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**TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH DIDACTIC
GAMES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

A guided work submitted for the degree in linguistics and Languages

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DEDICATORY

With all my love to my family, especially to my father's memory, Dr. Juan Rúa Ortubé, who not only gave me his unconditional support to be a qualified person, but also instilled in me values that guide my life.

I love you daddy. Thanks for all.

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ABSTRACT

The present report firstly summarizes the most important aspects of the development of this guided work carried out at Humberto Vásquez Machicado school and secondly, it makes reference to the results and objectives achieved at the end of the project.

This guided work aims the students to learn English in an amusing and effective way. Hence, the main objective of the guided work is to teach English language to secondary school students through didactic games by following the Communicative approach. So that, they have the opportunity to experiment a new and innovative way of learning English in a relaxed and pleasant classroom environment, because from pedagogical viewpoint didactic games are very useful to sustain the students' interest on the subject and to motivate the students to participate in classes.

In order to carry out the proposal of this guided work different teaching elements such as a basic English language syllabus, lesson plans for each unit, a student book and mainly didactic games have been designed and used to teach English.

As a result, at the end of this work, the objectives proposed have been achieved satisfactorily, since the students have become motivated to learn English. Therefore, they have acquired an elementary proficiency in English language skills.

Thus, this guided work is developed in six chapters. The first chapter provides a general introduction to the institutional background and the population characteristics. The second chapter contains the theoretical framework that supports this project. The third chapter explains the work proposal. The fourth chapter describes the proposal development. The fifth chapter present the general outcomes of the guided work. Finally, the sixth chapter ends with the conclusions and recommendations for future studies.

RESUMEN

El presente reporte, en primer lugar resume los aspectos más importantes del desarrollo de este trabajo dirigido llevado a cabo en el colegio Humberto Vásquez Machicado y en segundo lugar, hace referencia a los resultados y objetivos alcanzados al final del proyecto.

Este trabajo dirigido brinda una alternativa de aprender inglés en una forma divertida y efectiva. Por lo tanto, el principal objetivo del trabajo dirigido es enseñar inglés a estudiantes de secundaria a través de juegos didácticos siguiendo los principios del método comunicativo. De manera que ellos tengan la oportunidad de experimentar una nueva e innovadora forma de aprender inglés en un ambiente tranquilo y agradable, ya que desde el punto de vista pedagógico los juegos didácticos son muy útiles para mantener el interés de los estudiantes en el tema y para motivarlos a participar en clases.

Para efectuar la propuesta de este trabajo dirigido fueron diseñados y utilizados diferentes elementos de enseñanza como el programa de estudios para el curso de inglés, los planes de lecciones, un libro básico de inglés y principalmente juegos didácticos para cada unidad.

Al final de este proyecto, los objetivos propuestos fueron alcanzados satisfactoriamente, ya que los estudiantes se mostraron motivados para aprender inglés y como resultado ellos adquirieron una competencia elemental en el uso de este idioma.

Así, este trabajo dirigido es desarrollado en seis capítulos. El primer capítulo provee una introducción general de los antecedentes y características de la población de la institución. El segundo capítulo contiene los fundamentos teóricos relacionados a este proyecto. El tercer capítulo explica la propuesta del trabajo. El cuarto capítulo describe el desarrollo de la propuesta. El quinto capítulo presenta los resultados generales del trabajo dirigido. El sexto capítulo termina con las conclusiones y recomendaciones para futuros estudios.

INTRODUCTION

The English language is considered to be the universal language. At present, people need to speak this language because most of the information of different knowledge fields, such as science, technology, philosophy, international relations and education is in English. So that, the English language teaching-learning as a foreign language is very important to keep abreast of what is happening all over the world, and also to communicate with foreign people.

Nowadays, our educational system recognizes the importance of teaching English language in the schools, given that the Law Nro. 070, Avelino Sinani - Elizardo Pérez Educational Law, in its Chapter III (Socio-cultural and Linguistic Diversity) article 7 (Use of official languages and foreign language) numeral 5 states: "Foreign language teaching. The foreign language teaching starts gradually and it is compulsory from the first years of schooling, it counts on an appropriate methodology and a specialized staff, and it continues at all levels of the Educational System Multinational." (2010, p.6). However, from the questionnaire that we administered to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students, we confirmed that the traditional teaching methods are not working. Since the majority of the students said that they do not participate actively in the classroom because they do not understand the subject, are afraid of making mistakes or because the class is very bored seeing they only repeat grammar structures The students also state that many times they feel frustrated because they are conscious that if they would learn English language, they would have more opportunities to obtain a good job. This is especially true if we refer to students who attend to school at night because they have to work during the day, like Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students.

After we identified the problem, we asked ourselves how the students could learn English language in an appropriate and effective way. On the matter, through the time English language teaching has been continuously changing. Language specialists have created many theories and methods to get the best way of teaching a foreign language. Nevertheless, no method proposed so far is the best one; no method can guarantee best results. However, we

can use different teaching theories and adapt approaches, methods, procedures, techniques and strategies for teaching a foreign language, in this case English language, in a more effective and easier manner.

This sense, taking into account the students' answers, we think the Communicative approach is the more appropriate one to teach English language because in the acquisition of a foreign language it is very important to take into consideration the necessity of an integrated approach for the four linguistic skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), through which the students not only learn and practice it in a coherent way, but also have the opportunity to engage in real life communication.

Therefore, we proposed teaching English to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students through didactic games by following the Communicative approach principles, making dynamic classes in which the students learn and practice English language as well as they reinforce the vocabulary that they learn in the main task of the class. So, they can improve their communicative skills in a relaxed atmosphere, where the importance of their personal experiences and the communication through interaction between teacher and students, and between students-themselves get the students to have the possibility to involve their whole person in the learning process and, finally, they can apply the English language in real situations.

This sense, the present work attempts to show that teachers can use didactic games, as a suitable teaching technique, in the learning-teaching process and that students can provide a context to talk about, because from pedagogical viewpoint didactic games are very useful to sustain the students' interest on the subject, as well as to motivate the students to participate in classes; thus, according to Vernon (2010, p.5) "Learning through fun activities relaxes students and makes the classroom atmosphere much more supportive for learners. Students learn more effectively because the activity grabs their attention and interest so naturally they make more effort to concentrate and retain language."

Thus, our specific goals are the following ones: To create a relaxed and pleasant classroom environment, to achieve that the students to have more self-confidence to participate in classes

without being afraid of making mistakes, and to encourage the students to develop a high sense of cooperation among them by working in groups. These specific goals will help us to attain our main goal: To achieve the students to learn English through the implementation of didactic games in the teaching-learning process; so that, they have the opportunity to experiment a new and innovative way of learning this foreign language.

The project is divided in seven chapters: The first one describes the identity of the school in which we carried out the project and gives precise information about the population we work with. The second chapter shows the current situation of the school and the students' needs that gave origin to this guided work. In the third chapter is the theoretical foundation in which the project is based on. The fourth chapter is devoted to the work proposal. The fifth part of the project is the main one because this explains all the activities that we carried out in the proposal development. The sixth chapter presents the general outcomes of the project. Finally, we have the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

The identity and organization of the institution, as well as the population characteristics are indispensable elements in order to know where and with who the project will be carried out. For that, firstly we will carry out a SWOT analysis which will help us to know the needs of the institution. Secondly, we will administer a diagnostic questionnaire to the students in order to know their needs. Finally, we will analyze and interpret the students' answers. Thus, we will have a clear and objective diagnosis about the necessities of the school and the students. All these points will be developed in this chapter.

1.1. IDENTITY OF THE INSTITUTION

Humberto Vásquez Machicado School was founded on April 27th, 1958. Its first Principal was Mrs. E.V. de Saldaña. At the beginning, the school was located on Tejada Sorzano Avenue. Later, it was moved at 1065 David Crespo Street. Thus, the school has been opened to children and young people that live in the neighborhood since 1965.

At the beginning, Humberto Vásquez Machicado School worked with primary level: First, second, third, fourth and fifth grade. During the next years, intermediate level was introduced in accordance with administrative resolutions of respective functioning of the superior authorities of education. The levels that have been implemented are the followings: From 1966 to 1973 the school worked with the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth primary level. From 1974 to 1987 were created the first, second and third intermediate level. From 1988 to 1992 were created the four grades of secondary level, according to the students' enroll. The first graduation was in 1992.

Nowadays, Humberto Vásquez Machicado School is an accredited educational institution, where work graduated teachers from the "Normal", who have first and merit categories.

Moreover, it provides two levels of education: upper primary and secondary distributed in seven degrees.

The general goal of the school is to improve the quality of education through educational projects that provide solutions to pedagogical and institutional problems.

One of its specific goals is to develop students' feeling of patriotism, enhancing national values and inculcating truth love for the country. Another one is to organize sport, cultural and social events where students have the opportunity to develop their sport and artistic abilities as well as their human values.

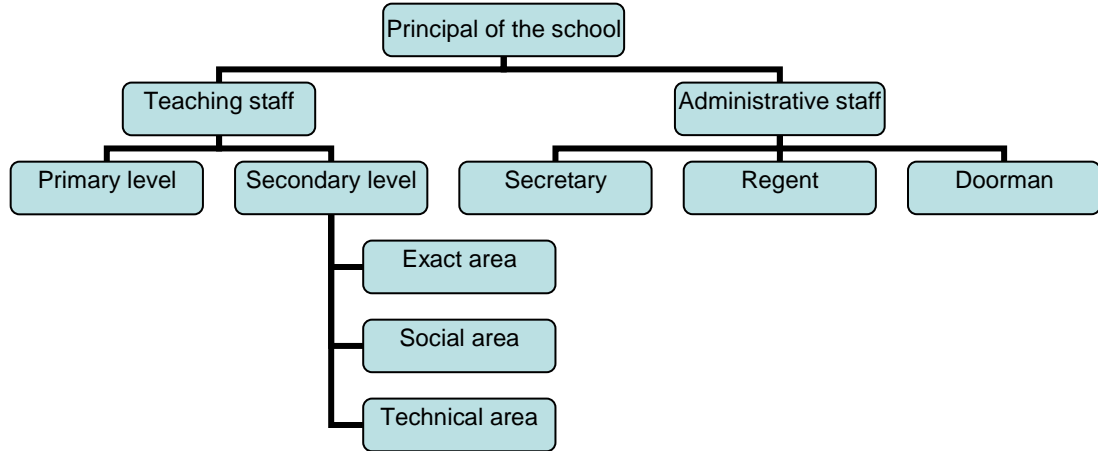
Its vision is a highly qualified institution where students receive an education with high values of respect, social justice and conservation of the environment, in order to strengthen and enhance their culture, build their self-esteem and develop their creativity. As a consequence, they become citizens who contribute to the development of our country.

The mission of the school is to contribute to students' overall education and to solve problems about high-grade dropout, stimulating personal motivation of each student with the active participation of all the actors of the educational community, through the intensification of education. Thus, students become young men and women enable to adapt to the social context and new developments in science and technology.

Regarding the building, until some years ago the yard was cobblestone. Fortunately, now it is made of cement, but many classrooms are not painted and some glasses are broken, so as the classes are at night it is very cold. Moreover, the blackboards and the desks are old. Finally, the school neither has an audio-visual room nor a secretary office.

1.2. ORGANIZATION OF THE INSTITUTION

In order to show the hierarchy organization of Humberto Vásquez Machicado School we presented the following chart:



1.3. NEEDS OF THE INSTITUTION

In order to know the needs of the institution in an objective way, we carried out a SWOT analysis that helped us to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Humberto Vásquez Machicado School, which are showed in the next chart:

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly qualified teaching staff. • Students' responsibility. • The principal and teachers want to implement a new curriculum, teaching methodologies and techniques. 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is with syllabus based on traditional methods focus on grammar. • The school does not have a good infrastructure. There is not neither an audio-visual room nor a secretary's office. • The school does have neither equipment for teaching English language (radio, TV, DVD) nor extra material (dictionaries, short stories, CDs). • There is not a good communication between parents and teachers.
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has an agreement with the UMSA, Linguistics and Languages Department through which 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work during the day. So, they could abandon the school. • The neighborhood is dangerous, there are

<p>undergraduate students can teach English language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate from Psychology Department also carry out internships at the school. 	<p>gangs and assailants near to the school. So, students could move school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of students' motivation to learn foreign languages.
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1.4. DIAGNOSIS OF THE INSTITUTION

Taking into account the factors mentioned in the prior point, we can bring to a conclusion that the main necessities of the school are the following:

The school needs to implement a new teaching method. Unfortunately, the teachers still use traditional teaching methods based on grammar and learning by heart. However, they want to change it.

The school has a lack of didactic materials, as Humberto Vásquez Machicado is a public school, the Government and the Majority of La Paz city support the school economically, in terms of salaries and infrastructure respectively. So that, the school does not have financial resources in order to acquire equipment and teaching material. As a consequence, there is a lack of students' motivation to learn not only English, but also other subjects.

There is a lack of students' motivation, as the majority of the students work during the day, they attend school tired and sometimes, do not pay attention. For this reason, it is necessary motivate the students in order to maintain their interest and attention on classes.

The school needs an appropriate syllabus based on activities that encourage students to participate in classes making a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere in order to improve the teaching-learning process. Fortunately, the school has a signed agreement with the UMSA, specifically with Linguistics and Languages Department; so that, the students have the opportunity to learn English in a more effective way through the syllabus that we proposed. It was possible thanks to the principal of the school accepted our proposal of teaching English language through didactic games based on communicative approach principles, since the principal and teachers of the school think the students should learn English not only because it

is a subject of the curriculum, but also because it is a tool in order for the students to obtain a good job.

1.5. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

As already said, Humberto Vásquez Machicado is a night school that works with primary and secondary level. However, as it is a night school, most of the students work during the day. For this reason, children and young people that are enrolled at this school are approximately from twelve to nineteen or twenty years old, it because some of them abandon the school before finishing the academic year and they, obviously, have to enroll to the same grade the next year. This is because these students are two or three years older than students who attend at schools day.

The school has 192 students enrolled, 40 in primary level and 152 in secondary level. There are 16 teachers, and three people from the administrative and service staff.

We carried out this project with first grade secondary school students. In order to know more about the students, they had a diagnostic evaluation at the beginning of the course. From their answers we knew that some boys work as assistants of mechanics or electricians. Some girls work as domestics, babysitters or salespersons and other students are looking for a job; so, most of the population of the school is from low-income families.

On the other hand, this educational institution also organizes sport and cultural activities, such as football championships, in which each team chooses a sponsor, who is generally one teacher or one students' father or mother. The students have a sponsor because they do not have economic resources to buy their sportswear. Among the cultural activities we can point out some festivals, that are organized by the teachers and the students, for celebrating some important days, like mother's day, father's day, anniversary of the school, etc. In these festivals the students perform folk dances, like morenada, caporales, tinkus, etc.

In brief, we could realize these students want to improve themselves, to study and why not, to have an academic excellence in order to obtain a good job.

This sense, after we analyzed the students' characteristics, problems and desires, we deduced that it is necessary give them an opportunity to learn, in this case English language, through an appropriate method and an innovative teaching technique. For that, we propose teaching English language through didactic games based on principles of Communicative approach, where the students have an active participation without being afraid to make mistakes; thus, they learn in an amusing way and in a relaxed classroom environment.

In brief, in this chapter we described the identity and organization of the school as well as the students' characteristics.

1.6. STUDENTS' NEEDS

We had the possibility of knowing the students' needs through a general questionnaire in Spanish (appendix A), which was administered to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students at the beginning of the course. From the answers obtained we could realize that there was lack of practice, as well as a lack of interaction between teacher-students and students-students in the classroom, and there was no motivation to learn English language. Besides, most of the students thought that to learn this foreign language was a hard and difficult task, which is why they have just gotten a little knowledge about the most elementary lessons such as numbers, family, clothes and the alphabet.

Besides, we had the opportunity to interact with the students, who told us that many of them came from rural areas of the Department of La Paz, where they were not taught English. Unfortunately, as the students answered the questionnaire, at present they do not have so much time neither to practice English nor to do their homework; because the majority of them work during the day to support their families and they study only at night.

Finally, according to the results of the survey we realized that there was not an appropriate English language level in the school. However, the students want to learn English not only to listen to music, watch videos and understand computer programs, but also to obtain good jobs.

1.7. INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDENTS' DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

The questionnaire administered to the thirty six students enrolled on first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School had ten questions. The statistics of the results are presented in the appendix B.

Firstly, it was necessary to know what the students do during the day, since they attend school at night. As we saw the results, we found out most students (69%) work during the day because their families can not support them.

The second question was aimed to know where the students attended the primary level. The results showed us that most students (83%) attended primary level in a public school. As before the “Ley de la Educación Avelino Siñani - Elizardo Pérez” [Avelino Siñani - Elizardo Pérez Educational Law] was promulgated, the students only learned English language from sixth grade of primary level on, it is possible to understand their low English level.

The third and fourth questions were addressed to find out whether the students thought that learning English Language was important or not, and if they liked to learn it. The results demonstrated that nearly all the students affirmed that learning English was essential and they would like to learn it. These answers showed us that Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students are aware of the importance of knowing this language.

These answers motivated us to work hard on doing a suitable syllabus by using appropriate teaching techniques in order to offer the students amusing and interesting classes.

