

THE USE OF ACTION - ORIENTED APPROACH AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
CLASSROOM.

BY

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Nota de Responsabilidad

Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en este trabajo de grado son responsabilidad exclusivas de los autores. Art. 1 del acuerdo No. 324 de octubre de 1966, emanado del honorable consejo directive de la Universidad de Nariño.

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Nota de aceptación

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Abstract

The English language teaching and learning in Colombia has represented a big challenge for the educational community in the country in its efforts to overcome this challenge have included a variety of strategies, among which the adoption of a National Bilingual Program outstands. The National Bilingual program adopted in 2006 was a strategy to improve the English language teaching and learning. One of the elements included in the program was the adoption of Standards for Language Teaching and Learning in Colombia, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language.

In order to achieve the goals proposed in the program, it is important to explore new teaching strategies for English as a foreign language to support the learning acquisition process in the country, taking into account the students' needs, as well the context where the strategy is going to be applied. A strategy that would probably be effective in our context is the Action Oriented Approach which has been highly recommended by the CEFR to enhance the language acquisition.

Key words: CEFR, foreign language, Action Oriented Approach, social learning scenarios.

Resumen

La enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en Colombia ha representado un gran desafío para la comunidad educativa en el país, en su esfuerzo de alcanzar esta meta, ha incluido una variedad de estrategias, entre las cuales sobresale la adopción de un programa nacional de bilingüismo. El programa nacional de bilingüismo adoptado en el 2006 fue una estrategia para la enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma Inglés. Uno de los elementos incluidos en el programa fue la adopción de los estándares para la enseñanza y aprendizaje en Colombia, basado en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las lengua.

Con el propósito de llevar a cabo los objetivos propuestos, es importante explorar nuevas estrategias de enseñanza del Inglés como lengua extranjera, con el fin de apoyar el proceso de aprendizaje en el país las necesidades de los estudiantes, así como el contexto donde la estrategia será empleada. Una estrategia que probablemente sería efectiva en nuestro contexto es el enfoque Action Oriented Approach el cual ha sido recomendado por el CEFR para mejorar el proceso de adquisición del lenguaje.

Palabras claves: CEFR, segunda lengua, Action Oriented Approach, escenario social de aprendizaje.

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Introduction

The Colombian government has implemented a national English program to be adopted by public educational institutions in the country; This program was designed to strengthen English teaching and learning processes in all levels focusing on developing teachers' skills in English and improving their pedagogical competencies. Its main objectives are: 1) promoting English learning as a foreign language with communicative purposes; and, 2) reach higher levels of competence in English among language instructors. (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014, pg. 2-3)

The National English program first edition was published in 2006; ten years later, after obtaining unsatisfactory results, it was reformulated to reach different goals; the program is nowadays known as "Colombia Very Well". Some of the main contributions made by the English program to language instruction in Colombia are related to the designing of the curriculum, the establishment of the "Basic Learning Rights" for learners and the designing and distribution among most of the public schools in Colombia of the teaching English materials created by the Minister of Education. Nevertheless, in order to achieve the National English Program objectives, it is also important to take into account, the Colombian context first, and also the methodology suggested to be adopted to teach English in such a context. Considering the contextualized conditions most public schools appear to share and the limitations that teachers and students could eventually face that affect the teaching - learning process, it might be important to evaluate the impact of adapting a specific methodology that serves to reach the goals proposed by the National English program and be adjusted to the context.

At the end of 2004, the Ministry of Education identified the necessity of defining a standardized level of competence in language for all students in Colombia at different levels of learning. As a consequence, the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) was adopted for its applicability, international recognition and apparently

appropriateness to the Colombian context. In an intention of internationalizing the learning of English in Colombia, English Language teaching and learning was standardized according to the CEFR using an own version adopted from the original document. Since then, Language level goals and English standards were formulated to be adopted across the country. CEFR has been embraced for different countries, mostly Europeans but also for others as Canada. CEFR has been successful applied and has been object of study for its philosophy of teaching, and also for its methodological proposal.

