UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEACHING PRACTICES AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES IN THE KIDS ENGLISH PROGRAM AT AN ENGLISH TEACHING BINATIONAL INSTITUTION IN MANIZALES

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ABSTRACT

This research study was carried out in a binational English institution in Manizales, Caldas, with the purpose of understanding the English teaching practices and assessment techniques the teachers at this institution are applying in the Kids English Program. The present thesis being a qualitative study and based under the hermeneutic research method, allowed the process of describing the classroom practices and assessment techniques leading it to a process of interpretation; from this phase, it was identified that a variety of teaching and assessment strategies are used in the Kids classes in order to stimulate and assess learning. These strategies are mostly chosen based on exploring and the teachers' experience, however, teachers still need to understand how the second language learning process happens in kids, so that they are able to select and apply these strategies taking into account theory as well, approaching and exploiting the different methodologies and assessment techniques even more efficiently. On the other, this study revealed more training is needed in regards to approaching grammar and assessing language in young learners considering their cognitive process is different from the one of an adolescent or an adult. Moreover, the influence it has for an English Program the choosing of an appropriate textbook and the structuring of a syllabus under which the teaching process will be developed is paramount for meaningful learning.

Key words: Second Language Teaching to young learners, Classroom practices, Assessment techniques, Syllabus.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Language teaching practices involve an array of important different components for the appropriate process of language teaching and learning; one of the main aspects is the methodology used in class developed through diverse teaching methods, approaches and strategies; they also refer to the assessment techniques used to evaluate the progress of learning, and moreover, they cover aspects on how teachers manage the classroom, how learners are involved in the teaching context, and in general on how teachers integrate and conduct internal and external factors to promote learning.

Accordingly, this research aims at understanding the English Language Teaching Practices and Assessment techniques applied in the Kids English Program from an English teaching binational institution in Manizales, considering that teaching a foreign language requires constant training and knowledge about how the language learning process happens, and more important for this study, in young learners. Even though this institution is recognized for its undoubtful results in the field of language teaching and learning, the Kids English Program particularly needs to be empowered through the improvement and consolidation of its teaching and assessment practices.

Furthermore, this study's purpose is to describe the English Teaching and Assessment Practices teachers assigned to the Kids Program are applying, and additionally, recognize their conceptions around the English Teaching and Learning language processes. Likewise, this study aims at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the language teaching practices in the Kids

Program, in order to acquaint the institution of those aspects that could be enhanced, or that on the contrary need to be readapted or changed thinking of the improvement of the English Teaching environment for Kids, increasing its significance and profit for their language process.

This study is carried out under the Hermeneutic research method and the theorical support of a range of authors who have deeply studied different aspects of second language teaching and learning. The study is developed under five chapters:

Chapter one presents the description of the problem, as well as the significance of its study and the objectives pursued; Chapter two develops the literature review, including research related and theory review covering: Theories of Children's First and Second Language Acquisition, Language teaching methods, Assessment, Teachers Qualification and Syllabus design. Chapter three, presents the methodology and instruments used to gather the study information; Chapter four focuses on the analyses of the data collected in respect to the theory presented, and finally Chapter five presents the corresponding conclusions and recommendations for this study.

1.1 RATIONALE

Speaking English has become into one of the most important 21st century skills for the population to be able to take an active part in a globalized world, reason why Colombian universities, schools and language institutions today have a great challenge to innovate in their teaching practices guaranteeing the second language learning process for all types of learners.

I have worked as an English Teacher at this binational institution for over seven years, here I have had the opportunity to see the institution grow thanks to the efforts it makes in keeping teachers trained in the latest teaching strategies and tools, and the institution has always been committed to providing high quality education to people from Manizales. According to the study and the interaction with the institution, most of the trainings are focused on teaching English to teen or adult people, which causes an imbalance between the program for Kids and the ones for Teenagers and Adults.

In the above respect, kids are promoted from English level every semester and thus a different teacher is assigned; on account this, kids have the opportunity to interact with many different teachers along their process; however, kids express dissatisfaction with some teachers' classroom practices since they are not dynamic enough as others. On the other hand, it has also been observed that kids learning results vary level by level, from being satisfactory to less satisfactory and vice versa.

For the above mentioned, the present research aims at understanding the teaching and assessment English Practices in the Kids Program, considering the influence methodology has on the learning processes. Given this, this research is appropriate for the institution since nowadays

parents are aware of the importance of learning a second language, and as a result more and more kids have been registering in the institution, demanding a stronger English Program offer.

Understanding the teaching practices used, is absolutely necessary in order to identify the strong and weak aspects of the Kids English Program, since the main importance is given to the methodological aspects of the class, as the teaching techniques, strategies and the activities carried out, with little regard to aspects like the assessment processes and curriculum design, which are essential to be analyzed in order to structure an integrated English program.

Having the above present, this research comes out to be relevant for the improvement of the Kids English program, and for the empowerment of the learning processes of the 300 hundred kids registered at the institution, increasing their motivation and improving their language results by getting involved in corresponding teaching levels, in which not only the methodology of class enriches their learning but also the class content and the assessment strategies, among other factors.

This research will have a great impact on the enhancement of the teaching processes of the institution, since this thesis outcome evidences the aspects which need to be restructured or readapted, changes that are viable thanks to the compromise of the institution with the continuous development of the English programs, and considering the internal and external resources learners today can count on with.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

Founded in 1959, the binational center, is an autonomous educative, cultural and non-profit institution which serves the communities of Manizales and Caldas. The core programs the institution leads are the English Programs, the public library Jhon F. Kennedy, the Education USA office in charge of advisory for academic internships with USA, visas and international exams as IELTS, and lastly the cultural program which brings to the institution national and international cultural activities to students and all citizens in the city.

In Colombia there is a total of nine Binational Centers, which make agreements with the USA embassy, with the auspice of the Public Affairs Section, with a wide project margin for mutual profit, without implying the Binational Centers depend economically of the USA government. Thanks to this alliance, the Binational Centers can carry out different projects for the growth of their centers and also for their cities, they can also grow infrastructurally and get equipped with materials that improve the quality of the core programs.

In Manizales, the biggest participation of the four core programs is found in the English program, which is divided in three branches, English for Adults, Teens and Kids. Each of the programs has different schedules to fit schools and work timetables, the programs have their own textbook and system of evaluation as well. The present study focuses on the Kids program, its characteristics are as follows:

The Kids English Program is categorized by levels, starting in Kids 1 for students who are between 6 and 7 years old, and ending in Kids 12 for students between 11 and 12 years old. Students pass from level biannually and each level is given by a different teacher. During this semester, there are above 300 kids registered in the different schedules: Wednesdays or Fridays from 3:45pm to 5:50pm, or Saturdays from 8:00 to 10:30am; as seen classes for Kids last two

hours and it is important to highlight that week students do not have a break in contrast to the weekend students that do have a break of twenty minutes. Kids come from private schools mostly, although during the last years the percentage of public school attendees has increased significantly.

In regards to the methodology for English teaching, it actually depends on each teacher, the institution does not impose a specific methodology to be applied; however, teachers do need to consider classes must have clear communicative goals, and also teachers need to follow a textbook. The textbook being used now is called Our Discovery Island which has a strong emphasis on listening activities and vocabulary, nonetheless it still lacks in-class and out-class speaking activities to practice the book content as well as more authentic materials.

On another hand, the institution does create and demand to follow an already planned system of evaluation. The evaluation is carried out under a percentage of 100%, if students get from 65 up it means they pass either homework, projects, the final exam, etc. The criteria and percentages are these: Attendance 5%, Class Production 25%, Homework 10%, Behavior 5%, Midterm exam 15%, Final exam 20%, and Project 20% to have a total of 100%. For the kids to pass the level, they need to have a minimum general passing grade of 70%, no matter if they fail exams or projects, as far as the minimum score is 70 as said above. The final exam for the Kids Program is structured by the Program Coordinator under different types of activities that include listening, writing, reading and grammar, and generally students take around 1 hour to complete it.

Having finished the Kids Program, students are promoted to the Teens Program, learners are placed in this new program through a placement test that assesses the four language skills, as speaking, listening, reading and writing, as well as grammar. Usually students get placed in two levels, either Elementary D or Preintermediate A, which according to the Common European Framework is an A1 or A2 level of English. Important to say that the Teens Program counts with

twenty levels categorized by modules: Module Elementary with four levels A, B C and D, Pre-Intermediate A, B, C and D, Intermediate A, B, C and D, Upper A, B, C and D and Advanced A, B, C and D.

Finally, the Kids Program counts with extracurricular activities as Music club, Fun club and Reading club. These clubs are 50 minutes long and are given after classes, registration is free and students can take part of the club they like; clubs are not mandatory but they have had great audience since they first were offered.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Given the fact that the audience at the institution is pretty diverse in regards to their academic, social and economic backgrounds, and that additionally everyone who registers to its English Programs needs to pay a certain fee per every level, it becomes a bigger challenge for the institution to structure and offer a very solid and inclusive English Program, leading students to achieve their language goals equipping them with the knowledge, tools and a proper learning environment.

Taking this into account, the institution has always outstood for its great results in the teaching of English thanks to its academic team who is always being trained in the last teaching techniques to apply in their classes, ensuring the teaching and learning process for their learners. However, it has been detected that the least favored program is the one for Kids, since trainings and conferences usually focus on the teaching for adults, and although some of these materials could be adapted for Kids, teachers still need and request training on how to work with this special age.

The Kids English Program registration has been increasing with time, more and more young learners are coming to the institution to learn English, since parents now understand the importance of speaking a second language. Considering this, it is fundamental that although the Program is solid and well structured, different aspects should be rechecked for the following reasons:

Even though the institution focuses on the Communicative Approach, teachers can and do need to use other teaching methods; however, for the meaningful use of any technique, teachers

must first recognize its purpose and second prepare the activities under the technique chosen carefully, so that teaching through it generates learning avoiding wasting time. Using different methods requires very thoughtful organization and knowledge about its applicability, and it is essential for the institution to have trainings on how to work with them successfully in such a way that every time a learner is promoted from level they do not feel a big difference in their learning environment and that can actually guarantee equitable language results.

On the other hand, and for the appropriate choosing of teaching methods and strategies, teachers also need to know the characteristics of second language learning in young learners. Although teachers studied this theory through their professional careers or TEFL courses, some of them are still hesitant on the differences between second language learning in kids or adults. Having teachers understand and manage the differences between language learning through ages is paramount for the appropriacy of their teaching process.

The diversity of learning styles, interests and even special needs of learners is another aspect that requires careful revision since teaching cannot be standardized. Teachers know they need to structure inclusive teaching environments, nevertheless they recognize more training on this field is absolutely needed in order to cope properly with the needs of all the students because sometimes they feel lost on how to carry the English Process of kids with cognitive problems and behavior disorders.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the understanding of the Teaching Practices and Assessment Techniques in the Kids English Program of an English Teaching binational institution in Manizales?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 General Objective:

- To understand the English teaching practices and assessment techniques applied in the Kids English Program.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives:

- To describe the English teaching practices and the assessment techniques applied in the Kids English Program.
- To recognize the teachers' conceptions around the English Teaching and Learning processes.
- To identify the strong and weak components of the Kids English Program in regards to English teaching practices and assessment techniques used.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In this section I will refer to some research that has been conducted nationally and internationally in regards to English Language Teaching, Assessment of languages and Second Language in young learners.

2.1 National Studies

First, in 2007, the research on Analysis of Children's English Language Learning Evidences when Engaging in Project Work was presented to Universidad Nacional de Bogota, carried out by Cáceres, A. and Unigarro, D., teachers from two different schools: Institución Educativa Distrital Gustavo Restrepo located in Bogota and IED Liceo Femenino Mercedes Nariño located in Pasto, Nariño.

The research is aimed at how effective it would be to teach English through Project work to kids from fifth grade in public schools. What teachers discuss to be more meaningful from the use of projects is the opportunities to have multi-skill activities and the use of a big range of ideas and resources in class. Also, the teaching and learning process is more contextualized and resultant thanks to letting students choose topics of their interests to be developed along the project schedule. Very relevant aspects to remark from the use of Project work is the possibility to adapt it to any level of English as well as any age and abilities; the knowledge students acquire

from formal classes is used in context and more meaningfully since carrying out a project means trying to solve a problem and look for improvements.

Project work is student centered not syllabus centered, the syllabus needs to be adapted to the project communicative and grammar needs, project work is skill based not structure based; considering these aspects, having project wok in class is a great idea to show learners they are the main focus of a class since most of the times syllabi offer topics and vocabulary sections students absolutely do not like and do not relate to, provoking lack of interest in the language learning. From this research, it was concluded that students showed great improvements in their learning independence, intellectual, social and physical/motor skills. Given the fact students worked on topics really related to their contexts, it was easy to have their constant motivation along the process. Oral and written skills were highly competent at the end of the project process.

Then, between the years 2000 and 2012 the research on Relevant Learning for Children in Early Childhood was carried out by Ospina B. and Restrepo J., both teachers from Tecnológico de Antioquia-Institución Universitaria, Colombia. The aim of this research was to highlight the relevance of early education into public policies, it is appropriate to analyze from an educative perspective the learnings that must be built in children during their first years of life. It is essential to understand the importance of providing learning thinking of the pupil as unique shaped by a particular context, essential for the preservation and development of the human collective.

Technology has transformed the way people live, it has transformed values, needs, and the ways how people interact; it is for this reason that one of the biggest objectives education should have is to offer learning environments that lead learners to the search of integral and meaningful development. Relevant learning comes from the interests and welfare of the student, ideal

interests from the student's self-sociocultural context, by means of cognitive, affective and linguist processes conducted to increase the level of potential development not only individually but also socially.

The age in children is not a matter when it comes to promote learning, what is relevant, is the level of potential development, therefore, the role of the teacher is fundamental since this is the mediator of the learning process. To the extent that the learning processes enable cognitive, communicative, affective and social changes, that recognize learners in reference to their specific contexts, relevant learning can happen and can achieve deep structural transformations in the individual and the society.

Education policies in our country should reconsider the bases under curriculums for schools are developed. Children as subject of law, have the right to receive integral education, supported by values like autonomy, self-knowing and self-care and interaction skills, immersed as well in an educational context where the applicability and functionality of contents go by hand with the interests and needs of the learners.

In 2012 the research on Teaching English to Very Young Learners through Authentic Communicative Performances was presented by Guevara, D. and Ordoñez, C. teachers at a private school in a mid-sized city in Colombia. The objective of their study was to implement a new Bilingual Curriculum in the kindergarten level based on communicative and constructivist principles. Success in learning a second language focuses on a need, wish and intrinsic motivation, reason why these two teachers planned the new curriculum under authentic contents. Games, role plays, stories and songs were some of the strategies teachers used to immerse children into the English language, what is meaningful about it is that all these activities were developed from the own ideas of the students.

Besides the main component focused on authenticity, the second language learning process for these kids was also helped out by the use of Spanish; activities were first planned in the native language in order to motivate students to participate freely and deeply from their development; this strategy was truly important for the whole process since decision making in Spanish fostered the autonomy in the children.

The conclusion of this study is to show evidence on the positive effects Constructivism contributed with to this kindergarten class; it was confirmed that learning happens when doing things, the authenticity component brought interest and meaning to the study of a second language, collaborative work was highly promoted, and it developed a very positive attitude from students towards participating from decisions and therefore all the activities carried out. Students felt very enthusiastic to be the central part of the process and they actually showed improvement in their oral skills.

Also, in 2012, Arias, C.; Maturana, L.; and Restrepo, M.; presented an article named Evaluation in foreign language learning: towards fair and democratic practices product of their previous action research Assessment Practices in Language Acquisition carried out during 2007 and 2009 at Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigó in Medellín, Colombia. The objective focused on implementing an Agreed Assessment System which was created from the need of having more coherent and reliable results from the assessment techniques used in the English classes. The outcome of this work is the evidence that varying assessment strategies, using different types and ways to assess students, not only summatively but also formatively, allows more democratic learning and teaching practices. For the authors, working on the construction of an assessment system for a language needs to be rigorous and systematic, the design of instruments, formats and assessment homework must be a meticulous activity for educators in order to transform the

assessment processes into a more fair and impartial practice that can benefit learners, teachers and institutions.

Lastly, in 2015 a research named Chiaroscuro in Teaching English. Critical Reflection on Teaching Practices was presented by Cordoba, N. and Lame, Y., as part of their master's thesis at Manizales University in Manizales, Colombia. The aim of their study was to reflect on the application of pedagogical practices on basic education in teaching English as a second language. Positive and negative aspects about these pedagogical practices were analyzed to contextualize their effectiveness in order to establish changes due to students' diversity in classrooms especially.

English works as a connection for the new generations to interact better and deeper with the multicultural world that surrounds them, also to diminish the gap among social groups which can be an important base for learning and experience. For this reason, the general law of Education in Colombia has been transformed since 1994 so that Colombian students can acquire English as a second language while doing their school studies, among the proposals we have: Educación Bilingue 1996 y El Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo 1997. Although these programs objective is to qualify students to communicate in English with international standards, their planning fails to take graduate students to a positive proficiency language level. According to the analysis done, this situation occurs as a result of curriculums not based on students' needs, interests and particular ways of living; besides, primary teachers and a percentage of high school teachers are not trained to teach English as a second language, reason why the school subject called "English" is not seen as a necessity but as general knowledge as the other subjects taken as mandatory at educational institutions.

Finally, with regard to this analysis it was concluded that Colombian Bilingual Education needs an urgent change based on the transformation of its pedagogical practices, methodologies

and education policies so that the process of learning a second language has the desired impact. For this, curriculums must be student centered, taking into account their interests, needs and their own context. Pedagogical practices must create spaces for cognitive development and the acquisition of new knowledge and tools that help students communicate in their real world. Teachers must also recognize the student as main participant of the classroom, giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making, respecting their diversity and fostering dynamic and motivational environments that encourage students to learn; however, for this to happen, universities must also revolutionize the way how professionals in education are prepared.

2.2 International Studies

In 2005 the study on Conceptions of Grammar teaching: A case study of Teachers' beliefs and Classroom practices was conducted by Farrell, T. a professor from Brock University from Canada and Poh Choo, P. a teacher from a Primary school in Singapore where the research took place. The research compared the beliefs and actual classroom practices of two teachers with regards to grammar teaching. Both professionals differed from their beliefs in regards to teaching grammar to children, one of them considered it was extremely important to teach grammar directly, while the other believed grammar should be taught in an indirect or inductive way; however, from the observations it was discovered that even though the last teacher prepared many different activities to practice grammar, she did explain grammar rules and they were evident in the content of the games and activities.

The findings suggest that teachers do indeed have a set of complex belief systems that are sometimes not reflected in their classroom practices for various complicated reasons, some directly related to the context of teaching. On the other hand, many teachers stated they followed

the Communicative Approach, however, grammar was explicit through formal explanations, giving corrections, feedback, and in different types of activities. Moreover, many of the respondents still hold firmly to the belief that grammar is central to language learning and direct grammar teaching is needed by their EFL/ESL students.

It was also concluded that lots of what happens in a classroom depends on teachers' beliefs about the students and classroom practices, which means that a teacher's conception about language teaching does have an impact in the classroom and students' learning.

Finally, the researchers suggest that opportunities need to be provided for teachers to reflect on their work so that they can be encouraged to articulate and reflect on their beliefs while also investigating any incompatibilities between their beliefs and classroom practices.

