

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES 0**

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Bogotá, 2020

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**Desarrollo de la Competencia Pragmática en Estudiantes de Décimo Grado Usando
Actividades de Orientación Socio Cultural**

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who do not have the opportunity to communicate with each other in English on a daily basis. For this reason, this study is focused on the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the development of pragmatic competence in order for students to improve their EFL skills, through their participation in debates and round tables about social topics. The purpose of this study is to increase EFL students' communicative competence by creating a discussion environment. According to Freeman D, L and Anderson M (2000. p. 99), the CLT approach seems to be misunderstood by teachers and this confusion has given CLT flexibility. Because of the misconception of the approach, teachers that report using it, seem to all apply it in different ways. Despite this, the principal objective of CLT is for teachers to focus on the skills that students have; as Patrima Shastri says, "communicative competence also refers to the capacity of using language according to the purpose" Shastri (2010.p 85). In this project, qualitative methods (participative and direct observation) were used to analyze the language skills of 27 students by using activities related to social topics around the world. During the activity, students were asked to show the vocabulary acquired during the investigation process, which proves what Patrima Shastri had said. This involves the pragmatic development of the students in order to produce language functions and speech acts through their own perception and interpretation of the information obtained. This paper attempts to demonstrate that developing discussion exercises helps increase communicative competence in EFL students who do not

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have the opportunity to communicate their ideas through the use of English other than in the classroom.

keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, pragmatic competence, task-based learning and discussion exercises.

Resumen

Este documento investiga a estudiantes de inglés como segunda lengua extranjera que no tienen las oportunidades para comunicarse entre sí en inglés, por esa razón este documento se basa en Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) y competencia pragmática. El propósito de este estudio es incrementar las competencias comunicativas en los estudiantes de inglés como segunda lengua en un ambiente de discusión. Teniendo en cuenta que "(CLT) es "confusa" en la comprensión de los profesores. Esta confusión ha dado CLT la flexibilidad cuando el maestro informa que están practicando (CLT) "(Freeman D, L, Anderson M. 2000. p 99). Esto significa que los profesores deben enfocarse en qué habilidades tienen los estudiantes, también como Patrima Shastri dice "competencias comunicativas también se refiere a la capacidad de utilizar el lenguaje de acuerdo al propósito. Shastri (2010.p87) Métodos cualitativos (de participación y desde un punto de observación indirecto) fueron usados para analizar el nivel de inglés como segunda lengua de 27 estudiantes usando un ejercicio de participación, esto implica desarrollo de la pragmática por parte del estudiante en orden de generar funciones y actos de discurso a través su propia percepción de la información. Este documento intenta demostrar que utilizando

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ejercicios de discusión ayudando a incrementar las competencias comunicativas de los estudiantes en este salón que no tiene las oportunidades de comunicarse por medio de inglés.

key words: communicative language teaching, pragmatic competence, task based learning and discussion activities.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of this research is to study the implementation of pragmatic competence using task-based learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts in order to enhance appropriate communicative behaviors among students in different social contexts. This is done by having the students participate in discussion activities using English as a way to communicate with each other. According to Ma, “pragmatic competence refers to the ability to comprehend, construct, and convey meanings that are both accurate and appropriate for the social and cultural circumstances in which communication occurs” (Ma, 2013, p. 4). According to Tello, when discussing pragmatic competence there are some aspects that must be taken into account. The first aspect is the speaker’s ability to use the language in different contexts and for different purposes. The second aspect is the listener’s ability to understand more than just the words, but also the speaker’s real intentions by understanding indirect speech, irony, or sarcasm. The last aspect is the set of rules that must be followed in order to turn simple utterances into the discourse, Tello (2006, p.173-174). Those skills have to be taken into account in order to develop the importance of pragmatic competence in EFL students.

Researchers found that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) helped with the development of pragmatic competences in EFL students. An example of this is the research by El-Okda on developing pragmatic competence in classrooms and in a social environment. There, he states that pragmatic competence “is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve

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communication in real-life situations” (El-Okda, 2011, p.169). Thus, as the purpose of CLT is to provide students with opportunities to learn and use the target language in an EFL context, CLT is used as a way to improve the students’ English level and to give them the opportunity to practice in class. Acar also stated that people "should take *competence* as the most general term for the capabilities of a person and *communication* means 'sharing', so what we share is meaning" (Acar, 2005, p. 4). As a result, it can be inferred that a person who can communicate properly and express their ideas, in a spoken manner to another people, has developed communicative competence.

Therefore, developing pragmatic competence using task-based learning with students by carrying out discussion activities could represent an increase in vocabulary acquisition, appropriateness when communicating, and better use of communication strategies. For this reason, if students have this vocabulary, it will be easier to have supporting ideas or arguments to defend a point of view in a discussion about social matters. In addition, this study seeks to improve communicative and pragmatic competences in students by implementing CLT in the classroom in order for learning to become meaningful to the students. In consequence, the project seeks to give students the opportunity to learn through task-based learning in order to improve their pragmatic competence taking into account the social background implication.

Statement of the problem

The present research focuses on EFL students that do not have the opportunity to

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communicate their thoughts in English. An investigation carried out in a private school located in the northwestern part of Bogotá, Colombia reveals that 10th graders present a lack of opportunities to speak in English, which affects their pragmatic competence. As a result, this lack of language practice and opportunities does not allow them to evidence improvement. These results also showed that at the moment they have a speaking activity and they try to communicate with each other, students use Spanish instead of English or prefer not to speak at all. The reason for this being that they lack the necessary vocabulary and structures which, in consequence, leads them to use their native language instead of the target language. Due to this lack of vocabulary, the students have low confidence in the knowledge they have acquired in the past, which leads them to hold back when communicating. In consequence, low self-esteem causes them to be less effective at the moment of participating in a discussion activity. Thus, this project focuses on discovering a possible strategy to solve this issue. The previous information was collected through preliminary observation and evaluating the students. This process was applied to 27 students, who deliberately participated in an enthusiastic and willing way, and showed consent. As a result, it was evident that the 10th grade students in the school presented a lack of opportunity to practice in an English-speaking environment, then we decide to apply social-oriented activities to develop their pragmatic competence because they do not have a lack of interest towards the L2.

The observation process started by having the students accomplish several activities

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(discussing news) where they had to communicate with each other by using basic structured sentences. After that, a listening exercise was applied in order to know what their listening comprehension level in the target language was. Finally, they were asked to share some of their likes and dislikes with the rest of the classroom in order to identify their spoken level. Despite the fact that the adequate environment was created, not written expressions were used correctly at the time of the activities. At the end, results indicated that more than half of the participants between 14 to 16 years old did not have the ability to express thoughts or feelings in the target language throughout the activities implemented.

Although students do not have a complete lack of knowledge, they still have a very basic knowledge of the target language. In consequence, they do not articulate long phrases when speaking or writing. In spite of this, at the time of listening to instructions or information given in English, they seem to understand almost all the information they are provided with. Therefore, as a way to achieve their pragmatic development, which is crucial in order for students to improve their communicative skills, this research proposes the implementation of socially oriented discussion activities, such as roundtables and debates about current social problems in the world. As a way of preparing for the previously mentioned activity, the students had to investigate and process this information to explain their point of view using strong and valid arguments. To further explain this, discussion activities are activities that are developed by the students using social and political issues, this is the center of the discussion.

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Some of the discussion activities are, roundtables and debates where social and political problems presented by students will also be provided with possible solutions.

This research project strives to identify what would happen if the proposed activities were to be implemented in an EFL classroom; in which students would have debates about current socially-oriented and political topics, in order to develop their pragmatic competence and be familiarized with different social situations. In regards to the development of pragmatic competences in an EFL classroom, Latha V.G. (2012, p. 3) stated that “Pragmatics is sometimes characterized as dealing with the effects of context. This is equivalent to saying it deals with utterances, if one collectively refers to all the facts that can vary from utterance to utterance as ‘context.’” This meaning that pragmatics deals with the effects that context has on the use of the target language.

When a student is required to use the language, it is essential for him/her to be able to use the appropriate language formality, expressions, and idioms according to each situation they may face. Thus, this project attempts to provide students with an environment that causes a positive effect on them by helping them better their skills in the L2 through the use of discussion activities. In addition to this, the activity will also help them improve their comprehension at the time in which they receive feedback from someone else, as giving and receiving feedback from other students is an important part of the process.

The activities mentioned above are focused on the development of students’ communicative competence based on their pragmatic competence during the classes. As a form

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of preparation for the in-class activity, students must carry out an investigation about the culture of the country of the target language. By doing so, they are able not only to learn about the context but also put into practice their previous knowledge in regards to reading comprehension and vocabulary. Once they have done the necessary research, the students have to share their findings with other students through the use of the L2. Subsequently, this research project reveals that these activities were well accepted by the students as well as if they will help students acquire the necessary tools and sufficient knowledge in order for them to communicate amongst themselves using the target language. The following section state the research question and the objectives, for a better comprehension of what this study pursues:

Research Question

- What happens when socially-oriented activities are implemented with tenth graders as a strategy to develop their pragmatic competence?

Objectives

General Objective

- To identify how socially-oriented activities can reinforce pragmatic competence in 10th graders from a private school located in the northwestern part of the city to promote communication amongst themselves.

Having in mind the purpose of fostering the pragmatic competence, it is mandatory to highlight that Task Based Learning is important to student's communicative language process.

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Apart from this, students integrate their pragmatic competence by putting it into practice and to complement it with the usage of socially oriented activities. In order to accomplish the general objective, we are going to help students to reinforce pragmatic competence through different real context activities.

Rationale

The process of learning English in Colombia has become more effortless now than with the strategies that were implemented before to teach a second language. Nowadays, the goals of communicative language teaching are not limited to spoken language alone. Researchers have reported that in this particular setting an emphasis on oral communication was seen to contribute to learners' development of skills in not only listening and speaking but also in reading and writing. In order to address the aforementioned problem, this project seeks to contribute to Colombian education by presenting a new way to introduce the English language to students. Hence, our proposal offers a group of tenth graders from a school located in the northwestern part of Bogotá to develop pragmatic competences in L2 using to develop learners' abilities to engage in meaningful and fluent communication. Additionally, pragmatic competence talks about the knowledge of conditions and of appropriate use. The implementation of the project's strategy might be helpful in the lack of oral production in English presented in Colombia.

Also, this project addresses a way of teaching English in a secondary school that makes students investigate social life situations and communicate the information found in English.

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Moreover, students are going to be involved in socially-oriented exercises contributing to education in Colombia. Within these activities, students are going to have the option to develop their communicative skills. In this exercise, students are going to be confronted with different discussions about social environments to work on their communicative language. Devos (2015.p. 112) identifies the involvement of learners in making meaning with both their teacher and their peers as a key factor in determining success (AbdulRahman Awadh Al Asmari, 2015). This study enables us to see how useful implementing communicative language activities can help students to develop socially oriented discussions through their investigations.

For this reason, and based on previous information about ways for students to improve their EFL skills, this project attempts to help students develop pragmatic competences in their English classes. As Tello Rueda said: “the final purpose of understanding and producing language that is appropriate to communicative situations in accordance with specific sociocultural parameters.” (Tello, 2006, p.1). Based on that information, this project seeks to implement sociocultural knowledge and context. In sum, this project used a recommended way to develop students’ ESL proficiency by using cultural context, and by introducing English structures for students to produce arguments based on the information they found in their investigation.