In this context, the CEFR has suggested the Action - Oriented Approach as an appropriate methodology to achieve the intended goals correlated to those presented in its documents which has been articulated in elementary and high schools in Europe. Although it has been mostly implemented on multicultural countries, its principles could be adapted to different contexts including those where there is not existence of multiculturalism and limitations to learn a second language are significant. Action - Oriented Approach complements and improves missing aspects of the communicative approach; while communicative approach tasks focus on learning, Action - Oriented Approach tasks are focused on social purposes. According to the acquisition learning hypothesis proposed by Krashen the optimal way of learning a language is through natural communication (1981,pg.104). As a second language teacher, the ideal is creating a situation where language is used in order to fulfill authentic purposes. The perception of tasks conceived in Action - Oriented approach, would eventually facilitate to foreign language learners to have a more natural process for learning.

Action - Oriented approach adopts a teaching philosophy which could be applicable to different language teaching - learning situations, making the language learning process more natural and changing students' role from a passive to an active one. It is valuable to analyze this strategy to determine its pros and cons in the field of language teaching in Pasto and go forward to apply it in the classroom.

Objectives

General Objective:

To present Action - Oriented approach as a tool to improve English language teaching in Pasto

Specific Objectives:

To determine proper English language activities to develop in the classroom, taking into account all the principles of Action - Oriented Approach.

To encourage the use of Action Oriented Approach for teaching English as a foreign language.

To enhance students' communicative competences through the use of Action Oriented Approach activities.

Justification

It is relevant to analyze the principles of the Action - Oriented approach to introduce this new strategy in the English classroom, adapt it to the curriculum designed by the institutions and achieve the goals proposed by the National English program for each level taking into account the time assigned for teaching English, the available English teaching materials and the motivation of the students.

It would be favorable the application of the Action - Oriented Approach in the English classroom because its use is adaptable to different foreign second language contexts. It would be beneficial to research about this strategy due to different factors: 1) different strategies for teaching English have been applied but the English level in the country is not what is expected, it is necessary to try a methodology which has been successful in other countries; 2) the principles of Action - Oriented Approach give freedom to teachers to create open - ended situations of English teaching - learning which could be flexible to different situations that teachers and students are facing in the English classroom, since this approach is based in a natural language

acquisition, teachers could manage different situations and present them in a natural way; 3) it would be allow students to use language in a more confident way through simple communicative tasks.

This research is relevant for the educational community because it could change the way how the practice of teaching English and the teachers and students' role are seen. Most educational communities would recognize the importance of working all together to achieve the English learning goal; and therefore students would get closer to reach the desired English levels.

Moreover, English language teachers would identify the pros and cons of the use of Action - Oriented approach, and use that knowledge to create appropriate activities to teach English, trying to reduce the anxiety of the students through interesting tasks where learners feel motivated to achieve, at the same time they are learning in an implicit way. It would be significant for Policy makers because they would be willing to create integral curricula from elementary to high school based on Action - Oriented approach, so students would be familiarized with the strategy since elementary school and teachers could offer a progressing and continuing English teaching. Thus, the results obtained after applying the strategy would hopefully include the improvement of English level in the region.

It is important to take into account the internal as external factors in the English language teaching and make a pertinent study of the strategy Action - Oriented approach in order to make up for gaps in the language English education. Adopting this philosophy of English language teaching in the institutional curriculum as in the English classroom, considering the students' needs to reach the national English program objectives and work with the educational community as a whole would help to achieve as much as possible the purpose of reaching a considerable English level.

Literature review

Language teaching has been a subject of study for many years, There is not a correct or wrong methodology or approach to teach languages, since all of them have their strong and weak points. To guide language teachers and language learners, the Council of Europe developed the Common European Framework of Reference which serves as a guideline to the language teaching and learning process.

Along with the presentation of the Common European framework, the Action- Oriented Approach also appeared. It is suggested to be a recommended strategy to make language learning/teaching more efficient. For its appropriate application in varied contexts, it is essential to know the nature of the Common European Framework as the principles which constitute the CEFR's approach.

This section presents the description of the approach principles, as the definition of the framework, along with its implementation.

The Common European Framework of Reference

According to the Council of Europe (2018), the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR), is the result of over twenty years of research which was created to offer an integral basis for language teaching. The CEFR has been translated to forty languages. It provides a common basis for the elaboration of languages syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, and so on; also it also defines what language learners need to learn, and what skills they need to develop to acquire useful foreign language communicative competences to act effectively in a community. It suggests levels of proficiency to measure foreign language speakers in order to know the language abilities they possess and track their language progress. (Council of Europe, 2001, pg. 1).

