

**Effects of Cooperative Language Learning Strategies on Written Production**

By

Carmelita Yasmin Loza Moreno

Diana Carolina Pinchao López

Submitted to the School of Human Sciences

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of B.A. in the Department of

Linguistics and Languages

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Las ideas aportadas en el Trabajo de Grado son responsabilidad exclusiva de los autores, artículo 1° acuerdo #324 del 11 de octubre de 1966 del Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

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Firma del jurado

San Juan de Pasto, Octubre del 2012

### Acknowledgments

It is very gratifying to see the achievement of one more goal in my life, this is surely the starting point of new ones, and I will do my best in order to reach them. The way to those goals would not be the same without the help and support of those people we love. That is why I want to thank to all people who have supported me through this process, to my friends and family, especially to my sister Tatiana and my mother. I also want thank to our advisor Ana Clara Sanchez whose support was the best. Thanks to our readers, my English and French teachers from whom I have learnt a lot, to all of you thank you very much.

Yasmin Loza

In life there was always the challenge to know who is better at doing something, even though there is always the right place and the right time to know how good you are at something. When it comes to your life the only thing that matters is to be alive to reach your goals and dreams without harming people around you, so that I would like to thank to God for giving me the chance to achieve one of my goals which was to be able to finish one of my dreams beside the people that I love the most. To me it is also important to say thank you to my mother, aunt and family who always gave to me their support in this stage of my life. The encouragement and the positive energy that sometimes was missing in my life was given by the only person who completes my life in every way, thank you habibi for those words and moments I won't ever forget. I would say thank you to my friend and sister who I made this project with, I would never ask for a better person to work through thick and thin. Thank you very much to my friends from the university whose I spent those five years those were very nice memories to be remembered! I would like to give a special gratitude to my advisor Teacher Ana Clara Sanchez who always was there to give us her help when we needed it through the whole process. Thank you very much to teachers Gabriel and Angie for their help in the process.

Diana Pinchao

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### Abstract

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is a current methodological trend that aims at paying special attention to individual differences, to develop critical thinking as same as collaborative and communication skills. In the last years, writing has been used as a mean of communication in social networks and through cell phones in an informal way, paying a minor attention to the use of punctuation marks. Even though, the use of punctuation marks has an essential role in the quality of written production, since this skill is also used to communicate ideas in an organized and formal way. Moreover, writing is one of the productive skills which might be seen as an individual task; therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the effects of CLL strategies on students' written production using punctuation marks. The results showed that after applying CLL strategies, there was a noted increase in students' written production and there was a better quality in writing sentences using punctuation marks. Working cooperatively changed the dynamics within the classroom allowing students to put into practice their writing skills, giving relevance to the use of punctuation in a friendly atmosphere where writing was not necessarily an individual task.

*Keywords:* Cooperative Language Learning, strategies, punctuation marks, written production.



### Resumen

El aprendizaje cooperativo de una lengua es una tendencia metodológica actual cuyo objetivo es enfocarse en diferencias individuales, desarrollar el pensamiento crítico, las habilidades cooperativas y comunicativas. En los últimos años, la escritura ha sido usada para comunicarse a través de redes sociales y teléfonos de manera informal, prestando poca atención al uso de la puntuación. Sin embargo, el uso de signos de puntuación cumple un papel esencial en la calidad de producción escrita, puesto que esta también ayuda a comunicar ideas de una manera formal y organizada. La escritura es una de las habilidades productivas que se espera sea llevada a cabo de manera individual, por lo tanto, el objetivo de este estudio fue determinar los efectos de las estrategias del aprendizaje cooperativo de una lengua en la producción escrita mediante el uso de signos de puntuación. Los resultados mostraron que después de la aplicación de estas estrategias hubo un incremento evidente en la producción escrita y una mejoría en la calidad de escritura de oraciones. El trabajar cooperativamente cambio la dinámica dentro del salón de clases, permitiendo a los estudiantes poner en práctica sus habilidades de escritura y dando relevancia al uso de los signos de puntuación, en un ambiente agradable, sin que el escribir fuese necesariamente una tarea individual.

*Palabras clave:* Aprendizaje cooperativo de una lengua, las estrategias, los signos de puntuación, la producción escrita.

## **Introduction to the Problem**

### **Problem Statement**

In the last years, the use of English as a foreign language has become more relevant in different fields of knowledge and entertainment due to the implementation of new technology, creating an impact in communication around the world. Moreover, communicating in another language has always been significant for the exchange of opinions and information which could be accomplished in different languages. Learning a language involves the development of skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. In that order, productive skills, in the context of English language teaching, are those skills which require the student to make an oral or written production. Consequently, the productive skills are speaking and writing, opposed to listening and reading, which are regarded as receptive skills. In the foreign language classroom, “the teacher aims at developing four skills of the learners’ ability to understand, to speak, to read and to write. The ability to write occupies the last place in this order, but it does not mean that it is least important” (Mandal, 2009), all of them are important for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Therefore, regarding writing as an essential skill in communication, its production can be reflected on some aspects of the language such as accuracy which includes using different elements associated to language form. One of these elements is punctuation, a sign or mark used in a written language to facilitate reading and understanding. Proper punctuation can make the difference between formal and informal language, and it should be directed to offer readers a natural and comfortable flow of ideas. In EFL contexts, the usage of punctuation in writing could

be a difficult task for learners who are used to manage a different path in their native language (L1). For that reason, they sometimes might try to apply the same patterns of the L1 in the language they are learning (L2), making of this, in some cases a problem when writing in both languages.

Consequently, according to Byrne (1998), as teachers, we should not assume that students are proficient at writing in their mother tongue, or that they already possess the necessary organizational skills for writing effectively. Moreover, the author states that we should not assume that the ability to write in the mother tongue can be transferred to the foreign language. Students who are learning English might tend to use the punctuation rules of their native language in the same way they use it when writing in English. Therefore, it is essential to provide students with a variety of guidelines that help them to develop writing skills. Additionally, Harmer (2005) claims that “successful collaborative writing allows students to learn from each other”. Following this idea, the use of Cooperative Language Learning might help to develop writing skills like punctuation, which is treated as “something that can be done mechanically and as an *“extra”* rather than as an essential part of the writing system” Byrne (1998).

### **Research Question**

What are the effects of using Cooperative Language Learning strategies on written production specifically on punctuation?

## **Hypothesis**

The use of Cooperative Language Learning strategies has neither positive nor negative effects on students' written production.

## **Justification**

In the field of education different theories, methods and approaches have emerged for teaching and learning a foreign language. One of those current approaches is Cooperative Language Learning which is defined as “group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is accountable for his or her own learning and it is motivated to increase the learning of others” (Olsen and Kagan 1992:8, cited in Richards and Rogers, 2001).

Considering that Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) promotes interaction among students, it helps to develop successful learning and communication in the four skills, including writing. It is significant to conduct a study about the use of CLL strategies on written production, emphasizing in some elements of the language form such as punctuation. Since writing is seen as a productive skill, teachers can appreciate learner's performance and proficiency of the language through writing. “As Kagan (ibid.) claims, cooperative classrooms change the view of the teacher from evaluator to adviser so the correction is not an evaluation but feedback” (Kagan 1994, cited in Aldana, 2005).

However, it seems that CLL has not been fully applied in a context such as Colombia. As the survey mentioned in López & Viáfara's study (2007) in a public school, CLL has not been

heard as a methodology, neither it has been included in lesson plans. Although, in some cases where this approach was used not all of its principles were followed. For this reason we consider important to regard the use of Cooperative Language Learning for learning writing skills focusing on punctuation in a context in the Universidad de Nariño, where there are no studies using this approach to enhance punctuation when writing.

This kind of study can help teachers to have a wide view of how to use different strategies of Cooperative Language Learning in an EFL classroom. Moreover, it can provide new information on how to use a variety of activities to promote group work and interaction during the lesson. In addition, it is relevant to know the effect of using Cooperative Language Learning strategies in the practice of skills, focusing on writing where the student is able to show how he/she can or cannot express his/her ideas in the L2. Nowadays, writing is being used in social networks by teenagers and society in general, using text messages in their cellphones with the aim to communicate their ideas in an informal way. For that reason, this study might contribute to enhancing writing in these situations, especially when students use punctuation, because they might also develop accuracy in written production.

Another aspect that justifies undertaking this research is that, in a context such as Pasto in most of cases writing is not a pleasant activity for many students, and it is seen as a boring and demanding task carried out individually. The study of the influence of CLL strategies on the development of accuracy in writing specially on punctuation, could bring more ideas to start working in groups, to determine not only how it works individually, but also how it works cooperatively; when the responsibility to accomplish the task is shared among the group, helping to reduce learning stress and enhancing learning motivation.

## **Objectives**

### **General objective.**

To determine the effects of applying Cooperative Language Learning strategies on written production, specifically on punctuation, in an EFL context like Pasto.

### **Specific objectives.**

To implement Cooperative Language Learning activities in an EFL classroom on written production, specifically on punctuation.

To observe the effect of the application of several activities based on Cooperative Language Learning.

To enhance the learning conditions for the recognition and use of punctuation through the implementation of Cooperative Language Learning activities.

## **Limitations**

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. It was difficult to start working cooperatively because learners were not used to working in groups. Moreover, students' attitude to work as a team was not the expected at the beginning; however, their attitude changed during the implementation of Cooperative Language Learning strategies. Besides, students did not usually work as a team in order to share ideas and integrate efforts to achieve a goal, to succeed on this it was necessary to assign each student of the group a role which made them participate actively in their learning process. Another factor that influenced in a big extent the

presented results of this research was the time in which it was conducted. The number of sessions was not enough to obtain satisfying results which could demonstrate a noted change in the students' written production.

## Review of Literature

### Cooperative Language Learning

Cooperative learning can be defined by a set of processes which help people interact together in order to accomplish a specific goal. Johnson & Johnson (1988) proposed that in a *cooperative* learning situation, interaction is characterized by positive goal interdependence with individual accountability. In other words, interaction should go along with students' interdependence with the purpose of reaching a common goal where responsibility is shared. Positive goal interdependence requires acceptance by a group that they "sink or swim together." Johnson and Johnson (Cooperative Learning, (n.d.)) also state that cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all members of the group. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. It may be contrasted with competitive (students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of "A" that only one or a few students can attain) and individualistic (students work by themselves to accomplish learning goals unrelated to those of the other students) learning. (Johnson et al., 1994:4)

There are some characteristics that need to be presented for applying Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) in an EFL context; such as:

- rise the achievement of all student, including those who are gifted or academically handicapped
- help the teacher build positive relationships among students



- give students the experience the need for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development
- replace the competitive organizational structure of most classrooms and schools with a team-based, high performance organizational structure (Johnson, Johnson , and Holubec 1994:2, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

All these characteristics have the purpose of providing opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

### **Cooperative Language Learning as an Approach**

The theoretical basis of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) as an approach, started with a more general learning approach called Collaborative Learning, which refers to a philosophy of teaching in which learners work together on a common goal, exchange their opinions on a subject, clarify the meanings of concepts or jointly address a problem (Hron & Friedrich, 2003). CLL principles go along with this idea of learning, since it also comprises collaboration between students in the achievement of a common goal. Cooperative Language Learning is based on principles where human being's interaction is essential when learning a language. Viogotsky and Piaget (1962, 1695, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), emphasize the importance of interaction and the role of society on learning.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) some objectives in CLL are to foster cooperation rather than competition, to develop critical thinking and to develop communicative competence through socially structured interaction activities. They also specify some goals that

characterize the use of CLL in the classroom. These goals are: to provide opportunities for naturalistic language acquisition, to provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings, to enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions, to provide opportunities to develop successful learning and communication strategies, to enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

Taking into account interaction among students and their cultural background, Hammond (2009) noted that not all students are used to working in groups to accomplish a task, especially if they are accustomed to a more centered teaching instruction. In addition, students have culturally specific communication styles that cannot facilitate cooperation within a group. There are five essential elements that need to be carefully structured into the situation: positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, promoting interaction, appropriate use of social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). All these elements should be considered when working in groups, in order to reach a goal cooperatively and in an effective way.

