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EXPLORING THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN READING AND WRITING OF
LOWER INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SUGGESTED ENGLISH CURRICULUM AT A RURAL SCHOOL ON THE CARIBBEAN
COLOMBIAN CONTEXT.

BY

EDUARD DANIEL SALGADO BAQUERO

MARÍA JOSÉ TOVÍO FLÓREZ

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Master's Director

Erica Ferrer Ariza, M.A.

AFFIDAVIT

We, Eduard Daniel Salgado Baquero & María José Tovío Flórez, hereby declare that this master's thesis has not been previously presented as a degree requirement, either in the same style or with variations, in this or any other university.



EDUARD DANIEL SALGADO BAQUERO



MARÍA JOSÉ TOVÍO FLÓREZ

Abstract

Teaching English in the Colombian official sector has been a challenge in certain contexts for decades due to a variety of reasons such as limited opportunities for teachers' development, poor infrastructure, and lack of resources. In terms of the latter, in the past, few resources were available for teachers to use to help their students develop their Communicative Competence. Currently, the governmental authorities have taken some actions that aim to guide the development of students' English competence, so that they can be able to use their skills to communicate in the foreign language. Consequently, the material proposed to teachers and institutions by national educational authorities motivates this qualitative action research study conducted with the objective to explore students' development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing through the implementation of pedagogical sequences based upon the Colombian Suggested English Curriculum issued by the Colombian Ministry of Education. The participants involved in this inquiry were twenty-six students in tenth grade from a public institution located in the rural area of Sahagún- Córdoba. The data was collected through different instruments such as: pre, while and post - tests, surveys, interviews, and written tasks students had to complete. The central findings revealed that students had a slight advancement in their Communicative Competence in reading and writing after the implementation of the pedagogical sequences.

Key words: Communicative Competence, Suggested English Curriculum, reading, writing, English teaching in Colombia

Resumen

La enseñanza del inglés en el sector oficial colombiano ha sido un reto en ciertos contextos por décadas, debido a una variedad de razones tales como limitadas oportunidades para el desarrollo profesional de los profesores, poca infraestructura y falta de recursos. En relación con esta última, en el pasado, pocos materiales estaban disponibles para el uso o referencia de los (las) docentes en su labor de apoyo del desarrollo la Competencia Comunicativa en inglés de sus estudiantes. Hoy día, las entidades gubernamentales han tomado algunas acciones que apuntan al desarrollo de las competencias en inglés de los estudiantes, de tal manera que ellos sean capaces de utilizar sus habilidades para comunicarse en una lengua extranjera. En consecuencia, el material propuesto a docentes e instituciones para guiar la enseñanza del inglés motivo este estudio de investigación acción, ejecutado con el objetivo de explorar el desarrollo de la Competencia Comunicativa en lectura y escritura a través de la implementación de secuencias didácticas basadas en el Currículo Sugerido de inglés para Colombia expedido por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Los participantes de esta investigación fueron veinte seis estudiantes de décimo grado de una institución educativa pública localizada en el área rural de Sahagún, Córdoba. Los instrumentos utilizados para recolectar la información fueron: exámenes, entrevistas, encuestas y tareas escritas que los estudiantes tuvieron que completar. Los resultados principales revelaron que los estudiantes tuvieron un leve avance en su Competencia Comunicativa en lectura y escritura.

Palabras Claves: Competencia Comunicativa, Currículo Sugerido de inglés, lectura, escritura, enseñanza del inglés, competencia de los estudiantes, investigación cualitativa, sector oficial, secuencias didácticas.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This paper presents an action research study implemented in the field of English teaching as a foreign language. As it is well known, English has become an element of great importance around the world. Thus, the design of plans for the empowerment of teaching this foreign language at schools in Latin American countries has gained relevance, and Colombia is not the exception. For about the last fifteen years, the government has taken some actions in an attempt to enhance the English teaching process in public institutions over its territory.

It is important to mention that in Colombia the educational system is divided into two sectors: the public and the private sector. According to the Law 115 (Ley 115, 1994) or General Colombian Law of Education, the education service in Colombia can be offered by the government as well as civilians who follow the guidelines established by the national government. The public sector (also called official) embodies the public policies and financial support of the government. Official institutions aim for the coverage of the educational necessities of learners from middle and the lowest socioeconomic communities of the country, those who lack of economic resources to pay for education. All the programs and fees within this sector are the responsibility of the government. Meanwhile, the private sector offers an educational service based on the policies for private education enacted by the government without receiving its financial support.

However, schools are given some autonomy in the development of their Institutional Educational Project (PEI - Proyecto Educativo Institucional). Generally, students involved in private education belong to high and middle socioeconomic strata of the national territory. Those who can pay for private education as well as to afford updated textbooks and travel abroad are more likely to strengthen their academic process especially in English.

Teaching English in Colombia has been a challenge for decades, especially in the official educational sector. In this sector, learners have presented a negative tendency in the achievement of competences needed to be proficient communicating in English. A report written by Sanchez (2013) concluded that 90% of 11th grade students taking a national examination in Colombia struggle to achieve the level A1, which is considered to be relatively low for this educational level. What is more, the lack of resources, infrastructure, deficiencies in teachers' qualification, and unification of methodologies sharpen the situation. For this reason, in the late 90's the Colombian Ministry of Education (also known as MEN), which is the maximum authority in the educational field in Colombia, enacted and implemented a document containing some guidelines. It was called: "Lineamientos Curriculares" and sought to support teachers in the elaboration, development, and evaluation of the curriculum (MEN, 1999). Besides, the document was expected to contribute with the regulation of the learning and teaching process nationwide.

Based on what has been said previously, by the end of 2004, the MEN evidenced the need to implement a new strategy to strengthen the English learning and teaching process in the country, which by that time was an area that, regardless of the efforts to improve it, had not achieved the results expected. As a consequence, the National Bilingualism Plan, whose main goal was to improve English proficiency levels in Colombia, was launched in 2004, and the expected goals of this plan would be attained by the year 2019. What is more, for the creation of the National Bilingualism Plan, it was of essential importance the establishment of a blueprint, which could be comprehensible and adaptable to the teaching and learning process of this foreign language in the country. Accordingly, the MEN decided to adopt the Common European Framework of Reference (also known as CEFR) as the starting point for the standardization of the EFL process in Colombia. This document was considered to fit the gap on the issue, and it was adopted as a

relevant international reference produced by meticulous work of globalized, multicultural nations where this framework allowed to categorize learners in a scale of different levels of competences according to what they are able to do in terms of language proficiency (MEN, 2006).

Later, the MEN, other authorities, and some Colombian universities worked on offering opportunities for teachers' development as well as providing resources for a better quality in public education. Under this frame in 2006, a plan called: "Plan de Educación Vision 2019: Fortalecimiento de Lenguas Extranjeras" was released, presenting a document centered on the conceptions and directions of the CEFR. Therefore, the set of competences students should achieve while learning English in Colombia was presented explicitly in a booklet. Since then, teachers have had available what is known as "Guide 22: Basic Standards of Competence in a foreign language: English" (MEN, 2006). These standards were an adaptation derived from the CEFR intending to support the main goal of the National Bilingualism Program. Besides, this document defines the competences to be evaluated in national examination and proposes the achievement of the following levels: from first to third grade, level A1/beginner; for fourth and fifth grade, level A2.1/basic 1; for sixth and seventh grade, level A2.2/basic 2; for eighth and ninth grade, level B1.1/pre - intermediate 1; finally, for tenth and eleventh grade, level B1.2/pre - intermediate 2 (MEN, 2006). Within the release of these standards, the concept of Communicative Competence was also coined in this official document in Colombia.

The main goal was defined and attempts to increase the English proficiency levels of students in the public sector in Colombia continued. For instance, in 2014 a new plan was proposed by the government to reform the already existing National Bilingualism Plan proposed in 2004. The former plan had not had the impact expected, due to the fact that only 1% of students from public institutions had reached the level proposed after 10 years of implementation (MEN, 2014). The

new plan known as “Colombia Bilingüe” launched concrete goals to be aimed at in 2018. Some of these goals included the following:

- To increment eleven graders’ performance on the National Examination (also known as Saber 11°), a test applied in the national territory to evaluate students’ competences in some areas such as: mathematics, critical reading comprehension, sciences, civics competence, and English.
 - To diagnose teachers’ level of proficiency.
 - To bring 1.400 native speakers of English to teach on 9°, 10° and 11° grade.
 - To hand out a national curriculum, orientations to learning from 6th to 11th grade.
- (MEN, 2014).

However, by the year of 2015, under an economic perspective, the government launched another plan seeking the consolidation of students’ ability to communicate in English in ten years. Hence, it is expected that by 2025 students graduated from the educational system in Colombia would have more opportunities to succeed in their academic and professional lives. Those expectations would be materialized due to their possible capability to communicate in the target foreign language, English. Under this plan named “Colombia very well” some new materials and strategies were presented for teachers and students in public institutions. Among the most relevant, it can be mentioned: *Bunny Bonita*, *English for Colombia, my first ABC kit*, and the first series of *English Please* textbooks for 9°, 10° and 11° grade (MEN, 2014).

Later, the government re-evaluated the implementation of the plan “Colombia very well” and decided to interrupt this plan and switch back to the “Colombia Bilingüe” program whose objectives seemed more feasible, clearer, and achievable. The main impact of switching back to

the former plan was the execution of some actions that could direct the achievement of the goals proposed in 2014. In this way, the Colombian Ministry of Education presented an English kit containing a series of documents that aimed to guide the achievability of the plan: “The Suggested English Curriculum” and “The Basic Learning Rights.” The purpose of these materials represented again an attempt to unify the teaching and learning process of English in Colombia as well as to take students to achieve a pre-intermediate level when finishing high school in public schools (MEN, 2016).

Despite the fact that Colombia has made significant efforts for the achievement of goals established in different plans by the MEN in terms of foreign language learning (mainly English), the results obtained after executing most of the actions within the “Colombian Bilingualism Plan” have been low or have generally presented unfruitful impact on Colombian learners. Nonetheless, the MEN present the Suggested English Curriculum, among others, as a strategy to improve this situation. In the words of the National Minister of Education, Gina Parody (2014-2016) the Suggested English Curriculum contains a variety of flexible theories, activities, strategies, and materials that “seek for students to achieve a level of proficiency in English, which allows them to communicate, interact and share knowledge, as well as potentiating their human and professional capabilities” (Parody, 2016).

In addition, the Suggested English Curriculum is said to be a flexible and adaptable guiding document, that reflects a compilation of the different visions, policies, and documents enacted previously by the MEN. Therefore, this paper presents an action research that aims to explore the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing of lower intermediate students through the implementation of the Suggested English Curriculum at a rural school on the Caribbean Colombian context. The decision to conduct this research study was based on the fact

that the Suggested English Curriculum is said to contain varied set of flexible strategies and materials that seek to develop the Communicative Competence of learners in the Colombian educational system. It is expected to be implemented and adapted by a variety of institutions and educational contexts along the national territory. Furthermore, on paper, it has aimed to offer to the directly involved actors in the teaching process more precise, defined, and descriptive orientations in terms of: pedagogical principles, programs of study, content scheme, standards, suggested textbooks, and basic learning rights. Additionally, it also provides guidelines on how to evaluate and assess the students' learning process, and some exemplifications of pedagogical sequences or lesson plans based on three models suggested within this curriculum (Task-Based, Project-Based, and Problem-Solving). Further tools in the Suggested English Curriculum include: suggested online books and web-pages to be taken into the classrooms, which offer access to a wider variety of resources that might be useful and meaningful for teachers and learners in the pedagogical exchanges to deepen in the teaching of a second language (MEN, 2016).

This study can be relevant to the Colombian context since it proposes to explore how the Suggested English Curriculum may influence or not students' development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing and their perception of the English language teaching and learning process. The decision to focus this study on the development of the Communicative Competence, specifically in reading and writing, relies on the need of exploring the new guidelines and materials suggested by the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN), but considering the constrains of the context. This context is that of students' low level of proficiency in English, lack of background knowledge, little input received in terms of listening and speaking, and time to focus on the development of other skills different from reading and writing, which they were more familiarized with.

At this point, it can be worth mentioning that numerous studies have been made nationally and internationally to explore the development of the Communicative Competence in students. For instance, Xiao (2004) in Ireland, Gomez (2012), and Buitrago (2016) in Colombia explored the issue with a focus on oral and written production. However, in the Colombian context, these studies have not been connected to the Suggested English Curriculum, since this is a recently proposed strategy by the Colombian government. Consequently, this inquiry is intended to conduct a thorough analysis that may encourage teachers among the Colombian territory to question, explore, and reflect on the teaching and learning process of a foreign language in Colombia and, bearing in mind the benefit of students, evaluate plans, and documents proposed for such processes.

It can be also important to highlight that the current trend in the development of Communicative Competence is related to intercultural communication. Although the latest trends seek to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence, this view can be more easily explored when students have some prior foundations or knowledge of the language. Byram (1997a) suggested that “Much acquisition of Intercultural Communicative Competence is tutored and takes place within educational settings” (p.43). In reality, constraints of the context and the background of learners involved in this research led to narrow down the scope of this work to the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing, instead of focusing it on the intercultural competence due to students’ lack of proficiency in English.

Throughout this paper, different sections will be presented as follows: firstly, a presentation and a description of the research problem, its context, as well as the justification to explore on the issue. This will be followed by the statement of the central question of this research study and the objectives to be achieved by it. The next section will present a theoretical framework in which the

main authors and their theories will be discussed in order to support this study. Then, the methodology and the presentation of the results of the current inquiry will follow. Finally, the conclusions of this research study will be stated.

Chapter 2. Rationale and Research Problem

The decision to base this study on the implementation of the Suggested English curriculum for the development of the Communicative Competence, specifically in reading and writing, relies on the need of exploring the new guidelines and materials suggested by the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN). What is more, it was considered that students have a low level of proficiency in English where the input received in terms of listening and speaking was relatively null, being the school the unique contact to the language since they have limited access to internet and foreign radio programs or TV shows that may help them to strengthen their process. It is expected that these materials would be embraced by institutions and teachers and adapted into their own contexts. Therefore, this study proposes to explore the possible impact (or not) of such implementation on students' proficiency development. Moreover, this study can provide teachers with some insights that motivate them to put into practice the suggested material in their teaching practices in order to document and evidence whether this governmental proposal applies to the local context or not. The new proposal by the MEN was elaborated after the application of a needs analysis on public schools. As mentioned above, the Suggested English Curriculum emerges as a comprehensive framework that is aimed to guide local authorities and schools in the definition of what Colombian students should learn in regard to English language (MEN, 2016).

To sum up, the idea of exploring the Suggested English Curriculum in the field of EFL in Colombia can motivate teachers in similar contexts to develop and implement similar strategies

to evaluate the influence and/or relevance of national policies in their local context. Furthermore, this study approaches the English teaching and learning process as proposed on the Suggested English Curriculum, pedagogical orientations for the Communicative Competence development viewed from the theoretical perspective of Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990), Richards (2006) and the Council of Europe (2001), whose works retain current validity and acceptance in the Language teaching and learning field.

A further reason to center this study on the Suggested English Curriculum, which Colombian teachers have available to use and incorporate into their pedagogical practices in EFL lessons, is that it has not been explored deeply or promoted extensively yet. Even though it seems to have varied resources to enhance students' learning process, it is important to actually evaluate the impact these resources can have in particular contexts and under particular circumstances since not all educational contexts in the Colombian territory share the same characteristics. Thus, a study like this may serve to inform various actors in the educational context: national authorities, local authorities, educational institutions, teachers, and students.

A further vital argument for carrying out this project is founded on gathering some information that may reflect insights and conception of learners, who are considered to be essential actors in the learning process. Consequently, their points of view about the new resources and their application can provide ideas to adjust some matters that would emerge during the use of the criteria proposed to teach English in Colombia using the Suggested English Curriculum.

This research can, then, make a contribution to the EFL field in Colombia, since as it has been mentioned previously, all the attempts made by the Ministry of Education trying to improve the teaching of English have not had the expected results yet. Thus, the outcomes of this

investigation may help to change the approach Colombian teachers may have to national educational policy. It may help them approach these initiatives critically and inform back strengths and weaknesses of proposals like this, on the basis of research and systematic documentation. In this way, all the actors involved in this process will be working together to hopefully strengthen students' abilities to communicate in English as well as to achieve the goal to make Colombia one of the most educated countries around the world, not only in terms of language teaching but of education in general at its different levels.

A description of the context of this research is essential to have comprehensible information and an idea of the characteristics of the setting of the study. Hence, it is important to recall that the Colombian educational system is divided into private and public sector. The latter is sponsored by the government, and it is considered to be the focus of the initiatives already mentioned in this paper. This sector is also considered to be the center of this inquiry due to the results shown by the official entities of evaluation in Colombia, which indicated that almost 60% of students from the official sector got graduated presenting an A- level of proficiency in English. This level is considered to be an adaptation of the CEFR levels for Colombian students who has not had any exposure to the language and do not reach level A1 (MEN, 2014). Moreover, public institutions in Colombia can be located either in urban or rural areas, and they are both divided into 4 levels pre-school, primary, middle school, and high school. Institutions from rural areas tend to lack resources, and students in many of these schools tend to have scarce exposure to the language, limiting their opportunities to learn the language.

In this section, the teaching of English in the public sector will be explained. In the lower levels (pre-school and primary) homeroom teachers are in charge of teaching English as well as all the other subjects. Consequently, most students present a low level of English when they

reach sixth grade, since some are not exposed to the language and others receive poor and sometimes inaccurate information. Although Colombia is making efforts to provide professional development opportunities to homeroom teachers, the perception in the Colombian territory is that students will have less opportunities to acquire the language if they do not have a proper professional to teach them. Darling-Hammond (as cited by Croninger, et al., 2005) “concludes that the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can outweigh student background factors including poverty, language background, and minority status” (p.312). On the contrary, in higher levels (secondary and high school), it is more common to see students being taught by English teachers. However, this is not a reality for all the schools since some rural areas have difficult access and low numbers in student population; such situation leads the government to hire fewer teachers to teach even subjects that are not their specialty and generally these teachers are not well-prepared to teach English. According to Bish (as cited by Granja, 2016) one of the problems in Colombia in English teaching is that most of the time some teachers are not qualified to teach this subject.

The context and settings where this inquiry takes place is a school in the rural area of Sahagún Córdoba, Colombia. This school offers its educational services from preschool to eleventh grade. Most of the students who are in secondary level come from different schools which only offer primary level. These learners study their basic cycle without the presence of a qualified English teacher and consequently they receive little effective exposure to the language. Furthermore, some of the students mentioned above belong to indigenous communities and low socio-economic stratum where the importance of English is not usually valued. Therefore, students' Communicative Competence in terms of reading and writing was considerably low and for some cases even none until they reach sixth grade, since in the small schools where they spend their

primary studies, learners generally are not encouraged to communicate in English in any of its forms. In fact, they are only exposed to basic vocabulary related to: parts of the house, family members, days of the week, and months of the year, numbers, animals as well as some grammatical topics such as: verb to be, and present and past simple tenses.

Taking into account the lack of contact with the language students have on their primary level, at the time of reaching sixth grade, learners in the English classes tend to present difficulties and limitations to achieve the competences expected during the course, and some deficiencies in regard to the language reception and production are evident. This inquiry will be specifically carried out in the main campus of the rural institution aforementioned, which offers services from pre-school to high school on a tenth-grade classroom with limited resources (no access to textbooks or internet connectivity). Based on what has been said above, the English class becomes the only contact with the language, which causes the process to be more difficult.

In addition, this study will lead to the exploration and application of some guidelines proposed in an official document enacted by the Ministry of National Education known as: The Suggested English Curriculum in order to help students develop the Communicate Competence in reading and writing. Considering that most of the authors and the Colombian Suggested curriculum itself favor the oral production, the constraints presented in the population already described led researchers to make the decision of narrowing down this inquiry to the development of the components which best fit the environment in which the investigation will take place. These competences are: linguistic, pragmatic and discourse in reading and writing respectively. However, the oral interaction will not be omitted, instead it will be encouraged gradually without being considered the center of the inquiry. In this way, researchers will attempt to motivate students to communicate in English.