Whereby, to be successful when developing communicative and pragmatic competence, it is necessary to take knowledge and ability into account to get communicated, process the information then express ideas. As kumaravadivelu (2006) says: “In order to develop the

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desired level of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge/ability, the learner, of course, has to make use of all possible learning strategies as well as communication strategies” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006.pp., 1761). As it can be observed, it is implying that the development of communicative competences in students is to make them have a discussion and letting them use the target language as tool to communicate. Those strategies can help students to acquire a broader understanding of the L2 and the activities discussed during the classes.

The aims of this study focus on the lack of pragmatic competence in the students that affects students’ communication in the foreign language. Developing sociocultural factors in situations presented around the world students will be able to speak about social and political topics of different countries and to find different possible solutions according to student’s previous knowledge as Magnan et al. (2014) said, “this demand came ostensibly from goals that encouraged students to use foreign language to explore content areas” (Magnan, S., Murphy, D., Sahakyan, N., & Lafford, B. 2014, p.25). Thus, developing activities within socio cultural situations will make them confront their ideas with other’s ideas encouraging the L2 acquisition process. To sum up, the information previously mentioned will facilitate students’ acquirement of the second language to achieve pragmatic competence in their communication.

To summarize, this project intends to benefit the students in EFL classrooms by creating the ideal environment for them to feel comfortable enough to exchange their thoughts and ideas in regards to the socio-cultural matters they are presented with. The work with discussion activities is expected to generate a positive effect on the communicative competences

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developed, which will then help the student be successful in their foreign language learning process. The activities propose and implement throughout the project are designed and though in order to address the needs students have when it comes to discussing socio-cultural topics, and furthermore, for them to be able to suggest possible solutions that are present in the different countries being discussed. That means, students can develop either their pragmatic and communicative competence by way of performing those social-oriented activities.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Nowadays, students need to have social interaction and background information in order to develop their communicative skills, thus those aspects provide us with a powerful way to teach by engaging learners in real language use. As Hurst et al. say “students learn more when they are able to talk to one another and be actively involved”. (Hurst, B., Wallace, R., & Nixon, S. B. (2013. p.376) In short, social interaction is the key to develop student’s communicative skills. In this study these theories are the adequate combination to develop students’ communications skills, in order to make them feel comfortable when speaking. In this chapter the theories considered important will be presented to provide further information. The first one to be presented is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in order to exhibit activities that use communication among students. The second theory is Pragmatic Competence (PC), which this projects expects students to develop. The third one is Task-Based Learning (TBL) which is the theory that provided the project with the praxis, thus there is the way used in class, and finally Meaningful Learning (ML) that basically gave the project the ideas in order to develop

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the class activities it refers to the learning process where students use their previous knowledge to improve and continue developing their second language skills in this case. To sum up, there is a combination among those theories applied to make students improved their skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) within social interaction.

Communicative language teaching

Communication in language learning classrooms became important and revolutionary since CLT appeared. The reason for this was that CLT give importance to the conditions of every EFL context and traditional methods of language teaching. These days, communication skills in English teachers have an important role around the classroom. People want to improve their knowledge in order to ensure that their children acquire a good level of English. Thus, it can be understood that CLT is a set of ideals about goals of language teaching, how students learn a language, the roles of the teachers and students. Anmad and Rao (2013. p.191) concluded that: “CLT enhances the learners’ confidence and it gives a sense of satisfaction to the teacher as well in the sense that s/he is successful in making the students use the foreign language in their conversation. CLT gives clarity to the expression. Communicative approach is better than all the other methods of language teaching in general” (Akram and Mehmood, 2011, p. 175). The role of the teacher is to facilitate the communication process and to share meaning among all the students. Teachers have to act as independent participants within the learning and students have to learn in an independent way. Throughout this process, students share and interact within the classrooms and with their partners, thus improving their use of the target

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language.

What is more, CLT needs to be developed through different types of activities for the students to feel interested in the topic while they are improving their L2 skills levels. When CLT is developed in an EFL classroom Nishino suggests that: “Thus, strictly speaking, an interpretation of the results should be that when teachers perceive that students' expectations for communication and their ability to engage in pair and group work are high, the teachers are likely to use communicative activities”. (Nishino, 2012. p. 388). With this in mind, it can be said that it is essential for learners to have the opportunity to put their knowledge of the language into practice in order to have better results in their learning process. This approach seeks to help students take the information that is acquired in a classroom and put it into use. As a result, they will be able to see the connection between the things taught and the real world. For instance, when a student is taught the present simple tense, they may not see the immediate use or possible applications for this tense. But, once they are shown that the structure can be used for simple things like expressing their likes, dislikes or daily routines, the information becomes useful to them, giving it relevance. This will, in itself, make it easier for the learner to remember the information, and also to use it in the correct context. In order to help the learner, make this connection between knowledge and communication, the teacher takes on an important role in the classroom. It is the teacher's responsibility to create the appropriate tasks that will provide learners with a reason to practice their communicative skills. This can be done by implementing different controlled activities like debates, round tables or any other one that

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will require the student to produce in the L2. In consequence, these types of activities and the CLT will help students improve several skills, like listening and speaking, in the target language, and also to express their thoughts and feelings.

Pragmatic competence

For years, EFL teaching has always been approached by focusing on grammatical and structural skills, rather than communicative ones. Educators have had the tendency to lean towards the development of pragmatic competence as it helps the students improve their comprehension of the L2. Despite this, studies have shown that by helping students achieve a pragmatic competence in the classroom, they are much more likely to be successful in a bilingual context. When a student is given a piece of information they take it in and eventually turn the information into knowledge, but sometimes this is not the case. If the information received does not seem to have a context, the student tends to struggle when the time to use this knowledge comes, and has a high possibility of failing in its use. As a result, the knowledge goes back to being just information and is stored never to be used again. The idea of developing pragmatic competence in an EFL context is to use real-life situations in which the student might be involved and teach the language skills needed for said context. (Tello, 2006. p.170)

When dealing with pragmatics in a classroom environment, it is essential to fully understand what pragmatic competence is. According to Fraser (2009. p.1), “pragmatic competence is the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was

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intended”. This means that when a student has developed this skill, they will be able to put the L2 into context and make themselves understood by using the correct vocabulary and expressions depending on the situation. Students who are not taught how to develop this competence within a classroom may, even though they have the necessary vocabulary, have difficulties transmitting the desired message to others because they are not sure how to apply the information they have to the context that is presented to them. Thus, resulting in miscommunication and frustration for the student.

To develop pragmatic competence there are some knowledge students need to develop. As Latha V. G says (2012. p.51): “Even maintaining a conversation in English requires a certain amount of knowledge underlying responses that prompt a speaker to continue, show understanding, give support, indicate agreement, show strong emotional response, add or correct speaker’s information, or ask for more information” Latha V. G says (2012. p.51). So, it is necessary for the the students to develop the skills mentioned before, giving them the tools to make a congruent intervention in the task development, also Latha V. G (2012. p.51) mention: “the importance of learning how to take turns, and demonstrates that listening behaviors that are polite in one language, may not be polite (or recognizable) in another”. According to that, it is important for the students to learn how to participate in conversation to develop pragmatic competence among them.

As a result of the difficulties that have been evident in EFL students when they have to use the language in a context, studies have been carried out and the development of pragmatic

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competences have started to be seen as important and relevant. Tello found that, what it is relevant in pragmatic competence is to differentiate acts of speaking in L2 that learners can use language appropriately to particular communicative events, to recognize the common utterances necessary to be considered as a competent proficient, and to understand meaning contextually. (Tello, 2005. p, 174). The findings from these researches have caused the educational community to start implementing the use of pragmatics more and more, as this helps the students to change the information they receive into meaningful knowledge. In consequence, the learning process is faster and more efficient for the students.

Task-based Learning

Nowadays, getting students attention is one of the main concerns english teachers have around the world. With that in mind, language teachers have to find the way of something that could create a difference in their classroom. Taking that into account, teachers have to use through tasks the way to create a methodological structure. Hence, tasks are activities that are applied in the classrooms to get a result from the given information given that teachers cover in the lessons, which bestowed the opportunity to handle the outcome of the process. (Al-Mahrooqi, 2014. p.116). For this reason, we implement social-oriented activities that learners can acquire around the completion of meaningful tasks, using those activities we make the language real for communicating. That is why, applying Task- Based Learning (TBL) in a classroom give students the opportunity to integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge in a context through interaction. Plus, the teachers can observe, evaluate and to get students focus

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on while they are completing tasks. Boraie D., Badry E.E., Habashy M. (2019.p. 64)

As a way of implementing task-based learning (TBL) in lessons, we need to focus on the task itself, making the learning meaningful by the hand of completing the task. To complete tasks well, students have to use language properly and communicate their thoughts. Students can use their background vocabulary to express those ideas without taking into account grammar mistakes. That is why through tasks learners can concentrate in developing the tasks instead of thinking in grammar or language mistakes. Also, students can exchange their opinions and develop their skills.

According to this method applying tasks in and outside of the classroom give as much for the teacher as for students to obtain a better process during the implementation of social-oriented activities. As mentioned before, during the TBL the language can be pragmatic in order to communicative or interact among people. For that reason, while implementing social-oriented activities we can notice a meaningful outcome that deduct and intervene about the topics to the students so they use them and make their L2 important in their lives. To close this topic, TBL give to the learners the opportunity through task to enhance their communicative skills and become a pleasant conversant.

Meaningful Learning

Taking into account that this project attempts to use real context situations mixed with social matters, meaningful learning is considered essential in this process. As Autio said: “Meaningful learning begins from practical real life problems and conflicts. When a human

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being notices that his information and his skills are insufficient to perform a task or to handle a situation, an internal conflict is created. If a human being is able to perceive this conflict as an interesting and educational challenge, meaningful learning can begin.” (Autio, 2009. p.14-23) students will have the need to search for more knowledge at the time they participate in discussion activities that will develop in them the meaningful learning that Autio mention, this project also attempts to motivate the students to keep on researching other key point that Autio O. mention “Both the subject matter and meaningful learning begin from motivation.” (Autio, 2009. p.14-23). In sum meaningful learning is taken part of this research because of the competences regarding research that students will develop.

In order to establish meaningful learning, learners have to relate previous knowledge with the new one, besides it has a relation with long-term memory because it involves a recognition of concepts. The recognition of concepts is related with how the new information integrates with prior knowledge and will have a sense, it provides rewarding motivation. Moreover, when the learning is clearly connected with the activity and it helps make it clear to the student, the results are usually better. Joseph Schwab stated that when it comes to education; the learner, the teacher, the subject and the context are all things that will have to be taken into account. (Schwab, 1973, p.80). Those are called *education elements* and Schwab added another one called *evaluation*. In this case, students and teachers may understand these elements differently. As a result, it is important for both of them to discuss the possible meanings and get to a middle ground by negotiating them. Then, we will be explaining those

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elements briefly:

Learner's role: When the EFL learner receives new information, and is additionally given context to go with it, the brain converts it into knowledge, thus becoming Meaningful Learning (ML). Despite the fact that this seems to be the case in all learners, the way they interpret the information varies between each individual. Depending on the person and the pre concepts they may have, the meaning of concepts and propositions will be slightly different. Because of this, it is essential for the learner to have a space in which he/she can have interpersonal interactions, and by doing so, a more efficient learning process can be ensured.