### **Strategies of Cooperative Language Learning**

Considering the elements mentioned above to implement group work among students in EFL classrooms, there are some strategies of Cooperative Language Learning that can be used in a context such as Pasto. These strategies are included in some activities which are based on interaction among students through group work. Some of them are stated by Mandal (2009): *Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, Three-Step Interview, Round Robin, Three-minute review, Numbered Head, Buzz Groups, Talking Chips, Critical Debate, Write Around, and Praise-Question-Polish.*

As these activities are based Cooperative Language Learning strategies, this study will use some of them to determine the effects of applying them on written production specifically on punctuation in an EFL context like Pasto. To achieve the main objective of this study, the following strategies will be used:

- *Think-Pair-Share*: This is a simple and quick technique; the instructor develops and poses questions, gives the students a few minutes to think about a response, and then asks students to share their ideas with a partner. This task gives them the opportunity to collect and organize their thoughts. “Pair” and “share” components encourage learners to compare and contrast their understanding with those of another, and to rehearse their response first in a low-risk situation before going public with the whole class.
- *Write Around*: For creative writing or summarizing, teachers could give a sentence starter (e.g. If there were no plants on the earth-----/ A man met an alien on the sea shore-----) then all students in each team have to finish the sentence. Then, they pass the paper to the right, read the one they receive, and add sentence to than one. After a few round, four great summaries or stories emerge. Students should be given time to add a conclusion and/or edit their favorite one to share with the class.
- *Praise-Question-Polish*: In this technique the group members take turns to read aloud their papers as their other group members follow along with copies. First, the respondents are asked to react to the piece of writing by asking them to identify what they liked about the work (Praise), then identify what portion of the writing they did not understand (Question), finally offering specific suggestions for improvement of

the writing (Polish). The students would be able to improve their own writing by critically evaluating the writing of their peers (Mandal, 2009).

- In *peer response*, students are given plenty of opportunities to brainstorm ideas in pairs or groups, to give feedback on each other's writing and to proofread and edit for each other. While increasingly more mainstream classroom teachers are encouraging students to write in collaboration..., (Jacobs, 1989, cited in Teo, 2006).

### **Teachers' Role**

When using these strategies of Cooperative Language Learning, the teacher's role is considerably different from traditional roles "where classes are largely teacher-fronted, with the teacher transmitting knowledge and students recording, memorizing, and recalling what is being transmitted" (Liang, Mohan and Early, 1998). In CLL, the teacher is the facilitator and a source of knowledge, but also he/she has to create a highly environment of the classroom assigning students to groups and roles and selecting materials and time (Johnson et al 1994, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, the teacher makes decisions about what to teach and the learning objectives, the types of teams based on tasks, the size of the teams, set the rules during the development of the tasks, as well he/she decides the learners' role in the group work. Besides, teachers must create groups that are equitable so that all students participate fully and use multiple-ability strategies (Cohen, 1998, cited in Yahya and Huie, 2002) if cooperative learning is to work. Teachers also need to convince students of three things: those different intellectual abilities are required in cooperative learning, that no one student has all of the abilities needed, but that each member of the group will have some of the abilities (Cohen, 1998, cited in Yahya and Huie, 2002).

### **Students' Role**

In the same way that teachers, students have an important role in Cooperative Language Learning. First, the student becomes a member of a team where everybody has a role to be performed. "Learners are also directors of their own learning. They are taught to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills" Richards & Rodgers (2001). Therefore students might take different roles in the group work according to the activity. They can be monitors, coordinators, time monitors, mediator, etc., but they must always have a task and be active participating in different activities in the EFL classroom. While students participate actively in the classroom they might develop the four basic skills.

### **Basic Language Skills**

As an important task EFL teachers need to design various teaching activities that combine four modes (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in order to enhance students' literacy, oral development, and thinking skills positively. The four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters, the mode of communication: oral or written, and the direction of communication: receiving or producing the message. Listening comprehension is the receptive skill in the oral mode. When we speak of listening what we really mean is listening and understanding what we hear. Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode, this, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing a word. Reading is the receptive skill in the written mode. It can develop independently of listening and speaking skills, but it often develops along with them, especially in societies with a highly-developed literary tradition. Writing is the productive skill in the written mode; it often seems to be the

hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way.

### **Writing**

Writing is an essential skill used for communication. It is seen as a productive skill that is related to the student's production of the language, in a written way. According to Raimes (1983), writing as a language skill, should be included in syllabi, not only because it is important to communicate in a written way but also because it helps to develop sub skills; such as reinforcing the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary and helping to organize thoughts and ideas. Writing also helps to remember the language lexicon and to put into practice the communicative abilities students have acquired. When writing students have the chance to venture with the language and to take risks about what they have just learnt. The learners look for different ways to express their ideas, in this way they learn how to use new words and language forms.

Considering that "writing involves the *encoding* of a message of some kind: that is, we translate our thoughts into a language" (Byrne, 1998). Writing in a second language is further complicated by issues of proficiency in the target language, first language literacy, and differences in culture and theoretical approach to the text. Therefore, instruction in writing is necessary and it might effectively improve student proficiency in a number of key areas such as accuracy, which is defined as the ability to produce correct sentences using correct grammar and vocabulary. Accuracy is an important element in the process of writing because it supports in a good extent the quality of the written production. Moreover, accuracy involves the correct use of

some categories of writing skills, such as the macro and micro skills. Next, the list of micro skills in writing is presented:

- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean using forms that express the right tense, or case or gender.
- Put words together in correct word order.
- Use vocabulary correctly.
- Use the style appropriate to the genre and audience.
- Make the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, and object, clear to the reader.
- Make the main ideas distinct from supporting ideas or information.
- Make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the development of the ideas.
- Judge how much background knowledge the audience has on the subject and make clear what it is assumed they don't know.
- Use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions.

### **Punctuation.**

Punctuation is considered as a micro skill in writing. It is a set of symbols used in writing to help indicate something about the structure of sentences, or to assist readers in knowing when to change the rhythm or the stress of their speaking. According to Harmer (2005), “Using punctuation correctly is an important skill. Many people judge the quality of what is written not just on the content, the language, and the writer’s handwriting but also on their use of punctuation”. Moreover, Harmer states that the not correct use of punctuation makes a text

difficult to understand and to read, for this reason, according to the author, students might start learning the use of punctuation conventions at earlier stages. Common units of punctuation in English and many other languages include the comma (,), period (.), apostrophe (‘), quotation mark (“...”), question mark (?), exclamation mark (!), bracket ([...]), dash (–), hyphen (-), ellipsis (...), colon (:), and semicolon (;). Each of these units indicates a different thing, and some may have multiple meanings depending on the context.

According to Goker (2001, cited in Ulas, 2010) the benefits of punctuation marks are as follows:

- Allow reading and understanding a written text correctly.
- Clarify meaning, and thus facilitate learning.
- Prevent meaning gaps and misunderstandings in written expression.
- In spoken language we make use of, and contribute to our verbal expression with, voice tone, stress, gestures, and mimics. In written language, these capabilities are provided through punctuation marks to a certain extent.
- They help us communicate better the information, ideas, feelings and thoughts we intend to convey to others in writing.
- They play an important part in voicing the text easily and in accordance with our purpose during oral readings.



## **Methodology**

### **Design**

The study is a quantitative research because the main purpose was to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in a population. Taking into consideration the time and the no existence of a control group, this research was regarded as a pre-experimental research. Two tests were applied in this study, one pre-test, at the first stage of the research and a post-test at the end. These were applied on an experimental group in the Language Center at the Universidad de Nariño.

### **Subjects**

The population for this study was third-level students of English in the Language Center at the Universidad de Nariño. Only one group was used to implement the study. The students were adults from 20 to 30 years old; this group was mixed, there were 6 women and 6 men. Moreover, the students attended classes from Monday to Thursday in the afternoon from 6 pm to 7 pm, during a period of three weeks; it started on May 28<sup>th</sup> and finished it on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2012.

### **Materials**

The materials used in this study were readings such as short stories and short texts that were presented on paper; these texts were taken from different internet sources. These materials were used in different activities based on Cooperative Language Learning strategies during the study.

### **Setting**

The study took place in the Language Center of the Universidad de Nariño.

**Instruments**

The instruments that took place in the study are a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test identified the students' current level in written production and it was focused on punctuation. Consequently, after applying the activities of Cooperative Language Learning the same test was taken again in the group to determine the effects of those strategies in the written production especially in punctuation; in order to collect the data and compare the final results.

**Procedure**

First of all, a Pre-test was applied to the group, this was based on some tasks in order to perceive the students management of punctuation while writing. The pre-test had three parts, first the students read a short reading "I Love your Wings", second, they did a task based on punctuation marks (comma, period, apostrophe, quotation mark, question mark, exclamation mark, colon and semicolon) to show the knowledge they had about the use of them. In the last part of the pre-test they wrote a short comment using punctuation marks. Next, a series of activities based on some strategies and principles of Cooperative Language Learning were chosen to be used during the study. The students were told about the tasks they might accomplish during the process and the role they had on this. In every session, the students worked on activities based on Cooperative Language Learning. In these activities students produced short writings using punctuation. The written production was done in group work, following the principles of Cooperative Language Learning strategies. Moreover, in every activity the students had to produce a variety of writings, which were focused on the use of punctuation. What they produced was the result of team work and their performance during the process.

Finally, a post-test was applied, after implementing Cooperative Language Learning Strategies in the course. The results were analyzed along with the pre-test; in order to identify and observe if any change was obtained in the students written production focused on punctuation.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

This study took into account the quantitative method including steps such as: data organization, identification of the main ideas to be classified in categories and sub categories, analyze and infer some data.

The pre-test and the post-test were the same before and after the application of this study to compare and analyze the results. The pre-test was assessed individually and the post-test was taken in groups.

The quantitative analysis was done with the results obtained in the pre-test and the post-test, which was entered in a data matrix where the written production was interpreted to establish similarities and differences within the group before and after the application of Cooperative Language Learning Strategies. To facilitate comprehension we also used tables and graphics.

### **Variables**

#### **Independent Variable.**

Cooperative Language Learning Strategies.

#### **Dependent Variable.**

Written Production Focused on Punctuation.

### **Data Analysis**

Considering the main objective of this study, which was to determine the effects of applying Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) strategies on written production specifically on punctuation in an EFL context such as Pasto; the hypothesis proposed at the beginning of this research was tested: “the use of Cooperative Language Learning strategies has neither positive nor negative effects on students’ written production”. After the application of this study there was slightly positive effect when talking about a better quality but not quantity in the students’ written production using punctuation correctly. The results presented in this study were the product of a process which started by applying a pre-test, followed by six classes using CLL strategies and it concluded with the application of a post-test. The pre-test, post-test, the six classes and its lesson plans are placed on the appendix section.