This framework must always be adapted to the requirements of particular contexts, and it can be applied to any language teaching/learning. Its levels describe the skills that learners have

acquired in their language learning process. The CEFR suggests six levels of proficiency, the next figure shows what they are and how they are divided:

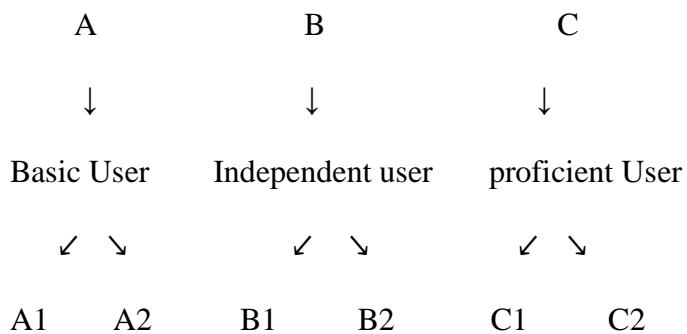


Figure 1. CEFR's proficiency levels. Taken from Council of Europe (2001 pg. 23)

Suggested Methodology for Achieving Language Goals in the CEFR

The approach suggested by the CEFR, is the Action - Oriented Approach which considers the student as an active participant in the learning process and a user of the language.

Communication is understood as a social activity designed to accomplish specific tasks.

Following this approach the language is acquired by performing a set of meaningful tasks in a real-social environment (Conseil, Garcia & Strotmann, 2016).

Although the CEFR does not intent to impose the methodology that users of this framework must employ, since it has to be adapted to each context, it highly considers the framework and its approach as a tool which facilitates the language and learning process; "The methodological message of the CEFR is that language learning should be directed towards enabling learners to act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures" (Council of Europe, 2018, pg. 27). This point of view recognizes learners as social beings, consequently it implies to perceive the nature of the language learning and language acquisition.

The Action Oriented Approach: What it is and what is it not?

To understand what the Action Oriented Approach is, and what are the outstanding differences from other communicative methodologies, it is important to observe the concepts that Action Oriented Approach has about the main aspects involved in the teaching process.

It views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents’, i.e. members of a society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning. (Council of Europe 2001, pg 9).

It takes into account the students’ real life communicative needs, so learners are involved in real language activities, considering the natural acquisition learning process. The Council of Europe adds: “Seeing learners as language users implies extensive use of the target language in the classroom – learning to use the language rather than just learning about the language (as a subject)”. (2018, pg 27).

In agreement with the Action - Oriented Approach, it is evident the student’s active role in the English language learning process, instead the passive one from other methodologies.

Language learner is an actor performing duties as it is done with an individual in the natural process of the mother tongue, where action is first and then communication is achieved, this view is supported by adding:

...the action came before the language in the process of the evolution of humanity and it constitutes the first stage of the interaction between the people, first the action is revealed then the language develops” (Moreno & Dökme; as cited in Sayınsoy, 2003).

Second, about teacher’ role, Delibas and Gunday claim:

Teachers are the facilitators and guides that guide the learning process, form the need, take an active role with the learners in the learning process and their task is to facilitate the acquisition of real or near-real learning environments for the acquisition of language skills. (2016, pg 147).

In the CEFR’s approach, teachers’ role also change, professors support learners to acquire the target language, he/she is not seen as the one who present a chunk of rules, but someone who promote the English learning process. Other adjectives which describe the teacher’s role are added by Germain (1993, as cited in Picardo,2014): “a ‘model,’ a ‘facilitator,’ an ‘organizer’ of activities in the classroom, an ‘advisor,’ an ‘analyst’ of the needs and interests of learners, a ‘co-communicator,’ etc.” (2014, pg 13).

In Action - Oriented approach, learning is constructed around actions, where those always have a different goal than language learning. Based on the Council of Europe “A task is defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfill or an objective to be achieved...” (2001, pg 10). The meaning of task in this approach is one of the main differences from other methodologies; a task is an instrument to achieve a everyday life action.

Dr. Enrica Piccardo presents an analysis about how activities are seen in the second language learning, according to Action - Oriented Approach; task as synonym of activity, is not just a language exercise to carry out a communicative situation, it is a real life action which students need it to perform any task. (2014, pg 26). In agreement with it, the language activities developed in the classroom must be as natural as possible and the use of language is up to the task that the learner needs to achieve.

