COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE A NEW CHALLENGE AT THE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF BOLIVAR

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1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“Much have I learned from my teacher, more from my colleagues, but most from my students”. (Talmud, Chicken Soup for the Teacher’s Soul, page 279, 2002)

Teaching involves much more than the basic idea of transmitting knowledge. It implies extrinsic and intrinsic factors to be taken into account such as: the context, motivation, needs, expectations, atmosphere, methods, techniques, and approaches to teaching and learning. Social, economical and cultural background, are other factors also to be considered.

Among the factors mentioned above, there is not a single aspect of more importance than the others if we analyze them in terms of aspects necessarily present in teaching, but in terms of students’ needs, the communicative competence becomes the goal and its springs from the above factors.

The need of developing communicative competence inside the language classroom has become a major awareness for teachers. They have realized the importance of what students need to learn in terms of communicative competence, what they need to learn it for, and how to make this goal reachable. Teachers are also becoming aware about the
“…-factors which shape the nature of such communication, and ways in which patterns of communication can help develop or limit opportunities for students to use and learn a second language in classroom settings.”(Karen, E. Johnson, 1991, page 192)

For the purpose of developing a worth second language program, it becomes necessary to foresee students’ oral communication needs to be able to design a program according to them. Taking into consideration what was stated before, teachers need to provide enough self-judgmental elements to determine if what has been done achieves students’ expectations, and prepares them for a professional competitive world.

Besides considering the programs, the dynamics of classroom communication are another important aspect to take into account. Successful learning is strongly influenced by how teachers are, what they know, what they believe, and how they think about teaching, teachers, students and second language classroom. Besides, it is worth mentioning that teaching attitude towards education is the one that allows the students, as well as the teacher, to use whatever is available worldwide in order to improve knowledge in a meaningful environment. (Delval, 2000)

Not only the environment is important, linking learners, teachers, people with professional experience in the related field who could contribute to the development of communicative strategies, also make a great combination for success. (Collins 1989, Donough 1990).

J.C. Richards in Johnson, K. 1987, also considers that helping teachers to recognize the way patterns of communication are established in class, how are they maintained,
and how these patterns affect students participation in classroom, shape the way in which they will use language for learning and to maximize students’ opportunities for second language acquisition.

However, when evaluating, teachers often complain about how poorly motivated their students are to speak, and how inappropriate of what has been taught during many course-in high school, proves to be.

Often these complains are due to the fact that a number of teachers do not acknowledge the importance of developing communicative competence in contexts. They also ignore students’ needs, or could also be possible, that teachers have not been taught about the effectiveness of structuring a class that allows students to develop communicative competence.

This project endeavors to understand in depth the process by which oral communication is developed inside English classes, with the belief that if we do understand the process, we can transform it for the benefit of our students.

The results will be gladly shared in order to enhance, implement, or rearrange classroom procedures to benefit students, as well as teachers.

An open door is going to be left for any one, as it was opened to me, wanting to continue looking for higher grounds on this filed, or to take it as a starting point to make future research that can fulfill further needs arisen in the path.
The following are the sections of this research project: it begins with the description of communicative competence and its implications inside the classroom. The next section is about the qualitative research, class observation, and ethnography. After that the outcomes of this research and how they relate to levels of communicative competence developed inside the classroom. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for the institution will be given.

1.2 RATIONALE

TO KNOW ENGLISH, SOMETHING MORE THAN A REQUIREMENT

Academic context
In the following lines a worldwide concern is going to be discussed: to be able to communicate with others in English is a must today. Even though the influence of Mandarin is penetrating the world, as well as the Chinese and Spanish, nobody can deny that English is the language masterly used in the publishing words with the latest discoveries, for businesses, and for traveling.

English is not any longer another subject in the curricula. Nowadays it is considered a fundamental requirement in any field in which one wants to develop, learn, and grow. According to Mrs. Bryan, head of the Language Department of La Sabana University in Bogotá, Colombia, “the knowledge of English not only enhances your cultural world, but assures you the entrance into the competitive world of business with higher economical condition, as well as competitive ones”.(Magazine, Posgrados April-October, page 27-30)
In her concept, this knowledge is acquired during schooling time, and college time. But, what it is a fact is that the institutions are not solely responsible for the progress and outcomes, a good will and compromise from the side of the student is fundamental to master the language.

With today’s available resources to enhance communicative competences, as well as writing, reading, and listening, excuses are no longer accepted and the shared responsibility lies on students’ and teachers’ shoulders. On the side of the teacher, lies the responsibility of opening the magic door that will arise curiosity and love to perform her/his best day by day, and from the side of the student, lies the responsibility of accepting and realizing that only the practice will make her/him master her/his knowledge.

Colombia is aware of this responsibility due to its desire to become into the TLC (Free Trading Business agreement with USA) which started during the government of Cesar Gaviria (1994), as well as to respond to the demands already acquired with other countries, regardless to say that no scholarship is given to any student that does not master English. At these times of globalization, the citizens of Colombia need to develop the skills in English in order to function in the global society. It is within this context that the Ministry of National Education of Colombia presents the National Bilingual Program, 2004-2010, which includes new standards on communicative competence in a foreign language.

This program has three main factors: language, communication and culture, as the process of language learning is also a process of cultural learning. Openness to others,
tolerance of difference, the ability to communicate effectively with members of other cultures, appreciation of one’s own culture as different from others, are also key elements of the National Bilingual Program.

Along with the national program, and due to the importance that Cartagena represents for Colombia’s future, The Cartagena bilingual program, was also created as a response of the demands the city is facing now with important projections to its future.

The aims of the program are basically four:
1. To train teachers, as well as students, from 10 and 11 grade in the English Discovery Network program.
2. To train students for the ICFES exams using a software created for that purpose
3. To promote communicative competence among teachers and students
4. To motivate students to use the educational software program

Improving the teaching standards of a foreign language in the whole educational system has now being a government major’s concern. In this issue, the program is divided in two stages. In the first stage the aim is that by 2010 students from primary and secondary levels will have achieved a basic knowledge of English as a Second language. Those in higher education should have reached good knowledge of the language by this time. In the second stage, the aim is to develop bilingualism in the country. This is why the first actions taken by the National Bilingual Program have concentrated on the formulation of standards necessary to ensure the appropriate levels of communicative competence in English. This has involved the evaluation of these competences in students, teachers, language programs, graduates and graduate students in general.
Along with these implementations, a new learning mentality is arisen in the mind of the teachers. The importance of meaningful language use at all stages in the acquisition of second language communication skills has come to be recognized by language teachers around the world, and many curricular innovations have been proposed in response to it. Besides, to work with terms such as real communication, contextualized or meaningful activity, spontaneous expression, are now part of the world language classroom. (Savignon, 1983).

Nobody can deny the fact that teachers and students with high-proficiency English level can interact with the academic community easily in any kind of environment, not only because the mind of the person that is exposed to the new information is always open and ready to continue growing, but also because this kind of student has opportunities that are denied to the ones that lack the language, such as scholarships, international training, and international links.

**Tourism**

Tourism is a field that receives major influence in Cartagena’s development hence it becomes a must to have bilingual citizens. This city is located on the Atlantic coast of Colombia, bases its economy in trading, tourism, and macroeconomic encounters among different countries of the world. Every year a minimum of five encounters take place in the city. Along with them the city by itself represents a charming place for foreigners to visit, therefore the need of English speaking qualified persons is a must for the city, and the satisfaction if this need depends on the education system. .
Last year, as another example of how important Cartagena is for Colombia as a tourist destination, the port (Sociedad Portuaria de Cartagena) received an average amount of three cruises per month. These cruises imply for the city a sum of a varied working force that ranges from port operators to art craft makers. All of them have the need to be in constant contact with the language in order “to sell the city” and attract the tourist attention towards the city.

Since the city does also offer a safe environment for the tourists, during the last years (starting from 2002), an amount of international competitions such as fishing and sailing, have also become another part of the frequent events that take place during the year, in which the capacity of the hotels is highly covered by the followers of these activities.

It is also important to point out the fact that charters from Europe, especially from Spain and Italy, are constantly coming to the city. This kind of tourism is the one that likes to come and visit all the historical places the city counts with, as well as the areas that surround the city. In here the need of fluent English speaking personnel is fundamental, not only because they are the tourist guides, but also because they are the image of the city, and nobody ignores that one satisfied tourist bring along hundred more.

The tourism has helped also with the development of the city. In this moment an amount of 45 buildings are approved by the government to be constructed in Cartagena, and almost 82% of the owners of the new apartments are foreigners. Thus the role of a
bilingual city is the most important one if they want to continue improving the standard living of a population that needs and deserves a much better future.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT

The importance of this project goes along with the implementations above mentioned. A new teaching-learning mentality towards communicative competence has arisen in the mind of the teachers, not only because of the external factors already mentioned, but also because the real language acquisition takes place when the interaction has meaning for the learner, when it has vitality. It is the liberation of the rigid impositions from the side of the teacher, it is the transition into a world in which flexibility allows the student to be free to take part in the classroom life and suggests ideas. (Stanislwcxyk and Yavener, 1976).

The importance of meaningful language used at all stages during the acquisition of a second language, has come to be recognized by language teacher around the world, and many curricular innovations have been proposed in response to it. “Real communication, meaningful activities, and spontaneous expressions are now familiar terms in discussions of what should go on in a language classroom” (Savignon, 1983, page 4)

Another aspect that makes this project important for the teaching community is the fact that teachers should be trained in theoretical issued related to communicative competence, such as: communicative techniques, self-assessment, test techniques, research questions, research processes, constant sections of feedback, external and internal factors that influence communicative competence, in order to build a
cooperative and interactive relationship between the researcher teacher and the students to nourish each other, but specially for the students’ good benefit.

To conclude, I would like to state that a second language teacher in this century must be not only proficient users of the language, but also efficient teachers of the language. The Technological University of Bolivar is also aware of this situation, they know that their students will have successful opportunities if they can reach a communicative competence level that allows them to work as fully bilingual persons, and they know that this responsibility lies in a great amount on teachers’ shoulders.

The actual world demands second language users desperately, and the fact of ignoring its importance just leads students, as well as teachers, to a future with limited or restricted opportunities to succeed.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM
Among the universities that are in Cartagena, La Tecnológica de Bolivar has been ranked among the universities with high academic standards in Cartagena. During the last years, the university has changed its English curricula in order to fulfil worldly demands and follow the criteria stated by the government.