The next questions were aimed to know why learning English would be useful for the students and if they thought that learning English language was an easy or a difficult task. From what the results stated, we realized that there is a strong demand to learn English in order to be well prepared and have more opportunities to get a good job. Secondly, because they have a clear idea that English is a necessity to travel abroad. Nevertheless, the students thought that learning English is very difficult.

These results gave us an idea about looking for a teaching method that provides the students with the possibility of studying in a dynamic way, which makes the English learning

process an uncomplicated task, leaving aside traditional teaching classroom experiences that stressed the correction of the grammar or pronunciation.

The following questions tried to inquire into the type of material that the students would prefer to use in order to learn English language.

The results showed us that we had to emphasize on adapting realia, songs and movies to encourage the students to learn English, without forgetting the use of student books. Besides, it is necessary to introduce didactic games in English language teaching process for giving the students more motivation and opportunities to improve their English level, since most students like to study by making amusing activities in classes. With these results we had in mind that a lot of meaningful activities should be introduced, in which the students interact with each other dynamically.

The last questions were related to the four linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). We wanted to know what linguistic skills the students thought the most relevant and which one or ones the least. 56% of the students thought that speaking was the most important, but they were aware of the fact that they do not have a good English level.

Firstly, we realized that the students unconsciously looked for a method that develops communicative competence. That is why we immediately thought about the necessity of implementing a suitable method that would help them to achieve this learning need.

Secondly, we wanted to know which English level was the appropriate to start this project. The results were clear: most students had just a little English knowledge, which meant that we had to start the course from the very beginning.

The information that we got from the institution needs assessment and the diagnostic evaluation was essential to define the activities and materials, objectives and assessment, and, especially, to determine the teaching methods and approaches, and techniques that we would take into consideration in order to develop a suitable syllabus.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the development of the present work we will review the key concepts, the most important second language learning theories, teaching methods and social foundations related with our project.

2.1. DEFINITION OF BASIC TERMS

In the development of this work we will use some terms that will have a specific meaning for us.

2.1.1. LANGUAGE

There are many definitions of language, which vary depending on the theory that explains it. Thus, a short but a complete definition is given by Brown (1994) “Language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, or gestural symbols that enable members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another.” (p.5). That is to say, the language in all its forms is the unique way that people have to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

2.1.2. LEARNING

According to the Cambridge International English Dictionary (1995) “Learning is the activity of obtaining knowledge” (p.806). Driscoll (2000) defines learning as “a persisting change in human performance or performance potential which must come about as a result of the learner’s experience and interaction with the world” (p.3). According to American Heritage (1994) “Learning is the act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge or skill. Knowledge or skill gained through schooling or study. Learning is a behavioral modification especially through experience or conditioning.” (p.219).

So, learning is the act or experience of one that learns the knowledge of skill acquired by instruction or study, the modification of a behavioral tendency by experience. Learning

changes people's behavior, which is later demonstrated by implementing knowledge, skills, or practices derived from education.

These concepts are very general; but, when we talk about language learning, in this case foreign language learning, we should take into account some methodological aspects. Since it is very important to learn a second language, but like everything, this implies a process, in this case a teaching-learning process. According to Brown (1994) "Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Total commitment, total involvement, a total physical, intellectual, and emotional response, are necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language" (p.1).

Basically, from an educator's perspective, learning involves helping people along the learning process, and learning includes all of the things that we do to make it happen. As an end result, it is known that learning occurs when people get new information and incorporate it into their life.

2.1.3. TEACHING

Regarding the concept of teaching, in a general way, it can be defined as "showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand." (Kimble & Garmezy, 1963, p.133).

As we can see teaching cannot be defined apart from learning, because teaching-learning always go together. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning. According to Brown (1994) "Your understanding of how the learner learns will determine your philosophy of education, your teaching style, your approach, methods, and classroom techniques." (Pp.7- 8).

The ease or difficulty of language learning depends on which theories, methods and techniques are used to teach a foreign language. For that, linguists and educators have proposed different theories and practices on the way languages are taught and learned along

the last years. However, there is not a special prescription to guarantee everyone's success when teaching or learning a second language, due to that many components taking place in the process itself, such as: stated objectives, syllabus specifications, types of activities, teachers' and learners' roles, teaching techniques, students' learning styles, materials and types of motivation used to enhance students' learning experiences, context where the process of learning takes place, and so on.

2.1.4. DIDACTIC GAMES

Didactic games, also called learning games, are defined by Schaub & Zenke (2001) as:

Didactic working materials prepared for teaching purposes that closely resemble its external appearance to a game of society, but that are directed in what makes subject and content to reach certain goals and didactic content. Educational games such as loto-reading, the calculation-domino, puzzles, dice, etc., must, in its leisure use, transmit, repeat, and practice knowledge and wisdom. The motivation and the desire to play also appear from the fact that it is made in the company of other students. The didactic games differ from the real game, above all, because, the first ones, cannot be exercised without a purpose. (p.106).

2.1.5. STUDENT

According to the Longman Dictionary Contemporary English (1981) "A student is a person who is studying at a place of education or training; [...] a person with a stated interest; a person who spends time in learning" (p.1107). In our case this person is studying at Humberto Vásquez Machicado School. This student is considered as a whole person with intellect, believes, emotions and attitudes toward the teachers, classmates and language learning process.

2.1.6. MOTIVATION

As Pastrana (2011, p.36) sets up in her thesis "Motivation is often defined as the psychological quality that leads people to achieve a goal. For language learners, mastery of a language may be a goal. For others, communicative competence or even basic communication skills could be a goal."

2.2. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES AND TEACHING METHODS AND APPROACHES

In order for the second language teaching-learning process to become a success, the teacher should base his/her work on teaching theories and methods that bring together cognitive, emotional and environmental influences, and experiences for acquiring, enhancing and improving the students' knowledge, skills and values. Then, we will review the following learning theories and teaching methods.

2.2.1. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES

As already said, explanations of what happens when getting knowledge are called learning theories which are attempts to describe how the students learn. In this case, this work is guided, in the first place, by Constructivism and, in the second place, by Rogers's Humanistic Psychology, the latter focuses on psychological viewpoint. However, as we will see, it is considered to be a constructivist school of thought.

2.2.1.1. CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism was developed –among others– by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. According to Piaget (1977) “Constructivism is a theory of knowledge that argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas. During infancy, it was an interaction between human experiences and their reflexes or behavior-patterns.” (p.184).

Constructivism states that learning is an active and a contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. So, according to this theory knowledge is constructed based on personal experience of the environment. At the same time, new information is linked to prior knowledge, thus social and communication skills, as well as collaboration and exchange of ideas are essential. The teachers should never tell students anything directly but, instead, should always allow them to construct knowledge for themselves, because education is learner-centered. As Cordova (2008) states “Teachers do not take the role of the ‘sage on the stage’ Rather, teachers work as ‘guides on the side’ who provide students adequate opportunities, new knowledge to the real view of the world.” (p.11).

Constructivism guides the development of this work because it is in accordance with the goal of the proposal, since in teaching-learning process; learners participate actively in classroom building knowledge and improving learning skills. Therefore, the time of changing our educational system has come because it is very important learners acquire a solid knowledge through a critical thinking and do not learn by heart.

2.2.1.2. ROGERS'S HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

According to Rogers (1983), Humanistic Psychology has more of an affective focus than a cognitive one. For that, this theory and Constructivism share some views about the language learning.

Rogers analyzed human behavior in general, including the learning process, because he studied the 'whole person' as a physical and cognitive, but primarily emotional being. From what Brown says, Rogers felt that given a non threatening environment, a person will form a picture of reality that is indeed congruent with reality and will grow and learn.

According to Rogers (1983, p.98) Humanistic Psychology Theory sets up that "Learning how to learn is more important than being taught something from the 'superior' vantage point of a teacher who unilaterally decides what shall be taught". What is needed, according to Rogers, is for teachers to become facilitators of learning through the establishment of interpersonal relationships with learners. For teachers to be facilitators, they must first be real and genuine, discarding masks of superiority.

Freire (1996), a well-known Brazilian educator, who shares the principles of Humanism, argues that "students should be allowed to negotiate learning outcomes, to cooperate with teachers and other learners in a process of discovery, to engage in critical thinking, and to relate everything they do in school to their reality outside the classroom." (p.62).

After analyzing this teaching theory, Humanistic Psychology, we took into account it in order to carry out this study because of the redefinition that gave about the teaching-learning process in general and language teaching-learning in particular. In other words, according to Rogers's Humanistic Psychology "Fully functioning persons" live at peace with all of their

feelings and reactions; they are able to reach their full potential. Since it is very important learners are actors in the educational process, constructing meanings in interaction with others and so, they can apply the knowledge learned in classes in genuine communication not only at the school, but also in the real life.

2.2.2. SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODS

In the teaching-learning process, the concept of method has become the most important tool of foreign language teaching, because it helps us to reach goals and objectives set in a course. Theories of methodologies of second language acquisition have introduced different features that try to link theoretical background and its practice, by setting three processes: theories of languages and learning, instructional design features, and observed teaching practices.

This work is guided by some elements from Total Physical Response and Natural approach, and mainly by the Communicative approach due to the fact that these teaching methods have a great significance in the second language teaching-learning process. Moreover, as we will see in the development of the work, these methods will help us to fulfill the purpose of the project. Didactic method, also guides this work because this is a teaching-learning project.

2.2.2.1. TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE

This elaborated method was developed by James Asher (1977), who focuses his study in two characteristics of first language acquisition. The first one is that children get a lot of comprehensible input before beginning to speak. The second one, in this period of living, children also get a lot of physical manipulation and acting language from their parents in order to encourage children's response; this acting language consists on commands.

Thus, according to Asher (1977) "the Total Physical Response classroom is one in which students do a great deal of listening and acting" (p.55). In other words, the students do a lot of listening before they speak, and that their listening is accompanied by physical responses (reaching, grabbing, moving, looking, and so forth).

Asher established his theory on three hypotheses:

1. There exists a specific innate bio-program for language learning which defines an optional path for first and second language developed.
2. Brain lateralization defines different learning functions in the left and right brain hemispheres. Asher points out that motor activity is a right-brain function, it should precede left-brain language processing.
3. Stress (an affective filter) intervenes between the act of learning and what is to be learned; the lower the stress the greater the learning. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 90).

At the beginning levels of second language, a Total Physical Response (TPR) class gives more attention to comprehension than production. So, grammar is taught inductively through imperative drills, class activities such as role plays, because one of the primary objectives underlying Asher's TPR methodology meant that the learning needed to become more enjoyable and less stressful. Asher thought that a natural manner to accomplish this was to recreate the natural way children learn their native language, most notably through facilitating an appropriate "listening" and "comprehension" period, and encourage learners to respond using right-brain motor skills rather than left-brain language "processing". That way, the students start producing second language in a natural way because they are comfortable and do not worry about making a mistake. It also focused on the ideas that learning should be as fun and stress-free as possible, and that it should be dynamic through the use of accompanying physical activity.

Learner's role

According to Asher the learners are listener and performer, because the first task that they do in TPR classes is listening to commands given by the teacher, and then learners respond physically, but they have no influence on the content of learning which is determined by the teacher.

On the other hand, learners should practice and construct new utterances recombined of constituents of prior classes, it is important for the teacher to encourage them to speak when they feel ready to do it.

Teacher's role

In TPR the teacher plays a very important role. "The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors". (Asher, 1977, p. 43).

The teacher has to decide what to teach. Then, model and present the new materials, the teacher also selects supporting material for classroom use, and he/she must supervise the activities developed in classes in order that the learners can internalize the basic rules of the foreign language. The teacher should avoid doing many corrections; at the beginning he/she should not interrupt to correct errors because this could inhibit learners.

TPR guides the development of the present study, especially in the following points: it is necessary that at the beginning the students have a suitable listening, in other words listen to the teacher before they speak. The affective filter plays a significant paper because learning should be more enjoyable than stressful. In our case, the students are encouraged to learn through didactic games and many of them are movement games; so that, the students make physical activities. However, grammar explanation must not be forgotten.

2.2.2.2. NATURAL APPROACH

The Natural approach was developed by one of Stephen Krashen's colleagues, Tracy Terrell, in the early eighties, based on Krashen's theories about second language acquisition. (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

This approach shared a lot in common with Asher's Total Physical Response method in terms of advocating the need for a silent phase, waiting for spoken production to "emerge" of its own accord, and emphasizing the need to make learners as relaxed as possible during the learning process; and that a great deal of communication and "acquisition" should take place as opposed to "analysis". (Brown, 1994, p.108).

There are three generic stages identified in the approach: (1) Preproduction - developing listening skills; (2) Early Production - students struggle with the language and make many errors which are corrected based on content and not structure; (3) Extending Production - promoting fluency through a variety of more challenging activities. (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

In other words, at the beginning, learners first listen to the teacher, then understand what the teacher says (the comprehensible input is essential), and finally they use the language, but it occurs just when they are ready to do it.

Krashen and Terrell point out that the learning process in the Natural approach has five stages which they called “hypothesis”.

- **The acquisition/learning hypothesis:** Language acquisition is an unconscious process developed through using language meaningfully; on the other hand, language learning is a conscious process of discovering rules about a language that needs a language formal teaching.
- **The monitor hypothesis:** Conscious learning operates only as a monitor or editor that checks or repairs the output of what has been acquired, it means learners recall grammatical rules in order to apply or correct what they are going to produce.
- **The natural order hypothesis:** Grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order and it does little good to try to learn them in another order.
- **The input hypothesis:** People acquire language best from messages that are just slightly beyond their current competence.
- **The affective filter hypothesis:** The learner emotional state can act as a filter that impedes or blocks input necessary for language acquisition. Aliaga (2003) states in his project that: “A research has shown three kinds of affective or attitudinal variables related to second language acquisition: **Motivation**; learners with high motivation generally do better. **Self-confidence**; learners with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to be more successful. **Anxiety**; low personal anxiety and low classroom anxiety are more conducive to second language acquisition”. (p.24).

In the Natural approach the teacher speaks only the target language and class time is dedicated to providing input for acquisition. Students may use either the language being taught or their first language. Errors in speech are not corrected; however, homework may include grammar exercises that will be corrected.

Communicative activities prevail throughout a language course employing the Natural approach, focusing on a wide range of activities including games, role-plays, dialogs, group work and discussions. Thus, according to (Nunan, 1991b):

“The following example activities, taken from Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) book on the Natural approach are all designed to provide comprehensible input, which, according to the authors, is the most important element in language acquisition: **Affective-humanistic activities**, these activities are designed to involve students’ feelings, opinions, desires, reactions, ideas and experiences [...]. **Problem solving activities**, in these activities, students are involved in finding a correct answer to a question, problem or situation [...]. **Games**, in the Natural approach games are an important element in the acquisition process. They qualify as an acquisition activity because of their value in providing comprehensible input.” (pp. 241-242).

This way, learners relate their prior knowledge to the comprehensible input and then, they can apply it in real situations developed in a relaxed atmosphere.

Learner’s role

The authors of Natural approach explain that in the learning process, learners pass through different stages. At the beginning, they just listen to teacher’s commands without having to respond in the target language. Then, they answer using single words that they recall and, finally students are able to involve themselves playing roles in games, and group work, just when they feel naturally ready or confident enough to do so.

Teacher’s role

Krashen & Terrell (1983) set out that the initial task of the teacher is to provide comprehensible input-spoken language that is understandable to the learners, given that the teacher is the source of the learners input and the creator of an interesting and stimulating variety of classroom activities, commands, games, skits, and small-group work.

Role of instructional materials

The materials used in the classroom are from the realia rather than textbooks. Visual aid is essential. Since schedules, brochures, advertisement, maps, and books of appropriate level for the learners relate the class activities to the real world facilitate language acquisition and foster real communication among the learners.

However, Krashen's theory has received plenty of criticism, particularly orientated around the recommendation of a silent period that is terminated when students feel ready to emerge into oral production, and the idea of comprehensible input. Critics point out those students will "emerge" at different times and it is hard to determine which forms of language input will be "comprehensible" to the students.

The principles of Natural approach that were applied in this work are these: offer to the students a relaxed environment in order for them to feel comfortable. It is also important to consider the affective filter; that is to say, students' motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Another principle is to develop communicative activities, including role-plays, dialogues, group work, and especially games; this last is one of the objectives of this work. Nevertheless, the teacher must stimulate the students to participate in class activities in order to have a more or less homogeneous level of students.

2.2.2.3. COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The Communicative Language Teaching, also called Communicative approach or Functional approach was proposed by the British linguist Wilkins in 1972 as a reaction to the structuralism and behaviorism embodied in the audio-lingualism then predominant.

According to Richards & Rodgers (1986), this functional or communicative definition of language could serve as a basis for developing syllabuses for language teaching, it is basically an analysis of the communicative meaning that a language learner needs to understand and express. So, the basic unit of language becomes not the sentence, but the communicative act. Function rather than form, and meaning rather than pattern determine the designing of materials. Communicative competence rather than grammatical competence is the goal. However, it does not mean that learners do not take into account the grammatical structures,

but they apply the language form when they want to communicate with their classmates. Hence, Communicative approach through variety of activities gives learners the ability to practice listening and speaking because they have the opportunity of expressing their ideas and listening to other students.

