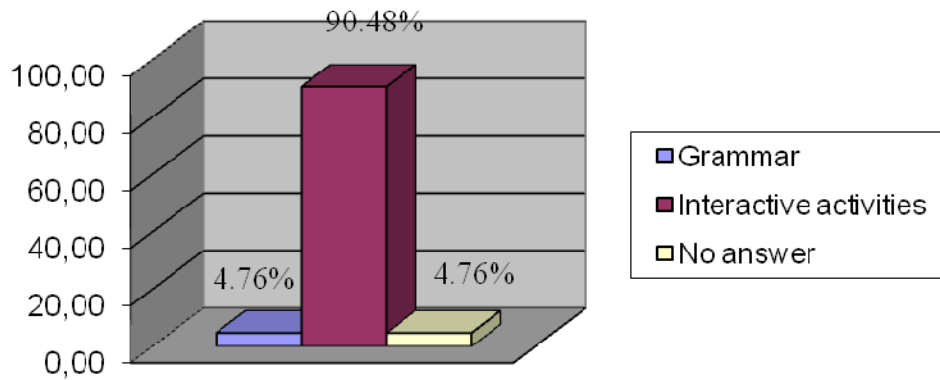


Chart 29

XI. ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY APPLIED TO THE FOUR TEACHERS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE RESEARCH

The purpose of applying this survey to the four participating teachers was to find if the application of the Plan of Action had had any impact on them and if they: a) were happy with what they were doing in the classroom, b) if they thought that a change was needed in relation to method, activities or approach, c) if they care about helping their students to improve their speaking abilities, c) were willing to continue using communicative activities, d) if they were willing to commit to learn and get involved in a new method of teaching. The answers were varied.

We are going to state each question followed by the four answers of the four teachers. Here is the first question.

- 1) Do you consider that with the methodology used in your course, the students have increased the oral use of the English language? If yes, can you explain how?

Teacher A.

He said yes and that his students became more motivated because they used the language to express their ideas and defend their opinions.

We think that this teacher misunderstood the question. He might have thought the questions was about the Action Plan.

Teacher B

This teacher also said yes because the activities have made them talk, using all the English they know in a spontaneous way.

Again, we think that this teacher refers to the Plan of Action and not to the method in his regular classes. He answered in a rush because he was busy doing other things.

Teacher C

This teacher said that it is difficult to answer “yes” because even if he does his best, most of the students do not, and then they will not improve the speaking ability.

This answer reveals that either he is confused with the purpose of the question, or he is implicitly admitting that he does all the action, in other words, all the talking. We think that he is in a defensive position by saying that he does his best.

Teacher D

This teacher sharply said “no because the methodology used is not for that purpose.” It is obvious that this teacher does not agree with what she is doing. However, she does not do anything to change. This particular teacher verbally expressed that the communicative activities were waste of

time. We do not know whether she meant these particular activities with no follow up or communicative activities in general to encourage the development of the speaking ability.

- 2) Do you think that the activities carried out during this research were a waste of time, or on the contrary, they motivated the students as to make them want to participate actively and enthusiastically in the class?

Teacher A

He said he was afraid at the beginning because some of his students were reluctant to participate in role-plays, but after a while they wound up actively in front of others and one of the role plays was very funny. Definitely, these activities were not a waste of time. This particular teacher engaged in all the activities. It was obvious that he wanted to become part of the new process. Previously he had admitted that he was book bound because he did not know any other methodology. He was the only one of the four participating teachers who was not graduated as teacher, but as a biologist.

Teacher B

This teacher scarcely said that the activities motivated the students to participate. This teacher, although very nice, practically did not get involved in any of the activities. Every time we came to the class to observe, he would say to his students “Here is the visiting teacher. Be nice to her and participate. Give a good image.” And he would turn to us to do the activity. He would take advantage of this time to prepare lessons for another institution he was also working at , or correct papers of the students or do calculations of grades.

Teacher C

In the opinion of this teacher the activities were great because most of them motivated the students to speak in English and they also developed some skills.

This teacher was very enthusiastic, got involved in all the process and was willing to welcome a change.

Teacher D

This teacher simply copied the question, she said: the activities carried out during the research motivated them to participate actively and enthusiastically.

This teacher showed a somewhat negative or carelessly attitude towards the activities. She apparently misunderstood that we were going only to observe, and she did not mind that. However, when we asked her to put into practice the activities she refused, and even worse pressured us to do them quickly because all she cared for was to finish the school official program.

- 3) Would you be willing to implement a systematic use of communicative activities so that your students get more involved in the learning process by interacting among themselves and becoming active subjects in the classroom?

Teacher A

He said that he would sure like to implement a systematic use of these activities. He admitted that he is sometimes afraid of implementing them because students refuse to participate because they might think they are too old to get involved, but after having all these activities, he would like to have more of them or get in touch with someone who can give him hints.

This is the teacher who is a biologist, but is willing to commit and get involved. He showed a very good rapport with the students and he also demonstrated good attitude and respect for the research.

Teacher B

He simply said yes, he would. This is the one who never got involved and was always preparing his lessons for another class or another institution he worked at.

Teacher C

This one said that yes, he would. He also said that he thought communication was the most important skill, but that he thought the other skills should not be neglected. This teacher was always enthusiastic and showed interest for every one of the activities. He got really involved.

Teacher D

Simply said yes she would. This is the one that thought the activities were a waste of time.

In conclusion, we have two teachers (50%) that believed in the communicative method, participated enthusiastically, took the plan of action seriously, and were willing to commit. On the other hand, we had another two teachers (50%) who although were aware that a change was needed, did not participate, did not take the plan as important, and showed no interest in the plan whatsoever. It is premature to give any conclusion from this survey. At this point we realize that the sample is too small to arrive at any conclusion on whether or not teachers at higher level are willing to change. It would be necessary to reflect on the limitations of the teachers again: salary, two jobs to complement income, etc. A larger sample would have been desirable.

XII. THE BASELINE STUDY

For the comparative analysis with our research, we are going to use the Baseline Study and The Impact Study of Tony and Michele Luxon carried out between 1993 and 1996 in state secondary schools, since this is the most serious research ever done in Nicaragua in the field of teaching of English and, because ten years later there are striking similarities between the way of teaching then and the way some private university teachers are teaching today.

We will point out the similarities and differences between the two studies with the purpose of and for analysing the importance of the use of communicative activities during the entire process of learning/teaching at all levels of education to see how the development of the oral skill is neglected and how this prevents the students from becoming competent in the acquisition of the English language.