As it has been mentioned before, the implementation of the Suggested English Curriculum has not been studied deeply and the controversy about using the resources has arisen, due to the great importance it has for the Government and the different actors within the national educational system to achieve the goal of improving English in Colombia and for the teachers around the national territory to have an integrated methodology and guidance. Thus, this inquiry seeks to answer the following question:

How does the implementation of pedagogical sequences based upon the Colombian Suggested English Curriculum contribute (or not) to the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing of lower intermediate students at a rural area on the Caribbean Colombian Context?

Chapter 3. Objectives

3.1. General Objective

- To explore the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing of lower intermediate students through the implementation of the Suggested English Curriculum at a rural school on the Caribbean Colombian context.

3.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify students' language, reading and writing competences before, while and after implementing pedagogical sequences based on the Suggested English Curriculum.
- To compare the achievement of the students participating in the research project versus students who did not.

- To explore students' perceptions on their own learning language process.

The next section will explore the most important theoretical concepts that are fundamental to support this study.

Chapter 4. Theoretical Framework

Teaching and learning a language are ongoing processes that have become of great recognition in the world in which awareness, involvement, and constant commitment of the actors engaged in them prompt the success or failure of these processes. Many countries worldwide tend to base the execution and operation of these processes on their standardization by tracing the work of influential authors in the field and their ideas related to English Language Teaching for the construction of official documents, guidelines, and policies in their territory of influence. In Colombia for instance, the government and ministerial entities responsible of monitoring official institutions nationwide have recently designed a set of documents and ascribed some policies to unify content, concepts, and methodologies in order to enhance learners' ability to communicate in English. This section of the paper, will deal with theories of authors who have studied in depth the concepts that are essential for this research study. Some of these concepts include: The Common European Framework, Curriculum, Communicative Competence, and Task-Based Learning.

4.1 Common European Framework (CEFR)

The heyday of the language learning and teaching processes around the world demanded a standardization to establish clear criteria in the assessment and notions of achievement of learners involved in these processes. As a result, in 2001 a joint endeavor of the Council of Europe in representation of all its members, pursuing to achieve a greater unity in the teaching of modern languages, common actions were adopted in the cultural field trying to bear in mind the plurilingualism among nations being part of it. The council of Europe (2001) considered language not only as a major aspect of culture, but also as a mean of access to cultural manifestations.

The plurilingual approach emphasizes the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a Communicative Competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. (p.4).

As a result of the strains of the Council, a document known as the Common European Framework of Reference for languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) was spread among European countries to provide a basis for the elaboration of language syllabi. "It also served as curriculum guidelines for examinations, and textbooks. Besides, the enactment of this framework made a determinant contribution for language teachers, centers, learners, directors, and stakeholder by the establishment of proficiency level for language learners" (Council of Europe, 2001). The reference proposed by this international framework allows then for the ranking or categorization of learners depending on their proficiency in the foreign language.

Some important theories pinpointed in the CEFR are: the inclusion of two key points in the document; the saviors, which are also known as “general competences” and the Communicative Competence. This latter is a key term for the language learning/ teaching around the world, and will be explained in depth in this paper. Focusing on the saviors, it can be said that: these are considered to be skills that learners develop. According to Byram (as cited by Lu & Corbett, 2012) these saviors include:

Attitudes (*savoir être*) ... to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. Knowledge (*savoirs*) of social groups... and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country... Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) ability to....explain and relate documents from one's own. Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*) ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices ... Critical cultural awareness/political education (*savoirs'engager*) ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (p. 332).

The acceptance of the document and its recognition as a starting point for language teaching and learning was spread worldwide and it directed the teaching of foreign languages in many places around the globe. Nowadays, the implementation of the CEFR has supplied agents involved in the evaluation process of the English language learning with some descriptors that permit the categorization of language learners' competence into three levels of proficiency organized as follow: A for basic user, B for independent user, and C for proficient user. Each of these levels break into a more specific categorization which includes:

- A1 is also known as: Breakthrough, in which students “Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions ... Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details ... Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly...” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.24).

- A2 also called: Waystage, in which learners “Can understand sentences ... Can communicate in simple and routine tasks ... Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.24).
- B1 also identified as: Threshold, in this level, pupils “Can understand the main points ... on familiar matters ... Can deal with most situations ... whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar ... Can describe experiences...” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.24).
- B2 also considered as: Vantage, in here, students “Can understand the main ideas of complex text ... Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity ... with native speakers ... Can produce clear, detailed text ... giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.24).
- C1 also known as: Effective operational proficiency, in which students “Can... recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously ... Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects...” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.24).
- The highest level: C2 also called: Mastery, in this level, learners “Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely...” (Council of Europe, 2001, p.24).

At the same time, the Common European Framework contains specific indicators for each of the main skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. It divides these skills into: understanding, which includes reading and listening skills, and production, which includes written and oral interaction as well as some domains that can be taught throughout students' learning process. Moreover, the CEFR contains activities and strategies to be worked for each skill with their specific indicators in order to verify if they were achieved at the end.

Taking into account some constraints of the Colombian context, the MEN modified the levels listed above. Since learners do not achieve the first level of the CEFR (A1). Thus, in Colombia and according to the ICFES (2015) the first descriptor became A- (also known as: Pre-A1 or A1). Meanwhile, in the same context the maximum level expected in "Prueba Saber 11" is B+ which is also an adaptation equivalent to B2 level. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Colombian national examination for high school is designed to evaluate intermediate students, which is the level proposed by policies in Colombia at that educational level. Referring to the context in which this inquiry is taking place, it is valuable to say that in Colombia the first attempt for regulation in the teaching of a foreign language, specifically English started with a document called: "Lineamientos Curriculares" (Curriculum Guidance, as it was presented in the introduction). The document contained general information about methodology, ICT in English teaching, and evaluation.

However, the document was too general and what students had to know was not clearly defined thus teachers struggled to decide the content and competences to be fostered under this guideline in their foreign language classes around the national territory. Every teacher in every institution did something different because there was not unification of criteria or official documents that served as a guide for them. The National Ministry of Education acknowledging

the great acceptance the Common European Framework of Reference had around Europe and other countries in Latin America made the decision to adopt it as a referent for the teaching of English in all Colombian institutions; public or private. This was the basis for the proposal of some actions to strengthen the teaching of this foreign language around its territory, which led to the design and implementation of a National Bilingualism Plan and the adaptation of the National Examinations Saber 11° and Saber Pro.

Consequently, for the Colombian context, the implementation of the CEFR as the basis for the national advancement of the teaching of English took place. The Government decided to elaborate and publish an adaptation of the CEFR in the form of Basic Standards of Competence (MEN, 2006) through which teachers and the community were provided with concrete competences indicators each learner had to achieve in regard to the skills by the end of the school year; they were expected to boost learners to improve their English proficiency level. That is to say, for the design of any action in Colombia related to English teaching, the CEFR has been taken since then as the starting point.

The Guide 22: “Basic Standards of Competence in a foreign language: English” was enacted by the government and spread all over its territory. This was even uploaded to the ministry web-page in order to verify that every citizen had access to it. This new document was released containing some key concepts related to bilingualism, as well as the Communicative Competence divided into pragmatic, linguistic, and sociolinguistic. This paper also included the importance of teaching English in Colombia, as well as some reasons to study it. What is more, this booklet contained the introduction to the Common European Framework of Reference by specifying the names’ levels and the school grades to be considered in Colombia.

In addition, this guide contained a classification corresponding to comprehension and production abilities which were subdivided into listening and reading as well as speaking and writing respectively. In this section of the document it is possible to see some charts, including a general standard, the division of the different skills, each of them with its specific standards or indicators all connected to the pragmatic, linguistic, and sociolinguistic competence. (MEN, 2016)

4.2 Curriculum

In education some essential pillars are required for the establishment and maintenance of the learning and teaching process. That is why, the definition of curriculum is relevant for the effective development of this work. Hence, according to Null (2011) “curriculum is about what should be taught... It combines thought, action, and purpose... Curriculum, however, is a specific, tangible subject that is always tied to decision making within institutions, whether they are schools, churches, nonprofit agencies, or governmental programs” (p. 1). This central component of the educational process somehow determines the content that must be taught, the goals that must be achieved, and the steps to carry out a proper assessment of the courses. Consequently, curriculum goes beyond being a simple written document to be followed yearly, and instead it appears as the core institutions and teachers have to define the horizon of the teaching and learning act under their domain. Furthermore, curriculum may be understood as the umbrella, which covers all the main aspects of the teaching and learning initiative: goals, standards, methodology, materials, and assessment.

Curriculum may be one of the most used terms related to education by teachers, stakeholders, and principals. It is essential to understand the roles of school in the educational process;

According to Sacristán (as cited by Montoya, 2014) “It allows us to come to terms with the relationships between educational actions and the different contexts in which they take place, the interactions among the different subsystems that operate within the educational system, and the relationships between teaching and the school and society” (p. 134). Thus, curriculum determines many features of the educational system in terms of pedagogical models, methodologies, approaches, and other crucial issues handled by teachers to breakdown the global goal of the school year into specific objectives that serve as the basis for the achievement of the main goal in any educational system.

According to the existing literature, several definitions of curriculum by different authors and at different times in history can be found. For example, Goodson (1995) stated that “the etymology of the word curriculum derives from the Latin word *currere*, which means to run, and refers to a course” (p.24). This definition leads to the idea that curriculum is the basis and the central element to be followed during the development of a course in the educational system. However, such definition seems to be narrow and diminutive since it does not mention the features of a curriculum, leading teachers and stakeholders to ambiguity when defining the curriculum in their institutions. Hence, the need of broader views of curriculum raised. For instance, Rodgers (as cited by Johnson, 1994) defined curriculum as “those activities in which children engage ... This includes not only what pupils learn, but how they learn it, and how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment and in what kind of facilities” (p.26).

Moreover, Candlin (as cited by Nunan, 1988) “suggested that curricula are concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation, and the raw relationships of teachers and learners” (p.3). This was a more detailed description of

curriculum, but authors continued exploring the concept and more complex definitions arose. Thus, there are different trends in the view of curriculum, for example, authors made a distinction between curriculum and syllabus by using the dichotomy of the inner and the outer circles of curriculum. “The inner circle has goals as its center. This is meant to reflect the importance of having clear general goals for a course. The content and sequencing the inner circle represents the syllabus... This large outer circle represents evaluation” (Nation and Macalister, 2010, p.1). On the other hand, Lumby (as cited by Middlewood, 2001) claimed that curriculum may be seen as a syllabus at a national level of implementation, which attempts to influence the teaching process by indicating the content, the assessment, the prerequisite learning outcomes, and the teaching methods.

Attending to the immediate definition given above, some countries in Latin America having the conception that through the standardization better results would be obtained in the process of English language teaching and learning, consequently these countries have tried to provide actors involved in education within their territory with some guidelines such as: standards. According to Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017) these nations have made common efforts to provide their own national curriculum based on the CEFR. These are designed by important transnational companies who also provide the materials and resources to a territory in order to lead teachers and learners to work the same content within the country. However, the results obtained in Colombia and most of Latin American countries are low and differ from region to region. “In Europe and the USA the content of the school curriculum is increasingly subject to political, often central, control. There is also a tendency towards greater curricular uniformity, both within countries and between them” (Coulby, 2000, p.1).

As aforementioned, Colombia has been implementing a National Bilingualism Plan in which the Ministry of Education has ascribed a national curriculum for English teaching and learning to be executed in public institutions. To go deep in this idea of a national curriculum to teach English in Colombia, it can be worth clarifying that the ideas of setting a standardized curriculum cannot be mandatory in the national territory. Since the Constitution defends the pluricultural characteristics of the different groups and communities spread around the country, especially “the General Law of Education (L. 115 / 1994) established curriculum autonomy for institutions at all educational levels” (Montoya 2014, p. 141). For that reason, the document enacted by the Colombian Ministry of Education to teach English in Colombia is suggested; this implies that teachers and/or instructors can adopt it or not, but no one has the faculty to impose it to them. Teachers who are the ones that best know their field may claim that this paper does or does not cover the necessities of the immediate context and learners’ needs and they should be free to use it or not.

Finally, the ideas of implementing a suggested curriculum to teach English in Colombia may not be seen as limiting, but as a booster for the process to have stronger results. In this sense the curriculum should not be implemented as a syllabus where teachers look at what to plan and teach in their classes. Jacobs (2010) stated that “we are restricted by ‘what we know’ and ‘what we are able to do.’ In a sense, many schools and leaders compose well-intended but antiquated mission statements reminiscent of the past century” (p.8). Following these ideas, it is understood that teachers should not be limited to what they know, but accept the new proposals intended to improve teaching and learning processes. The new documents and materials are to be analyzed, adopted and adapted to the specific needs of the learners in the classrooms. No idea in the document should be taken as a straitjacket.

4.3 Communicative Competence

The ever-evolving process of English teaching and learning has knitted together some ideas and theories conceived by linguists worldwide, those who seek to find means that allow languages user to face the current communicative challenges assertively. Namely, the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1972) coined the revolutionary term of Communicative Competence (hereafter CC), “as a counter-movement against the so-called “linguistic competence” introduced by the structural linguist Noam Chomsky (1965), who based linguistic theory on an ideal speaker-listener with perfect linguistic knowledge” (Rickheit, Strohner, & Vorweg, 2008, p.17) Since then, the concept of CC has gained acceptance and validity among linguists, theorists, and psycholinguists; the recognition of it has lasted up to current times. Therefore, several authors and scholars have presented a continuous horizontal theorization spotlighting the real communication rather than the precise domain of structures.

Formerly to 70s, the English teaching and learning processes were conducted under the Chomsky’s linguistic competence theory. According to this author, “Any consideration of social factors was outside the domain of Linguistics” Chomsky (as cited by Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.42). He focused then his theory on the idea that the linguistic competence is centered on ruled governed structures, and concepts of perfect structured utterances of an ideal speaker. This theory experienced considerable acceptance by that time gaining many devotees in the ESL language field. However, in opposition to the ruled governed linguistic competence, the new trend changed the emphasis of the language teaching and learning process. Accordingly, the most important principle then turned into communicating ideas among hearers and speakers in certain situations, rather than the production of correct grammar utterances Hymes (1972)

However, the work of Chomsky was acknowledged for introducing the concepts of “competence and performance.” Bagarić & Djigunović (2007) claimed that the original concept of competence was later expanded by the addition to the internal factors of language for the human significance proposed in the Chomsky’s definition, the external aspect that surrounds individuals involved in a communicative situation. According to Lilli (2006), Hymes considered that attention should be drawn not merely to cognitive aspects, but also to the sociolinguistic aspects of communication; contexts and real situations where language can be used.

Despite the fact that one of the first ideas that advocated the terms of competence and performance were within Chomsky’s theory, after some empirical explorations and inquiries were done, his definitions seemed to become too limited. Specifically, he proposed as competence; the ability to reproduce patterns of language without paying attention to the social situation, since his language view was related to the ideal speaker. In terms of performance, he claimed that this concept was related to the application of linguistic patterns. Reactions to those ideas appeared soon, namely Hymes (as cited by Rickheit, Strohner, & Vorweg, 2008) agreed partially on what was already proposed, but some clarifications were needed:

Communicative Competence should be related to a system of rules generating an ideal speech situation, not regarding linguistic codes that link language and universal pragmatics with actual role systems...competence and performance concepts are as two sides of a coin: Performance is the observable part, and competence is the inferred ability to produce the observed performance in the future. (p. 17)

Trying to give some detailed background to the CC, it can be said that its genesis is placed on the praises given by Hymes (1972) to the capacity of a language user to produce sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. Complementary to the way he or she acquires

competences as to be aware about “when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” Hymes (as cited by Johnson, 1994, p.87). Summarizing Dell Hymes’ ideas, this competence is the ability one has to use his/her aptitudes in relation to language, reaching a communicative goal assertively. The use of language is not only spoken, but nonverbal or written that allows someone to make himself/herself understandable through a reduced attention to the correctness in grammar.

The great acceptance this broad concept of CC had by that time, enlarged its adept list. As a result, several theorists and linguists empirically explored the issue to enrich the theory proposed by Hymes. For instance, in a haste for the elaboration of communicative syllabi, it was explored the existing theories related to the subject. As a result, it was determined that Chomsky’s main omission in his theorization according to Munby (1978) was that, “the most important linguistic ability; to produce and understand utterances which are not so much grammatical, instead appropriate to the context where they are made in terms of situational and verbal context of utterances” (p.9). In this sense, his ideas matched the theory coined by Hymes suggesting that a good speaker must know what to say, where to say it, to whom, and when. Consequently, for Munby (1978), syllabi for non-English speakers should not focus the mastering of grammar rules. The latter ideas correspond to the idea that a person who acquired and developed the CC, he /she may have also acquired some attached knowledge about the grammar, psycholinguistic, and sociocultural aspects related to the knowledge about the use of language.

What is more, some scholars continued the extension of the CC through well- structured research studies. According to Canale and Swain (1980) their studies aimed to the regulation for the feasibility and practicality of measuring the CC. Besides, they proposed a distinction in the notions of Competence and Performance. Thus, the foci of exploration on the issue was changed,

since clear and understandable definition of that dichotomy was given. Therefore, “competence refers to knowledge of grammar and of other aspects of language while performance refers to the actual use” (Canale and Swain, 1980, p.3). Secondly, the results and implications of their work led to the establishment of one of the most famous framework that keeps valid today. Under this framework, it was proposed a division within the components of the CC. Such division was established as a guideline for the organization and development of the teaching methodology and assessment of this broad Competence.

The theoretical framework proposed by Canale and Swain consisted on a division of the general CC into three sub-competences as to have a more comprehensible understanding of this globalized concept. According to Canale and Swain (1980), the CC is made up by: Grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Sometime later, further studies and publication by Canale (1983) on the issue led to the addition of the so-called discourse competence to complement the first framework. Consequently, as the framework proposed the sub-competence which were clearly defined and supported, they still maintain their relevance and validity.

For instance, the grammatical competence is closely associated to the current linguistic competence. It is related to the knowledge of the formal code of the language: lexis, spelling, grammar, phonology, syntax and so forth (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1993). The sociolinguistic competence according to Canale and Swain (1980) is made up of two main rules; sociocultural and discourse. These rules may play a very important role in real communication, to understand utterances with low transparency between meaning and speakers’ intention in certain communicative situations. This competence is related to the functions of the language according to the situations, the participants, and the context, that is to say, the way people should approach others depending on the situation. Furthermore, the strategic competence has been widely defined

since it was introduced in the 80s, according to Canale and Swain (As cited by Cummins, 2000), this competence “is called into play to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (p.577). Namely, the strategic competence is used by the speaker to maintain the communication when he / she lacks the language to say what he/she wants to express using resources such as paraphrasing and nonverbal language (Canale and Swain, 1980)

Finally, within the framework, a discourse dimension was included, and it belonged to the sociolinguistic competence, which referred to the capacity to interpret the intention of an utterance semantically. In further studies, Canale (1983) praised importance to the discursive part by adding the discourse competence to the existing framework. The discourse competence consists on the “mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres” (Canale, 1983, p. 9). This means the capacity someone has to use the knowledge of grammar and semantics to achieve a purposeful communication either spoken or written in different situation with not pre-established context. In regard to the discourse competence, Fairclough (1989) claimed that “discourse refers to a whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part...this includes the process of production and the process of interpretation” (p.24).

It is important to mention that “Unlike Hymes, Canale and Swain or even Widdowson, Savignon (1972, 1983) put a much greater emphasis on the aspect of ability in her concept of communicative competence” (Bagarić & Mihaljević, 2007, p.96) therefore, she defined the CC as “The ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors” (Savignon, 1972, p.8)

Further explorations on the issue led to the contribution of Bachman on the CC. This time from an evaluative perspective, this author collected and analyzed the ideas from some of the most relevant theorist by that time to create his own framework using different terminology. Hence, the CC turned into communicative language ability (Hereafter CLA). Accordingly, “the ability to use language communicatively involves both knowledge of and competence in the language, and the capacity for implementing, or using this competence” Widdowson and Candlin (as cited by Bachman, 1995, p.81). In his framework, this author was interested in providing tools to measure language abilities and doing research in language testing. His theory proposed a framework of three components for the CLA: “language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanism.” Bachman (1990) defined these components as follows:

Language competence comprises a set of specific knowledge utilized in communication via language. Strategic competence characterizes the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use... Psychophysiological mechanisms refer to the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon (sound and light). (p.84).

