

The Influence of Social Context on Foreign Language Learning in Rural and Urban Areas

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Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en el siguiente trabajo son responsabilidad exclusiva del autor.

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The ideas and conclusions presented in the following paper are the authors' exclusive responsibility.

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Nota de aceptación

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Jurado

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Dedication

This great success in my life was due to God and Virgen Maria because they always guided me and took care of me during this long and hard process. Also, I want to thank two special angels that were with me all the time. My grandfather Rafael who is in heaven praying for me. My beloved mother who always held me in her arms when I felt that everything was wrong and made me stronger with each one of her words.

María José Quintana Aguirre.

I want to thank God for having given me the strength to fulfill this goal, and all those people that made it possible: my teachers, my family and my thesis partner. But especially, I want to thank you, mother. With your sacrifice, effort and unconditional love, you have always taught me to fight for my dreams, to never give up against adversity and to be a better person day after day. This was your dream and now we can say together that it is a beautiful reality.

Diana Mayerlin Gómez

Resumen

Esta investigación fue realizada con el fin de dar a conocer la posible influencia que el contexto social ejerce sobre el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, en este caso, el inglés comparando dos áreas de estudio: el área rural y el área urbana. Este proyecto se debió a la necesidad de conocer y comprender las diferencias que existen entre estos dos campos, puesto que en nuestro medio existen ideas preconcebidas acerca de cómo los estudiantes adquieren y/o mejoran sus habilidades lingüísticas en la lengua objeto de estudio dependiendo del medio en la que ésta es enseñada. Este documento contiene una serie de capítulos los cuales dan una explicación clara acerca del problema de investigación, las teorías que lo apoyan, la metodología implementada, el análisis de la información obtenida y las conclusiones que arrojo el desarrollo y la evolución del proyecto.

Palabras clave: Contexto social, área rural, área urbana, aprendizaje, lengua.

Abstract

This research was done in order to present the possible influence that social context has on foreign language learning, in this case, English while making a comparison between two areas of study: rural and urban areas. This project was carried out due to the necessity of knowing and understanding the differences between these two fields since in our settings there are many preconceptions about how students acquire and/or improve their linguistic skills in the target language depending on the environment where it is taught. This paper contains a series of chapters which give a clear explanation about the research problem, the theories that support it, the implemented methodology, the data analysis of the obtained information and the conclusions drawn during the development and evolution of the project.

Keywords: Social context, rural area, urban area, learning, language.

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Introduction

The term “social context” refers to a specific area or environment where individuals get along with their peers. It is commonly divided in different categories that are related to psychological, affective, economic and cultural aspects. This concept has been the object of study of several researchers who have analyzed it from many perspectives, specifically from the SLA and EFL settings. This issue has led to the examination of certain variables that account for the acquisition of an L2. The previous statement has to do with the foreign language mastery in the fields of grammar, lexicon, fluency and phonetic and phonological elements.

In this paper, the researchers tried to make a comparison in an EFL context which is primarily focused on rural and urban high schools from Nariño. Furthermore, this project shows the development and the procedure of the research which demonstrated that there have been false ideas in regard to the teaching conditions of the studied contexts. This situation allowed to draw meaningful conclusions that are useful to foster the inclusion of this aspect in future studies. This research is also directed to teachers who will be in charge of carrying out their teaching process in settings where children are the main agents of the Colombian learning improvement.

Chapter I

The Research Problem

In this chapter, the research problem is described and analyzed in general terms, and its key words, population and setting are delimited. Next, its evaluation and objectives are presented and finally, its importance and some possible limitations for its development are justified.

Description of the Problem

Nariño's context is composed of socially diverse learners who are supposed to learn a foreign language as part of the curriculum of schools in Colombia. However, after a long period of teaching, there is still in some cases a low level of English at the end of high school as shown in the regional and national tests (ICFES) which measure this area of knowledge. In addition, due to technological advances brought by globalization, the expansion and the influence that English has achieved in the world supports the fact that non-native speakers should learn this language in order to connect themselves linguistically, socially and culturally to other countries. This situation has shown the influence that social context may have in foreign language learning making students have different ways of learning depending on each social setting.

These conditions may prevent or delay the teaching and learning process of English because they create apathy in the student. He/she does not see the importance of acquiring this language since it is not necessary to communicate and interact in his/her immediate

context. This has shown that social context has a real influence over English learning because the mother tongue is an important part of the learner's identity.

On the other hand, it is important to mention the evident lack of theoretical knowledge that some teachers have when they do not implement materials that are appropriate to meet the learners' needs making them feel confused and bored during the classes. This could be the reason for a low level of language acquisition because learners do not see language in use how it is seen in different means of communication as used by native speakers in daily life situations.

First of all, this research tried to give some possible solutions to improve the environment of English teaching and learning in two different social contexts: rural and urban areas. Some of them have to do with pedagogical and methodological recommendations for language teaching by using the sociolinguistic differences that occur in each student. Hence, these ideas may generate a positive attitude towards the foreign language (English) and also bring more meaningful learning while breaking the linguistic barriers between both languages.

Problem Analysis

Identification of Variables

In this research, the influence of social context on foreign language learning, in this case English was shown. This situation was seen in foreign language courses which were carried out in rural and urban settings in Pasto. There, some reactions that gave evidence that students belonging to a different context show certain variations in regard to the use of the target language were seen. This situation led to seek the integration of both sides

involved in this process in order to fulfill the main objective in foreign language teaching which is to connect linguistically and socially to the speakers of different languages.

Dependent variable: Learning English as a foreign language.

Independent variable: Social Context

The relationship between this variable and the learning context is shown in the following diagram.

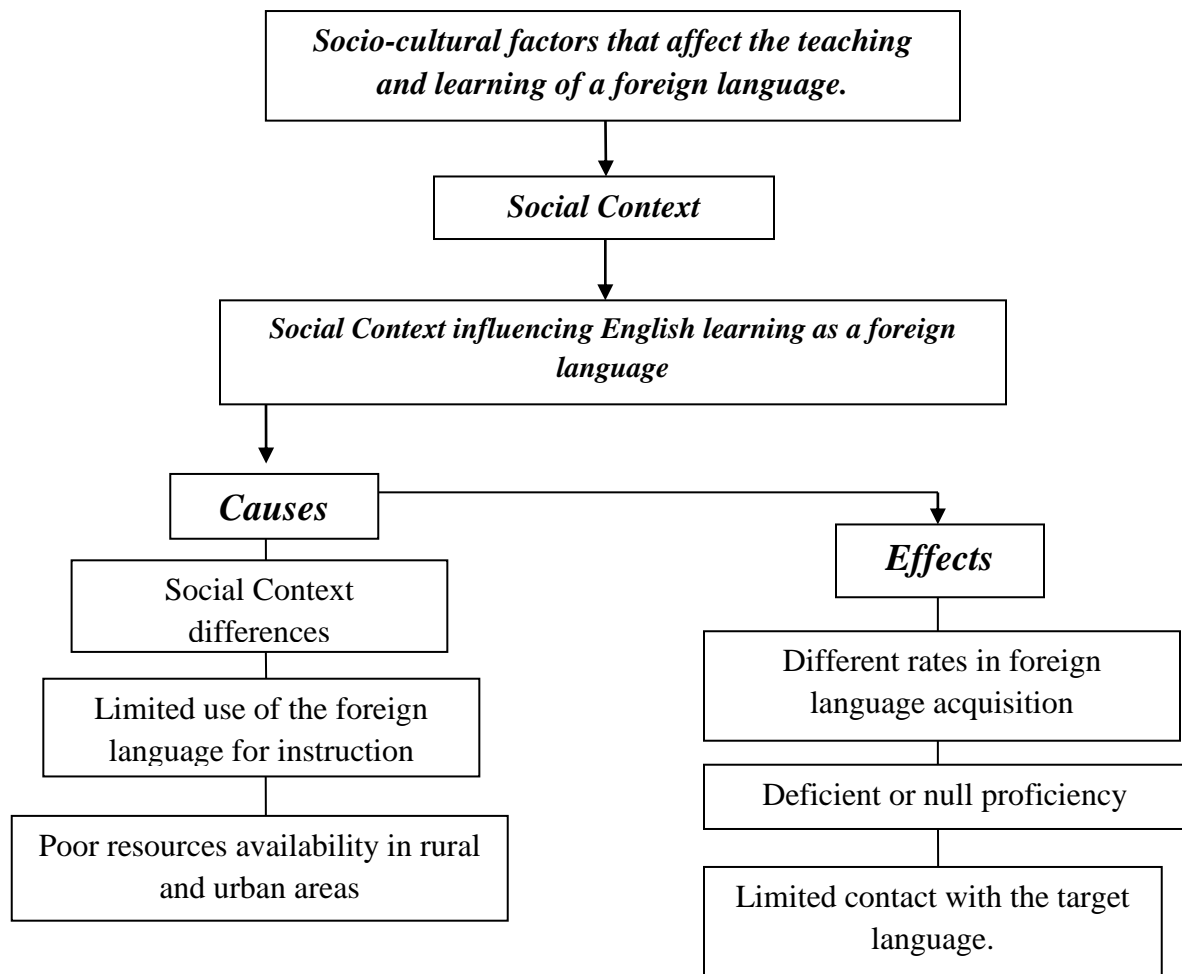


Figure 1.1. Variables' diagram.

The previous diagram shows the influence that social context has when it comes to teaching and learning English as a foreign language. In settings like the ones that Pasto has, it is common to see students belonging to a different social group who may need to learn English. This situation makes the teaching process difficult because social context is an important aspect to consider since it might cause different rates in foreign language acquisition, deficient or null proficiency and limited contact with the target language. Consequently, students may feel excluded by the new language and their speakers. Here it is the importance of taking into account students' social context when teaching a foreign language.

Problem Statement

How does social context influence English as a foreign language in students belonging to 6th grade of the Institución Educativa Municipal Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe from Catambuco and the Institución Educativa Municipal San Juan Bosco from Pasto?

Delimitations

Conceptual

Learning. It is the process of acquiring knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes with the help of study, teaching or experience. This process can be analyzed from a different perspective that is why too many learning theories exist.

(Retrieved from: <http://definicion.de/aprendizaje/>)

Social Context. Social context refers to the specific setting in which social interaction takes place. Social context includes specific, often unique meanings and interpretations assigned

by people within the given group. Understanding the social context of a particular setting demands that researchers seek to understand and interpret meaning according to those in the setting, rather than meaning according to the researcher.

(Retrieved from: <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods/n427.xml>)

Rural Area. A rural area is an open swath of land that has few homes or other buildings, and not very many people. A rural area population density is very low. Many people live in a city, or urban areas. Their homes and businesses are located very close to one another. In a rural area, there are fewer people, and their homes and businesses are located far away from one another.

(Retrieved from: http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/rural-area/?ar_a=1)

Urban Area. An urban area is the region surrounding a city. Most inhabitants of urban areas have non-agricultural jobs. Urban areas are very developed, meaning there is a density of human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways. "Urban area" can refer to towns, cities, and suburbs. An urban area includes the city itself, as well as the surrounding areas. Many urban areas are called metropolitan areas, or "greater," as in Greater New York or Greater London.

(Retrieved from: http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/urban-area/?ar_a=1)

Foreign language. Any language used in a country other than one's own; a language that is studied mostly for cultural insight. Example: Spanish has been present longer than English, but since the majority of the populations are native speakers of English, Spanish is often termed a foreign language.

(Retrieved from: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/foreign+language>)

Language. A human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols. The study of language is called linguistics.

(Retrieved from: <http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/languageterm.htm>)

Population

The research was carried out with some high school students who were between 12 and 14 years old and who were in 6th grade. They belonged to a medium-low socioeconomic status.

Geographical

The research was carried out in the Institución Educativa Municipal Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and the Institución Educativa Municipal San Juan Bosco which are public schools that are situated in Catambuco and in Pasto's downtown respectively.

Problem Evaluation

The importance of this research lied on the contribution that it hoped to make to the improvement of the relationship teacher-student since it sought to take into account social and cultural differences that surround a foreign language student and consequently may affect his/her learning.

It was researchable because some common research techniques (observations, interviews, surveys, etc) were used. These techniques were applicable in a context where there were social groups who were supposed to learn English as one of the key requirements to finish their academic studies. It was doable because the researchers counted on the economic resources, time and participation of the people who were involved. On the other hand, the researchers got the consent of the students and the institutions as not to transgress the participants' right to preserve their ideas and perceptions about the world.

Objectives

General Objective

To determine the influence of social context in English learning as a foreign language by doing a detailed analysis and description of the social differences between students from 6th grade of the Institución Educativa Municipal Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe from Catambuco and the Institución Educativa Municipal San Juan Bosco from Pasto.

Specific objectives

1. To describe the sociolinguistic features of a determined population in order to understand the research problem.
2. To analyze the teacher-student relationship with students who belong to a different social group in order to understand its possible influence in English teaching.
3. To suggest some activities as educational tools to promote the importance and use of social differences in the teaching and learning of a foreign language.