In 2013, the research on Teaching English to young learners was presented by Kersten, K. and Rohde, A. as part of the studies carried out at the institute of linguistics at Lund University in Sweden. These two professionals expressed through this study that teaching an L2 to young learners requires specific teaching approaches based on the principle of using English to learn it rather than using traditional approaches relying on learning English to use it.

From this study, the authors affirm that an early start in second language learning benefits not only the communicative skills but also the intercultural competences depending on the sufficient opportunities to encounter the language in communicative contexts. Taking this into consideration, the authors mentioned that in Europe there was discontent with the regular educational programs since they were not developing language in children,that is why Kindergartens and Primary schools are implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to enhance student opportunities to gain intercultural communicative competence and appropriate linguistic skills.

Consequently, the authors stated that teaching young learners must be carried out under different teaching methodologies since according to Krashen “Learners aged 3 to 10 have as yet not acquired some of the strategies that older learners are able to develop. Older learners have written language as additional input and benefit from a greater metalinguistic awareness, and may therefore be better monitor users than younger learners” 1992.

Among the conclusions, the authors said that primary schools where there is a fixed curriculum, teaching concepts and methods must be selected carefully and should not be based on explicit teaching of grammar and a marked focus on forms.

It was also concluded that a particularly effective type of teaching program is CLIL since it does immerse students in meaningful language. Moreover, additional factors that teachers must take into account when teaching young learners is the importance of having a great quantity of quality L2 input, which goes by hand with the teacher language which must be adapted using an appropriate tone of voice, the correct speed, use of gestures and miming, besides contextualization this being crucial for significant learning.

Finally, in 2015 the research on The Assessment of Second Languages. Balance and Perspectives was presented by Bordón, T. from the University Autonoma of Madrid whose objective was to describe the historical route of second language assessment closely linked to how languages have been taught and have evolved; Bordón also analyzes relevant components of assessment application and social impact. Developing a complete description through language teaching methods and illustrating the changes and uses of assessment, Bordón concludes assessment is undoubtedly necessary, especially the testing technique which allows institutions and teachers to make decisions upon academic processes; however, the need of having valid, reliable and applicable tests is highly exposed in order to promote fairness and coherence in the assessment of a course through testing. Finally, Bordón emphasizes the value of assessment

during the learning and teaching process of a language, reason why for her it is truly important to continue researching not only about new innovative teaching methods but also new reliable coherent assessment strategies that allow learning to be more meaningful for students and that can match as well the different purposes of a testing process.

As observed, research on English Language Teaching Practices covers a broad range of studies focused not only on the methodological aspects of language teaching, which according to researchers it is imperative to continuously look into, but also on teachers' performance, assessment techniques, on the importance of curriculums and syllabi design, and in general on the study of diverse teaching factors that play a key role in a meaningful learning environment.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 THEORIES OF CHILDREN'S FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The acquisition of the first language has characteristics mentioned by many different theories such as: unconsciousness, innate predisposition, need to be physically capable of hearing and making sounds normally and need of a community language to interact with others. A description of various theories with different points of view is provided to analyze and better understand the language learning process.

3.1.1 Behaviorist Theory

Behaviorist theories of learning search scientific explanations for simple behavior. They make use of two principal classes of explanation for learning: those based on contiguity that refer to the simultaneity of stimulus and response events, and those based on the effects of behavior, that is, reinforcement and punishment.

The behaviorist approach focuses on the immediately perceptible aspects of linguistic behavior, it affirms that newborn children do not have any ideas about the world or the language, they learn everything from their environment and they would respond only as they have been conditioned to respond, and that greater amount of conditioning produces a greater response from the learner.

The behaviorist model is based on Skinner's classic Verbal Behavior that is a branch of the general theory of operant conditioning. According to Skinner (as cited in Brown, 1987) "verbal behavior like other behavior is controlled by its consequences" (p.17); in the case of

language learning, it means that, prizing linguistic production helps the students maintain, and in many cases, increase the behavior, on the contrary, when the results are not prized, punished or not reinforced this behavior might weaken or disappear.

"Today few linguistics and psychologists would agree that Skinner's model of verbal behavior adequately explains the capacity to acquire language, for language and for a theory of meaning", (Brown, 1987, p.18).

Immediate, consistent, and positive reinforcement can increase the speed of learning. When a word, a phrase or an expression is learned, repetitive reinforcement will promote retention. These concepts from behavioral theory have formed the basis of most of the learning theory applied in child raising and in classrooms. However, educators now believe that although stimulus-response explains many human behaviors and has a reasonable place in instruction, behaviorism alone is not sufficient to account for all the phenomena observed in the learning process.

In the educational system, behaviorism is perceived as a process of matching skill objectives with repetitions and emptiness of meaningful learning. They also see the teaching process focusing too much on teacher centered and individual work rather than on group work. Although this theory has had considerable impact in explaining the learning process, some authors criticize this theory because it tends to invalidate the human nature by diminishing the human mental activity to a series of mechanisms, which liken human beings to machines or animals. Thus, the human activities such creativity, imagination, and reasoning among others, are simple stimulus-response without mental process.

3.1.2 Nativist Theory

The theory was founded on the assumption that all children who are exposed to a linguistic environment, careless of the contextual factors and differences in aptitude, are able to learn complex structures at a very early age. Chomsky as the pioneer of this theory, says "A normal child acquires this knowledge on a relatively slight exposure and without specific training. He can then quite effortlessly make use of an intricate structure of specific rules and guiding principles to convey his thoughts and feelings to others" (p.4); this thanks to The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which grants a rapid and successful language acquisition (Chomsky, 1965, as cited in Brown, 1987), this idea also supported by Brown 1987 "…we are born with a built-in device of some kind that predisposes us to language acquisition and to a systematic perception of language around us, resulting in the construction of an internalized system of language"(p.19); nonetheless, it also has a relation with cognition, allowing learners to create meaning out of the contexts they interact with.

The nativists believe that all humans have the ability to create knowledge in their own minds through a process of discovery and problem solving. Its principles are that students do not receive knowledge passively, but rather assimilate it actively; and that students construct new ideas or interpret concepts based on their present and previous knowledge. Even though the children's predisposition to acquire the language is innate, no specific feature of the language has been proven to be innate.

This theory differs from the behaviorist theory because the innatism emphasizes the mental ability that a human being has and his innate predisposition to acquire language, whereas the imitation theory has superficial explanation when it states that the language that children acquire is the result of learned responses from adults and it diminishes children's mental capacity to create a great deal of sentences from all kinds of situations.

3.1.3 Cognitive Development Theory

Piaget J. (1969), dedicated many years to researching children's behavior, motivated by his interest for understanding and explaining the nature of human thinking and reasoning. The human cognitive development goes through four main stages, which begin at infancy and progress into adulthood: the sensory-motor stage, the pre-operational stage, the concrete operation stage and the formal operation stage. The four stages are described as follows:

The Sensory-Motor stage develops from birth to two years old; during this stage the children's behavior is primarily motor, there is no conceptual thinking but there is an incipient cognitive development. The children's learning depends mainly on immediate sensory experiences, such as motor activities and bodily movements.

The Pre-operational stage goes from two to seven years old; in this stage, although children use the logic in a very low level, their thinking is superior to the thinking of the sensory stage. This new form of thinking is called conceptual symbolic thinking that consists of two components: non-verbal and verbal symbolism. In the Non-verbal symbolism children use objects for purposes different for the ones they were made, for example, a chair turned backwards may be a house, and a stick maybe a gun. In verbal symbolism children use the language, or verbal signs to represent objects or events and situations. In the pre-operational stage children are focused on the acquisition and use of language, (Océano/Centrum, 1998)

The Concrete Operations stage develops from seven to eleven years old; in this stage children develop the ability to apply logical thinking to a concrete problem. Children analyze perceptions and find differences among the objects, events or situations. They are able to establish differences between relevant and irrelevant information. At this stage, children think and ask questions about their own thinking and compare them with those of others in order to correct them or change them if they feel they are wrong. At this age children tend to imitate in a

selective way; they look for patters from people who are not part of their family, for instance, they imitate their friends and classmates but not their parents.

The Formal Operations stage, which goes from eleven to fifteen years old, shows that the cognitive structures reach the highest level of development. Children have the ability to apply logical reasoning to all the problems. The formal operations stage is the final stage of the cognitive development. There are five main skills that characterize the child who carries out the formal operations. This stage is characterized by: a) Egocentrism, in which babies are unconscious of anything else than themselves; they are worried about their own actions. b) Circularity, that means the repetition of acts in cognitive structures such as, simple bodily acts, repetition of actions as the use of objects, and repetitive actions with certain variation. c) Experimentation, as the intentional manipulation of objects, this characteristic is an important component of the learning process at early infancy, which is stimulated or repressed before the children's second year of life. d) Imitation, this consists of copying other's actions or repeating an event that children have seen or have experimented. During this stage, children understand very little of what happens in their environment, and they do not understand much of the parents' language, (Océano, Centrum, 1998).

It is important to say that Piaget's theory is mainly a theory of learning, and consequently did not concentrate on understanding and explaining the process of language learning.

3.1.4 Socio-Semantics Theory

The Socio-semantics theory provides a socio-linguistic vision of the development of the children's first language acquisition. This theory is proposed by M.A.K. Halliday (as cited in Fuensanta, 1984) who does not propose a psychological model of language learning, instead he

bases his assumptions on socio-linguistic factors. According to him the language acquisition develops in three phases:

In the first phase, which comprises from 9 to 15 months, children have the domain of basic extra-linguistic functions such as: 'instrumental, regulative, relational, personal, heuristic, imaginative e informative" (Fuensanta, 1984, p.64). These functions are part of a series of simple uses of the language. This is a pre-linguistic period where grammar is not relevant; there is only a systematic relationship between content and expression.

The second phase, beginning around the sixteenth month, has two main changes: On the one hand, the function needs to make a distinction among the uses of language and the components of the linguistic system. On the other hand, in this phase rapid increase in vocabulary, structures and dialogues are observed. According to Fuensanta (1984,) "Halliday understands that the lexical-structural learning is due no only to a desire of creating new functions, but also to the necessity to enrich the functional model, since the vocabulary will allow combining functions and creating new meanings" (p. 85) The dialogue as well as the vocabulary and structures are crucial in language learning because it will be useful to adopt, accept and assign linguistics roles.

Finally, for Fuensanta (1984) there is a third phase that supposes the adaptation of the children's language to the adult's language, one referring to the experience's representation, and the another one that refers to the process of communication; they both are functional components of the grammar and these functions occur at the same time.

This theory is important because it attempts to explain the process of language learning from a functional point of view. In addition, Halliday (as cited in Fuensanta, 1984) asserts that language learning is a social process that is influenced by the environment. However, his theory

does not pay attention to the acquisition of phonetic, morphologic and syntactic aspects, which are present in any language-learning situation.

Having in mind that the children's processes of L1 and L2 learning appear to go through similar processes, and a comparison of both processes is valid and important according to Brown (1982), now we refer to those theories that attempt to provide an explanation of the process of L2 learning. Some of these theories were based on the principles of L1 learning theories, and others were developed according to other principles, taken from a variety of theories.

3.2 THEORIES OF CHILDREN'S SECOND LANGUAGE

Current theories of second language acquisition (SLA) are based on years of research in a wide variety of fields, including linguistics, psychology, sociology, and neurolinguistics. To account for the learning of the second language, many theories have been proposed and to some extent they are related to those that explain the first language (L1) acquisition, inasmuch as they have features that provide support and explain the second language learning. For example, the Behaviorist theory explains the learning of a second language based on the assumption that it occurs through the processes of imitation, practice, reinforcement, feedback and habit formation; and the Innatist theory states that children are born with all the conditions required to acquire or learn and develop a language as well as the other biological functions. To explain the L2 learning, linguists base on the hypothesis that "innate knowledge of the principles of Universal Grammar permits all children to acquire the language of their environment during the critical period." (Lightbown and Spanda, 2000, p.36). The critical period for language acquisition goes from birth to puberty, at this time children acquire or learn the language of their environment more easily.

3.2.1 Cognitive Theory

The Cognitive theory bases its arguments on the information processing model proposed by cognitive Psychologists, which affirms that the human process is attained by means of automatization and restructuring of the acquired information.

In this model, learning involves the transfer of information from short-term to long-term memory, and is regulated by the use of controlled processes (Shiffrin & Schneider, 1997, as cited in McLaughlin, 1987).

Cognitive psychologists and psycholinguistics understand L2 learning as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. That is, learning a L2 is to learn a skill that requires the automatization of component sub-skills. During the process of automatization, the learner organizes the information and pay attention to the main words in a message and not to every word or morpheme implicit in the message. “Gradually, through experience and practice, learners become able to use certain parts of their knowledge so quickly and automatically that they are not even aware that they are doing it”. (McLaughlin 1987, as cited in Lightbown & Spanda, 2000, p.41). This process can also be applied to a context where there is an intentional learning and the learners are required to do their best effort in gaining practice and experience.

Through the process of restructuring the learner organizes and connects the acquired information to old knowledge in order to interpret, reorganize and produce a more advanced process which includes new components, (McLaughlin, 1987). In short, learning implies the continual modification of organizational structures. In learning a L2, learners invent new mental structures for understating and organizing new linguistic information.

In conclusion, the Cognitive Theory applied to second language learning implies that initially the learner integrates the sub-skills step by step as controlled process, then the repeated performance of the language skills and sub-skills leads to automatization. That is, the first stages

of learning "involve the slow development of skills and the gradual elimination of errors as the leaners attempts to automatize aspects of performance. On later phases, there is continual restructuring as learners shift their internal representation" (McLaughlin, 1987, p.139).

3.2.2 Acculturation Theory

According to this theory proposed by Schumann (1978) language learning in a L2 context is a process that involves a series of factors which might contribute to the learner's success or failure. One of the key factors affecting the L2 learning process is the social context in which the learner is immerse; thus, the learning of a second language also involves the learning of a second culture, this process is called Acculturation. Brown (1987) defines Acculturation as "the process of becoming adapted to a new culture" (p.128)

In this sense, the learner is psychologically and socially influenced by the new culture. According to Ellis, (1994) the psychological factors include "language shock", "culture shock", "motivation", and "ego boundaries", which can produce confusion, fear, anxiety, etc. when the learners use the language and when they find differences between their own culture and the new one.

The social factors are limited to those ones that allow the learners to feel that they are accepted or rejected by the target language groups. According to Schumann (1978, as cited in Ellis, 1994) there are various factors which determine social distance and promote good and bad learning situations. According to Schumann (1978, as cited in Ellis, 1994, p.252) an example of a good learning situation is when "1) the target language and L2 groups view each other as socially equal; 2) the target language and L2 groups are both desirous that the L2 group will assimilate; 3) both the target language and L2 groups expect the L2 group to share social facilities with the target language groups (i.e. there is low enclosure); 4) the L2 group is small and not very

cohesive; 5) the L2 group's culture is congruent with that of the target language group; 6) both groups have positive attitudes to each other; and 7) the L2 group envisages staying in the target language are for an extended period".

In addition, the theory states that the L2 learning success or failure might be determined by the learners' level of acculturation. This means that, if the leaner has a good attitude toward the new culture and he is willing to immerse in the L2 social context, the target language will be successfully learned. On the contrary, if the learner has an attitude or rejection against the culture, there will not be a good immersion in the community; consequently, the learner will receive very little linguistic and communicative input, and the target language will be poorly learned.

3.2.3 Interactionist Theory

Second Language Acquisition occurs through conversational interaction (Hatch, Pica, and Long, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2000); "Long sees modified interaction as the necessary mechanism for the L2 acquisition, what learners need is not necessarily simplification of the linguistic forms but rather an opportunity to interact with other speakers" (Lightbown & Spada, 2000, p.43).

In this sense the idea is related to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory where the learner is able to acquire or learn a language in the zone of proximal development, when the support comes from interaction with an interlocutor who is outstanding in mastering the language (Lightbown & Spada, 200), consequently, this interaction requires the intervention of the brain in order to carry out the modification of the input; to accomplish that, the learner is catered with the linguistic components capable of modifying the information through an internal and invisible process. Examples of conversational modifications are: elaboration, slower speech rate, gesture, additional

contextual cues, comprehension checks, clarification requests, and self-repetition or paraphrase. All of these strategies are important to learn a L2.

Bruner (as cited in Brewster and Ellis, 2004) estimates that children's mental process is interrelated with the social environment, thus the following linguistic factors which are taken from the context could influence the cognitive development: words and their meaning, the children and adults' interaction, and the school that is related to the necessity to communicate between teachers and peers. Consequently, the socio-cultural context is paramount in the cognitive development as well as in language learning development.

Apart from these concepts, that specifies the person to person interaction to develop learning, this theory also considers the influence of many factors present in the linguistic environment that surrounds the children. For instance, a child may learn from texts, from the signs on the streets or in the stores, from advertisements, commercials, etc. According to Broman (1982, p.51) "learning is a function of the child's total environment. This concept also describes the effects of the learning experience upon personality or character. The child who has really learned will behave differently in the future."

While the behaviorist theories stressed the role of environment in language and the innatist theory emphasized the role of the mind in language learning, the interactionist indicate that both factors place and essential role in learning L1 and L2. In this sense, this theory appears to have a more comprehensive view of L2 learning. However, according to Bastidas (personal communication, October 30, 2006) although the environment is an important factor he thinks that in language learning, the mental processes play a crucial role to process, comprehend and produce language utterances, he says that above all, L1 and L2 learning is a creative and constructive process.

3.3 KRASHEN'S HYPOTHESES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The theory proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982, p.9-32), is composed by five hypotheses: the acquisition learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor model hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. These are explained as follows.

3.3.1 The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

Krashen (1982) places this hypothesis as the "fundamental" of all the hypotheses, because in the context of a second language learning, adults have two personal ways of getting second language proficiency. On the one hand, he mentions Language Acquisition that refers to the unconscious process of language learning. This process is similar to the children's language learning, in which they feel they are using a language strictly for communicative purposes, not for learning a language in itself. Krashen (1982, p.9) also states that, "other ways of describing acquisition include implicit learning, informal learning and natural learning. In non-technical language, acquisition is "picking-up" a language." This way of language acquisition takes place mainly in a second language context, where the linguistic conditions are displayed for the learners to acquire the new language in an easier way.

On the other hand, the author mentions Language Learning as a way to get proficiency in a new language, which refers to the conscious learning of the linguistic elements: the use and usage of the language. "The term "learning" henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rule, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In non-technical terms, learning is "knowing about" a language." (Krashen, 1982, p.10)

Although second language learners in second language contexts have the conditions to acquire the language in a native-like level, that is not the general rule for all second language learners, and for foreign language learners.

3.3.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis

The natural order hypothesis consists of the acquisition of the grammatical structures in a predictable order, that means children acquire certain meaningful words or morphemes earlier than others, for example the plural "s" and the ending "ing" are the first ones to be acquired in English; and the "s" for possessives or the "s" in the third person is acquired later because of their complex use (Brown, 1973, as cited in Krashen, 1982).

3.3.3 The Monitor Hypothesis

This hypothesis is justified by the assumption that, "…learners use the monitor only when they are focused more on being "correct" than on what they have to say, when they have sufficient time to search their memory for the relevant rules, and when they actually know those rules" (Krashen, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2000, p.38). This can happen only if the learner has a good deal of grammar rules in order to carry out the amendments of mistakes in oral, as well as the self-editing in written production.