Teacher's role: First of all, teachers will supply the information for their students to memorize. It is important to take into account that teachers are also learners and that they must negotiate “meanings” with their students. This is more complex because the four elements must be taken into account, we need an interaction where all the four elements should be involved among teachers and students’ perspective. After the interaction, those four elements constructed the meaning of experience and this can be empowering or disempowering the meaningful learning.

Subject matter: In the past, teaching has usually been characterized by it being a memorization process on the part of the learner. As a result, the learner has difficulty making a difference between general concepts and small details, which results in them having a difficult time to fully understand the information that is being transmitted. According to Novak, “any discipline is not just an ocean of facts and figures but rather a framework of big ideas, what

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Ausubel called superordinate concepts, and when these were understood, all the subordinate concepts made much more sense.” (Novak, 2011. p. pp. 1-14). Meaning that once a learner develops the ability to recognize general concepts and understands them, the detailed information that will proceed will be much easier for him/her to grasp.

Evaluation: Finally, this theory addresses the evaluation methods that are used throughout the learning process. For many years, educators have evaluated learners based on a quantitative standard, rather than a qualitative one. This theory seeks to propose an evaluating system keeping in mind the understanding the learner has of the subject matter at hand, this way, they know how to apply knowledge to the correct context, and understand how they came up with the information. The objective is to focus on creating an environment where learning is meaningful. The information above may help teachers in the way they act in classroom taking into account their role and also what the student’s role may be.

Using all those elements students are immersed with social-oriented information in order to develop their communicative skills. Learners have the opportunity to use the language in real situations. Those approaches help students to take the information that is given by the teacher and use it making a social situation. Also, the students’ learning process will be successful if they use their previous language and continue increasing their vocabulary. To sum up, this study implemented those constructs to have a combination in order to develop students’ communications skills.

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Chapter Three: Research Design

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of pragmatic competence through task based learning (Implementation of social oriented activities) on students of tenth grade from a private school, who do not have enough spaces to practice English, most of the time, they are not able to express their thoughts or opinions in English. In order to accomplish the above mentioned we are going to use a qualitative method survey in order to collect information from student's progress. This chapter will include the following aspects, type of study this means method and approach, ethical considerations, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, instructional design and finally an explanatory conclusion.

Type of study

To carry out this study we decided to use Action Research because its definition and its possible application fits in what we want to do with the target population. As Stringer states "Action research provides a flexible and practical set of procedures that are systematic, cyclical, solutions oriented, and participatory, providing the means to devise sustainable improvements in practice that enhance the lives and well-being of all participants". (T. Stringer, 2013. P. 5).

According to Ward (2016), "The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the "actor" in improving and/or refining his or her actions." In this sense, the most suitable study is action research due to its several advantages. First, because it helps educators to use data, rather than preferences or hunches to guide improvement efforts, proposing ideas and theories that can be backed up by data. Secondly, action research offers teachers something

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more concrete to work instead of just relying on the principles that they have used in the past. For these last reasons, action research models teachers to be more effective in their students' training and development.

In this project, the main focus was the qualitative action research that is part of the general concept of action research. Also, as it matches with our study as Haradhan states in the following citation:

“Qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way of people interpret, and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals. It makes the use of interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations and immersions; and open-ended questionnaires to obtain, analyze, and interpret the data content analysis of visual and textual materials and oral history. It is exploratory, and seeks to explain ‘how’ an ‘why’ a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates as it does in a particular context”. (Haradhan, 2018. P-2)

We adopted the previous assumption, because the most of resources we worked on, were purely human, it means, students life experiences, community and real context situations.

This project also attempts to encourage students to develop their L2 communicative skills through a meaningful learning approach that will make the students learn in real context situations. Lastly, it can be said that in this study, action research takes place in order to enhance students' learning on socially oriented activities taking into account qualitative research instruments such as surveys, teachers observation and interviews. Based on these instruments,

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we were able to get the results and look for the desired outcome of fostering pragmatic competence in students.

Context and population

The population that this project was based on is a group of 27 students in 10th grade who study at a monolingual school in the northwestern part of Bogotá. The students in this class have an acceptable English level, specifically in grammar and reading, and they have an eight hour a week exposure to the foreign language. English classes always tend to be focused specifically on developing writing and reading skills, where there is no opportunity for learners to practice the other two skills required to have full proficiency in the foreign language (listening and speaking skills). Because of their age and their likes, students show interest in participating in socially-oriented activities and having space where they can practice their communicative skills, which is why this project focuses on developing pragmatic competences in the students.

Ethical considerations

Researchers informed the institution about the application of the project. Moreover, students were informed and signed a corresponding consent form. Our participants are underage, they are about 16 and 17 years old. Taking this into account, this project attempts to demonstrate that students can improve their communicative skills and pragmatic competence in the L2 when socially-oriented activities are used to contextualize the information that is being taught. Throughout this research project, the method that was implemented in the classroom

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was action research.

Action research is an orientation to knowledge creation that arises in a context of practice and requires researchers to work with practitioners. Unlike conventional social science, its purpose is not primarily or solely to understand social arrangements, but also to effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders. Bradbury-Huang, H. (2010. pp. 93-109).

Now taking into account the order of the research process, it was organized in the following way. First, there was a problem identification, second, following the information collected, an action plan was designed; Third, there was a data collection process that reinforced the information collected, fourth the data collected was analyzed to conclude how effective the activities were, and finally planning for further actions was done. Following this idea, this project uses action research because the pragmatic competence needs to be developed through controlled activities where the teacher takes part of the investigation being a model and setting up the activities, also researchers were paying attention to the changes and replies from the students. To sum, and taking into account what action research is, this project can be considered as such because it identified a problem, information was collected, then analyzed and finally, an action plan was set up to offer a possible solution.

Instruments to collect data

Taking into account the previous paragraphs, type of study and ethical considerations we looked for instruments to collect data according to the study's characteristics, this, in order

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to get proper information about the students' process. Those instruments are interviews, surveys and teacher observation. First of all, during the first data collection instrument students participated in surveys created by the researchers, before, during and after the implementation of the project. Second of all, researchers use semi-structured interviews to give students the freedom to express their feelings and thoughts, as the association of qualitative research mentions. Finally, we followed the format presented in (*appendix 3*) teacher observation, which we use to analyze students' performance. In consequence, all those instruments give the proper outcomes to study students' needs during the implementation of the project.

About the interviews Hofisi, C., Hofisi, M., and Mago, state that "an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order" Hofisi, C., Hofisi, M., and Mago, S. (2014.pp. 60-64). According to the previous assumption, the interview is a resource that is useful during the data collection because it allows the researchers to get more specific details about the matter they want to investigate on and also students are more opened to express their thoughts about the language. Then, we have the survey and here students will participate in a survey create by the researches to recapitulate information about the process but seen from the student's point of view. This survey (*appendix 2*) is implemented at the beginning, the middle and the end of the course, to have enough information about students' progress. This survey has been selected as an instrument for this research due to is a tool that allows the researchers to standardize information from the students who will be asked questions

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about the development of the activities.

The survey instrument is the tool used to collect data from respondents on the topic being investigated. Ideally one should demonstrate that the survey instrument chosen is both valid and reliable for use in the study. Validity refers to whether the items (i.e., predefined questions and responses) in the instrument are accurate in what they intend to measure. Lau F. (2017. p, 231)

As it is mentioned before the author's surveys help this research to valid information about the situation that students live and test the hypothesis that in this research document is meant to achieve about developing pragmatic competence in the students. On the other hand, we use observation method to obtain clear information about the student's development during the activities, about observation.

On the other hand, we use the observation method to obtain clear information about the student's development during the activities. M.Dewalt & R. Dewalt states that

Observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture. Observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture. M. Dewalt & R. Dewalt (2011. p. 11)

As the writers mention this instrument (*appendix 3*) will allow the researchers to see

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and report the students to progress in terms of pragmatic competence helping this research document to get together information to make conclusions about the activities done in class. This observation must be applied in every class to have students' evolution. This is one of the most important methods used in this research for obtaining data in an oral presentation. The researcher may be a participant-observer. The observer will write notes about the subject (class).

Pedagogical implementations

This project aimed to foster the student's opportunities to speak in English and develop their pragmatic competence, using social topics and worldwide situations to encourage them to communicate their ideas and generate interest in the class. We mentioned in above paragraphs why most of the learners did not want neither share their thoughts nor communicate their ideas in English and also, that it was defined as our main issue and our main objective is based on it. Taking this into account the purpose of this section is to highlight how useful were the chosen approach, method and methodology (Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Learning, Social Oriented Activities) in classes and how the researchers notice an improvement in their ability to express their ideas during the implementations of the activities propose in the lesson plans.

Communicative Language Teaching

In order to develop the classes and carry out the activities proposed there, in the most

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efficient way, we used Communicative Language Teaching as the main approach, this is due to the different and dynamic activities that imply communication and oral defense that can be taken from CLT as Richards states in the following citation:

Through CLT, students enhance fluency and accuracy, use the four skills interchangeably since they exist together in the real world, and generate and discover grammatical rules. CLT deals with learning the English language as an ongoing process that focuses on learning from trial-and-error practices that result in facilitating the learning process (Richards, 2006. p, 74).

Also, the students' English speaking skills were encouraged and enhanced through the implementation of different discussion activities such as round tables, debates and oral presentation in which students had to give opinions and defend a point of view according to different kinds of contexts proposed by the teacher were crucial not only in the pragmatic aspect but also in their motivation about the project. Most of students were shy at the moment to participate during the first sessions, but, by the time they started to participate more and they felt confident to express their ideas, even when those ideas were grammatically incorrect. Moreover, they started to improve their skills gradually with the implementation of CLT as Freeman States "Communicative language teaching or CLT, 'is the most effective method or approach of teaching language to develop learners' communicative skills'" (Larsen-Freeman, 2018, p.298). In sum, this project attempts to increase speaking skills in students by developing their pragmatic competences and providing them with opportunities to improve their knowledge

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and proficiency in the foreign language.

Task-Based Learning

In order to carry out and develop the classes presented on the lesson plans in such a way that all the activities were directed to make students participate in tasks based on “real life” contexts, we decided to use TBL as the main method. Since TBL has many useful aspects that the researches could take advantage of. Also, its versatility helped us to suit the students in different contexts. In other words, TBL helps students to improve their skills by placing them in real-life situation and at the same time helps them to increase their current level (Sánchez, 2004, p.47). According to the previous statement, TBL is mostly used in real -life situations in which oral communication is a relevant component concerning to develop a specific task. This previous affirmation is connected to the way we carried out the lessons, because we assigned a specific task to the students and they were supposed to use their current oral skills in order to develop it. TBL is normally executed through activities that demand students’ participation and constant speaking, such as debates and round tables; students are to work in groups in consonance with social oriented topics that the teachers proposed. And finally, once the task is complete, the teacher will give a conclusion about the theme of the activity.

