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THESIS REPORT:

DIDACTIC STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THE A-2 LEVEL STUDENTS'
COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ACCORDING TO THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF
REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES AT PUCE ESMERALDAS 2018

TESIS DE GRADO:

ESTRATEGIA DIDÁCTICA PARA DESARROLLAR LA
COMPETENCIA COMUNICATIVA DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DEL
NIVEL A2 EN EL IDIOMA INGLÉS DE ACUERDO AL MARCO
COMÚN EUROPEO DE REFERENCIA PARA LAS LENGUAS EN LA
PUCE ESMERALDAS, 2018

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STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I, Fiama Samantha Bautista Salazar, declare that the investigation presented in this thesis report research is totally unique and authentic and of my personal authorship.

The content of this research is a limited legal and academic responsibility of the author and PUCE Esmeraldas.

Fiama Samantha Bautista Salazar

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ABSTRACT

The use of didactic strategies, both for students and teachers, are crucial to improve language learning. In order to design a didactic strategy to improve university students' communicative competence in English at the A-2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, in the PUCE Esmeraldas, 2018; a qualitative-quantitative investigation was done, using the analytic, synthetic, hermeneutic and descriptive-statistics methods and the techniques of observation and surveys which were applied to 18 students and 2 teachers of English of the A2 level. The results obtained showed that even with the use of a provided material and the proper instruction of the teacher, the use of some didactic strategies may be of value for English lessons. This coincides with the results of the previous studies which concern about the use of didactic strategies to stimulate students' development of their communicative competence. It is concluded that didactic strategies influence a lot when learning a new language and improve the production of language.

Key Words: Didactic strategies, communicative competence, English Language Teaching, Language learning techniques, Languages, Teaching-learning process.

RESUMEN

El uso de estrategias didácticas es de vital importancia para mejorar y desarrollar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Para diseñar una estrategia didáctica encaminada a mejorar la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes en la lengua inglesa en el nivel A2 de acuerdo al Marco Común Europeo de Referencias para las Lenguas, en la PUCE Esmeraldas, 2018; se realizó una investigación de carácter cuantitativo-cualitativo, usando los métodos analítico, sintético, hermenéutico y descriptivo junto con las técnicas de observación y encuestas, aplicadas a 18 estudiantes y 2 maestros de los cursos de Inglés General nivel A2. Los resultados obtenidos demostraron que incluso con el uso de material didáctico y estrategias de los maestros el uso de estrategias didácticas sería de gran valor en las clases de inglés. Esto coincide con los resultados de los estudios previos referentes al uso de estrategias didácticas para estimular el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes en el idioma inglés. Se concluye que las estrategias didácticas influyen directa y proporcionalmente al momento de aprender un nuevo idioma y mejora la producción del mismo.

Palabras clave: Estrategias didácticas, Competencia comunicativa, Enseñanza de Idiomas, Técnicas de aprendizaje., Idiomas, Proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje.

INTRODUCTION

Theme of Investigation

Is Ecuador a country involved in language globalization? The term globalization refers to the different fields developed in the society, such as business, studies, job, sciences and so on, and nowadays English might be considered as the global language that allows the development of the world at large, as it is the aid that helps people to communicate around the world. Furthermore, talking about globalization and development if we mention The Group of seven, most of the countries that belong to this great power speak English, and this one is part of the curriculum for education on these countries as a requirement.

As a matter of fact, the main language spoken in Ecuador is Spanish, this is the mother tongue of the majority of the population, yet, the city in which this research paper is developed is Esmeraldas, considered as one with the greatest touristic areas, but it is not as much prosperous as the capital, or other big cities; besides, only two languages are recognized as the main ones, or the most important that people may know in Ecuador, Spanish and Quechwa. However, English, has not been totally taken into consideration as a useful or necessary language in our context; and the teaching of English has suffered some transitions. First, it was included in the curriculum for schools in the past, it was removed from it, and incorporated again by the Ministry of Education, which decided to put English as a subject in the curriculum of Basic, Senior High School and University education. It is how, what has been stated previously reveals the new adoption of English in education, with new specifications and requirements. According to the Ministry of Education laws, when students graduate, it is supposed they should have a B1 level of this language, but may be, this is a sudden changeable situation.

Learning English has been a complicated situation in our reality and it is noticeable on how the students from different specialities who receive General English at the PUCE Esmeraldas have not a good domain on the language, which could be attributed to all the changes this subject has suffered, because as there have not been a continuous development of the English language teaching-learning process and as they have not

received an adequate instruction for this subject before, the teachers' methodology, techniques and strategies would be new things for them to adapt to so, those are factors that should be accommodated and arranged for these amateurs students of the English language. This is the reason why didactic strategies are tools that may help them in the teaching-learning process to make it easier and less tedious.

Problem Statement

Nowadays, the domain of the English language is what gives us the opportunities to develop around the world, but the English language teaching-learning process is something that in Ecuador has undergone different transformations, ups and downs and what have hindered the right instruction of this subject. As English was taken apart from the curriculum for some years and only the private institutions kept it, people who attended to public schools did not receive English instruction in their primary studies, so when they get to the University they have the challengeable situation to learn something absolutely new for them.

In fact, without receiving English as a subject for many years and then being introduced it suddenly, gives as a result that the General English students from PUCE Esmeraldas have problems in the English language teaching learning process. There are four skills to develop at the English language, but developing the communicative competence may require more specific attention, as it implies being able to speak, understand, read and write appropriately, in simple words, being able to use the language, produce it in an accurate way; also this competence is mainly attached to the level of English domain; besides, there are six different levels which establishes people's proficiency at any language.

Despite the effort of teachers to teach English and to help students to get the proficiency level they require, there are still difficulties with didactic strategies that may help students develop the referred four skills, helping them to communicate in English. This is why the main question of investigation that represents its problem to be solved is:

Which didactic strategy may be helpful to develop university students' communicative competence in English at the A-2 level according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages at PUCE Esmeraldas, 2018?

Justification

The reason for the accomplishment of this research paper was the need to diagnose on the General English teachers from PUCE Esmeraldas the didactic strategies focused on developing the students' communicative competence at the A2 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The University has a system for English courses by means of which students are taught according to their knowledge and their needs; however, it was noticed that these students come from schools with a really low level, sometimes they do not even know simple or basic vocabulary. Equally, they are intimidated of facing the English language, because they do not have the level they are supposed to have, and feel uncomfortable with the English lessons. Students of the A2 level may feel out of place, and the process the teacher is taking to teach would not be successful for them; despite teachers' use of resources, book and the design of some activities, the students do not develop the communicative competence at the mentioned level. This investigation will provide a didactic strategy that will benefit both, teachers and students in the teaching learning process of General English at the A2 level. This constitutes an important practical contribution to the didactics of English at PUCE Esmeraldas.

