THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AN ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

AND SOME INDIVIDUAL AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF

THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: A CASE STUDY

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Research project to opt for the degree in Modern Languages

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Abstract

The present study intends to determine how an alternative learning environment and some individual affective factors contribute to the development of Communicative Competence of two subjects. The authors explored an alternative learning environment taking into reference the theory behind the constructs of Learning Environment, Communicative Competence, and Individual Affective Factors, and a grill that integrated some of the elements of these three constructs was designed with the purpose of analyzing the data collected through observations and videotaping. Subsequently, with the help of the grill, the authors diagnosed the extent to which the selected elements took place in the alternative learning environment. Finally, the dominant trends were identified to detect which of the elements selected actually influenced the development of Communicative Competence of two subjects, an 18 year old men and a 30 year old girl who study in the institute, and how.

The results showed that there are dominant elements that seemed to contribute to the development of both participants' Communicative Competence. Regarding Learning Environment (Wilson, 1996), the selected one did not provide students with opportunities for them to develop their Communicative Competence since there was lack of interaction among the participants due to the teachers' teaching and authority styles. Concerning Communicative Competence, the use of the Communicative Strategies (Celce-Murcia, 1995-2000) played a fundamental role for both participants since they used the strategies for diverse purposes in all the sessions observed. Referring to the Individual Affective Factors, Self-confidence had a significant influence in the participants' performance because it seemed to permeate the other two categories of analysis. Along the observation and analysis

stages, the emergent category of Teaching and Authority styles was identified and it seemed to affect all three main categories in particular ways: in the construction of the Learning Environment, in the exposure to different situations that allowed the participant to use all the sub-competences of CC, and the overall Individual Affective Factors.

The present study may shed light on how the selected Individual Affective Factors and some predetermined characteristics of the Learning Environments affect the development of the Communicative Competence. Moreover, the study enquires about the influence that teaching and authority styles might have in the development of CC and, maybe, in the language learning process. Keeping this in mind, further research needs to be done not only in a larger population and for a longer period of time so that the results could be more enriching, but also to go deeper in the topic and to propose different alternatives to improve the potentially existing learning environments.

Key words: Learning Environments, Communicative Competence, Individual Affective Factors, Teaching and Authority styles, Communicative Strategies, Self-confidence, Meaningful Learning, and Scaffolding.

Resumen

El presente estudio pretende determinar cómo un ambiente alternativo de aprendizaje así como algunos factores individuales afectivos contribuyen al desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en dos sujetos de estudio. Los autores exploraron un ambiente de aprendizaje alternativo, teniendo en cuenta la teoría subyacente a los siguientes constructos: ambientes de aprendizaje, competencia comunicativa y los factores individuales afectivos; con estos constructos se diseñó

una rejilla que integrara algunos de sus elementos más relevantes con el fin de analizar los datos recogidos a través de observaciones y grabaciones. Acto seguido, con la ayuda de la rejilla, los autores diagnosticaron hasta qué punto los elementos seleccionados tuvieron lugar en el ambiente alternativo de aprendizaje. Finalmente, se identificaron las tendencias dominantes y se detectaron cuáles de estos elementos influía en realidad en el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en los dos sujetos de estudio.

Los resultados mostraron que existen elementos dominantes que parecen contribuir en el Desarrollo de la Competencia Comunicativa de los dos sujetos de estudio. En relación con el Ambiente de Aprendizaje (Wilson, 1996), este no daba oportunidades a los sujetos de estudio para desarrollar su competencia comunicativa ya que se evidenciaba una falta de interacción entre los participantes debido a los estilos de enseñanza y de manejo de autoridad de parte del profesor. En cuanto a la Competencia Comunicativa, el uso de las estrategias comunicativas (Celce-Murica, 1995-2000) tuvo un rol fundamental para los dos participantes ya que estos usaron las estrategias con diferentes objetivos a lo largo de las sesiones observadas. Referente a los Factores Individuales Afectivos, la confianza en sí mismos influenció en gran medida el desenvolvimiento de los sujetos porque ésta parecía permear a las otras dos categorías de análisis. Durante las etapas de observación y análisis, se identificó una categoría emergente: estilos de enseñanza y estilos de autoridad. Al parecer esta categoría afectó cada uno de los constructos en diferentes maneras: en la construcción del ambiente de aprendizaje, en la exposición de diferentes situaciones que permitieran el uso de todas las sub-competencias de la

Competencia Comunicativa, y de manera general a los factores individuales afectivos.

El presente estudio puede dar luces acerca de cómo algunas características determinadas de un ambiente de aprendizaje y algunos factores individuales afectivos afectan el desarrollo de la Competencia Comunicativa. Además, este estudio indaga sobre la influencia que los estilos de enseñanza y de autoridad pueden tener en el desarrollo de la Competencia Comunicativa y, tal vez, en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Teniendo esto en cuenta, se necesitan realizar más investigaciones no solamente en una población más amplia y un periodo de tiempo más largo para que los resultados sean más enriquecedores, sino para ahondar más en el tema y a su vez proponer diferentes alternativas para potenciar los ambientes de aprendizaje existentes.

Descriptores: Ambientes de Aprendizaje, Competencia Comunicativa, Factores Individuales Afectivos, Estilos de enseñanza y manejo de la Autoridad, Estrategias Comunicativas, Confianza en sí mismo, Aprendizaje Significativo y Andamiaje.

Introduction

According to the authors' own experience and observations, nowadays, language classrooms lack authentic social situations in which learners can interact and cooperate with others; the acquisition of linguistic features is assumed to be the main goal to achieve when learning a L2. Nonetheless, the classroom should be a place built by the interaction among individuals. In the same manner, the activities that are carried out in the classroom should be intended to enrich their learning process meaningfully. This lack of authentic interaction causes difficulties in the learner's development of Communicative Competence and all its sub competences. During this process, there are also some Individual Affective Factors that have to be taken into account since they might affect positively or negatively this process. That is why the reason why the concept of Learning Environment acquires strength as it incorporates several elements which could effectively enhance the development of Communicative Competence.

Unfortunately, it seems that there are not current studies that integrate these three constructs to improve the development of CC in Second Language Teaching and Learning. This study will try to determine to what extent an alternative Learning Environment and some Individual Affective Factors contribute to the development of Communicative Competence. A description of each section of the present study will be shown.

The first section presents a description of the context in which the present study was developed. The authors show the main features of the selected institute; this includes its method and organization and the components of the courses.

The second section introduces the problematic situation that worked as the basis to develop and state the research question for the present study.

The third section establishes the main objective as well as the specific ones that helped in the development of the present study.

The fourth section exposes the justification of the study. That is, its relevance for the development of the Communicative Competence of the BA in Modern Languages of Pontifical Xaverian University.

The fifth section describes previous studies and the theory behind the three theoretical constructs selected for the present study: Learning Environments, Communicative Competence and Individual Affective Factors.

The sixth section embraces the methodological framework which includes the approach, the type of investigation, and the subjects who were chosen for the case of study, and the instruments to collect the data.

The seventh section entails the results and the correspondent analysis of the data collected by using a grill specially designed for this purpose.

The last section presents the main conclusions, limitations and the pedagogical implications this study encountered.

1. Context

This research was conducted in an instituted called Praxis Laboratory of Languages that is located in Bogota. This institute offers English courses up to B2 language level following the scale established by the CEFR. The English course is divided in modules from 1 to 100. These modules are classified as follows: from 1 to 32 participants will master an A1 level; from 33 to 65 participants will achieve an A2 level; finally, from 66 to 100 participants will complete the course with a B1 language level. The B2 level is sold apart from the main course under the name of English for business. The setting of the classes is composed by maximum 3 participants. However, this scenario rarely occurs. The physical organization of the classrooms consists of a big squared table with seats around it. There are no boards or any visual elements that contribute in the participants' learning.

The institute counts with its own set of textbooks for each level which are the core of the classes. These textbooks are used by implementing the Direct Approach which seeks to learn the language by the mechanization of vocabulary and grammatical structures. This is achieved by listening, repeating, and watching which according to the method, results in the overcoming of fear to use the language in a social context. for more info go to webpage link http://www.praxis.edu.co/

Apart from the regular classes, the institute offers complementary learning scenarios to enhance the language learning. These are: activities, workshops, and conversation clubs. The first one is carried out once per week and it is related with fun games focused on vocabulary. The second one seeks to reinforce grammar structures. The third one, which was selected as the alternative environment to be

observed and analyzed in the present study, intends to enhance participants' oral performance by talking and developing activities towards a specific topic. It is worth noting that participants must accomplish a number of attendances in each scenario in order to graduate at the end of the course.

2. Problematic Situation

From the authors' own observations, although students of the BA in Modern Languages of Pontifical Xaverian University appear to develop some language competences, one of their weaknesses seems to be the poor development of the Communicative Competence, understood as, the individual's knowledge and use of Linguistic, Socio-linguistic, Interactional, and Strategic aspects in different social and communicative situations (Hymes (1972), Canale & Swain (1980), Celce & Murcia (1995-2000)). The researchers believe that there are a number of factors that lead to this problematic situation. That is the reason why, the researchers decided to survey 30 students from the BA in Modern Languages of Pontifical Xaverian University major in order to identify more deeply which their perspectives on the subject are and how they can influence students' performance in terms of their Communicative Competence. Next, results of the survey will be presented (For the model of the survey, go to Annexe #1).

Question 1: Which characteristics of the classroom would you change or improve in order to create an optimum learning environment that favors the development of the communicative competence?

Material features

- More authentic materials
- Use of short videos
- Excessive use of the course book
- role-plays in diffent contexts
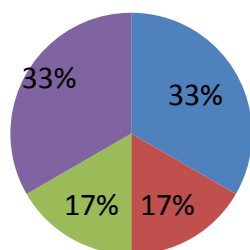
Firstly, they considered that authentic material should be used. Following the concept of Communicative Competence and what it implies, the use of authentic material becomes important in the sense that students need to be exposed to a natural interaction and input to be able to use the language in a given context. Nevertheless, in the language classroom, the course book becomes in the only source of information. Although it is necessary to know about the formal aspect of the language, it is imperative to know the informal aspects of it.

This type of language is not shown in the books. Moreover, other students said that there should be more daily life role plays that fulfil the need of having natural contexts to use the language in order to develop the competence.

Physical features

- Use of round tables
- Lack of space and ventilation
- The teacher's position
- Other environments different from the classroom

Secondly, they detected some aspects related with the physical space of the classroom. In fact, half of the students agreed that the sitting arrangement should be in round tables in order to establish an equalitarian role from all the participants.

According to the survey, the teachers' position should change too in order to achieve the previous goal.

Assesment and evaluation features

- Feedback
- Grammar should not be the focus
- Challenge students
- Preparation for international exams

Thirdly, the students mentioned that there should be more preparation for taking international exams, as well as more challenging activities. Furthermore, feedback should be improved because sometimes it is not enough and sometimes it is focused on negative feedback

Fourthly, there were answers related with some pedagogical aspects that need to be changed or improved. The aspect in which most of the students agreed was in the implementation of more debates instead of isolated presentations. This idea is directly connected with students' need to talk more in the target language in a spontaneous and argumentative manner. In fact, with the oral presentations students have to rehearse and plan what it is going to be said leaving behind the opportunity to use the language spontaneously. Besides, students remark the fact that there should be more authentic communicative situations as the communication and interaction inside the classroom most of the times is artificial due to the methodology imposed by the teacher .

Pedagogical features

- Implement meaningful tasks
- Less presentations and more debates
- Use of different teaching techniques
- Do oustide activities
- Use of real communicative situations
- More vocabulary and idiomatic expressions
- Challenge students
- Change the way to introduce grammatical topics
- Student should research
- Promote participation activities
- The teacher should follow students pace
- Barrier between teachers and students
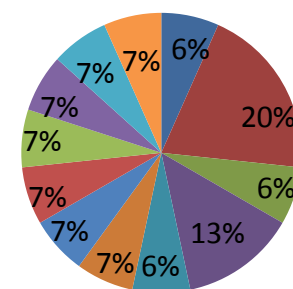
The other aspects the students mentioned were there should be a variety of topics to be freely discussed in class related to students' interests. In addition, there should be one teacher per ability in order to have a full development of each.

Other features

- ■ Native asistants
- ■ Students should be more qualified
- ■ The teacher should not be a guide
- ■ Current topics for discussions
- ■ Students interests
- ■ There should be one teacher per ability
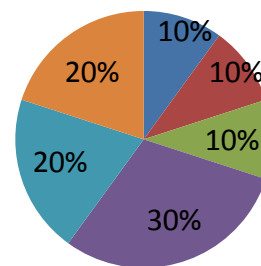
Question 2: Name 5 practices in the classroom you consider do not contribute to the development of the Communicative Competence. List them from 1 to 5 being 5 the one that contributes the most and 1 the one that does not.

- ■ Translated vocabulary lists
- ■ Master Lecture Classes
- ■ Excessive use of course books
- ■ Grammar focus
- ■ Repetitive Feedback
- ■ Lack of Feedback
- ■ Writing focus
- ■ No use of authentic materials
- ■ Watching Movies
- ■ Learning different accents

1
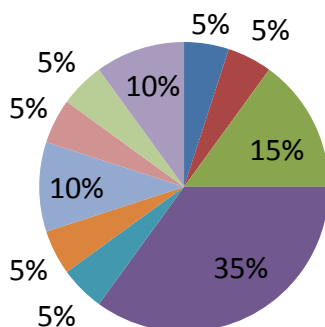
In the first graphic, the activities that contributes the least, there were plenty of different activities that students considered were not useful in the development of the Communicative Competence. As seen, 35% of them chose the grammar exercises as the activity that contributes the least, followed by the use of the course- book, with a 15% of the students.

These percentages show that these kinds of exercises do not appeal to the students due to the fact that for them, the most important aspect is to communicate with others. Besides, grammar activities are prone to be quite structural; that is, they are linked to a simple process of memorization and mechanization, without concerning the situational, cultural, and social aspect

.

The matter of using the course book was also noticed by the students. This may be due to the fact of its wrong utilization by teachers or curricula. Furthermore, most of the activities used on course books are related to grammar exercises, but not to other important features of the language. The excessive use of the course book could be justified if it is used in a deeper way; in other words, using course books towards communicative purposes. This implies the evaluation, adaptation, and in some cases, the creation of new materials to motivate the students to get involved in class activities.

- Dialogues
- Grammar focus
- Grammatical Feedback
- Artificial Material
- Lack of Feedback
- Too many Oral Presentations
- No constant communciation
- Writing
- Excesive use of the course book
- Preferences

2
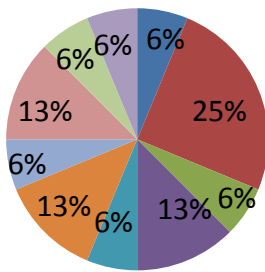
The second graphic, shows similar results to the previous one, regarding the grammar focus of some activities. However, there are 3 other activities that were equivalent in their percentage. Those were: Writing focus, oral presentations, and the use of artificial materials.

The first feature mentioned could be linked to the use of grammar aspects in a more formal way by the students. As they are not appealing to grammar rules, the process of writing papers would be as well overwhelming because the correct use of grammar rules are necessary in their development.

However, we consider this kind of exercises as well as the oral presentations could be also addressed to communicative purposes. The use of artificial materials has been quite controversial among Second Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistic theories and approaches. These artificial materials are normally included in course books, especially in dialogues. So, the students are not really motivated to go deeper in those unreal situations

- Reading
- Excessive feedback
- Authentic materials
- Excessive use of the book
- Games
- Preparation for international exams
- Lack of Role plays

3
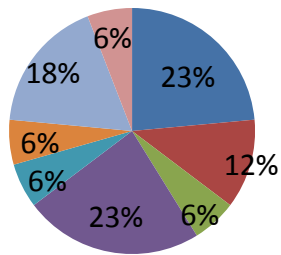
The following graphic is where the percentages are more distributed in several activities. The excessive use of course books has the highest percentage, alongside with reading activities. These reading activities are normally authentic materials extracted from articles from different sources. However, and unfortunately, these are addressed to the use of specific vocabulary, and correct use of grammar rules. If reading activities were more focused on research and analysis of the subject, it would be more enriching for the students' interests. Besides, for developing the Communicative Competence, these activities could be mixed with other skills, such as speaking because students can use the language to share their knowledge with others.

Legend

- Authentic material
- Oral Presentations
- Debates taking into account students' interests
- Current topics for discussion
- Comprehension exercises
- Tasks
- Formal writing
- Group discussions
- Role plays
- Speaking Focus

4
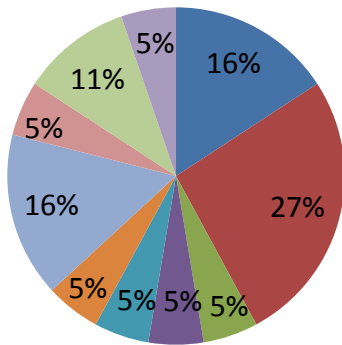
The fourth graphic shows the students' interests towards certain activities that contribute to the development of their Communicative Competence. Here, the focus was made on oral presentations. Clearly, these activities are intended to be more communicative rather than grammatical. According to the authors' observation, although students know the importance of these activities, they might not feel comfortable due to some individual affective factors that might have an influence in their performance.

Therefore, these activities should be an opportunity for students to be as relaxed as possible in the classroom. First, it was noticed that the use of authentic materials must be a meaningful tool for communicating because the students can learn from something that, indeed, exists. Second, they have the choice to go beyond the information, and make a research for themselves. Third, and most important, they can share what they learn with their partners and help them in their learning process.

- Listening Focus
- Debates
- Presentations
- Academic writing
- Real situations
- Activities that involve all skills
- Role plays
- Group work
- Spontaneous speaking

5
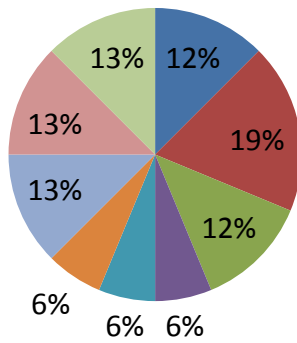
In the last graphic related to the activities that enhance the most the Communicative Competence, it is noticeable the balance of several activities that, indeed, favor the development of this competence. With 19%, the use of debate activities has the highest percentage. These activities seem to encourage students to make use of many cognitive skills such as investigating, analyzing, criticizing, comparing, among others. In fact, debating is a situation in which the students are involved normally, either in academic or informal context.

Question 3: Which teachers' attitudes have affected you in a positive or in a negative manner?

- Teacher disposition
- Students interests
- Socializacion activities
- Constant feedback
- Guidance
- Audiovisual media
- Current topics
- Motivation
- Participation is promoted
- Good environment
- Dynamic
- Native speakers contact
- Real situations
- Authentic materials
- Group work

Positive aspects

4%
4%
4%
4%
15%
8%
8%
4%
11%
4%
7%
4%
15%
4%
4%
4%
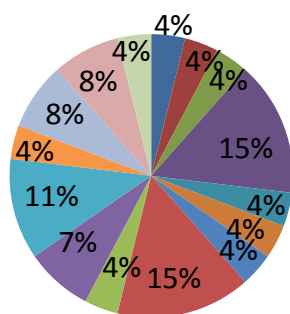
On one hand, a 15% of the polled affirm that the feedback provided by the teacher is necessary to improve their language. On the other hand, 26% of the students consider that the teacher constantly interrupts them. When taking a look at these percentages the authors of this study concluded that

feedback is negative when the objectives of the activity point to communicative purposes. When there are interruptions, students' levels of anxiety can increase and thus, his performance would be as well affected. Some other students considered that the teacher plays an important role in their motivation because if the teacher transmits security, provides positive feedback and assumes a role of a guide, the student may feel more motivated to accomplish the tasks.

