

PEDAGOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP ENGLISH BASIC  
SKILLS IN STUDENTS OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS IN COLOMBIA

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A Monograph

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by

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## **DEDICATION**

To my great teacher Liliana Isabel Moreno Cervera

For me, a great teacher is someone who has extensive knowledge, enjoys teaching it with empathy, is humble, and tries to put himself in the student's role, using friendly and motivating language.

Thanks for teaching me all that and much more.

## SPECIALIZED ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Title	Pedagogical and educational strategies to develop English basic skills in students of rural high schools in Colombia
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Description	Monograph
Sources	48 References Books: 39 Journals: 6 Magazines: 3
Contents	<p style="text-align: center;">El presente estudio se centra en la búsqueda de estrategias, metodologías y actividades que puedan ser aplicadas en las escuelas secundarias rurales de Colombia, ayudando a los maestros a desarrollar las habilidades comunicativas básicas en inglés: hablar, escribir, leer y escuchar.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">La investigación se centra en la búsqueda de actividades específicas para cada una de las habilidades mencionadas anteriormente. Sin embargo, esto no quiere decir</p>

	<p>que son las únicas estrategias que pueden ser aplicadas, por el contrario, lo que se busca es darles unas herramientas básicas a los docentes para que a partir de las ideas que se presentan en el documento puedan crear otras estrategias que beneficien el aprendizaje de los estudiantes de escuelas secundarias rurales de Colombia.</p> <p>Los resultados obtenidos destacan que para que los estudiantes mejoren sus habilidades comunicativas en ingles, las actividades planteadas por los docentes deben enfocarse a las cuatro habilidades colocando un tema en común para que se puedan construir los saberes a medida que se realizan ejercicios en cada uno de los procesos de aprendizaje, donde conocer el nivel de los estudiantes y ajustar los contenidos y estrategias es de suma importancia.</p>
<p>Research Line</p>	<p>This monograph is aligned to the research line of education and human development; it focuses on the documentary study of a specific topic through the search and analysis of different authors who have previously made observations and investigations about the importance of developing each of the basic English skills.</p> <p>The qualitative method was selected because it let to evaluate and interpret a wide gamma of academic resources to</p>

	<p>know a topic in detail and to carry out comparisons among the results obtained by different authors.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	<p>In the majority of rural high schools in Colombia, there are no specializing teachers in English teaching. Nevertheless, it is possible to find a lot of strategies and adapt them to rural students' context to develop their basic skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). The great advantage of finding new pedagogical approaches is that most of the strategies have already been applied in many schools and, according to their authors, have yielded positive results.</p> <p>On the other hand, to teach a foreign language, it is crucial to create a well-structured curriculum, good lesson plan design, creating strategies to develop each language skill, and a motivating environment that provides meaningful, cooperative, and immersive learning.</p>
<p>Advisor</p>	<p>MA Liliana Isabel Moreno Cervera</p>

## **ABSTRACT**

Due to globalization, during the last few years, the need to speak at least two languages grew significantly. Without any doubt, English is one of the languages people mostly communicate with around the world. Thus, educational institutions must prepare students in the domain of a foreign language and, in this case, English. To achieve this goal, English teachers must develop the basic language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, in their students and making use of different strategies and methodologies that allow active learning in classrooms.

In this regard, the monographic proposal “Pedagogical and educational strategies to develop basic English skills in students of rural high schools in Colombia” presents and analyzes a series of pedagogical strategies and methodologies, which will surely contribute to the teaching practice and therefore to the development of linguistic skills in the rural students in our country. These proposed strategies are the outcome of the investigation and the analysis of different references and authors such as Jeremy Harmer, 2001 and his book "How to teach English", R. Carter and D. Nunan, 2001 and their book "The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages" among others who can have contributed to the development of this research.

*Keywords:* Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), Pedagogical strategies, Methodologies in FLT, Communicative skills, Rural schools.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"The gift of teaching must be strongly linked to the uncontrollable desire to learn." I thank God that although I have learned many things from the lake of my life, He still keeps curiosity alive and the desire to innovate as a vital necessity.

I also thank my family, who has always supported me, my teachers and their pedagogical talks, my students who inspire me to continue questioning everything, and my closest friends who are always there to inject me with a new dose of energy when I'm discouraged.

This research is the product of thousands of experiences and the analysis of a large amount of information, which today even broadens my horizon a little more.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language besides a need has always been a challenge in rural schools in Colombia. The main motive is the lack of trained or specialized teachers; generally, in the rural high schools, the teachers have to teach to students of different courses with a methodology called "New School," so that it is always prioritized the called "essential areas" such as mathematics, Spanish, and science. Besides, in the few rural high schools where students have teachers for each area, it is usual that there is no English teacher. This situation, in addition to the lack of educational and technological resources, causes students not developing their basic English skills.

It is unnecessary to visit every rural high school in Colombia to approach the reality of this problem because even similar situations occur in urban public schools. Evidence of the general panorama is normally published in different newspaper articles that talk about the low results of Colombia in international tests related to the domain of the English. Particularly in a study realized by the British Council in 2015, where the results of the level of English of students of different colleges were analyzed, it was found that two-third parts of university entrants were at A1 or lower level. However, one of the national English language policy goals includes mandatory English in schools and fluency at B1 for secondary school graduates.

The next question would be: What is happening in the classroom? Why the English basic skills "speaking, reading, listening, and writing" that the students should acquire are not being developed? And what to do to improve teaching in different schools but mainly in rural areas where the challenge is superior. Usually, there is a huge list of factors that influence the acquisition of learning like motivation, adequate lesson planning, suitable communication

between teachers and students, and so on. Nevertheless, it is necessary to break with the traditional methodology, which usually focuses on the memorization of vocabulary and a few elements of grammar, but not into developing the basic skills in students progressively.

In that sense, to change the classroom's pedagogical practice, it is fundamental to renovate the teaching strategies through the analysis of a considerable range of research realized by different authors. They have been able to evidence what kind of approach can contribute to the development of students' basic English skills. Nonetheless, in that process of investigation, it must be clear that not all the strategies posed by the researchers can be applied in all school environments. It is necessary to select those that can function in a rural school where the tools and materials to teach are minimal.

In this monograph, the reader will find different theories linked to the pedagogical elements, principles, and methodologies applicable to the teaching and development of basic English skills in rural students in Colombia. Besides, each theory, strategy, and method was analyzed from different points of view and organized with the intention that teachers can understand what kind of elements must be developed in each skill, how to do it and how to combine them with the activities of the other skills to help students improve their performance in English.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teaching and learning a foreign language, especially English, was only considered a teaching area that was part of the curriculum of public institutions in the country for many years in Colombia. However, in the last ten years, the need to communicate in a foreign language has increased, mainly due to the labor market demands, which has generated a continuous demand in the preparation of English teachers and the application of new strategies that allow developing in

students the basic skills of the language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

To improve this situation, Colombia has advanced in the program called “Bilingualism National Program”, which will have validity until 2022, and according to the Ministry of Education of Colombia, the objective of this program is strengthening the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Preschool, Basic and Middle Education to guarantee comprehensive training, the development of skills for global and 21st-century citizens, and encourage the generation of cultural, academic, social and professional opportunities according to the needs of the Educational Institutions and the regions (Mineducación Colombia, 2018).

The challenge of teaching English goes further the needs of different public institutions and especially in rural zones. The strengthening of the pedagogical practices must be carried out, mainly in the strategies that are developed in the classroom because the current ones are not producing positive results. The educational innovation must contemplate the renovation of the curriculum and how the students interact with the foreign language. It is mandatory to create new learning environments and strategies with the intention that as the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing are developing in the students they can immerse not only in the language but also in a huger context of the culture, it is to say the language must be taught with a functional purpose.