Significance

This research was directed to English teachers who work in contexts where there is great social diversity that might make the teaching and learning process of a foreign language more difficult. It was also focused on identifying reactions in the classroom which brought the aspects mentioned before.

The research performed was a practical one since it supported the study on the influence of social context in learning a foreign language. The main reasons that led to develop this project were to determine the influence of social context on both teachers and students while promoting new strategies and methodologies. These findings may help reduce the isolation between the speakers of an L1 and an L2, and explore interpersonal relationships between teacher-student in order to foster a more pleasant school environment. Hence, they can perform various activities acknowledging the existence of social differences such as the L2 use, the practical language skills encouragement and the frequent contact with the L2.

Limitations

Some limitations that were found during the development of this research were:

1. Students showed apathy, so they did not develop the activities that were included in the research.
2. Interviewees changed their personal opinion when they were asked to answer the questions.
3. Interviewees had some kind of preparation before giving information in a questionnaire or in an interview.

Since these limitations prevented the development and/or the application of data collection techniques, an appropriate environment between the participants and the researchers was created. By doing this, they felt comfortable, confident and willing to collaborate with the planned activities.

In conclusion, this chapter gave a general overview of the investigated problem. This section was described and analyzed by giving some general aspects such as key words, delimitations, objectives and limitations that arose during the research. Next chapter is focused on the theoretical framework that supports this research

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

In this section, Vygotsky's main statements about the socio-cultural approach and its implications in the foreign language teaching field were reviewed. In addition, Stern's (1983) and Coletes' (1985) ideas who claimed the existence of a variety of socio-cultural factors that influence the learning / acquisition of a foreign language were checked too. Finally, social context is mentioned as the key construct of this research project.

Sociocultural Theory

During the last years, it has been observed the great interest that the contribution made by Lev Vygotsky (1962) has attracted to the evolutionary psychology and education. Vygotsky's contribution lies on the creation of foundations for a psychological system in which some materials that involve philosophical elements and social sciences are used. "The human pedagogy, in all its features is considered the defining characteristic of its approach and represents the central concept of its system" (Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001, p. 42).

In order to establish the contributions made by *Vygotsky's method* to the evolutionary psychology, Carrera and Mazzarella (2001) mentioned some important aspects such as the cognitive development in the early childhood, the emergence of language and communication, written language construction and other aspects. According to Vygotsky (1979 as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001), this evolutionary perspective is important since it is essential to analyze the changes that occur in human behavior. This analysis leads to understand the genetic variants involved in the psychological development of a person

also known as Vygotsky's *genetic-comparative and experimental-evolutionary methods* (1979). In the course of this process, four identified areas in the genetic method are used: 1. *Phylogenetic* which refers to the development of human species; 2. *historical-sociocultural* related to the social behaviors; 3. *ontogenetic* that shows the connection between the biological and sociocultural evolution, and finally, 4. *microgenetic* that is the study of particular elements of each person's psychology.

On the other hand, Vygotsky (1979 as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) stated that there is a relationship between thought and language. This idea suggests that a child's speech is generated by the ontogenetic development. This stage contains two sub- stages that are the pre-intellectual and the pre-linguistic stage which are connected to generate the emergence of verbal thought and rational language. Furthermore, Vygotsky stated that in order to achieve the transmission of ideas and experiences, it is necessary to use a tool which helps to achieve speakers' interaction. This tool is language. Therefore, verbal thinking is released through the meaning that words have.

Another important contribution is the use of linguistic signs to understand the social processes which an individual has to face and use as a guide for his /her different human activities. Vygotsky (1979 as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) held that a child already has previous experiences when he/she comes to take part in an educational institution. In this way, Vygotsky established that there is a close relationship between learning and development. Thus, he referred to the existence of two levels: the actual evolutionary level which is related to the activities that a child does on his/her own that are considered as a product of his/her mental abilities. On the other side, the potential development level occurs when a child needs help to do something that he/she cannot do on his/her own. This

last level is a clear sign of an advanced mental development. Taking into account the rate of learning, Vygotsky created the concept of Zone of Proximal Development“ which is the distance between the actual developmental level, determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers"(Vygotsky, 1979, p.133).In this zone, the functions in the maturity process, that is, the mental development is seen from a prospective way.

The connection that exists between learning and development is presented in *The Law of General Genetics*, which can appear in a social and psychological field. If it is found inside a group of people, it is part of an inter-psychological dimension, but if it is found inside a person, it is part of an intra-psychological one (Wertsch, n.d.as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001). For this reason, it was stated that learning stimulates the mental processes which are carried out through the interaction with our peers. This interaction is presented in different environments and always requires the language use as a means of communication.

On the other hand, Wertsch and Cole (n.d.) claimed that according to Vygotsky's view about *The General Genetic Law*, the inter-mental and the inter-personal processes have a big influence over the development of the individual intra-mental or psychological processes. Besides, it was stated that all the inter-mental and intra-mental plans are closely related to some cultural aspects, that is, the possible social and individual limits are connected with human's verbal thinking.

According to Jones (n.d.), Vygotsky's law has a "pivotal role" in the different human ways of verbal thinking. It is due to the internalization process of the external speech which is commonly changed from an "inner or egocentric speech" made by children in order to show their independence and cognitive capacities. Through this general law, Vygotsky tried to explain what kind of plans or processes are developed in our brain. In conclusion, human beings have to carry out an external discourse before starting an internal one in order to communicate accurately.

With regard to the contributions in education, Vygotsky (1979 as cited in Carrera & Mazarella, 2001) pointed out three ideas:

The Mental Development from a Prospective Way

It refers to the assessment of some processes that a child makes successfully and independently, so that he/she understands the emergence of new skills.

The importance of the Zone of Proximal Development is the constant change that is produced in the psychological part of a child that is why the teacher must try to activate this zone in order to get some improvement in the child's learning.

The Learning Processes carry out the Development Processes

In order to generate learning, it is important to carry out an internalization process of knowledge in an educational institution which could help the child develop certain mental abilities.

Intervention of Other Members of a Social Group as Mediators between Cultures and Individuals

It consists in the influence that the average world has over the internalized knowledge of a child. In this case, the school has the role of educating the new generations.

Some works that show agreement with Vygotsky's ideas (1979 as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) are:

- **Brown and Ferrara** (n.d.as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) stated that there are differences between the inter-psychological and the intra-psychological functioning.
- **Tudge** (n.d.as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) claimed that parents help to promote the child's development by giving him/her information for the Zone of Proximal Development.
- **Hedegaard** (n.d.as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) created a theory in which psychology and education work together in order to take into account children's personality in a social and cultural context.
- **Martin** (n.d.as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) tried to implement the use of technological and audiovisual material, so that children could arise their scientific thought.
- **De Corte** (n.d.as cited in Carrera & Mazzarella, 2001) claimed that in order to get significant learning, teaching must be directed towards the Zone of Proximal Development.

According to Vygotsky (1995 as cited in Torga, n.d), there are two kinds of concepts in a child's mind: spontaneous concepts which arise in an ascendant way and the scientific ones which arise in a descendant way and also have more elementary or specific relationships to a particular object.

The spontaneous concepts are created from daily life experiences of a child which are useful for interiorizing a scientific concept. For this reason, it was stated that teaching a foreign language looks like the acquisition of scientific concepts because it is a process made in a conscious and deliberate way. Vygotsky (1995, p.149) stated that "success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language". Nevertheless, according to his theory "both the mother tongue and the second language are developed in a reverse way by which the influence and the benefits between them are re-considered". Thanks to learning another language, "The child learns to see his/her language as one particular system among many others, to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to the awareness of his/her linguistic operations".(Vygotsky, 1962, p.110).

On the other hand, Torga (n.d) stated that the *socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky* raises the idea of the social mediation which allows knowledge to gain coherence through the internal functioning of the learner. With regard to foreign language learning, this mediation is made between an expert (the teacher) and a person with less experience (the student). It can be presented in an oral or a written way since both are language forms which can be useful in the cognitive development and the knowledge construction. Besides, the teacher has to help the student make use of the foreign language in order to express his/her own ideas and thoughts. This process of thought shows the teacher that students

have achieved a good development level since they are able to do different tasks on their own.

From this point of view, Vygotsky (1995 as cited in Torga, n.d) claimed that foreign language teaching not only implies that the teacher takes into account some linguistic aspects as a part of it, but also that he /she creates a supportive atmosphere that helps students with the foreign language which is being studied. It is important that the taught knowledge is beyond the learners' level so that they can construct full meaning with the help of their peers' knowledge, the text-book and other elements of the classroom.

The ideas given by Vygotsky (1979, 1995) with his socio-cultural theory are used for a classification of some socio-cultural factors involved in the second language learning proposed by Stern (1983).

Factors Involved in the Learning/Acquisition of a Second Language

In order to analyze the process of second language acquisition, Gardner (1975, 1979), Schumann (1976), Swain (1977), Bialystok (1978) and Naiman *et al.* (1978), proposed some learning models. These models show that there are some elements or factors that influence the process of teaching and learning a second language. In this sense, Stern (1983) classified the main factors involved in the second language learning. These are:

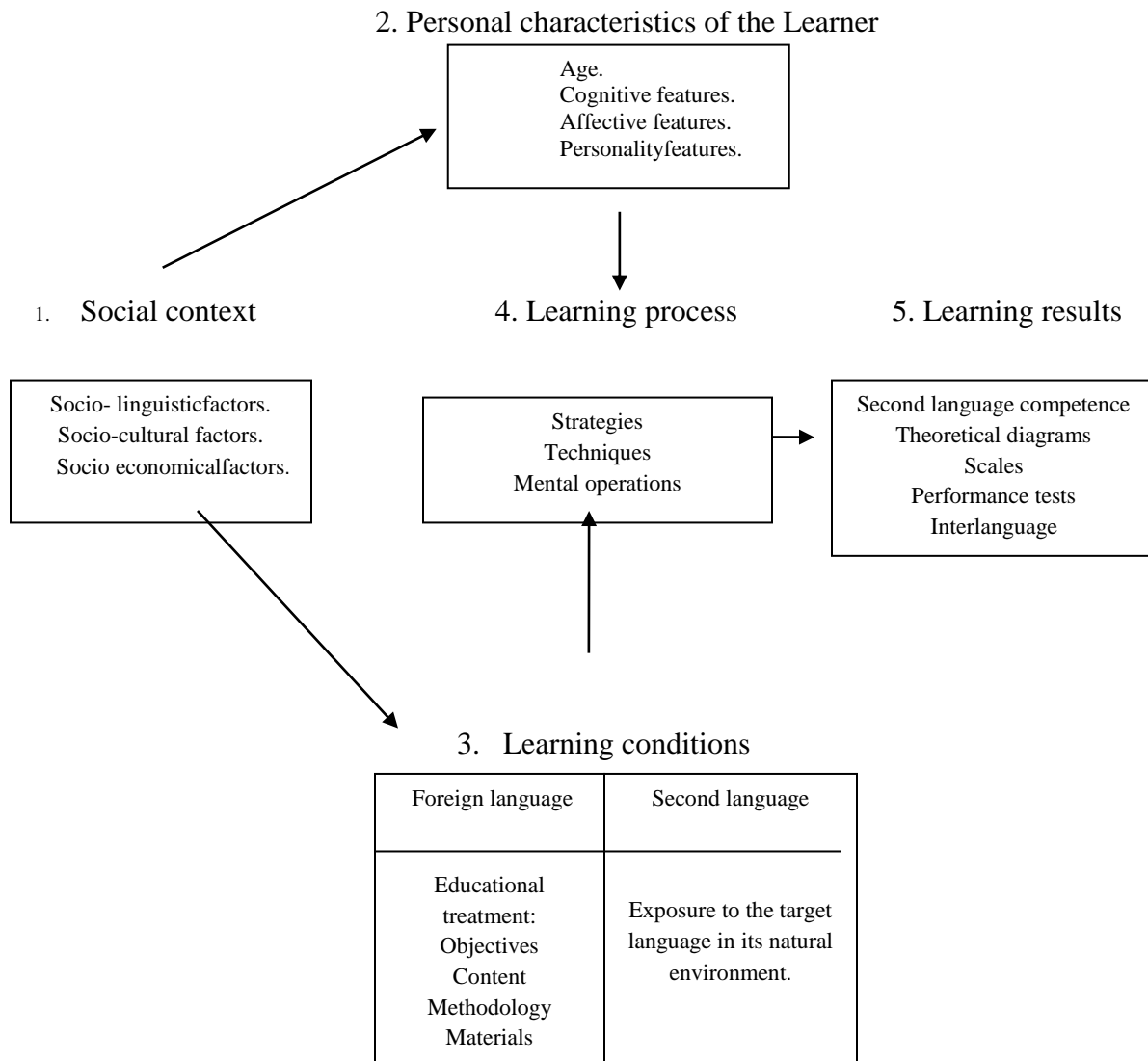


Figure 2.1. Socio-cultural factors' model (Stern, 1983)

Social Context

Dell Hymes (1972 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) asserted that “the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language but with context ... [and then to] systematically relate the two” (pp. xix–lvii). This provides an insight for the already known debate about the influence that external factors may have on second language learning and also relating it to the concepts of essentialism (in which an individual interprets the world objectively and learns from it) and constructivism (where knowledge is constructed by means of social and historic elements). Social context influence has been a matter of great importance among educators who are in charge of program design since the latter must be directed to facilitate language acquisition.