1. Some history

In 1993 a Baseline study was carried out in Nicaragua by Michele and Tony Luxon. This is probably the only important research ever implemented in Nicaragua since the UNAN –Managua opened the Faculty of Educational Sciences specialty of English in 1967. This study was sponsored by the Overseas Development Administration –English Language Teaching- Project (ODA-ELT Project) at the request of the Ministry of Education with the purpose of discovering “the present state of affairs of English language teaching in Nicaragua. The project was not to focus on any single aspect of the classes.”

What was found in this research was that English teachers were facing three large problems to teach English effectively. In the first place, the teachers` level of English was basically very low, and for this reason they did not feel confident enough to use it in their classrooms. Thus, the lessons were conducted almost entirely in Spanish. Secondly, the teachers lacked the necessary methodological training and, consequently, the classes were mainly lengthy grammatical explanations, and thirdly, there was no standardization of evaluation. In relation to the teachers, they found that in general, in all secondary state high schools T.T. (teacher talk was predominantly in Spanish, which prevented the students from getting English input, and of course prevented them from acquiring the second language, in this case English.

Their findings, in a more detailed way, then can be summarized as the following: “1) Over two-thirds of the teachers are not graduates in English. That is, many of the teachers are “empiricos”, meaning untrained in a formal manner; 2) there was basically no difference in level of English or in methodology between the graduate and the empiricos. In some cases the empiricos had a better domain of the English language than the graduated ones; 3) before the initiation of the ODA Project, teachers had never had the opportunity to participate in any training and had not had any support to improve their English or their teaching techniques.

In consequence, they mainly carried on teacher-centred classes with long grammar explanations in Spanish; 4) there was complete absence of practice of the four basic skills. Speaking was limited to the reading of a few sentences, 5) there were no communicative activities, and thus no interaction among students and only little between students and the teacher; 6) there was no reinforcement, encouragement or praising on the part of the teachers, 7) students had no opportunities to express their feelings, and there was no contribution on the part of the students to the topics of the or activities. T.T. was very high since the teachers did not know at the time what is known as learner-centred class.

According to the Baseline Study these empirico teachers were from various backgrounds. Some came from different fields such as engineering, and had had perhaps very little English at some stage in their careers, others have taught themselves English or taken classes privately because they like the language, one or two have spent some time in the United States and could speak English ranging from almost native speakers to extremely basic. Nevertheless, none of these teachers had any training in general or in ELT English.

Finally, for the most part, teachers who had a good level of spoken English still spoke Spanish in class, establishing no difference with those whose level of English was lower. Very few teachers had a satisfactory level of English. (Luxon 1193:17-19)

The Luxons` Baseline Study provides exact figures in percentages. They found that only 27% of the English teachers had university degrees (although not necessarily in English) in comparison to the Spanish teachers who were 70% graduated. All teachers in other areas had also higher percentages on graduated teachers as can be seen in the charts 30 and 31 bellow. ¹¹

¹¹ Charts No. 3 and 4 taken from Luxon M and T. Baseline study 1993-1996 Managua

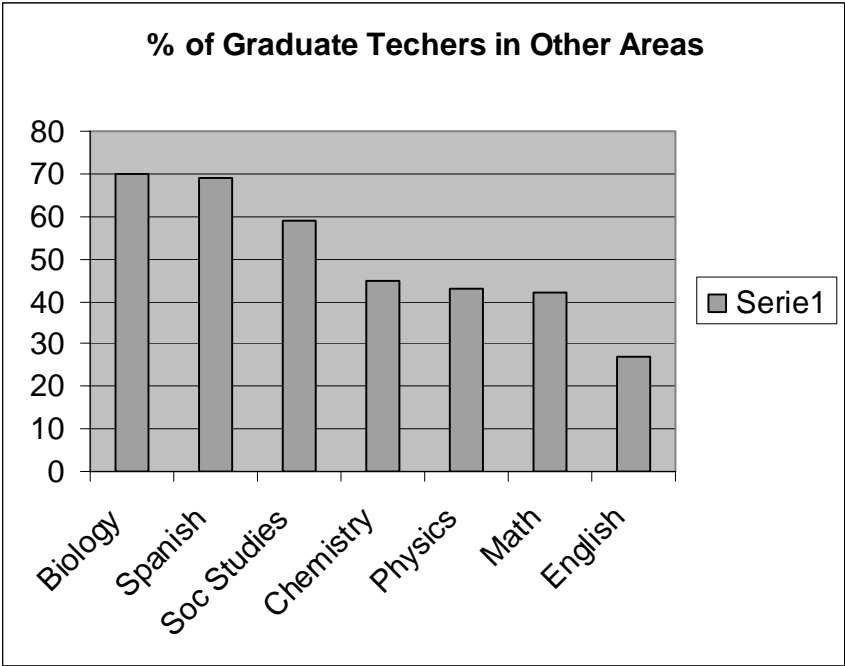


Chart No.30

English Teachers Qualifications

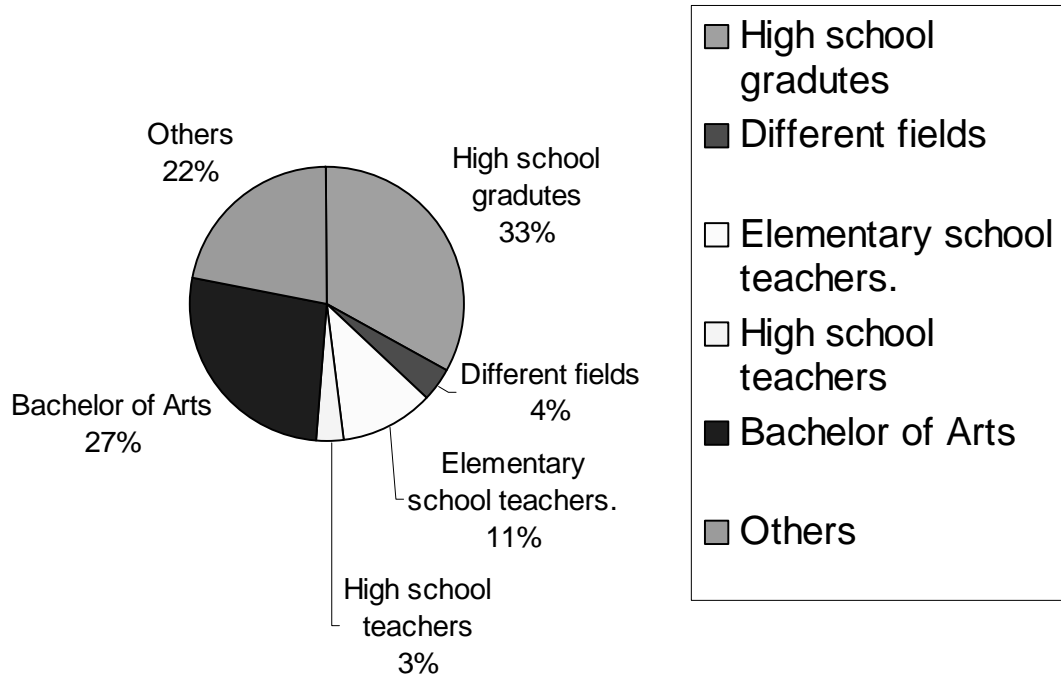


Chart No.31

It can be seen here, teachers teaching English were doing it because it was not because it was an easy way to make some money since they were not required any credential (they did not need to have a degree, to know English well, or to have any understanding of methodology, just to know some English) to enter in this field. On the other hand, there was only one school in the whole country that offered this career and it was in Managua. Travelling to Managua back and forth was neither easy nor inexpensive.