“[...] In Hymes’ view, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.70). Hymes’ theory is reinforced by Widdowson when he says that Communicative approach “[...] combines situational presentation with structural practice. Language items are presented in situations in the classroom to ensure that their meaning is clear, and then practiced as formal structures by means of exercises of sufficient variety to sustain the interest of the learner and in sufficient numbers to establish the structures in the learners’ memory [...]” (Brumfit & Johnson, 1983, p.117). So, English language learners should apply the linguistic knowledge learned in classes in their speaking and give it a social meaning in order to communicate with others, not necessarily their classmates, but any people.

Nunan (1991a) sets up five features of Communicative Language Teaching:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning management process.
4. An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom. (p.279).

Therefore, Communicative approach takes into account many factors in order that the students can learn any foreign language. In this theory it is very important that the teacher considers the students’ experiences and attitudes, which can be useful to choose the topics. Besides, the students would have the possibility of using the language according to their own language level to communicate their ideas and feelings as effectively as possible; so, they not

only share their knowledge about the subject, but also cooperate among themselves. That is, Communicative approach promotes knowledge of the linguistic system, to develop the students' communicative competence in the real life, providing them whole task practice.

Teacher's role

According to Littlewood, the teacher should restrict his/her participation in order to let the learners involve themselves in the activities and therefore develop their communicative skills. "However, this does not mean that once an activity is in progress, the teacher should become a passive observer. His/her function becomes less dominant than before, but not less important" (Littlewood, 1999, p.97). So that, the teacher will solve students' doubts, support, guide them, and make corrections when necessary. This way, the teacher prepares the lessons in a real and authentic situation which can occur in the daily life. Nevertheless, as the class should be amusing in order for the students to learn without any kind of pressure, the teacher can also use songs and games to improve the students' pronunciation.

Learner's role

In Communicative approach, learners act as communicators because of the increased responsibility to participate. Learners may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general, so they are encouraged to speak and communicate with each other in pairs or groups because most of the activities are developed around their needs and requirements (learner centered activities).

Role of instructional materials

This approach allows using and adapting different materials and many activities which can be applied in the communicative language teaching, like games, role plays, simulations, etc. As Richards & Rodgers (1986) point out "Many proponents of communicative language teaching have advocated the use of 'authentic', 'from life' materials in the classroom. This might include language based realia [...]; different kinds of objects can be used to support communicative exercises [...]" (p.83). So that, the students can transfer what they learn in the

classroom to the outside world. Thus, sources of appropriate materials for classroom activities should be provided.

Finally, the proposal of this study, which puts forward a syllabus design and its application in secondary schools, is mainly guided by Communicative approach because the teaching-learning process is centered on learners. Communicative Language Teaching works with real life situations, in which the students feel comfortable and familiar with the topic, since the exercises vary according to their reactions and responses. It introduces games, role-plays, pair and group work, scrambled sentences, surveys, and so on. These activities become motivating for the students and encourage them to use the target language. Therefore, the students are able to develop communicative competence and to use English language outside the school. Moreover, the goal of the majority of didactic games, which we will use in the English classes, is to practice and improve speaking skills.

2.2.2.4. DIDACTIC METHOD

Some scholars point out that the word “didactic,” was generally used for lectures or some other form of instruction in which the active teacher presented information to the passive student. However, that is not how the word was used in the classical tradition; in fact, didactic instruction engages the student’s mind and makes him/her an active learner.

The Didactic method (Greek: *didáskein*, to teach; lore of teaching) is a teaching method that follows a consistent scientific approach or educational style to engage the student’s mind. Didactics is the theory of teaching and, in a wider sense, the theoretical and practical application of teaching and learning.

In this approach for didactic instruction the teacher and the student are linked in a mutual contemplation. Both are actively thinking about the models placed before them. As a result, the teacher and the student move toward a more accurate understanding of the ideas contained in the object.

Didactic method is very effective to get the students to understand an idea or interpret a piece of art, like a painting, musical composition, text, etc. So, it can be effectively used in science, art, music, math, and languages. For that, we also took into account this method in the development of our project.

2.3. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

There are many factors that play an important role in the process of learning a foreign language, especially when students are teenagers, like in our case, who have a peculiar manner of seeing the life. These can be internal or external factors.

2.3.1. INTERNAL FACTORS

Regarding the internal factors that influence the English language learning, we considered the following ones:

2.3.1.1. AFFECTIVE FACTORS

Affective factors are important in the English teaching-learning process because these relate the students' emotional state and the attitude with the target language. Thus, students who study in a comfortable environment respond better than those who study in a stressful environment since they are generally stressed out.

2.3.1.2. PERSONALITY

Another important internal factor is the personality because the success of learning a foreign language depends significantly on that person's personality, it can be introvert or outgoing personality. On the matter, Cordova (2008) states in her project "In combination with the class environment, it can act to inhibit learners or to encourage them, increasing more opportunities to learn" (p.15). Sometimes students are afraid of making a mistake by speaking incorrectly and they prefer do not participate in classes. On the other hand, there are students who do not worry about errors that they can make.

2.3.1.3. ANXIETY

As we know, the anxiety is a factor which plays a significant role in human behavior –in any daily situation– like the foreign language learning. So that, it is possible to say that sometimes the students make a lot of mistakes in the pronunciation or simply forget the answer due to the fact that they get nervous, this causes them not to participate in the classroom and as a consequence to obtain a bad record. Studies have almost unanimously shown that anxiety damages students’ prospects for successful learning. Anxiety is often related to a sense of threat to the students’ self-concept in the learning situation, for example if a student fears being ridiculed for a mistake. So, the teacher should be able to perceive students’ anxiety and should try to reduce it by implementing suitable teaching-learning process and a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

2.3.1.4. MOTIVATION

The most important internal factor which was taken into account to develop this work was the motivation, because one of our specific objectives is to motivate the students to learn English through implementing didactic games in the teaching of this foreign language. Thus, in a general way, motivation is what moves us to act, what makes us perform different real activities. When we talk about learning languages, motivation makes us learning English, or teaching it. So, motivation influences how and why students learn as well as how they perform. Motivation is the best predictor of students’ achievement, since it influences directly how often students use the foreign language, how much they interact among them, and how high their general proficiency level becomes.

About the matter Hansen (1994, p.313) points out that “Motivation is one of the fundamental techniques of the education, it consists on stimulate the students’ learning desire, focusing their energies on the most constructive direction for both, the individual and the society”. So, it is possible to say that students who are motivated usually become better, not only in foreign language learning, but also in any subjects learning, due to that they should be engaged to the classroom activities by motivating them continuously. Moreover, it is essential

for teachers to understand students' motivational factors because motivation correlates strongly with proficiency.

There are many theories that explain the importance of motivation in the teaching-learning process. We will mention some of them developed in the work of Pastrana (2011).

According to the **Achievement Motivation Theory** (Atkinson & Raynor, 1974) individuals with a high need for achievement are interested in excellence for its own sake rather for extrinsic rewards, tend to initiate achievement activities, work with heightened intensity on these tasks and persist in the face of failure. The main drive to do well comes from avoiding a negative outcome rather than approaching a positive one.

Psychoanalytic Theory, according to Gardner (1985) motivation involves four aspects: a goal, an effort, a desire to attain the goal and a favourable attitude toward the activity in question. Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work toward that goal. Many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language. Thus, motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language.

Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, for this model motivation has three elements: effort, desire and effect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language and effect illustrates the learner's emotional reaction with regard to language study (Gardner 1985).

Crookes and Smidt (1991) identify four areas of second language motivation: The micro level which involves the cognitive processing of L2 input. The classroom level that includes the techniques and activities employed in the classroom. The syllabus level, it refers to the choice of content presented and can influence motivation by the level of curiosity and interest stimulated in the students. Finally, factor from outside the classroom that involves informal interaction in the L2 and long term factors.

2.3.1.4.1. TYPES OF MOTIVATION

There are different kinds of motivation because motivation is not fixed, it depends on the many factors such as learners' needs and desires, influence of their teachers, parents or peers, and so on. Thus, it can be intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, and integrative or instrumental motivation.

Intrinsic motivation, it refers to the performance of a task for its own sake. It values reward gained through the process of task completion, regardless of any external rewards. Dörnyei (2001).

Extrinsic motivation, the pursuit of some rewards external to the completion of the task, such as good grades. Dörnyei (2001).

Integrative motivation is the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Crookes & Schmidt 1991). Integrative motivation is the desire to learn a language to interpret successfully into the target community.

Instrumental motivation is characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the syllabus of a second language (Hudson, 2000). With instrumental motivation the purpose of language acquisition is more utilitarian, such as achieving high school states, obtaining a good job with a higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material and so on.

2.3.1.4.2. FACTORS THAT AFFECT MOTIVATION

Many factors affect students' motivation to learn a foreign language. The following charts show internal and external factors classifications:

Internal factors

Age	It vary according to students' goal
Gender	Girls are known to acquire languages faster than boys do. Hence, their motivation would be higher.
Goals	Why the learner is studying the language.
Need	How much the learner needs to study this language?
Interest and curiosity	How interest the learner is in learning this language.
Attitude	How the learner views this language and its speaker.
Expectancy	How much the learner expects to succeed?
Self-efficacy/ Competence	Judging own ability and competence. How capable of success they think they are.

External factors

Teachers	Encouragement, expectations, feedback, presentation, teaching strategies and techniques, rewards and strategies for teaching culturally diverse students.
Course content and classroom atmosphere	Relevance, attractiveness, challenge, relaxed and positive atmosphere (low affective filter).
Social identity (Peer groups)	Teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by their peer groups. In second language learning, peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers. Peer pressure often reduces the desire of the students to work toward native pronunciation, because the sound of the target language may be regarded as strange. For learners of a second language, speaking like a native speaker may unconsciously be regarded as a sign of no longer belonging to their native language peer group. In working with secondary school students, it is important to keep these peer influences in mind, and to foster a positive image for proficiency in a second language.
Role models	Students need to have positive and realistic role models that demonstrate the value of being proficient in more than one language.
Home support	Support from home is very important for students' motivation to learn a second language. If parents value both the native language and English, communicate with their sons in whichever language is more comfortable, and show support for and interest in their sons' progress, the children will definitely be more motivated to learn the second language.
Learning environment	In order for the students to be motivated, the learning environment needs to be free from anxiety, the students should not fell threatened or intimidated. In order for him/her

	to speak, he/she needs to feel he/she will be heard and that what he/she is saying is worth hearing.
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Chart factors that affect motivation quoted by Pastrana (2011. p. 52-53) from Salem Nada (2009).

In summary, we can say in order for the students to be motivated, teachers need to challenge his/her abilities, using a wide variety of professional experiences, teaching techniques and material resources like didactic games, which providing an important context to develop the teaching-learning process, since they present real communicative situations using the English language in a creative way, as well as didactic games encourage team work and the practice of all skills.

2.3.2. EXTERNAL FACTORS

The most relevant external factor that we took into account for the development of this work is **the class atmosphere** because in order to learn a foreign language, in this case English, the students should have a continuous practice; this should ideally take place in a relaxed atmosphere where any anxiety factor is lowered. Class atmospheres where the students have the opportunity to involve their whole person in the learning process according to their linguistic possibilities, since all of the people learn at different rates and in different ways. Therefore, the teacher's task is to create a language learning situation in which the students can develop their language learning abilities in a best way.

All the factors mentioned above are very important not only for the teacher to understand how the students assimilate the information and how they produce it, but also for the students to develop their cognitive and emotional aspects. This sense, we proposed teaching English language through didactic games because the students fell motivated to learn it in an amusing way and without any type of pressure; thus, didactic games can be played by introvert or outgoing students, all of them have a good time in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

2.4. GAMES IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

There are many teaching techniques that the teachers can use in order that the teaching-learning process succeeds. As some scholars (Calero, Lee, Lewis, Wright, etc.), who we will quote to in the development of this chapter, point out that the games can be a teaching technique. In order to explain this point, in the first place, we will put in plain words the difference between games and didactic games. Then, we will talk about the application of didactic games in the English language teaching, learners' age, characteristics, types and benefits of didactic games.

2.4.1. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GAME AND DIDACTIC GAME

Games are amusing activities in which generally two or more people participate, who have to follow the rules in order to reach the goal. Thus, Prodomou (1992) defines the game as “an enjoyable activity involving an objective that is achieved by following certain rules, usually in competition with one or more other people” (p.120). The common games not necessarily should be a tool of academic instruction, players can also play this kind of games just for having a good time, since through games people can experiment, discover, and interact with others and with their environment. In the matter Schaub & Zenke's *Diccionario Akal de Pedagogía* (2001) sets up that “The game produces amusement, it is linked to pleasant sensations and it is incompatible with feelings of panic.” (p.105). Moreover, “The game is the initial form of the capacities and it reinforces the development of themselves” (Calero, 1998, p.64).

On the other hand, “didactic games” are also called “learning games” since they are educational materials; although they resemble common games they are aimed to get specific didactic purposes. Didactic games differ from real or common games because the formers can not be played without any learning objective.

As a consequence, we can say that with the application of didactic games as an English language teaching technique we want to have the students learn the lessons not in a tedious way, but in an amusing way. Moreover (as we will see in the following points of this chapter),

didactic games are resources which the teachers can adapt to any level of proficiency, any students' age, and different class organization like individual, pair and group work.

In other words, when the students play a game into classroom they are active makers, imitators or actors, because they use their fantasy and imagination. They are also curious, they want to experiment, and to know new things, more than with academic purposes, they want to share their experiences and especially they want to have a good time. To get the students to learn English language in this way, game activities in language syllabus planning should increase learners' cognitive and physical skills as well as to develop their target language skills.

Thus, according to Schaub & Zenke (2001).

[...] the game is the activity without an order predetermined, it is a spontaneous and voluntary activity, it is ludic and directed by the fantasy, which elapses in accordance with certain rules [...]. The game takes place on a voluntary and self-determined basis, it does not have targets, it occurs by love of itself and free from external pressures. The game makes possible experiences of the reality and the processing of everyday problems through active confrontation with playmates and objects. In these processes of interaction have place learning that is of great importance for social development, cognitive and psychomotor. (P. 105).

In short, what differentiates didactic games from common games is the presence of a visible set of rules which guides the students' actions in order to research the academic purpose of the game, but it should always be with an element of fun which makes the students become concentrated and as an effect they learn, reinforce or practice better than in another conditions.

2.4.2. INSERTION OF DIDACTIC GAMES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Teaching through games means teaching through action, an action in which ideas, values, objectives and cooperation are involved. Games give a motivated context to the different activities created by the students due to the conscience of adulthood typical life. During game

activities learners discover new opportunities and challenges; they know their restrictions and potentialities. Thus, Roth (1998) points out that “Playing is a child’s natural way of learning. A game with all its rules and interaction is a mini social world in which children prepare themselves, little by little, to enter society. Through games and play, children learn to accept rules, how to work with others and how to behave, all in an enjoyable atmosphere. Games also develop the child’s automatic use of a foreign language, coordination, cognitive thought, etc.” (p.26).

However, from the students’ viewpoint, learning a foreign language in this case English language is not easy, the students have to pay much attention to internalize the structures, new expressions and every linguistic material related to this target language. In this context, the teacher should make the possible to motivate the students implementing learning activities, like didactic games, which interest them. This is corroborated by Wright (1993), who sets up that “Language learning is a hard work. One must make an effort to understand, to repeat accurately, to manipulate newly understood language and to use the whole range of known language in a conversation or written composition. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work.” (p.1).

From the teachers’ viewpoint, the use of didactic games to teach English language is a suitable tool in order that they can evaluate their students continuously because didactic games provide the key feature of drill, which gives opportunity to practice the language by increasing or decreasing the difficulty of the games according to what the teacher considers necessary. Thus, Wright (1993) points out that “Games also help teachers to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so [they] must understand what others are saying or have written, and they speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information.” (p.1).

2.4.3. LEARNERS' AGE

There is not an age for learning, human beings learn through their whole life. The question is: which period of people's life should be the best to learn a foreign language by using didactic games? The immediate answer would probably be: during their childhood. However, as Wright (1993) says "Enjoyment of games is not restricted by age. Some individuals, regardless of age, may be less fond of games than others. But so much depends on the appropriateness of the games and the role of the player." (p.2).

That is, students' age is not a decisive factor to play games. It can depend on other factors like learners' predisposition, motivation, personality or socio-cultural background; since there is a child in each man, games and didactic material normally used in primary schools can be accepted by young students or by businessmen. With respect to this matter Wright (1993) points out that "It is generally accepted that young learners and adults are very willing to play games [...]. Early teenagers tend to be more self-conscious and one must take into account their reticence when selecting games for them. Games which can be played in pairs or groups may be particularly useful in this case." (p.2).

On the matter, from the psychology of language viewpoint, learners possess an affective filter which affects language acquisition, since it relates the students' emotional state to their attitude toward the target language learning. So that, students who have a high affective filter are less likely to engage in the language learning because of shyness, concern for grammar or other factors. Otherwise, students who possess a lower affective filter are more probable to engage in language learning since they are less likely to be impeded by other factors, like personality, anxiety, motivation, class atmosphere, etc. This way, "Learners with a positive self-concept and high self-esteem are more responsive to learning and less threatened by learning environments and the process of change" (Nunan, 1995, p.179). All of these factors play an important role in the process of learning a foreign language, especially when learners are teenagers, like in this case, who have a peculiar manner of seeing the life. As Nunan (1995) points up "Affective factors are vital to the success of learning a foreign language" (p.174).