3.3.4 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The Affective Filter, as Lightbown & Spada (2000, p.39) state, "is an imaginary barrier which prevents learners from acquiring language from the available input". This imaginary barrier has to do with affective and the process of second/foreign language acquisition/learning. These variables include: motivation, mood, self-confidence and anxiety.

The hypothesis suggests that leaners' outcomes vary according to the level of their Affective Filter. When the filter is high, that is, when the learner is stressed, unmotivated, bored or anxious, the input and output is blocked; even though, they understand the message the input does not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition/learning. On the contrary, if the filter is low, that is, when the learner is highly motivated and relaxed, his mind is more open to the input and the process of learning is more profitable.

3.3.5 The Input Hypothesis

The input is related to all the comprehensible written and oral elements the learner is exposed to. The main idea of this hypothesis is that, "…a necessary but not sufficient condition to move from stage i to stage i + 1 is that the acquirer understands input that contains i + 1, where "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not on the form of the message." (Krashen, 1982, p.21) That is to say, the acquisition and learning of the language takes place provided this input embodies from and structures that are a little more complex than those already learnt. However, it is important to clarify that the input the learner receives, should not only surpass his level of competence, but also be meaningful, comprehensible and challenging enough to improve his linguistic competence. In short, if within a linguistic environment the communication is successful, i + 1 takes place; what is important in this hypothesis is that meaning is paramount in the process of language acquisition/learning.

3.4 APPROACHES AND METHODS TO TEACH ENGLISH TO CHILDREN

Teachers have to be careful when choosing the most suitable approaches and methods, in order to accomplish the goals and specific objectives proposed for teaching and learning English

to young learners. The approaches that seem to be more appropriate for the teaching of English as a foreign language in Kids are: a) Task-based approach, b) Activity-based teaching, c) Total Physical Response, d) Methodology based on games and fun activities, and e) Communicative Approach.

3.4.1 Task-Based Approach

The Task-based approach encourages students to make use of the language regardless the formal structure of the language. It is considered part of a specific achievement of communicative language teaching. The main feature of this approach is that, the activities proposed are non-instructional and meaningful, and they require higher-order thinking skills since they have to incorporate prior knowledge and new information.

From the statement, "Tasks are a way of bringing the real world into the classroom" (Krahnke, 1987, p. 59), we can infer that the purpose of the task-based activities is to get the students involved in real-life situations with real needs and interests, where the students have the opportunity to share their experiences. And learn from each other promoting interaction and motivation to learn the language.

For Kids teachers of English, it is essential to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the task-based approach for this level of instruction. On the on hand, task-based activities are meaningful and easy to adapt and contextualize according to age, abilities, needs and interests. They foster the use of language in simulated real-life situations, which are very attractive for the students. They give the students much experience and feedback in order to improve their learning through individual and group work.

On the other hand, task-based activities require teachers' creativity and a great deal of resources apart from the textbook (authentic materials are advisable). The evaluation is difficult

since the focus is on students' performance more than on students' competence, nevertheless improvements may be continually assessed; and what is more important is the teachers' availability to modify their traditional methodological concepts and to be open to ideas and suggestions for their teaching.

3.4.2 Activity-Based Teaching

This approach involves the students in a series of activities where they are stimulated and motivated to play, be creative and curious. It is a good source for teachers to take advantage of what children do naturally. Activity-based learning is more concerned on how to learn effectively than on what to teach. The topic is important in this kind of syllabus because the activities are structurally organized to combine them with the topic in relation to the context, the meaning and the purpose.

According to Holderness (as cited in Brumfit, 1991), the first thing for teachers to do is select the topic or topics which are appropriate, enjoyable and interesting for their students; for children, at the beginning level, the most suitable topics could be: school, people, jobs, toys, families, stories, friends, animals, transports, music, hobbies, etc. After choosing the topic, the next step is decomposing it in categories and subcategories of words, which are related to each other; in this organized way teachers can identify the vocabulary, the structures, the activities, and the resources needed for carrying out the lesson plans.

Teachers are catered with many different kinds of activities, which can be selected depending the students' level, the resources available and the number of students per course. In addition, the following cognitive skills could be included according to the purpose of the activities: describing, identifying and recognizing, matching, comparing, making connections,

sequencing and remembering. Finally, activity-based syllabus requires continuous assessment and feedback to give the students the needed support to guarantee their effective learning.

3.4.3 A Methodology Based on Games and Fun Activities

Fun activities and games, which combine enjoyment and meaningful learning at the same time, are very significant in the process of teaching and learning English with Kids. It is well known that children live singing, chanting, solving puzzles, clapping hands, etc. As teachers, we could take advantage of the children's' predispositions to have fun and learn.

The use of songs, rhymes, chants puzzles, coloring and drawing produce some benefits in the process of teaching and learning. According to Brewster & Ellis (2004) the benefits could be in terms of a Linguistic Resource that "provides for lots of natural and enjoyable repetition, they can be used to develop all skills in an integrated way" (p.162). A Psychological/Affective Resource, because they motivate the students to have a good attitude to the foreign language learning and to help them to feel comfortable by singing, solving puzzles, coloring, etc. in groups, in pairs or the whole class. In addition, these activities can serve as a Cognitive Resource, "because they help to develop concentration, memory and coordination" by using gestures and bodily actions, which makes children internalize the meaning of words or phrases. Additionally, they promote the students' interaction and integration among them.

Brewster & Ellis (2004) propose that these types of activities are advisable to be used in the following ways: "as warmers, as a transition from one activity to the next, as closers, to introduce new language, to practice language, to revise language, to change the mood, to get everyone's attention or to integrate with storytelling." (p.168). But when these activities are used, it is important to be careful with the quality of the activity and the time spent when they are carried out, because they may become a distraction from the teacher's academic purposes. For

instance, some pitfalls could be that you "provide an activity which is absorbing in itself but is of negligible pay-off in terms of language acquisition or else takes too long for too little return. Color the picture without any linguistic challenge is a good activity for calming children down, but if it goes on too long, time is being wasted." (Brewster & Ellis, 2004, p.33).

3.4.4 Total Physical Response (TPR)

The TPR method proposed by James Asher is founded on the following principles stated in Bastidas (1993, p. 36-7):

- The comprehensive abilities precede the productive abilities.
- The teaching of the conversation must be put off until the comprehensive abilities are established.
- The abilities, which are required through listening, are transferred to other abilities.
- Teaching must be focused in meaning rather than on grammar.
- Teaching must reduce the learner's stress.

TPR focuses teaching on the comprehension of commands and its posterior execution. It is based, first and foremost, on listening and connected with physical actions. The most common activities in this method may be commands or instructions such as: open the door, sit down, stand up, walk to the door, lend me your book, etc. where the teacher asks the students to carry out the instructions by performing them actively, therefore, under good conditions and provide with a good atmosphere in the classroom, these activities could be enjoyable and motivating for the students.

TPR has many advantages in terms of the dynamics of the class, the students' active position and the listening comprehension; but if we analyze the whole procedure of a lesson designed by

means of this method we can see that these activities are welcomed at the beginning of the lesson. After that, it could become repetitious and boring for learners. Since the imperatives are the basic structure used on this method, the use of the language is almost confined to this grammatical form; and the functions to be used in real-life situations are not developed widely. To conclude, it is recommendable to use the TPR method in combination with other methods, which work as a complement to strengthen the TPR weaknesses.

3.4.5 Communicative Approach (CA)

The Communicative Approach to English teaching comes forth in the 70's and 80's as a reaction against the mechanical practice promoted by the Audio-lingual method. The CA intends to encourage the learners to learn through activities that engage them in more meaningful and authentic language use. The emphasis of this approach is mainly on communication rather than on the accurate use of form. According to Bastidas (1993, p.165), "the Communicative Approach recognizes grammatical forms are important components of a language, but its emphasis concentrates on the semantic component, different to most methods that take syntax as a central point". To apply the principles of this approach, it is required that the activities promote interaction and communication among students and between teacher and students, therefore pair and group work are advisable to achieve the goals proposed for a communicative course.

The CA suggests certain principles about the ideal conditions under which the learning is carried out successfully. These principles are put into practice through activities that embodies authentic communication, activities that foster meaningful tasks through the use of L2, and the use of didactic materials and language input which is understandable for the students (Bastidas, 1993).

The objectives that the CA pursues are: "The acquisition of the communicative competence of a second language and the development of diverse procedures for teaching the four communicative abilities". (Bastidas 1993, p.167). The attainment of the objectives depends mainly on the appropriate teaching orientation according to the social context and the students' needs and interests.

In relation to the teacher's and student's role in the CA, the teachers' compromise is to facilitate, to guide, to monitor, and to give feedback on the learners' linguistic performance. The students' role is to be an active member of the learning process. The learner has the responsibility of his own success. To this point, Bastidas (1993, p.173) states "The student's responsability is to "learn" to communicate. The student is the manager of his/her own learning. His work must concentrate on negotiating meaning in order to understand and make himself understood.

Below I will refer to some other common methods used to teach English:

3.4.6 Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)

The GTM was created to teach Greek and Latin with the aim of analyzing classical literature. At that time, the main objective was "to prepare the students to be able to explore the depth and breadth of L2 literature" (Chastain, 1976, as cited in Bastidas, 1993, p.14). Since grammar was considered as "the art of speaking and writing well" Bastidas (1993, p.14), the approach was deductive, in the sense that the explanations were given in the mother tongue to assure students' comprehension, the lessons were based on verb conjugations, vocabulary (isolated words), and rules. Therefore, memorization played a central role together with a constant correction of mistakes.

This approach is related to what Harmer (1987) calls "over grammar teaching" which means that teachers provide the students with explanations and rules in a traditional way. Then, the teachers give the students a lot of exercises to practice grammatical structures.

The objectives that the GTM proposes are based on L2 reading comprehension and writing through translation and the understanding of L2 grammar. This means that the lessons are planned in terms of grammar topics which are selected according to the level of difficulty of the structures. The teaching of grammar is focused on usage rather than on the use of the target language. Given the importance of having a good comprehension of the L2 grammar, the mother tongue is used all along the class with the little or no use of the target language. This will allow students a better understanding of the use and usage of the structures.

Related to students' participation, a characteristic of this method is that there is little or no students' participation and interaction, thus there is no opportunity for the students' oral production.

Finally, in a typical English class with the GTM, the students learn vocabulary through memorization of lists of isolated words with their correspondent translation. The grammar rules are learned through their application in translation of given sentences, phrases and paragraphs from one language to another. Conjugation of verbs is also very important in tenses classes.

3.4. 7 Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

The Audio-Lingual method is based on the assumption that the language is a set of habits which are learned through practice, imitations and memorization. Since the development of oral skills was very important for the ALM, wide practice of sentences and phrases were done in order that students acquire a native-like pronunciation (Bastidas, 1993).

The ALM objective is to enable students to use the target language in terms of communication, so, this method emphasizes mechanic repetition, and immediate production as well as phonological, phonetic and syntactic aspects of the L2. The purpose was to have students use the L2 in the same way that a native speaker does. According to Bastidas (1993, p.65), the objectives proposed by the ALM are:

- Control of sounds, words and sentences structures
- Development of oral abilities (speaking and listening) principally.
- To train the student in pronouncing correctly.
- To develop written abilities (reading and writing) as a reinforcement to the oral abilities.

The typical lesson of ALM is done based on the following techniques: repetition, substitution, backward build-up, transformation, guided response, memorization of dialogues, expansion and integration among others. In this method, the teachers have the control of the class and guide the process. Thus, mainly the teacher pronounces a word or sentence and the students try to repeat in the same way the teacher does. Repetition is done with the whole group, half of the group, by rows and individually (Bastidas, 1993).

3.4.8 Eclectic Method

The main assumption of this method is to select the best procedures and techniques from different methods in order to apply them in a specific teaching situation, thus, the teachers need to look for different methodological options. According to Bastidas (1993, p.201), the Eclectic method encourages teachers to: “select in an intelligent way the theoretical principles, procedures and techniques of various methods which allow formulating a curricular plan according to their needs and that has immediate application in the classroom”. Teachers who are inclined to follow

this method need to do action research and to be good analyst of the teaching and learning situation, and to explore the students' needs and interests.

One of the problems of this method is that there is not a specific guide about the principles, designs and procedures to be chosen and combined from different methods in order to create another option to apply in class. This means that teachers have to be creative in order to design and use an eclectic method, contrary to what teachers believe and say when they are asked about this method: "An eclectic method is a mixture of all the methods", (Bastidas, 1993, 9.204).

3.5 TEACHER QUALITY

Teacher quality is a common concern in daily life, in education policies, and in academic literature. Teacher quality is a complex assembles in which qualifications, experience, methodology / teaching practices, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes play a key role. Some external factors are also linked to Teacher Quality like students' attitudes, availability of didactic resources, and adequate time on task, altogether with class size, and teacher work assignment (Ravitch, 1995).

3.5.1 Teacher Quality Concepts

Regardless of its existence in education discourse, TQ (Teacher Quality), often has different meanings and Kennedy (2008) points that Teacher Quality has become a global term without a clear denotation. She mentions five different meanings of this term:

As researchers enter into debates about teacher quality, they often use the phrase to refer to very different things. For example, people interested in recruitment tend to use the phrase

"teacher quality" to refer to tested ability. These writers want us to design recruitment practices that entice people with higher test scores to become teachers. For them, test scores are an indicator of teacher quality.

Meanwhile, people interested in the equitable distribution of teachers across student populations often use the phrase "teacher quality" to refer to credentials. These writers want to ensure that all students have access to teachers who have obtained comparable licenses and certificates. For them, certificates and teaching experience are indicators of teacher quality.

Still other people use the phrase "teacher quality" to refer to quality teachers' classroom practices. These writers want to improve the work teachers do inside their classrooms, when actually teaching students. Fort them, specific teaching practices are indicators of teacher quality.

Then, there are people who think about school finance and who seek the most productive use of expenditures. They often use the phrase "teacher quality" to refer to teacher's effectiveness in raising student achievement. For them, gains in student achievement are indicators of teacher quality.

And, of course, there are people who want teachers to subscribe to particular beliefs and values. In their minds, such values are the chief indicators of teacher quality. (Kennedy, p.59)

Likewise, there are three different terms but widespread terms associated to a quality teacher: good teacher, effective teacher, and high qualified teacher (Paone, Whitcomb, Rose, and Reichardt, 2008). The first term, good teacher is connected to daily school discourse; it refers to teachers that "teach well". However, common and understandable, this is a very imprecise term. According to Shulman (1986, in Paone, Whitcomb, Rose, and Reichardt, 2008) "a good teacher" connects learners with significant ideas, with themselves, and with the world. Good teachers do more than boost achievement, they shape lives." (p.5). This means that the concept of good teacher is not limited to what he does in the classroom (i.e., teaching); in a deeper sense, it is

related to the transcendence that his actions can have in his students' lives beyond school (i.e., education).

The second term, teacher effectiveness, is commonly found in education researchers and authorities referring to students' achievement resulting from teaching. In this perspective, an effective teacher produces significant improvements in the students' learning (Harris and Ó Duibhir, 2011). In the sense of teacher effectiveness, Teacher Quality is associated to students' achievement in tests. In this sense, their learning depends on teachers or, vice versa, TQ can be seen in students' success.

Despite so much research linking Teacher Quality to students' success in tests, this is still a very narrow conception of effectiveness (Kennedy, 2008) and there is still lack of agreement on how best to identify and measure effective teaching (Kane, Wooten, Taylor, and Tyler, 2001).

On the other hand, the third term, highly qualified teacher, is also usual and has been defined by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2004) as someone "who possesses the sophisticated content knowledge and familiarity with appropriate pedagogical and assessment strategies needed to challenge and increasingly diverse population of students to the highest level of achievement in the English Language arts of reading, writing, and speaking" (p.1). In general, TQ refers to the various teacher-related characteristics associated with positive educational results (Cochran-Smith and Fries 2005).

According to NCTE members (2006), the teacher's skills and expertise fall in the areas of pedagogical content and knowledge, planning instruction, skills and strategies to engage students. These skills are developed through time and they are what we usually call experience. NCTE's definition illustrates how TQ amalgamates the features a quality teacher has or must have (skills, knowledge, expertise, and the like), the qualities of what he does or should do (e.g., assessment), and the results he obtains in his students.

Some of the traits of a quality teacher, expressed by Teacher Leaders at the Leadership Conference of Colorado Education Association (2006), are listed by Paone, Whitcomb, Rose, and Reichardt (2008): "a quality teacher is continuously learning, hardworking, patient, confident and emphatic in multi-cultural or multi-racial issues, open-minded, and respectful of learners. A quality teacher builds a relationship with the students so a mutual trust and understanding can be established; a quality teacher has high standards for the students, a belief that the child's abilities will ultimately inspire and empower the child; a quality teacher infuses practicality: a quality teacher has expertise, passion, courage, discipline, structure and flexibility; a quality teacher listens; a quality teacher makes connections to the families and communities" (p.20).

However, Kennedy (2010) suggests that Education researchers and policy makers may be overestimating the role of personal qualities in their quest to understand teaching quality. In their effort to understand classroom-to-classroom differences in student learning, they may focus too much on the characteristics of teachers themselves, overlooking situational factors that may have a strong bearing on the quality of the teaching practices we see.

Up to here, we have seen authorities', teachers', and researchers' views. The students' perspective of what a quality teacher is somehow amalgamates all those concepts: we all keep the memory of those good teachers from who we learned a lot, those who were knowledgeable in their subjects, those who taught well and, those who also were significant in our lives beyond school matters.

3.5.2 Teacher Quality Components

As we saw in the previous section TQ is a complex construct whose very definition is still not unified. Kennedy (2008) pointed at that confusion and, to "sorting out the confusion" (p.60), proposed three broad groupings of teacher quality: personal resources (those qualities teachers

bring with them to their jobs), performance (related to teachers' day-to-day work, the work teachers actually do in their daily practice), and effectiveness (referring to teachers' impact on students, usually how good teachers are at raising student scores on achievement tests). In "personal resources" she included: beliefs, attitudes, and values, personality traits, knowledge, skill, and expertise, and credentials. In "performance" Kennedy included practices that occur outside the classroom (like, interacting with colleagues and parents or planning a curriculum that engages students), practices within the classroom (for instance, being efficient, being a good role model, being organized, providing clear goals and standards, or keeping students on task); and learning activities for students. Finally, for Kennedy "effectiveness" is not a unitary concept that can mean either fostering student learning, or motivating students, or fostering personal responsibility and social concern.

In general, TQ embeds both personal characteristics and professional competencies ranging from qualifications, to experience, to methodology / practice, to knowledge, to beliefs and attitudes. The first component of TQ that comes to mind is qualifications. Almost every institution and education system ask from its teachers a minimum of certified education as an entrance or permanence requirement. The evidence of adequate education is given by means of certificates, diplomas, degrees, or titles. Those studies give the teacher the necessary knowledge and skills to teach.

As early as in 1975 the international organization of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) adopted guidelines for the certification and preparation of teachers of English to speakers of other languages in the United States (Kreidler, 1986). The guidelines included:

- Academic specialization, including courses covering language; the grammatical, phonological, and semantic systems of English: the process of language learning (both first and second languages); and language in culture.
- Pedagogy, including courses covering methodology, second language assessment, and practical experience.
- The learning of another language, including its linguistic structure and cultural system

Many studies advocate the idea according to which the more qualifications the teacher has the better the teacher is. Ferguson and Womack's study (1993) found that, more than content knowledge, the amount of education coursework completed by teachers explained their performance. Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig (2005) found that certified teachers consistently produce a stronger student achievement gains than do uncertified teachers and that teachers' effectiveness appears strongly related to the preparation they have received for teaching.