The pre-test was designed to analyze individually students’ knowledge about the use of punctuation in simple sentences; moreover, this test presented a production part where not only the use of punctuation was shown but also the students’ accuracy on written production. In the first part of the test, students read a short reading where punctuation marks were included such as: comma, period, apostrophe, quotation mark, question mark, exclamation mark, colon, and semicolon. To assess students’ proficiency using the punctuation marks mentioned above, the statements were designed by using a multiple choice test. There were ten statements with four possible answers. It was designed a quantitative score to assess students’ answers in the following way:

Correct = 1

Incorrect = 0

The second part of the pre-test involved students to write a short opinion approximately in 100 words about the reading, using the punctuation marks mentioned before. This part was assessed taking into account the number of sentences the student wrote, also the quality of the sentences using punctuation marks.

The results obtained in the first part of the pre-test are the following: 17% of the students did not have any right answer, which showed non proficiency using punctuation marks. An 8% of the students had only one correct answer. The other 17% of the students answered two statements. A quarter of the students had three correct statements, and the remaining 33% had four correct answers. Those results indicate a probability of a low proficiency when using punctuation without working with Cooperative Language Learning. However, according to Mariam and Napisah (2005, cited Ismail and Tangku (n.d)) “when a peer interaction was incorporated in learning writing, the students generate ideas and construct sentences together ... The students will also be able to write, accurate and creative piece of writing.” This idea led to think about a possible difference in the hypothesis presented. Results of the Pre-test percentage score are reported in figure 1.

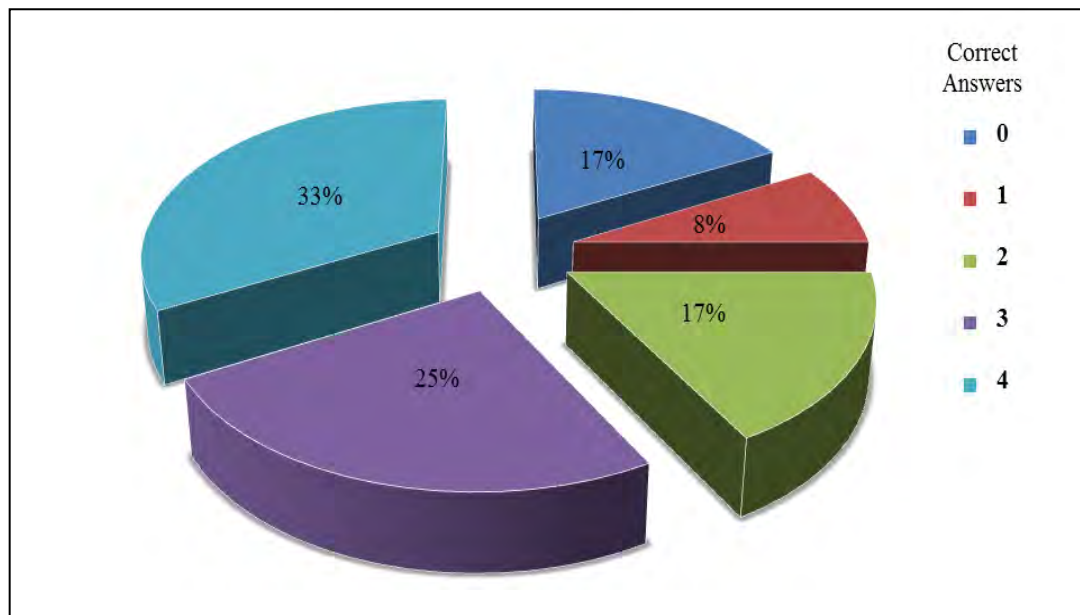


Figure 1. Pre-test results.

Before implementing the treatment using Cooperative Language Learning strategies the mean in the knowledge of using punctuation marks was 1,58 in the first part of the Pre-test, which showed a low proficiency in the use of punctuation marks. This is presented in table 1.

Table 1

*Results of the First Part of the Pre-test*

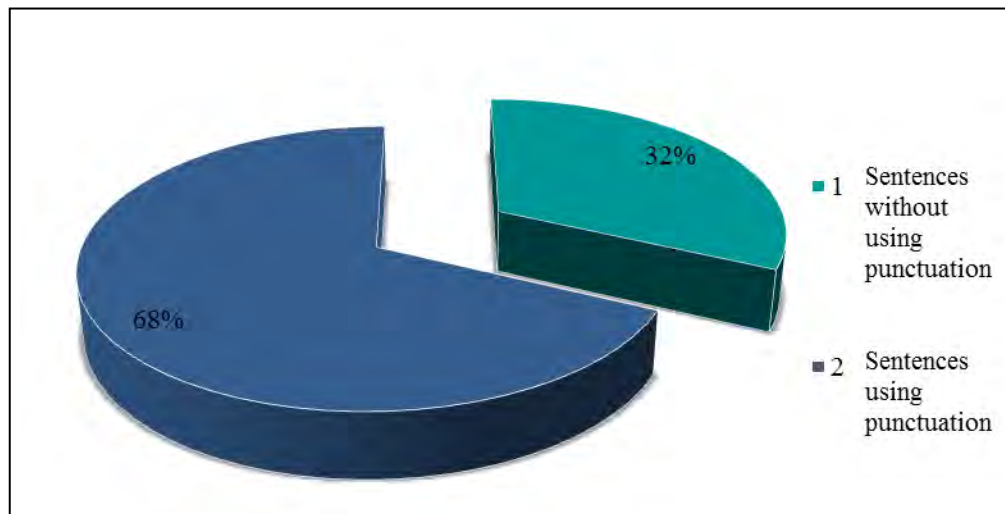
Score(X)	Frequency	Fx	$\sum x^2$
0	2	0	
1	5	5	
2	2	4	
3	2	6	
4	1	4	
Total	12	19	1,58

The Pre-test also had a second part where students produced a short writing based on the same reading used on the first part of the Pre-test. The students produced 25 sentences using punctuation marks correctly out of the 37 sentences produced in total, which means there was a 68% of correct answers from the sample of 12 students (Figure 2). The average is 2 correct sentences per student, and the average of produced sentences per student is 3. Therefore, the amount of sentences that students produced was superior to the production of correct sentences. While doing this part of the pre-test, the students were concerned about the quantity of sentences they could write in a limited time, without considering the quality of the writing neither the use of punctuation. As stated by Harmer (2005), to be understood by others when writing is an important issue to improve the quality of writing. These results are presented in table 2.

Table 2

*Results of the Second Part of the Pre-test*

Students	Produced Sentences	Correct sentences using punctuation	Average of produced sentences per student	Average of correct sentences per student
1	3	2		
2	3	2		
3	2	1		
4	4	3		
5	4	2		
6	2	1		
7	2	1		
8	4	2		
9	3	3		
10	4	3		
11	2	1		
12	4	4		
Total	37	25	3	2



*Figure 2.* Percentages of Produced Sentences.

Considering the objectives and the focus of this research, six lessons plans were applied in the experimental group after the Pre-Test. These lessons were based on four different strategies of Cooperative Language Learning, which were designed to assess students' written production using punctuation marks. Every lesson was developed with the teachers' guidance in a students-centered classroom, where the following steps based on Cooperative Language Learning strategies were considered, in order to make the lessons flow correctly. The first step considered was the appropriate group size for each lesson, "the optimal size of a cooperative group will vary according to resources needed to complete the assignment (the larger the group, the more resources available); the cooperative skills of the group members (the less skillful the members, the smaller the group should be); the amount of time available (the shorter the time, the smaller the group should be); and the nature of the task" Johnson and Johnson (1988). Regarding our research the appropriate management of the group, helped to be applied the



different group tasks along the study; however, there were not enough time to accomplish some of the activities.

A second step considered in the study was, to assign the students to groups, to make heterogeneous groups which tend to be more powerful than extreme homogeneity, Johnson and Johnson (1988). Moreover, such activity helped the groups to have a different perspective and opinions of different topics, also it helped to enhance the interaction and the collaboration among the students in each group.

Arranging the classroom in order to make students interact and see each other is the third step followed. This helped not to make difficult the arguing or the exchanging of ideas in the groups. The material is important in the success of the class, because each member of the group needs to have his/her own material to make clear the corrections and possible notes from the class.

Taking into consideration the steps mentioned above and the teacher's role, the six classes were planned and applied in the following order. The explanation of punctuation marks in each class was done by focusing on form and giving students examples using punctuation marks corresponding to each lesson. There was also student- teacher interaction when students were due to give some examples after teacher's explanation about the use of punctuation marks.

The first class was based on the strategy "Think-Pair-Share", and the main focus of the class was the use of punctuation marks: commas and periods. The purpose of this class was to identify how to use punctuation marks by grouping the students according to the principles of this strategy. The explanation of the use of the commas and periods was done using focus on form, at the beginning of the class. During the class, the first thing students needed to do was to

read information about endangered animals and its characteristics. Then, they were given some questions related to the reading with the purpose of thinking about possible answers to those, individually. After finishing the first step of the strategy, the students discussed their answers with a pair and they wrote together the answers to the questions set at the beginning of the class. In the final part of the lesson, the students shared the answers with the whole group.

While working with this strategy, it could be noticed how the student's tension decreased; and it was evident what Hron & Friedrich (2003) state: CLL is a philosophy of teaching where students exchange their opinions on a subject, clarify the meanings of concepts or jointly address a problem which certainly let them express themselves and share ideas without being afraid of making mistakes. The results of the written production (the answer to the questions individually and in pairs) showed that the quality of writing slightly improved, when regarding accuracy and punctuation while students performed this task in pairs.

In lessons two and three, the objective of the classes was to recognize and use the exclamation, question marks and colon. To do this, the strategy "Write Around" was used. In this strategy, the product of the class was written together with the group work. When students were working with "write around strategy" they were not just applying CLL principles but also had to organize their ideas and connect them to their classmates'. At the same time, they had to reflect and apply the uses of colon, exclamation and question marks. These punctuation marks helped them to express better their thoughts, and the feelings they wanted to portray in their stories. Byrne (1998) claimed that writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind which is translating our thoughts into a language. However, teachers should not assume that students are proficient at writing in their mother tongue, or that they already possess the necessary

organizational skills for writing effectively. Therefore, as the students developed the task, they could precise their ideas in English, but as the author states, some of them did it literally and used the punctuation rules of their mother tongue.

In the fourth lesson students identified the use of semicolon, focusing on Peer-Response strategy. The activity was developed as follows: students made a brain-storming activity in groups. Then, they wrote a short writing with the purpose of being assessed and exchanged with the other groups. After applying the strategy “Peer- Response”, the students showed certain interest in their peers’ opinion, creating a space for a different and meaningful interaction with their peers. According to Johnson and Johnson (1988) statement “students with cooperative experiences are more able to take the perspective of others, are more positive about taking part in controversy, have better developed interaction skills, and have a more positive expectation about working with others than students from competitive or individualistic settings.” Following with this idea, there was not an attitude of who wrote better or not while students accomplished the tasks. Moreover, students tried to do their best when checking other’s papers, even though; there were certain inconveniences to accomplish the activity, most of the members of the group doubted about their knowledge of the language and there was a clear intention to know what the other person meant. Searching for a complete understanding of the other’s opinion this activity created a healthy environment.