To conclude this chapter, it was important to use Socially oriented tasks, Task Based Learning and Communicative language teaching in order to guide students to foster their pragmatic competence. Finally, we selected those three strategies and used them to create an atmosphere where students could develop their communicative skills in different sections of the

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lesson plans. Such lesson plans were carefully developed based on the community and location in which we worked. Therefore, the study we made of the population and its location thanks to ethical considerations was the starting point. To sum up, thanks to the type of study, context and population, ethical considerations, data collection instruments and pedagogical implementations, we obtained, planned and created the lesson plans that included the approaches mentioned before.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

Developing the ability to correctly and effectively use the English language is not an easy thing to manage, especially when the person learning the L2 is not in a place where the language is constantly used. The lack of opportunities to practice it on an everyday basis causes the students to be less effective in communicating, as they do not see the benefits of using the language. As a result, several theorists have come to the closure that language cannot be taught or learned properly when there is no evident context to the L2 student. Tello states that “pragmatic competence is a central component incorporating the ability to use the language to express a wide range of functions, and interpret their illocutionary force in discourse according to the sociocultural context in which they are uttered.” (Tello R., Y., 2006, p. 5). The development of pragmatic competence in students seeks to give them a clear context in which the language could be used. Hence, they will be able to take different sentences and make a correct interpretation, taking into account what was said, by whom and why. Likewise, the

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speaker is provided with a coherent and adequate response or reaction.

During the beginning of the project, the lack of confidence that students felt in the L2 was evident for the teachers. Since they had not had many opportunities to put their knowledge into practice before, it was difficult for them to get used to using the target language. As a result, they were hesitant when they had to communicate and were not able to get their message across many times. The need for more vocabulary in order to fully express thoughts and opinions was evident in all three instruments and this was a point that also affected their self-esteem, making it more difficult for them to feel comfortable with L2.

Once these patterns were identified, they were analyzed by triangulating the three instruments and this confirmed that they were issues present in all of them. The interviews and some discussion activities implemented in class were transcribed into texts in order to see them. Throughout the transcripts, coding was used to identify the main categories and the participants in the investigation. In order to identify the different participants, only their initials were used as a way to ensure the protection of their identities. The triangulation of the instruments was what lead to the identification of these patterns, which then helped evaluate the progress in the students when the project was applied. Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe y Neville, delineate triangulation as “Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources” (Carter et al., 2014.pp, 545-547).

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With this in mind, the contributions to learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence will be displayed in categories with specific outcomes analyzed through the data collected. In order to collect sufficient and relevant data for the objective posed by this research project, which is to identify how socially oriented activities serve as a reinforcement of pragmatic competence in 10th grade students, different instruments of recollection had to be taken into account. The instruments used throughout the implementation of this project; which were interviews, surveys and teacher diaries; were mentioned and further explained in the previous chapter. These instruments were chosen based on the quality of the information they could gather for the research question presented in the project. Once the project was implemented and the lessons carried out, the recollected data was analyzed by triangulating the information given by the three instruments. In this chapter, we are going to talk about the information collected from the instruments that were used during this research process.

1. Students' engagement in the development of tasks

Students' engagement in regards to their learning process is of vital importance in order for them to be able to succeed in the development of pragmatic competence in the L2. Learning a second language is a complex process that requires more than just the understanding of a topic in itself. According to Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory, the process of language learning is affected by the context that surrounds the learner. This includes their cultural background, their experiences and the situations they have had to live with their families and context. When they

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start to learn a language with a specific purpose, and these aspects are taken into account, the learner will be more likely to be successful in achieving their purpose of communicating in the L2, as they feel a greater interest towards the language.

“The concept of cognitive engagement couple’s ideas from motivation research which ideas regarding learning strategy use. It includes students’ willingness to invest and exert effort in learning, while employing the necessary cognitive, metacognitive, and volitional strategies that promote understanding” (Phyllis, C., Blumenfeld, M., Kempler, T., & Krajcik, J. (2005. pp. 475–476). Taking this into account, it can be said that students’ engagement is essential to the L2 acquisition process. They must be able to take in the information that is being presented to them and connect these new concepts, to the previous knowledge they have on any given topic. Once a student feels interest and becomes engaged with the class, they will be able to make connections better and easier, which will result in the enhancement of their pragmatic competence.

When students have the opportunity to develop this competence, they seem to have better results when communicating in the target language. This is because when given a context to what they are learning, they become engaged with the lesson and can start to use the information they are being given. As a result, it becomes meaningful to them. In their research about the effects of context in L2 acquisition, Collentine and Freed said that,

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Atkinson (2002) encouraged investigators to adopt a sociocognitive perspective on SLA, drawing on connectionist views of the cognition of language, which do not see language as modularized in the brain but rather as intertwined with (and so inseparable from) experiences, cultural knowledge, emotions, and self-identity (Collentine, J., Freed, B. F.; 2004, p. 157).

Thus, it can be said that when a student is engaged with what they are learning and the purpose for it, they are able to better internalize the information and convert it into knowledge. Therefore, in order for English learners to develop pragmatic competence it is necessary for them to be engaged in their process and their own knowledge, which in consequence leads to a more effective use of the language.

Once a student feels engaged and interested in what is being taught to them and understand how it can be applied to real life situations, they begin to develop pragmatic competence. When an L2 learner is conscious about the use that can be given to what they are being taught, they can start to be more involved in their learning process. Keeping this in mind, some extracts from several interviews done to students were presented in order to show the importance of the learners' engagement of tasks being more involved and interested in the process of acquiring the L2. Then, we presented how, because the students became engaged with the lessons, their pragmatic competence in the use of English improved and the language became more important to them. Finally, with the data collected throughout the implementation

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of the project, we will show the impact that this had during the students learning process of the target language.

Being able to engage students during the tasks is one of the most important components in order to later on help them develop their pragmatic competence; and consequently, their fluency in the target language. When students feel like their thoughts and opinions are taken into account and valued by their professors and peers, they are more likely to be attentive to the class. Which will, in turn, make them want to participate more throughout the implementation of the lesson plans (Allen, 2008, p.5). Once this happens, the improvement of pragmatic competence in students becomes more evident, as they begin communicating their ideas more and more fluently each time. This is because an L2 learner will be much more likely to participate and begin to speak in an environment where they feel safe and respected.

When a new topic is taught in the classroom, it is important to give the students context on what is being learned so they can begin to make connections with the previous knowledge they already have. This will not only help them do better in the activity, but also make them feel more relaxed and comfortable which results in them feeling engaged and interested in the activities. The development of pragmatic competence in students helps them understand that language is not just a set of rules, but that it is made up by cultural aspects as well. When a given topic is presented without any real life situation examples, it is difficult for the student to understand how this can be used, and as a result the information can be lost in the process. On

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the other hand, when the same topic is presented to them, but is shown in a socially oriented context, it makes the information meaningful and it is interiorized. This helps create an interest in the students as they now know how to use it effectively in a situation in which they may find themselves at some point in the future. In consequence, it can be said that in order for the student to become interested and engaged with the process, the teacher must provide a context to the language and this will enhance their communication skills. When asked about the approach used throughout the implementation of the project, students answered the following:

Excerpt 1: IISLN (March 15th)

***T:** Do you feel it was easier for you to learn when the class was focused on discussion activities than when we focused on the grammar? Why?*

***IISLN:** Yes, because it's easier to learn to people and relacionarnos (to relate) with people."*

The previous question was asked in an interview that was carried out during the first day of implementation as a way to understand how engaged students felt during the lesson and how this affected their learning process. The extract was taken from an interview done to three different students. Even though students had a language barrier because of the lack of vocabulary, they were able to use simple words in order to express what they wanted to say. In some cases, they had to use some Spanish words, as it can be evidenced in the extract from the interview (IISLN), so that they could complete their thoughts. In the teacher's observations the same thing could be observed.

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Extract 2: (1) Teacher observation (April 5th)

“At the beginning of the class the students were reluctant to share their thoughts and opinions about the topic at hand, as they felt insecure due to their lack of vocabulary. Despite that, they began to feel more comfortable throughout the lesson and they slowly began to participate more. They seemed to enjoy the topics that were presented and this helped them want to give their opinion more. The fact that they understood the topic, because it was something related to the current situation of their country, made it easier for them to feel comfortable enough to try and articulate an opinion”

Once the lessons had all been implemented, the same interview was conducted with the same students in order to see if they had truly been able to improve their pragmatic competence. The following excerpt from the interview, showing the same question, shows that there was an improvement and their answers were more complete. Even though they continued to make some mistakes at the moment of speaking, they were able to present complete and clear thoughts. Additionally, they expressed how the fact that the teacher made the class more didactic was what helped them (*I2. SLMO*) feel that the process was easier for them.

Excerpt 5 Interview #2

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T: Did you find the classes to be more challenging when they were based on communication more than reading and writing? Why or why not?

I2. SLMO: I think the communication is more, edh, is more didactic than reading and writing because the people inter...interact too with the teacher or the person that, that direction the class. The communication is more didactic, edh, the people interesting more in the class or in the, in the process.

T: Ok. Alright, the second question. What was the easiest aspect of this process for you?

SLM.I2: Mmmm, really the teacher, ehhhh that, that the direction, eh, this class is (¿cómo se dice hizo?)

Teacher: Did

SLM.I2: Did the class more (¿fácil?)

Teacher: Easy

SLMI2: Easy, is more easy. Eh, the structures...of the structures, the sentence. But, the teacher is easy.

Keeping this in mind, the lessons that were implemented were mostly focused on the students having to discuss a given topic about current problems in Colombian society. These lessons used debates and round tables in order to create spaces for them to voice their opinions and practice the L2. During these activities, students felt engaged and interested because they did not have to only give their point of view, but also to defend it. The topics were controversial enough for them to be able to debate them, which caused them to feel more engaged in the activity because they wanted their team to win. As a result of their competitiveness, they made a greater effort to prepare their statements well; and to pay close attention to what was being said to them in order to give a rebuttal.

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Excerpt 3. Debate: Lesson #4 (29th march)

Impact of the war on children

Consequences of the war

Date: March 29th

Names: **CA.RO - LI.MO**

Monitor: **PA.RO**

Theories: Organization that help education

Against: Do not help Colombia. Do not help people.

Pro: Many people or this foundations give benefits that help other cities.

Solutions: Those foundations that have financials needs used to help poor people or people that are affected by the war.

As another way to monitor how students felt regarding their process, a survey was implemented in different opportunities. In the next excerpt, students were asked to answer some questions based on what they learned from the whole lessons and how they perceived their improvement.

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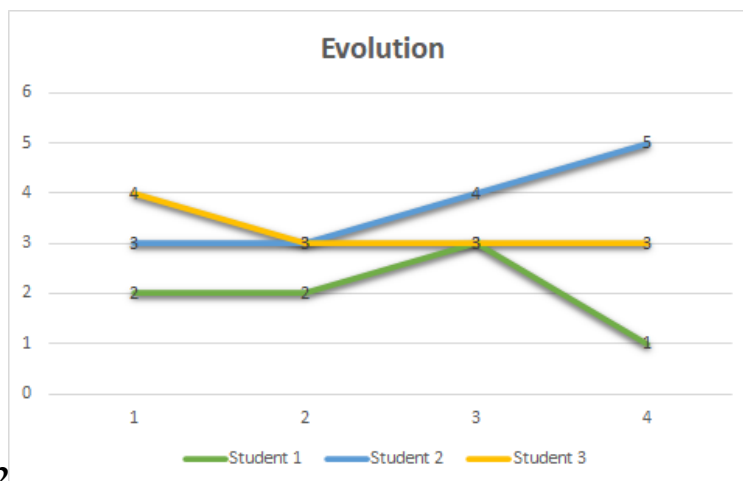


Table 2

1. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to speak in English?
2. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you understand when someone speaks in English?
3. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to make conclusions about what you listen to?
4. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to make conclusions about what you read?