Social context refers to certain aspects that characterize each learner along with the learning conditions that surround him/her. Students’ attitudes, motivation and some affective elements in different contexts could help to determine their personal differences. Carroll (1967, 1969 as cited in Stern, 1983), tried to classify social factors such as: linguistic factors which make a comparison between the mother tongue and the target language and socio-cultural factors which are related to the level of importance that a language has with regard to its cultural and political aspects along with the social and educational opportunities that it brings.

On the other hand, Schumann (1978 as cited in Stern, 1983), created an *acculturation* model in which the differences between social groups and the idea of learning a new language are explained. Individuals with a high social status never try to learn a language of a community or group with a lower one. Instead, the groups of a lower status are going to try to be accepted by a group that they think is superior to them. After

this process, the result is the assimilation (total language acquisition, culture and identity patterns). However, if a group shows a good attitude towards learning another language, then adaptation in which the learner achieves a high mastery of the target language takes place.

Social context can involve other factors such as: linguistic, socio-cultural, historical/political, geographical, economical/technological and educational factors. Nevertheless, such elements work at the same time, and sometimes they do not have any influence over the learning (Stern, 1983).

Linguistic Factors.

They refer to the rejection towards any foreign language. When there is contact between different languages and dialects, language learning can provoke a positive attitude in learners. The linguistic variety surrounding the student can prevent the teaching process.

Social and Cultural Factors.

The influence that has to be part of any social, ethnical, cultural, religious or professional group arises some attitudes surrounding language learning, dialect learning or bilingualism. Some studies carried out by Stern and Cummins (1981) showed that the inter-ethnical relationships could affect the ethno-linguistic attitudes and also language learning.

According to Coletes (1985), there are five factors that affect foreign language learning:

Social Class

This factor refers to how a good attitude towards the foreign language learning can be related to a person's high social status. This attitude comes from the standing support that apprentices of a high social status tend to receive from their parents during the learning process.

Origin Community's Attitudes

Gatbonton, Segalowitz, Forster and Klheif (1975, 1979 as cited in Coletes, 1985) claimed that some social groups have certain rejection towards an individual who wants to learn a foreign language. The reasons that generate this behavior can be the idea of "treason" to the group, the educational orientation, the relationship between both of the social groups, and the most important one is that the community see in this situation a possible refinement to their customs which results in a cultural rise in return for the change or loss of their idiosyncrasy. For this reason, the teacher must create a more communicative atmosphere in his/her classroom in order to eliminate these prejudices.

Foreign Community's Attitudes

It refers to the attitude taken by a group towards an integrant who has learned a new language. This behavior helps classify some communities in two types: "*ecumenical*" (including French, Arabic, American and Latin people) and "*hermetical*" (including Japanese and English people). So, Lawrence (1940 as cited in Coletes, 1985) stated that French people tend to admire individuals who learn their language, but a British person may feel that the learner is mocking at his/her language. So, it can be said that certain

communities create barriers against foreign people who speak well their native language for they consider them as intruders.

On the other hand, foreign language learners can also feel dissatisfied not only by the lack of grammar correction or vocabulary correction from the native speakers, but also by the lack of correction in the use of some phonological patterns. Besides, the main cause of this language learning rejection is the assimilation or non- assimilation of the nonverbal level which refers to the socio-cultural agreements between speakers. Finally, it is also seen that the fact of not knowing the culture of the foreign linguistic community brings some prejudices that lead to a breakdown in communication, and make difficult the foreign language teaching. That is why teachers must try to make students know more about the foreign language culture in order to prevent this situation.

Brown (1980) stated that some other factors could also affect second language learning. These are: stereotypes and generalizations, social distance and classroom culture.

Social Distance

According to Brown (1980), this concept is defined as the cognitive and affective proximity that an individual has between two different cultures. The word “distance“ refers to the differences between cultures. Schumann (n.d.as cited in Brown, 1980) stated that there are five parameters that belong to social distance:

- The target language mastery.
- The way a language is integrated (assimilation, acculturation or preservation) or the way it is enclosed.
- Cohesion size of the group that learns the language.

- Similarities between two groups with regard to values and beliefs (congruence) and attitudes between them.
- Permanence of the foreign language learners in the target language area.

Besides, Stern (1983) claimed that there are certain aspects related to the socio-cultural factors which are:

Geographical Aspects

Geographical distance between the speakers determines the language that is going to be learnt. In a second language context, there are more advantages with regard to the immediate use of a language whereas in a foreign language context, some other pedagogical tools in order to succeed in the learning process are supposed to be used.

Financial and Technological Development

Learning a foreign language can bring financial development or the abilities for the use of technology. Nevertheless, the implementation of programs based on language learning requires an investment that may affect other educational needs.

Stern and Weinrib (1977, 1978) claimed that the beginning of the language learning process is based on three ideas:

1. Time required to achieve a high communicative level in each learner.
2. Educational value that foreign language learning has into the curriculum.
3. Materials and human sources to carry out the learning language program that reaches the expected results.

On the other hand, Burstall *et al.* and Spolsky (1974 as cited in Stern, 1983), stated that there are other elements involved in these factors which are:

Learning Context

Schumann and Schumann (1977 as cited in Stern, 1983), claimed that any change into the teacher's methodology can make the learner abandon her/his learning.

Teachers

Tucker and Lambert (1973 as cited in Stern, 1983) stated that teachers' attitude towards students affects the quantity and quality of knowledge that students get during the development of a lesson.

Learning Conditions

According to Stern (1983), they have to do with the learning context, the teaching and learning model and the stages that this process involves.

Learning Context

There are two types of learning context: Second language learning when the student has direct contact with the target language either through formal instruction or without it, and foreign language learning that is related to the situation in which the target language is not spoken around the student, so that he /she can only practice it while being in the classroom (Stern, 1983).

In the same way Krashen (1982 as cited in Stern, 1983) proposed the existence of a natural context. In this context there are two stances: acquisition that refers to learning a

language in a natural environment where the individual has more opportunities to practice the language, and learning in which instruction is given in the classroom and the student is limited in the target language use.

Teaching and Learning Model. Dunkin and Biddle (1974 as cited in Stern, 1983) distinguished four categories of variables in their teaching model for a classroom:

Omen Variables. Particular features that the teacher includes during his/her classes.

Context Variables. Circumstances in which the teaching is carried out.

Process Variables. All the functions and behavior done by the students and the teacher in the classroom.

Product Variables. These variables “are those changes produced in students as a result of involving themselves in class activities which are done along with the teacher and other students” (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974, p. 46)

Taking into account the teaching and learning model created by Dunkin and Biddle (1974), Stern (1983) proposed his own model. There, Stern combined some factors involved in the two processes. The following diagram helps to understand and interpret the teaching and learning process:

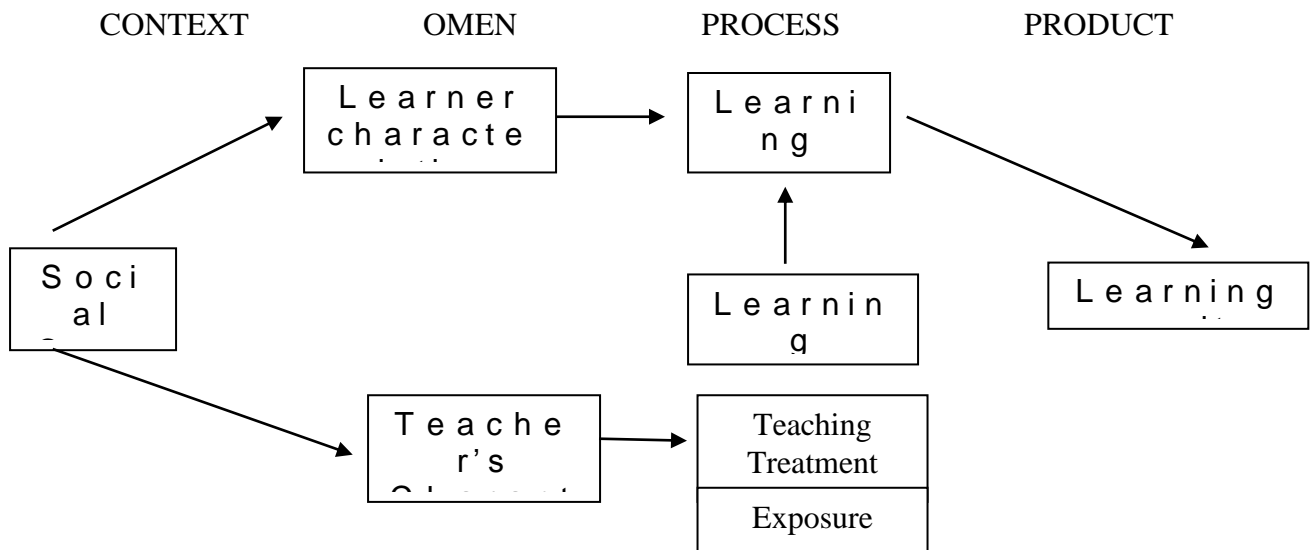


Figure 2.2. Teaching and Learning Model (Stern, 1983).

In this model, the power that the social context has on the teacher, students and learning conditions is observed; besides, the learning differences in natural and formal environments where the methodological procedure is taken into account are shown. The product obtained is not the end of the learning process but acts as a “feeder” to the rest of variables.

Between the models presented by Stern (1983) and Dunkin and Biddle (1974), there are significant differences. Whereas the latter one shows in an only set all the activities that are carried out in the classroom, Stern’s model focused the learning process in each student and established certain differences between the teacher, the educational treatment and the teaching process. Moreover, Stern (1983) suggested making this difference since there are some other factors that also have a direct influence during the foreign language learning process.

For this reason, Stern (1983) recommended that the teacher creates an appropriate environment in which the individual reaches significant learning. To make this possible, the teacher must plan the work to be done in class and also he/she must organize and choose well the elements that are going to be used in order to avoid confusion when delivering the knowledge.

Stages of the Process

There are two stages in the learning process according to Stern (1983):

Initial Stage. When the individuals start the learning process of a second language, they apply the linguistic competence. This competence that is used to acquire the mother tongue is also used to learn this new knowledge. According to Cook (1977 as cited in Stern, 1983), this initial stage also brings some affective, cognitive and social consequences.

The affective consequences refer to those situations that the student faces when he/she starts learning a second language. These situations could be the frustration caused by the lack of linguistic mastery, or the lack of a linguistic reference which creates a feeling of insecurity in the individual. Schumann (1975 as cited in Stern, 1983) associated this type of behaviour to a theory that talks about the emotional and intellectual shock that the student experiences during his/her stage of “beginner” in the second language learning. To make this theory more understandable they created three new concepts: cultural shock, linguistic shock and cultural stress.

Shock is part of the initial stage of the instruction process in a second language, generally during the immersion. Although it can be very difficult to control in temporary circumstances, shock can be reduced. Unlike shock, stress is related to the negative experiences that the student has had when he / she gets involved in learning a second

language. Some of the stress symptoms are the hostility and aggressiveness towards the teacher and the classmates. This behaviour can be overcome when the learner is aware of the cultural and linguistic differences between the foreign language and his/her mother tongue.

In regard to the negative consequences, it was said that there is absence of a reference framework in the second language similar to the one obtained during the L1 acquisition. Consequently, the learner finds ambiguity and arbitrariness in each concept presented by the teacher which would eventually cause confusion during the learning process. To overcome these difficulties, the student has to create a reference system that helps him/her adapt to the new language and above all to distinguish possible mistakes in its use.

Finally, the social consequences refer to the dependence that exists from the students towards their second language teachers in the classroom, or in the case of a natural environment, towards the native speakers of that language. This is due to the necessity of a model that helps the student to acquire the social rules and the culture of the foreign language.

Interlingua and Mistakes

Interlingua is defined as the representation of the precedent stages of the total acquisition of a language which is determined by correct and incorrect linguistic elements. The study of these mistakes is useful to understand the means to the “construction of a second language”.

As an essential part of those mistakes, the interferences which are generated during the use of the rules of the L1, and the “mistakes of interlingua” that are caused in the “second language process” are mentioned.

Interlingua is characterized by an invariable order in the mastery of the different syntactic constructions. The mistakes that are acquired during the evolution of the learning process can be set in any part of the interlingua where they are called “fossilized mistakes”. To reduce the “fossilized mistakes”, the student must reflect on his /her performance and correct those mistakes through different activities.

The Learning Process

It takes into account the learning strategies and some of their classifications (Stern, 1983).

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are the conscious or unconscious methods or devices that the student uses to acquire the knowledge. Learning strategies could be metacognitive, social and/or affective. Brown (2001 as cited in Stern, 1983) summarized the strategies that according to Joan Rubin and Irene Thompson (1982) are common in a student of foreign languages.

1. They look for their own way and are responsible of their own learning.
2. They organize the information about the language.
3. They are creative and develop a linguistic sense while they experiment with grammar and vocabulary.