To reinforce the above, they give relevant additional information about many other reasons why the performance of the English teachers was not as effective as it should have been. For example, when given the IELTS (International English Language Teaching System) to the teachers, only 20% of them scored above the sixth of the nine academic bands of this test, and the remaining 80% scored below the sixth band. Band six indicates a competent user, who has general effective command of the language and band five indicates a modest user, which means partial command of

the language. See Chart 5 below and academic bands,¹² see annex No. 12

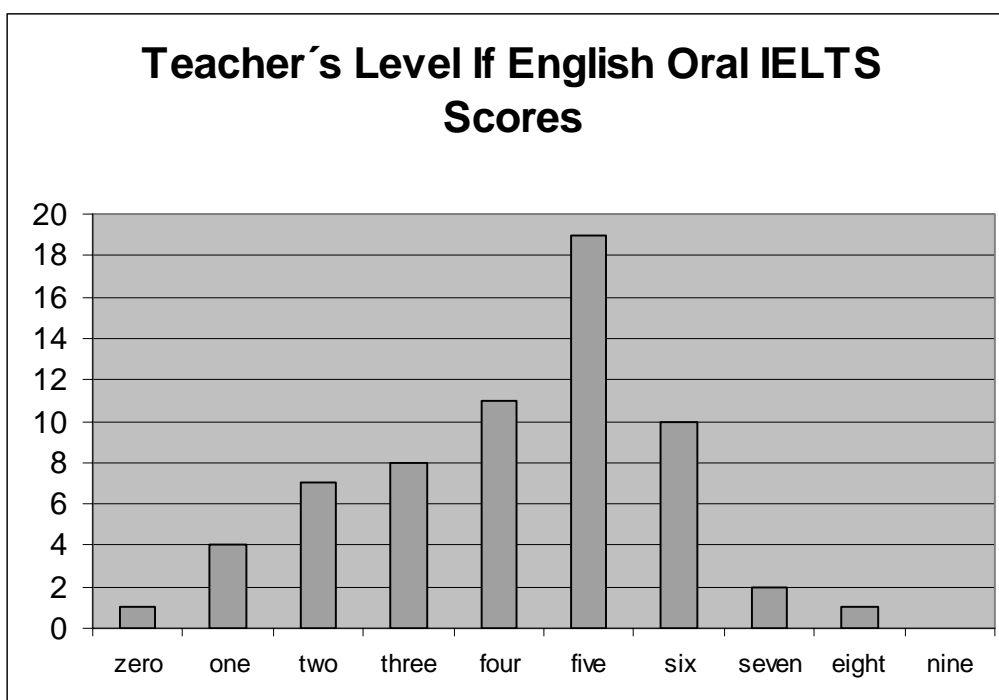


Chart No. 32

Experience was another area in which English teachers were not strong. The majority of them had only 6 years of teaching experience and some of them at primary level. Last but not least were the deterring factors. Teachers in Nicaragua faced some drawbacks in their work: 1) They taught a lot of hours, in many cases up to 40 hours per week, leaving very little time for planning, checking of homework, or preparing materials; 2) their salaries were very low, from 350 to 450 cordobas per month for empiricos to 600 to 650 cordobas per licenciados (at the time of this study), forcing the teachers to complement their incomes with an additional activity to make a living. The current study shows that salaries have been increased, but with inflation going faster, the salaries lag behind.

In general, teachers in private universities do not have a fixed term contract and consequently do not have job stability, secure monthly salary, no benefits of any kind, but get paid by the hour, ranging from 80 cordobas to 150 cordobas. 3) Large classes. In many cases state secondary schools had up to 80 students per classroom, which made it very difficult for the teachers to keep an appropriate classroom management; 4) opportunities for promotions were almost non-existent. In each school there was a director and a sub-director, and they both had to do

¹² IELTS academic Bands chart was taken from Luxon M and T. Baseline study 1993-1996 Managua

administrative but not pedagogical work, and the increase in salary was very little, thus not attractive; 5) lack of resources in general, which sometimes included absence of texts.

An overhead projector, a copying machine, or materials for visuals were unthinkable in many cases. (Luxons 1193:17-32)

2. Summary

The difficulties can be grouped in three big areas:

- The teachers` level of English was basically very low and for this reason they did not feel confident enough to use it in their classroom. Consequently, the lessons were conducted almost entirely in Spanish.
- The teachers lacked the necessary methodological training and thus, the classes were mainly lengthy explanations of grammatical rules without the necessary practice or production.
- There was no standardization of evaluation. Every teacher wrote his/her own exams which were very easy, offering no incentive or challenge on the part of the students to study or practice the language.
- Finally, the inappropriateness of the physical conditions of the classroom, the large number of students, and the lack of unity among institutions in charge of producing teachers, the MED and the state secondary schools all contributed to the low quality of the teaching learning process.

As far as the students were concerned, they found the following:

In general, the students were willing to learn and aware of the importance of English. Even in remote areas of the country, the majority of them thought that English was important.

Some Preliminary differences between the Baseline Study and the current study

It is necessary to state that the two studies were carried out in different contexts and the characteristics of the teachers are very different.

The Luxons` Baseline Study and the Impact Study

The current study

Took place in secondary state schools

the current study was carried out in private institutions at higher educational level

Covered the whole country

this was limited to three universities in Managua

The classes observed were larger; up to 80 students

the largest classroom had 30 students

Teachers were younger

teachers were older,

Mostly without a degree and with a few years years of experience.

all of them had a university degree and over ten years of experience

Some comparisons will be established between the two studies with the purpose of showing the similarities and differences, and for analysing the importance of the use of communicative activities during the entire process of learning/teaching at all levels of education to see how the development of the oral skill is neglected and how this prevents the students from becoming competent in the acquisition of the English language.