The university demands from their students, as a requirement to graduate from any program they offer, to finish the English levels they have. In this moment the institution offers a total of sixteen courses, divided in the following way: introductory, beginners, grammar, intermediate, conversation, advanced and TOEFL preparation. Each of these
levels lasts one semester in which the students have four hours of class a week, and one hour of virtual learning program called SAVIO.

With the implementation of the English program, along came the evaluation procedures that have to be followed by each student. The evaluation is done by means of a test. It is divided in the following way: the first part of the test has a total of one-hundred questions in which vocabulary in context, grammar, and reading comprehension is evaluated. After that, an informal conversation of a total of 10 minutes approximately takes place with the teacher that was designated by the head of the language department. Finally, both exams are added up, and then the grade is given. The grading scale ranges from 1 to 5, being five the maximum score.

Then the university is the one responsible for training students in English different competences that will be required in their future. Once the students start studying at the university they are more than aware about the importance of developing communicative skills, (this information will be expanded during interviews’ analysis) , as well as the university is.

When working at the Technological University of Bolivar, it is notorious that students’ English communicative competence does not match the level in which they are according to the English program. It seems the English level they bring from secondary school and the amount of academic work influences their performance in the language classrooms at the university, so there is a mismatch between what is expected from them once they finish each level, the language proficiency levels they are actually
attaining. As I said before, part of the problems is the previous knowledge of the students.

Just to mention some mismatch, one of the main problems shown by students in the ICFES (Colombian national exams) that has to be taken by every student in Colombia, is the language area (El Pais, 2000). According to this report the ICFES stated that 18% of students achieved a total of 45% out of 100% in 1999. Therefore it is undeniable that this factor has to influence the quality of English performance during the university, since the starting level is not the expected one.

Another factor that influences the development of communicative competence of the students is the level of language proficiency of their teacher. To start I would like to state a reality that is familiar for us: a considerable amount of teachers from public, as well as private educational institutions, lack a lot of preparation, specially in countries like Colombia, in which the possibility of improving teaching performance involves a lot of money.

ALTABLERO, a Colombian newspaper from the National Educational Government, has published in different editions how poorly the teachers are trained, how poor the teaching methodology is, how inadequate and insufficient is the material for the teachers, and last, but not least, the fact that teachers do not know how to work in teams, therefore they do not help themselves to improve self-evaluation and strategies of improvement. (ALTABLERO newspaper, Secretaria de Education, edition No.32. 2004)
It is also worth mentioning that according to the researches carried out by ALTABLERO newspaper, the expectations from teachers are generally far from the school directors’ expectations. Examples of this situation are seen today in universities and schools: for the directives to invest in technology is a must, for the teachers to invest in their personal education is very important, and for the students to be competent in the international world is undeliverable necessity.

No wonder The Improvement Plan has been the goal of the government since 2004. The reality is clear: efficiency and quality from teachers are in need of a change. The teacher’s evaluation that has being carried out by the government have shown the need of creating strategies in which the interests, efforts and resources could fulfil the expectations of the teachers in terms of training.

Another situation that is influencing students’ performance before they enter the university, is the fact that the government is giving the teachers a second chance to find a job as English teachers, no matter if they were trained another field that has nothing to do with the language. Of course, the consequences of this are disastrous.

For example, the Department of Education in Bolivar gave the opportunity to a group of teachers that were chosen under no specific criteria to be English teachers in different public schools of Cartagena. Inside the classrooms one could find teachers which experience in teaching music was around 19 years, but they found a place to work as English teachers, so the government trained them as English teachers. Thus, what can we expect from students if the teachers are not prepared well enough to teach, not only
in the schools, in each institution in which English is offered. This is a reality that has to be faced, and the universities are not far from it.

For this project the Technological University was chosen due to the fact that students at the time they graduate, after finishing, 16 English levels, do not show a high level of communicative competence, understanding this level like the one in which the student successfully communicate with minor linguistic error, shows effortless fluency with natural pauses for though, uses accurate appropriate sentence structure when speaking, and has extensive and accurate vocabulary as well as idiomatic expressions.(British council, CoE global proficiency scale).

In fact, when orally evaluated, most of the students often show faulty pronunciation and stress, avoidance of complex structures, constant repetition is needed for the students to understand, they need clarification and explanation of complex questions, the students struggle to express him/herself, frequently misunderstand and need repetition.

Therefore, for this project is fundamental to analyze the characteristic of the oral interaction process in the light of the notion of communicative competence in the intermediate level English program at the Technological University of Bolivar, also to identify the kind of communicative competence the teacher aims to develop in the SFL, and to identify the kind of communicative competence the students of intermediate level develop in practise.
1.5 POTENTIAL USERS

The outcomes of this project could be used in different educational institutions, as well as in areas in which developing communicative competence is a must. The following are the main potential users:

a. The outcomes of this project could be used in schools to rise awareness of the importance of developing, in an adequate manner, appropriate communicative competence levels, which has not only become a requirement from the Educational National Department, but also has become a must in today’s world demands.

b. The outcomes can also be used by the tutors of language institutions in order to have a much more clear idea of teaching language problems when focused on communicative competences becomes a major teaching issue.

c. The results could also be used by language school head department to have a clear concept of how an adequate communicative competence knowledge can lead curriculum designers into a graduated balance that swaps from emphasizing grammar, to emphasizing into oral skills as it is being demanded.

1.6 OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives that were taking into consideration to carry out this research project:
**General Objective**

To analyze the characteristic of the oral interaction process in the light of the notion of communicative competence in the intermediate level English program at the Technological University of Bolivar.

**Specific Objectives**

1. To identify the kind of communicative competence the teacher aims to develop in the SFL at the Technological University.

2. To identify the kind of communicative competence the students of intermediate level of the Technological University develop in practice.

**2. THEORETICAL FRAME**

In order to understand the endless opportunities communicative competence entails for the teachers, as well as for the students, it is advisable to give first a definition of the concept due to the fact that is the pillar of this project: the oral interaction based on the theory of communicative competence.

**2.1 Communicative competence definition**

Before getting deeper into all the implications of Communicative Competence in ESL, it is advisable to explain, as clear as possible, what the concept entails.
Today the world is interlinked thanks to the technology, and due to this fact the knowledge of different languages plays a fundamental role. The world and its cultures can not be understood, can not be apprehend, and therefore can not be familiarized by ourselves; the knowledge of languages leads human beings to learn and to cope with social and cultural integration.

Being able to expand your mind through the knowledge of other languages and cultures, also implies thinking abilities. It is a process that goes along with cognitive abilities, motor skills, and all the activities that take place in the learning process. All of them joined allow human beings to communicate, leading them to avoid boundaries and ignorance.

Famous linguists, like Cummins, Hakuta and Diaz (quoted by Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, page 24, 1999) state as a fact that “once a second language learning process starts, the persons develop a greater meta linguistic and linguistic awareness permitting the new learners to expand their communicative competence that already started when they were learning their mother tongue”. (Cummins 1984, Hakuta y Diaz 1984, 1986, and Oller 1981 quoted by Ministerio de Educacion Nacional de Colombia, Lineamientos Curriculares)

Thus, it becomes a great responsibility to develop curricula with a clear aim towards improving this ability already acquired. Consequently any language curriculum should have a clear aim: to promote this competence to be able to communicate in other language without being unaware of possible limitations like the non frequent exposure
to the language, the motivation, the manuals, and the teachers’ qualifications. (some of the above mentioned will be worked deeper due to their importance for this subject.)

Thus breaking the above mentioned boundaries becomes a need to allow the students to interlink their knowledge, to understand, and to interpret the surrounding reality in order to share ideas, feelings, opinions. It is worth mentioning that this interlink only takes place when the language has a sense for the student, a purpose clearly set.

What is called in here, a clear purpose, is what for others, such as Canale and Swain, 1983, are the competences that lead students to a successful learning stage. Nowadays, (Canale and Swain Lineamientos Curriculares, Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, page 26) the competences are considered fundamental for the theoretical aspects of any language teaching curriculum.

The authors also specify the importance of competence per se, and what it represents for the language learning process. In their work they describe the competence: as the ability to know the language and among those competences they stated four categories or subcompetences: grammatical, socio linguistic, discursive, and strategic.

1. The grammatical competence deals with how good you grasp and use the language including vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and syntaxes.
2. The socio linguistic competence deals with the ability one has to produce the language in terms of meaning as well as in terms of effective communication within the framework of a particular social group.
3. The discursive competence deals with the ability to use different kinds of speech and to be able to adapt them according to the situation in which they take place.

4. The strategic competence deals with the ability to use the knowledge one has about the language in order to convey the meaning it is stated and in case of detouring making it to be back into the expected path.

(Bachman, 1990)

Other authors suggest that Communicative competence should be understood as “the identification of behaviors of those considered successful at what they do, specifically, the identification of the characteristics of good communicators.” (Sevignon, 1983, page 4).
During the years a considerable amount of people have been interested in the field, and their main concern takes root in the fact that getting the message across is all they need. What is expected as a means of communication at certain age, becomes ignored in another stages of our lives, therefore with the time we learn that communication is between two elements, it is never “one-sided”, it is “negotiated between the persons involved.” (Sevignon, 1983, page 4).

Communication has become so important, that today is quiet normal to find training courses for communicating with accuracy as a must for certain companies. What people look for, is not the “intent but, the interpretation of the communicative act.” (Sevignon, 1983, page 5). Getting the message across implies success.

In today’s world, people are frequently exposed to situations in which they have to defend either themselves, or a position taken by the companies they represent, so the goal here is to help people understand what the situation really is, not what they want to understand for their own benefit. Thus real communication starts here since the meaning we intend must be the meaning we convey.

For instance, performance carried out by a person being exposed to a hard interview: it is a difficult task in which no doubt message must be across with no possibility of letting others interpret symbols such as tone of voice, postures, pronunciation, by their own viewpoint. Therefore expressions, interpretation, and negotiation must be a continuous process in the field of communicative competence, no matter the field.
As it was stated previously, and in order to summarize, so far what has been said is that one can say that communicative competence is a dynamic process since two or more persons share the same symbolic system, and it is indeed an interpersonal process. This sharing can take place in terms of written, spoken or symbolic systems in a specific context.

Yet communication can take place in an infinite variety of situations, but understanding the context as well as prior experience of a similar kind becomes a must in this field. It also becomes a must to pinpoint the difference between competence and performance, since the former one is defined as “.a presumed underlying ability, and performance as the overt manifestation of the ability. Competence is what one knows. Performance is what one does”. (Sevignon, 1983, page 9, quoted Chomsky. Aspects of the theory of syntax, 1965).