Objectives

General Objective:

To design a didactic strategy to develop the A2 level students' communicative competence in the English language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, at PUCE Esmeraldas, 2018.

Specific Objectives:

1. To analyze the teacher's strategies to teach English to students at the A2 level according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages, at PUCE Esmeraldas, 2018.
2. To determine the A2 level students' English language learning strategies.
3. To diagnose students' communicative competence in the English Language at the A2 level at PUCE Esmeraldas.
4. To design the necessary strategical actions to help the A2 level students develop their communicative competence in the English language.

CHAPTER I:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Theoretical and scientific foundation

1.1.1. The English language Teaching-learning Process

Richard and Rogers (1999) affirm that the language teaching process has passed through many modifications and stages as it progresses alongside with languages and their development. At first, teaching a foreign language was mainly based on acquiring language rules, then continuing with grammar, vocabulary, and different contents of the language, so, the structure of the language was the most relevant aspect when teaching, but with the pass of the time it upgraded to take into consideration the actual proficiency learners' need, what was actual useful for them; it is in this way that changing from focusing on acquiring information the teaching-learning process accommodated in order to give to the students enough instruction for them to use the language properly.

Talking about the English language teaching learning process, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration which may influence on it; just as learning a new language with characteristics and codes that differ from the native tongue of a person, this situation happens as a complex process, in which the learner's mind will have to deal with, how it occurs needs different methodologies, strategies and techniques, that is why to complement and serve to this complex situation, there are several theories of learning, developed by very well recognized pedagogists and psychologists. Furthermore, these theories basically try to simplify the English Language teaching-learning process by means of its foundations and concepts; indeed, one of the theories that influenced the most on the creation of methodologies to carry out this process is the Socio-Cultural Approach, by Vygostky (1978).

1.1.1.1. The Socio-Cultural Approach

How does this approach take part in the teaching-learning process of a foreign language? The first content Vygotsky (1978) talks about on his investigations is precisely language,

and parallel to it is also thinking, conceptualizing how the language comes up in children. In terms of the theories of learning, the most of the very first theories had its stipulations on biological facts, but he better figured out how the role of society and interaction among people influence on the mind development; first, stabilishing one of his main ideas that “human mind is mediated” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1), that means that people get along on this world thanks to the resources they have to work on, and reinforcing this conception his theory “stipulates that the development of the child’s higher mental processes depends on the presence of mediating agents in the child’s interaction with the environment” (Kozulin, 2003, p. 17).

So, children’s cognitive development mostly happens through social interaction and with the support of someone or something that influences and give the correct stimuli to them, a child learns by seeing, following or imitating what others do, in order to comprehend what is going on within his current environment, and being a participant of the moving world. Then, answering the question situated at the beginning of this paragraph, this theory is really important and gets relevance in this research paper as the investigation has to deal with the communicative competence, and communication cannot occur without the interaction among people. Communication and community are concepts that cannot be separated one from the other.

1.1.1.2. The Theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The theory of the Zone of Proximal Development is also one idealization from Vygotsky (1978) and accompanies his Socio-Cultural approach. The definition this author gives to his theory would be that the ZPD is: "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86); to simplify it, when the terminology Zone of Proximal Development appears, it refers to the mental abilities a person has, for this theory a child has to do a simple activity (what is known), and how these abilities under guidance of an instructor can accomplish a more complex activity (what is not known). In fact, it could be said that, the “space” between those two states is the Zone of Proximal Development, because it is where the mental abilities can be developed, it is where cognition works with

what a person already has and it is possible to improve it successfully to get new knowledge. A graphical representation of this theory is shown in figure 1, as follows:

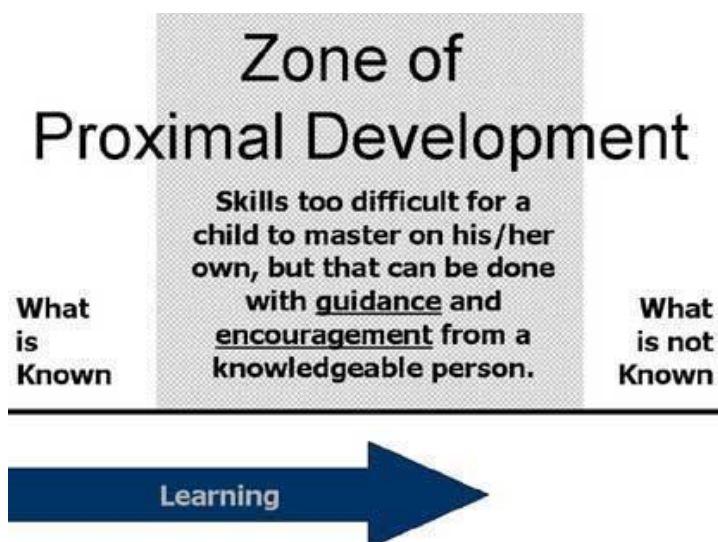


Figure 1: Zone of Proximal development
Source: McLeod, S. A. (2012)

1.1.2. The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching

This terminology may refer to a conception focused straightly for pedagogy, in this way, the Communicative Approach was created in response of some other methodologies such as the Audio-lingual method, Grammar-translation method, Direct method and others; trying to enhance the English teaching-learning process, giving to practice and realistic situations the importance they have for learning a language. Indeed, it is said that when learning is significant to the student it is easier for them to understand the concepts and internalize the information that is given, as there are presented different situations of their reality in which they must use the language, because of the real connotation existing, the meaning of the teaching-learning process becomes ingrained into their knowledge.

What Canale and Swain (1980) were setting up is this new approach contrasting the already known and developed before, showing how most of those theories based their content on grammatical functions, so that, language teachers could learn about the differences that separate a grammatical approach from the communicative approach. Basically, the grammatical approach was based on the grammar structures, taking into consideration, the patterns of sentences, collocations, and the rest of the aspects belonging

to the linguistic field, on the contrary, a communicative approach would be based on expressing, describing, inviting and other communicative functions which actually try to convey a message.