It is necessary to analyze the different pedagogical strategies that can be used to improve reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in the students, where the first language function lets them communicate effectively. Although the task is more arduous for the teachers in the rural schools, to have available a plan of action or procedure will help them to have clarity about what things they should develop in each one of the basic English skills, speaking, writing, reading and listening and how to design a lesson plan that integrates the class activities with a

common purpose but with a variety of elements that motivate their students, generating a participative and cooperative learning environment. Such analysis and action plan for developing students' English communicative skills is precisely what the reader will find throughout this research.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism, Colombia has become one of the most attractive foreign direct investment (FDI) destinations in Latin America. The situation has generated a high demand for bilingual professionals in the country, primarily with the ability to communicate in English, but at the moment manifested with a high deficit, mainly related to the ability to use English effectively in the workplace (Portafolio, 2018). In this regard, Fiszbein (2014) points out that, although the results are still not entirely positive, it is evident that Colombia has some progress in public policies. "It is not the country that has done the most, but it has made important progress." According to the expert, in the region, only Chile has an advanced public policy framework to promote language learning adequately.

The seriousness of this problem is that today this competition is linked to the perspective of competitiveness and economic growth. Therefore, the government must create new public policies regarding bilingualism focused on the teacher capacitation in designing a new syllabus and digital tools to support the teaching work. Of course, the teachers must also develop new methodological proposals that contribute to the development of foreign language skills, including English.

According to the report by Fiszbein (2014), in Colombia, there are two crucial points to work: On the one hand, the training of teachers and, on the other, the measurement of learning both in the student and in the teacher in charge. Furthermore, it is clear that the skills of students

in English are quite deficient, and it should be sought different strategies that contribute to improving these difficulties from the classroom. That is to say that teachers must investigate what kind of activities or procedures they should use to develop each of the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and adapt them to the context.

The above raises a concern: what kind of pedagogical and educational strategies should be applied to develop basic English skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in students of rural high schools in Colombia? Although there are surely many strategies that can be applied in teaching a foreign language, this review is carried out to analyze different pedagogical and methodological aspects that contribute to developing communication skills in English learners, to give another perspective on teaching and provide some recommendations given by experts and which are quite useful for any English teacher.

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

To propose pedagogical and educational strategies to develop English basic skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in students of rural high schools in Colombia based upon a systematic review of literature about foreign language teaching.

### **Specific Objectives**

To perform an extensive literature review of current knowledge about English language teaching in different academic repositories to form the basic theory of the investigation.

To organize the strategies and methodologies proposed by the chosen theoretical referents in four categories, each of them focused on developing basic English skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), suitable for rural high school students.

To create a pedagogical and educational structure with the fundamental elements that



orientate teachers in implementing accurate strategies to develop English basic skills in rural high school students.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, different theories that have been the product of a great variety of investigations carried out by experts on the subject of ELT will be analyzed. This compendium of theories will help English teachers to have a deep understanding of the research carried out and will provide a basis for the design of different strategies that will allow them to develop basic English skills in students of rural high schools, including relevant aspects such as motivation, cooperative learning, active feedback, language immersion, and the concordance between syllabus design and students level.

#### **Motivation First**

According to Ushioda (2008), common sense and everyday experience suggest that the high achievers of this world are always motivated. This word derives from the Latin verb "movere" meaning to move. Thus, defined, we might say that motivation concerns what drives a person to make confident choices, engage in action, and persist in the effort.

For the teaching of a foreign language, teachers must be motivated to teach so that they design strategies that motivate their students. Teachers are initially responsible for attracting their students to new knowledge by motivating them through different pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, for students of a foreign language, motivation is fundamental since it is directly related to their willingness and interest in learning. Without these elements, the teacher's work will not ensure much. In this sense, the more motivated students are, the more they will learn and will be able to develop their foreign language skills more significantly.

Several studies by Gardner (2003) and other researchers around the world have shown that the type of motivation that develops in the teaching process guarantees success in learning a

foreign language. On the other hand, unlike different types of learning where students can contribute to the content because they can express themselves in their mother tongue, learning a foreign language requires a commitment of time and additional effort throughout the process. In other words, motivated people will have more opportunities to develop their foreign language skills.

Bronson (2000) explains that motivation is also socially constructed, emphasizing mainly the student's desire to learn and socially constructed objectives with their classmates and teacher. This process is made visible through active participation, where thinking, wanting, and doing are carried out in a collaborative learning environment.

Within an educational process to achieve the objectives established in the curriculum, the involved strategies must be capable of motivating students and teachers to commit to the achievement of the goals and procedures that must be developed at each stage or process of learning the foreign language. Furthermore, it is clear that motivation is also socially constructed. For this, it is necessary to create learning environments that encourage the active participation of all students.

However, it is not enough to create learning strategies that motivate students. A learning environment capable of generating an environment of trust, encouragement, enthusiasm, and collaboration must be created in the same way. For example, many English teachers have adequate classrooms with materials that strengthen the learning of the language such as posters in English, games, small libraries with specific material to develop each communication skill in students (speaking, reading, writing, listening ), different chairs from the usual ones, technological tools, among others, that help students feel very comfortable not only with what they are learning but in the place where they carry out most of their activities.

For Dörnyei (2001), motivational strategies cannot be used successfully in a 'motivation vacuum' - the teacher must create certain conditions in the learning environment before engaging in any activities to motivate his students. According to the experience with different students, the following three motivational conditions are indispensable:

1. Appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students.
2. A pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere;
3. A cohesive learner group with proper group norms.

Of course, the three conditions mentioned above are not the only ones that must exist. Each teacher can create their requirements depending on the type of students or the context they must teach. Thus, the reliability of teaching a foreign language is not based on the knowledge of the teacher alone. In the teaching of a foreign language, elements as simple as classroom or group rules, collaboration, and empathy help strengthen that link between the learner and knowledge, which becomes motivation and the desire to learn. They also increase the relationships between teachers and students, who eventually commit much more to class activities.

### **Pedagogical Elements in Foreign Language Teaching**

For a lot of years, the teachers of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) have made the same question repeatedly: how to teach necessary communication skills to students who start their learning in a foreign language? Despite that, different methods have emerged in this process, such as the Audiolingual Method, the Direct Method, and Silent Way or Suggestopedia. Nonetheless, the majority of those methods are not used by teachers, or unfortunately, they do not know them. For that reason, students cannot participate in other kinds

of strategies or activities, and they cannot know which their real weaknesses in the foreign language are either.

For example, Lee (2015) suggests that the term pedagogy should replace the term method. This word best defines the process behind teaching and gives a broader sense to each of the teachers' steps to transmit, analyze, and mediate the knowledge with all the students.

Therefore, he suggests some questions to think about before starting any process of teaching

English:

1. Is your teaching based on a particular method of teaching?
2. When might it be useful to teach according to a specific process?
3. Some learners appear to be more effective language learners than others because they use more effective learning strategies. What do you understand by a "learning strategy"?
4. What role do you think motivation plays in learning a language? How can the learner's motivation be developed?
5. How important is it to take risks to develop new teaching strategies?

These and maybe other questions are a small introduction to another fundamental term in education, "learning strategies." This term is associated directly with all tools that the teacher designs, thanks to direct observations made in the classroom about students' particular needs. It is to say that thanks to the questions that teachers ask themselves about how to teach specific skills, nowadays exist a great list of strategies and methodologies easily applied in the classroom and that produce significative advances in the learners. In other words, the learning strategies are the result of pedagogical research.

As Brown (2002) affirms:

The best teachers can take calculated risks in the classroom: as new student needs are perceived, innovative pedagogical techniques are attempted. The follow-up assessment yields an observed judgment on their effectiveness. The initial inspiration for such innovation comes from the approach level. Still, the feedback that teachers gather from actual implementation then reshapes and modifies their overall understanding of what learning and teaching are, which may give rise to new insight and more innovative possibilities, and the cycle continues. (Brown, 2002, p. 11)

Regarding teaching a foreign language, there are some specific elements to have in the account in all stages by which students should advance. First, the students' language level, depending on ages, level schooling, or the exposition that they have had to the foreign language, is going to interfere or benefit each of them. Depending on each case, the study in question will have four groups:

1. Complete Beginners
2. Elementary
3. Lower intermediate
4. Upper-intermediate

For the author of “How to teach English”, Harmer (2001):

Learners will need to be motivated, exposed to the foreign language, and have the opportunity to use the language they are learning to advance the development of their skills. Therefore, we can say the elements that need to be present in a language classroom to help students learn effectively. We will call

these elements "ESA" three factors present in all - or almost all - classes. They are:

*Engage.* This is the point in a teaching sequence where teachers try to arouse the students' interest, thus involving their motivations.