The performance of the language has its role everywhere: social functions. These social functions together constitute one of three basic functions of language defined by Halliday: “Language serves for the expression of context or ideational function” and “Language serves to make links between itself and the features of the situation” (Halliday 1970:143). Basic functions that correspond to general categories of needs met by the language. The three categories show their importance as the way sentences are understood, which in other words becomes the new tendency of theoretical issues in communicative competence thanks to Chomsky. (Sevignon, 1983, page 9, quoted Chomsky)
After what was stated, it is important to strengthen the importance that communicative language has in teaching languages. It is said that the goal of communicative language carried out in the classroom is based on the culture where teaching is taking place, once this aspect is taken out from the context no success at all takes place in the language learning process: context, interpersonal relations and text must be joined in order to achieve the purpose of communication. (Hymes, D. 1987)

Communicative competence has reached a level of importance thanks to what represents for research purposes. A typical example of this is Canada in which the fact of having French as a second language (L2), arose in the country the special need to see how successful the program was. Not only the government still sponsors all kinds of research, but understands the importance of them in terms of having enough information to develop a curriculum in which grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence are included. (Hymes, D. 1987)

In other countries the research tends more not to go directly into communicative competence as such, like in USA, the tendency goes more toward the abilities involved in acquiring L2 and the abilities involved in such process considering that each child as well as each adult is different.

During many years people have been studying the implications between language teaching for theory and language teaching for practical. It is a fact that meaning has dominated our teaching application, and linguistics, as a means of competence, was almost exclusively relied into the study of language structure.
Then, in the late fifties, “Chomsky published his Syntactic Structures, and this event marked or “heralded” the arrival of a transformational generative grammar: the transformational theory of grammar”. Chomsky did also offer alternative strategies for teaching grammar, new ways of teaching the same things, but innovation was primarily there. (Chomsky, 1968, quoted by Hymes, 1987 page 5. On communicative competence).

Thanks to this revolution, linguists started to be concerned with developing systems of rules which accounted for the structural possibilities of a language. “This revolution has also touched the language as communication, as view in which meaning and the uses to which langue is put play a central part” (Chomsky, 1968 quoted by Hymes, 1987 page 6. On communicative competence.)

This new view exerts a tremendous importance towards communicative competence. If one analysis what this really means, I would say that language teaching crystallizes itself through communicative approach.

It is important to state that there is a large difference of what is today known as competence, and what competence was for Chomsky. He defined competence “as the speakers-hearer’s knowledge of his language which is the prime concern of linguistic theory. Competence is an idealization, it is the knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener’ operating within a completely homogeneous speech community”, (Chomsky, 1968 quoted by Hymes, 1987 page 3).
For Chomsky the real competence is performance that could be seen as the actual use of language in concrete situations, due to the fact that he considers that a real communicative competence production is seen in environments, (socio-cultural ones) which are familiar to the participants of the conversation, and not faked situations of interaction. It is important to keep in mind that when observing and recording this type of interactions they have a considerable amount of “natural speech”, which in other words, is not concerned at all in avoiding deviations from rules.

Linguistic competence and linguistic performance, so far, have been stated as two different complementary aspects. This explanation has been given since communicative competence is opposed to language competence, when analyzed under the lens of Chomsky and Hymes, and for the purpose of this research one must not be confused with the other when observing, evaluating, and analyzing information.

Communicative competence inside the classroom is seen as an ability that relays under teacher’s responsibility. Hymes’ (1987) performance concept is introduced as the actual use of language in concrete situations, therefore in my concept Chomsky’s (1968) theory in the sense of performance definition tends to be rigid due to the fact that teachers can lead students of independent socio-cultural features into actual use of language in concrete situations. I do certainly believe that a well trained teacher in communicative competence can overpass this barrier and create performance through competence.

The terminology does not affect the fact that both concepts are needed in the process of communicative competence. If one studies Hymes redefinition turns out to be that is
very similar to the actual definition used by the Colombia government: the capabilities of a person. (MEN. Serie Lineamientos Curriculares, 1999)

Hymes gave a broader redefinition to both concepts, since according to his mentality, giving “a constitutive role to the language inside socio-cultural factors gives the concept of performance the sense of actual use of the language, and competence is the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language use which the speaker –listener possesses that is not the knowledge of grammar, is deeper”. (Hymes,1987, page 18)

This ability, in the case of the children, is acquired naturally without taking into consideration the overt teaching of grammar: when acquiring the language, children implicitly acquire the grammar. This competence comes with attitudes, values, needs, experiences, social life interaction, and motivation.

As it was stated above, the ability to learn a language changes from adult to adult and from child to child since many aspects are involved in such acquisition such (vocabulary, articulation, critical thinking, reading, inferential abilities, writing, motivation, etc), but in the case of USA they have noticed that a considerable amount of production in the field of reading reduces once the students go to secondary school level. (Kame’nu E. Carnine, E, Dixon r, Somns, d and Coyne, M 2002)

Motivation, as it was stated before, deserves to be explained deeper due to the importance it conveys for this project.
Motivation

When stating the objectives of the project it was mentioned as a main objective the analysis of oral interaction in the light of the notion of communicative competence, but it is worth mentioning that along with other factors, motivation plays an important role from the students’ side. Teachers need to have an implicit motivation towards this field, (communicative competence), in order to transmit it to the students. The motor for communicative competence development is the teacher, a teacher with no motivation towards this topic, will not influence the students.

The literature on motivation that is relevant for teaching describes students as being oriented towards both a need for success and a need to avoid failure. Depending on the point of view it represents a competition between high, versus low need for achievement, also having high or low test anxiety, or having mastery versus ego orientation to learning.(Kame‘nui l, 2002)

One principle that underlies these conceptions is that some people will focus more on challenging themselves to achieve by choosing average difficult tasks. It is also noticeable the fact that they persist, while others try to avoid situation of moderately difficult tasks where their self-esteem would be at risk. Those who do not want to face the risk tend to choose either very simple tasks or very hard ones. In the former case they are confident, thus they will succeed, and in the latter case nobody will expect them to succeed.
It is worth mentioning that students with a high level of motivation will be more concerned about learning than socializing. Some other authors, such as Perez and Hunter, consider that … “students holding the entity view tend to avoid failure, have a low need for achievement, have high test anxiety, and develop an ego orientation to learning”. (Perez and Gehlbach, retrieved, 2005). The opposite associations generally were found in students with and incremental view of intelligence.

**Implications of motivation**

These theories have potent implication for predicting behavior patterns related to learning. Atkinson and Feather (1947, quoted by William Perez and Hunter Gehlbach), found that people who have a greater orientation toward approaching success tend to have higher levels of academic achievement.

This explanation fits into the goal setting theory of Dweck and Leggett (1988). In their experiment children were given a series of problems and experienced both success and failures. They state that, the mastery oriented children not only believe they could surmount obstacles and reach a solution, but even enjoy the opportunity to do so. Thus, those students with a “learning/mastery” orientation have a greater tendency to approach success more likely to put themselves in situation that will enhance their future learning.

The second important implication of these theories on motivational orientations involved how these dispositions can shape learning habits for extended periods of time.
The normal pattern for students which constantly approach success is to select a task slightly more challenging than the previous one. The increasing challenges maintain their interest and their learning continues. If these students fail on a task, they usually reduce the difficulty of their next task slightly and soon recall their positive cycle. On the other hand, those students with the tendency to avoid failure who are selecting inappropriately easy or difficult tasks, set themselves up in a failure situation. (Perez, and Ghelbach, 2005)

Repeated successes on easy tasks diminish interest in learning and schooling, and repeated failure of difficult tasks contributes to the creation of helplessness orientation. In either case, the students with a performance orientation decrease the likelihood of becoming “life-long” learners.

This situation is related to the reality at the university: the tasks are easy due to the fact that their preparation and what is expected from students is not a high level of production, therefore they may consider themselves life-long learners when they call themselves looser for not over passing the level they had when they entered the university.

What has being more frequent, as it was stated when the students were interviewed, is the fact that they feel that will “never learn, I am stupid” (See annex No. 4). In terms of this project, the repeated failure is making the population to be unenthusiastic about learning a new language, in this case English. This implications cause a serious delay in the language-learning process, not only because the student feels that he/she is the one
that can not cope with the new learning process, and also because ignores the fact that most of the learning relays on teachers responsibility.

Therefore, the education is being unfair in terms of learning a new language: communicative competence can be easily acquired, if and only if, the teacher is well prepared to activate the process and make it a continuous flow with an endless ending.

To sum up, personal motivation is generally accepted in the wider world of education, to be the key to the rate of success and attainment of a chills. The immortal words “I can’t be bothered” are a pretty big hint that a student desire to learn has withered beyond reach.

Without a motivated learner, the ability to deliver the curriculum effectively is impaired and learner’s social, emotional and psychological blocks to learning will dominate. Without motivation, your students will have no urge to learn and progress will be slow and short-lived. Yet perhaps most significant is the undeniable link between motivation and behavior. A lack of motivation to progress can evidently lead to poor behavior demanding constant correction and management from you, the teacher.

To finish, it is advisable to quote two authors which concept of motivation is inspiring for teachers: “Every person is gifted in some area. We just have to find out what” (Evelyn Blose Holman, Chicken Soup for the Teacher’s Soul, page 247) and the other quote states: “one of the most important thing a teacher can do is to send the pupil home in the afternoon liking himself just a little better than the way he came in the morning” (Ernest Melby, quoted by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen, 2002, page 106), and that
could only be done by someone with a good body of theory, teaching techniques and loves what he/she does as well as love and respect his/her students.

**Teaching technique**

As it was stated above, a good level of motivation does not flow by itself, it has to be accompanied by what a good teaching is: a holistic environment in which teaching techniques for speaking, reading, writing, and listening play a very important role.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking have always being together. One can use reading to make students develop communicative competence, or vice versa. In the following pages one technique, among a group of hundred, is going to be taken into consideration because it suits the needs that students at the Technological university have in this moment: they have to speak in English and they have to read in English

“Learning to read is very different from reading to learn” as Dorothy Stricklen, former president of the International Reading Association, states. She also says that “as impressive as the steady growth of nine years old has been, one must wonder if there is something that is or is not being done that militates against more of reading development to help produce more thoughtful, critical readers who are better prepare to shift to the more complete reading tasks of the middles grades” (Savignon, 1983. page 543).

“The goal of skilled reading is effective, efficient construction of meaning or comprehension (Davery and Menke, 1989, p.49).
While twenty years ago research on reading comprehension problems of students focused on difficulties with decoding text, researchers today view such problems as arising from difficulties across a wide range of language and thinking activities (Swanson and Hoskyn, 1988). They recognize that some students have mastered the mechanics of reading, but still have comprehension problems. The inability the students have to comprehend material is one of the major concerns for regular and special education teachers.