1.1.3. Communicative Competence

Defining what communicative competence is tends to be difficult, because of the different concepts, theories and assumptions several authors establish related to this, based on different criteria they have. Hence, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) established that communicative competence may refer to the compilation of knowledge people have in their conscious or unconscious related to grammatical rules and syntax and the skills they have in order to produce language appropriately. Indeed, as it is cited by Mojabi, S. S. (2014) knowledge can be divided into three positions, “knowledge of underlying grammatical principles, knowledge of how to use language in a social context in order to fulfil communicative functions and knowledge of how to combine utterances and communicative functions with respect to discourse principles” (p.25). However, these are the three aspects, which complement the amount of knowledge in a person’s mind that get into competence. Then, Canale and Swain (1980) went deeper from competence, classifying it first into three components; which are:

1.1.3.1. Grammatical Competence: Making reference to the grammatical forms that language has, and the knowledge a persons has of it in their background.

1.1.3.2. Sociolinguistic Competence: Composed by to combined sets, one of them is sociocultural rules and the other one is discourse rules, that working together become into the perfect combination for comprehending the meaning of the different utterances produced in interaction.

1.1.3.3. Strategic Competence: Referring to the ability people have to arrange the breakdowns that because of varied situations come up to communication, and interfere while conveying a message.

1.1.3.4. Discourse competence: With the addition of one more component years later, Canale (1983) joined this content as the ability a person has to link words by following

the grammar rules and create syntactically correct sentences, which could not be possible without cohesion and coherence.

1.1.3.4.1. Cohesion: related to the structure ideas are arranged, it means form.

1.1.3.4.2. Coherence: related to the organizations of the different concepts to convey an accurate meaning.

Furthermore, communicative competence more than the linguistic perspective or implications, involves different fields related to their corresponding context; and even as it is mainly connected with communication, influences on the pedagogical field for teaching English, so it may be used at the teaching-learning process.

1.1.4. Didactic Strategies

When talking about the teaching-learning process, there are a lot of factors that may influence on it; it is not just about a book, some students and repeat information, it is a complex process. If for regular lessons at the native tongue it is a kind of difficult to transmit the information to the students and for them to assimilate it, so, to think about conveying knowledge in a language that is not your mother tongue could be even more complicated, it is then when didactics takes place to facilitate this hard work.

Navarro & Piñeiro, 2012, p. 234, paraphrased Stocker (1964) in order to define the word didactic: “The word didactic comes from the Greek language “didaskhein”. It means teaching and “tékne” suggests art; “art of teaching”. Is this author which stated that didactic refers to laws, rules, percepts, and organization used within the teaching learning process regardless to the subject is being teaching; and this is why for these authors didactics involves different techniques, a numbers of methodologies, strategies, procedures which get together to help the students in their learning process, making easier for them to comprehend and internalize what they are working with to achieve a significant learning. Furthermore, using this science and its implications will bring a lot of benefits because it might work an aid for getting the correct strategies for improving the teaching method.

Then, Falus, 1998, as cited by Enikő (2013) for obtaining a proper definition of the word strategy: “The strategy is such a complex system of methods, tools, organisational styles and forms aimed at achieving goals which is based on a coherent theoretical basis and which has a particular syntax (the definition and given order of executable steps) and is realised in a particular learning environment” (p. 274). As creating or finding strategies could be complex, the teacher should take into consideration different facts for the teaching-learning process, such as, his students’ level, the environment they are working in, the characteristics of the group and so on because, it is not only applying any different technique which makes more interesting your English lesson, the functionality of this goes beyond on avoiding the students to get bored, it is about the success of the teaching learning process, an amount of resources would be useless if there are not well focused for the classroom’s requirements. Being not easy to define this concept, he tries to cite again what didactic strategies are: “Thus, strategies are well-defined means of activity orientating the process of learning which, due to their internal logic, allow for the selection and construction of methods, tools, processes and organisational forms while represent a fundamental pedagogical approach” (Ferenczi and Fodor, 1996, pp. 82-84).

Even when strategies are useful resources to improve the teaching process thanks to the diverse activities they offer in order to activate students’ knowledge and help them to get the proposed objectives for the classroom, the most important thing to take into consideration when using them is that the selected strategy involves real situations, that would impact on the pupils’ real life, because in this way they can be prepared for their future and responsible of the development of their current society. Didactic strategies are not only for classroom environment, those also have as a purpose to promote students’ autonomy, in this way they can create and work on their own learning making at the same time significant what they are learning (Pierce, F. 2017).

1.1.5. The Common European Framework of Reference For Languages (CEFRL)

The British Council establishes the CEFRL as an entity which functions as cooperator for teachers, instructors, institutions, and language learners around the world, to identify the proficiency they should obtain at acquiring a new tongue, so it is in charge of providing some determined standards for the English language that learners should achieve and be

able to use the language effectively according to the different levels and scales proposed by itself. In fact, the CEFR describes foreign language proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also defines three 'plus' levels (A2+, B1+, B2+). Moreover, when it takes on the scales, these are multidimensional because they are subdivided among the global scale, the self-assessment grid, and the illustrative, this last one includes activities related to the proper use and practice of the 4 different skills and its aspects. (Council of Europe, 2001)

1.1.5.1. A2 Level

There are different aspects to be accomplished for learning a Foreign Language, in which speaking, writing, listening and reading skills are included. For a speaker with an A2 level be competent in the language, he/she must fulfill the following requirements as expressed in the table below mainly focused on the communicative competence, production and use of the language.

Table 1

Aspects to be considered in the Students' A2 level of Communicative Competence

Level Aspects	A2
Range	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.
Accuracy	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.
Fluency	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.
Interaction	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.
Coherence	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".

Source: (Council of Europe, 2001)

Actually, at this level it is not possible to say that there is a full communicative competence developed, because the accurate production of language which is not part of the stipulations for this level, does not involve this concept, but, starts to create an awareness of it, making it possible for learners to get into the next scaffold easier. In detail, the abilities of communicating are kind of complex, that is why pushing students to develop them is a great opportunity to get the levels without complications.