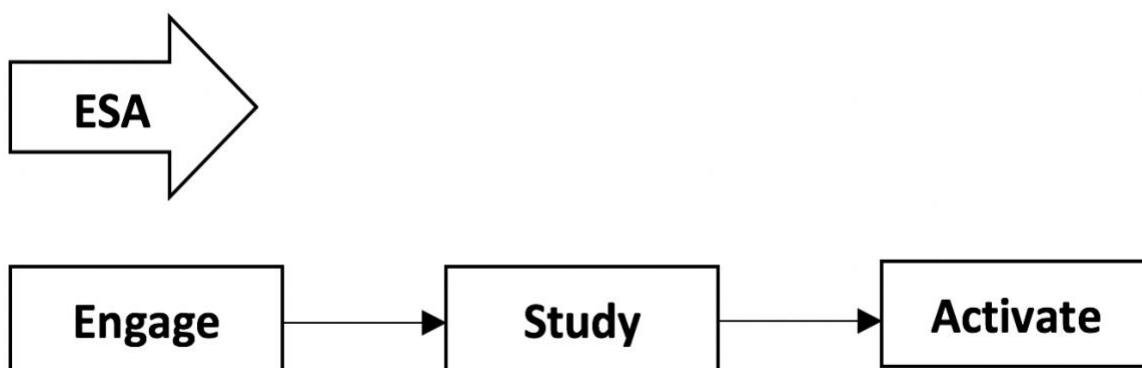
*Study.* Study activities are those where the students are asked to focus on language (or information) and how it is constructed.

*Activate.* This element describes exercises and activities designed to get students using language as freely and "communicatively" as they can. (p. 25)

We can represent this kind of lesson, as in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*ESA Straight Arrows Sequence (Harmer, 2001)*



On the other hand, about the generalities of teaching, it is necessary to analyze some principles that, through different research, teachers have found that they are feasible to apply in the classroom and with which students can quickly identify. Brown (2002), one of the most influential researchers about this topic, suggests twelve principles: automaticity, meaningful learning, the anticipation of reward, intrinsic motivation, strategic investment, language ego,

self-confidence, risk-taking, the language–culture connection, the natural language effect, interlanguage, communicative competence.

Below is a brief description of each of the principles to be called "Twelve principles of teaching a second language":

*Automaticity.* In all classes of a foreign language, teachers should develop strategies where they can communicate effectively; this means that they have to create a lot of strategies for the students to practice simply without having to think about grammar continually.

*Meaningful learning.* The class activities must take to the later application of the concepts learned in the classroom to other environments or situations in real life. Only at that moment, learning can be considered meaningful.

*The anticipation of reward.* The best way to attract students' attention is with small challenges and rewards with activities that generate this type of interest.

*Intrinsic motivation.* Occasionally, some students have their motivation (intrinsic), in this case, they do not need extrinsic motivation by the teachers, for example, many students study English because they have some opportunity of working in another country, want to learn a foreign language or just have the desire of doing it. For this reason, teachers should promote self-evaluation and reflective spaces.

*Strategic investment.* To have a favorable foreign language domain, the time dedicated in the classroom is not enough; all students should devote additional time, effort, and attention to their process. That extra dedication will be the significant manner to achieve success in learning the foreign language.

*Language ego.* When the skills in a foreign language have been developed, essential changes are produced mainly in the mode of thinking and action in human beings; this happens



because the learner gets more confidence. That new language generates a different attitude in students, and it can manifest in the way he gives to know their new knowledge and even his concerns.

*Self-confidence.* Each time that students can solve the activities proposed by teachers, they improve their self-esteem, allowing them a fast and effective in the development of their skills.

*Risk-taking.* To produce significant advances in the acquisition of a foreign language in students, they must be willing to assume risk constantly, leave fear aside, and start producing all kinds of communications and interpretations in the new language, no matter that initially all kinds of mistakes are made. These risks will be the unique form in which they can advance.

*The language–culture connection.* Whichever is the language that is taught or learned, it will be intrinsically linked with cultural elements. In other words, the language goes beyond the grammar norms, and the student has to be willing to respect, distinguish, and associate those elements.

*The native language effect.* The first approach to a foreign language is directly related to the knowledge of the native language, which will help the student understand the new language. Nevertheless, on occasions, it can also produce interfering in the production and comprehension of the new language. Thus, teachers must provide clear explanations about the grammatical differences that occur in each language.

*Interlanguage.* One pedagogical strategy that works effectively in the classroom as to the systematic evolution in the domain of a foreign language is the feedback that the learner receives on time. Even that feedback usually has a more positive effect when a partner with the same level realizes it. It is to say that the teacher should create spaces of participation where the

students can contribute to the activities realized by their classmates through positive comments or suggestions.

*Communicative competence.* Teaching should be directed to all the language components: organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor. In this sense, while students acquire a favorable domain, the teacher should pay more attention to how they incorporate the new language than to the full use of the rules that govern it.

In this section, different factors have been presented that must be taken into account when teaching a foreign language. A simple sequence has even been presented (Figure 1. ESA Straight Arrows Sequence) that can be adapted in any classroom. The term "learning strategies" has also been defined, and twelve principles proposed by Brown (2002) and which can be applied in teaching a foreign language have been described.

### **The Syllabus**

A syllabus is a formal document that must be created in all schools and universities. This document is prepared to consider four fundamental elements: aims, contents, methodology, and evaluation. Besides, the students' level is another aspect that must be present in the planning of a curriculum. In this way, you can define the start and endpoint of the course. English teachers often plan the syllabus taking into account the complete beginners, elementary, lower intermediate, and upper-intermediate levels. However, within the study plan, it is necessary to make more specific descriptions of the students' levels of competence. The next step would be to structure the curriculum by describing the fundamental elements that must be applied in the classroom in such a way as to provide an approach to teaching.

Richards (2001) proposes the syllabus to be:

*Situational.* Organized around different situations and the oral skills needed in those situations.

*Topical.* Organized around various topics.

*Functional.* Organized around the functions most commonly need to develop.

*Task-based.* Organized around different tasks and activities that the learners would carry out in English.

Furthermore, it is suggested that a study program should reflect ideas and believes about the nature of speaking, reading, writing, or listening research on the use and learning of language, and the theory of applied linguistics.

Breen (2001) recommends that a syllabus ideally should provide:

- A clear framework of knowledge and capabilities selected to be appropriate to overall aims;
- Continuity and a sense of direction in classroom work for teacher and students;
- A record for other teachers of what has been covered in the course;
- A basis for evaluating students' progress;
- A basis for evaluating the course's appropriateness concerning overall aims and student needs identified both before and during the course;
- Content appropriate to the broader language curriculum, the particular class of learners, and the educational situation and broader society in which the course is located.