Despite the fact that the language competence seems to be similar to the grammatical competence proposed by Canale and Swaim (1980), Bachman realized that there was an existing necessity to clarify and validate those concepts. Furthermore, Bachman (1990) stated that the language competence may be seemed as an umbrella term that comprises the organizational competence and the pragmatic competence. Referring to the organizational competence, it involves the grammatical competence that includes vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonograph. On the other hand, the textual competence associated to the discourse competence of

Canale (1983) included cohesion and rhetorical organization. In terms of the pragmatic competence, he included illocutionary competence related to functions and, finally, the sociolinguistic competence tied to the sensitivity and cultural aspect of those who participate in communicative acts.

In further publications, the model was reinforced and some changes in terminology were done. Therefore, Bachman and Palmer (1996) proposed two components: “Language competence also called language knowledge and strategic competence described as a set of metacognitive strategies” (p.67). This way the item in the components explained above changed to be: grammatical knowledge, textual knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and functional knowledge. They covered the same aspects of language but were defined under a competence measuring view. Finally, the strategic competence is defined by Bachman and Palmer (1996) as “high executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use as well as other cognitive activities” (p.70). That is to say, processes that not only demanded knowledge, but also cognitive process that help to reach meaning transference in conversation.

One of the most relevant authors and scholars that extended the idea of the CC in the last decades is Jack Richards. He associated this Competence to the Communicative Language Teaching Approach or the so called CLT. The purpose of this approach to teach languages was the development of the CC which, according to Richards (2006) “was a broader concept than that of grammatical competence... and included knowing what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions” (p. 9). What is more, it was established in this approach that the knowledge of the language codes (grammatical competence) does not assure the real communication; CC is needed to do so.

The development of the CC in a foreign language is thought to contribute to the development of some skills and competences considered higher order, cognitively speaking. Scholars and theorists have linked the domain of a language different from the mother tongue to psychological functions that allow anyone to accomplish certain task. For example, Vygotsky (1978) recounted some finding from different studies done on the exploration of a child's behavior, while facing some challenges versus ape's behavior in the same situations; these studies led to the conclusion that "children solve practical tasks with the help of their speech, as well as their eyes and hands" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.26). That is to say, people may solve problems using language not only speaking but also using language resources such as: body language and demonstrations.

At this point, it is important to mention that speech should not be referred to only as spoken language since a child has the possibility to use some tools available known as preliminary acts to make him/herself understandable. According to Vygotsky (1978) "a kid who faces a problem, first, thinks about the solution using the speech and then unfolds the solution by actions. That process is what makes people different from animals" (p.26). The possibility to think and organize a plan leads humans to develop inner motivation and intentions that end in complex cognitive processes that animals do not achieve. Vygotsky also associated speech development to social factors that served as input to acquire some language and behaviors that are processed, analyzed, and then adjusted to make one's own speech.

4.4 Task-Based Language Learning

As time has passed by, the teaching of English has evolved. Academics in the search for their practice's betterment explore and propose many different approaches intended to promote and

adequate and meaningful English teaching process in EFL classrooms. One of the approaches that has gained much recognition for the last decades, and which will be considered as essential in this research is called: Task- Based Language Learning (also known as TBL). For a broad understanding of the TBL, here is a definition of task according to Breen (1987):

... Any structured language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making. (p.23)

That is to say, tasks are presented to learners in order to expedite their learning process.

Additionally, tasks should be meaningful and appropriate for learners depending on their capacities and age, so as to encourage them to solve problems and make decisions on their own. The whole process of task creation must contain achievable objectives that will help the proper development of the task as such. The previous definition covered many components of a task. However, it was considered to be too broad. This is why, Ellis (2003) defines a pedagogical task as:

A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. (p.16)

The previous definition attempts to explore the importance of focusing language on meaning rather than on grammar. That is to say, an encouragement for learners to work in order to solve a

task, with the only requirement of using the language without being aware of grammatical structures. However, pupils will be able to learn grammar implicitly. Finally, Nunan (2004) proposed a different definition of a task:

A piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end. (p.4)

In other words, it can be said that tasks lead learners to understand as well as to communicate in the foreign language by using their grammatical knowledge combined with making meaning to transfer information.

“Task-based instruction can thus be defined as an approach which provides learners with a learning context that requires the use of the target language through communicative activities and in which the process of using language carries more importance than mere production of correct language forms” (Kasap, 2005, p. 2). Therefore, “Task-Based constitutes a strong version of Communicative Language Teaching” (Ellis, 2003 p. 30). Communicative Language Teaching (also known as CLT) “is properly viewed as an approach grounded, or theory of intercultural Communicative Competence to be used in developing materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning” (Savignon, 2006, p.213).

That is to say, the importance of this approach consists on engaging students on communicative tasks, so that they can develop their CC which, is referred to as “what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and the roles and intentions” (Richards, 2006, p.9). Equally, this competence becomes of greater importance on TBL. That is why a task outcome “is evaluated in terms of whether students are successful in this goal, and

there is a relationship with the real world in the sense that the kind of discourse that arises from the task is intended to resemble what which occurs naturally” (Ellis, 2000, p.196)

TBL teaching and learning also arose from the idea of providing students with authentic tasks. According to Ellis (2003), authentic tasks are those tasks whose interactional patterns are similar to those in real life situations. Hence, the purpose of this authentic materials must be achievable while learners acquire knowledge unconsciously. “Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning” (Krashen and Terrell 1983, p. 55). In this way, TBL will scaffold learners to acquire a second language without being aware of any grammatical patterns, but always focusing on the importance to achieve a communicative goal by transferring oral or written information. In TBL, the more authentic the material, the more opportunities learners would have to feel close to the context in which a foreign language is spoken. Hence, students may experience freedom to communicate more meaningfully.

What is more, TBL approach establishes some core principles, which may be essential to consider when developing pedagogical sequences based on this approach. The first is scaffolding, which may be seen as the steps used to move continuously in the process “scaffolding, so defined, helps learners achieve a successful task outcome” (Ellis, 2000, p.210). The second is task dependency, which may lead to establish relationships among the tasks so as to achieve the goal easily. “Within a lesson, one task should grow out of, and build upon, the ones that have gone before” (Nunan, 2004, p. 35). The third is recycling that supports the students’ learning since they are putting into practice the language acquired repeatedly. “Recycling language maximizes opportunities for learning and activates the ‘organic’ learning principle” (Nunan, 2004, p. 36). The fourth is active learning in which learners may put into practice their

experiences gained in order to build their own knowledge. “Learners learn best by actively using the language they are learning” (Nunan, 2004, p. 36). The fifth is integration of skills, which exploits pupils’ ability to communicate more accurately and efficiently “Communication, by definition, requires the integration of the main language skills; in integrated skill instruction, learners are exposed to authentic language and are involved in activities that are meaningful and interesting” (Akram & Malik, 2010, p.1). The sixth is reflection, which can be seen as one of the most important principle since learners may have the opportunity to reflect and enhance their own process. “Learners should be given opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how well they are doing. (Nunan, 2004, p. 37). Another important aspect, which may be seen as a principle, could be autonomy. The teacher is a facilitator rather than a provider of resources and information, “giving task autonomy ... is generally expected to result in higher motivation, satisfaction, and performance” (Langford & Moye, 2004, p.1).

TBL works under a framework which consists of three different phases. This framework has been proposed by some authors. For instance: Willis (1996) named these stages: “pre-task, task cycle, and language focus.” However, according to Ellis (2003), these segments are known as: “pre-task, while task, and post-task.” During the first stage, learners are exposed for the first time to the topic, as well as the task they will execute. “The pre-task phase introduces the class to the topic and the task, activating topic-related words and phrases” (Willis, 1996, p. 40). During this segment of the class, students also have the opportunity to get to know the goal of the task as well as the steps they may follow to complete the task.

The second phase, “offers learners the chance to use whatever language they already know in order to carry out the task, and then to improve that language, under teacher guidance” (Willis, 1996, p. 40). In this stage, learners work collaboratively either in groups or pairs focusing in meaning rather than on grammar in order to achieve the task proposed. At the end of this cycle,

students must come up with a report to present to the class. In here, students will have the chance to receive feedback from the teacher in order to clarify doubts and strengthen their task.

The last phase “allows a closer study of some of the specific features naturally occurring in the language used during the task cycle” (Willis, 1996, p. 40). In other words, the last stage is no longer about communication, but an understanding of the language forms used to carry out the task. As a consequence, the teacher may return to the report students worked on but this time focusing on the grammatical mistakes students may have or on raising awareness about a particular language aspect.

Finally, TBL seems to play an important role in the acquisition of a foreign language. It provides learners with authentic activities in which learners have the opportunity to use the language by simulating a real-life experience. Hence, this approach can be suitable to work on in the language class since it can help students with the development of the CC. TBL can contribute to have more effective teaching and learning process.

This section has dealt with the fundamental notions that support this study. The following section will present, describe, and justify the methodology chosen to answer the research question.

Chapter 5. Methodology

5.1 Research Method

The research methodology chosen to conduct a research study defines some important aspects within the inquiry such as the actions to be taken when designing the instruments, the steps to collect and analyze data, and the style in which the descriptions of the results would be revealed.

Griffiee (2012) stated that a convenient manner to determine the appropriate research methodology is approaching a research design that allows researchers to answer the research question. He also conceived that methodology may be considered the way in which a research study is organized in terms of data collection and analysis. In this case, the methodology can be seen as a schema that may help researchers to organize the information gathered before making conclusions about it.

Hence, for this research study, qualitative research is considered to be the most applicable method. Qualitative research is defined by several authors in many different ways. For instance: “Qualitative research is an umbrella term for an array of attitudes towards and strategies for conducting inquiry that are aimed at discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret, and produce the social world” (Sandelowski, 2004, p.893). It seems that this method is appropriate to work in the educational field since through its application, it is possible to understand human beings experiences. Some other authors such as Denzin & Lincoln (2005):

Defined (it) as a multi-method in focus involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter... Qualitative Research involves the use, and a collection of ... personal experiences, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routines and problematic moments and meaning in individuals lives (p.3).

Considering what has been aforementioned, qualitative research is thought to cover a broader field since it deploys a wide range of designs and instruments for researchers to conduct more descriptive studies. Actually, this methodology has been used lately in the educational field since it permits investigators to answer open-ended questions and to describe the reality within the settings they interact. “Qualitative methods are typically more flexible – that is, they allow greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study

participant” (Hashemnezhad, 2015, p.56). What is more, qualitative descriptions are not limited to numbers, enabling investigator agents to be more explicit and detailed when showing the results of the study. “Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2008, p.366).

5.2 Research Design

Another important aspect to consider while carrying out an inquiry is the design of the study as such, which is crucial for its success. Thus, action research was chosen as the approach to investigate in depth and try to find a possible solution to the identified problem. Burns (1999) said:

Collaborative Action Research processes, strengthen the opportunities for the results of research on practice to be fed back into educational systems in a more substantial and critical way. They have the advantage of encouraging teachers to share common problems and to work cooperatively as a research community to examine their existing assumptions, values and beliefs within the sociopolitical cultures of the institutions in which they work. (p.13)

This means that this approach to investigate provides researchers with opportunities to look at the context they are investigating in a more critical and reflective way. It also offers the chance for researchers to sit together and talk about common problems observed in their classrooms, as well as to find possible strategies to solve certain issues by considering people’s points of view and cultural aspects. Some other authors have explored about this research design. For instance: Action research is a “flexible research methodology uniquely suited to researching and supporting change. It integrates social research with exploratory action to promote development

... Action research involves fluid and overlapping cycles of investigation, action planning, piloting of new practices, and evaluation of outcomes” Somekh (as cited by Given, 2008, p. 4).

Based on previous definition, it can be said that action research can be used in the educational field since it incorporates social aspects of human beings within the investigation. Moreover, action research allows researchers to plan, pilot, and evaluate in order to collect data, which is basically what most teachers do when they start to investigate about a particular matter in their classrooms.

This was considered to be the most suitable option for this study since Collaborative Action Research offers valuable potential to a teacher(s) when he/she wants to research in his/her own classroom with the help of a colleague. Moreover, this design can be used by teachers to enhance their language teaching process and grow in the professional field cooperatively. This research study is considered to be a collaborative action research, due to the fact that there was a shared concern related to the potential impact in students’ development of the CC in reading and writing through the implementation of guiding documents enacted by the Colombian government called: Suggested English Curriculum. As it was a problem that may be seen in different contexts, the two researchers decided to work together.

This way, both researchers have the chance to reflect on the process which would contribute to the reliability and validity of this study. To do so, it was decided to choose the workplace of one of the researchers to explore the inquiry, and apply the different instruments planned, meanwhile the other researcher would work hand in hand with her co-researcher in order to actively participate in the design, planning, and analysis of such instruments. What is more, the researchers would share any thoughts or ideas that may help to the adequate development of the investigation.

5.3. Steps to carry out this inquiry

This section of the paper will describe the steps carried out during this research study. As it has been mentioned before, the objective of this study is to: explore the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing of lower intermediate students through the implementation of the Suggested English Curriculum at a rural school on the Caribbean Colombian context. In order to do so, the first step taken was to observe carefully the context and choose the population to conduct this investigation. Then, the document: Suggested English Curriculum proposed by the Colombian Government was analyzed.

Later, some pedagogical sequences based on this curriculum were designed by considering the context previously analyzed. To design the pedagogical sequences, three out of four modules suggested by the curriculum were considered. In theory, the Suggested English Curriculum is expected to provide a variety of activities, tasks and projects to engage students with the language learning process, since its main characteristics include “flexibility, adaptability, spiral and cyclical structure, proportional organization and development of 21st century ability” (MEN, 2016). In this way, the pedagogical sequences were divided into three units, each unit containing four lessons that were developed during three hours. Three hours corresponded to the frequency of English classes the population had during the week. The pedagogical sequences started in August and ended in November which represented third and fourth term of the school year. The decision to implement pedagogical sequences based on the Suggested English Curriculum was made to gain insight about the applicability and acceptance this document may have on low-level learners in public institutions.

Furthermore, the curriculum was adapted taking into consideration students’ needs and constraints of the context. For instance, when analyzing the document, it was found that it

suggested the use of problem-solving for tenth and eleventh graders. However, after doing some activities based on this method, it was found out that the population chosen did not have the appropriate language proficiency in which they had to use the foreign language to solve problems.

Taking into account learner's limitations, Task-Based Learning which was another method proposed in the document for lower levels was considered to be more suitable for covering learners' learning needs. After exploring several authors' ideas about the benefits of using Task-Based in the classroom, it was decided to implement this methodology and design some pedagogical sequences under the themes proposed by the curriculum and the principles of Task-Based. All this with the purpose of encouraging students to read and write texts about the topics proposed in the Suggested English Curriculum. Each lesson was then designed with the purpose of engaging students in a final product related to the writing of simple argumentative texts, where they had to complete several tasks to create a final written product. However, as the population had a low-level of proficiency in English, students were not forced to speak in English during the development of the lessons, although they were encouraged to do so when they felt confident to try.

The decision to emphasize reading and writing in this study was mainly based on the constraints found regarding the population. Thus, students' level of proficiency in English seem to be relatively low in relation to the B1.2 level they were supposed to have achieved by 10th grade. Considering this limitation, it was thought that the time to carry out the application of pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum could not be enough to develop the CC in speaking, hence reading and writing seemed to be adequate to work in this particular context in the time available. Besides, according to Savignon (2017):

CLT is not concerned exclusively with face-to-face oral communication. Communicative principles apply equally to reading and writing activities that involve readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning; the goals of learning depend on learner needs in a given context (p.5).

After the implementation of the pedagogical sequences, students were asked to take part in a dual-purpose survey. On the one hand, the survey was applied to gain insights on the students' perceptions toward the lessons they were exposed to. On the other hand, learners had the opportunity to evaluate the lessons in which they took part. Moreover, a survey was considered to be a good tool to gain more perceptions as well as reliable data. This data may lead to have more detailed information that may contribute to triangulation of the data collected in this study. Furthermore, a small sample of the population consisting of 10 students, both girls and boys were chosen to participate in a face-to-face interview to answer some specific questions about how they felt during the implementation of the pedagogical sequences. Questions were open, and students were given ample space to speak their minds as confidently as possible.

5.4 Data collection instruments

In this section, the instruments used for the achievement of the general objective proposed in this inquiry will be described. Namely, the data was collected using a variety of instruments designed from the qualitative perspective method. The instruments used were: English tests to evaluate reading as well as grammar and vocabulary, simple argumentative texts to assess writing, surveys, and interviews.

5.4.1. Tests.

Tests represent one way to assess knowledge and capacity. What is more, tests can be applied at different moments of the teaching and learning process with different purposes. In this study, three different tests were applied; a pre-test, a test during the implementation, and a post-test. (See Appendix 2).

Griffee (2012) defines a pre- test as “test that is administered before the experiment, intervention, treatment or where teaching takes place. The purpose of the pre-test is to establish baseline data; in other words, it establishes what the situation is before the intervention or treatment is administered” (p. 91). Hence, a pre-test or diagnostic test was applied seeking to discover learners’ level of proficiency in each of the competences (linguistic, pragmatic, and discourse) within the CC in reading and writing explored throughout this study in order to have an initial information to begin with the inquiry. The test applied during the implementation was done in the middle of the investigation in order to analyze and verify any possible progression presented by students during the implementation of the pedagogical sequences. On the other hand, a post-test is “a test that is the same or very similar to the pre-test, and is administered after the experiment or teaching takes place” (Griffee, 2012, p. 91). Thus, the post-test was administered to analyze the performance of the students after the implementation. The results attained from the post-test were compared to the results obtained from the two tests previously administered in order to follow up on any possible effect of the pedagogical sequences on students’ achievement.

In order to gather more reliable data, the three tests followed the same structure which will be explained in detail as follows: Taking into consideration that the population chosen was tenth graders, it was decided to choose the standardized test that follows the same structure the

Colombian Government implement in Prueba Saber 11°. This was considered to be a valuable tool since it also aims to measure the CC, and it is already based on the Common European Framework of Reference. This test is designed by a renowned editorial house and it is generally applied to students in the training process for Prueba Saber 11° as well as 11th graders students before graduating from high school. This test is divided into seven sections. Sections 1 and 3 are designed to test students' ability to use the pragmatic competence by using their knowledge of the world to answer some questions related to signs and conversation. Sections 2, 4 and 6 belongs to the linguistic competence in which students' ability to use grammar is evaluated. Finally, sections 5 and 7 include reading comprehension, in which students have to comprehend the text then answer both literal and inferential questions (See appendix 2).

As it was mentioned above, it was decided to choose a test similar to Prueba Saber 11° as the examination to be implemented in this application since it is a standardized test which always contains the same sections. What is more, this test focused on evaluating the CC in terms of reading. Besides, Prueba Saber 11° is accessible to teachers and it is designed by renowned institutions that are seen as knowledgeable in the EFL field.

5.4.2. Surveys.

Surveys are thought to be very popular tools to collect data, especially when the population chosen to conduct the study contains a large group of participants. Surveys can be open and closed-ended. This instrument allows participants to answer freely to given questions or just rate given statements anonymously, the anonymity contributes to gain accuracy in the information collected. This study considered a “close-ended approach (See Appendix 3) in which respondents

are asked to select from a range of predetermined answers” (Frechtling, 2010, p. 68). This approach seemed to be the more appropriate as it does not require a huge amount of time to decode the information gathered. “Open-ended responses may be difficult to code and require more time and resources to handle than close-ended choices” (Frechtling, 2010, p. 68). Surveys are also considered good tools to obtain information on a wide range of topics, since it leads the researchers to check on different aspects executed during the implementation done. For this reason, surveys seemed to be a valuable tool for this study since this instrument allowed the researchers to investigate in a practical way a wide range of topics such as activities, material, motivation, among others.