Negative aspects

- Excessive feedback
- Interruptions
- Focus on grammar
- Lack of authentic contexts and materials
- Bad attitude
- Preferences
- Lack of feedback
- Lack of presentations or debates
- Teacher as the center of the class
- The book is central
- Lack of interaction t-s
- Be repetitive
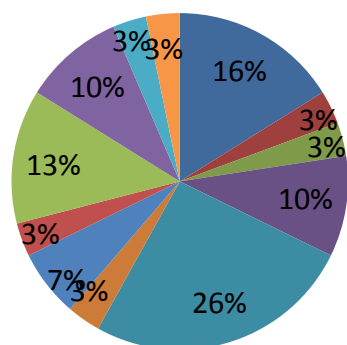
A 16% of the polled consider that the bad attitude from the teacher plays a negative role because this might discourage them when developing the tasks. The lack of interaction might also have an impact in their self-confidence and risk taking as they do not have the necessary opportunities to practice and in this way improve their performance in the L2 classroom.

Students also mentioned as negative the fact teachers do not promote debates because it does not allow students to develop their Communicative Competence. At last, students do not like when the teacher is the only one who talks because in this type of scenarios there is space for sharing, comparing and criticizing with classmates.

Question 4: Do you consider that your classmates play a positive or negative role in your development of the Communicative Competence?

Positive aspects

- Peer-correction
- Colaborative learning
- Comfort zone
- Interaction
- Oportunity to have different opinions
- Cultural exchange
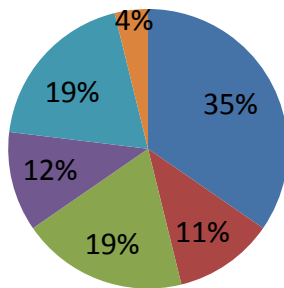
This question asks for the role of the classmate in the development of the Communicative Competence. Here, it is fundamental to take into consideration the influence have in others' learning process. The graphics were distributed again in positive and negative aspects in order to make a general parallel between them.

First, there is a notorious difference between the peer-correction percentage and the other aspects.

This may be due to the role friendships play in giving accurate and meaningful feedback. The matter of feeling more comfortable if a partner corrects others' mistakes could have a better impact in the learning process, rather than if a teacher does it. Besides, the opportunity to have different opinions is also enriching for the construction of knowledge.

Negative aspects

- ■ Distraction
- ■ No peer- correction
- ■ Rudeness
- ■ Different levels
- ■ Lack of participation
- ■ L1 is used among classmates
- ■ Lack of practice outside
- ■ Copy
- ■ Tendency to have the same mistakes

4% 8% 8%
4% 4%
4%
4%
16% 48%
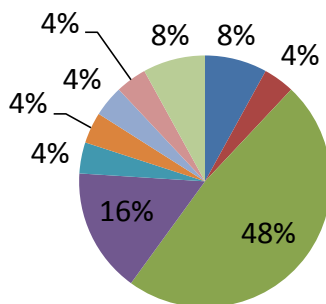
On the other side, rudeness by partners is more than a negative aspect. Bullying has become a cultural and social phenomenon in learning environments. It is known that these attitudes by classmates could have a high influence, not only in students' performance, but also, in their physical and psychological condition. As a result, some students do not try to communicate and interact with others, because they are afraid of being judged for what they think or how they act.

Therefore, the lack of interaction affects their development of Communicative Competence. There is also the difference in language levels as another negative aspect students took into consideration and the relation it might have with some individual affective factors. The fact students' performance depends on what they think of others could affect several aspects such as risk-taking, self-confidence and the overall performance in L2 and, therefore, their development of Communicative Competence.

Question 5: Besides the language courses at the university, have you or someone you know gone to another space which has improved your or their development of the Communicative Competence?

Outside spaces

- ■ Conversation clubs
- ■ Virtual spaces
- ■ No
- ■ Study in a foreign country
- ■ Restaurants
- ■ Job
- ■ Contact with native speakers
- ■ Self-strategies
- ■ Communities of practices
- ■ University tutorials
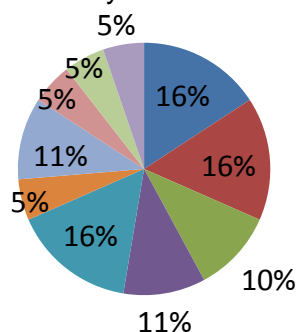
Most of the students have or know someone who has attended to conversation clubs or virtual spaces in order to develop their communicative competence. Some others have had contact with native speakers and they consider that in this type of interaction they got to improve their communicative competence. Restaurants are also another space where students have improved. The rest of the students have used some strategies on their own to improve some language skills.

They have taken tutorials, or they have had the opportunity to be in a community of practice. Knowing which the most common places students are used to assist to improve their L2 give the authors of this study some ideas of what kind of learning environment should be explored and analyze taking into account the results shown above.

The presented results led the authors to establish the following research question: To what extent the alternative Learning Environment and Individual Affective Factors contribute to the Development of Communicative Competence in a L2.

3. General Objective

- To determine how an alternative Learning Environment and Individual Affective Factors contribute to the development of the Communicative Competence in a Second Language.

3.1 Specific Objectives

- To explore an alternative learning environment from three theoretical constructs: Learning Environment, Communicative Competence and Individual Affective Factors.

- To integrate some elements from the three main theoretical constructs of the present study in order to create a grill as the main instrument for analyzing the data.

- To diagnose which, how, when and why the elements selected from the three main theoretical constructs occurred by using the grill created by the authors.

- To identify the dominant trends to detect which and how the elements selected for this study actually influence the development of the Communicative Competence.

4. Justification

This research project is a case study which intends to analyze to what extent an alternative Learning Environment along with some Individual Affective factors contribute to the development of CC in a L2. This study came from the personal experiences and interests of the researchers as students of the BA of Modern Languages to look for different ways to improve the students' development of Communicative Competence and therefore, second language teaching and learning in the BA. Unfortunately, research that integrates the three theoretical constructs: Learning Environments, Communicative Competence and Individual Affective Factors, were not found. That is the reason why this study seeks to establish a clear bond between these three constructs as well as to see how they contribute in the development of Communicative Competence.

From the establishment of these bonds, the authors designed a grill that will work in the diagnosis and analysis of a learning environment. This is the most important contribution of this study, as the grill will offer a first approximation to the understanding and analysis of the different variables that have to be taken into account in order to successfully develop the Communicative Competence, as well as to create a learning environment or enhance an existent one.

The integration and design of the grill will open new doors and establish new questions regarding the role of Learning Environment, Individual Affective Factors, and Communicative Competence in Second Language Teaching and Learning as well as its possible association with Applied Linguistics.

5. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

5.1 Previous studies

The study *"Overcoming Fear of Speaking in English through Meaningful Activities: A study with Teenagers"* by Buitrago & Ayala (2008) is perhaps the closest to the present study as it sought to reduce language anxiety levels in order to improve oral communication. Moreover, it intended to identify some of the sources of the fear of speaking and to explore a number of strategies that might contribute to the reduction of this fear. For Buitrago & Ayala (2008), these strategies influenced the classroom atmosphere. The standpoint from which this problematic situation was seen, is the theory related to cooperative and meaningful learning. This research took place at a public school in Bogotá called José Asunción Silva. At this school, the time assigned to English classes was three hours per week. The data collection techniques were surveys which provided information about students' perspectives on the subject matter, observations along with field notes, videos and audio recordings which gave account of students' oral interactions and sense of security/insecurity in their speech.

Buitrago & Ayala (2008) proposed "The Cultural Moment" as an academic environment in which students were stimulated through artistic activities (games, songs, sketches, dancing and poetry) to improve their self-esteem and oral performance.

Buitrago & Ayala (2008) found four main sets of strategies that seemed to work in reducing students fear to talk in English. The first set of strategies is related with the Psychological strategies linked to students´ self- assessment and awareness of error correction by their classmates. An atmosphere in which mistakes were

seen as necessary in order to achieve language success was settled, this resulted in more tolerance. The second set of strategies, the Methodological strategies included motivational strategies that resulted in students' higher involvement in the activities. This was seen in students' general improvement in their outcomes since they seemed to be more relaxed and confident. The third set of strategies, Cognitive and Meta cognitive strategies are linked to the implementation of planning, problem solving and identification errors stages along the proposed activities, in which L1 was used as a tool to go through the mentioned phases and to avoid tense feelings due to lack of English language knowledge. The last set of strategies, Social/Affective strategies referred to the importance of support from both students and teachers. The study showed that students felt fear when performing in English because of their lack of preparation and fear to face laughter.

Although the research conducted by Buitrago & Ayala (2008) went beyond by means of creating the Cultural Moment as a way to diminish students' fear to talk in the L2, it covers to some extent the main concepts to be worked on the present study. Some of the affective factors listed in *"Overcoming Fear of Speaking in English through Meaningful Activities: A study with Teenagers´"* such as language anxiety and self-confidence happened to be taken into account in the present study. In fact, for the researchers of the present study these two components are seen as key elements in the development of the CC as they appear to have a notorious effect on students' performance. Furthermore, Buitrago & Ayala (2008) followed a constructivist view of learning, focusing on cooperative and meaningful learning theories which are vital according to the authors in accomplishing the goal of making students feel confident enough to talk in English. In terms of

environment, they proposed an academic one which differs from the researcher's objectives.

The study conducted by Dorelly Gutiérrez (2005) *Developing oral skills through communicative and interactive tasks* intends to identify the main changes that interactive tasks bring to students, teachers, feedback and tasks' roles in the development of oral skills. This study was carried out at Institución Educativa Distrital Britalia, a public school in Bogota. There were 40 participants, 23 girls and 17 boys who belong to ninth grade; they received English instruction three hours per week. The theoretical constructs of this research were based upon three main principles. The first one was related to human interaction as a key element in order to establish a successful communication. According to Gutiérrez (2005), this might be done by developing and putting into practice both the Interactive and communicative competences. The second principle was taken from Willis (1996) who highlighted the importance of creating and maintaining a low stress atmosphere, as it enables the learner to develop a set of discourse strategies that will let him/her use the language in real communicative situations. Furthermore, three conditions (exposure, use and motivation) must be present for having an effective language learning process (Willis, 1996). The last principle was task-based learning as a tool to develop discourse strategies which are needed in order to complete some communicative tasks (Nunan, 1991).

The methodology was composed by: the inquiry stage in which some surveys, observations, video-audio tapes and a field diary were used with the purpose of identifying students' beliefs about developing oral skills in the L2. Based on the results obtained after the implementation of the different data collection methods, three interactive tasks were created:

- Task one was a *free talk* about a given topic. During this task, students worked in groups and were encouraged to use the L2. Students made use of paralinguistic devices in order to transmit their messages.

- Task two was a *photo story* from which students narrated previous experiences. Throughout this activity, it was noticeable the use of pet words and fillers.

- Task three was a group presentation about Maloka. In this activity, students brainstormed about their ideas regarding the topic and received peer feedback. Then, a small debate was done.

After implementing these set of tasks, Gutiérrez concluded that exposure is needed in order to stimulate communicative context in which students increase their self-confidence. This can be achieved through constant interaction and cooperative work among the students. The previous aspects are key in students' final oral production as the author observed that students made use of paralinguistic and discourse devices in order to improve their oral performance.

From this research, the authors of the present study highlight the importance of developing communicative strategies through interactive tasks as they seemed to play a major role in students' oral performance in the proposed tasks. In addition, the activities sought to establish both a good environment and collaborative work among students, which relate to the present study's theoretical constructs of learning environments and meaningful learning. Regarding the results obtained in the first stage of Gutierréz research, self-confidence and anxiety were the most important aspects in identifying students' source of worry when talking in English.

The study "*Innovative Learning Environments Research Study*" developed by Professor Jill Blackmore et all, intended to analyse to what extent Innovative Learning Environments contributed to improved cognitive, affective and social learning outcomes for students in twelve Victorian schools, in Australia. This study took place in Melbourne, Australia, in August 2010, with 12 Victorian schools which self-proclaimed as ILE (Innovative Learning Environments). The standpoint from this study was based on the lack of empirical evidence that indicated how building learning environments enhance students' learning, how teachers and students used these spaces and what effects might produce in other social groups.

In this study, a large multidisciplinary team of researchers participated and customized different qualitative approaches to successfully access to the several representations of ILE. The data collection included curriculum and policy documents, interviews with leaders, facilitators, students, and stakeholders, direct observation of classes to observe the teaching, learning and the use of resources, tours around the schools, and field notes. They also implemented the use of visual data collection such as students' maps, photographs, general organization inside schools, and semiotic symbolism.

The study indicates that, indeed, there was an effective step-by-step process in the preparation for, and the transition to, new learning spaces. Besides, the way teachers and students made use of these spaces by identifying significant engagement with collaborative and flexible learning allows learning to take place anywhere, anytime. Nevertheless, there was no evidence of cognitive, affective and social learning outcomes by participants due to the limited time they had in these spaces.

Although there was not a clear connection between how language learning could be implemented in these environments, this study reveals that educative institutions are committed to implementing the main principles and goals of Learning Environment into the curricula. This constructivist view of learning allows institutions, teachers and students to be in constant enhancement towards teaching and learning not only the content of a subject, but also metacognitive, social and interactional skills that may be fundamental in the future.

The study "*Growing Self-Esteem and Discovering Intelligences Through Oral Production*" carried out by Ochoa (2009) intended to increase students' self-confidence when performing oral activities in L2. According to the author, teachers have to rethink the role that teaching has on Pedagogy as it is important to help students to believe in themselves and create an appropriate environment in which they can construct meaning and develop their personality (Ochoa, 2009). This research looked for the following theoretical foundations to take into reference, multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and self-efficacy and self-confidence beliefs in students' performance in L2 classrooms (Bandura, 1977). This study was carried out in an 11th grade course in a public school located in the 19th zone of Bogotá (Ciudad Bolívar). The population selected for this study was the highest course of the Industrial modality (in this institution, there are three main educational focuses: Industrial, Science and Commerce). In this course there were thirty-four students: twenty-six males and eight females between 16 and 19 years old. At this school, the time assigned to English classes was two-80 minute classes per week. Ochoa noticed the insecurity of her students when performing L2 oral activities. This was because of students' lack of self-confidence and their

need to be accepted among their partners, therefore, this influenced negatively in their learning process.

The study did not specify its methodological framework, but its qualitative nature is noticeable. That is because it intended to identify the individuals´ characteristics by developing several activities proposed by the teacher that could increase students' self-esteem when performing in L2.

Throughout the research the students were encouraged to develop a task in which they related their previous knowledge in L2 with a free activity they were used to. The whole process was monitored by the teacher, from the arrangement of the ideas until the accomplishment of the task itself. According to the author, the focus of the research was the development of the activities as it was there where students' strongest and weakest points were spotted. The study found that students' attitude towards the activities positively changed as they showed dedication, preparation and respect while others develop their tasks. They also realized the importance of relating Language content to their favourite activities and hobbies to acknowledge what was being learnt. Finally, they felt that their self-esteem and disposition regarding English classes were notoriously higher than before as they understood what their capabilities were. In emergent results, their pronunciation was also improved, but there was still a lack of vocabulary to express their ideas and feelings better.

Although the study did not fully explore the different intelligences as stated in the title, it is important to highlight that meaningful learning and meaningful activities implemented many affective factors that resulted in the improvement of the students´ oral performance in L2. Ochoa emphasized on the creation of a special

atmosphere in which the students could identify what they are capable of and establish their own objectives toward learning as well. As seen, these ideas are close to the constructivist view that the present study project will take into reference when observing to what extent an alternative learning environment could favour the development of CC in a L2.

5.2 Theoretical Framework

5.2.1 Learning Environments

The concept of learning environment has been an object of study since Jonassen (1994) introduced it as part of Instructional Design approach. It emerged among the pedagogical constructivist view that claimed about the importance of giving the learner the chance to be part of his/her own learning process. This learning environment would provide the learner the opportunity to construct their knowledge and interact with pairs. Thus, the knowledge is no longer the primary element of the learning process. Despite the clear distinction of the concept by many authors (Jonassen, 1994-1996; Sauvé, 1994; Wilson, 1996; Lefoe, 1998), some others have confused this term with the concept of "physical and social space" or "atmosphere"; therefore, its actual definition has detached from the pedagogical constructivist view it had in 1990s to become in a concept closer to social disciplines.

It is essential to take a look at the different points that have been considered regarding Learning Environments (from now on LE). In order to gain some insight on the topic, Constructivism will be key in the development of this chapter. Taking this into account, the present chapter will be divided into three main sections: the first one will present a brief summary of the Traditional View of Learning

Environments (from now on, TLE), taking a glance at the origins of the term Learning Environment, as well as its different conceptions from Jonassen (1991,1994), Sauvé (1994), Wilson (1996) and Lefoe (1998). The second section will attempt to briefly contextualize the reader with Constructivist Learning Theory by presenting two of his main features to analyse the learning environment: Scaffolding, and Meaningful Learning. Finally, the authors will briefly present the Constructivist Learning Environment approach (from now on CLE).

Traditional View of Learning Environments

Lefoe (1998) explained that the first and the traditional notion of a Learning Environment appeared in the scenario of instructional design, a field which roots came from behavioural and cognitive psychology in early 1950s. According to the author, an instructional designer's main goal is to create an instructional space for the students to interact with their knowledge, which has been previously acquired via a teacher or some other tool. However, when Jonassen (1994) identified the active role learners had in their learning process, the development of instructional design crossed paths with Constructivism. Although research was still focused on creating a model for instructional designs, Jonassen (1991, 1994) focused more on the designing of LE rather than instructional designs (Lefoe, 1998). In other words, the significant change relies on designing authentic LE in which students could construct their knowledge and interact with pairs.

When Jonassen introduced the term "Learning Environment design" many authors considered worth noting to define it from different perspectives. One of those authors was Sauvé (1994), who defined Traditional Learning Environment (TLE) from a more social Constructivist: "a space in which a significant construction of

the culture occurs "(Sauvé, 1994). From her position, the key element is culture. Another of such authors was Wilson (1996) who offered a definition closer to the construction of meaningful ways to solve problems. Wilson also established two main features that a LE must include: the learner and the space in which the learner acts. Here, Wilson agreed with Jonassen in what both said that knowledge is no longer the most relevant aspect of the learning process; instead, the learner and the space will take that position. This view differs from the one proposed by Perkins (1991) who mentioned five main features a LE must incorporate: information banks, symbol pads, phenomenaria, construction kits, and task managers. For the present study, the perspectives of Perkins and Wilson will be taken into account as they complement each other by providing a variety of features to be identified and analysed in a LE. These features will serve in the designing of the main instrument to analyse the alternative Learning Environment.

In the following section, two theoretical constructs regarding the constructivist learning theory will be presented as a fundamental part in the design of the main instrument to analyse an alternative learning environment.