In addition to the elements mentioned above, the syllabus that is created for teaching a foreign language must focus on the four communication skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing, and usually in that order. After testing the effectiveness of different syllabus, Brenn

(2001) highlights four types of syllabus: Formal, Functional, Task-based, and Process. The main characteristics of each one are presented below:

**Table 1**

*Characteristics of the Four Main Syllabus Types (Brenn, 2001)*

	<b>Formal</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>Task-based</b>	<b>Process</b>
<b>Knowledge focus</b>	Forms, systems, and rules of phonology, morphology, vocabulary, grammar, discourse as text.	Purposes of language use in terms of social functions: e.g., requests, descriptions, explanations, etc.	Meanings derived and created through a unified system of linguistic forms and interpersonal conventions.	Overall same as task-based but focus may also narrow at times to Formal/Functional knowledge depending upon identified immediate and long terms needs of learners.
<b>Capabilities focus</b>	Accurate production. Four skills from receptive to productive.	Social appropriateness based on the repertoire of functions.  Four skills related to purposes/needs.	Comprehensible, accurate and appropriate interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meanings in tasks.  Skills use integrated within tasks.	Same as task-based plus negotiated decision-making within classroom group on aspects of the class curriculum.
<b>Selection and subdivision</b>	Larger units down to smaller units: e.g., sentence types or intonation patterns to modality, inflections, particular vocabulary, single sounds, etc.	Linguistic realizations of superordinate and subordinate functions of language in common use or derived from needs analysis for particular.  Special purposes; academic or occupational.	Communicative/target-like tasks: everyday tasks (e.g., planning a trip) or special purpose tasks (e.g., solving the technical problem).  Meta communicative/learning tasks: e.g., deducing pattern in verb forms or comparing learning strategies.	Negotiation cycle:  1. Decisions made on purposes, content, and ways of working in the classroom group; 2. Agreed action - such as tasks/activities; 3. Evaluation of both outcomes and chosen procedures.  Cycle applied to all elements in the curriculum so that actual syllabus of the class evolves.
<b>Sequencing</b>	Assumes learner accumulates and synthesizes.  Simple to complex, or frequent to infrequent, or most useful to less useful.	Assumes learner builds repertoire.  Most common linguistic realizations to more subtle or most needed to less needed.	Assumes learner refines knowledge and abilities in cyclic way. Familiar to less familiar or generalizable to less generalizable tasks.  Task sequence also shaped by problems in earlier tasks.	Assumes learners refine knowledge and abilities in a cyclic way.  Sequence of activities and tasks emerges in an ongoing way through evaluation stage revealing needs and achievements that inform the next decisions.

In addition to the elements mentioned in Table 1, teachers must consider that each context is different, and each group of students has specific needs, so the syllabus is different for each school. Therefore, the design of the curriculum, according to Hyland (2003), requires that teachers:

- Analyze learner needs
- Select what is to be learned based on these needs
- Sequence the elements for active learning
- Provide writing opportunities
- Monitor learner progress and provide effective intervention

In summary and to simplify the syllabus construction process and adapt it to the needs of the students and its context, it is essential that the teacher design it under a logical structure that includes: grammar, vocabulary, functions, notions, situations, standards, and aims. It can also include pedagogical strategies, materials, and references to the digital or printed material used in class. On the other hand, it is essential that students also know the syllabus they are going to develop so that they will be able to contribute to their learning and feel more motivated.

### **How to Teach Language?**

According to Harmer (2010), if the study of the foreign language is organized within ESA teaching sequences, there are four things that students need to do with the new language: be exposed to it, understand its meaning, understand its form (how it is constructed) and practice it.

In this sense, the classes should be focused on developing the four skills in students (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) and not only in making known the grammar as usually occurs in a lot of classes. The professors can use the ESA structure to planning activities for each skill with specific time and moments; for example: in the Engage Step when starting the class,

the teacher can introduce the topic with a particular question (in English) to students use their knowledge in the foreign language (L2). Their experience to solve it or to present their ideas (practice speaking). Then in the Study Step, teachers can teach the grammar utilizing a short text, a script, written dialogue, or another kind of document (practice reading and grammar). After that, they should propose different writing activities to practice the grammar structure (practice writing) and finally listening audios for solving specific questions or talking about them (practice listening). That requires proper teacher preparation and constant research.

According to Leaver, Ehrman, & Shekhtman (2005), language learning consists of acquiring four skills - reading, writing, listening, and speaking - and four sets of enabling knowledge - grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural understanding. The former is the means for developing communicative competence, or the ability to use the language for communication with native speakers in authentic situations. The latter are the building blocks that you will need to acquire any one of the four language skills.

To this purpose, teachers must be clear about the characteristics of each of the skills and how they relate to the others, for example:

*Reading.* It is a receptive skill; the other receptive skill is listening.

*Writing.* It is the opposite of reading. This means that while reading the ideas of other authors are interpreted, in writing, their own thoughts are expressed so that others can understand them.

*Listening.* Like reading, listening is receptive, though not a passive skill. One of the big differences with the other skills is that in this skill, there is little control over what is heard, and there are generally no repetitions.

*Speaking.* It is another productive skill; in this ability, all kinds of messages are coded through oral language, making use of different phonetic forms to give clarity in everything you want to communicate.

On the other hand, in a study of effective teachers in bilingual education programs in California and Hawaii, Tikunoff (2002) observed teachers to realize how they organize instruction, structure teaching activities, and enhance student performance on tasks. After an analysis of the information, it was possible to demonstrate a strong linkage among the following:

1. The clarity in the activities designed by the teachers and the students' confidence to be able to perform them without any trouble.
2. The instruction organization associated with the student's participation.
3. Fidelity in achieving the objectives and the expected learning.

Having into account the elements described next and pedagogically speaking, the didactic is the most critical element in the classroom because it demands not only that the teacher knows their area but also the ability to analyze and understand the real needs of the students to design specific strategies that can contribute to the meaningful learning. The essence of good teaching is that the teacher is continually inventing new strategies and adapting them according to their students' needs.

Starting from the wide variety of analysis and strategies designed by foreign-language teachers, Cohen & Weaver (2005) differentiate learning strategies into the following categories:

*Cognitive.* Referring to the activities designed for students to identify the new language's critical elements, they can use them later.

*Metacognitive.* These activities have to do with learning planning and how the monitoring will be done to know their effectiveness.

*Affective.* During the last decades, teaching to have control of the emotions and being empathic have become something so relevant that in the classroom, there should be activities that strengthen these skills in students.

*Social.* This type of strategy has to do directly with the implementation of the lessons learned with other people of the same level as the students or, if possible, with native speakers to stimulate the desire to learn positively.

In conclusion, English teachers should spend enough time organizing the different learning processes and activities they will use to develop communication skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in their students. This organization must include different strategies that allow students to expose themselves to the foreign language that they are learning and practice it.

### **Elements to Consider for the Design of Pedagogical Strategies**

When we talk about teaching, we are implicitly referring to the learning strategies that teachers use to generate experiences between knowledge and students. Although there is an excellent diversity of pedagogical approaches to develop English communication skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), it could be said that the activities can be of two types: mental (related to imagination or visualization) and physical (where the student must do something specific).

Griffiths (2008) says, “individuals are infinitely variable and any attempt at a one-rule-for-all type conclusion is unlikely to be universally applicable. In addition to strategies, many other learner variables (such as aptitude, learning style, motivation, age, beliefs, culture, gender, personality, metacognition, or autonomy), and learning variables (for instance vocabulary,



grammar, pronunciation, function, skills, teaching/learning method, strategy instruction, error correction, or task) have the potential to affect the outcome of language learning efforts.” (p. 94)

For example, students with an intermediate or higher level of proficiency in a foreign language often choose their strategies for specific purposes and improve their language skills and learning process. In general, the strategies selected by the students focus on:

- Managing their learning (metacognitive)
- Strategies to improve grammatical knowledge
- Strategies focused on developing or improving specific skills
- Strategies to expand vocabulary
- Strategies that allow them to learn in their leisure time
- Strategies that involve the use of technological resources

On the other hand, teachers must think that not all students are committed to their learning. The number of students who need to be motivated and accompanied in their learning of a foreign language is greater. For this reason, teachers must design activities and tasks in such a way that students see them as functional for their learning and commit to solving them. Also, many students are active learners. In other words, they are constantly evaluating the purpose and function of the activities presented by their teachers.

For Cameron (2001), classroom activities should be designed around five essential criteria:

1. Have coherence and unity for learners (from the topic, activity, and outcome)
2. Have meaning and purpose for learners
3. Have clear language learning goals
4. Have a beginning and final

### 5. Involve the learners actively

Until English teachers apply the strategies outlined in this section in each of their contexts, their effectiveness cannot be fully evaluated. However, the different activities described above can be used as a first introduction to the foreign language and can be modified as students' progress in their learning processes.

### **The Importance of Feedback in Foreign Language Learning**

The learning process essential thing is that the students know what they have managed to learn and what they still need to learn. From this affirmation, the teacher must find a way to guide the student until they can overcome his difficulties. That process is called "feedback." Currently, the feedback has positive impacts on students' learning because they feel that teachers are much more interested in helping them improve their difficulties beyond just evaluating them. The effect has been so significant that the evaluation process has changed in many schools, and nowadays, the teachers have adopted the formative evaluation. This type of assessment focuses on evaluating students' effort and helping them achieve the objectives at each stage of their learning.