Kennedy (2008) compared the findings of qualitative and quantitative studies in the Teacher Qualifications and the Quality of Teaching (TQQT) database (USA) since 1960 and noticed that both kinds of studies do not make a difference between teachers with different types of certificates or different teacher education backgrounds. From these studies she concluded that context and students' characteristics have a great impact over practice, as well as the schedules, textbooks, resources and rules set by the school, stating also that content knowledge influences teaching practice more than teacher certification; besides, the author determined that teacher course concepts need to be understood and applied through different specific strategies; and,

finally, she also concluded knowledge does not remain static in the teachers' minds but it does evolve as it interacts with both beliefs and teaching experience itself.

Although certification as an associated factor of TQ is supported by the valid underlying assumption that specific formal training and education is a must, certifications do not per se guarantee TQ. Teachers with high certifications do not always perform well in the classroom; the opposite was also the case in former times when teaching was more an art than a matter of a professional occupation. That means that certifications, although important, are just part of TQ.

Another component of TQ has to do with what the teacher does, his practice in general or his methodology in particular. In general, the actions that a quality teacher performs, according to CEA, Colorado Education Association (2008) include involving students in learning environments designed according to their contexts, needs and interests, and are assessed under different ways; likewise, integrates the community and the learners' family looking for collaborative relationships. A quality teacher also demonstrates professional knowledge, providing quality education and keeping an ongoing professional training, and, additionally, generates an understanding on the diversity of students and communities, attempting to overcome the internal and external barriers that impact student learning.

As it can be seen, the actions that a quality teacher does, have to do with effective teaching or classroom practice and with professional activities beyond direct teaching, aimed at improving his knowledge and practice. Moreover, effective classroom practice is associated with the use of adequate methodology, classroom management techniques, motivation of learners, and communication skills.

Teachers' knowledge is another conspicuous component of TQ. Teachers must be knowledgeable in the subject matter they teach and be proficient in the language; this kind of knowledge has been called subject knowledge. Of course, knowledge about how to teach

(pedagogical and didactic knowledge) is also necessary; this has been called professional knowledge of teachers (Florez, 1974; Chaves, 2008: Kostina and Hernandez, 2007). Others consider necessary that language teachers know linguistics and culture and even research (Cook, 1992). Educational research is also a desirable knowledge for teachers, for it allows them to analyze their teaching and the students' learning (Richards and Farrell 2005). Teacher's disciplinary and professional knowledge is the basis of his authority (de Tezanos, 2007): in relation to the foreign language, students are able to see if, for instance, the teacher speaks well the language and if he is good at teaching it; if they consider the teacher does not have a good level proficiency or teaching ability, they will not consider him a good teacher. Such knowledge is developed both through study and experience and it leads to effective teaching if combined with some other skills like communication and planning.

The position of the international association of teachers of English (TESOL) on TQ is that native speaker proficiency in the target language is not a sufficient qualification for ESL or EFL teaching positions. For them, students have the right to be taught by qualified and trained teachers. Specialized training is required for teaching English to speakers of other languages. Qualified ESL and EFL educators not only should demonstrate a high level of written and oral proficiency in the English language (regardless of native language), but also should demonstrate teaching competency. Moreover, qualified ESL and EFL educators should be aware of current trends and research and their instructional implications in the fields of linguistics, applied linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, language pedagogy and methodology, literacy development, curriculum and materials development, assessment, and cross-cultural communication. Where applicable, ESL and EFL educators should receive necessary degree, licensing, validation, or certification as determined by their institution, country, or region from qualified ESL/EFL teacher educators. Most importantly, ESL and EFL educators, like all

teachers, require ongoing professional development, and should receive both the resources and support for continued professional growth and achievement. (TESOL 2003).

As seen, it is a disputed subject that refers to an excess of teachers' characteristics that can be broadly summarized in four categories: qualifications, knowledge, practice (methodology), and image (personal traits and professional attitudes). It is necessary to keep in mind Kennedy's (2008) assertion about this complex matter of TQ: "True understanding of teacher quality requires us to recognize that these many facets are distinct, not always overlapping, and not always related to one another. Moreover, we aren't even sure how they influence and interact with one another when they do." (p.60).

3.6 ASSESSMENT

3.6.1 Testing, Assessment and Evaluation in Foreign Language Learning

Testing, assessment and evaluation are vital components of the learning process that continuously overlap in education. That is why it is necessary to establish the difference among these terms, as López and Bernal (2009) distinguished them:

Testing is one way to assess in a very formal standardized way to gather information. Assessment is to gather information about the learners through different and several procedures. Evaluation is to make decisions based on the information provided by the assessment process. This is the widest process, and involves assessment and testing.

These three concepts are strongly connected and there are no strict barriers that separate one from the other. They constantly move and interact in the same context. They need each other in order to properly occur. Teachers everywhere put into practice these concepts when testing learners in a specific moment in time; when assessing them in a continuous process, by observing

and gathering data from different points and activities; and evaluating them by interpreting the information collected in order to give a concept about their students' learning process.

3.6.2 Assessment Procedures in Foreign Language Learning

Due to the change of conceptions towards language learning, where it is no more viewed as stored skills, teachers have implemented new assessment procedures. These procedures are grounded on two bases: the first one is the perception of the language as a mix of several components such as syntax, morphology, semantics, phonology, vocabulary, among others, and their interrelationship. The different assessment procedures help language to be assessed not as a structure, but as a way to communicate and self-express (Eggleton, 1992). The second one is the inclusion not only of the academic but of the personal aspects of the student, since both of them are an integral part of language learning and because learners are seen as a whole in their social, academic and physical contexts.

These new conceptions of assessment where the purposes have changed have lead to other approaches of assessment (Martyniuk, Mike & José, 2007). In these approaches there are two tendencies: assessment of learning and assessment for learning. The former is centered on summative assessment, where the priority is in measuring the objectives, and ensuring the process itself. The latter is done through formative assessment with emphasis on the feedback that will foster an improvement of performance; self-assessment belongs to this tendency, mostly used as a tool of formative assessment. Therefore, assessment can be diagnostic, formative or summative as explained below:

- Diagnostic assessment is the one applied with the intention of establishing the knowledge of a child in order to provide learning opportunities in the future (Cameron, 2007). This assessment is frequently done at the beginning of the lesson or the school

year, so it can provide teachers with meaningful information to plan the lessons and determine the objectives. The results of the diagnostic assessment can be used as further reference to establish the progress in the students' learning process.

- Summative assessment is intended to measure learners' achievement. It is usually done at the end of a lesson, module or period of time in order to determine the students' knowledge, abilities and skills developed. While formative assessment fosters feedback, it is not necessarily the same case in summative assessment, as Cameron (2007) mentions this one points to learning at the end of a cycle, meaning it does not need feedback into the following teaching period. In some cases, the results from this type of assessment are used to verify the quality of a program.
- The formative assessment is focused on the improvement of learning rather than on judging of final achievements (McDonald & Boud, 2003). This type of assessment looks for the learners' strengths and weaknesses in order to reinforce and modify the ones that need to be improved. This type of assessment provides the teachers, parents and students useful information about the leaners' progress towards the established objectives, and it can be used to adapt or modify further classroom work. This kind of assessment needs thoughtful construction since it is an intricate procedure (Read-Dickins, 2008).

One of the purposes of formative assessment is to give proper feedback in order to improve the aspects of the process that show some kind of flaws. Feedback is the information that is given to the students; it can be by the teacher or a peer, about what they need to work on in order to do it better next time. It is not only to let them know what they did wrong but show them the path that will guide them to improve. In order to provide and receive effective feedback, the

information provided should take into account the following conditions: according to Brinko (1993)

- Be gathered from a number of credible, knowledgeable and well-intentioned sources.
- Be based on accurate data and contain concrete information.
- Be descriptive rather than evaluative.
- Be given, if possible, right after performance.
- Consider the learners' experience.
- Acknowledge that learners may not have control over all aspects of their teaching.
- Take cognizance of the learners' self-esteem.
- Begin with positive feedback, and be open to response and interaction.
- Relate to goals defined by the learners.

As it can be observed, assessment in foreign language learning offers different types of procedures but, in any case, they demand several conditions to be truly effective.

3.6.3 Classroom Assessment: Guiding Principles for Practice

The assessment strategies previously mentioned are part of classroom assessment which includes all the informal and formal means of assessment used by teachers and by students in educational settings; it mostly works with formative assessment. López (2008) establishes among others three main goals of classroom assessment:

- To improve student learning.
- To align classroom assessment with instruction.
- To help teachers become more effective and to help them structure instruction.

Likewise, in 2002 the Assessment Reform Group (Cambridge University, School of Education) produced ten principles that are foundational to assessment for learning:

- be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers
- be part of effective planning of teaching and learning
- promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of the criteria by which they are assessed
- be recognized as central to classroom practice
- focus on how students learn
- provide constructive guidance about how to improve
- develop learners' capacity for self-assessment so that they can become reflective and self-managing
- take account of the importance of learner motivation
- be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact
- recognize the full range of achievement of all learners

In order to have an effective classroom assessment, it should be focused on the students and they should be involved in the process. Besides, as it has been shown on this section, there should be a constant communication, among all the participants in the learning process, and a clear relation between learning and assessment.

3.7 SYLLABUS DESIGN

Planning the syllabus for a subject matter is the basic task that teachers must carry out in

order to specify and organize the course on the whole. Krahnke (1987, p.1), states: "Among the various aspects of second or foreign language teaching, one of the most ignored has been the content of teaching, what is generally referred to as curriculum syllabus design". In other words, teachers are always concerned about the method and the materials to be used in their classes; they do not realize that the goals to be attained at the end of the instruction and the syllabus (the selection and organization of the content) are the first elements to determine when a course is being planned, and it is also the crucial base under meaningful learning can take place.

According to Bastidas (1993), the curriculum plan also embodies three aspects to consider: the role of the learners, the teachers and the didactic resources. The new trend now in methodology is to give the students an active position in the process; thus, they are responsible for the development of the tasks and activities proposed by the teachers and to attain the main goals of instruction. The teacher, as well as the students also has a crucial role, he is no longer the authority who has the power of knowledge over the students; contrary to this conception, the teacher has become a guide, an advisor, a friend, and the person in charge of providing a good atmosphere that fosters the students' motivation and learning.

Finally, the didactic resources play an important role in the attainment of objectives, depending on their content, adequacy, quality, usefulness, and availability. It is important that teachers learn how to design materials and how to evaluate them in order to adopt them for their courses. Teachers also need to be resourceful and creative to adapt their materials to the students' contexts and interests; it may help them in the learning process.

Needless to say, setting the learning goals for the course based on the principles specified in the approach is the foregoing activity, which will be a guide in the selection of the content (the scope and sequence), and the method or methods applied during the course. The goals should also be stated depending on the emphasis the teachers want to place on: listening, speaking

(conversation), reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar. To do this, Krahnke (1987) concludes teachers also need to know who their students are in terms of their prior knowledge, expectations (needs and wants), social and personality types, the number of students per class and the real time available for the entire course.

To design the syllabus for primary school teaching three types of syllabuses seems to be the most appropriate ones. Topic-based syllabus "where the learners are involved in a series of activities, which could be imaginative, creative or investigative". Activity-based syllabus, which is focused "on learn by doing, and promotes learning by play, creativity and curiosity" (Bastidas, 2002, p.170-173), and Task-based syllabus, in which "the content of the teaching is a series of complex purposeful tasks that students want or need to perform with the language they are learning" (Krahnke, 1987, p.11).

3.8 COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a language assessment instrument created by the European Council to promote lasting learning and boost the quality and practicality of language education where languages are taught, considering that language education is a fundamental human right for all types of individuals, reason why effective language learning processes must be provided and assessed under a determined scale guaranteeing equity in language quality.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is presented under a detailed order according to language proficiency, developed through the following reference

levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2; in the CEFR these levels are specified through illustrative descriptor scales, providing also curriculum design options.

The CEFR develops the competencies students must attain through its 'Can do', defining the aspects of proficiency and contributing with a clear guide for learning, which not only serves as a means of measurement but a tool to progress in the language learnt.

The following are the aims the CEFR intends:

- "promote and facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in different countries
- provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications
- assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and co-ordinate their efforts" (p. 25)

The CEFR has two bases, one that enlists the categories for describing different activities and aspects of competence, and another one in charge of expressing progress in proficiency in those categories; this structured system lets learners involve with relevant aspects of the descriptive scheme in a progressive way. Nonetheless, the levels of proficiency are not proposed to be totally fixed, since they can be grouped into three broad categories: Basic user (A1 & A2), Independent user (B1 & B2) and Proficient user (C1 & C2), and these could also be segmented in sublevels, for example: A1+, -A2, B1+, etc. depending on the learners' performance in the different language competencies.

The following are descriptors and levels of proficiency on spoken language presented by the CEFR (p.163):

- Level A1 (Breakthrough) is considered the lowest level of generative language use - the point at which the learner can interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions

about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, rather than relying purely on a very finite rehearsed, lexically organized repertoire of situation-specific phrases.

- Level A2 does appear to reflect the level referred to by the Waystage specification. It is at this level that the majority of descriptors stating social functions are to be found, like use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address; greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers. Here too are to be found descriptors on getting out and about: the simplified cut-down version of the full set of transactional specifications in 'The Threshold Level' for adults living abroad, like: make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; get simple information about travel; use public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, ask for basic information, ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask for and provide everyday goods and services.
- Level B1 reflects the Threshold Level specification for a visitor to a foreign country and is perhaps most categorized by two features. The first feature is the ability to maintain interaction and get across what you want to, in a range of contexts, for example: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect; give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends; express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly; exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to; maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when

trying to say exactly what he/she would like to; keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production. The second feature is the ability to cope flexibly with problems in everyday life, for example cope with less routine situations on public transport; deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling; enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics; make a complaint; take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction; ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.

- Level B2 represents a new level as far above B1 (Threshold) as A2 (Waystage) is below it. It is intended to reflect the Vantage Level specification. The metaphor is that having been progressing slowly but steadily across the intermediate plateau, the learner finds he has arrived somewhere, things look different, he/she acquires a new perspective, - can look around him/her in a new way. This concept does seem to be borne out to a considerable extent by the descriptors calibrated at this level. They represent quite a break with the content so far. For example at the lower end of the band there is a focus on effective argument: account for and sustain his opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments; explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options; construct a chain of reasoned argument; develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view; explain a problem and make it clear that his counterpart in a negotiation must make a concession; speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations; take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses.

Secondly, running right through the level there are two new focuses. The first is being able to more than hold your own in social discourse: e.g. converse naturally, fluently and effectively; understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment; initiate discourse, take his turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly; use stock phrases (e.g. 'That's a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say; interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party; adjust to the changes of direction, style and emphasis normally found in conversation; sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker. The second new focus is a new degree of language awareness: correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings; make a note of 'favorite mistakes' and consciously monitor speech for it/them; generally correct slips and errors if he becomes conscious of them; plan what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient/s. In all, this does seem to be a new threshold for a language learner to cross.

- Level C1, the next band, was labelled Effective Operational Proficiency. What seems to characterize this level is good access to a broad range of language, which allows fluent, spontaneous communication, as illustrated by the following examples: Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. The discourse skills characterizing the previous band continue to be evident at Level C1, with an emphasis on more fluency, for example: select a suitable phrase from a fluent repertoire of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain

time and keep it whilst thinking; produce clear, smoothly-flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

- Level C2, whilst it has been termed 'Mastery', is not intended to imply native-speaker or near native-speaker competence. What is intended is to characterize the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease with the language which typifies the speech of those who have been highly successful learners. Descriptors calibrated here include: convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices; has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative level of meaning; backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.

The Common Reference Levels can be presented and exploited in a number of different formats, in varying degrees of detail. Yet the existence of fixed points of common reference offers transparency and coherence, a tool for future planning and a basis for further development. The intention of providing a concrete illustrative set of descriptors, together with criteria and methodologies for the further development of descriptors, is to help decision-makers design applications to suit their contexts.

3.9 SUGGESTED CURRICULUM FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The National Ministry of Education of Colombia in cooperation with the initiative of the National Development Plan 2014 – 2018, developed the Suggested Curriculum for primary and secondary schools seeking for high quality education in the field of bilingualism, guaranteeing Colombia becomes the best educated country of the region by 2025.

The Suggested Curriculum presents the basic learning rights and the suggested curriculum for all school grades, starting in Transition grade going to 11° grade, providing teachers with specific curricular guidelines, looking for improving classroom practices and also looking for students to reach the language level required in each grade. On this account, different topics of current matter are proposed in order to develop the curricular content, as health, globalization, environment and peace. The previous contents and topics were chosen and structured into the Suggested Curriculum considering the needs and characteristics of public Colombian institutions in a way they can be adaptable to their own contexts.

The Suggested Curriculum is presented through two booklets, one for primary school and another one for secondary school. Its content develops through transition grade to fifth grade, and from sixth grade to eleventh grade. The main contents include: a suggested scope and sequence, a syllabus, methodological and assessment suggestions, and projects and tasks suggestions as well. These contents presented aim at giving teachers the tools to strengthen school English curricula that can support the accomplishment of the learning goals established; however, it is important to highlight each school has the opportunity to adapt and modify the contents according to the needs and particularities of their teaching context, as well as to the characteristics of their student population.

The following are the levels of proficiency suggested by the English Basic Standards of Competence: English (MEN 2006):

Grade	Level	
From 1st to 3rd grade	Beginner	A1
From 4th to 5th grade	Basic 1	A2.1

From 6th to 7th grade	Basic 2	A2.2
From 8th to 9th grade	Pre-intermediate 1	B1.1
From 10th to 11th garde	Pre-intermediate 2	B1.2

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Type of Study

This study is presented as a qualitative research, which inquiry process is ample and can be modified and complemented before, while and after the process. Additionally, its objective focuses on collecting perceptions, opinions and points of view instead standardized data.

The characteristics of this study are linked to the ones presented by Hernández, Fernandez and Baptista (2014), when they explain that the interactions for this type of study are done among individuals and groups of people, to whom the researcher asks open questions to obtain answers either through written or oral language, by using interviews, observations, life story records or surveys. There is also concern for understanding personal interests and tendencies from the participants. The researcher's role is to focus on what participants describe for this to be used as the qualitative data.

This type of research pretends to understand the reality by a dynamic inquiring process, flexible to move among the data collected, the theory and, the interpretation that each participant provides would be unique and particular.

Furthermore, the study was carried out through the Hermeneutic research method that according to Ricoeur (1992) is implied as the theory of the operations of the understanding in their relation to the interpretation of texts. However, Ricouer stated that Hermeneutics could also be applied to all human activities and no only to the interpretation of texts as Schleiermache and Heidegger first proclaimed. The present research was developed by means of this method in the

sense that its main objective is to understand and interpret the teaching practices in the Kids English Program.

4.2 Participants

For this research, twenty students from the Kids English Program participated, the learners' age range was between 8 and 12 years old and they belonged to different levels of English, their levels ranged from Kids 4 to Kids 10. Likewise, 20 teachers from the institution and randomly selected made part of this research as well. These teachers' age varied, they were between 20 and 55 years old, whose teaching experience with kids also varied, some of them had worked in the field for over 15 years while others had just 1 year or no experience teaching kids. The teachers who participated from the research came from Colombia and other countries like The USA and South Africa.