4. They look for opportunities to practice the second language in the classroom and out of it.
5. They learn to live with uncertainty. They do not feel nervous and keep on talking and listening despite they do not understand all words.
6. They use mnemo-technical techniques and other memory strategies to remember what they have learnt previously.
7. They take advantage of their own mistakes.
8. They use their linguistic knowledge which is included in their mother tongue to learn a second language.
9. They take advantage of contextual clues that help them understand.
10. They learn to make intelligent hypothesis.
11. They learn “pieces” of language as “phrases” and other formalized routines that help them go beyond their current competence.
12. They learn certain tricks that help them keep their conversation going.
13. They learn certain production strategies to fill the gaps of their own competence.
14. They learn different speaking and writing styles to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

On the other hand, Stern (1983) created four categories in which he established the possible strategies that are used by the outstanding students of languages.

Active Planning Strategies. They are the selection that the student does of short-term and long-term objectives.

Explicit and Academic Learning Strategies. They refer to the concept that the learner has about language learning along with the characteristics that define languages as a sign system.

Social Learning Strategies. When the learner looks for opportunities to interact with his/her peers during the first stages of learning.

Affective Strategies. The students face with a positive attitude the difficulties related to the emotional and motivational aspects during the learning process of a second language.

Results of the Learning Process

Results of the learning process can be satisfactory, or on the contrary they can be disappointing and disconcerting. Reactions to the negative results can cause feelings of hatred, rejection and resentment in the learner. These feelings can be directed towards themselves, the teacher or towards the target language (Stern, 1983).

Due to the influence that learning English as a foreign language has in the social, cultural, economic and political context of thousands of learners around the world, it is advisable to implement teaching from early ages. In regard to learning conditions and context, it was said that during the process of second language acquisition, students have faced different situations that help them establish “real” communicative relationships with

their peers. This is also useful to make students reach a high level of competence (Stern, 1983).

Siegel (2003) mentioned social context as one of the socio-structural factors that intervenes in the learning/acquisition of a second language.

The Influence of Social Context on SLA

Jeff Siegel (2003) examined the influence of the social context on SLA from different perspectives: a) the sociolinguistic settings; b) the several ways in which it could be analyzed, c) the educational programs involved and d) the importance of schooling in the L1.

Socio-linguistic settings

In the field of SLA, there are at least five recognizable settings: Dominant L2, External L2, Coexisting L2, Institutional L2 and Minority L2. These settings take into account certain aspects related to L1 and L2 learning such as the L2 widespread or restricted role in the world, if it happened to be the L1 for a specific part of the people (being monolingual or bilingual) and the variety of the input provided for the language users (Siegel, 2003).

The Dominant L2 setting also named as the “majority language context” by Ellis (1994 as cited in Siegel, 2003) is characterized by the fact that the L2 is the native language of most of the people in a determined place, and it is used in all possible daily life situations. This setting is common in countries such as the USA, Australia, France and Japan. The L1 speakers are immigrants, visitors and indigenous people who are supposed to learn the language in order to be active members of the society. In the External L2 setting,

monolingual L2 learners are taught formally a language that is not immediately used for communicating with other people. This language can be a foreign language, a language spoken in another part of the same country or a world lingua franca.

The Coexisting L2 setting, according to Siegel (2003) uses a language seen as an L1 for a vast amount of people. These people live in border areas or in countries counting on two or more languages. Both languages are used in the same way by their speakers and have similar status. Research normally done for the field of SLA focuses on the three settings mentioned above which intend to teach standard varieties of the L2; however, it neglects the last two ones, Institutional L2 and Minority L2 settings. In Institutional L2 settings, the L2, although used for several situations, is learned as an additional language in order to communicate with speakers of other languages and for official purposes such as education. This L2 may be a former colonial language or one of the indigenous languages of the country. Its speakers are generally bi- or multilingual and used their L1 at home and in other domains.

On the other hand, the indigenized varieties of English (IVEs) also called “New Englishes” are another variety of L2 use which is found in Institutional L2 settings. This type of language is used mainly to communicate with other non-native speakers; thus, its input comes from the classroom or from the interaction with non-native speakers, or sometimes it is mixed with certain verbal repertoires. In this sense, the concepts of negative transfer (or interference) and interlanguage are seen as a positive aspect in the process of learning (Sridhar, 1986 as cited in Siegel 2003).

Minority L2 settings are those in which “speakers of a dominant language learn a minority language in naturalistic rather than classroom contexts” (Siegel, 2003). Some studies that account for this kind of settings are the ones done by Rampton (1991, 1995 as cited in Siegel, 2003) and Trosset’s (1986 as cited in Siegel in Siegel, 2003). In the former study Rampton concluded that Minority L2 settings tend to be a more pleasurable experience for learners. Consequently, Trosset’s claimed that there was not such a stigmatization towards the learners. On the contrary, a noticeable importance is given to the native speakers’ perceptions about them and their role as “consciousness raisers and performers” (p. 189). These facts made Siegel state that research in SLA has made generalizations that do not involve all sociolinguistic contexts, questioning in that way, the validity of them.

In contrast, Batstone (2002 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) clarified that learners have to face two contexts: communicative and learning ones. In communicative contexts, the learner is supposed to use the L2 in order to exchange his/ her ideas and be an active member in social and interpersonal daily life situations. In learning contexts, input and output are adjusted with the help of the teacher in order to lead learners to form, so that they can improve their linguistic abilities.

To understand the importance of these two contexts, Collentine and Freed (2004) proposed three types of sub-contexts in which students from high school or university ranks are thought to live in. First, the formal language classroom (also known as AH for “at home”) in which pedagogues try to include activities for learners to use the L2 in a communicative way is introduced; however, these tasks do not include important elements that are part of affective variables and are gotten in social and interpersonal circumstances

of the L2 use. Second, the intensive domestic immersion (IM) context, also known as a summer program, allows students to study the foreign language in an L1 environment while being surrounded by their L1 culture. There, there is a balance in both learning and communicative functions since students are asked to stop using their L1 and start conveying meaning in the L2. Nevertheless, this interaction is not going to count always on native speakers' participation or cultural situations.

The third context was called by Collentine and Freed (2004) as the study abroad (SA) in which learners study the target language in an L2 setting while they also share time with host families. This type of context presents both communicative and learning situations: students attend to formal lessons and use the L2 in them, and also when they want to negotiate meaning. Besides, information exchanges involve native speakers in the L2 culture which fosters the creation of practical strategies of social interaction. In this sense, Miller and Ginsberg (1995 as cited in Collentine and Freed ,2004) and Carson and Longhini (2002 as cited in Collentine and Freed ,2004) reported that students always search to apply in social interactions what they learn in formal classes. Batstone (2002 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) discussed the benefits of communicative contexts pushed output in L2 situations by warning that it can help to the development of complex morpho-syntactic abilities but also bring threats to risk taking atmospheres.

Analysis of Social Context in SLA

Social context in SLA can be analyzed from three different parameters as stated by Siegel (2003): macro vs. micro, structural vs. interactional and objective vs. subjective. Macro-analysis is concerned about the specific features of the different social groups that

are part of it. In this sense, it deals with size, status and power of the L1 and L2 speakers and the fields of use of each one of them. Micro-analysis has to do with the learner's behavior depending on the linguistic situation. It studies specific activities, social links between both types of learners along with their power and status when interacting between them.

In the structural analysis aspects such as power, prestige and history of a context are taken into account. This is due to the fact that SLA is affected by someone's identity (which is intrinsically connected to a social group). In contrast, the interactional analysis proposes a social context that is created by each speaker according to the situation in which he/she is participating. This means that both relationships and identities are modified depending on the social interaction; consequently language is affected too (Siegel, 2003).

The objective parameter focuses on the noticeable elements of social context, and the subjective one, on personal insights that learners have about them. Thus, someone's identity comprises two points of view related to a group's membership and the attitudes that a person has towards some others along with their interaction. Siegel (2003) asserted that the objective parameter "looks at institutional associations of particular languages", the subjective perspective "looks at symbolic associations". (p.184)

In this regard, Siegel (2003) warns that sometimes socio-structural factors may be confounded with some other ones such as the amount of contact between the speakers of both the L1 and L2. An example of this is that low-status minority groups are supposed to have more chances of interacting with high-status minority ones than vice versa. However, a study done by Clément and Kruidenier (1983 as cited in Siegel, 2003) showed that the

status and contact between the L1 and L2 have independent effects when talking about the alleged reasons to learn another language (L2). Within these theories, the social psychological approach also takes into account the socio-structural factors that influence language learning. The socio-educational model (Gardner, 1983, 1985, 1988 as cited by Siegel 2003) intends to explain how social context is related to L2 proficiency along with the influence of certain variables such as motivation and anxiety.

DeKeyser (1991 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) noticed that SLA in a SA context is quite complex. In the same way, Freed (1995a as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) stated that SA studies show certain surprises in the information obtained. At this time, data was considered to be problematic because there were claims about the benefits of these contexts in using just test results which was seen as limited data information. To conclude, it was proved that AH settings are far better in the case of helping to the acquisition of some remarkable aspects of language learning, for instance, morpho-syntax. Freed (1998 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) meanwhile, asserted on a summary made by the collaboration of several colleagues that learners from a SA learning context are able

... to speak with greater ease and confidence, expressed in part by a greater abundance of speech, spoken at a faster rate and characterized by fewer dysfluency-sounding pauses. [Such students]...display a wider range of communicative strategies and a broader repertoire of styles ...and their linguistic identities extend beyond the expected acquisition of oral skills to a new self-realization in the social world of literacy.(p.50)

Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsberg (1995 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) checked the reasons of success behind SA context learners and they found that they attain better proficiency in the target language as shown in oral tests. In this case, reading and grammar skills are one of the most important indicators of it. Besides, Freed (1995b as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) asserted that it is also noticeable that fluency is greatly improved by the fact that speeches have fewer interruptions or pauses; an idea that was also supported by Lafford's findings (1995 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) about great communicative skills. Meara (1995 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) also got some evidence showing good acquisition of vocabulary in this type of settings. It was also stated that the SA context may also provide important insights about differences in regard to the way students improve their grammatical knowledge in the L2 (Guntermann, 1995 and DeKeyser, 1986 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004).

As for the acquisition of sociolinguistic skills, it can be concluded that it varies from student to student depending on their own involvement in social interactions. However, it was also pointed out that pragmatic competence develops in a delayed way in SA contexts (Hoffman Hicks, 1999; Rodríguez, 2001 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004) and it was also stated that adjusted speeches to the L1 have a negative incidence on social relationships (Wilkinson, 1995 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004). Another fact shown by research is that attitudes related to gender and race when in the L2 culture can also affect the efficacy of the learners' experience (Tallburt & Stewart, 1999 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004). Finally, among some other findings, there was the one done by Wilkinson (1998 as cited in Collentine and Freed, 2004). He claimed that intercultural sensitivity such as ethnocentrism may have positive and negative consequences in how efficient a learner is.

This is certainly seen when the learner deals with a host family experience in another country which in the end represented the degree of personal identification that he/she has with the L2 culture.

Educational programs

When talking about classroom SLA, it is important to mention the different types of educational programs where the social context is involved. In this case, language policy decisions consider how the L1 and L2 work as a means of teaching and as a matter to be studied. As a consequence, programs are classified depending on the educational goal they present: additive bilingualism (Lambert, 1974 as cited in Siegel, 2003) where learners use actively the L2 without losing their L1, and subtractive bilingualism where learners replace their L1 with the L2 or fail to acquire the latter in an excellent way. Siegel (2003) divided educational programs into monolingual “where two (or sometimes more than two) languages are used for instruction” (p. 193) and described how they fit in each one of the sociolinguistic settings.

Monolingual programs are subdivided in L1 and L2. L1 monolingual programs use the L1 as a means of teaching while the L2 is studied in the classroom. Siegel (2003) asserted that this type of program is commonly seen in external L2 situations as submersion programs in dominant L2 settings. In these programs, teachers are generally monolingual in this language; and there are not any special allowances for children of immigrants or other minorities who do not speak the L2. However, some exceptions may include “pull-out” classes where these children are taught in their mother tongue or with special instruction in the L2. Some other programs (as the sheltered or structured immersion) work with L2

instruction but with specially designed materials that help students to learn it. L2 monolingual programs are also seen in institutional L2 settings but they differ from the submersion programs in three aspects: First, the teachers are bi or multilingual and they know the L1 or the most common language where they are teaching. Second, the content and materials used for teaching are more related to the student's culture. Third, students do not interact with the L2 speakers (Siegel, 2003).