The survey was applied at the end of the lessons. students answered and researchers could evidence the fact that they felt engaged throughout the lessons, having positive results in the final outcome. By the end of the project implementation, their answers to the questions showed that they felt like they had advanced in their use of English. This caused them to feel more excited about the classes and made them more willing to participate actively in the previously mentioned activities.

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As a result, researchers could have observed students' process in the use of the language of English since they were engaged into the tasks such as the debates that were done during the classes, putting into practice speaking and listening skills which contribute to the pragmatic competence, making students feel more confident at the moment of communicating to others.

1.2 The perception students have of their own knowledge and the lessons

When learning a second language, it is not only necessary to be aware of one's learning process, but it is also important to be engaged in order to better understand how the language must be used depending on the context and situation. "Pragmatic competence is crucial for healthy communication because the lack of it can result in communication breakdowns which can even have severe consequences in some cases" (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Shi, 2014. p.385-406). Here he stated that when a given student has understood pragmatic competence, they have gained knowledge on how the language must be applied, depending on what they need it for. This subcategory attempts to analyze the perception that students have about their pragmatic competence and how it may have changed during the implementation of the lesson plans proposed.

At first, some students stated that they did not see the use of the English language for their lives in general as something useful. This was because they had always been learning the target language focused on a grammatical aspect only, where they mostly developed their reading and writing skills, leaving the speaking and listening skills aside. Many of the students

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had a good understanding of the grammatical rules and structures, but when they had to communicate in a spoken way, they had difficulties applying these rules. The reason for this was because, despite the fact that they had the necessary knowledge, they had not had the opportunity to put it into practice. This aspect leads to think on a communicative approach in order to develop pragmatic competence in EFL students.

Throughout the implementation of the lesson plans, a survey (*appendix 2*) was implemented on some students who were randomly selected. The questions asked to them were created in order to analyze their own perception of how well they could use and understand the target language. When it was first applied, the students' perception of their knowledge was low and they were more confident when asked about reading and writing, than when they were asked about listening and speaking. Also, it demonstrated that, out of all the four skills, speaking was the one that had the lowest percentage because they felt that they could understand more than what they could communicate.

Once the students started to see that the lessons were focused on a communicative aspect, they became more interested and engaged in the L2. It became evident that, even though it was harder for them to participate, they were more eager because they were able to use the information that they had been receiving. The use of socially oriented topics that, in one way or another, affects them as well, was crucial in order to get their interest and to help them see that the language was useful for them to share their thoughts about something that affects the

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everyday lives of Colombian people. Once they were able to start seeing their pragmatic competence in a different way, their perception on the use of English changed and this enhanced their communicating skills. This can be evidenced in the excerpt below. The excerpt seeks to present the observation of the students that showed at the moment they were in class and we can evidence their perception of the lessons.

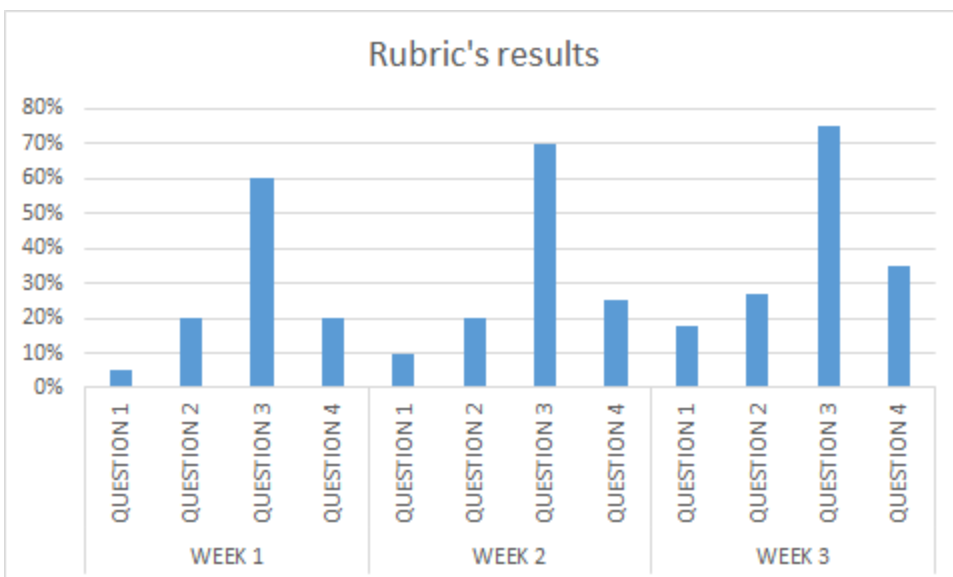
Teacher Observation 2 (February 16th)

“Although some students seemed a bit reluctant when they were told that they would be discussing topics related with the peace process in Colombia, they had a good attitude throughout the class. They made an effort to present their point of view and give arguments against opinions that they did not agree with. Since they understood the topics well, because it is something that affects their lives in one way or another, they were interested in getting their opinion across to others.”

Here, students had to present their ideas about the perception they had on the situations Colombia, as a country, was going through. They had to, not only, present their thoughts, but also defend their point of view and in some situations offer a possible solution to them. Students understood and were conscious about the topic and based on their previous knowledge they were able to analyze and participate in this topic.

Table 1

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1. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to speak in English?
2. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you understand when someone speaks in English?
3. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to make conclusions about what you listen to?
4. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to make conclusions about what you read?

In the interview below we can evidence which students had an improvement in their pragmatic competence during the implementation of the lessons using their L2 and where those topics supported them to participate and to have confidence at speaking during the classes and the interviews.

Excerpt 6 (Abril 19th)

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T: Did you feel it was easier for you to learn with a communicative approach or is a grammar based teaching more effective?

S1.I2: Yeah much more (Student laughs)., eh hh true, much more I now I like the speaking English the interesting the, the, eh hh, the English (Student laughs). Eh hh ay no, no sé, now I more interesting in the learning English. The learning with communication, eh hh is most, is more practice is more effective for me.

T: Were the topics discussed interesting enough to make you feel excited about participating in the activities?

S1.I2: eh hh, yeah, interesting, eh the, the topics really the teacher of the direction did the class (mas) more practice interesting

T: ok, and the last one. Do feel you speaking and listening skills are better now than they were before the lessons?

S1.I2: Yeah much more (Student laughs)., eh hh true, much more I now I like the speaking English the interesting the, the, eh hh, the English (Student laughs). Eh hh ay no, no sé, now I more interesting in the learning English.

As a conclusion, it can be seen that with the passing of the lessons, the students began to feel more confident with their use of the language evidence in the **Table 1**. Even though their speaking skills continue to be in the process of improvement, there was a significant raise in the percentages that display their perception of their understanding through the development of pragmatic competence.

2. Students' performance in regards to the production of the lessons.

When students are given the space and opportunity to practice and further develop their communication skills, rather than just focusing on reading and writing, their attitude towards

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the activities proposed by the teachers changes. As students develop the knowledge, their performance and attitude change towards learning. This change of attitude, when given a task, can help the performance they have throughout the lesson plan. During the first approach between the teachers and the students, they seemed interested and excited with the idea of focusing more on the communicative aspect. Despite this, some students felt anxious and insecure due to their lack of vocabulary. As a result, the students who felt insecure about their own knowledge had a lower performance during the lesson plans in comparison to the ones who felt more secure about it.

During the first approach with the students, they expressed their low interest in learning English as a foreign language. Despite this, once the project was explained to them and they were informed that the lessons would be conducted with a communicative approach through the use of socially oriented activities, their attitude towards the classes changed notably. The lesson plans were focused on talking about the internal conflict that has been going on for years in Colombia between the FARC guerrilla and the government. The topics were discussed through roundtables, debates and role plays in order to enhance their participation.

Providing the students with a safe environment in which they felt comfortable enough to participate was determining for them to develop their pragmatic competence. During the first lessons, the students had the tendency to speak in their L1 as they felt insecure about their previous knowledge, and they felt like they did not have enough vocabulary to express their

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opinion. Despite this, some students became very interested in the topics that were being discussed and made an effort to be able to learn the vocabulary they needed in order to speak and participate during the activities. During one of the first sessions, it was evident that they made an effort to express their thoughts and opinions on the topic, even though the lack of vocabulary made students not to concrete their ideas or thoughts. This can be evidenced in the following excerpts which were taken from some of the first lesson plans. Also, in the debate excerpt about *Organizations in Colombia that help education*. Students were divided into 2 different groups (against and for) based on pictures they saw.

L4SS3 (March 27th)

“T: Yeah, who else?”

S3: In this agreement of, when the politics in the country, initiate a strike in this moment for express the, this agreement. But in the National Civic Strike, emmmm, it's fast moments party, parties sad because the strike during. During the strike 22 people was killed and in the national force, was part of the state and this create more violence for part of the...”

Their interventions and participation were evaluated through the use of rubrics (*Excerpt 3*.

Debate: Lesson #4 (29th march). The rubric sought to evaluate the accuracy of the responses provided by the students during the lesson plans more than their pronunciation skills. The following form *Appendix 3* was filled out by the teacher in regards to one of the lessons implemented in the middle. This information was taken into account in order to analyze their

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development throughout the implementation of the project.

Appendix 3

	The student understands and builds new ideas based on what the other group has said about the topic	The student expresses his/her ideas clearly using English language structures when speaking.	The student provides appropriate responses to the questions and affirmations that the other group makes.
It is clear	3		
Not very clear	1-5-6	3-5-6	
Clear enough	4	1	
Barely clear	2	2-4	
Not clear at all			

1: “It’s traume for your family. This is that anything wanted in their life”. L6SLI.MO(april 12th)

2: “ The farm kidnapped for the benefit and this prejudication for the people. L6SVC(april 12th)

3: The most of people were deprived or innocent of their liberty only for money or for revenge. L6SAR(april 12th)

4: Are the people.No. People are on, deserve a second chance after living. You must feel very despaired and distance for living your life behind. L6SJ.SA(april 12th)

5: People that were kidnapped hurt to suffer a lot pain because of their families or the bad conditions. L6SLN(april 12th)

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6: People were affected their psychological and physical by the society and also they were not longer the same. L6SPG(april 12th)

Note: This excerpt was taken from a lesson plan (6), in order to share students' performance at the moment of the lesson.

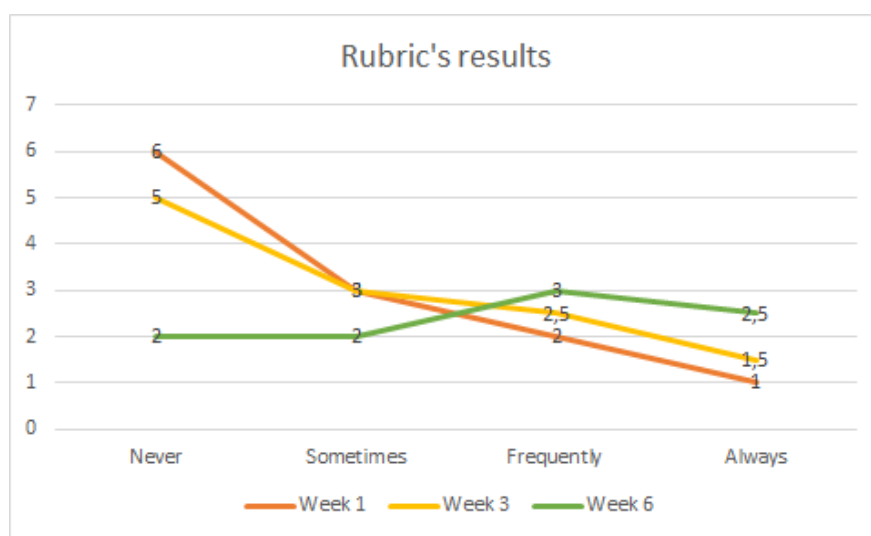
As it can be observed, even though the students did not have much vocabulary, they made an effort to participate during the lesson plans. The numbers explained the order they talked in the class and the corresponding column. This allowed the researchers to evaluate the performance throughout the different lessons. Keeping in mind the fact that language learning is more than just a grammatical and structural aspect, it is important to remember that other factors play a large and important role in the way a learner will performance at the moment of speaking. If they are able to make themselves understood, even with mistakes, they are able to be competent in their performance. Thus, the research showed that when students felt comfortable with the activities and topics, because they could relate to them, their performance was better than when they did not feel interested about the topic at hand.