Moreover, some times people need moving away of real life, although it is just for some minutes; so, not only children, but also teenagers and adult people can go into the world of games. Certainly, didactic games should be appropriate for each age group. Thus, according to Rinvolucrí & Davis (1995) there are different types of games to teach students of different ages, for example: Primary school children should be taught through “movement and cognitive games”. Lower secondary pupils generally need a variety of ways of correcting their language, thus “correction and competitive games” are suitable activities for this age group. Upper secondary and tertiary students, then “feeling and grammar games” and “cognitive games” are the most appropriate activities. Finally, to teach adult evening classes to which people come tired from work, teacher may find things in “movement and grammar games” that will wake them up.

In this case, we should say that in our educational system there are not only adult night schools, named “Centros de educación media acelerada” [Medium accelerated teaching center], but also primary and secondary night schools, that is because many children and teenagers have to work during the day. These students are the same age that the ones who study in daytime; perhaps the formers are one or two years older than the latter ones. As we carried out this project with first grade students from a secondary night school, it is necessary for us to have more information about the factors that influence in the teenagers’ learning development, for that we quote to Pineda & Espejo (2009), who in their project point out:

The age from 13 to 18 coincides with the time of rapid transition and change, both mentally and physically. As teenagers begin to develop more cognitive ability, they can be exposed to language learning techniques that require more logical and abstract thinking. Attention span begins to lengthen, but there are also more distractions of an emotional nature. Probably the most important considerations for these learners are affective ones. Issues to do with ego and self steam are at their height, and teenagers can incredibly be sensitive to the ways others see their physical, mental and emotional development. They need to develop cognitive, analytical and logic skills. (p. 27).

As we previously saw, teenagers generally learn by: Using humour in classroom dynamics, interacting with listening materials and videos, using pictures to describe and work with,

having a lot of opportunities to be exposed to the second language in different situations, being continuously motivated with topics that they like most, like music, sports, technology, hobbies, etc. All of these pedagogical activities are part of didactic games because each of them is designed with a specific learning purpose.

2.4.4. DIDACTIC GAMES CHARACTERISTICS

Didactic games are characterized by affective and cognitive factors, class dynamics and students' adaptability.

The **affective factors** are the following: low affective filter, encouragement in the creative and spontaneous use of language, stimulus in the communicative competence, motivation and enjoyment.

The **cognitive factors** that characterize didactic games are the following: reinforcement, revision and development, and focus on grammar communicatively.

Class Dynamics are very important in order for the students to learn English language through didactic games. Class dynamics are characterized by the following factors: student centered, teacher acts only as facilitator, whole class participation and healthy competition.

Didactic games are also characterized by the **adaptability**, which means that in order to carry out a didactic game the teacher should take into account the following aspects: facility of adapting for age, level, and interests, use of all four skills and requirement of a minimum preparation to be developed.

2.4.5. TYPES OF DIDACTIC GAMES

Didactic games are effective tools for getting the students to learn through interacting and using the language, in this case English language, in a natural way. About the matter Krashen's input hypothesis sets up that human beings acquire language in only one way, receiving a "comprehensible input." (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Moreover, the use of didactic games in classes more than any other teaching activity gives the teacher the

possibility to teach the four basic linguistic skills, as well as allows the students to learn through amusing activities. However, in order that the use of this teaching tool succeeds whenever a game is to be conducted, the number of students, proficiency level, cultural context, timing, learning topic and the classroom settings are factors that should be taken into account by the teacher.

There are many types of didactic games to teach English language according to the students' age, the students' level, the skills that the teacher wants to teach or practice, the objective of the lesson, etc., because as Lewis (1999) sets up "It is important to know what types of games are available in order to plan a lesson with a balanced rhythm" (p.15). Therefore, the teacher should decide which didactic games are appropriate for his or her students. Certainly, it is not an easy task to find didactic games which combining all the teacher's requirements, so that, the teacher should sometimes adapt didactic games in order for them to fulfill the established objective. In this project we took into account the classifications given by the following scholars: Wrigh, Rinvoluceri & Davis and Lewis.

Wrigh (1993) didactic games classification, according to this author's criterion the most important types of games are the followings:

- **Picture games.** They are games in which the use of pictures plays a major part. Mostly, they involve comparing and contrasting pictures; considering differences or similarities; considering possible relationship between pictures, such as narrative sequence; describing key features so that someone else may identify them or represent them in a similar way.
- **Magic tricks.** From the point of view of language learning using magic tricks is much productive because there is an authentic need for repetition. Magic tricks always attract attention and invite comment.

- **Caring and sharing games.** This type of games demand and encourage trust and interest in others. When students play a caring and sharing game, they learn to believe in the value of their classmates getting to know each other and learning to respect and value others whenever it is possible.
- **Card and board games.** These are well-know and well-bred games, which can be adapted for the students whose English is limited and/or the students with a wider range of English.
- **Sound games.** Sound effects can create in the listener's mind an impression of people, places and actions. This leads to individual interpretations, and expressions of opinions and ideas. So, sound games although concerned with listening, also gives rise to rich oral production.
- **Story games.** These games provide a framework for learners to speak and write at length instead of engaging in short exchanges. Story games are useful to practice linguistic skills for both, beginners and advanced students by using, in each case, basic or more complex linguistic structures.
- **Word games.** In these games the focus of attention is initially on the word rather the sentence: spelling, meanings, words for sentence-making, words as inferred from contexts, or words as categorized according to grammatical usage. However, learners are required in many cases to go beyond the initial focus and to communicate in full sentences.
- **True/false games.** This is one of great families of games. Essentially, someone makes a statement which is either true or false. The game is to decide which it is. All levels of proficiency can benefit from this sort of games.
- **Memory games.** These games challenge the players' ability to remember. Memory games can also lead to many different games and variations. The inevitable differences

between what players remember lead to discussion in which opinions and information are exchanged.

- **Question and answer games.** This kind of games is designed to create contexts in which the learners ask questions in order to find something out. Sometimes, there is a role for more mechanical practice of questions forms. However, even here amusing and challenging contexts will lead to more efficient learning.
- **Guessing and speculating games.** In this kind of games someone knows something and the others must find out what it is. It is possible to play many guessing and speculating games by making short unconnected guesses. Playing in this way, the games are useful for beginners.

Other games classification is given by Rinvoluceri & Davis (1995), who classify games into the following categories:

- **Competitive games.** Competitive activities that pit pairs against pairs and threes against threes are excellent for fostering collaboration and mutual help within each team. In this heightened atmosphere a lot of learning takes place without the students noticing they are studying. In many of these games the students' language task is to look at a set of sentences and decide which are correct and which are wrong. The students building up a strong internal monitor to help them speak and write correctly.
- **Feelings and grammar games.** In these games the students concentrate on expressing real things about themselves and people around them. They do this using prescribed structures according to their English level.
- **Listen to people.** The aim of these games is for the listener to accurately enter the world of assumption, proposition and feeling of the speaker, bringing in as little of her or his own judgment and feelings as possible.
- **Movement and Grammar.** The students need to be asked to get up and do things in the course of their learning. This kind of games has people up and moving while

practicing and internalizing grammar. It is in movement that some learners absorb language best, as the movement, the intonation and the grammar form a whole for them.

Lewis (1999) didactic games classification, this author categorizes games mainly taking into account their most outstanding features and learning materials used in them.

- **Movement games.** In these games, the students are physically active. These games wake a class up. They get the adrenaline going.
- **Board games.** This type of games mainly involves moving markers along a path. Board games can be made by the learners as a fun craft activity.
- **Dice games.** Dice games are incredibly versatile. The dice need not only have numbers on the faces, but also colors, letters of the alphabet and so on. Dice need not be six-sided either.
- **Drawing games.** These games are especial because they span a gap between key functions of the brain. Drawing requires creativity and a sensitivity towards the world. Moreover, the students must be able to understand instructions and describe their art.
- **Role-play games.** These games can be seen as simple, guided drama activities. The language input can be quite rigidly prescribed or very open depending on the language level, curiosity and confidence of the learners. Role plays stimulate the students' imagination and are tests of true communication.
- **Word games.** These games utilize learners' enjoyment of playing with words. They involve spelling and writing.

In short, what the teacher wants is having a clear linguistic outcome for each game. For example, a didactic game can develop the listening skill which will allow the students listen to a new grammatical structure in use repeatedly, or it can be a speaking game to allow the practice of the grammar once it has been absorbed through listening beforehand. Then, it is

possible to say, as we saw above, there are relevant types of games for all levels. Thus, the beginners, like our students, could use more of the drill type games to encourage accuracy and help them while they learn the bases of English. However, the teacher is who has to decide which type of didactic game is the most appropriate for his or her students.

2.4.6. GENERAL BENEFITS OF DIDACTIC GAMES

In order to find the benefits out of using games in the teaching-learning process it is necessary to know why the use of didactic games helps the students to learn more effectively than traditional teaching methods. To answer this question, we quote to Lengeling & Malarcher (1997) who set up that “[...] these benefits range from cognitive aspects of language learning to more co-operative group dynamics.” (p.42).

So, there are many benefits of using didactic games in English language teaching; next, we mention some of them.

- Learning through fun activities relaxes the students, helps bonding among class members and with the teacher and makes the classroom atmosphere much more comfortable for learners. As Roth (1998) says “Games create a sense of closeness with the class” (p.26).
- Students learn more effectively because the didactic games grab their attention and interest, so they make more effort to concentrate and retain language.
- Students get involved in the activity itself and are therefore more inclined to contribute in class, so even the shy students come forward to join in.
- Beginners and lower intermediates in particular need a lot of repetition in order to fully absorb new vocabulary and grammar and this can be done through fun language games. Thus, “The language used in games is repetitive and/or uses basic structures” (Roth, 1998, p.26).

- Using enough variety in the type of activities or didactic games will bring all four learning skills into play: reading, writing, listening and speaking. This not only benefits the student who learns predominantly from one learning style, but also helps students in retaining information better.
- Didactic games provide motivation and give the students the opportunity for a real communication.

As a consequence, we can say that the use of didactic games in the English language teaching has many advantages for the students. This way, “Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely.” (Richard-Amato, 1996, p.147). “Games are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings.” (Hansen, 1994, p.313). They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which is not always possible during a typical lesson. Furthermore, as Richard-Amato (1996) says “they [didactic games], ‘add diversion to the regular classroom activities,’ break the ice, ‘but also they are used to introduce new ideas’” (p.147). Lastly, in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games the students remember things faster and better, because an appropriate didactic game for a group of students captures their attention, lowers their stress and gives them the chance to use the foreign language spontaneously.

To conclude this section we should point out that, according to all the scholars which we mentioned above, didactic games are very useful to teach English language; although in previous times education in the schools was very serious. Thus, Kim (1995) points out the following: “There is a common perception that all learning should be serious and solemn in nature and that if one is having fun and there is hilarity and laughter, then it is not really learning. This is a misconception. It is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time. One of best ways of doing this is through games.” (p.35). Fortunately, in the new educational system, teachers can use games as a teaching-learning process; since, as Calero (1998) claims “The game is the initial form of the capacities and reinforces the development of themselves.” (p.64).

The majority of the didactic games are organized into team-based activities which encourage cooperation among students of a work group, who have to work together toward a common goal, because “The language playfulness is not an individual activity, but verbal play within the social context of the classroom.” (Lantolf, 2001, p.123). So, the students who have some doubts are helped by others who have accuracy in linguistic skill used in that game. This is corroborated by Krashen’s theory input hypothesis (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), in which the acquisition of any foreign language is a highly collaborative and interactive process. He also claims that a small-group approach enables learners to attain greater language competence.

On the other hand, some didactic games are competitive, these games have winners and losers and often losers are out of the game. Also, in non-competitive games, some students may just finish quicker than others, so the formers would stay out of the game. This sense. To avoid the students that are out of the game are bored, it would be a good idea to group together two or three students at once, so they could start another activity. About the matter, Lewis (1999) gives us some interesting advices, he says that the teacher can divide the class into small groups to play the game. Rather than being out, losers from one group go on to compete with the losers from another group. They can either play a new round of the same game or move into a completely different game. In this way the stigma of losing is reduced and an interest in the game is maintained even after a student is out. The same principle can be applied in the opposite direction. Winners can also go on to play with other winners, or the winners of game A play with the losers of game B.

Therefore, the ultimate goal of using didactic games is that students learn, reinforce and practice English language in a comfortable and pleasant classroom atmosphere, where they not only amuse themselves at the same time learn the lesson, but also have a good relationship with their classmates. As Lewis (1999) sets up “Apart from motivational value as an enjoyable form of activity, they [the games] provide a context in which the language is embedded” (p.1). Didactic games should be simple to explain, set up and play. All the students should be able to participate on it, and in order to get them interested in a didactic game, it is such a great idea to let them participate actively in its creation.

In this chapter we revised some important concepts, Constructivism and Rogers' Humanistic Psychology theories, Total Physical Response, Natural approach and Communicative approach, all the theory (types, characteristics and benefits) of didactic games, and the influence that the learners' age and the motivation have in the teaching-learning process. This information will achieve that our project has a solid theoretical foundation.

CHAPTER 3

WORK PROPOSAL

The work proposal will be based on the following points: the justification of the project, the general and specific objectives, the indicators of fulfilment, the strategy of action, the action plan and the work plan, which we will develop in this chapter.

3.1. JUSTIFICATION

Nowadays everybody acknowledges the importance of learning English. Our school system states that this foreign language is taught from first years of schooling. In this sense, teachers of both public and private schools use many approaches, methods and teaching techniques in order for the students to learn it in the best way possible. Unfortunately, in most schools, the traditional teaching methods are used yet, which emphasize on explanation of grammar structures and learning by rote. So that, the students receive much information, learn a lot but can not produce the language because they are not able to maintain a basic conversation face to face or have a performance in front of the class. As a consequence, students feel unmotivated and think learn English language is a very difficult task. Therefore, it is necessary apply appropriate approaches, methods and techniques in accordance with students' needs, as well as implement new and innovative teaching techniques, giving the students the possibility to participate actively in classes with any type of pressure.

From our experience as students, we know that to learn English is a hard work; students must pay much attention to understand the teacher's explanation, to repeat accurately, to write compositions following the grammatical rules and to speak in English language. We think this teaching-learning process would be easier and effective for the students if this would be developed in a relaxed environment classroom and through didactic activities that the students like, as didactic games, which according to Wright (1993), help and encourage many students to sustain their interest and work.

Besides, as Wright (1993, pp. 1-2) sets up “Games can be found to practice all the skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), in all the stages of the teaching/learning sequence (presentation, repetition, recombination and free use of language) and for many types of communication (e.g. encouraging, criticizing, agreeing, explaining)”.

In this sense, there are some works that propose teaching English using games to children, but there are not studies that propose teaching English using games to teenagers, especially if they attend at night schools, like in our case, perhaps it is because these students are considered like adult people since they have responsibilities and have to work during the day. However, we think these students should be motivated to study through teaching techniques, like didactic games, that encourage them to participate in classes.

For these reasons this work proposes teaching English language to secondary school students by using didactic games guided by the Communicative approach, in which “the learner has an active, negotiative role; should contribute as well as receive.” (Nunan, 1995, p.80). Thus, the students have the opportunity of developing and practicing the four communicative skills through didactic games that are especially designed for each lesson.

Therefore, didactic games are an essential part of the syllabus that we designed to first grade secondary school students. Besides, we developed a student book with the objective that the students can study and practice at home.

In summary, we propose the students become able to use this foreign language as an useful communicative tool in real situations.

3.2. OBJECTIVES

3.2.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- To teach English language at elementary level to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students through didactic games by following the Communicative approach principles.

In order to attain the general objective we need to fulfill several intermediate steps, here presented as specific objectives.

3.2.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To develop didactic games in the English language teaching-learning process to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students, encouraging the interaction between teacher and students and between students themselves.
2. To propose a basic English syllabus for first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students so that, through didactic games, they can acquire communicative competence in everyday situations.
3. To design a student book for first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students, based on some other English teaching books, which helps the students developing the English course.
4. To encourage first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students to learn English through the use of didactic games.

3.3. INDICATORS OF FULFILMENT

In order to achieve the proposal of our project successfully we take into account some activities that should be developed, which are mentioned next:

1. To take a diagnostic evaluation.
2. To design a syllabus for teaching English language in a relaxed and amusing way.
3. To design the lesson plans in order to develop the syllabus in the English classes.
4. To develop a basic student book that worked for the students as a guide along the English course.
5. To develop or adapt didactic games (two per unit).
6. To take three written tests (one each three-months period):
 - The first test includes the units I, II, III and IV. We plan to take this test in April.

- The second test includes the units V, VI, VII and VIII. We will take this test in August.
 - The third test includes the units IX, X, XI and XII. The students will have this test in November.
7. To evaluate speaking skills through the participation of the students in didactic games and in oral performances.

3.4. STRATEGY OF ACTION

In order to follow a logic order in the development of our project we designed a strategy of action taking into account the following aspects:

3.4.1. PREPARATORY STAGE OF THE PROJECT

In order to have a clear idea about the students' English level, the linguistic skills in which they needed support and the manner that they wanted to learn English language, at the beginning of the course we took them a general questionnaire in Spanish language. After that, on base to the analysis of the results of it we developed the next steps of the strategy of action.