1.2. Previous Studies

Talking about strategies these are not only focused on the teaching field, they are also related to the learning process, that is why Gerami & Baighlou (2011) presented a work in which they explain how learning strategies influence and become a relevant part in the teaching-learning process for languages. At first, to comprehend what these strategies are about, it could be said that the learning strategies are the procedures and steps which learners use depending basically on their context and makes an easy process for them at the time of studying. As language is socially enlarged and context dependent, it is how according to students' different realities their mental procedures at learning a language may vary because of their place of origin, the resources people have in their countries and the background that each culture has. For instance, belonging to a country of the first world with technological accessibility will promote on students a preference on using multimedia resources for learning, not on a country in which the accessibility to technology may be difficult, students may have a preference on practicing with each other and using resources.

Going ahead, once identified the students learning strategies, the English language teaching strategies can be proposed as well. Araujo (2013) studies how pupils acquire language and literacy related to their own context and the oral and written language can be promoted by the teacher, as children do not develop their communicative skills one by one, but integrating them all and having them embedded all together, exercises in which students can use more than only one skills are the best for them. Since children are mainly influenced by the environment, it is important to expose them to the use of language, making them feel comfortable during the English lessons to support their cognitive development.

In Cuba, a proposal of a developmental strategy was presented by Pullido (2005) establishing the importance of creating strategies as they may represent a useful didactic-theoretical systematization, getting theoretical concepts and enlarging the communicative competence, and this put an impact on the teachers as the strategies allow them to plan, direct, and evaluate the teaching-learning process along with their students. This research demonstrates that the teaching-learning process is more than the interaction between teachers and students, and how didactic strategies affects while the process occurs; showing that teachers must know their students, what their strengths and weaknesses are and according to this, conciliate the appropriate strategies to enhance the English language teaching-learning process.

Getting in within this investigation, there have been, may be not several, but some papers with the thematic of didactic strategies, to develop productive skills such as writing and speaking. A close example is Moreno (2010), who did an investigation at the Technical University of Ambato, Ecuador and found out that teachers blame mainly to the textbooks, arguing that those do not offer opportunities for the students to interact, so, the production of language is not supported by the only one resource they have. While the students say that the teachers do not push them to use the language as they only present grammar structures on the lessons, come which tend to create a tedious environment, without bringing interest to students for learning.

In Esmeraldas, Ecuador, there have not been studies on didactic strategies to develop communicative competence as such, but there is a research done by Estupiñan (2015) at “Velasco Ibarra School” focused on teaching English with a ludic method. This paper states that the common manner and strategies of teaching English for motivating students and facilitating internalization of knowledge, are the ones which involve dynamic exercises and activities.

Talking about the proficiency level of English in Ecuador, it has not been analyzed in depth, most of the information found about this topic is on journal articles which talk about how lower is the level in comparison with other regions and according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

1.3. Legal Bases

This research paper was accomplished according to the legal foundations of the current reality of Ecuador, taking into consideration the laws of the Ministry of Education related to the English teaching-learning process. As it is proposed on article 2, item b, from Agreement No. 242-11. (2011). Quito, Ecuador: The Ministry of Education in Ecuador states that the profile of the Senior High School students should include the abilities to communicate effectively. It means that the students, at the time of graduating from Senior High School must have a proper competence for communicating as well as in Spanish as well as in the English Language.

Ecuador has its own regulations regarding to education and one of these is the “Organic Law of Intercultural Education” which rules over the components of the teaching-learning process including, teachers, students, and institutions to look after their welfare. In the title I of the main principles, unique chapter of the scope, principles and goals, article 2 item bb, it is stated about plurilingualism, ensuring that everyone has the right of receiving instruction in their own native tongue as well as international languages related to the international communities.

As a matter of fact, considering the memorandum of the MINEDUC-SFE-2014-0034-M which presented as a problem the teaching of English in high school but not in the primary school, the government established in the Agreement No. 005214 that it should be changed because of the importance of the English language as it is necessary and fundamental in the current society for communication and access to scientific information and upgraded technology, so the English Language Teaching should be since early ages from second year of general education.

CHAPTER II: MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Type of Investigation

The investigation that was carried out was a qualitative-quantitative one. It was carried out with the A2 level of General English students at PUCE-Esmeraldas, in the academic year 2018. The different level or parallels of the English subject were posed with a placement test which might group students according to their level, regardless their careers.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population of study was formed by 30 students and 3 teachers of the A2 level of General English at PUCE-Esmeraldas.

The Sample was selected at random. It was represented by 18 students and 2 teachers.

2.3. Operationalization of the Variables (Appendix A)

This investigation has allowed to establish two variables: the independent variable that is “Didactic Strategies”, which stated about how the use and incidence of these in the teaching-learning process of English brings great benefit for teachers and students. Besides, the dependent variable which is the “The Communicative Competence” that has indicated the students’ development of such competence during the English language learning process.

2.4. Methods of Investigation

The methods that were used are:

- **Analysis and Synthesis:** They were used to analyze the bibliography and to synthesize the most important theories that may support this investigation. They were also used to analyze the results and synthesize the most relevant information.
- **Hermeneutics:** It was used for interpreting the most relevant information analyzed in the theoretical framework. Besides, it helped to interpret the results obtained with the application of the techniques.
- **Descriptive statistics:** It was used to process the data obtained with the application of the techniques.

2.5. Techniques of investigation

The techniques that were used were: Observation and surveys, which were applied to general English students at PUCE-ESMERALDAS at the A2 level.

2.6. Instruments

To collect the data, the instruments designed were according to the different techniques such as observations and a survey that were used for the research:

For the technique of observation, a guide was created with five items to observe teacher's strategies. (Appendix B)

For the technique of observation, a rubric was also established which contained four items to be observed in order to determine what strategies would be useful to help the students to improve their English language communicative competence at the A2 level. (Appendix C)

For the survey to evaluate the two variables, one questionnaire was applied to students with five closed questions. (Appendix D)

2.7. Data Processing

The information that was obtained from the application of the different techniques, was tabulated manually. The data were taken to figures using the Microsoft Excel program.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

3.1. Results of the Survey Applied to Students

The very first part of the survey was focused on a single question divided into two items, which should express if the students really want to learn the English language and not only take it like another subject of the curriculum. The data collected revealed that most of them, a 69% of the students, actually like the English language, but as can be seen in Figure 2, even when the majority say that they like English, likewise it was expressed that learning English is useful but difficult as well. Since they think it is difficult, they put on themselves a mental barrier on learning knowing that the English language is an important tool nowadays.