XIII. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS TO AUTHORITIES IN CHARGE OF THE INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE ODA Project. (UCA, UNAN, MED, and ANPI)

We as teachers and researchers want to understand why a work of the magnitude carried out by the ODA-ELT project in Nicaragua in 1993 after 9 years teaching did not reach the higher education classroom and invaluable effort of this sort was lost. Why if so many good qualified teachers were involved in the project and were willing to pay what they have achieved and share with their colleagues and fellow workers, this did not occurred. As Arroliga (2004), pointed out:

“Along with the study, training was provided to a select group of teachers in Nicaragua. Also, the cascade effect of the project was to be obtained by sending five Nicaraguans to the Master’s degree program at the University of Lancaster in addition to another 18 teachers that were sent to short-termed postgraduate courses to the same university in the span of three years. The Luxons`’s final report called “Impact Study” shows a definite improvement in class effectiveness from those who underwent training in the area of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching).

In order to know the state of affairs of the sustainability of the teacher training after the ODA-ELT project was carried out in Nicaragua between 1993-1996, the researchers considered that another source of information of particular importance was the interviews and surveys to the authorities in charge of the institutions involved in the ODA ELT Project, for example the directors of the English departments of UCA and UNAN Managua, MED, and a former ANPI director. The purpose of these interviews was to find out the reasons why these project collapsed. To do this, we interviewed to the beneficiaries of this project after the technical cooperation officers of the project left the country. An interview format was designed and applied for the objective mention above.

Regards to the type of information we requested them to answer, we can mention for example that question number one refers to the preparation and execution of workshops by the Ministry of Education to train state secondary school teachers, in order to provide them some tools to improve the quality of the language teaching method, both in rural and urban areas within the country. Concerning to this question, one of the beneficiaries of the project from UCA replied that if there were any program training organized by the MEC, they had not been invited to participate. He argued that they were available to join with them as a team work, since they had a commitment with ELT in Nicaragua because they received some benefits from this project.

Moreover, he pointed out that the beneficiary teachers of the ODA-ELT project from UCA had made some contributions to ELT in Nicaragua after they were trained. As an illustration to this, it is suitable to mention that they have participated training teachers for the UCA's undergraduate program, supporting NICATESOL Conferences, and training English teachers from some secondary state schools. Besides, UCA offered a Post graduate course in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) to 27 participants from March to October 2003 with a total of 120 hours.

Regard to their English teaching program, the first intake in 1996 was 80 students; however, this figure has undergone a decreasing tendency for social economic reason, for example in 2002 the intake was a total of 36 students.

In terms of the number of graduated students since the opening of this program, UCA has graduated 87 plus some others who completed the plan of study, but did not graduated for different reasons. In total they are more than 100 students. In the UCA's undergraduate program (TEFL) some students do research as a requirement for graduation. Some of these graduated students have been hired by the Ministry of Education to work in state schools, and others are working for private schools and / or language academies.

On the other hand, the person interviewed from UNAN Managua, stated that MED has run some workshops, and that this institution had requested them to participate actively in the continuation of the teacher training in English. He also stated that UNAN has provided a number of two teachers to get involved regularly every one or two months in the execution of these workshops.

Regards to the collaboration of the ODA_ELТ beneficiaries, it can be stood out teaching pre-service and in-service students in regular and Saturday courses by implementing modern methodologies. Furthermore, UNAN has offered a post-graduate course in TEFL in 2002. It must be noticed that any research has been done by the Masters returnees from Lancaster.

Concerning to the English teaching program, it was opened in 1967; however, it was closed before the ODA-ELT project took place in Nicaragua. At that time, the intake was 40 students, but currently this number has increase to up to 120 students. An 85% of them are from urban areas. This career has the greatest amount of students of the Faculty of Humanity. It seems that there is awareness of the demands of teachers from the majority of the students.

An average of 30 students graduated every year from the TEFL program at UNAN. Some of these students started teaching before graduating, and most of them are working for MED. Nowadays, students may have the option to take a seminar for graduation, which ends with a research work in order to obtain their degrees.

Another important institution that took a highly significant part of the ODA-ELT project was the Nicaraguan English Teachers' Association (for its Spanish acronyms ANPI). This association was founded in September 1971 with 43 members, was reborn and revived. In the 90's it grew up to have more than 900 members. ANPI is in charge of the organization of the NICATESOL Conferences held annually for the last eleven years in Nicaragua. This events represents a huge effort since this association does not have a budget to support the expenses. ANPI works with tight resources with the sponsorship from the American and the British embassies, educational institutions of EFL / ELT, as well as editorials accredited in the country. These conferences are attended by pre-service, in-service, and uncertified teachers from the different areas within the country. ANPI has played an important role since through the teaching training workshops many voluntary teachers from the ODA-ELT project have had the opportunity to share their knowledge.

It is well known that MED is the rector body in charge of the preparation and execution of workshops, and who coordinate and keep in contact with the different institutions of the educational system within the country. In addition to this, MED as well as the officials in charge of the head department of English from UCA, UNAN Managua, and ANPI had signed a letter of intention, in which they presented their commitments to contribute with the sustainability of the ODA-ELT project.

As Smith (1995:2) claims in Bermudez (1996-7), emphasizes that sustainability in aid funded projects is the ability to continue the impact intended for the project after the aid funding has cease. This term is used to refer to the continuation of the project once it has been finished, and more support is required to go beyond of the expectations. It is important to mention here that the real goal of an ELT project must be to transform the people and the institutions involved so that they are able to adapt and to diffuse not just the immediate innovation but innovations that have not yet even been dreamed of. McGovern (1995:7) cited in Bermudez (1996-7).

In spite of the fact that this agreement was ratified after the ODA-ELT project was over, one of the current official person in charge of the MED argued at the moment of the interview that she was not well informed about this document, and due to the lack of funds many of their projects had not been carried out.

XIV. CONCLUSIONS

- 1- The hypothesis of this research “Diminishing teacher talk.....” was validated with this research.
- 2- A communicative approach truly helps students acquire and learn the language in a pleasant environment.
- 3- Communicative activities have proven to be a good vehicle for students to lower their fear of speaking in front of their peers and have also proven to be a way of raising their motivation to participate.
- 4- Turn taking takes place naturally and thus there is a good deal of sharing and students interaction.
- 5- Communicative activities when well chosen provide the closest to real situations for students to interact.
- 6- Communicative activities are enjoyed by the students and so they are willing to get involved in the process.
- 7- There excessive teacher talk in the classroom and this is delaying the acquiring of the target language
- 8- Teacher-centred classes are still predominant in the Nicaragua teaching system of English
- 9- ODA-ELT Project continues to have actuality and relevance up to now.
- 10- ODA-ELT provided an important ground for further research.
- 11- ODA-ELT Project has not been taken advantage of.
- 10- ODA-ELT Project never reached university level in Nicaragua.
- 12- To us the researchers, the impact of these findings have made more aware of our commitment to our students to try to guarantee them what they want us for: to help them build strategies that would lead to become independent students, responsible of their own learning.
- 13- This research provided us with enough data to state that of the three main components of this research: The students, the teacher, and the physical conditions of the classroom, the failure in the students acquisition of the target language is definitely not the students nor the physical conditions, but the teachers in so that their methodology is old fashion, that is, not adequate to learning styles of the students and does not meet the needs of the modern globalized world that uses English as a lingua franca.
- 14- Serious training to teachers at all of levels of the educational system is of paramount importance if Nicaragua wants to compete in the floor of the world labour market.