Scaffolding and Meaningful Learning as Constructs to Analyse a LE

To understand how a LE works, it is important to study some of the constructs behind one of the most important legacies Constructivism has left: the constructivist learning theory. The reason why this theory gets relevance to the purposes of this study is because, as stated before, learning assumes the main role in the construction of knowledge by the learner rather than the acquisition of knowledge (Wilson, 1996). Many have been the constructs authors such as Vigotsky (1978) and Ausubel (1968) have developed regarding this theory;

however, two concepts highlight among all of them: Scaffolding and Meaningful Learning. Next, some of the main ideas from both constructs will be explained as well as how they contribute to the purposes of this research project.

The concept of Scaffolding has been defined and built from three different theorists: Lev Vigotsky's view (1978), Wood, Bruner and Ross's view (1978), and Mercer's view (2008). The three definitions will be briefly presented as all see Scaffolding from different perspectives, but they get to a same objective that is, the construction of knowledge.

Before the concept was given the name Scaffolding, Vigotsky (1978) established the concept of ZPD (Zone of Proximal Model) as "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential problem solving as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more able peers (1978: 86)". He argued that a structured help must be given to children who have reached similar levels of conceptual development. This structured help would be renamed by Wood, Bruner, and Ross as Scaffolding (1978); a metaphor for the way an expert 'tutor' (such as a parent) can support a young child's progress and achievement through a relatively difficult task (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1978). According to the authors, the tutor has to comply 6 main functions in the process of Scaffolding:

- Orientating the child's attention to the version of the task defined by the tutor.
- Reducing the number of steps that are required to solve a problem, thus simplifying the situation in a way that the learner can handle the components of the process.

- Maintaining the activity of the child as she/he strives to achieve a specific goal, motivating her/him and directing her/his actions.

- Highlighting critical features of the task for the learner.

- Controlling the frustration of the child and the risk of failure.

- Providing the child with idealized models of required actions.

Bruner would give his own definition of Scaffolding as "a cognitive support given by teachers to learners to help them solve tasks that they would not be able to solve working on their own" (Bruner, 1978).

The third approach regarding Scaffolding is based on the researches conducted by Neil Mercer (2008). He introduced the concept of IDZ (Intermental Development Zone) as the dynamic and reflexive maintenance of a purposeful shared consciousness by a teacher and a learner. In other words, the process of scaffolding is no longer a function performed by the teacher, but the knowledge is constructed by both the teacher and the student by taking into reference the objective of learning (Mercer, 2008). Moreover, this author proposes talking in class as an appropriate strategy to reach an ideal IDZ by contextualizing the talk activity.

As seen, Scaffolding has become a process that gives the opportunity either to learners and teachers to be involved in both learning process and construction of knowledge. That is the reason why the implementation of Scaffolding can favour the construction and implementation of a LE. Now, it is necessary to see the role of Meaningful Learning and what it needs to take place in a LE.

The second principle taken from constructivism that this research will take into account is Meaningful Learning. Novak (2010) remarked the importance in

Ausubel's theory of Meaningful Learning by saying that there exists two ways of learning: rote learning and meaningful learning. According to Ausubel (1968), the learner who is learning by rote will not make a substantial effort to relate the new information with the previous knowledge located in his/her cognitive structure. On the contrary, learning meaningfully implies a process of subsumption, in which the new information obtained by the learner will be integrated with previous relevant ideas in his/her cognitive structure. The importance of learning meaningfully relies on the construction of an integrated framework of concepts and propositions organized hierarchically for a given domain (Novak, 2010). The next concept map made by Novak & Cañas (2008) will introduce the main theory regarding Meaningful Learning.
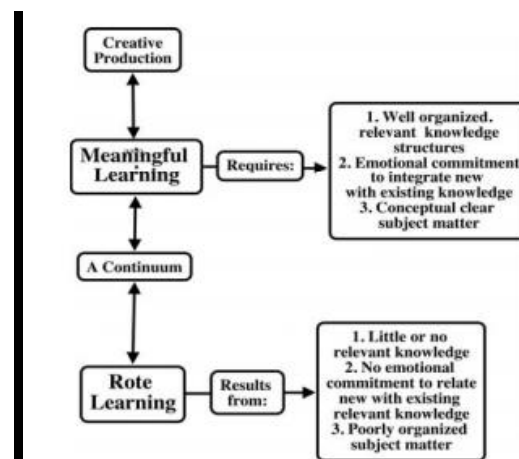
Concept map made by Novak, J.D & Cañas, A, 2008.
The theory Underlying Concept Maps and How to Construct and Use Them.
Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition Pensacola

The concept map above is a summary of the distinctions made by Ausubel (1968) between Rote Learning and Meaningful Learning. He stated that the way in which meaning is constructed influences directly in the rote or meaningful learning process the learner is carrying on. For the purposes of this research, the requirements for Meaningful Learning to take place will be presented next:

- The material used by the teacher or the information to be learned must be conceptually clear and presented to the learner within contextualized examples related to the learner's prior knowledge.

- The learner must have relevant previous knowledge for what is going to be learned. If not, it is possible that Meaningful Learning does not occur. As a consequence, the new information will be left behind to become in rote learning.

- It is up to the learner to learn meaningfully. This aspect focuses on each learner's motivation. If the learner is intrinsically motivated to learn something, there is a big opportunity that Meaningful Learning takes place. On the contrary, if the learner experiences Extrinsic Motivation, the Meaningful Learning will turn into Rote Learning, causing misunderstandings, poorly organized information, and even the oblivion of the content to be learned.

Ausubel (1968) also stated that there are two main learning situations in which meaning can be constructed: by reception or discovery. According to him, learning by discovery does not have a clear advantage over learning by reception as the learner may take longer to acquire the new information he/she discovers. Besides, learner assumes the risk of discovering an erroneous content that may interfere with his/her learning process. While learning by reception is more effective because the information acquired is, most of the times, concrete and reliable. These situations share two features as the ways in which learning situations can be developed: repetitive if the learner needs more than one time to understand a concept or an idea, or meaningful if the concept is related to the learner's previous

knowledge and integrates with the new information he/she is receiving or discovering (Ausubel, 1968).

In 2011, Jane L. Howland, David H. Jonassen, and Rose M. Marra introduced in his book *Meaningful Learning with Technology* five main components of Meaningful Learning by taking into reference Ausubel previous contributions to the concept. These are:

1. Learning is active: participants are actively engaged by a meaningful task in which they manipulate objects and parameters of the environment they are working in and observing the results of their manipulations.
2. Learning is constructive: learners must articulate what they have accomplished and reflect on their activity and observations to learn the lessons that their activity has to reach.
3. Learning is intentional: all actions learners do must be goal-directed, that is, they must fulfil an intention proposed at the beginning of the task.
4. Learning is authentic: learning should be embedded in real life, useful context for learners to practice using what they have learnt.
5. Learning is cooperative: learners negotiate a common understanding of the subject that is being discussed.

After a brief glance at the main characteristics and components of Scaffolding and Meaningful Learning theory, it is important to see how these constructivist concepts have influenced the definition and goals of the Constructivist Learning Environment approach since 1990s.

Constructivist Learning Environment

This heading will present the definition of Constructivist Learning Environments (from now on, CLE) from Wilson's perspective (1996). It will also make a brief historical review regarding the conceptions about CLE and its designing goals according to Jonassen (1991), Cunningham, Duffy and Knuth (1993), Jonassen and Duffy (1994), Jonassen et al (1995), Savery and Duffy (1995), and Duffy and Cunningham (1996). The objective of reviewing this approach is to take his definition and some of his main goals to be considered when designing the main instrument to analyse the alternative learning environment authors previously chose.

In his book *Constructivist Learning Environments: Case Studies in Instructional Design* (1996) Brent Wilson defined CLE approach as a place where learners work in groups and help each other in the development of the given task. To do that, they use a variety of tools and information banks to solve problem-based activities and achieve the established learning goals (Wilson, 1996:5). Here, *how* is more important than *what*, as the learners are the owners of their learning process, deciding the most appropriate way to construct their own knowledge. In 1997, Van Der Meij disagreed with the argument above as there must be a balance between what is learned and how it is learned. Otherwise, the learning process would be incomplete.

During this research project, the authors will analyse the chosen LE by taking into reference the importance of these two features equally, as well as others.

As mentioned before, the concept of "Constructivist Learning Environment" came up from the discussion of implementing instructional design in some authentic

environments in which learners could have control over their learning process. However, it was in 1991 that Jonassen made reference to some specific goals a CLE designer must follow, which are:

1. To use negotiation rather than imposition to establish general and specific objectives.
2. To give free interpretation to task analysis so the tools used to solve problems can be implemented in multiple situations.
3. To promote multiple perspectives of reality of the tools used in the environment.
4. To give learners "tool kits" to facilitate the construction of knowledge.
5. To evaluate goals freely in order to be used in self-analysis.

Based on the study of some environments considered as CLE, inn 1993, Duffy and Jonassen developed some characteristics a CLE must have. The authors established a set of three main features a CLE should fulfil:

1. Knowledge construction: it must be founded on negotiation of meanings, established as a social agreement of reality, assisted by the discovery, design and usage of LE, and developed into mental models.
2. A context for learning: it must be meaningful and authentic in order to use the constructed knowledge in problem-solving tasks.
3. Collaboration: learners and teachers must work together to construct knowledge. Nevertheless, the teacher must be a coach rather than the holder of knowledge.

In 1994, Cunningham, Duffy, and Knuth developed their own 7 goals to design CLE. Later on, in 1995, Duffy and Savery would broaden these goals into 9. The

following chart developed by Lefoe (1998) will compare the two groups of goals mentioned before:

Comparison of design goals specified by Cunningham et al (1993) compared to the design goals specified by Savery and Duffy (1995)

Cunningham et al 1993	Savery and Duffy 1995
1. provide experience with the knowledge construction process	1. give the learner ownership of the process used to develop the solution
2. provide experience in and appreciation of multiple perspectives	2. encourage testing ideas against alternative views and alternate contexts*
3. embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts	3. anchor all learning activities to a larger task
	4. design an authentic task
	5. design the task and the learning environment to reflect the complexity of the environment they should be able to function in at the end of learning.
4. encourage ownership and voice in the learning process	6. support the learner in developing ownership for the overall problem or task
5. embed learning in social experience	7. encourage testing ideas against alternative views and alternate contexts *
6. encourage the use of multiple modes of representation	8. design the learning environment to support and challenge the learner's thinking
7. encourage self-awareness of the knowledge construction process	9. provide opportunity for and support reflection on both the content learned and the learning process

The authors of this research chose some of the goals exposed in the chart above as part of the analysis of the chosen LE. In the methodological framework section, they will be further explained.

Finally, in 1996 Duffy and Cunningham reunited again to make a refinement to the goals proposed in 1993. However, the new goals were focused on the socio-cultural aspect of constructivism. Thus, they will not be mentioned as is not the main focus of the present research.

As seen, Learning Environment is a construct that has been in constant development since its introduction in 1990s into the pedagogical disciplines. It is also fundamental to identify that the concepts presented above: the traditional and constructivist view of the construct, Scaffolding and Meaningful Learning, have several bonds with Second Language learning, specially, the development of CC.

These bonds will be clearly presented when diagnosing which, how, when and why the elements selected occurred in the alternative LE by using a grill specially designed for this objective. Now, the Communicative Competence construct will be presented in order to review and establish what the authors will understand as CC.

5.2.2 Communicative Competence

When referring to Communicative Competence (from now on CC), it is necessary to talk not only about the origins of the concept, but also about how it can be developed and assessed. This chapter will deal with the topics mentioned before under the following headings: Historical Review of Communicative Competence and Development of the Communicative Competence. The first heading will concern the evolution of the concept taking into account the perspectives of Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972), and the proposals by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and Celce-Murcia (1995-2000). The second and last heading will present some of the theory related to the development of the Communicative Competence from the perspectives of Young (1999), Young & Miller (2004), Cekaite (2007) and Young (2011) (Interactional Competence), and Dörnyei & Thurrel and Mariani (Strategic Competence, 1991). The CEFR will also contribute to some notions about the development of Linguistic and Socio-linguistic Competence. At the end of this section, a brief conclusion will be stated about why is it important to make this historical review of CC as well as its development.

Historical review of Communicative Competence

In 1965, Noam Chomsky created the notion of the *ideal speaker-listener* defined as the individual who has a linguistic knowledge of a language. Such knowledge, according to Chomsky, is made up of three components which are: the syntactic component dealing with the correct sentence structure, the phonological component dealing with the sounds or phonemes of the sentence generated by the syntactic component, and the semantic component dealing with the meaning or interpretation of that sentence.

Regarding the linguistic knowledge that an *ideal speaker-listener* has, Chomsky distinguished between *the knowledge as such* and *the use* of that knowledge. The former was given the name of *competence* and the latter was given the name of *performance*.

Since Chomsky's perspective was based on cognitive principles, which means it is focused on discovering a mental subjacent process to a behavior (Chomsky, 1965:4), it brought up a discussion around the relationship between competence and performance because some authors considered that the social context was left aside.

In fact, in 1972 Dell Hymes argued that *competence* and *performance* should be considered as two sides of the same coin. He claimed that an individual's competence (linguistic knowledge) may not be reflected on that individual's performance. According to the author, the competence is not only about acquiring a set of grammatical rules, but also about a set of social rules. This contribution highlighted the role of communicative situations due to the fact that the speaker

should learn what, how and when to use certain forms of the language (Hymes, 1982:74-77).

Hymes established the importance of analyzing both, the capacity that an individual has to use the language as a mean of communication in different contexts, and the fact that the language is variable and functional according to the context in which it is used (Hymes, 1982:128). Therefore, the author defined CC as the individual's ability to use the grammatical competence in different communicative situations, and thus he considered four components of CC which are *Grammatical Competence* (Chomsky's Linguistic Competence), *Sociolinguistic Competence* (communicative situations), *Pragmatic Competence* (speech acts), and *Psycholinguistic* Competence (individual's variables). In the following paragraphs, each competence will be presented.

Hymes conceived the G*rammatical Competence* as Chomsky did, that is, the linguistic knowledge (syntax, phonology and semantics) of a language. This component was not the focus of Hymes' theory as he intended to go deeper into the Sociolinguistic component of the CC.

Sociolinguistic Competence refers to the communicative situations and it was given the name of *The Ethnography of the Speech* by Hymes. According to Pilleux (2001) the Sociolinguistic Competence has four components:

- The first one is *rules of interaction* which refers to the culturally agreed usages of the language of the speech.
- The second one is *the speaking model* which is intended to analyze the different social situations that could affect the communicative process.

- The third component is the *interactional competence* which is the knowledge and use of implicit social rules in different communicative situations in a socio-cultural and linguistic community. The present study will later go further into this component as it is widely developed by Celce-Murcia (1995) and turns out to be one of the main categories of analysis in this study.

- The fourth one is the *cultural competence* defined as an individual's capacity of comprehending and acting according to the social structure in terms of its values, beliefs, and how he/she perceives the world.

The *Pragmatic Competence* was assumed by Hymes from a philosophical perspective based on the studies conducted by Austin, Searle, and Grice, and refers to the role of the statements as active forms in a social context. This competence takes into account three main concepts: the *functional competence, the implicatures,* and the *presuppositions.* The first one refers to the speech act such as congratulate, forgive, deny, ask, clarify, etc. and how their meanings change according to the culture. The second concept refers to the inferences that the receptor makes about the meaning of a message based on the context, not on the literal meaning of the words that make up the message. The last concept, *presuppositions,* refers to the inferences that can be made based on the linguistic form that shapes the message.

The *Psycholinguistic Competence* focuses not only on the personality of the speaker, but also on the socio-cognition, and the affective conditioning that could affect his/her process of communication. The speaker's personality factors are influenced by the speaker's motivation, intellectual condition, as well as his/her social status, age or gender. The socio-cognition aspect takes into account the

mental representations that are common to a community that also influences an individual's, and it may modify both the community and the individual's speech. The affective conditioning includes elements from the culture, the individual, and the context in specific events. These factors will be further explained in the section called Individual Factors that might affect the development of CC.

Years later, Canale & Swain (1980) reviewed Hymes' model of CC and argued that the Psycholinguistic Competence, which Hymes incorporated into the Sociolinguist Competence, did not belong to the CC but to the Communicative Performance. For them, CC was the relationship between the Grammatical Competence and the Sociolinguistic Competence, while Communicative Performance focused on the actual production and the comprehension of utterances from a psycholinguistic perspective. This Communicative Performance included motivational and decision-making factors.

According to Canale & Swain (1980) CC involved the Grammatical Competence, the Sociolinguistic Competence (both as Hymes conceived them in his model) and the Strategic competence. The first one consists in the morphologic, syntactic, phonological, phonetic and the semantic knowledge of a language. The second one involves two types of rules: the *socio-cultural rules*, which refer to the degree of appropriateness in a given context and how a specific register or style adopts certain grammatical forms and the *rules of discourse*, related to the communicative functions and its utterances. The third one, Strategic Competence which was first introduced by them, includes verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies that are implemented when there are "breakdowns in communication" (Canale & Swain: 30:2002). This component affects both Grammatical Competence and Sociolinguist Competence.

In 1983, Michael Canale proposed a third component of CC, the *Discourse Competence.* This one consists in the ability to connect sentences in order to form a meaningful utterance (Mohani, 1992). This component will be part of Canale's model, but it would not be worked until Celce-Murcia's contributions years later.

In 1995, Marianne Celce-Murcia et al proposed a CC model that took into account some of the previous conceptions mentioned before. The Linguistic, Socio-linguistic and Strategic Competences were seen just as Canale & Swain (1980) did. The additions made by Celce-Murcia et al to their CC model were the Discourse Competence and the Actional Competence.

It is necessary to give a brief glance to each of the competences embedded in Celce-Murcia et al's model of CC in order to establish which ones will be part of the present study.

The Discourse competence is considered as the core of their CC model. The reason why it is seen as the principal element is the fact that according to the authors, the discourse competence is shaped by the Sociolinguistic, Linguistic and Actional Competences which at the same time are built upon the Discourse Competence. This last competence refers to the ability to shape a spoken message by making use of five sub-areas. These ones are: cohesion, deixis, coherence, genre, conversational structure. For the purposes of the present study, these components will not be developed.

The Linguistic competence remains with its traditional elements (from Chomsky's view) which are: syntax, morphology, lexicon and phonology. Celce-Murcia et al added orthography to this competence which includes spelling and phonemes features.

The Socio cultural competence involves how to be appropriate within the cultural context and it is composed by: social contextual factors, stylistic appropriateness factors, cultural factor, and non-verbal communicative factors. Although these factors contributed to the conception of the Socio-Cultural Competence, the socio contextual, the cultural and the non-verbal communicative factors are not the focus of the present study and therefore they will not be taken into account. As seen, Celce-Murcia modified the name of this competence from Canale & Swain and Hymes' term. This was not explained by her, but the researchers of this study considered this change fundamental as it is culture what constantly shapes linguistic features in a social context. Therefore, this new term makes wider the study of linguistic and communicative phenomena in society.

The Actional competence, which was first presented by Hymes´s under the name of Functional Competence) concerns the speaker's ability to convey and understand language functions. Celce-Murcia et al proposed seven components which are: interpersonal exchange, information, opinions, feelings, suasion, problems and future scenarios. Each of them refers to different communicative situations.

Strategic competence is conceived following Canale & Swain (1980) perspective. However, Celce-Murcia et al (1995) went deeper by means of specifying the communicative strategies components which are:

- Avoidance or reduction strategies which can be observed in the following attitudes: message replacements, topic avoidance or message abandonment.