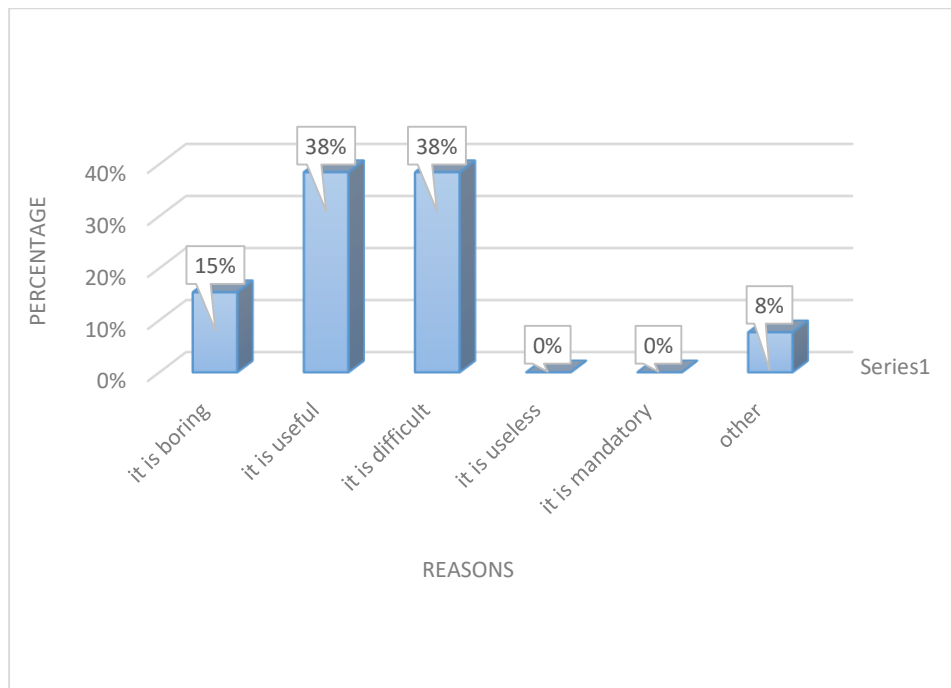


Figure 2. Reasons why students like or do not like English

Source: Survey applied to Students

Regarding the students' preferences for classroom environment, as can be appreciated in figure 3, the 85% prefer a dynamic environment in which they can use pragmatically the language, so students like to be active, being working and participating, not only in the straight line of the coursebooks' exercises, by repeating and full filling blank-space programmed exercises. Most of the time coursebook activities has to do with reading a paragraph and looking for information to get specific answers, or looking at the statements and selecting the correct one, these activities can take so much in the level they are as they have to concentrate and possibly read more than two times to do them correctly and it is in this time they get tired and bored. As the class is not dynamic they do not feel interested or participative.

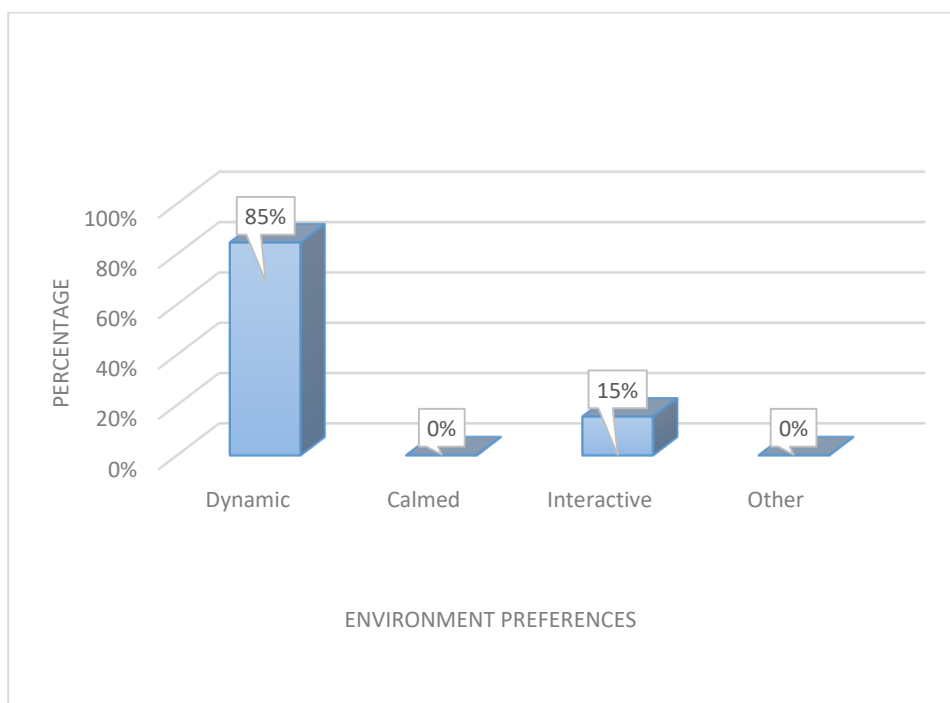


Figure 3. Environment Preferences
Source: Survey applied to Students

In relation to the way students may feel more confidence when it is about the organization of the classroom to work, as shown in figure 4; most of them selected the option of working in groups while the rest in an equally extend expressed their like to work in pairs or by themselves. Working in groups gives a little bit more of confidence to pupils to develop and complete the different activities and tasks presented at the English lessons. Being grouped facilitates the work as students can share responsibilities and each member of the group can help with their abilities complementing each other weakness at the

English language, so everyone can learn from each other and receive support and help improving their own skills.