The survey applied was designed using a Likert scale, which contains items such as: totally disagree, disagree, nor in agreement or disagreement, agree and totally agree. This Likert scale was meant to be linked with the following seven statements: The English classes taken during this year were different to English classes taken in former years, I worked committedly during the activities assigned, the content of the lessons was valuable to increase your knowledge of the world, the themes worked were interesting, the materials used were appropriate, the activities were difficult, and the classes contributed to the acquisition of the foreign language (See Appendix 3). The purpose of this survey was to get to know students’ perceptions about the pedagogical sequences applied during the implementation, specifically if they liked the content, materials, activities and if the lessons were meaningful to them. To give trustworthiness to this instrument and make it objective, it was decided to apply this survey anonymously, in this way, students would feel free to state their real opinions with no pressure.

This survey was applied in December after the implementation of the pedagogical sequences in order to have a broader vision of students’ perceptions. The survey was implemented to all the

population chosen (26 students: both girls and boys), the survey was done based on a Likert scale from one to five in which students had to range some statements related to the implementation of the pedagogical sequences they participated during four months.

5.4.3. Interviews.

Interviews are considered to be important instruments in a qualitative inquiry. “The qualitative research interview has become one of the most widespread knowledge-producing practices across the social scientific disciplines” Brinkmann (as cited by Given 2008, p. 470). Then, it can be said that even though interviews are not the only nor the most important research instrument, they are widely-known and commonly used by many researchers around the world. This can be due to the fact that interviews allow the researchers to have contact with people involved in the study as well as to know their opinions and obtaining first-hand information that may be more reliable when analyzing the data collected. “Interviews are discussions, usually one-on-one between an interviewer and an individual, meant to gather information on specific set of topics” (Harrell & Bradley, 2009, p.6). In this discussion which is most of the time held face-to face, researchers have the opportunity not only to record the answer given to each question, but also to look at the interviews’ expressions, behavior, emotions, and body language. “Interviews are a common source of qualitative data because they are an effective means to learn from participants about their perceptions of and experiences with a study’s topic” Plano (as cited by Given 2008, p. 432).

After analyzing what was said previously, it was decided to apply an in-person or face-to-face interview to the students who participated during the implementation of the pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum in order to explore their perceptions

about the implementation developed as well as their views about the progress (See Appendix 4) in their own learning process. Students' perceptions about the implementation were considered important as a way to verify if the pedagogical sequences applied were meaningful for them and also to explore in depth students' points of view about all the classes, activities and materials employed during the lessons.

The interviews were held on December after the implementation of the pedagogical sequences by taking a sample of ten students distributed as follows: four students who seemed to be interested in achieving the goals of the tasks effectively and who participated actively during all the lessons. Three students who showed effort to complete the tasks and participate sporadically. Finally, three learners who presented difficulties to carry out the tasks and had limited participation during the lessons implemented.

Chapter 6. Results

This section will present and discuss the results obtained after the analysis of the data gathered from the application of the different instruments used in this study. To collect the data, diverse resources such as pre, while, and post-test were used. These tests aimed to explore and evaluate students' proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, and reading. Additionally, the results of the post-test were used to make a comparison between learners' performance enrolled in the application of the pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum versus students who did not take part of it. Although the results obtained by this means might have been influenced by certain aspects other than the implementation of the Suggested English Curriculum lessons, they can also serve as a reference and represent a source of data worth analyzing.

Moreover, to get to know students' insights in relation to the lessons carried out during their English classes on the second half of the year, surveys and interviews seemed to be suitable instruments to achieve that goal. Thus, these instruments were applied by the end of the implementation process. Finally, this study took into account simple argumentative texts written by students during the implementation of the lessons in order to evaluate the writing skills, which was not included or evaluated as such in the tests.

6.1. Students' achievement

6.1.1 Tests.

As it was already explained in the methodology section, it was decided to apply three tests which follow a similar organization and distribution as that used by governmental standardized national examination known as Prueba Saber 11°. The goal of the application of these tests was to collect information about the CC of students, more specifically, their linguistic, discourse, and pragmatic competences in reading. The tests had a total number of 45 questions, which were divided into seven parts; some of these related among them. For instance: part 1 and 3 are aimed to test pragmatic competence, part 2, 4 and 7 are attained to assess the linguistic competence and finally part 5 and 6 are intended to evaluate the discourse competence through reading comprehension. These tests intended to measure features related to: basic vocabulary, grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension. Each segment corresponded to the three competences already mentioned.

The specific structure of the tests will be explained as follows: parts 1 and 3 have five questions each which totalize 10 questions among them. These two parts make reference to the pragmatic competence. In the first section, students are asked to connect some signs and their

content with the place in which they could be seen. Likewise, in the third section, learners are required to select the correct option that completes the conversations based on the context in which these could take place and their general knowledge. Moreover, the linguistic competence is evaluated in three different parts, specifically part 2 containing five questions, part 4 includes eight items, and finally part 7 with ten questions. The sum of the items in these parts complete a total of 23 questions related to: part 2 vocabulary usage, in which learners are supposed to relate some words with its corresponding definition. Furthermore, the tests include in parts 4 and 7 grammatical categories in which pupils are required to choose the correct verb, article, preposition, adjectives, and pronouns to complete a text. Finally, the discourse competence was measured through parts 5 and 6, which contain seven literal and five inferential questions for a total of 12 questions interrelated with the reading skill.

At this point, it is important to recall that this kind of exams are applied to 11th graders. However, the population chosen to carry out this inquiry were 10th graders, presenting low level of proficiency. Consequently, it was decided to assess the tests by focusing on specific competences rather than on overall the performance levels. For doing so, some parts of the test were grouped and then percentage that represent the number of correct answers obtained in each competence assessed was calculated.

6.1.1.1 Overall Results.

This section of the study introduces the overall results obtained from the three competences assessed in the exams applied along the implementation of the pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum. The objective of this section is to present a general view of students' performance in relation to the competences assessed in each of the tests applied.

6.1.1.1.1 Pre-Test.

In order to know students' level of proficiency in the foreign language and set a starting point before taking any action that would involve the design of pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum guidelines, a pre-test was applied to the whole group selected as the research sample, 26 students. Another purpose of this pre-test was to explore the possible competences in which students could show some notions or lack of knowledge of the language they are expected to have acquired at their academic level. For the analysis of the information collected through the application of this pre-test, it was decided to add all the correct answers that students had, taking into account the different parts of the test which corresponded to the different competences assessed. That is to say, learners' answers were tabulated and categorized according to the language skill or sub-skills they evaluated and the competences they were connected to. Next, all the correct answers students got in each competence were averaged. The results of the pre-test will be shown in the following graph with its corresponding description:

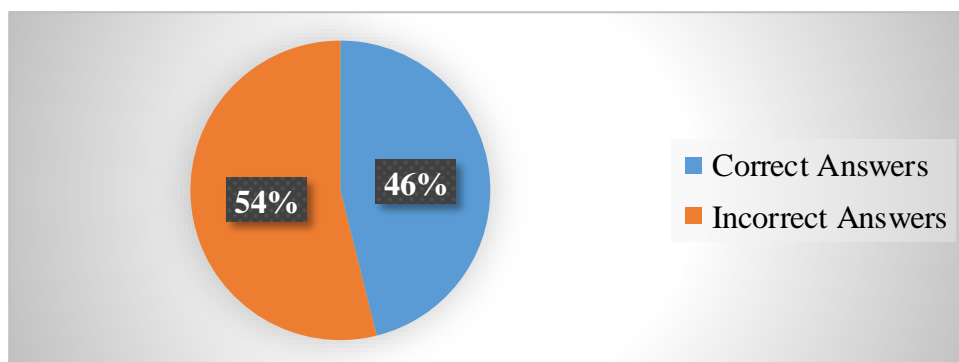


Figure 1: Pragmatic Competence Results (Pre-test).

The analysis of the answers got by students in the sections that corresponded to the pragmatic competence, during the first test applied and before the implementation of the pedagogical sequences showed that: from a total of 260 answers, learners were able to obtain a 46% of correct answers, while 54% of the answers chosen during this test were incorrect. That is to say, more

than half of the population presented difficulties to select answers related to signs and conversations or signs and symbols and their meaning.

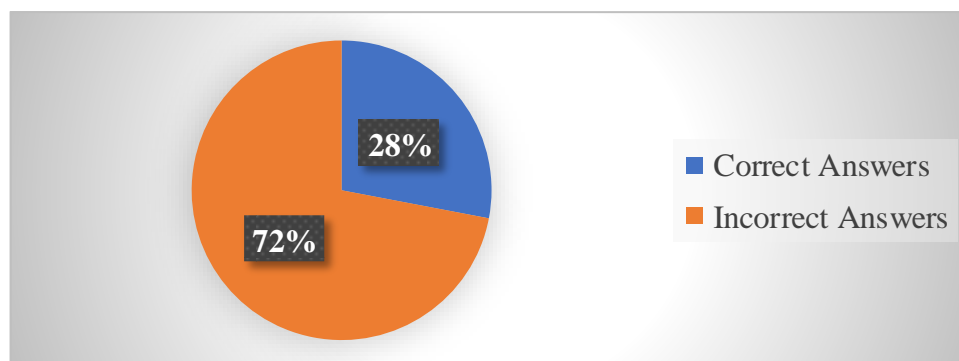


Figure 2: Linguistic Competence Results (Pre-test).

In regard to the test items corresponding to the linguistic competence, the maximum of correct answers to be attained by the whole research population were 598. Thus, the responses chosen by learners during the development of the test revealed that 28% of the option selected corresponded to the correct choice, whereas 72% of the options chosen represented incorrect choices. These results showed that the great majority of the participants had some troubles to relate parts of speech or grammatical patterns with its meaning as well as to complete texts using grammatical categories.

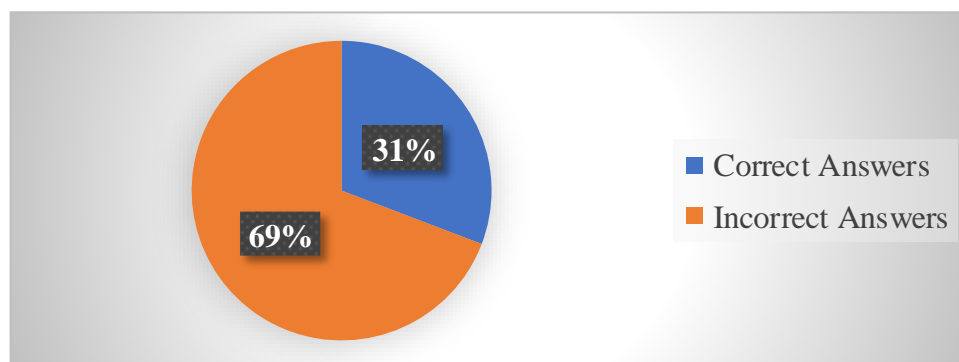


Figure 3: Discourse Competence Results (Pre-test).

Considering each of the segments belonging to the discourse competence in the test, it can be stated that the whole population had the possibility to achieve 312 correct answers. The analysis

of the options chosen by students disclosed that students selected 31% correctly versus 69% incorrect answers selected by pupils. Consequently, it can be stated that a great number of the population struggled to answer reading comprehension questions during this exam. As aforementioned, this competence is related to the reading skill, in part 5 and 6 of the pre-test students were asked to answer 12 questions, specifically, 7 questions of literal understanding and 5 questions that demanded learner to make inferences.

In general, after the analysis of the data collected through the use of the pre- test to explore learners' level of proficiency in the three different competences assessed in the exam, it can be concluded that the results of the students resemble a rather low level of proficiency in each of the competences evaluated, corresponding in all cases to less than 50%. Consequently, the performance of learners indicated a deficient domain of vocabulary intended for beginners as well as grammar and reading comprehension.

6.1.1.1.2 While-Test.

It is important to highlight that after two months implementing the pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum a while - test was applied. This exam had the same structure of the pre-test so as not to alter the results that could be obtained. The objective of this test was to find out students' progress in terms of the three different competences evaluated: pragmatic, discourse, and linguistic. Following the same pattern of the analysis done in the pre-test, the correct answers gained in each competence by the whole population were categorized, added up, and then transformed into percentages. This was done to provide an easier

interpretation of the results as well as to keep validity and credibility of the study. The results of the second test will be shown next:

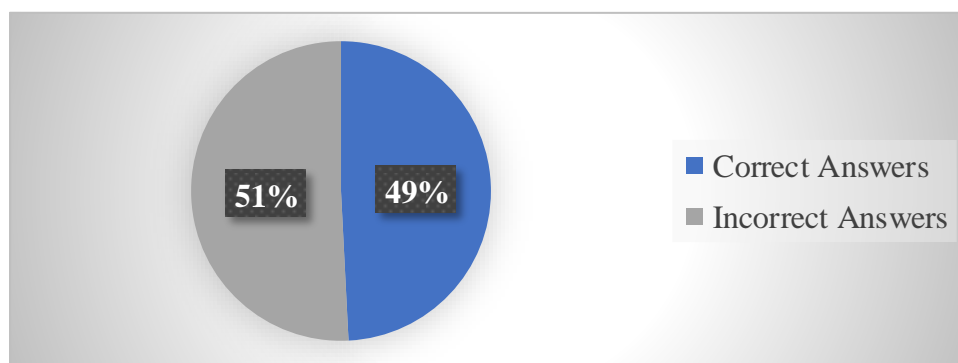


Figure 4: Pragmatic Competence Results (While-test).

The items in the test that made up the pragmatic competence represented 260 answers. The responses gathered from students' answer sheets revealed that 49% of students' answers were correct whilst 51% of the choice chosen by learners were incorrect. As a consequence, it can be said that almost half of the population experienced difficulties to identify signs and give proper responses to conversations.

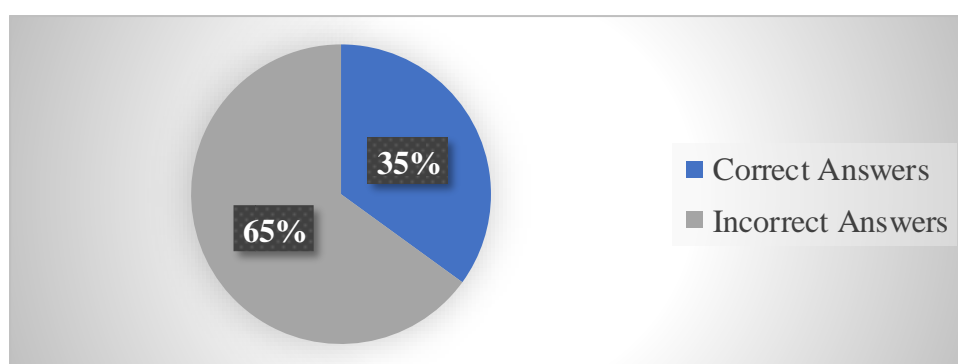


Figure 5: Linguistic Competence Results (While-test).

The three parts that integrated the linguistic competence in the test represented 598 possible correct answers. Hence, the number of correct answers observed in students' answer sheets represented 35%, while the amount of incorrect answers found after the tabulation reached 65%. These results, led to claim that great part of the participants displayed some problems to

match vocabulary with definitions as well as to fill in some blanks using grammar aspects to give coherence to a text.

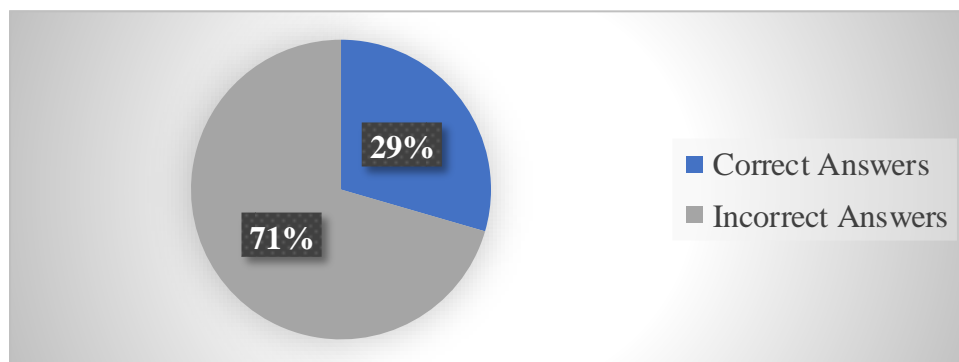


Figure 6: Discourse Competence Results (While-test).

Discourse competence consisted of 312 questions. The options selected by students indicated that they selected 29% correct answers, while 71% of the options chosen by students represented incorrect choices. Thus, it can be said that high number of participants had some complications to manage reading comprehension questions at both literal and inferential levels.

After the analysis of the while-test and a comparison with the information obtained from the pre-test, the data gathered in this second test indicated that most of the participants who took part in the implementation of the pedagogical sequences continued to have a low level of proficiency in each of the three competences evaluated after two months of lesson's implementation.

Although, the information collected from both tests led to infer that some learners seemed to have gained some notions of the foreign language in terms of basic vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, it is important to mention that a negative tendency of having a higher range of incorrect answers is maintained.

6.1.1.1.3 Post-Test.

By the end of the application of the lessons taught based on the Suggested English Curriculum; a final test was applied to the population. Through the implementation of this final exam, it was aimed to make a comparison among the information gathered in relation to the former tests employed. An additional objective of this test was to figure out the level of advancement reached or not reach on each of the competences evaluated during the three different tests. Likewise, to continue the tendency used in previous exams, the post-test followed the same structure of the two evaluations already administered. This was done so as not to modify the results as well as to maintain the reliability and credibility of the study. Moreover, the same process of analysis was used to analyze the data collected with this instrument; the number of answers given by students was grouped and categorized into correct and incorrect; then they were presented in the form of percentages per competence. The results obtained from the post-test are shown below:

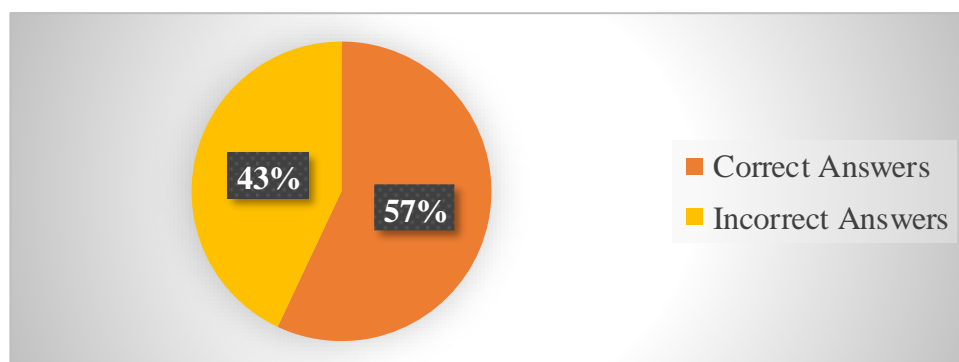


Figure 7: Pragmatic Competence Results (Post-test).

The analysis of the choices attained by learners in each of the segments that assess the pragmatic competence, during the application of the post-test displayed that from a total of 260 options, students were capable of reaching 57% correct answers, while 43% of the answers given by learners during this test displayed incorrectness. This led to claim that less than half of the

participants showed some problems to identify the appropriate place for signs and choose suitable responses to conversations.

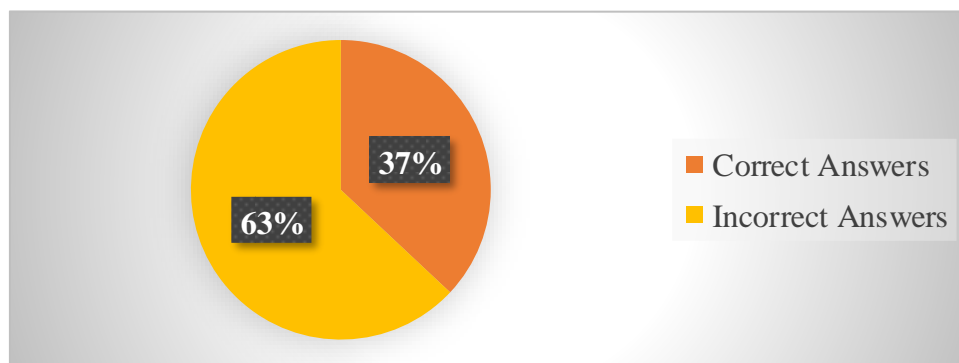


Figure 8: Linguistic Competence Results (Post-test).

The linguistic competence was evaluated by 598 items in the test. Through the analysis of this amount of answers, it was noticeable that the percentage that represented the correct answers provided by pupils during the application of the test ascended to 37%, whereas the percentage that alluded to incorrect choices reached 63%. Hence, these results displayed that most of students who solved the exam presented some complications not only associating lexical items with its corresponding definition but also following up texts using grammatical features, which are some of the aspects that the test deals with.