As a result, it can be observed that using socially oriented topics which is related to the students, helps them to have a greater participation during the lesson plans and work hard to make themselves understood when expressing their opinions and points of view, which in turn leads to the development of their pragmatic competence. "communicative competence is to be distinguished from communicative performance, which is the realization of these competencies and their interaction in the actual production and comprehension of utterances under general

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psychological constraints that are unique to performance” (Jones, C., Byrne, S., and Halenko, N., 2018). Taking this into account, the performance refers to the ‘actual use’ of the language and the ability a learner has to put the language into context in a given situation. When this is achieved, it can be said that the learner has become competent in their communicative performance.

Graphic 1



The previous graphic indicates that during the implementation of the project, students’ pragmatic competence increased. Teachers guided their students throughout the lessons in order for them to improve their skills. Conceivably, the activities proposed by this project helped students build up their confidence in the use of the language, and as a result, their learning process became meaningful. During the classes, students gave their best to learn and

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communicate what they wanted to say. In consequence, it was evident that the students were able to get positive results in their learning process, as their confidence improved which lead to an increase in their performance and pragmatic competence.

Teacher's observation 3 (April 26th)

“With the passing of the lessons, it was evident that the students’ confidence started to build up because they understood the topics at hand, felt interested and they had more vocabulary than when the lessons began. This resulted in a more active participation. Even though they had a great attitude in general towards all the activities, it was easy to see that they enjoyed debates the most because there was also a factor of competition involved. This made their performance improve because they wanted their team to win. Also, the students who did not participate as much at first, started to speak more because they wanted their opinion to be taken into account.”

With the teacher’s observation and the graph showing the progress of the students, it became evident that there had been improvement throughout the lessons. In conclusion, by the end of the implementation of the project, the students were able to see that they had more tools to communicate and because of this they felt more confident when they had to speak. They were now aware of their knowledge and this reflected positively in the overall results of the

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study.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications for further research

Colombian public schools have the tendency to focus on the grammatical aspects of English, rather than on listening and speaking skills. Therefore, this project intended to implement CLT in the classroom as a way to help student improve their pragmatic competence, throughout socially oriented activities; these activities proved the students become more confident when developing their pragmatic competence at the time of using L2, into practice. The purpose of this chapter is to present the final conclusions of the process carried out by the researchers. The following paragraphs present first, the general conclusion of this research; and then the categories found through instruments and activities; students' engagement in the development of tasks; how the perception students have of their own knowledge regarding their pragmatic, and finally students' performance regards to the production of the lessons.

From the results obtained, it was determined that students saw a purpose to the activities that teachers implemented in the classroom, they are more likely to get involved and thus have better overall results. It is important to mention that before applying the lessons, students were reluctant to participate as they thought the classes would be taught with the same focus they had always had, which was working only on the grammatical aspect of the language. Once the teachers explained that the lessons proved that social topics affect the students and their

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community on a daily basis, their attitude towards the class changed and they seemed more interested in participating. Since the topics of the lessons were something that they already knew about, implementing activities like debates and round tables was a lot easier and more effective. Students wanted to be a part of the class discussions because they wanted their opinion to be heard and taken into account. This led to go forward in terms of engagement, perception and performance throughout the development of the lesson plans. Students made a great effort to learn new vocabulary in order for them to be able to express their thoughts on the topics and the improvement was evident by the end of the project. With time, they started to see a change in the use of the information they had been receiving for many years. Now, they are able to take that information and use it to form an opinion and share it, or to express their disagreement with someone else's opinion as well. This, in turn, gave learners the confidence they needed to, not only to participate more actively, but also to start correcting themselves and each other when they heard a mistake.

The first category of developing pragmatic competence using social-oriented discussion activities is related to students' engagement in the development of tasks. Along the project, students had the tendency to have a bad attitude towards the language because they felt that the classes were boring and ineffective. Once the dynamic of the classes changed, the focus was now on communication instead of just grammar, since the teacher provided a context to the language and this enhanced their pragmatic competence. Then, students become interested and

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engaged with the process. Using activities such as debates and round tables was essential to improve students' engagement in the production of the lessons. This was because they were not only interested in the topics that were covered in the lessons, but also given the opportunity to practice their speaking skills. During the activities students felt more engagement as these were about day by day context or history in Colombia. Thus, students achieved to demonstrate during the tasks into the lessons the language engagement for activities like debates and round tables developing the pragmatic competence.

Another category deals with student's perceptions towards their knowledge and the lessons. Students faced a safe space in which they can express their thoughts and opinions, which ensures them higher chances of success in their acquisition process. Even though they were interested in the topics and activities, the adaptation process was not the same with all students. At first, only a few of the participants spoke during the activities. Some of the students who felt weaker than others would rely on the stronger students to express their opinion for them. But, as the lessons passed and they began to feel more comfortable with the group and themselves, more students participated and began to show improvement. Furthermore, they were able to communicate better and more efficiently than when the project had begun, even though students' communicative skills continue to grow up, there was a big difference that showed their perception of their understanding through the development of pragmatic competence.

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The last category concerns students' performance regarding the production of the lessons. When students have the space and the opportunity to participate orally, developing their communicative skills their attitude towards the classes changed. Meaning, their performance change towards learning L2 because there were topics students already knew. Some of the students had a lack of vocabulary that made them feel uncomfortable at the moment of sharing their ideas, even though students make mistakes, they are competent in performing what they learned. Based on the above, making the relationship between previous knowledge and the use of L2 in context, we can conclude that students' performance was better instead of not knowing any previous information about the topics.

Despite this, the improvement was not as evident in all students. By the end of the project, some students still had difficulties when communicating, as they were shy or took longer to learn than others. Further research must be done on this topic, considering that not all participants have the same abilities, and language acquisition may be more difficult for some than for others. Every person learns in a different way and processes may be slower or faster depending on each one. As a result, even though they all showed improvement in some way, the results were different in each student.

In conclusion, the project proved that when we taught a language within a context, the results are better than when it is simply taught as an abstract concept. Using an absolute grammatical approach in language teaching will provide the students with concepts and

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information, but it will not be able to help them understand when and how this information can and must be used. Giving a context is of absolute importance as a way to assure that the learners will know what to do with the concepts that they are learning, thus making the information something meaningful to them. Now, it is necessary to continue to implement these types of activities in more classrooms in order to see whether they truly make a difference no matter what the context is. Will these types of activities work as efficient when the cultural differences of the two languages are greater? It may be necessary to carry out more projects of this type in different contexts as a way to find out how effective they can be no matter what the situation is.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview

1. Did you find the classes to be more challenging when they were based on communication more than Reading and writing? Why or why not?
2. What was the most difficult aspect of this process for you?
3. What was the most enjoyable and beneficial aspect of the classes?
4. Do you feel it was easier for you to learn with a communicative approach or is a grammar based teaching more effective? Why?

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

5. Were the topics discussed interesting enough to make you feel excited about participating in the activities?

6. Do you feel your speaking and listening skills are better now than they were before these lessons?

Appendix 2

Survey

1. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to speak in English?
2. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you understand when someone speak in English?
3. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to make conclusions about what you listen to?
4. From 1 to 5 how much do you feel you are able to make conclusions about what you read?

Appendix 3

Teacher Observation

	The student understands and builds new ideas based on what the other group has said about the topic	The student expresses his/her ideas clearly using English language structures when speaking.	The student provides appropriate responses to the questions and affirmations that the other group makes.
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DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

It is clear			
Not very clear			
Clear enough			
Barely clear			
Not clear at all			

Table 1

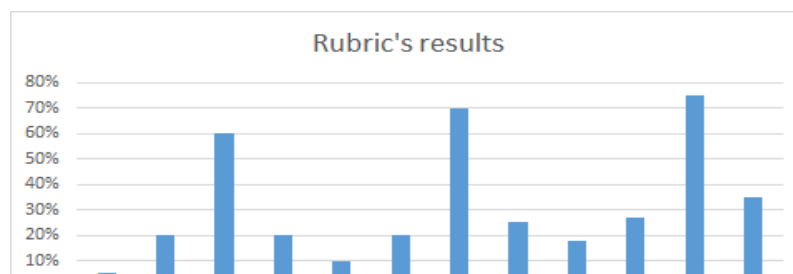
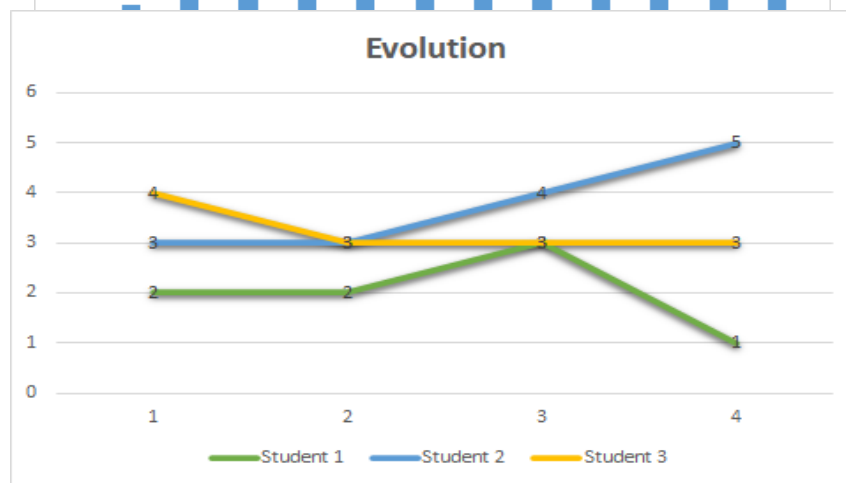
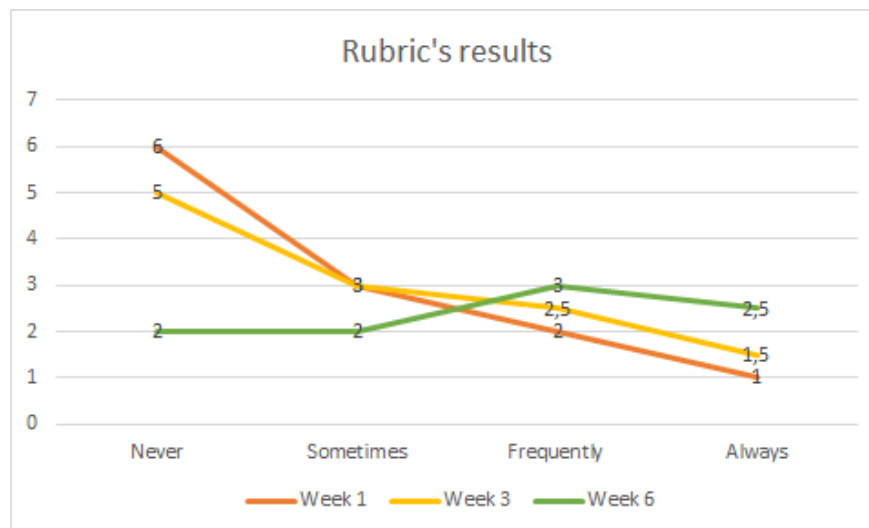


Table 2



Graphic 1



**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES**

**Consent Form
CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO**

Estudio de Desarrollo de Competencias Pragmáticas en Estudiantes de Décimo Grado Usando
Actividades de Discusión Socialmente Orientadas

Jennifer Andrea Espinoza, Angie Daniela Pérez Cortés, Yesica Ocampo, Sara Valentina Ortiz
Facultad de Educación, Universidad El Bosque

Estimado/a Apoderado/a:

A través de esta carta queremos invitarlos, a usted y su pupilo/a, a participar del proyecto de investigación titulado “Desarrollo de Competencias Pragmáticas en Estudiantes de Décimo Grado Usando Actividades de Discusión Socialmente Orientadas” a cargo de los estudiantes Jennifer Andrea Espinoza, Angie Daniela Pérez Cortés, Yesica Ocampo, Sara Valentina Ortiz de la Universidad El Bosque. El objeto de esta carta es informarle sobre este estudio para ayudarle a tomar la decisión de participar y de autorizar que su pupilo/a participe en la presente investigación.