Once the students finish high-school and enter college, the language and reading demands placed upon them, not only increase, but also change in nature. They are expected not only to extrapolate or infer information from material read, but also use the information.

A poor reader can not connect words and sentences in a meaningful way. One of the main reasons for this is that students tend to focus on small units of the words instead of the larger units. Since fluent readers perceive phrases when reading and decode automatically, comprehension is proficient. The same happens when a poor speaker is performing, units or chunks are produced, with not interconnection among themselves. But, the same situations happen in both fields: students are victims of the unspoken assumption that there is only one right way to teach speaking or reading to all children and adults.

Thus, the goal should be to create a new generation that understands the importance of learning how to speak and read, to enjoy the world of words, and to experiment the
happiness when faced to any situation in which the fact of having the concept will make any learning or experience unforgettable.

The goal of teachers is to help students to overcome difficulties in any field. As a teacher at the university I have discovered that when I use the PALS (Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies) reading strategy, even it was conceived for first graders it turns out to be that the outcomes are the same when used with children that when used with adults. I follow to explain the strategy to share it with any college that finds it useful as I do.

In the following lines and explanation of PALS strategy will be explained in order to portrait how the two major needs the students at the university have, can be combined to create a great mixture of learning how to speak and to read together. The teacher and the student, both work together as a team, no demanding or bossy situation is possible in here. There is a place for an environment of confidence and mutual respect for learning styles.

Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies was developed to enhance the regular school reading curriculum, not to replace it. It is intended for students who need to increase their reading performance, as well as those who might benefit from providing such help. For three 35-minute sessions each week for 16 weeks the entire class engages in PALS. The first step is to create pair at random. Each pair of readers can be working on different lessons, reading different stories and each student serves as both the tutor and the tutee during each session. Each session incorporates two separate routines. The first routine, entitled Sounds and Words, is a set of code-base activities that follow a
direct instruction model and include the component of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. The second routine, Story Sharing, provides each pair the opportunity to interact with the text to promote fluency and comprehension.

During sounds and Words, pairs conduct four activities during 15 minutes. If there are new sounds or words introduced in the lesson sheets, the teacher presents them before this routine begins. The four activities consist of a) Letter-Sounds, b) Hearing Sounds, c) Sounding-out, and d) Sentences and Stories.

After Sound and Words is completed, the pair engages in Story Sharing for the remaining 15 minutes. Story Sharing involves three activities: a) Pretend. Read, b) Read Aloud, and c) Retell. Each of these activities revolves around a piece of literature chosen by the teacher with the only restriction being that the text must be at the Coach’s independent reading level.

PALS was developed in response to the need for feasible early reading strategies to prevent failure and increase all the student’s reading level with a resource that motivates both the struggling and advanced reader.

PALS is based on the Vigotsky’s Theory of Social Cognitive development in which its major thematic thrust is based on the fact that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition.

If this concept is liked with this project, one of the main conditions for developing communicative competence is giving the student an environment that allows a social
natural interaction with an emphasis in contextualizing what is being learned; and reading activities can provide that.

Results of these studies have indicated that the lower-achieving students participating in PALS make significantly greater gains on multiple measures of reading progress than those low-achieving students in contrast classrooms. Thus if this goal is acquired at the university, the students will have the opportunity to feel short-learner, and at the same time to work on both basic skills: speaking and reading.

Another characteristic this technique has, and that could also be used at the university, is the possibility of easily adjust the system according to the students’ needs in terms of time. In each lesson students have to identify words in connected text that require to integrate phonological awareness, alphabetical understanding, and automaticity with the code. All letter-sound correspondences, word types, and sight words are integrated into the Sentences and Stories activity.

Pretend Reading that is the first activity during Story Sharing routine is designed to activate student’s prior knowledge before reading. To prime background knowledge the introduction of a new word type to be sounded out is proceeded with auditory practice of words of that type during the Hearing Sound activity. PALS reinforce the big ideas of phonological awareness, alphabetical understanding, and automaticity with the code with the activities in both routines.

Reading strategies when teaching a new language become a fundamental tool to make the class more active and productive. The book that is used is also another important
tool, but the way in which its information is “sold” or shown is what makes the big difference.

In terms of materials design, the technique could be used in all of them, in the case of the The Technological University of Bolivar, the book collection they use for the English classes allows the students to work with PALS’ strategy. It is just a matter of training the teacher and implement the system, not only because is worth having it, but also because communicative competence can be used in context, allowing a greater amount of authentic situations to take place inside the classroom.

2.2 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS COMMUNICATION

No matter the amount of years students have been exposed to the language, they frequently “remain” deficient in the ability to use the language and understand its use in normal communication either in oral or written mode.

Nowadays the problem has improved due to the fact that updated information is found in English, and it appears to be much more frequently than what is expected: students can not deal with English material presented at the university. Then, when and where did the problem start? Also, in our context, secondary school students do not seem to profit from nine years of English instructions.

For some writers such as Widdowson,1980 (The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching, 1980), the answer is mainly because teachers do not teach the way they were trained in colleges and in-service courses, and also because they do not follow the instructions “embodied in the prescribed textbooks”, (Widdowson, 1980).
hence the root of the problem, according to this writer, is the way teachers approach students and the way they lead them into the practical world of the language.

The assumption behind this approach seems to be that learning a language is “a matter of associating the formal elements of the language system with their physical realization, either as sounds in the air or as marks on paper”, (Widdowson, 1980 page 118). This shows a difficulty since the ability to compose sentences is not the only ability we need to communicate: “communication only takes place when we make use of sentences to perform a variety of different acts of an essentially social nature”. (Widdowson, 1980, page 118)

With this kind of approach, the real communicative competence is worked in here in terms of a proficiency acquired by means of associating the formal elements of the language system with their physical realization, but it is not that simple. Apparently it entails most of the details expected when we communicate, such as using sentences to make statements of different kind, describing, recording, classifying, making requests, giving orders, but there is no contextualization or purpose.

Contextualizing in communicative competence is “…the ability to allow the learner to grasp concepts by using his/her own world with a clear purpose: language needs to be comprehend only for a certain purpose”…(Prabhu, 1987, page 68). Any language teaching that does not offer the possibility to be felt by the learner, does not have any meaning at all.
When teaching “we should think not only in terms of linguistic structures and situational setting, but also in terms of communicative acts: we must incorporate the systematic teaching of communicative values”, (Widdowson, 1980. page 119). The systematic teaching communicative value is the system that allows the student to grasp concepts, no matter the subject, in a natural amount of combinations, without getting into teaching structure.

In here, stretching the knowledge and joining concepts go along with offering the advantages of grading the amount of words to be taught. It is also advisable no to deny that “linguistic competence involves, not just being able to communicate meaning, but in that process, conforming to grammatical and lexical norms as well”. (N.S.Prabhu, , 1980, page 69).

Another advantage this system offers for communicative competence is that it presents the language items by focusing on their communicative value, therefore “the relevance of the language to the subject is more immediately apparent”, (Widdowson, 1980. page 120). Then in here, the real sense is the one given to that meaning-focused activity which constitutes a condition for language acquisition: the learner feels the need and the logical use of the language, nothing is unfamiliar to him/her, and at the same time the feeling of “bringing into play what is taught”, (Widdowson, page 120) makes it more enjoyable.

In fact “strictly speaking, language needs to be comprehended only for a certain purpose and an outcome needs to be formulated in language only to the necessary extent for putting its meaning content across” (Prabhu, 1987, page 70). The concept of meaning
content across can not be isolated by the time of teaching grammatical and lexical norms.

Experience shows that when children are learning their own language the structure (grammar) is never given, they acquire the language naturally. A process of internal system-development goes on at a subconscious level of their minds; therefore, the extensive exposure to the structures becomes a favourable condition for this acquisition without the need of getting into grammar concepts as such. (Madra’s project, 1983 page Ramirez, 2006)

Alan Beretta and Alan Davies when reporting about The Bangalore/Madras Communication Teaching Project (quoted by Prabhu, 1987, page 144), also agreed in accepting that “grammar-construction by the learner is an unconscious process which is best facilitated by bringing about in the learner a preoccupation with meaning, saying or doing”. In fact one of the conclusions that came upon during this project was that “grammar construction can take place through a focus on meaning alone”. (Madras’s project, 1983. page 151, quoted by Prabhu).

In conclusion, grammar is an important element of communication, and it has to allow students to empower their communicative skills without interfering. The moment of readiness for production coming from the side of learners of second language “is not predictable, not observable and not likely to be uniform for different learners”, (Prabhu, page 81), but can be lead into a meaningful task full of success in context.
What we teachers can do, is to ensure continual use in comprehension strategies by providing constant opportunities for production, and make sure that any possibility that will attempt to diminish the production should be reduced or avoided.

### 2.3 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

On of the aspects that has been researchers’ concern is how people learn a second language, how is this process carried out in the brain of the persons, what involves all this process, and much more worries that still surround the atmosphere without being successfully answered. The researchers basically wonder how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue.

Second Language Acquisition term refers to the “subconscious or conscious processes by which a language, other than the mother tongue, is learnt in a natural or tutored setting. It covers the development of phonology, lexis, grammar, and pragmatic knowledge…” (Ellis, 1985. page 4).

As well as Ellis, various authors desired to extend this concept beyong of the morphosintax world, and give it a new look towards it. So far what it seems to be clear for most of the authors is that Second Language Acquisition is the product or result of many factors in which both, learner and learning situations, are involved and fuse themselves in one. It also seems clear that variability and individuality of language learning are factors that should be taken into consideration during research time.
For the above reasons researchers generally like to make a distinction between competence and performance when studying language acquisition. According to Chomsky 1965 “competence consists of the mental representation of linguistic rules which constitute the speaker-hearer’s internalized grammar. Performance consists of the comprehension and production of language.”

In Ellis’s words one is the capacity, and the other one is the performance of this capacity. In fact he stresses that… “acquisition is used to refer to picking up a second language through exposure, whereas the term learning is used to refer to the conscious study of a second language”, (Ellis, 1994 page 7).

Both deal with different interpretations of the terms, but in my concept one is not far from the other. What for Chomsky is competence for Ellis is acquisition, and what for the former is performance for last one is learning. Both deal with aspects that are fundamental to carry out an observation of what acquisition takes into consideration to be developed: performance, individuality, conscious and subconscious processes, learning situations, and setting.