Bilingual programs, according to Siegel (2003), are divided in three types: transitional ($L1 \rightarrow L2$), immersion ($L2 \rightarrow L1 + L2$), and continuing ($L1 + L2$). Transitional programs use the learners' L1 as a means of instruction in regard to initial literacy. Meanwhile, the L2 is taught as a subject. Some years later, the L2 becomes the means of instruction which is an abrupt change in the third and fourth grades. These programs are commonly found in dominant L2 and institutional L2 contexts, for example Fijian and Hindi speaking students learning English in Fiji. As for immersion programs, they are present in coexisting L2 or external L2 settings. Here, the L2 is the means of instruction for most subject matters; however, teachers are bilingual and modify the content in order to assure students' understanding of it. There is a great emphasis on the L1 in upper grades but instruction is made in both languages. The most popular immersion programs are commonly seen in Canada. In the last type continuing bilingual programs, both languages (L1 and L2) are used in teaching throughout the school years. Siegel (2003) distinguished mainstream continuing bilingual programs which are particularly found in coexisting L2 settings. Dominant L2 settings count on maintenance continuing bilingual programs used with minorities and Dual-language or two-way used with minority and majority students.

There, both languages are used for instruction which permits students to experience some kind of immersion in the L2.

Researchers such as Cummins (1988; Garcia,1997; Siegel, 2003; Thomas and Collier 1997; World Bank, 1995 as cited in Siegel 2003) concluded that bilingual programs produce better achievement of the L2 than those being monolingual. Cummins (1988 as cited in Siegel 2003) asserted that the latter may also have negative effects on children and he also refuted the “time-on task” hypothesis that promotes the idea of devoting more time for instruction in a language in order to have better results on its mastery. This last statement was also supported by Thomas and Collier (1997 as cited in Siegel, 2003).

On the other hand, Siegel (2003) stated that the interpretation of these pieces of research depends on several factors such as “the interaction of the type of educational program, the sociolinguistic setting, and the socio- structural factors of size, status, and power of the L1 and L2 groups” (p.196). Siegel also took into account the ideas proposed by Auerbach (1995) who claimed that L2 immersion programs are good in Dominant, Majority settings since their L1 is given more importance in society. Auerbach also stated that transitional or continuing bilingual programs are more appropriate for subordinate, Minority language learners whose L1 is not given too much value or support. It was also claimed that the same type of program results in different outcomes according to the several proposed settings. Another issue to be mentioned is the one related to education policies that determine the type of setting for each place. Here, it must be remembered that these decisions depend on those in a position of power which can bring racism, “linguicism” (Phillipson, 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988 as cited in Siegel, 2003) and the language rights (Hernández- Chavez, 1988 as cited in Siegel, 2003) concepts into the field of SLA.

Research on SLA about this topic has come up with some important insights such as the ones made by Long (1983 as cited in Siegel, 2003) asserting that immersion programs' success lies in their focus on content rather than form. This was also stated by Cummins (1988 as cited in Siegel, 2003) who claimed that the input used in these programs is comprehensible (supporting Krashen's theory in 1982). Siegel suggested that submersion programs' failure is related to the fact that input is never modified to make it comprehensible for students. As for the success of transitional and continuing bilingual programs in dominant L2 settings, there is little research. Although it was expected that the use of the L1 in formal education increases the ethno-linguistic vitality of the L1 speakers and gives a strong identification with it, the intergroup model showed that these factors, on the contrary, produce low levels of L2 proficiency. The field of SLA, according to Siegel (2003), considered three areas related to the positive influence of schooling in the L1: a) positive influence on affective variables, leading to low anxiety, high motivation, and high self-confidence on the part of the learner (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988 as cited in Siegel, 2003); b) the promotion of metalinguistic awareness when developing literacy skills; and c) the learning of relevant skills in L1 which are then transferred to learning another language as proposed by Cummins (1981, 1981 as cited in Siegel, 2003) in his "interdependency principle" or "common underlying proficiency generalization".

Moreover, it is important to take into consideration some authors as Lyster & Ranta (1997) who proposed meaningful ideas related to classroom observation and the types of settings in social context.

Observing Second Language Teaching

It is believed that learning a second language in a natural acquisition setting can be different from learning in an instructional one. It is due to the idea that many successful learners are exposed to the language outside the classroom.

Natural Acquisition Settings

In this setting, learners are exposed to the language through social interactions (e.g. work, etc.). With regard to children, language is provided through school situations where teaching is directed toward native speakers.

Traditional Instructional Settings

Second and Foreign Language Learning are related to learners' and teachers' focus. In the former, students are interested in passing an examination instead of facing daily life interactions. In the latter, teachers provide learners vocabulary and grammatical rules of the target language to be used during the class instruction.

Communicative Content Based and Task Based Instructional environments

The instructions are focused on students' interaction and language use instead of "learning about the language". The topics vary depending on the usage. For example, in Content Based Instruction, learners are exposed to the target language through several subject- matters, such as history or biology. With regard to Communicative and Task Based Instructional settings, topics have to do with the general interest of the student.

Characteristics of Natural Acquisition Settings

- Learners are not corrected because it can be rude or annoying for the interlocutors.
- Learners are exposed to different structure and vocabulary patterns.
- Learners are usually in contact with the language for many hours.
- Learners participate in many exchanges of information at school, etc.
- Learners usually use modified input in order to get information or answer questions.

Characteristics of Traditional Instructional Settings

- Learners' speech is often corrected in order to give priority to accuracy.
- Learners are given pre-elaborated input in which linguistic items are presented each one at a time.
- Learners' instruction is limited to few hours a week.
- Learners feel forced to use accurately the second language.

Classroom Observation Schemes

Classroom observations are considered as learners' and teachers' behavior examinations. They can have several categories: qualitative and quantitative descriptions, selected samples of classroom interactions and audio-video analysis.

A clear observation scheme for second language classrooms is the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT). This observation scheme has 70 categories divided into two parts. In part A, there is a description of focus, content and organization of activity types. With regard to part B, there is a description of learners' and teachers' language production (e.g. How much it is produced, production' restrictions, kinds of questions and reactions to learners' errors, etc.)

Feedback in Classrooms

Lyster and Ranta (1997) described several types of feedback on learners' and teachers' error called uptake. This model was developed through the observation of a French immersion classroom. They used a combination of COLT observation scheme and other models based on feedback examination. From this feedback model, they identified six different feedback types:

Explicit Correction. It refers to the explicit errors' correction.

Recasts: It refers to the implicit errors' correction that is, the teacher's reformulation of learners' error.

Clarification requests. Students are asked for a reformulation or repetition of the message through different phrases, such as "Pardon me".

Metalinguistic Feedback. It refers to the teachers' comments or information about the correct formation of the target language structures.

Elicitation. Teachers use different strategies to elicit the correct language form. For example, completion of the students' utterances and use of questions.

Repetition. Teachers provide a repetition of the learners' incorrect utterances.

Other Related Studies

The Social and Cultural Contexts of Second Language Acquisition in Young Children

Language Acquisition

In order to learn a first language, young children need to master different processes such as phonology, vocabulary, grammar, discourse and pragmatics. Language development starts when children interact with others and create great vocabulary and expression abilities by the age of five. According to McMurray (2007 as cited in Soderman & Oshio, 2008), there is a process called “explosion” or “word spurt” in which children notice the particular names of common objects. It helps them to acquire useful words in order to get along in several social situations, (e.g. needs, wants, control others, seek information, etc.).

Second Language Acquisition

Nowadays, it is essential that people master a primary language with other languages in order to interact with other cultures across the globe. Nevertheless, there are some studies that show how brain’s maturation brought a decline in language learning abilities. It occurs because children are able to learn accurate phonology better than adults in second language learning. For this reason, first language learning takes place in an early period of the childhood and special training is not needed. There are five factors which describe the success in second language acquisition:

Age factor. Young children have less trouble than older learners.

Aptitude factor. It refers to “talented people” in second language acquisition.

Social factor. Some people tend to be more open-minded to language learning.

Psychological factor. It is important to take into account learners' motivation.

Low anxiety in the learning environment. Stress can affect learners' motivation.

Children's attitude towards other language can vary. Some of them do not understand the advantages that they have in the learning process. In spite of this, some others can feel proud of taking this language risk. Some evidence shows that bilingual children have self-esteem and develop cognitive abilities and metalinguistic awareness. (Siraj-Blatch Ford and Clarke 2001, as cited in Soderman & Oshio, 2008).

In some cases, bilingualism is simultaneous or sequential. The former occurs when young children are exposed to two or more primary languages from birth at the same time. The latter refers to the use of languages in different social contexts. It gives children the ability of mixing words from both languages.

According To Priscilla Clarke (1996 as cited in Soderman & Oshio, 2008), there are some specific stages of second language acquisition taking into consideration learners' differences (e.g. personality, motivation, etc.).She noticed some difficulties that children experience during the learning process, such as "the use of home language" in the new context along with non- verbal communication, silence period, repetition and single words.

Tabor (1997 as cited in Soderman & Oshio, 2008) claimed that these four stages are followed in order to acquire a second language:

Stage 1

Home language use. Learners tend to use their mother tongue in order to interact with others. Nevertheless, they are confused because the interlocutors do not respond to them.

Stage 2

Non-verbal period. They start using non- verbal means to interact.

Stage 3

Telegraphic and formulaic speech. Learners use short phrases or words to communicate. They also tend to mix words from their primary and second language.

Stage 4

Productive language. They produce more complex sentences but they continue making language mistakes.

Teaching a Second Language to Young Children

There are many linguistic, cultural and age differences in a classroom. For this reason, it is important to have an idea about what happens when children are learning more than one language, and also check how they progress.

The present study

Soderman and Oshio (2008) stated that their study tries to examine the social behavior and competence of children while they progress throughout the stages of second language acquisition in a dual immersion program.

Methods: Participants

- All preschool (ages 3-5), Kindergarten (ages 5-6) a total of twenty-two children.
- 12 boys and 10 girls with international passports in the final sample.
- Participant nationalities: Australian(2); Austrian(1); Chinese(6); Dutch(19); Finnish(1); German(2); Japanese(4); Korean(3); American(2).
- Children age: 3.8 years in preschool with a range of 3.1-4.10 years. In kindergarten, 5.1 years with a range of 4.9- 6.4 years.

Procedure

The study lasted one year. It began in August 2006 and finished in June 2007. There were almost 100 observations of the learners' behavior and learning strategies. The observations were from 2 to 3 hours once or twice a week. The researcher only observed the behavioral responses of the children.

Measure of social competence

The researcher used "The Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale (SCBE: LaFreniere et al. 1992) which refers to an eighty-item likert rating scale to evaluate social behavior. Each scale describes different social processes such as "successful adjustment and adjustment difficulties" (e.g. Depressive- Joyful, Aggressive-Calm, Dependent-Autonomous, etc.). Finally, there was a summary of the rating scales in categories: Social Competence, Internalizing Problems, Externalizing Problems and General Adaptation (ranges from 72- 89).

Analysis

The study used coded-observation for more clear results which shows adjustment difficulties and successes in the different stages of language learning. It also took into account that there are some factors which affect peer interaction and the use of teachers' strategies. A paired test was elaborated in order to evaluate differences between Time 1 (T1) (beginning of school year) and T2 (end of school year).

Social Competence

Great differences of social adjustment between Western and Chinese classrooms scores were found. Students with higher means indicated better social adjustment in their classroom.

Discussion

The researcher found that female- learners had "adjustment difficulties" in the Eastern classroom. Some studies show that girls tend to be part of "prosocial behaviors" more than boys (Fabes & Eisenberg 1996; Kostelnik et al. 2006, as cited in Soderman & Oshio, 2008). Consequently, male- learners tend to be represented in emotional impaired populations (Soderman et al.1999; Soderman, Gregory and McCarty 2006, as cited in Soderman& Oshio,2008).Also, girls acquire earlier verbal ability than boys (Berk, 2003, as cited in Soderman & Oshio,2008).

Due to independence/dependence ideas, learners' cultural differences are reflected in the study. For this reason, observations were shared with the teachers for clarifications. On the other hand, the identification of children was necessary in order to know their difficulties making friends in the setting. Parents also took part of the study when they established "play dates" with children of different nationalities. It was made to create a closer link where they could share their culture and some social experiences.

To sum up, this chapter shows certain theories and investigations that are related to the sociocultural factors in foreign language/learning acquisition. This information makes the researchers conclude that social context is a sociocultural factor of great importance since the region counts on a big cultural and social variety. Pasto's social context is clearly visible in the classroom of the rural and urban zone of this city. Therefore, it deserves a detailed study. In the next chapter, the methodology that was chosen in order to develop the investigation is explained in detail.

Chapter III

The Research Method

In this chapter, some methodological tools implemented during the development of the research are described. This project was focused on determining the influence of social context on foreign language learning in some rural and urban areas of Pasto. Some of these methodological tools are related to the project design, the population, the setting, the sample, the procedure and the ethical issues which were taken into account in order to not affect the integrity of the participants and the researchers.

Design

Next, the research paradigm, the research type and the data collection techniques used during the development of this project are presented.

The Research Paradigm. The qualitative research was chosen for developing this project.

Qualitative research. According to Moreno & Uscátegui (2002), this type of research is the study of social and human phenomena. These phenomena depend on the point of view of their interpreters in order to achieve understanding, interpretation or transformation.

Its main objectives are:

1. To describe facts and social or human phenomena which are compared between some other groups.
2. To formulate hypothesis that can be verified with a different research.