- Achievement or compensatory strategies include non-linguistic means such as miming, gesturing or pointing and some other related with literal translations, foreignzing (L1 word with L2 pronunciation), among others.

- Stalling or time gaining strategies entail the use of fillers, and self-repetition.

- Self-monitoring strategies can be observed when the speaker rephrase and corrects what has been said.

- Interactional strategies cover a huge amount of communicative situations. For the present study, only two categorizes will be taken into account, *requests and responses.* There are three kinds of *requests*: repetition requests, clarification requests and confirmation requests. On the *responses* side, there are five types: repetition, rephrasing, expansion, confirmation and reduction.

In Celce-Murcia et al's model, it is clear the interest they had in establishing not only the definitions of each competence but also the different components each one has. Therefore, the authors of the present study will follow the Actional competence and the Strategic Competence as part of their understanding of the CC. This is due to the fact they were broken into smaller parts which make easier their understanding and analysis. In the following scheme, Celce-Murcia et al´s model is summarized:

Taken from: Celce-Murcia (2000). Rethinking the Role of Communicative Competence in Language Teaching.
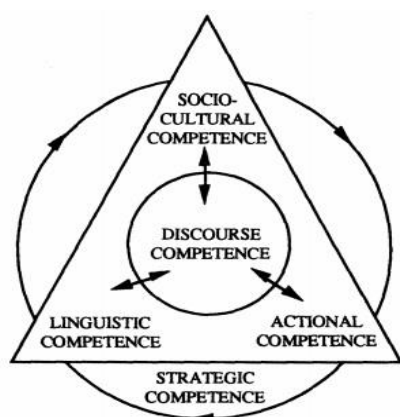
Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence

In 2000, Celce-Murcia would complement her CC model by adding two extra Competences: Formulaic Competence and Interactional Competence. The next figure illustrates the schematic representation of her new model:
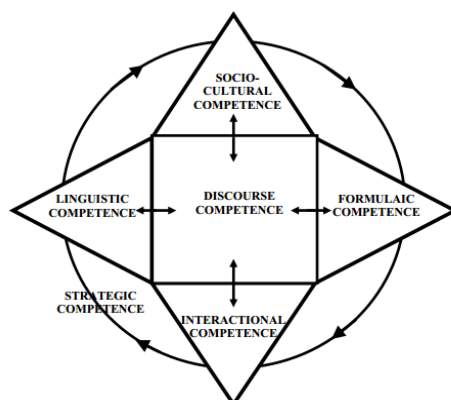
Figure 3.3 Revised schematic representation of 'communicative competence'

Taken from: Celce-Murcia (2000). Rethinking the Role of Communicative Competence in Language Teaching.

Before presenting her add-ons, it is important to mention that the Discourse Competence is still being the core of her model. First, she introduced the Formulaic Competence as a counterbalance to Linguistic Competence. It involves the fixed utterances of daily use language. That is, expressions related to routines, collocations, idioms, and lexical frames. She also took the Interactional Competence as one of the reformulations in her new model. This competence is divided into three different sub-competences: Actional competence (involves the knowledge and use of language functions in specific contexts), Conversational competence (embraces some dialogic genres such as turn-taking, how to open, close, interrupt in conversations, among others), and Non-verbal or paralinguistic competence (refers to the kinesics, proxemics, haptic behavior, and non-linguistic utterances with interactional purposes).

Having presented the historical review of the concept of CC, the authors of this study will offer their understanding of what CC will be defined as, as well as its components. Throughout the years, what changed were the components of CC. However, its definition remained just as Hymes (1972) formulated it. Therefore, for the authors CC will be defined as: the individual's knowledge and use of linguistic, socio-linguistic, interactional, and strategic aspects in different social and communicative situations. For the authors, CC is composed by the following competences: the Linguistic Competence and, the Sociolinguistic Competence from the proposal of Hymes (1972), the Interactional Competence and the Strategic Competence seen from Celce-Murcia model (2000). The reasons behind this notion are linked to the different features each one covers and how they relate to each other. Keeping in mind that Hymes's conceptions of Linguistic and Socio-linguistic Competence were not debated by the authors that followed him, the present study will keep his ideas regarding these two competences.

Although Hymes included the Functional Competence related with speech acts into his CC model, he did not develop it as Celce-Murcia (1995-2000) did in her two proposals. Hence, the authors choose the Interactional Competence which includes the Conversational and Actional Competence (Functional Competence according to Hymes) as she gave a more detailed explanation of its elements. Besides, these elements are more observable as they are situated in specific communicative situations, in contrast with the speech acts, which are more abstracts concepts.

Regarding the Strategic Competence first introduced by Canale and Swain (1980) the authors selected the contributions made by Celce-Murcia (1995) because she went deeper into the different communicative strategies at hand by establishing

even examples and different communicative situations in which these strategies can be effectively used.

The authors mentioned in this historical review of CC have shaped the concept of this competence not by being against other theories, but by contributing with their point of view according to the evolution of Applied Linguistics. This fact is fundamental to this research project as possible results from the observations can be supported not from one point of view, but from a whole perspective built by many theorists along the years, Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972), and the proposals by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and Celce-Murcia (1995-2000). Yet, it is still important to review how CC and its sub-competences presented by the authors above are developed and which the most common techniques to enhance this competence are.

Next, the development of the sub competences that will be part of the main instrument will be briefly introduced.

Development of Communicative Competence

The authors of the present research did not find any documents or other studies related to the Development of CC as a whole. However, there are many authors which embrace the development of isolated competences attached to CC. Although these researches explain several changes an individual may have when developing different competences regarding CC, Young (2011) claimed there is still no evidence of how they occur. Thus it is necessary to go deeper in this subject.

Keeping in mind the selected sub-competences to be analyzed in the present study, the sources and authors to be observed will be: CEFR (linguistic and socio-

linguistic competence), Young (1999), Young & Miller (2004), Cekaite (2007) and Young (2011) (Interactional Competence), and Dörnyei & Thurrel and Mariani (Strategic Competence, 1991).

The authors of this research project believe that the development of these sub-competences could therefore generate a development of CC as a whole. Nevertheless, the lack of theoretical support that attaches the development of several sub-competences to a general improvement of CC difficults the task of developing a whole theory towards this relationship.

Development of the Linguistic and Socio-Linguistic Competence according to the CEFR

The CEFR has established a group of three competences related to communication in L2. These competences already mentioned by most of the authors in the section Historical review of Communicative Competence are intended to explain what features a L2 learner must develop to achieve an appropriate competence. These three sub-competences are: Linguistic Competence, Socio-linguistic Competence, and Pragmatic Competence.

This section will develop the first two competences mentioned above, as Pragmatic Competence was not taken into reference in the analysis of the Learning Environment.

Linguistic Competence

The CEFR has tried to classify the main components regarding the Linguistic Competence, defined as the knowledge of formal resources and the ability to use them. These components help the L2 learner to create appropriate utterances in

daily conversations. The components or sub-competences of the Linguistic Competence the CEFR establishes as a guide for the teachers and institutions to be applied in educative curricula are: Lexical Competence, Grammatical Competence, Semantic Competence, Phonological Competence, Orthographic Competence, and Orthoepic Competence.

The next chart shows the development of the learner's ability to use those linguistic resources included in each sub-competence. This classification is based on the CEFR's common reference levels.

	GENERAL LINGUISTIC RANGE
C2	*Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity . . . No signs of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.*
C1	*Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.*
B2	*Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.*
	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.
B1	*Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.*
	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.
A2	*Has a repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words.*
	Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information.
	Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places, possessions etc.
	Has a limited repertoire of short memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.
A1	*Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type.*

Development of the learner's ability to use the linguistic resources included in each sub-competence.
Taken from: CEFR Page 110

Now, this section will briefly present each sub-competence related to the Linguistic Competence.

- Lexical Competence: it entails the knowledge and the ability to use the acquired vocabulary of a language. It is composed by lexical elements that include fixed expressions, and single word forms; and grammatical

elements, closer to several word classes such as articles, quantifiers, possessives, conjunctions, among others.

- Grammatical Competence: it is known as the knowledge and ability to use the grammatical tools of the language. Its components established by CEFR are: elements (morphemes, affixes or words), categories (gender, number or time tense), classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, among others), structures (phrases, clauses or sentences), processes (nominalization, afflixation, among others), and relations (concord or valency). It also involves linguistic disciplines such as morphology and syntax.

- Semantic Competence: it relates the cognitive organization and awareness of the learner with the meaning of lexical and grammatical features.

- Phonological Competence: it focuses on the knowledge and production of sound-units (phonemes), its realization in a specific context (allophones), the phonemic features that difference phonemes, the phonetic configuration of words, sentence phonetics, and phonetic reduction.

- Orthographic Competence: it is related with the knowledge and use of the symbols which compose a written task. It embraces: the form of letters in printed or cursive forms, spelling, punctuation, typographical and logographic conventions.

- Orthoepic Competence: it is opposite to the Orthographic Competence, and involves the correct production of an established written text. To do that, the learner must get: the knowledge of spelling conventions, the use of some aids such as dictionaries to check spelling and pronunciation, use of punctuation marks, and the ability to identify ambiguity.

Sociolinguistic Competence

The CEFR conceives Sociolinguistic Competence as the knowledge and use of the social dimension of language used by the learner. As seen, this definition shares similarities with the ones proposed by Hymes (1792), Canale and Swain (), and Celce-Murcia (1995, 2000). It is also attached with the socio-cultural dimension of language use. However, it is not going to be developed as the authors of this research did not take it into reference when analyzing LE.

As well as the Linguistic Competence, the CEFR relates the Sociolinguistic Competence to some matters regarded language use such as: linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences, dialect, and accent. The CEFR clarifies that the learner must develop these matters in order to fully achieve an appropriate control of the competence:

- Linguistic markers of social relations: it focuses on the different aspects inherent in a social group or al culture. As there are too many ways to use language conventions in a specific place, the CEFR establishes some of the most common such as: greetings, addressing someone or something, turn-taking, and expletives.

- Politeness conventions: as stated, it embraces the different forms of politeness found in a specific social group or culture. There are positive and negative ways of politeness; appropriate use of expressions to ask, request, or apologize; and expressions of impoliteness.

- Expressions of folk-wisdom: it involves the correct and appropriate use of proverbs, idioms, familiar quotations, and some other expressions of beliefs, attitudes, or values.

- Register differences: it entails the use of different kind of registers according to the given situation. They go from formal, informal, familiar, or neutral expressions. The CEFR claims that A1-B1 learners should start using neutral register. Along the learning process, the learner would be able to difference and choose between one or another register according to the situation or the culture he/she is involved in.

- Dialect and accent: the learner must know the differences established by social class, national origin, ethnicity, or occupational group regarding language use. Off course, these aspects not only involves the socio-linguistic dimension of language, but also all the sub-competences attached to Linguistic and Pragmatic Competence.

As seen with the chart regarding Linguistic Competence, the CEFR has created a similar chart that illustrates the conditions a L2 Learner must acquire to develop his/her Socio-linguistic Competence. These abilities are organized according to the CEFR's common reference levels.

	SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROPRIATENESS
C2	*Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning.* *Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly.* *Can mediate effectively between speakers of the target language and that of his/her community of origin taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.*
C1	*Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.* *Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.* *Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.*
B2	*Can express him or herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.* *Can with some effort keep up with and contribute to group discussions even when speech is fast and colloquial.* *Can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker.* *Can express him or herself appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation.*
B1	*Can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register.* *Is aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately.* *Is aware of, and looks out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of his or her own.*
A2	*Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way.* *Can socialise simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.* *Can handle very short social exchanges, using everyday polite forms of greeting and address. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc.*
A1	*Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc.*

Conditions a L2 Learner must acquire to develop his/her Socio-linguistic Competence

Taken from: CEFR page 122

Now, the authors of this study will analyze the two remaining competences from the perspectives of Young (2011) and Dörnyei & Thurrel and Mariani (1991).

Interactional Competence

The term Interactional Competence (from now on IC) has been the object of different interpretations regarding SLA studies. However, there seem to be few studies establishing a link between this competence and CC as well as how to develop it.

In fact, Young (1999) claimed that there were no empirical studies which contributed to the theory about the development of IC. This situation radically has changed along the years as many researchers have found some empirical

foundation for developing IC, although they do not present it as a step-by-step process. Next, two studies developed by Young and Miller (2004) and Cekaite (2007) will be briefly reviewed in order to present what has been said about the development of IC.

In 2004, Young and Miller wanted to investigate how IC is enhanced between a Vietnamese student of ESL and a tutor, an English native speaker. For four weeks, the tutor and the learner checked some essays written by the student in order to identify problems related to his writing.

In the first week the participation of the learner in each revision talk was limited to some utterances like *Yeah!* which made the tutor's interventions longer than expected.

However, by the end of the four weeks, the dynamic of the revision talk had a significant change because the student performed most of the task the tutor was supposed to make. These tasks entailed the identification and self-correction of writing aspects, free talk about the topic, and the establishment of new objectives for future sessions. As the study showed, not only did the learner have a full intervention in the sessions, but also his writing skills improved notoriously. Overall, Young and Miller concluded that the student acquired some IC abilities by co-constructing learning with his tutor.

Besides this research, other investigations made by Bowles & Pallotti (2004), Yagi (2007), and Dings (2007), which followed similar ways to make L2 learners interact with native speakers, concluded that the development of IC was not related to a step-by-step process to fully achieve it. Rather its development relies on the acquisition of several skills involved in the

conversation. Moreover, the co-constructed learning is fundamental to enhance these skills.

Nevertheless, according to Young (2011) these studies were a bit controlled as the interaction occurs once in a while with only one person. That is why he reviewed Cekaite's study (2007) about how a one seven-year-old immigrant named Fusi developed her IC in an immersion class in Sweden.

Cekaite emphasized three stages through which Fusi went in order to develop her IC. In the early stage, the girl was silent and barely participated in classroom tasks. When requested, she avoided the situation by crying or leaving the classroom. In the middle stage, Fusi started to participate in class activities; however, she was not conscious about the interaction rules in the classroom. That is, she talked loudly and did not respect her partners talking turns. In the final stage, it was worth noting that Fusi was a competent member of her class. That implies that her participations were meaningful for her and for her partners; she started to get involved in class activities that implied mastering interactional skills about the language and the culture.

As seen, the development of IC was attached to the understanding and acquisition of some interactional skills related to the social group she was immersed in; and the learning was co-constructed between her, her partners, and her teacher.

Despite the contributions the previous authors, and others, have made regarding IC development, Young has claimed there is no detailed evidence of how IC development occurs and what is needed to develop it (Young, 2011).

Strategic Competence

Strategic competence refers to the learner's knowledge and use of verbal and non-verbal strategies when breakdowns in communication take place (Canale and Swain, 2002; Celce-Murcia, 1995, 2000; Dörnyei andThurrell, 1995; Mariani, 1995). Within this competence, there are the Communication/Communicative Strategies that theorists have more widely explored and included, since 1990s, in the framework of Strategic Competence. That being said, Communicative Strategies are defined as conscious plans the learner uses to reach a specific goal when communication in his/her L2 (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). Although many authors have stated that Communication/Communicative Strategies could reflect from L1 to L2 (including knowledge and use), they have also claimed the importance of teaching and developing such strategies in L2 classes (Dörnyei andThurrell, 1995; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell, 1995). Three proposals regarding the development of Strategic Competence or/and Communicative Strategies will be presented below so as to have a general view on the topic.

First, in their paper *Communicative Competence: A Pedagogically Motivated Model with Content Specifications,* Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1995) highlighted the importance of including Communication Strategy training in language syllabi. According to them, such training must take into account 6 main features:

1. Raising learner's awareness about the importance of using Communicative Strategies in daily communication.
2. Encouraging learners to use Communicative Strategies.
3. Providing L2 examples of the use of some Communicative Strategies.

4. Highlighting the differences regarding the Communicative Strategies that may appear between diverse social contexts and cultures.

5. Giving the learners linguistic tools to use Communicative Strategies correctly.

6. Providing the learners with opportunities to apply Communicative Strategies in context.

According to the authors, by including these features in language teaching syllabi, institutions can help learners to develop not only their communication Strategies appropriately, but also some other abilities regarding other competences.

The second proposal, made by Mariani (1995), seems to share some of the features exposed in the previous proposal regarding developing learners' Communicative Strategies. His contribution consists of a cyclical approach that alternates experience with observation (see figure()).
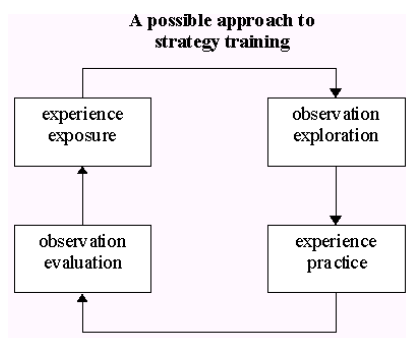
Approach to strategy training by Luciano Mariani (1994)

Taken from: http://www.learningpaths.org/papers/papercommunication.htm

In the first stage, the learners should be exposed to different examples showing the appropriate use of some Communicative Strategies. In the second stage, they must explore through discussion what they observed in the first stage regarding

linguistic, situational and socio-cultural aspects. The third stage entails the contextualized practice of the Communicative strategies seen in the first stage. In the last stage, the learners' performances must be assessed by the teacher and the learners themselves.

The third proposal dealing with the development of Strategic Competence section, Dornyei and Thurrell (1995) claimed that it can be cultivated separately from other competences. This occurs due to the fact learners transfer L1 Strategic Competence to L2 learning situations. This means that when adults start learning a L2, they already have a developed set of Communicative Strategies from L1.

In order to train Strategic Competence, the authors introduce some Communicative Strategies that can be used in a L2 classroom. These strategies are:

- Fillers: they are fundamental when there is a possible breakdown in the conversation. Fillers can give the learner some time to re-organize his/her ideas, highlight some point of the conversation, and delete what was said, among other possibilities. This is why it is fundamental to start providing the learners with fillers from beginning stages of learning.

- Going off the point: it is useful when learners want or need to avoid some kind of question. When mastered, besides giving the learners confidence, this strategy also provides the learners with the absolute control of the conversation.

- Paraphrase and circumlocution: Paraphrasing is a very effective way to clarify what learners heard from someone or something. Circumlocution

refers to a sentence that circles around an idea with many words rather than going straight to the point.

The process of development of each category of CC is still a topic to be further developed in future researchers. This brief glance at the sub competences that will be part of the main instrument will help in the diagnosis of which, how and when these take place in the alternative learning environment.

5.2.3 Individual Factors that might affect the Development of the Communicative Competence

Identifying students' levels of anxiety, language anxiety, affective principles and motivation towards the language, and to examine to what degree these affective factors have an impact on students' performance is necessary in order to achieve the learning goals.

This chapter will cover the mentioned factors under the following headlines: the first headline is Anxiety which will start with a definition taken from the American Psychological Association. Then, it will also present the types, effects and situations of anxiety. In addition, Language Anxiety consequences, instruments to measure Language Anxiety and signs to identify will be presented. The third headline Affective Principles will embrace the principles of language ego, risk taking and self-confidence from the affective principles proposed by Brown (1994). The last headline Motivation will take in the different types of motivation. The mentioned terms will be presented from the perspective of Brown (1966), Oxford (1995-1999), Gardner's & McIntyre (1993), Gardner (1985).

Anxiety & Language Anxiety

According to The American Psychological Association anxiety is defined as:

"It is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure…People with anxiety may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat" (w,d).

