

Running head: THE IMPACT OF SABER 11 EXAM ON SOME PRACTICES

The impact of SABER 11 exam on some practices inside a classroom for Teaching English as
a foreign language process

by

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NOTA DE RESPONSABILIDAD

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Resumen

Lo que se ha mencionado anteriormente se puede reflejar en la experiencia de primera mano la escuela secundaria, donde los maestros sólo enseñan la gramática y el vocabulario explícito, debido a esas son las principales habilidades que SABER 11 demandas, los profesionales simplemente omiten los otros componentes tales como escuchar o hablar, y como resultado, este trabajo se propone analizar el impacto Saber 11 exam tiene en la práctica de Inglés de enseñanza dentro de salón de clases, por lo que el desarrollo del problema proporcionará resultados positivos o negativos que deben ser analizados posteriormente.

Abstract

What was previously mentioned can be reflected in high school firsthand experience, where teachers only taught explicit grammar and vocabulary, due to those are the main skills that SABER 11 demands; practitioners simply omitted the other components such as listening or speaking; as a result, this paper intends to analyze the impact Saber 11 exam has on the English-teaching practice inside classroom; thus, developing the problem will provide positive or negative outcomes that must be analyzed subsequently.

Chapter One: Introduction

It has been widely recognized that standardized tests have serious limitations, because they do not fully measure students' higher-order thinking skills (Schmoker 2000). In Colombia the teaching of English is sometimes limited, because some teachers think that it serves only to approve a test such as SABER 11 and for this reason there is a gap between theory and practice (Rosa María Cely H., 2009). SABER 11 is a standardized test, that the government has created for teenagers in high schools in order to promote the superior education and besides it is taken as a requisite item by the universities in the process of admission.

According to the afore mentioned, SABER 11 is divided in two components “common core questions” and “flexible component”; in the “common core questions” the English subject matter is included; consequently some characteristics of this test are comprised according to the new project “Colombia Bilingüe”, which echoes the “Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés”(MEN, 2006);congruently, it structures the levels of proficiency based on The Common European Framework (CEF) where the band scores taken into account for this test go from A1 - A2 elementary level to B1 - B+ pre intermediate; moreover it is relevant to mention that this exam has 45 questions which are divided in seven parts (booklet issued in 2010 the ICFES SABER 11°Qué se evalúa, Cómo se interpretan los resultados individuales):firstly in front of five announcements the student has to decide where they will go, second the student has to match between some words and questions about their definition, third he/she will complete five short conversations, fourth the student will complete a text with words (eight words), at this point there will be a reading comprehension text with 7 questions, then the student will answer five questions based on a reading comprehension text, to finally fill in the ten blanks organized in a different text.

Problem statement

How does Saber 11 exam influence on some practices inside classroom for Teaching English as a foreign language process, in one group of eleventh graders from a public high school in Pasto?

Problem Description

As Saber 11 is an important exam in the Colombian context, as well as it includes an excerpt devoted to the foreign language that the students have to face, this paper is going to be focused on how this exam can affect the different procedures and aspects of the lesson developing that teachers apply in their classes, observing if concepts such as syllabus and lesson planning, or current trends of methodologies are being carried out to convey an appropriate process of English learning; to be more specific it must be checked if teachers are focused on simply teaching skills of grammar, reading and writing because these are the main components comprised in the exam.

Significance of Study

The relevance of this study relays on the awareness of how the test SABER 11 affects the teaching process of a foreign language on students. Furthermore, this study possibly could determine whether the teachers only teach English as a requisite for this test in order to enroll a university program in Colombia or, if they teach English as a means of communication being seen as a whole to be used in different contexts, what enables students to face new world challenges. (Estandares Basicos de la lengua extranjera: Inglés 2010)

On the other hand, it has to be taken into account that this paper is highly relevant for teachers because they are responsible of English instruction; furthermore they act as monitors or advisers in this process; nonetheless, students and institutions are also closely involved due to all of them have to cope to meet the objective and requests implied in the Saber 11 test demands.

Finally, some of the benefits that can come out from this paper are; the fact that teachers can realize about the importance and the different consequences that English has as a global language which results in the improvement of the practices of the language teaching; in addition, they can recognize that EFL Teaching cannot be only treated as a request of a test, but as an important tool in the development of other activities such as the study of a career, or to be put in practice in a real life situations. Congruently, the analysis of the different data collected could provide a feedback that serves to identify students' needs, motivational issues and alternatives offered by teachers to convey improvement of teaching and learning.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To determine the impact of Saber 11 test on some practices inside classroom for Teaching English as a foreign language process ,in a group of eleventh graders from a public high school in Pasto.

Specific objectives

- To establish if teacher's syllabus design and lesson planning are in accordance to the requirements of "Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés".
- To establish if teacher's syllabus design and lesson planning match the Saber 11 test demands or objectives.
- To find out if the methods and procedures applied by teachers reflect communicative principles.

Research Questions

General Question

How does Saber 11 test impact on some practices inside classroom for Teaching English as a foreign language process, in one group of eleventh graders from a public high school in Pasto?

Objective Questions

- Do teachers design syllabi and lesson plans to match the requirements of “Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés”?
- Are the syllabi and lesson plans designed to reflect Saber 11 test demands?
- What kind of methodology and techniques do teachers apply in order to promote the communication in their classes?

Limitations

- It is possible that as researchers do not have access to observe the different methodologies teachers put in practice in their English classes because they could think that we are going to criticize them.
- Teachers could not be used to the concepts of lesson plans and syllabus; thus they would not provide us with the documents we need to analyze.
- The institution and teachers could not have a defined methodology, so the lack of this data could bring some complications to the evaluation and results of the research.