3.4.2. CHOICE OF THE TEACHING METHOD

Since we analyzed the results of the questionnaire that we took to the students at the beginning of the course, we realized that was necessary to stimulate the students' participation in the English classes. For that, this work is mainly guided by the Communicative approach because as we saw in the theoretical foundation (section 3.2.2.3. of that chapter, pp.23-24) this teaching approach is mainly student-centered, it emphasized communication in meaningful contexts and it gives the students the possibility not only to develop speaking and listening skills, but also reading and writing skills.

3.4.3. DESIGN OF THE SYLLABUS

After we decided which method would guide our work, we designed the syllabus for first grade secondary school students based on the same teaching method (Communicative approach). The syllabus has twelve units since we had the opportunity to carry out the English course during a complete academic year. We designed the syllabus of the units I and II in advance because it was necessary to have the didactic material before starting the classes; that is, we already designed the units I and II of the syllabus in February, and the other units from March to June. Specifically, we developed the units III and IV in March, the units V, VI and VII in April, the units VIII and IX in May, and the units X, XI and XII in June. Thus, we designed the complete syllabus at the same time that we were developing the English classes with absolute normality.

3.4.4. DESIGN OF THE LESSON PLAN

As soon as we decided which teaching method would guide our project, we designed the syllabus. Then we designed the lesson plan because it is necessary the teacher knows how to develop the lesson, which steps to follow and how to organize the class activities, so that the students can learn of the best way as is possible.

We carried out this stage while we were developing the English course, at the beginning we designed each lesson plan after finishing the prior lesson in order to realize if it was necessary to change the order of some activities according to the results obtained in the prior class. We later developed the rest of the lesson plans in advance, like the syllabus. To be precise, we designed the lesson plan of the unit I in February, the lesson plans of the units II, III and IV in March and April, the lesson plans of the units V, VI and VII in May and June, the lesson plans of the units VIII, IX and X in July and August and the lesson plans of the units XI and XII in September.

3.4.5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENT BOOK

We developed the student book at the same time that the didactic games, that is to say we developed the units I and II in February, the units III and IV in March, the units V and VI in April, the units VII and VIII in May, the units IX and X in June, and the units XI and XII in

July. For that, we unfortunately could not give the students the complete student book at the beginning of the course. Nevertheless, they always received in advance the unit of the student book that we had to study.

3.4.6. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DIDACTIC GAMES

In this stage we devised some didactic games and adapted other ones to the linguistic and functional objectives of each unit of the syllabus. At the beginning, we simultaneously developed this process and the design of the syllabus because the classes had to go on, but then the development of the didactic games was slower. Thus, we designed the didactic games corresponding to the first two units in February, the didactic games of the units III and IV in March, the didactic games of the units V and VI in April, the didactic games of the units VII and VIII in May, the didactic games of the units IX and X in June, finally the didactic games of the units XI and XII in July.

We designed didactic games to play in class work, group work and pair work in order to motivate the students' participation during classes.

3.4.7. DESIGN OF THE WRITTEN TESTS

We developed three written tests. As the syllabus has twelve units, each test includes four units. We planned to take the first written test in April, the second test in August and the final test in November. The students also had oral quizzes, since when they participated in the didactic games they got feed back at the same time that they were evaluated about the knowledge previously acquired. In this sense, the quizzes were implicit in the objectives of the didactic games.

3.5. ACTION PLAN

In this point we detail the activities that we carried out in every class, the objectives of the activities, the time in that we developed each activity, the resources that we used and the responsible of all this process.

ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES	TIME	RESOURCES	RESPONSIBLE
Diagnostic evaluation	To know the student' English level and the linguistic skills in which they needed support.	From February 17 th to February 23 rd .	Written questionnaires (one for each student).	The design, development and the implementation of the elements of the action plan is the responsibility of the undergraduate who proposed this project.
Syllabus	To have a guide about the content of each unit.	Unit I from March 1 st to March 12 th . Unit II from March 17 th to March 29 th . Unit III from April 5 th to April 19 th . Unit IV from April 20 th to May 12 th . Unit V from May 21 st to June 8 th . Unit VI from June 9 th to June 18 th . Unit VII from June 21 st to June 25 th and from July 19 th to July 28 th . Unit VIII from July 29 th to August 13 th . Unit IX from August 25 th to Sept. 3 rd . Unit X from Sept. 6 th to Sept. 17 th . Unit XI from Sept. 27 th to October 15 th . Unit XII from October 19 th to November 9 th .	Student book. Handouts. Photocopies. CD record. CDs. Pictures. Realia.	
Lesson plans	To have a guide that shows the teacher how he or she should carry out the syllabus design.	The dates of the lesson plans development are the same that the dates of the syllabus design development because the syllabus shows what the teacher should do in classes and the lesson plan shows how the teacher should do it.	Lesson plans printed for the teacher.	

Student book	To give the students a guidebook in order that they can study and practice not only in classes, but also at home.	The students used the student book at the same time that the teacher was developing each unit. That is, the dates coincide with the syllabus design development.	One student book printed for the teacher and student books photocopies for the students.
Didactic games	To teach English language in an amusing and relaxed way. So that, the students can also practice and reinforce the knowledge acquired.	The students generally played the didactic games the day in which we finished each unit because we proposed using didactic games in the follow up stage. However, the students sometimes played when the teacher explained an important part of the lesson and it was necessary they practice it before going on.	Handouts. Photocopies. CD record. CDs. Pictures. Realia.
Written tests	To evaluate the students' reading, writing and listening skills in order to realize which lessons the teacher should reinforce or explain again.	First test (from unit I to IV), May 17 th and May 18 th . Second test (from unit V to VIII), August 19 th and August 20 th . Final test (from unit IX to XII) November 15 th and November 16 th .	Tests printed. CD player. CD.
Oral tests	To evaluate the students' English performances in order to know if the didactic games are working or not.	First test (from unit I to IV), May 19 th and May 20 th . Second test (from unit V to VIII), August 23 rd and August 24 th . Final test (from unit IX to XII) November 17 th and November 18 th .	Pictures. Realia and so on.

3.6. WORK PLAN

In order to carry out the proposal, we divided it into three stages, that is to say, three three-months periods, except the first stage that has four months because we spent some days of February to administer a questionnaire to students. As already said, we had the opportunity of developing our project in a complete academic year. In this sense, the work plan is described in the following chart:

STAGES	TIME		ACTIVITIES
	MONTH	DATE	
First	February	From February 17 th to February 23 rd .	Diagnostic evaluation through a questionnaire.
	March	February 26 th .	Presentation of the work proposal to the principal of the school.
	April	From March 1 st to May 12 th .	Development of the teaching of the first four units.
	May	March 12 th and 29 th , April 2 nd , 19 th , and May 11 th and 12 th .	Implementation of didactic games.
		May 13 th and 14 th .	Review of the knowledge taught to the students.
		May 17 th and 18 th .	First written test from the units I, II, III and IV.
		May 19 th and 20 th .	First oral test from the units I, II, III and IV.
		May 27 th .	The mother's day, in which the students participated through short dialogues and poems about that special day.
		May 31 st .	Delivery of the first guided work report to school tutor.
		June	From May 21 st to August 13 th .
July	June 4 th .	The teacher's day. The students practiced speaking and listening skills through performances.	
August	June 8 th , 18 th and 25 th , July 28 th and August 13 th and 16 th .	Implementation of didactic games.	

		August 5 th .	Bolivia's day, in which the students developed their creativity and speaking and listening skills through English activities performed in that occasion.
		August 17 th and 18 th .	Review of the four units taught in this three-month period.
		August 19 th and 20 th .	Second written test from the units V, VI, VII and VIII.
		August 23 rd and 24 th .	Second oral test from the units V, VI, VII and VIII.
		August 30 th .	Delivery of the second guided work report to school tutor.
Third	September	From August 25 th to November 10 th .	Development of the last four units.
	October	September 3 rd and 17 th , October 15 th and 18 th , and November 9 th and 10 th .	Implementation of didactic games.
	November	Nov. 11 th and 12 th .	Review of the last four units.
		November 15 th and 16 th .	Third written test from the units IX, X, XI and XII.
		November 17 th and 18 th .	Third oral test from the units IX, X, XI and XII.
		September 20 th .	The spring day, in which the students practiced the four skills because they wrote and read anonymous poems or thoughts.
		October 22 nd .	English festival, in which the students showed not only their talent and artistic abilities, but also their speaking skills in English language.
		November 25 th .	Delivery of the third guided work report to school tutor.
		November 26 th .	Graduation of the students.

The whole work proposal mentioned above helped us to follow a logic order in the development of our project.

CHAPTER 4

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter firstly we will have a brief introduction in which we will describe the methodology that we used, that is how this project was carried out, the teaching approaches, methods, techniques and instruments that we used for both, to attain our objectives and to organize the English classes. Secondly, we will develop the sequence activities: the diagnostic evaluation, the syllabus, the lesson plans, the student book, the didactic games and the tests, all of them already mentioned in strategy of action (Chapter 4, section 4.4., pp.50-52) and developed in detail in the following points. At the end, we will talk about the initial achievements and experiences.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

There are different ways to teach English language. Ones work better than others. It depends on the students' characteristics, that is students' age, English level, interests and so on, as well as the teacher's goals, that means which linguistic skills the teacher wants that his/her students to achieve at the end of the course. So that, the teacher should consider these aspects in order that the teaching-learning process succeed.

In our case, we aim first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students at learning English in an effective way and in a pleasant classroom environment through didactic activities specifically didactic games, that motivate them to participate in classes without any type of pressure, by following the Communicative approach principles mainly and some aspects of the TPR and the Natural Approach. Therefore, the students practice and reinforce the linguistics skills and as a consequence they can use the English in real situations.

Thus, in order to decide the methodology that we would use, firstly we did a diagnostic evaluation through a questionnaire in our mother tongue in order for the students to understand the questions and as a consequence we receive a clear and exact information about students'

needs and interests. In a general way, they answered that learning English is very important and they want to learn it, but they believe that learning this foreign language is a difficult task, for that reason they do not participate in classes and as a consequence they do not have a good English level. However, they like to learn English through amusing activities in which they have the possibility to participate in classes.

Therefore, the syllabus that we designed is based on an eclectic method, which consists on using techniques and strategies from different teaching methods and approaches responding to students' necessities and interests.

In this sense, didactic games are an essential part of the syllabus that we proposed since they are closely related to Communicative approach because didactic games are a teaching technique through which students practice the four skills and they also can increase their self confidence in using the English. So that, the use of this teaching technique gives a solution to the problem that we identified from the students' answers, leading them to learn English in an innovative and amusing manner.

The syllabus is comprised of 12 units and was developed with thirty six students enrolled in first grade secondary level Humberto Vásquez Machicado School. In order to carry out the syllabus we designed the lesson plans that describe the activities of each class, in a general way, we spent 15 minutes on the warm up stage, 20 minutes to explain the lesson, 15 minutes to answer some doubts and questions from the students who did not understand the lesson and to explain again if necessary; 20 minutes to give examples, to do exercises and so on. We spent the last 20 minutes on the follow up stage, in which we put into practice didactic games to provide immediate feedback and reinforce the English language.

Finally, in order that the students make a good use of the English classes, we used the class organization as an effective strategy. The majority of the class activities were developed in group works because the teacher can put in a group work students that have different linguistic abilities, thus they can help among themselves developing the sense of cooperation and participate actively in the group. We also carried out activities in which the participation of all the class was necessary, since all students listen to the teacher or to some student; this is

appropriate when the teacher teach new topics before pair or group work and also when the students should report some task. Other activities were developed in open pairs where two students ask and answer while the rest of the class listen; this is suitable to exemplify a closed pairs activity. Some activities were developed in closed pairs, in which each student works with a partner; here the students increase the practice and their self-confidence. Finally, only a few activities were individual ones, for example writing a letter or describing something, obviously, then the students should report it to the whole class.

In summary, the methodology used in the proposal development helped us to carry out the English course and specially achieve successfully the main goals and objectives of the project.

4.2. SEQUENCE ACTIVITIES

4.2.1. SYLLABUS DESIGN

In order to understand the importance that a syllabus has in the teaching-learning process we should know that “A syllabus is a framework of what is going to be learnt on the nature of language and learning; it acts as a guide for both teacher and learner by providing some goals to be attained. It can also be seen as a ‘summary of the content to which learners will be exposed’.” (Yalden, 1987. p.87).

With the purpose of offering an appropriate syllabus which responds the students’ needs, we consider the two approaches that Nunan (1993) proposes on the subject: Product-Oriented Syllabuses and Process-Oriented Syllabuses, and their most important subtypes. Product-Oriented Syllabuses focus on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of instruction. While Process-Oriented Syllabuses focus on the learning experiences themselves; that is, tasks and activities that will be carried out throughout the course.

One of the approaches from Product-Oriented Syllabuses is the Functional-Notional Syllabus, in which “functions may be described as the communicative purposes for which we use the language, while notions are the conceptual meanings (objects, entities, states of affairs, logical relationships, and so on) expressed through language” (Nunan, 1993, p.35). So that, this syllabus approaches the interrelation between the communicative purpose and the conceptual

meaning of the language, that is to say the connection between functions and notions is relevant. Some functional examples may include: apologizing, giving an opinion, asking for permission and requesting. Notional examples include: number, time, place, color, size, etc. This sense, we considered this kind of syllabus in this course design because it is the most suitable, taking into account that assumes that speaking a language is a skill best perfected through practice and interaction, and uses tasks and activities to encourage learners to use the language communicatively in order to achieve a purpose.

On the other hand, Task-Based syllabus, an approach from Process-Oriented Syllabuses, points out that tasks are a more salient unit of planning for teachers than objectives. This emphasizes an activity which is carried out as a result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). Therefore, we also took into consideration some principles of Task-Based approach to design the syllabus that we applied in the development of the English language course, because an appropriate syllabus not only includes one approach, but also the combination of some approaches, since the teacher should know that comprehension precedes production and that is advisable to prepare activities that promote subconscious acquisition rather than conscious learning in order to develop basic personal communicative skills, both oral and written.

In short, to carry out the English course we adopted a syllabus that is a student-centered syllabus due to the fact that is focused on the students' requirements because we seek that the students have to think rather than just remember. We achieved this goal through the inclusion of didactic games in the syllabus because to use enough variety of didactic games brings the four learning skills into play: reading, writing, listening and speaking. As we could see in the English classes, this not only benefits the students who learn predominantly from one learning style, but also helps them to retain information better.

4.2.1.1. SYLLABUS COMPONENTS

The syllabus model that we took into account to carry out this English language course is proposed by Shavelson and Stern (1981), cited by Nunan (1993, p.47), who suggest that a syllabus pattern should have the following elements:

- The situation in which the foreign language will be used, including the topics which will be taught.
- What the learner will be able to do with respect to each topic.
- The general and specific notions which the learner will be able to handle.
- The language functions which the learner will fulfil.
- The language forms which the learner will be able to use.
- The degree of skills with which the learner will be able to perform.

We adapted these syllabus components in the following way:

- **Unit:** The general title of the unit.
- **Topics:** The lessons that belong to the unit.
- **Functions:** The communicative competence that the students will be able to use at the last of each lesson.
- **Forms:** The grammatical structures which the students will be able to use.
- **Skills:** The four linguistic skills, which the students will practice in the learning activities, especially in didactic games.
- **Topic vocabulary:** Words or expressions that the students will learn in each lesson.

Based on these elements the syllabuses that correspond to all the units are proposed in appendix C.

4.2.1.2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYLLABUS

The first three-months period we developed the first four units. In the unit I, “First day at school”, the students learned to meet and greet people making use of the simple present of verb *to be*, they also learned the demonstrative adjectives by using them in context. In the unit II, “Friends”, in the first place, the students asked and gave basic personal information through

spelling abilities by practicing the alphabet, in the second place; they talked about occupations and learned new vocabulary. The unit III, “My dream house”, was aimed at the students to describe a house learning the difference between *there is / there are*, in this part the students were able to write a short paragraph using vocabulary about furniture and prepositions of place. Finally, the unit IV, “A big family”, worked in order for the students to describe their families applying possessive adjectives, they also learned to ask and answer “*who*” questions.

In this stage we obtained that the students to learn the verb *to be* in all its forms, for that they practiced it in the four units. At the same time the students learned many words; but, they had some problems with the use of *there is / there are* and prepositions of place, so that we prepared more activities, specially didactic games, in order for the students to have the opportunity to practice these subjects and do not have doubts about them.

The second three-months period we developed the following four units. In the unit V, “My day”, the students talked about their daily routines by using time expressions. The unit VI, “On the weekends”, describes leisure activities in the simple present tense, the students learned the use of the auxiliaries *do / does*. In the unit VII, “What are you doing?”, the students talked about activities at the moment by using the present continuous. In the unit VIII, “Let’s go shopping!”, we taught the students the difference between countable and uncountable nouns.

In this period we had to expend more time in the unit VI because the students confused the use of the auxiliaries *do / does*, we just passed to the next unit when they could use these auxiliaries in questions and short answers without problems. The students also needed much practice in order to apply the countable and uncountable nouns in a correct way. They assimilated the other units very quickly.

In the last three-months period, we developed the last four units. In the unit IX, “When I was a child”, the students learned to use the simple past of *to be*. In the unit X, “How was your vacation?” the students described past events using the simple past tense of regular verbs. In the unit XI, “Hugo has a headache”, the students talked about health problems and made suggestions using imperatives; they also learned the objects pronouns. The last unit was “It’s

so amusing” in which the students learned the use of the modal verb *can*, they applied it to talk about skills and abilities.