According to Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engelsen (2016), “the concept draws attention to assessment embedded in pedagogy. It explicitly focuses on the complicated relationship between learners' internal feedback and external feedback provided by significant others. In this view, feedback involves more than the one-directional transmission of information, and the focus on internal feedback highlights the role of students' self-regulation and self-efficacy.” (p. 1)

The integration of this kind of pedagogy gives students opportunities to take an active role in their learning through interactions with their teachers and peers, searching to construct new strategies to overcome their difficulties. Burner (2015) suggests that feedback is essential in

learning foreign languages, as EFL learning involves subject-specific challenges for students related to communication, grammar, and curriculum.

Besides, the feedback has been evolving. Now it is not only a part of the learning process where advances of the students are evaluated but all the pedagogical elements that are used in teaching. For example, students can speak about the deficiency in the study material, activities, clarity in the explanations, and so on. This process helps the teachers improve their pedagogical practices by reflecting and analyzing the comments given by their students. In the words of Vattoy & Smith (2019), this learning model shares similar characteristics with various models of self-regulated, for example:

- Students are active, constructive participants;
- Students monitor, control, and regulate aspects of cognition, motivation, and behavior;
- Regulation is related to criteria and goals;
- Self-regulatory activities serve as mediators between achievement and personal and contextual characteristics.

In a few words, one of the significant changes that must occur in teaching a foreign language is directly related to incorporating feedback as a tool to streamline the process of improvement in student difficulties and to evaluate teaching strategies.

### **Cooperative Learning**

In the last decade, interest in the use of collaborative learning activities and strategies for teaching and learning a foreign language has grown. Different cooperative learning techniques are strategies that teachers use to encourage mutual help among learners. According to Jacobs & Hall (2002), before planning activities, you should think about the emphasis of the activity, for example, what type of motivation intrinsic or extrinsic activities require? If students are given

options to choose your workgroup, what are each member's responsibility and role? Besides, teachers must anticipate situations that may occur in cooperative work and how to solve them. It is usual for student groups to have some who do not like working with others. That is why the motivation must be present in this type of strategies, showing students the different benefits of cooperating with others such as solving class activities is more fun, the skills of another strengthen the weaknesses of one student, the responsibilities They are divided among all the participants and allow different views on the same idea.

On the other hand, bearing in mind that group activities are designed to improve students' learning, cooperation, and interaction skills. Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest that teachers should be clear about the following roles:

*Learner roles*

- Work collaboratively on tasks with other group members
- Learn teamwork skills
- Lead their learning
- Plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning

*Teacher roles*

- Create a highly structured and well-organized learning environment in the classroom
- Setting goals, planning, and structuring tasks
- Establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom
- Assigning students to groups and roles
- Selecting materials and time

*The role of instructional materials*

- Be specially designed to assign group roles.

- Focused on specific purposes.

Another aspect that cooperative learning is going to improve in teaching a foreign language is the learning environment. Most of these factors are associated with the students' psychological and cognitive environment and are essential for meaningful learning. Quiroga (2010) mentions that the psychological factors associated with cooperative learning are:

*Security and trust.* They are associated with the tranquility that students feel when expressing themselves freely with their peers.

*Improve self-esteem.* As students integrate with their peers to solve the different activities proposed by the teacher, they feel important and included, which increases confidence in their abilities.

*Socialization.* Most students feel comfortable working with their other peers so that as more cooperative activities are implemented, it will be easier for them to establish new relationships.

*Motivation.* As the above factors are developed, students will feel more like learning and participating in class.

*Acceptance of criticism.* It is the most challenging factor to develop and depends on the type of conversation in each learning group. Students must be able to recognize their mistakes and respect their classmates' criticism.

Although the factors described above are implicitly included in cooperative learning, students do not notice that they acquire these psychological skills and are adding them in their daily behavior. Once the students develop these skills, they begin to be reflected in all kinds of activities that the teacher uses to transmit new knowledge, mainly in fulfilling the objectives set out in the study plan.

In summary, cooperative learning applied to teach a foreign language allows students to be easily integrated into the development of their learning. Furthermore, since collaborative learning requires active participation, generally through practical activities, students acquire other psychological skills that are strengthened by positive comments from their peers.

### **How to Teach Listening?**

Listening is generally the first skill that human beings develop as they begin to communicate with language, being one of the essential skills for their development. For this reason, it must be one of their priorities for those who learn a foreign language, as well as for teachers who must develop communication skills in their students.

According to White, G. (2008), good language learners need to activate non-linguistic knowledge about physical context, topic, ways in which discourse is organized, and so on, to understand a spoken message. They should view listening as an important medium for developing language and be aware that to develop language effectively, students need to practice the language they hear, either by responding to the spoken message and/or by producing some of the languages they have listened to in other situations. They also need to develop a range of receptive communication strategies, which will enable them to cope with interactive listening.

In general, the methods used to teach a foreign language (FL) are strongly emphasized in the development of writing or reading skills mainly, with the false hope that the skills as listening can be acquired through exposure to the foreign language and that it cannot be taught. It is to say that the development of this skill depends on the own effort of the students or the direct exposure to the foreign language, in this case, English. Nevertheless, the reality is another. Many teachers who have done studies and research about the development of listening skills affirm that

a lot of processes and methodological strategies that can be applied in the classroom despite the types of audios available to use free are limited by comparison with those that occur outside.

According to Field (2009), a good listener varies the depth of attention (shallow vs. profound) and the locus of care (micro- vs. macro- ideas) according to her current goals, to the text genre and to online decisions about which information is essential and which is not. The above means that the student develops the ability to vary the level of attention that he gives to the different audios he hears. Even those with a low level easily disconnect from the main ideas. In this sense, the focus of the listener's interest can be of two types: local, which refers to the extraction of more straightforward ideas or global that is focused on the general understanding of what he hears. Besides, these two types of listening developed by speakers can occur at four levels of attention. Depending on the task they are performing, these are shadow attentional focus, medium attentional focus, deep attentional focus, and very deep attentional focus.

In Table 2, the proposal by Field (2009) for applying the two types of listening mentioned above is presented. These strategies can help English teachers create specific activities to develop listening skills in their students.

**Table 2**

*Types of Listening as Determined by Listener's Goals, (Field, 2009)*

	<b>Global</b>	<b>Local</b>
<b>Shadow attentional focus</b>	<p><b>Skimming</b> (listening generally) to establish discourse topic and main ideas. <i>What is about?</i> e.g., TV channel hopping, TV advertisements, eavesdropping</p> <p><b>Phatic communion</b> <i>What is the speaker's intentions?</i> e.g., greetings</p>	<p><b>Unfocused scanning</b> to locate information relevant to the listener. <i>Does the speaker mention anything of interest to me?</i> e.g., news headlines</p>
<b>Medium attentional focus</b>	<p><b>Listening for plot; listening to commentary</b> <i>What happened next?</i> e.g., film, TV drama, TV/radio interview</p> <p><b>Conversational listening</b> <i>What is the speaker's message?</i> e.g., everyday chat</p> <p><b>Information exchange</b> <i>How much do I need to know?</i> e.g., tour guide</p>	<p><b>Focused scanning</b> to locate one area of information needed by the listener. <i>When will the speaker mention X?</i> e.g., airport announcement, weather forecast</p> <p><b>Search listening</b> to locate and understand information relevant to predetermined needs. <i>What is the answer to these questions?</i> e.g., hotel/travel information</p> <p><b>Message listening</b> <i>How many details do I need to retain?</i> e.g., answerphone</p>
<b>Deep attentional focus</b>	<p><b>Close listening</b> to establish the speaker's main points and to trace connections between them. <i>What is important?</i> e.g., lecture listening</p>	<p><b>Close listening</b> to record in depth the speaker's main points and supporting detail. <i>I assume that everything is important.</i> e.g., street directions</p> <p><b>Listening to the form</b> of words <i>What precisely did he say?</i> e.g., listening to quote somebody</p>
<b>Very deep attentional focus</b>	<p><b>Listening to check critical facts</b> <i>Is this consistent?</i> e.g., witness evidence</p>	<p><b>Listening to vital instructions</b> <i>I assume that everything is important.</i> e.g., street directions</p> <p><b>Listening to the form of words</b> <i>What precisely did he say?</i> e.g., listening to quote somebody</p>

Once the two types of listening are understood, it is necessary for the teacher to provide the students with audios with different accents, so that they adapt their ears and can more easily understand what they hear in the foreign language. Through various investigations, Griffiths (2006) shows that successful learners use chances to watch TV and movies, listen to native



speakers, and notice language use in the environment. Those strategies applied by the students help them significantly improve their listening skills. What makes us think not only in the kind of audios that the students are listening to in each class but in another element that is very important in language, "The Phonetic", and that nevertheless it is not usually taught in the classroom or the teachers dedicate very little time on it. So, as teachers, we should ask ourselves, what are the real difficulties of students to listen or interpret conversations or audios in English? And to what extent we could teach or enlarge the capacity of students to understand a FL.