Possible Solutions

- If the institution is not offering the required conditions to carry out the study or it does not have a defined methodology, it will be necessary to apply the observations in a different institution.
- If lesson plans or syllabi are not provided by teachers, a second instance like coordinators or principals should be asked to intervene in the solution of the inconvenient.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The Influence of Standardized Tests on Students

Standardized testing seeks to make sure that all students are involved in adequate processes of education; therefore these tests measure students and school's performance. A great advantage is that standardized tests help to end social promotion because some universities require a standardized test to be enrolled. On the other hand, standardized testing may encourage students to memorize material instead of processing the information naturally, along with the ability to reason with the information. Teachers find this issue stressful, especially for younger students who cannot memorize a great deal of material, and for this reason some teachers feel these tests are pushing teenagers' limits too soon

In addition, many factors influence student reactions to tests, including format, length, time constraints, testing environment, familiarity with test format, perceptions of test validity, and student anxiety, which students feel before and after the test. Besides, when standardized tests are used in accountability systems, they produce the undesirable effect of narrowing the curriculum to factual information or simplistic cognitive tasks. Moreover, the investment and emphasis on the alignment of the curriculum with these tests tends to control educational authority (McNeil 2000)

Syllabus Design

Based on first hand experiences, it could be said that some English language teachers in our context, disregard the fact that syllabus design should be taken as a significant aspect of teaching. Some reasons we could mention are lack of knowledge about the current background of TESOL or their knowledge on the subject matter are archaic; additionally, there exist institutions with people who has not a degree on language teaching (Linares, A. 2011. *El Inglés se enseña de forma muy arcaica aún: Experta en Bilingüismo*. El tiempo.com). As a result, the misconceptions about the definitions of syllabus appear, and a

negative outcome of this condition is the use of textbooks as a way of syllabus, taking the objectives and content provided here, without the evaluation of learners needs, context or conditions of teaching, or an adequate assessment criteria. It means that teachers in these cases are simply indifferent towards what a syllabus should be composed.

In order to support this fact, Breen (2001) explained that a syllabus is a planning based on the goals of a course. Subsequently, it embraces various elements such as: aims, content, methodology and evaluation. The content to be selected is specified clearly, presenting learners what is going to be learned. The techniques to be applied to teach the content are referred to methodology, while the outcomes of learners are assessed by the evaluation process. The syllabus can be carried out as a long term and pre-designed document or a syllabus that is developed as lessons progress, selecting content daily. Breen (2001) argued that a well-planned syllabus would serve as framework of knowledge and content that brings orientation and continuity to the teaching and learning process; as well as it provides a record for other teachers about the topics studied in the course and a base for evaluating learners' progress.

The latter are reasons for teachers to give syllabus design the importance in the practice of the profession and their responsibilities and it simply demonstrates their professionalism.

Moreover, the use of syllabus brings multiple conveniences when well-designed; such as been a document which can be administered multiple times within a variety of courses with some few arranges that fit the context and learners needs, as well as the aspects that can be left out when necessary. It is an aspect that brings teachers more reasons to stick to the habit of designing this tool. What is more, the practices of teaching become enriched with the benefits of creative and non-improvisation based processes because of planning and previous preparations of teaching.

In addition, Nunan (1988) gives a distinction between concepts of syllabus design and methodology which is relevant for this research. Nunan claimed that syllabus design is related to content selection and grading, while methodology refers to tasks and activities that are chosen in order to facilitate learning.

The contribution of Breen and Nunan regarding the two concepts leads the effort of professionals of language teaching to recognize methodology as part of their planning when teaching a course; what results in a process of selecting appropriate methodologies or approaches to language teaching settled under the language needs and conditions.

As we can see, theory on syllabus design exposes a framework to compare the current situation in the context chosen for this paper and the desired aspects of this important feature in language teaching. Consequently, Gross (2006) exposes the basic elements composing a well-organized syllabus, these elements should contain:

1. General course information providing course name, schedule and course calendar.
2. Objectives settled upon the identification of needs and possible conditions such as age, level, and reasons for learning a language, even strengths and weaknesses based on previous assessment. It is basically aimed to fit the benefits acquired by learners after finishing a course. Nunan (1988) makes an important contribution about this notion saying that exposing learner's reasons for learning a language and teachers expectations for the process in classroom it brings as the exercise contributes to select the content and learning activities; furthermore, the appreciation and acceptance towards the learning experience becomes greater if learners are aware of objectives and the terms of the whole course.
3. Selection of course content aimed to reach the objectives.
4. Definition of the approach of teaching that best suits the course regarding the content and goals previously established.

5. After the methodology, the audience and content is delimited, the material and the resources have to be selected. The availability and adequacy must be analyzed to this means.
6. Schedule arrangement that contains deadlines for activities, assignments, tests, projects, etc.
7. The assessment procedures are explicit providing clear criteria for assessing, describing relevant aspects like format, quantity, percentages for the administration for tests and papers or projects.

The elements previously enlisted, are the structure to obtain a well-designed syllabus; but it is not conclusive as we have to pay attention to the teaching conditions involving more details to be added to this public document. As an example, working with undergraduate learners or adults that are characterized by being responsible and independent enough get a mayor profit of a syllabus that provides a reference about the course. In such situation, Nunan (1988) suggests to go further and include more aspects like course requirements, additional activities or even student responsibilities; comprising developmental rules regarding participation and penalization for non-accomplished tasks like tests, activities or missing classes.

Additionally to the components that a syllabus should contain, Breen (2001) presented four principles of organization that define a syllabus. According to Breen, the main principle is the focus on the language skills that have to be fostered through the syllabus. As a second principle, refers to the content which must be fixed in relation to the linguistic and communicative focus. The subsequent principle should be concerned to the organization of the content into systematic parts that guarantee the optimal development of the teaching and learning processes. As a consequence, the content that has already been organized must be sequenced in order to provide a progressive process, going from lower to higher level of

complexity and leading the gradual development of language abilities; independent to the choice of the syllabus designer who would opt for a cyclic progress trying to refine the features of language that have been previously worked.

As a personal point of view, the disparities between the appropriate syllabus design and the processes carried in Colombia do not allow learners or teachers to reach the desired standards abided by the government. The proficiency levels marked by the Common European Framework are the standards that Colombian students from all the educative levels have to reach; as a result, learners are required to have an accurate and fluent management of the language; nonetheless this goal will be lying far from success unless syllabus relevance is clearly understood.