In this last stage we could develop the units without problems because the students not only learned very fast, but also applied the prior knowledge. In that way they enriched their written and oral production.

4.2.2. LESSON PLANNING

The preparation of a lesson can determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the teacher’s work in the classroom because planning a lesson involves a series of mental notes and a detailed written procedure for the lesson. A lesson plan is a framework for a lesson, since it shows the teacher where to start, where to finish and the route to take to get there.

We think that in order to plan a lesson it is important that the teacher asks herself/himself some fundamental questions:

- Are the aims of the lesson valid for the students’ needs?
- Can these aims be achieved with this group of students and in the time allowed?
- Do the activities in the procedure of the lesson accomplish the states aims?

To answer these questions it is necessary to have a clear and explicit presentation of the aims and of the procedure by which they will be achieved because once that the objectives of the course are determined, the teacher must establish clear and realistic aims for the lesson. At that point, the teacher expects his/her students to attain these goals and objectives by trying a variety of techniques, materials and activities, which are carried out in the development of the stages of the lesson planning.

4.2.2.1. LESSON PROCEDURE

An English language course can have different objectives according to language skills that the teacher wants to cover in the lesson; thus, it can focus on grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening or writing. So that, it is important to have well-structured the three stages of the lesson and obtain an interesting and enjoyable class.

4.2.2.1.1. WARM UP

It represents the introduction of the class in which the teacher engages the students with the lesson. So, the first third of the class time, called “warm-up”, is used to provide the students with the understanding and practice to previous or new communicate situations using some basic functions and notions. In this stage, the teacher should make activities which encourage students to use English language.

4.2.2.1.2. MAIN ACTIVITY

The second third of the class is focused on practice. It does not have to be necessarily new language input; it could also cover revision and extension of previously taught material. In this stage, learning activities and teachers’ skills play an important role in order that the students can systematically be introduced to the way that English is put together. Active learning gets the students can answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during the class. Learning through didactic games and situational learning encourages the students to employ and practice further grammar rules. During this period the four basic classroom activities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are proportionally represented and practiced.

4.2.2.1.3. FOLLOW UP

In the third stage the students have the opportunity to produce what they have assimilated during the previous stages by working with different tasks that normally involve speaking activities, like didactic games, which require the students to use not only the vocabulary that they learned that class, but also the prior vocabulary that they have learned.

Besides, the teacher has the possibility of noticing if the students have attained the objective of the lesson, or if they make mistakes on their performances, in this case they need feedback and reinforce the language. As a consequence this stage also involves evaluation which measures the students’ progress during a lesson or a course. At the same time, it also allows the teacher to adjust activities and his/her teaching methods.

The lesson plans that we propose in this work correspond to twelve units that, each unit has linguistic and functional objectives, the activities developed in three stages of the procedure and at least two didactic games to reinforce, practice and improve students' English language. In a general way, we carried out all the lesson plans as we programmed them, except in some lessons in which we had to spend more time in order for the students to assimilate and to internalize the new information without problems or doubts. This especially occurred in the first three-months period since the students' learning was slower than in the rest of the academic year.

The lesson plans from units one and two are presented in appendix D because it is important to show that the theory is in accordance with the practice.

4.2.3. MATERIAL DESIGN

The design of learning materials helps the teacher to create activities and achieve objectives. The teacher should adapt or design the didactic materials according to the students' needs and the objectives of the lesson. For that, it is important to consider the effectiveness and usefulness of the learning materials.

In our case, the school does not have many learning materials; it only has blackboards and chalks. Nevertheless, in order that the students learn English language in a suitable way it was necessary to count on other material resources, like photographs, pictures, cds., books, marks and the material that we used in didactic games, for example cards, dominos, chips, artificial or real fruit, vegetables and so on. All of this extra material was provided by the undergraduate in order that we develop our project with the suitable learning material; since, the main goal is to get the students to learn English language and to have a good linguistic competence.

As Pineda & Espejo mention in their project, didactic materials play an important role in Communicative approach. Good teaching materials for classroom experiences should include the following features: appropriateness for any particular group of students, relativity for being closely related to the teaching aim of a particular lesson, fun factor for connecting with something that interests or appeals to the students, multi-sensory modes or visual-auditory

learning styles and challenging for encouraging independent thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Since the Communicative approach guided this project it is necessary to consider that this approach divides the learning materials into three broad categories:

- **Text-based Materials.** Text-books or course book which have a lot of practice exercises, reading passages, gap fills, recordings, etc. They form an essential part of most lessons. In our case, we had the opportunity to elaborate a student book, which has twelve units. Each unit includes a vocabulary section, a brief grammar explanation and exercises of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Finally, each unit includes two didactic games.

- **Task-based Materials.** These might be used to support “real life” tasks for example: role playing, buying something, or a job interview. These could include game boards, role-play cards, materials for drilling, pair work tasks, etc.

Regarding this point, we used many task-based materials in the development of the course. We mention some of them: In the “English night” the students presented different role plays, for instance they had a party, they were shopping, etc. In class activities, the students also performed some role plays. They performed a fashion show in the unit VII. In another activity, the students worked in pairs, one of them interviewed the other, who was a famous person and then, they changed the roles. Finally, the students had the opportunity to play different kinds of didactic games, such as: board games, memory games, caring and sharing games, etc.

- **Realia.** This includes objects from the real world, such as magazines, newspapers, fruit and vegetables, clothes, etc., it depends on the activity or the lesson.

In order to develop some class activities or didactic games we used many objects, clothes, fruits, etc. For example, we used twelve chairs to play “Real time”. We needed clothes for the “Fashion show”. We used sugar, rice, cookies, oranges and grapes for teaching countable and uncountable nouns.

In brief, we can say that in order to adapt and use materials in a communicative environment, we should consider many sources, especially authentic materials which are the

link between the classroom and the outside world. In our project we designed and applied many didactic games. It is also important to have a student book, which is useful for both the teacher and the students. Next, we have the development of the student book and didactic games.

4.2.3.1. STUDENT BOOK

In order to have an optimum development of the lesson plan we proposed a student book taking as reference books some student books of secondary school and grammar books, which are quoted on references. We prepared this student book in order that the first level secondary school students can use it as a guidebook in the English language course.

The student book is divided in twelve units; each one is organized of the following way:

In the first part there is a short illustrated vocabulary section.

Then, there are some speaking exercises that always have examples in order that the students have a clear idea about what they have to do.

Next, we have the grammar section, in which there is a chart with the grammatical structures that are part of that unit. This section does not have an explicit explanation in order to incentive the students' critical thinking; however, there are some examples in context.

There are also different types of writing exercises, these can be read and answer questions or exercises to match or complete, etc.

Exercises about reading comprehension are an important part of the student book. The difficulty of these increases little by little.

Finally, we have the listening section, there are generally songs or dialogues in order for the students to repeat it, answer some questions or complete the blanks.

We presented the units one and two from the student book in appendix E.

4.2.3.2. DIDACTIC GAMES

With regard to didactic games, these are an important element of syllabus design because they are the key learning resources of the proposal of this project. Each didactic game is aimed to practice and reinforce the knowledge acquired not only in that lesson, but also in prior lessons.

Each didactic game includes its own goals, required materials to accomplish the game, time in which the game should be carried out to avoid the students become bored and, an explanation about the complete procedure of it.

- **Objective:** This point refers to the linguistic skills that the students will practice in order to reach the linguistic and functional objectives of the lesson.
- **Time:** In each didactic game we mention in how many minutes that game will be carried out. However, this time is not exact information because, in the first place, it depends on the students' motivation and, in the second place; it also depends on the game level of difficulty.
- **Materials:** The materials that we will use in the development of the game are mentioned in this point. The teacher should have ready these materials in advance.
- **Procedure:** We explain the process of the didactic game in a clear way, giving examples if necessary.

In order for the students to learn and reinforce each lesson in an amusing and effective way, we designed two or three didactic games for each unit. We present the didactic games corresponding to the first and second units in appendix F.

4.2.4. DEVELOPMENT OF DIDACTIC GAMES

The didactic games that we proposed were put into practice in the follow up stage of each unit. In the didactic games, the students practiced, remembered and reinforced what they learned in each unit and, in some occasions, they learned new English vocabulary. As already said, we developed four units in each three-months period, each unit has two didactic games.

Except three units, the units V and VIII have three didactic games each one because some students needed more practice, and the unit IX has only one didactic game because the students learned the topics easily and quickly. In order to explain the skills that the students practiced in the development of the didactic games we did the following chart:

UNIT	DIDACTIC GAME	SPEAKING	LISTENING	WRITING	READING	GRAMMAR
I	1. The names game	✓	✓			
	2. The king game	✓	✓			
II	1. Say the alphabet	✓	✓			
	2. What's my uncle's job?	✓	✓			
III	1. Hide and find	✓	✓			✓
	2. Puzzle: How many are there?	✓	✓	✓		✓
IV	1. Who is it?	✓	✓			✓
	2. Ask me	✓	✓	✓	✓	
V	1. Real time	✓	✓			
	2. A day the life of...	✓	✓	✓		
	3. This is my time	✓	✓		✓	
VI	1. Life style surveys	✓	✓	✓		✓
	2. Do you like your neighbors' word?	✓	✓			
VII	1. Actions by one person	✓	✓			✓
	2. Fashion show	✓	✓			
VIII	1. Stop	✓	✓			
	2. Turn round quick	✓				✓

	3. I like this but I don't like that	✓	✓		✓	
IX	1. Interview your friend	✓	✓			✓
X	1. Bibliographies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2. Sit down then	✓	✓			✓
XI	1. Snakes and ladders	✓	✓			
	2. Simons says	✓	✓			
XII	1. Listen, sing and act	✓	✓		✓	
	2. Who can do it?	✓	✓			✓

In a general way, we can say that the students practiced speaking and listening skills in all didactic games. They practiced writing and reading skills in five didactic games and grammar in ten didactic games. To be more specific, we are going to explain how we applied the didactic games in each three-months period.

4.2.4.1. DEVELOPMENT OF DIDACTIC GAMES IN THE FIRST THREE-MONTHS PERIOD

In the first three-months period, the students practiced speaking and listening skills in the eight didactic games that belong to the first four units. They practiced writing skills in two didactic games and in another one they practiced the four linguistic skills. Finally, the students practiced grammar in three didactic games.

In unit I, First day at school, the students mainly learned the simple present of *to be*, demonstrative adjectives and pronouns. In order to reinforce this knowledge, they played two didactic games. The first one was “The names game”. The objective of this game is to encourage the students to remember their classmates’ names, in order to practice the simple present of *to be*. This didactic game is a class work game, in which the students practiced speaking and listening skills. In this didactic game we used a screwed-up ball of paper. The second didactic game, “The king game”, was useful to practice the demonstrative pronouns and

remember the class objects using realia (class objects). In this class work game, the students practiced speaking and listening skills.

In unit II, Friends, the students learned the subject pronouns, the present verb *to be* conjugations and the indefinite articles: *a /an*. They also remembered the alphabet in order to ask and answer *what* questions. At the end of the unit, the students participated in two didactic games. The first one was “Say the alphabet”, the objective of this didactic game is that the students try to memorize the correct pronunciation of the alphabet, using alphabet letter cards. This is a group class game, in which the students practiced speaking and listening skills. In the second didactic game, “What’s my uncle’s job?” the students practiced the vocabulary learned in the lesson and the verb *to be* in all grammatical forms. Finally, they practiced their listening and speaking skills. In order to develop this game we used cards of professions.

In unit III, My dream house, the students learned *how many* questions and *there is/are* answer, *where* questions and the use of prepositions of place. As usual, the students played two didactic games. In the first one, “Hide and find”, the students practiced prepositions of place, using realia (small objects which can be hidden). All the students participated in this game and they improved listening and speaking skills and grammar. In the second didactic game, “Puzzle: how many are there?” the students remembered the numbers and reinforced the use of *how many* questions and *there is/are* answers. They practiced speaking, listening and writing skills and grammar. This is a group work game in which we used a handout for each group.

In unit IV, A big family, we taught the verb *to have*, the use of possessive adjectives and *who* questions. In order to reinforce this knowledge, the first didactic game that the students played was “Who is it” whose objective is that the students practice questions and answers with *what* and *who*. They also used the adjectives learned in class. All the students participated in this didactic game and they improved their speaking, listening skills and grammar. In order to develop this didactic game, we only used the blackboard and chalks of different colors. The second game was “Ask me”, this didactic game tries the students practice questions and answers to establish appearance, interests and other details. The students apply all skills. This

is an individual work leading to class work and pair work, in which each student should have a piece of paper or card.

In this period we realized that the didactic games that had the best results were the following: “What’s my uncle’s job” which worked very well because the students did not have problems to use the verb *to be* (third person singular). “Puzzle: How many are there?” was very useful in order that the students learn *how many* questions and *there is/are* answers. “Who is it” is another game that had very good outcomes because the students learned to make questions with *what* and *who* perfectly. But, the didactic game that did not work very well in this period was: “Hide and find” because the students did not understand very good the use of prepositions of place. So, we had to explain more about the topic. The students assimilated the other units in the way that we expected.

4.2.4.2. DEVELOPMENT OF DIDACTIC GAMES IN THE SECOND THREE-MONTHS PERIOD

In the second three-months period, the students practiced speaking skills in the ten didactic games that belong to the units V, VI, VII and VIII. They practiced listening skills in nine didactic games, writing and reading skills in two of them and grammar in three didactic games.

In the unit V, My day, we taught the use of the simple tense: positive statements, the rules for the third person singular, *what time* questions and the use of time expressions. In this unit we proposed three didactic games. The first one was “Real time”, the objective of this didactic game is the students practice language for telling the time, asking questions and answering with *what’s the time?*, so that, they could improve the speaking and listening skills. This is a class work game in which we only needed twelve chairs. The objective of the second didactic game, “A day the life of...” is that the students work in pairs with information gathering and talking about oneself, and ask questions about times and regular habits, using the simple present tense. The students practiced speaking, listening and writing skills. We used a copy of the handout per pair of students cut into two parts. Finally, the third didactic game “This is my time” aims to reinforce the use of simple present tense. To say the time and practice not only daily routines, but also the verbs learned in prior classes. This is a group work game, in which

the students improved speaking, listening and reading skills by using cards of daily routines and other verbs.

In the unit VI, On the weekends, in the first place, the students reinforced the simple present tense: positive statements. In the second place, they learned the use of auxiliaries: *do/does* (in questions and short answers). They also learned to ask and answer *how often* questions and the use of adverbs of frequency. The students had two didactic games. The first one was “Life style surveys”, the objective of this didactic game is that the students practice the simple present tense in all its forms: positive statements, questions and short answers. They, also reinforced the grammar about *what often* questions using adverbs of frequency. This is a class work game, in which the students improved speaking, writing and listening skills, and grammar. In order to develop the game we used working sheets. In the second didactic game, “Do you like your neighbors word?”, all class took part practicing the use of the auxiliaries *do/does* in simple present questions + short answers. The students improved the writing and listening skills.

The unit VII, What are you doing?, was useful to teach the use of present continuous, to practice *what* questions and to use time expressions. The first didactic game that the students played was “Actions by one person”. This class work game tries the students can narrate a sequence of events, using the present continuous. They not only practiced the speaking and listening skills, but also grammar. We needed some pieces of paper in which are written a sequence of actions. The second didactic game, “Fashion show”, helped the students to practice the present continuous using vocabulary learned in this unit. The students improved the speaking and listening skills. In order to develop this show, we used realia (students’ clothes).

In the unit VIII, Let’s go shopping!, we taught countable and uncountable nouns, and the difference between simple present tense and present continuous. As in the unit V, this unit also has three didactic games because the students had some doubts about the lesson. Thus, in the first didactic game, “Stop”, they could memorize and remember the vocabulary, and practice speaking and listening skills. We needed a ball and flash cards (food). The objective of the second didactic game, “Turn round quick”, is the students memorize some irregular verbs

learned in that class. This is a class work game, in which the students practiced the simple present tense and the present continuous. They improved speaking skills and grammar. The last didactic game of this unit was “I like this but I don’t like that” whose objective is the students express likes and dislikes followed by a gerund. They practiced speaking and listening skills, and grammar. In this game we used some handouts.

This stage was very productive for the students because they learned the use of the auxiliaries *do/does*, the present continuous, *WH* questions, countable and uncountable nouns, etc. To be more precise, in the game “Real time” the students had the opportunity to ask many questions and give many answers about the time, so that, this didactic game gave very good results. The students liked very much the game “This is my time” because they talked about their daily routines. “Fashion show” gave excellent results because the students used the present continuous in a correct way and they had a very good time. But, in “Life style surveys” the students did not use the auxiliaries *do/does* in a correct way, and they become bored quickly. At this point, we could realize that the students learned quicker the present continuous than the simple present, since they made some mistakes in *WH* questions or negative sentences with the singular third person. Fortunately, we could reinforce the use of the auxiliaries *do/does* with the game “Do you like your neighbors word?”, which gave good outcomes.

4.2.4.3. DEVELOPMENT OF DIDACTIC GAMES IN THE THIRD THREE-MONTHS PERIOD

In the last three-months period, the students participated in the last eight didactic games of the units IX, X, XI and XII. Like in the other two three-months periods, in this time the students practiced the speaking and listening skills in all the didactic games. Nevertheless, they also practiced reading in two didactic games, writing in only one of them and grammar in four didactic games.