4.3 Research Instruments

For this study three different research instruments were used as class observations, interviews and surveys.

a. Class observations: This process consisted of 10 class observations, in which 10 different teachers were observed teaching different English levels as well, from Kids 1 to Kids 10. The class observations were supported by an Observation Format were everything that happened in class was described in regards to: Classroom Management, the Instructor, the Students and the Learning Environment.

In the Chapter for the data analysis, the following codes are used to incorporate the information obtained through the Class Observations:

Class observation	Level Observed	Code
1	Kids 1	CO1
2	Kids 2	CO2
3	Kids 3	CO3
4	Kids 4	CO4
5	Kids 5	CO5
6	Kids 6	CO6
7	Kids 7	CO7
8	Kids 8	CO8
9	Kids 9	CO9
10	Kids 10	CO10

b. Interviews. The type of interview applied was developed under 12 open fixed questions and were applied to 10 teachers of the Kids English Program; the data collected through this instrument aimed at obtaining and comparing information provided by the teachers in regards to the process of English teaching at the institution, the training and teaching background in the field of language teaching to young learners, and the general perceptions teachers have about the Kids English Program of the institution.

In the Chapter for Data Analysis, the codes used for analyzing the voices of the teachers who participated from the interviews, are:

Item	Interview	Code
1	Teacher 1	TI1
2	Teacher 2	TI2
3	Teacher 3	TI3
4	Teacher 4	TI4
5	Teacher 5	TI5
6	Teacher 6	TI6
7	Teacher 7	TI7
8	Teacher 8	TI8
9	Teacher 9	TI9
10	Teacher 10	TI10

c. Surveys. The survey, as well as the interview type, was designed under a set of 7 open questions and was administered to 20 students cursing different levels of English in the Kids Program. The purpose of this survey was to find out the general perceptions the students have in regards to their English Program at the institution.

The Codes for integrating the voices of the Kids who participated from the surveys, are:

Item	Student & Level	Code
1	Student 1 – Kids 4	SS1
2	Student 2 – Kids 5	SS2
3	Student 3 – Kids 6	SS3
4	Student 4 – Kids 7	SS4
5	Student 5 – Kids 8	SS5
6	Student 6 – Kids 8	SS6

7	Student 7 – Kids 9	SS7
8	Student 8 – Kids 9	SS8
9	Student 9 – Kids 10	SS9
10	Student 10 – Kids 10	SS10

Considering three different research instruments were used to collect the study data, a triangulation process was carried out in order to do the analysis of the information gathered from the teachers' and the students' contributions as well as the class observations.

For this process, the data obtained through the surveys, the interviews and class observations was analyzed under the three main categories of the study: Teaching and Assessment Practices and Strengths and Weaknesses of the Kids English Program, which allowed the identification of subcategories, as they repeatedly appeared through the information provided by the participants.

Taking into account the three instruments showed affinities among participants in regards to the methodology and assessment processes in the Kids English Program, a method for differentiating the subcategories by using different colors was applied, highlighting the correlations found. This technique permitted an integrated data analyses allowing the understanding of the methodology and assessment practices carried out in the Program.

In the following chapter, the analyses of the study categories and subcategories are presented.

CHAPTER 5

CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

Teaching a second language requires professionals to be skillful on diverse areas, methodology being one of the central components to develop a class, assessment to provide a bigger range of opportunities for learning and, continuous teaching development on how to work with the diversity of a classroom are essential to offer a proper learning environment. As Cameron states "the range of language experiences that children get in their foreign language lessons is likely to influence in how their language develops" (2001, p.16) which evidences that the teacher's role and performance are crucial for learners to develop a second language effectively.

On this chapter, an analysis of the teaching and assessment practices used at the Kids Program is developed under different categories taken out of the process of triangulation of the instruments used to collect the data. The first category focuses on the Teaching Practices at the Kids Program, which is analyzed under the following subcategories: Strategies, Techniques and Teaching Methods, Playing and Using Technology as Teaching Strategies, and Interacting in the EFL Classroom. The analysis continues on the area of Assessment, developed under the subcategories: Assessing Second Language in Young Learners and Criteria Assessed in the Kids Program. Finally, the analysis concludes with the category for the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses the Kids English Program has, which focuses on: Importance of a Textbook for an English Program, Teacher quality, plus a brief summary on the strengths and weaknesses out of the Teaching and Assessment Practices carried out in the Kids Program.

5.1 Teaching Practices in the Kids English Program

5.1.1 Strategies, Techniques and Teaching Methods

With respect to the methodology and teaching strategies used at the institution and especially in the Kids Program, the only method the institution requires teachers to use is the Communicative Approach, however, teachers can include many other approaches, methods and techniques they consider are effective for the learning of their students.

In this regard, there is a concern given the fact that in the Kids English program we have about thirty teachers who use different methods and teaching strategies with their students; besides using the CA, most of the other methods observed during the class observations have to do with approaches like: Task Based, Activity Based, the approach based on Fun Games and Activities, Grammar Translation Method, TPR and the Audiolingual Method. Taking this into account, it can be inferred that teachers are using the Eclectic Method, which refers to the combination of different methods applied to accomplish certain goals according to the conditions of the learners as Bastidas (1993) states.

The surveys applied to Kids also brought the appreciation of the importance of having a common methodology level by level, and learners highlight this component as a strong reason for learning English at the institution, “in my school learning is boring, but at this institution we do many different fun and entertaining activities through which we can interact and learn better” SS12. In the same way, SS5 said, “I think teachers have an excellent way of teaching, we sing, we practice English in many ways and that makes learning fun”; however, this student also added: “I think all the teachers should have the same methodology, since some of them think we

must learn sitting down on a chair" SS5; these comments do give evidence of the relevance of speaking a same language in terms of what is done in class.

Apart from these appreciations and despite the fact that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, they are still hesitant on what the best and most appropriate methods are, and one of the biggest concerns teachers have is the teaching of grammar to children, "I think teaching grammar is necessary, although it is complicated to teach it so I consider this should be a very important point for trainings"TI8; however, other teacher considered "…all the components of the language are key, grammar, pronunciation, listening, reading…kids must be taught what is imparted in a normal class, I would say the difference between a kid and an adult is very little…" TI4. As seen, teachers express their worrying around teaching grammar or they actually think it can be taught as for an adult.

During the class observations, the use of Grammar Translation Method was evidenced since teachers tried to explain grammar in an implicit way, however, all of them ended explaining grammar the traditional way and even translating full sentences into the mother tongue so that students could understand what the sentences meant, this is the case of class observation for Kids 2 (CO2), that despite the teacher's effort to make students understand the use of *do* and *does*, she had to specify the structures on the board and tell the meanings of the sentences in Spanish.

Krashen (1982) is an author whose work had a great importance in the understating of learning a second language, one of his proposals is the Natural Order Hypothesis as Brown (1973) also stated, they say children acquire grammar rules in order of complexity, they state children acquire first the most essential concepts to communicate and vocabulary that is common and useful for everyday life; on another hand, there is the Input Hypothesis, which according to Krashen (1982) the input the learners receive must be challenging but at the same time meaningful and clear. Having this present, may help educators structure a reasonable English

program for kids under a scope & sequence that is simple for the students, that goes step by step in the studying of grammar, but that includes relevant contents that reflect on the learner's real contexts.

The selection of contents to study each level is such an important factor considering that it can either motivate or demotivate students, depending on how interesting the topics are for the learners and how useful they are. As mentioned, the Program is structured under a scope & sequence based on the textbook, apparently some of the topics that are seen at the institution are also studied at the schools, reason why some students feel their learning does not show much progress, "I consider it is the same because everything what my teachers at this institution teach me I have already studied at my school" SS1; this is another reason why the methodology used in class is so crucial, understanding that even though the institution has curricular similarities with the schools, thanks to the teaching strategies applied different skills and subskills can be developed.

Another point teachers strongly highlighted during the interviews and with regards to teaching methods, is the importance of having trainings on how to work with students who have special needs. Teachers express they may know how to teach the language in different ways but they are not sure if they are applicable to those students who may have behavior and cognitive difficulties, "I think we need training on how to work with kids with special needs, because sometimes we have this type of students in class but we are not properly prepared" TI10; besides, teachers understand that despite the fact of having or not a kid who is special, all learners are different, "…we also need to take into account the students, they are very different form each other, learn differently, their personalities are different and there will always be students with cognitive and emotional necessities…" TI5.

5.1.2 Playing and using Technology as Teaching Strategies

A prevalent teaching approach for young learners is the one about Fun Games & Activities, which according to Brewster and Ellis (2004), through this approach learners can develop language skills in an integrated way, they get motivated and adopt a positive attitude towards the second language thanks to enjoying the learning environment. In this regard, students surveyed emphasized their like for games, "I like studying at this institution because teachers do different fun activities, they are entertaining and we learn better" SS12, "Studying here is cool, we play games" SS20; in the same way, other students ask to have more and more games in class, "I would like teachers would include more dynamics to improve our learning"SS15, and "I would like there were many more activities to do in class" SS4.

For Brewster and Ellis (2004), the approach on Fun Games and Activities is clue for teaching young learners since it is natural for them and thus highly motivating, besides it promotes interaction and makes students feel comfortable, lowering their affective filter and enabling cognitive development. Admitting the appropriacy of this approach, it must also be taken into account that using games in class requires careful planning, so that they have a purpose for the progress of the learning of all students; for Brewster and Ellis (2004) teachers must pay attention to the quality of the games proposed, understanding they must have linguistic challenges. It is then precise to evaluate the games in order to discard the ones that can become more into a distraction rather than in a way for fostering learning.

During class observations it was evidenced that most teachers do have great abilities to plan diverse activities and games, and most of the ones observed followed a learning objective, either to practice grammar, vocabulary or any other competence. For example, during CO6 a diversity of activities and games were observed, all of them planned to connect to a same topic, clothes & weather. The last activity of the class required students to create a monster and its

habitat and clothes, the objective was to practice vocabulary about apparel, the weather and the structure *What's the weather like?, Do you like….?*. It was observed the students were pleased to feel independent and felt enthusiastic to create their own pieces knowing they were going to present them in front of their partners; even though there was no time for presentations, students were willing to take their posters to their house to improve them. As seen, this class was evidence that having linked and well-structured activities and games do work and are effective for meaningful learning thanks to giving students an active role and adapting the learning context to their likes.

On another hand, using games and activities besides demanding lots of creativity and thoughtful preparation, also demands proper instructions explanation, giving students clarity on how to proceed and avoiding confusion causing anxiety on the kids. During class observations, it was noticed that some teachers were a little frustrated when giving the instructions for some activities and games since students did not understand them, and the potency of the activities proposed diminished due to lack of understanding on to how carry them out; that was the case of CO7, the teacher observed does not speak any Spanish, and she took long trying to explain the different instructions to students, this caused disinterest in some students, evidenced when they started being indiscipline and doing other things.

Apart from playing, students also remark their interest on using technology in class, "I would like all teachers would take us to the computers' room"SS5, and "I would like we would use more technology and to have an e-book" SS3. Although the surveys evidenced students are requiring more technology use, during the class observations it was noticed that teachers are aware of this and are coming up with different activities to use technology in a proper way. An example of this, is CO4 and CO5 that as a coincidence, the teachers took students to the computers room and played an online game called "Kahoot" to recheck some grammar concepts.

Apparently, this game is a favorite for the teachers due to its applicability and the entertainment it provides to students, evident on their performance while playing the game, the students were just ecstatic; however, it generated a little indiscipline.

In regards to the above activity, it is important to highlight the relevance feedback has on every activity or game done in class, agreeing with Holderness (as cited in Brumfit 1991), all activities in class require continuous assessment and feedback to give the students the needed support to assure their effective learning. From this game, teachers gave general feedback while playing, but some students still looked confused since some of the questions of the game asked them to complete sentences with different grammar structures, which they actually did not manage very well. In these cases, contents should be more context and example based rather than grammar based, and feedback should be deeper giving even more value to the activities and games carried out.

It can be determined that most teachers at the institution value playing in class, taking into account that it promotes meaningful learning and motivates students as expressed by the teacher during TI1, "I think playing with kids helps a lot for their natural learning besides that it creates empathy…I think all teachers should speak the same language in this regard because playing is very important for kids…playing is their life"; however, some other teachers have different appreciations, "In regards to playing, mmm I'm not totally against but I do think games should not be a constant part of the class" TI4, although they do believe the sessions need to be developed under many different types of well-paced activities so that the students are always attentive, "I think one needs to vary the class through different activities, taking students out of the classrooms, and keeping them active" TI4.

5.1.3 Interacting in the EFL Classroom

Teachers at the institution must use the Communicative Approach as the main method for class, which according to Bastidas (1993) it requires lots of interaction between all participants, and the material used to develop the activities must be understandable and coherent with the students' needs, interests and contexts. According to the author, this approach needs all students to be active and to be accountable of their learning and amount of use of spoken language, which actually is not an easy requirement for a young learner since this approach expects them to manage the language more semantically than syntactically, which is favorable since it is more natural but still difficult for a Kid.

In the above regard and thanks to the surveys applied to kids, communicating in English is one of the components from the Kids Program learners value the most: "I like that teachers almost always speak in English and that among them there is a complete communication in English" SS4, and "the difference between English at school and at the institution, is that here teachers speak more English…" SS19.

It is important to highlight the amount of English inside the classrooms, since teachers all the time speak English, first this is mandatory from the institution, and second, teachers understand the significance it has in the learning process of the students, even though, teachers sometimes speak Spanish mostly to clarify grammar rules. Likewise, it was evidenced among all the classes observed that most teachers are very careful when speaking English to Kids, teachers do adapt their tone of voice and the speed of their speech so that it is easier for students to get the messages, and also, most teachers use lots of miming and gesturing making the communication much clearer and less frustrating for students.

On the other hand, it was observed that despite teachers promote lots of participation, not all students dare to take part of these spaces, maybe because they are shy and feel afraid of

making mistakes, or because they just do not count with the necessary input to be able to produce an answer or an idea. Considering the Affective Filter Hypothesis stated by Krashen (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2000) the role of the teachers is essential in the appropriate process of learning a language, sometimes teachers force students to speak in front of the class and to do things they do not like because takes them out of their comfort zone, provoking stress and frustration and blocking the learner's own process to adapt to his new environment. On this account, teachers observed did not make pressure on students to participate, some teachers did insist kindly on some learners to express their ideas, but these tries were unsuccessful most of the times.

From the Affective Filter Hypothesis, it must also be highlighted that a teacher's attitude and performance determine the level of success for the learners in a great deal, providing a teaching atmosphere free of pressure is ideal to low the affective filter in pupils in order to give them space to settle into the group with assurance, and although teachers observed seemed to understand this, teachers know they must look for different ways to have students speak a little English in class, "I think it is very important to keep on insisting on student participation so that there is real communication among students and teachers…so that students can do much more in this ability, because many times it is difficult for them to keep a conversation or express their ideas orally" TI9.

Consequently, Bruner (as cited in Brewster and Ellis, 2004) states that children's mental process has a lot to do with the social environment, the school, the family, friends and teachers, it helps the cognitive development in general and also the learning of a second language as far as there is an interaction in the matter language. In this regard, teachers should promote as much

participation as possible from every pupil in class through interesting motivating activities making the environment more teachable and meaningful for the learner.

During the observation process, it was observed that in every class, teachers included pair work and group work activities, and the kids' attitude towards them seemed to be very positive; however, from the surveying process for kids, they ask to have more interaction among them, "I would like to have more group activities so that I can know more about my classmates" SS13. Apart from this, in one of the observations the kids were taken out of the classroom to interact with other kids from other levels, at first, kids were a little afraid of talking to other people, but then they were actually very happy to be able to interact in English with other students. This activity really engaged students and thus learners ask for more activities like this one, "I would like to do more activities outside the classroom so that we can interact with other students from other classrooms" SS12, another student said "I would like the teacher would take us to all the spaces the institution has and interact with other people" SS11. Therefore, it is clear that kids do value interacting with their classmates as well as with other people making them feel they are progressing in the language and motivating them to continue learning.

5.2 Assessment in the Kids English Program

5.2.1 Assessing Second Language in Young Learners

When teaching a second language to young learners it is not only important to consider the teaching methods to use, but also the assessment techniques to be applied since Assessment is a worthwhile support for learning, it is a component that must not be disregarded in an English

Teaching Program given the fact that it can work more as a learning instrument rather than as a measuring tool.

From the teachers interviews, it was evidenced that Assessment is one of their biggest concerns since they know they lack knowledge on how to assess kids properly, "…I am not really sure on how one should assess learning…I think we need a little bit more of knowledge on this regard" TI8, another teacher said, "the directors from the institution must look for new ways to assess kids, although I would be lying if I said I know the adequate way to assess kids…" TI6; even though some teachers feel there must be a change on this area, others think there is no difference in assessing different ages, "I believe that kids must be assessed the same way as it is done with adults" TI4.

These comments demonstrate training on assessment procedures with young learners must be provided, understanding how the process of learning a language is, and how to complement the teaching procedures with the ones for assessment is necessary in order to generate an even more positive impact in the students' process.

Analyzing the contributions during the interviews, some teachers expressed their dislike about using numbers for grading kids, "to me a number does not tell much, each child is different, so how come are we going to standardize them? … it must be a process of continuous assessment, assessing every day the achievements of my students since the first to the last day without standardizing them" TI1; or even using formal exams considering they may affect the affective filter in students making them nervous as Krashen stated (cited in Lightbown & Spada 2000), "well it is true that kids hear the word "exam" and they get in shock, they think it is the most horrible on the world, but if we adapt different methods to assess them without making them notice they are being evaluated, all the process becomes much easier to teachers because we

can be aware of how the process goes" TI2; however, other teachers consider that having a programmed system of evaluation based under certain percentages helps the organizational process of the course, "the Kids Program counts with a system of evaluation that works under different items, evaluations, workshops and projects, so I think the program is organized…" TI5

Although the Evaluation System for the Kids Program involves both summative and formative assessments, there is a lack of comprehension on the purposes of each type. According to Cameron (2007), summative assessment is the one that is used to measure learning goals at the end of a given period, and it usually cooperates with the improvement of the English program as well thanks to the analysis of the given results; on the other hand, and according to Mcdonald & Boud (2003), formative assessment is done along the complete process and it focuses on detecting strengths and weaknesses and works through continuous feedback to the improvement of skills. Having these differences present, can serve as the mean to rethink the Assessment procedures established, taking also into account the objective of the Kids Program which is offering quality learning environments in the second language so that pupils can start building strong bases in the language.

5.2.2 Criteria Assessed in the Kids English Program

From the Kids Coordination and with the help of teachers, a system of evaluation is structured for the Program; as said previously, this system involves summative assessment and implies the use of formative assessment as well, derived from the feedback students receive out of their classwork, homework and on an action plan filled twice during the course. The criteria established covers different components which have a certain percentage for a total of 100%:

- Attendance 5%

- Behavior 5%
- Class Production 25%
- Homework 10%
- Projects 20%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Final Exam 20%

As seen, not only the academic components are assessed but also behavioral aspects, which actually have the lowest percentages out of the criteria, attendance 5% and behavior 5%. In regards to the other components assessed, we have homework with a 10%; from the class observations done, it was noticed most homework focuses on filling out exercises from a workbook students have. It was observed kids are given between 2 and 4 pages to solve at home, which refer to contents already seen in class. From an analysis of this workbook, the exercises proposed have to do with grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening and pronunciation.