¿Cuál es el propósito de esta investigación?

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Este estudio busca examinar a estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera que no tienen la oportunidad de comunicarse entre sí por medio del uso del inglés a diario. Con base a esto, este estudio está enfocado en el uso de enseñanza comunicativa de la lengua y el desarrollo de competencias pragmáticas para que los estudiantes mejoren sus habilidades en la lengua extranjera. Esto se logrará a través de la participación en mesas redondas y debates enfocados en temas sociales. El propósito del estudio es incrementar las competencias comunicativas de los estudiantes al crear un ambiente de discusión y participación.

¿En qué consiste la participación en el estudio?

La participación consiste en hacer parte de las lecciones que se implementarán durante la hora de la clase de inglés. Durante la clase se buscará ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar sus habilidades comunicativas de una forma más efectiva a través de la implementación de actividades que estén basadas en temas del tipo social. Esto con el fin de que se vean más interesados por los temas y que esto los lleve a participar de forma más activa. Al final de las sesiones de clase, se implementarán unos cuestionarios y una entrevista para terminar de recopilar la información necesaria acerca del proceso que se llevó a cabo.

¿Cuánto durará su participación?

La participación tendrá una duración Diez (10) clases, donde tendrá un tiempo de duración de sesenta (60) minutos cada una. Las clases se van dar dictar por uno o dos de los pre-profesores de la Universidad El Bosque ya mencionados al comienzo. Estas mismas tendrán una repetición de una vez por semana, donde los estudiantes pueden participar sin ninguna obligación o repercusión en sus notas con sus clases de inglés que les brinda el colegio.

¿Qué beneficios puede tener su participación?

Los estudiantes se pueden ver beneficiados en que, a lo largo de la implementación de las lecciones, sus habilidades comunicativas sean desarrolladas de manera más efectiva. Esto los llevará a tener más

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING

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facilidad a la hora de tener que comunicarse en el idioma inglés, lo cual lo ayudará a tener más y mejores oportunidades en el futuro.

¿Qué pasa con la información y datos que usted entregue?

Los investigadores mantendrán CONFIDENCIALIDAD con respecto a cualquier información obtenida en este estudio. Toda la información será almacenada con códigos, por lo que el nombre de cada estudiante, así como de las instituciones participantes, no aparecerá junto con sus respuestas o con los informes entregados. Su decisión de autorizar a su hijo/a a participar de esta investigación no afectará en modo alguno su situación escolar.

¿Es obligación participar?

Los estudiantes NO están obligados de ninguna manera a participar en este estudio. El día de la aplicación del cuestionario se preguntará a cada estudiante que haya sido autorizado por sus padres y/o apoderados si está dispuesto a participar, y tanto el padre/apoderado como el estudiante pueden retirar su autorización para participar en cualquier momento que estimen conveniente o bien no responder algunas preguntas.

¿A quién puede contactar para saber más de este estudio o si le surgen dudas?

Si tiene cualquier pregunta acerca de esta investigación, puede contactar con los estudiantes Jennifer Andrea Espinoza, Angie Daniela Pérez Cortés, Yesica Ocampo o Sara Valentina Ortiz de la Universidad El Bosque.

HE TENIDO LA OPORTUNIDAD DE LEER ESTA DECLARACIÓN DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO, HACER PREGUNTAS ACERCA DEL PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN, Y ACEPTÓ PARTICIPAR EN ESTE PROYECTO, Y AUTORIZO A MI PUPILO A PARTICIPAR SI ASÍ LO DESEA, EN UNA O TODAS LAS INSTANCIAS DEL ESTUDIO SEÑALADAS EN ESTA CARTA.

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Nombre del estudiante	Nombre del padre/apoderado
Firma del padre/apoderado	Fecha
Firma del Investigador	Fecha

Lesson plans

Pre-service teacher's name	Jennifer Andrea Espinoza, Angie Daniela Pérez Cortés, Yesica Ocampo, Sara Valentina Ortiz
Lesson Number	1
Class time	60 minutes
Theme	War in Colombia
Learning objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To acquire knowledge about social situations and start preparing a social activity (roundtable to discuss social matters). - To make assumptions about a given topic.

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Teaching objective	Teachers will gather information regarding the implementation of social discussion activities in the classroom.
Materials and resources	Photos and articles

Warm up (10 mins)

Students will split into groups and receive some photos that help explain the Colombian civil war with the FARC and how it began (annex 1). Once they have been able to take a look at the pictures, they will discuss them as a group. Then, they will share what they saw and concluded with the rest of the class by using assumptions and examples of the situation.

Presentation (10 mins)

The teacher will give examples of assumptions and opinions about the war in Colombia. Students will then identify those structures and point them out. The teacher will check the sentences identified by the students on the board and focus on the use of this tense.

Practice (10 mins)

Students will make groups of 6 and share their opinions about the situation lived in Colombia based on what they saw at the beginning of the class. Once they have discussed this; the teacher will give them opinion articles about the Colombian war (annex 2). Taking this information into account, the students will create sentences about the situation lived in Colombia, and later on share them with the rest of the class.

Production (15 mins)

Students will create a speech based on what they have in their notebooks (practice activity), in order to talk about the origin of the conflict in Colombia and how the country has been affected throughout the years and on what level. This information will be used in

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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a round table that will be performed by the students the next class.

Evaluation (5 mins)

The teacher will verify the information shared by the students and give them advice on how to better express their ideas at the time of a round table activity. A rubric will be provided for the students to know what they will be evaluated on during the round table (annex 3).

Notes :

Teacher`s signature

ANNEXES

Annex 1

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES



Jorge Eliecer Gaitán became a very important politician in Colombia. People thought he could be the solution for many years of political and social injustice. Many people wanted him to become the next president of the country.



April 9th, 1948. Gaitán is murdered in front of the people when he was giving a speech.

[illegible]

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING

SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

1958 - The Colombian elite society makes an agreement and create the National Front (Frente Nacional).



The Conservative and Liberal parties agree to share the control of the country. One party will have one president for a period, and then the other party will have a president for the next period. This makes people angry because there was no real representation for the people.

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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1961 – A senator denounces the existence of independent republics in different parts of Colombia. The farmers had organized and taken control over some territories. This was the beginning of the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). The ELN started a few years later in 1964.

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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1970 – Misael Pastrana Borrero is elected as the new president of Colombia but the people are not happy. They say that he won because of fraud, not because he was really elected.



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70's – During this time, the FARC started to kidnap people in the government and also civilians. With this money, and the money from drugs, they were able to get the necessary things for the group to continue.



1979 - The people went on a National Civil Strike (Paro Cívico Nacional) to express their disagreement with the politics of the country. During the strike 22 people were killed by the national force, and this created more resistance and violence.

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES



1980 – The government has dialogues with the FARC and tell them they can have political participation.



1985 – The UP (Unión Patriótica) is created by the different guerilla groups and the people are happy with their representation. The UP had 5 senators, 9 representatives, 14 deputies, 351

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

councilors and 23 mayors.



The people who controlled Colombia were not happy with the new political party that was becoming strong so they created paramilitary groups. A war started again when the agreement was not respected.

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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More than 4,000 people from the UP and more than 1,500 from the Movimiento Político a Luchar were killed. This caused some guerrilla groups to stop working with the government.

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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The guerrilla group M19 stops working with the government and starts to kill people in the Armed Forces of Colombia. This causes an internal war again.

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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December 1990 – The government calls to a National Constituent Assembly to help stop the violence.



At the same moment that the government was in the National Constituent Assembly, the army was attacking Casa Verde (the place where they were having the dialogues with the FARC). They went back to killing and kidnapping people.

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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1998 – President Andrés Pastrana starts peace dialogues with the FARC again, but both parts of the conflict continued the attacks. This made the process impossible to work.

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2000 – The FARC grew a lot during all the time and by this year they had 17.000 soldiers.



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Álvaro Uribe Velez becomes the president who fights the most against the guerillas and during his presidential period, many were killed. When Uribe finished his two presidential periods, the FARC only had between 6,000-7,000 soldiers. The problem was that they started getting children and had 14,000 children in the war zone.



2002 – Plan Colombia was implemented and the United States started to help Colombia to fight the guerrillas and the drug problems. They started to fumigate the drug fields, but many farmers were affected with the chemicals that were used.

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES



President Juan Manuel Santos started a peace process with the FARC guerrilla group, and is the first president to get an agreement with them. The process was very complicated and long and many Colombians did not like the final document. For this reason, the people voted NO in the referendum, but the congress eventually approved the agreement after some changes.

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Annex 2

Article called: “The battles began in 1964: Here's a look at Colombia's war with the FARC rebels”

Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

For more than 50 years, the Colombian government battled a leftist rebel group known as the FARC, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, in a conflict that claimed 220,000 lives, displaced millions of people and hampered the economy of a country rich in natural resources and human capital.

After several failed attempts, the government and the rebels reached an agreement last week in Havana that could finally end the longest running conflict in the Western Hemisphere.

Colombians will vote whether to approve the deal Oct. 2 in a nationwide plebiscite.

In the meantime, the two sides Monday announced a formal cease-fire.

Here’s a primer on the history and potential future of the country’s largest rebel group:

What is the FARC?

Pedro Antonio Marin, a peasant farmer who went by the alias Manuel Marulanda, or “Sure

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Shot,” founded the rebel group in 1964 after a 10-year civil war known as La Violencia fought between paramilitary groups representing the Liberal, Conservative and Communist parties over control of agricultural lands. It ended with amnesties for leaders and a power-sharing agreement that didn’t resolve underlying peasant complaints. The FARC’s stated aim was to seek redistribution of land favoring the poor as well as opposition to the presence of multinational companies.

Under Marulanda’s leadership, the FARC drew recruits mainly from poor, rural, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and universities, growing to an estimated 20,000 armed fighters by the late 1990s.

Marulanda died of natural causes in 2008 at age 77.

What conditions allowed the FARC and other insurgencies to grow?