Syllabus Types.

Along the time, multiple language assumptions have shaped the Syllabus design. It has been already stated that it is mandatory for syllabus designers to analyze learning conditions in order to set the adequate type of syllabus. The evolution of various models of syllabi has been similar to the progression of the language teaching approaches, in response to different movements' contributions and its relative reactions of opposite parts, arguing different basis for teaching organization.

A double- side distinction is mentioned by Nunan (1988) related to *synthetic* and *analytical syllabi*. The first one implies the organization of content regarding structural, lexical, notional, functional and situational topical aspects of language, learning the language in isolated features acquired gradually. Nevertheless, Nunan (1988) also said there is a rejection tendency towards this kind of syllabus as educators aim to associate grammar within functional and notional items. As a summary, Wilkins (as cited in Finch, 2000) explains that such notion suggest that learners are thought to be able to learn a language as separate pieces; therefore, these pieces are joined together functionally if speakers require to communicate.

Alternatively, Wilkins (as cited in Finch, 2000) added that an analytical syllabus is prepared based on the assumption that the language can be learned upon purposes or objectives that lead to multiple language performances conveying the achievement of the determined objective. Likewise, the analytical syllabi establish a division of the language in parts in view of learners' ability to infer or deduce language rules without explicit linguistic description. As an example, it can be mentioned the procedural, process and task-based syllabi

The formal syllabus.

According to Finch (2000), the characteristics of this kind of syllabus permits to categorize it as a synthetic syllabus. The behaviorist theories have grounded this notion, and the content is shaped by the grammar structures which are presented in in relation to its complexity going from easy to more difficult forms. Obviously this condition gives no place to communicative approaches for teaching, as elements are isolated, developing the receptive skills first to then work on accurate production of the language.

Accordingly, Breen (2001) argued that a formal notion intends to develop knowledge on grammatical structures, systems and rules of phonology, morphology, and vocabulary. This theory implies that the content must be sequenced depending on aspects such as complexity, frequency, or even usefulness. In contrast, Finch (2000) exposes the advantages this syllabus could represent for teachers, because of the metalinguistic awareness stimulation, besides the facility to organize and evaluate content; which would result in certain instance appropriate for adult learners who feel confident when working under organized parameters.

Notional-functional syllabus.

In response to the formal figure, the notional-functional syllabus appears combining two elements saying the opposite statements. White (as cited in Raine, 2010) stated that a notional

aspect involves conceptions about time, space, movement or the effects and its causes; although, the functional side embraces the intention behind the use of language, it means what we can obtain by means of communication. Reilly (1988) quotes Wilkins' (1972) proposal of the notional-functional syllabus, where production is seen more relevant due to the content used functionally in real life situations, focuses on speech acts, like descriptions, explanations, requesting. Concepts like interaction and learners centered classes appear, nonetheless the content results to be subdivided so the assessment seems to be affected negatively. An additional characteristic presented by Finch (2000) is the sequences of the functions which are settled in a top-down scheme.

The procedural syllabus.

This syllabus appeared in the 1960's with proponents such as Prabhu and Romany; according to Finch (2000) they were the principal authors. The characteristics of this procedural syllabus, show that despite there exist a focus on interaction and meaningfulness of language the content has no appropriate order and do not meet requirements as it does not contains components of assessment or evaluation, what gives a sense of arbitrary design. Prabhu's '*Bangalore Project* (1980) was the starting point of the procedural syllabus; conceiving structure to be learned properly when the attention of learners is addressed to meaning. Greenwood (as cited in Finch, 2000) stated that there is a change of the focus from linguistic aspects to the pedagogical aspect of the tasks. When selecting tasks and activities the planning is done previously, but the linguistic content is not taken into consideration. Then, the procedures for this syllabus are settled and graded into groups of similar concepts. Being so, it could be said that aspects of order, grading, or selection of the content are to certain extend neglected. Some common tasks to be mentioned are information- gap and opinion-gap activities, procedures that help learners acquire the language unconsciously, whereas they are aware of the meaning during the task solving process. Furthermore, Rabbini

(2002) considered it from the perspective of a process instead of a product. In other words, the objective behind the planning

Lesson Planning

Lesson planning becomes a relevant tool for teachers especially for novice teachers; this is why it can be described as a proposal for taking action in classroom and have most of the issues covered. Besides, it can be developed as a formal document in case some institutions could require them, or a planning can be made just as some personal notes to remind the procedures to be taken into account.

According to Harmer (as quoted by Larsen-Freeman 1991), planning a lesson can be carried out through out a series of basic steps; which are considered as pre- planning. Pre-planning embraces all the general aspects to be taken into account before we face a group; essentially we must understand what are the basic needs of Ss as well as their context (educational and cultural background, motivational levels and possible learning styles). This information as in every aspect of teaching gives the teachers a sense of what the goals are and what the means for those goals must be set. Moreover, as the lesson planning is influenced by the creation of curriculum and syllabus, the latter concepts must be also considered inside the pre-planning.

Harmer, detailed some of the elements that have great weight in the process of planning a class. He argued that the activities involved in the class are the first element to be considered, this is because when deciding what activities are more suitable for certain group we can guarantee in some way that the Ss are going to be engaged in the different exercises planned. Usually, what is most likely is to provide a variety of activities around one lesson, so the students are provided with different opportunities to use the language.

In a second instance, it is mandatory to think about the skills that we as teachers want to foster inside classroom. If we are working under the framework of a syllabus, it is already

covered; nonetheless, some planning about how the skills are going to be worked including the sub skills to be integrated. On the other hand we have to evaluate the language to be practiced in the class session, according to Harmer, it must be considered as one part of planning not just the definition of a set of drills to dominate a specific form of the language. It has to be guided to obtain variety in the practice of teaching and has to be attained to the aims of our course.

Consequently, the concept of Content is also included in the planning of the lesson. Content is not only a way to provide interest on students and get them involved with the topics we offer, but is a tool that can have negative impact if not selected properly. However, the role that teacher plays in choosing the content as well as the activities and language infers on the success the lesson can have when well prepared, and the content selected if it is not always interesting for all of the students, then the skills of teachers to find out how to work better with this is crucial.