This emotion is linked with the feeling of frustration, uneasiness, and dread among others. When talking about language learning these feelings may be determinant in students' language success (Brown, 1994). These feelings and physical symptoms are reflected on students' willingness to communicate, to talk, and to interact with others. Brown (1994) established different types of anxiety in language learning, based on the situations in which they occur. Brown (1994) affirms that there are two types of anxiety: the *trait anxiety* is the tendency to have feelings such as stress or fear in most life situations which might or not affect the language performance, and the *state anxiety* might occur just in particular events and it is related with language success. Oxford (1999) proposed two different types of anxiety based on the effects of Anxiety: the *harmful (debilitating) anxiety* and the *helpful (facilitating) anxiety*. The first one has a negative effect on students' performance such as lack of participation and avoidance of the language. The author states that this type of anxiety is associated with motivation and beliefs towards the language. The second one results in high language proficiency and is related with students' self-confidence. This study will take into account Oxford's types of anxiety as they focus on the effects of anxiety, which unlike Brown's perspective, are more likely to be observed. Oxford's proposal is

observable in the language classroom since these types of anxiety are reflected on students' language proficiency, interaction among their partners and individual behaviors.

While Oxford and Brown's theories make a special focus on different types of anxiety, Gardner and Macintyre (1993) emphasized several situations that lead to this Anxiety to take place in different communicative situations. According to the authors, anxiety occurs when the learner is obliged to use the target language when s/he knows or feels that s/he is not proficient. As seen, their proposal is more specific by studying how language anxiety takes place in students' learning process. Next, some of these situations will be presented:

1. *Communication apprehension,* which refers to the level of fear that the learner encounters before or after communicating with others.

2. *Test anxiety* which takes place at any time of the activity and it normally leads to low performance. The sources of this type of anxiety are different. Some of them are the lack of preparation or confidence, the negative previous experiences with tests or worrying about the results before taking the exam.

3. *Fear of negative evaluation* involves peer approval and a worry about the social impression that the learner transmits. This situation leads to possible language avoidance as well as unwillingness to participate actively during the classes which might affect the language learning process.

Having presented the definition, the types, the effects and the situations that lead to anxiety, the researchers will now emphasize on Language Anxiety as one fundamental factor in the development of CC.

Language Anxiety is defined by Gardner & Macintyre (1993) as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient". Moreover, as it is linked with social and communicative aspects of the foreign language, it was placed as one of the *social anxieties*, from the psychological field, by Macintyre in 1989, 1991. *Social anxieties* are defined as the permanent fear an individual experience when performing in different circumstances which lead to uncomfortable and intimidating situations (The American Psychiatric Association, 2013). According to Macintyre (1995), Language Anxiety is linked with Social Anxiety as it is based on the similar feelings a learner might experience when learning a language. Keeping this in mind, Macintyre quoting Whitmore (1987), Levitt (1980) and Wine (1980) summarizes three consequences that arise from social anxiety which are also valid to language learning: 1. the *cognitive* dimension which causes expectations of failure. 2. The *behavior* dimension which inhibits actions. 3. The *affective* dimension that creates an atmosphere of fear. The mentioned outcomes are part of a cyclic process due to the fact that if one of them is affected the other two will be permeated as well.

In the language classroom, these three consequences may arise if a student is asked to answer a question. This might lead to anxiety which at the same time might affect students' cognition as it would be divided into the task at hand and the worry of performing it. This chain of event might or not have an impact on the overall performance.

As the researchers of this study created an instrument to analyze the different signs of anxiety in language learning, it is important to take a brief look at some of

the previous instruments that have been implemented when evaluating Language Anxiety levels.

In 1994, an experimental research was conducted by Macintyre and Gardner with the purpose of identifying the consequences that *state anxiety* has in the language learning processes. From this study, the authors concluded that state anxiety is the most common factor that affects language learning. Furthermore, Macintyre and Gardner (1994) affirmed that state anxiety can occur at any stage of the learning process and it generally leads to the three outcomes mentioned in the first paragraph of this headline (cognitive, behavior and affective consequences).

The most recognized scale was shaped by Horwitz et al.'s (1986) and was called the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)[1]. From Macintyre's (1995) perspective, this type of scales gives account for the *trait-based anxiety* which tells the existing predisposition to this emotion, instead of the state anxiety which is the most important one in language learning.

The previous study showed that *state anxiety* could be observed without the implementation of a scale. MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994) position was supported by Oxford (1999) who disagreed with Horwitz et al.s' scales as she considered that there were some behavioral aspects that could be observed without a tool. Accordingly, she proposed three general signs of Language Anxiety:

1. *General avoidance:* Forgetting the answer, low levels of verbal production, lack of volunteering, showing carelessness, and seeming inability to answer even the simplest questions.

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[1] Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. The Modern Language Journal, 70(2), 125-132

2. *Physical actions:* Playing with objects, stammering, nervously touching objects and being unable to reproduce sounds even after repeated practice.

3. *Physical symptoms:* Headache, feelings of tension in any part of the body, and sweating (Oxford, 1999, p.66).

As was previously shown, *state anxiety* which was first introduced by Brown, is the one that affects language performance the most in different levels. Therefore, the present study will try to detect its observable signs established by Oxford (1999).

Affective principles

In his book Teaching by Principles, Brown (1994) proposed four main principles to be considered in order to shape an approach to language teaching. Those principles were divided into Cognitive, Affective, and Linguistic principles. For the purposes of the present study, the Language ego, Self-confidence and Risk-taking which belong to the Affective principles category, will be developed in this section. For the authors of the present study, these Affective principles seem to play an important role in the development of the CC as they might have a strong impact on students' oral performance.

The first one is the *Language ego* which is related to the fragility that the learner might encounter when he/she discovers that the Strategic Competence which would normally help them in their native language becomes almost obsolete in the L2.

 Self-confidence is the second principle and it is attached to the students' feelings about their ability to perform a task in the second language. In other words, it consists in the self-assessment of the learner. This principle leads to different

outcomes. In the first one, there is enough self-confidence and it lets the student practice and communicates. In the second one, self-confidence is low and it makes students lose opportunities for improving their level.

The third one, *risk-taking* refers to students' willingness to participate even if they know they can make mistakes. It is important to mention that this principle is mostly determined by the self-confidence.

For the purposes of this study, self-confidence is the main principle to be observed as the other two principles convey to some extent into this aspect. Moreover, it is linked with student's levels of anxiety which according to the authors of the present study is a key in the development of students' CC.

Motivation

 In order to clarify what the researchers will follow as a reference to the study, the perspectives from Gardner (1985), Stevick (1976), Brown (1994) and Ryan & Deci (2000) will be briefly presented. Then, the authors will enlighten their position in order to analyze the type of motivation that the participants seemed to have and how it was translated into actions and behaviors in the conversation clubs.

Following Gardner's (1985) perspective there is a distinction between *motivation* and *orientation.* The first one is defined as the individual effort and desire that the learner performs in order to achieve his/her expectations. The second one responds to the reasons why the individual wants to learn the language. Taking this into consideration, there are two other types of orientations: The *instrumental* one which means that the individual is moved to learn a language for an academic or personal reward or by simply obligation. The *integrative* one refers to the desire that the learner has in terms of being part of the culture and social life around the

second language. Later on, Gardner (1985) based on Stevick (1976), established that both orientations are extrinsic as they point out that the language is learnt to suit some goals such as obtaining a job (instrumental) or interacting with the culture (integrative orientation).

According to Brown (1994), the dichotomy made by Gardner (1985) in terms of the types of orientations is adequate to the learning context as they express the purpose of learning. However, Brown (1994) believes that they are not the same as the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as Stevick claimed. The latter, according to Brown, refers to the force (extrinsic or intrinsic) that moves the individual towards learning.

A new perspective is given by Ryan & Deci (2000) who based their perspectives and conceptions towards motivation following the *Self-determination theory* which defines the sources of motivation and the roles that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have in the individuals' development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The authors agreed in the dichotomy made by Gardner by stating that there are different types of motivation which relates to the why of actions (orientations) and there also different levels in those types of motivation (motivation per ce). Ryan & Deci (2000) exemplify their conception with an example: a student can be highly motivated to do homework out of curiosity, interest or approval. In this case the amount or level of motivation is the same what changes is the nature of it (orientation). Regarding the dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the authors considered that the former is the one that is more likely to result in high-quality learning. Intrinsic motivation is established between the student and the task at hand. This link is based on the desire that the learner has to satisfy psychological needs such as autonomy and a sense of competence. On the other

hand, extrinsic motivation seeks to obtain a separable outcome. This type of motivation has an instrumental orientation as the performance works as a medium to get something. According to the Self-determination theory, in these two types of motivation the degree of autonomy changes as they attained different things.

To sum up, in this section some individual aspects such as Anxiety, Language Anxiety, Affective principles and Motivation that might affect CC development were presented. It is important to highlight that from the mentioned aspects, the first two which correspond to Anxiety and Language Anxiety are the basis to analyze the collected data.

5.2.4 Emergent concept: Teaching Styles and Authority Management

Throughout the data collection and analysis phases, a trend related to teaching styles and authority management started to play a significant role in the participants' performance. This category had not been considered as an inductive category of analysis due to the fact that the authors of the present study believed that individual factors were more influential in participants' performance than these two concepts. However, the observed session proved that the teacher style and authority management are essential in students oral performance. Therefore, these two concepts were added to the methodological framework in order to analyze how they influence the participants' performance

Teaching Styles has been the focus of several researchers, each of them with different proposals about how many teaching styles there are. Thus, some of those proposals will be presented next in order to catch a general idea about Teaching Styles evolution.

In 1979, Barbara Bree Fischer & Louis Fischer defined Teaching Styles as: "… a classroom mode, a pervasive way of approaching students that might be consistent with several methods of teaching". Keeping this in mind, Bree and Fischer (1979) proposed six Teaching Styles which will be listed next:

1. *The Task-Oriented Style* which emphasizes on the materials to be used in order to complete the given task. Performance is evaluated throughout the process.
2. *The Cooperative Planner* refers to the distribution of functions between the teacher and the students. In this type of styles students' participation is constantly encouraged.
3. *The Child Centered* consists in the teacher's passive role while his/her students work in the subject at hand. Curiosity on students' interests is a key aspect.
4. *The Subject Centered* implies a focus on the topic to be covered which results in the isolation of students.
5. *The Learning Centered* style gives an equal relevance to the subject and the learner as far as the learning goals are accomplished.
6. *The Emotionally Exciting* style focuses on creating an emotional environment to learn.

In more recent studies some changes have been made to the stated types of Teaching Styles. Pratt (2002) quoted by Lankard (2003) established five perspectives on Teaching Styles which are:

1. *The Transmission style:* the teacher focuses on the content to be learnt. He/she is the one that determine what is to be learnt by the students.

2. *The Developmental style:* the tutor praises students' previous knowledge and tries to attach it to the new content at hand.

3. *The Apprenticeship style:* the educator provides students with authentic tasks.

4. *The Nurturing style:* the teacher emphasizes on getting to know the students with the purpose of responding to their emotional needs.

5. *The Social Reform style:* the tutor tends to relate the content with students immediate context.

In the previous proposal, it can be seen that some of the types relate to the ones presented by Fischer (1979). For instance, the *Nurturing style* is similar to the *Emotionally Exciting style* and The *Transmission style* might be related with the *Subject centered style.* Although it is important to know the similarities and differences among the presented proposals, the authors consider that they do not provide a considerable contribution to this study. The reason why is that although the mentioned proposals focused on how to approach students in terms of the tools that the teacher should provide to them, they were not directed in establishing an emotional climate in the teaching process which according to the authors and the theory presented in the sections about Learning Environments and Individual Affective Factors that contribute to the development of CC, play a major role in students development of the CC. For that reason, the authors will illustrate the proposal to be used in the present study.

In 1994 with his book "A matter of Style", Anthony F. Grasha stated that all teachers have qualities from different teaching styles but they develop just some of them. The author later proposed five teaching styles that differed from the ones established by Fischer & Fischer (1979) and Pratt (2002) which according to him

could contribute or not to the emotional climate and the interactions that occur in the classroom. Those Teaching Styles were:

1. *Experts*: the teacher transmits knowledge to the students.
2. *Formal Authority:* the teacher has status among students because he owns the knowledge.
3. *Personal model:* the teacher gives prototypes of what he expects students do or behave.
4. *Facilitators:* there are teacher-student interactions as the teacher is seen as a tool to complete projects.
5. *Delegator:* the teacher seeks to develop autonomy in students.

Being these the teaching styles, Grasha (1994) stated that if there is an emphasis on the Expert and Formal Authority styles, there would be a apprehensive emotional climate and students will play a passive role as there is no interaction. When the teacher emphasizes on being a Facilitator, Delegator, and an Expert there are teacher-student interactions and a warmer climate in the classroom.

 Moreover, the author established three factors to keep in mind when selecting a Teaching Style. The first factor refers to the ability to handle students. The second one implies classroom management with a focus on the task. The third one is willingness to build and establish relationships. The mentioned factors are directly related with Authority Management which will be later discussed.

The following table summarizes Grahas's Teaching Styles proposal, including details about the common behaviors and roles that correspond to each type.

TABLE 1.—The Relationship between Teaching Style, Roles, and Corresponding Attitudes and Behaviors

One-on-one teaching styles	Major faculty roles	Important attitudes and behaviors
Expert	Prescriptive adviser	Gives detailed explanations
		Provides succinct answers
		Provides details on what to do
	Questioner	Questions emphasize basic knowledge and comprehension of concepts
	Mini-lecturer	Gives an overview of issues involved with a problem and outlines ways to handle it
Formal authority	Provider of feedback [evaluative/summative]	Provides clear expectations and directs feedback to expectations
		Sets high standards for project or task
		Has clear goals and objectives for task or project
		Believes in correct, acceptable, and standard ways of doing things
Personal model	Coach	Teaches by example
		Able to work alongside learner to provide guidance and direction
	Role model	Perceives self as a worthy role model to follow
	Provider of feedback [nonevaluative/ formative]	Gives feedback that helps learner enhance skills
Facilitator	Provider of feedback [nonevaluative/ formative]	Provides feedback that helps learner enhance skills
		Uses descriptive/nonjudgmental feedback
	Active listener	Listens well to learner's concerns before making interventions
	Discussion facilitator	Able to engage individuals in a discussion of issues
		Strives to be an encouraging and supportive teacher
	Questioner [open-ended]	Asks broad questions designed to facilitate creative and critical thinking
Delegator	Consultant Resource person	Encourages appropriate autonomy independence
		Directs responses and questions to immediate needs of the learner
		Helps learner to explore options for what to do
		Willing to delegate tasks and responsibilities
		Readily available to provide guidance, give advice, and suggest other resources for help

Taken from: The Dynamics of One-on-One Teaching. Anthony, F. Grasha (2002).

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In addition, Grasha (1994) formed four clusters which resume the teaching methods to be used according to the adopted Teaching Styles which will be of great help when analyzing the collected data as it gives notions about the

characteristics of each combination of Teaching Styles. Each cluster contains some primary styles and some secondary styles.

- Cluster #1

  Primary Styles: Expert/ Formal Authority

  Secondary Styles: Personal Model/ Facilitator/ Delegator

- Cluster #2

  Primary Styles: Expert/ Personal Model/ Formal Authority

  Secondary Styles: Facilitator/ Delegator

- Cluster #3:

  Primary Styles: Expert/ Facilitator/ Personal Model

  Secondary Styles: Formal Authority/ Delegator

- Cluster #4

  Primary Styles: Expert/ Delegator/ Facilitator

  Secondary Styles: Formal Authority / Personal Model

Having these descriptions about each Teaching Style features and its possible combinations according to Grasha, is essential in order to have a complete analysis of the observed teachers' behaviors in the recorded sessions. Moreover, it will facilitate the analysis in terms of the Teaching Style(s) that seems to be predominant in the selected learning environment.

Freire (1994) and Ausubel (2005) stated that authority is essential in both the development of the student as part of the society and the inner growth of the individual. It is important to acknowledge that authority is presented in the adopted teaching style. Therefore, it also influences students' performance. The authors of the present research will develop the different authority management type's next. On one side there is the *authoritative* teacher which according to

Freire (1999) establishes a dominant position by means of being repressive with students. Some of the consequences that this authority style might bring to the classroom are the fact that there is a possibility of creating attitudes such as submission, lack of team work and a general dependency on an authority figure. On the other hand, there is the *spontaneous* authority which, following Freire (1999), is the opposite from the *authoritative* style in the sense that it is too permissive, which might lead to classroom management issues.

Although these Authority types seem to be suitable for what happens in the classroom, it received a critic. Giroux (1990) established that these two sorts of authority management are a fallacy due to the fact that they belong to a traditional view of education which ignores students' background. Considering this, Giroux (1990) proposed a model called *democratic discipline* which conceives discipline as a factor that contributes to the development of the learner. This proposal is characterized by the creation of connections among teachers and students.

As mentioned during this section, there are three factors that every teacher should pay attention to before adopting any given Teaching Style. How to handle students, classroom management seen from the task at hand and how to create links with students will vary according to the Authority Style of the teacher. It is worth to say that depending on these two variables, students' performance might be positively or negatively influenced as was seen during the observations.

6. Methodological Framework

The contributions of alternative Learning Environments and Individual Affective factors in the development of CC in a L2: a case study

6.1 Approach

Following the objectives of this research project, the qualitative approach fits better as it intends to comprehend the contributions that alternative learning environments and individual affective factors have in the development of CC in two L2 learners. This approach allowed the researchers of this study to get into pedagogical and social situations in an English institute, and to take a passive role to identify, describe and analyse to what extent these factors influence in the development of CC in a L2.

In this way, the comprehension of these implications will serve as a basis to hypothesize about what a learning environment must accomplish in order to fulfil learners' needs towards L2 learning as well as how to contribute to the improvement of conversation clubs as Learning Environments in the Pontifical Xavierian University.

6.2 Type of Investigation

For the purposes of this research project, the type of investigation to be used is descriptive through observation as it allows both, to explore and to identify problematic aspects of the chosen situation. Following Massonnat (1989) thinking, observation is the process by which knowledge is constructed around a specific subject. This knowledge seeks to understand, describe, analyse or reflect upon the chosen subject to be researched. It is important to mention that this

observation process can have different goals. One of them is to analyse individual and structured aspects of the theme of interest; this aim corresponds to the situational observation. The other one intends to analyse the interaction that occurs between individuals, this one is called systematic observation. The systematic observation corresponds to the purposes of this research project due to the fact that, although some specific categories of analysis were identified before the observations, the authors of the present research want to observe how they interact to favor or not the development of CC in a L2.

6.3 Population

This study case is carried out with two subjects who are English students at Praxis Laboratory of languages. Subject #1 is eighteen years old, at the moment he is a first semester law student. His language level at the moment of carrying out the observation was B1 following the CEFR, equivalent to module 70 in which he was according to the scale used by the institute. It is worth to remember that the scale used by the institute consists of modules which go from 1 to 100, being 1 the basic module and 100 the most advance. He started the course because his parents told him to do so, this was the second time he tried to complete the course due to the fact he dropped out once when he was 12 years old. From the observations, he seemed to be a talkative, easy going, and confident person who apparently does not get intimidated nor affected by what happens around him.