Colombia had a long history of inequality and repression of peasants by moneyed elites. The victimization of poor farmers was exacerbated by the lack of agrarian reform. Peasants effectively were the slaves of coffee haciendas controlled by rich land owners. The country’s mountainous geography that isolates many rural communities meant the state had little influence.

Peasant rebellions date back to the 1930s, when the collapse of agricultural markets and government neglect led to massive rural protests. In the 1940s, a dozen farm communities actually declared their independence from the government by forming “red republics.”

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The 1958 pact that ended La Violencia excluded poor farmers and labor unions, making extremist groups like the FARC more appealing to the disenfranchised.

Why did the FARC become Colombia's largest, most powerful rebel group?

While up to six insurgent groups operated in Colombia at various times, the FARC had the strongest ties to Colombia's peasantry. In many remote communities where rule of law was weak or nonexistent, the rebels filled the void.

Even now, the poor in many areas turn to the FARC to resolve disputes over property, loans and other matters. The rebels would act as judge, jury and, if need be, executioner in exchange for the loyalty, intelligence and food support from poor petitioners.

Growth accelerated after 1982, when the FARC began to pursue a military takeover and finance it through kidnappings and drug trafficking. The change in strategy helped fill the ranks through better payments to fighters and gave the rebels greater control in the countryside.

When did the FARC achieve its peak military strength?

The FARC inflicted a series of humiliating defeats on the hapless Colombian military during the 1990s by overrunning several bases and taking hundreds of soldiers hostage. By the beginning of President Alvaro Uribe's term in 2002, rebels had encircled the capital, Bogota. They fired rockets at downtown targets during his inauguration ceremony.

What led to the FARC's decline?

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The rise of paramilitary militias forced the FARC to retreat from many areas of influence, including the Caribbean coastal areas, in favor of the remote eastern jungle plains and southern border areas. The paramilitaries were formed by wealthy farmers and cattlemen as self-defense forces against the FARC because they felt abandoned by the central government. By the time the militias demobilized in 2006, many had morphed into criminal gangs involved in drugs and extortion rackets.

Another blow was Plan Colombia, the U.S. antiterror and drugs aid program that funneled \$10 billion to Colombia's armed forces and social service agencies. Included in the aid was telecommunications monitoring technology that helped Colombia target and kill FARC leaders such as Raul Reyes in 2008, Mono Jojoy in 2010 and Alfonso Cano in 2011.

The 1982 decision to engage in kidnappings and drug trafficking ultimately cost the FARC popular sympathy.

Why did previous peace negotiations fail?

The FARC and the government signed a peace deal in 1984 that led to a three-year ceasefire and the formation of a FARC-allied political party, the Union Patriótica. But the slayings in subsequent years of about 1,000 of the party's office-holders and activists by right wing death squads quashed hopes for peace.

Starting in 1999, President Andres Pastrana held peace talks with the FARC and even consented to a demilitarized "clearance zone" in eastern Colombia for the rebels so they could

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

negotiate. But the talks broke down in 2002.

Why did the FARC finally forsake war and join peace talks in 2012?

The killings of several top FARC leaders by the military and the death of Marulanda crippled the leadership structure. Over the last decade, the modernized Colombian army had the FARC on the run. Desertions in the lower ranks were common.

Convinced that the rebels would never win militarily, outside boosters, including Cuba's Fidel Castro and the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, urged the FARC to seek peace and shift strategy to the political stage.

Polls show Colombians deeply divided over the peace deal. Why are so many expected to vote against it on Oct. 2?

Few families in Colombia are untouched by the war's kidnappings, displacements and extortion involving threats of violence. Although the military and right wing paramilitary groups committed atrocities over the course of the conflict, the public holds the rebels most accountable.

Under the peace deal, rebels would be guaranteed 10 congressional seats for the next two terms and amnesty for certain crimes if they confess. Those terms may be difficult for many Colombians to accept.

As former FARC hostage and presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt put it to a television

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

interviewer last weekend, many victims are eager for peace but still need time to forgive.

What will be the FARC's future role in Colombian politics?

If voters approve the deal, the FARC will disarm over a six-month period as its fighters move to 23 "relocation zones" and eight rebel camps. The FARC has yet to say what its political party will be, but many think it will be the now-forming peasant-based Marcha Patriótica whose goals involve agrarian reform including redistribution of large land-holdings to poor farmers.

By: Chris Kraul

Annex 3

Rubric for speaking exercises.

	The student understands and builds new ideas based on what the other group has said about the topic	The student expresses his/her ideas clearly using English language structures when speaking.	The student provides appropriate responses to the questions and affirmations that the other group makes.
It is clear			
Not very clear			
Clear enough			

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
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Barely clear			
Not clear at all			

Pre-service teachers' names	Yesica Ocampo, Valentina Ortiz, Jennifer Espinoza, Daniela Pérez
Lesson Number	3
Class time	60 minutes
Theme	Displaced people
Learning objective	Students will know about displaced people in colombia and also they will start to understand the process of getting information, process the information and give some personal conclusions about it.
Teaching objective	To improve students knowledge about displaced people in colombia.
Materials and resources	Video and worksheet provided by the teacher.
Warm up - 15 mins	
Students will watch a video called “Debate example” (annex 1). Once they have watched the video, they will brainstorm what some of the main points to a debate are, based on what they saw in the video.	
Presentation - 10 mins	

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Taking the brainstorm as a starting point, the teacher will explain what a debate is and what some of the most important aspects are so that they can be kept in mind. This will help the students set up goals and start organizing their ideas.

Practice – 10 mins

The class will be divided into two groups (the teacher will decide what students will go to what side) in order to start organizing the debate teams. The groups will be either for or against the displaced people in Colombia. Depending on what side they must defend, they will also have to come up with possible solutions to the conflict and present them as well. Then, they will watch a video called “Displaced people in Colombia” (annex 2).

Production 5 – 20 min

Students will make a debate (explanation above) where the ideas about solutions for displaced people in Colombia will be exposed, classroom will be divided into two groups, each one will answer the question: What are the possible solutions for displaced people. Also, students will talk about the Colombian conflict by answering the question: Should international organizations get involved and help the Colombian government solve the situation of displaced people?

Evaluation 5 – 20 min

Teacher will verify the information written in the report (worksheet) filing the information required (theories and solutions) (annex 3). And give feedback about the exercises done by the students. Rubrics will be used in order to evaluate the students. (annex 4)

Notes :

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES**

Teacher`s signature

ANNEXES

Annex # 1: video called: “Debate example” length: 5:46 min. Get it from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcY5A58oIfA>

Annex 2 “Displaced people in Colombia” get it from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kry4EKQJ-0c>

Annex # 3:

Names:

Date:

Monitor:

Theories:

Solutions:

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Signatures:

Annex # 4

	The student understands and builds new ideas based on what the other group has said about the topic	The student expresses his/her ideas clearly using English language structures when speaking.	The student provides appropriate responses to the questions and affirmations that the other group makes.
It is clear			
Not that clear			
Clear enough			
Barely clear			
Not clear at all			

Pre-service teachers' names	Yesica Ocampo, Valentina Ortiz, Jennifer Espinoza, Daniela Pérez
Lesson Number	4

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Class time	60 minutes
Theme	Life in rural areas
Learning objective	Students will understand life in rural areas.
Teaching objective	To make students analyze what the differences between living in rural and urban areas are.
Materials and resources	Images

Warm up - 10 mins
The teacher will ask the students what it is they have been learning about the life in rural areas and have them describe some of the most important aspects about it, according with their knowledge. If students do not have an answer, teacher will give examples related with the topic to make students have an idea.
Presentation - 15 mins
The students will break into groups of four people and they will see some images related with life in rural areas (annex 1). The students will then talk about what they see related with life in rural life among the groups (partners). Then, each group will have two minutes to express their thoughts.
Practice - 15 mins
Students will stay around the classroom, in the same groups. They will work on giving possible assumptions about how life is in rural areas and what could be done in order to make it better.
Production - 20 minutes

SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Students will make a round a table. Then, they will discuss what are some of the situations that people living in rural areas have to face in their daily lives. Keeping in mind some of the hardships that they must face, they should also come up with suggestions as to how their living conditions can be improved. The teacher will be the moderator of the activity (she will assign the turns out in order for the students to speak).

Evaluation

The teachers will evaluate the accuracy of students when participating in the round table through the use of a rubric (annex 2).

Notes :

Teacher`s signature

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIAALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES



Annex 1



DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES



Rubrics for speaking exercises. (annex 2)

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES**

	The student understands and builds new ideas based on what the other group has said.	The student expresses his/her ideas clearly using English language structures when speaking.	The student provides appropriate responses to the questions and affirmations that the other group makes.
It is clear			
Not that clear			
Clear enough			
Barely clear			
Not clear at all			

Pre-service teacher's name	Yesica Ocampo, Valentina Ortiz, Jenifer Espinoza, Daniela Pérez
Lesson Number	7
Class time	60 minutes
Theme	The impact of war in an economy
Learning objective	To effectively use the English language to talk about the way war has affected the Colombian economy, and use compound words to do so.
Teaching objective	To make students think about the way war affects economy, not

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	only in a government, but also in the people.
Materials and resources	Pictures, word cards and posters.

Warm up - 10 mins

The teacher will present the students with some pictures showing typical problematics in Colombia that were a result of the economical impact of war (annex 1). The students will then brainstorm to describe what the situation might be and how it is connected to the war. Once the class has decided what the problematic in each picture is, they will use modal verbs (previous knowledge) to offer solutions on how each situation could be handled.

Presentation - 15 mins

The teacher will have some words written on small pieces of cardboard and they will be put on the board in a random order (annex 2). The teacher will then explain that some of those words take on a different meaning when they are put together with another one of the words on the board. The students will then get into small groups, and together, try to guess what the correct combination of words is in order to create the new ones. After that, the group will get back together and they will share their guesses and see who got the most combinations correct.

Practice - 10 mins

Once they have shared the correct combinations all together, they will be asked to get into pairs or groups of three. Each group will receive a bag with the words and they will compete against the other groups to see who can remember the most number of words, the fastest in order to win.

Production - 20 mins

SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

The students will get back into groups and create a poster in which they mention some of the most common problems that the affectation of the economy has caused in the country using the compound words that were learned throughout the lesson. Then, they will offer some possible long-term and short-term solutions to these. They will be given a list of some common compound words where they can choose some words to use in their presentations (annex 3). Once they finish their posters, they will present this to the rest of the group.

Evaluation - 5 mins

The students will receive feedback about their presentations and will be evaluated based on their fluency and accuracy. Annex 4

Notes :

Teacher`s signature:

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCIALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

Annexes

Annex 1



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Annex 2

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
SOCALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES**

can	not
some	thing
in	side
with	out
week	end
air	port
be	come
some	where

Annex 3

<p>Cannot</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Something</p> <p>Inside</p> <p>Without</p>
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DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING SOCALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

<p>Become Another Everything Nowhere Somewhere Scapegoat Airport Headquarters Household Nearby Weekend Somebody Anymore However</p>

Annex 4

	The student understands and builds new ideas based on what the other group has said about the topic.	The student expresses his/her ideas clearly using English language structures when speaking.	The student provides appropriate responses to the questions and affirmations that the other group makes.
It is clear			
Not that clear			
Clear enough			
Barely clear			
Not clear at all			

**DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN 10TH GRADE STUDENTS USING
SOCALLY ORIENTED DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES**