



PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL ECUADOR

SEDE IBARRA

PUCE-SI

FINAL REPORT OF THE RESEARCH

THEME

ECRIF IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM:

STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ITS IMPLEMENTATION

**Submitted in fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza Bilingüe Español - Inglés**

Area of Research: Innovative English Language Teaching Methodology

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IBARRA, DECEMBER 2013

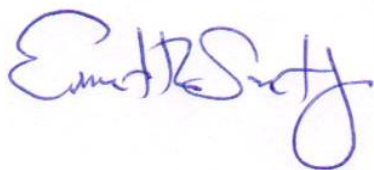
Ibarra, 19 de octubre del 2013

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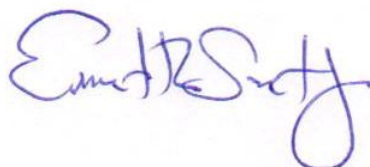
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ABSTRACT

This study is a mixed method descriptive case study –descriptive quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews, focus group and journaling) – which investigates students perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching, which focuses on learners and learning as they become fluent users of the language. The research took place at the Academic Language Center of Universidad Tecnica del Norte, in Ibarra, Ecuador. The study was conducted with 21 first level students who were enrolled in different majors at the university. Two research questions guided the research in conjunction with two sub questions in the first one. (1) What are the students’ perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching in the EFL classroom? in conjunction with: 1. a.- How do the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, and peer support in each stage of ECRIF help beginner students gain fluency in verbal communication in English as a foreign language and how does it boost confidence and motivation? 1. b.- What are students perceived language learning difficulties in an EFL class exclusively conducted by the teacher researcher while following the five cognitive learning stages to develop communicative language fluency? (2) How “ECRIF” can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series? A questionnaire with closed and opened ended questions was designed for the purpose of the investigation and follow up interviews were undertaken. The researcher kept a journal to respond question two. The results on the perception about the implementation of ECRIF were positive. Almost all participants expressed their satisfaction and motivation due to their significant improvement in language learning. This was acknowledged into direct reactions through praising the teaching and learning approach due to: (1) the scaffolding process, (2) content, (3) material (visual aids), and (4) interaction and learning activities. Some negative issues were also raised. For a couple of students some of the activities were considered excessively simple and slow. A number of students felt that they needed to work on listening comprehension. Regarding question two, the researcher realized that working with a framework that guides the learning process is feasible due to the criteria of the framework and mainly because it is a not prescriptive approach. Awareness at each stage is important. As he perceives ECRIF is a positive alternative approach in language teaching to facilitate language learning, but it entails new challenges on pedagogical practices and classroom management in the language classroom when trying to put in practice the theories and principles embraced by ECRIF.

DEDICATION

Dedicated with gratitude to the memory of my mother.

To my mother Clemencia Tirira who showed me both, the value of work and education from my early years. You never ceased to provide your children love, support and encouragement to make life a joyous experience even under difficult circumstances. Expressing gratitude for what we have was one of your values you put in practice every day. I remember you saying we should avoid the suffering that might come from wanting more than what life could offer us. Your absence is deeply felt at this moment of accomplishment. Your memories will guide my steps no matter how difficult the path may be. I thank God for the years I shared your presence and friendship. Thank you for being such a great mother and friend, your advice and encouragement will always be in my heart and mind. I miss you mom!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the essential contributions of many individuals who have made this work possible. I owe them my sincerest appreciation.

First and foremost, I would like to thank and express my eternal gratitude to my teacher trainer Mary Scholl, for having showed me the path an educator should follow and for being a role model as an agent of change in the field of a peaceful education. Her experiential teaching has equipped me with invaluable knowledge and professional insights to better serve learners. Her work in the language teaching field has significantly influenced my research topic.

I also would like to extend my appreciation to Ernesto Santos, tutor and advisor of the present study for his guidance, patience, feedback and support throughout the completion of this research. I cannot forget moments I was talking to him when I was struggling and felt overwhelmed and everything around me was a huge challenge. His kind and thoughtful assistance with important points meant a great deal to me. They helped me move forward and then backwards and eventually move from one step to the next one as I went through the long journey of putting the pieces of this big puzzle together; I mean the journey of writing this thesis. Also, special thanks to Cyan Solis-Sichel (ETA Fulbright teacher at UTN 2012-2013) for taking the time to do the proofreading of the present work and for her valuable suggestions.

I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Ruben Congo Maldonado, Director of the Academic Language Center at UTN, for granting permission to conduct the research with one group of students in the university.

I am grateful to the group of students who did not hesitate and were willing to participate in the present study since its beginning. Thank you for the time you gave to the present study and for your feedback throughout the implementation of ECRIF in the foreign classroom. Your feedback has contributed to see teaching and learning with new lenses.

Your feedback challenged me to clarify my role as a language teacher and as a person in the classroom.

I also thank my wife, Cecilia, and my daughter Grace, without their priceless support throughout the time of study and research this work would not have been possible. Thank you for your endless love and supportive encouragement during the seemingly-never ending process of writing this thesis. Life and weekends have been put on hold for the last four years of our lives in order to achieve my goal of earning this master degree.

Last but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to Marcia Mantilla for dedicating her time and effort to the establishment and development of the pioneering master program in Bilingual education in the country. The program has provided English teachers with a great opportunity for professional growth.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Introduction

“Different approaches to teaching English (do) not just occur by chance, but in response to changing geopolitical circumstances, social attitudes and values, as well as to shifts of fashion in linguistics.” Cook, G (2003, p. 30)

Language is the most important communicative tool of mankind, both for intellectual and for social messages. Language is the living and source of cultural, social and scientific meaning. In a world marked by the twin processes of economic and cultural globalization, English has become the lingua Franca of the global community and major professional fields. English is present in every continent and it is used as a means to have access to the information that forms the basis of social, educational and economic development Kumaravadivelu (2006). English language has become an important tool for today’s international communication and it has increasingly become the medium in every domain of communication, cultural and intercultural dimensions. English has become the vehicle through which shared knowledge is created, communicated and transformed. Therefore, the demand for speakers using English effectively has become a requirement in a number of fields, occupations and professions. There is a need for effective teaching and learning of English in many world contexts.

The teaching and learning of English has played an important role in the educational system in many countries. In the last few decades, English has become the language most widely taught as a foreign language in over 100 countries and in most of these countries it has emerged as the principal foreign language to be encountered in schools Crystal (2003). Therefore, a permanent quest for better methods in language teaching has been a preoccupation of language teachers and applied linguists throughout the twentieth century Brown (2001). Theories and practice of language teaching and learning throughout the world have undergone dramatic changes; all of them attempting to increase the efficiency with which second and foreign language learners can develop communicative ability in the

English language. In the last sixty years, the language teaching field and its professionals have seen concentrated attempts to understand better how individuals acquire and learn a foreign language, and with this in mind, new paradigms and initiatives are continually being developed. The emphasis on new language teaching pedagogy has focused on learners and their learning. These developments have all had a profound impact on how best to teach and learn a foreign language to equip students with a communicative tool to succeed in this ever-changing, complex world and to meet the demands of global economics.

Since the 1950s to the 1980s, there is a long and notable development in the field of language teaching and learning. The emergence and development of various methods and approaches the “Aural-Oral Method” or “Structural Approach” then the “Audio-lingual Method” “cognitive code”, followed by subsequent researches based on psychology of teaching and learning theory led to the emergence of a humanistic pedagogy, “Total Physical Response”, “Silent Way”, “Suggestopedia”, and “Community Language Learning”, they all have tried to offer innovative solutions to the problem of how to learn a second language more effectively Richards & Rogers (2003). According to Nunan (1999), these changes have been driven due to changes in educational theory, and the way linguists and researchers think about language and learning.

In the decade of the 80s due to dissatisfaction of earlier communicative models and approaches of language learning and teaching gave origin to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with its emphasis on meaning, fluency and real life communication. CLT sees the learner as an individual with different needs and interests and with varying degrees of motivation Cook (2003), Brown (2001). CLT has come to be adopted as the key approach to language teaching in most parts of the globe including Ecuador; however, it must be emphasized that CLT is a broad approach or a set of approaches rather than a single method. The shift from a single paradigm to a distributed paradigm has had important implications for pedagogy, learning design and classroom environments. CLT places emphasis on activities that promote real communication, activities that create the need for meaningful language use and special attention is given to the sequencing of

communicative activities in which learners are to gain control over individual skills before applying in communicative tasks Littlewood (1983).

The field of language pedagogy in the early 21st century has given light to the post methodological or pedagogical conceptualization of communicative language teaching paradigm. It fosters reflections upon the concept of language, the learner and language learning itself. The concept of method has been replaced by the context-sensitive guiding pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility Kumaravadivelu (2001). Throughout the language teaching history we have seen that there is not a universally appropriate and effective language teaching method Canale & Swain (1980). There is no ideal method that can address all intervening variables and factors in the language classroom. According to Stern (1983, p. 338) stated in *Methodological Approaches* by Funiber, language methodology or language frameworks used in the classroom can be seen as something that is chosen in response to a better understanding of group and individual needs and interests based on social context, learner differences, learning conditions, the learning process itself and the result of learning.

Thus, what language teachers today need, more than a ready-made method of teaching, is an integration of useful ideas and techniques to adapt to their own context and purpose from all the methods and approaches in language learning. This will help language teachers articulate the underlying belief associated with the classroom practice. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), English pedagogy should give language teachers the power to build their own practices in the classroom. Language teachers need to see the learner as a physical, psychological and intellectual being with needs, interests, motivation and feelings that extend that far beyond the classroom Diane Larsen-Freeman (1987). With such an appreciation, language teachers will be willing to make informed decisions in their daily teaching instruction to improve students' language learning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Education in Ecuador as one of the reforms in the field of education seeks to close the negative gap regarding English language teaching and learning. The current

government developed a project with the goal of improving the learning and teaching quality of English as a foreign language Andes (2012). Ecuadorian Universities are also responsible for continuing with this process. Tecnica del Norte University in Ibarra Ecuador is embarked on a Bilingual Project since September 2008. The main objective of the Bilingual Project is to develop students' ability to use English in a general way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future work and social interactions, the future professionals will be able to use English both accurately and fluently through both spoken and written channels "UTN Bilingual Project" (2008)

Since the establishment of the Bilingual Project at Universidad Tecnica del Norte, the language teachers have been using the Touchstone book series and applying the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT). Students have made substantial progress in their learning of English as a foreign language during the five semesters of the first stage of the Bilingual Project. However, the Academic Language Center in the last institutional sufficiency evaluation found out that a high percentage of students who have been studying English for five semesters are in need of improvement to achieve their sufficiency in English.

Since Touchstone textbooks are produced to be used by teachers all over the world and in very different schools with students from different backgrounds and whose knowledge and ability can be very wide-ranging, there is a need for UTN language teachers to follow a language framework and be creative in how they use the book if they want to plan lessons with a learning objective in mind. Even though, "Touchstone is a corpus-informed course", that is, the books are designed for learners to encounter the most useful and widely used words, expressions, "conversation management strategies" and structures/grammar in everyday situations, it is required to use a methodology that focuses on learning and its developmental stages as students become fluent users of it. Indeed, there is a need of finding clear guidance on providing lessons that could advance students language learning and acquisition. There is a need to modify instruction that will help language learners achieve the communicative language competences stated in the Common European Framework of Reference Council of Europe CEFR (2001) as it is part of the bilingual project of the institution. The Common European Framework of Reference distinguishes

three main components of communicative language competences: linguistic competence (dimensions of the language system), sociolinguistic competence (the sociocultural conditions and the social conventions of language use), and pragmatic competence (the abilities to use and interpret communicative language functions).

Reflecting on students' needs and their learning when planning lessons will help language teachers use the Touchstone textbook series more creatively and not just go through it doing one activity after another activity and covering page after page as they appear in the textbook. Instead, teachers can refine their decision-making based upon responses from students and their learning. Teachers can make a variety of decisions where they feel a congruency between their beliefs and their actions to address students learning. The application of "an engaging scaffolding learning process framework" which includes collaborative learning, experiential learning, problem-based learning, and a variety of other pedagogical methods may support language development and its internalization. This can be done by selecting, adapting, rejecting, supplementing (SARS) activities in the teaching-learning process when using the Touchstone series. Thus, applying Encounter – Clarify – Remember – Internalize – Fluent Use (ECRIF), in Level 1 after an internal institutional placement test at UTN from March 2012 to July 2012 was a key issue for the teacher researcher. The framework was proposed because the framework could be applied as a useful framework in planning more effective lessons from the students' perspectives to achieve communicative fluency. The framework provides a structure for developing learner centered classrooms in which language teachers can constructively intervene in the developmental language learning process.

ECRIF is a post method paradigm framework in language teaching introduced by Joshua Kurzweil and Mary Scholl (2007). It aims to facilitate productive language skills development. It is a non prescriptive language framework. It is an integrated scaffolding language lesson framework. It is both learner-learning centered and contextualized. It is sensitive to the parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility Stern (1992) and the ten macro strategies from Kumaravadivelu (2003). It is the teacher responsibility to examine the different areas of language learners' needs, interests and ability. The role of the teacher is that of articulating learning goals, identifying and designing the types of

tasks and doings that are likely to foster language development and skill. The learning activities would include a set of scaffolding activities in which students become the primary constructors of their learning. The students appropriate language knowledge and skill from what they do in the classroom with the teacher, their classmates, the material and the text. Students' participation is a thoroughly interactive and constructive activity in their language learning process.

When using ECRIF, the teacher provides learners with learning opportunities and direction. The possibility of learning might occur as learners have several opportunities to encounter and use the target language/structure in different active participatory learning situations. In the different learning stages, the students have the opportunity to rebuild their existing knowledge through individual and social constructive participation. The various (VAKT) scaffolding learning activities (sensing, perceiving, motor action, thinking, feeling, emoting, and motivation) in which students are engaged in at the different stages: Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize and Fluent Use allow the learners to gradually create individual organized structures of knowledge as they become fluent users of the language.

ECRIF uses the core tenets of constructivist theory (The constructivist educational theory). Constructivism refers to the idea that students construct their knowledge and understanding of the world as a product of their action and experience. It combines basic concepts of constructivist theories of learning with those principles derived from a variety of disciplines, mainly those of linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, neuroscience and sociolinguistics on how people learn a second language to give students the knowledge and experiential learning necessary to achieve language fluency. How "ECRIF" can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series? What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching in the EFL classroom? How do the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, teacher and peer support in each stage of ECRIF help beginner students gain fluency in verbal communication in English as a foreign language? What are students perceived language learning difficulties in an EFL class exclusively

conducted by the teacher researcher while following the five cognitive learning stages to develop communicative fluency?

1.2 Background and Need

In response to the Secretaría de Educación Superior (SENESCYT) and the Consejo de Evaluación, Acreditación y Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (CEAACES) in Ecuador, La Universidad Técnica del Norte in Ibarra, Ecuador, through the Academic Language Center has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and learning to support the Bilingual Project at the Institution. The necessity for an appropriate but mainly non prescriptive teaching methodology when using the Touchstone book series is therefore as strong as ever. Developing the communicative competence in the students is a daily challenge that language teachers face every day at the institution. Being able to overcome this challenge implies the application of language theories, methods and techniques as indispensable means to succeed in the language teaching-learning process. Indeed, there is a need of applying an instructional language framework and practices with a direct impact on how much and how well students might/would learn.

Since postmethod criticizes the traditional concept of method, and in order to address the objectives of the Ecuadorian government and the university as an integral part of their reform and developmental plan, there are needs for alternatives that help teachers accomplish their objective. A direct instruction (teacher centered approach) in language learning with no desired learning outcomes in mind and without a connected intensive scaffolding practice, will not necessarily give any kind of assurance that language learners at the university will internalize the new target language/structure to use it fluently in daily life. According to Tanner (2009), in recent years numerous studies have demonstrated that traditional teaching that rely on passive learning are not as effective as active, student centered learning strategies. Hence, the question how to provide the language learners with more effective language strategies for helping them internalize the new language is by all

means of vital importance in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language at the institution.

Applying ECRIF, in one of the first levels of English at UTN was proposed in response to the needs of the university. Its significance lies on the importance of developing alternative ways of pedagogical thinking concerning appropriate language teaching instruction and methodologies to meet various learning and teaching needs, wants and situations when using the Touchstone series. Although each theory embraced by ECRIF provides useful insights for teaching and learning and its paralleled derived instructional strategies are based on their theoretical grounds, these strategies have not been empirically applied to a real situation by UTN language teachers, nor corroborated through foreign language students' response and voice. The need is evident for a study to investigate the perceptions of first level students in regard to its implementation in the classroom. The study will help the researcher gain insights and examples upon the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language and how it can be most effectively taught to facilitate language learning.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore students' perceptions and thoughts about the implementation of ECRIF in the language classroom as a new paradigm in language teaching. It aims to see how the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, teacher and peer support help language learning in the students as they gradually internalize the target language and develop communicative fluency. ECRIF uses the post methodological conceptualization of communicative language teaching paradigm. It scaffolds the language learning process. That is, the language instructor consciously and deliberately tries to design learning sequenced activities and experiences so that the order in which they are experienced by the learners move learners forward in their language internalization process. Hopefully, the research result(s) can be put into consideration of forthcoming lesson plans adopted by the Academic Language Center at the university in the near future as an alternative to enhance English language learning and teaching quality.

The research was undertaken in the March-July semester of 2012 at Universidad Tecnica del Norte. The subjects of this study were originally 29 students, ten males and nineteen females, but two decided not to participate in the study since the very beginning and then five students dropped the course the first week of study. One student did not come for the post questionnaire survey. So, the actual number of subjects was 21 students. Among the 21 subjects, 4 were males and seventeen females. They were young adults between 18 and 31.

The course was intentionally taught through ECRIF. It aimed to see whether the scaffold designed staging learning activities with performance in mind/desired learning outcomes contributed to the learning of English as a foreign language as opposed to traditional classroom situations in which only a limited number of tasks are used in the learning process.

The students' opinions are valuable in order to better understand how the cognitive process that follows ECRIF throughout the different activities in each stage help students internalize the target language and develop communicative fluency. This may give us options for more effective English language teaching instructions. These orientations might contribute in the improvement of pedagogical practice in EFL instruction to support and facilitate students' language learning in the classroom.

1.4 Research Questions

Given that any particular language is a form of knowledge in its speakers' minds, one of the major goals of language teachers as a foreign language should be oriented on how to facilitate learners' attainment of the knowledge of foreign language as well as the attainment of the ability to use the foreign language in verbal communication CsabaCzeglédi (2008).

The research questions underlying the investigation in this mixed method descriptive case study are as follows:

1. What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching in the EFL classroom? in conjunction with:

a.- How do the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, and peer support in each stage of ECRIF help beginner students gain fluency in verbal communication in English as a foreign language and how does it boost confidence and motivation?

b.- What are students perceived language learning difficulties in an EFL class exclusively conducted by the teacher researcher while following the five cognitive learning stages to develop communicative language fluency? And;

2. How "ECRIF" can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Investigating the above research questions provided a significant knowledge on the importance and effectiveness of post method communicative language teaching paradigms while using ECRIF. Although, the research focuses on beginner EFL learners' perceptions and thoughts about the implementation of ECRIF in English 1, the study provides a positive perception on affective variables such as language learning progress, motivation and attitude towards the teaching and the learning process itself when designing opportunities for all the students to have dynamic, creative, joyful connected learning experiences at each stage of the framework. Participants' voices and opinions have the capacity to inform the condition of a broader/principled education, the processes of language learning and ways to enhance language learning outcomes. The students' perceptions provide insights into the provision of best practices in language teaching.

This knowledge is fundamental for several reasons. First, it provides the potential for positive attitude and motivation for learners. Positive attitude and motivation can enhance the learning process itself and learning outcomes not only for beginners but also for diverse learners from any level. With more enjoyable and learning centered experiences, Bilingual

Education at Universidad Tecnica del Norte can become a powerful and transforming life experience for the students at the institution. Second, the value of positive attitude and motivation on beginner English language learners can encourage them to go beyond and continue with the learning of foreign language learning and gain a sufficiency level at the end of the fifth semester which is a requirement to graduate from the university.

Another reason this study is potentially significant is in that it offers language teachers insights into the relationship between theory and teaching practices while using a non prescriptive framework. The framework criteria is based on the post method communicative language teaching embedded in the principles of the context-sensitive guiding pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility Kumaravadivelu (2001). Even though theories are not prescriptive for designing effective teaching-learning practices, they can help language teachers constrain the design of ineffective ones. If teachers are familiarized with the framework and the principles, they will be in a better position not only to be innovative, but able to craft the language learning process to ensure learning by design. The value of using a framework to scaffold the language learning process gives opportunities to diverse learning style students to gradually internalize the target language.

The ECRIF framework Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) template (see appendix I) will be useful for teachers in any context and level for planning productive lessons, staging learning activities, and promoting desired learning outcomes. The framework will help language teachers focus attention evenly on learning, what the students are learning, how they are learning, whether the students are internalizing and using their learning and how the up-to-date learning positions the students for future learning. Kurzweil, J. (2007, p. 3) states in his thesis that the implementation of the framework “can help teachers focus on students’ learning and seeing options rather than “right” answers” Language teachers may be better able to design language lessons and learning activities based on their students’ needs and interests. Language teachers can make informed decisions in their daily teaching instruction to improve students’ language learning through a heuristic paradigm by overtly applying their beliefs and experience.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

It is important to define the following terms and abbreviations relating to the topic of this study, which are used throughout the thesis.

Accuracy: Accuracy refers to how correct learners' use of the language system is, including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Accuracy is often compared to fluency when we talk about a learner's level of speaking or writing.

Acquisition: Acquisition is the way we learn our first language, i.e. through being involved in real communication, and without formal teaching. As we learn, we hypothesize rules, and use these to communicate until we notice that the rule is different, or has exceptions.

Applied Linguistics: The study of the relationship between theory and practice: The main emphasis is usually on language teaching, but can also be applied to translation, lexicology, among others.

Approach: An approach is a way of looking at teaching and learning. Underlying any language teaching approach is a theoretical view of what language is, and of how it can be learned. An approach gives rise to methods, the way of teaching something, which use classroom activities or techniques to help learners learn.

Attitude: Learners possess sets of beliefs about language learning, target culture, culture, teacher, learning tasks, etc. These beliefs are referred to as attitudes. They influence learning in a number of ways.

Audio-lingualism: Audio-lingualism is a method of foreign language teaching where the emphasis is on learning grammatical and phonological structure, especially for speaking and listening. It is based on behaviorism and so relies on formation as a basis for learning, through a great deal of mechanical repetition.

Authentic assessment: Ways of assessing students learning that are embedded in classroom instructional practice and that serve to inform educators on an ongoing basis of student learning progress in the day-to-day activities of the classroom.

Authentic language: The type of genuine, or natural, language used by native speakers in real-life contexts rather than the contrived language used solely to learn grammatical forms or vocabulary.

Authentic Task: A task which involves learners in using language in a way that replicates its use in the 'real world' outside the language classroom. Filling in blanks, changing verbs from the simple past to the simple present and completing substitution tables are, therefore, not authentic tasks. Examples of authentic tasks would be answering a letter addressed to the learner, arguing a particular point of view and comparing various holiday brochures in order to decide where to go for a holiday: See pedagogic task.

Bilingual Education: An educational language in which two languages are used during instruction in order to (1) continue primary language (L1) development, (2) provide instruction in content in both L1 and L2 English acquisition.

Cognitive overload: It is a situation where the teacher gives too much information or too many tasks to learners simultaneously, resulting in the learner being unable to process this information. In this situation, the language processing demands of an activity go beyond the language processing limits of the learner. It produces anxiety and stress, as well as affecting learning.

Cognitive strategies: Cognitive strategies are one type of learning strategy that learners use in order to learn more successfully. These include repetition, organizing new language, summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context, using imagery for memorization. All of these strategies involve deliberate manipulation of language to improve learning. Classifications of learning strategies distinguish between cognitive strategies and two other types, metacognitive strategies (organizing learning), and social/ affective strategies (which enable interaction).

Cognitive theory: A cognitive theory of learning sees second language acquisition as a conscious and reasoned thinking process, involving the deliberate use of learning strategies. Learning strategies are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning or retention of information.

Comprehensible input: The continuous modification of speech to facilitate the development of students' L2.

Comprehensible input hypothesis: Krashen's (1982) hypothesis that second language learners are ready for the acquisition of language input that is one step higher (I+1) than their current levels.

Communicative Approaches: Approaches to language teaching which aim to help learners to develop communicative competence (i.e., the ability to use the language effectively for communication). A weak communicative approach includes overt teaching of language forms and functions in order to help learners to develop the ability to use them for communication. A strong communicative approach relies on providing learners with experience of using language as the main means of learning to use the language. In such an approach, learners, for example, talk to learn rather than learn to talk.

Communicative Competence: The ability to use the language effectively for communication. Gaining such competence involves acquiring both sociolinguistic and linguistic knowledge (or, in other words, developing the ability to use the language accurately, appropriately, and effectively).

Communicative Functions: Purposes for which language is used; includes three broad functions: communicative, integrative, and expressive; where language aids the transmission of information, aids affiliation and belonging to a particular social group, and allows the display of individual feelings, ideas, and personality.

Communicative Language Teaching: An approach concerned with the needs of students to communicate outside the classroom; teaching techniques reflect this in the choice of

language content and materials, with emphasis on role play, pair and group work, among others.

Constructivism: A theory of knowing; it examines the way in which we learn and acquire knowledge.

Context: Language items do not exist independently. They might be found in a text, a piece of classroom conversation, a tape recording, etc. These are the contexts. To help clarify the meaning or use of an item, we can also create imaginary contexts or example “situations”, perhaps using board pictures, in order to provide a context for a language item and give the students as illustration of a way that it would typically be used.

Contextualization: Contextualization is putting language items into a meaningful and real context rather than being treated as isolated items of language for language manipulation practice only. Contextualizing language tries to give real communicative value to the language that learners meet. The context can help learners remember the language and recall it at a later date. Learners can use natural learning strategies to help them understand contextualized language, such as guessing meaning from context.

Disequilibrium: The state of being we experience when things are not what we expect; it is in this frame that learning occurs.

Drill: a common restricted production activity involving students in repetition or very controlled oral practice.

ELL: English language learner; the term in current use to denote students in the process of acquiring and/or learning English as a second language.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners and Teachers: are those who are learning or teaching English while living in a community where English is not spoken as a first language. **English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners and Teachers:** are those who

are learning and teaching English while living in a community where English is spoken as a first language.

ESL: English as a second language.

False beginner: Someone who has studied the language before, but appears to have forgotten most of it. Progress can be fast as the “lost” language may return relatively quickly. A true beginner, by contrast, has none of this deep-stored knowledge; a progress will likely be much slower.

Fluency: It refers to how well a learner communicates meaning rather than how many mistakes they make in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Fluency is often compared with **accuracy**, which is concerned with the type, amount and seriousness of mistakes made.

Holistic approach: A holistic approach to language sees it as a whole, which is not divisible in a meaningful way for teaching. It contrasts with an atomistic approach to language, which attempts to analyze language into parts, such as grammatical structures or functional exponents, which can later become the content of a syllabus. A holistic approach would focus on everything the learner needs to know to communicate effectively.

Humanistic: Humanistic language teaching is an approach based on the principle that the whole being, emotional and social, needs to be engaged in learning, not just the mind.

Internalization: It is the process of learning something so that it can be used as the basis for production. Once language is internalized, it can then be retained and retrieved when needed for communication.

Monitoring: When the students are working on an activity where you do not have an active role, you can keep an active eye over what is going on, perhaps with a view to

checking that instructions are being followed, being ready to help if needed, collecting a list of language used for use later in the lesson, etc.

Outcomes: They are what learners should be able to do or have done at the end of the class or course. Outcomes are similar to aims but are more focused on end results and often describe what actually happened rather than what the teacher intends to happen.

Pace: Pace refers to the speed of the class. It is a subjective judgment, connected with how it feels for the learner to go through the sequence of activities in a class.

PPP: Presentation, Practice, Production: an approach to grammar lessons based on the idea of giving (presenting) small items of language to students, providing them with opportunities to use it in controlled ways (practice) and finally integrating it with other known language in order to communicate (production).

Personalization: It happens when activities allow students to use language to express their own ideas, feelings, preferences and opinions. Personalization is an important part of the communicative approach, since it involves true communication, as learners communicate real information about themselves.

Praxis: The continuous transformative cycle of reflection leading to action and action leading to further reflection that is the culmination of dialogue and of students and teachers finding ways to affect change as a result of their discoveries.

Prior knowledge: It is the knowledge the learner already has before they meet new information. A learner's understanding of a text can be improved by activating their prior knowledge before dealing with the text, and developing this habit is good learner training for them.

Psycholinguistics: A term that links psychology and linguistics. That is to say it links learners' psychological variables (personality traits, perceptions, beliefs, etc.) and the

language learning and speaking process. The aim of the psycholinguists is to find out about the structures and processes, which underlie a human's ability to speak.

Rapport: Rapport in language learning refers to the relationship between the teacher and the learners. Teachers try to build good rapport with the learners in order to produce an environment that will help learning.

Retention: It is remembering new language rather than forgetting it. Once a word is retained, it can be retrieved and used later.

Scaffolding: A way of providing support to students through modelling, feedback, instruction, and questioning. It is based on the premise that, what the learner is able to do with assistance today, the learner can do alone tomorrow.

Second language acquisition: the process of developing a second language naturally, in the same manner as the first, without substantive formal instructions.

Second language learning: The progress of developing a second language through formal language instruction.

Stage: One distinct part of a lesson, usually a single activity, stages may link together to help make a complete lesson.

Target language: It is the language learners are studying, and also the individual items of language that they want to learn, or the teacher wants them to learn.

Zone of proximal development (ZPD): The distance between what a student knows and what a student can learn with the help of a knowledgeable adult. It is within this zone that students have the optimal or proximal development and it is also where social interaction becomes the mode by which new learning occurs.

1.7 Limitations

The limitations of a study are the methodological characteristics that set parameters on its application and interpretation. In other words, limitations are the constraints on generalizability, transferability and utility of findings, which are the results of the devices of methodology that establish the study's validity Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman (2005)

In accordance with this perspective, this study held some limitations: First, since the language instruction was carried out by the teacher researcher only with one group of students in the university, this may not allow for generalizability or transferability outside of the sample under the study. Second, the study could have been more representative if a different teacher would have been in charge of the language instruction. Third, the research was carried out with a group which had to cover twelve units of the "touchstone book 1". This put some pressure on the researcher because students had to take an institutional evaluation after the first six units (middle term) and the other six units at the end of course. Fourth, there may be possible bias from the teacher researcher because the pre questionnaire was not tested in a preliminary pilot study to ensure that the wording of the questions was clear and the feedback feasible.

1.8 Ethical Considerations

The group of the students who participated in this study during the second semester of the academic school year 2011-2012 was designated by the director of the Academic Language Center of the university once the request to conduct the research was approved (see appendix A).

The first week of class, the researcher informed the students that the group had been selected to participate in a case study during the semester to explore their perceptions on the teaching methodology applied by the teacher. However, the researcher asked the participants to sign a Consent Form (see appendix B) that invited them to participate in the study. The participation was voluntary. Participants had the right to withdraw from participating at any time during the study. The researcher informed the students that classes

would follow a normal course during the semester; that meant that students wouldn't have any kind of pressure to achieve the researcher's objective. It also was explained to them that all data from the study would be kept confidential and that the subjects' identities would not be revealed before, during, or after the study.

1.9 Overview of the Remainder of the thesis

The first chapter has begun by identifying the goals of the present mixed method descriptive case study research and by discussing some of the key questions and concepts that it will address. In addition, the theory and the methodology for the analysis has been named and discussed briefly.

This study will be comprised of five chapters. Chapter one delineates the purpose and rationale of the study along with a brief overview of the theoretical framework and methodology. In addition this chapter includes a definition of salient terms and explanation of researcher bias. The theoretical framework in chapter II explains the conceptual understanding and relevance to the field of language teaching of (1) constructivism (2) Communicative Language Teaching in the Post Method Pedagogy (3) Backward planning (4) ECRIF and (5) a summary illustrating the connections between these four areas. Chapter III discusses the overall research methodology and methods that were used to explore the two questions of the present research: Methodology as outlined in this chapter, describes for the reader important components of this case study such as its purpose, research questions and theoretical framework. This chapter included a description of the study, which is a mixed method descriptive case study research. The context of the study describes the participants and the research site that were selected to participate in the study. Protection of human subjects and ethical issues are briefly discussed. This chapter specifically outlines the process of data collection, instruments, data analysis and criteria for ensuring the quality of the research. Chapter IV illustrates the results of the study in relation to the initial and post questionnaires, focus group, interview and the journal reflection from the teacher researcher. Chapter V is about conclusions and recommendation which can help language teachers improve their language methodology when using ECRIF.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dramatic changes occur when the learner is respected and understood as a whole person, when the teachers and students engage in building communities of learners, and when beliefs and practices are challenged in safe and constructive ways. – Diane-Larsen, ESOL scholar and author.

With the internalization of English there is a growing demand for quality language teaching and learning all over the world. In Ecuador, in a context of educational reform, universities are adopting new methodologies to improve English language teaching and learning. Tecnica del Norte University, a small university in the country is embarked on a new project in order to better serve learners in English learning. However, helping language learners become fluent users of the language has been a difficult task and it continuous to pose demands and challenges in the foreign language classroom in the university. It is difficult to meet the academic needs of the English language learners by merely combining teachers' lectures (teacher centered approach) with textbook activities and readings. Therefore planning and implementation of more effective paradigms that focus on learners and their learning process are needed to assist students in developing language fluency. The implementation and development of ECRIF in one of the courses where the investigation takes place may prove to be a positive first step toward incorporating a framework to guide language teaching and learning under the principles of constructivism, CLT in the post method era and backward planning to support language learning as students become fluent users of the language. This study explores and investigates the perceptions of UTN first level of English students regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the classroom and how this new paradigm can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series?

The focus of this chapter is on the specialized knowledge of the theoretical framework and review of the literature for this study. The first part of this chapter highlights literature research that informs the theoretical framework of ECRIF and its relevance to the field of foreign language teaching when planning lessons with the main objective in mind (backward planning). This part has been organized into five major areas: (1)

Constructivism: a theory of learning which sees learning as a process where students construct knowledge rather than discover it; relate and connect to their previous experience; and restructure it as they gradually internalize new knowledge as a result of interpersonal, textual and ideational interaction. (2) Communicative Language teaching in the post method methodology: sees communication as the center of language instruction and learning. It embraces a variety of approaches that all focus on helping language learners to communicate meaningfully in the target language. (3) Backward planning: a pedagogical approach to lesson planning in which the teacher first identifies the desired outcome and then works in reverse to create supportive instruction. (4) ECRIF: an instructional road map (a five stage lesson framework) for teachers to focus on learning by using the principles of constructivism, communicative language teaching in the post method methodology and backward design through the lenses of a three-dimensional pedagogy framework of particularity, practicality and possibility and the 10 macrostrategies principles. (5) A summary illustrating the connections between these four areas. The second part of the chapter discusses relevant literature of how backwards design can be applied to individual lesson planning when using the ECRIF lesson framework for productive skills in the language classroom.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, the theoretical framework is described and explained. Initially, a conception of constructivism philosophy is described followed by a discussion of Constructivism Pedagogy in Language Education. After that, a background surrounding the historical development of communicative language teaching as an approach to language teaching is described. Thereafter, Communicative language teaching is defined based on the basic tenets gained throughout its development to eventually analyze its role in the post communicative methodology, then backward planning, instructional design and lesson plan in constructivism are articulated as used in this study. Finally, theoretical perspectives (insights) concerning the link between theory and practice when using ECRIF are discussed. This section further delineates the significance of the theoretical framework for understanding the principles (insights) of constructivism, communicative

language teaching in the post language methodology, backward design and instructional design. It explores how the theoretical concepts and knowledge gained in these areas are turned into applicable pedagogic principles in ECRIF as it is used to scaffold the target language while helping learners develop language fluency in the second foreign English language classroom.

2.1. Constructivism Philosophy

Constructivism is a branch of philosophy that tries to understand how we construct knowledge (brain, mind, experience): what it means to know something and how we come to know it. Constructivism is a theory of learning which embraces the belief that knowledge is socially constructed. In this perspective, constructivism sees learning as a process in which the learner actively constructs or builds new ideas or concepts based upon current and past knowledge or experiences Kristinsdóttir (2001). According to constructivism, knowledge is the natural result of learner experiences and the interaction between the learner and the environment. Twomey Fosnot (1989) defines constructivism by reference to four principles: learning, in an important way, depends on what we already know; new ideas occur as we adapt and change our old ideas; learning involves inventing ideas rather than mechanically accumulating facts; meaningful learning occurs through rethinking old ideas and coming to new conclusions. Kurzweil and Scholl (2007), claim that learning involves conscious and unconscious changes in knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes.

2.1.1. Cognitive View of Constructivism

Constructivism draws on the developmental work of Piaget (1977) and Vygostky (1978). Piaget favors a cognitive view of constructivism. Cognitive or individual constructivism is focused on the internal construction of knowledge as it occurs in the minds of the individuals. The central idea in cognitive constructivism theory is that all learning builds on what we already know, and the dynamic of learning is characterized in terms of whether or not new knowledge fits easily with what it is already known. Piaget proposed a

schema theory which includes the concepts of four stages: assimilation, accommodation, disequilibrium, and equilibration.

According to schema theory, individuals have cognitive structures, or mental models of the world through which they fit new learning. This approach indicates that meaningful learning involves understanding the relationship between facts and principles, and students will learn best when they have a schema that allows them to link the new knowledge to the existing knowledge in the mind of the learners Mergel (1998). Assimilation and accommodation happens when the new knowledge does not fit. Therefore, it is implied that teachers are the ones who need to be in charge of being aware of their students' cognitive structure, their knowledge and experience to better serve learning in the classroom.

According to cognitivism, learning is considered not just stimulus-response association only but an active cognitive processing. Valentin Turchin states "A process is an action which we see as a sequence of constituting sub-actions. The states of the world resulting from sub actions are referred to as stages of the process. Thus, we see a process as a sequence of its stages." There is an emphasis on discovery learning rather than teacher-imparted information. Piaget hypothesized that language develops through interaction with the physical world. Though Piaget recognizes a social aspect in the construction of knowledge, he focuses on the individual as the center of that construction.

2.1.2. Social View of Constructivism

On the other hand, Vygostky pioneered works in co-constructivism better known as social constructivism. Vygotsky's work is basically based on three assumptions. The first assumption is that the community and its internal members play a central role in interacting in that individual's view of the world. The second is the assumption that the materials and or tools, whose types and qualities determine the pattern and the speed of cognitive development, are involved in the surrounding culture and language Vasidderly (2007). According to Vygostky (1978), learning is not simply the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge by learners; rather it is a process by which the learners are integrated into a knowledge community.

Thus, social constructivism focuses on the key role played by the environment and the social interaction between learners rather than of individual construction. Scholnik, Kol, Abarbanel (2006). Within the social constructivist perspective, knowledge is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of development; learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge. According to Sousa (2011), the more connections-interactions that are made by the learner, the more understanding and meaning the learner can attach to the new knowledge. The social processes of learning are seen as intrinsic to the cognitive processes. That is, learning is socially and culturally mediated through the flow of the language due to the social interaction. These interactions can give language learners multiple opportunities to attain new knowledge.

Vygostky (1978, p. 3) points out that “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them.” In addition, he considers language, spoken or written as dialogical rather than monological. This means that the basic unit of language is conversational interaction, not sentence structure or grammatical pattern. A fundamental consideration that Vygotsky draws attention to is that the social function in the learning process and the corresponding mental (cognitive) function are not the same: the process of internalization is a process of transformation, involving individual appropriation and reconstruction. Learning is about the reconstruction and transformation of resources and practices in ways that are responsive to individuals. As knowledge arises in social activity, then learning is co-constructed and in this construction there is a role for individual work. Central to this view on learning is that how individuals learn, what is learned and how that knowledge will be used. This will depend on the sum of the individual’s prior experience, the context in which learning takes place as well as those needs and interests from the learners Johnson (2009).

Vygostky’s work places more emphasis upon the role of experience and how understandings and meanings grow out of collaboration and interaction. Vygostky places emphasis on the social aspect of knowledge, believing that all learning takes place through language and social interaction in the context in which it is encountered Kanuka and Anderson (1999). Therefore, social constructivism means that students construct

knowledge and skills based on interaction, individually and with peers and teachers in combination with prior experiences and reflections on the process. In Vygostky's sense, learning refers to the process of cognitive development as it progresses, initially from external socially mediated activity to internal mediation controlled by the individual as he or she appropriates and reconstructs knowledge. These two senses can interact over time to strengthen one another in a reciprocal spiral relationship Martin (1998). Both learners and the environmental factors are important in the learning process.

2.1.3. The Zone of Proximal Development

Building on the concept of Piaget's schema theory, Vygotsky proposed the idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) level of adults or experts within a context of learning Palincsar (1998). The ZPD is viewed as the third principal assumption in social constructivism. It is conceptualized as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and level of potential development as determined through solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" Vygostky (1978, p. 86). Within the ZPD, individual cognition originates in the social collective mind and combines in and through engagement in social activity with others. This proposal suggests two steps. In the first, all cognitive processes are interpersonal, and in the second, those processes are internalized by the individual or in an intrapersonal way.

In the context of language learning, the ZPD may be considered as the opportunity for learning where the individual's both independent and supported performance can be displayed during a given goal-directed learning task beyond the individual's sole competence. The ZPD can also be conceived as the collaborative construction of learning opportunities where learners work together or with more expert individuals towards a shared goal Bailey (2009). The ZPD is favorable in the development of language learning due to the permanent interaction in the classroom between the teacher and the students. These interactions can be seen in the different lesson stages that allow learners to work on a series of activities where students can outperform their tasks through the assistance and

support of their peers involved in the socially mediated activity of learning. These activities basically go through inter and intrapersonal processes.

A learner progresses from one cognitive level to another through support, or scaffolding. Scaffolding is closely related to the ZPD. It is only within the ZPD that scaffolding can occur. The learner is assisted from a more cognitively person in the view that learning is a process of gradual internalization of routines and procedures available for the learner from the social and cultural context in which learning is taking place Applebee and Langer (1983). According to the ZPD, at the outset of a learning process, the teacher is to undertake most of the task before the teacher and students assume the collaborative duty Schunk (2000). According to David Wood (1998), scaffolding is tutorial behaviour that is contingent, collaborative and interactive. The teacher gradually reduces the help as scaffolding until students can perform alone since they become more capable Campione et al., (1984). “Students are challenged to learn within the bounds of the ZPD, which is altered as they develop capabilities” Schunk (2000 p. 245).

The paragraphs above have briefly discussed two ways of fundamental understanding of how learning takes place from a constructivist perspective. These concepts recognize human learning as: (1) a constant, self-regulated struggle to adapt existing knowledge to include new information and experiences. It provides an explanation for the fact that human learning is individual, temporary and ever changing. (2) An individual developing knowledge is shaped by the social interaction, tools and the environment in which learning is taking place. Meaning and knowledge can be created collectively by learners or by learners and teachers. From this view, social interaction supports the development of the individual’s knowledge that is viable and meaningful which in turn will eventually provide the foundation from which new learning can occur.

Thus, social interaction in the classroom should emphasize the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners, tasks and the learning environment. Learners attempt to foster knowledge by doing, being involved in the process and accomplishing tasks. The second concept also acknowledges the important role of implementing socially situated scaffolding interactions in the development of learning. Teachers need to present “new

ideas”, strategies, and concepts of information on what students already know in small reasonably sized scaffold doses. In conclusion we can say that though learning is personally constructed, the constructed learning is socially mediated as a result of experiences and interactions with others. Understanding knowledge of theory is necessary because it provides us with a framework for thinking and doing. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will create a dialectical relationship between theory and practice. He will design his work (lessons) by translating constructivist theory into the instructional planning process using ECRIF as a lesson framework to support language learning. He will create an environment that promotes social interaction among learners in the classroom by providing meaningful connections with the real world to achieve language fluency.

2.2. Constructivist Pedagogy in Language Education

As Brown (2001) pointed out, in recent years, constructivism has an accepted practice to hold various constructions of knowledge. The shifting paradigm toward constructivist approaches to learning has created instructional changes in the language teaching field. Constructivism has affected the approaches to language teaching and learning. Transactional curriculum, learning centered, student centered, collaborative tasks and active learning that focus on cognitive and social processes in learning have replaced curriculum-centered, passive learning, teacher-centered information transmission models and individual tasks.

Communicative language teaching in the post pedagogy has integrated a variety of instructional approaches that focus on language-centered methods, learner-centered methods and learning centered methods consisting of three interwoven pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility Kumaravadivelu (2003). These changes in language pedagogy have been informed by the two main perspectives in constructivist learning theory: cognitive constructivism which is about the (1) cognitive process involved in knowledge construction and meaning making, and (2) social constructivism which is about the social and cultural processes involved in learning Reyes and Vallone (2008).

Thus, learning is seen as an on-going process. It is not only a matter of cognitive development but also of shared social practices. Learning involves continual interaction between the mind, the environment and its interaction. Learning is never completed, and teachers are in charge of enhancing and enriching students' development in these two areas as they strive to create an environment and circumstances that help students do the learning while they pay attention to their students learning process Kurzweil (2007).

The constructivism approach instruction focuses on a day-to-day learning by the students where teachers as facilitators of that process, are in charge of designing learning experiences based on what learners will do in their learning process as they gradually internalize the new language. The language, learner, and learning centered approach basically consist of specified set of theoretical principles and specified set of classroom procedures. Thus, teachers flexibly and creatively can incorporate on going experiences in the classroom to scaffold and facilitate learning in order to accomplish the goals of language learning and teaching in the classroom Kumaravadivelu (2003).

It is probably helpful at this point to define what is commonly meant by scaffolding: The term scaffolding was developed as a metaphor to explain the type of assistance offered by a teacher or peer to support learning only on those skills that are beyond their current students' capability based on the work of Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976). Holton and Clarke (2006) define scaffolding as: "an act of teaching that (1) supports the immediate construction of knowledge by the learner; and (2) provides the basis for the future independent learning of individual" (p. 133). Scaffolding is considered a psychological tool that serves to reduce the cognitive load required to perform a certain task so that the learner can remain in the center of the task and be fully engaged, without which the learner cannot be fully involved Johnson (2009).

In Vygotskian theory, scaffolding is distinguished from simple "assisted performance" which is the straightforward directions to complete a given task, in the sense that scaffolding targets cognitive development and nurtures concepts that are already developing. It is the type of assistance adjusted with what the learner can do with it to build on his/her existing knowledge. Yet it can be given and withdrawn at certain points to

allow the learner to appropriate and internalize the cognitive function in hand until eventually the learner demonstrates internalization in the form of independent control over the task. In this sense, scaffolding leads to cognitive development. Ovando (2003, p. 345), defines scaffolding as “Scaffolding refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modelling, visual and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning.”

Within the teaching-in-planning, Walqui (2006) states that there are three major types of scaffolding that can be thought of as three related supported pedagogical scales. First, there is the meaning of providing a support structure throughout the lesson stages to enable certain activities and skills to develop. Second, there is the actual carrying out of particular activities in class. And, third, there is an assistance provided in moment-to-moment interaction. According to Gibbons (2003) a pedagogical scaffolding action is blended of the “instructional” and “planned” scaffolding. It moves from planned to improvised, and from structure to process.

In the language teaching field, Brawn (2011) conceives scaffolding from two different perspectives or domains of teacher action in the teaching-learning process. (1) “Implementation”, here scaffolding happens as the interactive social nature of learning in joint activities that focus on matters of shared interest and that contain opportunities for learning when it is appropriate to a learner’s current and potential level of development (ZPD). Scaffolding here takes place naturally or spontaneously between teacher and students, or students and students who can learn from each other during their interaction in the classroom. From this first perspective, Brawn states that “scaffolding is something that is not planned but a necessary feature of the act of teaching and the process of learning”.

(2) “Planned” scaffolding, referred by Brawn as the designed pedagogical support in the micro level (lesson planning). Brawn points out that there are two kinds of planned scaffoldings within a typical lesson. The first relates to the lesson or target language to be presented in the lesson, and the second one to the task or activity that the teacher selects, adapts or creates to be used at any stage of the lesson. According to Brawn, scaffolding in

the domain of “planned” is still something that helps the learner gradually internalize the target language, but it is something planned into the lesson activities and materials

Therefore, language teachers need to be aware and recognize how learners use their own experiences, prior knowledge and perceptions, as well as their physical and interpersonal environments (interaction in the classroom) to construct knowledge and meaning. The activities are designed to scaffold the learners’ knowledge construction process. Wilson (1996) defines a constructive learning environment as “a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities” (p. 5).

Since the 1970s with the emergence of cognitive revolution there has been an increasing interest toward language learning and language teaching strategies. These have assisted language facilitators in creating instructional frameworks to facilitate the language learning process. Frameworks are based on meta-cognitive strategies (planning for learning, thinking about the learning process, observing production, comprehension, correcting mistakes and evaluating), Cognitive strategies (direct manipulation of the learning material – specific learning tasks), and socio-affective strategies (interaction with the environment and with others) Marvdasht (2012).

Thus, constructivist perspectives on learning and teaching have important implications for instruction and curriculum design. From a constructivist perspective, teachers do not teach in the traditional sense of delivering instruction to a group of students. Constructivist learning environments can encompass fundamental aspects such as: authentic situations which contextualize relevant learning, use of pragmatic methods, instructional aims and plans developed through the collaboration between the learners and teachers, enhance content relevance, where learners are encourage to draw on their prior knowledge to establish conceptual relationships and then transfer this acquired understanding to construct new knowledge.

Teachers need to create pedagogical support, including materials, experiences, peer interaction and teacher-student interaction, through learning activities of increasing

difficulty that systematically challenge the learner but are still achievable given the learners' level of experience (ZPD). The learning activities should encompass multisensory participation and occur with discovery, experience and modeling. They should focus on interaction including self, pair, small group and whole class activities supported by collaborative efforts of the teacher and students themselves Jonnassen (1999).

2.3. Communicative Language Teaching

The methodical history of language teaching has always been in constant movement and change trying to find the best method and approaches to solve language teaching problems in the last century Brown (2001). However, the language teaching field has seen many significant changes in the last 60 years searching for innovative and effective methods of language instruction. It is within the last thirty years that Communicative Language Teaching (hereafter referred to as CLT) in the language teaching field has been put forth as a new and improved principled approach to teach English as a second or foreign language in many parts of the world as an effective way of teaching in ESL/EFL contexts. According to Richards (2006, p. 172), CLT has passed through a number of different developmental phases. These phases have helped language teachers gain an understanding of theoretical principles (theory of language, communicative competence, functional account for language use, discourse analysis and social linguistic considerations) for the epistemology of practice offered by CLT and its interpretation of that practice as CLT has evolved and as it continues to offer a framework for integrating linguistic theory, research and teaching practice Savignon (1991). Consequently, according to Richards (2006), CLT has prompted a rethinking of approaches and to syllabus designs, classroom materials and activities that reflect the principles of a communicative methodology in the last few decades.

Kumaravadivelu (2006, p. 89) defines principles as “a set of insights derived from theoretical and applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, information sciences and other allied disciplines that provide theoretical bases for the study of language learning, language

planning and language teaching” and its classroom implications “procedures” which is defined as “ a set of teaching strategies adopted/adapted by the teacher in order to accomplish the stated and unstated, short –and-large long term goals of language learning and teaching in the classroom.” Kumaravadivelu (2006, p. 89).

Both theoretical principles and classroom procedures in the CLT sees communication as the center of language instruction and learning, reflecting real communication process, avoiding constant error correction and putting grammar at a right place in the teaching-learning process. It advocates learning a language through use. In other words, the concepts of language and theories of learning gained throughout the evolution of CLT have contributed to shape and reshape the instructional processes and strategies in the communicative language classroom Kumaravadivelu (2006).

2.3.1. The First Phase of Communicative Language Teaching

The first phase of the beginning of the communicative approach was developed in the 1970’s in reaction to grammar translation (structural linguistics) and audio-lingual approaches (behaviorist psychology) to language teaching pedagogy and in recognition of theoretical advances in the language teaching field. The methods mentioned above focused on language as a system and learners tried to master the grammar and pronunciation of the target language Celce Murcia and Olshtain (2000) cited in Celce Murcia (2007). Its teacher-fronted pedagogy, which involved explanations of grammatical systems and new vocabulary while students copied notes, read, and translate texts in the new language did not help learners to connect language learning or language use in real world situations outside the classroom Richards (2006).

One of the most widely brought forward points of criticism toward these methods is that the learners lacked engagement on meaningful language use. This was due in part to the negative response of the habit formation theory of language acquisition and to some extent to the fact that both teachers and students found repetition boring and unmotivating.

Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 65) state that “Students were often found to be unable to transfer skills acquired through audiolingualism to real communication outside the classroom, and many found the experience of studying through audio-lingual procedures to be boring and unsatisfying.” These criticisms paved the way for psychologists and language acquisition researchers to move onto new, more complex theories of learning more concerned with creativity.

Thus, the first phase of the CLT is characterized by the emergence of a “communicative approach” in which important implications for syllabus design took place. Linguist researchers and teachers started to analyze learners’ needs to involve them in the language they were learning more actively and which according to Brown (1973), introduced construct such as “creative construct,” which helped to see language learning as a cognitive process. Hymes (1972) introduced the distinction between linguistic competence and communicative competence. His work led Second Language Acquisition scholars to focus on studying the nature and development of communicative competence. He pointed out that in addition to linguistic competence, a language learner needed notions of socio linguistic competence “knowledge how to use the language” to account for language acquisition and language use. According to Hymes, language learners should not only master a language’s forms, but should also be able to communicate through language.

Wilkins (1972) also discusses the importance of considering both form and meaning in the study of language. These conceptions resulted in the move from language as a structured-base mental system to language as a functional tool for communicative purposes. The functional view regards language as a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. It emphasizes semantic and communicative dimensions rather than grammatical characteristics. Syllabuses then were organized in terms of notions such as time, sequence, quantity, location and frequency and categories of communicative functions such as informing, requesting and informing rather than grammatical structures Wilkins (1976). According to Larsen-Freeman (1987), the implementation of syllabus based on notional-functional concepts of language use, meant to build a course around the uses or functions to which language is used (its meaning).

Teaching contents were organized by categories of meaning and function rather than by elements of structure and grammar. Language is seen as a means of communication which indeed affected the way teachers went about teaching a language Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 14). Wilkins' concepts of notions and functions played a central role in the language teaching field in the 70's. This was the beginning for a restructuring of language syllabus, which gradually culminated in the communicative turn. This was basically the turning point that occurred within the field of linguistics and language pedagogy. Notional-Functional syllabuses arranged language material into units that focused on language functions and provided some structure for learning to communicate through various semantic notions. Hymes and Wilkins' philosophy was an important step towards a shift in language methodology, which increasingly defined language learning as learning to express oneself in interaction with others. However, some linguists as well as Wilkins (1976) felt that the various manifestations of the Notional Functional Syllabus that emerged in the 70's did not provide a good guidance for language teachers and that there were no adequate techniques to be applied in the classroom within a notional syllabus.

In summary, the first phase of the CLT is characterized by its rejection to Grammar Translation method and Audio lingual method and mainly to its language instruction, which principles of language-centered pedagogy were drawn from structural linguistics and behavioral psychology. The first phase of CLT embraced the need to develop a syllabus that was compatible with the notion of communicative competence. This led to proposals of syllabuses in terms of notions (a context in which people communicate) and functions (a specific purpose for a speaker in a given context). Although, its pedagogy was effective in the beginning, as time went by, it failed to deliver its main goal of developing successful communicative ability in the learners. Basically, there was a need of guidance to support the practice in the classroom to meet their specific communicative needs in the learners based on research theory.

2.3.2. The Second Phase of Communicative Language Teaching

The second phase of CLT took place in the 1980's. Language instruction moved towards a more "communicative approach." However, its application in the classroom was still ambiguous and the concept of communicative competence was still in debate. One important aspect in the second phase of CLT is the attempt to integrate linguistics research into the field of language pedagogy in order to foster communicative capability in the learner. The shift in language pedagogy to base language teaching practice on research-based theory from the fields of linguistics, psychology and other relevant fields such as ethnography, ethnomethodology, pragmatics, and discourse analysis served to strengthen the theoretical foundation of CLT. The insights borrowed and adapted from all of these areas of inquiry were reflected in the theory of language and communication adopted by learner-centered pedagogies. These insights helped to initiate and further theoretical and practical developments in the language teaching field Kumaravadivelu (2006).

Canale and Swain research (1980) contributed to the language field to clarify the concept of "communicative competence" introduced by the anthropologist Dell Hymes (1972). They identified three components of communicative competence to assess language learners' use: (1) grammatical competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, (3) strategic competence, which later were revised to incorporate a fourth component (4) discourse competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980, p. 29), grammatical competence refers to "Knowledge of lexical items and the rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology." In other words Richards and Rogers define grammar competence as "the knowledge of building blocks of sentences (e.g., parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns) and how sentences are formed." This knowledge will help the learners to use and understand a language structure accurately and unhesitatingly, contributing to their fluency.

Sociolinguistic competence is that which involves knowing what is expected socially and culturally by the users of the target language (norms and rules) and which has to do with the use of language according to sociolinguistic context. That is, awareness of acceptable ways of interacting with others in different situations and relationships. Knowledge of

language alone does not adequately prepare language learners to use the target language appropriately and effectively Canale and Swain (1980, p. 7).

Strategic competence refers to the ability to know the various conversation strategies a person can use to keep a conversation going, how to end a conversation, and how to clear up communication breakdown as well as comprehension problems. Canale and Swain (1980, p. 30).

Finally, discourse competence relates to the ability to perceive and process stretches of discourse and to formulate representations of meaning from referents in both previous sentences and following sentences. It describes cohesion and coherence in oral and written texts. It relates to the concept of language as discourse and describes cohesion and coherence in written and spoken texts. From this perspective the learning of discourse involves understanding how texts work as cohesive and coherent units. Thus, there is a need of acquiring a large repertoire of structures and discourse markers in order to express ideas, show relationship of time, and indicate cause, contrast, and emphasis Canale and Swain (1980).

The multi faceted modality of language proficiency (grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence) that was taken into account within the second phase of CLT based on the work of Canale and Swain (1980) outlined the theoretical principles and classroom procedures of learner-centered pedagogy. The focus on language as discourse in addition to language as a system (linguistics properties) and meaning (functional properties) made a significant contribution to furthering the cause of principled language teaching. That is “language was understood as a means of conveying and receiving ideas and information as well as a tool for expressing personal needs, wants, beliefs and desires” Kumaravadivelu (2006, p. 129).

Learners were perceived as central to the language teaching-learning process. New classroom procedures (curriculum and lesson design, safe learning environment, interaction dynamics) were introduced in order to create and maintain motivation. (See appendix C). By this time, there was an increased belief that “teaching communicatively”

was the best pedagogical principle for teaching language learners to communicate through language. Language is seen as a system for the expression of meaning, the primary function of language is for interaction and communication, the structuring language reflects its functional and communicative uses, the primary unit of language is not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 71).

As communicative language teaching methodologies kept evolving and being more clearly defined in the 1980's and early 90's, a set of alternative approaches and a range of alternative methods emerged to make their position on communicative competence. Among these approaches and methods we have the Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, the Silent Way, and Suggestopedia. It is in this second phase when language teachers began to understand the importance of fostering language learners' abilities to communicate in a foreign or second language based on the work of Widdowson (1978), Canale and Swain (1980), Nunan (1991), and Littlewood (1981). CLT is conceived from a sociolinguistic approach to language learning that stresses an emphasis on activities that engage the students in language use (functional activities and social interaction activities) that is more meaningful and authentic. Both activities represented an effort to make the concepts associated with communicative competence applicable to the practice of language teaching.

In conclusion, the second phase of CLT was characterized by the integration of linguistic research into the praxis of language teaching. At the level of language theory, there is a very broad and rich scope, if somewhat eclectic theory base: (1) language is a system for the expression of meaning, (2) the primary function of language is for interaction and communication, (3) the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses and (4) the primary unit of language it is not merely its grammatical and structural features but categories of functional and communicative meaning. At the level of linguistic theory, communicative competence is made up of four major strands: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. The main goal of language teaching is to develop "communicative competence" through developing a wide repertoire of activities. At the level of language learning, learning is

seen as a cognitive process. Therefore, uses of language became the focus of classroom activities favoring the multiple explanations for language learning.

This implied new roles for teachers and learners. At this phase, CLT focused on procedures for identifying learners' needs and interests and this resulted in proposals to make needs analysis an essential component of communicative methodology. Learners have to participate in activities that enhance communicative competence through social experience. This change in roles of both teacher and learners relates to the fact that CLT proposed a different view of the nature of language to previous methodologies. The knowledge gained throughout the first and second phase of CLT helped language teachers understand that successful communication is comprised not only of learners' application of linguistics skills but also of their meta- linguistic skills.

A consensus is found regarding the process of language learning: language can not be learned through synthetic units such as grammar, functions, or notions in a discrete and linear way, and nor can it be learned separate from language use. Consequently, CLT does not have a procedure or an overall plan (framework) for the presentation of language materials. CLT allows language teachers to introduce purposeful communicative activities and principles that could be used as a basis of a communicative methodology such as group work, task-work, and information gap activities within the classroom. Indeed, CLT has had a creative influence over the way language teachers select the theoretical ideas based on a pedagogical approach to language teaching. It has incorporated notions of language acquisition, learning and motivation when teaching English as a foreign language these days, especially in communicative classes.

2.3.3. Defining Communicative Language Teaching

According to Savignon, the best summary of the core tenets of CLT is that offered by Berns (1990) cited in Chapter 35 of the Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning (2005, p. 639-640).

1. - Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication. That is, language is seen as a social tool that speakers and writers use to make meaning; we communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing.
2. - Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development and use in second language learners and users as it is with first language users.
3. - A learner's competence is considered in relative, not absolute, terms of correctness.
4. - More than one variety of a language is recognized as a model for learning and teaching.
5. - Culture is seen to play an instrumental role in shaping speakers' communicative competence, both in their first and subsequent languages.
6. - No single methodology or fix set of techniques is prescribed.
7. - Language use is recognized as serving the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual functions and it is related to the development of learner's competence in each.
8. - It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language, that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of learning. Learners' expectations and attitudes have increasingly come to be recognized for their role in advancing or impeding curricular change.

In this sense, CLT can be said to be multidisciplinary as it draws on ideas from a number of disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, educational research and philosophy. Although a number of dominant features of the CLT approach are easily identified, CLT has been difficult to define. Bell, D. (2003, p. 328.) defines CLT as:

a set of diverse principles that essentially stress the engagement of learners in authentic, meaningful and fluent communication, usually through task based activities that seek to maximize opportunities for the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning in integrated language skills contexts; and that facilitate inductive or discovery learning of the grammatical, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse rules of the language with the ultimate goal of developing communicative competence

The above theoretical foundation and core tenets of CLT as well as the definition embraced by Bell (2003) have challenged the understanding of the goals of language instruction. Thus, language teaching since the 1990's has become more demanding and sophisticated under the influence of CLT due to its consolidation hand in hand with the understanding

that language learning is unique and different from situation to situation and takes place in a cultural context in which many variables need to be taken into account. Syllabus design has to account for not only structural aspects of language but also human and social factors. CLT requires and supports several pedagogical implications and a wide variety of classroom procedures to address different aspects of the processes of teaching and learning (Richards and Rogers, 2001; Savignon, 2001).

2.3.4. The Third and Current Phase of Communicative Language Teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the third phase of CLT started in the 1990's and it has focused on the application of the principles or core tenets of CLT. From this perspective, various teaching methods and approaches under the term of "communicative approaches" have attempted to integrate the concepts of theory to praxis. They have concentrated on the integration of communicative competence and meaning potential. Language teachers are in charge of designing language syllabus (macro-micro) and teaching materials that could be used as a basis of a communicative methodology. Its theory and research has encouraged a trend towards an eclectic mixing of teaching methods. This has been called "the post method condition" Kumaravadivelu (1994) or the "post method pedagogy" Kumaravadivelu (2006). Post method pedagogy stresses language teaching that embraces components of the previous two phases of CLT as well as the best of "traditional" practices while discarding others that have shown to be less effective. This implies a renewed focus on the teacher's role as an informed decision maker in the classroom taking a multiplicity of roles such as facilitator, guider, researcher, scaffolder, participant and learner. Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 2) states that

To shape the practice of everyday teaching, teachers need to have a holistic understanding of what happens in their classroom. They need to systematically observe their teaching, interpret their classroom events, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions and try them out to see once again what works and what doesn't work

That is, language teachers are mainly in charge of exploring all language teaching approaches and methods since no single approach or method is best suited for all teaching contexts and mainly due to the various factors that involve a given language classroom. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), the post method condition signifies three interrelated attributes: (1) an alternative to method rather than an alternative method; (2) teacher autonomy; and (3) principled pragmatism Teachers need to reflect about specific needs, wants, situations and the process of learning and teaching. To be precise, teachers need to reflect about what helps and hinders language learning so they can design, create and apply learning opportunities.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), the concept of method is not sufficiently flexible to accommodate the contextual variables of educational settings nor does it address the needs and goals of individual teachers and students. Teachers are encouraged to draw on many methodologies in order to create and manage conditions for communicative social interaction such as group work, task-work, and information gap activities appropriate for their contexts and the goal for the learners. Teachers need to make a good use of their repertoire of teaching practice to establish and maintain social relations and transactional functions while developing communicative competence in the learner.

However, according to Kumaravadivelu (2006) an eclectic approach has many pitfalls as it lacks both credibility in theory and reliability in practice. Kumaravadivelu has proposed to use Stern strategic framework (1992) which visualizes and contextualizes post method pedagogy as a three-dimensional system consisting of pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility that could be used as the guiding principles for the construction of post method pedagogies that are context-sensitivity oriented to optimize language learning opportunities.

The parameter of particularity requires that teachers become aware that the sorts of techniques they use are appropriate depending on where, when and to whom they are teaching. By the notion of particularity, Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 34) suggests, “any language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular

institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu.” That means that language teachers need to create a relationship between the teaching context and the methodology they apply in class as a process to achieve a goal. Teachers need to make use of a unique combination of procedures that are appropriate to the learner, their needs and interests as well as the (setting) institutional and sociocultural factors.

The second parameter of practicality is intertwined with the parameter of particularity as it directly impacts the practice of classroom teaching. That is, the connection between theory and practice. A method should be applicable in a real situation; otherwise the practice theory relationship can not be approached. In other words, a theory is of no use unless it can be applied in class. It is the teacher, who reflects about what works and doesn't work in the classroom, and therefore, language teachers are the ones who can select the best way to teach a language based on their reflection and this is then subjected to further critical evaluation. Kumaravadivelu (2006, p. 173) states that reflection on the part of language teachers can only be achieved when they are “enabled to theorize from their practice and practice as they theorize.” According to Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 35) the parameter of practicality recognizes that “no theory of practice can be fully useful and usable unless it is generated through practice.” This is called a sense of plausibility by Prabhu (1990) and it requires that language teachers view pedagogy not only as a mechanism for maximizing learning opportunities but to transform possibilities in and outside the classroom.

The third parameter of possibility seeks to reflect the role derived from any pedagogy and its implication in relation to students' social background and previous experiences that learners bring to the classroom and consider them as important aspects in the course.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) proposed the use of the macrostrategic framework presented by Stern for language teaching (1992) consisting of pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility as the foundation for a post method methodology. The post method framework is supported by ten interwoven macrostrategies as guiding principles “derived from historical, theoretical, empirical, and experiential insights related to L2 learning and teaching” Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 38) these macrostrategies guide language teachers to carry out the language pedagogy in the classroom by (1) Maximizing learning

opportunities; (2) facilitating negotiated interactions; (3) minimizing perceptual mismatches; (4) activating intuitive heuristics; (5) fostering language awareness; (6) contextualizing linguistic input; (7) integrating language skills; (8) promoting learner autonomy; (9) ensuring social relevance; and (10) raising cultural awareness Kumaravadivelu (2003 p. 39).

Maximizing learning opportunities: Envisions teaching as a process of creating and utilizing learning opportunities and being aware of them in the language learning process. Teachers need to constantly monitor the learning process and balance their role as facilitators as the lesson unfolds (lesson plan) and make suitable changes as necessary. For example, in a lesson where the topic is about aches and pains, students might not be able to see a difference between them, so it is the teacher's role to create a learning opportunity by describing the difference between the words that are presented.

Facilitating negotiated interactions: Refers to meaningful learner-learner, learner-teacher classroom interaction (textual, interpersonal and ideational) in which learners are entitled and encouraged to participate in conversation. By employing this macrostrategy, teachers take students beyond the limited action of react and respond. Learners have the opportunity to initiate conversations as well as to react and respond to them when using the language to communicate their ideas and thoughts.

Minimizing perceptual mismatches: Emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the teacher and learner(s) each have a clear understanding of each other goals, assumptions and interpretations related to their teaching/learning. It involves recognizing those perceptual mismatches. One way of avoiding the mismatch could be by using concept checking questions when giving instructions and when checking the meaning of a word, or structure.

Activating intuitive heuristics: It stresses the importance of creating a rich linguistic environment in the classroom so that learners can have the opportunity to activate their intuitive heuristic in their learning process by self discovery. That is teachers using an approach where learners discover things by themselves and where they can learn from their

own experience due to the social interaction in the classroom or the textual data presented in the lesson.

Fostering language awareness: Refers to any attempt to draw students' attention to an awareness of linguistic and sociolinguistics features governing language usage to promote learning. In other words, the formal and functional properties of their second language are taken into account in relation to second or foreign classroom teaching. This can be done through the process of personal reflection, think-pair-share and small group to whole class sharing.

Contextualizing linguistic input: Highlights how language usage and use are shaped by "linguistic, extra linguistic, situational and extra situational contexts" This is by presenting linguistic input within thematic contexts and authentic written or oral texts that reflect the natural use of language as it is used in real life situations. This macrostrategy involves the integration of form, meaning and use. In a lesson students are given the opportunity to focus not only on the forms but also on meaning and discourse when necessary.

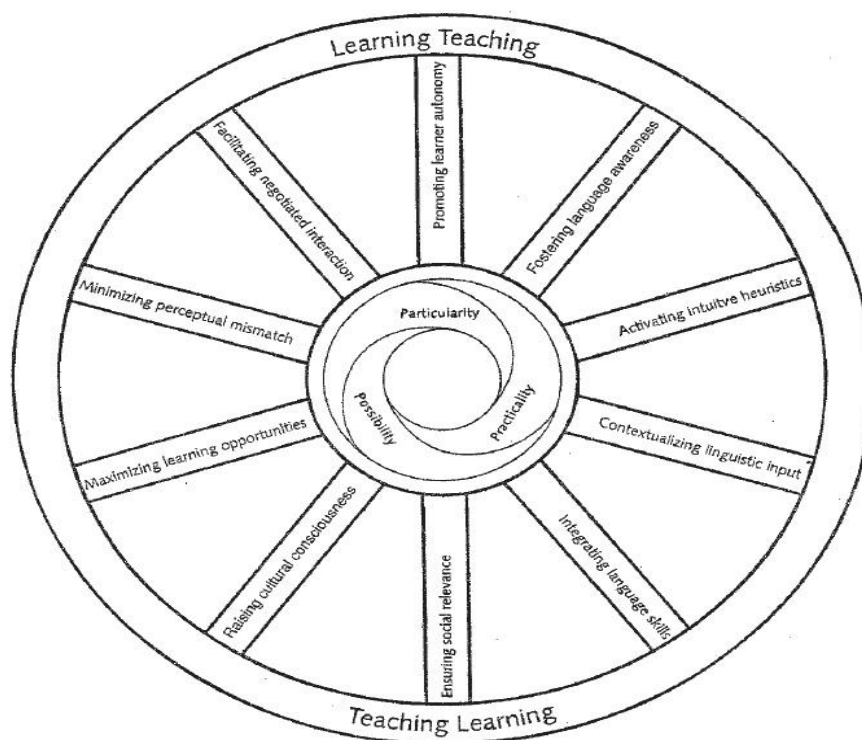
Integrating language skills: Stresses the need to holistically integrate the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The separation of skills is inadequate for developing integrated functional skills because "language skills are essentially interrelated and mutually reinforcing." Therefore, language teachers should conduct lessons in such a way that learners have the opportunity to use language for all the language skills through combining different learning activities in the different learning stages.

Promoting learner autonomy: Involves learners helping learn how to learn, equipping them with strategies necessary to be self directed and self monitor their own learning. "A crucial task of the teacher wishing to promote learner autonomy is to help them take responsibility for their learning and to bring about necessary attitudinal changes in them." Language teacher should provide them with a framework to monitor their learning progress. They also should invite students to set their own goals for a lesson as well as for a unit and help them recognize their own learning styles and learning strategies.

Ensuring social relevance: This macrostrategy calls attention to the need for the teacher to be sensitive to the social, political and educational environment where the language teaching-learning process is taking place. Teachers need to use relevant teaching materials that not only reflect the target culture but also draw on their learners' own life and culture to enhance social relevance. Teachers need to make connections between their learners experience and the topic(s) being presented or through personalization.

Raising cultural awareness: Language and culture are interrelated. Therefore, this macrostrategy emphasizes the need to treat learners as "cultural informants" so that learners are encouraged to engage in a process of classroom participation by creating awareness and empathy toward the second language they are learning. Teachers can create opportunities to make comparisons between their culture and the target culture. It is the teacher's role to help learner go through a process of knowing about, knowing how, knowing why and knowing oneself. It is the learner who decides extent to which they accept, explore or become part of the culture Patrick Moran SIT.

The pedagogic wheel from Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 41)



Kumaravadivelu (2003, p.30) states that “macrostrategies may be considered theory-neutral as well as method neutral” that means that the framework is not constrained or prescribed by the underlying principles of a single theory of language learning, or language teaching nor of a particular set of theoretical principles of procedures associated with a particular language method. It suggests that teachers should find a middle path in the application of the 10 principles.

In conclusion, the third phase of CLT in the post method methodology keeps in mind the limitations of the concept of method and how post method pedagogy based on Stern framework (1992) through the parameter of particularity, practicality and possibility and Kumaravadivelu’s macrostrategies (2003) can help language teachers overcome these limitations. Post method methodology allows language teachers to see learning and teaching with new lenses. Language teachers need to revise and adjust the methods and approaches based on their own real classrooms, learners and the situations in which the teaching and learning process is taking place. They need to pay attention to students’ background, needs, feelings, interests and ability as they get involved in a reflective teaching and learning process. Reflection can lead language teachers to better formulate their own principles, assumptions, constraints, and approaches to language learning as they develop a systematic, coherent and personal theory and practice that goes beyond the limited and limiting concept of method.

2.4. Constructivist Instructional Design and Lesson plan

In the context of second language education, planning for teaching and learning is seen as a complex process that needs to take numerous variables into account to fulfill a variety of functions. It is generally agreed that teachers’ classroom daily practice is directly or indirectly based on some theory whether or not it is explicitly articulated. However, it can be seen from a variety of perspectives by different teachers. The teaching techniques applied in a lesson are in one way or another informed by principled theories. According to Smith and Ragan (2005, p. 2), the term instructional design “refers to the systematic and

reflective process of translating principles of learning and instruction into plans for instructional materials, activities, information resources and evaluation.”

Theories and philosophy about learning (cognitive, motivational, technical, attention and engagement) are the source of principles that will offer an explicit regulation for what the instruction should provide to facilitate learning based upon conditions (learners and context) and learning goals (tasks) Saphier (2007 chapter 10) Smith and Ragan state that theory and philosophy of learning can provide a rationale for many of the decisions teacher can take in when designing the teaching learning experiences in a lesson. It is a visualized representation of a process showing the main elements or phases and their relationships. They will promote cognitive processes that lead to learning. However, they are not necessarily prescriptive. They do not directly suggest what kinds of instructional interventions should support learning.

Smith and Ragan (1999, p. 2) make a distinction between instruction and design. For Smith and Ragan instruction is “the intentional facilitation of learning toward identified learning goal.” In the second – foreign language teaching field, it will be seen as the intentional arrangements of experiences embedded in purposeful activities that will lead to language students learn particular target language or skills. The activities will help learners to appropriate knowledge; helping students rehearse, encode process and internalize information (long term memory); monitoring students’ performance and providing feedback as to the appropriateness of the students learning activities and practice performance.

In contrast, design “implies a systematic or intensive planning and ideation process prior to the development of something or the execution of some plan in order to solve a problem.” According to Smith and Ragan design is distinguished from instructional planning by the level of precision, care and expertise that is employed in the planning development and evaluation process. In other words, it means selecting an instructional strategy that it is appropriate for learning concepts Smith and Ragan (1999, p. 4).

In the language teaching-learning field, instructional design takes into account many factors that affect individual learning such as: content (framing the task or tasks), focus of the activity (getting ideas, sharing information, problem solving, creating something, finding the right answer, preparing a presentation, remembering new information, figuring things out), sequence of activities (controlled, semi-controlled, free), engagement/interaction (cooperative, collaborative, competitive, time pressured, open ended), supporting material (visual, Kinesthetic, auditory, tactile), and interactive environment (individual, pair, small group and the whole-class interaction). Teachers need to operationalize principles of learning and integrate the various elements of curriculum into a coherent plan Cumming (1989). All of these aspects may affect or be affected by the implementation of an instructional plan Kurzweil and Scholl (2007).

Designing and implementing a framework for teaching a second or foreign language using the CLT in the post method pedagogy and applying the two constructivism learning theories and principles (cognitive-social) might be a challenge due to the fact that constructivism is considered a learning theory and not an instructional-design theory. However, according to Ertmer and Newby (1993) constructive instructional design is tasks demanding high levels of processing that are frequently learned with strategies advanced by the constructivist perspective. That is situated learning, cognitive apprenticeships and social negotiation. Thus learning is mediated and structured by the teacher taking into account the constructivist learning perspective.

Reyes and Vallone (2008) highlight four tenets in a constructivist language classroom. They aim to contribute to language instruction: (1) new learning builds on prior knowledge; (2) learning is mediated through social interaction (3) problem solving is part of learning; (4) learning is a process, and teachers are facilitators of that process. A constructivist classroom then is a learning-learner-centered classroom; it focuses on students learning rather than on teachers teaching.

Consequently, when designing a framework for language teaching as mentioned earlier, language teachers can respond to the following set of questions based on general assumptions concerning the nature of human knowledge and learning and about how it is

attained. (1) How does learning occur? (2) Which factors influence learning? (3) What is the role of memory? (4) How does transfer occur? (the application of learned knowledge in new ways and how prior learning affects new learning) (5) What types of learning are best explained by the theory? (6) What basic assumptions or principles of the theory are relevant to instructional design? (7) How should instruction be structured to facilitate learning? Scrivener (2005 chapter VI) and Ertmer and Newby (1993).

By brainstorming answers to these questions, teachers can design and explore instruction practices that focus on the students and their learning. And what is most important, it is to see how the planning and its activities can entail an intellectual impact on every single student: the less experienced; the highly able, but motivated; the less able; those with varied interest and those with different learning styles. These answers, may lead teachers to reflection and have important implication for language pedagogy as they explore, relate and align the theoretical concepts of constructivist learning theory and CLT in the post method pedagogy to instruction design and their classroom practice.

The understanding of the underlying principles of constructivism and CLT in the post method pedagogy can contribute in important ways and guide teachers to focus on how to look at and design language lessons frameworks in terms of the subjective process of knowledge construction in individuals. Teachers can make decisions by translating them into concrete and practical ideas and exercises to support and facilitate students' language learning. Teachers can frame and stage the learning process by adapting and designing a conscious sequence of learning activities that would appeal to a variety of individuals, any of which can affect what happens in the language classroom and thus the quality of learning Ertmer and Newby (1993).

Since learning according to constructivism occurs as an act of cognitive restructuring, the construction of knowledge in students holds deep significance in terms of how teachers design their lessons to be applied in a constructivist language classroom. Constructivists instructional design aims to provide generative mental construction embedded in relevant learning environments that facilitate knowledge construction by learners taking into

account both the psycho-motor activity and the mental and cognitive process Jonassen (1991).

According to Nicaise and Barnes (1996), the role of the teacher in a constructivist classroom is that of a facilitator, guider, scaffolder, and problem/task presenter. Teachers using a constructivism model must incorporate three things: a goal, materials with which the students can create their own meanings, and a safe space in which to do so. Therefore, in a constructivist classroom, language learners interact with the learning material or the content that teachers construct for them. But, more importantly, the learners' interactions are influenced by their background experiences, their own motivation for learning, and their previous learning – all of which help them construct their knowledge foundation Fowler (2004). Teachers must consciously develop activities which increase students' sense of performing in meaningful social contexts rather than simply responding to prompts.

2.4.1. Lesson and Lesson Plan

The definition of a lesson and lesson planning that are presented in this paper come from four authors dedicated to improving teaching and learning. The first definition about a “lesson” comes from a language specialist, and then three definitions of lesson plan are presented. The first two definitions come from researchers in general education and the next one by a specialist in the language teaching field.

2.4.1.1. Lesson

Penny Ur (2012 p. 14) defines a lesson as: “The lesson is a type of organized goal-oriented social event that occurs in most if not all cultures. And although lessons in different places may vary in topic, atmosphere, methodology and materials, they all have served basic elements in common. Their main objective is **learning**, they are attended by a predetermined population of learner(s) and teacher(s), and there is a pre-set schedule for where and when they take place.”

2.4.1.2. Lesson Plan

According to Saphier (2007 p. 395), “A lesson plan is the centerpiece of planning and it is the detailed implementation scenario that specifies what the teacher does and what the students are expected to do during a bounded chunk of time devoted to a particular mastery objective.” As said by Clark & Dunn (1991), lesson planning is a psychological process of envisioning the future and considering goals and ways of achieving them. Lesson planning can be defined as a systematic development of instructional requirements, arrangement, conditions, materials and activities, as well as assessment and testing. It involves analysis of the teaching needs and the development of a delivery structure to meet those needs.

According to Tong (2012) he suggests that “ A lesson can be understood as the implementation of a deliberated, systematic attempt, within a given time unit, to provide a series of learner activities which can provide focused, organized (learning) experiences to a group of language learners. These focused, organized experiences are given with the aim to helping learners move gradually towards a set of justifiable or desirable objectives.”

The salient feature of a lesson as well as the three definitions about lesson planning is that a lesson plan is a pre active decision making of a carefully executed scenario oriented to achieve a clear objective (learning) within a period of classroom time before instruction. Planning a lesson is regarded as a series of consciously decisions which build a planned series of learning experiences such as presenting information, creating mental engagement, cognitive empathy and consolidating and anchoring the learning. No matter what format a teacher uses, it must guarantee that the planning is strategically leading students toward significant academic gains and serves the principles of learning Saphier (2007).

According to Robertson & Acklam (2000), every lesson is unique and it is made up of different stages. Lessons can focus on grammar, vocabulary, reading or writing. They may contain listening and speaking activities and concentrate on introducing new language items or on revision. The actual content of any lesson will depend on what the teacher aims to achieve during the lesson. Lesson plans should build toward the achievement of the

objective by planning cohesive instruction that can move all students to a desired goal and connect it to the long-term instructional goals.

Harmer Jeremy, in his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (2008) states that “The best teachers are those who think carefully about what they are going to do in their classes and who plan how they are going to organize the teaching and learning”. Additionally, Kurzweil & Scholl (2007) support this, by stating in their book *Understanding Teaching through Learning* (2007). “Effective teachers design lessons that provide them with concrete evidence of students learning.”

2.5. Backward Planning

“To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you are going so that you better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction”- Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989, p. 98).

According to Jack Richards (2013) curriculum design can be defined as “the overall plan or design for a course and how the content for the course is transformed into a blueprint for teaching and learning which enables the desired learning outcomes to be achieved.” In general education, the field of curriculum design has not been fixed; new techniques have been suggested for changing existing curriculum all the time, even though it might be a new term for an old one or existing idea. However, if we look back over the history of curriculum development, we will learn that the backward design process is something unique, not found in its literature. Since the 1920’s curriculum development was driven by the technical-scientific approach. Influential models developed by Tyler (1950) and Taba (1962) directed curriculum developers and teachers in their planning process for years. The designers of this traditional way of planning (forward design) listed the following steps in curriculum construction: (1) define the goals, purposes, or objectives, (2) define experiences or activities related to the goals, (3) organize the experiences and activities, and (4) evaluate the goals. This way of planning was embraced by the traditional language teaching (audio-lingual, structural situation and the beginning of CLT) method, which

followed the next three stages: syllabus planning (input), methodology, assessment of learning outcomes.

In 1998, Wiggins and McTighe presented a similar model but changed the order of the steps familiar to the previously mentioned curriculum developers, Wiggins and McTighe include the following steps: (1) identify the desired results, (2) determine the acceptable evidence, and (3) plan learning experiences and instruction. Typically, many teachers begin with textbooks, time-honored activities, and favored lessons rather than obtaining essential content from standards or targeted goals. The authors promote the reverse: “one starts with the end-the desired results (goals or standards) and then derives the curriculum from the evidence of learning (performances) called for by the standard and teaching needed to equip students to perform”. This backward approach to design also departs from another common procedure, thinking about innovative assessment as something to do at the end of a lesson. Backward design promotes choosing goals and standards in terms of assessment evidence as one begins to plan a course, unit or lesson Wiggins & McTighe (1998).

The backward design model encourages teachers to think about a unit or lesson in terms of assessment evidence needed to document and validate that the desired learning has been achieved so that the lesson is not just content to be covered while following a series of activities from a book. Similarly when using the traditional transmission approach, language teachers are marginalized from their role in the developmental process as they offer students sets of disconnected and de-contextualized experiences which do little help for students with the attainment of the final outcome. Assessment becomes an integral part of every step in this learning design. Teaching that is grounded in textbook coverage only can leave students with a superficial grasp of key ideas and an erroneous view of how knowledge becomes knowledge.

Nevertheless when using the backward design, the lesson will be anchored by performance tasks that provide evidence that students are gradually internalizing knowledge, so eventually they will show that they are able to use their knowledge in context. When planning with learning in mind, teachers should consider a culminating performance that

demonstrates evidence of understanding of the concept of the lesson. Once the culminating performance has been designed, then it is time to plan the learning experiences and instructions to be developed in class. The learning experiences must be engaging, and not only this but stimulate students to actively participate throughout the learning process.

2.6. ECRIF and Its Underlying Principles

“I need to start with something I can apply on. Is there anything more primitive than self awareness?” Caleb Gattegno – A Working Model for Health

In view of the challenges in understanding and implementing CLT in the post method methodology, constructivist theory, and backward design in a foreign language classroom, a framework is necessary to link teaching practices and the theoretical conceptions and principles of each of these areas. To guide teachers’ decision making in planning productive language skills, Kurzweil and Mary Scholl (2007) introduced ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching. ECRIF was created as an alternative to the PPP framework. Josh Kurzweil states “...one of the inherent problems that I always had with it (PPP) is figuring out who the actor is...” For him, he explains just the word “present” in most cases invites teachers to lecture or do a long presentation. Lecturing and doing long presentations is basically a teacher fronted class and does not focus on learning Thornsby (2012). According to Tanner (2009) traditional lecturing that relies on passive learning are not as effective as active, student centered learning strategies. Therefore, Kurzweil felt he needed to create an alternative framework to put learning at the center and to focus on what the students are doing with the target at each stage as they learn. (See appendix D) ECRIF is an acronym which stands for Encounter - Clarify – Remember - Internalize and Fluent Use. ECRIF seems to meet the criteria and the requirements of Communicative Language Teaching in the post method pedagogy, constructivist theory, and backward design based as a learning-teaching framework. Indeed, with the advent of international standards such as the Common European Framework, which describes six levels of achievement describing what a learner should be able to do with the productive and receptive language skills, ECRIF should be implemented in language instruction.

Each stage is considered an action stage in which students are working with the target language or structure. It suggests language teachers consider more carefully the desired results and the assessment of students' performance and achievement at the end of a lesson. Language teachers need to stage lessons in a way in which they can scaffold the content, balance accuracy and fluency work and provide stepping stones to learning objectives Kurzweil and Mary Scholl (2007). It helps teachers avoid "activity-oriented design" in which the teachers design activities without aims, and "coverage" in which the teacher covers the content of two or three pages in the textbook and transmit it to the students Wiggins and McTighe (2005 p., 16).

ECRIF is a dynamic, flexible, coherent instructional framework. It guides language teachers to be aware of the student's learning experience in an organized and contextualized way and not at random to sustain students' learning, interest and motivation. It helps teachers design and organize the scaffolding practice activities (that move from controlled to less controlled and finally to the use which is free and open ended) in such a way that they will lead gradually to the fluent use of the target language or skills for "genuine communication" and not only for referential questions Richards (2006). Teachers are encouraged to move from practice to praxis – that is, their work should be intentional, informed and critically reflected in a quest to help students make meaning through using language as a tool of communication. It is applied to a backward communicative – oriented language lesson framework to help learners become fluent users of the language (see appendix E).

ECRIF is a non-prescriptive paradigm; it incorporates the core tenets of constructivist learning theory and CLT in the post method pedagogy. Although it is a learning framework, as a teaching framework it is meant to facilitate the learning process Bradley (2012). It combines basic concepts of constructivist theories of learning with those principles (insights) derived from a variety of theoretical disciplines, mainly those of linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics on how people learn a second language and not only from these, but from allied disciplines that provide theoretical bases for language planning and language teaching Brandl (2008, p. 6).

The procedure, the practice activities designed, adopted, adapted and applied by the teacher at each stage are envisioned to give students the knowledge and experiential learning necessary to achieve language fluency at the end of a process. While not all the elements need to be implemented at the same time, there is a need to be aware of these key components that affect learning when creating, adapting, supplementing and or using activities throughout the five stages in the integrative language lesson framework. It is required for the teacher to play several roles in the different stages of a lesson. Teachers can take the role of presenters, designers, organizers, guiders, scaffolders, discussion leaders, resource providers, needs analysts, and facilitators in order to lead the students along the sequence of different learning activities (ECRIF stages) to achieve the different pedagogical goals/objectives of the productive lesson.

ECRIF focuses on the three dimensions applied to language in communication: Form, Meaning and Use Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003, p. 34-48) in each stage in order to help learners become fluent users of the language. The interaction of these three concepts guides teachers to focus on language learning thinking on what learners will be able to do with the language rather than on the mastery of particular language forms. However, it raises questions on how these three dimensions can be integrated into the different stages of a given lesson. It makes use of the CLT in the post method pedagogy as a macro framework which embraces a combination of the strengths from different traditional approaches to support certain learning experiences.

The framework provides a micro direction for teachers as they develop more informed and reflective classroom procedures within the CLT post method pedagogy. It takes in to reference the theoretical foundation of the backward curriculum framework developed by Wiggins &McTighe (1998), which ensures learning by design. Design implies intentionality, purposefulness and planfulness. It involves teacher's purposeful efforts in developing a coherent system of activities that facilitates the evolution of students' cognitive knowledge. It also applies the brain-based learning theory which encompasses educational concepts as learning styles, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, cooperative learning, problem-based learning and experiential learning Fletcher (2004). The quality of those decisions and efforts depend on the creativity of language teachers and

on their ability to apply learning and instructional theories. Ertmer and Newby (1993) suggest correlating different theories with the needs of the learners, the content to be learned and the environment to be created.

Rather than offering a step-by-step guide to follow, ECRIF provides a conceptual micro framework. It is not a philosophy of education, nor does it require a belief in any single pedagogical system or approach, it is compatible with a full range of prominent educational initiatives on how second languages are learned. It focuses on the cognitive learning process that learners go through as they learn the target language based on the four stages of Gattegno's universal and dynamic model of learning: awareness, exploration, automaticity and transfer Roslyn Young and Piers Messum (2011). ECRIF does not present teachers with a compile of repertoire of classroom activities. That is, it is not activity-driven; it is concept driven. Its main objective is to help language teachers see the micro pattern and criteria within the macrostrategic framework (Stern 1992) and the 10 macrostrategies presented by Kumaravadivelu to connect the tenets of Constructivism, CLT in the post method methodology and Understanding by Design to facilitate language learning.

2.6.1. Gattegno's Four Learning Stages vs. ECRIF Stages in a Lesson

The discussion that follows outlines the characteristics of ECRIF framework that makes it work as a planning tool across language teaching and learning contexts in EFL based on Gattegno's Four Learning Stages. Roslyn Young and Piers Messum in their book "How We Learn and How We Should be Taught" (2011) explain that according to Gattegno, learning only occurs in terms of awareness. The first stage is the simple act of awareness that there is something to be explored; there is something to be learned, some unknown to be known.

2.6.1.1 Encounter Stage

In the teaching of a foreign language Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) call this first stage the **Encounter Stage**: It is here where schema is activated. Students hear or see new language

and realized they do not know something. It is the students who encounter something new. Students realize that there is a skill or idea that they do not know or do not understand. Basically, this first stage is made up of contacts with the unknown. In the encounter stage, the learner is not expected to produce anything new; it focuses on input and initial assessment of learners' prior knowledge. The teacher is aware of what students know and what they do not know. Thus, it is a stage that prepares learners for what will come next. Learners become familiar with the topic, the language and essential vocabulary they will use during the lesson. Students do not even know if they make a mistake, if they are right it is just a matter of coincidence.

In the encounter stage, the teacher creates opportunities for students to encounter target language and skills. Teachers need to think more about how to set up a situation or text in which the student will encounter something new. Students can activate their prior experiences, ideas and feelings. The context of use is established by providing students with a scenario where the target language (form-meaning-and use when applicable) or skill is encountered or presented in a clear context that is familiar and relevant; students meet the target language for the first time through an activity, such as a puzzle or game; student prior knowledge is assessed through brainstorming, mind mapping or elicitation; student interest or awareness is generated by providing materials and activities that have impact; and rapport with students is built through providing students with a familiar and relevant context. (See appendix F) In the encounter stage students are not expected to produce the target language; the stage focuses on providing learners with comprehensible input. Teachers ignore the inaccuracy of target language at this stage of learning.

The second stage is when learning starts but there is an exploration of what is to be learned and mistakes are made while learning it. Awareness of the mistakes and the feedback regarding the mistakes allows learners for success in the learning process when the learner is "present" to the learning. Mistakes enable learners to progress because as they observe what happens and become aware of it, they can adapt their attempts in relation to the feedback given by the environment where learning is taking place Young and Messum (2011).

2.6.1.2. Clarify Stage

In the teaching of a foreign language Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) call this second stage the **Clarify Stage**: At this stage, learners hesitate and use time to try to make sense of the new impact. Students try to distinguish the meaning and form of the new language or structure. They see what it means; the way it is pronounced and spelled, its structure, and basically see how to make it in a sentence. Learners have time to write and reflect on new language structures or vocabulary and ask their own questions about accuracy, meaning and form to figure out the technique or knowledge. Students basically try to begin to clarify understanding of the form, meaning and use when applicable. Teachers create opportunities for students to need to clarify the target language and skills. Teachers answer the learners' questions or create the opportunity for the learner to discover the questions about accuracy. (See appendix G)

The third stage is a transitional stage from having to be aware of the learning while in the process of using or doing, the learning and development of automaticity of the learning. At the end of this stage, the learner no longer needs to pay attention. The new skill has completely become automatic Young and Messum (2011).

2.6.1.3. Remember and Internalize Stage

In the teaching of a foreign language Kurzweil and Scholl (2007) call this third stage the **Remember-Internalize Stage**: At this stage, the focus turns to practice and it requires time to remember and internalize the target language or skill. The practice activities are not so mechanically dull but attempt to introduce a combination between form and meaning. Providing sufficient time for rehearsal in these two stages to go beyond the initial processes will allow the learner to review the target language or structure, to make sense of it, to elaborate on the details and to assign value and relevance to the new learning. In these two overlapped stages, teachers provide the students with a lot of scaffolding at the beginning of the remember stage but as they move through the internalization stage the scaffolding is gradually withdrawn. Students actively continue to make discoveries, and

will continue to notice important aspect of the target language as they go through a process of internalization; the students continue to recycle what they have learned and move toward freer practice. Students internalize and remember the target language through a variety of practice activities that progress from “teacher-controlled” to less controlled “student centered” forms of practice. (See appendix H & I). According to Vigotsky (1981), internalization is the process which through social activities evolves into internal mental activity. Students work on remembering the skills and or knowledge and try to move it from short term memory to long term memory with the goal of incorporating the target elements and build fluency in their use.

As students continue throughout this process, they will benefit from feedback and correction from the teacher and their peers. Students gradually develop an unconscious competence. Students are in the process of connecting the new skills and knowledge to their prior experience. Students eventually become more spontaneous as they access the knowledge and or do the skill. Thus, controlled group work which uses repetition drills to focus on pronunciation will give way to pair work that will focus on accuracy which will lead to either group or pair work that focuses on meaning and use. Learners carry out rehearsal at different rates of speed and in different ways, depending on the type of information in the new learning and their learning styles. As the learning task changes, learners automatically will shift to different patterns of rehearsal.

As students get into the internalization stage, they in some way are no longer actively thinking about what they are doing. Teachers create opportunities for the students to use the target language and skills in semi-controlled context in an interactive way. Whenever possible an inductive approach is utilized to facilitate student discovery and learner self-investment Brawn (2011). Regarding inaccuracies, teachers provide slight, indirect hints that really give the learners the chance to self correct inaccuracies at this stage of the learning process. Accuracy and fluency are not developed in a linear way; however they might happen in a cyclical way.

The fourth and final stage is referred as a transfer stage. At this stage, the learner is capable of taking what has been learned and using any associated new skills, as well as the content of the learning, and applying it to further learning. Young and Messum (2011).

2.6.1.4. Fluent - Use Stage

According to Kurzweil and Scholl (2007), in the last stage of their model, which they call the **Fluent Use Stage**, students demonstrate their ability to use the target language and/or skill on their own through some kind of communicative task in a creative way without the support from the teacher. Activities at the fluent stage differ from the ones at the remember/internalize stages. (See appendix J). They are less oriented toward practice and more towards helping students recognize their own abilities and competencies and develop both their confidence and self motivation. Teachers create opportunities for students to use the target language and skills in a free way. Learners spontaneously produce the language required for the whole, real life task, real communication by choosing what language to use or not to use. The target language is potentially fluently used. The task is constructed so that it provides a clear context of use for the target language or skill that the teacher is trying to assess. Learners demonstrate their independent control or learning of the new language. Learners are able to use the new learning, possibly in a modified or generalized form in other situations. Successful completion of the activity or task should allow teachers to determine whether or not the learners have attained their students learning objective. At this stage, teachers ignore inaccuracies but note that student is self correcting.

Bradley R. (2010), states that even though the ECRIF lesson plan is linearly designed, that is, logically sequenced from Encounter to Fluency and the activities sequenced from controlled to free, the implementation is circular. The teacher's job being present with the students is of monitoring, scaffolding, facilitating, reviewing, clarifying, correcting, all in response to students' needs. That is, language teachers need to base their teaching choices upon their students' learning. Teachers need to take into account that students in the classroom might be at any given time in their learning process-each one at a different place on the learning cycle. (See appendix K). Kevin Giddens, on the other hand, states when using ECRIF "I believe that we create an environment where a shared language provides a path towards collaboratively exploring the learning process" Giddens (2013). When looking at the different stages, Kurzweil also says that it is important to keep in mind that they are not meant to describe a linear process and he presents the following example:

One might be fluently using language in a conversation, which then leads to encountering an unknown word. The student might then clarify the meaning and work on remembering it. However, as often happens they might forget it and need to clarify it again. Likewise, the student might be in the processing internalizing the word only to realize that they just encountered something about the pronunciation or its collocation that leads them to clarify more about the word. The point for a teacher is not to try and make students learn in a regimented way, but rather to see how they are learning and support them in whatever ways they can.

Regarding the social aspect in the classroom Kurzweil states that ECRIF often acts as the “motivator force” that gets students onto ECRIF cycle. He also lays out a reflective process that focuses on the role of interaction in the classroom between and among the learners and the teacher, and the teacher’s role (when using the framework). Kurzweil states the following ways in which ECRIF can describe the social aspect in the classroom.

1. When two students are speaking in a fluency-focused task, one uses a piece of language that the other does not know. They desire to communicate and understand the other creates a context in which the listener encounters and may seek to clarify that piece of language. The same could be said for teacher/student interaction. In this sense, the social aspect of language learning can be the motivating force for students to learn i.e. begin to ECRIF a piece of language.

2. As a teacher, I am always thinking about how I can help students encounter new language. By recognizing the fact that it is students that must actively do the encountering and clarifying, I must figure out socially meaningful contexts that will create need among my learners. This is one of my favorite aspects of TBL when they have noticing tasks. It is often fascinating to see what the students encounter in an activity that I hadn’t thought about.

3. Another social instance of ECRIF can come when students are engaged in practice activities together in class. For example, let’s say students are involved in some kind of ordering/ranking activity in which they are working in pairs or small groups to R/I vocabulary related to jobs. One student might be at the stage of internalizing a word while the other doesn’t know it or forgot it and is back at the E/C stage. In this case, the activity can lead to peer teaching. The fact that students all learn at different paces and bring different prior knowledge is an essential aspect of how ECRIF works in the classroom. In addition to the fact that students often feel safer clarifying language from another student, the desire to interact with classmates can add to their desire to engage in an R/I activity.

4. This brings up another key function of ECRIF. While it can be used to design a lesson by thinking about the main aims of an activity, it can also be used by teachers to assess where individual students are in their learning. As teacher monitor students during activities they can use ECRIF to get a sense of where the student is in their learning and what they may need.

2.7. Planning a Language Learning Experience

Planning for teaching and learning is a complex process; it takes on many forms for different teachers. It needs to take numerous variables into account: who are the learners? What is the context for learning? What are the students' needs and interests? And what are the beliefs about learning and teaching? Parish (2004). Kurzweil and Scholl point out that "planning a lesson is a dynamic and creative process; there is no one correct way to approach it." When planning a lesson, teachers need to be aware about the complexity of the individual student's learning process. Each student does not learn in the same way. This means that if teachers choose just one style in the teaching learning process, learners will not be maximizing their own learning potential.

Learning is affected by different types of interaction and instruction. The teachers' task is to facilitate the learning. Obviously, teachers can not reach every student on the same level during the lesson but teachers can provide opportunities for different types of learners to participate. In addition, Kurzweil and Scholl point out that "with so many factors in play, the learning process can seem chaotic" and invite teachers to think about how they can design the different learning experiences throughout the different stages of the ECRIF framework so students can focus on a particular learning point. And what is most important is whether the teacher will know if individuals in the class have actually learned that learning point.

2.8. Applying Backward Design to Individual Lesson Planning

While Wiggins &McTighe (1998) have set forth a framework for "backward planning" in unit design, Mary Scholl and Joshua Kurzweil (2007) provide a micro language framework

ECRIF for employing backward planning in individual lessons. The lesson template has been designed to promote language learning-led lessons and the ability to recognize how to know when they have achieved it. ECRIF honors the common assumptions of constructivism and focuses on the development of situations as a way of thinking about the constructive activities of the learner rather than the demonstrative behavior of the teacher. Kurzweil and Scholl state that backward planning for forward teaching is a key factor when planning a lesson using ECRIF. As with unit design, a language lesson must begin with a learning objective.

Thus, Kurzweil and Scholl invite teachers to first start the planning of a lesson by thinking about, visualizing and formulating the specific learning sought (desired knowledge, skills, and learning outcome) in terms of SMARTA goals, objectives and action plans Mager (1962). Teachers need to state a clear learning objective before thinking about what they will do or provide during a period of time in teaching and learning activities. When stating the objective, teachers need to take into account coverage (What will the teacher cover? What will be of interest to the students? What students might already know?), activity (What might students be doing during the lesson) and involvement objectives (What type of mood does the teacher want to support in the classroom) Saphier (2007).

The term SMARTA describes that the objective is specific, meaningful, attainable, realistic/relevant, time bounded and adjustable. It communicates what the teacher intends for the students to achieve. An objective is specific if it includes a clear description of the behavior, knowledge or skills that will be taught and how the learners' progress will be measured including the situation in which they should be able to demonstrate it (i.e. What language? Where? When? How much? How often? With whom?) Measurable: It means that the teacher will be able to count or observe it. A measurable objective will allow the teacher to know how much progress a learner has made. With a measurable objective, the teacher will know when the learner reaches the objective. Achievable: Is the objective achievable due to the given time and other constraints of the class and course. Relevant or Realistic: Is the objective meaningful for the students and teacher? Does it address the needs and interest of the students? Time bound: It refers to time that is available for instruction. Will the teacher be able to do it in the specific amount of time? Adjustable or

Flexible: How will the teacher adjust the objective if the teacher or the learner is moving faster or slower than expected? It gives the learners and the teacher the possibilities to refocus, revisit and move on Mager (1962), Kurzweil and Scholl (2007).

Having a well stated learning objective will allow the teacher to select meaningful and relevant activities, materials, and methods of instruction to create a smooth instructional flow and scaffold learning in small chunks. In addition, it will provide a good organization of the lesson; focus on the learning and the learner, and not the content or the teacher. The purpose of setting up a learning objective at the beginning of the lesson is to indicate the kinds of changes/behavior in the learner to be brought about so that the activities, materials, and interaction at the different stages of ECRIF can be designed and developed in a way likely to achieve the final learning outcome.

2.8.1. Creating Learning-Centered Objectives for Productive Lessons

Productive lessons are ones in which the main learning objective involves the students actually creating or producing language to communicate. When stating SMARTA learning objectives in a productive skill (speaking) lesson, teachers need to take into account the following questions: Is the objective stated in a positive way? , Is it measurable? Do action verbs describe what students do? Is the objective specific? Does it identify when, where, how many, etc.? Is it achievable? Is there sufficient time, space, etc.? Is it flexible enough? Does it allow for adjustment based on students' abilities? Mager (1962).

Written in terms of “At the end of the lesson, learners will be able to”

The objective must include (1) specific target language that the students are to learn, (2) observable verbs describing student behavior and (3) an authentic meaningful communicative task that will allow the student to interact and demonstrate their ability to use the target skill and or target language. By the end of the lesson, SWBAT: use (grammar point, vocabulary, strategy, pronunciation) to (function/active verbs) in or during (a meaningful communicative task).

“By the end of the lesson, SWBAT use “be going” to ask and answer 4-6 questions about future plans in the dialog “A: What are you going to do ____? B: I’m going to _____.” by making a weekend plan with their partners in a cocktail party.”
Adapted from Brawn (2011).

Second, teachers need to determine how they will see that the learner has reached the objective or the desired results; the evidence of that learning (main assessment - **fluent use stage**). The purpose of writing the evidence of the learning is to translate the needs and goals into specific behavior skills to be learned, the conditions under which they must be performed and the criteria for successful performance. One of the criteria for acceptable performance is that the behavior being observed should be situated in a context of use that requires authentic, meaningful interaction and/or use.

Having the assessment in mind during the beginning stages of lesson planning will enable language teachers to carefully arrange a sequence of performances in the earlier learning experiences within the lesson. These are learning activities that require students to use knowledge in new situations and which help them to build, as well as demonstrate their knowledge. They can help teacher scaffold the target language, structure, vocabulary, skills or knowledge necessary to make the demonstration in the last stage. Though the fluent stage occurs last in the lesson, from a backwards planning perspective Wiggins & McTighe (2005), Kurzweil and Scholl (2007), this is where language teachers should begin the lesson planning process. This stage should mirror the lesson goals.

Once teachers have stated the overall learning objective and an appropriate evidence of it, then, it is time for teachers to ask: What would the steps be to reach the lesson objective? What scaffolds are required for students to reach that end? Flynn et al. (2004). Language teachers also need to consider flexibly what method(s) or approach (es) they should use throughout the lesson to help the students attain the desired result. And then start planning the various prior learning experiences and instructions for the Internalize and Remember stages. These are the pre culminating stages. The activities at these stages are carefully crafted, so students can demonstrate a transfer of knowledge (remember / internalization). The activities are aimed to enhance students’ understanding through further scaffolding.

They provide further evidence of student knowledge. The activities are the planned interventions designed to help learners gradually internalize the new language and not only this, but to enhance the lesson. The activities continue to help learners do the prior thinking and understanding that prepare them to use the language in a fluent way in the last stage.

Finally, Language teachers need to consider and design activities for the Clarify and Encounter stages. Teachers need to design activities that help learners to capture learners' attention, elicit prior knowledge, and help students generate the basic understanding of form, meaning and use of the target language. These early activities are aimed to ensure student success in completing the activities throughout the remembering and internalization stages. Though these exploratory activities occur early in the lesson, they should be planned only after the lesson's objective, evidence and internalize, and remember activities have been created Wiggins & McTighe (2005), Kurzweil and Scholl (2007).

The decisions teachers make when they choose to do one activity over another when using ECRIF is based on the objective of each activity as well as to the stage of the lesson. This means, that teachers are in charge of developing instructional strategies. Instruction strategy is an overall plan of activities to achieve the desired learning outcome; it includes the sequence of intermediate objectives and the learning activities leading to the desired final outcome of the lesson. Its purpose is to identify the strategy to achieve the terminal objective and to outline how instructional activities will relate to the accomplishment of the objective. Kurzweil points out that ECRIF "puts learning at the center and focuses on what students are doing with the target language as they learning." The types of practice activities throughout the stages are not prescribed, instead, teachers need to be aware of the students learning process and are encouraged to be innovative while they scaffold the language activities to facilitate learning. ECRIF is a dynamic and non linear process that encourages teachers to move towards a more creative and innovative curriculum to work on all areas as appropriate. (See ECRIF template and criteria appendix I).

How can language teachers outline instructional activities that will lead to the accomplishment of the objective? Freeman and Jensen (1998, p. 95) state that “a single best way to format language learning does not necessarily exist.” Mark Fletcher (2004) suggest that if teachers plan their lessons taking into account the brain (understanding of what the brain is, and how we learn) and its distinct regions as well as its roles in relation to teaching and learning, then teachers can create more productive if not optimum “external” and “internal” learning environments where students will become more effective learners as they engage together in the learning process.

2.9. Designing Brain-Compatible Activities

In both, planning and interacting with students, language teachers need to consider different ways of explaining content. According to Fletcher, many strategies will work as long as they are brain-compatible. Therefore, when planning and when designing activities, Language teachers need to have in mind different types of interactions that focus and make connections with the left hemisphere, right hemisphere, reflex brain, limbic system, neo-cortex and learning styles. These connections will help learners have a fruitful experience and thus learning can be maximized Fletcher (2004). The diverse brain-compatible strategies can be applied throughout stages in a lesson and therefore enhance the learner’s brain to absorb, process and store experiences and information in a more meaningful way. Fletcher (2004, p.16), introduces a framework based on a friendly checklist for lesson planning. The checklist takes into account six aspects when planning a lesson. It is the teacher responsibility to apply strategies tailored for various age groups, subject areas, circumstances and experience levels.

Check 1 for Left Hemisphere: Is there a logical progression in the lesson? Does the lesson have a clear timetable fit? Are there opportunities for questions and answers getting to grids with rules, structured practice? Have I got the timing right?

Check 2 for Right Hemisphere. What is there in this lesson to engage the intuitive, holistic fanciful faculties? Is there an opportunity for students to visualize situations, to see the

“big picture” not just a small item of target information, Are we using color for underlining, highlighting? If we are doing skill work, such as summarizing or giving talks, are we using non-linear note taking (mind maps)? Have I included music to establish moods (high energy/calming)?

Check 3 for the Reflex brain. Where are the occasions for breaking the “hunched over desk” posture, raising heartbeat and getting good supplies of oxygen pumped around the brain? Have I thought about stretch breaks or times when students are moving around, changing places, collecting materials, etc.?

Check 4 for the limbic system. Memory and emotion are closely associated, so what does the lesson provide so that students “self invest,” contribute their own ideas and feelings or get positive feedback from colleagues and teachers? Is there an opportunity for team-building, pair and group work? Are my correction techniques conducive to building a healthy “inner learning environment” showing respect for the learners and avoiding sarcasm or embarrassment?

Check 5 for the neo-cortex (new brain). Does the lesson contain opportunities for students to be original with the target concepts through role play, tasks, etc.? Is there a chance for students to experiment and find out how the rules/boundaries operate?

Check 6 for learning styles. Can I look at this lesson and say “Yes, there is a built in safety-net so that auditory, visual and kinesthetic learners will all be able to get hold of the content”?

According to Fletcher, This check list provides insights into the variety of ways in which language and specific activities complement each other and how they can be used at any stage of a lesson.

In summary, The ECRIF framework and the backward design process are aimed to give teachers the sense that the design and development process is a continuous cycle that requires constant planning, awareness, design and assessment to insure effective instruction. It does not suggest a right way to teach or any specific methodology. It allows

for flexibility, which can be necessary if the teaching learning process is to be appropriate to each context. Given the focus just described, a wide variety of activities may be employed. Hence, selecting and sequencing activities as appropriate in a learning experience will be done through the ECRIF framework. The framework provides a set of micro guidelines for the five stages. These guidelines will help teachers make strategic choices based on the purpose and key principles of each stage when planning, teaching and assessing lessons more effectively on a daily basis. Teachers may need to look at what students are doing and thinking as they learn during lessons. They need to be aware of the learning process students are going through so they can be constantly recreating themselves through reflective practice. Mary Scholl states that “the ECRIF framework helps us see and, respond to and plan for what is happening inside the learners’ minds as well as the buildings of the skills” (2013). In other words, teachers need to focus on the “why” behind their actions and be aware of their students’ knowledge. This awareness and knowledge will serve as a lens through which language teachers can shape an image of their class, set goals accordingly, and adjust their actions and reactions to individual students based on their perception of students’ needs and their situation Mayer and Marland (1997).

ECRIF addresses the assessment evidence as a way of making the objective more concrete and the different learning activities in each stage more meaningful. That is, activities should be aligned to the achievement of the lesson objective. It provides a structure for developing learning-learner-centered lessons, ensuring that the planning is strategically leading students toward success in their learning process. The framework meets the criteria, process, and principles of language teaching and learning. It supports the design of learning by providing clear guidance of progression based on constructivism, backward design and CLT in the post method methodology. This new approach is characterized by three aspects. It is communicative, interactive and participatory. Language teachers as well as learners have an important role in the teaching learning process since communication, interaction and participation involves everyone.

This literature review provides an overview of major theoretical and pedagogical issues (constructivism, communicative language teaching and backward design) that influence the implementation of ECRIF as a language framework. This overview shapes the study of ECRIF as a language framework and its implementation to facilitate language learning in the EFL or ESL classroom. The literature has been synthesized into the learning background process to develop the methodology of this mixed method descriptive case study. The details of the methodology of the present study are discussed in the next chapter.

Overview of Chapter III

Chapter III describes the methodological research framework that will help define the research design, collection and analysis of data and its relationship to the theoretical framework. The discussion presents the description of the nature of the study to answer the research questions. It describes in detail the research design, the research setting, the participants, the source of the data, teacher researcher role, research validity and data analysis. The methodology described in chapter III was used as the main guideline for gathering the data and carrying out the data analysis of the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

If the doors of perception were cleansed everything
would appear to man as it is, infinite. William Blake (1790)

Within the research framework, the present investigation aims at gathering data on students' perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF a language framework that focuses on learners and the learning process itself and how it can be implemented when using the touchstone book 1. This study was guided by two major research questions and related sub questions which are listed below:

1 What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching in the EFL classroom? in conjunction with:

a.- How do the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, and peer support in each stage of ECRIF help beginner students gain fluency in verbal communication in English as a foreign language and how does it boost confidence and motivation?

b.- What are students perceived language learning difficulties in an EFL class exclusively conducted by the teacher researcher while following the five cognitive learning stages to develop communicative language fluency? And;

2 How "ECRIF" can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series?

This chapter will explain the design of the study and a description of research methodology as well as methods used to collect and analyze data. The teacher researcher first provides a rationale for using a mixed (QUAN + QUAL) method design case study research for conducting this study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 41) state that the notation (QUAN + QUAL) "indicates that both qualitative and quantitative methods were used at

the same time of the research and both have equal emphasis in the study.” This is followed by a description of the context in which the research is situated, the role of the researcher and his experience regarding ECRIF is explained, followed by a description of the participants involved in it. The chapter includes a section describing the data collection and analysis methods and processes including the researcher’s journal reflection. In the last part of the chapter, the researcher discusses strategies employed to enhance validity of this study.

3.1 Methodology and Design

Since the implementation of ECRIF in a foreign language classroom at Universidad Tecnica del Norte aimed to respond to the research questions, a mixed method (QUAN + QUAL) was adopted. This study is essentially descriptive in its approach and employs features of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Mixed method design may be defined as “the collection or analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” Creswell (2003, p. 212). Qualitative research is seeking a dynamic and subjective reality through naturalistic, uncontrolled data collection procedures for expanding the knowledge of phenomena through the exploration of the individual’s subjective information of mind Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000). By contrast, quantitative research aims at discovering causal relationships between different parties by using control and objective instruments, and as a result, placing little emphasis on individual behaviour Guba and Lincoln (1989).

Consequently, qualitative and quantitative research should not be viewed as reciprocally exclusive. That is why the teacher researcher used a combination of the two methods to best address the purpose of this research. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), mixed methods research does not insist on a single linear approach, but instead can follow four major design categories: (1) Exploratory Design, (2) Explanatory Design, (3) Embedded Design, and (4) Triangulation Design. The present study used the Triangulation

Design. Interpretation based upon qualitative + quantitative results. Quantitative data may be used to triangulate qualitative data or provide support for a particular qualitative finding, and qualitative data may help to explore the reason behind quantitative results. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the purpose of triangulation design is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic, and basically when the researcher wants to directly compare or contrast qualitative finding with quantitative results. Therefore, data collection and analysis techniques from both methodologies were implemented throughout the study.

The study focused on investigating students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF during one semester in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, from a research perspective this study takes on the general form of a mixed method descriptive case study. It encompassed both the qualitative data (i.e. one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observation and reflections), and quantitative data (i.e. questionnaires). This study focuses on collecting data, analyzing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data as a method Creswell and Plano Clark (2007).

The research involved two main events namely: "action" and "research". In this study, the emphasis is on the research itself. The teacher researcher used ECRIF, a language framework to guide his instruction. That is, the researcher applied language and learning theories embraced by ECRIF and its principles in each stage of the cognitive learning process and put them in practice in the English classroom to enhance language learning and achieve its fluency. As mentioned above, the application of this new language framework aims to find out students' perception regarding its implementation in the foreign language classroom and, in turn, their self-perceived impact on language learning.

A case study can be defined as a case analysis of a person, event, activity or a process set within a cultural perspective Creswell (2005). According to Yin (2006) case studies are the preferred strategy when "how", "why" and "what" questions are being posed and when the focus is on current processes of inquiry. As stated by Burns (1995), case study has a long history in educational research and thus, many researchers see case studies as a very useful research strategy for investigating educational innovations, evaluating programs and informing policy Merriam (2001). A mixed method case study describes a qualitative and quantitative

research method that results on a holistic description and analysis of an event. According to Yin (2006), case study research is not a sampling research. However, selecting cases must be done so as to maximize what can be learned in the period of time available for the study.

The aim of a case study is to study the way people respond to the world as it is perceived. However, the researcher needs to consider not only the voice and perception of the students, but that of the whole group. One of the characteristics of case study is that researchers spend extended time on site. They are personally in contact with the subjects, the activities, the operations, and the current process in which researchers are in charge of reflecting, describing and revising meanings of what is going on Stake (1994).

In the current study the natural setting was an actual classroom environment. The implementation of ECRIF took place in a small public university in Ecuador where English has become a basic subject of the curriculum as part of a project which aims to turn this higher institution into the first bilingual public university in the country. In the case of this particular study, the participants were currently enrolled in English 1. Classes and research were taught and conducted by the teacher researcher during the language instruction period. That is, the study was bounded by time, participants and place and therefore, it can be viewed as a single unit of study. According to Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (1998), valid generalizations produced by case studies might be limited. However, the major usefulness of this kind of study is not as tools for testing hypotheses, but rather on the generation of hypotheses, which then can call for language teachers to test them through a more deductive research. In other words, case studies can encourage other researchers to investigate its effects.

3.2 SETTING

3.2.1 Context of study

The research was conducted at Universidad Tecnica del Norte, a state regional university, located in the north of Ecuador. Tecnica del Norte is a recent accredited higher institution that serves a population of about 9600 students. Students come from Ibarra, and the provinces of Imbabura and Carchi as well as counties in the northern section of adjoining

Pichincha and Esmeraldas Provinces. Most students come from low socio-economic families. The university has five faculties: Education Science and Technology, Business Administration; Environmental Science, Computing and Natural Renewable Resources. The organizational structure in all the faculties is based on two-semester system per year. The first semester runs from October to February. The second semester runs from the last week in March to the first week of July. The students are required to take five levels of English. Each level lasts a semester. This university was selected because the teacher-researcher works at the Institution where English has become a basic subject in the curriculum of the university. English has become a basic subject in the curriculum due to its new project of turning the institution into the first public bilingual university in the country.

3.2.2 Participants

The research was carried out in one of the first level courses of English at the Academic Language Center, which offers 5 levels of English for all the faculties at Universidad Técnica del Norte. The main objective was to explore the perception of the participants regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the language classroom. The teacher researcher obtained ethical approval from the Academic Language Center to conduct the study on April 02, 2012. (See appendix B). All the ethical rules were taken into consideration. According to the objective of the study, a level 1 English class was determined by the director of the Academic Language Center to apply the research during the second semester of the academic school year (2011-2012). It is important to mention that the class of 29 students assigned for the study was not specifically selected, but was a normal class that would otherwise have been taught by one of the regular teachers of the Academic Language Center. The participants' English level was rated as beginners and false beginners. Their level was determined through a placement test given by the institution at the beginning of the school year as one of the requirements for the students to register at the Academic Language Center. Students were given a written and speaking test to be placed at this level.

The first week of class, the teacher researcher informed the students that the group had been selected to participate in a case study during the semester. It was made clear during this initial encounter with the students that participation would be voluntary, and that no benefits would be given to the participants. The teacher researcher explained the purpose and the value of the research. Then, students were distributed consent forms to identify the volunteer participation. The consent form was originally written in English and then it was translated into Spanish to be handed in to the students. However, the teacher researcher stayed with them as they went through the consent form and all the aspects mentioned in it. After students read, the teacher researcher asked the participants to sign the Consent Form (see appendix C), which invites them to participate in the study. Each student was assured that they could discontinue participation in the research without any further consequence if and when they so wished. It was also assured that the information provided by them during and after the intervention would be kept confidential. The teacher researcher also informed that participants' answers would have no positive or negative input on their overall grade during the semester. Classes followed a normal course during the intervention time; this means that students did not have any kind of pressure to achieve the researcher's objective.

The participants are young adult university students who were enrolled in different majors at the university. Regarding their level of English, they all were beginners as explained above. The subjects of this study were originally 29 students, ten males and nineteen females, but two decided not to participate in the study since the very beginning and then five students dropped the course the first week of study. One student did not come for the post questionnaire survey. So, the actual number of subjects was 21 students. Among the 21 subjects, 4 were males and seventeen females. They were young adults between 18 and 31. The participants came from several majors such as Physics and Mathematics (13.63%), Marketing (9.09%), Renewable Natural Resources (4.54%), Computing (4.54%), and a high percentage of the students were majoring in Psychology (59.09%).

Students were from different levels of instruction. Most of them were in second semester. All the students were Ecuadorians with previous English learning experience under the Ecuadorian's education framework. Their English language experience varied from 3 years (9.09%), 6 years (4.54%), 7 years (9.09%), 8 years (18.18%), 9 years (18.18%), 10

years (4.54 %), 11 years (18.18 %), 12 years (9.09 %), and 13 years (9.09%). As explained earlier, this was by no means an indicator of fluency or mastery in English. It just meant that they had been involved in English courses for at least three years in high school by the time they reached the university level. The course was intentionally taught through ECRIF using “**Touchstone book 1**” following the curriculum established by the Academic Language Center. It aimed to see whether the scaffold designed staging learning activities with performance in mind/desired learning outcomes contributed to the learning of English as a foreign language as opposed to traditional classroom situations in which only a limited number of tasks are used in the learning process.

The research focused on examining the perceptions, thoughts and experiences of first level English students with regard to the implementation of ECRIF in the language instruction. However, it was not only significant to document learners’ perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF, but it was also important to determine how their learning context, in this case going through ECRIF, which addresses cognitive, emotional, kinaesthetic and other aspects of learning affected and shaped their perceptions. The type of data sought is aligned with the research questions and focus of the study. To ensure validity and reliability, the research process was designed and conducted in accordance with established research principles pertaining to choice of appropriate research approach, data collection instruments and data analysis. The students’ views, perceptions and reflections provided the descriptive data recounting what was gained when using ECRIF in the language classroom in their own voices. Since students reflective views were required to inform the investigation, the mixed method design descriptive case study was most suitable to fulfil the aims which were to contribute to a better understanding of using a teaching learning language framework that focuses on learning.

The researcher was also the instructor of the first level students who participated in the case study. The case study research was not expected to affect routine classroom work or assessment of any student irrespective of their participation or non-participation. The teacher researcher applied the innovative ECRIF language lesson framework while using the official textbook “Touchstone book 1” adopted by the Institution since the beginning of the Bilingual Project. The language instruction followed the content and topics required by

the curriculum of the Academic Language Centered.

The teacher researcher had to adopt a more learning centered approach from his learners' perspectives. That is, principles of constructivism, communicative language teaching and backward planning were focused on the whole instructional process including instructional planning, instructional activities in the classroom and assessment. This helped the teacher researcher follow the ECRIF framework guiding principles and thus engage students actively in their learning process by providing declarative and procedural experiences in each learning stage that promote autonomy, choice, cooperation, collaboration, interaction, creativity and meaningful communication. The teacher researcher had to be present at the different stages of the students' learning and observe details and steps of the study day after day. Classes were held five days a week, Monday to Friday for about ninety minutes each day during a semester (March 21 – July 18 2012).

It is important to mention that the researcher developed his basic knowledge about ECRIF at the SIT TESOL training course in Costa Rica in September 2005 and "Compassion Communication for Educators" in January 2012. Both training courses were taught by Mary Scholl co-author of this new language framework. The courses followed the ECRIF learning cycle. During the first training course, the teacher researcher had the wonderful opportunity to experience language learning as both a language learner (lessons in Hawaiian and Japanese) and language teacher (in practice teaching sessions with real students from a small town in Costa Rica).

The lessons in Hawaiian through ECRIF brought him to a new level of awareness where he gained a whole new insight as to what it was like to be a student of a foreign language in the classroom. The training was followed by a process of feedback, reflection and analysis as language learner first and as facilitator of language learning afterwards. It was a time to explore the many pedagogical factors (constructivism, scaffolding, CLT in the post methodology era and backward design) that influence the successful implementation of ECRIF. It was a time to see and be aware of those factors that help and hinder language teaching and learning. The teacher researcher had the opportunity to see through the eyes of his students. That is, to experience the challenges of going through a process of

internalization and using a new language in authentic situations. This experience helped the teacher researcher see many aspects about teaching and learning with new lenses.

During the teaching training, the teacher researcher spent a lot of time reflecting about teaching and learning, and mainly considering the learner and processes a learner goes through while acquiring a new language. ECRIF is a pedagogical tool he has incorporated in his teaching to guide his decisions in classroom practice. Being aware of the benefits and challenges when using ECRIF, he decided to investigate in depth students' perceptions about its implementation in the EFL classroom in the setting where he works. The research was part of the requirements to graduate from the master program in which he was enrolled.

Being the researcher, instructor as well as a participant observer allowed him to observe and be aware of the participants' progress, involvement and perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF more closely due to his reflections and the focus group feedback offered by the participants in this study. Taking this into account the researcher believes that applying ECRIF can effectively help students learn foreign languages and in order to minimize bias while applying ECRIF and gathering data, he tried to maintain objective and he did not interfere with the process of forming participants' preconception about ECRIF. This was essential to obtain reliable and objective results as well as answers to the research of the present case study.

The teacher researcher faced a number of challenges applying ECRIF. The first one was to translate the key concepts of the three fields or theories into action in his teaching. He had to develop his ability to adapt and design activities to support learning. The second challenge was to make inter-stage connections (based on the content in the Touchstone book) and create opportunities within the same context where learning might happen at each stage of students learning. Instruction was based on this innovative language learning-teaching framework centered on students' needs and previous knowledge. The third and most challenging aspect was that of being present in each moment. This means being "aware" of the processes of learning.

This study was particularly responsive to a mixed method design descriptive case study because the teacher researcher's main objective was to find out students' perceptions about the implementation of a new pedagogical language framework driven from Kurzweil and Scholl's learning-learner centered approach. The framework puts learning at the center and focuses on what the students are doing with the target language as they are learning. The teacher researcher did not assemble variables to manipulate. Rather, the teacher researcher started gathering data with the application of a pre-questionnaire to find out the participants' background and attitude toward English language learning and the factors that have helped or hindered their previous language learning experience as a tool of diagnosis.

Throughout the research, data was collected through video recording of 25 classes. Video recording started the first week of May. The video recording was planned and scheduled to take place at that particular time in order to allow adequate time for students to gain familiarity with the new methodology and not only this, but to allow the teacher-researcher to establish good rapport with the students. Once or twice a week, at the end of a class, a group focus feedback was conducted through a self reflection to see how the students mirrored their learning experience during the class. The questions were not rigid in nature but they were flexible and allowed the participants to reflect about what helped and hindered their learning. The feedback session was conducted in Spanish due to their basic level of English. The participants were allowed to think and express their own answers freely. Three TESOL teachers were invited to observe the development of a lesson through ECRIF and provide feedback about it. The observation was done at the end of the first month of the research, the second one in the middle of the intervention and the third one the last week of the research. The teacher researcher kept a weekly journal reflecting on how the process helped or hindered learning in the students. In the middle of the intervention, the teacher researcher applied a whole class metaphor to get feedback and find out students' perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF in the classroom. Person to person open-ended interviews as well as a post questionnaire was conducted at the end of the study to find out the students' opinion and perception in a general way about the teaching methodology applied during the time of intervention.

The teacher researcher then analyzed these data to identify what the teacher researcher

perceived to be recurrent patterns or categories which explain the data. The use of these data sources provided a wider perspective on the issue examined and allowed triangulation of data. Triangulation was necessary to eliminate biases and validate the findings for two reasons. First, the investigation was based primarily on participants' perception where language instruction was carried out by the teacher researcher. The second was that the investigation was conducted solely by the teacher researcher who performed the roles of teacher, researcher, analyst, interpreter and writer of the study.

Consequently, the data collected during the intervention assisted understanding of what was acceptable and meaningful when using ECRIF in the language classroom. Through the particularities of mixed method design descriptive case study methodology, a deeper understanding of the application of a framework that focuses on constructivism and a declarative and procedural cognitive learning process was gained. The understanding was lengthened by the application of a number of quantitative and qualitative methods plus the teacher researcher's journal. Data were collected through a combination of a pre-questionnaire, observation, reflections, videotaped classes, focus group feedback and post questionnaire and open ended interviews at the end of the intervention.

3.3. Data Sources and Collection Method

As mentioned above, the goal of the present research was to explore students' perception about the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom. With this end in mind, which relies less on quantitatively measurable activities and more on the participant's thoughts, opinions and perception at an individual level, the teacher researcher collected data in three phases to guide his inquiry: at the beginning, middle and end of the intervention. For data collection purposes the following instruments were used: pre questionnaire/diagnostic, focus group, post questionnaires and open ended interviews. The three different techniques applied to collect data were used to triangulate them. Triangulation "is a process in which the data are looked at from a range of perspectives usually at least three, if not more" McNiff & Whitehead (2010, p. 179).

The teacher researcher used the triangulation process in the present case study as a means of achieving greater validity and reliability of the research data as it only presents a part of the society not whole. According to Yin (2006), the need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes. In addition Patton (1990 p. 244), points out “multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective”. The use of these three data collection instruments (questionnaires, open-ended interviews and focus group feedback) were used to validate both the answers in the questionnaires and interviews as well as to have more valid data to strengthen the study. The teacher researcher has added a fourth method which reflects the use of ECRIF as his teaching methodology through a journal reflection in order to add a further dimension to the data gathering and analysis. This study does not pretend to generalize from its findings but it will aim for transferability.

3.4. Research Instruments

In order to obtain a general understanding of first EFL students’ perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF, the research incorporated three research tools to ensure a higher degree of validity.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

One of the major instruments of this study was a pre and post written questionnaire. As stated by Nunan (1992), questionnaires can provide qualitative and quantitative data. They function as a tool to be used for the elicitation, the recording, and the collecting of information. Dale T. Griffiee (2012, p. 137) points out “a questionnaire is an appropriate instrument for collecting data on what your students think or believe about certain issues.” Questionnaires can be analysed using basic as well as sophisticated statistical analysis or qualitative analysis. The questionnaire, as a method of collecting information from people about their feelings, behavior, motivations, and needs has been widely employed in the field of English as a second or foreign language Gorsuch (2001). According to Oppenheim

(1992), questionnaires have been the most frequently used research tools in general education especially in exploring views and opinions towards language teaching programs.

In addition, Cohen and Manion (1994), state that questionnaires can provide effective means for expression without fear and or embarrassment to the respondents who are free to answer at their convenience. Considering the advantages of questionnaires as a tool to collect qualitative and quantitative information, the teacher researcher chose to use a questionnaire as one of the research instruments at the beginning (pre questionnaire) and at end of the research (post questionnaire). The data obtained in the pre questionnaire would be beneficial to have insights into issues that can be of relevance for the educational process to be investigated and to compare it from data obtained after the implementation of ECRIF. The post questionnaire was also used as a way to elicit and record what respondents perceive as beneficial when using ECRIF a language framework focused on learning and the learners. The post questionnaire was also used as a pass key to the interview Dale T. Griffiee (2012).

3.4.1.1 Pre-Questionnaire

As mentioned above, two questionnaires were devised. In the first phase or diagnostic stage, the researcher starts collecting data with the application of a pre- questionnaire to collect quantitative and qualitative information from the participants. The pre questionnaire was used in order to gather information from participants regarding their background and mainly as a means to elicit and identify participants' general information regarding their previous English education. It aimed at exploring issues related primarily to students' EFL learning experiences and to find out participants' conventional attitudes toward language learning and perceptions regarding their previous English language experience. It also was used to see if their early experience of learning English had an effect on their attitude and motivation to learning English.

The questionnaire was initially administered the third day of classes. The questionnaire was written in English. In order to prevent any misunderstanding and confusion, the

teacher researcher did the translation as student went through the questions. That is, he stayed with them while they were answering the questionnaire. They were also invited to write their answers in Spanish. The Questionnaire consists of three parts (See appendix L). The first part was used for the descriptive data to find out the subject's personal details (that is, area of study, name, and age). In addition, this section incorporated an item about the student's previous English learning experience. That is, the number of years of study in English. Contrary to the general practice of anonymous respondents, students were required to write their names for the purpose of subsequent individual follow up. Though, their real names were not used. The teacher researcher used fictitious names.

The second part consists of three closed questionnaire items. They were designed to explore and find out possible students self perceived (1) attitude to English language learning, (2) motivation to learn English, and (3) impressions about English language learning from prior experiences. In this section participants were invited to check the words that most reflected their impressions: interesting, stressful, relaxing, enjoyable, difficult, easy or boring. They were allowed to specify others, with space provided for respondents to expand their answers as needed. Participants were also invited to reflect on the factors they thought may have influenced their attitudes towards English language learning: teacher's teaching method(s), teacher's English proficiency, teaching and learning conditions, textbook and exercise book. They were also invited to specify others, whereas as before space was provided for respondents to expand their answers as needed. The closed items were intended to produce specific data, which is easily quantifiable and measurable. However, regarding the items in which the participants had to specify others, they had the opportunity to reflect and raise any issues they perceived essential regarding the question. The concept of attitude and motivation was taken into account as they can be considered fundamental and important starting points in the acquisition of knowledge in any learning process Deardorff (2007).

The third part of the questionnaire was designed by the teacher researcher with input from the available theoretical and pedagogical framework foundation of ECRIF and its stages in the learning cognitive process. This final part is directly linked to one of the main points of interest of the research. It aimed at finding out and collecting data about students' previous

learning experience. This part consists of 4 questionnaire items that invited students to reflect on their former teachers methodology applied in the language classroom. This section used a Likert scale requiring respondents to choose from four options (often, sometimes, rarely, never) to gain insights into how their prior instruction was conducted. This scale was used to indicate the degree of their perception about the teaching-learning process applied by their English teachers in past English language instruction.

A framework for the basis of the questions provided in this section of the questionnaire is as follows: (1) Encounter and Clarify stage: At the encounter stage were you able to clarify form, meaning and / or use of the target vocabulary/language structure? (2) Remember Stage: At the remember stage, did you have the opportunity to practice the language in a variety of activities (VAK) that focus on the target language and progress from receptive understanding to productive practice, controlled language to freer choice of language? (3) Internalization Stage: At the internalization stage, did your teacher involvement gradually decrease as you and your partners took more control and moved from controlled to freer practice? Did you have the opportunity to increase your talking time and be ready for the USE stage? (4) Fluent Stage: At the fluent stage did you have the opportunity to spontaneously use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life task, real communication?

3.4.1.2 Post Questionnaire

Data on students' perception and their opinion about their learning experience with ECRIF were collected using a semi structured post questionnaire designed by the teacher researcher with input from the available literature about ECRIF. (See appendix M) The main purpose was to find out the students perceptions of the importance of ECRIF and how it benefits language learning when applying it in the classroom. The instrument also aimed to learn whether the initial learners self perceived (1) attitude to language learning, (2) motivation to language learning, (3) impressions about language learning from prior English languages experiences have changed or not after the application of ECRIF. The questionnaire was conformed by 14 item questionnaires. Item 4 requested from the

respondent to explain the reason why he/she has selected (X) option. Items 13 and 14 are open ended question which require students to reflect and write about problems they have encountered in the learning process through ECRIF and those aspects they particularly dislike about this new paradigm in language teaching and learning. Each questionnaire item used a Likert scale requiring participants to choose from the available options to indicate the degree of their self perception. The percentage for each item obtained from all the participants was obtained by summing the checked item and then dividing it by the number of responders. Validation of the questionnaire was done by the tutor of the teacher researcher. Reliability was tested with a sample of six students from the same course once the questionnaire was validated by the tutor.

3.5 Focus Group

As focus group interview is considered to be a powerful technique in qualitative methodology Morgan (1997), the researcher opted to use this qualitative instrument to collect data regarding the implementation of ECRIF to obtain more specific information and details from the participants. The purpose of using focus group interview in addition to individual interview was to collect data from the collective participants just immediately after they have finished a learning experience. This technique was chosen because the teacher researcher might uncover positive and negative aspects that all participants, in general, were encountering as they were undergoing through this new process. According to Krueger (1994), focus group interviews are well suited for providing insight into the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of participants. Focus group interviews could be used to discover participants' attitudes and opinions about learning English. The data provided information to triangulate patterns with other data. This more detailed aspect of data collection was done once or twice per week during the development of the study through video recording. The focus group interview took place in the same classroom where students had their language instruction, just after the class of the day was over.

The students sat in a circle and were invited to express their thoughts and opinions about what helped and hindered their learning when using ECRIF. Besides they shared how they

felt about what they did in class. The researcher made sure that the focus was on the methodology, materials or activities and not judging the teacher. The interviews were planned to begin with structure focus questions. As feedback proceeded, the researcher formulated follow up questions based on students' responses.

As the number of participants was not big, the whole class was present during the focus group interview. Nevertheless, only two or three students (each time different ones) participated in each session. The participation was voluntary in most sessions. However, there were occasions in which the teacher asked a specific student to respond a question. Students were allowed to say "I pass" when they were not willing to answer a question. The focus group did not take a long time. They lasted about five to seven minutes.

The open ended questions invited honest personal comments from the students, and they were used in order to capture authenticity, richness, depth of response, and honesty which is the primary asset of qualitative data Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 255). In the first feedback sessions, students hesitated a lot before answering the questions, but as time passed by, they became familiar with the focus questions. During the focus group interview, students described their views regarding the methodology, gave examples of what helped and hindered in their learning and the benefits of using ECRIF. Participants' feedback was a useful way of understanding their difficulties, preferences, what they found useful and what they thought could be done differently next time if they were to be taught the same topic by the same teacher. The focus group interviews were transcribed at a later time. The information provided by the students during the focus group interviews, that is ideas, sentences or words relating to students perception of ECRIF and its contribution to language learning were categorized by themes and then read and re-read to confirm evidence of recurring patterns and categories.

3.5.1 Interview

Based on Nunan (2002), Kvale (1996), Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2000) definitions of a questionnaire, Dale T. Griffiee (2012, p. 159) concludes that an interview has a structure, purpose and form and he defines it as "a person-to-person structured conversation for the purpose of finding and/or creating meaningful data which has to be

collected, analysed and validated. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), interviewing has become a widely used means for data generation in qualitative study when a researcher is interested in the lived experience of other individuals as to how they make meaning of their experience. The last data collection instrument of this study was a face-to-face open ended interview which enabled the researcher to collect qualitative data about student's perception towards the implementation of ECRIF in the first level of English language course. (See appendix N)

The teacher researcher prepared an open ended interview. The interview questions in some way were based on data already collected through the post questionnaire and for which further investigation was needed. In this partially final open ended interview, the teacher researcher posed a few predetermined questions as seen in appendix (G) but had considerable flexibility concerning follow up questions pertinent to their English learning experience through ECRIF. The aim of investigating participants' views and or perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF through an interview was to validate and complete the findings provided by those results from the focus group and post questionnaire instruments. Indeed, it was used for triangulation and to help the teacher researcher gain an in-depth understanding of the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the language classroom and their perceived difficulties during the intervention. In addition, three professionals in the language teaching field (TESOL) were invited to observe three different classes (initial-mid-end) through ECRIF. They offered a written feedback on what they observed in the class.

The interview was divided in three parts. In the first part of the interview, the students were invited to describe their past learning experience and express if they have had more positive or negative learning experiences, then, they were invited to share positive and negative experiences. In addition, they were requested to state some differences if any, regarding their past language experience in contrast with the current experience through ECRIF. In the second part of the interview, the teacher researcher had a conversation with the students based on the following question: How working with ECRIF made a difference or made no difference to their learning of English? In the last part of the conversation the teacher researcher invited students to consider whether their opinions at the end of the

intervention were different from the ones they had at the beginning of the course regarding their attitude and interest in learning English. Finally, they were invited to comment on their learning progress in English. The open ended interview between the researcher and the participants was held in and outside the classroom at the end of the semester once the intervention was concluded. During the interview, the teacher researcher asked the participants to take some time and reflect on their past English learning experience and compare it with the new learning experience in level one at the university. In other words, the researcher invited students to reflect on the meaning of their experience.

The teacher researcher listened to each participant's responses in order to get clues as to what question or questions to ask next, or whether it was important to probe for additional information Maykut and Morehouse (1994). The researcher also was prepared to restate or paraphrase the question when necessary. The interviews were conducted in Spanish due to participants' basic level of English, and mainly to encourage the participants to answer the questions fully and to express their opinions without being under pressure due to their lack of English proficiency. With the participants' permission, all the interviews were video-recorded. Each interview lasted for about five to seven minutes. The interview began with a greeting and then led to the core issues of the study.

Brown and Dowling (1998) point out that personal opinions, understanding, and perceptions on learning and teaching vary accordingly to the individual background, social context and experience. The data from the open ended interview with the teacher researcher assisted in better understanding of the results of the focus group interview and the post questionnaire completed by the learners.

In particular, the interview aimed at clarifying how the implementation of a new paradigm in language teaching had contributed or hindered their learning. The learners also had the opportunity to reveal certain thoughts and ideas about ECRIF that they considered important to mention.

3.5.2 Journals

In addition, as further research instruments, the researcher kept a weekly journal throughout the study reflecting on his own teaching in relation to the second question on how to apply ECRIF when using the Touchstone book 1. This would be another way into exploring the factors that influence the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom. This part of the case study can fit with the tradition of research into teaching through reflective enquiry. This was also a way of positioning the teacher researcher as an interested language teacher in applying and exploring the new language framework. This was important because the teacher researcher needed to articulate theoretical and pedagogical perspectives embraced by ECRIF and the teaching practice itself. In journaling the teaching experience throughout the intervention, the teacher researcher not only recorded what happened in class, but what seemed to help and hinder language learning as students went through the five stages of their learning: Encounter – Clarify – Remember - Internalize - Fluent Use.

3.6. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was planned to reveal students' lived experience and perceptions in relation to the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom. As mentioned above, the data were collected using multiple sources of evidence (pre and post questionnaires, focus group interview, observation from professional language teachers, individual interview and teacher's journal) After data collection was completed, the data analysis process continued in several steps. First, collected data of the questionnaires were sorted out and the percentage of the participants offering the same answer was computed using basic quantitative data analysis in Microsoft Excel 2010. The questionnaires were tabulated to record the responses from each participant for each option of the questions. Then, the tabulations were read and re-read carefully to find out the common patterns of the same points of view. In fact, the data analysis process regarding the questionnaires tried to identify and describe patterns and themes from the participants Creswell (2003). Then, the data was analyzed and reported both quantitatively and qualitatively. Second, regarding the focus group interview as well as the post interview, the researcher started transcribing the

interviews, then by reading the interviews transcripts several times, the researcher discovered the students' perceptions about their experience regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom and identified the recurring themes and salient comments in regard to the benefits and or their difficulties they had encountered while going through the five stage learning process. Third, the salient aspects/insights gained through the planning and delivery instruction were analyzed from the teacher's journal to then be described in the last part of the findings. The description was done in relation to the stages in which teaching and learning was performed. The use of these data sources provided a wider perspective on the issue examined and allowed triangulation of data.

3.7. Summary

This chapter provided an overview of this research mixed method case study, which used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods of questionnaires; video recorded focus group, semi-structure interviews. As the study was seeking to find out participants' perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF in the language classroom, interviews, questionnaires and focus group interviews were constructed and applied based on the available literature about ECRIF. The research tools were selected to provide a range of thick text, description and rich data to triangulate the results. Data collection took place in three phases: before, during and after the application of ECRIF. In the first phase, a pre questionnaire was administered in order to find out if the students had been exposed to a dialectical constructivism learning approach through scaffolding and to find out possible students self perceived attitude to language learning, motivation to language learning, and their impressions about language learning from past experiences. In the second phase, focus group interviews were conducted as ECRIF was being implemented to analyze students' perceptions as they gradually had become familiar with the teaching and learning methodology applied by the teacher researcher. In the third phase, a post questionnaire and an open ended interview was conducted to find out students' perception and their opinion about their learning experience with ECRIF. The data collected were used to triangulate information to eliminate biases and validate the findings. The teacher researcher added a fourth method to obtain salient features about the use of ECRIF as part of his teaching methodology in order to add a further dimension to the data gathering and analysis.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

In the previous chapter, details of the general research design, research setting, target population, instruments, considerations for mixed method research quality, data collection and analysis methods, and research limitations were discussed. While chapter III presented the research methodology used in this study. Chapter IV focuses on the results of the collected and analyzed data from the pre questionnaire, focus group interview, post questionnaire, post interview and insights gained from the teacher's journal in relation to planning and delivering lessons following the five stages of the lesson framework. The results reported here used a mixed method case study research in order to find students perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the English classroom as well as to how to carry it out when using the Touchstone book 1. Specifically: What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching in the EFL classroom? in conjunction with: 1.a) How do the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, and peer support I n each stage of ECRIF help beginner students gain fluency in verbal communication in English as a foreign language and how does it boost confidence and motivation? 1.b) What are students perceived language learning difficulties in an EFL class exclusively conducted by the teacher researcher while following the five cognitive learning stages to develop communicative language fluency? and; 2. How "ECRIF" can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series?

4.1. Results of pre-questionnaire.

4.1.1 Demographic data

By the time of the study, the participants were young adult university students. The students' age varied between 18 and 31. They were enrolled in different majors at the university: (13.63%) Physics and Mathematics, (9.09%), Marketing, (4.54%) Renewable Natural Resources, (4.54%) Computing and (59.09%) Psychology. They were in different levels of instruction. Most of them were in second semester in their majors but they were registered in level one at the Academic Language Center at the University. All of them

were Ecuadorians with previous English learning experience in secondary school varying from 3 years (9.09 %), 6 years (4.54%), 7 years (9.09 %), 8 years (18.18 %), 9 years (18.18 %), 10 years (4.54 %), 11 years (18.18 %), 12 years (9.09 %), and 13 years (9.09%).

The second part of the pre questionnaire explored issues related primarily to students EFL learning experiences with the use of a set of a pre questionnaire Koshy Valsa (2005). The teacher researcher used a questionnaire to identify and find out possible students self-perceived conventional (1) attitude to language learning, (2) motivation to language learning, (3) impressions about language learning from prior English language experiences before the implementation of ECRIF. In this section participants were invited to check the words that most reflected their impressions. That is, students had to choose the best option which best described their opinions. They were allowed to specify others.

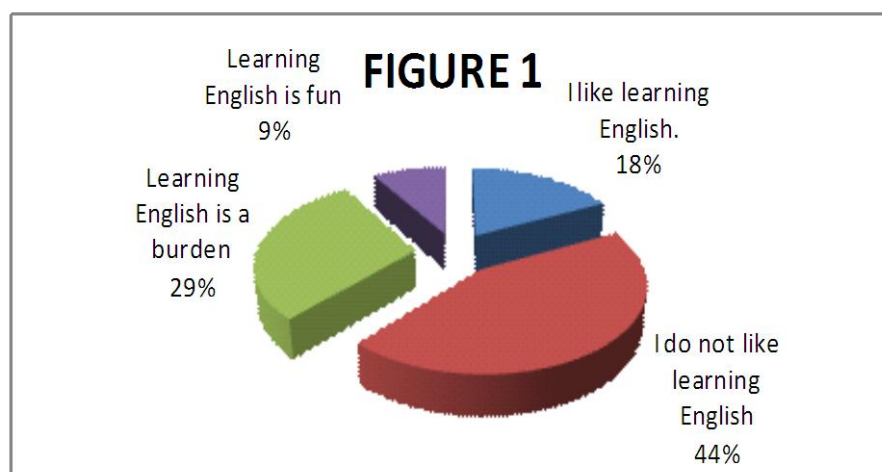
Tables are drawn below to show the frequency of responses. The first question of the second part on the pre questionnaire asked students to reflect on their self-perceived attitude to language learning and to share their perceptions of their own regarding it.

4.1.2. - Attitude to Language Learning.

Table A shows the respondents' self-perceived attitude to language learning. The question focused on like/fun, dislike/burden. NOTE: Some respondents marked more than one response.

Table A

VARIABLE	Number	%
I like learning English.	6	17,65
I do not like learning English	15	44,12
Learning English is a burden	10	29,41
Learning English is fun	3	8,82
TOTAL	34*	100



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As figure 1 displays, the majority of participants (n=15; 44.12%) express they do not like learning English, (n=10; 29.41%) think that learning English is a burden, however, (n=6; 17.65%) express they like learning English and (n=3; 8.82%) express that learning English is fun.

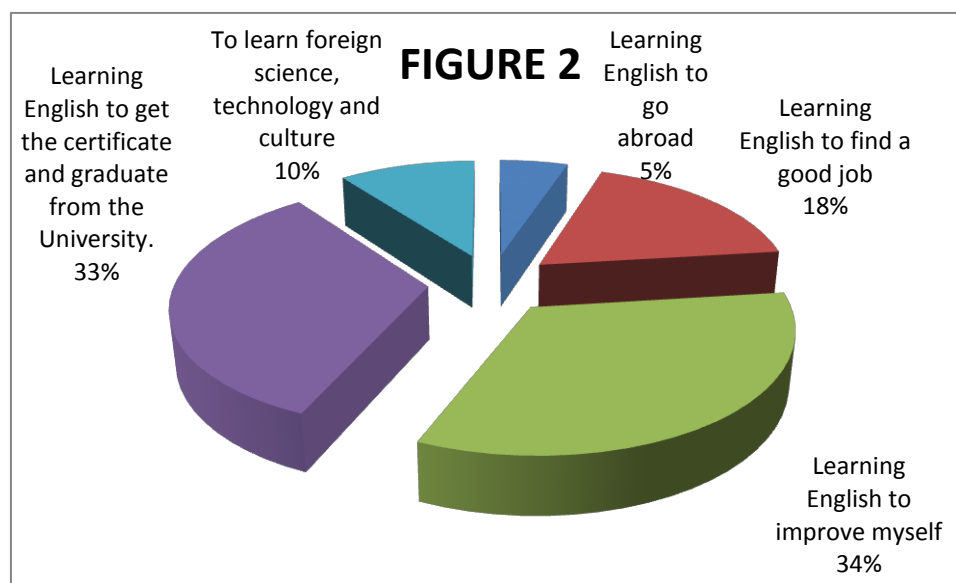
The next question focused on students' motivation to language learning. Table B presents the responses to this question

4.1.3. - Motivation to Language Learning

Table B shows the respondents self-perceived motivation to language learning. The question focused on the reason to learning English. NOTE: Some respondents marked more than one response.

TABLE B

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Learning English to go abroad	2	4,00
Learning English to find a good job	7	14,00
Learning English to improve myself	13	26,00
Learning English to get the certificate and graduate from the University.	13	26,00
To learn foreign science, technology and culture	4	8,00
TOTAL	50*	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

- Some respondents marked more than one response to this question.
 Percentages were calculated based on the number of respondent (n=24)

As this table reveals, the respondents (n=13; 26. %) expressed they were willing to learn English because they needed to get the certificate as one of the requirements to graduate from university. The same number of participants (n=13; 26. %) expressed they were learning English to improve themselves. The third most cited response (n=11; 22. %) was to learn foreign science, technology and culture. A few (n=7; 14. %) indicated that they were taking English classes because they were interested in finding a good job. Only (n=2; 4. %) marked that they were learning English to study abroad. This underlines that 74% of the students enrolled in this class might have been easily motivated to learn English at UTN. However, the 26% who expressed they were taking English because it is a requirement may reflect certain apathy to English learning.

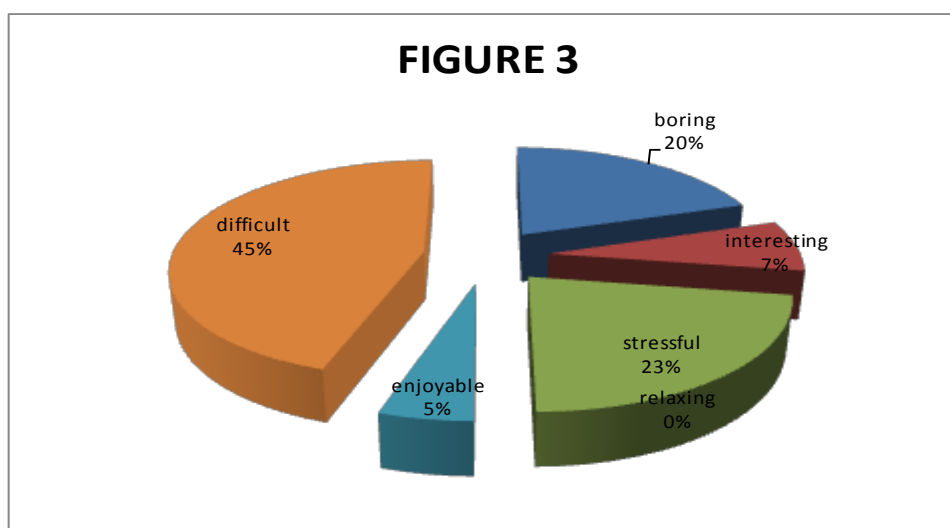
The next question asked students to comment on their impressions about past experiences in English language learning. The aim was to determine how language learning was characterized from the learners' perspective. Table C shows respondents' impressions about language learning from their past experiences

4.1.4. - Impressions about Language Learning from Past Experiences

Table C shows the respondents impressions regarding their past experience in language learning. The question focused on the characterization of their learning experience. NOTE: Some respondents marked more than one response.

Table C

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
boring	8	20,00
interesting	3	7,50
stressful	9	22,50
relaxing	0	0,00
enjoyable	2	5,00
difficult	18	45,00
easy	0	0,00
TOTAL	40	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

- Some respondents marked more than one response to this question.

Percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents (n=24)

Others, please specify...

As indicated in table C, the respondents (n=18; 48. %) marked that learning English was difficult for them, (n=9; 22.50 %) marked that learning English was stressful, (n=8; 20.

%) marked that learning English was boring. Only (n=3; 7.50. %) marked that learning English was interesting and (n=5; 26. %) expressed that learning English was fun for them. Regarding the “other” response, nine students responded to this section. The students’ answers on this section revealed in more detail how they perceived their past learning experience. Students wrote that their learning experience was boring, frustrating, and scary and not motivating as it is described in the following extracts:

“Learning English was boring because we never had the opportunity to learn the language in a dynamic way. The teachers got into the class and they explained the subject matter to the class, but actually they explained it to themselves and not to the students. This was one of the reasons why learning English became boring and consequently difficult.”

“Learning English was frustrating because we did not have a time to process the information. Everything was taught in a rush...It was done in a superficial way.”

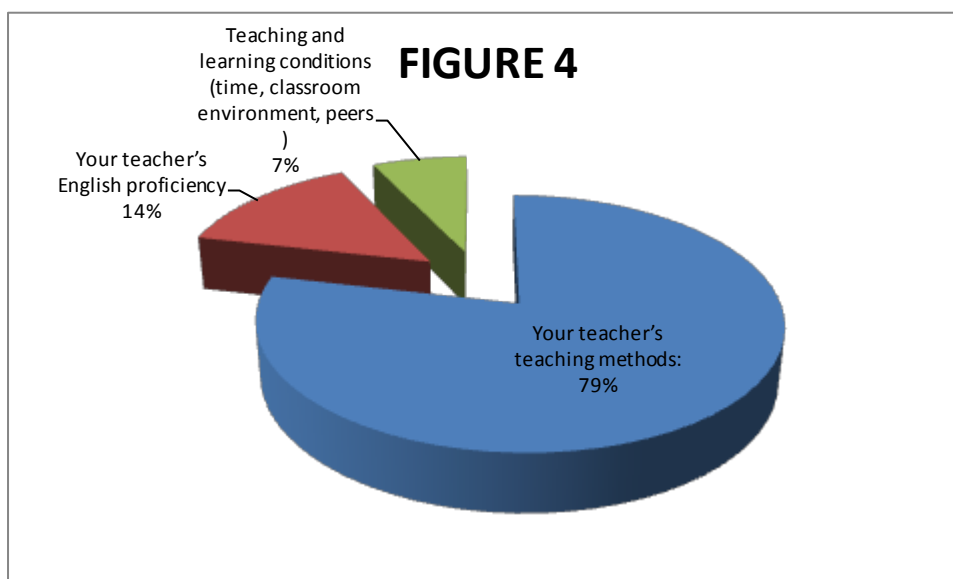
“Learning English was scaring because all the English language teachers are very bad persons. They are “groseros”. This was one of the reasons why I stop liking to learn English.”

“Learning English has always been boring!!....The pedagogy was frustrating...There was no motivation.”

The last question of the second part of the pre questionnaire asked learners to think in those factors that may have influenced their attitude towards English Language Learning. Table D displays learners’ responses to this question.

Table D

VARIABLE	FREQUENC Y	%
Your teacher’s teaching methods:	22	78,57
Your teacher’s English proficiency	4	14,29
Teaching and learning conditions (time, classroom environment, peers)	2	7,14
TOTAL	28	100,0 0



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

- Some respondents marked more than one response to this question.

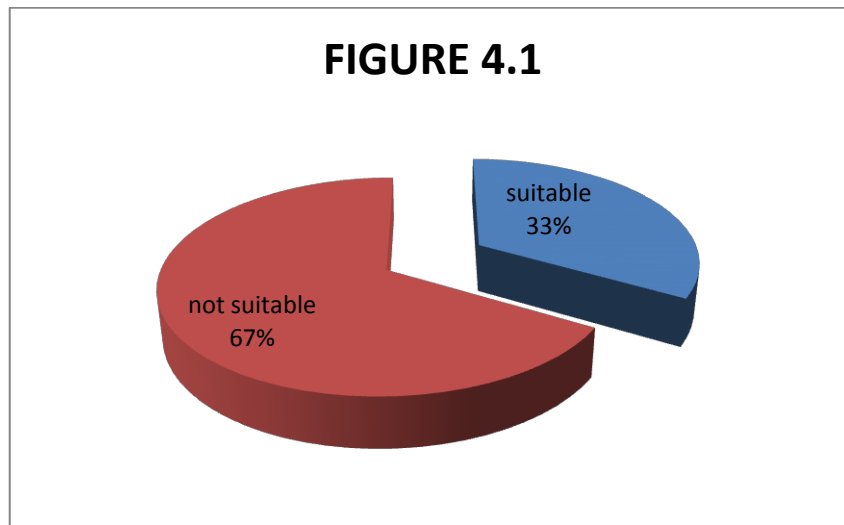
Percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents (n=24)

Most of the students (n=22; 78.57. %) said that their teachers' teaching method had influenced their attitude towards English language learning. (n=4; 14.29. %) marked that their teacher's English proficiency had influenced their English language learning. (n=2; 7.14. %) marked that teaching and learning conditions (time, classroom environment, peers) had influenced their English language learning.

As the next table reveals, the textbook and exercise book also affected their attitude towards English language learning.

Table E

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
suitable	2	33,33
not suitable	4	66,67
TOTAL	6	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As indicated in table G, (n=4; 66.67. %) said that their textbooks were not suitable meanwhile (n=2; 33.33. %) said that their textbooks were suitable

Others, please specify.

In this section, only three students provided information regarding their attitude towards English Language Learning. In a general way they attributed their attitude to language learning due to the methodology applied by the teachers. The students' comments can be read in the following extracts.

“The teaching methods were bad, we couldn't understand anything, Methodology was book centered. The teachers relied on the textbook as the only source of language input. This did not help us learn and develop our communicative ability”

“I didn't understand the English classes...I always used my dictionary in class and at home to get to know something”

“The way in which the language was taught. There was no motivation. We did not find a reason to learn the language.”

4.1.5. – My Previous Learning Experience

The last part of the pre questionnaire asked the students to reflect on how their language teachers staged their lessons and see if they have had the opportunity to scaffold their language learning process. The questions invited the participants to share their perception using a Likert scale requiring respondents to choose from four options: often, sometimes, rarely, never. This part of the questionnaire was designed with input from the available theoretical and pedagogical foundation of ECRIF and its stages in the learning cognitive process. It aimed at finding out how students' prior instruction and learning process were conducted. The first question on part four required the students to reflect about how their teachers helped them see or hear new language so they could realize they did not know something. And if there was a time for them to individually and actively clarify the form, meaning and use of the target language.

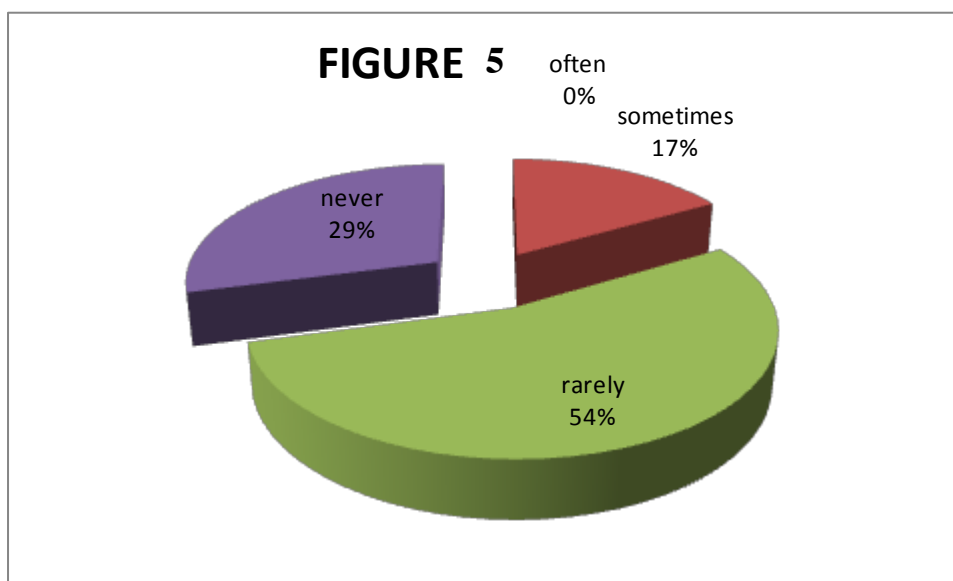
Table F summarizes the answers of the students indicating the frequency in which they had the opportunity to encounter something new and clarify (form, meaning and use) of the target language they encountered in their learning process or in a new English lesson.

4.1.5.1. – An encounter/Clarify stage: At the encounter stage were you able to clarify form, meaning and/or use of the target vocabulary/language structures?

Table F presents students responses regarding the Encounter /Clarify stage.

Table F

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
often	0	0,00
sometimes	4	16,67
rarely	13	54,17
never	7	29,17
TOTAL	24	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As seen from figure 5, in this first stage, the students (n=7; 29. 17 %) indicated that they never had the opportunity to clarify the form, meaning and use of the target language, vocabulary or language structures, (n=13; 54. 17 %) marked that they rarely had the opportunity to clarify it/them (n=4; 16. 67. %) indicated that sometimes they had the opportunity to clarify the language they encountered.

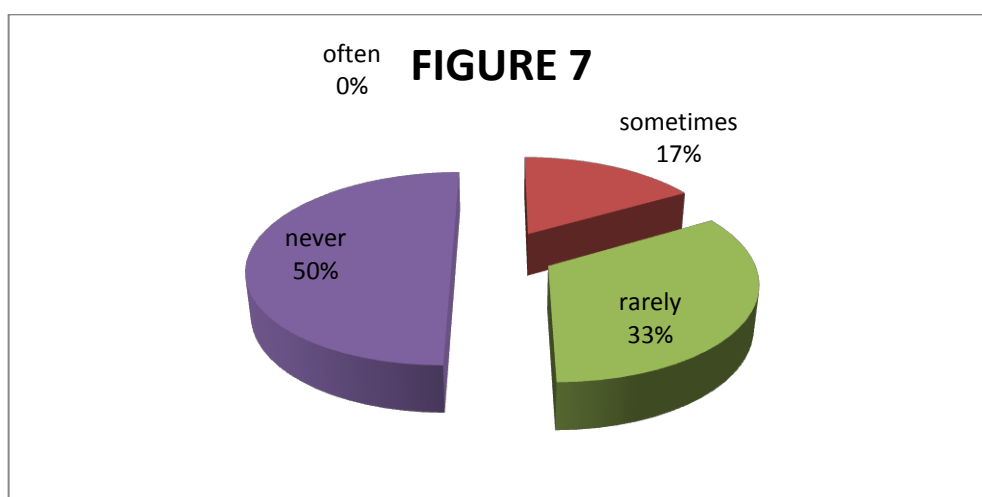
Question two of the third part of the questionnaire focused on analyzing how the students perceive the frequency of having adequate time to practice and memorize the language in a controlled setting using a variety of activities (VAK) that focus on the target language and progress from receptive understanding to productive practice.

Table G shows the answers of the students indicating the frequency in which they had the opportunity to practice and memorize the language in a controlled setting using a variety of activities (VAK)

4.1.5.2. – Remember Stage: At the remember stage, did you have the opportunity to practice the language in a variety of activities (VAK) that focus on the target language and progress from receptive understanding to productive practice, controlled language to freer choice of language?

Table G

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
often	0	0,00
sometimes	4	16,67
rarely	8	33,33
never	12	50,00
TOTAL	24	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As this figure reveals, the questionnaire respondents (n=4; 16.67 %) indicated that they sometimes had the opportunity to practice and memorize the target language, vocabulary or language structures in a controlled setting; (n=8; 33.33 %) marked that they rarely had the opportunity to practice and memorize the target language, vocabulary or language structures in a controlled setting; however, figure 7 shows that (n=12; 50 %) indicated that they never had the chance to practice and memorize the target language, vocabulary or language structures in a controlled setting

4.1.5.3. – Internalization Stage

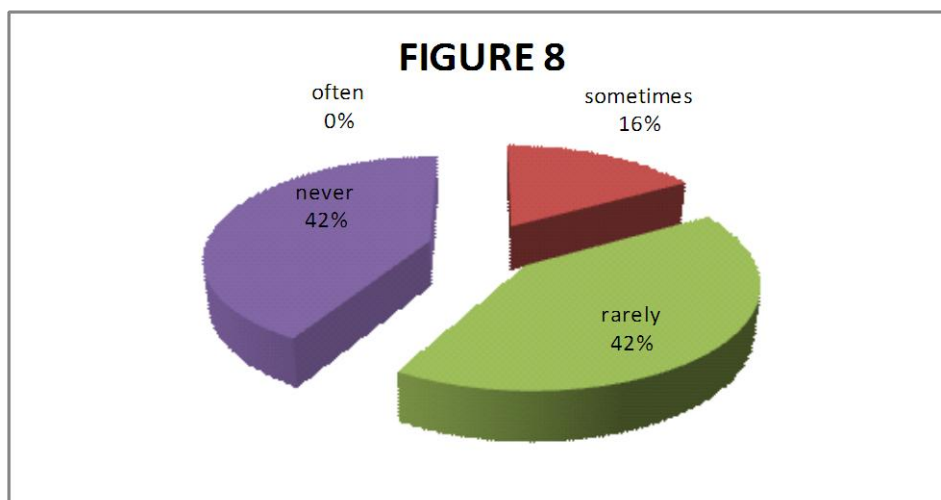
Question three has two parts and focused on analyzing how the students perceive the frequency of having the opportunity to practice and own the language as their teacher involvement gradually decreased so they could take more control and begin to personalize it and use it in a communicative task in different contexts.

Table H shows the answers of the students indicating the frequency in which they had the opportunity to take more control on the activities and move from controlled to freer practice.

4.1.5.3.1. –At the internalization stage, did your teacher involvement gradually decrease as you and your partners took more control and move from controlled to freer practice?

Table H

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
often	0	0,00
sometimes	4	16,67
rarely	10	41,67
never	10	41,67
TOTAL	24	100,00



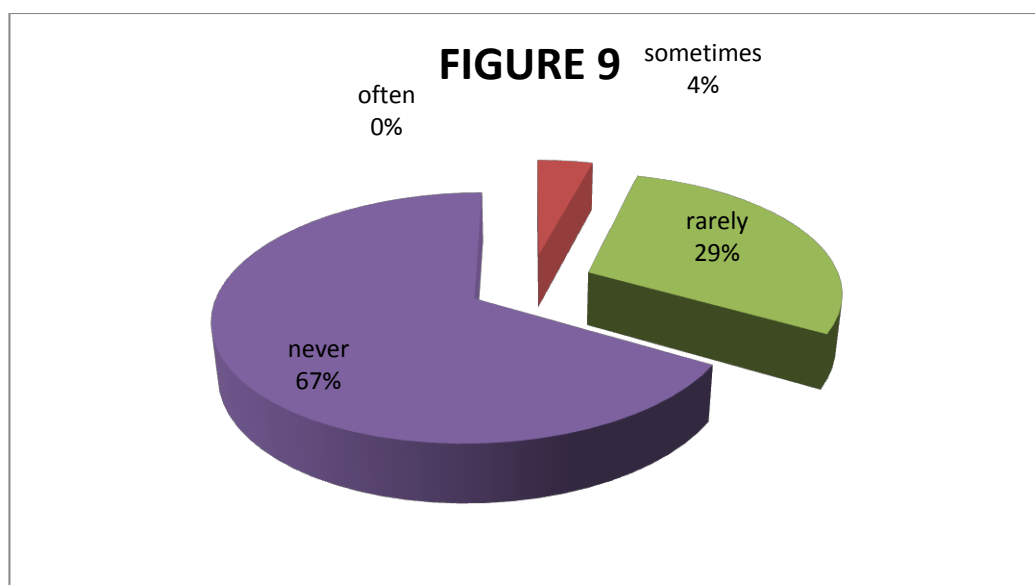
Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As figure 8 reveals, the respondents (n=4; 16.67 %) indicated that they sometimes had the opportunity to take more control on the activities and move from controlled to freer practice; (n=10; 41.67 %) marked that they rarely had the opportunity to take more control on the activities and move from controlled to freer practice; though, figure 8 shows that (n=10; 41.67 %) indicated that they never had the chance to move from controlled to freer practice in their language learning process.

4.1.5.3.2.– At the internalization stage, did you have the opportunity to increase your talking time and be ready for the USE stage?

Table I

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
often	0	0,00
sometimes	1	4,17
rarely	7	29,17
never	16	66,67
TOTAL	24	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As figure 9 reveals, the respondents (n=1; 4.17 %) indicated that they sometimes had the opportunity to increase their talking time and be ready for the USE stage; (n=7; 29.17 %) marked that they rarely had the opportunity to increase their talking time and be ready for

the USE stage; though, figure 8 shows that a high proportion of respondents (n=16; 66.67 %) indicated that they never had the chance to increase their talking time and be ready for the USE stage.

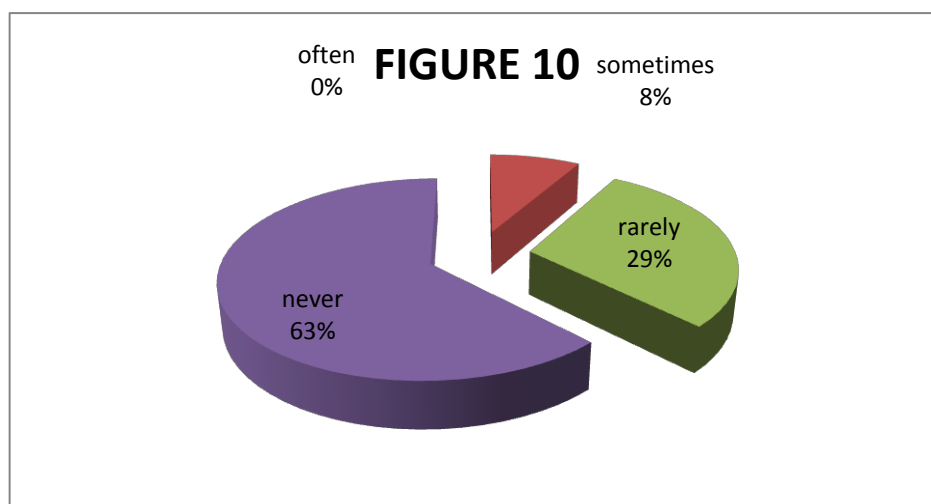
The final pre questionnaire question asked respondents to reflect on the frequency in which they had the opportunity to use the new language to communicate their ideas in different context in a spontaneous way (i.e. beyond one lesson).

Table I shows the answers of the students indicating the frequency in which they had the opportunity to spontaneously use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life task, real communication.

4.1.5.4. –Fluent Stage: At the fluent stage did you have the opportunity to spontaneously use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life task, real communication?

Table I

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
often	0	0,00
sometimes	2	8,33
rarely	7	29,17
never	15	62,50
TOTAL	24	100,00



Source: Pre Questionnaire, March, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As figure 10 reveals, the highest proportion of the respondents (n=15; 62.50 %) indicated that they never had the opportunity to spontaneously use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life communication; (n=7; 29.17 %) marked that they rarely had the opportunity to use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life communication; Only (n=2; 8.33 %) indicated that they sometimes had the chance to use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life communication

4.2 Summary and Conclusion

The results of the pre questionnaire indicated that the students participating in this study had diverse practices and backgrounds regarding their previous language experience. It seems that learners previous language experience have had a profound influence upon language learning. The lack of learning appears to reflect problems in motivation and attitude. As can be seen above, a high percentage of participants at the beginning of the research expressed that they did not like studying English. Some of them had some negative self-perceived attitudes to language learning, little motivation to language learning and bad impressions about language learning due to their past English language experiences. Regarding their language learning, it can be seen that the majority of students excluding only a few of them did not have the opportunity to learn English in a context in which the language teacher implemented both scaffolding target language and scaffolding activities. In other words, students did not have the opportunity to learn the language following processes that lead them up to communicative goals. This was a key aspect for the researcher so he could explore and find out students perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom.

4.3 Findings

The research findings presented below correspond to the research question one with the corresponding sub questions. Specifically the findings describe the students' perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF in the English foreign classroom and the self perceived effectiveness of this five stage learning framework through focus group interviews, post questionnaire and open ended interview.

What are the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching in the EFL classroom?

How do the sequence of content, communicative tasks, material, and peer support in each stage of ECRIF help beginner students gain fluency in verbal communication in English as a foreign language and how does it boost confidence and motivation?

What are students perceived language learning difficulties in an EFL class exclusively conducted by the teacher researcher while following the five cognitive learning stages to develop communicative language fluency?

4.3.1 Focus Group interview

Because each learner has his/her own way of learning and because each experience may be completely different, the teacher researcher expected that the students' perceptions would vary a lot. There were, however, four emerging themes in the 21 students' perceptions about the use of ECRIF, which are the process, visual aids, amount of information and interaction and learning activities. When the teacher researcher asked the students to share those aspects that helped or hindered their learning in each class, most students claimed that the process, amount of information to be learned in a class, their interaction with the classmates either in pairs or small groups as well as the use of materials contributed to their success in language learning. To some degree some of the students at a certain point during the class felt frustrated in their learning process. In spite of their frustration in their learning process, all of the students affirmed that peer and teacher support as well as the use of visual aids helped them to overcome that difficulty and continue with the learning process. In order to successfully learn a language they emphasized that language teachers need to take into account students' background knowledge and not to cover a lot of information in one class. They stated that they needed time to process the information, suitable activities that motivate them and lots of practice. Their perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF confirm that learner-learning centered approach like ECRIF can promote a more effective language learning environment in the classroom.

4.3.1.1 What was something that helped or hindered language learning today?

Four categories emerged from the data regarding the focus group in which students were invited to reflect about what helped or hindered their learning process in a lesson? The following comments from some of the students echoed and supported the findings in the focus group interviews.

What was something that helped or hindered your learning in this class?

4.3.2 The process

During the focus group interviews, the students frequently mentioned that they benefited from the scaffolding process in their learning. They valued the implementation of activities that allowed them to gradually master the necessary vocabulary or structure through ample practice in which they were able to internalize the language. Susan and Jonathan's statements provide examples of students' perceptions about the process they have gone through.

Jonathan commented: "Something that helped my learning is the process we have gone through. Let me describe how I personally see this process... I have heard from my classmates that the process provides them with a sense of confidence so after the exercises they feel ready to use the language in more complex situations. Mine...It is the same, but I see that I go through this process... I go from very difficult to difficult and when I am in the middle of the class I go from difficult to not very difficult and from this to easy. I do not know if you get it....But for me the process helps me a lot because of the steps. They offer me with stages of transition so eventually I can use the language in the last activity where I have to ask or answer questions with my classmates. Sometimes this doesn't occur in one class but as we review this in subsequent lessons....after two or three classes I can use the information. I am not saying that my English is fluent but I can understand and say some things."

Susan commented: “Well, I would say that something that helped my learning today was the process. First, I had the opportunity to listen to the words. I heard the pronunciation of the words. Then when you asked us to just point to the words we heard I was able to identify the words and look at the picture you were referring to.... I managed to get the meaning of the words through the pictures...It was easy for me to listen and identify...Then when we did the same activity with my partner....here... I had the opportunity to practice. Sometimes, I made mistakes but my partner helped me with the pronunciation. It was fun. In the next activity... when we had to use the words in the blanks I did most of the exercise by myself. There were two statements that I was not sure because there were some new words for me. When you invited us to stand up and find a partner to check our task... I could see that I had a mistake. I corrected it with the help of my new partner. Then, when we did the mingle activity I had the opportunity to read and practice the questions and answers. In the last exercise when you asked us not to read the question and give our own answers... I realized I could use the language. I felt good about it...so I think the process helped my learning. I really like working with different people. It is a good practice.”

4.2.3 Visual aids.

About 90% of the students pointed out that the use of visual aids (no technology) and tactile materials used in the different stages contributed to their language learning. The students strongly believed that the use of visual aids helped them clarify the meaning of vocabulary and grammar as well as when they had to express their thoughts and ideas. According to some students, the use of pictures and posters motivated them and their classmates to engage in their learning process. Kyle and Elizabeth clearly stated the benefits of posters and pictures used throughout the learning process.

Kyle

“Something that helped me today.....and not only today... but during the course is the great diversity of pictures, graphs and posters you have used in the teaching process. It is

easy for me to remember the words just looking at the pictures. Having pictures on the board, my desk and on the floor have contributed to my learning. Actually, this is the first time that I have worked with pictures on the floor... It is good because I can walk around the class and use the pictures as I talk with a partner. Today for example you presented the topic with some posters. Just looking at the pictures I knew what the topic was in a general way. Then, when you introduced the class...uhh....when you started the class by pointing at the pictures I knew you were talking about free time activities. The pictures helped me deduce the meaning of the words you were presenting. I could remember some vocabulary I studied in high school... and learned some more. The pictures have supported my learning.” I found it quite easy to understand. It is interesting to learn the language when the content to be learned not only comes from the book but from the material you bring to class in this case the pictures which are connected to the topic and the words we need to use to communicate”

Elizabeth

“I found the use of pictures so useful today. Sometimes I don’t get the meaning of the words but with the help of the pictures I can infer the meaning. The pictures or the handouts with the pictures are very useful. They helped me construct my knowledge as I manipulate them in the different activities. The activities that you prepare using the pictures within the same context have helped me develop my ability to use the language. Pictures are very useful to me. They encourage me to speak more. I do not think the book only can help. So, relying only on the book is not good. I like the method.” The use of pictures and posters throughout the process has motivated not only me but my classmates. The use of pictures has contributed to the engaging in our learning process.

4.2.4 Amount of information

The majority of the students stated that the small amount of information covered in one class contributed to their learning process. Many students stated that following the book in the past was boring and overwhelming. They stated that they used to cover two or three pages in one class. They expressed their satisfaction of not having to cover a lot of

information in one class. They saw this as something positive that enabled them to pursue and enhance meaningful learning. They added that having to cover a small amount of information per class helped them have more control over their learning process and eventually use the language in a real situation. Carmen stated her view about the amount of information in the following way.

Carmen.

“Having being exposed to a small amount of information during this process has contributed to my learning. Today was not the exception. We went through several activities that were not out of context. We recycled over and over again the same information within the same situation. This does not mean that we haven’t done much.... Well,... if we take a look at the book we can see that we only covered half of a page, but the practice we did several times with my classmates was related to a single context. Furthermore, the activities were adapted to our real life situation. We had to use the language to talk about us. This is good.... Because... in the past, we followed the book in a very slavish sort of way. We followed activity after activity as they were in the book... so we covered at least two pages in a class... it was impossible to learn...I did not feel like I was learning anything in class. We only covered the topics. But.... the adaptations you make from a page in a book provide us with the basis to move on and develop our speaking ability.”

4.2.5 Interaction and language learning strategies

Students highlighted interaction as one of the aspects that contributed to their learning of English throughout the course. Their comments reflected the satisfaction they found towards pair work, group work and the whole class interaction in the different stages of their learning process. Students acknowledged and appreciated the grouping strategies used in class as well as the different learning strategies. They expressed that the different kinds of interactions throughout the lessons engaged them and motivated them to continue with the learning process. Many students expressed that the learning strategies through interaction and cooperation contributed to their language development. They repeatedly

stated that the different kinds of activities provided them with opportunities to practice the language as they interacted with their partners and the materials.

“Well, one of the things that helped me today to learn the language was the different types of interaction I had with my classmates during the lesson. Student to student interaction as well as working in small groups gave me the opportunity to practice the language....Having the opportunity to exchange information with several classmates helped me express my ideas and listen to the ideas of my partners. The good thing about practicing the language with different people is that I get to know them a little bit more about their lives. Today for example when we worked with the exchange cardseverybody had a card with one question....We had to approach a person,...read the question and listen to the response of my classmate and then ask a follow up question.....this was interesting...but as we had to exchange the card when we finished talking ...and then...talk to someone else ...this gave me the opportunity to ask at least seven different questions to seven different classmates and also to respond to seven different questions.....this process helped me understand, learn, and remember.. some new words. I am glad ...that.. I can learn not only from the book ...but from my partners. I think....that interaction makes learning more active.”

“What can I say?..... Something that helped my learning today was the interactive participation in class. But mainly... because... I can decide who I can work with... I like working with my friends...so when I have to practice I look for them. I feel confident working with my friends. When I have to work with my other partners...uhh... I do it ...but....I am afraid of making mistakes...Sometimes I feel embarrassed....But in a general way interaction with my friends help me learn the language....also the different activities...we do not stick to the book. ..I really like the interaction with the material you bring to class....Today for example.. We worked with the questions from the book...but you gave us a dice....so we did not have to stick to the exercise line-by-line....We answered the questions in the group depending on the number we got after we tossed the dice.... You had the opportunity to practice the language... and at the same time....you had fun with it...and... especially when we got number five because It was time for our group to stand up and stretch....We learned the language..., practiced the language and

we ...had fun with the different learning activities...My speaking has gotten better, because we have lots of interactions. I have the opportunity to speak more and learn more. I get more interested in learning the language because I do not have to use only the book as it was in high school.

4.3 TESOL Observers' voices.

Initial term

Nancy commented:

“I think your class was organized, interesting, and fun. I really enjoyed how you started the class by taking a moment to relax, and then have the students greet each other. This seemed to create friendship, intimacy, and comfort. The pictures you used were a great idea to remind students of the actions they could speak about. I liked that your activities were short, practical, and gave students new people to practice with. Students were able to recycle what they had previously studied, and then build upon that. You gave them many opportunities to practice and expand on the new material. I liked how you gently corrected students by repeating what they said correctly. And students gently corrected each other as well when you told them to only listen to your pronunciation of the vocabulary words (some of them were repeating, and other students told them they should only listen). I really liked that you gave students ample time to practice asking questions because this is a very basic but important skill. The use of lots of repetition with small changes in structure allows students to feel comfortable and confident.”

Middle term

Susan commented:

“Thank you for letting me join your class today. I'm always excited to learn from other teachers and I learned many new ideas from watching you teach today! From beginning to end, your pacing was excellent, you varied the groups to get students moving around, used both audio and visual aids and the whiteboard to support the text, and created excellent

extension activities. The lesson was seamless and the students remained on task and engaged throughout--congratulations on a great lesson!"

End of the term

Katherine commented:

"There were many strategies/techniques (greetings, mindfulness exercise, pair shares, vocabulary activities, card game, small group discussion) that made the class interactive. I could see everyone's curiosity and wonder with each activity you introduced. The group atmosphere was excellent! You really kept everyone attentive and interested the whole time. I really like the way of pairing students and the materials used throughout the class. I think this affects ambience / pacing of class positively. You have such a calm teaching style, but you completed so many activities in one lesson. I would like to be more like that! I am wondering...what is the ideal number of new vocabulary to introduce in a lesson? This is a sincere question that your class made me think about. Regarding teacher talk time, I realized that you talked approximately 20 minutes and students talk time was about 60 minutes. Congrats!!"

4.4 POST QUESTIONNAIRE

As stated earlier, the main objective of the present study was not to generate theory but to understand and explore the case presented here in depth. The post questionnaire exploring students' perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom consists of a set of 15 statements. They requested students' ideas about how they perceived the implementation, facilitation and self perceived effectiveness of ECRIF in their language learning process when using Touchstone book 1 as they developed language fluency. The study explored its research questions through a cross-sectional questionnaire based on the theoretical foundation of the language framework. The questions included structured and open-ended type for the sake of comprehensible feedback. The structured items required students to select one response from the alternatives while open-ended type of items required students to express their own views on particular issues.

The first four questions of the post questionnaire focused on the teaching practice itself in a general way. That is, the design and management of the learning progressive activities leading up to communicative goals in real communicative situations in which students had the opportunity to gradually internalize the new language/structure through individual and active learning as they developed language fluency. The first question of the post questionnaire was directed to learn about whether students liked the teacher's language methodology applied in the classroom in a general way or not. The second question aimed at exploring how students perceived the contribution of ECRIF in their language learning process. The third question focused on how well the flow of the activities as well as the smoothness between activities and the stages work in their learning process. The fourth question requested from students to determine if the varied activities focused on different kinds of learners in each stage of their learning process helped or did not help language learning. Students were invited to comment why it helped or did not help their learning.

Questions 5, 6, and 7 focused on the procedural stages. That is, the cognitive and constructive preparation which focuses on the practice and attainment of language skill and the time employed in each stage to improve skills and move toward mastery: time needed to encounter and clarify the target language/skill; time needed to work on accurately remembering and internalizing the target language/skill; time needed to work on fluently using the target language/skill.

In order to find out students perception regarding the way how the new target language/structure was encountered/presented at the beginning of a class, question five invited students to mark one of the four alternatives (1) very interesting, (2) somewhat interesting, (3) a little interesting and (4) not interesting to illustrate their experience. Question six investigated students perception about how useful they found the strategies used by the teacher in which they had the opportunity to clarify the form, meaning and use of new language or structure. Question seven invited students to focus their attention on the "remember" and "internalization" activities and determine if their active engagement and personalization in these two stages helped them make the new knowledge their own. Question 8 invited students to express their perception regarding the appropriateness regarding the length of time employed by them at each stage of their learning process.

Question 9 and 10 invited students to express their perception regarding their competence and skill to use the new knowledge in a real life situation in the fluent stage. Question 9 investigated about how well prepared/equipped they were to produce the language (accurately and fluently) required for the “real life task” in the last stage. Question 10 invited students to reflect if success in the use stage depended on the quality of the preceding stages. Question 11 invited students to mark their impression regarding their learning experience through ECRIF. Question 12 invited students to comment on their English learning progress as they perceived it. Five items were used: (1) not progress at all, (2) very little progress, (3) moderate progress, (4) substantial progress and (5) very high progress. Questions 13 and 14 were open-answer questions about specific problems they had experienced in the classroom during the implementation of ECRIF. The final question invited students to describe something in particular they dislike about ECRIF.

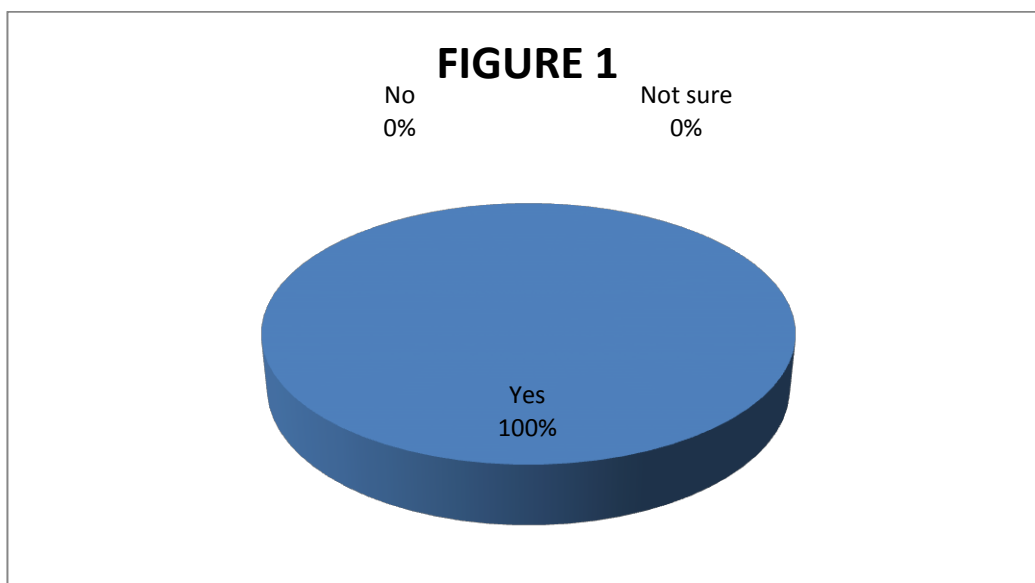
The following section presents the findings related to the implementation, facilitation and effectiveness of ECRIF in the EFL classroom. Tables are drawn below to show the frequency of responses.

The first question was aimed at finding out in a general way if students in the EFL classroom liked the methodology used by the teacher during the semester and the adaptation he did while using the Touchstone book 1.

Table 1 presents the frequencies of responses (Yes, No, Not sure) and the percentage of each item that measured attitude toward ECRIF.

1. Do you like the methodology used by the teacher during this semester and the adaptation he does while using the textbook Touchstone?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Yes	21	100,00
No	0	0,00
Not sure	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00



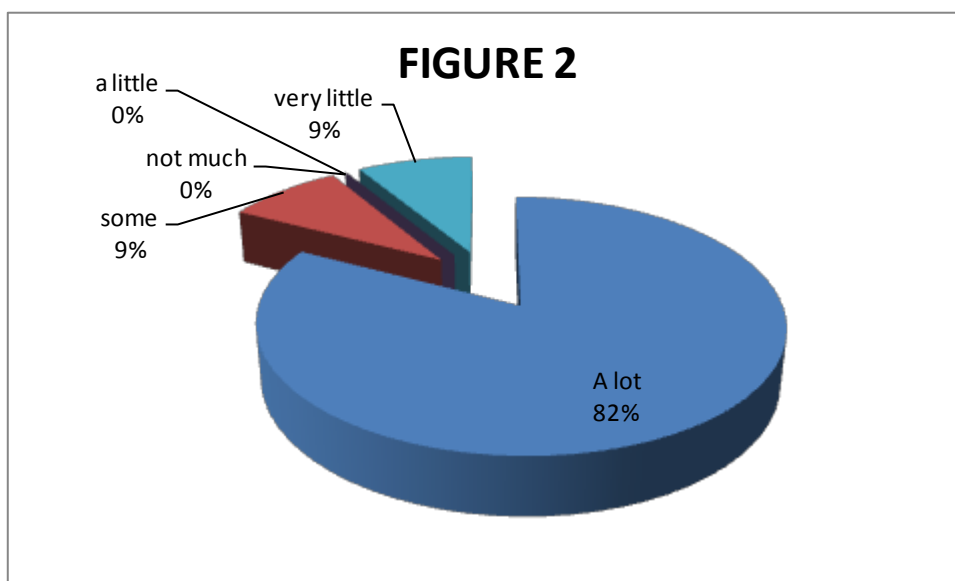
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked if the students liked the methodology and the adaptation made by the teacher in the teaching learning process, 100% of the students replied “yes” (n=21; 100%). All of the participants showed their strong enthusiasm in learning English through ECRIF. This could reflect that applying this new paradigm in the language teaching learning process was a motivating and effective approach in language learning for them.

The second question aimed at finding out if the stages embraced by the language framework contributed to the learning of a foreign language.

2. Do you think ECRIF a new paradigm in language teaching and each of its stages of the framework (Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluent Use) contribute to the learning of a foreign language?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
A lot	19	90,47
some	2	9,52
not much	0	0,00
a little	0	0,00
very little	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00

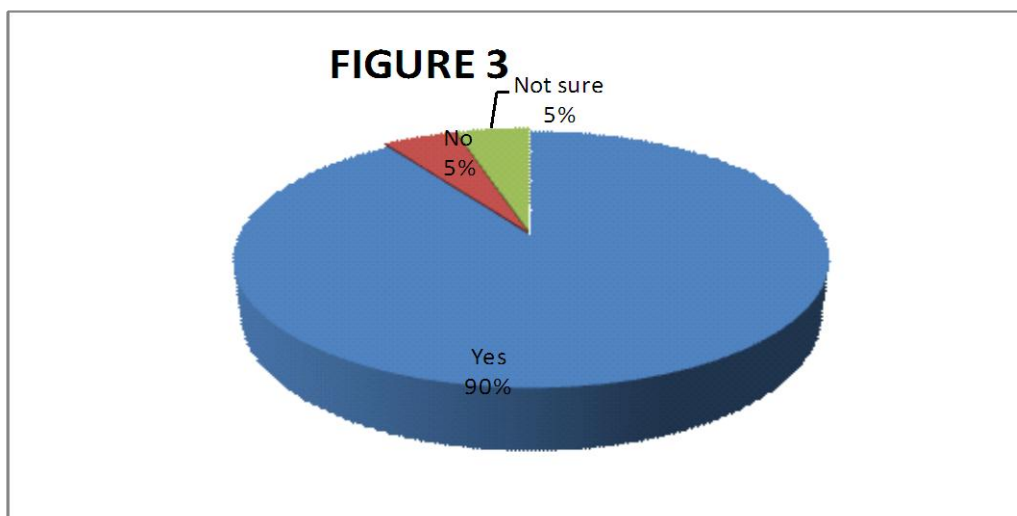


Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked if ECRIF a new paradigm in language teaching and its stages contribute to the learning of a foreign language, most of the students (n=19; 90.47%) felt that the new paradigm contributed “a lot” to their language learning. Only (n=2; 9, 52%) thought that ECRIF just contributed in some way to their learning process. This can be attributed to the high level of declarative and procedural cognitive engaging learning process they went through and which in turn became a learning outcome at the end of a lesson or unit. Indeed, it could be said that the actual declarative as well as the procedural content activities planned for each stage of the learning process Clarify, Remember, internalize and fluent used along with the teaching action (needed to support varied learners, interests aptitudes and abilities) were responsible for generating specific cognitive processes and learning results in the participants.

3. Do the activities at each stage of ECRIF flow well? Are the transitions between activities and among the stages smooth?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Yes	19	90,48
No	1	4,76
Not sure	1	4,76
TOTAL	21	100,00

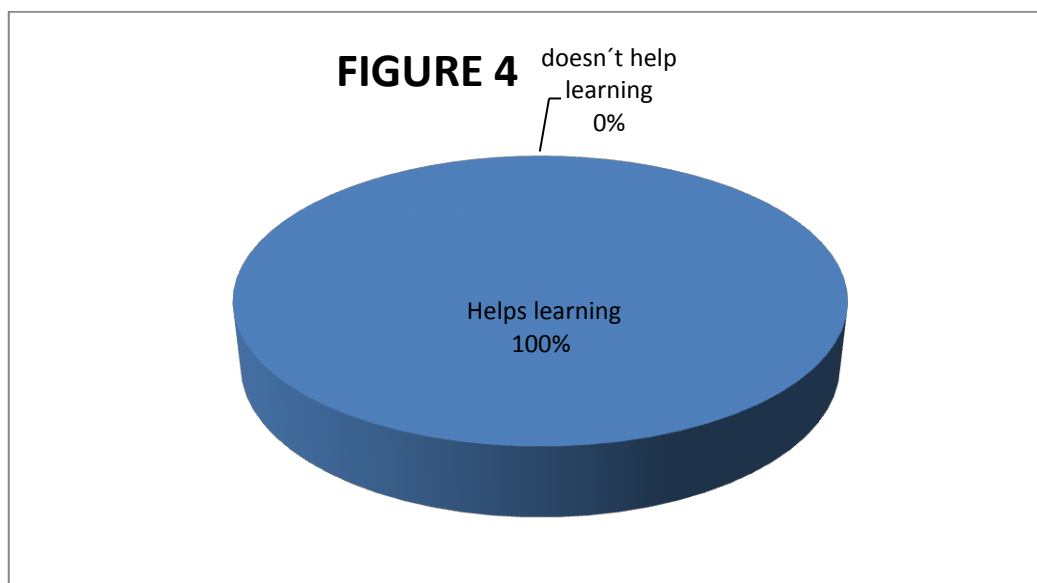


Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked if the activity/activities at each stage flow well and if the transitions between activities and the stages worked in a smooth way in their learning process (n=19; 90.48%) felt that they did. One (n=1; 4.76) was not sure about it and One (n=1; 4.76) say that the activities at each stage did not flow well. The positive response from a large number of students draws attention to the fact that the students excluding two of them were aware of the contribution of scaffolding activities in their learning process. It could be said that the sequential flow (scaffolding activities) in which the activities were comprised in their learning process, that is, from controlled to less controlled forms of practice in different contexts offered students a number of opportunities to articulate and build new skills and knowledge based on their prior experiences. Thus, activity/task scaffolding is a key feature that language teachers need to take into account in the process of learning when planning single lessons and in the act of teaching itself to achieve the student learning objective. The next question invited students to reflect on the different kinds of activities they tried in class and determine if they have supported student learning or not.

4. Do you think the varied activities that focus on different kinds of learners in each stage of ECRIF helps or doesn't help language learning?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Helps learning	21	100,00
doesn't help learning	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00



Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked if the varied activities that focus on different kinds of learners in each stage of ECRIF helps or doesn't help language learning, 100% of the students responded "yes" (n=21; 100%). This could reflect that student centered activities that include varied approaches taking into account different kinds of learners, classroom environment, arrangement of students, position/role of the teacher, materials and time needed to set up, do, and wrap up the activity/activities help students develop their skills and achieve learning in a better way. Planning lessons which simultaneously engage and stimulate the brain areas will better serve learning and sustain interest. See a brain friendly checklist for lesson planning.

Why?

The students' answers on the why, revealed in more detail the reasons why the different learning style activities contributed to their learning. Four themes were identified as the ones that were recurrently mentioned across most of the respondents due to their experiences: (1) The use of visual materials, (2) interaction with the classmates, (3) scaffolding practice and (4) learning styles. This is depicted in the following seven excerpts:

"The visual and tactile materials used in the different activities in the learning process contributed to my learning. The use of visual and tactile materials increased my understanding and my level of retention. In addition, the interaction we had with our

classmates (practice of dialogues) with the guide of the teacher contributed to my learning of English. This helped me remember and understand better. I mean, the permanent recycling of vocabulary in different situations was important to me.”

“The development of varied activities in a lesson helped us with our learning. They all contributed in some way or another to learn the new language. We have different perceptions. Some of us learn better when we look at images, others when we listen, and others when we have the opportunity to repeat the language several times and others when we interact with people. Having had the opportunity to work on all of these kinds of activities in a sequential way contributed to our language learning in this course. I would say, “They contributed a lot!!”

“They helped us a lot. Firstly, because there is a sequence, the use of graphics in the process helped us get the meaning of vocabulary and what is most important to strengthen and reinforce what we have learned (the language) as we went through different connected activities. The graphics highlighted my attention and memory”

“Because it is a didactic method that embraces steps and fundamental pillars in the learning process of a language. The student can clarify, remember and internalize the information in an easy way. This methodology is not a monotonous one. I would say it is completely different from the methodology applied from most English language teachers.”

“Yes, it helps. As a student, if I am stuck in the same place/seat, I do not have the possibility of making the new vocabulary my own. I mean the new vocabulary can not be fixed in my mind. With this new methodology, I think I can remember about 80% of what is being taught. I was able to learn quickly. I am 100% sure that what I have learned in this level I won't ever forget it.”

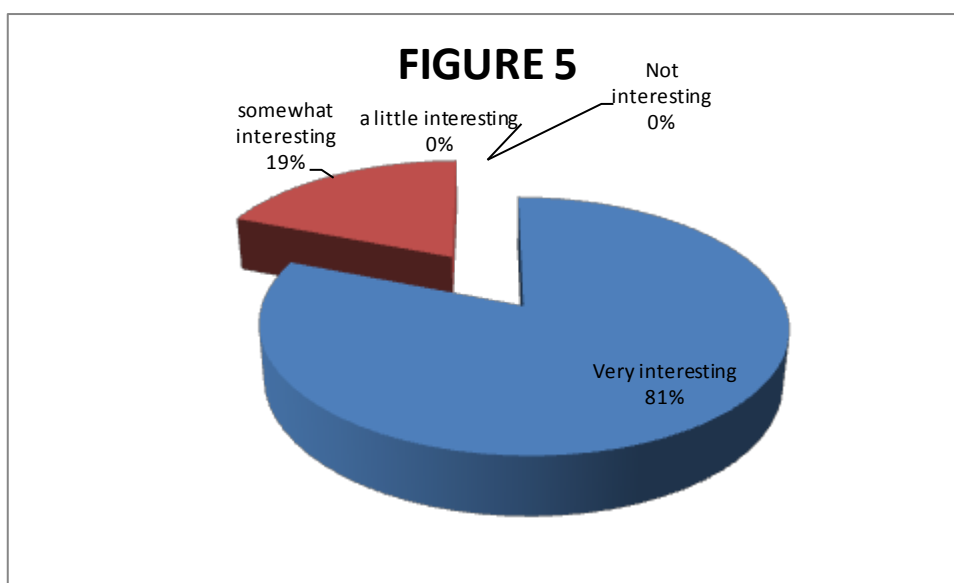
“Yes, it does. I think that people not only need a book to follow in the learning instruction, but have lots of practice. And this was something that actually happened with ECFIF. We had the opportunity to use visual aids such as pictures, posters, postcards, word calendars, realia, charts, graphic organizers, pictures from the books, etc. We had lots of

opportunities to interact with our classmates, etc. This was an essential teaching strategy used by the teacher to help us memorize the language.”

“Yes, because we could realize if we knew something or not at the different stages. Starting the learning with words and small phrases allowed us to use them later in more complex structures/situations. The recycling of the words or phrases presented by the teacher at the beginning of the class and then the support I received from my peers, incrementally supported my learning of English. This process helped me use the language with my classmates at the end of the class or in the next classes.”

5. What do you think of the way the language/structure is presented at the beginning of the class?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Very interesting	17	80,95
somewhat interesting	4	19,05
a little interesting	0	0,00
Not interesting	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00



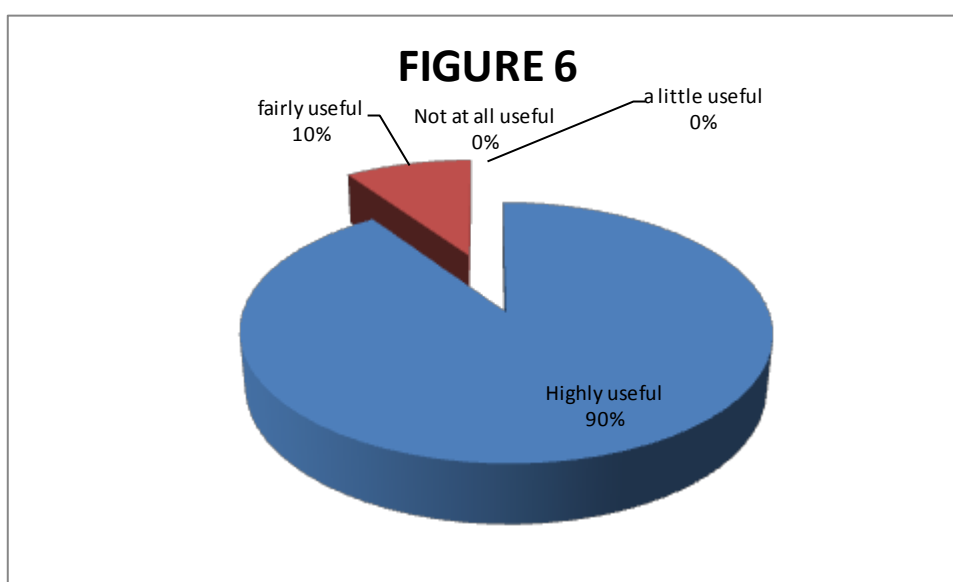
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked students what they think about the way in which key (new) language/structure was encountered/presented at the beginning of the class. In terms of the four choices,(n=17; 80.95%) marked that they found it “interesting”, (n=4; 19.05%) found the

way of encountering the target language “somewhat interesting”. This could suggest that by using a variety of sensory modes, schema can be activated in a context in which the teacher provides learners with authentic exposure to target language. That kind of exposure might allow students to meet the language and be aware that something new is there to be discovered and notice key features in the content. The teacher has a stage in which to elicit what some students already know so that everybody can benefit from it. It also gives the teacher the opportunity to see what aspect of the language (form, meaning or use) he/she needs to work on.

6. How useful, do you think, are the strategies used by the teacher to help you clarify the form, meaning and use of the new language?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Highly useful	19	90,48
fairly useful	2	9,52
a little useful	0	0,00
Not at all useful	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00



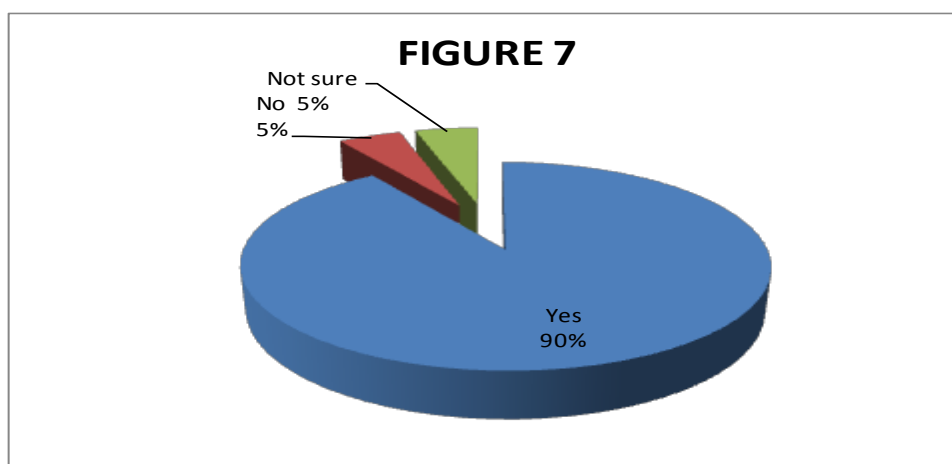
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked students to evaluate how useful they found the strategies used by teacher in which they had the opportunity to clarify the form, meaning and use of new language or structure, the majority of the respondents (n=19; 90, 48 %) expressed that the strategies

were highly useful. Only two respondents (n=2; 9.52 %) found them fairly useful. This could suggest that creating(target language scaffolding) opportunities for students to clarify form, meaning and or use at an early stage of their learning process can lead to successful learning and use of the target language and/or target skill when following the ECRIF framework.

7. Do you think that the stages of remembering and internalizing are more effective if the tasks or activities keep the learners actively involved practicing the language in a personalized way as they make it their own?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Yes	19	90,48
No	1	4,76
Not sure	1	4,76
TOTAL	21	100,00



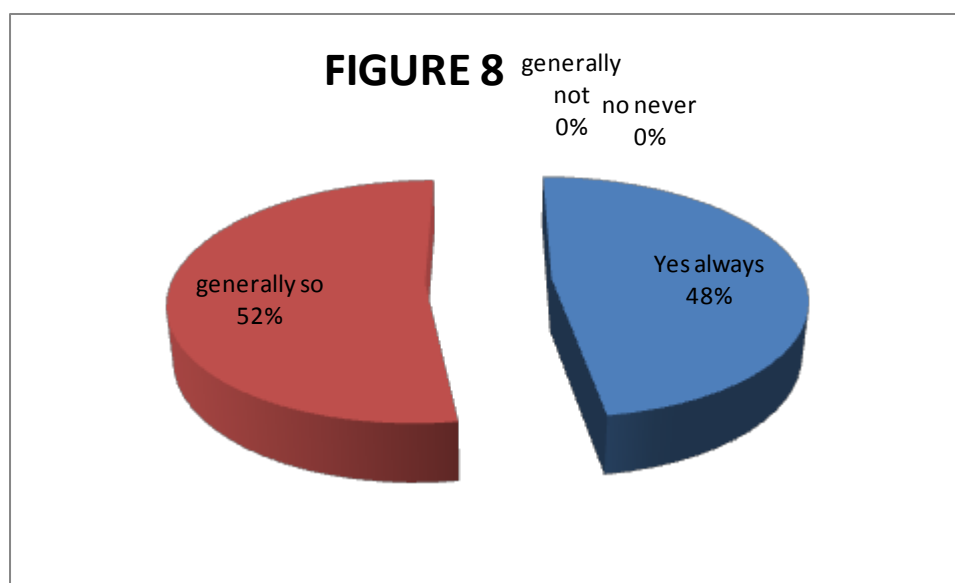
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked students to focus their attention on the “remember” and “internalization” activities and determine if their active engagement and personalization throughout these two stages helped them make the new knowledge their own, in terms of the three choices, the majority of the respondents (n=19; 90.48%) were confident with the knowledge gained and they expressed that the activities in these two stages helped them gain language acquisition. One respondent (n=1; 4.76 %) was not sure about it and (n=1; 4.76 %) expressed that the activities in these two stages did not help make the new knowledge his/her own. This could suggest that if students have a number of opportunities on a more personal level to connect new skills and knowledge to their prior experiences, these could

help them remember and possibly internalize the new information in a better way. This also could be attributed to the two kinds of scaffolding planned and applied into the lesson: (1) target language/target skill scaffolding and (2) activity/task scaffolding which assure that the challenge level throughout the different stages of the learning process remains in the learners' zone of proximal development.

8. Are the varied activities the right length so that you (the learners) can gradually internalize the target language as you remain engaged and motivated at each stage of ECRIF?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Yes always	10	47,62
generally so	11	52,38
generally not	0	0,00
no never	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00



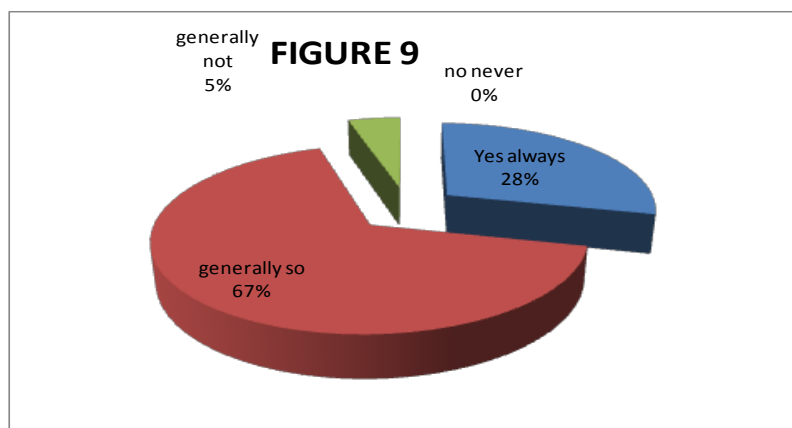
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked students if the varied activities were the right length so that they were able to gradually internalize the target language as they remained engaged and motivated in each stage of ECRIF, almost half of the participants (n=10; 47.62%) chose the “Yes always” option; (n=11; 52.38%) selected “generally so”. This question was a little bit tricky, but the purpose was to invite learners to reflect and look back on their experience and see if they thought that the time devoted to the practice and development of the different activities

were appropriate in their learning process. This is not surprising because as noted by Stern and Todesco (1978) we learn at different pace and human learning differs consistently from one person to another due to “learning style”. Learning style is defined as “a biological and developmental set of personal characteristics that make the identical instruction effective for some students and ineffective for others” Dunn, Thies, Honigsfeld (2001, p 11). On the other hand, Dunn and Dunn (1999) define learning style as “the way each person begins to concentrate on, process, internalize, and retain new and difficult academic information” (p. 11). As explained earlier ECRIF is not a linear process but a spiral one where students can go back and forward as they gradually achieve mastery of the language or skill. It is here where the ECRIF framework provides language teachers with the lens for seeing the levels of learning, knowledge and skills. It is important for the teacher to be able to identify what stage of the learning process students are in with the target information or Skill. Being able to see where learners are in the process of learning will allow teachers to help them move forward and provide different support as needed in the different stages of their learning.

9. Do you have enough skill and knowledge to produce the language required for the “real life task” in the last stage?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Yes always	6	28,57
generally so	14	66,67
generally not	1	4,76
no never	0	0,00
TOTAL	21	100,00



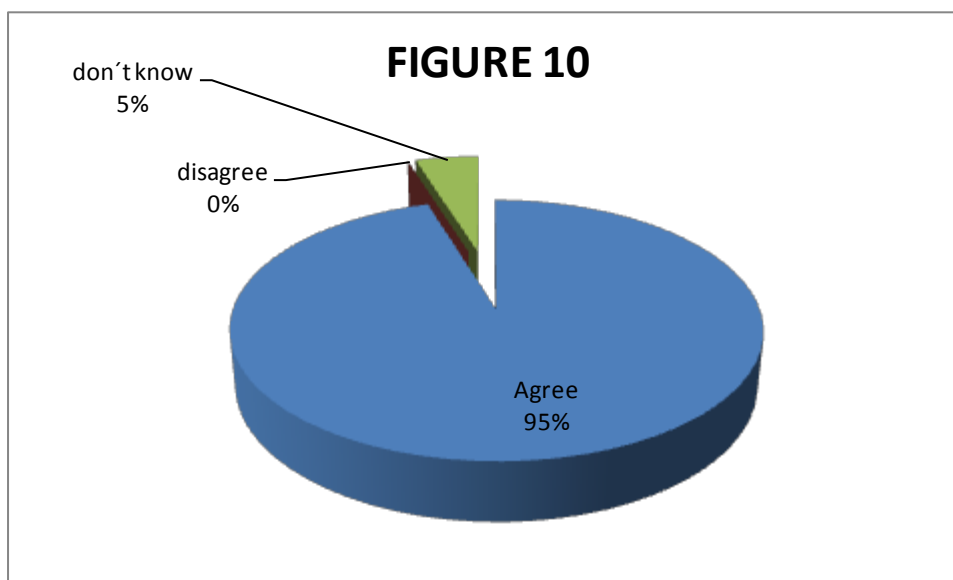
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked students if they feel they have enough skill and knowledge to produce the language required for the “real life task” in the last stage of their learning process, (n=1; 4.76%) marked the “generally not” option; (n=14; 66.67%) marked the “generally so” option; only (n=6; 28.57%) marked the “yes always” option. It is evident from the majority (14+6) of the respondents’ perceptions that for a successful achievement of language learning – students should go through a process of scaffolding.

Further, in the 10th question, the students were asked whether they agreed that success of the final stage depends largely on a sound relationship of the activities in the pre stages.

10. Do you think the success of the final stage (the FLUENT stage) entirely depends on the quality of the preceding stages, and thus, none of them can be rushed through nor ignored?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
Agree	20	95,23
disagree	0	0,00
don't know	1	4,76
TOTAL	21	100,00



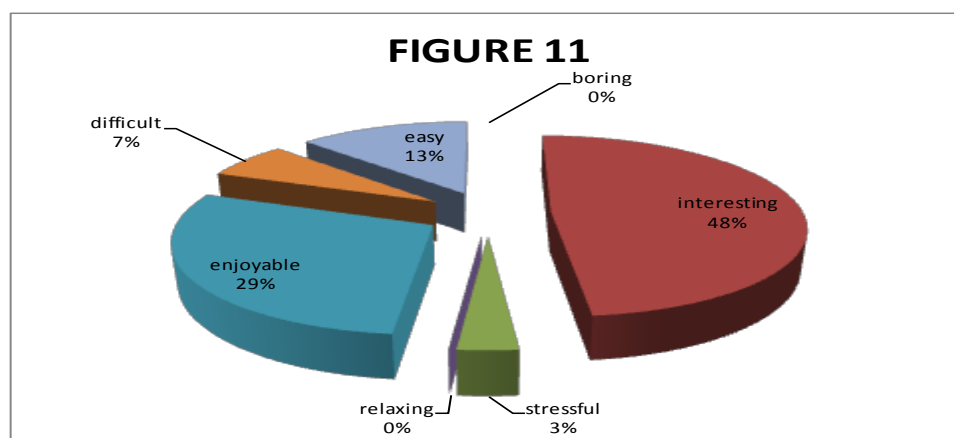
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

When asked students if they think the success of the final stage (**the FLUENT stage**) entirely depends on the quality of the preceding stages, and thus, none of them can be rushed through nor ignored, (n=20; 95.23 %)of the respondents confidently “agree” that

the success in the fluent stage depended on the quality of the activities in the pre stages of their learning process. However, (n=1; 4, 76 %) chose the “do not know” choice. As can be seen here, the response of the majority despite the hesitant response underline the fact that providing students with stepping stones in their learning process is key for successful English learning.

11. Talking about your English language learning experience during this semester through ECRIF, which of the following words most reflect your impression about it:

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
boring	0	0,00
interesting	15	48,39
stressful	1	3,23
relaxing	0	0,00
enjoyable	9	29,03
difficult	2	6,45
easy	4	12,90
TOTAL	31	100



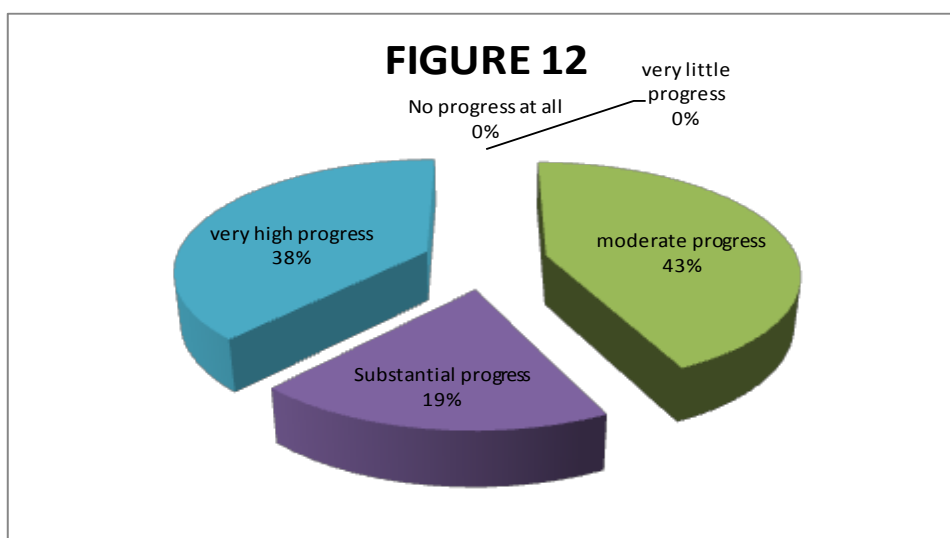
Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
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When asked students to describe their learning experience during the semester through ECRIF, (n=15; 48.39%) chose the “interesting” choice; (n=9; 29.03%) chose the “enjoyable” choice; (n=4; 12.90%) chose the “easy” choice; (n=2; 6.45%) chose the difficult choice. The majority (19+9) of the participants chose positive items to describe their learning experience through ECRIF. The above stated responses highlights the fact that the implementation of ECRIF in the teaching and learning of English in the foreign

language classroom can very likely help improve the quality of the teaching learning process in a joyful environment. On the other hand, we can see the presence of two negative responses (n=1; 3.23%) stressful; (n=2; 6.45 %) difficult which may generate negative feeling about ECRIF. So, it is necessary to find out the reasons of these two choices. The next question invited students to comment on their progress in English during the semester

12. Talking about this semester, would you please comment on your progress in English as you see it?

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	%
No progress at all	0	0,00
very little progress	0	0,00
moderate progress	9	42,86
Substantial progress	4	19,05
very high progress	8	38,10
TOTAL	21	100,00



Source: Post Questionnaire, July, 2012
 Author: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira

As this chart reveals, the responses to this questions are - (n=8; 38.10%) for “very high progress”; (n=4; 19.05%) for “substantial progress”, and (n=9; 42.86%) for “moderate progress”. Interestingly, the students ‘response here brings about a lot of fresh hopes. It highlights that to achieve successful EFL learning objectives; a learning-learner-centered approach such as ECRIF needs to be implemented in the language classroom.

13. Have you experienced any problem during the implementation of ECRIF in your classroom throughout this semester? If so, please explain

When asking students to state the problems they have encountered during the implementation of ECRIF, all the students gave a positive feedback. They said that they did not have problems with the new methodology. However, four students expressed that they had some difficulties in their listening skill as it is described in the following extracts:

“I have some kind of difficulty understanding what people say in the conversations the teacher presented in class.”

“I have a hard time when trying to understand the listening activities presented by the teacher. I mean the ones from the book.”

“Not much, sometimes the noise from outside or sometimes the noise caused by some students did not help me understand some words.”

“Personally... Sometimes I think that I have difficulties in listening. I guess I have some problems with my learning. It doesn't have to do anything with the methodology. I think it is me.”

14. Is there anything you particularly dislike about ECRIF?

Most students expressed their satisfaction with the methodology. However, they expressed some thoughts and points of view to be taken into account when using this new paradigm in language teaching. This can be read in the following excerpts:

“No, there was not anything that I dislike about the methodology. However, I would suggest more listening exercises. I have learned to speak and write with ECRIF, but I have the feeling that I can not understand the language much.”

“There were some extremely simple activities. I knew I was able to use the language very well in those situations. However, the teacher employed a lot of time on them.”

“I don’t think it was a good strategy to work in groups with different people. I felt more confident working with my friend in my group!!”

“Honestly... I liked EVERYTHING, because I can use the language.”

“I liked the method and the way of teaching. However, the noise caused by my classmates working at the same time disturbed my concentration and in some way... it did not help my participation with my peer or peers.”

“I think the methodology applied by the teacher was very good. I think we, I mean, the students have to take a proactive role in our learning if we want to learn the language effectively.”

4.5 Student Interviews

Qualitative data were also collected from a post interview. The post interview was done to validate data collected from the focus group interview throughout the implementation of ECRIF and the post questionnaire at the end of the study. This allowed the teacher researcher to have a conversation directly with the students and talk about their previous learning experience and the experience with ECRIF. They were invited to describe their past English learning experience in a general way and highlight positive and negatives aspects of it. Then, they were invited to comment if working with ECRIF made a difference or not. In the follow up of the conversation, they were asked to tell if any change regarding their attitude and interest have occurred during the semester. Finally they were asked to comment on the contribution of ECRIF in language learning.

The following extracts from eight students may well summarize their perception: It is important to mention that students’ comments from the interview, were first transcribed, summarized and then translated into English.

Maria

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“My learning experience was not very good. First of all, we went through a very fast process. We learned something because we were afraid of failing the year and not because we liked learning the language. Actually we had a book that did not facilitate our communication.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“I had more negative experiences. My teacher was very demanding. I found the learning process difficult. I did not like English and I did not have that desire of learning it.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, there is. I can see that my learning is a real learning. I mean, it is not memorization for a day or two. I think my learning would last for a long time.”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester?

“Well, now I can say that I like learning English a little bit more. I have that desire of learning the language so I can speak it in a fluent way.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Now I can ask questions, I can answer questions easily. I also can keep a conversation going with you.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Yeah, because I have more interest, I feel like I want to learn the language and I give my very best in this subject.”

Carolina

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Actually, my learning experiences were bad because I did not learn much... I did not have good teachers. We only had to copy in class. Yeah that was it. The teachers only spoke for themselves. They made us copy certain patterns...and we did not learn anything.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Well, the negative ones I already mentioned. ...Regarding the positive ones...I guess that we had the opportunity to work in small groups and make friends while we were working in the written exercise”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, there is a lot of difference. This new methodology is great for me. I learned a lot...I have learned a lot. I did not have much knowledge about English when I started this course. It would be good if this methodology can be implemented in the university.”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester?

“Well, before I did not like English...But now I like it...Yeah I like it.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Well, I can speak a little bit, but I need to practice listening and writing...”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Yeah, a lot because we always started our classes with pictures which allowed us to remember words and then we could do the activities step by step with no difficulty.”

Melissa

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Let’s see, when I was in high school...I would say my learning experience was not so good because the teachers only followed the books. We worked on translations. We translated the verbs...and for oral test we tried to memorize the words. Besides, we only had a class of 45 minutes a week...and the teacher only spoke Spanish in the instruction. No, no...I did not learn.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Negatives...I did not learn to pronounce and understand the language, but one good thing about my past experience is that now I like to read and translate the paragraphs in the books”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, there is a difference...because with the pictures and posters... I can predict the meaning of some words. The pictures help me clarify the words. I can use the words in sentences looking at the pictures, I can tell something about them...as I work with my partner and in small groups...and the process itself”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Yeah, now it is not only the grade.....now it is because I want to learn. With this new methodology I do not get bored in class because the activities are active and we are

constantly changing partners...However, the time of the class is not the appropriate. We study all morning and then we have to come to English class at 1pm. Sometimes we haven't eaten anything.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Uhh....Yeah, I can understand and talk to my classmates when I have to interact with them...not a lot but if I compare with the learning from the past now I can use the basic sentence structures”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Yeah, the process, the practice and using the info with personal information has helped me a lot and my classmates too. I can see that ... when I work in pairs. There are some classmates who are kind of fluent. Yeah, it does.”

Stefanie

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Well, it wasn't interesting because I did not like studying English. It doesn't mean that now I like it. No, no...I do not like it.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Well, what can I say... negative experiences...in the past we were requested to open the book and work on the different activities.... The teacher just came to class to explain the topic umm umm that was the routine and I did not learn the language. I did not like it... When I was in sixth course... I learned a little bit because the teacher was very demanding and I was afraid of failing the year or having to take a supplementary test”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, there is a lot of difference...this method is completely different due to the process. The steps and the pace we go through... the activities help us remember the language, and at certain times we are using the language. Yeah the process helps. Also the process is dynamic and fun.

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Well, as I said before I do not like English. However, I think the method is good. If I had studied with this methodology before ... I am sure that I could have learned the language in a different way.... and maybe have a different perspective about it.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“A little bit. I can establish short conversations with my classmates. I need to work on pronunciation and listening. I need to find a reason to learn the language.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“In a general way I would say that it does. This is due to the steps, the recycling of the information within the same contexts and the practice we did with our classmates. I really like the fact that we were moving and changing places. The use of the floor instead of the board was also fun.”

Miriam.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Well, my experience was not good in the past.I have been studying English for about 13 years including the years in the school. But,... unfortunately I did not learn much because I can not understand the language. When I started this course I did not understand much.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“The English classes were not dynamic. We spent our time in class only doing repetition and drilling.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, there is a lot of difference because the methodology is dynamic. Sometimes, I do not understand some things... but with the process we follow I can clarify and then I can continue with my practice as I make the learning my own. It is good because it goes from simple to more complex activities; we talk about our personal experiences so we can use the language the teacher has presented in class. It does not seem difficult because we follow a sequence with a certain grade of difficulty that connects with what we can do.

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Yes, because I did not like English at all... at the beginning I did not like it. But as the time passed by and due to the different activities in which we all had the opportunity to participate...it started to call my attention and progressively I started to learn the language and enjoy what we did in class...And also I started to learn many things.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Yes, at the end of this first level I can see that I have learned a lot....more than what I learned in my entire life in school and high school.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Yes, it does. The sequence is something... that I see as something positive because it follows a sequence and therefore contributes to our learning. We do not cover many pages in one class as we used to do in school. We work with the book and sometimes we use the same activities of the book but “you” make them lively. We are not in the same place. There is a lot of movement.”

Jocelyn.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“I did not have many hours of English in my high school... but I think that we were forced to memorize vocabulary... That is... the teacher had a methodology in which she requested from us to memorize either words or verbs every day. ... It was 10 verbs or words that we had to memorize for the next class. I mean, for the oral test. And the next day ... the teacher invited the students for the oral test according to the roll and that was the routine for each day we had English. So, we were limited to memorize the words only for the day...because after one or two days we were not able to remember the words. Well, but some basic things like the color or numbers were learned very well. I can use them.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Well, when I was in high school I thought I had a good experience in my English classes. My teacher was a very good person. She did not make us do much. We had to work on the activities from the book. We filled in the blanks. She used to check the exercises...but she did not take the time to see if we were right or wrong. We had a good grade and that was it.

We did not do much. ...ahh....positive we learned some songs.. And we knew the meaning of the lyrics”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, because with this methodology we are not limited to memorization. Once we are able to pronounce, and we get to know the meaning of the words....immediately we start to practice the words in several activities and thus we begin to automatize. ... And with the support of the pictures and the interaction with my friends...That helps us a lot because we know the meaning of the words.

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Yes, a lot.. because.... .for example now I try to use English with other people. In my case In my house... even though the members of my family do not know English...I talk to them in English ...and then they asked me to explain to them what I want to say..... It is fun, but I think this is the beginning of a change of attitude towards learning English in myself.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Yes, I do not know when but I can see that I can use the language... I know I have mistakes but I can get across my message. In class, ... we laughed we do not know some words we want to express. I am all for the process... Yes I can see some progress.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contribute to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Yes, it does. Firstly, we are not afraid of making mistakes because there is respect in the class. We do a lot of practice, have fun with our classmates. If there is something we do not know...our classmates help us to clarify and we can continue with the learning. ...It is not stressful and I do not get bored.”

Theresa.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“I think it was bad. I was trying to learn English for many years in the past and had no success with it. I did not even learn the basic things.... ”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Well, the teachers did not focus on learning so we could use the language in the future. The teaching was centered only for the moment. We had to read and try to understand for that moment. Well, honestly...I do not like English. Learning English has always been difficult for me...and it is a little complicated for me. Besides the hours we had English...They have been used to do something different and not exactly for the teaching of English.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes, there is a lot of difference. I have the opportunity to work on different activities, manipulate the materials. You provided us with examples before doing the exercises...This has helped me gain more knowledge than in the past. This is because the learning process is more dynamic and “you” put more emphasis on learning.”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“I think so, because now it is not seen as an obligation...perhaps I do not understand everything, but the learning has turned out to be fun and not so difficult and boring as it was in the past. Yeah, I think I am getting to like it.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Yes, I have been learning the language little by little and from time to time I feel excited about what I can say and do in class.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Yes, because we have worked on different kinds of activities.... and not only this, but the methodology follows different steps....and what is most important the activities are fun and active. I mean we are responsible for learning the language.”

Sam.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Well...as this was a long time ago..... it is difficult for me to remember about it. What I remember is that the teacher used to miss classes. We did not have much interest in the subject. The number of hours were very limited .. two or three hours a week....”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Let me think... well instruction was based on the book. We had to complete the book. This was frustrating. I did not know what to do when the teacher gave instructions in English. I do not know how I passed the years in school.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Well, yeah....because first...you are mature and you know you are responsible for your own learning. You are aware that there is a need of learning. Then it is a matter of discovering the motivation...and as the methodology has a sequence... This allows you to develop your knowledge.. I do not know ..from my personal point of view .. Yes it does. ..I think this is because we have time to process the information. The use of graphics helps me understand in context... Well, I can read and understand, but I have to work on fluency.”

3. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Yes, because at the beginning of the semester I did not like English. I like French... With this methodology you need to use the language with other people. I mean.. with your classmates... The focus of the methodology is the communication. So you get help from the people you interact with... and sometimes I can help my classmates.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Well, I do not have much fluency...but I can read and understand the texts in the book...I also can understand what you say in some way... and I can understand my classmates too.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“mmm, yes, yes, This methodology is like a mold...It has a sequence...It promotes learning in the students.”

Joshua.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Well...let’s say that in the past it was a matter of passing the year. I did not pay much attention to my learning. The teachers taught from the book and not from them.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“I guess it was fifty - fifty. ..One of my teachers was friendly and he helped us to complete the exercises and he never gave us a low grade. But... I remember I had a teacher with whom most of us had to take a supplementary test to pass the year. Classes were very tense and it was so terrifying to know that we had classes on a certain day. We did not want that day to come.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Sure...It is totally different. It has been satisfactory to study with this methodology. The fact that you have learned so much in such a short time... makes a big difference. The material, the activities, the examples, the interaction with the classmates has contributed to my learning.”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Yes...a lot. How can I say this....Now, I have the desire to continue learning more and more, but at the same time I am thinking what about if next semesters teachers use a different methodology.. you know most of the teachers use a traditional method and...you know.....most of us don't like this kind of methodology. We are afraid of that....let's say that we have to continue with the traditional method in which we have to complete the book and just try to pass the semester and not learn the language... ”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Yes, I can read, understand write and express my thought in a simple way.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“Absolutely... I can see my progress and not only mine... but that of my classmates and friends. I can see the result. As I have noticed, classmates and friends who did not know anything ...now... they are at the same level. They are using the language. I guess this is because we had to practice within a context .. umm within the same situation”

Mark.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“My experiences were a little bit ...well, not really good. I was not able to learn the language....the problem is... my teacher made us repeat the language so many times, but the information was not relevant. I had problems connecting the information to a realistic life situation. He did not use a didactic method. Well, you know if the methodology is good.. then....students like learning. But in my case ... I only studied to pass the year.. a test, an exam you know.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“Well, I had different teachers... I had a different teacher each year....At the beginning of the year, they always asked till which unit we had studied and to not look bad we used to say that we studied till unit “X” unit and then they gave us a test...umm like a diagnosis and the results were not good. It was very embarrassing.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“Yes. I have learned a lot. .. If I look back... The first days in the course I was very nervous because I did not know anything. I was afraid that my classmates would make fun of me....I could not say anything. But with the procedure we follow in class.. I mean, with the practice...I have learned a lot. There are sometimes in which I do not have to think about every single word I simply use them in context. Progressively you can remember the verbs and use them in a conversation...maybe that contributes to the learning of English. The method is very good. It is excellent. This is not only my perception but the perception of my classmates too.”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Now.. I am really interested in learning the language. You know if there were intensive courses in this summer.... I would like to be there as a listener...because I do not want to get disconnected from the process. I am on the way...I need to practice and practice...constantly.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Yes, now I can transfer the information to a real situation. I can talk about my things and the things of my family and friends. You feel good when you are using the language to express your ideas. Yeah.. I am learning. ”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“It contributes a lot to the learning. Because we study...we remember.....we practice. All the activities are developed within the same topic... you make connections with our personal experiences... and eventually we use the language...It would be a good idea if this method could be implemented in high school...so....when you get to the superior levels ...you can use the language”

Kevin.

1. - How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

“Well, my teacher did not use a dynamic method. She was very strict. It was really difficult to get good grades with her. We lost the interest. ..in the other university, we had to memorize and... as you know ...the memory is so fragile....We had oral tests...the teacher invited us to go to the front....I mean we had the test in front of everybody...this was not good.. I got really nervous...I forgot everything.”

2. - Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

“I was afraid of asking for help. I never asked for an explanation. I think it was not so good.”

3. - Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

“It would be good if ECRIF could be implemented in the other subjects. For example in trigonometry... this would be really good. You get to know easily the subject matter with this methodology and you feel comfortable enough with what you have to do or say...with the practice you do with your classmates ...at a certain point you are equipped to use the language.”

4. - What changes have taken place in your attitude/interest toward learning English during this semester? Have you experienced any change in yourself?

“Let’s see.. yeah, yeah, yes...with this kind of teaching you get motivated and want to learn more. It has been like an awakening of my interest in the language. And you are expecting to take the next levels and achieve the proficiency level....That is what the university requires...right?...But I am expecting to have the same methodology....because if the methodology changes that would be like a step back....like in the high school. You get stuck with what you have achieved so far.”

5. - Can you see any progress in your learning?

“Yeah, I have improved in the language. The interaction and practice in class have helped me retain and improve my language skills. I can speak, read, understand, but I need to work on writing.”

6. - Do you think ECRIF contributed to the learning of English in the classroom?

“No question about it. You go through a process in which you are active. The frequently change of exercises...The exercises were not unrelated, they were focused on the same theme...I guess this kept the students motivated and interested in their learning process...It was something positive. Personally I think this method contributes to the learning of English.”

4.6 Summary of the findings.

Generally speaking, focus group interviews, post questionnaire and post interview showed that the first level of English students had positive perceptions/feelings towards the ECRIF language learning process. They all liked the language methodology embraced by ECRIF. They felt that going through the five cognitive learning stages as well as the application of the macro and micro strategies embraced by the CLT in the post method era contributed substantially to the students learning process. The adaptation, design and application (backward planning for forward teaching) of activities made by the teacher focusing attention precisely on how students go about learning (E-C-R-I-F) brought change in their attitude and interest in language learning. Students' motivation and interest in learning English was reflected in the satisfaction expressed by most students for their significant improvement in learning as they developed their basic ability to use the language in real contexts. This was acknowledged into direct reactions through praising the teaching and learning approach due to: (1) the scaffolding process, (2) content, (3) material (visual aids), and (4) interaction and (5) learning activities. The positive impact on both students learning and motivation could be ascribed to the three embedded areas of constructivism Piaget (1977) and Vygostky (1978), Twomey Fosnot (1998), the application of communicative activities under the macro and micro strategies of the CLT approach in the post method era Kumaravadivelu (2006), and the backward lesson planning Wiggins and McTighe (2005) and Kurzweil and Scholl (2007). This study, however, was carried out to see students' perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF rather than testing a hypothesis or how the teacher developed the activities for each stage, which professional

researchers can study in the future. Actually, the results gained in this study could lead to further quantitative research to indicate which aspects of ECRIF are most effective, which are easiest to implement successfully when using the touchstone book series and which do not fit with the current curriculum. Future research can assess the impact of the application of ECRIF or take individual aspects of the whole process to be explored and studied.

4.7 Teacher Journal.

The information presented below corresponds to the second question of the research. Specifically, the teacher researcher presents the insights gained during the study as he used the ECRIF framework to plan and deliver individual lessons following the Touchstone book one contents.

How “ECRIF” can be carried out in the classroom when using the Touchstone textbook series?

Insights gained throughout the teaching learning process regarding the Cognitive and constructivism theories.

4.7.1 Cognitive Engagement throughout the Five Stages.

The ECRIF approach appears consistent with the social-cognitive constructivist approach to learning in that it emphasizes cognitive engagement through active learning, requiring student to encounter, clarify, remember, internalize and fluently use the target language in a communicative activity. The Activities are modified (scaffolded) to suit the learners’ current knowledge and ability at each of the stages as they gradually internalize the target language. (See appendix O) Tasks are designed initially to help students encounter something new to then progress through more complex activities that move from controlled, narrowly focused practice to not controlled but focused practice (private rehearsal and language play) to controlled but not (narrowly) focused, facilitated language attainment and led gradually to the students to the use stage in which they were able to use

the language in a personalized and spontaneous way at a basic level. This hierarchical progression in delivery (backward planning for forward teaching) allowed the teacher-researcher to select, adapt, reject, supplement and modify exercises and communicative tasks to students' different cognitive and levels particularly benefiting students with lower knowledge of the language and limited practice. The social interaction throughout the process fostered an atmosphere of student cooperation and mutual support

4.7.2 ECRIF in the Constructivist Pedagogy

The development and application of activities where students became active constructors of their knowledge changed the role of both the teacher and the students. In contrast to traditional language teaching, students actively assumed responsibility for their own learning through (a) oriented communicative activities, (b) guided communicative tasks, (c) problem solving situations, (d) peer support opportunities, (e) and exchange of authentic information. During a lesson, exercises, activities and tasks were adapted and designed following the criteria of ECRIF to help students develop language attainment so they could eventually use it in a real life situation. Going through individual, pair work, small group and whole class interaction, the students were provided with opportunities to practice the language, participate and contribute to the learning process. Consistent with constructivist approaches to curriculum, the students were involved in creating their own knowledge through their active participation. As students were in the remember stage, the teacher gradually stepped back and acted as an observer of the learning process. This meant that each student was encouraged and challenged to contribute to the lesson and to the other classmates. As students worked in small groups, they had opportunities to support their classmates and be supported by a group member. This provided students with responsibilities for their own learning as well as that of their classmates. As students became more involved in constructing new knowledge, they also were engaged in decision making and taking more responsibility for their own learning. As students were acquiring the language, they realized they were able to use the language in a basic level in a personalized way. They gradually realized that language learning was not a matter of

studying grammar rules or vocabulary in an isolated way, but rather a matter of practice in context, interest and motivation.

4.7.3 Students' Language Knowledge Construction

Along the five stages in ECRIF, students had more opportunities to interact with the language, the text, the material and their peers. During this time, I could notice an improvement in students' listening comprehension and language development at a basic level. It was observed that due to development and application of (VAKT) activities, the students were able to use the available time more effectively. They gradually interacted with students who were more fluent with the language and got support from them in their learning process. Peer support was a key aspect throughout the whole process.

4.7.4 Constructivist Language Pedagogy as a Community of Learners

Students became a community of learners actively sharing information and helping each other regardless language construction and attainment. At the beginning of the intervention it could be seen that some students did not feel comfortable with the grouping activities. They were afraid of making mistakes and that their classmates would laugh at them. However, as students became more involved in pair work, small group work and whole class interaction, they entrusted in the experience, enjoyed working in groups, and became more comfortable and involved in their learning process.

Consequently, throughout the variety of pair work, small group work and whole class activities in which they worked closely with each other, they came to realize that each student had something special to contribute in their learning process. The cooperative learning environment endorsed in ECRIF approach provided students of all abilities regarding English language with opportunities to interact, practice and gradually develop language fluency.

4.8 Insights Gained Throughout the Teaching Learning Process.

There were several aspects that were taken into account when designing and applying the ECRIF framework (see appendix P). The SARS framework provided Ron Bradley (2010), Susan Berry (2007), plus the questions provided by Scholl (2010) (see appendix Q) were used as a guide to select, adapt, reject or supplement the activities presented in Touchstone book 1 in the different stages of ECRIF.

4.8.1 SMARTA Objectives.

First I needed to set up a SMARTA objective. The objectives in the book for each unit are too general. Let's take a look at one of the objectives of unit four: "*Students learn how to talk about daily and weekly routines.*" As we can see, this objective does not meet the requirements of a SMARTA objective when using the backward lesson planning framework. It does not describe what the students will be doing (terminal observable behavior) when they demonstrate their ability to talk about daily and weekly routines. It does not tell anything about the references the students will be allowed to use or the materials they will be using while they are talking about daily and weekly routines. It is not specific. It does not say how many actions (minimum acceptable number of verbs) the students will be able to use to talk about daily and weekly routines. Besides, it does not tell us under which conditions they will be assessed. The objective is not time bounded. It does not tell how much time the students will need to demonstrate what they can do within a specified amount of time. And finally, it doesn't explain in which communicative situation will the students apply their knowledge. Therefore, The first step when applying ECRIF was that of setting up a SMARTA objective for the lesson to be taught. This was very important because it allowed me to plan the activities ensuring that I was taking the most thoughtful activities/strategies possible to get my students where I wanted them to be. The activities were targeted to achieve the lesson objective. Having a learning outcome in mind as a starting point in a lesson, helped me both (1) establish a clear vision of what it will look like for students to attain the objective and (2) focus on what the students will be doing in each stage of their learning process.

4.8.2 Insights Gained at Each Stage

Taking into account my role as a teacher and mainly on what my students will be doing at each stage of their learning process was imperative as I developed each lesson plan. Next I will discuss the opening and the 5 stages of the lesson plan in the order in which lessons were presented to the students and its implications. Let's not forget that the chronological order in which classes are delivered is actually opposite to planning the lesson.

4.8.2.1 The Opening

Throughout the course, we had a few minutes for greeting each other in the class. From time to time we worked on mindfulness activities. This was useful because it helped us to get to know each other a little bit more. The daily greeting in different ways built a positive rapport and supporting learning environment in the classroom.

4.8.2.2 The Encounter/Clarify Stage

Having the opportunity to use active and creative situations in which the learners had the opportunity to activate what they knew and mainly see and hear new information was important in this first stage. It was a time to prepare students memory to make connections to new information by referring to prior knowledge. It was a time of awareness where students realized that something new was there to be learned. In some way, I would say that in this first stage I took a centered teaching stage in which I presented, explained, modeled, demonstrated and illustrated new information/target language, but it was the students who actually made the encounter and clarification. My role was that of deciding what to present (vocabulary/structure point) and the way in which I expected my students to encounter it. I also needed to think in ways on how they will clarify (form, meaning or use) of the new information. I needed to capture their attention and interest, so that they sensed a need to learn the target language or structure. This first stage allowed me to see in

which areas of the language (form, meaning or use) I needed to work on in the subsequent stages of the students learning.

4.8.2.3 Remember Internalize Stages.

Having encountered and clarified the new information did not mean that the students were able to use the language. The planning and choosing how to deliver and sequence the activities in these two stages were fundamental. I had to think on how the activities will help the students explore the new information and how these activities will help them to begin to internalize it. There were several aspects that I needed to take into account regarding which activities to use along these two stages. First, I needed to see if the students required exercises of recognition before productive ones within a same context. That is, from more controlled to less controlled exercises. These two aspects allowed the students to work on their prior knowledge and scaffold their learning. The activities served as a mold in which students' retention gradually were taking place. Depending on the activities, then I needed to adapt the dynamic of interaction moving from individual to more student-student interaction and then to small-group interaction. Concept checking questions were essential in these two stages. They helped me in some way see where the students were in their learning process.

The extent to which students interacted as they were trying to remember and internalize the information, varied from student to student. However, in a general sense, these types of interaction provided the students with a variety of opportunities to learn from each other and to progressively remember and attain a higher level of retention of the target language. The development of these types of interaction also helped me gradually reduce my interaction with individual students. So, I was able to leave adequate time for the students to practice as I circulated through the class and observed the students interactions. In some occasions, certain topics turned to be complex for them. Therefore, it was required to restructure the activities and offer more time to practice. The students' interactions helped me monitor their learning and accordingly help the students when they required my help. The variety types of interactions came in useful for exposing students to diverse embedded

VAKT learning activities. Since students work at different paces, a variety of exercise types within the same context was required. The activities ranged from simple exercises to more complex ones in which they needed to personalize the information. The exercises were designed and applied in order to solidify their language learning and to appeal to different learning styles. The development of these types of activities throughout the “remember” and “internalization” stages boosts confidence in the students and thus, they became more interested in learning as they had the opportunity to exchange their ideas and experiences. The students practice throughout these two stages, gave me an opportunity to get an idea in which stage of their learning they were. It was nice to see **learning at different levels** in the students. It was interesting to see how the students used the language everyday in which they were performing better than the days before. It was a gradual learning process in which they were able to connect their basic knowledge of English to their day-to-day life situations.

4.8.2.4 Fluent Stage

From my point of view, this was the independent practice where the students were using the language in a communicative situation. At this stage I was responsible for observing, listening and assessing the students learning objective. It was not an easy task due to the number of students, but it gave me the opportunity to have a general appreciation of the level of achievement on the lesson objective. It allowed me to see what the students were able to do and what they needed help with to achieve the objective. Being present at this stage kept me informed of my students’ progress. It was my starting point for the next class.

4.9 Insights From Day-to-Day Planning And Its Implementation.

The day-to-day planning and implementation of ECRIF in the classroom during the time of intervention of the present study led me to gain some insights into the elements of backward lesson planning, its application and effectiveness. First, I have come to believe that the most salient feature of using ECRIF derived from the five stages was the fact that

it provided me with a structured, but flexible framework for developing and delivering student centered lessons. The framework assisted me in creating a smooth instructional flow of activities in a non prescriptive way and thus scaffold learning in small chunks as the learners gradually internalized the target information. Second, placing the students at the center of the learning process helped me concentrate on “student learning” rather than on “my teaching”. That is, I needed to be aware in which stage of the learning my students were (Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluent Use) before, during and after the language instruction. This awareness helped me support the students so they could keep up the pace of learning as they made good rates of progress. Third, staging the lesson (E-C-R-I-F) with varying levels of support throughout the five stages (scaffolding) and the focus on students progressing in their learning helped me draw on a repertoire of teaching strategies and techniques that could/would facilitate the evolution of students learning. The design and selection of these activities was done in order to provide students with multiple opportunities to practice (scaffold) the target language within the same context and therefore optimize their learning. A very important role of each activity was that of weaving them into each stage and connecting the activities to those of the stated learning objective.

Fourth, having the opportunity to follow and apply an integrative and non prescriptive framework that serves the learning process with an emphasis on backward planning was a key aspect throughout its implementation. Beginning lesson planning design with the end in mind was critical for the language instruction when using the touchstone book 1. It helped me target instruction in two ways (1) to select and devise sets of closely connected activities within the same context and (2) to carefully sequence every learning experience within each stage to reach the pre-established communicative SMARTA objective. In other words, my role was not that of “teaching” but that of creating a conducive environment for learning, and offering guidance, stage setting, observing and assessing students’ progress. I was responsible for setting up and guiding activities in which students were able to progressively learn due to their active role and engagement (constructivism) in the learning process. It is important to mention that throughout this experience, I could notice that selecting and planning the developmental activities was not a matter of preference of what teaching and learning strategies to use to meet a “particular communicative objective” but

a matter of making informed pedagogical choices based on students' perspectives and the criteria of each stage of ECRIF. Besides planning, it was a time to be present and see what I could do to provide students with those opportunities for learning throughout the lesson.

Fifth, as we know, ECRIF embraces the multiple (cognitive and social constructivism, CLT, backward planning) perspectives of learning and teaching. These theories represented the basis for making conscious decisions and sequencing the activities when planning the language lessons. These concepts constituted the perspective of the current teaching and learning in view of major aspects: (1) students as active constructors of their own learning, (2) the conditions for meaningful learning were activated and enhanced taking into account students prior knowledge, (3) several VAKT activities and tasks were developed bearing in mind the diverse kind of learners, (4) criteria and concepts of each stage in ECRIF were used to plan a gradual progression from one level of cognition to the next one. The introduction/adaptation of activity sequence needed to be adjusted to the sequence of events underlying a real communicative situation (CLT). Implementing ECRIF was not an easy task, but the daily use of this framework as a guide to plan lessons brought into line my instructional actions. It helped me in some way strategically align and adapt the activities to the criteria of ECRIF in each of its stages. However, as students do not learn in a lockstep linear way in a class, being aware of how students went about learning in the classroom was very important in the whole process. Awareness helped me restructure the activities and thus build toward the final student communicative outcome.

Finally, the application of cognitive and social constructivism, CLT and backward planning theory guided the process of planning and delivering language instruction throughout the time of intervention. The activities focused on the learning process as well as on the active involvement and facilitation of knowledge development rather than on the transmission of knowledge. In addition to the design of the developmental activities throughout the lesson, I had to take into account which choices to make regarding how I will have my students grouped during the different stages of the learning process. I had to think about how I will make those choices considering my students prior knowledge, needs, interests and ability, along with the nature of the context, the time and resources that were available for the lesson. These elements in classroom management and task design

helped me see with new lens and encourage cooperative interaction. In fact, the teaching and learning process through ECRIF took more time than the usual, but the end product was of far greater quality and the experience was much more rewarding for the students and the teacher. Although ECRIF was a new approach applied in the English classroom at UTN, it proved to be conducive to meaningful learning when selecting, adapting, rejecting and supplementing information and materials in a non-prescriptive way while using Touchstone book 1.

4.10 Summary

In this section the teacher researcher presented and discussed the results obtained from the analysis of the students' pre questionnaire, focus group interview, post questionnaire and post interviews. Generally, the study of the pre questionnaire indicated that the students participating in this study had negative self-perceived attitude to language learning, motivation to language learning and impressions about language learning from their prior English languages experiences. As regards the outcome of the post questionnaire focus group and post interviews most of the students expressed their satisfaction and self perceived effectiveness of the application of ECRIF in their language learning process during the semester. They communicated a positive perception on affective variables such as, motivation and attitude towards the teaching and the learning process itself when following dynamic, creative, joyful connected learning experiences at each stage of their language learning. They believed that the use of ECRIF helped them considerably with their language learning process. They stated that the scaffolding activities as they were developed were very important to their learning. The activities were very motivating for them and could promote collaboration among them as they gradually internalized the target language. Some negative issues were also raised. For a couple of students some of the activities were considered excessively simple and slow. A number of students felt that they needed to work on listening comprehension. They stated that following ECRIF helped them speak but that they needed more practice on listening and writing. One student stated that her learning was hindered due to the noise and permanent change of partners. She claimed that working with one person would have better

facilitated her learning. In brief, all the participants found the experience valuable and useful in their learning process. Regarding the teacher researcher reflection about the implementation of ECRIF, he realized that working with a framework that guides the learning process, as he perceives it, is positive and entails new challenges on pedagogical practices and classroom management in the language classroom when trying to put in practice the theories and principles that embrace ECRIF.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The growth of English as one of the most universally spoken languages due to economic, social, technological and cultural reasons has contributed to the demands of new practices and environments in EFL and ESL classrooms to better serve learning. This has also contributed to the initiation of expanding learning theories and applications of new language teaching approaches that focus on learners and their learning. These new theories and practices are aimed at increasing the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom to help language learners develop communicative ability in the English language Crystal (2003). Such innovations involving processes of learning and application of new paradigms have taken little regard of learners' voice and opinions regarding their perception about their new learning experience in the classroom Rudduck (2005). Consequently, there is a need of investigating students perceptions about new methodologies or approaches applied in the classroom. Language learners' perceptions will help teacher researchers as well as language teachers in general improve their understanding about teaching and learning. The knowledge construction gained from research might hold deep significance in terms of how teachers think about teaching, learning and learners Kurzweil (2007). This understanding basically would help teachers be aware of the benefits and challenging effects when applying new paradigms in the language classroom.

In general, educational research in language teaching and learning in the classroom can provide language teachers with opportunities not only to renew language teaching and learning practices, but to contribute to the body of knowledge of language teaching and learning and thus, if positive, the new paradigm or approach can become a more inclusive practice in schools where the main objective is oriented to better serve learners and learning. ECRIF a new paradigm in language teaching seems to be one of those approaches that pay attention to learners and their learning process as they develop communicative ability. This new paradigm embraces the principles of a pragmatic methodology such as

constructivist learning theory (cognitive-social), communicative language teaching in the post method era and backward planning to facilitate language learning in the classroom.

The stated above, provided the justification of the present mixed method case study research, which appeared to be the most appropriate for this purpose. The teacher researcher carried out this investigation in order to find out UTN first level of English students' perceptions about the implementation of ECRIF. The research focused on examining the perceptions, thoughts and experiences of first level English students with regard to the implementation of ECRIF during one semester in a small university in northern part of Ecuador.

The students' perceptions are valuable in order to better understand how the implementation of ECRIF in the foreign language classroom contributes to language learning. The findings of the present research may inform options for more effective English language teaching and learning processes in the classroom. According to the pre-questionnaire, the participants involved in this research have been subjected to English learning grounded in grammar and structure of the language. Most of them have followed and have been exposed to a traditional process, in which many tasks have been covered in a class session. They have gone through this teaching-learning process due to activity oriented and coverage-oriented curriculum planning by their teachers. It is assumed that the amount of information that students had to process in class surpassed the limits of their cognitive abilities. These factors may have not contributed to transferring information from working memory and storing it in long-term memory. The lack of English learning through traditional teaching in school and high school appears to reflect students' problems in motivation and attitude toward English language learning.

The traditional teaching can be referred as teacher-centered approach "telling or lecturing". It is the teacher who tells the students something they did not know before entering the class. The teacher-centered approach makes students passive learners and information recipients. The teacher talks most of the time and the students are either listeners or they copy information from the board. The Students did not have the appropriate time to process and internalize the target language. The students' cognitive abilities were neglected.

Lessons were not designed based on the learners' cognitive processing abilities nor their previous learning. They had little time and space for individual learning. To put it briefly, the participants in this study haven't had a lived experience focused on learning and its developmental learning stages (encounter, clarify, remember, internalize and fluent use). Consequently, since most of them may not have experienced an engaging cognitive language learning process in a language class, there was a need of applying ECRIF a new language approach to find out students perceptions and views regarding its implementation

5.1 Discussion and Pedagogical Implications.

Taking into account that the post communicative era is characterized by the fact that there is no single macro-methodological approach that could claim to cover all relevant aspects of teaching and learning, and mainly because there is no clear picture of what helps or hinders language learning in a language classroom due to multiple potential reasons, the current teacher researcher decided to applied ECRIF a new language approach which embraces the principles of a pragmatic methodology. ECRIF embraces three major models of language learning and acquisition: (1) constructivist learning theory (cognitive-social), (2) communicative language teaching in the post method era and (3) backward design/planning. These three major theories served as theoretical frameworks for classroom instruction and lesson planning and design. The principles of these three areas incorporate a variety of methodological approaches. They are intended to deal holistically with learners and their learning process as students gradually attain language knowledge and become fluent users of the target language.

The study examined the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of ECRIF in the EFL classroom. The results obtained through qualitative and quantitative instruments (questionnaire, focus group interview, open ended interview and journaling) provided encouraging evidence showing that most of the first level English students generally perceived that they benefited from the implementation of the five learning cognitive stages embraced by ECRIF when using the touchstone book 1. As perceived by the participants and the teacher researcher, the implementation of ECRIF, a learner-learning-centered approach has proved to be conducive to meaningful learning in the EFL classroom. The

successful application in the classroom can be attributed to the translation of the principles of constructivism, CLT in the post method pedagogy and backward planning into practice through the criteria of the language lesson framework, which focuses on the developmental learning process. The framework provided the guidelines for planning and delivery of classroom practice. The conjugation of these elements from the students' perspectives allowed the teacher to create an environment in which the students participated in an interactive (personal and textual) and constructive learning environment.

According to students' perceptions, they feel that the application of scaffolding learning activities, learning materials, and social interaction in the learning process formed a favorable learning environment. The students claimed that they liked the language methodology embraced by ECRIF. They felt that the learning process they followed contributed substantially in their language learning throughout the semester. They said that they benefited from the scaffolding learning process as they were actively involved in their learning process in a setting through interaction, use of authentic and meaningful language. Despite the limitations of the study, including the relatively small number of participants, which only reflects the experiences of students from first level of English at the university, the findings suggested that guiding language learning through ECRIF when using the touchstone book 1 helped UTN first level language learners (1) improve their language learning, (2) develop cooperative learning, (3) foster their affective attitudes toward language learning and (4) strengthen motivation for English learning.

5.2 Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the present study. The application of this new paradigm in language teaching holds a number of advantages and challenges as well. First, it is evident that the language framework introduced by Kurzweil and Scholl (2007), provides a useful guide for language planning and teaching in the perspective of the post communicative method era. It stresses the important idea that the teacher and student traditional roles need to be changed. It invites teachers and students to share classroom responsibility and learning throughout its process. The teacher's work is more on preparation, planning and organization of the learning process whereas Students need to

take the responsibility for their personal learning processes in collaboration with their peers in the language classroom.

Second, when planning backward for forward teaching, the framework helped the teacher-researcher be aware of what activities to apply and the goal they had at each stage of the learning process. The use of this learner-learning-centered framework in conjunction with the touchstone book 1 made of language learning an interactive, communicative and meaningful experience for first level students. The most important planning criteria to determine the quality of activities or exercises at all stages of the learning process included: the SMARTA objective = (1) what are my students supposed to do with the target language ultimately? (2) What kind of assistance (scaffolding) from the teacher and or peers in terms of strategies, techniques and materials would learners need at which point of time or stage E-C-R-I-F? There was a possibility to learn more about the students, their interests and needs and, consequently apply activities that were more conducive to students learning reflecting the needs of the students.

Third, the application of four types of practice throughout the learning process within the same context (VAKT activities) that went from controlled, narrowly focused practice **to** not controlled but focused practice (private rehearsal and language play) **to** controlled but not (narrowly) focused, facilitated language attainment and led gradually to the students to the use stage in which they were able to use the language in a personalized and spontaneous way at a basic level.

Fourth, the application of ECRIF would not work when trying to cover a lot of information in a short time. The curriculum needs to be modified. The acquisition of a foreign language is a complex process and it requires a lot of practice. Preparing students to use the target language in real life situations needs a lot of rehearsal. Learners need to go through a set of distinct steps (E-C-R-I-F) which show evidence of certain grades of acquisition. Therefore, the teacher job is that of providing stepping stones to facilitate their learning and their ability to use the language in the last stage. However, we need to be aware that using effective practice throughout the different stages is not an easy task.

Finally, due to the teacher-researcher experience throughout the intervention, the implementation of ECRIF in language teaching can help language teachers develop their own understanding of what they do when they do it in each of the learning stages as they serve students learning. Through such thinking and reflection language teachers may continue to explore what helps and hinders language teaching and learning. They can develop their criteria for deciding whether and how to integrate, select, adapt, supplement and reject learning experiences and thus, be flexible, creative and able to cope with the unexpected.