After the statement and analysis of the previous elements, the process of planning the lesson formally can take place. This point is variable depending on the multiple situations and experience of the teacher; in this way, there may be some teachers who make decisions some few minutes before entering the classroom; in the other hand, there are some of them who rather developing a more structured plan containing a detailed format of what the lesson will be based on. In certain cases, teachers have to struggle with the pressure of time and overwork; then, it is easier for them to let the course books do the planning work but it could imply some issues if it is not evaluated the context and conditions of the different groups to whom the lesson is addressed. (Rinvolucris, M. as cited by Harmer, 1996).

Rinvolucris stayed that the case of the teachers who go into a classroom with no further pre-planning may be acceptable to certain extend; due to the practice of teaching can turn the process into something rutinary and mechanized, instead of that, the author suggest that this

practice may lead to a positive form of precise diagnose on the run of the teaching development. This idea requires the teachers to be really proficient, even more, really experienced in order to have success with this method, otherwise, the result could be negative and what is more worrying is the lost or misleading of the goals for a course. (Malamah-Thomas 1987). Therefore, teachers must always have in mind what the aims for the lesson are; regardless the kind of planning they rather to use.

The parts on a formal plan. As it has been mentioned previously, the use of a formal plan is not a rule but it is essential for all of us to know what the structure of this format is in order to study the functionality and applicability for different circumstances. We must take into consideration that we can be required in any moment to be evaluated or observed, then we can be sure that our planning is correctly devoted to what we want to achieve.

Description. A general description of the course can contain the number of students, categorization of the learning styles as well as the psychological or socio-economic conditions of learners. For some teacher it is important to include more details such as the behavioral items in classroom, response of students to certain activities or disposition to cope in classroom activities.

If possible, the teacher can make an individual description in order to proceed under specific needs of learners; nonetheless, it results to be really demanding and it gives a better result if the number of students in a group is low.

Into the description, a time reference can be adjusted, so the practitioner is aware of what the point of the process is placed, offering a framework of the content and experienced gained by the group of students along the time spent on the course and it permits to diagnose easily the future actions to take place in class sessions.

Lesson objectives. Planning a lesson must include the idea of what the teacher wants the students to perform or the goals to be met. This also permits at the end of a class to

measure whether the process has offered a desired outcome or it needs to be reorganized to get those goals. The objectives can be subdivided from general objectives to specific objectives into a single class or session.

Methodology in language teaching

Language teachers are familiar with the intended outcomes of language teaching, specifically, for students to use the new language in speech and in writing for a variety of purposes and in a range of contexts. Also nowadays teachers have access to many textbooks setting out activities for doing this. It is important to take into consideration the fact, that for as long as people have been learning and teaching languages, and because of this event, it has been a continual dispute about what the best way of carrying out those processes is. Much current teaching practice is the direct outcome of such constructive argument.

In accordance with Jeremy Harmer (1998); there have been five teaching models which teachers and trainers still refer to. They are Grammar-translation, Audio-lingualism, PPP, Task-Based Learning, and Communicative Language Teaching. Grammar-translation is probably the most commonly method used of teaching languages for hundreds of years, and it is still practiced in many situations. In this method teachers think that, by analyzing the grammar structures and by finding equivalents between the language students speak, and the language to be studied, learners will be able to learn how the foreign language is constructed. It is remarkable to say that most language learners translate in their minds at several stages in any case; but to be focused just on this fact stops students from getting the kind of natural language input, which is important to help them to acquire and activate their language knowledge.

Audio-lingualism is a method heavily based on behaviorist theories of learning, which suggest that much learning is the result of habit formation through conditioning. As a result of this, audio-lingual classes focus on long repetition drills stages, where the teacher hoped that

the students would acquire good language habits, by rewarding correct production during these repetition phases. However, it is interesting to observe that drilling is still popular during some stages of the learning process, especially for low-level students.

PPP, this set for Presentation, Practice and Production and besides is similar to the straight arrows kind of lesson described above; in PPP classes, the teacher presents the context and the situation for the language and both explains and shows the meaning and form of the new language; after that, the students practice making sentences, before going on to the production stage in which they talk freely about themselves or about the real world. This method is appropriate for teaching at lower levels, but not for learners when already knows a lot of language.

Task – Based Learning this method is focus on the task rather that the language itself. Here student will be encouraged to produce language by themselves about a determinate topic, for example learners ask information about train and bus timetables and to get correct answers, so teachers give them the timetables and they then try and complete the task; after, perhaps, hearing someone else do it or asking for examples of the kind of the language they might want use. When they have completed the task, if it is necessary teacher could give them a bit of language study to clear up some of the problems presented during the task.

Communicative Language Teaching has two main trends: the first, is that language is not only parts or grammar structure, it also involves functions such as inviting, agreeing, suggesting etc., which students learn how to use, besides they to be aware of the needs of appropriacy when talking and writing to people in terms of the kind of the language they use; the second stand for this method is developed form the idea that students have to be exposure to language, real situations in order to have opportunities for its use. Communicative Language Teaching has had a good effect in teaching, since it reminded teacher that people learn languages not so that they “know” them, but so that they can communicate.

Teaching listening

It is important to take into account that, this skill should precede speaking, besides teachers have to know that is impossible to expect a student to produce a sound which does not exist in his/her mother tongue, or a natural sentence using the stress, rhythms and intonation of a native speaker of the foreign language without first of all providing him/her with a model of the form he/she is expecting to produce; so if a teacher attempts that his/her students attain oral fluency or accuracy, the reasonable first step, is to consider the learner's ability to listen.

There is a clear parallel between the listening and reading with understanding are receptive (but not passive) decoding skills; but linguistics believe that a listener is involved in guessing, anticipating, checking interpreting, interacting and organizing by associating and accommodating their prior knowledge of meaning and form.

In accordance with Mecheal Rost (1991) listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input to the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin.