The fifth and the final classes were based on the principles of the "Praise-Question-Polish" strategy. The students practiced what they learned about the apostrophe and quotation marks by writing a short paragraph. In these classes the students were focused on correcting their peers’ paper in a more effective way than they would have before. Each member of the group

tried to encourage the other and give some ideas about the possible answer or solution to the problems the other had. As Johnson and Johnson (1988) state, “cooperation among students where they celebrate each other’s successes, encourage each other to do homework, and learn to work together regardless of ethnic backgrounds, male or female, bright or struggling, handicapped or not, is rare” but not impossible, at first it was a challenge to correct other’s mistakes but students themselves encouraged each other to reach the same goal which was giving a personal feedback based on their own knowledge.

After working with these Cooperative Language Learning strategies during the six lessons, in the experimental group, the post test was applied the Post-test. This test was administered at the end of the three-week treatment. The following results indicate that some progress was made after applying the treatment, which means that instruction had an impact on the students’ performance. 17% of the students had three correct answers; the 33% obtained 4 correct answers. A quarter of the students had five correct answers; the 17% had six correct answers. The remaining 8% had seven correct answers in the use of punctuation marks. These results are shown in figure 3.



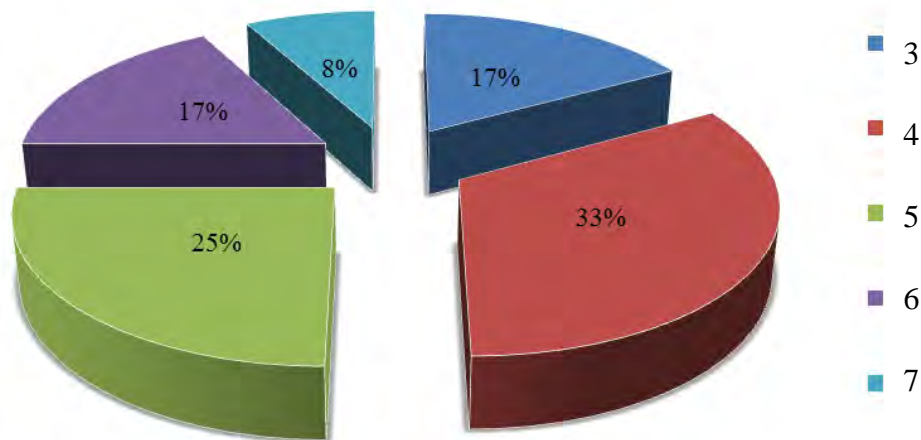


Figure 3. Post-test Results.

Next, and in order to allow the readers to see clearly the results of this study, the same research findings are presented by means of descriptive statistics.

Table 3.

*Pretest results*

Score(X)	Frequency	Fx	$\bar{x}$
3	2	6	
4	4	16	
5	3	15	
6	2	12	
7	1	7	
Total	12	56	4,66

As it is shown in table 3, the mean in the students' proficiency using punctuation marks was 4,66 in the first part of the Post-test, which shows that there was a difference between the

pre-test and post-test results. The aim of the first part of the post-test was to measure the students' knowledge about the use of punctuation marks in writing after giving instruction related to its use and rules. It is important to consider that the instruction in writing is necessary and might effectively help student's proficiency; moreover, as Ulas (2010) affirms "we cannot use punctuation marks arbitrarily. Knowing well where they are used and using them accordingly are the most important elements which help to achieve success in text writing".

In the second part of the Post-test 36 sentences were produced and 31 were written using punctuation marks correctly. The students produced an 86% of sentences using punctuation correctly from the sample of 12 students (Figure 4). The average is 3 correct sentences per students and the average of produced sentences in general is 3 as well. Therefore, it can be inferred that the amount of sentences that each student produced was equal to the production of correct sentences. This test showed that there was a difference between the pre-test and post-test, regarding accuracy in written production (the amount of correct sentences). The use of punctuation marks influences the quality on writing: "Inability to use punctuation marks or failing to use them in place leads to confusion or loss of the meaning, misunderstandings and misapprehensions, or to a bothering text. Using them where appropriate allows to grab the meaning easily and provides a neat text. Those who fail to learn where to use punctuation marks are condemned to fail in written expression" (Uludag, 2002, cited in Ulas, 2010). The results are shown on table 4.

Table 4

*Results of the second part of the Post-test*

Students	Produced Sentences	Correct sentences using punctuation	Average of produced sentences per student	Average of correct sentences per student
1	2	2		
2	2	1		
3	4	4		
4	4	3		
5	3	2		
6	3	2		
7	2	2		
8	2	2		
9	5	4		
10	2	2		
11	4	4		
12	3	3		
Total	36	31	3	3

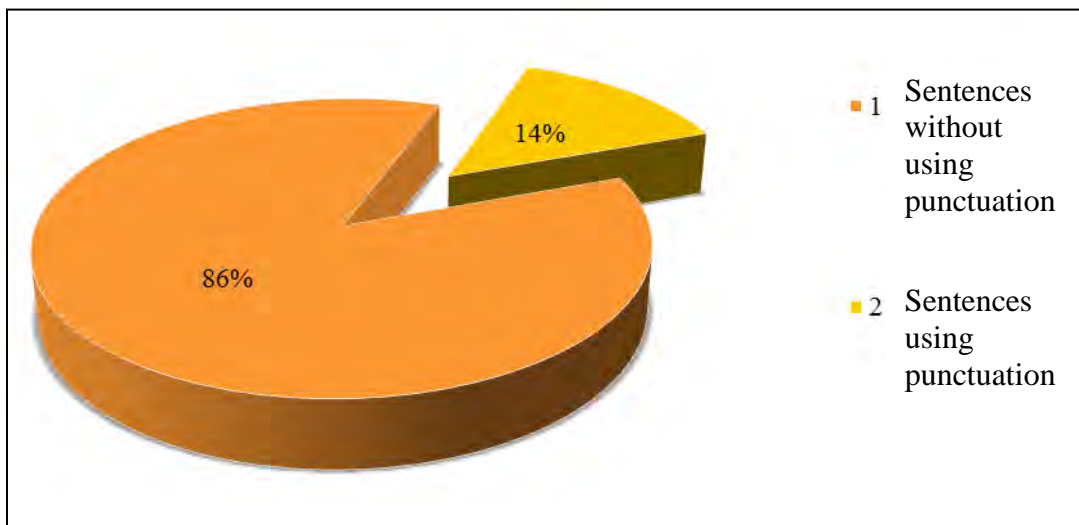


Figure 4. Percentage of Produced Sentences.

Comparing the results of the Pre-test where the mean is 1, 58 and the mean in the Post-test is 4, 66. After applying the Post-test, it is possible to infer that there is a difference in the students' proficiency using punctuation marks.

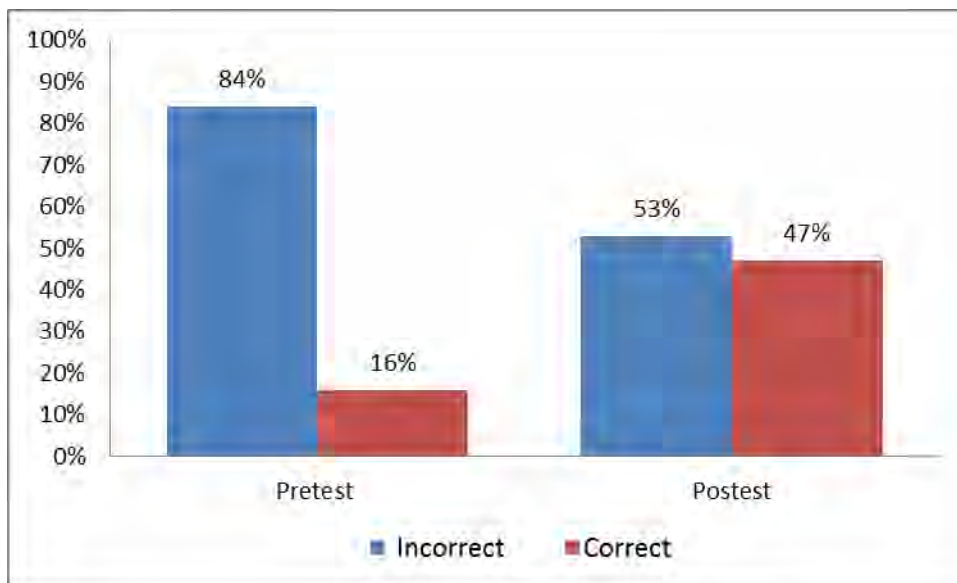
Table 5

*Pre- test and Post-test Results from the First Part of the Test*

Score(X)	Frequency	Fx	$x \square$	Score(X)	Frequency	Fx	$x \square$
0	2	0		3	2	6	
1	5	5		4	4	16	
2	2	4		5	3	15	
3	2	6		6	2	12	
4	1	4		7	1	7	
Total	12	19	1,58	Total	12	56	4,66

Considering the percentages of correct and incorrect answers obtained in the first part of the Pre-test and Post-test, it can be observed that the percentage of incorrect answers in the first part of the Pre-test was 84%, and after applying the Post-test the percentage of incorrect answers decreased to a 31%. On the other hand, the percentage of correct answers in the Pre-test was 16% and in the Post-test it was 47%. These results demonstrate that there is a clear difference in the students' performance when using punctuation marks, since the students had a focus on form instruction about the use of punctuation marks and its differences between the mother tongue and the target language. Also, it helped to clarify possible doubts through the process, and it enhanced the learning conditions conducive to express the learners' ideas when writing in English. These results are presented in figure 5.





*Figure 5.* Percentage of number of sentences in Pre-test and Post-test.

The final results of the second part in the Post-test demonstrated the written production of students. We could conclude from graphic 6 that the difference between the percentage of correct sentences, using punctuation marks in the pre-test and post-test, was 54%. Moreover, as it is shown in table 6, the Pre-test had a higher amount of produced sentences but without using punctuation marks. However, in the Post-test the written production using punctuation was lower, but the quality of sentences using punctuation increased. Therefore, it might be said that there was a significant change in written production using punctuation after applying Cooperative Language Learning strategies. The findings not just showed students' accuracy when using punctuation, but students also improved the quality of their group work and worked cooperatively.