Subject #2 is 28 years old; she works in an organization which was the sponsor of her English course as it had an agreement with Praxis Laboratory of Languages. According to the CEFR which as was mentioned has an equivalent in the institute's scale, she is an A2 speaker and she is placed in module 32. According

to what the researchers could observe, she seemed to be a discreet and shy person when interacting with others.

In some of the occasions the authors of the present study had with her, she told them that her motivation to study a L2 is related with the agreement the organization in which she works has with the institute. It seems that the organization needs professional with an appropriate mastering of the L2 and she has to go there to fulfil the requirements it demands.

During the study, three teachers were in charge of the observed sessions of the conversation clubs. Teacher #1 has a good performance in L2 as he can transmit his ideas and instructions easily by taking into account each student's English level. Besides, he seems to be outgoing, charismatic and collaborative with the students and other teachers; besides he tries to promote interaction among students in every conversation club he is in charge of.

On the contrary, teacher # 2 was the opposite regarding all the characteristics from the previous teacher. He is introvert, shy when talking with others, and does not seem to know how to initiate conversation among students as the dynamic he manages consists of asking closed and direct questions to others.

Teacher #3 has a closer personality regarding teacher #1 as he always promotes some sort of interaction and debate among students. Besides, he looks for students' analysis and opinions by taking into reference their previous knowledge about the topic in discussion.

6.4 Instrument to collect data

After presenting the population, the approach and the type of investigation the researchers of the study will work on the instruments to be used in order to collect the necessary data.

Throughout the research, three instruments were used to collect data. The first instrument was a survey made to 30 students from the BA in Modern Languages, which is composed by 8 questions targeted to look into the different factors that did not help in the development of CC. This instrument emerged from the personal perspectives of the researchers towards the subject; therefore, they implemented the survey in order to double check others points of view. To see more information about the survey, go to the second section of this study.

The second instrument was a grill that took the most important aspect of each theoretical constructs the authors of this study took into reference and previously developed in the Theoretical Framework section. Along with the third instrument, videotapes of each Conversation Club, the authors recollect the necessary data to achieve the specific goals stated at the beginning of the study.

There are nine different versions before the final result due to the fact that it was reviewed several times in order to filter information that was not necessary or that was not easily observed and to polish the style and the overall content. For more information about the changes that it had see annexes. This grid was revised by two professional researchers who accepted it as an appropriate instrument to be used in the study.

While applying this grid, the authors will play an active role in the dynamics of the conversation clubs by being participants in every session. The reason behind this decision relies on the fact that this may decrease the feeling of tension that being

taped might produce on the subjects, which could lead or not to a change in their behaviour. In order to maintain an objective view during the whole study, the authors took notes after each session and then reviewed the tape after some time with the purpose of contrasting their first impressions with the ones presented and identified in the videotape.

The reason why this grid was designed by the authors of this study was because none of the authors presented in the theoretical framework created an accurate and complete instrument that integrated the aspects the authors of this study believe, were fundamental to accomplish the objectives of it.

There is a grid for each of the categories of analysis which are:

- Communicative Competence defined as the individual's knowledge and use of linguistic, socio-linguistic, interactional, and strategic aspects in different social and communicative situations. This competence is composed by four sub-competences: the Linguistic Competence and, the Sociolinguistic Competence from the proposal of Hymes (1972), the Interactional Competence and the Strategic Competence seen from Celce-Murcia model (2000). See theoretical framework.

- Learning Environments was introduced as an alternative to design new spaces in which learners could construct their knowledge and interact between them in authentic situations. The constructivist notion of this term emphasizes the idea of the construction of knowledge by learning meaningfully, that is, to engage learners' emotions, experiences and previous knowledge in what is being taught (Jonassen 1991, 1994; Wilson, 1996). The aspects to be taken into account will be: General goal of LE

(Wilson, 1996), Conditions for Meaningful Learning (Diaz Barriga, 2007), Components of Meaningful Learning (Howland, J, Jonassen, D, Marra, R, 2011), Learning Situations (Ausubel, 1970), and Scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976).

- Individual factors that might affect the development of the CC will embrace a set of aspects such as: Anxiety and Language Anxiety, the principles of Language Ego, Risk-Taking and Self-confidence from the Brown's Affective principles and Motivation. The mentioned terms will be presented from the perspective of Brown (1966), Oxford (1999), Gardner's & McIntyre (1993), Gardner (1985). See theoretical framework.

The grid is structured as follows:

In the three grids, the name of the category of analysis is the first one to appear as the core of each grid. Then, there is the aspect to be observed with its correspondent authors. After that, there are the specific aspects to be observed in each of the sub-categories.

There is a variation in each grid in the scale of assessment and comments columns. In the case of CC grid the scale of assessment is based on the frequency in which the participants perform or not each specific aspect and the comments are intended to briefly explain how it happened. In LE and Individual factors grid, the scale to be used assess if the specific aspect to be observed takes place or not in each session and the comments section is the space for explaining the reason why and how it occurred. In the LE grid, there is a space at the bottom in which the specific aspects of the environment are explained such as

the number of participants, the setting and unusual situations that may arise during the conversation club.

7. Results & Analysis

The results of this research project are shown according to the three main constructs that fed not only the theoretical framework, but also the categories of analysis and, as a consequence, the creation of the instrument described in Methodology.

As stated in the Methodological Framework, results per section and per specific aspect will be presented together with their analysis in the light of the Theoretical Framework. At the end of each section, a major summary of the topic will be presented regarding both subjects' results.

Concerning the Individual Affective Factors, there was no motivation analysis due to the fact that the researchers did not have tangible evidence about each participant motivation. Moreover, it is not an aspect to be discussed upon just by taking as a reference the mere observation.

7.1 Learning Environments

General goals of LE

In most of the sessions, both subjects seemed to be involved in different situations in which his/her understanding is tested. However, it is important to highlight the fact that this learning environment (Conversation Club) did not put the attendees in situation. What happened was that the information presented by the teacher

intended to ask about what the participants knew or had experienced regarding the topic. There was no space for raising a conversation, a debate or acquiring new information or knowledge. When there was some new information, it was because the participants asked for the meaning of some new vocabulary. Yet, it was neither presented nor used meaningfully as the new vocabulary was not placed in different contexts or situations, it was not related to participants' experiences and there was not an emotional commitment to the new vocabulary either. Because of these reasons, it cannot be said that the new vocabulary was fully understood, and there was not evident attempt to test it either.

Concerning students' adaptability in terms of outside interruptions and noises, there were no such factors during the sessions. However, the researchers believe that subject #1 would have been able to cope with these factors without affecting his performance in L2 as during the sessions he looked self-confident in any communicative situation he was exposed to, that is, he was not afraid of expressing his opinions towards the topic or taking risks when necessary to solve any problem related with lack of vocabulary. Regarding subject #2, she looked less self-confident when performing in L2 as she was not willing to take the risks subject #1 did. This factor might have had an effect on her adaptation if there had been noises or interruptions during the conversation clubs. This self-confidence factor will be deeply analyzed later on as it is closely related to the different individual factors taken into reference in the instrument.

A Conversation Club's main objective focuses on the cooperative work that participants or attendees must do in order to learn meaningfully from social situations. It could be said that learning is constructed from social situations conceived as the interaction among individuals. However, in the Conversation

Clubs, the Learning Environment chosen for this study, learning was not constructed from social situation as there was little interaction among participants, which was related with the dynamic teachers assumed during the sessions. This dynamic consisted on "creating a discussion" around a specific topic by asking and answering several questions that turned into waiting for participants' turn, instead of creating a debate or establishing a social situation in which the topics could be actually discussed. Therefore, the only interaction among individuals was the one teachers established with them. This dynamic changed in the session about ghosts (29/09/2014) directed by teacher #1, in which the participants had to walk around the classroom to discuss different questions regarding paranormal experiences, pasted on the walls. The fact that the questions allowed the individuals to initiate a conversation contributed to the interaction. At the end of the session, the teacher asked each pair what they had learnt from each other's experiences. Although the experiences may not be considered as a clear learning, the change in the dynamic of the session allowed participants to practice the L2 in some social situations and to interact in a more natural context.

Information banks are sources where learners can find information about anything. In most of the cases, the only information bank used by participants was the teachers; however, the teachers did not use their knowledge about language to offer richer educative experiences. This was identified when participants did not know a word in English; they asked the teachers for its meaning or translation. This last resource was always used by Teacher #2, who provided the words' translations to clarify new vocabulary. Teacher #1 and #3 tried to make the participants think by means of examples instead of meanings or translations; nonetheless, when they did not achieve their intention, they gave up and provided

the participants with the answer. Apart from that, the teachers the club attendees did not make use of technological aids such as online dictionaries or translators to improve their learning process, although they were allowed to do so.

The analysis of these four aspects showed that the Conversation Clubs of the institution did not completely reach the main goals of a learning environment. First, it was noticeable the lack of a clearly constructed learning. What happened was that the information was not presented meaningfully by means of involving the participants' previous knowledge and experiences, and promoting emotional commitment towards the topic. If they had had the opportunity to construct this knowledge by taking into reference the previous features, this learning environment (Conversation Club) would have enriched the students learning experience not only through mastering the L2, but also through learning about such L2 culture t and interacting with others, as proposed by Duffy (1996), cited by Lefoe (1998), who clarifies that learning is a process of constructing rather than acquiring knowledge. In addition, Ausubel (1968) also highlights the difference between meaningful and rote learning, being the latter the kind of learning that participants in this learning environment (Conversation club) are reaching.

Second, meaningful learning would have been also enhanced by involving interaction among participants as the construction of knowledge embraces the cooperative work to achieve a given task (Jonassen, 1991, 1994; Wilson, 1996; Howland, Jonassen, Marra, 2011). In a Conversation Club context, the main task is to discuss a specific topic, so that participants can not only practice their L2, but also learn from different social and communicative situations. However, this was not seen in the learning environment observed in this study as teachers were not

willing to make participants interact among themselves. This made the language learning unobservable and, at times, useless in the following sessions.

Third and last, the use of Information banks is a fundamental tool for teachers to provide participants with meaningful scaffolding to enrich their educative experiences. They can provide participants with the help needed to achieve the task, and enhance the learning process for both teacher and participants by taking into account the main objectives of the session (Bruner, 1998; Mercer, 2006). In the case of the learning environment observed, the fact that the teachers were the only source and provider of information did not contribute in the participants' construction of learning as they seemed to become dependent from teachers to check if what they said was linguistically correct. This perception may change as far as institutions train teachers on how to teach meaningfully, that is, by including participants' experiences in the learning process as well as using cooperative learning to enhance participants' performance in L2 either in classroom or in authentic contexts.

Conditions for Meaningful Learning

The materials and topics teachers used in the learning environment observed (conversation club) had an arbitrary relation with participants' thinking and needs as teachers are able to freely choose the topics and materials for each session without taking into consideration the participants' specific needs or interests. This occurs due to the fact that the people who attend each session vary, making it hard for the teachers to follow a process with each student.

Unfortunately, there is not a clear and substantial relation between the materials and topics with participants' thinking none of the study subjects was emotionally engaged with the topics because the topics and the materials did not target to participants' personal interest. In some cases, such as the session about death (15/10/2014), the topic was completely awkward for all attendees as the questions focused on personal experiences of each participant related to death. Here, not only did the choice move away from participants' thinking and emotions, but also affected some of their performances in L2, apparently. It was not the case of subject #1 who was willing to answer every question no matter how awkward it was.

Along the sessions, it seemed that neither of the subjects were engaged and motivated to have a full disposition towards learning. While the other participants had the speech turn, subject #1 started using his cellphone to chat. Meanwhile, subject #2 seemed to be out of focus until it was her speech turn. This was a constant during most of the conversation clubs they attended. This situation radically changed in the session about Ghost (29/09/2014) as both subjects had to interact to discuss the questions given by the teacher and share their experiences. During the conversation, both subjects took an active role that influenced their disposition to learn from each other's experiences. Subject #1's behavior was similar in the session about Religion (11/11/2914) conducted by teacher #3, in which a recording about the book of Genesis from the bible was played, and then a discussion based on specific questions took place. The questions allowed subject #1 not only to just give his opinion, but also to criticize, hypothesize and debate some religious beliefs. Here, he seemed to display more disposition

towards learning as he voluntarily took an active role when participating or listening to others' opinions to learn from them.

All in all, it seems this learning environment do not fully accomplish the conditions for meaningful learning to take place, as materials and activities usually do not have a main role in participants' learning process. They are chosen by teachers to make participants talk; however, they are not chosen by taking into consideration neither the objectives nor the participants' needs, let alone the participants' emotional engagement for the topic. This is fundamental for meaningful learning as materials serve as scaffolding for participants to successfully accomplish their personal objectives, goals, or interests (Diaz Barriga, 2010). In both sessions mentioned in the results the meaningful use of materials, no matter how simple they are, can engage participants to have a better disposition towards learning. If materials do not encourage participants to be emotionally engaged during the activities, it will be difficult for them to improve their social and language skills, which of course, is the main goal of the learning environment observed, a conversation club.

Components of Meaningful Learning

In most of the sessions, there was not an active interaction between the participants and the surrounding environment. This was also due to the dynamic chosen by teachers which did not allow participants to use the classroom space and elements as tools to enhance their language learning practice. When teacher #1 changed the class dynamics in the session about ghosts, there was a partial involvement of the participants with the space in order to fulfill the task. Even

though the role of the space was not as meaningful as expected, this change made the activity more enjoyable for participants as it simulated a daily life conversation and it involved participants' personal experiences and beliefs about ghosts.

The activities proposed in the sessions registered asked about the participants' previous knowledge; however, there was not a clear integration of that knowledge with the new information apart from language matters in terms of new vocabulary. Even when this occurred, the vocabulary presented was not applied in different communicative situations, therefore, it could be said that there was not evident learning at all.

On the one hand, teachers #1 and #3 used to clarify the general goal of each activity, that was, to discuss a specific topic. To some extent, such objective was fulfilled different points of view were presented through the participant's opinions. Paradoxically, teacher #2 did not clarify a clear goal for the activities; however, they seemed to achieve the same goal, to discuss a topic. On the other hand, participants did not discuss their goals with either of the teachers to get to a common understanding.

In this conversation club, learning was always contextualized as all the topics chosen by teachers were based on real life situations such as music, paranormal phenomena, death, religion, sports, among others. The association to the real world was made through different hypothetical questions that intended to make participants think and give their opinions about the topic. Nevertheless, the usual dynamic restricted the language output in a couple language functions such as Feelings, Suasion, and Problems (see Actional Competence in CC section).

In most of the sessions learning was not cooperative because of the lack of interaction among individuals, which did not allow the participants to get involved so as to share their personal views about the topics. As a consequence, they did not come to a common understanding with their partners. As it was not possible, in some cases teachers #1 and #3 summarized the opinions expressed during each session to get to a common understanding; yet, this did not seem relevant for participants as none of them complemented the teachers' conclusions.

To sum up, the researchers of this study consider that most of the components for meaningful learning are not fully developed in the learning environment chosen for this study (conversation club), since the lack of interaction plus the constant dynamic imposed by teachers made it difficult for participants to construct a meaningful learning regarding the L2 and the content of each session. Thus, this learning environment seemed to promote rote-learning as a result of little or no relevant knowledge to be linked with previous one, participants' little or no emotional commitment, and poorly organized subject matter. The latter due to the lack of clarification of objectives (or a possible oversimplification of the club's goals) to guide the session neither by teachers nor by the participants (Novak & Cañas, 2008). The researchers think that this situation influences negatively the development of CC because learning a L2 goes beyond mastering a set of linguistic rules. It implies that learners interact, practice and co-construct learning through different authentic situations with the teacher or monitor guiding the process.

Learning situations

Participants seemed to learn some language provided by teachers; that is, they seemed to learn by reception. This is linked with the role that teachers assumed as the providers of information, specifically regarding vocabulary. Regarding the topics, we could say that participants did not acquire any new knowledge as the way they were developed throughout the sessions did not contribute to take a look at new aspects of the topics proposed. Most of the times, this dynamic affected the participants' engagement to the topic and the activities presented.

There was a session in which knowledge was acquired by reception, but it was presented in a different way that positively contributed to subject #1's disposition towards learning. In the session about Muslims conducted by teacher #3 (19/11/2014), two videos that showed a bit of the general customs Muslim women had to follow in their culture were introduced to subject #1. Throughout this session, he tried to keep attentive to the videos, but his language level made it too difficult for him to follow the listening. Nevertheless, he used three things to obtain the necessary information to participate: the few images from the video, some of his previous knowledge about Muslim culture, and the other participants' ideas. With this information, he gave valuable responses to what the teacher asked him. It seems that the way the videos challenged the subject #1's language skills made him get emotionally engaged during the discussion.

There were few cases in which participants acquired knowledge by discovery which consists in the learners' acquisition of new information by their own means. Some of those cases occurred, for example, when participants were able to infer the meaning of a word based on the context. When this did not occur, and it was quite frequently, teachers provided the answer to keep the session going.

As stated by Ausubel (1968), that the knowledge is acquired either by reception or discovery depends on the way it is presented, if it is repetitive or meaningful. Throughout the analysis of the learning environment chosen for this study (conversation club), the researchers have claimed that knowledge was not meaningful for either of the subjects in most of the sessions. This is because knowledge was learnt by rote, as a result of little or no relevant new knowledge linked with previous knowledge, little or no emotional commitment from participants, and poorly organized subject matter (Novak & Cañas, 2008). Apart from the causes exposed above, the lack of interaction, exposure to authentic communicative situations, and some individual factors (especially in subject #2) seemed to have a big impact in the subjects' CC development. However, from the experience reported above, it is clear that knowledge can be acquired by reception, but at the same time, it can be meaningful for the learner. In this case, apart from the subject #1's evident emotional engagement, the use of his previous knowledge about Muslim culture, made that knowledge meaningful for him.

Following Ausubel (1968), most of the knowledge presented in the conversation clubs was not repetitive apart from language matters (vocabulary), which was necessary to make special emphasis on a concept. It is the case of "Chauvinism" which was further explained by the teacher by using some daily life examples. Other vocabulary was presented and repeated when necessary, but it was noticeable that the participants did not know how to use that word in an expression. Besides, activities were not designed to allow participants to use what had been learnt in context. Interesting considerations came up about the learning situations in the learning environment chosen for this study. First, learning by reception influences the participants and the teachers' disposition towards learning

and teaching. In most of the sessions the teachers provided the necessary information to successfully complete the tasks; however, as it was not presented meaningfully, learners' active engagement in the topic was negatively affected. However, the change of the source of information (not the teacher but videos about Muslims) demonstrated that challenging subject #1's language skills seemed to have a positive influence in his disposition towards learning, as subject #1 had to look for ways to grasp the information in order to be able to participate in the discussion.

Second, challenging participants should also imply that the teacher is not the only source of information so that the participants acquire knowledge by discovery and are encouraged to be part of their own learning process. Contrary to Ausubel's (1969) primary notion of learning by discovery, its importance not only relies on the development of the participants' fundamental skills when learning and practicing a L2, but also on the enhancement of some cognitive and metacognitive skills essential for a human's whole development.