In unit IX, When I was a child, the students learned the use of simple past of *to be* and the use of past time expressions. In this unit we had only one didactic game, “Interview your friend”, because the students learned the topic quickly. In this didactic game the students used the simple past tense of verb *to be*, by asking personal questions and giving information gap.

This is a class work game, in which the students practiced speaking and listening skills, and grammar.

In unit X, How was your vacation? the students learned the simple past tense of regular and some irregular verbs. They also remembered simple past tense of *to be*. The first didactic game, “Biographies”, is an information gap game where the students worked in pairs. The objective is to practice simple past tense and ask with *WH*-questions in the past tense. This is a pair work game in which the students improved all linguistic skills. In “Biographies”, we used two handouts per pair of students. In the second didactic game, “Sit down then”, the students continued to practice verbs in the past tense and *WH*-questions in the past tense. All the students participated in this game, they improved speaking and listening skills and grammar.

In the XI, Hugo has a headache”, we taught objects pronouns and the use of imperatives. In the first didactic game “Snake and Ladders”, the students practiced the use of object pronouns and imperatives, asking questions and giving suggestions in their own words. This is a group work game, in which the students practiced speaking and listening skills, and remember vocabulary learned previously. We needed dice and a board game (snakes and ladders). The second didactic game, “Simon says”, is a well-known one. The objective of this game is that the students get up and follow the instructions from one of their classmates, who is chosen to be “Simon”. In this class work game, the students are moving or acting while practicing imperatives, listening and speaking skills.

Finally, we have unit XII, It’s so amusing, in which the students learned the modal verb *can* and the use of adverbs: *quite well, well, not very well, not at all*, and so on. As usually, this unit has two didactic games. The objective of the first didactic game, “Listen. Sing and act”, is to practice the use of modal verb *can* and to improve the correct pronunciation of topic vocabulary. This is a group work game. The students practiced listening, speaking and reading skills. We used a CD player, a CD of the song “At the zoo” and working sheets with the letter of the song and pictures of animals. In the second didactic game, “Who can do it?”, the students improved their mental agility because they have to say an affirmative or negative sentence using the modal verb *can* and the topic vocabulary immediately after they read a flash card in which a verb is written. All the students participated in this game and they

practiced speaking, and listening skills and grammar. We used cards with written verbs and a small ball.

In this period we could observe that the game “Interview your friend” was very useful for the students because they understood very good the use of the simple past tense of verb *to be*. In order to practice the simple past tense of regular verbs, in the didactic game “Sit down then” the students had a good time and all of them participated. So, this didactic game worked in an effective way, whereas “Biographies” did not was very useful because the students become bored. On the other hand, in the game “Simon says” the students had a good time and they said many imperatives without making mistakes. Regarding the modal verb *can*, the two games that we prepared for this unit: “Listen. Sing and act” and “Who can do it?” were very useful for reinforcing and practicing the topic.

4.2.4.4 TYPES OF DIDACTIC GAMES THAT WORKED AND THOSE THAT DID NOT WORK

In order to talk about the types of didactic games that worked and those that did not work throughout the English course, firstly we should clarify that, in some cases, in the same kind of didactic games there are games that worked and others that did not work.

As already saw, we used some types of didactic games from three scholars’ classifications: Wrigh, Rinvolucris & Davis and Lewis, which we considerate in our project (Chapter 3, section 3.4.5, pp. 38-42). In this sense, in the application of didactic games we could see that some of them worked better than others.

On the one hand, in movements games (The king game, Stop and Simon says) the students had a very good time and they practiced and reinforced the English vocabulary. Caring and sharing games (The names game, A day the life of... and Interview your friend) also had good results. The use of sound games (Actions by one person and Listen. Sing and act.) was also satisfactory. Question and answer games (Who are you?, What’s my uncle’s job? and Ask me) worked very well.

On the other hand, we observed that the students became bored or tired in some types of didactic games, like: grammar games (Biographies) and guessing and speculating games (Hide

and find). In these cases, the teacher had to stop the game and change it to another class activity.

Finally, we could realize that in movement and grammar games there are games that worked very well, such as: Real time, Sit down then, Do you like your neighbors' word?, This is my time and Fashion show, in which the students not only practiced and reinforced grammatical structures, but also had a very good time. But, there are other games such as: Life style surveys and I like this but I don't like that, which did not work in an appropriate way.

From the class organization view, the didactic games that worked better were the group work games. In the first place, the teacher can put in a group work students that have different linguistic abilities. In that way, all the students might participate actively in the group because they might help among themselves. In second place, some didactic games should have a group leader. However, it is not necessary that the leader is one of the best or more extrovert students. On the contrary, it is advisable that the leader is a shy student, thus he/she would be motivated to participate in the didactic game. Finally, in group work games, the teacher may control the students more than in an individual, pair or class work without her/his constant presence. In group work games the teacher can go from group to group listening in, contributing and, if necessary correcting. For that reason, as we saw above, the majority of the didactic games that we used in this project are group work games.

4.2.4.5. DO'S AND DON'TS OF DIDACTIC GAMES

Each teacher may find do's and don'ts of didactic games depending on the students' age and English level. In our case, after we applied the didactic games, we can mention some do's and don'ts of the use of didactic games for teaching English language.

DO'S OF DIDACTIC GAMES	DON'TS OF DIDACTIC GAMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didactic games should have clear and well defined learning objectives. • Didactic games should have clear rules. • The teacher should familiarize the students with didactic games. • Didactic games should be interesting for the students. • Didactic games should keep the students' willingness and concentration. • The teacher should stop a game before the students become tired or bored of it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didactic games should not be very long. • Didactic games should not be only fun, but also educational ones. • The teacher should not force the students to participate. Reluctant students might act as judges. • The teacher should not have the students playing a game until it finishes if this is a boring game. • The teacher should not interrupt a game which is following successfully in order to correct a mistake in language use.

In summary, it is very important to choose didactic games which are appropriate for our students and to take into account the do's and don'ts of didactic games. In that sense, we can say that most of the didactic games reached the objectives of our project, since the students learned English language in an amusing way. We realized that when the students participated in the didactic games they asked more questions than in the rest of the class, perhaps it is because they prefer to spend the class time speaking English and not doing worksheets or listening to grammar explanations. So that, the students improved their speaking and listening skills, since these two linguistic skills were practiced in the majority of *the* didactic games of our project.

4.2.5. EVALUATION

In order to have a clear idea about the students' learning, there are many alternatives to determine how much learning has occurred. For example, the students can have written tests, respond to oral questions, do homework exercises, write papers and make oral presentations.

In this project, we divided the students' assessment in two parts. First, we did a continuous evaluation by giving a number of assignments based on class work and participation in the different didactic games, since each didactic activity and didactic game is an opportunity to know the students' learning level. Second, we took written tests, three in total (appendix G), one at the end of each three-months period. Since we carried out this course throughout a complete academic period, we divided it in three stages during nine months and covered twelve units. In short, we decided the final score on a combination of assignments and a final test.

We evaluated to the students in the above-mentioned way for the following reasons: in the first place, evaluation is not only for measuring the students' performance, it is also for giving them a sense of accomplishment as well as information about what they know and what they need to review and to reinforce some weaknesses. In the second place, evaluation helps the teacher to get the feedback about the efficacy of the teaching methods that he/she is applying. It can also provide information to use for the future direction of classroom practice, for the planning of the courses and for the management of learning tasks and the students. Finally, evaluation also includes assessment of the course itself, for the reason that it tests the effectiveness of the course, if the teacher and the students make good use of learning experiences and materials or not, and if the classroom environment is adequate or not.

4.2.5.1 STRATEGIES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

In order to make an appropriate students' assessment we took into consideration two strategies and evaluation criteria. In The first one we considered the linguistic skills. In the second one we took in account the scale of marks that our school system sets up. In which the assessment is from 10 to 70 points.

4.2.5.1.1. EVALUATION CRITERION TAKING INTO ACCOUNT LINGUISTIC SKILLS

We assessed to the students based on this evaluation criterion because it is very important for the students to learn and practice the four basic linguistic skills of the English language.

SKILLS	STRATEGIES	EVALUATION
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronunciation of words. • Dialogues in pairs. • Short performances about their experiences. • Participation in didactic games. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily evaluation through participation in the classroom, especially in didactic games.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of basic vocabulary in short texts. • Comprehension skills. • Answers to questions. • Reading of short stories and compositions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation in the process.
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises of filling in blanks. • Writing of sentences and short paragraphs. • Description of their houses, neighborhoods and families. • Writing of letters and own compositions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual evaluation.
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of sounds. • Orders in class. • Conversations about professions. • Understanding to their classmates' expositions. • Conversations and performances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto evaluation.

4.2.5.1.2. EVALUATION CRITERION TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE SCALE OF MARKS

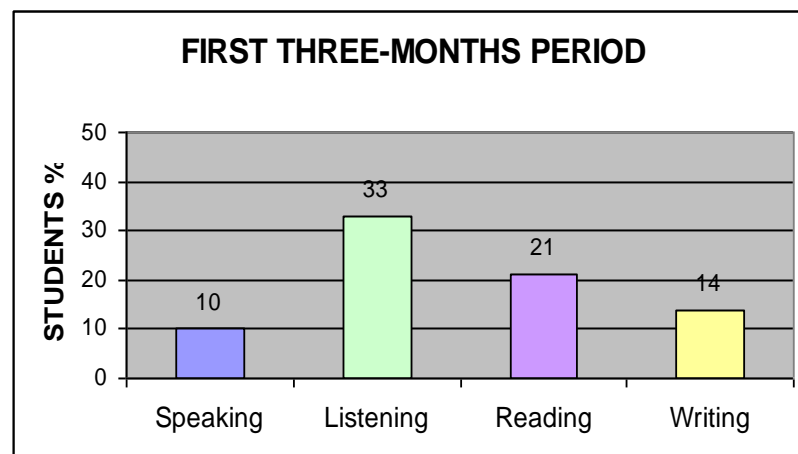
Following this evaluation criterion the students have to be assessed each three-months period. Thus, the students had a final score each three-months period, which was obtained averaging the marks achieved in the written tests and in the other class activities.

THREE-MONTHS PERIODS	STRATEGIES	EVALUATION
First three-months period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking skills. Daily evaluation. • Written test: reading, writing and listening. • Participation in didactic games. • Personal development. • Attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 10 to 40 points. Students need help. • From 41 to 50 points. Students have a good academic level. • From 51 to 60 points. Students have a very good academic level. • From 61 to 70 points. Students have an excellent academic level.
Second three-months period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking skills. Daily evaluation. • Written test: reading, writing and listening. • Participation in didactic games. • Personal development. • Homework. • Attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 10 to 40 points. Students need help. • From 41 to 50 points. Students have a good academic level. • From 51 to 60 points. Students have a very good academic level. • From 61 to 70 points. Students have an excellent academic level.
Third three-months period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking skills. Daily evaluation. • Written test: reading, writing and listening. • Participation in didactic games. • Personal development. • Homework. • Extra activities: English festival, students' day, etc. • Attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 10 to 40 points. Students need help. • From 41 to 50 points. Students have a good academic level. • From 51 to 60 points. Students have a very good academic level. • From 61 to 70 points. Students have an excellent academic level.

4.2.5.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF TESTS

On the one hand, in order to analyze and interpret the tests in accordance with the evaluation criterion taking into account the linguistic skills, we divided each written test that the students had in four parts: grammar, listening, reading comprehension and writing. In order to evaluate speaking skills, as already said, the students had a continuous assessment throughout all the English classes.

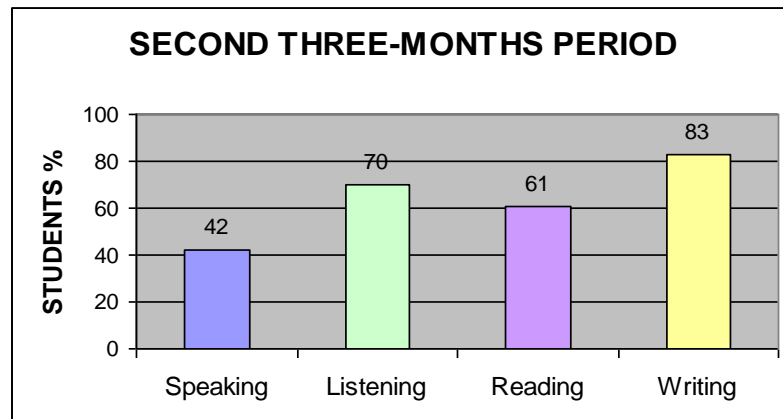
The first three-months period the students' English level did not have a big improvement, since most of them did not reach a satisfactory level, perhaps it is because this stage was mainly to ensure that students are on the same level or because they had to get into a new way of work. Next, we have the percentages of the scores that the students achieved in this period.



As we can see in the chart the students obtained the following outcomes: Regarding speaking skills, just 10% of the students achieved very good marks; most of them needed help. In the written test the outcomes were the following: In listening, 33% of the students got good marks, but more than half of them needed to improve. In reading, 21% obtained a good mark, and the 79% needed to progress. Finally, in writing and grammar, the 14% of the students wrote sentences without making many mistakes.

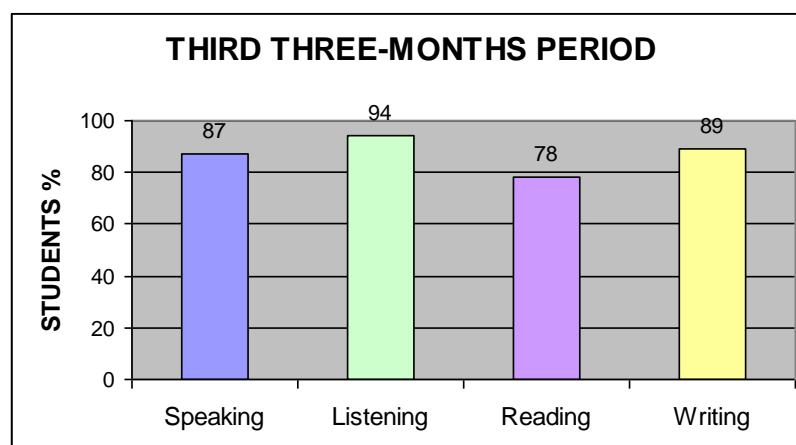
However, once we applied the Communicative method and didactic games, most of the students improved their English performance, since they participated in the didactic games

learning and practicing the English language with a lot of fun and motivation. We can see these results in the second three-months period statistics.



The chart shows us that the 42% of the students obtained a very good oral performance, 39% of them reached good and sufficient marks and only the 19% needed to improve. 70% of the students improved their listening and 30% needed help. 61% of them obtained a very good reading comprehension. The students got better results in grammar and writing because 83% of them achieved very good marks and only the 17% needed to practice.

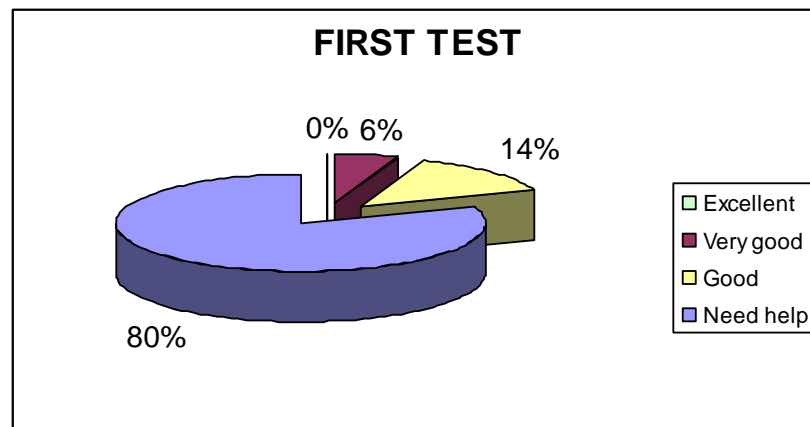
The last stage, the third three-months period, was the most productive one for the students. In this sense, we have the following chart:



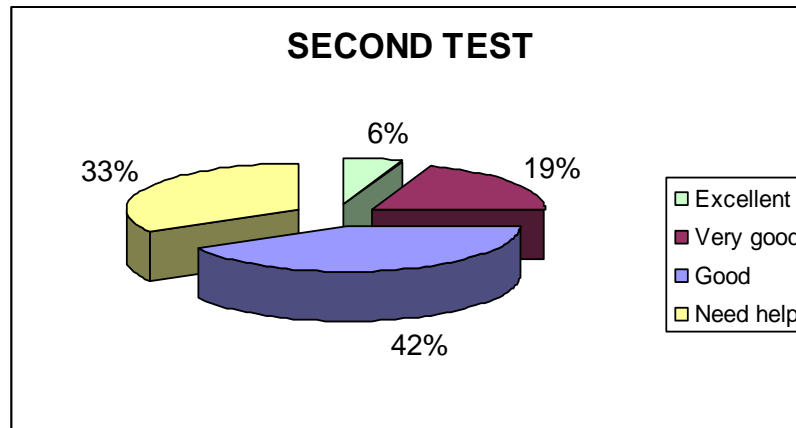
As we may see, the 87% of the students had a very good linguistic competence because they could sustain a conversation using correct English items. The majority of the students, 94%, got to understand what the teacher or their classmates said. The 78% of them obtained a very good reading comprehension. And the 89% could write short paragraphs and letters.