Table 6

*Pre- test and Post-test Results from the Second Part of the Test*

Students	Produced Sentences	Correct sentences using punctuation	Students	Produced Sentences	Correct sentences using punctuation
1	3	2	1	2	2
2	3	2	2	2	1
3	2	1	3	4	4
4	4	3	4	4	3
5	4	2	5	3	2
6	2	1	6	3	2
7	2	1	7	2	2
8	4	2	8	2	2
9	3	3	9	5	4
10	4	3	10	2	2
11	2	1	11	4	4
12	4	4	12	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>31</b>

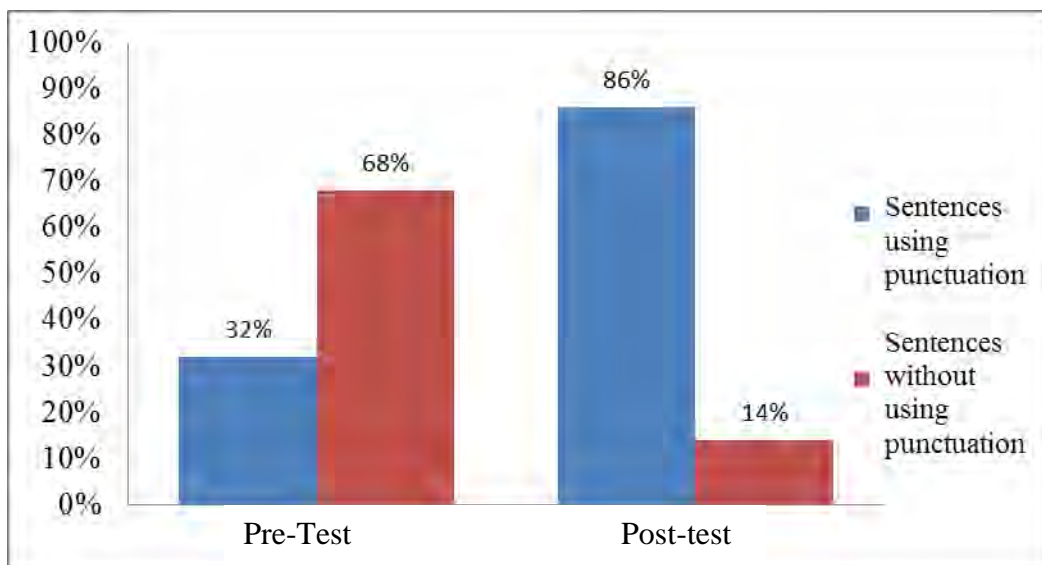


Figure 6: *Second Part Results from the Pre- test and Post-test*

In this study, before Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) was incorporated in the lesson, students obtained low scores when assessing their knowledge of the correct use of punctuation and their accuracy on writing when using it. After working with CLL strategies, it could be noticed that the specific objectives and the main objective of this study, which was to determine the effects of applying these strategies on students' written production regarding punctuation, was accomplished since the effects of CLL strategies were positive as the final results presented a better quality in written production and a less quantity of production, which differs from the Pre-test results. Considering these findings, we can say that the quality of written production prevailed upon the quantity they needed to produce. Moreover, students' written production using punctuation was better when working cooperatively and implementing CLL strategies. Each student's had a role in the group where the students' anxiety level was lower because the responsibility was shared among the group and they did not have to worry about the amount of output when writing.

## Conclusions

After applying the different strategies of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), it can be concluded that the use of those strategies in group work activities had a slight positive impact in the students' written production using punctuation. A clear effect of these CLL strategies in the lessons was the creation of a space where students could express their opinions without restriction, aggression, fear of failing or being judged by making mistakes. CLL helped to reach this climate in the classroom reducing the anxiety of students when they had the opportunity to practice their answers before being asked in front of the whole group.

Another issue to be noted is that after using CLL strategies and group work, motivation among the students increased. It is interesting to say that this was not an intended outcome of this study, but it is a positive by-product of it. At first, it was difficult to start working in an environment where there was no evidence of group working focused on writing. However, there was a good reception from students when trying a new way to learn the language, which gave them the opportunity to reach and enhance different skills that they were not aware of before.

One element worth mentioning is that there is indeed another way to provide input among students and it works even under the EFL conditions found in Pasto. The environment created while using CLL strategies, generates an interactive context where students listen to each other, ask questions, evaluate and clarify doubts. They can also somehow adjust their knowledge about the target language to suit other members of the group, in order to be understood by others. That means that negotiation of meaning did take place in the class when CLL strategies were applied. Moreover, grouping students changed the dynamics of the classroom which allowed them to work cooperatively and in a more learning-oriented setting where learning to write did not have

to be an individual task as it was seen before. In addition, group work based on Cooperative Learning principles, helped to change the traditional teacher-centered classroom to learner-center classroom, where the teacher becomes the advisor in the classroom or a source of knowledge, but not the main agent in the learning process.

While using CLL strategies there was a different language output produced. Here, students were not only able to put into practice their writing skills, but also other skills such as listening and speaking, when sharing ideas and accomplishing one single task in the group was needed. In some cases it might be difficult for students make use of the target language but students might also find other ways to express their ideas before those are printed in paper. Again, an interesting by-product of this study was the integration of skills and it was interesting and satisfactory to see how learners started using the L2 in order to exchange ideas, provide feedback and encouragement.

It could be also concluded that learning a language not just involves the performance of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The use of sub skills must be taken into account as well. Punctuation as a sub skill in writing has an important role, because it influences in a great percentage the quality of writing, we could observed this in the results presented in the pre-test and the post-test where punctuation helped students to express their thoughts or ideas in a more direct way and start thinking in the foreign language. Additionally, the use of punctuation marks should not just be taught in the native language. The non-appropriate use of punctuation in any language might change the aim of communication and even more when learning a foreign language.

We could observe through the process some interaction patterns mentioned in Johnson and Johnson (1988) research, those patterns were influenced by the application of Cooperative Language Learning strategies; they are: competition, individualism and cooperation. First of all, strategies such as “Think- Pair and Share” and “Peer Correction” helped students to decrease the level of competition within the classroom. For instance, in one of the classes were due to write a story, which had to be corrected by their peers, in this way students were aware of their own mistakes and others’ mistakes and they were able to understand and acknowledged that everybody could make mistakes. Consequently, completion was reduced because the object was not to achieve a high score but to learn from others’. Second, “Write Around” was one of the strategies in which students learn how to write with the help of their peers. Considering other’s points of view and ideas in order to complete the task in an effective way; letting them to put aside individualism and care about the other. Third, “Think Pair Share” was another strategy that also contributes to students’ cooperation, because students could share their opinions and cooperatively, as well as they did in all the strategies applied.

Regarding the students’ written production, accuracy was one of the factors that influenced the quality of writing in the study. Moreover, students achieved accuracy in writing through the correct use of punctuation which was acquired along the lessons. At the end of the process students were aware of how important it is to use writing to shape their own ideas, organize and make them clear. Writing can reflect to a large extent, the students’ proficiency in the target language. Although, writing is sometimes seen as a hard and boring task to perform in the classroom, but students’ view of writing was changing through the process, mainly when Cooperative Learning Language strategies were applied. These activities gave the class a

different path with variety which contributed positively in the development of the tasks where students' willingness was increased.

As this study was the first conducted at the Universidad de Nariño we could conclude that in a context which was not likely seem to be effective the use of Cooperative Learning Language strategies in a EFL classroom, it was demonstrated the opposite. Even though, students were not familiar with the strategies and there were not used to work as a team to achieve a common goal in writing. Eventually, learners started to work cooperatively and they demonstrated sympathy and disposition to continue working in groups, because the found in CLL strategies a different way to write with their classmates.

### **Recommendations**

Implementing approaches such as Cooperative Learning Language in a longer period of time might bring more meaningful results. It could be better if teachers focus on the quality rather than the quantity of written production. Consequently, the quality of writing could improve when students do not have to think about the amount of written language they need to produce and they will start writing little by little but making a good use of punctuation, grammar, coherence and cohesion.

For further research about the use of Cooperative Language Learning in written production, other strategies of this approach could be implemented once students get used to the rhythm of working in groups. When applying those strategies it is important to provide more time in developing those, because some of the students might not be familiar with the way strategies are developed and they need time to move from a teacher-fronted class to a learner-centered classroom.

Moreover, it is important to constantly foster motivation among the class, in order to make students work actively for their own benefit rather than working for a grade. It is also important to constantly remind students what their role when working in groups is. This way autonomous learning becomes a tangible element in the CLL classroom and teachers can make use of it not only to provide instruction on punctuation, but to teach any set of skills or sub-skills.

The teacher must keep the role of advisor in every session when applying these strategies. As it was mentioned above, the role of a teacher is to be a mentor in the classroom where he/she can help to clarify doubts and guide students in the achievement of each group's goal.



It is also recommended for teachers to start working the uses of punctuation with children, and make them realize about the differences between their mother tongue, and the foreign language they are learning. Thus, students from young ages would become familiar with them and might have a good start in the performance of this skill. However, it is important to take into account the students' proficiency level in order to start implementing writing, as well as Cooperative Language Learning strategies when grouping students. They need to be independent and responsible when accomplishing the tasks and duties of the roles that have been assigned in the team.

Readings should always be accompanied with writing activities, in the same way that listening activities should be planned along with speaking tasks. Teachers should provide students with different readings before they start to write so that the natural order of acquisition of the skills is accomplished. However, it should not be forgotten that the combination of all the skills is essential to accomplish language learning because none of the skills by themselves guarantee an effective development of communicative competence.

In a context such as Colombia, where students proficiency in English is measured by the ICFES/SABER exam (a written test), it is relevant for teachers to start working with reading and writing activities paying special attention to punctuation. Most of these kinds of tests need proficiency in reading comprehension which is also achieved through the adequate use of punctuation.

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**Appendix A. Pre-test and Post-test Format**

<b>Pre-test and Post-test</b>	
Background information	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: short reading: "I love your wings!"  Markers, eraser, white board.
Class: 12 Students	Skill focus: writing
Level: Pre-intermediate	
Topic: the use of Punctuation	
General objective: to identify the students' proficiency level and knowledge about the use of punctuation in written production.	
Specific objective: students will read a short reading where punctuation marks are included (comma, period, apostrophe, quotation mark, question mark, exclamation mark, , colon, and semicolon)  Students will write a short opinion ( 100 words) about the reading using the punctuation marks mentioned before.	

<b>Time</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
0-5 mins	Teacher (T) gives instructions about how Students will develop the pretest.	Make clear the test procedure
15-20 mins	Students will read "I love your wings!" And they will look up new vocabulary.	Show with examples when to use punctuation.
10- 15 mins	Students will develop the second part of the activity.	To assess students prior knowledge about the use of punctuation marks.
15-20 mins	Students will develop the third part of the activity in which they will write a short paragraph of 6 lines using punctuation marks.	To establish the students' proficiency level of written production using punctuation.

Unversidad de Nariño

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Read the following article and look up the unknown words.**

**I love your Wings!**

Dr. Joe Rosen is a well-known American plastic surgeon and he thinks you should be able to change your appearance, any way you like. He thinks you should have wings if you want. He'd also like you to have a tail and extra thumbs or fingers, too.

The idea of extra body parts is not so odd. People already modify their bodies in many ways, such as piercings their ears for earrings. Metal pieces are often added to other body parts: the nose, lips, belly button and even the tongue. People who lose a body part in an accident are sometimes given a new one, either from another person or something man-made.

Fifty years ago, plastic surgery—to improve your appearance rather than for medical reasons—was uncommon, but now people increasingly use surgery to look younger and better sometimes this involves making a nose smaller or getting rid of wrinkles. Why not also add something useful? Dr. Rosen wants once met a waiter who was born with an extra thumb in one hand. The extra thumb made the waiter excellent at his work by letting him carry plates more easily. Perhaps other people would like to have an extra thumb for other jobs. There might even be new jobs that could be done by people with extra fingers. For example, what new music could a pianist play with seven or nine fingers on each hand?

Dr. Rosen could probably give you wings but they would not help you fly; the human body and its bones are too heavy. To fly, we would probably need to replace our bones with hollow ones, like birds have. But at least you would be able to flutter your winds, thanks to a wonder of the brain called *body mapping* that controls new limbs.

Many people have plastic surgery to feel better about themselves. Perhaps new wings would make you feel like an angel...

2. Choose the best answer for the correct use of the following punctuation marks: Comma (,) period (.) apostrophe (‘), quotation mark (“ ”), question mark (?), exclamation mark (!), colon (:), and semicolon (;)

1. Plastic surgery just for beauty has a different name cosmetic surgery
  - a) Plastic surgery just for beauty, has a different name: cosmetic surgery
  - b) Plastic surgery, just for beauty, has a different name: cosmetic surgery.
  - c) Plastic surgery, just for beauty has a different name, cosmetic surgery.
  - d) Plastic surgery, just for beauty, has a different name: cosmetic surgery
  
2. Reasons for plastic surgery not just for medical needs are quickly changing
  - a) Reasons for plastic surgery, not just for medical needs are quickly changing.
  - b) Reasons for plastic surgery not just for medical needs, are quickly changing
  - c) Reasons for plastic surgery, not just for medical needs, are quickly changing.
  - d) Reasons for plastic surgery, not just for medical needs, are quickly changing
  
3. Plastic surgery now has many uses improving looks losing weight correcting physical problems
  - a) Plastic surgery now has many uses improving, looks, losing weight, correcting physical problems.
  - b) Plastic surgery now has many uses: improving looks, losing weight, correcting physical problems.
  - c) Plastic surgery now, has many uses: improving looks, losing weight, correcting physical problems
  - d) Plastic surgery now has many uses; improving looks, losing weight correcting physical problems.
  