According to Nunan (2002), to develop appropriate approaches to teaching listening skills, it is first necessary to understand the nature of listening. For this, he suggests two models: the bottom-up and the top-down processing models. The bottom-up model refers to the decoding of the words or vocabulary that the listener can extract from what he is listening to. The top-down model is more comprehensive because, in this case, the listener is more active since he uses his prior knowledge to decode the message.

In this sense, the pedagogical strategies to develop the listening skill and understand a foreign language, in this case English, it should be focused on steps of interpretation and not the literal translation. The students generally have a vocabulary incorporated that they quickly recognize in an oral language; nonetheless, when that vocabulary is associated with another that the student does not know his brain is locked immediately.

Field (2002) examines a commonly used format for the teaching of listening, one which involves three stages in a listening activity: pre-listening, listening, and post-listening. Through these stages, the teachers can guide their students in the complete process and surely with more significative results. The method for developing students' foreign language listening skill becomes an integral part of the classroom activities.

*Pre-listening.* In this first stage, the teacher should have clear which is going to be the vocabulary that will be used in the class, especially in the audios to perform different activities involving actively to all students, so that they can incorporate quickly to their vocabulary the new words, concepts, and meanings and associate them with their pre-knows to produce a more significant understanding of the context where the new vocabulary is used.

*Listening.* The second stage can or usually takes place in two ways: in the first option, the teacher can create different questions that are associated with the audio; students read and use them to compose in their mind one version of what they will listen to. The other option consists of the teacher waiting until students listen to the audio, and then he asks them different things about what they have heard, to analyze how much information they achieved to extract. Anyone that is the case, the primary intention is to make the student pay more attention to what he listens to and analyze it more objectively.

*Post-listening.* The third stage has to do with the analysis of many aspects present in the audio, for example, the use of the tenses, expressions, idioms, among others that can include the repetition of the phrases or words to learn the correct pronunciation.

According to Nunan (2002), other aspects should be analyzed in the lesson planning: the different types of listening, which can be classified according to several variables, including the purpose for hearing, the role of the listener, and the kind of text that is being listened to. This analysis is fundamental because, depending on the type of audio, the strategies mentioned above can be given in a different order. Even many teachers use the audios, so that afterward the students carry out small conversations as an imitation of what they have previously heard.

The reason for doing these kinds of activities in the classroom is because normally when listening to a conversation or monologue, the listening is nonreciprocal. It is to say, students do

not have the opportunity of asking questions, answering, or clarifying doubts about the content in the conversation. For this reason and to promote the active participation in class, the audios can be used to create another kind of strategies that not only involve the listening skill, so other skills as writing or speaking. In a few words, the teacher can increase the learner's involvement with extension tasks, starting from the content in the audio listened to; for example, if the student listened to a conversation that occurs in a restaurant, he could use the new vocabulary or the context to create a new dialogue or monologue to practice with one of his classmates.

In summary, to develop listening skills in a foreign language in the classroom, the following aspects must be taken into account:

- The teacher's voice should not be the only one heard by the students. The materials and especially the audios should contemplate a great variety in the type of speakers; if dialogues or monologues were from native speakers, the better it would be.
- Pre and post-listening activities should be considered. These may include vocabulary exercises, questions, scriptwriting, or role-playing practice.
- The student's level should always be taken into account, for example, for the Complete Beginners, Elementary levels, the audios may have to be repeated several times. In contrast, for the Lower intermediate or Upper-intermediate levels, the audios must be ever more challenging.
- Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the strategies should offer all students opportunities to become actively involved. Even if possible, the content should be tailored to each student's capabilities or group.

### **How to Teach Reading?**

For most English as a Foreign Language students, developing the skill to read comprehensively in English is very important. The need to read in a foreign language mainly arises because many specialized academic books are found in English and necessary for several purposes in their careers. On the other hand, one of the big reasons to teach students to read texts in English has to do directly with another of the skills that must be developed in students, writing. Every time students are exposed to the reading of different kinds of text and start recognizing patterns, they can apply them to their written documents; in a few words, reading improves the writing skill considerably.

And although many doubts exist about what kind of readings are the most adequate for EFL students, nowadays, there is a high number of sources for pedagogical support to develop the skill to read in English. Nevertheless, the truth is that typically inside the classroom, enough strategies to help or lead students of FL in this process are not carried out.

It is to say that the process must go further than translation word to word or paragraph to a paragraph because, in this way, none skill is being developed. Even today, students can use many technological tools as software or apps specialized in which just by entering the text, an image, or putting the camera above the document; they translate it instantly. Nonetheless, if the students wish to develop their reading skill, this kind of tools are not the most adequate. Thus, one of the main aims of foreign language teachers is to develop reading comprehension in EFL students and not the need to translate each paragraph that they face.

In the report of Grabe (2002), research has demonstrated at least ten significant reading instruction findings. These are:

- The importance of developing letter-sound correspondences for beginning reading.
- The importance of word recognition and the relatively complete processing of words in a text.
- The necessity for a large recognition vocabulary for fluent reading.
- The need for reasonable reading rates for processing.
- The usefulness of graphic representations for comprehension instruction.
- The value of extensive reading.
- The importance of dialogue and teacher modeling in comprehension instruction.
- The facilitating role of Content-Based Instruction.
- The need for students to become strategic readers.
- The influence of varying social contexts on the development of reading abilities.

This study shows that reading skills in a foreign language require the design of a great variety of pedagogical strategies inside and outside the classroom. Without going too far, one of the first activities has to do with the learning of a vast range of vocabulary. When students are going to read a text in a foreign language, their primary fear or inability to read a book, comprehensively is associated with the little vocabulary they know. This lack of vocabulary does not refer only to verbs, nouns, adjectives, or pronouns, but a wide range of items of writing language like connectors, adverbs, conjunctions, synonyms, and so on. Consequently, the fluency in the reading is continuously interrupted, and read in a foreign language becomes a bad experience for the EFL students.

In the same way, many teachers know that reading comprehension is developed when reading at least full paragraphs. Besides, it is improbable that students can develop their reading

interpretation if most of the vocabulary present in the text is unknown to them. Therefore, according to Grabe (2002), before creating any reading strategy, it is necessary to realize vocabulary knowledge tests. Then, as from the results obtained, teachers can design the reading strategies for more specific purposes. Nevertheless, they should verify very well the types of texts that will be used for each one of student's levels (Complete Beginners, Elementary, Lower intermediate, or Upper-intermediate) because one of the barriers that prevent the understanding of English texts is students' little knowledge of vocabulary. That is to say that the readings used in class should contribute to the incorporation of new words and meanings. In simple terms, if learners read in common areas where they bring a lot of relevant background knowledge to their reading, they will easily cope with unknown words in the context, but they will probably not learn them. If they read in unfamiliar areas, there is a higher chance of learning new vocabulary because they have to pay close attention to the text's language to get the meaning.