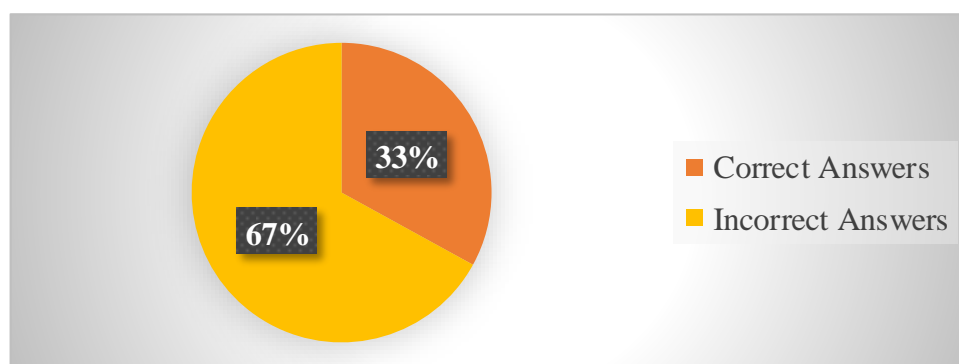


Figure 9: Discourse Competence Results (Post-test).

Taking into account the two parts fitting the discourse competence in the post-test, it is relevant to mention that this section of the test sums of 312 points. The analysis of the answers

given by the participants unveiled that 33% of the items selected showed correctness, though 67% of the choices chosen displayed incorrectness. Therefore, it can be said that the majority of the population were not able to answer correctly items related to reading comprehension at literal and inferential levels.

The finding drawn from the analysis of the information gathered from the post-test led to conclude that some learners involved in the application of the intervention, still showed a considerable low level of proficiency in the competences assessed, namely: pragmatic, linguistic and discourse competences, which were aimed to evaluate vocabulary grammar and reading skills.

6.1.1.2. Consolidated Results.

This part of the paper presents the consolidated results gathered from the different competences evaluated in each of the tests administered throughout the intervention. The purpose to include the consolidated results in this chapter sought to show a general view of the information already presented in the overall analysis of the data collected from the exams applied in terms of pragmatic, linguistic, and discourse competence. As follows, some graphs that may contribute to synthesize the information concerning to each competence are presented. Every graph represents the progression of the competences in each of the tests conducted.

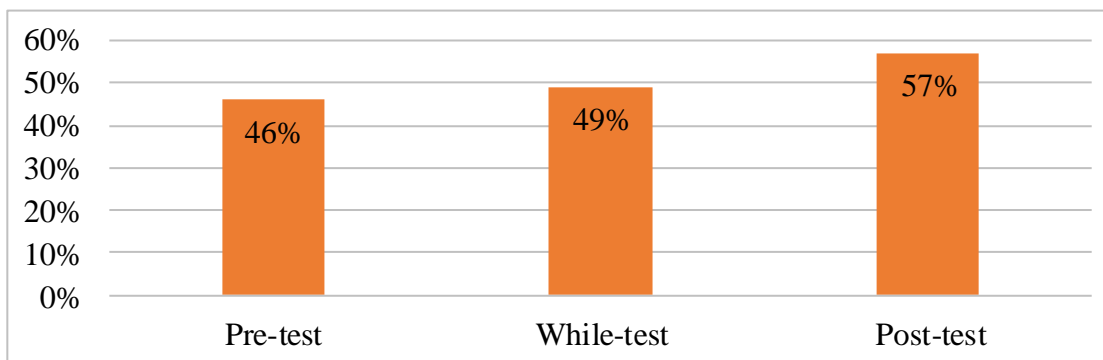


Figure 10: Consolidated Results Pragmatic Competence.

The information presented on the previous graph allowed to conclude that the pragmatic competence of students had a slight advancement according to the test results. The pragmatic competence obtained a total amount of correct answers equivalent to 46% in the pre-test, 49% in the second test and 57% in the final test. That is to say, this competence progressed 11%. In here, it is important to recall that the items that evaluate the pragmatic competence are composed of five signs to associate with the place in which they can be found, as well as five conversations where learners have to choose the proper responses to each question based on the context.

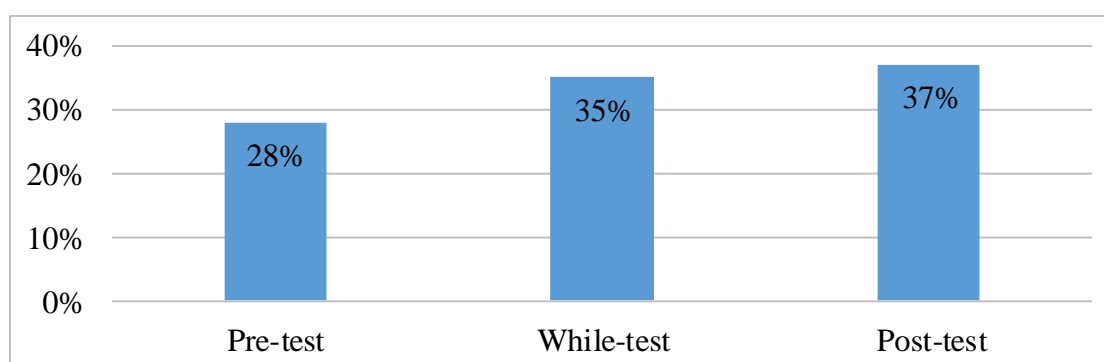


Figure 11: Consolidated Results Linguistic Competence.

The data displayed on the graph above allows to infer that the linguistic competence also showed a progression but on a minor scale. Considering specific features of the information explained before, the linguistic competence achieved a total 28% of right answers in the pre-test, 35% in the while test and 37% in the post - test. This means that, the progression registered in

this competence from the first to the final test was 9%. The items used in these tests to assess the linguistic competence were: association of words with its corresponding meaning, as well as completion of texts based on grammatical categories.

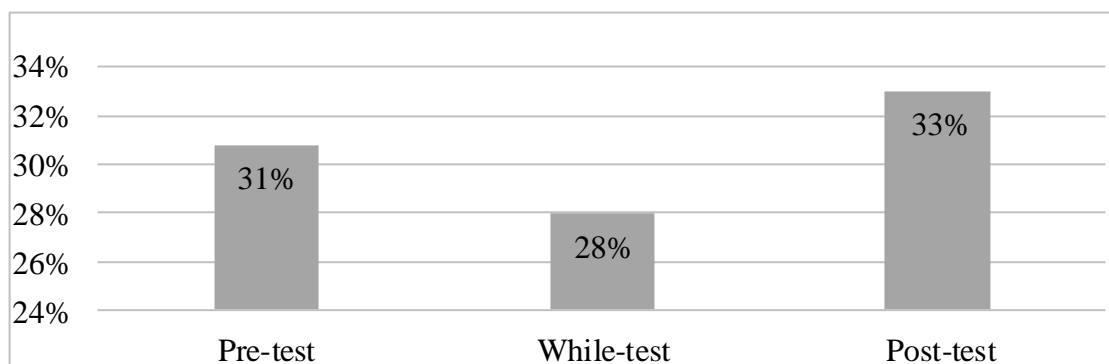


Figure 12: Consolidated Results Discourse Competence.

The graph presented above reflects the progression for the discourse competence during the application of the three tests. From the starting point, the level was low, but it was even reduced in the while test. However, the progression raised its rate of correctness in the post-test. Accordingly, the scores got by learners in the discourse competence during the three exams were specifically: 31% right options in the pre-test, 28% in the while test and 33% in the post - test. Hence, the improvement presented in regard to this competence was 2%. The competence was evaluated through two reading comprehension exercises in both literal and inferential level.

The information presented in this section where the results were consolidated by grouping the results of the competences attained in the tests applied led to conclude that: the three competences evaluated showed a slight advancement in different percentages. Specifically, the pragmatic competence presented the highest progression with 11%, which can be evidenced in every exam due to the results were ascending from the pre to the post-test without regression. In regard to the linguistic competence the range of advancement was 9%, in this competence also the level of correctness was ascending after every test. Subsequently, referring to the discourse

competence, which had the lowest level of improvement with 2%, these results can be evidenced with the information gathered from the three different exams during the analysis. This was the competence, which showed some regression in the while-test, but in the post-test this competence overpassed the results obtained in former tests.

6.1.2. Tests' comparison.

This section compares the achievement of students who participated in the implementation of the pedagogical sequence versus students who did not. The purpose of doing this comparison is to have an additional reference for the analysis of the data collected, providing more resources to draw conclusions and triangulations. Likewise, through this comparison, it may be possible to observe differences in students' achievement, which may not totally, but perhaps in part, be explained by the implementation of the lessons designed based on the Suggested English Curriculum. In here, it is important to clarify that the context in which this study was implemented has two different classrooms: 10thA and 10thB. Both groups had been working with the same teacher since the beginning of the year.

Thus, pupils had been exposed to the same methodology, topics, materials, and tests. Furthermore, these two groups shared the same number of English hours as well as an equal amount of students. Based on the fact that students had the same level of proficiency in the foreign language, the population for this investigation was chosen randomly. Consequently, 10thB was exposed to a different methodology suggested by the English curriculum since the middle of the year. Meanwhile 10thA continued working with the same methodology from previous years. It is important to clarify that the post-test applied to both classrooms corresponded to a test designed by an editorial house that works with the school preparing 11th graders for the national

examination; Saber 11°. This company authorized the implementation of these test for the benefits of this research study.

Subsequently, the following graph will summarize the results got during this post-test (See Appendix 2) by the participants who did not take part in the lessons planned under the guidelines given by the Suggested English Curriculum.

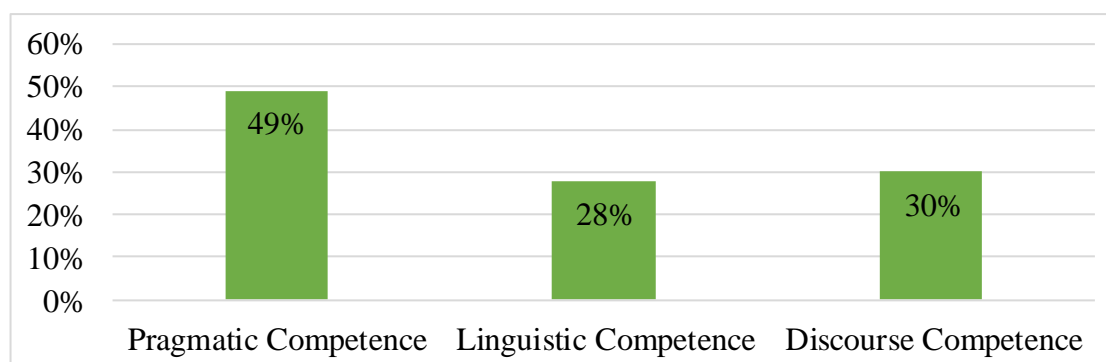


Figure 13: Tests' comparison: 10th A Results.

In the graph above, it can be observed that in the post - test, learners who did not participate in the application achieved a 49% of correct answers in the pragmatic competence. Besides, in terms of the linguistic competence, students' responses obtained 28% of correctness. Finally, this population was able to achieve the 30% of right answers in the discourse competence during the test. In here, it is important to clarify that the final exam for 10thA was the same post-test applied to 10thB who were the students participating in the application. What is more, it is essential to recall that the structure of the post-test is the same followed in the pre and while test. This includes the division of the test in seven parts which evaluates pragmatic competence in its parts 1 and 3, more specifically the connection of signs and places as well as conversations; linguistic competence in its segments 2, 4 and 7, regarding to lexical aspects such as vocabulary and grammatical categories. Finally, discourse competence in its sections 5 and 6 concerning to reading comprehension at its both literal and inferential levels.

As follows, the results obtained by the population who participated in the implementation of the pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum during the post-test in order to contrast both results will be presented. The contrast of this data will lead to some conclusions that may inform the use and application of the proposed methodology.

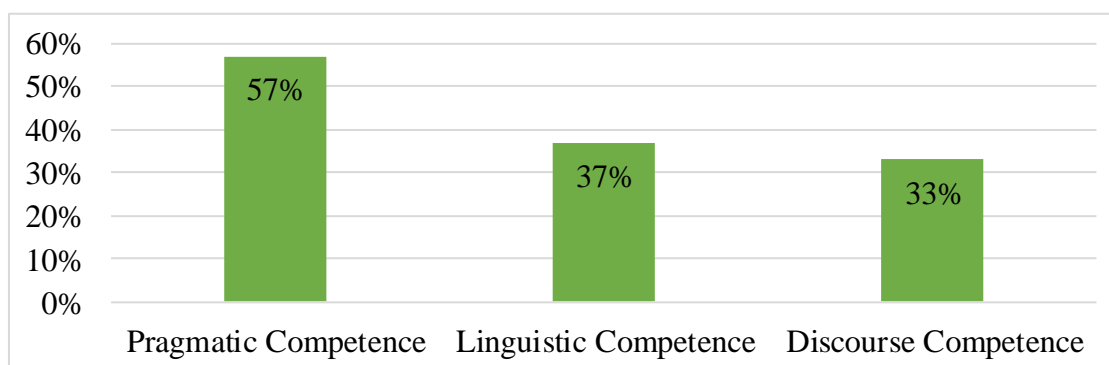


Figure 14: Tests' comparison: 10th B Results.

This figure presents the results of the post – test attained by the target population of the study. The actual results were the following: 57% of right answers were achieved in the parts corresponding to the pragmatic competence. Secondly, 37% corresponded to the percentage of correctness obtained in the linguistic competence. Finally, 33% of correct answers were achieved in the parts that evaluated the discourse competence.

To sum up, it can be concluded that students from 10th grade B who were the ones participating in this investigation were able to obtain slightly higher results than the learners who did not participate in the implementation. The participant population got 57% vs 49% of the non-participant group in the pragmatic competence; in the linguistic competence 10thB obtained 37% vs 28% obtained by 10thA students; finally, in the discourse competence the population who participate in the implementation got 33% vs 30% for those students who did not participate in the application. However, it is important to clarify that the results obtained by both groups of students were not distant which did not indicate a great difference between their levels of

proficiency in the foreign language. The difference could also be related to the actual awareness or knowledge of the test.

6.1.3 Writing skills

The intervention carried out through this study set some attention to the writing skills. Despite the fact that this is one of the skills encouraged during the application of the pedagogical sequences, the structure of the tests administered did not evaluate indeed the writing skill, for that reason, it was decided to include a written task, which would result as a product by the end of each unit planned. This activity consisted on writing an argumentative text following some patterns shared in class, such as: formulation of a thesis statement, establishment of topic sentences, giving supporting details or arguments and stating a concluding sentence. The idea of including writing skills in this inquiry was mainly based on the recommendation given by the Suggested English Curriculum. The methodology in this document expects students to construct simple argumentative texts by 10th grade. After the application of the pedagogical sequences, it was expected for students to have a clear idea of the structure of argumentative texts as well as to state arguments and support them.

In order to achieve the goal of preparing students in the composition of argumentative texts by the end of each unit plan as it is proposed on the Suggested English Curriculum. Learners were scaffolded to start writing pieces of argumentative essays, in this process the teacher provided students with samples of the different part of an argumentative text based on the topic or thematic being taught in class. Besides, to give students more resources and confidence, the explanation regarding to the argumentative text structure were separately given. This intended learners to compose an argumentative essay writing step by step as the explanations were clear. The

scaffolding process started by modeling the writing of the thesis statements, then the introduction, later the body paragraphs and finally the conclusion.

To narrow down the information gathered from the writing task, a sample of fifteen written short texts produced by students from the research population was chosen randomly. The decision to choose a small sample responded to practical reasons since every student in the sample wrote three different texts which were analyzed to make comparisons. The core goal of the writing tasks was to explore to how writing skills evolved (or not) during the implementation of the pedagogical sequences. As it was already said, the data gathered consisted of three different texts written by students as the final product of the topics taught in each of the modules. Besides, in order to analyze this information, a rubric was created to define the criteria to be used to grade the texts (See Appendix 5). Some of the specific items evaluated are listed as follows: thesis statement, sequencing of ideas, concluding paragraph, grammar, spelling and vocabulary which were scaffolded during the application of the pedagogical sequences. The results obtained will be discussed as follows.

In regard to the first writing exercise, students were asked to write arguments about the food they eat at their school, which is presented in the menu, in terms of healthiness and unhealthiness. In here, it was found that most of the students had difficulties to construct a thesis statement. However, one student was able to fulfil some requirements for this item. It is important to mention that this was the first-time students were asked to write arguments in their English classes. Moreover, all the participants presented problems to properly sequence their ideas in the text. This was reflected on their assignments since their ideas had no connection between them; this situation made the text difficult to understand. Furthermore, it was evidenced that none of the learners finished their argumentative texts. Students were not able to wrap up their ideas so as to

draw a conclusion. In addition, when it came to talk about grammar and spelling, just two students had the ability to write understandable ideas. They made few errors despite the fact their ideas were not well sequenced. Nevertheless, the rest of the pupils presented a limited use of grammatical categories. They even wrote in Spanish and invented some words. That made their ideas fuzzy and hard to follow. The last category evaluated was related to the use of target vocabulary. This item seemed to be somehow covered by students because they tended to include some words taught in classes.

Referring to the second writing task, the topic to write arguments about was: globalization. After analyzing the pieces of writing produced by the selected learners, it was evidenced that most of them wrote an acceptable thesis statement in which they only named the topic but missed the main topics to be discussed in their texts. In terms of sequencing ideas to be developed in the text, most of students showed some advancement since they were able to sequence better their ideas. In the meantime, few learners still displayed a lack of cohesion in the organization of their arguments. At this point, it is important to acknowledge that some students could organize their ideas better and, consequently, they were capable of completing their texts. Nevertheless, some others had difficulties to re-state their arguments throughout the text. In terms of grammar and spelling, it was evidenced an improvement since all students displayed notions of the grammatical topics explained during the lessons. Furthermore, learners struggled to use most of the words from the vocabulary related to the topics discussed in class, which were also the ones they were arguing about.

Finally, for the third writing assignment, students were asked to write simple arguments about the phenomenon of fast fashion, which was discussed and explained in class. After the analysis of the assignment, it was evidenced that most of students were able to write the thesis statement in

the introductory paragraph following the steps given; naming the topic and outlining the main topics to be discussed along the text, with varying levels in the command of language.

Additionally, students could state topic sentences, which helped them to develop an argument in each body paragraph maintaining a logical sequence that contributed to the readability of the text.

The well structuring of the different arguments in the body paragraphs led pupils to wrap up the ideas developed in the text and write their concluding paragraphs by re-stating the main points discussed previously. In regard to grammar and spelling, all learners seemed to have a good understanding of the grammatical topics worked in classes since they showed some domain of the verb tenses and structures socialized during the pedagogical sequences. The last item assessed was concerned with vocabulary. It was noticeable that students acquired a considerable range of the target vocabulary socialized during the lessons because they employed this vocabulary to give support to their ideas. Some sample writings are included in Appendix 6

In summary, the analysis discussed above led to conclude that although all the participants presented some difficulties at the beginning of the implementation in terms of writing an argumentative text by the end of the intervention, learners were able to write good thesis statements, to organize their ideas properly following the outline scaffolded and given, to use appropriate grammar and to put into practice the target vocabulary according to their level of proficiency in English. On the other hand, despite the fact that learners revealed a considerable improvement in their writing skill from the first to the third written activity assigned, it cannot be stated that learners have reached the same level of proficiency in other kind of texts or writing in general not practiced in class. This should be seen as a process and as such time, exposure, scaffolding, and actual practice are important elements of the teaching and learning process to keep working on.

The next section presents the analysis of students' perceptions of the lessons developed under the framework of the Suggested English Curriculum.

6.2 Students' perceptions

6.2.1 Surveys

To have count on resources that offer students' perceptions towards their own learning process in this study, a survey which was completed by all the population participating in the implementation was implemented (See Appendix 3). Students corresponding to the sample population of this study were asked to answer some questions related to the application they were exposed to during the second half of the year. The survey was divided into seven questions related to motivation, compromise, materials, among other factors. To make this instrument more understandable for students, it was decided to use a Likert scale survey composed by five options including: Totally disagree, disagree, not in agreement or disagreement, agree and totally agree. To make sure of the understandability of the resource, it was applied using students' mother tongue. The main objective of the survey was to know students' perceptions on the lessons developed under the framework of the Suggested English Curriculum. To analyze the information gathered through the implementation of this instrument, students' answers were categorized based on the level of agreement or disagreement displayed in each of the options listed in the survey.