4. Scarring is done in several ways branding with hot metal cutting their skin and rubbing in ash
  - a) Scarring is done in several ways: branding with hot metal, cutting their skin and rubbing in ash.
  - b) Scarring is done in several ways; branding with hot metal; cutting their skin and rubbing in ash
  - c) Scarring is done in several ways, branding with hot metal, cutting their skin and rubbing in ash
  - d) Scarring is done in several ways: branding with hot metal; cutting their skin; and rubbing in ash.



5. No one knows what problems an operation may bring be careful
  - a) No one knows, what problems an operation may bring be careful
  - b) No one knows what problems an operation may bring; be careful!
  - c) No one knows; what problems an operation may bring, be careful
  - d) No one knows what problems an operation may bring be careful!
  
6. There are good reasons for changing the way we look to feel better to look younger to lose dangerous weight
  - a) There are good reasons for changing the way we look to feel better, to look younger, to lose dangerous weight
  - b) There are good reasons for changing the way we look: to feel better, to look younger, to lose dangerous weight.
  - c) There are good reasons for changing the way we look: to feel better to look younger to lose dangerous weight.
  - d) There are good reasons for changing the way we look to feel better, to look younger, to lose dangerous weight.
  
7. Dr. Rosen says Once I met a waiter who was born with an extra thumb on one hand
  - a) Dr. Rosen says Once I met a waiter who was born with an extra thumb on one hand?
  - b) Dr. Rosen says: Once I met a waiter who was born with an extra thumb on one hand.
  - c) Dr. Rosen says “Once I met a waiter who was born with an extra thumb on one hand”
  - d) Dr. Rosen says: “Once I met a waiter who was born with an extra thumb on one hand.”
  
8. Why would a person with wings would not be able to fly
  - a) Why would a person with wings would not be able to fly!
  - b) ¿Why would a person with wings would not be able to fly?
  - c) Why would a person with wings would not be able to fly?
  - d) Why would a person with wings would not be able to fly.



**Appendix B. Lesson Plan 1, Think-Pair-Share strategy**

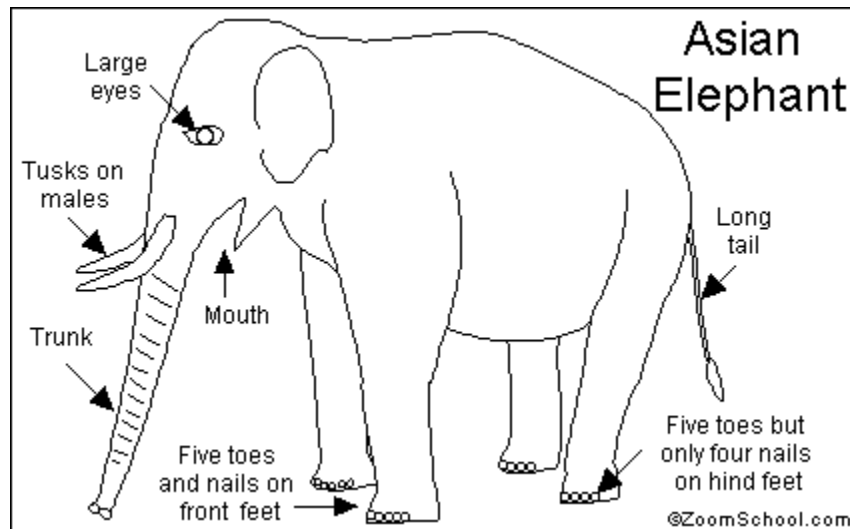
<b>Lesson Plan 1</b>	
Background information	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: Readings about five endangered species. Color markers in colors, board and eraser. <a href="http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/endangered.shtml">http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/endangered.shtml</a>
Class: 12 Students	
Level: Pre- Intermediate	Method: Cooperative Language Learning CLL, <i>Think-Pair-Share</i> strategy.
Topic: the use of comma and period.	Skill focus: writing
General objective: Students will learn how to use the comma and period.	
Specific objective: The students will identify how to use comma to separate items in a series including coordinate adjectives. Then, they will put them into practice by answering the questions given by the teacher.  Students will work in pairs, then, they will share their answers with the whole group.	

<b>Time</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
-------------	------------------	----------------

0-10 mins	The teacher asks the students what their favorite and least favorite animals are and what animals they think are scary and which are already extinct, etc.	Warm-up activity
10-15	The T writes on the board some characteristics of dinosaurs, by separating them with commas and periods in different color.	Focus on Form. The use of comma.
5- 10	Each student will read a description of one different animal and they will think about the answers to the questions individually.	Give students information about endangered animals.
10-15	The students will work in couples. Then, they will share with a peer the information about the reading. Next, they will write down the answers together to the questions given by the T.	Compare the student's ideas with a partner.
5- 10	The pairs will be mixed so students will know different information that their classmates have. The teacher will ask some questions to the whole group to make clear the use of commas implicitly.	Share ideas and information about different animals.  Share with the whole group their ideas.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Read the following information about endangered species.



The Asian Elephant (also known as the Indian Elephant) is a huge land animal that lives in India, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Sri Lanka. This elephant is used extensively for labor; very few are left in the wild. Their life span is up to 70 years.

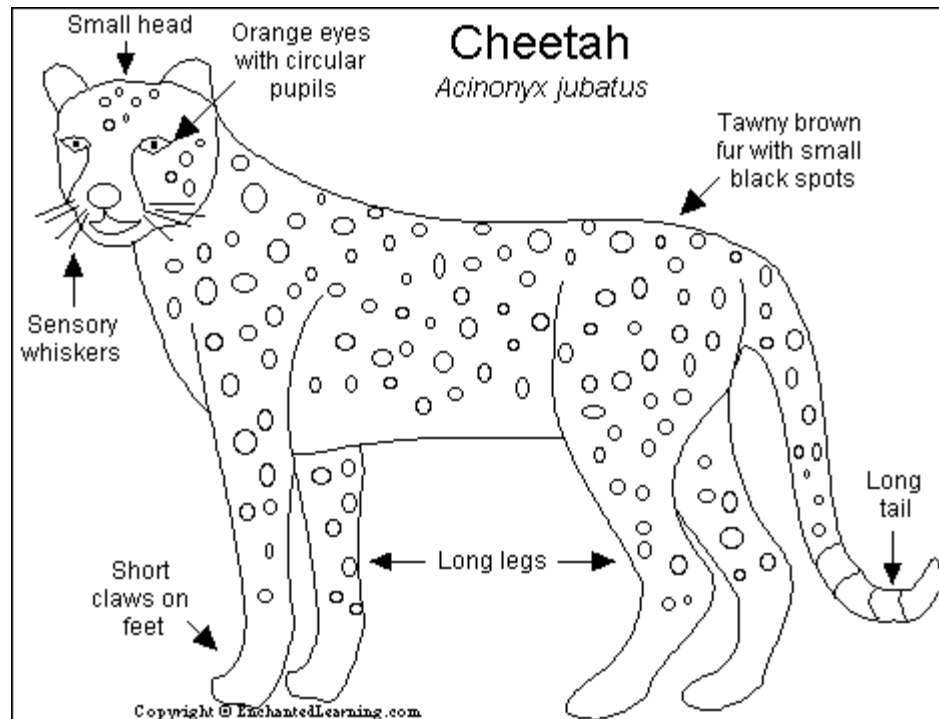
This mammal has very strong social bonds and lives in family groups headed by a female (called a **cow**). Males (called **bulls**) occasionally join the group. Elephants are excellent swimmers. Elephants have few natural enemies except man, and they are in extreme danger of extinction due to loss of habitat and poaching (they are killed for their ivory tusks).

**Anatomy:** Asian Elephants average about 8 feet (2.5 m) tall at the shoulder (smaller than African Elephants). Males weigh up to 6 tons (5,400 kg); females average about 4 tons (3,600 kg). Only males have **tusks** (large, pointed ivory teeth). They have wrinkled, gray-brown skin that is almost hairless. The ears not only hear well, but also help the elephant lose excess heat, as hot blood flows near the surface.

**Trunk:** Elephants breathe through two nostrils at the end of their trunk, which is an extension of the nose. The trunk is also used to get water and food. To get water, the elephant sucks water into the trunk, then curls the trunk towards the mouth and squirts the water into it. The trunk has a **prehensile** (grasping) extension at the tip, which it uses like a finger or scoop.

**Diet:** Elephants eat roots, grasses, leaves, bark, bananas and sugar cane. Working bulls can eat up to 300-600 pounds (130-260 kg) of food each day.

**Classification:** Kingdom Animalia (animals), Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia (mammals), Order Proboscidea, Family Elephantidae, Genus Elephas, Species E. maximus.



Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) are the fastest land animal. These long-legged cats can run up to 65 miles per hour (100 kph) in short bursts when they are hunting.

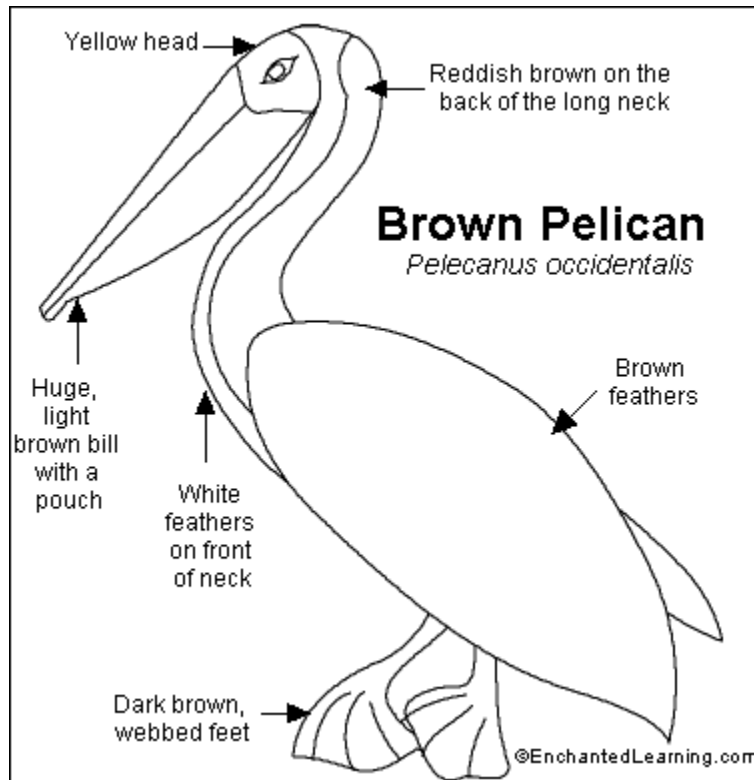
Cheetahs are shy and are not very sociable with each other. These speedy mammals live for about 8 years in the wild; in zoos, they have a life span of about 10 years. Cheetahs are an endangered species.