15- Teachers are afraid of putting in practice communicative activities precisely because they don't try them.

16- Teachers don't have time to prepare and resources to obtain the bibliography necessary to prepare communicative activities

17- Workshops, post-grade courses and master's courses are not accessible to the majority of the teachers in different levels of the educative system.

18- Teachers need training on how to use strategies themselves and how to train their students to use these strategies and how to develop their own for the students to become successful in their tasks.

19- It is the belief of the researchers that the participants of the different post-grade courses imparted in UNAN-León with the cooperation of Universidad de Alcalá, previous to this master's course, and especially those who attended the master's course are aware that teacher talk has to be controlled and are gradually reducing their protagonism and are letting their students participate more actively in the teaching/learning process.

XV. RECOMENDATIONS

1- The number one recommendation is that teachers at university level be trained in a communicative methodology. The implementation of interactive activities can only be successful if teachers change their way of teaching. For this, teachers should engage in continuous education such as post-graduate courses and master's courses.

2- Universities and all educational institutions that impart English in any of its forms, English as foreign Language (EFL), or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at all levels should encourage, help, and demand that their teachers improve their teaching in competence not only in reading and grammar, but also in listening and speaking.

3- The objectives of the programmes should be re-stated to include all the skills and give more practice to the basic ability, that is oral communication.

Educational should plan and reinforce periodic and systematic methodology meetings for teachers to share their experiences and to give workshops to their colleagues to keep up the quality of their teaching. These meetings and workshops should be paid.

4- ANPI should be given a solid support from MEDC to continue the effort started by previous Presidents and Board of Directors, to bring the teachers, especially those from remote areas together, for them to update their knowledge of the language as well as the new methodologies.

5- A minimum bibliography should be available or accessible for teachers in high schools and university libraries for teachers to update.

6- More emphasis should be put to student-centred classes, that is, students should be more active, more a subject than and object of the learning process, their ideas, opinions, and feelings should be taken into consideration at the moment of deciding the topics and activities of the classes. In other words, teachers should not have a fixed program to follow and finish. More than that, they should follow an objective.

7- Finally, the size of the English classrooms should be enlarged because they do not have enough room for the students to work in groups on in teams, and this is necessary for cooperative learning.

XVI. ANNEXES

1. ANNEX 1 Calendar of the activities for the research.
2. ANNEX 2 Number of teachers, students, and administrative personnel that took part of this research.
3. ANNEX 3 Target population (students)
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5. ANNEX 5 Instrument of the research
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18. ANNEX 18 Survey to the institutions involved in the ODA ELT Project
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ANNEX 1

CALENDAR OF THE ACTIVITIES FOR THE RESEARCH

DATE	ACTIVITIES
March 07-27 2003	Meeting of the researchers Definition of the Object of Study
From March 2003 to March 2004	Gathering of literature
March 2003	Holding meeting of directors of English departments teachers who were going to participate in the research process
March 2003	Design of the measurement instruments and diagnosis
March 15 2003	Elaboration of the calendar of the classroom observation
March 19 – May 20 2003	Classroom observation
May 2003	Design of the plan of action
May 22 – July 26 2003	Plan of action + Diaries of the students after the implementation of the plan of action
July 2003	Survey to the students
August-September 2003	Elaboration of graphics
October-December 2003	Review of additional literature
January – February 2004	Analysis of the data
April-June 2004	Writing of the rough draft document
July 2004	Interview to authorities in charge of the institutions involved in the ODA Project. (UCA, UNAN, MED, and ANPI)
August-Jan 2005	Writing of the final report and meeting with the tutor

ANNEX 2

NUMBER OF TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL THAT TOOK PART OF THIS RESEARCH

Subjects	Numbers
Academic and administrative authorities of Private Universities	3
Teachers	4
Students	96
Authorities in charge of the institutions involved in the ODA Project	4

ANNEX 3

TARGET POPULATION (Students)

Total number of Students	Level of English course	Career	Year of the career	Ages	Sex Female	Sex Male
24	II	All careers	1 st	17-20	9	15
26	III	Marketing	2 nd	19-23	12	14
36	III	All careers	3 rd	17-22	14	22
10	X	International Relations	4 th	24-45	4	6

ANNEX 4

TARGET POPULATION (Teachers)

Teacher code	Age	Sex	Year of teaching experience
A	38	M	More than 10
B	40	M	10
C	36	M	12
D	39	F	15

ANNEX 5

INSTRUMENTS OF THE RESEARCH

INSTRUMENT	No. of applications	Date of administration
Questionnaires fill out by the students at the pre-stage of the data collecting	96	March 07 2003
Timed classroom observations.	40	March -May 2003
Plan of action	10 communicative activities	May 22 2003
Students' comments after the implementation of the Action Plan.	85	July 2003
Students' surveys after the Action Plan.	85	July 2003
Teachers' interview.	4	July 2003
Interview to the institutions involved in the ELT ODA Project	4	July 2004

ANNEX 6

Questionnaire for Classroom Research

Sex: Male Female Age:

About the teacher

ALWAYS SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The teacher creates a good atmosphere in the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| The teacher-student interaction is excellent. | | | | |
| 2. The teacher gives students enough opportunities to interact. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The teacher shows the same interest in every student. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. The explanations and instructions are clear and loud enough. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. The teacher is patient and nice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. The teacher makes the class interesting. He/she is dynamic, prepares interactive activities such as pair work, games, role-plays, discussions, interviews among the students, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. The teacher knows the subject well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

About the Physical conditions of the classroom

AGREE DISAGREE

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 8. The class offers a good environment for learning. There are pictures, posters, murals or any decoration related to the class. | 0 | 1 |
|--|---|---|

ALWAYS SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 9. There are external noises that affect the development of the classes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|---|---|---|---|

About me (The student)

10. I am motivated to learn English:

a) to get a good job in the future	b) to be updated with technology	c) to be able to understand materials about my career	d) for cultural interest	e) for fun
1	2	3	4	5

ALWAYS SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER

11. I come to class on time.	1	2	3	4
12. I come to class prepared with the material read ahead of time.	1	2	3	4
13. I have a positive attitude toward the class.	1	2	3	4
14. I show respect for the class, the teacher and my classmates.	1	2	3	4
15. I do my homework.	1	2	3	4
16. I make an effort to cooperate / share with my classmates.	1	2	3	4

ANNEX 7

ACTION PLAN

During the Action Plan the following activities were carried out:

1) Museum presentation. (This activity took the whole hour of class and was used as control activity to measure the increase of vocabulary, oral skill, and level of interaction obtained by the students at the end of the research)

Description: Students in groups of four discuss different topics for ten or fifteen minutes. Then they agree on one topic and everyone contributes ideas on the topic. They write the content or their ideas in an orderly fashion on a large piece of paper. They posted it on the wall to explain it to students of other groups. Two students stay by their papers and the other two go visiting the other groups around the classroom. This time a good number of students were hesitant to participate. They were shy or simply not used to speak or interact in the classroom. At the end of this Action Plan this same activity is carried out with complete different results.