3. To examine social and textual facts or joints.
4. To understand, interpret and evaluate factors and actions of social type.
5. To clarify the descriptions and relationships which have been generated in other pieces of research.

Moreno & Uscátegui (2002) presented the main characteristics of the qualitative research.

1. The social reality is made up of external observable facts and also for social and cultural meanings.
2. This research tries to understand the most common elements of the reality.
3. It describes the context surrounding the development of a particular event.
4. It explores and observes the different perspectives and factors of a fact's reality.
5. There is a close relationship between the researcher and what is going to be investigated in order to find a meaning that is appropriate to what is being studied.

On the other hand, there are some validation criteria in this paradigm. It is formed by close and local meanings of actions. Its importance is shown in the relationship and existing compatibility between the theoretical interpretation and the own interpretation of the participant. It was really important to take into account the qualitative research in this project since it worked with a methodology which facilitated the data collection through a series of research techniques such as observation and interviews which allowed describing the human and social phenomena that surrounded the research problem.

Research Type. It was based on an ethnographic type of research.

Ethnographic research. According to Muñoz, Quintero & Munévar (2001), it is a model of qualitative research which refers to a natural interaction where the researcher and a specific group of participants try to describe and interpret their visions and perspectives of a problematic situation in particular. This prototype is characterized by:

1. The researcher must be in direct contact with the phenomenon that is going to be studied.
2. The researcher has to stay and interact constantly with the population, the setting and the activities that are developed.
3. The researcher permanence in the study field allows him/her to discover the different points of view of the participants.
4. The researcher creates a goal as his/her research advances.
5. Hypotheses are not generated since ethnographic research constructed meaning through the experiences of the participants.
6. An interpretative-qualitative study seeks to define the relationships that give sense and meaning to what is being studied.
7. It maximizes the value, sense and meaning of the observed facts.

The choice of this type of research had to do with the fact that certain characteristics that owned this model suited to the project, for example the permanence and direct interaction of researchers in the study field with the population, the setting and the activities carried out in order to get their views and their actions.

Research Techniques. The main research techniques which were used in this project were observation and interviews.

Observation. According to Hopkins (1985), it is a research technique to a detailed data collection which focuses primarily on general and specific elements. Observation is used as a support for prior teacher knowledge about the phenomenon that is going to be analyzed. The procedure followed during this process is to determine the study field in which the technique is applied, to observe the scenario and finally, to give feedback that interprets and analyzes the results. This technique was useful in this project since it was necessary to recreate accurately the existence of a problematic situation in the field of the study.

Interviews. According to Hopkins (1985), this technique involves the formulation of a series of questions from the researcher to the participants, or vice versa. Interviews allowed to ask direct questions about the research subject. In addition, they provided data that could help to create an appropriate environment for communication between researchers and participants. The process carried out deals with an interview which is exclusively based on talks between the interviewer and the participant about the research subject. To make this process more effective, it is necessary to make use of its several types of questions such as descriptive, structural and contrast questions. Also, it is useful to keep a scheme of questions, and paraphrase a question when it is not clearly understood by the interlocutor, when general replies are gotten, or when the answers do not contain relevant information to the study. This technique was used since it allowed to get the perspectives, views and information from the participants in order to check the importance of this study.

Other techniques. Other techniques used were:

Field Notes. According to Bastidas (2003), they refer to the annotations or notes made by the researcher who takes into account the participants' reactions and reflections.

Slides and Photographs. According to Hopkins (1985), they are focused on the illustration of outstanding incidents and on the stimulation for the discussion about them.

Documentary Evidence. According to Bastidas (2003), they are documents that surround a curriculum and other educational concerns. They can provide reasons and purposes in an interesting way.

Population, Setting and Sample

Next, the population, the setting and the sample took into account during this research are described below.

Population. The project was carried out with a group of students and teachers from public institutions who were between 11 to 12 years old and 30 to 50 years old respectively. Students were enrolled in 6th grade and teachers worked in basic secondary education. Students belonged to a low social status. Teachers were between a middle and high social status.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL CONTEXT IN I.E.M. NRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE FROM CATAMBUCO AND I.E.M. SAN JUAN BOSCO	TEACHERS	STUDENTS
ANALYSIS UNIT	4	8
TOTAL	12	

Table 3.1. Population, Setting and Sample.

Settings. The research took place in the Institución Educativa Municipal Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and the Institución Educativa Municipal San Juan Bosco, which are located in the south east and in the downtown of Pasto respectively. The former institution counted on well-equipped facilities which had a good amount of classrooms for the students. The latter institution counted on classrooms with basic elements of teaching such as desks and boards. Besides, they were public schools which offered basic primary education, basic secondary education and agro-industrial media education.

Sample. A sample of 12 people selected at random and composed of 4 teachers and 8 students was taken for this research. They belonged to the Institución Educativa Municipal Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe from Catambuco and the Institución Educativa Municipal San Juan Bosco from the downtown of Pasto.

Procedure

In order to start the research process, some ethical principles such as the corresponding authorizations from the institution, its directors, students and parents before applying any of the pre-selected data collection techniques such as observations of the participants, field notes, questionnaires, interviews with students and teachers, analysis of documents belonging to several investigations, slides/photographs and documentary evidence were fulfilled. These data collection techniques were carried out through strict processes which followed the right steps proposed for the application of each one of them.

On the other hand, during the design and development of this research project, some issues such as the concept that participants had about social context, learning and foreign language were taken into account. Furthermore, the teachers' concepts in regard to education and students' low level of learning in order to determine the influence exercised by social differences in the process of learning a foreign language were considered too.

At the end of the research, the participants' help was rewarded by giving a general overview of the final results.

Validation Criteria

Pilot study. There was a pilot study prior to the research in order to avoid possible difficulties in the development of the project as it could happen with the use of certain data collection techniques. First of all, the researchers got into the study field and after an analysis of the population, the participants were provided with the questionnaire form to be filled in on their own. In case that the information collected was not appropriate and this

technique failed, it was necessary to reformulate and redesign the technique to get more relevant and accurate data.

Validation criteria. There was a triangulation of some important elements in the research to assure that the information was reliable and accurate. It was studied from different perspectives: interviews with the participants and the collaboration of teachers and students. In addition, some external information as articles, documents, and research to support and verify the validity of the research were used.

Ethical Issues

The ethical issues mentioned by Kennis & McTaggart (1981) were taken into account in regard to voluntary participation, contributions acceptance along with the decisions of some people involved in the research.

Copyright. Before using any external information such as texts, articles, research, and/or documents, the source or reference from which this data was extracted was mentioned in order to respect and recognize copyright.

Permission. Permission, both oral and written, was asked to the institution involved in the study, in this case the Institución Educativa Municipal Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe from Catambuco and the Institución Educativa Municipal San Juan Bosco.

Observation Protocol. There was voluntary participation of students, teachers and the high school faculty in the research.

Integral Protection. The project itself was intended to avoid causing any kind of harm either physical or psychological to the participants from the chosen population.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. There was anonymity and confidentiality when it came to dealing with the negative results gotten in the research.

Acknowledgements. The results obtained during the research were shared with the institution. In addition, a copy of the work was provided to the schools as a sign of appreciation for their help.

In conclusion, in this chapter, some methodological elements that were used as the basis for the data collection were presented. Such methodological elements helped to show the importance of studying the relationship between social context and foreign language learning in a context where there is great social variety. Next chapter is focused on explaining the results obtained in this study.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

In this chapter, the data collection techniques used in order to develop the research are analyzed in detail. For this purpose, some charts and graphics are used throughout the text in order to make the research results more comprehensible for the reader.

Results of the Students' Surveys

Survey 1

1. ¿Le gusta la materia de inglés?
2. ¿Disfruta escuchar música en inglés con referencia a la música regional o local?
3. ¿Hace uso frecuente de palabras extranjeras (del Inglés) como por ejemplo "Ok", "Bye", "Hello", "Excuse me", en su comunicación cotidiana?
4. ¿Ha intentado leer o hacer uso de obras literarias, artículos, revistas o periódicos en inglés?
5. ¿Le gustaría desenvolverse en un contexto en el cual en inglés sea un idioma necesario como instrumento de comunicación?

Answers

INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA MUNICIPAL NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE					
CHILDREN	QUESTIONS				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	No	Indifferent	Yes
3	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Table 4.1. Answers of students' questionnaires in the rural area

Results. Table 4.2. Results of the students' questionnaires in the rural area

Questions	Yes	No	Indifferent	%Yes	%No	%Indifferent
1	4	0	0	100	0	0
2	3	1	0	75	25	0
3	0	4	0	0	100	0
4	1	2	1	25	50	25
5	4	0	0	100	0	0

Answers. Table 4.3. Answers of the students' questionnaires in the urban area.

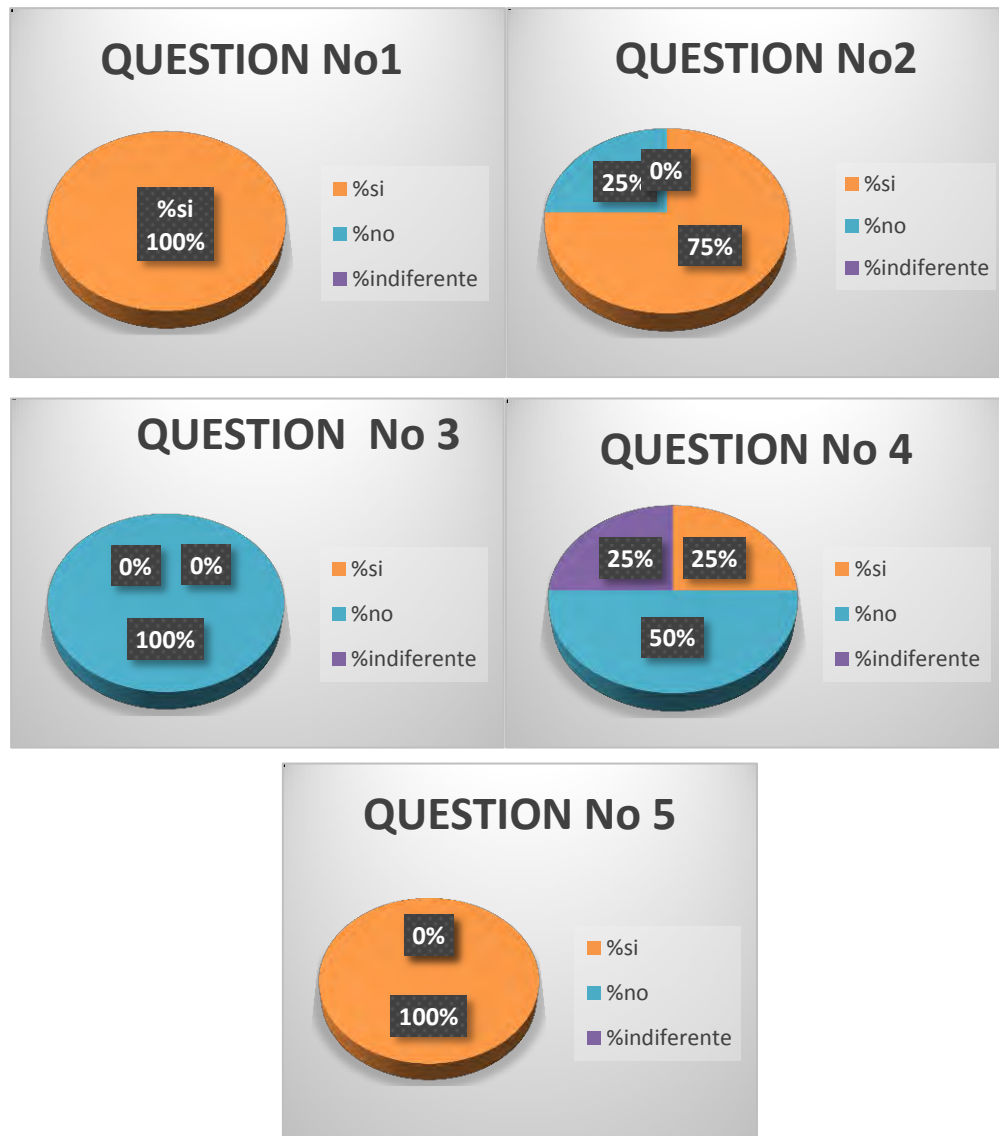
INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA SAN JUAN BOSCO					
CHILDREN	QUESTIONS				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
3	Indifferent	Yes	No	No	Yes
4	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Results. Table 4.4. Results of the students' questionnaires in the urban area.