**Anatomy:** Adult cheetahs are a rich, tawny brown with dark spots. They have long tear-drop shaped lines on both sides of the nose, extending from the corner of the eyes to the mouth. Adult male cheetahs are up to 7 feet (2.15 m) long, weighing up to 125 pounds (55 kg). Adult females are slightly smaller, up to 6 feet (1.8 m) long, weighing about 100 pounds (45 kg). Cheetahs have a long tail that lets them make very abrupt turns. Cubs have dark fur and are born blind.

**Diet:** Cheetahs are carnivores (meat-eaters). They eat animals like impalas, gazelles, rabbits, birds, and other small animals.

**Habitat:** Cheetahs live in Africa and southwestern Asia in temperate grasslands and tropical savannas.

### Brown Pelican



The Brown Pelican is a large bird that lives along the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico in North and South America. Its scientific name is *Pelecanus occidentalis* (Genus and species).

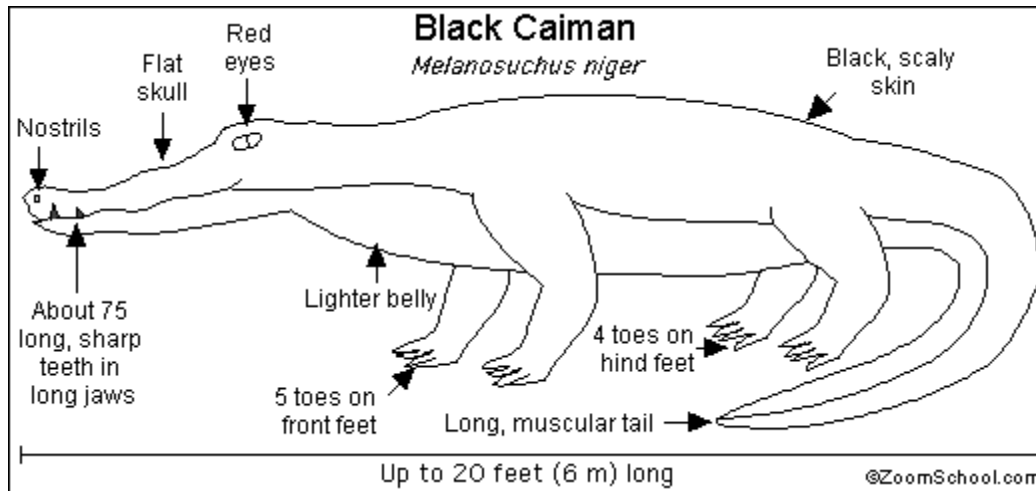
**Anatomy:** The Brown Pelican has a long, straight bill with an enormous pouch attached to it. This pouch holds three times as much as its stomach can. The pelican uses the pouch to catch fish, feed its young, and cool itself (the pouch is full of blood vessels, which lose heat near the surface of the skin). The Brown Pelican on average is about 4 feet (1.2 m) long, weighs roughly 9 pounds (4 kg), and has a 6 1/2 to 7 1/2 foot (2 to 2.3 m) wingspan. Although it is a large bird, the

Brown Pelican is the smallest of the eight species of pelican.

**Diet:** Brown Pelicans are **carnivores** (meat-eaters) and hunt during the day (they are diurnal). They eat mostly fish and some amphibians and crustaceans.

**Nest and Eggs:** Brown Pelicans build platform-like nests made of grass and sticks located on the ground or in low trees. In each **clutch** (a set of eggs laid at one time), females lay 2-3 chalky-white eggs.





Black Caimans (*Melanosuchus niger*) are large, meat-eating reptiles that spend most of their lives in the water. They live in freshwater habitats in South America, including the Amazon basin. They live in slow-moving rivers, streams, and lakes in rain forests, and in seasonally flooded savannas. Caimans swim very well, mainly using their tails to propel themselves through the water, and also using their webbed feet. Black Caimans are nocturnal (most active at night).

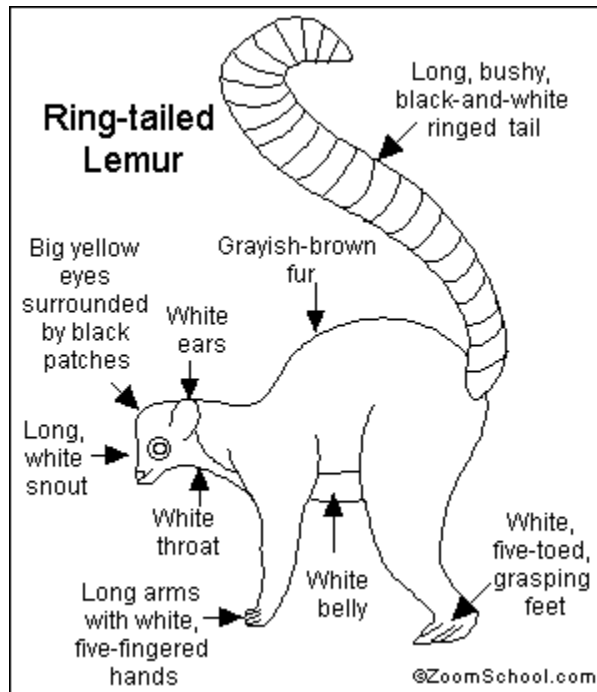
**Anatomy:** The Black Caiman is up to about 20 feet (6 m) long. It has a bony ridge over the eyes, and black armored skin. It is very similar to the American alligator.

**Diet and Teeth:** Caimans hunt at night; they eat fish (including piranhas and catfish), birds, turtles, reptiles, and mammals. They have about 75 long, sharp, conical teeth, which are used for catching prey (but they do not tear it apart - they swallow their prey whole).

**Reproduction:** Females build a huge soil-and-vegetation mound nest (5 feet = 1.5 m across) and lay 50 to 60 eggs in each clutch.

## Ring-tailed Lemur

*Lemur catta*



The Ring-tailed Lemur is a noisy mammal that lives in Madagascar, a large island off the southeast coast of Africa. The ring-tailed lemur spends most of the time on the ground but it is a good tree-climber (other lemurs spend most of their time in trees).

Lemurs live in **troops** (groups of lemurs) in many environments, including: rain forests, **scrub** (areas with low trees and shrubs), and rocky areas.

The scientific name of the Ring-tailed Lemur is *Lemur catta* (Genus species). Lemurs are primates, mammals closely related to monkeys, apes, and people.

1. **Anatomy:** The Ring-tailed Lemur has large eyes, a long snout, and a long,

ringed tail. This lemur's body is 16 inches (40 cm) long plus a tail that is 2 feet (60 cm) long. It weighs about 6 - 8 pounds (3-3.5 kg).

**Diet:** Ring-tailed Lemurs eat fruit, leaves, flowers, insects, and tree gum.

2. Answer the following questions.
  - What does this animal eat?
  - What are the characteristics of this animal?
  - Why is this animal about to be extinct?
  - How does this animal live?
  - Which animal do you think is going to be extinct first?

**Appendix C. Lesson Plan 2, Write around strategy**

<b>Lesson Plan 2</b>	
Background information	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: Urban legend: “Bloody Mary.”
Class: 12 Students	
Level: Pre- Intermediate	Method: Copperative Language Learning CLL, <i>Write around</i>
Topic: the use of question and exclamation marks.	Skill focus: writing
General objective: Students will learn how to use question and exclamation marks.	
Specific objective: The students will identify how to use question and exclamation marks in English. In groups they will write a story in using the question and exclamation marks.  They will share their stories with the whole group.	

Time	Procedure	Purpose
0-10 mins	The teacher gives a short urban legend where the exclamation and question marks are used.	Warm-up activity
10-15	Students will read it and retell what it is about.	Give students information about the use of question and exclamation marks.
0-5	<p>The teacher gives a starting for the story and explains the students what they are going to do.</p> <p>Students get together in groups of five people.</p> <p>Each student will continue the story orally using the question and exclamation marks.</p>	Giving instructions.
10-15	Each student will write a part to continue the story.	Fostering writing skills.
5- 10	<p>Finally, every group will read the whole story for all the class.</p> <p>The teacher will ask some questions to the whole group to make clear the use question and exclamation marks.</p>	Share with the whole group their ideas.

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1. Read the following story.

**Bloody Mary**

When I was about 9 years old, I went for a birthday party. There were about 10 other girls there. About midnight, we decided to play Mary Worth. Some of us had never heard of this, so we asked with surprise: is this a scary story? No one answered us and one of the girls started telling the story.

Mary Worth lived a long time ago. She was a very beautiful young girl. One day she had a terrible accident that left her face so disfigured that nobody would look at her. She had not been allowed to see her own reflection after this accident for fear that she would lose her mind. Before this, she had spent long hours admiring her beauty in her bedroom mirror.

One night, after everyone had gone to bed, unable to fight the curiosity any longer, she crept into a room that had a mirror. As soon as she saw her face, she broke down into terrible screams and sobs. It was at this moment that she was so heartbroken and wanted her old reflection back that she walked into the mirror to find it, vowing to disfigure anybody that came looking for her in the mirror.

After hearing this story, which was told very scarily, we decided to turn out all of the lights and try it. The girl who told the story said: No! Don't do it! Are you crazy? After that all the girls got scared and we all were around the mirror and we started repeating "Mary Worth, Mary Worth, I believe in Mary Worth". About the seventh time we said it one of the girls that was in front of the mirror started screaming: ahhhh! Don't kill me! And she tried to push her way back away from the mirror. She was screaming so loud that my friend's mom came running into the room. She quickly turned on the lights and found this girl in the corner screaming. She turned her around to see what the problem and saw these long fingernail scratches running down her right cheek. I will never forget her face as long as I live!

2. Read the starting of the story and write the final part of it, consider the punctuation marks seen the class.

**Starting story**

On an isolated road around midnight, in New York, a man and his girlfriend were driving. Suddenly a car approaches them from behind. "Stop!" he said. The man entered in a lonely road. He went out and talked to the man. "What is it, babe?" the girlfriend asked, but nobody answered. So she turned on the radio. Then, she heard a crash "Mike?" she said. She ran out of the car and her boyfriend's head was hanging in a tree. She yelled: help! And she came back to the car and tried to call the police. As soon as she opened the car door she heard, "No use. . . No one will answer you."

**Appendix D. Lesson Plan 3, Write around**

<b>Lesson Plan 3</b>	
<b>Background information</b>	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: Urban legend: “The Mexican Pet”
Class: 12 Students	
Level: Pre- Intermediate	Method: Cooperative Language Learning CLL, <i>Write around</i>
Topic: the use of colon.	Skill focus: writing
General objective: Students will learn how to use colon in writing.	
Specific objective: The students will identify how to use the colon in English. In groups they will write a story using colon. They will share their stories with the whole group.	

<b>Time</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
0-10 mins	The teacher gives a short urban legend called the Mexican pet where colon is used.	Warm-up activity
10-15	Students will read it and retell what it is about.	Give students information about the use of question and exclamation marks.
0-5	The teacher gives a starting for another story and explains the students what they are going to do. Students get together in groups of four people.	Giving instructions.

10-15	Each student will write a part to continue the story.	Fostering writing skills.
5- 10	Finally, every group will read the whole story for all the class. The teacher will ask some questions to the whole group to make clear the use question and exclamation marks.	Share with the whole group their ideas.

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Mexican Pet**

This story was told to my husband by one of the truck drivers at work. It is supposed to be true, but then someone told him that he found it on the internet. I have not been able to confirm it...