2) Clapping Hands. This activity takes about fifteen minutes and is used as a worm up.

Description: Students are standing facing each others in pairs. The teacher claps his/her hands and shouts a topic. Students begin to talk about that topic. In about two or three minutes the teacher claps his/her hands again and changes topic. Students change partner an begin to talk. Teacher stops when he/she considers it is enough.

3) Ranking activity. This one was used as a main activity and takes the whole hour of class.

Description: Students receive a hand out about with a list of controversial statements. they individually number them in order of importance. After a few minutes, teacher puts them in pair to discuss why then think that is the right order. They have to come to a consensus. After a few minutes, teacher places them in groups of four and again they have to convince each other of their opinion. they have to come to a consensus. at the end, one student goes to the board to check the results of the whole class. A newer discussion and interaction was observed with this activity:

4) Competition game. This activity is used as a warm up and can take up to 20 minutes.

Description: The class is divided in two groups or teams. teacher divides the board in halves. In one half the first group writes occupations or animals. Example: engineer, doctor, housewife, monkey, horse. In the other half, the second group writes object or fruits. Example: oranges, tables, cups, houses, etc.

The teacher gives instructions. Then students choose a secretary to control the points of the team. Students take turns asking questions. The first team might ask the second team: What can a monkey do with a pencil? If the second group gives an answer that satisfies the class, this team gets a point, but if not this team also loses a turn.

5 . Categorize. This activity was used as a main activity and took about 45 minutes.

Description. Students were given a hand out containing columns with occupations on top: doctors, journalists, teacher, movie actress, policemen, and degrees of importance at the bottom: more important, more profitable, more necessary, more interesting, boring. Individually students were to decide which occupation was more necessary, interesting, etc. Then in pairs or groups they discuss their reasons; at the end, one student goes to the board to write the results of the whole class.

6) Board game. This one was used as a main activity and took the whole class period.

Description. Students in groups of four were given a handout, a dice, and four counters they take turns throwing the dice and speak about the topic were the counters landed: The one that finishes first is the winner and might get a candy from the teacher.

7) Role-play. This was a main activity and took the whole class period.

Description. Students were given a situation that they had to perform in small groups. They were allowed thirty minutes to prepare. They decided how to approach the topic, they organized it, They asked and answer question among themselves, they decided how to do it, what to say and the outcome of the situation. They performed in front of the class.

8) Another ranking. This was a main activity and took the whole class.

Description. This time it was a longer list of item to to be selected in order of importance in a situation given. Students work individually, then in pairs, and finally in groups.

9) “Guessing whose the famous character” This was a main activity and took about thirty minutes.

Description: The seating arrangement of the students was organized in a circle. One student , the contestant was standing in the middle of the circle. The teacher stuck a flashcard with the name of a famous person on the back of the participant. This one had to walk into the circle while the rest of the students were giving him/her some clues that could helped him/her to guess the name of the character.

10) Museum presentation again. Control activity to measure how much students interacted as compared with the first one. This time students chose the topics themselves, they were highly motivated, topic were of the most varied kinds, mainly current events, myths, and taboos.

In the above action plan, the teacher was just a facilitator, the students did the class, the IRF and the turn taking was observed more than in regular classes.

Observers were impressed by the level of engagement, initiative, level of organization, turn taking, contribution, order, self and peer correction, responsibility and enjoyment doing the whole ten activities of the Action Plan:

ANNEX 8

START	My rent is due on Thursday	I failed The test.	I ran out of gas, and I don't have any money with me.	My sister lives in Wyoming
I love to swim	We're going to Disneyland because my friend has never been there.	I need to borrow some money for lunch	I had doctor's appointment at 10:30	I got my hair cut
I'm going to the movies tomorrow.	I have freckles on my nose	I have three cats and a dog	His name is Matthew	I gained a lot of weight over the holidays
She poked me in the eye	I love horses	My family lives far from here	I'm worried about my sister she's never been this late before	He's crying because another kid pushed him
She's my mother	He's going bald	I look just like my grandmother	He twisted his ankle and couldn't go on the sky trip	My shoes are worn out.
I have some free time later today	I'm planning to graduate in the fall	The water in the bathtub is overflowing	There a fire truck out front	That man just grabbed my purse

¹³ Taken from **Fun with Grammar**, P.123, 1997 Prentice Hall Regents. Duplication for classroom is permitted.

I just bought a new mustang convertible	I´ve had a headache all day	This book belongs to my best friend	I just couldn´t resist	THE END
--	--	--	-----------------------------------	----------------

ANNEX 9

Worksheet 64C: BOARD GAME (High Level)¹⁴

START		What may I Borrow from You?	What are you Supposed to Do for you Family?	ROLL AGAIN	What can You do by yourself?
What are You used To doing	LOSE A TURN	What would You do if You do not Understand Your teacher?	What is Something you Mightdo if It rains		Where are You to be At 8:00 Tomorrow?
GO AHEAD 3 SPACES	What would You rather do Than study?			What did you Use to do as A child?	GO BACK 2 SPACES
	What must your Best friend Be doing Right now?	What is Something you Must not talk About?	LOSE A TURN		What is something you Might not Do ever?
GO AHEAD 4 SPACE			What must a doctor have?		How many languages can You speak?
What is An adult Supposed To do?	What does a pet owner Have to do?	ROLL AGAIN	GO AHEAD 2 SPACE	What can you Tell your best Friend but no one else?	

¹⁴ Taken from **Fun with Grammar**, P.210, 1997 Prentice Hall Regents. Duplication for classroom is permitted.

Whose advice Should you Listen to?	Where can you Find people to Speak English?		How much Money have You been able To save this Year?	What must a Person bring to Your country?	
YOU WIN!!!!		GO BACK 4 SPACE		What is something a person ought to know before visiting your country	

ANNEX 10

The Perfect Spouse

Below are a list of qualities that may be important when choosing a spouse. For you which are the 5 most important qualities? Rank the qualities from 1 (most important) to 5.