The main characteristics of a task in Action - Oriented Approach are: 1) the situation is authentic; 2) there is a task to be completed; 3) it's open-ended; and, 4) it involves an interaction. (FSL, n.d). Following all characteristics which involve tasks in Action - Oriented Approach, students would feel more comfortable using the target language when they need to do it and through attractive tasks according to their age and interest, and performing tasks not related to the English acquisition language, as It occurs in the mother tongue communicative activities. Students could achieve group activities, task in pairs and by their own.

Finally, Action Oriented approach philosophy about assessment claims based on the Council of Europe, that the assessment process should not be concerned about a performance, but the competences evidenced by the performance. (2001,pg.180). Although the framework does not prescribe tools for assessment, The document *From Communicative to Action Oriented: THEORY INTO PRACTICE*, states a short description about assessment tools which could be helpful for language teacher who are willing to use the Action Oriented Approach , “Assessment

tools may include tools to monitor and collect data from conversations, observations and/or products of learning. The tool should reflect the purpose of assessment, and should include the success criteria..” (n.d, pg.5). All test are a form of assessment, there is also the continuous assessment as the checklist and the informal one as the teacher observation. It is fundamental for the assessment process to be valid, reliable and feasible. In a short way what those terms means are: Validity, demonstrates that is being assessed what students learnt in the classroom; reliability, it is being assessed what student need to know according to the standards proposed; standards should be interpreted in the design of the assessment; feasibility means that the performance need to be practical. (Council of Europe, 2001).

Since Action Oriented Approach has similar characteristics to Task Based Approach and Communicative Approach., the next chart presents basic definitions of their views, in order to be clear what Action Oriented Approach is and what it is not.

Table 1. Approach principles comparison chart.

Roles	Task Based Approach	Communicative Approach	Action Oriented Approach
Teacher	Coach, trainer. T gives instruction about what Ss have to do.	Guide - Instructor	Facilitator - Organizer
Student	S is a user of the target language	S in constant interaction with and exposure to the language.	Social agents.
Task	Real-world activities with communicative	Task presented in a context. T has communicative	Focused on social life. Communication serves

	problems to solve. Focused on learning	purposes.It serves communication	task.
Assessment	Based on task outcome	It focuses on S' accuracy and fluency.	It is multidimensional and present from the beginning.

(Living Democracy, 2015); (Ontesol, 2003); (Daville , 1996) ; (Fluentu, 2019); (Council of Europe, 2001)

In those approaches, learners are involved in real communication activities but their differences lay down mainly in the purpose of their tasks.

Perception of Language Under the Action Oriented Approach

According to the Council of Europe, “Language process refers to the chain of events, neurological and physiological, involved in the production and reception of speech and writing.” (2001, pg 10). The main goal of language in the Action Oriented Approach should be carry on communication to achieve tasks and it should be learnt as the natural process of first language acquisition ; Krashen explains “Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication” (2009, p. 10). As the use of the mother tongue, language arise from the communication needs.

Perception of Language Teaching

According to Piccardo’ analysis of the Action Oriented Approach “The notion of language needs contends that language teaching must be closely linked to the learner for whom it is intended and to the context in which it is delivered.” (2014,pg 10). Teaching process serves the students language needs and the context where language is going to be taught.

The University of Cambridge in its document *Principles of Good Practice*, claims:

Language teaching is most successful when it focuses on the useful outcomes of language learning – for example, on what exam grades mean in terms of specific skills and abilities rather than simply the grades themselves. Linking teaching to the CEFR is a very effective way of achieving this.(2011, pg 13).

Language teaching goal should be the students earned competences which are showed up through their performances.

Perception of Language Learning

“Language learning’ may be used as the general term, or confined to the process whereby language ability is gained as the result of a planned process, especially by formal study in an institutional setting.” (Council of Europe, 2001). The Action Oriented Approach places the Language learning within the social context, It is placed in real situation contexts where language is used with the purpose to achieve daily life activities; Hashim adds: language succeeds when is learned through interesting content in a meaningful and authentic social context. (2006, pg. 170).

Action Oriented Approach and its applicability in similar contexts to the Colombian one

To talk about the applicability of Action Oriented Approach, It has to be taken into account the applicability of the CEFR . The framework, primary was created for being applied across Europe. It means for multicultural countries, but it is not language or context specific, thus the Action Oriented Approach as the framework users need to adapt their use to their language needs/goals and their specific context.