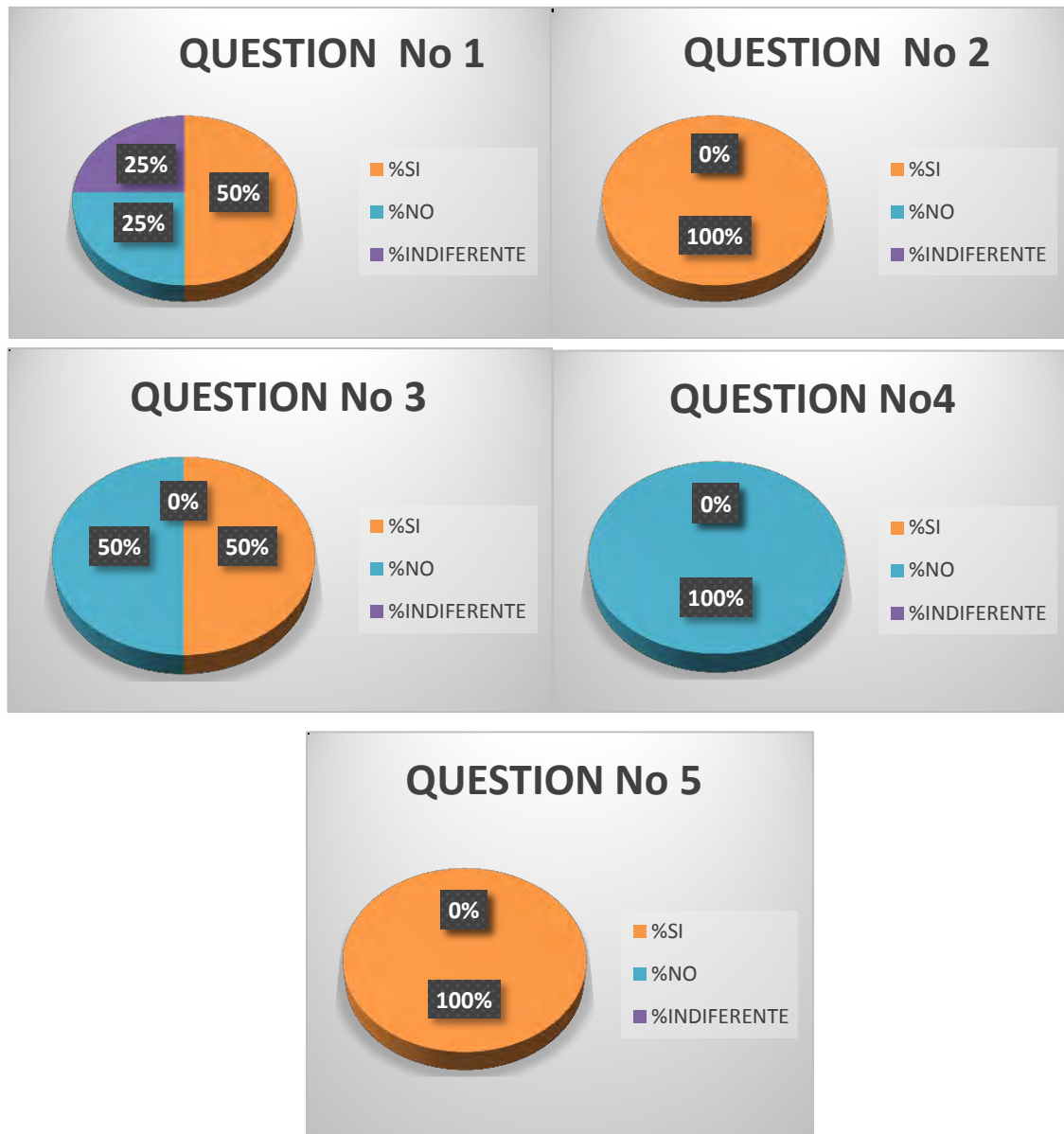
Questions	Yes	No	Indifferent	%Yes	%No	%Indifferent
1	2	1	1	50	25	25
2	4	0	0	100	0	0
3	2	2	0	50	50	0
4	0	4	0	0	100	0
5	4	0	0	100	0	0

Graphics

Graphic 4.1. Results of the students questionnaires in the I.E.M. Nuestra Señora De Guadalupe.



Graphic 4.2. Results of the students questionnaires in the I.E.M. San Juan Bosco



Analysis of the Students' Surveys

Question 1. This question showed the students' willingness to learn English as a subject matter. According to the research, a hundred percent of the participants of the rural area enjoyed English learning at high school. But, students from the urban area had divided opinions about the aspect formulated since only half of the participants liked the subject.

Questions 2 and 4. They intended to show the learners' contact with the target language. The results obtained vary from school to school. In the urban area, children stated that they really enjoyed listening to music in English. On the contrary, most of the children from the rural area liked this activity. In regard to the use of authentic materials from the part of the learner, the rural area presented partial implementation of them while in the urban area no one seemed to use them.

Questions 3 and 5. These questions tried to search information about the way students interact with each other by using the L2 and what they thought about facing situations in which the target language is used. In this case, the rural area students did not include basic vocabulary items in their daily communication although they would like to be in an English speaking real context. However, in the urban area, half of the students included linguistic elements in their oral interactions, and they would also like to be able to participate in an English environment.

Results of the Teachers' Surveys

Survey 2

1. ¿Ha notado que los estudiantes tratan de incluir elementos lingüísticos o sociales del inglés dentro de su cotidianidad?
2. ¿Ha intentado promover o propiciar el uso de herramientas audiovisuales con el fin de acercar el idioma extranjero a los estudiantes de su clase?
3. ¿Hace uso frecuente de la lengua extranjera (inglés) a la hora de dictar su clase?
4. ¿Fomenta la participación de sus estudiantes en cualquier nivel cognitivo (lectura, escritura, escucha y habla)?
5. ¿Cuenta el aula de clase con el equipo necesario para una apropiada instrucción en el área de inglés?

Answers. Table 4.5. Answers of the teachers' questionnaires in the rural area

INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA MUNICIPAL NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE					
TEACHERS	QUESTIONS				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Results. Table 4.6. Results of the teachers' questionnaires in the rural area

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	MAYBE	%YES	%NO	%MAYBE
1	1	1	0	50	50	0
2	2	0	0	100	0	0
3	2	0	0	100	0	0
4	2	0	0	100	0	0
5	2	0	0	100	0	0

Answers. Table 4.7. Answers of the teachers' questionnaires in the urban area.

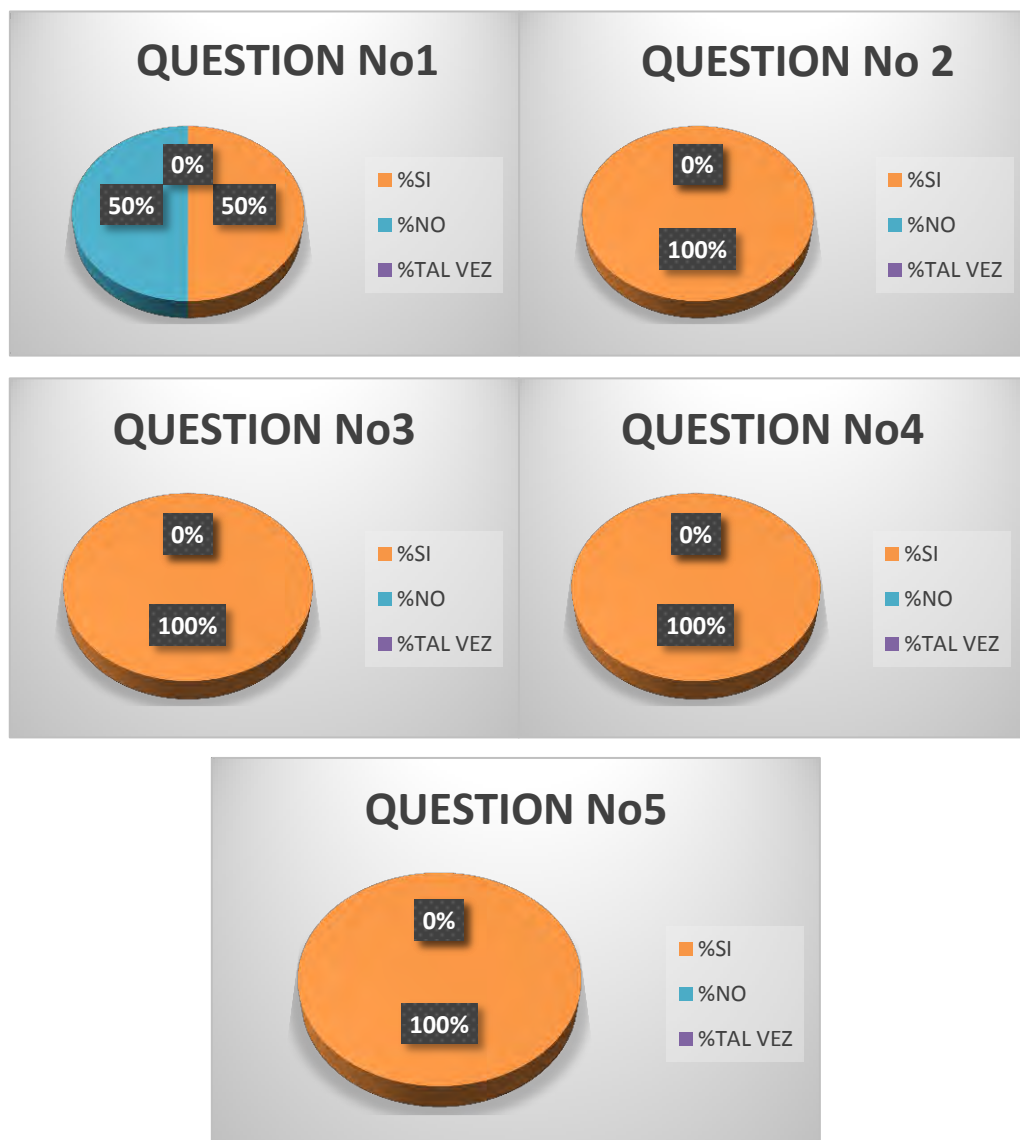
INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA SAN JUAN BOSCO					
TEACHERS	QUESTIONS				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	No
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No

Results. Table 4.8. Results of the teachers' questionnaires in the urban area

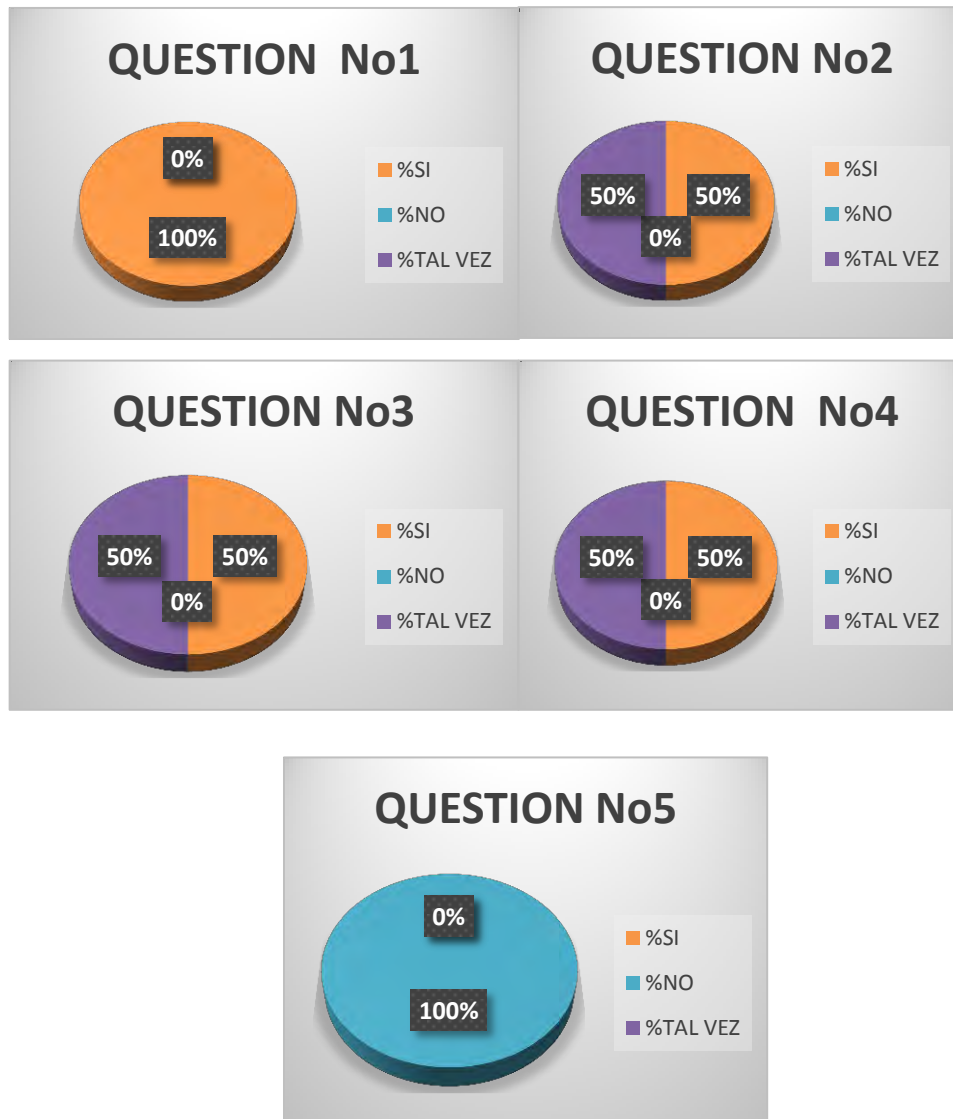
QUESTIONS	YES	NO	MAYBE	%YES	%NO	%MAYBE
1	2	0	0	100	0	0
2	1	0	1	50	0	50
3	1	0	1	50	0	50
4	1	0	1	50	0	50
5	0	2	0	0	100	0

Graphics

Graphic 4.3. Results of the teachers' questionnaires in the I.E.M Nuestra Señora De Guadalupe.