Most importantly, acquiring knowledge either by reception or discovery would be useless if it is not presented meaningfully. As stated during this whole section, the link between previous and new knowledge is fundamental for the construction of knowledge. That is why there was not a significant improvement in some of their sub-competences as all the information they were exposed to was not presented meaningfully

Scaffolding

It is important to clarify that, contrary to the results in aspect #1 The participant is involved in different situations in which his/her understanding is tested.The subject

is involved in different situations in which his/her understanding is tested from this section there was indeed an attempt to test participants' knowledge. In fact, teachers #1 and #3 used to make some general questions before, during and after the sessions to test and guide the development of participants' understanding about the topic. Those questions followed a specific sequence in which participants were asked about their previous knowledge about the topic (Ghosts, Muslims, Religion). Then, during the activity teachers asked them comprehension and hypothetical questions to challenge their understanding about the topic, take a position, and express their opinion. When the activity finished, teachers used to sum up to get a common understandings.

Quite different was the way teacher #2 used questions to test and guide participants' understanding throughout the activity. He asked for a participant's opinions and experiences regarding the material given at the start of the session. After a series of 3 or 4 questions, teacher #2 continued with another participant and asked him/her different questions related to the topic. It seemed that those questions were not intended to test participants' knowledge, but to just bring some information into the conversation club. Consequently, it could be said that the development of the participants' understanding was not taken into consideration despite asking these kinds of questions.

Learning purposes were briefly presented in some sessions; however, they seemed to be too vague to let participants clear about what they would learn in the sessions and did not have an impact in participants' performance throughout the activity. This could be seen in the sessions about ghosts, gays or religion, in which the teacher told the participants that they would discuss about the topic proposed, but there were no learning purposes mentioned at all. Thus, participants got to the

sessions and left them without working on their personal objectives with the teacher, and without knowing if they had achieved any learning purpose.

Questions and answers were identified as the general trend in the use of dialogic techniques used by teachers as the core of the sessions to make participants give their opinions about the topic proposed by the teacher. It is worth noting that participants assumed an active role because the activity demanded it, but not because of their own choice.

This technique worked perfectly as participants were able to give accurate answers, but their participation finished when the teacher had no more questions to ask. Thus, there was not an opportunity for the participants' to take an active role because the dynamic of the activity restricted them from going on with their opinions.

The teacher #2 barely used reformulations when the participants did not get the main idea of the given question which happened because of some unknown vocabulary in the formulation of the question.

The teachers tried to motivate and direct participants with daily life topics. Nonetheless, there was not a link with the objectives as they were neither clearly established nor agreed with participants. As a consequence, neither participants nor teachers seemed to have clear objectives to achieve per session, and motivation seemed to have played a negatively role in the individual factor for both subjects.

In the learning environment chosen for this study models were not used as the dynamic of the whole conversation clubs was to discuss a specific topic. When it was necessary to give an extra explanation to a question, teachers gave their own

answers to guide participants in the understanding of the topic. In some other sessions the researchers of this study were taken as examples to answer, give examples or to expose a problem. This worked for both subjects as they managed to answer the questions better.

All teachers in the learning environment observed for this study tried to make the participants participate equally, a symmetrical interaction. However, there was no evidence this fact would positively or negatively affect the understanding of participants towards the topic.

It is worth noting that all teachers used to help participants to get to a clear understanding of what they had been asked. Nevertheless, the teachers forgot to involve participants themselves in the learning process, which would entail the acquisition and the use of the new knowledge in real communicative situations.

Based on the theoretical framework, a learning environment should foster cooperative learning as fundamental for participants to have a meaningful learning. This would improve factors like affective factors that may affect the participants' emotional engagement in the activity, their disposition towards learning, and their role in the learning process as well as the dynamic of the activity. The previously mentioned aspects should always be supported with good scaffolding either from the teacher or the participants' peers.

Communicative Competence

The main feature to be highlighted in CC section regarding both subjects is the effectiveness in the use of most of the communicative strategies stated by Celce-Murcia. These strategies were constant no matter who the teacher was or what

the activity was about. On the contrary, the other aspects linked with Interactional and Socio-Linguistic Competence were limited by the teachers' dynamic.

Linguistic Competence

1. **The participant make an appropriate use of the English grammar**

Following the CEFR, subject #1 made an appropriate use of the language considering that he has a B1 level. Regarding the Linguistic Competence, mistakes with the third person singular conjugation of verbs and time tenses were common in all sessions. Moreover, the subject #1 had difficulties with a specific word that he pronounced as in the L1 (Depend on-Depende). He also made common mistakes related with word choices and forms such as "I couldn't did in my week", "I would like say saw" and "that things". It is worth to say that although the subject made these mistakes, they did not have an impact when transmitting the message.

Concerning subject #2, she committed several mistakes regarding third person conjugation, use of articles, prepositions and adjectives. Besides, participant did not make a distinction between time tenses and use of auxiliaries when necessary. These mistakes did not completely affect her performance in conversation clubs although she needed more time to develop her ideas. That is why most of the times she made an appropriate use of the English grammar as her mistakes and errors correspond to the ones committed by a person with an A2 English level, according to the CEFR.

2. The subject is able to understand literal meanings

It seemed the subject #1 was able to understand literal meanings as he answered accurately every single question proposed by the teachers. Furthermore, he used some interactional strategies embedded into the communicative strategies stated by Celce-Murcia (1995) which reflected the subject's awareness about the teacher was referring to. For instance, in session 19/11/2014, the subject constantly used clarification strategies (attached to Interactional Strategies) such as: *what? Arranged? She wants to, what?*

The mistakes the subject usually made fit in the parameters established by the CEFR correspondent to a B1 Language level. In this level the B1 user is able to understand the main points of a daily life topic as well as to produce simple sentences regarding a topic of interest. Here, it was noticeable that although the subject made several mistakes regarding grammar, he could accomplish his objective of transmitting his message accurately. Besides, he managed to give account of his opinions and positions about the topic discussed in the session. It is worth to note that these linguistic behaviours were identified under one specific dynamic established by the teacher. Hence, this study does not clarify if these behaviours could get better or worse in other communicative situations different from the conversation clubs.

This might reflect subject's attention and understanding to the teacher's interventions.

Meantime, subject #2 was able to understand literal meanings as she could give a clear response to what was asked. Yet she had difficulties when questions implied specific vocabulary that needed to be either translated (teacher #2) or clarified

(teacher# 1). She constantly used the expressions *how do you say (word in L1)?* or *what is (word in L1),* to look for a clarification regarding vocabulary either to understand a given question or to give her opinion towards the topic.

This study classified subject #2 in an A2 language level according to the CEFR. In this level, participant is able to understand sentences and common expressions related to family, shopping or likes. An A2 learner can also give simple descriptions about her background or her environment. Indeed, throughout the sessions Subject #2 seemed to understand and give reasons to what she was asked, however, the lack of specific vocabulary affects her fluency, involving some individual factors into it. This linguistic aspect needs to be further developed in other communicative situations to verify if her performance in L2 gets better or worse. It is also worth noting that her understanding of literal meanings is clear as she gave accurate answers to what was being asked. Just as participant #1, this might reflect her attention and understanding in the teacher's interventions.

Socio-linguistic Competence

3. The subject make use of politeness techniques

The use of different politeness techniques was not observable due to the dynamic used by the teachers, which did not allow subjects to be part of different situations in which they can use them. Nevertheless, this does not imply they do not know how to use such techniques appropriately as these techniques are usually transferred from L1 to L2 with few changes.

4. The participant assumes (one of the following) roles during the conversation

In most of the sessions, subject #1 assumed a passive role due to the dynamic used by the teacher. This implies that he had to wait until he was asked to give his opinions. However, there were few changes in the dynamic that allowed the subject to be involved in the session actively such as the ones presented in the session about ghost.

In the majority of the sessions the teachers' teaching style was that of an *Expert* and a *Formal Authority* which according to Grasha (1994), pretends to be the only one who transmits and owns knowledge and therefore establishes a notorious difference in the status between the teacher and the student. This was seen in the sessions in which teacher #2 was the only source of unknown vocabulary and so he provided other participants with the translation of the unfamiliar words, which might have affected the subject's willingness to play an active role, not to mention that it might also make the participants feel intimidated (see Individual Factors that Affect CC Development section).

On the other hand, the participants moved around the classroom to answer different questions regarding paranormal experiences enabled them to have more interaction, therefore, more opportunities to express their ideas freely. In addition, in this session he assumed a collaborative role by helping his partner (subject #1) in developing and completing her ideas. There was another session about homosexuality in which the teacher proposed general question to be freely answered. Here, the subject #1 looked interested in the topic and he managed to participate as many times as he could. With these examples, having either an

active or collaborative role allowed the subject to have a full disposition towards the activity but not about learning. This fact will be further explained in Learning Environment section.

During most of the sessions the subject #2 assumed a passive role as it was evident she did not have a full disposition towards learning. This was also influenced by the teachers' dynamic, which consisted in asking and answering different questions regarding a specific topic. Even in session about ghosts, in which she had to discuss with subject #1 about their paranormal experiences by taking into reference some questions, she assumed a passive role as her responses were straight to the point with no extra explanation, while subject #1 seemed to take risks in order to accurately transmit his message.

This might be due to individual factors that affected subject #2 during the sessions. She seemed to be a bit shy when she was asked, and her responses were straight to the point. However, these factors did not affect her performance in L2 as she could complete her ideas with no problem at all. This passive role might also reflect her low emotional engagement towards the activities as dynamic did not allow participant to be motivated, even if that implied talking about daily life topics.

Interactional Competence

    5. The participant uses idiomatic expressions

According to the CEFR, C2 speakers are the ones who are able to use the idiomatic expressions effectively. Since subject #1 belongs to a B1 level and subject #2 belongs to an A1 level, it is acceptable the lack of use of idiomatic expressions, as they were not noticed during the observations the researchers cannot tell whether they know or not idiomatic expressions.

6. Conversational Competence: the participant knows when and how to start a conversation as well as continue it.

Once again, due to teachers' teaching style the subject #1 was not involved in situations that allowed the researchers of the present study to observe and determine if he was able or not to start and continue a conversation. Just in one of the sessions related with Ghosts, the participant asked further questions to subject #2 which encouraged her to keep talking.

Although learners are supposed to know these strategies as they are transferred from L1 to L2, learners must practice different ways to start and continue a conversation in L2. However, the way teachers manage most of the activities did not allow the participants to put those strategies into practice. It would be necessary to observe the subjects in other communicative situations and contexts to see if they use these strategies.

The dynamic of most of the sessions did not allow the researchers to notice if subject #2 knew when and how to start a conversation. In fact, the lack of interaction among individuals made difficult to identify this aspect in real life conversations. However, in the session about ghosts conducted by teacher #1, she managed to keep a conversation with participant #1. Yet her brief responses made the conversation hard to keep going as authentic as possible.

7. Conversational Competence: when there are turns, the participant respects them.

Most of the times subject #1 limited his interventions just to answer the direct question asked by the teacher and respected talking turns. However, in the session related with Ghosts, subject #1's notorious and repetitive interruption was due to his will to help subject #2 develop her ideas.

Meanwhile, subject #2 respected the talking turns due to the dynamic of the class, in which teachers used to assign them by calling each participant by their name randomly or according to the sitting arrangement. When she interrupted the teacher's speech, it was because she wanted extra explanation about a specific word, idea or instruction. This change in the session about ghost in which participant had to discuss the give questions with her partner. During the conversation she did not interrupt subject #1 talking moment to highlight some idea or double-check some vocabulary. Instead, she was attentive to what her partner was saying. These were the moments in which she seemed to arrange her ideas in her mind to be explained after the end of participant #1's talking turn.

It is noticeable the importance of the passive role she assumed during the sessions in some of her interventions and how the dynamic may influence in not changing this role. Perhaps, she might feel comfortable when taking this role as this is also related to her self-confidence when performing in L2. These aspects are imperative as learners must practice different ways to start and continue a conversation as well as to respect talking turn. In fact, learners are supposed to know these strategies as they are transferred from L1 to L2. However, the way teachers manage most of the activities did not allow them to put them in practice. As stated before, it is necessary to observe the participant in other communicative situation to check if he makes a correct use of them.

8. **Actional Competence: The participant notice and respond to different language functions.**

Concerning the use of and response to different language functions (Actional Competence) the subject #1 generally focused on giving his *opinion* about the topics being discussed.

Information was observed at the moment of asking for information about the content of the topic or the linguistic part of the language. This is supported by the recurrent use of Interactional strategies such as *clarification requests, confirmation requests and/or repetition requests* (Communicative Strategies which will be later analyzed under Strategic Competence heading).

Future scenarios were a trend thanks to the teachers' questions which encouraged the participants to hypothesize about their reactions and thoughts about a topic or some given situations. For instance, in session 11-11-2014 related to the bible the teacher asked subject #1 about his beliefs regarding marriage. Subject #1 answered these questions by means of implementing the extension response (communicative strategy which will be later discussed) in which the subject hypothesized about what he would do if he were married.

Interpersonal exchange referred to subjects' #1's reaction had to the teacher's speech. In some cases, subject would laugh or look interested during most of the teacher's interventions.

The subject's type of intervention depended on the type of questions proposed by the teacher. While teachers #1 and #3 used to state questions related with hypothetical situations, which engaged the participants to explore and give details about their opinions, teacher #2 used yes/no questions which did not require any

type of further explanation by the student. As a consequence, the participants were more willing to talk when being asked to give account of their points of view.

Subject's #2 use of language function depended on the dynamic of the sessions. This is due to the fact she was asked to give opinions or simple information towards the topic, which she did successfully. However, the use of these language functions were not seen in a more naturalistic manner, even in the session about ghost she stayed close to what was asked without going beyond into the conversation. Therefore, the passive role she assumed in the sessions affects her authentic language practice into the learning environment.

In few cases there was evidence of Interpersonal Exchange as subject #2 seemed to smile when a sudden situation took place, either a teacher or other participants' comments. Nevertheless, this was the only facial expression she did, in some cases, as a courtesy to respond to everyone's laughs.

It is necessary to see the subject in other alternative learning environments to see if she usually makes use of these language functions in L2 accurately. The fact participant was not encouraged to use more language functions may affect the way she understands the use of language in different communicative situations. Thus, her language use might be strongly linked with a more linguistic view, ignoring the communicative aspects of it.

Strategic Competence

From all the Communicative Strategies, the *achievement or compensatory strategies and the interactional strategies* were more notorious than the other ones because of their current use by subject #1, in his case the usage of the mentioned

strategies helped him in his develop of CC. The most least common strategies regarding subject #1 were: *stalling or time gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies and avoidance or reduction strategies.*

In subject #2 case, several communicative strategies were used, however, not as an aid or tool to improve her performance in L2. The ones she always used were *Message Abandonment, Achievement or Compensatory Strategies, Fillers*, and most of the *Interactional Strategies.* In her case, *Self-monitoring Strategies* were not a trend in her interventions*.*

9. Achievement or compensatory strategy

Subject #1 frequently used *Non- Linguistic means* achievement strategies such as miming and gesturing, whenever he needed to reinforce a word whose meaning he doubted about. In session 15-10-14 related with Death, he was referring to the word "waste", and although he pronounced it correctly, he mimed the action with his hands. Another example was observed when he referred to a "coffin" and used his hands to draw the figure in the air. Moreover, when talking about some current news related to violence, he mimed the word "beheaded". In this case he did not know the word so he just acted it out and then received the help of the teacher with the precise word. Apart from the non-linguistic means, the subject #1 put into action both*, literal translation form L1 and foreignizing* which are also part of the *achievement or compensatory strategies.* The first case was observed in various sessions, for instance when talking about Death, in which the subject had several mistakes with literal translation such as "my inside organs" and "easy die". Examples of foreignizing were identified in session   about Ghosts (09-29-14), in

which the subject tried to pronounce L1 words with English pronunciation such as "diable" (devil) "physics" (appearance).

The subject #2 used some of the achievement or compensatory strategies to keep with her ideas during the discussions. She often used literal translations from L1 such as *publicitary companies, the other face* (27/10/2014, session about Football)*, I don't have scare,* or *I think the same of you* (29/09/2014, session about ghosts). When the subject did not translate literal expressions, she barely used gestures when she did not know a specific expression such as *mucho ruido* or *seeing someone.* Apart from that, the session about ghosts she touched subject #1 to emphasize what she was referring to: *when you feel a hand on your shoulder.*

10. Interactional strategies

Subject #1 used both sub-strategies *Non-misunderstanding* and *Responses strategies* with the same frequency. In all sessions, the subject used non-misunderstanding strategies when he asked the teacher for clarifications, confirmations, and repetitions; although he did not use the repetition strategy as much as the others. He always seemed to ask for confirmation and/or clarification by expressing his understanding of the concept, word or idea. Here some examples:

- Repetition request:
  - Cómo cómo no entiendo? (Ghost topic, 09-29-14)
- Clarification request:

- What is the meaning of enhance? (Gay topic, 23-10-14)How do you say desperdiciar… waste? Death topic (15-10-14)

  - Confirmation request:

    - Will es deseo? (Death topic, 15-10-14)

    - Aspect or the Physic? (Ghost topic, 09-29-14,looking at the teacher and using question intonation)

Regarding the *responses sub-strategy*, the subject #1 notoriously used expansion when answering. This is seen in most of the sessions observed as he often exemplified his ideas with real or hypothetical cases. Moreover, he almost always gave his own interpretation concerning the topic being discussed. For instance, in the session related to Death (15-10-14), when talking whether euthanasia was appropriate or not in pets, the subject told the group about a friend who had made the decision of sleeping his pet to save it the suffering. In this case, he illustrated a real life example and then complemented his position on the subject. Rarely did he use confirmation responses; he only used them in one session when asking: Do you know what I mean? Bible topic (11-11-14).

On the other hand, confirmation responses were not observed in any of the six sessions.

Repetition, clarification, and *confirmation requests* were always used by subject #2 in all three sessions she attended. She used them to have a full understanding of the given question, specifically when the questions were ambiguous, had unknown vocabulary or hard structures the subject did not yet comprehend. In the case of Rephrasing, Expansion and Confirmations, she used them in session about ghosts, probably because the change in the dynamic let her do so with her partner

on her side. Here are some examples of the use of the strategies mentioned above:

- Repetition Request:

How what? (03/09/2014)

Can what? (19/09/2014)

- Clarification Request:

What's the meaning of *prohibit*? (03/09/2014)

How do you say…*permite, influenciar?* (03/09/2014)

How do you say *hospedaje?* (27/10/2014

How do you say *que ganan más a medida que pasa el tiempo?* (27/10/2014)

How do you say *distribución?* (27/10/2014)

- Confirmation Request

Radio….station? (19/09/2014)

Qué musica me gusta? Rock al parque? Then, I answer….I dislike? (03/09/2014)

- Rephrasing

She rephrased and looked at the person (teacher) for confirmation.

- Confirmation

Subject #1: *they can move things?*

Subject #2: *YES!*

11. Stalling or time-gaining strategies

The *stalling or time-gaining strategies* were not regularly used by subject #1. Fillers and Self-repetition strategies seemed not to be needed by the subject as he barely used them. In one of the sessions he self-repeated "When I … When I…" and then completed the idea. Probably in this case he used them because he was not sure about a word: therefore, he might have self-doubted. Nevertheless, this was not a trend in his performance.

The subject #2 constantly used *hummmm* and *ammmm* as fillers in the middle of her ideas. Besides, she made the pronunciation of some words longer than usual. This was repeated along the sessions when she had to think twice before answering a question. These fillers were used to reorganize her ideas before her speaking turn, but not to improve the different grammar features mentioned in Linguistic Competence aspects.