Consequently, Mohan (1990) highlights eight problems that must be addressed in the classroom:

- Importance of discourse structure and graphic representations.
- Significance of vocabulary in language learning.
- Need for language awareness and attending to language and genre form.
- Existence of a foreign language proficiency threshold in reading.
- Value of metacognitive knowledge and strategy learning.
- Require for extensive reading.
- The benefits of integrating reading and writing.
- Importance of Content-Based Instruction.

These theories show that reading ability in EFL students is a complicated process. Therefore, the pedagogical strategies that teachers design to help students acquire that skill must go beyond the simple translation of texts, the cursory analysis of the same, or the solution of a series of questions. In the opinion of Grabe (2002), fluency in reading is established by having students reading extensively and by practice with a combination of timed readings, paced reading, rapid recognition exercises, and rereading techniques.

Thus, some pedagogical proposals may include:

- Lists of specific vocabulary to work in each stage of the English course
- The creation or selection of texts for different levels in a way that to be timed, analyzed, and discussed openly by students
- Extraction activities of unknown vocabulary
- Graphic readings in which students can create their realistic version of the texts and contribute to the reading comprehension process
- Quick reading exercises with short texts where students should read and extract the main idea, theme, or other characteristics
- Intermediate-level readings to be analyzed directly with the teacher, without making use of dictionaries
- Reading universal literature.

Other authors suggest that reading skills should be taught as a strategic process. For example, in the teaching approach of Brown (2007), students are taught four reading strategies: summarizing, predicting, clarifying, and asking questions. From these four strategies, students acquire the skill to predict. This new ability is a similar strategy to those that have been suggested to apply to develop listening skills. Within this strategy, the teacher can teach EFL

students to do a general revision of the text as of the title and the known words. With this methodology, they will achieve a primary understanding where unknown terms will affect very little the fluency or reading comprehension.

Duffy (1993) defines strategies as "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning" (p. 232). This expression is quite clear; What teachers of English should look for in classrooms, regarding the development of reading ability, is to provide the student with a series of cognitive tools that allow them to unravel the texts and understand them, even if they do not know the meaning of many words, but that with certain developed abilities they can get to associate them quickly and endow them with meaning when comparing them with the rest of the textual content.

In this regard, Janzen (2002) proposes various strategies, which include asking questions, making predictions, checking those predictions, and summarizing or paraphrasing.

### Table 3

#### *Sample Strategies to Develop Reading Skills (Janzen, 2002)*

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Why</b>
Connecting - What I already know (to) what I'm reading - Previous part (to) what I'm reading	While reading After reading	To clarify ideas To help paraphrase To evaluate content
Evaluating	While reading After reading	To judge the author's idea To make own opinion To develop knowledge
Asking questions	While reading Before reading	To evaluate To check To have more interest
Checking for answers to questions	While reading	To paid attention to what I'm reading
Translating	While reading	To get exact meaning



To conclude, all these strategies that have been described by different authors seek to strengthen the reading ability of students. Each method can be applied at any of the levels through which the student must pass. But mainly teachers must understand the importance of teaching reading as a purpose of language and not as a class activity. In the words of Harmer (2001), reading is not a passive skill; students need to be engaged while they are reading and interacting with the content of a text. Hence, teachers should teach them how to read for different purposes - including reading for pleasure and reading for detailed comprehension.

### **How to Teach Speaking?**

Thinking about how to teach speaking in a foreign language requires knowing and understanding a wide variety of elements beyond the repetition of words or phrases. According to Bygate (2001), speaking in a foreign language involves developing a particular communication skill. For example, the basic grammatical, lexical, and discourse patterns are different to produce the oral language than the necessities to develop the written language. In a few words, the strategies applied to teach a foreign language should be divided according to the skill to develop. Hence, the skills needed to read or write probably will not be useful in developing oral communication. Moreover, we have to check some approaches that have been used over time to this kind of teaching.

The first is related to tradition. For decades, many foreign language teachers have used repetition to teach English with phrases like "Please, repeat after me" to do students express in English, setting aside the teaching of the different communication skills. Therefore, when students need to communicate spontaneously, they cannot do it.

The second approach is directly linked to technology. The appropriate medium to facilitate learning in whatever time or place. Carter and McCarthy (1997) stated that only since

the mid-1970s, the audio-recording has been sufficiently cheap and practical, allowing the study of many elements of the conversation of the native speakers.

In agreement with Bygate (2001), the third approach is related to the wrong belief about the teaching of oral language. In many cases, teachers think that students should only learn to pronounce some words and do not teach them to communicate effectively in English. Other authors, as Levelt (1989) propose that to develop speaking skills in a foreign language, the teachers must plan strategies involving four main processes: conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring.

*Conceptualization.* It is all the planning of what the student wants to communicate: what will he say? How is he going to tell it? And what he hopes that other people understand?

*Formulation.* It is to find the phrases or language appropriate to set the message to communicate, order it, and use a logical sequence.

*Articulation.* It is probably the most challenging step because it involves controlling the articulatory organs, such as the lips, tongue, teeth, etc. Without a correct pronunciation or tangled, the message will not be clear.

*Self-monitoring.* The most relevant aspect in all learning because it is the process in which students identify, evaluate, and correct the possible mistakes. That is to say, initially, for foreign language students, communicating fluently and accurately is complicated because they must develop an automation process that allows them to express themselves exponentially and not in an interrupted. Therefore, in this case, the teacher's primary task is not only to design strategies for students to mechanize the four processes described previously but also they can express fluently.

Bygate (2001), refers to the methodology used in classrooms for teaching a foreign language and suggests that the structural rigidity of communication should be left aside. For each class, the teachers should create different activities where students are given more opportunities to communicate so with simple expressions. These kinds of strategies help students to explore the creative form of language and improve oral fluency.

Another of the most used strategies to improve speaking ability in students of a foreign language is the student-centered approach. In this type of procedure, teachers have conversations with each of their students using the foreign language. However, for some teachers, these activities are uncomfortable because they reduce the opportunity for interaction between students and because class time is not enough to converse with all the group members.

For this reason, another strategy that teachers can work in the classroom is to use a language according to their students' level. This does not mean that the teacher should not require them to improve their speaking ability. It is about using more straightforward language to encourage student participation so that as they progress, they can incorporate more vocabulary and more spontaneous expressions.

According to Bilbrough (2007), learners always hope to have a teacher with advanced skills to communicate in English. This skill should be exploited in-class activities and primarily in the development of speaking skills in students. The teacher's role should not focus solely on creating interactions between students but also on creating opportunities to engage in dialogue with them, support, challenge their abilities, and help them improve.

Bygate (2001), in this regard, comments that for classroom activities to be positive for the development of speaking ability in students of a foreign language, there must be three specific phases. The "input phase" where students are exposed to native speakers' conversations and

analyze different aspects of it. The second phase, called "rehearsal phase," refers to the specific task where students will try to imitate, rebuild their knowledge, or contextualize what they have previously heard. Finally, in the "performance phase," students put into practice the built elements. As previously stated, it is crucial to review the possible errors constructively, and a self-evaluation of the all-around performance should realize.

On the other hand, Harmer (2010) suggests that classroom strategies should include speaking activities. This approach would motivate students to use the kind of language with which they feel familiar. Moreover, the student will inevitably go through the following three stages that will be very significant for their learning.

*Rehearsal.* As an opportunity to analyze and rehearse their speeches outside of the classroom.

*Feedback.* When students are faced with performing a job on their own, more questions appear; students learn to recognize their mistakes, and teachers can identify each student's language problems.

*Engagement.* As students actively participate in speaking activities at home, they may feel more engaged and motivated.

Until now, different aspects have been explained that may favor or impede the development of speaking ability in foreign language students, regardless of their level (Complete Beginners, Elementary, Lower intermediate or Upper-intermediate) and the various stages that students go through be able to communicate effectively. However, through her studies, Hebert (2002) argues that effective communication necessarily has to do with semantic, syntactic, lexical, morphological, and phonological elements, which are inseparable and must be worked on in classroom activities. For example, she suggests that oral language is interactive and

generally involves two people who exchange opinions and meanings but not only with words because verbal communication is referential and effective. In a few words reading a text is not the same as communicating an idea. Then, oral language characteristics such as stress and rhythm, intonation, pitch variation, and volume should be worked on in the classroom.