Graphic 4.4. Results of the teachers' questionnaires in the I.E.M San Juan Bosco.



Analysis of the Teachers' Surveys

Questions 1 and 4. By means of these questions, the researchers wanted to represent the teachers' perceptions about how students involved themselves in the English learning while including what they knew in language tasks. Thus, in the rural area, teachers had a divided opinion of the evaluated aspect since just one of them believed that the children used and interacted with the L2. Nevertheless, the teachers asserted that they did foster the use of the language at any cognitive level. In the urban area, it was seen that teachers thought students did include specific language aspects in their daily activities. However, when asked about how they fostered the use of the L2, just one of them reported that he tried to involve the students in all language skills.

Questions 2 and 5. These aspects were formulated in order to get information on the use and availability of authentic materials and resources necessary to teach English. In the rural area, there were complete possibilities of the fulfillment of both conditions. There, teachers counted on a positive atmosphere that was related to the fact that they had enough materials for their classes. In the urban area, despite one of teachers promoted the use of authentic tools; both participants claimed that there were not good conditions for teaching English since they did not have the appropriate equipment to work.

Question 3. This question reflected the amount of input that children got from the most important source of it in the classroom: the teacher. In the rural area, a hundred percent of the participants showed a high use of the target language during the instruction. This gave children the opportunity to get a vast amount of meaningful input. Finally, in the urban area, only half of the teachers contended to use of the L2 while in class.

Results of the Students' Interviews

Questions

1. ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés?
2. ¿Crees que en tu aula de clase existen elementos que beneficien el aprendizaje de inglés? ¿Cuáles?
3. ¿Crees que el profesor (a) hace uso frecuente del inglés durante las clases?
4. ¿Te gustaría viajar a algún país de habla inglesa (Estados Unidos, Inglaterra)? ¿Por qué?

Analysis of the Students' Interviews

Question 1. Considering the reduced importance given to the English subject, this question was formulated in order to get some personal perspectives from the participants about the subject. Research demonstrated that students from both institutions and/or areas of study (rural and urban ones) thought that it was important to learn English. They believed that it would be a useful tool when travelling abroad.

Question 2. Taking into account the influence of available resources when teaching a foreign language, this question intended to show the actual conditions of classrooms in both rural and urban areas of Pasto's high schools. In this case, results proved that in the rural high school there were certain materials that helped learners in their classes such as computers, television sets and books. However, in the case of the urban high school, students stated that they did not count on sufficient resources for their English lessons.

Question 3. The frequency of input gotten in formal lessons is one of the most remarkable aspects in order to learn a foreign language. Thus, this aspect attempted to search information about the L2 use done by teachers during the instruction. Here, students from both areas of study reported a frequent use of the L2 from the part of the teachers.

Question 4. Being fluent in another language is a crucial factor when travelling to another country, so this supported the formulation of this question. Results presented that the urban high school students would like to travel abroad in order to meet new people and learn or improve their English knowledge. In the case of rural high school students, they would like to learn about other cultures and countries, meet new people and improve their English knowledge if they travelled to another place.

Results of the Teachers' Interviews

Questions

1. ¿Qué clase de contexto considera usted es el más conveniente para la enseñanza del inglés? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Qué habilidades (lectura, escritura, habla, escucha) se interesa por explotar más dentro de sus clases?
3. ¿Considera usted que es importante enseñar el inglés (como lengua extranjera) basándose en el contexto del estudiante? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Qué clase de “authentic materials” utiliza para desarrollar el conocimiento de la lengua extranjera?

5. ¿Cree usted que lo anterior beneficiaría el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de inglés? ¿De qué manera?

Analysis of the Teachers' Interviews

Question 1. This question was intended in order to get some meaningful ideas about a better teaching context for foreign language (English) teachers by taking into account their experience in public high schools from Pasto. In this sense, the rural high school teachers asserted that students in this area had to face a lot of adversities in regard to their social, economic, affective and psychological levels along with the fact that government goals did not fit within the lack of resources for teaching. Besides, learning English was seen as an immediate need depending on where it was taught. There were also some materials which were obtained thanks to the principal's management.

Urban high school teachers also presented some facts that accounted for the lack of useful tools in their classrooms. They believed that one of the best teaching contexts should be closely related to the use and manipulation of digital technology as seen in bilingualism rooms and online exercises.

Question 2. In this question, the researchers could check the importance that teachers gave to each one of the cognitive abilities when they were teaching English. So, in the rural high school teachers admitted that they focused their lessons on the requirements made by the Ministry of Education by means of the ICFES tests. That is to say, they promoted just reading and writing. As for the urban area high school, teachers also kept this statement claiming they wanted to make sure that students understood English readings in an easier way.

Question 3. This question was formulated in order to see if teachers made meaningful adaptations to the materials they used for ensuring students' involvement in the language tasks while based on their real life. Thus, in the rural high school, one teacher believed that it was really important to adapt the government goals by taking into account the teachers' experience in order to avoid possible frustrations from both sides. Another teacher, asserted to use materials that made the class as real as possible. In the urban area, one teacher claimed that he was trying to include some technological tools such as social networks in order to get in touch with the students' learning process as they did with their peers when they finished their classes. The other teacher stated that social context was really important since English is a universal language; but, he also demanded for more teaching hours to cover the required topics.

Question 4. This question was made in order to get some information about the frequency of updated and native-like sources and/or equipment's use from the part of the teachers. Consequently, teachers from the rural area contended that they worked with audiovisual sources such as video beam, television sets, cassette recorders, flashcards, games and the adaptation of a book searching to motivate students. In the same way, a teacher from the urban high school claimed that he used certain materials such as movies, listening tasks, the internet and e-mail addresses, magazines and online news just to get students closer to English. The other teacher claimed that he preferred the assigned textbook and its speaking practices and also the use of dictionaries.

Question 5. The last question intended to get some personal points of view from the teachers about the idea of including new, creative and more meaningful aids such as authentic materials in their lessons. As a result, a teacher from the rural area stated that although this type of aids would be useful for his classes, students from this setting would still have to deal with several adversities and difficulties (undernourishment, a

neglected family environment and remote progress perspectives) that would prevent the appropriate flow of their learning. The other one asserted that it would for sure make English lessons more pleasant and students would face national tests with more preparation. In the same way, both teachers from the urban area high school claimed that this kind of tools had great impact when creating a positive atmosphere among students. For that reason, it would be necessary to invest some money in the setting and introduction of these materials and tools.

To sum up, this chapter was focused on the analysis and description of results of the data collection techniques implemented during the investigation. Next chapter provides the most meaningful and relevant conclusions and recommendations made from the research as a whole.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research was done based on a rural setting that counted on different resources and well-equipped facilities while the urban one presented the opposite conditions. For this reason, the data obtained showed that teachers should not have pre-conceptions about the teaching conditions of a determined setting since they could be deceitful. In this sense, this project could be shared with the main governmental entities in order to promote exhaustive analysis and evaluation of each one of the public high schools in regard to their available resources and teaching methodologies. As a result, the findings obtained in this study suggested that rural high school learners stood out from the urban area ones because of the constant use of authentic materials (e.g. magazines, computers, video beams, etc.), and new methodologies in order to foster students' motivation.

Moreover, during the research teachers stated that the Ministry of Education established a series of standards based on the Common European Framework which do not fit in the Colombian education structure and produce frustration between both parts. Consequently, these findings were aimed to create awareness among different educators and policy makers. Also, they wanted to show that it is important to avoid imposing foreign evaluation criteria and education goals in settings like Pasto in which learning programs present weaknesses in their rationale.

In the same way, there are many evaluation techniques in Colombia which were designed in order to check the education improvement in all areas of the study. One of them was the well-known ICFES test which partially measures the acquisition of a foreign language, in this case English. As a result, it is necessary to reformulate the

evaluation methods applied in this country which are focused on reading and writing by leaving out the listening and speaking skills. So, it would be useful to include the four abilities in national tests in order to see the real scope of English language learning in public high schools.

In contrast, the research showed that students were not interested in using the target language as a means of communication neither on finding a way of exploring the L2 culture with simple activities such as listening to music or reading a book. Furthermore, it would be advisable to enquire about how this social factor is affecting the learners' mastery in the L2 when there are not enough and appropriate resources in the classroom and out of it. This could be done in order to raise students' curiosity about the target language.

Finally, in spite these results demonstrated the importance of taking into account the social context influence, it is suggested to do some new research about this issue since education conditions are not always the same for each one of the rural and urban institutions from Pasto.

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Appendix 1

TÉCNICA 1: ENTREVISTA

NOMBRE: Entrevista a los estudiantes

OBJETIVO: Hacer que el entrevistado exprese su opinión acerca de la influencia que ejerce el contexto social sobre el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera teniendo en cuenta su opinión personal.

INSTRUCCIONES: Habiendo leído las preguntas entregadas por el investigador, respóndalas de manera clara y precisa.

(Preguntas):

1. ¿Crees que es importante aprender inglés?
2. ¿Crees que en tu aula de clase existen elementos que beneficien el aprendizaje de inglés? ¿Cuáles?
3. ¿Crees que el profesor (a) hace uso frecuente del inglés durante las clases?
4. ¿Te gustaría viajar a algún país de habla inglesa (Estados Unidos, Inglaterra)? ¿Por qué?

NOMBRE: Entrevista a los profesores

OBJETIVO: Hacer que el entrevistado exprese su opinión acerca de la influencia que ejerce el contexto social sobre el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera teniendo en cuenta su opinión personal.

INSTRUCCIONES: Después de haber leído con anticipación las preguntas que el investigador le ha entregado, respóndalas basándose en su experiencia como docente de lenguas extranjeras.

(Preguntas)

1. ¿Qué clase de contexto considera usted es el más conveniente para la enseñanza del inglés? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Qué habilidades (lectura, escritura, habla, escucha) se interesa por explotar más dentro de sus clases?
3. ¿Considera usted que es importante enseñar el inglés (como lengua extranjera) basándose en el contexto del estudiante? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Qué clase de “authentic materials” utiliza para desarrollar el conocimiento de la lengua extranjera?

5. ¿Cree usted que lo anterior beneficiaría el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de inglés? ¿De qué manera?

TÉCNICA 2: CUESTIONARIO

NOMBRE: Cuestionario a los Estudiantes.

OBJETIVO: Recolectar información general y personal que permitan al investigador llevar a cabo el proyecto y verificar las ideas propuestas sobre la influencia del contexto social en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera.

INSTRUCCIONES: Lea cuidadosamente las siguientes afirmaciones. Marque con una (X) la opción que más se ajuste a su opinión personal.

EJEMPLO: ¿Se le facilita el uso de inglés en el aula?



SI

NO

INDIFERENTE

CONTENIDO:

1. ¿Le gusta la materia de inglés?



2. Disfruta escuchar música en inglés con referencia a la música regional o local.



3. Hace uso frecuente de palabras extranjeras (del inglés) como por ejemplo “Okay”, “Bye”, “Hello”, “Excuse me” en su comunicación cotidiana.



4. ¿Ha intentado leer o hacer uso de obras literarias, artículos, revistas o periódicos en inglés?



5. Le gustaría desenvolverse en un contexto en el cual el inglés sea un idioma necesario como instrumento de comunicación.



¡Muchas gracias por tu colaboración!

NOMBRE: Cuestionario a los Profesores.

OBJETIVO: Recolectar información general y personal que permitan al investigador llevar a cabo el proyecto y verificar las ideas propuestas sobre la influencia del contexto social en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera.

INSTRUCCIONES: Lea cuidadosamente las siguientes afirmaciones concernientes al tema de investigación. Marque con una (X) la casilla que más se ajuste a su opinión personal.

EJEMPLO: -¿Considera usted importante la enseñanza del inglés?

SI (X) NO () TAL VEZ ()

CONTENIDO:

1. ¿Ha notado que los estudiantes tratan de incluir elementos lingüísticos o sociales del inglés dentro de su cotidianidad?
SI () NO () TAL VEZ ()
2. ¿Ha intentado promover o propiciar el uso de herramientas audiovisuales con el fin de acercar el idioma extranjero a los estudiantes de su clase?
SI () NO () TAL VEZ ()
3. ¿Hace uso frecuente de la lengua extranjera (inglés) a la hora de dictar su clase?
SI () NO () TAL VEZ ()
4. ¿Fomenta la participación de sus estudiantes en cualquier nivel cognitivo (lectura, escritura, escucha y habla)?
SI () NO () TAL VEZ ()
5. ¿Cuenta el aula de clase con el equipo necesario para una apropiada instrucción en el área de inglés?
SI () NO () TAL VEZ ()

Agradecemos mucho su colaboración y la atención prestada.