On the other hand, the teacher may be aware that his students cannot understand ordinary colloquial English as used by native-speakers. In this case, his aim would be rather to create a more general familiarity not only with the phonological characteristics of conversation (especially the stress, rhythm and intonation patterns), but also with the lexis and grammar typical of this style of discourse. He would then set his class to listen to a passage of natural English speech suitable to their level.

Extensive Listening. Extensive listening can be used for two different purposes. A very basic use is the re-presentation of already known material in a new environment. This could be a recently taught structure or, say, a lexical set which was introduced months before and needs revision. The advantage of exposing the student to old material in this way is that

he sees it in action in a genuine, natural environment rather than in the classroom context in which it was probably first presented.

Extensive listening can serve the further function of letting the student hear vocabulary items and structures which are as yet unfamiliar to him, interposed in the flow of language which is within his capacity to handle. There might be unknown, rather technical words or an unfamiliar verb form.

Intensive listening. Whereas extensive listening is concerned with the freer, more general listening to natural English, not necessarily under the teacher's direct guidance, intensive listening is concerned, in a much more controlled technique, with just one or two specific points. There is one important division to be made; the listening can be primarily for language items as part of the language teaching program, or it can be principally for general comprehension and understanding.

In intensive listening, the vocabulary of conversation is often fundamentally different from the written language with which the student is probably more familiar, consequently listening to conversations is invaluable for learners because in this way they will become familiar with their ear to what they would hear if they have the opportunity to go abroad; so teacher must present to his/her students available passages with more well-known, colloquial lexical items and concentrate on a possible real situation, rather than in explicit grammar structure; but also, listening can be useful for grammatical as well as lexical purposes; so, in this case teacher must present authentic material with a high incidence of a given grammatical feature.

A very simple way to practice this type of listening is to have the students listen without a written text once or twice to a passage containing several sentence connectors, then teacher will give them a written text with blanks where the connectors are. Their task is to fill them in without listening to the tape again.

To conclude is also important to know that several students have a tendency to practice listening comprehension line by line, without attempting to get an overall understanding of the passage; for this reason is important to keep in mind the type of question used; the simplest are yes/no answers to questions and true/false exercises. Blank-filling can direct attention to key-words and phrases. Beyond the purely accurate questions such as these, other sorts depend on inferences being made from the passage, this last exercise could be difficult for the student, as it demands that not only understands what the passage says, but also what it implies.

Teaching Speaking

Speaking skill is regarded as the measure of knowing a language and it is considered as the most important skill that learners can acquire, and also it is determined by fluency which is considered the ability to talk with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language.

It is necessary that teachers talk to students about the importance of recognizing that speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

1. Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation
2. Functions (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building)
3. Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what contexts, about what, and for what reason.

One of the methods which emphasizes in teaching this skill is the communicative model, where instructors help their students develop this part of knowledge by providing

authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. They help their students develop the ability to produce grammatically correct, logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts, and to do so using acceptable pronunciation.

Goals and Techniques for Teaching Speaking. The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative effectiveness. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, teachers can use a balanced activities approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves.

Language input may be content oriented or form oriented.

1. Content-oriented input focuses on information, whether it is a simple weather report or an extended lecture on an academic topic. Content-oriented input may also include descriptions of learning strategies and examples of their use.
2. Form-oriented input focuses on ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or another source on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (linguistic competence); appropriate things to say in specific contexts (discourse competence); expectations for rate of speech, pause length, turn-taking, and other social aspects of language use (sociolinguistic competence); and explicit instruction in phrases to use to ask for clarification and repair miscommunication (strategic competence).

Structured output focuses on correct form. In structured output, students may have options for responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific form or structure that the teacher has just introduced. Structured output is designed to make learners comfortable producing specific language items recently introduced, sometimes in combination with previously learned items. Instructors often use structured output exercises as a transition between the presentation stage and the practice stage of a lesson plan. textbook exercises also often make good structured output practice activities.

In communicative output, the learners' main purpose is to complete a task, such as obtaining information, developing a travel plan, or creating a video. To complete the task, they may use the language that the instructor has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know. In everyday communication, spoken exchanges take place because there is some kind of information gap between the participants. Communicative output activities involve a similar real information gap. In order to complete the task, students must reduce or eliminate the information gap. In these activities, language is a tool, not an end in itself.

In a balanced activities approach, the teacher uses a variety of activities from these different categories of input and output, in order to encourage students, obtain the expected results and an excellent quality in the teaching; it doesn't matter if learners are at a proficiency or beginner level, because the benefit and the main achievement from this variety; it is more motivating, and it is also more likely to result in effective language learning.

Teaching Reading

There are several reasons why getting students involve in reading is an important part of teaching English; some of those reasons are learners want to be able to read texts in English either for their careers, for study purposes or simple pleasure, if the text is interesting and engaging it will be very useful in the teaching, in as much as students will be expose to

the language. Besides reading texts also provide good models for English writing, opportunities to study language such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way learners construct sentences, paragraphs and texts. Lastly, good reading texts can introduce interesting topics; simulate discussion, and imaginative responses

There has been frequent discussion about what kinds of reading of texts are suitable for English language students. The greatest controversy has centered on whether the texts should be “authentic” or not. That is because people have worried about more traditional language-teaching materials which tended to look artificial and to use over-simplified language which any native speaker would find laughable and untypical. It is important to take into account that there must be a balance between real English on the one hand and the students’ capabilities and interests on the other.

There is some authentic written material which beginner students can understand to some degree: menus, timetables, signs and basic instructions, for example, and, where appropriate, we can use these. But for longer style, we may want to offer our students texts which, while being like English, are nevertheless adapted especially for their level. The important fact is that such are as much like real English as possible. The topics and types of reading text are significance, the relevant fact here it is that teacher has to take into consideration some details to apply a suitable type of reading such as students’ interests, careers, classroom goals; among the things the teacher might want learners to read are magazine, letters, stories, menus, advertisements, reports, play extracts, recipes, instructions, poems and reference material.