For the purpose of this project to have clear the previous concept, the difference between competence and performance, it is important since I am looking for the characteristics of the oral interaction process at the light of the communicative competence, thus to see how they are involved as well as how they influence language learning was very important.
The role of the first language

It is undeniable that living in Cartagena, Colombia, the influence of the first language is very obvious when learning a second language, in this case English. The environment of the city is not officially bilingual yet, it is easily seen the influence the tourism exerts over the city, but the city is not officially bilingual yet. For example the signs on the streets are in Spanish, in the supermarkets the products are displayed with Spanish tags in the aisle, new on TV are only given in Spanish, and so forth.

In the following lines an explanation of how a native or first language affects and influences the process of second language acquisition is going to be given, not only because it influences communicative competence performance, but also because the role it plays by itself is very important.

Until the 1960s, was believed that any difficulty that was present in L1 (native language) was immediately taken or transferred to L2 (second language). Thanks to this trend teachers were encourage to work on negative transfers, that means, on concepts that were different between L1 and L2, and minimized the importance of positive transfers (similar concepts between the two languages.)

In the late 1960s, thanks to Dulay and Burt (Dulay and Burt, 1973) findings, the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis lost its importance since “…the theory held grave doubts about negative transfer as a major factor in the process of SLA. A large proportion of grammatical errors could not be explains by L1 interference. As a result of
such studies, the role of the L1 was played down and Contrastive Analysis became less fashionable.” (Dulay and Burt, quoted by Ellis, page 7)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Research methods can be classified in various ways, however one of the most common distinctions is between qualitative and quantitative research methods. In this project Qualitative Research Methods are the ones that are going to be applied.

To start I would like to give a clear definition of what qualitative research is, and the difference between qualitative and quantitative research in order to make clear the differences both entail.

For many scientists that deal with quantitative studies, the concept of qualitative research is unclear. It is important to start by pointing out the fact that qualitative research implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are “rigorously examined, but not measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency”. “…. In fact the generation of hypotheses often replaces the testing, explanation replaces measurement, and understanding replaces generalisability” (Myers. 2006).

Taking into consideration what was stated before, the difference between quantitative and qualitative is enormous. Qualitative is mainly concerned with the properties, the state and the character of the phenomena. This method typically produces a
considerable amount of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases. It also describes careful situations, events, interactions and observed behaviours.

The easiest and most simple, but clear definition of qualitative research is the one given by Kaplan and Maxwell (Quoted by Michael D. Myers, 1994): “Qualitative research methods are designed for researchers to understand people and their social and cultural contexts within they interact”.

Another characteristic clearly stated in this kind of research is the kind of approach. In here the approach does not measure the reactions of a great amount of people into a limited set of questions, it does not either measure it in terms of quantity, amount or frequency, neither compares or contrasts, and to finish, it does not allow an statistical aggregation of the data.

What the researcher can do is to infer by analysing the collected data, as well as the observations carried out, all external and internal factor, that are involved in the research problem, as well as to work on processes and meanings.

Now that the reader is familiar with qualitative research, I would like to state the differences between quantitative and qualitative research, not only because it is fundamental for the purpose of this paper, but also to state clearly the reasons why I did not follow a quantitative research approach.

**Quantitative** research works with survey methods, laboratory experiments, formal methods, such as econometrics, and numeric as methods such as mathematical
modelling. “As a rule, quantitative research is mainly concerned with the degree in which phenomena possess certain properties, states and characters, and the similarities, differences and causal relations that exist within and between them. It is usually based on theoretical or empirical considerations and quantifying phenomena”. (Labuschagne, 2003)

According to Maria Amaris Macias (2005, page 11), most of the qualitative researchers do works in steps. First they formulate a question which will go narrowing through the research. After that comes the sample stage made by theoretical sampling, then data collecting that could be made by means of observations, interviews. After comes the analysis of the information that must be carried out by decoding, contrasting and comparing, and to finish showing results.

In fact, the difference in terms of phenomenological value and research strategy is really notorious. To make this words meaningful ,I made my own adaptation from Kielhofner’s differences between quantitative and qualitative research.(Macias, 1983):

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<tr>
<th>World’s social view</th>
<th>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
<th>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is a dynamic order influenced by the personal interpretations and actions of the actors.</td>
<td>It is a mechanical order in which the predictable results are separated from the actors’ actions</td>
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<th>Relations with the theory</th>
<th>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
<th>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
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<td>Formulate theories</td>
<td>Verify theories</td>
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<th>Concepts’ usage</th>
<th>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
<th>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
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<td>Concepts which aim to</td>
<td>Operational concepts</td>
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3.2 WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Nowadays qualitative research is having a developmental stage, mainly in Human Sciences. This development has been notorious in Europe, Latin America, and USA. This growth is due to the conviction that it becomes a must to find a new path to face in an empirical way new challenges that have not been answered satisfactorily before with traditional methodology.

Along with the above mentioned concepts, the emphasis on subjective processes has also improved allowing the gap between theory and practice to be closer. In other
words, the need to construct theoretical knowledge through practice is there, and is there for me as a challenge to face.

There were many reasons for me to chose this kind of research, and the ones I found profusely important, are the ones that follow in here in detail. I am fond at the fact that in this research I could work with qualities, I mean, with the description of the relations among the characteristics of what is being studied. Also the fact of working with verbal concepts, and not quantities or numerical statistics, is something that is really linked to my personal abilities: words, not numbers. (Miles and Hubermann, 1984, p.21, quoted by Marian, J, 1995, page 2).

Another reason that makes me use this kind of research is the possibility to formulate myself questions that will identify the phenomenon that will be studied, instead of hypotheses. In terms of some authors, this kinds of questions can also be called general and specific objectives, that are not only flexible, but allow the freedom to explore the phenomenon in depth.

Once those objectives or questions are stated, four aspects work together: data collecting, sample selection, both interlinked. Then was have data analysis and data collections, both interlinked too, then we have data analysis and results, both interlinked too. In other words, it is a simultaneous implementation of all of them in order to get into clearer results.

What was called in here interlinked, is nothing else than the triangulation methodology that is used for this kind of approach, and in order to have clear the way this research
was carried out the concept, triangulation as such will be defined to support its worthiness as a research tool.

Once the researcher has considered that the research is going to be carried out using a qualitative approach, the he/she knows that it will be necessary to have interviews, questionnaires, research impressions and reactions, documents, observations, data analyzing, interpretation of the data, field work, and literature that supports his/her research. Once all of the above mention are taking place, the researcher works with them by relating each main vertices with the other one, none of them can be isolated, they are closed, interlinked one with the other like in a triangule shape, that is where the name comes from.

In this research, triangulation turned out to be a really interesting tool to work with since, not only allows all the concepts to be constantly recycled, but at the same time the inclusion of multiple perspectives makes the concepts of multidimensional approach to be more useful and more practical in terms of deepening the project any time is needed.

For this research the triangulation was carried out in the following way: every fifteen days a conversation between the researcher and the teacher took place. The main purpose of it was to share as much information as possible about the research field in order to have extremely clear concepts of the way we were going to takele the research. Once the qualitative research concept was clear, then the readings that supported our research took place. After that we started with the observations, analysis of
observations, interviews, analysis of interview, document analysis, and class material analysis,

Another figure that calls my attention is the flexibility mind condition imposed to the qualitative researcher. I find this not only interesting, but challenging, in the sense that is my previous knowledge constantly being confronted with new information.

In here my own believes, perspectives, and predictions must be in an objective stage in order to avoid the research to be strongly influenced by them. Taylor and Bogdan (1986, quoted by Mariane, J, page 9), stated that “…the researcher has to try to understand the persons inside their own environment. He/she should also consider his/her previous knowledge and balance it and transform it into new congruent information.”

To finish I would like to state that the fact of being exposed to different teaching environments forces me to have a flexible mind, to use my previous knowledge, to value different perspectives, to improve my critical thinking analysis, and to enhance my social interactions, were enough reasons to be inclined to use qualitative research.

3.3 CLASSROOM RESEARCH

Not every time one is going to carry out a research finds the “wonderland” environment to work on. It is also common to find a lot of tensions between the researcher and the teacher being researched, but where do they come from, where do they start?
It is advisable to start by the very beginning giving a typical example of the origins of future frictions. Just to use an example, the teacher of this study, decided to cooperate in a research in which during the day the students will be exposed to have a S L during a long period of time, and then they will go back to their native language. In order to develop and understanding of the classroom activities, the teacher planned to use the ethnographic strategy of triangulation, which included not only her own observations and perceptions, but also the opinions from the participants, in this case the teachers and students on the classroom activities.

When time came she refused to review one of the tapes with the teacher, and even though the other teachers that were researched accepted the invitation, she definitely rejected because she was feeling that the researchers were being even demanding, intrusive, unhelpful, and inflexible.

The persons that were carrying out this research did follow the TESOL Research Committee outcomes published in 1980 in which and Ethical Research Guideline in ESL was given:” All research on humans should proceed only with the “uncoerced, informed consent of the subjects, in writing if possible.”(Tarone 1980). In the case of the above mentioned teacher she did not feel that cooperation was major point, she felt that not only her time but her performance was totally dedicated to please and entertain the students when she was observed.

In fact, once you see the real side of the situation the one that feels more pressure is the researcher since he is not in the position to impose any kind of teaching strategy that may come out in the time he is observing because of his/her non-intrusive role in there.
The pressure therefore is not exerted on the observed teacher, is on the researcher not only because there is nothing in the classroom that could be manipulated by him/her, and also because there are a lot of boundaries that must be taken into consideration in order to carry out a process in which culture, individuality, teaching style, and interests, must be absolutely respected.

Therefore if one considers all the aspects that are involved in a research can affirm that there are three main aspects in the relation between the researchers and their subjects: the more principles or ethics, the support or advocacy, and the empowerment frameworks.

Ethics as number one rule refers to the respect that must be carried out in a relation in which if empathy is developed is a plus aspect, but in case that such aspect is not acquired the respect of the culture as well as the respect for the subject essence is a must, “avoid someone else’s territory, do not fudge, and acknowledge your sources. It is a starting point” (Spada, 1987)

Advocacy or support as number two rule takes into consideration the enormous responsibility the researcher carries out in the community in which he/she is working on. In the time the researched community opens its door to be observed, it is created an immediate implication that demands from the researcher an obligatory objectivity that forces him/her to search for the truth.
Here comes another aspect that has an amazing influence and it is the fact that the information obtained by the researcher must be spread since the community that is observed is the one that receives the benefits of the observations. Thus the decision making process is only in the hands of the researcher, and not where it should be: in the hands of the community who did open the doors for the task that really concerns them because they are the most affected ones.