5.3 Recommendations

The degree of complexity of academic demands in Ecuador SENESYT – CEAACES (2013) continues to increase as linguistic and cognitive accountability are set for English language learners in the different levels of education and mainly at university level under international standards. The implementation and development of ECRIF in the foreign language classroom may prove to be a positive first step toward incorporating a framework to guide language teaching and learning under the principles of CLT in the post method era, cognitive & social constructivism and backward planning to support language learning as students become fluent users of the language.

As ECRIF defines and follows the progressive cognitive and communicative learning development, the incorporation of this learner learning centered approach should be incorporated/applied as an alternative to the current more frontal approach to teaching in the bilingual education program at Universidad Tecnica del Norte. While ECRIF is not prescriptive and represents a learning theory, the principles that represent the theory can still serve as an alternative guide for language teachers at the Academic Language Center to refocus their teaching and change their current roles in the language classroom. ECRIF can help language teachers better understand the principles of CLT, social-constructivist theory, backward design and adapt their language instruction while using the touchstone book series as part of their teaching. Perhaps the use of ECRIF can open doors for incorporating a learner learning centered approach in teaching while accommodating the needs, interests and ability of the students who are currently or will come into the classrooms of the university. Perhaps the use of ECRIF as a learner learning centered

approach will also help meet the objectives of the bilingual project in its first stage and thus have students ready to enter academic classes in the second stage of the project.

When using ECRIF, language teachers should make use of diverse methodological principles that have been found effective and explore new ones that are in accordance with principles of learning and acquisition. They can function as theoretical and practical guidelines in order to better serve the students learning process. However, we should not forget that progressions and learning phases (personal way of internal processing) may be very different for individual learners and may not correspond to teaching and learning phases in this model. As opposed to the act of following the activities in a textbook, when planning lessons with the eyes of ECRIF, language teachers can note and be aware of the different effects of students learning in the different stages of the process. This awareness can help teachers consider how revising, designing, creating, adapting and applying scaffolding learning activities from the students' perspectives in a manner that keep it comprehensible for the learners contribute to language attainment as they develop language fluency. Moreover, teachers should be responsible of adjusting the lesson, the learning environment and the interaction dynamics (social interaction as the vehicle to start the process) to accommodate learners' new experiences in each stage of their learning process. All in all, when using ECRIF as a reference, language teachers should be aware of the different theories and approaches and use them as a basis in their teaching learning process. ECRIF would suggest that teachers should be aware of what happen in each of the stages of the students learning process and know how to align their beliefs and actions based upon students' needs, interests and ability. Teachers' reflection can help them develop confidence in making their own judgments in the light of their classroom reality. Serving learning can be an open skill with many possible options for language teachers at any point in their students learning process.

As for the socialization of this new paradigm at the university where the research took place, the first step has been given. Language teachers at the Academic Language Center were trained about ECRIF with the intervention of Mary Scholl co author of this new paradigm. The intervention took place during intensive training courses in April 2008 and September 2012. Teachers responded positively to this new approach. Here we have some

excerpts by CAI teachers in response to one of the questions formulated at the end of the training: What have I learned about teaching and learning through the lens of ECRIF?

“ECRIF defines the progressive and vital steps of learning a second language. It is learner based, and rightly so, as the purpose of teaching is not simply related or imparting knowledge but somehow introducing that information into the minds of the students, adding it to their working knowledge through their personal experience of understanding and internalizing it. Only after fluency has been demonstrated can the teacher be sure that the point has been learned. As a teacher I can see that ECRIF pays particular attention to internalization and fluency, two steps often forgotten by most teachers.”

“I have been conscious of my learning and teaching process through the ECRIF framework. It is a learning process based on the learners, rather than the teacher. That is why we need to know our students needs in order to set a SMARTA objective, which involves the (use, -to- and in or during), I have noticed that ECRIF is flexible; it adjusts to our students needs. Its main goal is to have successful learners into fluency, which is the last stage. This is not a linear cycle; it is like a spiral process. When you are fluent in one aspect, then, you are encountering a new part of the language. The first step, Encounter, is when the learner comes across with the language. In this stage the student becomes aware of it. The next stage is clarifying. It is the time to ask questions and examples. Remember is the next step when we have slow production. Traditional learning was focused on this stage where we had to memorize a lot of things. The two last stages are deeper than the others. Internalizing is when it is part of us; we have longer term memory to finish in a communicative interaction with others, which is the fluent use stage. The target language flows like a river in this stage.”

“ECRIF definitely changed radically the beliefs that I had about teaching and learning a language as it is a student centered frame. ECRIF is a system –developed by Mary –that takes the students as the basis for the learning and teaching process. Besides being innovative, ECRIF in my view guides both teachers and learners to fulfill objectives effectively as it is so well articulated that nothing has been left disconnected. I wonder how long it took to Mary maturing this precious frame that now she has put in our hands.”

“When planning a lesson we need to start with a good objective. For this, we use the SMARTA acronym which stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound, and Adjustable. With this formula Use – to – in/during. Then, when applying ECRIF is very important that teachers investigate more, research for more information, look for activities, strategies in order to develop the whole process, depending on the students and their level of knowledge. The change of activities keeps the attention of learning, for this it is necessary planning and organization of the class. The teacher must work hard in advance, but in the classroom students will put their part and we all will be successful.”

“For me, this week has been totally shocking because all what I had learned before about teaching and learning a second language, now is totally scrambled in my mind. I do not mean that I am confused, I mean, that everything is taking a new order, a new way and a new final objective. I feel more confident about what to do in class with my students. I am sure if I am able to apply the ECRIF process and my students keep walking on these steps, soon I will see good results. I feel like I have found the missing piece in my students learning puzzle. The steps of ECRIF give us a better and wider idea of what happens with our students when they learn something in a meaningful way. It shows us that since the first step, the learners are the protagonist of their learning. Since the very beginning of the process, the students have a fundamental roll. That is, being aware of their previous knowledge, encountering new and relevant things, clarifying the new information through their own ways of doing it, practicing to remember it, including in their own mind structures (internalizing) and finally using them in a natural way (fluency).

As we can see, language teachers at the Academic Language Center see the new approach as a promising alternative to facilitate language learning in the classroom. It is hoped that this new encounter with an alternative approach motivate language teachers to incorporate ECRIF in their teaching practice and provoke some change in the more traditional teaching paradigm that is still in place at the university and move teachers toward a more learner-learning centered approach that takes into account the nature of learning and mainly learners as unique individuals who bring their own ideas, principles and experiences to the classroom.

5.4 Future Research

Taking into account that this is one of the first researches regarding students’ perceptions about its implementation in the language classroom, more research is needed as to how ECRIF can contribute to language teaching and learning. It is hoped that the results gained in this study could lead to further quantitative research to indicate which aspects of ECRIF are most effective, which are the easiest to implement successfully when using the touchstone book series and which do not fit with the current curriculum. Future research can assess the impact of the application of ECRIF or take individual aspects of the whole process to be explored and studied. Future studies may also focus on comparative analysis. Finally, it is hope that the findings of this study can contribute to emerging but growing body of research that deals with the implementation of ECRIF, a learner learning centered approach to facilitate language learning in the foreign language classroom.

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Annexes

Appendix A

A Letter of Request to Conduct Research at Universidad Tecnica del Norte.

Dr.

Ruben Congo Maldonado
AcademicLanguage Center Director
Universidad Tecnica del Norte
Ibarra, Ecuador

I am currently enrolled in a Major program “Lingüística Aplicada a la Educación Bilingüe Español–Inglés” at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ibarra. As part of my MA program, I am required to conduct a research dissertation. I am writing this letter to request permission to carry out a qualitative action research for one semester in one of the English courses at CAI

I am interested in learning and understanding how “ECRIF” a new paradigm in language teaching help university students internalize English L2 to develop communicative fluency. The title of the research is: **“ECRIF IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM. STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION REGARDING ITS IMPLEMENTATION.”** The purpose of this study is to explore students’ perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF – a backward lesson framework designed to develop communicative fluency.

Participants will be provided with consent letters. Ethical issues will be adhered for example, the aim of the research, topic, and matters concerning confidentiality, secrecy, trust and loyalty. Participants will have the right to withdraw from participating. Data will be collected through Observations, questionnaires and interviews. Questions will be based on the research topic. After completion of the research CAI teachers will be informed of the results of this case study.

Your kind assistance in granting me permission will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly

Ernesto Muñoz Tirira.

A Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Universidad Técnica del Norte.

Ruben Congo Maldonado
CAI -Director
Universidad Técnica del Norte
Ibarra, Imbabura Ecuador.

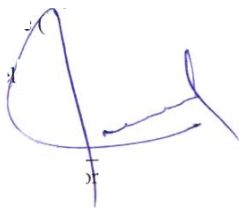
Subject: Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Universidad Técnica del Norte.

This letter will serve as authorization for Ernesto Muñoz Tirira, teacher of English at Universidad Técnica del Norte in Ibarra Ecuador to conduct the research project entitled **“ECRIF IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM. STUDENTS PERCEPTION REGARDING ITS IMPLEMENTATION”** in one of the English Courses at the Academic Language Center as one of the requirements for the degree of “Linguística Aplicada a la Educación Bilingüe Español – Inglés”.

The Facility acknowledges that it has reviewed the protocol presented by the researcher, as well as the associated risks to the Facility. The Facility accepts the protocol and the associated risks to the Facility, and authorizes the research project to proceed. The research project may be implemented at the Facility upon approval from the Institutional Review Board.

If we have any concerns or require additional information, we will contact the researcher and/or the () Office for the Protection of Research Subjects.

Sincerely,



Facility's Authorized Signatory

Date

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Signatory

Appendix B

Consent form

Dear
UTN CAI Student

Thank you for considering your participation in the study “**ECRIF IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM. STUDENTS PERCEPTION REGARDING ITS IMPLEMENTATION**”

The purpose of this study is to explore your perception regarding the implementation of ECRIF – a new paradigm in language teaching methodology to develop communicative fluency. The implementation of this new paradigm will be applied in daily instruction throughout the semester in the course you have registered to approve **English I** as one of the requirements to graduate from university. This means that you will not give extra time during the development of this study.

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your input will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected.

- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point throughout the research.
- Your answers will be kept confidential and your identity will be protected.
- Your participation will take approximately five months. During this time you will answer questions about your perception about your teacher methodology in the classroom.

This project will be carried out in your English course by your English Teacher: Ernesto Muñoz Tirira during one semester at UTN. It has been approved by Msc. Ruben Congo Maldonado Director of the Academic Language Center of the University and the Institutional Review Board.

The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the participant’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights.

If you are still interested in participating and assisting with this research project, please complete the consent form below. Keep the top of this form for future reference. You can contact me at 2 652-058 or 089 792 998 if you have questions, comments or concerns now or in the future about your participation in this study.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Ernesto Munoz Tirira
Teacher Researcher

Agreement form

Ernesto Muñoz Tirira
Teacher of English CAI
Universidad Técnica del Norte
Ibarra, Imbabura Ecuador.

I, _____, agree to participate in the study of “**ECRIF IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM. STUDENTS PERCEPTION REGARDING ITS IMPLEMENTATION**”
Conducted by Ernesto Muñoz Tirira, Teacher of English at UTN

I understand that:

- My answers will be used for educational research.
- My participation is voluntary.
- I may stop participation at any time
- I need not answer all the questions.
- My identity will be kept confidential.





I have read the information above and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Subject)

Appendix D

The ECRIF lens on language learning

Activity aim	What the students are doing as they are learning	What they may be thinking
<p>E ENCOUNTER</p> 	<p>Ss see or hear new language and realize they don't know something</p>	<p>What's this? I don't know this?</p>
<p>C CLARIFY</p> 	<p>= Ss distinguish the meaning and form of the new language</p>	<p><i>Oh I see what it means. Oh I see how it's pronounced. Spelled. Oh I see how to make it in a sentence.</i></p>
<p>R/I REMEMBER & INTERNALIZE</p> 	<p>= Ss have a chance to memorize and own the language in a controlled setting or game. They then can begin to personalize it and use it in different contexts.</p>	<p>Okay. I'm starting to <i>remember this</i>. Okay. I've got <i>it in this activity</i>.</p>
<p>F FLUENTLY USE</p> 	<p>= Ss have a chance to use the new language to communicate their ideas. Ss work toward being able to spontaneously use the language in different contexts.</p>	<p><i>Cool. I can talk and write about myself with this new language and other language I know.</i></p>

Appendix E

PLANNING A LESSON THROUGH ECRIF

Backwards planning for forward teaching
(the “map is not the territory” but it sure can be useful)

FIRST: PLAN THE OBJECTIVES

CLEAR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Written in terms of “At the end of the lesson, learners will be able to ...”
- Includes specific target language, observable verbs describing student behavior AND a communicative task

By the end of the lesson, SWBAT: use (grammar point, vocabulary, strategy, pronunciation) to (function /active verbs) in or during (a meaningful communicative task).

By the end of the lesson SWBAT:

USE: (grammar point, vocabulary, strategy, pronunciation)

TO: (function /active verbs)

IN: or during (a meaningful communicative task, possibly a real world task, in which the speaker has a reason for speaking and the listener has a clear REASON for listening).

SECOND: PLAN HOW YOU WILL SEE THAT THE LEARNER HAS REACHED THE OBJECTIVE
(This is the fluent use stage and also your main assessment of their learning)

When planning it is important to address the following:

1. Learners use the language in a real life, personal and/or creative way. Ss choose what language to use and/or not use.
2. The structure of the task is controlled, the learners have great choice over the content they put into the task
3. Learners have a clear reason to listen to each other and to speak to each other. They engage in meaningful and authentic communication.
4. Learners expand on the target language in a real and/or meaningful context.
5. Learners demonstrate their independent control or learning of the new language/material.
6. Teacher LIMITs response to inaccuracies. And ONLY responds to those that inhibit communication
7. Teacher removes visual support for target language and make sure that visual support for support language is accessible.

Teacher involvement is limited to monitoring, keeping Ss on task and checking on progress toward achievement of Student Learning Objectives (SWBATS)

**THIRD: PLAN AT LEAST 4-6 WAYS TO HELP
LEARNERS REMEMBER AND INTERNALIZE THE TARGET LANGUAGE**

Remember and Internalize STAGE

When planning it is important to address the following criteria:

1. Learners do a variety of activities that focus on the target material/language and progress from:
receptive understanding to productive practice
controlled language to freer choice of language
lower order thinking skills to higher order thinking skills
safe to more risky tasks
more time for planning what to say to less time for planning what to say
slower production to faster production
shorter chunks of language to longer chunks of language
greater predictability to lesser predictability
2. Teacher's involvement gradually decreases as learners take more control and move from controlled to freer practice.
3. Learners do pair and group work with teacher monitoring to gradually increase student talking time and decrease teacher talking time. This allows learners to demonstrate their understanding as the teacher monitors and helps as necessary.
4. Teacher responds to inaccuracies during the activities in order to support ACCURACY
5. In the final activities in this stage Learners show that they are ready for the "Fluent Use" stage.

**FOURTH: PLAN HOW THE STUDENTS WILL BECOME AWARE OF THE TARGET
LANGUAGE**

Clarify and Encounter STAGE

Criteria

1. Learners' access background knowledge related to topic or language point, teacher finds out what the learners already know related to the lesson.
2. Learners activate schema for the topic
3. Learners encounter the form, meaning and/or use of target vocabulary/language structures
4. Learners have structured opportunities that prompt them to ask questions about the language to assure that they are clear on the meaning, form and use.
5. Learners have time to write and reflect on new language structures or vocabulary and ask questions to begin to clarify understanding

By: Mary Susan Scholl. SIT TESOL COSTA RICA. UTN TRAINING COURSE 2008.

APPENDIX F

ENCOUNTER STAGE



This is the stage when the learner becomes aware of the target information or language. We can see learners engaged when they show that they are becoming aware of something new. The target information is engaged in some realistic context or situation, which creates the need and desire for clarification. If the teacher presents new material/rules it is a deductive teacher-centered encounter. If the teacher elicits rules or presents examples for the students to discover the rules it is an inductive encounter. If the students work together to discover the rules it is an inductive collaborative discovery and is learner-centered.

The teacher may use examples, explanations, descriptions, scenarios, drawings, dialogues, a reading, a video, interactions, etc. to help students engage the new target language--situation, context, vocabulary, structure, and grammar.

At this stage teachers can help students by	Activities at this stage might include
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Providing a clear context● Giving students a chance to talk about a topic. This burst of fluency at the beginning of the lesson can help establish context and help students activate experiences, vocabulary, and grammar that may help them in the lesson.● Providing a text to read or listen to. First focus on the overall meaning of the text to establish context.● Eliciting vocabulary, sentences from students (Ex. What words do you know to describe personality? OR How might you combine these sentences?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Brainstorming vocabulary● Answering questions with target language in it.● Labeling or describing a picture● Doing a gap fill activity● Using key words to make sentences or complete a dialogue● Choosing the best response or question for a dialogue● Noticing or Marking particular words, phrases, or sentences in a text● Listening to or reading a story and noticing words or grammar structures that the learner doesn't know● Doing a task and writing down the words that the learner needs but does not know

APPENDIX G

CLARIFY STAGE



This is the stage when the learners themselves are asking questions about what is the correct meaning, form or use of the target language. Students can ask for clarification or the teacher offers clarification where needed. With a collaborative discovery encounter, this stage can become part of the encounter.

Teachers can use techniques such as checking questions to assess if Ss have clarified. (e.g., answering simple Yes/No or Wh- questions, pointing or marking correct pictures or replies, ordering pictures, matching items, categorizing, deducing and explaining rules or concepts, creating questions, etc.). Students need to indicate somehow (not necessarily by producing the language) that they have understood the concepts they have encountered. The mother and daughter are working together.

At this stage teachers can help students by

- Finding out what students already know.
- Providing students a chance to peer teach. Ex. show each other the meaning, pronunciation
- Eliciting ideas from students rather than just telling them
- Being ready to explain the language item in a variety of ways (Ex. simple verbal explanations, visually, with examples, kinesthetically, etc.)
- Highlighting the language item on the board with different colors
- Slowing down or repeating the language item several times.
- Asking concept check questions

Activities at this stage might include

- Matching meanings or rules to words or sentences
- Sorting sentences or words into groups (Ex. adjectives vs. adverbs, finished actions vs. unfinished actions)
- Discussing the meaning, pronunciation, or rules of the language items
- Using dictionaries,
- Asking peers or teachers
- Explaining

APPENDIX H

REMEMBER STAGE



This is the stage when learners are focused on memorizing the specific target language. They are focused mostly on the language bits and their meaning, form and/or use. Students work with the material in a controlled context to help them develop accuracy and confidence with the target material.

Activities are more controlled: repetition, substitution drills, copying, picture card games, simple fill-ins (word, dialog, gesture, strategy), etc. There is heavy scaffolding at this stage. But it is also a time when students may be given individual think time to mentally or otherwise practice the language bit, perhaps a series of numbers or vocabulary or a two-line dialogue. T-ss & S

<i>At this stage teachers can help students by</i>	<i>Activities at this stage might include</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Doing choral repetition● Paying close attention to problems that students may have.● Giving students specific feedback (Ex. Is their answer or pronunciation correct?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Having students quiz each other (Ex. with pictures, meanings and words)● Having students do drills (Ex. making or changing a sentence from key words)● Playing games like Bingo, concentration● Doing a lot of recognition activities● Saying a word or sentence and point to a picture● Pointing to a picture and say what it is● Matching questions/answers, meanings and words, sentences and situations, etc.

APPENDIX I

INTERNALIZATION STAGE



This is the stage when learners are able to remember the language bits enough that they can begin to use them more naturally in broader, more varied contexts. Students are required to discriminate among choices in language within a less controlled context. Activities provide for freer and more spontaneous expression by the students, with less and less scaffolding. The activities are generally not personalized. The interaction dynamic is s-s or small group. Common activities are question-answer exercises, info gaps, Find Someone Who-restricted, board games, etc.

At this stage teachers can help students by

- Providing chances to use the vocabulary or structure to talk about themselves.
- Giving student 'think time' to get ideas or recall experiences.
- Allowing students to write and ask questions first and then putting away the paper during the subsequent fluency activity

Activities at this stage might include

- Describing _____ using the target language or skill
- Answering questions: words embedded into questions that students ask and answer together
- Doing gap fill activities: Choose correct words, place into blanks in text
- Doing tailless sentences: given beginning of sentence so students write endings
- Doing information gap activities
Information gap: Students A/B have different information, must communicate to get the information the other has
- Correcting sentences: Sentences with mistakes (grammar, factual) they correct
- Making a story: given beginning of story, continue with TL
- Creating a survey: use words to make a survey to ask other Students
- Making sentences about yourself: make true sentences about people (whatever you are studying)
- Putting words in order: get list of words, put them in order that makes sense
- Ranking: put words in order based on preferences, usefulness, etc. Students choose their best 3 or worst 3

APPENDIX J

FLUENT STAGE



FLUENTLY (and accurately) USE: This is the stage when learners are able to use the target language automatically in a real, meaningful and personalized way without thinking too much about it. Activities allow for student learning to be demonstrated as defined by the lesson objective. The interaction dynamic is usually s-s or small groups. Common activities include role plays, presentations, situation interactions, Find Someone Who-personalized, board games, discussions, competitions, debates, etc.

<i>At this stage teachers can help students by</i>	<i>Activities at this stage might include</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Providing a good model of the activity● Providing a clear communicative task that is motivating and relevant to students● Encouraging students to ask more questions and give longer answers● Giving students enough time to get ideas● Noting errors that students make (for future lessons) but not correcting in the moment as it can interfere with student communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Retelling story: List of TL, teacher tells a story, students teach words they hear as they listen. Retell the story to their partner using the words● Doing a role-play. Ex convincing, requesting, etc.● Discussing questions or issues● Jigsaw activities in which students teach each other about a topic● Making a decision together. Ex. What should we take on a desert island and why? OR Who should receive the scholarship?● Project work● Improvisational theatre games● Sharing personal stories and experiences● Teaching or reporting about topics● Summarizing movies or news story

Appendix K

MAGIC EYE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ON ECRIF LINEAR LESSON PLAN AND ITS CIRCULAR IMPLEMENTATION

The two graphics, the vertical arrow and the spiral are indicative of the movement through a lesson both in a linear and circular fashion.

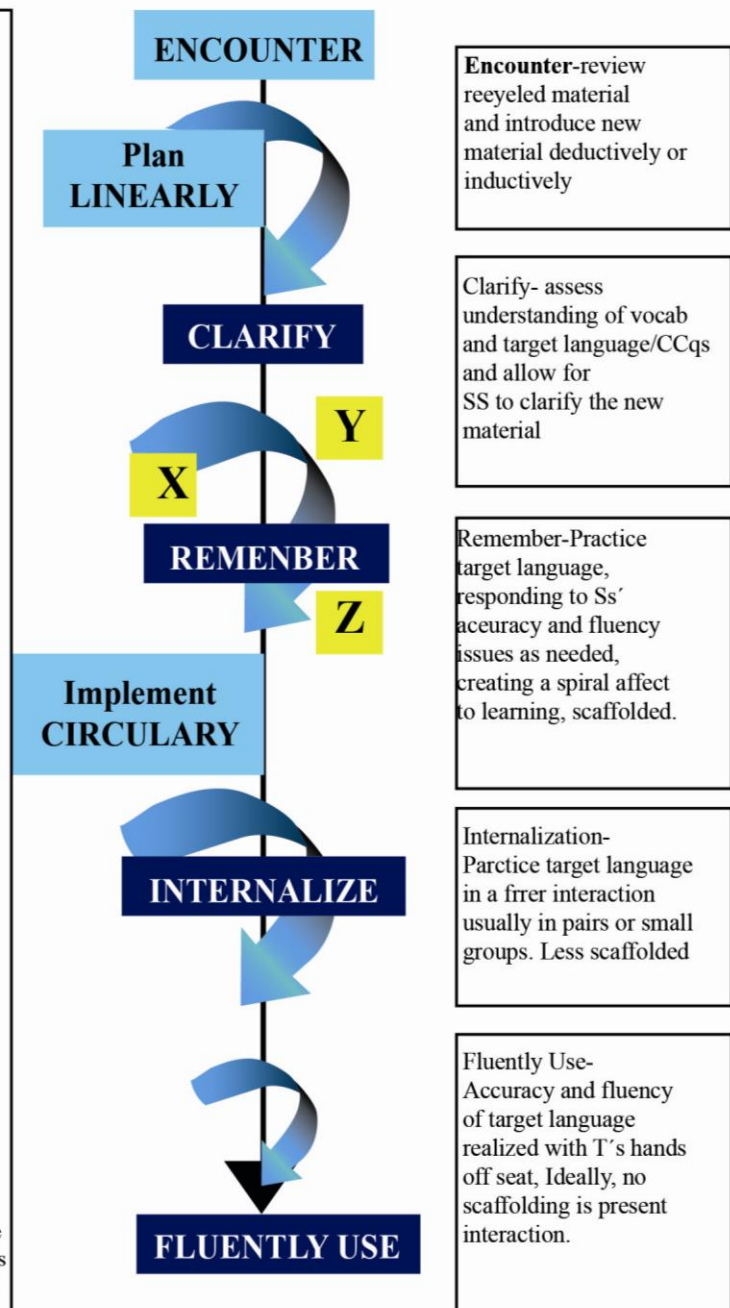
While the **Lesson Plan** is **linearly designed**, that isn't logically sequenced from Encounter to Fluency and the activities sequenced from controlled to free, the **implementation** of the plan is **circular**: the teacher being present with the students is monitoring, facilitating, reviewing, clarifying, correcting, all in response to student need. The teacher is always alert to teachable moments.

The X, Y, and Z show where various students might be at any given time in their learning process—each one at a different place on the learning cycle. And each student is at a different place on his/her own learning circle.

The **funnel shape** of the spiral is representative of the movement toward a focus on the student learning objective being met. Ideally the students are brought closer together toward mastery of the student learning objective.

As the spiral moves down and narrows, the teacher's role becomes more of an observer and assessor until in the fluency the teacher's hand is off the bicycle seat and the effectiveness of the SLO is assessed. The results hopefully are that the students own the target language.

Note the dichotomy between the two. While we need to plan linearly (classical physics model—predictable), we need to implement in a way that we don't know what the outcomes actually will be (quantum physics), because the lesson is constantly adjusting to the students' and student's needs.



Appendix L

Pre - questionnaire on English language learning

Name: _____

Age _____

Years studying English _____

Major:.....

Semester

Primary Public Private

Secondary Public Private

University Public Private

Total of years

Extracurricular English courses yes No

The purpose of this research is to investigate students' attitudes towards English language learning and the factors that have helped or hindered their language learning. All information will be confidential. Your response is greatly appreciated.

1. - Attitude to Language Learning

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion.

I like learning English.

I do not like learning English.

Learning English is a burden.

Learning English is fun.

2. - Motivation to Language Learning

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion.

Learning English to go abroad

Learning English to find a good job

Learning English to improve myself

Learning English to get the certificate and graduate from the University.

To learn foreign science, technology and culture

Learning English to obey university rules.

3. - Impressions about Language Learning from Past Experiences

Talking about your previous English Language learning experiences which of the following words most reflect *your impression*:

boring interesting stressful relaxing enjoyable difficult easy

Others, please specify...

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What factors do you think may have influenced your attitudes towards English language learning?

- Your teacher's teaching methods:
- Your teacher's English proficiency
- Teaching and learning conditions (time, classroom environment, peers)
- Textbook and exercise book (suitable) (not suitable)

Others, please specify...

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

My Previous Learning Experience

How did your teachers present a new topic in the teaching learning process and how frequently did they use these techniques?

	often	sometimes	rarely	never
<u>1. - An encounter stage</u>				
At the encounter stage were you able to clarify form, meaning and/or use of the target vocabulary/language structures?				
<u>2. - Remember Stage</u>				
At the remember stage, did you have the opportunity to practice the language in a variety of activities (VAK) that focus on the target language and progress from receptive understanding to productive practice , controlled language to freer choice of language?				
<u>3. - Internalization Stage</u>				
At the internalization stage, did your teacher involvement gradually decrease as you and your partners took more control and move from controlled to freer practice?				
At the internalization stage, did you have the opportunity to increase your talking time and be ready for the USE stage?				
<u>4. - Fluent Stage</u>				
At the fluent stage did you have the opportunity to spontaneously use the language in a personal or creative way for the whole, real life task, real communication?				

Appendix M

POST QUESTIONNAIRE

July 18, 2012

Name: _____

This questionnaire serves the purpose of finding out students' perception and their opinion about their learning experience with ECRIF, a new paradigm in language teaching at Universidad Tecnica del Norte in Ibarra, Ecuador.

Please put a check in the square that matches your opinion most.

1 Do you like the methodology used by the teacher during this semester and the adaptation he does while using the textbook Touchstone?

Yes No Not sure

2 Do you think ECRIF a new paradigm in language teaching and each of its stages of the framework (**Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluent Use**) contribute to the **learning of a foreign language**?

A lot some not much a little very little

3 Do the activities at each stage of ECRIF flow well? Are the transitions between activities and among the stages smooth?

Yes No Not sure

4 Do you think the varied activities that focus on different kinds of learners in each stage of ECRIF helps or doesn't help language learning?

Helps learning doesn't help learning

Why?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

5 What do you think of the way the language/structure is presented at the beginning of the class?

Very interesting somewhat interesting a little interesting

Not interesting

6 How useful, do you think, are the strategies used by the teacher to help you clarify the form, meaning and use of the new language?

Highly useful fairly useful a little useful

Not at all useful

7 Do you think that the stages of remembering and internalizing are more effective if the tasks or activities keep the learners actively involved practicing the language in a personalized way as they make it their own?

Yes No Not sure

8 Are the varied activities the right length so that you (the learners) can gradually internalize the target language as you remain engaged and motivated at each stage of ECRIF?

Yes always generally so generally not no never

9 Do you have enough skill and knowledge to produce the language required for the “real life task” in the last stage?

Yes always generally so generally not no never

10 Do you think the success of the final stage (**the FLUENT stage**) entirely depends on the quality of the preceding stages, and thus, none of them can be rushed through nor ignored?

Agree disagree don't know

11 Talking about your English language learning experience during this semester through ECRIF, which of the following words most reflect your impression about it:

Boring interesting stressful relaxing enjoyable

Difficult easy

12 Talking about this semester, would you please comment on your progress in English as you see it?

No progress at all very little progress moderate progress

Substantial progress very high progress

13 Have you experienced any problem during the implementation of ECRIF in your classroom throughout this semester? If so, please explain

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14 Is there anything you particularly dislike about ECRIF?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix N

Post Interview

PERSON-TO-PERSON INTERVIEW

General Instructions: This interview is principally composed of open-ended questions addressing the various issues related to the implementation of ECRIF a new paradigm in Communicative Language Teaching. The participating students will be asked to review the questions briefly before the interview. It will be made clear to all participants that they have all the rights not to answer any question(s) that they feel uncomfortable with.

Students will be asked to reflect on their previous language experience and their current experience with ECRIF

How would you describe your past experiences studying English?

Were there more positive learning experiences or negative ones?

§ Can you share one example of your positive and/or negative learning experience(s)?

§ Do you think there are any differences between your previous experience studying English and your current experience with ECRIF?

How did working with ECRIF make a difference or make no difference to your learning of English.

CHANGES

What changes have taken place in your **attitude** toward learning English during this semester?

What changes have taken place in your **interest** in learning English during this semester after been exposed to a new paradigm in language teaching?

Talking about this semester, would you please comment on your progress in English as you see it?

Appendix O







ENCOUNTER-CLARIFY-REMEMBER-INTERNALIZE-FLUENTLY USE

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN SEQUENCING THE INTERNALIZATION STAGE

		Choices	Scaffolding	Interaction Dynamic	
Controlled (Teacher)	Accuracy (Pron. & Structure closely monitored and corrected)	None (as in a repetition or simple substitution drill)	Total (Support language provided)	T-SS	T Hands on (T assesses and corrects in some fashion)
		Open-ended (Free use of target language and any other relevant language from students' backgrounds in a creative activity)	None (Ideally no support language provided)	S-S or SS-SS	T Hands off (T assesses and offers little or no correction)

Definition of **Scaffolding**: Target language provided visually.

Example: "John gets up at 7:00 in the morning." is written on the board.

100%	John gets up at 7:00 in the morning.	Students do not have to think, just read or repeat. No Choices.
90%	John get up at 7:00 in the morning.	Students must provide correct <u>form</u> of 3 rd person singular. Two choices for form.
60%	John  at 7:00 in the morning	Students must provide both correct form and lexical meaning of the verb. Two choices, one form, the other verb meaning.
40%	John   in the morning.	The above plus the time. Three choices.
10%	John   	The above plus the time phrase that gives meaning to the structure. Four + choices.
0%	Talk to your partner about your daily routine.	Fluency: open ended, personalized. Choices almost unlimited.

Note: The percentages are arbitrary. Also note that time and verb meaning need to be addressed in the encounter or recycled from previous less

Consider the following. What is the order of difficulty?

___ T-S: Ask me what time I get up in the morning. S-T: What time do you get up in the morning?"

___ T-S: Ask me, "What time do you get up in the morning?" S-T: What time do you get up...?"

___ T-S: Ask Kumiko what time Jose gets up in the morning. S-Kumiko: What time does Jose get up...?"

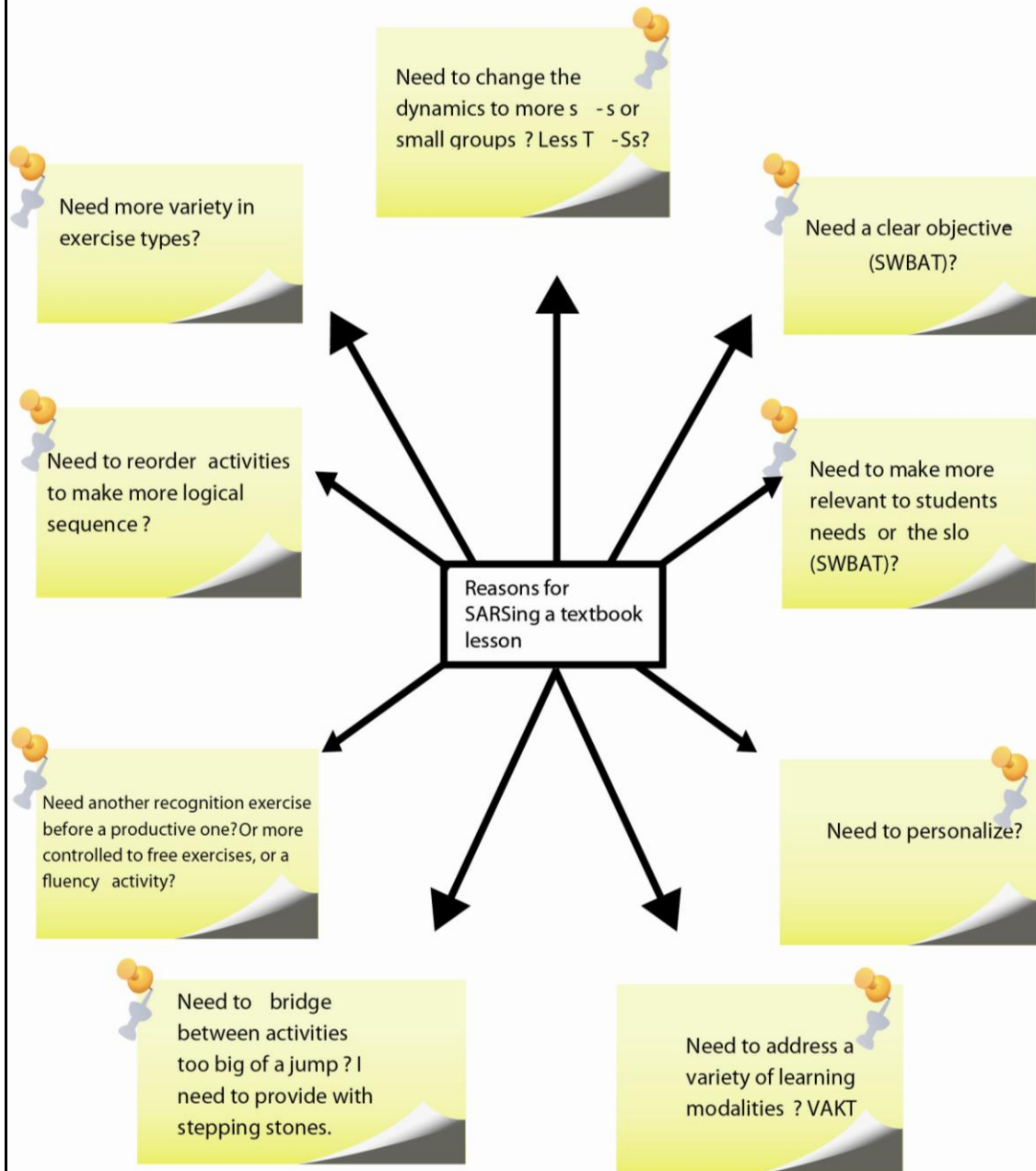
___ T-S: Ask Kumiko what time she gets up in the morning. S-Kumiko: What time do you get up...?"

Note: this is another way to scaffold. You can also address the differences in student level by how you direct Ss to ask the question.

Appendix P

TEXTBOOK ADAPTATION WHEN USING THE ECRIF FRAMEWORK

SARS = Select, Adapt, Reject, Supplement



Ron Broadly and Susan Berry 2010

Appendix Q

Using ECRIF to analyze/adapt materials

The goal of the ECRIF framework is to help students learn new language and skills so that they can use them fluently (i.e. with relative ease and speed) and accurately (i.e. with the correct form and meaning) to communicate outside the classroom.

Questions to consider while planning or adapting materials.

- How will students encounter the target language? In what context? How can I provide them with opportunities to activate their prior knowledge and fluency?
- How will student clarify the form, meaning, and use of the target language?
- How will students remember/internalize the target language?
- What communicative tasks will provide students opportunities to fluently use the target language?