_____	Kind	_____	Romantic
_____	Religion	_____	Age
_____	Income / Money / Salary	_____	Same interests as you
_____	Beautiful / Handsome	_____	Same Ethnic Background
_____	Educational Level	_____	Intelligence
_____	Sense of Humor	_____	Their family
_____	Job Plans	_____	Other? _____ (Write your own idea if it is not included above)

ANNEX 11

Desert Island

You are stranded on a desert island in the Pacific. All you have is the swim-suit and sandals you are wearing. There is food and water on the island but nothing else. Here is a list of things you may find useful. Choose the eight most useful items and rank them in order of usefulness.

- | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| _____ | a box of matches | _____ | a camera and five rolls of film |
| _____ | a magnifying glass | _____ | ointment for cuts and burns |
| _____ | an axe | _____ | a saucepan |
| _____ | a bottle of whisky | _____ | a knife and fork |
| _____ | an atlas | _____ | 20 meters of nylon rope |
| _____ | some metals knitting-needles | _____ | a blanket |
| _____ | a transistor radio with batteries | _____ | a watch |
| _____ | a nylon tent | _____ | a towel |
| _____ | a pencil and paper | _____ | a book |
| _____ | a mirror | _____ | a hammock |

ANNEX 12

ROLE PLAYS (unknown source)

Loud Music

You love popular music. To feel the rhythm and get into the mood of the music, you think it is important to have the volume turned up high. Your parents, however, don't like pop music and have told you to turn the volume way down.

Part-time Job

You have a part-time job in order to have money to do things with your friends and buy yourself some clothes and records. Lately, your parents have been worrying out loud about the high cost of your older brother's education. You know they would like to contribute some of your money to help pay for it.

Get Married?

You have met someone you really like and are thinking of getting married. Your parents say that you are too young, and they don't approve because the girl/boy is from a different background and social class. They tell you to stop seeing each other.

The Family Business

Your parents own a small family business. They say that since you are sixteen now you should help out by working there in your spare time. You don't want to, because it would take time away from your studies and would leave you almost no chance to do things with your friends. Your parents say that since you get the benefits of the income from the business, you should take some of the responsibility for contributing to it.

Your Clothes

Your hair style and clothes are the same as your friends'. Your parents, however, say you look messy and ridiculous. They tell you to start dressing and grooming yourself more respectably.

Your Career

For years your parents have expected that you would follow in their footsteps and go into business. But all your life you have loved music, and you want to make it your life work. Now that you are at

the age to find a job, your parents advise against a music career because music isn't practical or a secure kind of work. They say it would be good to continue music as a hobby.

Poor Grades

Your parents don't approve of your friends. When your last report card showed that some of your grades had dropped, they said it was the bad influence of your friends. You admit that some of your friends aren't very interested in school, but you believe that your grades were low because of a couple of tough, new teachers. But your parents advise you to find new friends. They also want you to limit the time you spend with your old friends until your grades improve.

ANNEX 13

OPPOSITE CARDS

Women should do very little housework and they should work out of the house only if they want.

Men should do most of the housework: cooking, cleaning, washing and also work out of the house.

2-A People that cut trees should be put in jail.

Trees were made for construction, furniture and fire. There is nothing wrong with cutting them.

3-A Prices for food in Nicaragua are very high. They should go down.

I am a businessperson and I have a food business to make a lot of money. Prices in food should be increased.

The government has a lot of money and everything in this country should be free: food, clothing, school, entertainment and housing.

If everything is free people don't appreciate it and the government would run out of money soon.

Attendance in the university should be taken into consideration for the grading. Students with perfect attendance should get extra points.

Attendance in the university should not be compulsory. Students should come to class only when they want.

Parents with teenage students should be very strict. They should establish a curfew no later than 9 o'clock even during weekends.

Teenagers should be allowed to come home as late as they want at night, especially during weekends.

Children should not listen to their parents after they are 17 years of age even if they live at home and are still supported by their parents.

7-B Parents should always have the right to be obeyed by their children until they die.

ANNEX 14

INTERVIEW TO THE TEACHERS

Dear teacher:

This is the end of our semester (term) and we would like to know your opinion about the following aspects:

1. Do you consider that with the methodology used in your course the students have increased the oral use of the English language? If yes, can you explain how?

2. Do you think that the activities carried out during this research were a waste of time or, on the contrary, they motivated the students as to make them want to participate actively and enthusiastically in the class?

3. Would you be willing to implement systematic use of communicative activities so that your students get involve in the learning process by interacting among themselves and becoming active subjects in the classroom?

<ANNEX 15

The nine Academic Bands and their descriptive statements are as follow:¹⁵

9-Expert user.Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.

8-Very good user Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriateness. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar Situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well,

7- Good user. Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language,well and understtands detailed reasoning.

6-Competent user Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies inappropriaces and misunderstanding can use and understand fairly complex language particularly in familiar situations.

5-Modest user.Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most. Situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field

¹⁵ Taken from The Baseline Study (Appendix 8) Luxon T & M, 1996.

4-Limited user basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understandings and experssions is not able to use complex language

3-Extremely limited user conveys and understand only general meaning in very familiar situations frecuent break downs in communication occur

2-Intermitent user no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.

1-Non user essentially has not ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

0-Did not attempt the rest. No assessable information.

ANNEX 16

Students' comments made after the implementation of the Action Plan

- Today our English class was really entertaining. I felt very well because I felt myself as part of the class, since there we interacted. I think that this methodology is excellent because all of us learn a lot, both the ones who ask as well as the ones who answers during the activity. We learn new vocabulary, lose our fear to speak English, and exchange our opinions.
- The activity is very nice because it let us to fight shy of speaking English. Also it help us to make self-corrections at the moment of writing the sentences. This motivates us to look at new words in English. In my case, today when I was about to leave home this morning I wonder my self what new dynamic activity we will do in class. This means that the activities have aroused my interest.
- The activity that we did today was really nice and dinamic. I liked it a lot because I did not stay sitting down the whole period of class, listening to the teacher and doing written exercises, but I stood up of my chair and I interacted with my classmates.
- I think that it is fine that our English classes are very dynamic, since it let us not to get bored nor tired of reading or writing.
- I liked the activity because it let us to interact with our classmates. It was really funny and creative, but above all it was vary informative.
- The activity that we did today in our English class liked me a lot because each student gave his/her opinion about different topics, so all of us had the chance to participate, to speak and make questions in English. I would like that in our English classes we always do this type of activities because they let us the opportunity to participate and the classes get more dynamic.
- The activities we did today were Great; Great; We practiced how to say the numbers, we mentioned things that we like in English, and also we knew the things that our classmates like. The guessing activities are really funny. These activities are very good and enjoyable. They increase our self-confidence with the English language.