The truck driver's wife works in Boston on the docks where this little white dog comes around at noon and everyone feeds it a little something from their lunch. The wife went home and asked her husband if he would mind if she got a dog. She told him about the stray that everyone has been feeding. He said that he didn't think she wanted a dog. She said it would be nice company since he was away from home a lot, so he agreed.

She went to work the next day and the dog did not show up, but the next day the dog was there. Everyone gave him something to eat and she coaxed the dog into her car and brought him home. In there: she washed, she cleaned and she bathed him, and the dog slept with her in the bed that night and the next night.

The next day she came home from work and found the dog had eaten her cat. Most of the cat's parts were all over the room: its head, its legs, its tail and its eyes. The only thing missing of the cat was the skull. There was no blood anywhere. She called the veterinarian who told her to bring the dog right in. He could not do anything for the cat, but the bones from the cat could do injury to the dog.

She brought the dog right in and was in the waiting room when the nurse (assistant) asked her to step into one of the rooms immediately!! When she got in the room the vet asked her where she got the dog and she told her it was a stray she found where she works near the docks in Boston.

The vet told her she had to kill it immediately — that it was not a dog, but a 40-pound Cambodian rat that came in from one of the ships in the harbor. The rat was so big that it looked like a small dog with a little snub tail.

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1. **Read the first part of the story and with the help of your peers complete the second and third part of the story. Remember you need to write using colon and the punctuation marks seen before.**

### Covert's Bridge

A young couple had gotten married on Halloween. Around midnight, they were riding in a horse drawn carriage across the bridge, there was also a car crossing the bridge. The bridge was only one lane, so by the time they saw each other it was too late. Story has it that they crashed and the hubcap of the car was destroyed, decapitating the bride and all her things were covered in blood: her dress, her necklace, her earrings and her shoes...

#### Second Part

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Third Part

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Appendix E. Lesson Plan 4, Praise-Question-Polish strategy

Lesson Plan 4	
Background information	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: Urban legend: The Brick Wall
Class: 12 Students	
Level: Pre- intermediate	Method: Cooperative Language Learning CLL, Praise, Question Polish Technique.
Topic: the use of apostrophe and quotations marks.	Skill focus: writing
General objective: Students will learn how to use of apostrophe and quotations marks.	
Specific objective: The students will identify how to use of apostrophe and quotations marks in English. In groups they will read a story aloud and they write an alternative end for the story, using the apostrophe and quotations marks. They will share their stories with the whole group. Students will assess their peer's ends using the Praise, Question Polish Technique.	

Time	Procedure	Purpose
0-10 mins	The teacher gives a short urban legend apostrophe and quotations marks are used.	Warm-up activity Giving instructions. Give students information about the use of question and exclamation marks.
10-15	Students will work in groups and they will read the story aloud taking turns.	

0-5	Students will look for the meaning of unknown words to fully understand the reading	To understand the reading.
5-10	<p>Students will answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you like the story</li> <li>2. What is it about</li> <li>3. Do you think it really happened?</li> </ol>	Students share ideas about the reading.
10	Each student will write an end for the story.	Fostering writing skills.
10	Finally, students will correct their peers writing by using the Praise, question and polish technique.	To learn the uses of Apostrophe and quotation marks when writing the final part of the story.

### The Brick Wall

Massey was a soldier unfortunate enough to cross me, his commanding officer. He did not live to regret it. There was something very satisfying in the moment when I thrust the tip of my sword into the soldier's heart during our duel. I watched him fall to the ground with the satisfaction of a job well done.

The men under my command seem depressed in the following weeks. They mention Massey frequently, but I ignore their conversations.

One night, I retreat to my chambers to sulk and soon was joined by a delegation of men who were friends of Massey. I am surprised and delighted to learn that they had come to their senses and now saw the impertinent lieutenant for the cheat he really was. We share a round of drinks and laughed together. I'm afraid I drank far too much that evening.

The other soldiers suggested we explore the lower dungeons. That sounded like a fine idea to me.

We set off in merry spirits, drinking and singing and laughing, our voices echoing through the narrow passages. Deeper and deeper we went. My head started spinning and my legs felt like rubber after all that drinking. I am afraid I passed out from drunkenness, much to my shame.

When I came to, I was lying on my back with my wrists and ankles shackled to the floor. Drunken men, fooling around, I thought.

"Very funny, lads," I called out. "Now set me free."

The soldiers didn't answer me. A moment passed and Massey's best friend appeared in the doorway, holding mortar and a mason's trowel. The other men began handing him bricks and I realize that the soldiers are bricking up the entrance to the cell in which I lay shackled. "Very funny," I said again.

No one answered me. They worked in silence, laying brick after brick until one row is done, then two. They were playing a nasty joke on me, of course.

Then Massey's best friend paused in his work and looked directly into my eyes. At that moment I realized that this joke is no joke. Scream after scream ripped from my throat as I struggle against my bonds. But the dungeon was too deep within the fort, and no one heard my screams.

They were on the final row of bricks. I was reduced to bribery now, desperately using my wealth in an attempt to escape my fate. But no one listened to my bribes. I watched in heart-thudding horror as the last brick is put in place, as the last chink of light faded from my sight. I have been entombed alive in the deepest, darkest dungeon of the fort. I howled in panic, writhing against the iron manacles binding hands and feet and twisting my body. Eventually I fell back against the floor, my wrists and ankles wet with my own blood.

My fingers were torn and throbbing from their intense scrabbling against the hard floor. I found myself weeping angrily, though I have never shed a tear in my lifetime.

The agony of the thought sent me writhing again in spite of the horrible pain racking my wrists, ankles, and hands. Daylight. I must see daylight again. Just once more.

"Don't leave me here to die alone! Don't leave me!"

But I was alone, and the sheer brutal horror of it overwhelmed me. My eyes strained against the complete and utter darkness, and I wondered if they were even open.

Dear God, I can't get out. I can't get out. I CAN'T GET OUT!

**Appendix F. Lesson Plan 5, Peer response strategy**

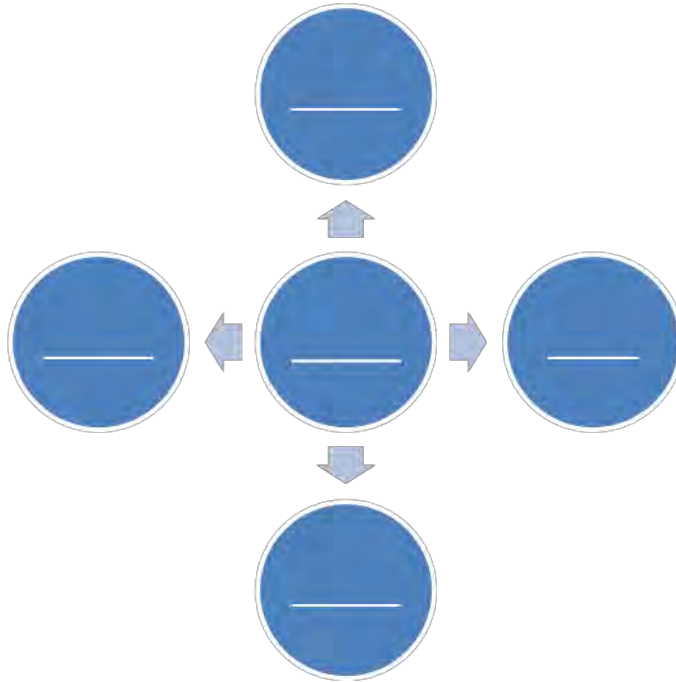
<b>Lesson Plan 5</b>	
Background information	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: White board, markers, sheets of papers.
Class: 12 students	
Level: Pre-intermediate	Method: Cooperative Language Learning <i>CLL, Peer-Response</i>
Topic: the use of semicolon.	Skill focus: writing
General objective: Students will learn how to use of semicolon in writing.	
Specific objective: The students will identify how to use the semicolon in English. In groups they will write a story using semicolon. They will share their stories with the whole group.	

<b>Time</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
0-10 mins	The teacher writes a topic on the board and shows students how to do a brainstorming and how to use semicolon.	Warm-up activity
10-15	The teacher gives a topic to be worked in the whole class.	Giving instructions.
10-15	Students get together in	Fostering writing skills.

10-15	<p>groups of three people.</p> <p>They start doing a brainstorming in the groups adding different information about the topic.</p>	Share with the whole group their ideas.
5- 10	<p>Students organize the ideas in the brainstorming and they start to write.</p> <p>After they finish the papers they exchange it with the other groups of the class</p> <p>Each group will assess the writings of the other groups. Students decide which story was better written.</p>	Foster peer assessment

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



1. After doing the brainstorming in your groups of work, then organize your ideas in a short text using the semicolon and the punctuation mark seen before.

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**Appendix G. Lesson Plan 6, Peer response strategy**

<b>Lesson Plan 6: Reinforce</b>	
Background information	Time: one hour
Subject : English	Materials: White board, markers, sheets of papers.
Class: 12 students	
Level: Pre-intermediate	Method: Cooperative Language Learning CLL, <i>Peer-Response</i>
Topic: the use of punctuation marks	Skill focus: writing
General objective: Students will learn how to use punctuation marks which are included comma, period, apostrophe, quotation mark, question mark, exclamation mark, , colon, and semicolon.	
Specific objective: The students will identify how to use the punctuation marks in English. In groups they will write a story using semicolon. They will share their stories with the whole group.	

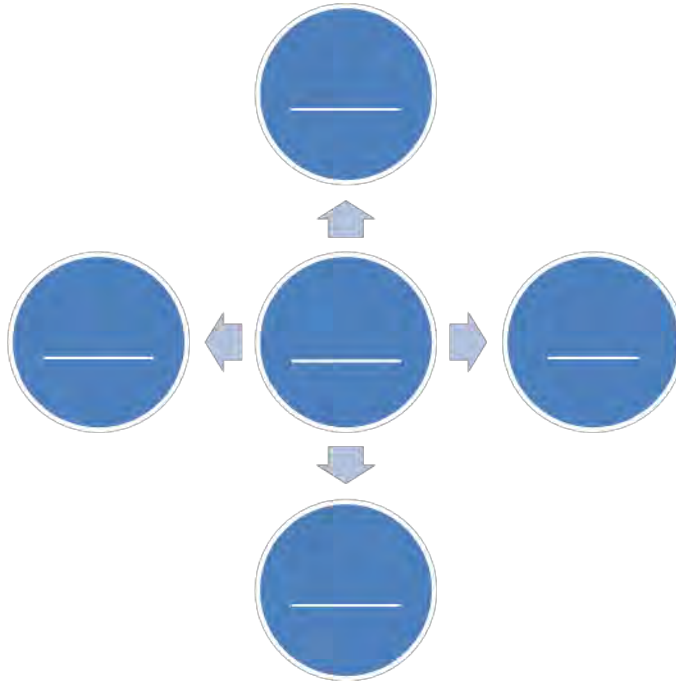
<b>Time</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
0-10 mins	The teacher writes a topic on the board and shows students how to do a brainstorming and how to using punctuation marks. The teacher gives a topic to be worked in the whole class.	Warm-up activity
10-15	Students get together in groups of three people. They start doing a brainstorming in the groups adding different information about the topic.	Giving instructions.



10-15	Students organize the ideas in the brainstorming and they start to write.	Fostering writing skills. Share with the whole group their ideas.
10-15	After they finish the papers they exchange it with the other groups of the class	
5- 10	Each group will assess the writings of the other groups. Students decide which story was better written.	Foster peer assessment

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



1. After doing the brainstorming in your groups of work, then organize your ideas in a short text using the punctuation marks seen before.

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