On the other hand, students need to be able to do a number of things with a reading text, they need to be able to scan the reading, which means that they do not have to read every word and line; on the contrary, such an approach would stop them scanning successfully. Students need to be able to skim a text to obtain a general idea of what it is

about; whether readers scan or skim depends on what kind of text they are reading and what they want to get out of it. One of the teacher's functions when training learners to read is not only to persuade them of the advantages of skimming and scanning, but also to make them see that the way they read is vitally important.

Reading principles.

1. Reading is not a passive skill.

To do it successfully, we have to understand what the words mean, understand the arguments, and work out if we agree with them if students and teacher do not get this point, so we only just scratch the surface of the text and we quickly forget it.

2. Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

If students do not feel engaged with what they are reading, they are less likely to benefit from it; but if they are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them

3. Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.

The meaning, the message of the text, is just as important and teachers must give students a chance to respond to that message in some way, besides they should be allowed to express what they think about the topic, so this incites personal engagement with it and the language.

4. Prediction is a major factor in reading

In general when we read texts in our language we frequently have an idea of the content before we actually read. For example book covers, give an idea of what is in the book; at the moment when we get this hint, our brain starts predicting what we are going to read. Teachers must give students "hints" so that they can predict what's coming too, it will make them better and more engaged readers.

5. Match the task to the topic

Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read it is necessary to choose reading tasks. The most interesting text can be undermined by asking boring and inappropriate questions; the most commonplace passage can be made really exciting with imaginative and challenging tasks.

6. Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full

Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions and so on. Good teachers include the reading text into interesting class sequence, using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for Study and later Activation.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is an integrated part of foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance to a substantial extent. In spite of, the teaching of EFL pronunciation has received varied treatment from having no room in the synthetic syllabus and the grammar-translation method to being the main focus in the situational syllabus and the audio-lingual method in which emphasis is put on the traditional notions of pronunciation, minimal pairs, drills and mini-conversations. And with the advent of communicative language teaching in the late 1960s (Richards and Rodgers, 1986), the role of pronunciation in the EFL curriculum started facing questions: whether the focus of the programs and the instructional methods were effective or not.

The value of teaching foreign language pronunciation is a widely debated matter in the language teaching world. Purcell and Suter (1980:286) hold that pronunciation practice in the class has little effect on the learner's pronunciation skills and, moreover 'that the achievement of accurate pronunciation in a second language is a matter substantially beyond the control of educators'. Nonetheless, pronunciation is definitely the biggest thing that people notice when a person is speaking.

Grammar.

Hinkel and Fotos (2002) also say that learners who are between the age of 15 are more susceptible to this problem since they are persons who acquire a considerable level of the second language to be able to communicate even with grammar errors, and many people who learn English as their second language do not get the negative feedback that would allow them know if they are doing something wrong.

Grammar teaches how to build sentences, about the types of words that people use, when it is important to use it, and how to use them in a specific sentence, as a result, understanding grammar will mean that you can think more logically, since without coherence and organization you cannot make understandable what you want to say; so, as more grammar rules you understand, your communication is going to be clearer.

Grammar is important because it is what makes possible for everybody to communicate and understand what people say. Grammar names the types of words and word groups that make up sentences not only in English but in any language since being able to talk about how sentences are built and they are coherent, means that one knows about grammar.

Chapter Three: Methodology**Methodological Design**

According to the research problem and the theoretical framework for this research paper it is going to be applied an ethnographic descriptive research; basically, quantitative research will be presented for gathering numerical data about the information discovered in the teaching practices. It is also, relevant to take into consideration that ethnography assumes that researchers must first discover what people actually do and the reasons they give for doing it; then this kind of research methodology is significant in order to reveal the facts or information required to meet the objectives. As a subsequent result, it would be possible for the researchers to be acknowledged of real conditions and contrast them in an appropriate teaching process.

According to the afore, the investigation best fits with teachers' practices because the information provided by the research instruments can demonstrate if educators are teaching English just to get a desired score in the test subject of study, or they teach English under a set of principles coming from new trends in the field of teaching which pursue pertinent and engaging EFL learning processes. Results will be also presented to give suggestions aiming to the adequacy of teaching that embrace terms such as syllabus, lesson plans, even methodology to be used in classes.

Design

It is going to be a ethnographic descriptive research because this study will provide an accurate interpretation of characteristics of a particular situation in a group of eleventh graders; moreover, this research will describe existing conditions and provide relevant data serving to analyze reasons that affect the choice of teaching methodologies and techniques, regarding the demands of the government with SABER 11 test.

According to the previously described, the categorization of information, the description, and analysis of data will show the different incidences that standardized tests like SABER 11 have on English-teaching process for eleventh graders in a public high school in Pasto. The choice of an ethnographic descriptive research emerge from the intention of examining the situations that learners experience in classrooms by means of direct observations; tracing how teachers apply their methodology and its real purpose which could infer in the second language teaching process.

The use of quantitative research permits to show some differences existing between the methodology of teaching and the goals set from the standards; permitting to find not only variations, but also the role that teachers might handle regarding the feature that learners have to be taught English as a whole and not the skills that teachers could consider the most

important when they take into account other achievements, as an example, the results of a test such as SABER 11.

Beyond the former aspect, it is an ethnographic descriptive study because it is necessary to interpret the material collected to provide evidence which aims teachers to be aware of the importance of setting appropriate goals for EFL teaching.

Sample

In this research 22 students of eleventh grade of the public high School Ciudadela Educativa will be observed. It is necessary to select one course in a high school which has about 13 men and 9 women students and their ages are between 16 and 19 years old.

Population

The public high School Ciudadela Educativa from Pasto is going to participate in this study, with one group of eleventh graders that is going to be selected at random.

Procedure

A group of the public high School Ciudadela Educativa is going to be selected. It is necessary to choose a group of students and a teacher to make direct observations and to collect some information on the English- teaching process taking into account the influence of the standardized test SABER 11; additionally there must exist an analysis of documents regarding class and content preparation such as lesson plans or syllabi. Some classes will be observed in order to analyze how teachers apply their methodology on the teaching of English and what facts are considered to teach it; furthermore, this study could expose if SABER 11 test represents an influence on teaching.