Empowerment as a rule number three, or also called collaborative framework by Cameron (1993), entitles what is sometimes very difficult in a process of researching: the relationship between researcher and researched. It is a relation of power or “oppressive us versus a powerless passive”, therefore the main goal here it is to encourage together in order to achieve mutual goals.

In this step the presentation of the results the researcher discovers what he/she has not learned about himself or herself so far and turns that knowledge into effective strategies to improve the research.

To finish as a rule number four, we have the alternatives in action in which new changes take place. In here if things were done wrongly it is time to change them and give them a swirl in terms of a contribution to the classroom, as well as the teacher(s) that were involved in the research in terms of a very positive attitude reflected not only on what is spoken but in terms a written outcomes.

In this research the outcomes are going to be shared first with the teacher that gladly accepted to be observed as a matter of respect, and then the head department of
language will have access to the information. The importance of the outcomes is because they turned in the future into conclusions and recommendations, thus their role is fundamental not only for the researcher, but also for the institution that was investigated during this research.

3.4 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN REPORTING CLASSROOM RESEARCH.

Classroom research always encounters problems thanks to the paradigms or different types it encounters. The first type considered in here is the naturalistic (Hammerley, 1983). In here the emphasis is on observing, describing, interpreting, and understanding how events take place in the real world, and not in a controlled environment.

Since the real world is the aim in here, multiple realities must be encounter because the truth is not objective neither observable, in fact it tends to be qualitative research in the sense that describes what is currently taking place, which is nothing different than ethnography research.

On the other side non-experimental research possesses more problems if one takes into consideration that the real environment of the classroom is changing after the consent of the teacher chosen for the project is given. Some times he/she will be asked to perform activities that will involve extra class time in order to carry out the project, and after helping the researcher will have to face the fact that no matter how hard the researcher tried no to hurt his/her sensibility the reality is in there once outcomes are published.
Research as it was stated before carries out a lot of problems, but I would like to “put forth” thee aspects because pretending to ignore them in any moment of the research is not doing classroom research.

Observing a L2 classroom is essential for the growth of this field. Classroom research hand to hand with communicative competence have developed up to the point that today they are considered science that deserve a lot of importance and their place in the language teaching world. One can not be without the other one, as well as the classroom research can not go without a teacher.

The researcher teacher necessarily goes into the classroom with a previous background that like it or not affect the research and places him or her in a position that I can hardly describe it.

If you are going as a teacher researcher for the first time it is needless to say to you are placing yourself in one of the most indescribable situations of your life, helplessness will be next to you for many hours.

You are having in front of you someone that not only you respect and thank for letting you in, but also is a human being which performs that job that you do every single day of your life, so pretending to be as objective as possible takes time and a lot of endurance because your previous experience is always in there reminding you that you are a teacher observing another teacher.

3.5 MAKING SECOND LANGUAGE CLASROOM RESEACH WORK.
As it was stated before the changes are coming inside the communities in which classroom research has been carried out, even if it is only inside one classroom, the point is that a good communication was established while the research was taking place, therefore the outcomes were well received and became part of the new world.

What was stated above should be the ideal resulting after a research, but that involves curricular innovations first of all. Curricula can not be isolated from students cultural environment, therefore if the curricula does not have a way to become alive does not have any sense of existence at all.

Curricula will be developed for the students by teachers which sometimes have no approach to the culture, thus at times for choosing the persons involved in this process this aspect must be taken into consideration for the logical reasons already stated.

During this research an Ukrainian teacher was encharged of TOEFL preparation, and according to the program (See annex no.3) this course has to come with some extra reading material which is not given to the teacher in advance. Thus, coming from where she comes, makes it really difficult for an interchange training teacher to start working with material that has to be sorted out by her, her, without knowing the culture.

3.6 ETNOGRAPHY

Qualitative research does have its own research methods. Among them we can find interviews, documents, participant observation data, researchers’ impressions and reactions. And it also has qualitative methods of action research such as: Case study research and ethnography (Myers, 2006).
Ethnographic research is one of the most “in-depth” research methods possible. Since the researcher is there for a reasonable amount of time, and sees what people are doing, as well as what they say they are doing, the ethnographer obtains a deep understanding of the people, the organization, and the broader context within they work or setting.

An ethnographic setting can be defined as anything from a neighborhood to a sixth-grade classroom. The selected context and participants are observed while working activities and in their setting. Since the researcher observes rather than manipulates, the researcher spends a considerable amount of time in the context observing and interacting with the participants.

In order to make this kind of methodology a touch of clarity, I would like to give a broad general summary of the steps to follow an ethnographic approach:

The researcher, when doing ethnography approach, must enter the setting slowly, learning to become accepted by the participants and gaining “rapport” with them.

With the time the researcher collects data when in observations. With this data of initial observations, interpretations, and “refining of initial interpretations” about the context and participants start to form the first basis of the research.

With the above mentioned aspects the researcher obtains a deep understanding of both, the context and its participant’s role in it. After that, the researcher organizes the collected data and interprets it.
Finally the result of the ethnographic study is a “holistic” description and interpretation that represents the participant’s everyday activities, values, and events. The study is written and presented as a “narrative”.

As you can see, it was a real useful tool in the case of this project, for observing communicative competence inside the classroom. During this research the steps mentioned above were followed in order to triangulate, as well as to refine observations in order to present the study that will become the departure for another researcher interested in the future to deepen in these previous observations.

Making emphasis again in the importance of ethnography, as it was mentioned before, it is worth mentioning that for many ethnography has proven to be “… a helper in terms of meaning-making processes of dialogue, negotiation, and consensus, provide the basis for group, community, or organization action. People can review their activities, develop plans, resolve problems, initiate projects, or restructure an organization. In education, community-based research can be applied to a wide range of problems and issues at classroom, school, or system levels.” (Stringer, 2005)

On David Fetterman’s book (Fetterman, 1998) for example, the importance of ethnography is stated by showing the reader the new resources available for ethnographers today: The Internet, he considers, is one of the most powerful resources available today for ethnographers. By this media the ethnographer conducts searches about topics or sites, collects census data, conducts interviews by chatting and
videoconferencing, shares notes and pictures about research sites, debates issues with colleagues and downloads data collection and analyzing software.

To conclude it is advisable to strengthen that ethnography in other words means town’s portray, it is also a mater of understanding its cultural life from their native point of view. Our responsibility is to observe this environment with a distant and respectful approach. It is also a matter of sensibility, adaptability, as well as a good triangulation process.

Once all the above aspects are joined, nothing than a helpful conclusion for the group that is being studied should come out. For this project in fact, there were some aspects that were considerably difficult to deal with, but the most difficult one was: passive observation. In here the role of the researcher really has to try his sensibility and adaptability in order not to interfere in the process and be as respectful as possible.

3.7 QUALITATIVE METHODS OF DATA COLLECTING

The ethnography, already explained above, is a qualitative approach that studies participants in their natural culture or setting. This approach is used with some instruments that allow the researcher to gather information to be analyzed in widen in the future. These methods are: **in-dept, open-ended interviews; direct observation; written documents, including such sources as open-ended written items on questionnaires and personal diaries.**
To start we have the **interviews**. As the words states, they consist of an amount of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinion, feeling and knowledge. For this project, open questions were used for teachers as well as for students.

The author of this project is fond at open questions due to the fact that they allow both, the researcher and the interviewer, to be as free as possible to express himself/herself, as well as adding any personal comments that can enrich your experience, as well as your research project. Besides, since the information gathered in here is more extensive, it allows the researcher to gather information that was not possible if the questions were made in terms of an ended interview.

To make this point more specific, I would love to give the reader an example give by Labuschgne(2006)

“Accountability as practices in our primary health care system creates an undesirable atmosphere of anxiety among nurses

___1. Strongly agree

___2. Agree

___3. Disagree

___4. Strongly disagree.

Now compare this response to her response to an open-ended question:

Please add any personal comments you would like to make in your own words about any part of the primary health care system’s accountability approach:
Response: “Fear is the word for accountability as applied in our system. Accountability is a political play to maintain power and control us. The disappointment in our system is incredible. You wouldn’t believe the new laws of administration that have been created just to keep this system going. Come down and visit in hell sometime.”

I consider that this example shows quiet clearly why it that I am in favour of this kind of questions is.

Another important aspect about interviews is that allows the researcher to use discourse analysis. This is a tool strongly useful in the sense that what is naturally stated by the interviewer could be deeply analyze and become a helpful source of information that lets the researcher jumps into conclusions that were not obvious for the former.

The observations consist of detailed descriptions of participants’ behaviours, staff actions, and the full range of human interactions. These observations involved far more than just being present and looking around. As it was stated before, the abilities of the researcher using qualitative approach are fundamental in here: be distant, have good social interactions, have a sense of empathy, be flexible, respect the environment, and be aware of cultural context.

During observations the researcher also uses a technique called diary. As the words states, in here, the level of emotions, thoughts, experiences, basic perceptions, etc, are written in order to keep a record that will allow some information to emerge out of it. It is obviously a non-numerical data organization.
Once all these methods have been applied the concept of **triangulation**, already mentioned in here, will be the last step, but not the least, since it is important to remember that one of the main characteristics of qualitative research is to be constantly checking what is being observed in order to make conclusions with the help of the theory.

A good qualitative research must have triangulation. This step is the one that gives good quality to the research. The triangulation helps to establish relations with the results; it is implicit that throughout multiple perspectives new complex results arise.

To finish the last instrument is written information. All kinds of sources related with the topic of research are allowed in this approach, they can range from letters, to books. This tool is the one used to complement, to expand, and to enhance your point of view towards your theory. It becomes a must to use as much information as possible since the idea is to be able to state a position in such a clear way that not only generates a deeper research but, also produces new changes inside the phenomenon of study.

For the purpose of this research, a considerable amount of books, documents, informal talks, and internet (see bibliography) were used to help support the theory of oral interaction process in the light of the nation of communicative competence inside the classroom.

The University is considered one of the most important on teaching mechanical subjects such as mechatronic, in the city of Cartagena. Students from different towns as well as cities come to study here.
The University has an average of five hundred students, which are divided in two different campuses: Ternera and Manga, and in the two of them the students have different international opportunities of studies. The university has agreements with Central America, North America and Russia.

4. RESULTS

4.1 ANALYSING DATA

This section is dedicated to present the results obtained after using the instruments for this research. First, the results of the observations of two different kinds of courses: one TOEFL oriented and the other a conversation level; followed by the results from the interviews made to the teachers and to the students. After that the analysis of the documents, photocopies and notebooks used in the class. Once the analysis is carried out, implications will be given. To finish, general conclusions and recommendations will come.