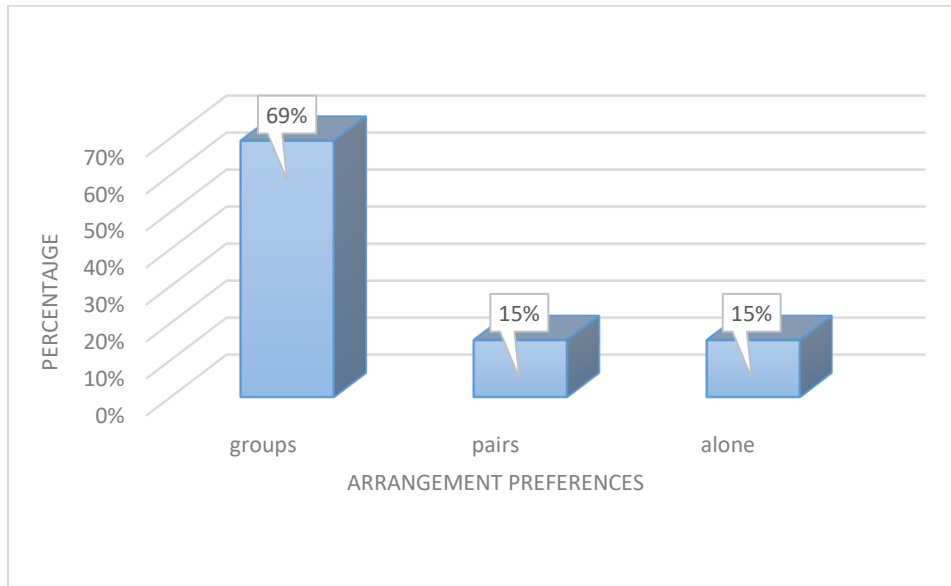


Figure 4. Arrangement preferences
Source: Survey applied to Students

In accordance with the activities the students like the most for English language learning, as illustrated in figure 5 the results revealed that they like dialogues as much as games, reinforcing the theory, they like to be active, to produce and use the language they are learning, applying it through significant activities for them.

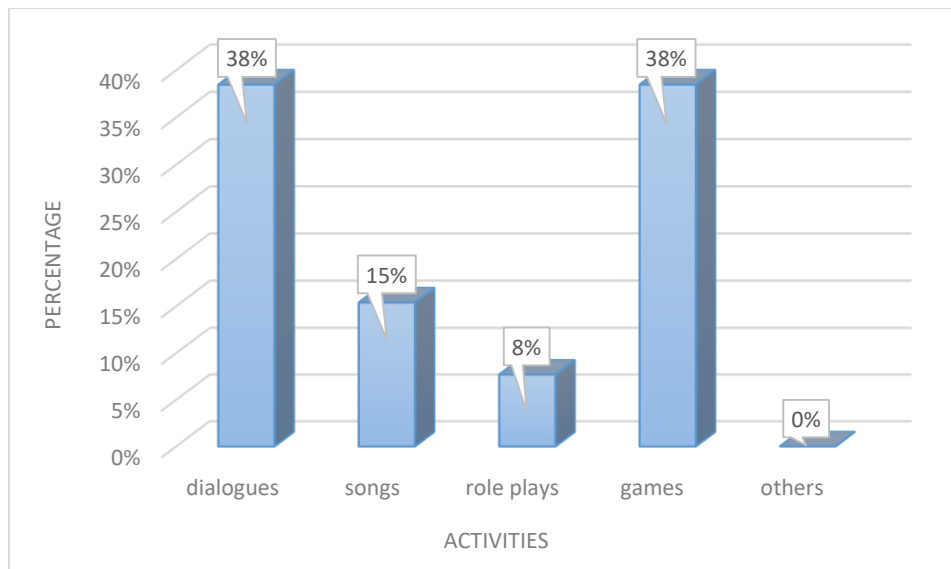


Figure 5. Activities students like the most.
Source: Survey applied to Students

Regarding how the students have a better reception of language as shown in figure 6, the majority of the students, represented by the 77%, make reception of vocabulary by repetition, and only a 15% said that by posters they may retain better the words. Moreover repetition is though to be one of the oldest techniques. This shows that as students do choral repetition no one else is going to notice their mispronunciation and so they can correct by listening altogether.

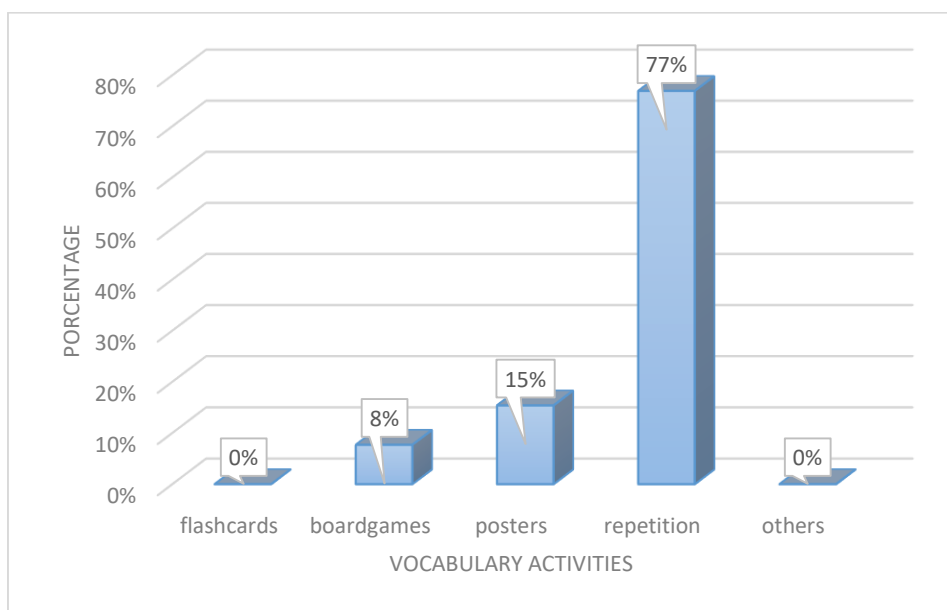


Figure 6. Activities to develop vocabulary
Source: Survey applied to Students

3.2. Results of the Observation Applied to Teachers

The teacher used mimics of real life examples where the vocabulary can be used, the coursebook gives examples of the use of the language only in the “foreign” situation and this could be a reason why students do not relate the information because it is not something engaged to them. The teacher asks questions about the book’s information, what the students answers were according to what the exercise required, it means it is not about students’ interests or perceptions, most of the questions have a kind of pre-programmed responses, if you have one of those you did it well, but if you have a different one, you did it wrong. For exercises of speaking, the teacher organized the classroom by pairs in order to make them use the language communicatively. The teacher used chorus reaction in order to check students’ performance but it could be difficult to identify students that were not participating at all or were committing errors. The teacher asked

about real life situations for his students to relate to the topic and it helped come, but the students were still insecure about what to respond as they were used to respond what the book proposed and it could be difficult for them to create their own statements using the English language.

3.3. Results of the observation Applied to Students

By observing the students, it could be noticed that it was not the best one, as the topic was not interesting for them and as the responses to complete or options to be selected were the same to everyone, some of them only waited until the moment the tape was over and so get the answers of their partners, which means that they decided it was not necessary to pay attention and listen properly, and this is a way of avoiding practicing. It may be why they cannot get a high listening skill. Besides, at the item of production of language accurately, most of them could only repeat words, but not simple sentences as it, basically, the teacher told the statement partially for students to complete it using only a word, when the teacher repeated the complete sentence in order to give a reinforcement in pronunciation not all of the students did it, and some of the ones that did it, only repeated the word of the vocabulary but not the complete sentence.