- I think that the activity was excellent. I like to do activities in class. I think that they help us to develop our oral skill. This is the purpose that we want to get. I like to do them more often, this is a good strategy to speak faster in English. It was great, I liked it.
 - I think that the class was excellent, funny, and dynamic. Not only we had a good time, but also we learn new things when we listened to our classmates. We listened to them and then we repeated what they had said. This is a good way to make the students to participate more in class and also that they lose their fears.
 - ...I don't like the books we are using in class, they are really boring. The good thing was that we did some dynamic activities.
 - In my opinion, the implementation of dynamic activities among the classmates is very important because we can lose our fears to speak in English. This problem many times does not help people to develop themselves, mainly because this is a foreign language. It also avoid that the students get bored just by studying grammatical rules and vocabulary.
 - In my personal point of view, I think that it is wonderful when we know something about the way of life of our classmates, because we can learn a little bit about their customs and different personalities. So, I can have the opportunity to know the way they are, and also I can change my first impression about them.
-

ANNEX 17

SURVEY APPLIED TO THE STUDENTS AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

1. According to your opinion the communicative activities developed by the visiting teacher were:
a) Excellent b) Very good c) Good d) Unnecessary

 2. Do you consider that you can improve your speaking ability through these activities?
a) Agree b) Disagree c) I don't know

 3. Do you think that you can improve your speaking ability through these activities?
a) Agree b) Disagree c) I don't know

 4. Do you think that you can develop your speaking ability just by listening to the teacher speak in class during the whole session?
a) Agree b) Disagree c) I don't know

 5. Do you consider that you learn better only by the teacher explaining grammar and exercises on the book OR by practicing interactive activities in pairs, groups, etc.(talking with your classmates during games, small conversations, role-plays, etc.)
A) Grammar b) Interactive activities
-

ANNEX 18

SURVEY TO THE INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE ODA ELT PROJECT

Survey to the institutions involved in the sustainability of the teacher training (ELT) for the secondary school teachers after the ODA ELT Project is over. These institutions agreed and signed a letter of intent concerning a proposal to expand the project under the aegis of the European Union to extend the model of the ELT Project into curriculum.

UCA agreed to contribute with the Ministry of Education by providing teachers help in the continuation of the training for the secondary system if workshops were organized.

1. Did workshops take place after the ODA Project was over?

2. Did UCA provide teachers that it offered?

3. How many?

4. How regularly have these workshops been taking place?

5. Has UCA contributed the teachers in all workshops?

6. How has the UCA expertise been used after the ODA Project finished?

7. Has research been done by undergraduates in order to continue the research done by the ODA Project and as a requisite to graduate?

8. How many have been done?

9. The first intake of students for the teacher training programme in 1996 was 80. Has this figure increase over the years?

10. How many students have graduated since then?

11. Do you have any way of knowing if these graduates have been hired by the Ministry of Education?

12. Is research been done by undergraduate in order to obtain their degree?

13. Has there been any additional research done by Masters returnees from Lancaster?

ANNEX 19

**OBSERVATION SHEET OF THE BEHAVIOIR OF THE CLASS DEVELOPMENT
DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH TO JUNE 2003.**

VARIABLES

Seating Arrangement

Traditional:	Rows	<input type="text"/>				
Non Traditional :	Pairs	<input type="text"/>	Small Group	<input type="text"/>	Big group	<input type="text"/>
	Circle	<input type="text"/>	Semicircle	<input type="text"/>	On the floor	<input type="text"/>
	Out of the classroom	<input type="text"/>				

FLT Methods used in the classroom:

The Traditional or Grammar-Translation method	<input type="text"/>
The Natural or Direct method	<input type="text"/>
The Structuralist method:	<input type="text"/>
The Oral Approach	<input type="text"/>
The Audiolingual method	<input type="text"/>
The Communicative Approach	<input type="text"/>
The Silent Way	<input type="text"/>
The Community Language Learning	<input type="text"/>
Suggestopaedia	<input type="text"/>
Total Physical Response	<input type="text"/>

Classroom Interaction:

Individual (T-S-T)	<input type="text"/>
Pair work (T-S-S)	<input type="text"/>
Group Work (Cooperative Learning)	<input type="text"/>
Whole Class (T-SS)	<input type="text"/>
No interaction at all	<input type="text"/>

Teacher's Role:

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SOMETIME	RARELY	NEVER
To motivate the students						
To gives instructions						
To use English in class						
To translate new words (English-Spanish-English)						
To read in the classroom						
To ask questions						
To explain the class						
To facilitate use of strategies						
To encourage skills development						
To make corrections						
To assess						

Students' Role

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SOMETIME	RARELY	NEVER
Coming early to class						
To bring their books to class						
To pay attention (Attentiveness)						
To show a positive attitude to the class						
To do homework						
To read in class out loud or silently						
To interact with their peers						
To participate						
To give opinions						
To ask questions						
To take notes						
To answer questions						

Teacher-Centered-Classroom (Teacher as a protagonist / student as an object) YES NO

Student-Centered-Classroom (Teacher as a facilitator / Student as a subject) YES NO

Types of Activities Developed in the Classroom:

ACTIVITIES	YES	NO
Grammar substitution drills		
Repetition		
Games		
Songs		
Role Play		
Competition		
Discussion		
Problem Solving		
Information Gap Activity		
Dialogues		

Types of Questions asked by the teacher: (Frequency)

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SOMETIME	RARELY	NEVER
1. Display Questions (The teacher knows the answer)						
2. Referential Questions (Genuine communication)						
3. Yes /No Questions (They begin with auxiliary verbs)						
4. Yes / No Questions with alternative answers						
5. Proving Questions (The students think beyond the initial response)						
6. Ambiguous Questions (Unclear and unfair)						
7. Spoon feeding Questions (Teacher gives too much guidance)						
8. Compound Questions (Includes too many factors)						
9. Opinion Questions						

Language Skills Practice

	A LOT	ENOUGH	SOME	A LITTLE	NONE
Reading					
Writing					
Listening					
Speaking					

Sub-Skills Abilities Practice

ACTIVITIES	YES	NO
Predicting		
Anticipating		
Making inference (Reading between the lines)		
Skimming (Understanding General Meanings)		
Scanning (Understanding the meaning of specific details)		
Identifying the purpose of a reading or lecture		
Identifying the role of part of speech		
Understanding the relation between sentences		
Understanding the relation between parts of a text		
Identifying the main idea from supporting details		
Critical Thinking: Summarizing Synthesizing Analyzing		

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