When practicing qualitative research, ethnography is used. As it was stated before in data collecting, observations, interviews, documents, notebooks, practice books; are also used as part of the material to be analyzed. For this research I used: class observations, teachers’ interviews, students’ interviews, and class papers such as photocopies and notebooks.
a) Class observations: with this technique I was allowed to gather information about teachers and students discourse, the interaction with themselves, and the interaction with all of them with didactic resources used by the teachers. A total of ten hours was observed since this was a special intensive course that allows to see reflected most of the aspects involved in the process of teaching-learning. Each class lasted a total of sixty minutes which were all recorded and complemented with note taking. After each class was finished, the respective transcription was written and analyzed using turns, transactions, the stimulated competence, and specific comments.

In order to make the previous contents more clear, a broad definition of each of them will be given:

- The turn specifies who is the person that is talking in a specific moment, could be a teacher or a student.

- The transaction corresponds to the amount of words spoken either by the teacher or by the students about one specific topic, in the moment another topic is introduced, another transaction starts.

- The stimulated competence is the part of the transcription that shows if what is being stimulated by the teacher is the grammatical, or textual, or illocutionary ideational, or illocutionary manipulative, or illocutionary heuristic, or illocutionary imaginative, or sociolinguistic. (Brown, 2000)

b) Interviews: students and teachers helped with this aspects. The purpose of them was to find out what the communicative competence was for them, their concept about learning a second language, the importance of communicative competence development, how they favoured this development inside the classroom, what were their
opinions about the ways to develop communicative skills, how aware were the students about the performance in terms of communicative competence.

c) Class materials: notebooks, books, photocopies, and movies were analyzed in order to see how the communicative competence was favoured; which competence was really favoured in terms of the class development.

What you will find in this part of the project is the analysis of the data collected with the instruments above mentioned. When reading t-s-t it stands for teacher-student-teacher.

4.2 OBSERVATIONS ANALYSIS
The following part is dedicated to analyse the amount of classes that were observed. It is worth mentioning that 10 hours of class were analyzed in an intensive speaking course which gave 2 hours one day, 4 hours the next day, and 4 hours that last day of observation.

OBSERVATION NO. 1  TWO HOURS

It has a total of 9 transactions with the following amount of turns:

10 for transaction no.1
7    for transaction no. 2
6    for transaction no. 3
8    for transaction no.4
5    for transaction no.5
21 for transaction no.6
9 for transaction no.7
17 for transaction no.8
12 for transaction no.9

**Transaction No.1:** the competence favoured was the pragmatic illocutionary heuristic.
The talking pattern was teacher-student-teacher, (see annex no.1) as the following example shows:

T. hello
S. hello. I have a problem with my grades
T. what is it?
S. I appeared in the list, but not grades
T. you mean the grades I gave you are not down there in the records
S. yes, they say that to me

**Transaction No.2:** the competence favoured was the pragmatic illocutionary heuristic.
The talking pattern was t-s-t.

**Transaction No.3:** the competence favoured was the pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

**Transaction No.4:** the competence favoured was the pragmatic illocutionary heuristic.
The talking pattern was t-s-t.

**Transaction No.5:** the competence favoured was the pragmatic illocutionary heuristic.
The talking pattern was t-s-t.
Example:
T. who is the next one?
S. I do it on Tuesday
T. Ok. Who is next?
S. Me
T. Ok, go ahead.

Transaction No.6: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was s-t-s.

Transaction No. 7: the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was t-s-t. The following is the example:
T. do you know if your friend is coming along?
S. she is having the baby
T. today, really, and I am giving her a test. I am such a bad teacher. I am afraid I have to ask you for 8 hundred pesos because I had to make the copies. I know this is ridiculous, the teacher going, making the copies by herself.

Transaction No. 8: the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 9: the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was s-t-s. This transaction is very important because is the only one that breaks the pattern. The following is the example:
S. what is that on the board?
T. what is it?

S. is in Spanish, do you know Spanish?

T. yes, I am studying Spanish. It is very difficult

S. but, why are you study?

T. I have to learn Spanish, its very important for me

In this class once could observe that out of the 9 transactions, 45 interventions belonged to the teacher and 44 to the students. This kind of interventions tended to develop a pragmatic illocutionary heuristic competence. It was also shown the pattern in which the teacher was the initiator. There was not a single transaction in which spontaneous taking was done by the students, all of them started by the teacher. The interaction among the students was always carried out in Spanish with no prohibition coming from teacher’s side. The competence, pragmatic illocutionary heuristic, was favoured 33 times.

The didactic resources suggested by the university are Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL TEST, Deborah Phillips. Skills and Strategies, Volume A, Deborah Phillips.

The suggested topics for multimedia usage in class given by the university to the teachers are: CD ROM that includes TOEFL program, and as it is stated in the manual: “as a review, I suggest to use Cd’s from English Discoveries used in advanced courses” (Programa de Ingles Semestral para Estudiantes de Pregarado. Elaborado por Lic. Sara Cabeza Bobb and Prof. Juan Fernando Montoya Giraldo. Nov. 30, 2001).
The teacher observed used the book exercises, as well as her own adaptation of the book for exams, since in her concept “the book is really high for students’ level”, (see annex no4). She also used extra material, such as short readings for the students to take home and practice reading comprehension and vocabulary in context.

In the two of them, in the book and in her exams, a major emphasis was given to the grammatical part, due to the fact that according to teacher’s believes this area deserves more attention and is less difficult for them to write than to speak, even though, as she stated the amount of vocabulary they have is poor.

The time devoted for communicative competence, is an average of 35 minutes out of four hours of 60 minutes each. During this time students give oral presentations about topics they feel inclined to share with others orally, the rest is dedicated to fill out papers in which grammar is emphasized as well as vocabulary in context.

**OBSERVATION NO.2  FOUR HOURS**

It has a total of 8 transactions with the following amount of turns:

4 for no.1  
24 for no.2  
90 for no.3  
16 for no.4  
64 for no.5  
39 for no.6  
11 for no.7
Transaction No. 1: the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was t-s-t. The following is the example:

T. hello, how are you
S. hi teacher, how are you
T. fine, how about yourself
S. good

Transaction No. 2: the competence favoured was organizational grammatical. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 3: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary heuristic. The talking pattern was t-s-t. The following is the example:

T. Now you are going to sit down in groups of three and you are going to use this vocabulary by telling me 10 ways to reduce intra familiar violence
S. we write
T. First you discuss with your friend, and then you write the ideas if you want to. Yes write the idea, but then you have to explain your solutions orally. So you are working
S. how many what?
How many what, solutions you have to give me a lot, or at least solutions that can reduce intraviolence in Colombia
Transaction No. 4: the competence favoured was organizational grammatical. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 5: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 6: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t. The following is the example:

T. ok. Let’s go to no2. Please Tania, would you read no.2
S. people who tell lies steal as well
T. Do you agree or disagree. What is your opinion
S. disagree strongly
T. you

Transaction No. 7: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 8: the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

I swap from the previous TOEFL class to advanced conversations because I wanted to see how prepared were the students to take the last course that is the one above mentioned. This decision was relevant for this research since the main goal was to see the oral interaction process in the light of the notion of communicative competence inside the classroom, and this course of conversation 16 offered me this possibility.
This class had a total of 8 transactions in which 117 belonged to the teacher, and 129 belonged to the students. The pragmatic illocutionary ideational competence was the one intended to be developed in here. In this class the teacher was the initiator for every intervention, excepting one.

The competence, pragmatic illocutionary heuristic, was favoured 76 times, and the pragmatic illocutionary ideational was favoured 41 times. The amount of students’ interventions clearly improved when the ideational competence was used, and clearly diminished when the teacher used organizational grammatical competence. It did inferred the flow of conversation coming from the students’ side.

The didactic resources are the board, the notebooks, and photocopies, (see annex 3), they do not follow any kind of book for this oral course, what is suggested is an amount of topics to be worked with: worldly topics basically. (Programa de Ingles Semestral para Estudiantes de Pregrado, Universidad Tecnologica).

It is also worth mentioning that the teachers do not have a teaching methodology given by the language department to its teachers, they have total freedom to choose as well as to bring to the class, the material they considered is the best according to their inclinations, but it is not material that has been studied by the department and neither has been evaluated as suitable for each course.

**OBSERVATION NO. 3 FOUR HOURS**

It has a total of 11 transactions with the following amount of turns:
Transaction No. 1: the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was t-s-t. The following is the example:

t. ok guys. We are gong to watch a movie, when its over I will as you some questions about it

S. what is the name

T. the revenge

S ha, yo ya la vi

Transaction No. 2: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t. The following is the example:

T. ok guys, aaaaah, what kind of movie were this, what kind?

S. Blood, violence. Very, very violent, kill, a murder

T. a, what?
S. they lies
T. what is lies?

**Transaction No. 3:** the competence favoured was pragmatic sociolinguistic. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

**Transaction No. 4:** the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary heuristic. The talking pattern was t-s-t. This is the example:
T. Te setting. Where does the movie take place?
S. In florida, Tampa. Tampa, Florida and in Puerto Rico
T. Tampa

**Transaction No. 5:** the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary heuristic. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

**Transaction No. 6:** the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary heuristic. The talking pattern was t-s-t. This is the example:
T. ok now, what kind of deal was going on at the harbour, at the dock?
S. drugs, traffic, money
T. that right

**Transaction No. 7:** the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t. This is the example:
t. what kinds of feeling are involved in the movies
S vengeance, heat
T. vengeance, hatred
S. love
T. where exactly in the movie is shown love?

Transaction No. 8: the competence favoured was organizational textual. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 9: the competence favoured was organizational textual. The talking pattern was t-s-t. This is the example:
T. and now, is the kill of all those innocent people away from our Colombian reality, is it close, what do you think
S. too exaggerated
T. but, some things from there are true in our country

Transaction No. 10: the competence favoured was organization textual. The talking pattern was t-s-t.

Transaction No. 11: the competence favoured was pragmatic illocutionary ideational. The talking pattern was t-s-t. This is the example:
T. ok, and the last question. What does Frank mean when he says that he has nothing to lose, but Jovany and his friends yes?
S. he has family. They have family
T. what do you like the most about the movies?
S. too bloody
T what part of the movie was so funny?
In this class out of 11 transactions, 35 belonged to the teacher and 63 to the students. It is worth mentioning that this class, even though, is a conversation class, three hours and 35 minutes out of four hours, were dedicated to watch a movie. The competence that the teacher was trying to develop was the pragmatic illocutionary ideational.