Instruments

In this study a series of documents such as, lesson plans, syllabi, classroom observations, check lists and surveys are going to be used with students and teachers in order

to collect information and determine whether the SABER 11 test has an impact or not on the English- teaching process in the public high School Ciudadela Educativa.

Validity

The validity of this field research could be supported since it will make use of some research procedures applied to actual second language learners, which show real data that could be matched up to another studies; furthermore the theory showed in the second chapter will serve as a complement in order to support investigation.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

Taking into account the information presented in literature review regarding the idea that a standardized test such as Saber 11 could have a certain impact on some methodological aspects on the English teaching, different classroom observations were developed in eleventh-graders from Ciudadela high-school in Pasto. The observations were done in a classroom where the students' ages ranged from 15 to 19 years old.

Trying to obtain a systematic set of gathered information, three different formats of classroom observation were applied in order to evidence if the procedures carried out in classroom are aimed to an specific purpose such as the standardized test Saber 11 demands or appropriate objectives of a regular English course. A first format was thought to enquire on how classes are developed for the aims of progress on the four skills and sub-skills, while a second layout was applied to the parts of the lesson that takes place. The final format was attained to check what are the class objectives based on the “Estándares básicos de competencia en lengua extranjera” or the requirements of the test Saber 11. The results can be measured under two concepts, applied or not applied checking the boxes for each class. The numbers of occurrences are transformed into percentages that sustain the comments carried out by the observers about the general development of the classes.

Skills development

The type of the activities developed play a relevant role in the learning and teaching process, and these results show how these skills are worked along the classes. According to authors such as Harmer and ideal class would be where the four skills are integrated, where the students have the opportunity of producing language by themselves; in this case skills must not be thought separately they must be thought as whole if teacher wants to obtain good results at the end of the process. On the other hand teacher has to take into consideration the main goals of the course, that in this case it is based on the “Estándares básicos de competencia en lengua extranjera” where the students at this level must have an English level with B1. This information can be seen in the results found in the classroom observation

Category	Percentage
Listening	17%
Speaking	17%
Reading	83%
Writing	0%

Regarding listening skill, it shows a low percentage of development along the classes as well as the speaking category, the skill that has the major weight is reading which contrasts from writing that has no relevance at all. Depending on this information it could be said that most activities lead in the classroom are based on reading comprehension, translation, pronunciation and memorizing grammar structure and vocabulary, these activities are centered in Saber 11 demands, besides teachers do not use listening and speaking activities due to these two skills do not appear in the test, but also there are other reasons not to do that, such as number of students, lack of time and the demands of the Institution to get a good score on this Exam.

Sub-skills development

Category	Percentage
Grammar	100%
Vocabulary	0%
Pronunciation	33%

As the grammar item seems to be one of the important elements on the exam, it could be seen that the total of the classes were devoted to foster this skill, in combination with the reading practices; pronunciation was given an space when students were asked to read the text provided in class with a minimal percentage of opportunities to do that. Finally vocabulary was neglected, the only attempts to work on this sub-skill was by means of memorizing but any suitable practice in classes.

Lesson development

As a goal of this research paper is to determine the impact of the Saber 11 test on some methodological aspects; the lesson planning, syllabus design, activities, techniques must be taken into account to see to what extend the learning and teaching process are carried out in the classrooms; the elements mentioned before are parts of the framework of the teaching process and throughout the observations it can be stated whether appropriate sequence in the learning or it has been deviated because of the needs of getting the desired results on a standardized test like Saber 11.

Category	Percentage
Methodologies matching communicative approach	33%

Content and methodologies reflecting syllabus	0%
Extensive use of L2	67%
Goals of class matching lesson plan	0%
Classes focused on grammar	67%
Grammar integrated deductively	0%
Content contextualized	67%
Interaction and practice in class	0%
Tasks and activities used to produce language	0%

As it can be observed in chart number 3, the categories that have the most relevant influence in the teaching process are classes focused on grammar, the content is contextualized and the extensive use of L2. Most of the classes are taught with explicit grammar rules because learners are used to learn in this way and they find difficult to deduce the grammar structure by themselves, besides it isn't regarded the connection in how people use the language (it's function) with the grammar (the form), because there are not enough communicative process Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman (1999), when they have not developed the skills completely, besides teachers find this sub-skill very important in order to obtain good results in the Saber 11 exam; in spite of that condition, some the classes tend to have contextualized content and extensive use of L2, for example giving frequent instructions using L2 or providing texts or reading with real information about the context.

Finally in the chart above, the categories which have a minimal percentage reveal that there are no a use of tasks and activities which allow students to produce language by themselves, or any kind of interaction. Talking about the content and methodology reflected

on the syllabus, it could be said those are no organized in a coherent sequence despite the topics shown on the syllabus (plan de aula) are reflected in classes but there is no path to evaluate the process As teachers argue that they do not follow a formal format it is not possible to compare if they are achieving the goal set for each class.

Syllabus Objectives

In this apart, the content and design of the syllabus of the English course for the group belonging to the research is going to be analyzed and compared to the specifications given in documents like the Estandares Basicos de competencia en lengua extranjera and the document to interpret the results of Saber 11 exam. As matter of fact, the high school chosen to run the research provided a document called “Plan de Aula” and the information given here was taken as the parallel instrument of the syllabus adapted for this context.

1. Taking into account the syllabus objectives there are some items such as reading comprehension that is reflected by means of questions based on a text, in spite of this, the document shows the activities as means for the learning process but as a goal to achieve a good result on the Saber 11 exam.
2. Due to the plan de aula does not specify certain materials to be used along the course it is not possible to say whether these are providing useful context.
3. Regarding the “Estandares Basicos de competencia en lengua extranjera” most of the communicative competences do not match the methodological techniques that appear in the plan de aula, such as “daily life expressions” “short dialogues”and “role-play”
4. Revising the format of this plan de aula it has been found that some principles mentioned do not make part of this document what leaves some gaps concerning the activities and the timeline to develop the course.
5. According to the plan de aula it is possible to observe that some of the achievements presented in the document “Estandares Basicos de competencia en lengua extranjera” are

taking into consideration such as reading comprehension, question analysis, presenting information based on a text, but one of the main goals like cultural values identification it is not mentioned because this document does not present authentic materials to be worked on classes.