Regarding the first statement: The English classes taken during this year were different to English classes taken in former years, the information obtained from this item led to say that 42.4% of the population showed to be totally in agreement with this entry, 38.6% agreed, 11,5%

were not in agreement or disagreement and 7.5% of the learners disagreed. In total, 81% of the answers received expressed agreement while 19% of the responses obtained displayed disagreement.

Then, the second statement: I worked committedly during the activities assigned, revealed that 19% of students showed to be totally in agreement, 58% agreed to be committed to the task carried out, whereas 11,5% did not express agreement or disagreement and 11,5% disagreed. This informs about student own perception of their commitment to their learning process in the English class. In this statement, the overall results were 77% of the answers showed agreement while 23% revealed disagreement.

In regard to the third statement: The content of the lessons was valuable to increase your knowledge of the world, the responses given by the participants in this option showed that 61% of the population were totally in agreement, 31% agreed, meanwhile 8% expressed disagreement in their answers. For the third statement the general level of agreement reached 92% meanwhile the level of disagreement obtained was 8%.

Furthermore, the fourth item required for students to state their level of agreement with the idea that: the topics developed were interesting; the data collected in this part showed that 54% of the population was totally in agreement, 42% agreed with this item while 4% of the pupils were not in agreement or disagreement. In general, it can be said that students' responses displayed 96% of agreement meanwhile the other 4% did not express positive or negative answers but rather neutral.

The fifth statement asked about whether they considered the materials used were appropriate for their level, the information extracted from students' responses indicated that 38% of the

students were totally agreed, 39% agreed; however, 19% of the population did not express agreement or disagreement in their answers and 4% disagreed with this statement. For this statement, the answers given by the population showed that learners agreed in 77% and disagreed in 4% while the 19% left of the responses were neutral.

Bringing up the sixth statement: The activities were difficult, in this item 4% of the students stated that they were totally in agreement, 19% agreed, 23% did not express agreement or disagreement, whilst 27% disagreed about the difficulty of the activities and tasks and 27% totally disagreed on this item. For this statement, the overall results displayed that the level of agreement reached 23%, the level of disagreement obtained was 54% meanwhile the 23% left of the answers given were neutral.

The last statement asking whether the classes contributed to the acquisition of the foreign language, according to the data gathered from the population, 61% of learners totally agreed while 35% of them agreed and 4% disagreed. In this seventh statement, most of the students were in agreement since this item reached 96% of agreement while only 4% of the responses collected expressed disagreement.

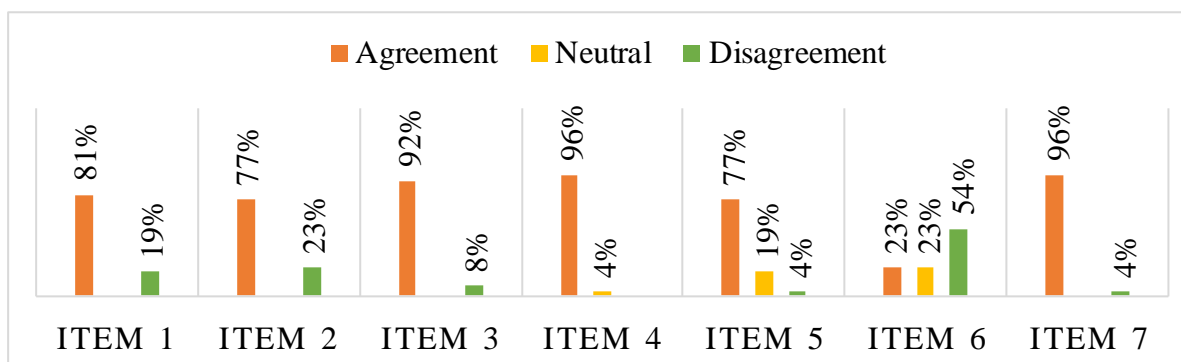


Figure 15: Surveys' Overall Results.

To conclude the analysis of the information collected through the application of this instrument, it can be claimed that learners' responses showed that they liked the activities, materials and content worked throughout the application. Moreover, the population agreed on the idea that classes were different from former lessons taught in the past. Students' answers displayed that they worked committedly to reach the objectives proposed in each of the tasks carried out. Finally, pupils' replies reflected that activities were not difficult, which also seemed to have contributed to their learning process as well as their acquisition of a foreign language.

6.2.2 Interviews

To reinforce the data collected through the instruments used formerly in this phase of the data collection, the implementation of some other resources available may be essential to gain more insights and information from the participants who can be seen as the main actors of this application. Consequently, an interview was applied aiming to explore more in-depth students' perceptions and ideas about the pedagogical sequences implemented in which learners were part of as well as to complement the information gathered from the surveys. A small sample of the population was chosen. For the selection of the participants who answered this interview, it was taken into consideration learners' levels of commitment, participation, and understanding during the lessons. Hence, a total of 10 students were selected for the interviews.

The criteria defined for the selection was to include four students considered to have a high level of motivation, three students who seemed to be at an average level of commitment and three learners who reflected low levels of understanding and commitment. These were the characteristics of the students who accomplished the interview. Furthermore, this instrument,

which consisted on a total of eight questions related to motivation, commitment and methodology, was designed in students' mother tongue so as to ensure their understanding of the questions (See Appendix 4). In order to have a clear understanding of the data gathered through the implementation of this instrument, it was decided to group the answers obtained in each question taking into account the similarities found among the different responses expressed by pupils.

For instance, in question number one: Do you consider your English classes this year were similar or different compared to former years? The data collected from this question prompted that ninety percent of the sample claimed that the English classes in which they took part during this study were different from classes taken in previous years. The most common argument provided was related to the proper domain of the topics reflected by the tutor, which paved the way to a better understanding of the issues explored in classes. Meanwhile, ten percent of the sample differed from their classmates justifying their arguments on the idea that the themes worked were the same taught in former years.

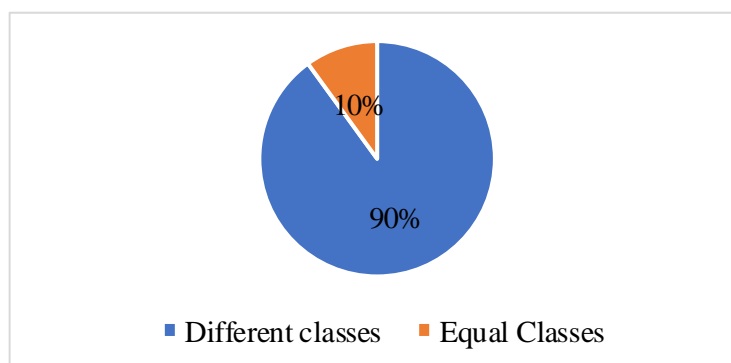


Figure 16: Interviews' Question #1 Results.

In regard to question number two: Do you consider the English classes implemented during the second half of the year contributed to your English learning process? The responses provided by a hundred percent of population matched with the idea that English classes in which they were

enrolled during the third and fourth term enriched their acquisition of a foreign language. Based on the insights that they were able to learn new topics, grammar, and vocabulary as well as to improve their writing skill on composing argumentative paragraphs and texts.

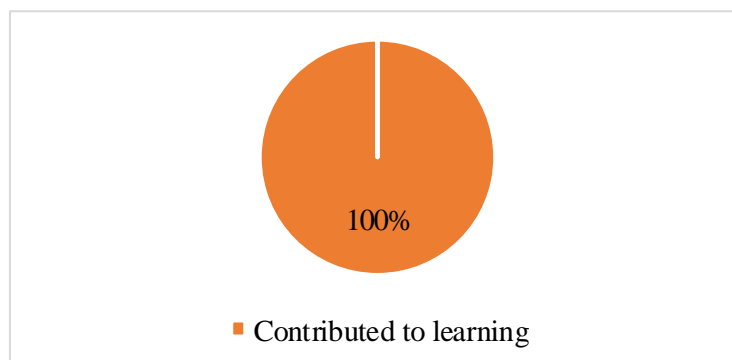


Figure 17: Interviews' Question #2 Results.

Referring to the third question: How was your level of responsibility and commitment during the second half of this year? The information gathered in this question revealed that seventy percent of the interviewees stated that they had a good level of commitment and responsibility. Moreover, twenty percent learners claimed that they had a high level of compromise since they gave their best to complete the tasks and achieve the goals. Nonetheless, ten percent of the participants were aware that their level of engagement was not the appropriate and they struggled to accomplish the activities and reach the objectives since they did not pay much attention.

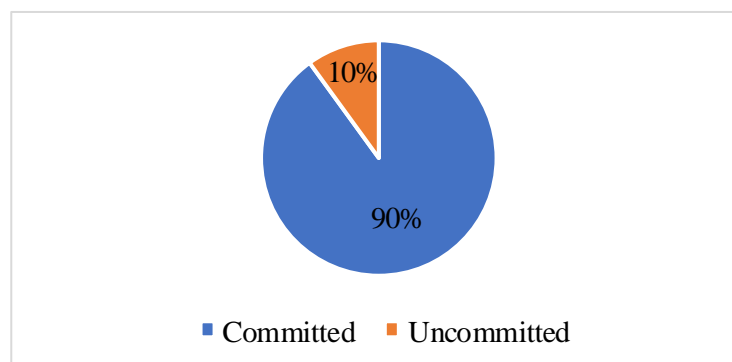


Figure 18: Interviews' Question #3 Results.

Dealing with the fourth question: What did you like the most about the English classes you received during the second half of this year? After the analysis of the answers provided by students in this question, it can be said that different answers were obtained: twenty percent shared the idea that what they liked the most was the way the topics were explained to them, and thirty percent agreed that writing argumentative texts was the most relevant aspect for them. Besides, twenty percent of learners' responses displayed that grammar was the aspect they liked the most. The rest of the population corresponding to thirty percent agreed with classes having been dynamic due to the videos.

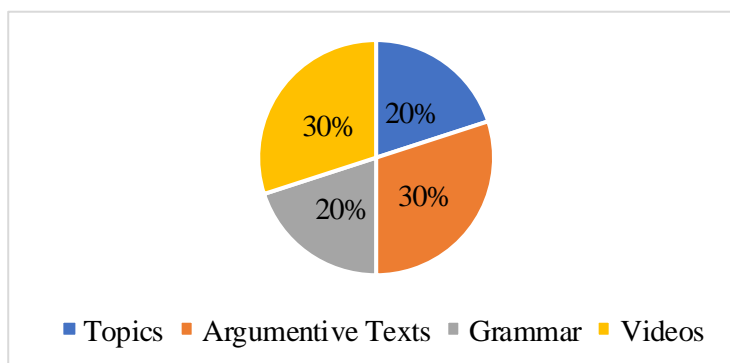


Figure 19: Interviews' Question #4 Results.

In terms of question number five: What did you dislike the most about the English classes you received during the second half of this year? The information extracted from this question resembled that a variety of responses were received from the interviewees: Thirty percent of learners recalled some discipline problems of classmates who were not engaged in the activities. Moreover, Thirty percent of the population alleged that they liked all the activities developed during the implementation of the pedagogical sequences. On the other hand, ten percent of interviewees said that the topics were difficult to understand, another ten percent expressed that

the topics and activities were always the same, finally, twenty percent of the sample claimed that they did not like frequent presentations.

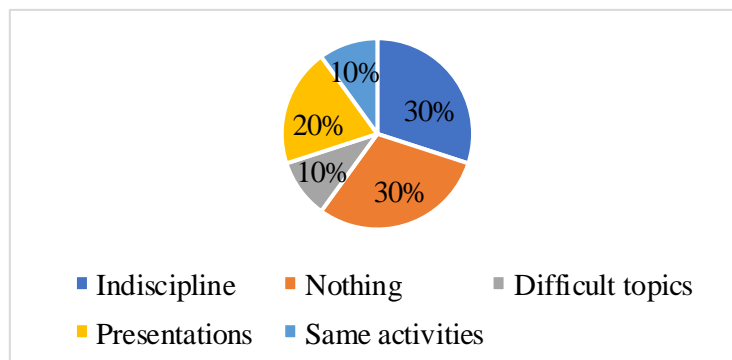


Figure 20: Interviews' Question #5 Results.

In relation to the sixth question: What is your opinion about the themes you worked during English classes on the second half of the year? The revision of the answers of every student in this question showed that a hundred percent of the target population taken to attend this interview was in agreement with the fact that the topics developed were good or interesting for them. This was based on the premise that these new and unknown topics helped them to open their mind about general issues which expand their knowledge of the world. Likewise, the new topics motivated students to write argumentative texts in such a way they were able to improve their writing skill.

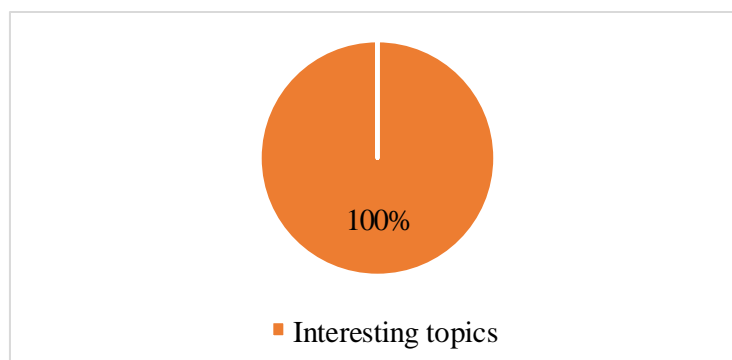


Figure 21: Interviews' Question #6 Results.

In relation to the seventh question: What is your opinion about the activities you worked during English classes on the second half of the year? After the analysis of the information gathered from this question, it can be concluded that a hundred percent of the sample agreed that the activities proposed were good for them. They expressed different arguments to support their opinion. According to them, first, the activities implemented encouraged collaborative work, which seemed to be beneficial to build a good rapport among students in the class. Second, the dynamic of the activities motivated students to carry them out with a good attitude, and third, the activities done helped them to acquire general knowledge about different topics.



Figure 22: Interviews' Question #7 Results.

Concerning question number eight: Do you think you learnt something new during your English classes this year? The responses provided by the participants revealed that a hundred percent of interviewees displayed an agreement by giving a positive response to this question. Most of the interviewees claimed that the lessons taught during the second half of the year led them to gain new knowledge of themes such as globalization, health, and fast fashion. Besides, some others stated they learned new vocabulary related to verbs and the topics discussed in class. The rest of the learners claimed these lessons helped them to improve their pronunciation as well as writing skills.

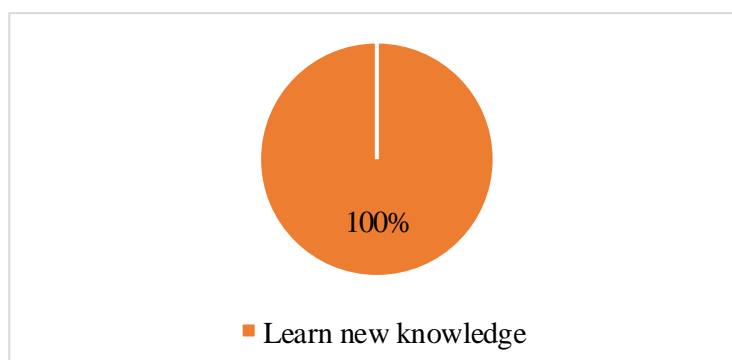


Figure 23: Interviews' Question #8 Results.

To summarize the analysis of the data collected through the interviews, which was presented above, it was possible to extract from the input gathered that students' insights about the pedagogical sequences unfolded were mostly positive. Additionally, learners showed a good perception of the methodology and the content developed which were extracted from the Suggested English Curriculum. Furthermore, it was possible to determine that students felt comfortable during the application of the lessons since the answers collected revealed in general their like and acceptance towards all the teaching and learning process.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing of lower intermediate students through the implementation of the Suggested English Curriculum at a rural school in the Caribbean Colombian context. It required first, an in-depth review of concepts such as: Common European Framework of Reference, Curriculum, Communicative Competence and Task-Based Learning. Second, for its development a

collaborative action research approach was chosen since it was considered to be the most adequate in order to explore a shared concern in which the two researchers wanted to enrich the reflection process toward a new material suggested by the government. Finally, data gathering instruments were designed in order to answer the research question: How does the implementation of pedagogical sequences based upon the Colombian Suggested Curriculum contribute to the development of the Communicative Competence in reading and writing of lower intermediate students at a rural area on the Caribbean Colombian Context?

The analysis of the data collected through the implementation of pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum led to draw the following conclusions:

- At the beginning of this inquiry, students presented a low level of proficiency in the competences evaluated, which reflected their deficient domain of vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension. This is a challenge that is commonly faced by institutions in the national content. That is to say, the expected level versus the actual level of foreign language proficiency of students.
- In the middle of the application, some learners seemed to have slightly gained some notions of the foreign language in terms of lexis, syntactic features, and reading comprehension.
- At the end of the study, some pupils still showed a low level of proficiency in the competences assessed. Nonetheless, most of the students demonstrated to have improved in some extend their linguistic, discourse, and pragmatic competence.
- A slight advancement in each of the competences evaluated was observed. This was done in different percentages as follows: pragmatic competence: 11%, linguistic competence:

9% and discourse competence: 2% according to the test applied at the different stages of this research project.

- Students who participated in the implementation got better results than learners who did not take part of the pedagogical sequences based upon the Suggested English Curriculum. It is important to mention that this result (as well as the previous one) may or may not have been the consequence of other variables or the sum of other factors added to or different from the implementation of the pedagogical sequences based on the Suggested Curriculum.
- The writing skill presented some difficulties at the beginning of the inquiry. However, by the end of the implementation, still with some difficulty, students were able to: write thesis statements, organized ideas properly, use appropriate grammar, and put into practice target vocabulary.
- The surveys showed that learners appeared to like the methodology and content worked during the implementation and in general their insights towards the pedagogical sequences were mostly positive.
- Both surveys and interviews revealed that learner thought this implementation not only contributed to their knowledge of the world but also to their learning process.
- This study indicated that the Communicative Competence can be developed through the implementation of the Suggested English curriculum although more studies need to be conducted with different population in a variety of contexts in the national territory to contrast or confirm results.

After having analyzed all the data collected through the different instruments applied in this inquiry and having drawn some conclusions based on such information, it can be said that despite

all the constraints faced during this research study (learners' low level of proficiency in English due to their learning background, students' lack of knowledge of the world, few access to resources as internet connection, textbooks and dictionaries, lack of adequate school infrastructure), it was possible to find some strengths which were essential to the application of this study such as: students' motivation, guidelines provided by the Suggested English Curriculum, the support provided by the principal of the school as well as the editorial house who gave access to the tests applied and the availability of audiovisual equipment.

It is recommended for further research that aim to explore on the development of the Communicative Competence to evaluate the context, its strengths and limitations in order to define if this competence should be limited to reading and writing, or it could be developed focusing on the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. A further recommendation may be to explore in depth the Suggested English Curriculum so as to adopt and adapt the methodology proposed on it to the current needs of the population in which it is intended to be applied.