Although, It is not found bibliography which evidence the implementation of Action Oriented Approach in a similar context to the Colombian conditions, Since it does not have specific information for specific context, teachers may adapt the approach philosophy to the students’ needs. John Trim (as cited in University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, 2011): In

the CEFR model the two key notions are task and interaction; If this notion is followed, the English language learning/ acquisition would be successful.

Minimal requirements for the implementation of Action Oriented Approach in a multilingual context

Taking into account the philosophy of the CEFR and its suggested approach which has been presented along the paper, the minimal requirements for implementing the Action Oriented Approach should be: 1) Learners, teachers, course designers, authors of teaching material and test designers should make a team to connect the teaching/language process with the Action Oriented Approach ; 2) Tasks in the language classroom are essential; and, 3) Teacher should have an active role and a proper proficient English level.

Researches on the Action Oriented Approach

There has been achieved many researchers about the implementation of the CEFR in different contexts, and few others have gone not just for the implementation of the framework but for the Action Oriented approach in the classroom, as the next study which objectives were: “ make a contribution to the development of implementation theories on educational change; and ,provide a deeper understanding of the classroom implementation of the curriculum with an action-oriented approach”. (Palabiyika & Daloglu, 2016, pg. 46)

The Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, developed an study about the implementation of Action Oriented Approach in the curriculum of a primary school, where was found that the teacher is the most important factor for the successful of the curriculum innovation; It aims that the teacher inclusion in the curriculum development process and the continuing support to the professors, promote a favorable implementation of the Action Oriented Approach in the curriculum. In the adaptation process of the curriculum innovation in the classroom was observed at the first stage that teachers were not acknowledge about the change,

later they did but they did not implemented any modification in their classroom; at the end teachers started to implement changes in favor to the new curriculum need but then the modifications and adaptation were made taking into account the students' needs. (Palabiyika & Daloglu, 2016). This study evidences that, factors as the facilities in the school are important for language teaching, but it has a major relevance the teacher's role in the implementation of the curriculum and the adaptation he/she applies.

The implementation of the CEFR in the schools curricula has represented a big challenge since educators are not familiarized with the framework and it is not clear how the CEFR could fit in local context, as it presented in a study developed in Malaysia. The Malaysian council adopted the CEFR, in order to improve the foreign language acquisition, the goal and plan started in 2013 and it is expected to end in 2025: the first phase of the program has been training teachers in their English skills; the next phase has been determined appropriate CEFR levels in reference to all educational levels, it means from preschool to teacher education, in this phase curriculum and syllabus, textbooks and teaching materials are aligned with the CEFR and the council goal. At the end of this stage is implemented the new CEFR aligned curricula. Phase 3 correspond to the council evaluation. As a result of the study It was found that English teachers and ministry of Education official were optimistic about the implementation of the framework for improving the English level proficiency of Malaysians but although the adoption of this framework is necessary, it is also required that teachers are well prepared and familiar with the new implementation before to performed in the classroom. (Mohamad & Abd, 2018). This study shows us how important is the accuracy of the implementation of the framework with all stages of the teaching language process, it means that framework, syllabus, curriculum, lesson plan and English teaching material need to be all connected, and the teachers need to straighten their English language skills and development curriculum knowledge with the new implementation.

Didactic Proposal

Pedagogical implications

In order to benefit the foreign language acquisition, this paper suggests to apply in the English classroom different activities based on the Action Oriented Approach as a strategy to improve the communicative competences among students from urban public schools in Pasto.

To implement the Action Oriented Approach as a strategy to reach the goals aimed by the MEN, it has to be considered the public schools background in Pasto, from the classroom context to the curriculum designs.

The Use of the CEFR's approach imply teachers be aware of: 1) the National English program and its goals, 2) the principles of Action Oriented Approach, 3) the students' background English knowledge, 4) the skills students need to achieve, and 5) the students' interest. For this reason, It would be necessary to make a diagnosis about the teachers' knowledges, which would consist on interviewing English teachers about how much they know about the English program, the skills that students need to acquire according to their level, methodologies that they apply in the English classroom, the Action Oriented Approach and curriculum design. After this It would be required to train teachers in those aspects that they were interviewed; with regard to teachers are able to design a curriculum that meets clear English language objectives depending on the assigned level they are going to teach, where teachers develop Action Oriented activities that match students' interests and needs.