12. Self-monitoring strategies

As to the *Self-monitoring strategies* the subject #1 employed *self-initiated repair.* In session 23-10-14 Gay topic, the subject was conscious about a mistake he made and then he corrected it, "The gay of Bogota haven't… doesn't have..." In the same session and in session 15-10-14 Death topic, he self-repaired by using the L1 like this: "he could … hubiera sido ... He could have…." (23-10-14) "until … hasta ahora… until now" (15-10-14). In these cases it is clear that the subject still establishes certain links between his L1 and the L2. Furthermore, this might

indicate that one of his learning tools is his L1 as it is a reference for deducing some L2 rules.

Subject #2 did not use this strategy at any time during the observations.

13. Avoidance or reduction strategies

Last but not least, the *Avoidance or reduction strategies* did not play a significant role on the subject # 1's development of the CC as they were not common in most of the observations. Just in one of them which correspond to 11-11-14 Bible topic, he had *message abandonment* because he did not know how to pronounce "disobedience" thus the teacher and some classmates helped him with the word: however, he did not continue with what he was saying at that moment.

Regarding this strategy, subject #2 opted to abandon the message she was about to communicate. This was recurrent in all three sessions she was observed. Unfortunately, this strategy was not used to enhance the message, but she gave up with her idea with expressions like *I don't remember,* or *I don't know.*

All in all, the use of the Communicative Strategies seemed to be key in subject's #1 development of the CC. The reason why is that by using them, the subject was able to understand and express himself better. Moreover, the strategies that he used the most seemed to help him considerably in transmitting and understanding the message. Strategies such as *achievement* and *interactional strategies* are needed in order to have a successful communication as they both allow the learner to reinforce the message when needed. In addition, the use of *self-monitoring strategies* shows a degree of interest in his own learning process. This is as he is conscious about what he is producing and tries to do it as good as he can by means of correcting when necessary.

Additionally, during the observation, the researchers noticed that most of the aspects embedded in the Interactional and Socio-Linguistic Competences were barely observed due to the teachers' role and dynamic. The role teachers assumed had a notorious influence on the participant willingness to play a dominant or collaborative role during the conversation club. Likewise, not only due to the dynamic and type of authority adopted by each teacher but also due to the dynamic of each of them, the possibility to observe most of the aspects embedded into the Socio-Linguistic and Interactional Competences was limited. Aspects such as turn-taking and the usage of politeness techniques were not observed for that reason.

To sum up and as stated by theory, learners can use these communicative strategies if problems when performing in L2 occur. These might enhance both the message learner wants to transmit, and the grammar aspects of it. In some cases, the way in which subject #2 used these strategies did favour one aspect of the message, but the other was left behind. Thus, she had to ask for help from teacher or other participants. This aspect is taken into reference when embracing the perceptions both subject #1 and subject #2 had about the role of the teachers in class as the absolute source of information as well as the scaffolding they provided to participants. Subject #2 seemed to need more assistance from teachers than subject #1 to successfully transmit a message. This may also be influenced by the important role individual factors such as self-confidence and motivations play when she performed in L2 and interacted with others. These aspects will be further explained in the analysis of Learning Environments and Individual Factors.

Individual Factors that affect the development of CC Participant #1

It was noticeable that although the researchers of the present study conceived individual factors as a relevant cause for the subjects of this study to have a good or poor performance, these factors did not seem to play a determining role for the subject #1. Some of his behaviors, according to the theory, belong to different signs of anxiety and self-confidence levels. Nevertheless, for this participant they seemed not to be related with the speaking performance.

Different from subject #1, individual factors seemed to play a significant role in subjects' 2 oral performance; this was seen in the way she acted and proceeded in certain situations. This is due to the fact that some physical actions plus some aspects related with CC appeared to have an important bond in most of the observed sessions. Overall, the analyzed corresponding to Anxiety: Physical actions were somehow related with the participants' self-confidence: therefore, the results will be presented all together.

General avoidance

1. **The participant has episodes of anxiety that result in the avoidance of the language.**

When performing in L2, subject #1 did not avoid the language even when he did not know a word or the correct pronunciation. In these cases, he found ways to sort out the situation and continue with the conversation. The way this subject managed to overcome the lack of language knowledge was by using some of the communicative strategies mentioned by Celce-Murcia. When he did not know a word or how to express an idea, he rephrased his ideas in order to transmit what he was thinking. Moreover, he reinforced the message by using miming and gestures when necessary.

The usage of these strategies might have improved the subject's self-confidence as he never seemed to be affected by the lack of vocabulary or language knowledge about the topic in discussion. This might be an indicator of a high self-confidence, which is enough to deal with different situations that may affect other people. However, since all observed sessions had a similar dynamic, the present study cannot demonstrate if other communicative situations could affect either his performance in L2 or his individual factors.

The subject #2 avoided and abandoned the message she was transmitting several times. This was seen in session (29/09/2014) min 8:23 from the first video-tape related with ghosts in which she started talking about what she believed ghosts were like: "I think ghosts are invisible and they can…hum …" In this case, it seemed that she did not know the word to use because she tried to say it by moving her hands. However, she was not able to do so and so she quit the message. In the same session in min 2:20 from the third video, the subject she was explaining what she believed about ghost, and she said: "you think mmm… that ghost are bad and mmmm "and then stopped.

Anxiety: physical actions

For this particular aspect, the researchers of this study joined into one single paragraph what could be said about the subjects based on the observations.

2. **The participant has a general body trembling when he is asked to perform in the L2.**

3. **The participant paralyzes when he is asked to produce in the L2.**

This explanation can be related as well with some physical actions of Anxiety such as trembling or paralyzing. It is possible subject #1 did not suffer from this physical

action due to his high self-confidence when performing in L2. As long as he can successfully communicate in L2 by developing his communicative strategies, his self-confidence in L2 would be enhanced as well.

Subject #2 did not present body trembling or paralysis when performing in the L2.

4. The participant starts playing with objects when he is asked to talk.

Concerning playing with objects, physical symptoms of Anxiety, it was notorious that subject #1 did it during almost all sessions. However, this constant playing did not seem to be connected with the subject's oral performance. This is because he played with objects not only when he was asked to talk, but also when he was listening to his classmates. Perhaps, this action might be unconscious and not influenced by either negative individual factors presented when performing in L2 or certain environmental factors.

Most of the time, subject #2 played with a pen when she was asked to talk and in some other sessions, although she did not play with an object, she scratched her hands only when it was her speaking turns.

This might be a sign of a state anxiety which according to Brown (1994) occurs when the individual is asked to perform in the L2 and he/she knows they are not proficient. Subject #2 might experience this type of anxiety as the action of playing with objects was only observed when she was required to use the L2. Probably the reason why she played with objects when performing in the L2 was linked with her self-confidence levels. This is due to the fact that she seemed to get frustrated when she did not know how to say something. When this happened she either played with the object, used fillers or abandoned the message (See Communicative Strategies, CC section)

Self-confidence

As was seen in the previous aspects, self-confidence has been one of the most highlighted individual factors in this subject case. It was seen in most of the aspects to be observed and it was also the case of eye-contact, volunteering and self-doubting. During the sessions, the subject made eye-contact with the teacher when he was asked to talk. Yet when it was not his speak turn he did make eye contact neither with the teacher nor with other participants. Only few times, he established eye-contact with his interlocutor, this depended on the dynamic of the class which as has been mentioned throughout this study, did not allow students to have constant interaction among them. In some other sessions, eye-contact was interrupted when he looked up to the ceiling. It seemed that when he did this, he was looking for a word he did not know.

5. **The participant avoids making eye-contact when interacting with another person.**

The researchers believe that when eye-contact was interrupted by himself, it was not because he felt intimidated by others, but because it was some sort of strategy he used to clarify his thoughts and to find ways to communicate. Most of the cases, he managed to transmit the message even if it had grammatical mistakes. This might be the result of his self-confidence level as he seemed to be able to handle problems in communication by implementing most communicative strategies.

Complementing what has been just said about the subject #2 physical actions, eye contact was involved in the tendency of playing with objects. This was observed when the subject was asked to produce in the L2 and the eye-contact was

established with the object she had in her hands instead of the teacher. In fact, she made eye-contact with the teacher but only when she was finishing her message. Only in the session about ghosts (29/09/2014), she established and maintained eye-contact with the other participant.

This might have happened because the interaction was between her and subject #1, not with the teacher. Perhaps, this also shows that she might have felt intimidated by the teacher when she was directly asked to produce in the L2 (see Self-confidence, #7-8).

6. **The participant self-doubts him/herself when he/she has to perform in the L2.**

The subject self-doubted himself when he was not sure about how to say a word. When this happened, he reacted in different ways: he tried and then looked for confirmation by the teacher or the researchers; he also looked to the ceiling and tried to remember the word; in some other cases the subject asked the teacher how to say the word in English. Nonetheless, it is important to state that even if he self-doubted himself, this did not seem to affect his performance. This last aspect, confirms that the subject has a high level of self-confidence and he did not let this type of situations have a negative impact on his oral production.

As mentioned in the first subtitle *General avoidance*, subject #2 self-doubts herself when she was not sure about a word or expression, this often led to language avoidance and/or message abandonment. In fact, this behavior was observed in the excessive use of fillers which belong to the communicative strategies stated by Celce-Murcia (1995). However, in this subjects' case, the fact that she used them did not help in her communication or final production. The

subject seemed to use them in order to show that she did not know what to say and ended up quitting the message.

7. The participant feels intimidated by others better performance.

In any moment did he look intimidated when performing in L2; probably, because the other participants seemed to have the same or a lower English proficiency level. Even with the conditions would have been different; his self-confidence would help him to face these situations appropriately.

During the observations, subject #2 did not explicitly seem to be intimidated by other participants. This feeling could have been related to the lack of eye-contact either with the teacher or with other participants or the fact that she plays with objects, though. Possibly, this is related with her self-confidence which, as has been previously mentioned, seemed to be low. Nonetheless, it is important to make clear that she was not explicit in telling the authors that she felt this way when performing in the L2.

8. The participant volunteers during the sessions.

Due to the dynamic of this Conversation Clubs, volunteering was not observed as the teacher owned the speak turns. However, in some of the sessions (ghosts, gay topic and religion) he volunteered and gave his opinions and positions regarding the given topics.

This seemed to be related, apart from the dynamic, with the degree of interest he had in the topics. Furthermore, it also changed according to the type of questions used by the teachers because in some cases they gave the subject hypothetical situations which allowed him to think and put himself into context while some

others were yes/no questions which did not encourage him to go further into his answers. Probably if there had been more opportunities for interaction, the subject would have volunteered more and his contributions would have been more meaningful.

In subject #2 case, volunteering was not observed basically for two main reasons. First, due to the teachers' dynamic, there was no space or opportunities for the participant to freely give her opinions about the proposed topics. In most of the sessions, the teacher in charge took an *Expert* teaching style which following Grashas' (1994) perspectives, consists of questioning about students' knowledge on a subject. This type of teaching style, neither encourage nor allow the participants to have a critical thinking in which they deeply develop their ideas and positions towards the topics. Therefore, volunteering was affected as they were not asked to give account of their opinions. Second, as she seemed to have a low self-confidence, she limited her interventions to answer the direct questions made by the teachers.

As seen, Self-confidence factors determined most of the attitudes the subject adopted during the observed conversation clubs. Self-doubting, making eye-contact and volunteering were the aspects in which the subject showed high levels of self-confidence taking into reference the fact that he did not get affected by problems such as lack of knowledge or wrong pronunciation. Instead, subject #1 implemented some communicative strategies that helped him going through these difficulties in a successful manner. Regarding the physical symptoms of Anxiety, in the participant case, the fact that he played with objects was not and indicator of any state of Anxiety. Following Oxford and Brown's perspectives, this subject did not have neither state nor trait anxiety according to the obtained results. It is worth

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to say that having observed what happened inside this learning environment, the individual factors were not crucial in the subject performance. Instead, teachers' role and dynamic seems to be a key factor when developing CC.

Having analyzed the individual factors that might contribute or not in the development of CC, it is noticeable that in subject #2 case, these factors played a significant role in her overall performance. This is seen by her physical actions and her self-confidence. More specifically, in behaviors such as playing with objects, lack of eye-contact, and self-doubting. In spite of the dynamic of the teacher and the conversation club, the authors believe that this participant would have probably acted in the same way in another given environment.

8. Conclusions

Along the present study both the research question and the specific objectives were formulated in order to achieve the ultimate objective that is to determine how an alternative learning environment and individual affective factors contribute to the development of CC in a L2 in 2 cases.

First of all, the authors succeeded in the exploration of the alternative learning since it provided data regarding the selected theoretical constructs to be analyzed in the present study. Moreover, as the data was observable and tangible the researchers were able to create a grill that integrated the specific aspects to be observed from each of the constructs. This integration not only helped to put together these three theoretical constructs, but also to identify how they relate to each other. Apart from the selected theoretical constructs, an emergent concept arose from the observations; the Teaching and Authority Styles. These emergent concepts played an essential role in the Development of CC since they permeated

somehow the three main constructs, Learning Environments, Individual Affective Factors and Communicative Competence.

Next, the dominant trends concerning each category of analysis will be presented in order to identify to detect which and how, these trends taken from the grill took place.

In the Learning Environment, the teacher and authority styles limited the **scaffolding** process not only from the teacher but also among participants. Besides that, there was not **meaningful learning** due to the fact that the teachers neither recycled students' previous knowledge nor emotionally engaged them in their own learning process. As a consequence, there was only rote learning which is the opposite of meaningful learning. Lastly, the lack of interaction among all the participants, both teachers and learners, did not let the knowledge to be co-constructed, which goes against the theoretical foundations of what a Constructivist Learning Environment should be.

In Individual Affective Factors, **self-confidence** seemed to be determinant in almost all the aspects that the authors intended to observe. Nonetheless, it did not affect the two subjects in the same manner. In subject #1, it contributed in what seemed to be a positive way his performance. This was seen, in his ability to use most of the **communicative strategies** proposed by Celce-Murica et al (2000). In his case, they were fundamental as they helped him not only to express his ideas but also to confirm and to clarify his understanding. In subject #2, self-confidence seemed to play a negative role in her overall performance as she showed explicit signs of anxiety, such as playing with objects or the lack of eye-contact. Furthermore, although she also used some of the Communicative Strategies

(Celce-Murcia et all, 2000) they did not seemed to contribute in a positive manner. That is, as she used fillers which often resulted in message abandonment. Overall, despite the lack of language knowledge in terms of vocabulary, subject #1 was able to overcome difficult situations such as not knowing a word. This might be the result of his self-confidence which is also seen in his risk-taking and efforts to play an active role in his Development of CC. However, subject # 2 due to her language level A2, did not have some of the necessary language tools to communicate, such as vocabulary or complex structures; this was reflected in her self-confidence as it impede her to take risks and have an active role during her Development of CC.

8.1 Limitations

The researchers tried to find different learning environments in which they could have a stable population in order to obtain complete data about their process. The first option was a conversation club located in a bakery from Bogota called Nico Pan. This meeting was set up every Saturday from 3 to 5 in the second floor of the bakery. It is important to say that in this conversation club, participants were motivated towards learning the language as it was a free conversation club. Moreover, they did practice the language use with other participants and with native speakers who also assisted the conversation club. It could be said that this was the ideal environment to carry out the present study as it had all the characteristics and goals a learning environment should have according to Wilson (1996). However, after a month of assisting to it, it was notorious that the assistants were not committed with the project as they did not show up regularly considering that the conversation club took place every Saturday from 3 to 5pm and none of the participants went more than one Saturday.

Apart from this place, the researchers also considered to observe the conversation club from the faculty of modern languages from the Pontifical Xaverian University. Nevertheless, after talking with the person in charge in order to identify and know more about the basis and dynamics of the conversation club, the researchers decided not to make it part of the research as it did not fulfil the goals nor components of a learning environment. This is due to the fact the proposed activities seemed to be too structured which did not let the participants to have a meaningful and authentic practice of the language. Besides, it did not have a stable population that allowed the researchers keeping track of their progress.

Another problem the researchers had was that participant #2 quitted without previous notice. As a consequence, the researchers collected three videotapes from participant #2 against six videotapes from participant #1.

8.2 Pedagogical implications

Throughout the development of this study, several pedagogical implications regarding the three theoretical constructs emerged to be taken into consideration to further research projects. Next, each of these implications will be presented in the same order they are in the theoretical framework and the results of this study. At the end, the implications concerning the methodology and the general aspects of the study will be as well shown.

Learning environments

The analysis of the alternative learning environment let the authors of this study with the following implications:

- It is necessary to analyze virtual and technological learning environment due to the fact the term "learning environment" has received more theoretical and empirical contributions from the development of these tools. It would be also interesting to compare these environments with physical learning environments to see which of these contribute the most in Second Language Learning process.

- It would be necessary that the institution to which the learning environment chosen for this study belongs, allows the teachers to be part of participants' experiences inside classroom to make conversation clubs become something more than a simple requirement to graduate. This conversation club must be a fruitful experience for participants not only to practice their L2, but also to discover, learn and interact with others with same objectives, likes, experiences and interests.

- The relation between Learning Environments and Second Language Learning also suffers from a lack of research that creates a clear bond between them. This is unfortunate due to the fact these two concepts contribute to the improvement of both and an enriching educative experience from teachers, students, and institutions. Therefore, it would be important to keep investigating about how to integrate the concept of LE into the Second Language Learning as well as one of the main investigation lines from Applied Linguistics.

- Further research needs to make special emphasis on the difference between the concepts that are commonly associated with Learning Environments such as space and atmosphere. Although these concepts have several aspects in common, the arbitrary use of them in different

investigation has provoked the term Learning Environment get involved with other disciplines, letting behind the most important notion of it: the pedagogical one.

Communicative Competence

This construct has been also identified with some gaps regarding several aspects that will be presented as follows:

- The authors previously exposed the lack of bonds between all sub-competences of CC. In other words, there is no notorious relation between the development of each competence and how they contribute to the development of another. Besides, studies have established the different features behind the development of each competence; however, they do not explicitly clarify how it is enhanced. These inconveniences among others have left away the relevance of developing CC in second language learners. This research project intends to open a new branch in further studies regarding this topic as well as the construction of instruments which may identify several features of CC in action.

- In the development of CC section, Mariani (1996) added the assessment part to the features to take into reference when developing Communicative strategies. This is vital as the learner should understand clearly the role these strategies have in communication either in L1 or L2. Therefore, this understanding comes from the appropriate feedback the teacher or peer could provide to the learners. This reference brings into consideration the creation of an instrument that allows teachers and institutions to assess the

development of CC of learners as well as the development of each sub-competence attached to CC.

Individual affective factors

Although several empirical researches makes reference to how these factors influence Second Language Learning, future research has to take into consideration the following points:

- The discussion needs to become narrow as the concept of Second Language Learning involves a whole discipline with several constructs. Therefore, if researchers focused more on the influence these affective factors have in learners' development of CC, the studies would provide richer and more accurate results.
- More attention is needed towards the learners' Individual Affective Factors since they seemed to affect their overall performance in the development of CC. It is worth to say that these factors should be analyzed considering what the Learning Environment offers to the learner due to the fact that it notoriously influences the Individual Affective factors.

Methodology and general aspects of the study

Further research needs to be done not only in a larger population and for a longer period of time so that the results could be more enriching, but also to go deeper in the topic and to propose different alternatives to improve the potentially existing learning environments. This fact implies the total commitment of participants as well as its permission to make interviews and surveys that can provide more data that contributes to the purposes of research.

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