Some possible benefits of this study in the EFL field are that teachers in the Colombian public sector may feel attracted by the results obtained in this inquiry, to look at the recent materials accessible to them and conduct reflective classroom research to review the language learning process in their contexts. Here, it is important to recall that as these documents are suggested, they should be adapted to the different settings in which it will be implemented. It is also expected for teachers to reflect on the methodology they have used to enhance their practices. Moreover, this proposal may help educators to raise awareness about the importance of developing the Communicative Competence in low level students to encourage them to acquire a foreign language and facilitate their learning process.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix #1: Pedagogical Sequence Sample – Unit #1

PEDAGOGICAL SEQUENCE: HEALTH		
<i>Teacher:</i> Eduard D. Salgado B.	<i>Grade:</i> 10°	<i>Duration:</i> 3 Hours
<i>Goal:</i> Evaluate the impact of cultural and social practices: piercings, tattoos, extreme sports and sedentary lifestyle on health.		
<i>Standards:</i> I use adequate strategies for the purpose and the type of text (activation of prior knowledge, use of body language and gestures, use of images) to understand what I hear. I identify the values of other cultures and that allows me to build my interpretation of their identity. I use appropriate vocabulary to express my ideas clearly on subjects of the curriculum and of my personal interest.		
<i>Objectives:</i> Recognize implicit information in argumentative oral and written texts related to the impact of cultural and social practices on health. Exchange opinions verbally in spontaneous conversations.		<i>Functions:</i> Recognize different points of view. Request clarification on the information presented.
<i>Performance Indicators</i>		
<i>Knowing:</i> Recognize words and expressions on certain cultural and social practices in readings and oral texts. Identify information on the most common cultural and social practices. Recognize general and specific information in narrative and descriptive oral and written texts related to academic subjects of interest.	<i>Doing:</i> Produces simple texts on cultural and social practices that cause health problems for people. Verbally justifies in a respectful way his point of view on the most effective campaign using vocabulary, expressions and structures studied.	<i>Being:</i> Respect personal and cultural differences. Recognize the consequences of certain cultural and social practices on people's health
<i>Transversality</i>	Education for health and prevention.	
<i>Content</i>	Extreme sports: climbing, cliff diving, kayak, mountain biking, hiking and motorcycling. Cultural and social practices: piercings and tattoos. Sedentary life activities: watch TV, play video games, eat fast food, chatting with friends, sleep excessively and waste time on social media. Diseases: infection, scars, ink allergy, tetanus, hepatitis B and C, arthritis, heart attack, stroke, obesity, broken bone, bruises and laceration. Healthy and non-healthy food. Expressions to give opinion it is my opinion that, I think that, I consider that, I really believe that. Modals (should)	
<i>Stages</i>		
<i>Presentation:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate student's prior knowledge on health by showing them pictures of fruits, vegetables, sick people, piercings, tattoos, sedentary activities and extreme sports. Teacher will ask students what 		

<p>they see in the pictures. 10'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will get in trios in order to discuss and find out the connection among the pictures. 10' • Students will receive pieces of paper containing a word related with the pictures saw (tattoo, piercing, extreme sports and sedimentary activities) and its corresponding definition, students will try to match them. Teacher will give feedback at the end of the activity. 10' • In the same groups, students will receive some puzzles pictures related with the target vocabulary. students will have to organize the puzzle - meanwhile teacher will be pasting around the class four target categories related with health (tattoos, piercing, extreme sports and sedimentary activities) after students finish organizing the puzzle, they will have to walk around and find the category related with its picture as well as to prepare with the new group a general opinion on each category and how are these related with health. 20' 	
<p><i>Practice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will receive a picture containing a disease (heart attack, ink allergy, infection, broken bone...) learners will walk around the class to find a partner with the same picture, then they will discuss about the cause of the disease they got. After that, teacher will divide the board into the four categories learnt on the previous class, students will associate by pasting the images of the diseases they received with the social practices (categories from last class) that may cause them. 10' • Students will watch some videos related with the diseases gotten after experiencing social practices such as tattoos, piercing, extreme sports and sedentary life- in the meanwhile, students will have to complete a chart related to the videos. 15' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiKg6JfS658 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_8dnTHJkUo • Students will be given an argumentative text about fast food for them to analyze the arguments presented on it, answer some inferential questions and relate the text with some of the possible diseases previously explored. 15' • Teacher will provide an interview model for students to create their own. Learners will be organized in groups of four, each member of the group will design an interview on one specific social practice of the ones studied as well as practice it with their classmates. 10' 	
<p><i>Production:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will get in same groups from last class so as to share what they did at home. 5' • A jigsaw strategy will be used to get the class divided into 7 groups in which students with the same social practice category will get together in order to analyze the information they got at home and prepare a poster to present it. 20' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_A8xyEbEhI • Each group will have 3 minutes to present their analysis to the whole class- the rest of the class will be taking notes to do an individual report about the information gather. 25' 	
<i>Homework</i>	Apply the interview you design and practice at school, to five people around your neighborhood.
<i>Activities</i>	Puzzle pictures Interviews Readings Pair images with definitions Posters Presentation
<i>Evaluation</i>	Co evaluation: Teacher will evaluate students through a rubric.
<i>Materials</i>	Videos Paper bond Puzzles Images

	Markers T.V Speakers
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PEDAGOGICAL SEQUENCE: HEALTH		
<i>Teacher:</i> Eduard D. Salgado B.	<i>Grade:</i> 10°	<i>Duration:</i> 3 Hours
<i>Goal:</i> Evaluate the impact of cultural and social practices: piercings, tattoos, extreme sports and sedentary lifestyle on health.		
<i>Standards:</i> I use adequate strategies for the purpose and the type of text (activation of prior knowledge, use of body language and gestures, use of images) to understand what I hear. I identify the values of other cultures and that allows me to build my interpretation of their identity. I use appropriate vocabulary to express my ideas clearly on subjects of the curriculum and of my personal interest.		
<i>Objectives:</i> Recognize implicit information in argumentative oral and written texts related to the impact of cultural and social practices on health. Exchange opinions verbally in spontaneous conversations.		<i>Functions:</i> Recognize different points of view. Request clarification on the information presented.
<i>Performance Indicators</i>		
<i>Knowing:</i> Recognize words and expressions on certain cultural and social practices in readings and oral texts. Identify information on the most common cultural and social practices. Recognize general and specific information in narrative and descriptive oral and written texts related to academic subjects of interest.	<i>Doing:</i> Produces simple texts on cultural and social practices that cause health problems for people. Verbally justifies in a respectful way his point of view on the most effective campaign using vocabulary, expressions and structures studied.	<i>Being:</i> Respect personal and cultural differences. Recognize the consequences of certain cultural and social practices on people's health
<i>Transversality</i>	Education for health and prevention.	
<i>Content</i>	Extreme sports: climbing, cliff diving, kayak, mountain biking, hiking and motorcycling. Cultural and social practices: piercings and tattoos. Sedentary life activities: watch TV, play video games, eat fast food, chatting with friends, sleep excessively and waste time on social media. Diseases: infection, scars, ink allergy, tetanus, hepatitis B and C, arthritis, hear attack, stroke, obesity, broken bone, bruises and laceration. Healthy and non-healthy food. Expressions to give opinion: it is my opinion that, I think that, I consider that, I really believe that. Modals (should)	
<i>Stages</i>		
<i>Presentation:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some thinking bubbles will be pasted around the board – students will be asked: did you ever see one of these? Where did you see them? What are these? What are these use for? 10' The same thinking bubbles will be presented but this time with some expressions to give opinion 		

<p>such as: it is my opinion that, I think that, I consider that, I really believe that. 10'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be shown short videos with the same categories studied last week along with some examples on how to state opinions using the expression introduced. 15' 	
<p><i>Practice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student will be organized in pairs and they will be given some pieces of paper containing the examples shown previously but with some blanks for students to fill in. 15' <p style="text-align: center;"><i>2nd class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be shown empty food pyramids divided into 6 sections. Each category missing will be written in pieces of cardboard. Volunteer students will go in front of the class and try to organize the pyramid by giving their opinions about the organization they believe is the correct one – using the expressions already taught last class. 10' Each student will be given a short argumentative text about food pyramid for them to read; at the end, students will have to check the activity they did previously. 15' In trios students will receive a piece of paper containing the name of a food, they will discuss based on the information read, the correct classification of each food name according to the pyramid explained before; also, students will have to support their decision. 10' The class will be divided into four teams, each team will receive a bond paper divided into two sections (a thin and a fat person). Each team will get a set of flashcards containing some healthy and unhealthy food which students would classify in each corresponding side of the bond paper as well as state their opinions about why these two people are either healthy or not. 15' 	
<p><i>Production:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group will state their points of view about the school menu. Meanwhile, the rest of the class will be evaluating their partners' job through a checklist. 20' Teacher will explain students the structure to write argumentative texts. 10' Based on previous presentations and explanation, students will have to write a short argumentative text in which they state the healthiest menu to propose to the school cafeteria. 20' 	
<i>Homework</i>	Students will be organized in groups of 3 and they will be given the menu of a week of the school restaurant for them to analyze it and prepare a short presentation where they state their points of view considering whether the menu is healthy or not and why, as well as an alternative menu to make it healthier.
<i>Activities</i>	Presentations Reading argumentative texts Writing argumentative texts Matching Categorization
<i>Evaluation</i>	Peer evaluation: students will evaluate among them through a checklist.
<i>Materials</i>	Videos Word flashcards Images Glue Scottish tape Markers T.V Speakers

PEDAGOGICAL SEQUENCE: HEALTH		
<i>Teacher:</i> Eduard D. Salgado B.	<i>Grade:</i> 10°	<i>Duration:</i> 3 Hours
<i>Goal:</i> Evaluate the impact of cultural and social practices: piercings, tattoos, extreme sports and sedentary lifestyle on health.		
<i>Standards:</i> I use adequate strategies for the purpose and the type of text (activation of prior knowledge, use of body language and gestures, use of images) to understand what I hear. I identify the values of other cultures and that allows me to build my interpretation of their identity. I use appropriate vocabulary to express my ideas clearly on subjects of the curriculum and of my personal interest.		
<i>Objectives:</i> Recognize implicit information in argumentative oral and written texts related to the impact of cultural and social practices on health. Exchange opinions verbally in spontaneous conversations.		<i>Functions:</i> Recognize different points of view. Request clarification on the information presented.
<i>Performance Indicators</i>		
<i>Knowing:</i> Recognize words and expressions on certain cultural and social practices in readings and oral texts. Identify information on the most common cultural and social practices. Recognize general and specific information in narrative and descriptive oral and written texts related to academic subjects of interest.	<i>Doing:</i> Produces simple texts on cultural and social practices that cause health problems for people. Verbally justifies in a respectful way his point of view on the most effective campaign using vocabulary, expressions and structures studied.	<i>Being:</i> Respect personal and cultural differences. Recognize the consequences of certain cultural and social practices on people's health
<i>Transversality</i>	Education for health and prevention.	
<i>Content</i>	Extreme sports: climbing, cliff diving, kayak, mountain biking, hiking and motorcycling. Cultural and social practices: piercings and tattoos. Sedentary life activities: watch TV, play video games, eat fast food, chatting with friends, sleep excessively and waste time on social media. Diseases: infection, scars, ink allergy, tetanus, hepatitis B and C, arthritis, hear attack, stroke, obesity, broken bone, bruises and laceration. Healthy and non-healthy food. Expressions to give opinion: it is my opinion that, I think that, I consider that, I really believe that. Modals (should)	
<i>Stages</i>		
<i>Presentation:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be asked to look at three pictures containing different situations and answer questions like: what do you see in the pictures? What do you think is anything wrong in the pictures? 10' • Students will receive three short paragraphs to read and associate with the pictures previously discussed as well as to state their opinion why. 20' • Students will use the same paragraphs to complete some charts about the problems each person 		

<p>has and possible solutions to solve the problem. 10'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be provided with some advices containing the modal should for them to associate each advice with the problems of the characters presented earlier. 10' 	
<p><i>Practice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be organized in pairs, each student will receive a problem card; learners will have to come up with some solutions to the problem given by using the structure already taught. 10' The class will be divided into two teams, one half of the class will receive images with sick people and the other half the names of the diseases, students will have to walk around and match the image of the sick person with the name of the disease. Teacher will be monitoring and helping students with the activity. After that students will have to write an advice to solve the disease. 20' Student will listen to a conversation of two people giving advices. Teacher will ask students to say the advices they could understand from the conversation. Then, the transcript of the conversation would be given for students to listen again and underline all the sentences that contain advices. After that, students will receive the same transcript but this time with some spaces in blank for them to complete. Finally students will have to come up with different advice from the one given in the conversation. 20' 	
<p><i>Production:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be asked to get together in groups of five and create a role play in which one of them will be the doctor and the rest will be patients who will have several illness and should follow the doctor's recommendations to get better. 20' Each group will perform their conversation, teacher will be evaluating through a rubric. 30' 	
<i>Homework</i>	Students will be sent some texts: <i>why people should exercise? Why students should eat breakfast every day? Should I get a tattoo?</i> for them to read and identify the elements of an argumentative text.
<i>Activities</i>	Matching Reading Listening Role play Completion or fill in the blanks
<i>Evaluation</i>	Co evaluation: Teacher will evaluate students through a rubric.
<i>Materials</i>	Flashcards Problem flashcards Markers T.V Charts Speakers

PEDAGOGICAL SEQUENCE: HEALTH		
<i>Teacher:</i> Eduard D. Salgado B.	<i>Grade:</i> 10°	<i>Duration:</i> 3 Hours
<i>Goal:</i> Evaluate the impact of cultural and social practices: piercings, tattoos, extreme sports and sedentary lifestyle on health.		
<i>Standards:</i> I use adequate strategies for the purpose and the type of text (activation of prior knowledge, use of body language and gestures, use of images) to understand what I hear. I identify the values of other cultures and that allows me to build my interpretation of their identity. I use appropriate vocabulary to express my ideas clearly on subjects of the curriculum and of my personal interest.		
<i>Objectives:</i>		<i>Functions:</i>

<p>Recognize implicit information in argumentative oral and written texts related to the impact of cultural and social practices on health. Exchange opinions verbally in spontaneous conversations.</p>	<p>Recognize different points of view. Request clarification on the information presented.</p>
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
<p><i>Knowing:</i> Recognize words and expressions on certain cultural and social practices in readings and oral texts. Identify information on the most common cultural and social practices. Recognize general and specific information in narrative and descriptive oral and written texts related to academic subjects of interest.</p>	<p><i>Doing:</i> Produces simple texts on cultural and social practices that cause health problems for people. Verbally justifies in a respectful way his point of view on the most effective campaign using vocabulary, expressions and structures studied.</p> <p><i>Being:</i> Respect personal and cultural differences. Recognize the consequences of certain cultural and social practices on people's health</p>
<i>Transversality</i>	Education for health and prevention, technology.
<i>Content</i>	<p>Extreme sports: climbing, cliff diving, kayak, mountain biking, hiking and motorcycling. Cultural and social practices: piercings and tattoos. Sedentary life activities: watch TV, play video games, eat fast food, chatting with friends, sleep excessively and waste time on social media. Diseases: infection, scars, ink allergy, tetanus, hepatitis B and C, arthritis, hear attack, stroke, obesity, broken bone, bruises and laceration. Healthy and non-healthy food. Expressions to give opinion: it is my opinion that, I think that, I consider that, I really believe that. Modals (should)</p>
<i>Stages</i>	
<p><i>Class #1</i> <i>Presentation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be working on a project called: Prevention of illnesses. • Students will watch a sample video similar to the one they will have to produce at the end of the project. 5' • Activate students' prior knowledge by asking them to make a list about the most common diseases regularly found on their community (KWL Strategy). 10' • Students will be organized in groups of four by regions, and they will be asked to discuss the most common diseases around them, as well as to choose the most common one. 10' <p><i>Practice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher will hand out to each group a reading about the disease chosen so that they can get informed about this sickness – each group will also receive a bond paper where they will have to design a chart in which they include symptoms, causes and ways to prevent the illness. 20' <p><i>Production:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will paste their charts around the board, for the rest of their partners to see. 5' 	
<p><i>Class #2</i> <i>Presentation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will see <i>YouTube</i> logo and they will be asked what is it? What is used for? Have you seen videos using this app? Have you uploaded a video using this app? 10' 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will watch a video about how to upload a video in YouTube, learners will be asked to take notes; the video will be repeated twice. 15' <p><i>Practice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will be organized in groups of 4, they will receive some pieces of paper with the steps to upload videos in YouTube for them to organize. 10' <p><i>Production:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the same groups, learners will receive a computer for them to put into practice how to upload a video on YouTube. 15' 	
<p><i>Class #3</i></p> <p><i>Production:</i></p> <p>Each group will present their videos to the class – the rest of the class will be filling in the blanks for the transcripts of the videos presented. 50'</p>	
<i>Homework</i>	Create your video along with the transcript and upload it to YouTube.
<i>Activities</i>	Project Readings Listening Chart completion Video uploading
<i>Evaluation</i>	Co evaluation: Teacher will evaluate students through a rubric.
<i>Materials</i>	Bond Paper Markers T.V Speakers Computers

Appendix #2: Test Sample

PRUEBA DE INGLÉS

PARTE 1

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 1 A 5 DE ACUERDO CON EL EJEMPLO

¿Dónde puede ver estos avisos?

En las preguntas 1 – 5, marque A, B o C en su hoja de respuestas.

Ejemplo:



- A. In a church
- B. At the movies
- C. In a store

1. This film is suitable for people over **eighteen**.

- A. In a drugstore
- B. At the disco
- C. At the movies

2. CHRISTMAS DAY.
Book now for lunch.
Thurs 25 Dec.

- A. At a university
- B. In a restaurant
- C. In a tourist agency

3. NO PARKING
Garage in constant use
Thank you

- A. In front of a house
- B. in a park
- C. At a hotel reception

4. FLIGHT CONNECTIOS
BAGGAGE RECLAIM
PASSTPORT CONTROL

- A. In an airport
- B. In a train station
- C. In a bus station

5. Today's Mrs. O'Brien will replace Professor Mr. Smith **because he is sick**.

- A. At a university
- B. In a store
- C. At a pub

PARTE 2

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 6 A 10 DE ACUERDO CON EL EJEMPLO

Lea las descripciones de la columna de la izquierda (**6 – 10**) y las palabras de la columna de la derecha (**A – H**).

¿Cuál palabra (**A – H**) concuerda con la descripción de cada frase de la izquierda (**6 – 10**)? En las preguntas **6 – 10**, marque la letra correcta **A – H** en su hoja de respuestas.

0. This insect can sting and make honey.

0	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

6. This insect lives underground in colonies.

A. Camel

B. Bear

7. When this farm animal grows, farmers sell it as food.

C. Fox

D. Wolf

8. You could ride on this animal if you want to travel in the desert.

E. Ant

9. This bird usually hunts at night.

F. Bee

G. Owl

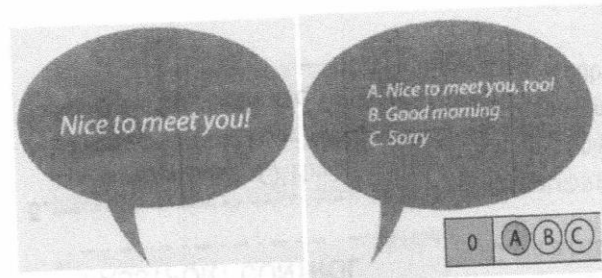
10. This large and heavy animal can stand on two legs like a person.

H. pig

PARTE 3

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 11 A 15 DE ACUERDO CON EL EJEMPLO

Complete las cinco conversaciones.
En las preguntas **11 - 15**, marque **A**, **B**, o **C** en su hoja de respuestas.



11. Are these your keys?

- A. Yes, these are hers.
- B. Yes, they are.
- C. Yes, I am.

12. How old is Maria?

- A. its three kilometers from here
- B. Maria is a college student.
- C. She turned 18 last September.

13. I don't like spicy food.

- A. Are you hungry?
- B. Me too.
- C. I don't like either.

14. Where did you buy that blouse?

- A. At the cemetery.
- B. Wherever you go.
- C. At the mall.

15. Do you want this car?

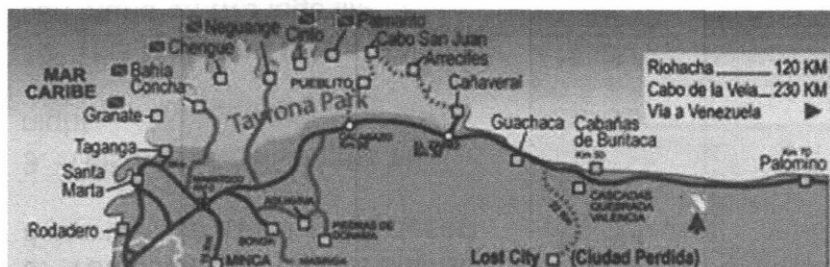
- A. I didn't believe him.
- B. I know what you mean.
- C. No, thanks.

PARTE 4
RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 16 A 23 DE ACUERDO CON EL
SIGUIENTE TEXTO

Lea el artículo y seleccione la palabra adecuada para cada espacio.