Besides the above mentioned turns, a considerable amount of Spanish was spoken while the students were watching the movie. The pattern for interaction was always the same: teacher initiated and students answered, no spontaneous conversation took place. The interaction among students was always in Spanish, even though a prohibition to use Spanish was stated since the first day.

In terms of didactic resources the concept above mentioned for observation no.2 applies for no.3. The only difference is that for this class a movie was used. The language department has tapes, cds, videos, internet, and a reduced amount of movies that were chosen without following a specific parameter. The movie they watched that day was “too violent” according students’ point of view.

4.3 RESOURCES ANALYSIS
4.3.1 NOTEBOOKS AND PHOTOCOPIES

The notebooks and those classes are not an obligatory requirement in terms of following any specific pattern. The students can have a paper if they wish, but notebooks are not corrected or checked during the classes.

In the two classes the students use their notebooks to copy the unknown words in English and their corresponding meaning in Spanish, (see annex 3). The extra copies
given by the teacher should not be attached to the notebooks; in fact, as far as they have the copies during the class is enough.

**4.4 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS**

In this analysis there will be a contrast between teachers’ believes towards with students’ believes. Both interviews had as a main objective to discover the believes the teachers have towards speaking abilities, if it is congruent their thoughts with their actions, how they consider the oral level of the students and what factors are influencing on them.

The conclusions are:

a. There is a major difference between what is important for the two parts involved in this process: for the teachers the grammar becomes a must as a starting point to develop communicative competence. They believe that once you learn the grammar, then you can learn to speak. The following is an example. In here R states for researcher and T for teacher. (see annex no.4)

R. Cual crees tu que debe ser el orden al aprender un idioma?

b. The fact of not being motivated is blamed on the teachers they had at school and the bad experiences they had with them. They consider that the students are scared of talking because the teachers stigmatized them leaving a mark in which makes them believe that they can not speak.

c. What they use in the classes (in most of the levels) as a major teaching tool to develop communicative competence are the dialogues the book brings with them. At the
university the English department follows Interchange Collection, by Jack C. Richards. It is worth mentioning that this book is not contextualized at all, therefore a lot of dialogues in there do not make any kind of sense for them at all.

d. As a logical result of what was mentioned in point .a., most of the exercises and the time is dedicated to the workbook and to the extra material is brought to the class to reinforce grammar structures. (see annex).

e. Since most of the teachers are not educated in the field of language education per se, the concept of developing communicative competence among the class, joined with the grammar, was not accepted since they consider that one must be separated from the other.

f. An astonishing contradiction came out: teachers are more than aware about the importance the spoken language has in the world today, but they dedicate their effort to teach them how to write properly.

g. Students considered that the classes must be dedicated to use role plays, oral presentations about topics of their careers, asking others about their main interests, and singing songs or even inventing them. They consider that they spend a considerable amount of time writing inside the classroom and not speaking.

h. They mentioned that the teachers tend to strictly follow what they book says as well as what the practice book comes along with, therefore there is not time for spontaneous speaking, or spontaneous interaction since the class structure comes already determined.
by the teacher. In other words, the teachers use the organizational grammatical competence.

5. CONCLUSIONS

I am more than aware that what I have found as conclusions are not the total reflection of the reality. What I present in here, even though the limitations, is what I found after studying the theories of communicative competence development, then how this theories could be applied to analyze classroom experiences in given contexts by means of class observations, and finally how they have influenced the students’ performance.

1. The concept of communicative competence as such, is understood by the students as “the act of speaking in English really fast”. Under this concept the students think that they should be prepared for “speaking” fluently once they finish their careers.

2. Students are more than aware about the importance of the English in the world today. They know what represents for them to master the language orally, they, themselves stated that the oral part is fundamental nowadays. Thus the motivation exist, but the university is not taking advantage of it.

3. The students do not find interesting writing or reading, what they like the most is speaking and listening. They find grammar as a “waste of time”, they do not see the relation between grammar and proper oral performance. Implicitly what they suggest is the fact that the structures should be acquired naturally, and after that they should go into the reason why “things” are the way they are.
4. Students’ motivation in terms of learning English tilts towards speaking. What they portrait as their successful future is a fluent English speaker. They assure that the best positions in the companies are always given to the persons that can master the language in an oral way.

5. There is a contradiction of interests. Students perform much better in writing than in speaking, even though their interests are in speaking, not in writing. When tested for written skills they punctuate with an incredible difference from the results when evaluated orally. Thus, the point in here is quit clear: there is a disjunctive between what the students expect and what the teachers are giving. It shows a major emphasis in writing and grammar than in speaking.

6. When teachers were interviewed they showed a clear inclination for grammar. Their concepts could be summarized in the following way: “students must know how to write properly and once they can master that, then they can talk with no mistakes. It sounds really bad to hear students talking with a lot of grammar mistakes. They have to learn first the grammar and then to speak”. What comes out of this point of view is a reconfirmation of the fact that not having licensed teachers in languages reflects on the quality of teaching in terms of what the theory states should be taught in order to develop certain skills, in this case communicative competence.

7. In terms of reading they consider that they have “enough to read and study for the other subjects”, thus for them should not be any kind of extra reading besides the one inside the classroom. It is worth mentioning in here that English has no credits, therefore if you do not work or do not do your home works, you are still passing the
semester. What the university demands is that you have to cover all the courses in order to graduate, thus a considerable amount of students are getting a job after they finish their studies, and once the company starts pressing them to be professionals, then they decide to finish the English courses by using a system the university supplies which are intensive courses with four daily hours during 8 days.

8. There is not a standardized criteria for choosing English teachers. That is proven when you read teacher’s resumes. One can find a broad range of careers among the teachers that are not related with the field of language teaching or teaching as such. There are 29 teachers, and only 7 are credited to be language teachers. This outcome shows that this mismatch should be considered one of the aspects that is influencing the fact that students do not communicate in English when they finish their careers.

9. The criteria for a general teaching system is not established. At the university the teachers have the freedom to give their classes the way they think is best. It is worth mentioning again that they are not graduated teachers in teaching, therefore the concept of developing skills is submitted to individual subjective point of view. This position leaves the students vulnerable to any kind of learning process the teacher considers is best for them.

10. Teachers do accept the fact that there are opportunities for training, but very scarce and unproductive. As it was stated, these sessions are dedicated to share teaching experiences inside the classrooms, but they have turned to the point in which teachers repeat what they have already said in other opportunities about their teaching experience, leaving the subject without the importance it deserves. They are aware that
they are not bringing their best to these meetings, and that they are not being demanding with themselves in terms of requiring constant and refreshing teaching concepts.

11. Teachers are interested in being trained, but there are not enough economical resources. Teachers manifest their interest on being actualized, not only because some of them accept the fact that they are not teachers as such, but also because they know they need to be updated in terms of new technology, materials, methodologies, and new teaching currents. The budget for this kind of training is not given to the department due to the fact that the university has other priorities, and the language department is not among them in this moment. Teachers are also aware that they can not send all the staff to be trained in other cities in which they constantly give lectures such as Bogota, Medellin, Cali, but they think that one teacher can be sent, and then this person can come and share with the others.

12. All of the activities in both classes are completely controlled by the teacher. The teachers follows the book, or the paper brought to the classroom, or the activity previously imposed to the students. The students do not participate on how the class will be developed or the activities that will take place in there: their role is passive.

13. The questioning does limit students oral improvement. Most of the questions are made in terms of yes/no questions, leaving the student with no opportunity to participate that much, or questions in which a certain level of vocabulary must be acquired, but was not introduced previously, therefore the student is limited in his/her participation and can not cope with what the teacher is saying.
14. The classes are monopolized by the teachers due to the fact that students do not deal with the vocabulary, therefore most of the talking is done by the teacher, (annex with observations), and the role of the student is to be a passive learner. There is a restricted amount of teacher-student interaction.

15. Since the teacher is the one that controls every opportunity for talking, there is not much chance for students to interact among themselves and use the vocabulary in real conversations. Opportunities are not given, therefore the competence is not developed leaving the students to the same pattern that was observed: teacher-student-teacher.

16. The speaking atmosphere as such is only implemented by the teacher, but the students once among themselves do not practice the English. They are used to see the teacher as the one who talks, but not the classmates as the ones that can talk or produce speeches in English, therefore again the monopoly states on the teachers “hands”.

17. Topics brought to class, or that are in the book, are not contextualized, thus what the students see in there is nothing related with their reality. If one considers the major implications of this, can understand that there is not much chance for empathy to the language since they can not identify themselves with it.

18. Topics are developed in a way that the students play the role of recipients: it is a banking methodology in which students receive, but do not produce. It is not expected from them that much production because it is implicit that they are not able enough to cope with the answer that is expected from them.
19. The environment of the classroom, in both classes, was really warm. The teacher were constantly smiling, were respectful, and very opened to suggestions.

20. Teachers accepted with a positive attitude the fact of not having enough for language development inside the classroom. In fact, the two of them looked for the material they thought could be best for their students.

To conclude after analyzing the characteristics of the oral interaction process in the light of the notion of communicative competence in the intermediate level English program at the Technological University of Bolivar, I could see that the communicative competence is not being developed at the University due to many different factors, but it is advisable to mention the ones that were outstanding findings in this project

To start, the teachers are not trained for developing communicative competence inside the classrooms. Besides, the university does not provide neither the training nor the possibilities for teachers to acquire enough structures to be able to transmit this knowledge to the students.

Also, the oral interaction is a contradictory aspect in the university: while the students expect to have a high oral performance, the teachers consider that grammar is the most important aspect to be taught, and should also be first according to teachers concepts.

As it was stated before, not all of the findings were mentioned in here, because in the previous pages were clearly stated.
6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last part of this project the reader will find what is considered to be some of the possible solutions to the difficulties found at the university. I am aware that the university is having a changing process, and this research aims to drop a little help in this enormous endeavour that is called communicative competence.

1. Teachers should be trained in communicative competence development.

2. The university should be aware that the worldwide demand is in terms of oral proficiency; therefore the programs should be redesigned in terms of reinforcing this skill.

3. The university has to take advantage of the fact that the students are aware that having a high English oral proficiency represents a good position in a company. Thus, the motivation is there, is only a matter of redirection the programs in terms of fulfilling students’ expectations.

4. The university has to take advantage of teachers’ motivation toward training, therefore opportunities should be given to them in order to assist to regional, national, or international workshops, seminars, congresses, etc, in which the main topics will be: communicative approach, communicative competence, language interaction processes inside the classroom, learning processes, language teaching methodologies
5. The head department, with the approval of the university should redirect the goals of the department with the help of the teacher in order to fulfil real world expectations, as well as students’ expectations.

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