As a matter of fact, at the time of observing their reading skill they felt more confident as they worked along and had the time to read by themselves, they got easily the answers. The students' writing skill was good enough to complete the blank-spaces the activities required to fulfill as they only needed vocabulary, but at the moment of creating their own sentences they used the simplest structures and avoided using connectors to make it easier for themselves.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

Students' learning strategies and teachers' strategies to instruct depend mainly on the context they are in; as Gerami & Baighlou (2011) proposed, that is why creating new activities and presenting didactic strategies might help students to use the language because those are based on their own reality giving them the chance of working as a community and integrating everyone on the teaching learning process of the English Language. Didactic strategies are tools that promote knowledge internalization by the students; the outcomes that the techniques applied for this research paper accompanies the theory of the author mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, which says that the students' learning strategies are closely related to their own and actual context in the society. In Ecuador, for instance, it is very common to have large classes with more than 20 or even 30 students; when classrooms are as big as in Ecuador, it is appropriate for teacher getting the pupils into groups so he can check and support everybody the most he can. By arranging the class into groups students can also receive support from their own classmates which makes them feel more comfortable at the time of performing or working in class.

Besides, Araujo (2013) reinforces the fact that context influences during the teaching-learning process, due to the fact that learners are influenced directly from the environment, the most exposure to the language they receive the easier is for them to familiarize with the language, it means, promoting students to interact and talk among them using what they have learned in the English lesson, it may help them to feel surrounded by the English language and getting familiarized with it.

Establishing the correct strategy, it is also possible for the teacher to identify his students' weakness and awareness. It was Pullido (2005) who pointed out this fact; then, at the time a teacher is performing his strategy he can notice what activities are the ones which engage or get lost to his students. The findings of the survey applied in this research investigation show how students memorize easily by repetition, thanks to this a teacher can plan or modify his lessons looking for the best circumstances for his students internalize the provided information. As the teacher realizes it is better for students to memorize the use of repetition, the vocabulary for the lessons may be presented using a

chorus reaction in which all of the students can participate and practice their pronunciation.

The results obtained coincides and support what was stated by Moreno (2010) that students have more facilities to develop and work on their receptive skills than dealing with the productive ones, it is easier for them to listen and read, but when they have to write or talk it tends to be complex for them to accomplish it. The communicative competence involves the four main skills but, in fact the productive skills are the ones in which teachers should pay close attention, because some studies demonstrate that what teachers want for their students is to dominate the grammatical rules of the language, by thinking about the productive skills the preparation of the proper activities for the students to get confident when producing the language becomes an easy job.

Also, the data obtained support that students prefer the activities which involve dynamics, not only the grammar structures presented tediously as Estupiñan (2015) noticed. So, it could be said that there is not a lack of didactic strategies, there are didactic strategies but they are not focused on the students' requirements or needs. According to the survey, they do like learning the English language and they think it is useful for their lives, but what they want of this is to be active, in the way they interact, they use the language in aspects they are interested in, and in this way learning will become significant for the students. According to this author, the regular classes which has not dynamic activities makes the subject a boring and tired thing for students, and on the contrary the strategies with dynamic activities engage students to the topics, and engage the attention and predisposition of students to be participative and work actively during the English lessons.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

- The A2 level teachers actually use different strategies to teach English such as chorus reaction to practice vocabulary, questions and answers individually for students to participate and check if they are engaged to the topic, but these strategies are not well focused on students' interests and needs.
- Students' learning strategies showed how they memorize better vocabulary by repetition, but using games and dialogues they understand easily the topics, and a chance of designing the appropriate didactic strategies based on these results becomes a reality to improve students' communicative competence at the A2 level.
- The students' communicative competence is good for the level they are, as the production of language is not exactly a requirement of their level, but there is the possibility to work deeper on the productive skills in the English language.
- A didactic strategy was designed based on the results obtained, which make use of communicative activities organized in three phases: Pre-teaching, Content Manipulation, Production and feedback and correction.

CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to A2 English Teachers to:

- Focus on and pay more attention to the actual students' needs and interests related to the content of the lessons with their current situations.
- Promote awareness of the students' learning strategies, so, in this way teachers can arrange their lessons, instructions and exercises in the most appropriate manner so the pupils will be benefited by it.
- Give more opportunities to the students to practice their communicative competence by giving more speaking activities in which they can use their English language.
- Continue this investigation with an experiment where the suggested strategy may be put into practice.

Proposal: Didactic Strategy to Develop A2 students' Communicative Competence.

Communicative Based Didactic Strategy to Improve the Students' Communicative Competence in the English language

Objective: To develop the A2 level students' communicative competence in the English language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

A didactic strategy was established through the application of different research techniques to obtain information about teachers' and students' strategies used in the English lessons. It is how the gathered information reflects that the most appropriate procedure to follow for helping students to develop their Communicative Competence at the A2 Level is one based on the Communicative Approach as it promotes communication by the use of language. This is useful because it involves the real use of the language in situations favorable to students, increasing the possibilities of developing and improving their communicative competence. This strategy must drive students to put into practice their knowledge under the guide of the teachers and setting the interaction among students like the most important part of the teaching-learning process.

To carry out this strategy it is necessary to follow different phases during the development of the English Lessons.

Phase I Pre-teaching of Contents: This phase is the basic one, and it is so important because it is useful for getting students in the way to perceive what the topic of the class is about; as they do not receive all at once unfamiliar information, it helps to prepare their minds for the new knowledge.

Objective: To get the students familiarized with the new content to be presented during the lesson.

Activity: Introducing to students a new vocabulary from a reading by means of flashcards just for them to observe, listen and identify.

Role of the Teacher: Active, he guides and give instructions.

Teacher's procedures:

1. To show students flashcards which relate and contain the new vocabulary of the new topic. (These are visual aids to activate students' reasoning)
2. To write on the board the words of the new vocabulary. (For the next stage it is possible for students to imagine the meaning of the words)
3. To pronounce each one of the words aloud and clear for students to listen. (So students hear the correct pronunciation before they have to pronounce it by themselves)
4. To ask students if they know what word corresponds to each flashcards. (In order to check students' background knowledge about the topic, and identifying students' facility on the topic)
5. Paste the flashcard in their respective place side by side with the word of the vocabulary it belongs to. (For students to clarify and associate meanings)

Role of the Students: Active, they participate and have to be focused on the topic.