En las preguntas **16 - 23**, marque la letra correcta **A, B, o C** en su hoja de respuestas.

TAYRONA NATIONAL NATURAL PARK



Tayrona Park (o) _____ one of Colombia's most popular national parks. It is located (16) _____ the Atlantic Ocean and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and has 15,000 colorful hectares. The park has an amazing range of biodiversity and (17) _____ of the most beautiful coastline of the Caribbean Sea. Also, within the limits of the Tayrona, there are indigenous cultural settlements that still maintain many of their traditions and (18) _____ are accessible. It is therefore not surprising that it is one of the most visited national parks in Colombia.

Also, there are many species of animals (19) _____ in the Tayrona National Park: from monkeys to iguanas, woodpeckers to jaguars, not to mention all the marine creatures! The (20) _____ time to see some animal action is in the morning.

(21) _____ a protected area, the use of motorized vehicles is restricted within the park. To get to the beach, visitors can (22) _____ walk for a couple of kilometers or there is also the possibility to hire tour guides and horses. The options for accommodation are (23) _____ varied.

- | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| 0. A. are | B. is | C. be |
| 16. A. among | B. between | C. on |
| 17. A. one | B. much | C. some |
| 18. A. what | B. which | C. who |
| 19. A. living | B. live | C. lived |
| 20. A. good | B. best | C. better |
| 21. A. as | B. it | C. since |
| 22. A. either | B. each | C. every |
| 23. A. too | B. only | C. also |

PARTE 5

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 24 A 30 DE ACUERDO CON EL SIGUIENTE TEXTO

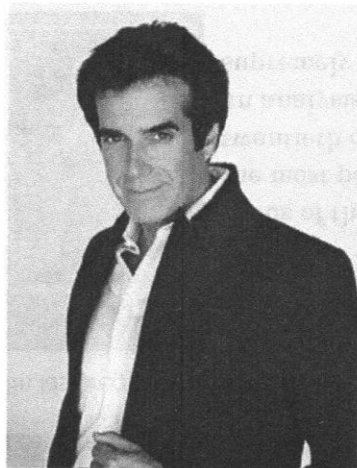
Lea el artículo y luego responda las preguntas.

En las preguntas 24 – 30, marque **A**, **B** o **C** en su hoja de respuestas.

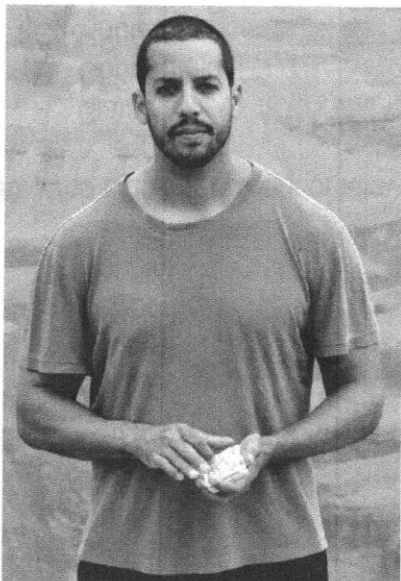
FAMOUS MAGICIANS



Harry Houdini was born in Budapest and brought up in America. He started out as a street trapeze artist, later using magic to expose spiritualism, which was big business in his days, but he was famous for escaping from restraints or other traps. In a pre-television era, he gained worldwide acclaim by challenging every jail in each town he visited to hold him and then escaping from them all. While his advertisements suggested he could "dematerialize", he described in books how he opened handcuffs with careful pressure or hidden picks.



David Copperfield is easily one of the best known magician in the world. He presented innovative magic in his many television specials. Currently, he tours and performs for live audiences. He's an immensely talented and skillful entertainer who has effectively changed with the times and does it all: illusion, manipulation and close-up. At times in his career, he's had the popularity of a rock star. He's one of the richest entertainers in the world.

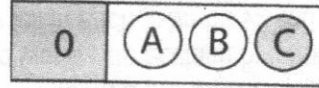


David Blaine graduating from cards tricks and illusions, Blaine is known for his appearances in television specials carrying out public imprisonments. These include spending three days entombed inside six tons of ice, being buried beneath a tank of water in New York, and being suspended in a glass box over the Thames for 44 days in 2003. His unique intense style of street magic illusion and high-profile feats of endurance disturbs his audience. Although, his tenacity and magic illusions are impressive, his most startling tricks remain being his pavement levitations acts.

Ejemplo:

0. Who was born in Budapest?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini



24. Who is a very wealthy magician?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini

25. Who is well known for physical stunts that involve endurance?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini

26. Who regularly performed escape acts?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini

27. Who presented lots of TV specials?

- A. Blaine
 - B. Copperfield
 - C. Houdini
-

28. Who explained his magic tricks?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini

29. Whose Viewers Feel Anxious?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini

30. Who didn't get plenty of television exposure?

- A. Blaine
- B. Copperfield
- C. Houdini

PARTE 6

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 31 A 35 DE ACUERDO CON EL SIGUIENTE TEXTO

Lea el texto y las preguntas de la siguiente parte.

En las preguntas 31 – 35, marque **A, B, C o D** en su hoja de respuestas.



LORDS OF THE FLIES

Lords of the Flies by William Golding is one of the most popular and endearing books of the twentieth century. Partly a morality tale, partly an analysis of the human psyche, it is also a supremely interesting and exciting adventure

story. All of these combined elements make the book a true classic and perennial audience favorite.

Within its pages we see drama, tension, horror, cruelty and the extraordinary complexities that can occur when people are forced into unique situations. This encourages the audience to philosophically engage with the book and look more deeply into it to find answers to the questions it poses. A plane crash strands a group of British schoolboys on an unknown island. In a society now deprived of traditional authority figures, it is up to the abandoned boys to establish some kind of working system to guide them through the dangers, inevitably inherent, in their new, uncharted existence. The difficulties they encounter lead to violence, segregation and death.

The somewhat ambivalent ending of *Lord of the Flies* engages the audience by leaving them with unanswered questions and moral dilemmas. The leadership contest, the struggle for survival, the corrupting rush of power, the use of violence as a means to an end and the degradation of the human species into an almost animalistic state raises questions relating to the very basic foundations of the human condition.

What do their actions tell us about notions of respect for one another? How delicate is the balance between civilization and savagery? How damaging is their loss of innocence? All of these questions serve to engage the reader in Golding's classic text.

31. What is the writer trying to do in this article?

- A. Say why *Lord of the Flies* is a morality tale.
 - B. Advertise a new book by William Golding
 - C. Discuss the elements in the book *Lord of the Flies*.
 - D. Review the book *Lord of the Flies*.
-

32. What can the readers find out from this text?

- A. The writer wanted to write a morality tale.
- B. The book is popular.
- C. A group of British schoolboys built a society.
- D. There is also a movie called Lord of the Flies.

33. How does the story begin?

- A. Some British schoolboys establish some kind of working system.
- B. Establishing some questions and finding answers.
- C. Analyzing the human psyche.
- D. A group of people is forced to survive after an accident.

34. What does the ending of the book cause to the audience?

- A. To leave with unanswered questions.
- B. To question some basic features of being human.
- C. To link that the use of violence leads to separatism and death.
- D. To wonder how the British schoolboys end their lives.

35. Which best describe the book?

B. Lord of the Flies is a book by William Golding that describes the experience of some schoolboys.

A. Lord of the Flies is full of cruelty and drama which provokes questions from the audience.

C. Lord of the Flies is one of the most popular books of the twentieth century and was written by William Golding.

D. Lord of the Flies is an adventure story that encompasses moral dilemmas and triggers analysis of the human psyche.

PARTE 7

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 36 A 45 DE ACUERDO CON EL SIGUIENTE TEXTO

Lea el artículo y seleccione la palabra adecuada para cada espacio.
En las preguntas 36 - 45, marque la letra correcta A, B, C o D en su hoja de respuestas.

COLOMBIAN AMAZON



With the (0) _____ tropical rainforest and the most copious river in the world, the Amazonas jungle we (36) _____ with our neighbors is another of Colombia's treasures. It is a prodigious place, (37) _____ for the aboriginal people that inhabit it and the sheer size of the river, but also for the life it spawns and nurtures on land and water.

Located in Colombia, Leticia is a hospitable and comfortable city, surrounded by (38) _____ that lead to fascinating places in the Amazonas jungle, (39) _____ it the main travel destination in the area. For (40) _____, the path to Tarapaca, a Huitoto Indian Village, leads to the Tanimboca reservation,

part of which is a 45- meters high platform (41) _____ amid trees. In Tanimboca you can climb 35- meters high trees and slide 80 meters from one tree to another (42) _____ the beautiful forest canopy.

River (43) _____ take visitors to extraordinary unimagined places, supposedly forbidden to those who have not experienced the jungle. Making your vacation a unique experience. The Colombian amazon jungle is a (44) _____ destination for scientist interested in learning form Indian shamans the secret of "talking" with nature. The world normally sees the Amazonas jungle as a reserve of oxygen, but it is much more than that: it is home to every special people and a (45) _____ laboratory of plants and animals life.

0. A. largest B. shortest C. ugliest D. happiest
36. A. keep B. lose C. share D. meet
37. A. not only B. both C. as well D. and
38. A. discoveries B. Settlements C. ruins D. paths
39. A. blowing B. holding C. making D. choosing
40. A. occasion B. Demand C. illustration D. instance
41. A. built B. climbed C. lent D. caught
42. A. along through. C. toward D. down
43. A. rocks B. systems C level D. trips
44. A. ritual B. classic C. traditional D. folk
45. A. living B. commercial C. secret D. biology

Appendix #3: Survey Sample

ENCUESTA

En general que tan de acuerdo estas con los siguientes enunciados relacionados con tus clases de inglés de este segundo semestre del 2017, teniendo en cuenta la siguiente escala:

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
2. En desacuerdo
3. Ni de acuerdo, ni en desacuerdo
4. De acuerdo
5. Totalmente de acuerdo

Lee las preguntas / Escoge una respuesta de la escala	1	2	3	4	5
1. Las clases de inglés este año fueron diferentes a las clases de inglés que he tomado en el pasado.				X	
2. Trabajé con dedicación en las actividades asignadas.				X	
3. El contenido de las clases me ayudo a conocer más el mundo.					X
4. Los temas trabajados fueron interesantes.				X	
5. Los materiales utilizados fueron apropiados, es decir, considero que no fueron ni muy fáciles ni muy difíciles.					X
6. Las actividades realizadas fueron difíciles.		X			
7. Las clases contribuyeron a mi aprendizaje del idioma.				X	

Appendix #4: Interview Sample

ENTREVISTA

1. ¿Consideras que tus clases de inglés durante este año fueron diferentes o iguales a las clases de inglés que tuviste en años anteriores? Explica
2. ¿Consideras que las clases de inglés durante el segundo semestre de este año contribuyeron a tu aprendizaje de este idioma? Explicalo.
3. ¿Cómo fue tu nivel de compromiso y responsabilidad en las clases de inglés durante el segundo semestre de este año? Explica.
4. ¿Qué te gustó de las clases de inglés que recibiste durante el segundo semestre de este año? Explica.
5. ¿Qué no te gusto de las clases de inglés que recibiste durante el segundo semestre de este año? Explica.
6. ¿Cuál es tu opinión de los temas que trabajaste en las clases de inglés durante el segundo semestre de este año? Explica.
7. ¿Cuál es tu opinión de las actividades que trabajaste en las clases de inglés durante el segundo semestre de este año? Explica.
8. ¿Crees que aprendiste algo nuevo durante las clases de inglés este año? Ejemplifica.

Appendix #5: Rubric Sample

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards	Score
Focus or Thesis Statement	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.	
Sequencing	Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought.	Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.	A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.	Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.	
Closing paragraph	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.	
Grammar & Spelling	Writer makes occasional errors in grammar that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes few errors in grammar that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes frequent errors in grammar that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes too many errors in grammar that distract the reader from the content.	
Vocabulary	Excellent range of general vocabulary and excellent use of target words taught in class.	Good range of general vocabulary and good use of target words taught in class.	Acceptable range of general vocabulary and acceptable use of target words taught in class.	Poor range of general vocabulary and poor use of target words taught in class.	

Appendix #6: Argumentative Texts Samples

Student 1

Why is the restaurant menu healthy?

The food of restaurant is good for you. It offers a balance nutrition that keep us healthy, and also the food is organize for a nutritionally.

In the restaurant served us or menu balance that have all the request nutritious that you body need with protein, dairy, fruits, vegetables, bread and cereal.

The food that give us in the restaurant come evaluate nutritionally for a nutritionally that know and to studied all the that you need for to be strong and healthy

However, sometimes the cooks prepare badly the food, they put too much salt, sugar or sometimes they put much flour in the food and in occasion they repeat the menu.

To conclude the food of restaurant is good, though the cooks shoulder to begin to prepare the food without put too much of such ingredient in the food.

Student 1

Globalization

Around the world different economic processes are happening in an accelerated way; It is a phenomenon that affects us directly or indirectly because there are work, technology's advances and the affluence of products.

The process of the globalization is producing work, namely, capitalizing is one of the many phenomena that participate actively in the globalization and that make people to capitalize others business. Besides, when an company grows hire to more people of these way help to the people to have a work stable that generally an entrance of money in to life.

Thanks, the interchange of knowledge among the countries to worldwide in the last years old, we have seen with the globalization as there are advances technology's, for example, the knowledge of people of other countries is helping to create new and more advances technology's as the is the development of programs that help us, to that we are not lose in the way, when we are new in a city or country.

The affluence of products has brought much benefits for the countries, because they get products that before were not available. However it has caused a impact in the smaller economies for example many farmer that before lived of the sow of wheat, they see that in the market there are new products that are faster selling and that the peoples buy more these products, there is a offer smaller of wheat ocasioning a decrease in the economy of these farmer.

In conclusion the affluence of products, the work and the technologys advances are only some of the processes that affect us directly or indirectly in the globalization, therefore the countries in the that is happening this pheno-
-menon, should to create a plan in your governments to confront the negative impacts.

Student 1

The negative side of fast fashion.

In the world of the fashion nowadays is happening the phenomenon of the fast fashion, it grows negatively for much people and for all the world because cause the increase of the industry, pollutes the environment and also affects the mental health of any consumer.

Every young that adopts a new fast fashion there is increase of the industry, it is a problem for the free development of market because when there are more industries producing the demand of clothes there will have less possibility of emerging in the business.

When a person have much clothes in your wardrobe will begin to throw in the garbage therefore will it is a cause important of pollutes the environment due to the clothes is made of materials derived from fossil fuels and to passed for different process chemicals that emit gases as the CO_2 that little to little destroys the ozone layer, for example the sandals of plastic that is very common in the coast the finish its use fulltime, the material they are made of last much time in decompose pollutes the ground.

By having different garments to wear pretty and very cheap the people felt with more desires of follow buying, moreover when your friends tell you the good that you look wearing the new fashion trend, it increases your self-esteem, it will motivate you to that every time

buy more and more garments, it will convert you with help of time in a shopaholic and it is for this that the fast fashion affects the mental health of any consumer.

To conclude the fast fashion grows negatively affecting the mental health of any consumer, making that they increase their levels of anxiety buy in excess clothes that is of bad quality the to be very cheap, this fast consumption provoke the increase of the industry this will unchain a pollution in the atmosphere is for this that this phenoment of interest us to all, and therefore it is our duty think in the way as we can to control the fast fashion.

When a person have much clothes in your wardrobe will begin to throw in the garbage therefore will it is a cause important of pollutes the environment due to the clothes is made of materials derived from fossil fuels and to passed for different process chemicals that emit gases as the CO_2 that little to little destroys the ozone layer, for example the bottles of plastic that is very common in the closet the finish its use fulltime, the material they are made of not much time in decompose pollutes the ground.

By having different garments to wear pretty and very cheap the people felt with more desires of follow buying, moreover when your friends tell you the good that you look wearing the new fashion items, it increases your self-esteem, it will motivate you to that every time

Student 2

HEALTHY EAT LIVE MORE!

For my the restaurant menu is healthy because the food is healthy, contain protein, include the dairy and fruits that are fountain the vitamin.

The protein the find in the meat how the chicken, cow the meat, pig. The protein we serve energy, that are leave think best.

The Dairy the find in the milk juice the milk toast calcio, that are help to maintain in good estade your bones, The fruit contain much vitamin, the vitamin C by example that is find in the guava.

Student 2

GLOBALIZATION

Since some years in the world emerged a phenomenon world-wide that searches the good among countries. The globalization is an economic movement where is needed to capitalize to have good communication and to manufacturing materials.

The capitalization is one of the most common process in the globalization. It consists on some big companies invests on small companies to promote them, for example Claro capitalized to Comcel

Second, the communication allow the relation among people. so is an important point in the globalization to shape better people for example Estacion United has good communication with Colombia.

Third, the manufacturing of material is need in the globalization. Because let that big businessmen export product's the foreign. However this product's can lose in the journey and lose business.

In conclusion the country grows of a fast very manner. The processing of raw material with manufacturing of materials, the good communication among people, and the business use in little word the capitalize are needed for a good
GLOBALIZATION.

Student 2

Do you consider fast fashion is positive or negative?

long time ago was shot in the world a disease of be fashionable the people spend much money buy clothes in fast fashion which is a bad phenomenon that consist in the pass fashions of the trends of clothes, when trends of clothes wear not this clothes is burn, it generates contamination of environment, healthy problems to humans and increase of garbage.

Fast Fashion generates contamination of environment, as a result of its is originate much illness. for example, the flu that is cause for the air contaminated.

Second it generates healthy problems to humans, as a consequence is find the dead without reason the much people for example = the Colera in Africa for throw clothes dirty in the ambient.

Another problems that generates the fast fashion is increase of garbage for the quantify of clothes that are cast, for example = the factory of clothes discard the product that not sad and generates contamination.

To conclude exist much phenomenom that generates contamination in the world a of its phenomenom is the fast fashion that is enough bad, the clothes to be unfashionable is burn when it is not sad, therefore generates contamination of enviroment, the smoke of the clothes cause changes in the life of the humans for this reason the clothes burn is bad for the healthy.

Student 3

why is the school restaurant's menu healthy?

The food is very important for people because it helps us to be active every day and with much strength.

The restaurant's food is necessary for the health because ~~has~~ much proteins, it permit us to be active in class but sometimes feels us sick

The restaurant's food has much proteins, calcium, vitamins that give us strength and feel us good everyday.

when we eat always we ~~are~~ actives in class, thanks to the fruits juice that give us in the restaurant for that reason the restaurant's food is healthy.

some times feel us sick because the food does not have proteins, vitamins, calcium, for that reason we ~~get~~ sick.

Student 3

GLOBALIZATION

Many countries are affected by some social problems that impact its inhabitants. such as the un-employment in the that generates principally malnutrition, violence and sickness.

The globalization is an expansionist process in which powerful countries dominate small countries. They get more powerful, but globalization sometimes contributes to the development of small countries.

when a great country brings its business to the small countries. The biggest country gets more advantages over the small countries.

this country will become more development.

if a country has powerful and do business with other country, this country becomes in a country more powerful.

when a small country does business with a big country, the small country can to have a development due to the business that they did. Then the globalization help to the development the small countries.

many countries are affected by economic problems that impact to the people with sickness as malnutrition and the violence. people don't have to eat and generate the malnutrition and the violence among people.

Student 3

Fast fashion

The contamination is very dangerous for the living beings, because brings us much illness. The fast fashion is a negative phenomenon that has passed in the world because has much consequences as: pollution the environment, also affect to the humans and pollute to the ozone cope.

people like to be in fashion and buy all types the clothes, when clothes became out of fashion the people throw it, and it produces air pollution, due to polyester that has the clothes and the polyester is derived from fossil fuels, for that reason pollutes the environment.

Taking in to account what has been said above, the air is polluted, and people breath it, then this produces illness. if people throw more garbage to the dump, more pollution is produced as consequences the health is more affected.

Also, when people burn the clothes the smoke they throw, arrive to the ozone cope, this produce us much consequences to the living living beings, a consequence is that the smoke destroys to the ozone cape and for that reason is that we feel more heat than before

people don't have that throw clothes because produce us much consequence. The fast fashion has been very bad because has harmed us the nature. we should be prepared for this trends and can to fight this negative phenomenon.