During the observation phase, most teachers assigned homework, however, not all of them check it; this is the case of various class observations: CO1, CO4, CO6 and CO8, the teachers went seat by seat checking students had completed homework, nevertheless, it was noticed there was not a deep correction of mistakes, teachers just put a check on the pages assigned, so students did not really know which exercises were right or wrong. Contrary to this, we have: CO2, CO3, CO5 and CO10, teachers checked homework on the board, they had students participate and among all solved the homework exercises, this way some students asked questions about the contents of the homework that were not clear.

Another component assessed is the project, with a 20%. The project is carried out along the course, and kids are required to present different tasks as scaffolding for the last task, which is presented as the final project at the end of the course. Considering the tasks preparation, these are designed and established by the Kids Program Coordination and a group of teachers, who annually get together to create them, taking into account the topics to study during the level according to the scope & sequence of the textbook.

According to Krahnke (1987), Task Based is an approach of high order thinking, having students develop and practice the language trough real-life situations, which is a challenge for teachers since they need to be very creative so that the task is well structured, planned and that can come out to be meaningful for the students.

As an example of the type of tasks assigned, in CO4 students had some time during the class to present their second task about "My favorite pet", for this, students brought posters showing the animal selected, and included a written description of the animal. It was noticed, most students tried to write the descriptions in their own words, but others probably used a translator considering the descriptions were longer and very well written. During the presentations most students read, but the teacher also asked follow up questions trying to make students speak more naturally. After presenting, the teacher corrected pronunciation, although, she did not provide any extra feedback in terms of the contents of the posters and the presentation itself.

On the other hand, and taking into consideration the last class observation done, it is necessary that midterms and final exams, which are also design by the Program Coordination not by the level teachers, are analyzed in regards to its grammar components and its general structure. The CO5, a course for kids between 8 and 9 years old, was done on the day of the final exam of

the level, students were first given a general review of the topics and then, were set in lines and started the exam, which was three pages long and the time to solve was an hour and twenty minutes. While students were doing the exams, they had to ask many questions to the teacher in regards to the grammar components, which asked students to complete exercises with the auxiliary *do, does, has* and *have*, which really confused some students. Additionally, some pictures were blurry so the teacher also had to give help to students explaining its content. By the end of the test, most students finished, although three out of the fourteen students were still trying to complete the test but had to leave the space blank.

On this account, teachers expressed their discontent in regards to applying such exams to kids considering they are no appropriate for such young learners, "the exams are long for the kids' age and attention span, and there are images in the exams that are unclear. I think the exams were not analyzed when they were created, sometimes they are too difficult for the kids and sometimes do not match the contents seen in class" TI8. Moreover, surveys also evidence that kids consider exams are long, "I would like exams at Colombo were shorter" SS1.

Regarding the above, and despite the fact that the Kids Program counts on with an organized system of evaluation, it is evident components like the exams must be rechecked in order to adapt them to the students' age and the contents covered in classes. Making a balance among the types of questions of the exams is important, considering that the grammar sections require students for very deductive information, contrary to what Krashen (1982) proposes in his hypothesis about Comprehensible Input, he says all input students receive either written or oral must be clear; considering this the exams that are being applied serve just as a tool for guaranteeing the quantitative results rather than serving for real a learning goal.

Moreover and according to the information collected through the instruments, feedback appears to be the component which does need to be strengthened since in some class observations, it was evidenced that kids did not get further comments and advises for their homework and tasks. According to Brinko (1993), feedback is essential in order to support the students' learning process, letting them know not only what is wrong about their performance but also and more important, giving them the guidance and opportunities to correct and improve those flaws; and even though, teachers need to write an action plan for the kids twice during the course, which is actually created to show during parents' meetings, it is not sufficient to generate the type of formative opportunities for the students for their continuous language improvement.

5.3 Strengths and Weaknesses in Teaching and Learning Processes

5.3.1 Importance of a Textbook for an English Program

Selecting a textbook for an English Program is essential considering that it is the base for the consolidation of the syllabus under which the language learning goals will be set, in other words, the textbook comes out to be the main guide for the development of the learning process on account of the contents proposed unit by unit. At the institution, textbooks are selected by the Coordination and by a group of teachers, who use a textbook evaluation format in order to analyze the different components of the book.

The textbook currently used in the Program is called Our Discovery Island and among their offers is the variety of listening activities, which according to Lightbown and Spada (2000) it is a key point in the acquisition of a language because it works as input for the brain to process

output; the book also contains several role-playing activities and a range of new vocabulary; grammar is also included along the units as well as a section for good and bad behaviors.

In regards to the usefulness of the book, teachers' opinions are divided, "…one of the strengths the program has is that we have a book that has lots of listening, I think that when the auditive part is stimulated kids learn much easier…" TI2; nonetheless, it was evidenced that other teachers consider the textbook needs to be changed, "…the book would be another of the weaknesses … the one we are using is not very exigent in the sense to prepare students for a future program…" TI4, or as TI8 said, "…the textbooks need a change, many of the topics or the way they are distributed, the relation with the vocabulary and the grammar sometimes do not match…I do think the improvement the program needs, relies on the textbooks…". It is evident teachers differ with the use of the current series; however, teachers interviewed do believe the program would improve by implementing a new textbook.

Retaking Krashen's hypothesis about Input (1982), hey says the understanding and learning of a second language depends greatly on how meaningful, clear and challenging the input is. Comprehensible Input is a component that should be unavoidable in every single class, learners need to be provided with contents, materials and activities that are proper to their age, their interests and to their brain development. In this regard, some teachers expressed, "I've found the book sometimes is a little difficult for the kids" TI8, and, "a weakness I think the English Program for kids has is the textbook, it is not appropriate for the kid's age, sometimes it appears to be too easy or too difficult" TI3.

Drawing from Krahnke's study (1987), stating that one of the most disregarded aspects of English teaching and planning is the analysis and selection of a syllabus, and taking into consideration teachers' points of view, a target to point would be the choice of a new series,

bearing in mind the need to provide authentic meaningful content for the students' age, providing a scope and sequence that is logical and organized, and that provides challenging but fun activities for the students to keep them motivated to learn the second language.

5.3.2 Teacher Quality

In regards to Teacher Quality, it is imperative first to highlight its importance within the field of Education, since a teacher can either boost the learning process, or on the contrary block it depending on his general performance, thanks or due to classroom practices, attitudes, motivation and commitment towards his practice.

To analyze Teacher Quality among the teachers of the institution, it is important to consider the goal of the Kids Program, which is to point to the progressive and integrated development of communicative and linguistic skills of English, working with the twenty first century language skills in class. Aiming at enriching learning, giving meaning and applicability to the language so that leaners can be prepared to confront globalization challenges, promoting critical thinking and collaborative work, all this comprised in the Program through the awareness and approximation towards the English language learning.

Bearing the above in mind, evidences teachers have a great challenge, since the institution offers a very complete English Program involving all the aspects of the Second Language developing it through other life skills; teachers must then be committed to providing very high-quality classes including not only the language content but also activities that let students evolve in other competences.

Consequently, and considering the component on Teacher Quality about tested language and credentials, most teachers graduated from the major in Modern Languages from Caldas

University, others have degrees from other universities of the country related to Education and Languages as well, and a few other teachers have different degrees like Design, Engineering or Public Accounting; however, they also hold diplomas in TEFL, which gives them the certification to teach English. Moreover, a few teachers are pursuing or have already pursued their Master degrees focused on Education, Human Development, TESOL, and Didactic of the English Language. In respect to what has to do with teachers' level of English, they hold language certifications in B2 or C1 according to the levels given by the Common European Framework.

As seen, teachers at this institution are qualified regarding their studies and language level, which gives them the formal bases to be able to be part of a language teaching process; however, and according to Kennedy (2008), certifications and language knowledge does not eventually guarantee a teacher's appropriate teaching performance.

In regards to this affirmation, the teachers' interviews also support the reflection that studies and credentials are not the most important component talking about qualification, but experience instead, "for Kids I wouldn't consider myself absolutely qualified but I think my experience has just broaden and now I know what I have to do" TI3, and TI4 added: "the word "qualified" is used nowadays to refer to the studies, certificates and credentials teachers have, but in the sense of qualification itself I think it is determined by the experience each teacher has, there are many fresh teachers who just graduated from university and master degrees but who demonstrate that experience is the one that really matters".

Concerning the above, teachers consider that even though studies are important, the teaching experience and the classroom practices used in class are the ones that evidence the quality of a teacher. Although teachers know the methodology is a paramount aspect for the appropriate development of language, they also imply motivation and commitment towards their

practice as important aspects of qualification, “I am qualified to teach Kids because I have the motivation to do it, because I am willing to learn and apply new things, to research for new resources and strategies that help improve my classes” TI8, and TI6 expressed, “as time passes I realize I need to improve more and more, and I think that is what makes me a qualified person to teach Kids, because I care about their learning…”.

Taking into account that teaching experience is vital for quality teaching, it was found that the institution counts with very experienced teachers who have worked in the field for ten years and up, “I have taught kids for over 10 years and I have learnt a lot from this process” TI2, but on the other hand, it also counts with fresh teachers who have two or one year of experience in this field, and even one expressed not having experience teaching young learners, “ to be talking honest I do not have any experience teaching Kids, but I have what I have acquired during the teaching process, I do not have pretraining as to how to teach Kids under the age of 12” TI3, in addition, other teachers expressed, “I have a general knowledge on how to teach English, but it is not specific on teaching Kids” TI5.

In spite of the fact that some teachers are still immature in the field of teaching young learners, it is valid to highlight they are aware of the need to be consistent with their professional development in order to continue nurturing their teaching practices, “it has been a discovery process, since I am always finding new strategies and methodologies to provide more appropriate teaching to my Kids…we need to look for new teaching strategies so that we can impact learners the best way” IT10. In this regard and on account of the fact that teachers really understand the importance of continue learning, it becomes into a strength for the Program thanks to the marked compromise to provide effective teaching.

5.3.3 Strengths and Weaknesses in regards to Teaching and Assessment Practices

According to the interviews in regards to the teachers' conceptions around the learning process of a second language, it can be perceived that most teachers from the Kids Program are still doubtful on how it happens in young learners, "to be honest no, I think we do need more training in understanding how the second language process in children is, and how it works" TI3 or "I consider it is totally needed to have more training in this regard, we finish our university studies poorly prepared to work with such a special population, and we limit kids to learn as adults do" TI1; nonetheless, TI2 said, "well at the beginning it is an association process, children begin to make connections between Spanish and English, … after is a process of comprehension and then a production process" or "I think it is done through interaction between students and teachers, besides I think this age benefits learners since their brains assimilates information easily" TI9. It is clear teachers try to understand and make assumptions from the context they are working with, but they still lack knowledge on how learning a second language happens.

According to the interactionist theory by Lightbown and Spada (2000), there is a critical period in a person's life that goes from birth to puberty, it is said that children absorb information more easily at this stage although the type of exposure to the environment where the language is spoken is crucial. Likewise, Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory states that learners can acquire or learn a language during the zone of proximal development, taking into account the importance of the quality of the input received by the teacher.

The importance of understanding how acquiring a second language happens lies in the quality of the teacher's performance. In terms of methodology, having clear how kids learn the language can be taken in favor to structure classroom practices that are more purposeful for the learners process. In this account and even though teachers at the institution use a variety of

strategies and methodologies, and are committed to generating effective teaching environments, as TI9 expressed, “I think a strength the Program has is the methodology used, because all teachers are very dynamic and use different resources for teaching”, teachers still consider they need training on how to apply the different teaching techniques in respect to the age of their students, “teachers should be trained on how to work with Kids, on how to approach their teaching taking into account young learners’ characteristics” TI10; opinion reinforced by TI1, who added, “I think it is truly important to have trainings considering that Kids are a total different population”.

Likewise, during the interviewing process, teachers gave some insights on how the Program could be improved, and once again, methodology appears to be the main component, “I think training for teachers in regards to methodology is vital, I know teachers are professionals but many of them enter the Kids Program with no teaching experience and then they suffer the consequences by not knowing how to confront different classroom situations”TI4,

Correspondingly, some teachers agree that having a common methodology including playing and didactic tools must be central for the process, “for the improvement of the Program, we could create a bank of games, dynamics and activities so that all teachers speak a same language in regards to games” TI1. Besides, teachers highlight the importance of basing teaching on real life situations so that the learning process is more natural, “I definitely think Kids need a space designed for them, the walls at the institution are totally white, there are no decorations and no toys, kids should have a space where they can use realia” TI2.

Finally, and regarding the importance of second language learning knowledge, there is the Assessment component, which was previously mentioned in the section of Assessment in the Kids Program, but that given its relevance for effective teaching environments it is retaken in this final section.

As presented before, the System of Evaluation for the Kids Program comprises diverse criteria that assumes the integration of summative and formative assessment; notwithstanding, class observations evidenced teachers still need training on how to assess learners formatively, since it was perceived teachers lack applying feedback techniques to let students recognize their weaknesses, and that can also provide students with tools for overcoming their mistakes; as Brinko (1993) states, feedback cannot be disregarded out of a formative assessment process considering that it is the mean to generate methods for language reinforcement and improvement.

As an example that Formative Assessment does need to be connected between class practices and the students' performance, during interviews a teacher expressed her concern about the evaluation process for Kids, since she feels the Evaluation established lets students pass level by level underestimating the language flaws students may have and then learners are promoted from level without the needed language bases, "for me a weakness the Program has is the system of evaluation, you can't really fail a kid, you always have to do other things in order for the kids to continue" TI3.

On another hand, teachers also expressed their worry about using final tests with kids, they consider its structure is not appropriate for the learners' age, "I think exams should be reevaluated, I think we need to look for different ways to assess the Kids…some exams are out of context for the kids" TI6, likewise T10 said, "In regards to the System of Evaluation I find it complicated for kids since tests asks them for very formal grammar rules".

As seen, the above proposals and concerns focus on the way Kids are being taught and assessed, which clearly indicates that an appropriate action to take for the improvement of the English Program would be more preparation for teachers on these accounts. Teachers evidently have great ideas, they know and use different techniques hoping they can support the process of

learning the language at this age properly; nevertheless, these professionals need to have more formal and updated trainings that prepare them suitably to work with young learners.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The central objective of this study focused on the understanding of the English Teaching Practices and assessment techniques in the Kids Program of the institution, however, from the theoretical review and the information obtained through the research instruments used, it can be concluded that the main issue is the fact that teachers assigned to the Kids Program still have doubts on how the process of teaching and assessing a second language in young learners should be in terms of the metholody and assessment strategies used, and although this program is strong and well structured, kids notice the unbalance between the methodology teachers are using, requesting an equivalent teaching and learning process through the different English levels.

Having carried out the class observations process, having interviewed teachers and surveyed students, the following can be concluded:

In terms of the methods used, all teachers use the Communicative Approach as the base of their teaching; however, teachers also use or try to use other methods and approaches like Total Physical Response, Task Based, Activity Based, the method based on Games and Fun Activities, the Audiolingual method and a little bit of the Grammar Translation Method. Considering this mix of methods, one can conclude that the English teaching method for the Kids Program is the Eclectic Methodology. Even though teachers are taking risks to vary their methodology including the kids' learning styles, it is essential teachers go in depth on how to apply these methods effectively so that their content and development promotes meaningful learning, thus it is

important to continue applying a variety of methods and approaches always having present they are developed under significant content for the students.

Nonetheless the variation of methods is absolutely needed, it is necessary to recheck how teachers are taking grammar into the learning process, taking into account that some teachers expressed they still use the Grammar Translation Method and highlighted their worry about teaching grammar to Kids. It is paramount to have experts train teachers on how to approach kids to grammar, considering its relevance in second language development and considering grammar teaching must be adapted regarding the students' age, recognizing cognition stages are different in young, teen and adult learners.

On another hand, the information gathered in respect to the assessment processes, teachers assigned to the Kids Program expressed not having enough knowledge about how assessing young learners should be, therefore it is prevalent to have extensive training on this regard since Assessment is a vital component for the process of learning a language, given the fact that learners can acquire meaningful knowledge and learn significantly by taking advantage of the assessment techniques used as long as these are carefully planned and include a process of monitoring and feedback. It is then advisable that the Coordination of the Kids Program along teachers, rethink and adjust the System of Evaluation components considering how effective and formative they are in regards to the support they offer to the learning process.

In consideration of the adjustments previewed, an important action to take thinking of the improvement in the fields of methodology and assessment techniques, is to evaluate how profitable the series "Our Discovery Island" is for the program, in view of the repetitive complaints and observations teachers presented through the interviews assuring the content and

organization of the book can be confusing, and that appears to be too difficult or too easy for the students.

Piloting a new series would demand a thoughtful and meticulous analysis based on the content of the text and how it is developed through the four language skills; despite of the time this process requires, going through it is essential so that the curriculum of the program can be restructured under a syllabus that offers authentic contents and materials stimulating meaningful learning in students. Additionally, having a new series would imply changing the final tests used for the different English levels, which is also another major action that needs to be taken, since most final exams are based under grammar aspects which could frustrate the students' learning process and that may not have enough formative goals but just serve as indicators for language measure.

Bearing in mind the decisive commitment this Binational Center has in the offer of high quality education, the advises suggested in this study are viable in the sense that the institution counts on with great resources and with qualified teachers whose mission is providing excellent education to all students who come to the institution. It is important to highlight the rich teaching environments in which young learners are involved in in this institution, and it can be assured teachers care for their learning and are open to continuous training, understanding it as an unstoppable activity since education is a field that requires constant innovation.

The English Teaching Practices applied in the Kids English Program are evidence of the constant exploration in search of better teaching and learning results; however, and as said through this study, it is convenient to continue training teachers, first on how second language learning happens in young learners, so that teachers have the tools to distinguish among the most practical and beneficial methods for teaching and assessing learning, and second, having the basic

knowledge on language acquisition, more training on making teaching and assessing methods and approaches more effective are key to the improvement of the Kids Program.