Students' procedures:

1. To be attentive and look carefully to all the flashcards presented. (Students' attention should be caught)
2. Read carefully all the words written on the board by the teacher. (Students' reasoning should be familiarized with the written forms of the vocabulary)
3. Listen carefully the pronunciation of the words of the vocabulary from the teacher. (So students hear the correct pronunciation before they have to pronounce it by themselves)
4. Students' brainstorm about what words represent each flashcard. (Trying to figure out or have an idea about the meaning of the words)

Phase II Content Manipulation: At this phase students have the possibility of touching, managing and using different resources and materials by themselves under the guide of the teacher, to support the comprehension and assimilation of the topic.

Objective: To get students to manipulate the new content.

Role of the Teacher: Passive, it becomes a monitor and guide and can interrupt students while performing on the board.

Teacher's procedures:

1. The teacher provides the class with a printed version of the reading the flashcards belong to, complemented with a worksheet to be solved. (So everyone has the necessary material for the lesson)
2. The teacher asks students *What they think it should be the correct order of the pictures.* (Giving the opportunity for students to speculate and think)
3. The teacher reads the whole reading aloud for students once to follow it. (students can familiarize and recognize vocabulary)

Role of the Students: Active, practice and work dynamically.

Students' procedures:

1. Students read along as they listen from the teaching text. (Following by reading the development of the story)
2. Students participate and give their opinions aloud about how they think the pictures should be ordered. (In a trial of ordering the pictures students have the chance to develop their critical thinking)
3. Students might pass to the front to paste in chronological order the flashcards. (Participating actively in the class)
4. Students read in silence by themselves and underline the vocabulary they recognize was presented at the beginning of the lesson. (Now students can work alone in their own space)
5. Answer the questions and solving the worksheet. (Students can work all by themselves)
6. Students compare with the rest of the class the answers having the opportunity of a collective correction.

Phase III Production: In this phase students can perform all by themselves and practice using the English language.

Objective: To get students to use the content.

Activity: Students are going to practice pronunciation by performing a role play with dialogues.

Role of the teacher: Passive, he is an instructor and observant and he cannot interrupt during students' performance.

Teacher's procedures:

1. To form heterogeneous groups of work. (Giving to students the chance of interacting and sharing among them)
2. To provide students with short pieces of paper which contain different stories for each group. (There are varied materials for everyone to practice in different ways)
3. To give the explanation of the activity which consists of creating the dialogues for the stories provided. (The plot of the stories is provided, but students have to create the dialogues)

Role of the students: Active, they become performers.

Students' procedures:

1. To arrange the seats as they are grouped. (It is easier for students to work in a comfortable classroom arrangement)
2. To talk and share ideas with their classmates organizing the information. (Everyone has the opportunity to talk and participate actively and no one feels isolated)
3. To create the dialogues based on the plot of the story and using the vocabulary provided before. (Students have the chance to put their knowledge into practice.)
4. To pass to the front of the class and role play the story. (In order to practice their pronunciation and for the teacher to listen and identify if there is any mistake in the students pronunciation)

Note: It is possible to add more steps if the teacher thinks it is necessary to check students' dialogues or giving more time to rehearse their performance.

Phase IV Feedback and Correction: Providing feedback and support to students, realize and identify their mistakes if there were any, and being aware of it.

Objective: To check and correct students' mistakes at the end of the class.

Activity: According to students' performance, jot down the mispronunciations and the weakness that showed up during the presentation.

Role of the teacher: Active, and advisor as it gives the proper clarification of the topic to students.

Teacher's procedures:

1. To make a list of the words students mispronounced and write them on the board. (Having identified where students need reinforcement)
2. To pronounce these words correctly for students to clarify. (Students can realize where they failed)
3. To make students repeat the vocabulary as chorus reaction (Everyone can correct their mispronunciation and practice it)

Role of the Students: Active, and attentive as they have to pay attention to correct any mistake.

Students' procedures:

1. To be quiet and pay attention to the board. (Students' attention should be focused on the teacher and the correction)
2. Listen attentively without interrupting the teacher. (Students' attention should be focused on the teacher and the correction)
3. To repeat aloud collectively correcting their mispronunciations.

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Appendices

			Reading	Reading comprehension of a reading text.
			Writing	Production of ideas coherently and with cohesion.

Appendix B: Observation Guide Applied to Teachers

Objective: To analyze the teacher's strategies to teach English to students at the A2 level according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages, at PUCE Esmeraldas, 2018.

OBSERVATION GUIDE

	YES	NO
1.The teacher uses flashcards, board-games, posters, or books to stimulate students' assimilation of vocabulary		
Others		
2.In order to get the students to practice speaking the teacher uses role play, songs, or games.		
Others		
3.1 The teacher organizes the classroom in groups or pairs.		
3.2 The teacher organizes the classroom by individuals.		
Others		
3. The teachers uses group work, questions and answers or role play to check student's		

performance while teaching.		
Others		
5. To activate students the teacher uses dramatizations, games, or songs		
Others		

Appendix C: Observation Applied to Students

Objective: To test the students' communicative competence in the English Language at the A2 level in the PUCE Esmeraldas.

OBSERVATION GUIDE

	High	Fair	Low
Comprehension of a listening text.			
Production of language in communicative activities fluently and accurately.			
Reading comprehension of a text.			
Production of ideas coherently and with cohesion.			

Appendix D: Survey Applied to Students

Objective: To determine the students' strategies to learn English.

SURVEY

Instruction: Circle the option you choose per each of the items below.

1. Do you like the English language?

- a) Yes
- b) No

1.2 To say why, chose one the following reasons according to what you respond in question number 1.

- a) It is boring
- b) It is useful
- c) It is difficult
- d) It is useless
- e) It's mandatory
- f) Other _____

2. You prefer your classroom environment to be:

- a) Dynamic
- b) Calmed
- c) Interactive
- d) Others _____

3. You like to work in:

- a) Groups
- b) Pairs
- c) Alone

4. Which of the following activities you like the most:

- a) Dialogues
- b) Songs

- c) Role plays
- d) Games
- e) Others _____

5. You assimilate vocabulary better with:

- a) Flashcards
- b) Board-games
- c) Posters
- d) Repetition
- e) Others _____