After the training process it is expected that teachers adopt the Action Oriented Approach in their English class, adapt in their teaching practices and assessment process different activities based on this approach, this as a strategy to enhance the communicative competences to reach the goals proposed by the National English program.

Teachers must acquire a very active role in the classroom, this implies that teacher is on continuous observation to be aware about the weaknesses and needs that students demonstrate in

their output which serves to prepare future activities that reinforce their weaknesses and introduce new information. Teacher should create a real learning environment tasks that facilitates the students' communicative competence development.

The assessment should be a continuous process which would serve as part of the observation practice, according to the CEFR the assessment should be suitable, attractive to focus in the Action Oriented Approach and concern a real world task, It may sound educational for younger basic users (A1, A2), thus students focus in the successful result of +the activity. (2001, pg. 180).

Action Oriented Approach in the classroom

To be successful in the implementation of action oriented approach activities in the classroom, teachers should make sure of presenting a clear goal of the task that students are developing, also teaching materials should be comprehensible and real.

Since the teaching and learning context is crucial to develop an activity, first, it is going to be presented what students need to learn at seventh grade, as it has to exist coherence between the development of the task, the language goal and the MEN objective. Taking into account the standards for English language learning in Colombia, students of 7th grade should develop an upper basic to low intermediate English level (A2), so it is required to know each achievement that students need to reach. It will be identified the students background, thus it would be clear how it would be designed the activities later in this research.

Second, some tasks are designed considering each Action - Oriented Approach principle and thinking about the time assigned to language instruction, students background and learners motivation in order to select adequate topics which match students' needs.

For the creation of any educational material is important to take into account students' knowledge background, the context of the institutions as the goals aimed by the Minister of Education; thus, some activities are proposed for seventh grade students between 11 to 12 years

old. Usually the number of students in a classroom in a public institution in Pasto is above 35. Public schools classrooms are equipped with a white board. Schools have one or two recorders which could be asked with anticipation by the professors in order to use them in the class. The resources are limited, so activities should be developed with teaching learning materials and content.

The English knowledge background in 7th grade learners is low, considering the levels organization by the CEFR (2018, pg. 34), they are placed in a lower level than A1. The students elementary school former education in Pasto is deficient, as English teachers are not well prepared in English language methodologies as their English language skills. (Bastidas & Ibarra, 2011).

Another consideration that it has to be taken into account is that the students have never been exposed to the Action Oriented Approach before, since teachers use a mixed of techniques with the expectation to reach the traced goals by the syllabus.

The seventh grade students should develop an upper basic to low intermediate English level (A2) according to the National Minister of Education in Colombia (MEN), the ICFES states the next specific descriptors about the skills which need to be reached in this level:

- the student is able to comprehend phrases and expressions of frequent use related to special experiences which are relevant for him/her (basic information about him/herself and his/hers family, shopping, interesting places, professions).
- the student is able to communicate when it is required to accomplish simple and daily tasks that require simple and direct information about known and usual matters.
- the student describe with simple speech aspects about his/hers surroundings, past and immediate needs. (*translated from Saber Pro 2018 niveles de desempeño módulo de Inglés, 2019*)

About the communicative competences the National Bilingual Program defines it as the facility to use the language knowledges in different situations, inside and outside of the scholar life. (2006, pg. 12). The communicative competences include the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The abilities needed to reach at the end of the course for A2 students are the next:

Speaking/Oral Communication • I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe personal and work-related information eg, in short, rehearsed presentation. • I can exchange simple information on familiar, work-related topics eg, arranging a meeting. • I can say I don't understand and use simple phrases to ask someone to repeat what they said. Writing • I can write short, simple messages, correspondence eg, emails and work-related texts eg, a report when using a template and simple connectors eg, and, but, because. Listening/Understanding • I can understand frequently used vocabulary and phrases in meetings, presentations and social situations when the speaker speaks clearly and slowly and the topic is very familiar. Reading/Understanding • I can find and understand specific information in short, simple, work-related texts eg, emails, minutes and texts on familiar topics eg, instructions. (marcusevans linguarama).