In summary, the students demonstrated a complete acceptance and predisposition to learn English, since they improved their speaking skills, as well as their reading, listening, writing and grammar.

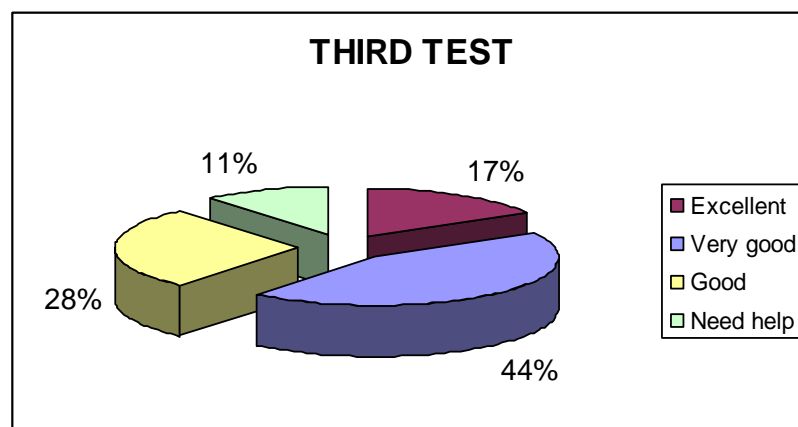
On the other hand, in order to analyze and interpret the tests in accordance with the evaluation criterion taking into account the scale of marks, we obtained the general academic results averaging the scores that the students got in the four skills. These results are showed in the following three graphs:



This graph demonstrates us that in the first three-months period the majority of the students, 80%, needed help. However, some of them quickly assimilated the new methodology of teaching. In a specific way, the 14% of them achieved between 41 and 50 points; that is, they obtained good scores. The 6% of the students achieved very good scores, from 51 to 60 points, and none obtained the maximum score.



As we can see in the graph, the results from the second three-months period were much better than the results from the first three-months period because in this time the students were already very enthusiastic to participate in didactic games. Thanks to their predisposition we could develop the lessons. In this way, the 42% of the students just passed the tests. The 33% of them achieved good scores; that is to say, from 41 to 50 points. The 19% of the students obtained very good marks, between 51 and 60 points. Finally, the 6% of them achieved scores between 61 to 70 points.



Finally, this third graph demonstrates that the last three-months period was very positive for the students because they assimilated very good what we taught them. Thus, 44% of the

students obtained excellent scores; that is to say, they achieved between 61 and 70 points. The 28% of them obtained very good marks; that is, from 51 to 60 points. The 17% had good academic results; they obtained between 41 and 50 points. Lastly, only the 11% of the students achieved low scores, so they needed to improve.

This way, we are satisfied with the outcomes obtained in each three-months period because we know the development of any educational project has to pass by different stages until this works successfully. In that sense, the general academic results of our students covered all our academic expectations.

4.3. INITIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

When we began the English course, the students did not show interest in learning English language, they were bored and did not participate in classes. However, we obtained the first initial achievement when we observed the first changes in the students' behavior after we put into practice the didactic games. They showed a lot of enthusiasm not only participating in the didactic games, but also suggesting some games. Given that each didactic game was related with the lesson that the students previously studied, they paid attention when the teacher explained it or gave an instruction about some class activity. So, their interest in understanding what the teacher said was increasing until they felt encouraged to make questions or give opinions in English language.

Another initial achievement that we can mention is that bringing into play the didactic games in the English language teaching-learning process was also very useful to create a relaxed environment, in which we realized that students had more self confidence because they talked face to face about the rules of the didactic games or their favorite topics without being afraid of making mistakes. At the same time, they developed a high sense of cooperation among them. As a result, the students improved their oral production in English language, as they demonstrated it in the first English festival that was carried out at the school.

The positive change of the students' attitude towards the English language learning stimulated us to continue the development of our project. Moreover, we could confirm that if the students have a good time in the English classes, so they will have more interest and

enthusiasm for learning this language through amusing activities. This was demonstrated with the outcomes of the tests that the students had.

4.4. EXPERIENCES

During the development of the English course we had two types of experiences, the first one in the professional aspect and the second one in the personal aspect.

The professional experience was very positive because of two reasons. The first one was because of the final scores that the students obtained, which demonstrated that the use of didactic games for teaching English language facilitates the students' learning. This is corroborated by (Ersoz, 2000), who sets up that "Constant effort is required to understand, produce and manipulate the target language. Well-chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skills. Games are highly motivating since they are amusing and at the same time challenging. Furthermore, they employ meaningful and useful language in real contexts. They also encourage and increase cooperation." (p.17).

The second one was because of the students' positive attitude for learning English language. So that, we could carry out some activities in which the students had the opportunity to use and practice the English language. One of these activities was "The spring day", in that occasion the students had a very funny activity. They wrote anonymous poems or thoughts and made nice cards with the name of the addressee, a classmate, that should guess who wrote it. In this English activity we realized that when the students are motivated because of doing activities that they enjoy, then they want to learn more about it and participate in these activities. As a result, there was a good communication between the teacher and students and between students themselves which is an important factor in order that teaching-learning process succeed, as Puchta & Schratz (1999) point out "[...] process in teaching and learning is principally a matter of the quality of communication between teacher and students and, especially, between students." (p.3).

Another nice experience was the "English festival", the first one that was carried out at the school, in which the students showed not only their talent and artistic abilities, but also their

speaking skills in English language. This festival was successful because the principal and the teachers liked it and they congratulated the students that participated in this important activity.

Regarding the personal experience, we can say that to carry out this project was a great experience because we had the opportunity to meet young students, who not only study, but also work. However, although they attended very tired to classes, they always paid attention to the teacher's explanation, wanted to participate in the didactic games, and showed respect to the teacher and their classmates. Moreover, they wanted to know many things about different subjects; for that, we besides having the English lessons, we moved on social topics or just topics that were interesting for them. In that way, we realized that even though these students know life is not easy, they go ahead.

In summary, we could carry out this work thanks to the acceptance and collaboration of the school's principal because when we presented our project, the school's authorities were willing to help us to make the project works. Their interest increased when we explained them the proposal of it, teaching English language through different kinds of didactic games according to the functional and linguistic objectives of each unit. We began to carry out the project after we took the diagnostic evaluation to the students.

We also collaborated to organize some extracurricular school activities, that is the celebration of holydays in which the students always presented one or two activities in English language. One of the most important events was "The talent night" or "English festival" in which we could organize and perform some didactic games, songs and poems in English language and the students had the opportunity to show their artistic abilities using some English oral expressions in a natural way.

This sense, we developed our project without problems. All the activities were prepared in advance although we sometimes had to change some of them according to the students' needs, especially at the beginning of the course because not all the students had the same English level. So that, in order to carry out the English course as it was foreseen and in order that the work proposal succeeds, we developed the diagnostic evaluation, the syllabus, the lesson plans,

the student book, the didactic games and the tests. We also mentioned the strategies and evaluation criteria, the initial achievement and shared our experiences.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

After we finished the English language course, it is possible to evaluate the outcomes achieved. We focused these results from four viewpoints. First, we considered the students' academic results. Second, we evaluated the general outcomes about the use of didactic games. Third, we evaluated the indicators of fulfilment that we proposed at the beginning of this project. And fourth, we mentioned the general positive and negative outcomes.

5.1. ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

In order to obtain the academic outcomes, that is to say, the scores that the students achieved in the written tests and the continuous assessment of their participation in the didactic games and in other class activities, we based on the criteria that we proposed about the students' evaluation (Chap. 5, section 5.2.5.1, p.80). This way, we evaluated the four basic linguistic skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing each three-months period, based on the scale of marks, from 10 to 70 points, that our school system sets up.

In the first place, as we know, listening and speaking skills are very related to each other because in order to answer a question, give an opinion or participate in a dialogue, it is necessary the students listen to the message and understand it from the person who is talking to them.

In that sense, at the beginning of the course, the speaking skill was not very developed by the students, perhaps because of the application of the new teaching methodology or because they did not feel encouraged to participate in classes. About listening, we could observe that only some students could understand questions, commands and oral presentations. To be more precise, in the first three-months period, 33% of the students improved their listening skills, they understood the message from the teacher and their classmates. However, just the 10% of

them were encouraged to have an oral participation. In this period, the students used Spanish language.

Fortunately, throughout the course, the students had more participation in each class, until they were able to give and ask information in a real way and maintain predictable face to face conversations. This was possible thanks to the implementation of the didactic games, through which the students got a feedback that is to say when they played a didactic game, they remembered and internalized the vocabulary and grammar structures. Then, they could practice this knowledge, especially having oral performances. So that, in the last three-months period, the 94% of the students reached to understand perfectly the message of an oral performance, and 87% of them got a very good linguistic competence.

Regarding reading, the outcomes of the first test showed us that only 21% of the students had a good reading comprehension. However, they had the opportunity to practice this skill until in the end of the course, 78% of them became able to understand simple discourses in printed form.

With respect to writing skills, in the first period, the students could only write simple words and very short sentences; so that, just the 14% of them obtained a good proficiency in this skill. This situation changed significantly during the development of the project, since at the last time of the course, 89 % of the students could write short paragraphs using simple and compound sentences, connectors and vocabulary in a suitable way.

In summary, the English language teaching outcomes that we got in this English language course were positive and very encouraging, given that these accomplished the objectives of the project.

5.2. GENERAL OUTCOMES ABOUT THE USE OF DIDACTIC GAMES

In the first three-months period, the didactic games about the use of the verb *to be* (third person singular), *how many* questions and *there is/are* answers, and *WH* questions (among others) had very good outcomes in the students' learning. But, the didactic games about the use

of prepositions of place needed being reinforced or changed by others because the students did not understand the rules, so they thought the didactic game was difficult.

In the second three-months period the scores of the students increased. The students had a good time and learned more with the didactic games about the present continuous; we realized this because they continued using it in their sentences. But, the students were bored with some of the didactic games about the simple present; for that was necessary to make other activities in order to consolidate the use of the auxiliaries *do/ does*.

The last period was the best one because the students not only were very motivated to play the didactic games, but also to propose some didactic games. So that, most of them worked very well, especially those played in group work.

5.3. OUTCOMES OF THE INDICATORS OF FULFILLMENT

When we decided to carry out this project, at the beginning of the English course, we proposed some didactic elements which would work to demonstrate if we achieved the objectives that proposed or not.

1. We took a diagnostic evaluation to the students in order to know their English level. This diagnostic evaluation was very useful in order that we can propose a suitable syllabus.
2. We proposed a syllabus that was developed completely by following step by step the lesson plan designed.
3. We designed the lesson plans, which worked as a guide in order that the teacher can develop the syllabus design in the English classes.
4. We designed and adapted didactic games, which helped us to fulfill our proposal since, as we said supra, the majority of them gave very good results. In this sense, the didactic games that we applied in classes helped the students to improve their linguistic skills in a big manner.

5. We designed a student book, which includes twelve units. This student book worked in order that the students study, understand and practice some grammatical structures, dialogues or other exercises at home.
6. We took three written tests (one each three-months period). We evaluated four units in each test, such as we have planned it; but we had to change some dates of the assessments:
 - The first evaluation included the first four units. We planned to take this test in May, but it was taken in April.
 - The second test included the units V, VI, VII and VIII. We programmed to take this assessment in July, but it was taken in August.
 - The third test included the last four units. The students could have had this final test in November, the month that we have planned it.
7. We evaluated the students' speaking skills in their participation in didactic games and in oral activities, which were carried out in every English class.

That way, we can say that we carried out all the indicators of fulfillment and, therefore we fulfilled our work proposal successfully.

5.4. GENERAL POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

The general positive outcome of this project is that, with the help of didactic games in the English language teaching, the students acquired elementary proficiency in language skills. Specifically, they can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands. At the same time, the student has a sufficient comprehension to listen to and understand short conversations. The students are also able to understand simple discourse in printed form. Finally, they acquired sufficient control of writing system to write simple and compound sentences and short paragraphs.

The negative outcome is that a little percentage of students still needs to improve some linguistic skills. Probably this is because sometimes these students showed lack of interest

because of their tiredness because, as already said, most of them work during the day or because they did not attend at all the classes.

In brief, in this chapter we presented the students' academic results and the outcomes achieved after we used didactic games in the English language teaching. Finally, we evaluated the indicators of fulfilment and the general outcomes of the project.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The teaching-learning process is in continuous evolution, unfortunately there are no teaching theories, methods or techniques that guarantee success. However, each teacher can create his/her own eclectic teaching method and adapting it to students' needs because it is necessary to change the traditional way of teaching that exists in our educational system; in which the study of grammar is emphasized and the teacher role is central and active. Therefore, the teacher should be ingenious and use the teaching techniques and resources that are able to use.

In this sense, this project proposes an alternative to teach English language to secondary school students by using didactic games as a pedagogical tool because didactic games introduce different and productive learning attitudes when using it appropriately.

Since the principles of Communicative approach guided the proposal of this work, all didactic games were centered in students' active role, and the teacher designed and guided every learning activity in order to organize the students and support their self confidence, which, we think, is a very important factor in the learning process.

Learning English language through didactic games provided a relaxed and positive classroom atmosphere, where the students were more willing to participate in a non threatening environment, making dynamic classes. Besides, we aimed many of the learning activities at promoting group work in order to increase the students' participation and cooperation.

As a consequence, we attained the objectives that we proposed at the beginning of our project. Regarding the general objective, we achieved to teach English language at elemental level to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students through didactic games by following the Communicative approach principles. What is more, learning English language became an easier and more productive task for the students; we verified this during

the daily evaluation that the teacher made in the development of the didactic games, and comparing the results of the first written test with the final outcomes.

As it is known, in order to attain the general objective, it was necessary to accomplish the specific objectives.

In this sense, the first specific objective was satisfactorily achieved because we developed didactic games (two for each unit) for teaching English language to first grade secondary Humberto Vásquez Machicado School students, and put into practice these didactic games during all the course, encouraging the interaction between teacher and students and students themselves.

The second specific objective was also accomplished, since the students acquired communicative competence in everyday situations through the basic English syllabus that we proposed, in which we developed lessons and didactic games in real-like situations.

We also achieved the third specific objective, given that the student book that we designed provided the students with useful English vocabulary in learning activities, in which they had the opportunity to put into practice the four linguistic skills.

Finally, we accomplished the fourth specific objective because we attained our students become motivated to learn English through implementing didactic games in the teaching of this foreign language.

In accordance with all the above-mentioned points, we can say that teaching English language through didactic games was a successful task, since the students learned this language in an easy and amusing way, and they got motivated to participate in class activities using English language as a communication tool. Moreover, the students made stronger their team spirit and collaboration because the group work was an essential part of this teaching methodology. At the same time, we attained strengthen the teacher-students confidence.

The end result of the students' positive attitudes was showed in the statistics of final tests, which allowed us to demonstrate that the implementation of didactic games in the English language teaching gave positive results, since the students were motivated and challenged to

learn this foreign language and, as a result, their academic outcomes improved in a significant way.

Thus, about speaking skills, in the first three-months period, just 10% of the students got very good marks; however, little by little they had more participation in each class, until in the last period of the course, 87% of them obtained very good oral competence. Regarding listening skills, in the first period 33% of the students had a good oral comprehension, this situation improved since in the third period 94% of them achieved a very good listening. In reading, at the beginning only the 21% of the students had a good comprehension; however at last, this percentage increased to 78%. The same thing occurred with writing skill, since in the first period only 14% of the students wrote without making many mistakes, and in the third period, 89% of them enhanced this linguistic skill.

In summary, as a result of the application and combination of the teaching elements used in this work, such as: Constructivism and Rogers's Humanistic Psychology principles, the design of a syllabus and a student book guided by the Communicative approach, the implementation of didactic games as the main teaching technique, the relaxed and positive atmosphere in classroom, and the students' motivation to learn English language it is possible to affirm we achieved the objectives of this project successfully.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Once we finished the English course, in which the students learned, reinforced and practiced English language through didactic games, we can give the following recommendations:

1. The proposal of this work was aimed just to teach English language through didactic games to secondary school students. However, throughout the course we could realize that the use of didactic games is so wide. So that, we recommend that teachers implement didactic games not only in English language teaching, but also in general teaching-learning process.
2. Some teachers think didactic games are useful only for teaching to children because the games are part of their life and, teaching through games to older people would be a lost of time. However, in this project we demonstrated that using didactic games for teaching to teenagers gives positive academic outcomes, due to the advantages that offer didactic games in the English language teaching-learning process, such as:
 - Didactic games make learning an active process in which students are the main actors.
 - Didactic games add interest to what students find boring.
 - Didactic games provide a context for meaningful communication.
 - Didactic games lower the students' anxiety and increase their motivation.

So, it is possible to recommend the use of didactic games in the teaching-learning process for any age and any level. On the one hand, didactic games can be used for teaching to beginner, intermediate and advanced level. On the other hand, didactic games can work for teaching to children, teenagers, young and also adult people, thanks to its positive outcomes and its therapeutic effects in the teaching-learning process.

3. It is necessary to remember that most didactic games were played in work groups. So that, the students had to work together with a team spirit in order to reach a common goal, since to learn a foreign language not only consists in knowing the lesson, but also in practicing it. As a consequence of this continuous practice, the students were able to sustain a basic conversation outside class using English language items in a real context. This way, we recommend that teachers organize many group works activities not only in English language classes, but also in other subjects.

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