CHAPTER 7

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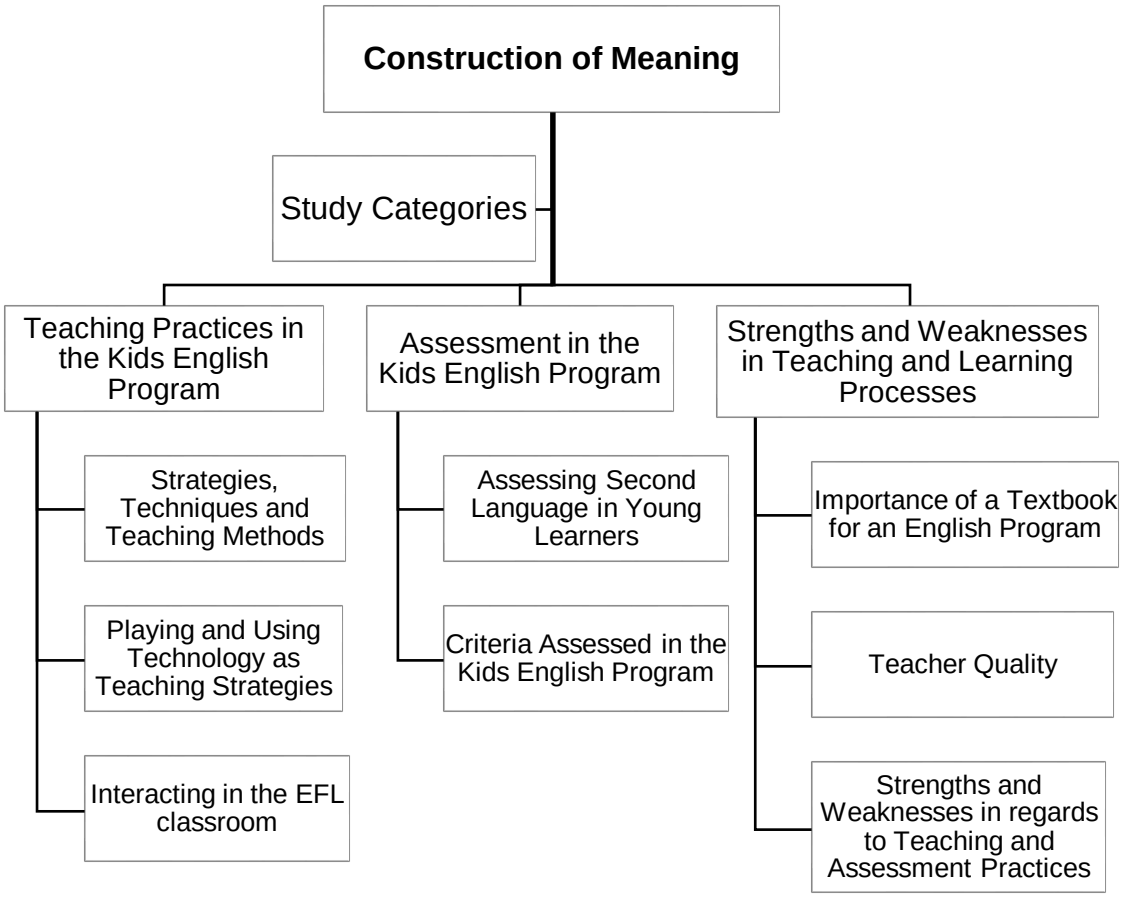
CHAPTER 8

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Graphic - Research categories



Appendix B. Informed Consent Form. Students' surveys

Consentimiento informado para padres de familia de los participantes de ENCUESTAS para la investigación:

"Comprensión de las prácticas de enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua en el programa de inglés para niños del Centro Colombo Americano"

Yo Claudia Marcela López Lodoño, identificada con c.c 1.053.802.954, docente del Centro Colombo Americano y participante de la Maestría en Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Universidad de Manizales - CINDE, estoy llevando a cabo mi proyecto de investigación en el programa de niños, cuyo objetivo es comprender las prácticas de enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua.

La presente carta de consentimiento tiene como finalidad requerir su permiso como padre de familia para que su hijo pueda ser partícipe de una encuesta, cuyo objetivo es recoger información que servirá como material para la investigación mencionada.

Dichas encuestas serán usadas para los anexos y los análisis de la investigación. El nombre del estudiante no hará parte de esta información.

Con su nombre y firma estará dando el consentimiento para que su hijo pueda ser parte de la encuesta que se llevará a cabo la próxima semana al finalizar la clase.

Nombre padre de familia: Luisa Fernanda Londoño

Firma: Luisa Fda Londoño

Agradeciendo su apoyo y atenta a cualquier duda que necesite ser aclarada,

Claudia Marcela López Londoño

[redacted]

Teléfono: 316 795 81 02

Appendix C. Student Survey

SS1

COMPRENSIÓN DE LAS PRÁCTICAS DE ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE EN EL PROGRAMA DE INGLES PARA NIÑOS y PREADOLESCENTES DEL CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO DE MANIZALES

ENCUESTA

1. ¿Por qué estas estudiando inglés?

Porque me gusta el ingles

2. ¿Cuáles son las semejanzas y diferencias entre el inglés que ves en tu colegio y el inglés del Colombo?

que en el de el colegio los temas son mas extensos

3. ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de recibir clases de inglés en el Colombo?

que aprendo

4. ¿Qué es lo que no te gusta?

que hay muchas cosas que ya se

5. ¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre la forma como tu profesor te enseña inglés en el Colombo?

que es buena y divertida

6. ¿Cómo va tu aprendizaje de inglés en el Colombo? ¿Consideras que ha mejorado o sigue igual? ¿Por qué?

yo considero que sigue guat porque todo lo que me enseñan ya lo se

7. ¿Qué te gustaría que se cambiara o se incluyeran en las clases de inglés del Colombo?

que los examenes fueran mas cortos

¡¡GRACIAS!!

Appendix D. Student Survey

555

COMPRENSIÓN DE LAS PRÁCTICAS DE ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE EN EL PROGRAMA

DE INGLES PARA NIÑOS y PREADOLESCENTES DEL CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO DE MANIZALES

ENCUESTA

1. ¿Por qué estas estudiando inglés?
   Porque la necesito para poder participar en una beca para estudiar en Inglaterra.
2. ¿Cuáles son las semejanzas y diferencias entre el inglés que ves en tu colegio y el inglés del Colombo?
   El colombo es muy completo en el colegio vemos los mismos temas todos los años, creo que no tienen semejanza
3. ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de recibir clases de inglés en el Colombo?
   La metodología de enseñanza no es aburrida es muy practica
4. ¿Qué es lo que no te gusta?
   Todo esta bien, hasta el momento creo que deberían abarcar mas temas en cada nivel
5. ¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre la forma como tu profesor te enseña inglés en el Colombo?
   Me parece una excelente forma para que enseñan con un metodo pedagogico, cantan, practican y nos estan quietos y eso hace que el aprendizaje sea divertido
6. ¿Cómo va tu aprendizaje de inglés en el Colombo? ¿Consideras que ha mejorado o sigue igual? ¿Por qué?
   Creo que he mejorado he aprendido muchisimo ya que donde yo estudio el nivel de ingles es muy bajo y por eso creo que el colombo es una excelente institucion
7. ¿Qué te gustaría que se cambiara o se incluyeran en las clases de inglés del Colombo?
   Creo que todos los profesores tengan la misma metodología ya que algunos creen que debemos aprender sentados sin hablar es bueno que todos nos lleven a utilizar los equipos digitales

¡¡GRACIAS!!

Appendix E. Class Observation

Level: Kids 8

Observer: Claudia Marcela López Londoño. Date: 12 / 05 / 2017 Time: 8 : 00

Level: Kids 8 Number of students: 13 Age range: 9-10

Seating arrangement: Horseshoe

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

1. Objectives (ask teacher previous to the class) ✓
2. Mode:
   - ✓ Cognitive (thinking processes)
   - ✓ Affective (promote or utilize feelings / emotions)
   - ✓ Psychomotor (motor skills / use of materials-objects)
3. Method:
4. Format:
   - Lecture
   - ✓ Discussion - Talk
   - ✓ Drill & Practice
   - ✓ Workshop
   - Lab
   - ✓ Independent study
5. Subject specific strategies:
   - ✓ Oral activities
   - Reading activities
   - ✓ Writing activities
   - ✓ Listening activities
   - ✓ Speaking activities
   - ✓ Grammar activities
   - ✓ Pronunciation activities
6. Materials: Board-markers-TV-textbook Flashcards

INSTRUCTOR

1. Speaks with:
   - ✓ Sufficient volume
   - Natural intonation
2. Gives clear:
   - Directions 1/2
   - Explanations
   - Rules
   - Homework instructions 1/2
3. Relates to previous work ✓
4. Introduces new lesson ✓
5. Emphasizes main points ✓
6. Provides for application to new situations ✓
7. Summarizes ✓
8. Reviews returned homework 1/2

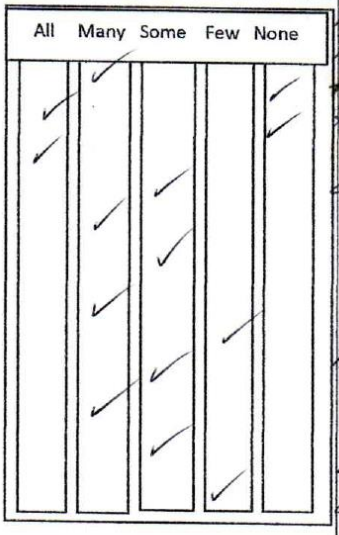
QUESTON STRATEGIES AND FEEDBACK

9. Asks questions:
   - ✓ Data recall
   - ✓ Data processing
   - Evaluation
10. Handles student errors:
    - ✓ By teacher
    - ✓ Self-correction
    - Peer correction

Comments:

1. The T wrote the agenda on the board and explained to ss they were going to work on sports and what people were doing at an exact moment.
3. The T used CA, games, audiolingual and TPR.
4. 5. The T planned a variety of activities, however there was lack of time planning since many activities couldn't be done and at the ss asked the T why she hadn't done all the activities they felt behind the class.
4. The T had a very loud voice, but it was nice because all ss were very attentive when she spoke. Besides she was enthusiastic so kids didn't feel the T was mad or something like that
2. The lacked a little more activity explanation since for most activities she had to give extra explanations - she used Spanish to Explain 7 activity to was a bit confusing. She didn't explain homework, she just wrote the pages on the board before the class finished.

To give the grammar explanation, the T tried hard to make the topic clear. She used lots of gestures, kids stood up and carried out different commands, she used a video, flashcards and wrote the grammar rules on the board - in order to be sure ss understood she translated 7 sentence into Spanish so the kids had the meaning clear. The T checked homework, she passed by each students' seat checking they'd due homework however there wasn't a deep time for correction.

11. Reinforces correct answers	She assessed SS a lot. She used many new words to motivate SS.
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	
INSTRUCTOR 1. Uses: ✓ A warm-up to start the class ✓ A wrap-up to finish the class 2. Structures activities as challenges / problems. X 3. Varies: ✓ Pace ✓ Activities 4. Relates materials to: ✓ Student interests ○ American culture ○ Global issues ✓ Other 5. Maintains control: ✓ Directly ✓ Indirectly 6. Questions: ✓ All students ○ A part of students: Most talkative /Less talkative. 7. Personalizes 8. Projects: ✓ Rapport ✓ Humor ○ Flexibility ✓ Enthusiasm ✓ Confidence ○ Other	The T used a wrap-up that included lots of TPR. - mimy actions. The T did a wrap up to quickly check what they had learned during class (The wrap up was very similar to the first), but this time SS mixed all sentences. The T could have planned activities better so that they could have practiced everything. The attitude of the T towards SS was quite nice, she looked very enthusiastic & kids were very attentive and alert to what was going in class.
STUDENTS 1. Appear: ○ Receptive ○ Defensive ○ Active ○ Passive 2. Pay attention 3. Respond: ○ Reflectively ○ Productively 4. Initiate questions / comments 5. Interact: ○ On task ○ Off task 6. Use native language ○ With the teacher ○ With the classmates 7. Display confusion 8. One or more control class	
	In general, kids looked happy, they really liked the activities done in class since they could interact with each other, they stood up, moved around, etc. Some SS were a little frustrated with the grammar exercises, but they moved on after the T explained and used a bit of humor to explain what the sentences meant.

POST OBSERVATION QUESTIONS	
What were some techniques that encouraged good interaction? The attitude and tone of voice of teacher had a nice impact in the class environment. Kids were very enthusiastic and active. The activities were very nice, kids felt they were playing, but at the same time they were practicing the ~~content~~ skills	
What were some techniques that encouraged learning? The games/activities proposed. The material was a great help since SS loved the visuals and videos shown.	
Other observations and comments: The games proposed were very nice. There was a part of the class where SS could go out observing what people of the institution were doing. The T gave the ss'mts to go around and look (although it took not). This activity made students absolutely enthusiastic (although some SS were shy to ask other teachers what they were doing) when SS arrived to the classroom, I by I told the T what other people was doing. ex: Teacher, the teacher Paola is singing with her ss. When the sentence wasn't expressed correctly, the T helped students.	

At the very end of class, students' behavior and class performance was evaluated through a very nice platform "Dojo". There, the SS can get positive/negative points according to different aspects: Distraction, homework, participation etc

Appendix F. Class Observation

Level: Kids 9

Observer: Claudia Marcela López Londoño. Date: 17 / 02 / 2017 Time: 3 : 00

Level: Kids 9 Number of students: 13 Age range: 10-11-12

Seating arrangement: Horseshoe

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

1. Objectives (ask teacher previous to the class)
2. Mode:
   - ✓ Cognitive (thinking processes)
   - ✓ Affective (promote or utilize feelings / emotions)
   - ✓ Psychomotor (motor skills / use of materials-objects)
3. Method:
4. Format:
   - o Lecture
   - ✓ Discussion
   - ✓ Drill & Practice
   - o Workshop
   - o Lab
   - ✓ Independent study
5. Subject specific strategies:
   - ✓ Oral activities
   - o Reading activities
   - ✓ Writing activities
   - ✓ Listening activities
   - ✓ Speaking activities
   - ✓ Grammar activities
   - ✓ Pronunciation activities
6. Materials: TV - PC - Board - markers

Comments:

1. The objectives were written on the board, and the T explained each of them very clearly at the beginning of class.
3. The T used different methods as: CA, audiolingual TPR, Approach based on games.
4. There was group work and games along the class.
5. The T made a great variety of activities which were carefully planned. She explained and three

INSTRUCTOR

1. Speaks with:
   - ✓ Sufficient volume
   - ✓ Natural intonation
2. Gives clear:
   - ✓ Directions
   - ✓ Explanations
   - ✓ Rules
   - ✓ Homework instructions
3. Relates to previous work ✓
4. Introduces new lesson ✓
5. Emphasizes main points ✓
6. Provides for application to new situations ✓
7. Summarizes ✓
8. Reviews returned homework NA

QUESTON STRATEGIES AND FEEDBACK

9. Asks questions:
   - ✓ Data recall
   - ✓ Data processing
   - ✓ Evaluation
10. Handles student errors:
    - ✓ By teacher
    - ✓ Self-correction
    - o Peer correction

1. The teacher's accent helped SS a lot in understanding what she meant. Her tone of voice allowed a great atmosphere in class. SS payed lots of attention.
2. The T explained classroom rules carefully and interactively. She gave rules to SS on a paper to stick on the notebook as well. She explained homework very well, she wrote it on the board and gave an example on how to do it. However, during one activity SS misunderstood the instructions, so she

(OF 1 ACTIVITY)

patiently explained again, this time including one example of what they had to do.

11. Reinforces correct answers ✓

The T praised SS a lot, always with a smile face.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

INSTRUCTOR

1. Uses:
   - ✓ A warm-up to start the class
   - ✓ A wrap-up to finish the class
2. Structures activities as challenges / problems. ✓
3. Varies:
   - ✓ Pace
   - ✓ Activities
4. Relates materials to:
   - ✓ Student interests
   - ✓ American culture
   - ○ Global issues
   - ○ Other
5. Maintains control:
   - ✓ Directly
   - ✓ Indirectly
6. Questions:
   - ✓ All students
   - ○ A part of students: Most talkative /Less talkative.
7. Personalizes ✓
8. Projects:
   - ✓ Rapport
   - ✓ Humor
   - ○ Flexibility
   - ✓ Enthusiasm
   - ✓ Confidence
   - ○ Other

This was a great class, the T started the class with a nice warm up activity - SS had to guess information about the T -- She always tried to explain everything very well and her way of being - her attitude caught the attention of the SS. They all wanted to participate thanks to the rapport that was created between T and SS.
The activities were based on the T country / life as well as the Students
The T was always moving around giving extra help to SS
She used lots of humor, which was nice to students

STUDENTS

1. Appear:
   - ○ Receptive
   - ○ Defensive
   - ○ Active
   - ○ Passive
2. Pay attention
3. Respond:
   - ○ Reflectively
   - ○ Productively
4. Initiate questions / comments
5. Interact:
   - ○ On task
   - ○ Off task
6. Use native language
   - ○ With the teacher
   - ○ With the classmates
7. Display confusion
8. One or more control class

All	Many	Some	Few	None
✓	✓			✓
	✓			✓
	✓	✓		
	✓	✓		
	✓		✓	
✓				✓
			✓	

In general, all SS were very interested in class, although some few students were a bit indisciplined. I consider the timed activities had great influence in having students active and attentive / interested in the whole class.
Somehow all SS but some SS were pretty willing to talk with the T in English, which was always praised by the teacher.

POST OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

What were some techniques that encouraged good interaction?

- The teacher's attitude. She was fun and very active.
- The teacher's tone of voice.
- The games proposed → - interesting, included topics students like.

What were some techniques that encouraged learning?

- The games and activities done.
- The way the teacher corrected their mistakes (she had SS reflect upon what they should correct)

Other observations and comments:

The preparation of the class was evident. The T planned every moment of the class carefully and consequently. She gave a time for each activity. She tried to explain all the steps of every activity clearly, and, for each one she gave the corresponding feedback.
I would highlight the great attitude the T displayed, since thanks to it SS were very interested in paying attention to her. She was very funny, she helped all students in a personalized way when they needed it, and students did notice the teacher cared about them. There was a very friendly atmosphere.
The T gave very clear class rules, which I think have a great impact on how kids behaved in class. When the T was giving rules, she also involved SS and they were able to participate and give their own ideas and rules.
Students were a central part of the class.
The T also let them play music - in English.
SS were happy about it.

Appendix G. Teacher's Interviews Transcriptions. TI1

1. ¿Cuál es su formación profesional en la enseñanza de inglés para estudiantes menores de 12 años?

   Soy Licenciada en Lenguas Modernas, pero es limitada esta formación en cuanto a lo que dice que para niños menores de 12 años porque en la universidad pues va más enfocado hacia adultos.

2. ¿Cuál y cómo ha sido su experiencia en el área de la enseñanza del inglés para estudiantes menores de 12 años?

   En cuanto lo que sé, lo sé para enseñar a niños menores de 12 años lo sé por mi experiencia, llevo 6 alrededor de 6 años enseñando a niños y pues lo que sé es por lo que he leído y por lo que yo misma he investigado, por la práctica y pues la experiencia ha sido muy positiva, me he dado cuenta que el proceso pues el totalmente diferente que con adultos, y pues que tiene muchas ventajas el enseñar a niños empezar con el proceso de la lengua extranjera desde muy temprana edad.

3. ¿Por qué se considera cualificado para este programa?

   Yo me considero cualificada, preparada o apta para enseñar a esta población por lo mismo, por la experiencia que tengo por el dominio que tengo de grupo, realmente trabajar con niños no es fácil en cuanto al comportamiento todos son muy diferentes y son muy exploradores digámoslo así, pienso entonces en cuanto a mis capacidades las que tengo las he ganado por la experiencia y ha sido positivo el proceso porque desde muy temprana edad bueno he trabajado con niños de 3 años en un proceso de 4 años, entonces los tuve desde los 3 años, desde pre jardín hasta transición o un primero y fue

sorprendente ver ese proceso en ellos en la medida en que desde el primer día hubo una inmersión en la lengua a pesar de que eran súper chiquitos y ya en un transición o en un primero ver por ejemplo que tenían muy buen dominio de la lengua pues reconocían las palabras, su pronunciación era bastante bueno en comparación con otros estudiantes que no habían tenido contacto con la lengua desde muy temprana edad entonces creo que por los resultados tengo muy buenas ósea me siento capaz y es una de mis ventajas a la hora de enseñar, me gusta hacerlo y creo que lo hago bien.