6. Finally this plan de aula states some information where the student will be able to produce short paragraphs and sentences identifying the tense on them even though this document does not reveal any useful strategies to achieve the goals.

To summarize it is necessary to say that most of the activities that take place in classroom do not illustrate the objectives presented in the “plan de aula” because along the observation in the classroom it could be observed that teachers focus their classes on memorizing vocabulary, with some context, and presenting explicit grammar rules where the students are not going to be able to produce an accurate language proficiency, in addition teacher did not provide place to interact among themselves or at least teacher did not give reliable activities to put in practice what they have learnt.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

As the literature review leads us to the consciousness of processes and practices in classroom to foster adequate learning and teaching, it is mandatory to conclude with some recommendations of the conditions presented in the current research. We have mentioned that the inclusion of multiple skills to be developed along a course in a determined pace and periodicity is essential to reach the objectives we propose for this one. Taking into account Harmer there are four aspects that students need to do with the language which they are learning: be exposed to it, understand its meaning, understand its form and practiced it; and taking into account Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés, students must be prepared to real situations where they can practice what they have been

learning inside the classroom and teachers have to prepare adequate “educational activities” where students have the opportunity of learning a new language and interacting among them

Nonetheless the settings and context of our country tend to change the play rules. which teachers have to face daily in their labors accomplishment. One of the most relevant or evident features that tend to be neglected due to the former mentioned, is the use of language in a communicatively way. As this keystone condition in classroom is not presented we may recommend that the knowledge and boundaries of methods applicability in high school must be regulated through the design of internal policies due to the government demands that students should obtain at the end of high school a B1 level aiming to guarantee the effectiveness of the processes that take place in the Institution.

Furthermore, during the process of acquiring a new foreign language, teachers must take into account the main goals in this case based on the paper Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés that should be reflected in the syllabus (plan de aula) when planning the course including teaching techniques and materials in order to obtain the desired results, likewise teachers cannot deny the existence of Saber 11 achievements in eleventh grade, so they have to create activities where the integration of both goals take place.

According to the afore that come out from this research it is the need of changing the old method of grammar instruction or at least taking into account some new trends for example communicative language teaching where the instruction is meaning-based and gives priority to fluency and accuracy (Spada); despite this, it is possible to neglect Hinkel and Fotos (2002) studies which express that learners of a second language do not become proficient if they do not understand a basic structure that is only provided by grammar studies, and in addition taking into account SABER 11 demands grammar is relevant too, but it must not be taught through repetition or explicit instruction as it could be observed in the research, for making it possible, different materials can be used for teaching grammar, for

example using a textbook let teacher and students to follow an order with the grammar topics, and the diverse activities found in it are useful for students when learning the grammar topic since it can provide them the correct context in which it has to be used.

Regarding Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés teachers must explore all the new technology that the world offers today such as music and internet and besides it encourages to teach English through other subjects, changing the paradigm of teaching English to score in an exam, as consequence English could be seen as a very important tool which students can use in order to extend their world and their knowledge, what teachers can do related to the exam it is to show learners its structure and give them some strategies to get good results on it.

Finally as the conditions observed in the study, evidences the lack of conditions for teaching English it is fundamental to cope with new proposals to arrange the issue. Then, this study may serve for subsequent researchers who could be interested in bringing out solutions or lead a new perspective that fits the context in which the results have been obtained

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APPENDIX A**Classroom observation check list****Skills develop in class**

The following format is aimed to gather information through a class observation in “I.E.M Ciudadela” as part of the field research paper “The impact of SABER 11 exam on some practices inside classroom for Teaching English as a foreign language process”

Put a tick in the square of each item if it is “applied” or mark an X if it is “not applied”

Category	Skills worked in class							Total tallies
English in use	Main skills							
	Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Listening							
	Speaking							
	Reading							
	Writing							
	Sub-skills							
	Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Grammar							
	Vocabulary							
	Pronunciation							

APPENDIX B**Classroom observation check list****Lesson development**

The following format is aimed to gather information through a class observation in “I.E.M Ciudadela” as part of the field research paper “The impact of SABER 11 exam on some practices inside classroom for Teaching English as a foreign language process”

Put a tick in the square of each item if it is “applied” or mark an X if it is “not applied”

Category	Tallies per week						Total tallies
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

Category list

1. The methodologies used in class match the communicative approaches
2. The content, and methodologies carried out reflect the bases of the syllabus
3. Are the activities developed according to the syllabus
4. There is extensive use of L2
5. The goals of the class are clear according to the lesson plan
6. The class is focused exclusively on grammar
7. Grammar is integrated deductively in class
8. The content is contextualized and draws the attention of Ss
9. Apart of class is devoted to interaction and practice of what was learned
10. Ss are encouraged to produce language by themselves through tasks or activities.

Additional comments: _____

APPENDIX C
Check list

Syllabus objectives

The following format is aimed to gather information through a class observation in “I.E.M Ciudadela” as part of the field research paper “The impact of SABER 11 exam on some practices inside classroom for Teaching English as a foreign language process”

Use the following grids to complete the check list:

Y= Yes

N= No

P=

partially

1. The syllabus objectives are based on the format on SABER 11 exam_____
2. The content presented in syllabus are contextualized and uses the techniques that lead Ss to acquire the language significantly_____
3. Teacher presents communicative activities such as oral presentations, role plays, monologues, conversations that foster the accomplishment of the “Estándares básicos de competencia en lengua extranjera”_____
4. The syllabus is presented by means of listening activities where the student will be able to meet the goals of the “Estándares básicos de competencia en lengua extranjera”_____
5. The syllabus is presented by means of reading activities where the student will be able to meet the goals of the “Estándares básicos de competencia en lengua extranjera”_____
6. The syllabus is presented by means of wrting activities where the student will be able to meet the goals of the “Estándares básicos de competencia en lengua extranjera”_____