Since the students in 7th grade have a very low English level and they are going to be exposed for very first time to the Action Oriented Approach, It is appropriate to start the teaching and learning process with simple topics, where students be exposed to simple vocabulary according to their age and background learning; Gunday and Atmaca claim:

In this method words are taught in social and cultural context and with the exercises which are based on action. Instead of teaching separately the words with different activities, the words are taught/learned actively based on activities and tasks which aim to develop all language skills. (2006, pg. 115)

Taking into account the above - mentioned information, the next activities are proposed as an example of how teachers can apply the Action Oriented Approach in the classroom as a strategy to enhance communicative competences in the teaching of English as a foreign language. It is proposed different activities for each skill but it could be planned tasks where the four skills are put into practice.

Speaking: The activities based on Action Oriented Approach as a strategy to enhance speaking competences, should be implemented through authentic situations where students are required to exchange and describe simple information about familiar things. Teachers must recreate real life scenarios and pick topics that students feel familiar with. Taking into account that there are around 35 students in a class, it would be favorable to develop activities where students can work in small groups. To make sure all student in the group participate, it is

important to give a role in the group to each learner. Following, an activities that could be applied in the classroom:

- **Job interview:** students make groups of 6 people, teacher assigned a role to each group, some groups are interviewers and others interviewees. The interviewers have to prepare two questions each student for the applicants according to the position they are interviewing; and, the interviewees have to prepare possible answers according to the position they are applying. Teacher are in charge to give the position and role to each group.

Listening: To improve listening comprehension, teachers can make use of any audio material through action oriented activities that meets the students level, this means that the audios should contain vocabulary that students know but they also have to be challenging.

Teachers should present audios with interesting and familiar topics in order to improve listening skills, present new vocabulary and frequent use expressions, and also reinforce the acquired knowledge. Some possible listening comprehension activities that teachers can apply in the foreign English classroom may be:

- **Design a mother day's card:** an audio is played in the classroom that contains specific information of how to make a card for mother's day. Students may follow all directions.
- **What kind of animal are you?:** Teacher reads for the class an abc test with personality related questions; each question has a value which sum result will determine an animal. Students write down the option which they feel more comfortable with, after students sum their result, teacher read the description of each animal. finally, teacher ask students what kind of animal they are and if they are comfortable with the result and why.

Reading: Teachers can apply the Action Oriented Approach to design reading activities to encourage students to use English language in real world context tasks. The goal is students understand and recognize information in simple readings. The role of the teacher in reading

activities based on the Action Oriented Approach is to facilitate reading materials according to the students background knowledge. Different activities can be used:

- Apply for the university: teacher presents a form to be completed by the students, in this case it would be an application for the university form, but it could be any form that students can be required to achieved in a real live scenario.
- Completing a survey: teacher ask students to complete a survey in order to give a product or place feedback as customers. Teacher should pick the survey to complete, the survey should have a lot of questions and students are expected to give simple questions, since this activity has to be focus on reading.

Writing: writing activities based on Action Oriented Approach should promote the improvement of students' writing skills which goal at this level is to write simple texts using elemental connectors, vocabulary and phrases. Possible writing activities:

- Complaint: students should write a complaint about a real situation described by the teacher, it could be a service or product complain.
- Refusal: Students are asked to write refusal letters. A job offer, an invitation for a seminar or event or a business proposal could be some of the topics to refuse in this activity.

The teacher's and students role in the Action Oriented Tasks activities described above are:

- T organizes social context activities to be accomplished by the students.
- T observes students output in order to reinforce weaknesses in language use.
- T promotes the need to use the foreign language.
- T designed activities to work with vocabulary that students are been exposed before.

T encourage students ask questions, teacher could design activities where some information is missing or is new and they need it to complete the task, thus they are going to ask for clarifications and info.

- Ss ask teacher for the meaning of vocabulary or expressions to complete their task.

It is expected Ss recognize their lack of vocabulary or expressions to carry on an activity in order they feel responsible of their own English learning.

The benefit to adapt the Action Oriented Approach in the classroom activities is that students are going to be focused on developing a task that meets their interest, and/or on learning social skills which could be useful in the real world; this fact would help to reduce the anxiety of using the target language, since the goal is not language related. Another benefit is that the activities could be used as an informal assessment, this could be a double benefit since teacher can use the students' output to reinforce the topic that students need to, and it could be used to grade learners.