4. ¿Considera usted que es necesario incluir más capacitaciones dentro del proceso de mejoramiento del mismo? ¿Si es así, de qué tipo? ¿Por qué?

   Totalmente de acuerdo. Considero que se necesita mucha capacitación en este medio, creo que es indispensable porque salimos de la universidad poco preparados para enfrentarnos con una población que es demasiado especial y creemos que los niños pues van a aprender igual que un adulto y los limitamos digamos al hacer tanta traducción o transferir tanto de la lengua extranjera a la lengua materna sabiendo que ellos tienen muchas más capacidades porque son como esponjas para recibir una nueva lengua no tienen tantos limitantes entonces pienso que en ese sentido si necesitamos una buena capacitación por este lado, formación a la hora de trabajar no solamente un la parte gramatical sino también lúdica, metodológica y pues si esa sería como la respuesta.

5. ¿Cuáles considera usted los puntos a favor y en contra de enseñarle inglés a estudiantes menores de 12 años?

   Como decía anteriormente, mis estudiantes no tienen tantos esquemas mentales con la lengua, no se bloquean tan fácilmente. Otro punto es que es un aprendizaje natural, ellos no se cuestionan por qué se dice así porque no, por qué la estructura gramatical digámoslo así de la lengua materna no la tienen muy clara entonces pues obviamente va a ser más

fácil que ellos solamente reciban la información y pues no se estén cuestionando el por qué. Otra ventaja se puede hacer mucho más divertido, ósea se puede utilizar muchos recursos didácticos, también yo considero que el hecho que sean niños le da a uno como la autoridad de poder brindar el conocimiento en comparación con un adulto que obviamente se va a sentir mas no ofendido pero si como va a estar más limitado para recibir de una persona más joven que él, en cambio un niño siempre va a ver al profesor como imagen de autoridad la va a respetar y por ende pues también le va a creer lo que este dice.

Bueno otra ventaja es pues la influencia que tiene un niño también sobre el maestro a la hora de enseñarles, pues creo que uno como docente tiene que meterse en un rol y en un papel totalmente diferente y eso facilita el aprendizaje también porque lleva al docente como a ponerse pues en el lugar de los niños entonces creo que es algo divertido el hecho de enseñarles siempre y cuando el maestro esté dispuesto entonces creo que es muy jovial pues yo no sé impregna de la vida de los niños se impregna la capacidad de asombro y pues eso también lo hace a uno crecer esa es la otra ventaja.

Una de las desventajas seria pues obviamente el hecho de que no tengan una estructura gramatical bien definida de la lengua materna pues va a hacer que sea más arriesgado o bueno como challe o ¿cómo digo? ¿cómo puedo decir esto? que sea más si como arriesgado para el docente el hecho de preparar un tema gramatical entonces pues obviamente demanda crea que una de las desventajas es que puede ser ventaja a desventaja demanda muchísima preparación por parte del docente a la hora de transmitir un conocimiento que no tiene preconceptos porque como decía anteriormente pues la estructura por ejemplo no está bien definida en un niño tan pequeño, entonces demanda más preparación por parte del docente, es necesario ser recursivo, es necesario ser muy

dinámico porque pues los niños necesitan eso n su vida, para ellos el juego es importante y pues un maestro que no tenga en cuenta esto definitivamente pues se va a convertir en un limitante a la hora de brindar el aprendizaje entonces que esa creo que es otra desventaja, hay que tener mucha energía, tiene que tener buena actitud a la hora de comunicarse con los niños porque obviamente cualquier impresión va a afectarle y no solamente en ese momento sino para toda la vida le va a marcar. Igualmente, por la misma energía que necesitan es desgastante, realmente manejar un grupo de niños no es fácil y pues uno de desgasta más dando instrucción haciendo acompañamiento entonces pues obviamente es demandante y a veces hasta frustrante pero tiene muchas ósea lo que uno siembra en un niño obviamente lo va a ver multiplicado a corto plazo porque los niños como decía son como esponjas y retienen con facilidad entonces va a ser más natural después, y pues otra desventaja que pues no yo creo que esas son como las desventajas pues de mi experiencia yo he visto, obviamente pues los resultados se ven pero pues es poco a poco y por eso mismo pues yo no como docente de un niño pues no puedo evaluar de la misma forma a como evaluó a un adulto entonces digamos que en ese sentido es más una evaluación de procesos del día a día más que de resultados porque los logros de los niños pues se van a ver en el día a día.

6. ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas que a su parecer el programa de niños y preadolescentes tiene?
   Tener en cuenta: - Horario, Currículo, Libro de trabajo, Metodología, Sistema de evaluación, Otro.
7. ¿Y por el contrario, cuáles son las debilidades y aquellos componentes que a su consideración deberían ser reconsiderados?
   Tener en cuenta: - Horario, Currículo, Libro de trabajo, Metodología, Sistema de evaluación, Otro.

Bueno yo pensaría que el horario es una fortaleza, obviamente pues hoy en día los niños pasan mucho tiempo estudiando entonces por eso terminar una jornada tan extensa en el colegio y continuar ingles en la tarde pues va a ser un poquito complicado y ahí es donde entra el rol del docente pero pues antes yo pensaría que es una debilidad en cuanto al horario debería haber más… más que…más nivel de intensificación pues como tener no solamente no verlos una vez a la semana sino de pronto dos veces a la semana para mi seria idea porque para muchos niños el único espacio de inglés que tienen es ese y la verdad pues una de las fortalezas para mi es el currículo no una no la verdad el currículo me parece pues bien adecuado el libro pues también dentro de los ajustes que se han hecho pero me parece bien y fortaleza también el hecho de no ya sería debilidad el espacio, realmente el espacio del colombo no es apto para niños, la verdad necesitan más espacio para que pues si como no se unos salones no tan estructurados pues es que son para adultos empezando por las sillas, las sillas no son para niños, los niños no alcanzan hay para niños para bueno de Prekids y ya de resto digamos un Kids 1 tiene que estar en una silla así de alta sus útiles se caen pues para mi esa es una de las debilidades, y fortalezas todas, yo considero que es un buen programa pero pues una de las debilidades seria también que el espacio no es apto para los niños empezando por las sillas y que podría haber más intensificación de inglés poderlos ver dos veces a la semana.

8. Desde su experiencia, ¿Cuáles son las mejores estrategias para la enseñanza del inglés en niños menores de 12 años?

   Para mi es importante una rutina, tener una rutina definida me parece muy importante seguir la agenda que es algo pues que se hace en el Colombo pero creo que cuando hay más tiempo con los estudiantes, digamos más días a la semana con ellos, un ejemplo, pues obviamente esa rutina se va a ver más marcada entonces debe ser una clase muy

dinámica, debe ser bueno donde hallan encuentros donde todas las habilidades o la mayoría de las habilidades comunicativas se desarrollen no solamente dedicarme a la parte escrita porque sabemos que digamos con niños de 4 o 5 años pues esto es difícil entonces tiene que ser más practica más dinámica así como estrategias para mí la música es importante pues yo sé que a muchos docentes nos les gusta pero los niños se sienten identificados digamos con la música, y por asociación aprenden muy fácil, entonces un ritmo que a ellos les guste una ronda obviamente pues les va a ayudar mucho más y esta parte de escucha pues se va a ver más desarrollada y la vez pues la parte de speaking también entonces aquí la pronunciación va a ser más efectiva.

Bueno otra estrategia sería el juego, ósea implementar el juego como herramienta de aprendizaje entonces para presentar temas para practicarlos, no ser un payaso pero si ser muy creativos y el juego pues les va ayudar mucho más a que sea de forma natural y pues definitivamente el hecho de tener la empatía con el estudiante entonces pues ser una persona pues yo me considero no melosa pero si tratarlos bien que haya este tipo pues de trato de respeto con cuidado uno deber estar pendiente del estudiante porque son niños entonces involucrar a todos los estudiantes va a ser optimo cuando pues yo me comunico con ellos cuando los conozco entonces esta parte también es otra estrategia que yo he aplicado ósea la comunicación con todos, y otra es identificar las inteligencias de mis estudiantes cuáles son sus habilidades, sus fortalezas su debilidades y pues ya partiendo de allí pues yo también empiezo a trabajar también en mis clases

9. ¿Sabe usted cómo es el proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua en niños?

   Para mi el proceso es natural porque pues ellos no tienen tantos esquemas o bloqueos con la lengua. Para mí también es interpretativo porque los niños comienzan bueno a interpretar lo que escuchan a asociar entonces ellos mismos se encargan de descubrir que

tal objeto es así, que este se llama de esta forma y suena así, entonces para mí también es interpretativo, y es colectivo porque involucra el juego, y a su entorno, entonces esta la maestra, están sus compañeros, y la lengua se convierte en el motor para comunicarse pues con esa comunidad, entonces pues dentro de mi experiencia sería algo así, es muy natural, es interpretativo y colectivo.

10. ¿Qué se debe enseñar en las clases de inglés para niños menores de 12 años? ¿Gramática? ¿Pronunciación? ¿Valores?

    Bueno las clases de inglés que se debe enseñar, pues lo real, lo que el niño va a necesitar, en donde como desenvuelve pues la lengua tiene que ser algo real y por lo mismo pues la temática, las palabras, el vocabulario y el léxico y tiene que ser acorde a su mundo entonces pues obviamente un vocabulario básico y así como es el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua materna debe ser el de la segunda lengua entonces primero escuchando y luego produciendo palabras básicas dentro del proceso de crecimiento de un niño entonces pues que se debe enseñar más que valores porque bueno obviamente son importantes, pienso que el listening es importantísimo y por eso pues las canciones para mi juegan un rol importante, el reading también el hecho de que ellos escuchen cuentos historias eso para mí es lo que se debe enseñar y pues dentro de eso iría lo de los valores que también pues se tienen que trabajar en todas las áreas.

11. ¿Cómo se debe evaluar el aprendizaje del inglés en niños menores de 12 años y que se debe tener en cuenta?

    Bueno en cuanto a la parte evaluativa yo creo que esta debe ser cualitativa, a mí un numero realmente no me dice mucho, entonces cada niño es diferente entonces como estandarizarlos pues de cierta forma pues va pues no va a encerrar en si lo que realmente es entonces para mi debe ser cualitativo, debe ser un proceso de evaluación continuo en

donde yo evaluó el día a día, los logros de mi estudiante de mis niños desde el primer hasta el último día sin estandarizarlos en cuanto a pues como que este estudiante es como este, no pues ósea todos son diferentes y por lo mismo siento que las inteligencias múltiples pues también van predeterminar un poco ese sistema evaluativo de lo que alcance cada niño de acuerdo a sus capacidades, a sus habilidades, destrezas, fortalezas y debilidades, entonces para ese seri el proceso evaluativo a seguir.

12. ¿Qué otro aporte puede hacer usted pensando en el mejoramiento de este programa para un futuro?

    Bueno como mejorar el programa, pues yo creo que es muy importante la capacitación lo que decíamos inicialmente, la capacitación de los docentes teniendo claro que pues son una población totalmente diferente a la que estamos acostumbrados a manejar, y pues tener en cuenta a esos docentes que realmente están interesados y le gusta y disfrutan trabajar con niños, y no obligar a uno u otro porque es lo que hace falta porque pues eso va a ser un daño para el maestro y para el niño. Para mí también se puede mejorar este programa pues teniendo más visitas o encuentros no sé cómo decirlo pero de campo más visitas de campo entonces los niños se van a sentir mucho más inmersos en la lengua, entonces digamos cuando en ciertos niveles se esté hablando de los animales pues tener una vista de campo a una granja a un zoológico bueno así sea a una finca pero donde ellos puedan tener contacto con la lengua, puedan tener contacto con el mundo real y utilizando la lengua entonces esto mejoraría mucho, que en cada nivel allá una visita de campo, tomar el tema más importante o bueno el que se pueda utilizar, y pues con los recursos que tengamos obviamente pero pues yo sé que esto sería muy yo sé que esto trascendería mucho en el aprendizaje del niño y sé que lo atesoraría, y pues si realmente tener pues como un banco de juegos, de dinámicas o de actividades que todos los maestros pues

hablemos ese mismo lenguaje en cuanto al juego que es tan importante para el niño, ósea esa es la vida de los niños, el juego es su trabajo es su razón de ser, y que ellos encuentren eso en una clase no para que sea pues chistosa sino más bien para que sea pues para que trascienda va a ser muy valioso para ellos y pues va a acercarnos más a ellos y pues a los mismos, si va a acercarnos más a los estudiantes. Y super importante pues el trato con los niños, uno debe tratar a los niños como si fueran sus propios hijos, yo por eso soy una abanderada de la idea de tratarlos bien, de respetarlos sin importar que son menores de edad, con los más chiquitos que uno cree que no entienden, pero a al contrario, entonces eso también eso es muy importante y mejoraría mucho más al programa creo yo.

Appendix H. Teacher's Interviews Transcriptions. TI3

1. Which is your professional background in the teaching of English to kids?

   To be talking honest, I don't have any experience but I have what I have acquired during the teaching process, I don't have like pretraining as to how to teach kids under the age of 12.

2. How and wish has been your experience in the teaching English to children under 12?

   First of all, I found it very intimidating because I wasn't sure as to how I teach kids in terms of: Do you do it exactly the same as you do adults? obviously now I know you don't but I have to say that at the beginning was really really difficult and intimidating and really scary.

   I'm teaching kids since the beginning when I started working at the Colombo which is in May of 2016.

3. Why do you consider you are qualified for the English program for kids?

   For Kids I wouldn't consider myself absolutely qualified but I think my experience has just broaden my experience from being able to mmm I mean from what I have to do, I think it's been a situation of … and a lot of help of all the teachers of the Colombo.

4. Do you consider it is necessary to include more trainings in the program?

   Absolutely, I think it's very very important, I don't think it's a good idea to just say Ok we have teachers at the Colombo let's just push them into the kids program. I think it's really really important that teachers get training as to how kids are taught, because obviously it's completely very different from the way we teach adults and teens, so I think it's really really important.

   I think should be the system of evaluation and methodology, extremely important, and what it is that you teach kids? do you just open the book and follow the book? is grammar important? is pronunciation important? what's important in teaching kids?

5. Which do you consider are the good and bad factors in teaching kids?

   I think that good points of teaching kids is that you learn to be a kid again, I think is very fun to teach kids and I've found that you learn a lot from kids because kids are open to anything that you give them whereas adults are a lot set on their way so they may not be happy to do everything that you want to do whereas with kids you can almost do anything with them and they are happy as long as you structure it to for their age, obviously.

   I think the downside of teaching kids without experience is just you think you know how to teach kids in terms of a method, but then when you….my experience anyway, I have found this very difficult as to, is this the correct methodology to teach kids? Or is this not the correct methodology? So I think it's very important first of all to have training, when it comes to kids training is absolutely important.

6. Talking about the kids program there at the Colombo, which do you think are the strengths and the weaknesses? Talking about the schedule, the curriculum, textbook, methodology, evaluation system.

   Tener en cuenta: - Horario, Currículo, Libro de trabajo, Metodología, Sistema de evaluación, Otro.

   Talking about the Schedule I think so far I've had no problem with the schedule we have for the Wednesday and Friday classes that I've had the schedule has been fine. The book that we have I'm not too sure if they are happy with the book because I've found the book sometimes is a little bit difficult for the kids, yes there's been times when the kids complain and all of that, but I think in terms of learning the language the book is not really … for kids learning English a second language so that's a problem that I've had. System of evaluation to me I feel like almost don't have system of evaluation, because I mean the exams I guess there's no answer sheet for one, two you can't really fail a kid you always have to do other things in order for the kid to continue, unless the child is absolutely absolutely terrible and had problems through the cycle, otherwise if they've been an average student and they don't make it you're still making the way for the child to pass, for the evaluation system needs to be relooked at, not that we need to be strict with kids because this is their second language, but they need to understand that as they have an evaluation at school there's going to an evaluation for this as well, you cant just let them just go through because we need them to pass, because I've found that I talk from my experience, I had a parent who was asking me why does my child not know how to make questions? And she's had the same problem over three levels and it was impossible for me to answer this question because I don't know if it was a problem of the book, the

problem that generally questions are difficult to English, I wasn't sure, for me I think those are the main problems.

The strengths, I think one is the timetable I think is perfect for children, although I still think our kids maybe need to be given a break because a lot of them are still complaining about wanting a break and I find that they go to the bathroom a lot, I think sometimes is just to get away of the classroom and take a break, it's not necessarily that they need a bathroom. Another thing I think could be probably the projects that they have to do, some of the levels are really time consuming and a lot of the times the parents end up doing the projects for the kids.

I find that the workbook Our Discovery Island, I find that the workbook has too many exercises, far far too many.

7. From you experience, which are the best strategies to teach kids?

   Jum that's a very difficult question for me, difficult because I haven't had the training on how to teach kids, ok but I think the best methodology probably is to include a lot of fun things to do, because one we need to remember that this is the kids' second language, it's not something like Maths or Science, that's totally own language, this is a completely different language so we need to make it as fun as possible without the kids realizing that they are actually learning something, and maybe include games, include mmm maybe taking them out somewhere and things like that.

8. Do you know how the process of learning a second language is, in kids?

   To be talking honest, no, all my experience for learning a second language is with adults, so I'm not really sure, Ok I know from experience or what I've read is that kids learn by absorption is just listening, whereas adults always want to try to analyze why is this or try to translate into Spanish, that's what I know.

9. What do you think must be or should be taught in the Kids program? Like grammar, pronunciation, values?

   I think grammar, but grammar not as in grammar rules because we know that kids learn by absorbing what you say and also by imitating what you say, so I think we should teach grammar but not as in grammar like what we do when are teaching adults. Pronunciation, I really don't think pronunciation is that important because I think kids would pick up pronunciation as they better and better with the language. Mmm as for values, for me ok values are important in the way they are structured, in the current program that I'm teaching, no, I think we can take out the whole section of values out, I don't think is an important section at all.

10. How do you think learning should be assessed in kids?

    Marce that's a really difficult question for me, I mean I don't have a of experience in terms of assessing kids right, especially in terms of a second language so for me that's a very difficult question to answer I mean it comes to adults I'm absolutely happy to answer that question but with this one what I would say what I've done is what is expected of me according to the program, but I think if they could make changes, absolutely, for examples in the interviews that they have at kids 2, 4 and 6 I don't really think the interview is an important part of assessing kids because I mean learning a language you know is a long process and we can start doing such things when they get probably to the teens program, but I think interviews no, and the exam I think it needs to be either, we need to find some form of continuous assessment without only having two assessments, the midterm and the assessment at the end, and we say that we have to assess the kids' ability to speak English at any level, for me no, I think we really need to look at the way we are assessing our kids.

11. Which other contribution can you give to the Kids English program so that it can improve?

    First of all I think that when teachers are hired at the Colombo, everybody especially teaches that are going to be teaching kids need training, I mean we generally need training obviously because we need to how the program is and all of that, but I think mostly with kids because from mi experience I'm not sure if I'm teaching kids in the proper way even I think is even worse for me because I'm supposed to speak in English to the kids all the time, but sometimes when they completely don't understand me I don't know what to do, I'm like so what do I say?, I'll give you an example, I had to explain the project for the kids 5 and the kids 5 and there are five different steps because they have to build a module of a house, so at each step they needed to do something and my kids just couldn't understand what it is that I have to do, so I needed to get another teacher to come and explain each and every step, so maybe making the project easier, not making it as detailed and also training is the most important thing above all.