Conclusions

English Language teaching and learning has been an important factor in the educational process in Colombia. The adoption of the National Bilingual Program, built on the basis of the CEFR's structure has been an opportunity to think about the goals to reach in order to achieve high levels of competency in English. The Minister of Education in Colombia embraced the CEFR framework, making adaptations and presenting different reformulations to adapt it to the Colombian context, but expected results have not been reached so far.

Since the awaited outcome has not been accomplished, there is a need to look for new proposals that satisfy the need of improving the English level in the country. This research aimed to present the Action Oriented Approach as an alternative to reach the goals proposed for the educational community.

The main objective was to study the CEFR approach in order to learn about it and apply it in the Colombian context classrooms, especially in public institutions from Pasto. This research paper takes into account the implications to apply the Action Oriented Approach in the English classroom and offers an activity models of how would be the adaptation of the approach in a foreign language English class; it considers the activities implementation based on Action Oriented Approach principles, a good strategy to reach acceptable results in the improvement of English as a foreign language communicative competences.

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Annexes**Lesson Plan****Week :**1**Lesson:**1**Time:** 90 mn**Grade:**7th**Proficiency level:** upper basic to low intermediate English level (A2)

Language objective: Learn English vocabulary about items in the supermarket and basic expressions.

Focus: Communicative competences**Materials:** bulletin boards and printable american money**Theme:** shopping at the grocery store**Topic:** American currency.

Pre - lesson: **1)** Teacher presents a grocery store simulation in the white board with different grocery items pictures (each item has its price). There are sales and other discounts; **2)** Teacher explains students how to use the discounts in order to buy the most they can with the given money; **3)** Teacher ask the students to make groups of 3 people (11 groups in total) and give each group american currency (each group have different amount of money)

Lesson: **1)** Teacher is going to show the money to the students to introduce each bill and coin; **2)** Teacher is going to present to the student the explanation about the coins use. (penny, nickel, dime, quarter and half dollar); **3)** Teacher asks students to make a grocery list and go to the grocery store to buy the items they need, taking into account how much money they have, each group has to have a client, cashier and a clerk ;**5)** Teacher places a new bulletin board with the coins use explanation to help students to achieve this task ; **6)** Teacher ask students if they need clarification about the topic or the activity; **7)** teacher asks students to prepare their activity which would take around 20 minutes.

Post - Lesson: teacher ask each group to present their simulation.

For research purposes, the proposed lesson plan has three functions: 1) present new vocabulary to the class; 2) evidence the vocabulary level and the management of simple sentences and expressions students have which serve for future lesson plans. and, 3) serve as the first assessment tool activity to determine the English level background knowledge.

It is important to apply regular informal assessments to know the students needs and plan each class according to them.

It is also essential that the teacher ask students if they need clarification during the class presentation and when students prepare their task, this is going to ensure students are able to complete their activity in a successfully way; According to the CEFR to ask for clarification students in level A2: can say he/she did not follow - can signal non-understanding and ask for a word to be spell out. (2018, pg 102).

Assessment

At the grocery store: teacher recreates a supermarket in the classroom where teacher role is: “ clerk” ,and students role is: “customer”. Teacher places grocery item pictures (prices in each item) around the classroom. Also there are information about supermarket schedules and special offers. Each student exam has specification about what they are required to buy in the supermarket and how much their budget is. Students should ask shopping related questions to the teacher. There are five different exams which are going to be randomly distributed, each exam ask different groceries and has different budgets, each exam has one question which need to be asked to the clerk since it is not exhibited in the supermarket, for example, some products do not have the price, and some of them are out of stock . *Questions to the clerk has to be asked in English.

Exam 1.

- 1) Your mom gave you a list of groceries you need to buy in the grocery store. You got 60 dollars. Don't forget your mom's change.

List: mushrooms, croissants, butter, shrimps, BBQ sauce, salt, plums, leeks, tea, orange juice, margarine, courgettes, peas, chickpeas.

- 2) Give some information about the grocery store:

Does the grocery store open on sundays?

Is the grocery store pets friendly?

What offers did you see?

Your change is: _____

Assessment goal: this test aims to observe the communicative competences acquired by the students in a daily life situation. It is valid because is assessing vocabulary and expressions learned in class. It is reliable because is assessing the acquired competences that students need to reach in the A2 level; and, it is feasible.

The assessment activity follows the Action Oriented Approach since it is presented in a familiar situation and it focuses in carry on a daily life task which is to acquire grocery items on a budget (not language related).