For this reason, the teacher must carry out activities that allow them to know the level of their students and also plan class activities, giving special attention to each of the stages of the lesson.

### **How to Teach Writing?**

For many students who are learning a foreign language as English, developing writing skills is very difficult. In general, the trouble is presented in all the writing process, is to say, from when they start to generate ideas until they want to put them in argumentative order. Nonetheless, this skill usually does not associate only with the knowledge of vocabulary or grammar, but with a more complex process of planning, organizing, skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on. Besides, that difficulty can be strongly linked with the pressure of having the student of FL writing in his mother tongue.

Therefore, Harmer (2001) explains that teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language includes reinforcement, language development, learning style, and, most importantly, writing as an opportunity to voice their opinions or ideas. In other words, there is to write to learn to write, and only during the own process is when it is possible to correct the difficulties of textual production. Because not only is connecting words or phrases but because the incorrect use of various elements previously mentioned can make the text not to have a real sense, with vague ideas or directly that it does not communicate what the writer wishes to make

know. Hence, it is necessary that teachers at the moment of designing pedagogical strategies to develop the writing skill take into account the following:

*Reinforcement.* Usually, people write the same way as they speak, and in many cases, it is not always the correct way. Hence, it generates the first difficulty in developing writing skills in a foreign language. That problem is due mainly to the people who acquire the language in an oral/aural way. In effect, the teachers before to design strategies to develop the writing skill in students in some manner must check the way that they acquired the oral language and at least adjust it to the foreign language grammar.

*Language development.* As mentioned previously, the ability to write develops as the student is advanced. Consequently, the teacher must enlarge the variety of strategies or possibilities of writing. For example, within the activities, the teacher can propose the creative writing of the daily routines to "Complete Beginners" level and as advanced the student level "Elementary or Lower intermediate" the teacher can ask them to write letters, design posters, invitations or little comments about a newspaper article or subject in particular. Meanwhile to a high level "Upper-intermediate," the teacher can design activities where students write radio news, television programs, little essays, and job application letters. In the same way, the teacher can create textual exchange strategies like messages or e-mails between the same students or with the teacher so that they can receive feedback instantly. These kinds of exercises will achieve to involve effectively and creatively students and hence, a more quickly development of the skill to write in a foreign language.

*Learning style.* There is a wide variety of difficulties that can occur in the classroom. However, it has to do mainly with the way students learn. It is very reasonable that schools have students who learn faster and others who need constant support from the teacher. In

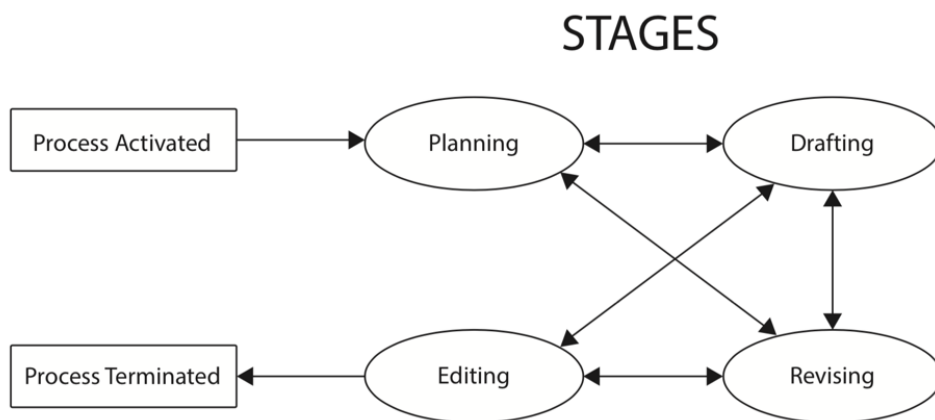
consequence, the teachers must recognize this unforeseen and create immediately leveling strategies for not losing interest or motivation from students. For example, the teacher can group students in levels, focus on each group's skills, or propose the support of groups by the most advanced students to help those who have more considerable difficulties.

*Writing as a skill.* According to Jeremy Harmer (2001), by far, the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, is that it is a necessary language skill, just as important as speaking, listening, and reading. Thus, students need to learn to write all kinds of text. It is to say that the design of writing activities in the classroom must cover the writing of a great type of documents.

For other authors, as Seow (2002), the process of teaching writing as a skill of a foreign language must understand four primary stages: planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

## Figure 2

*Process of Teaching Writing (Seow, 2002)*



These processes do not seem to be anything extraordinary, and they are part of the continual process of writing. Nevertheless, Seow's proposal is directed to teachers, suggesting that for each stage, strategies should be designed to motivate the students so they can develop

their skill with accompaniment and timely feedback. This purpose may include pedagogical approaches like brainstorming, freewriting, a list of ideas, or mental maps. Besides, Reid (2001) suggests that teachers have to be aware that grammatical inaccuracies can have adverse effects on the overall quality of students' writing. Because of this, writing teachers need to help students develop their editing and composing skills. For this, the teacher must begin to correct the most frequent errors, mainly those that make the text meaningless or that do not communicate the message accurately. However, a wide variety of errors can occur and it is entirely reasonable that, depending on students' level, some of them are more common. Therefore, the correction strategies should be given progressively and actively involve the student.

According to Harmer (2001), as with all types of correction, the teacher has to achieve a balance between being accurate and truthful on the one hand and treating students sensitively and sympathetically on the other. For example, some of the corrections may include small text notes or annotations with symbols previously agreed upon with the students (S=spelling; WO=word order; V=Vocabulary; G=Grammar; and so on).

In addition to activities that teachers can design to develop writing skills in students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the different levels that students will advance must be considered (Complete Beginners, Elementary, Lower intermediate or Upper-intermediate) and therefore design a syllabus suitable for this purpose. Richards & Renandya (2002) propose a list to organize the curriculum according to the skills that students develop:

*Structural.* Entry-level students (Complete Beginners) cannot be asked to complete a paragraph of text. In this sense, the syllabus focuses on simpler writing patterns, such as writing the same sentence in different tenses, changing the subject, and the type of phrase, among others. If you are an elementary level student, you may be asked to construct short paragraphs or



descriptions of some kind. Students at the Lower intermediate or Upper-intermediate levels may be required to write analyses on a current topic, essays, or even summaries.

*Functional.* Writing activities can be designed for different functions: telling a story, explaining, describing, writing a biography, an article, among others.

*Topical.* Help increase students' vocabulary, syllabus and especially writing activities can be organized by topic: family, health, technology, environment, and so on.

*Situational.* The idea of developing students' diverse skills is that they can use them in every real-life situation over time. Then the writing activities can also be directed to the construction of texts such as requests, complaints, letters, permits, and so on.

*Skills and processes.* Part of the pedagogical strategies to develop writing skills in EFL students should focus on the creative part of the construction of texts, that is, the formulation and organization of ideas, to exchange comments between peers, to create several versions of a story, to change the endings, add new arguments to the texts of other students, among others.

*Tasks.* Writing activities should not only be working out in the classroom, on the contrary, collaborative writing works can be designed, such as creating a magazine, writing a play and staging it, organizing small poetry books, fables or stories written by students, creating comics, blogs, websites with specific themes but in a foreign language, etc.

### **Positive Aspects of Developing the Writing Skill through Creative Writing**

Writing correctly is one of the communication skills that students of a foreign language take time to develop. Nevertheless, in most foreign language courses writing becomes a prolonged process because students have to know an extensive vocabulary, grammar rules, and spelling. It is also necessary to develop in students the capacity of invention and disposition for

writing. For this reason, promoting their creativity should be another of the objectives of English teachers.

At first, writing creatively can be a complicated process because to achieve a communicative competence the student must be motivated not only to write but to read different types of texts in such a way as to allow them to have a broad knowledge of different subjects. For Alvarez (2009), creative writing is the art of storytelling, which is not an easy task because it requires connecting ideas, emotions, and thoughts on a blank sheet using coherent speech. However, from this process, different techniques are born that enhance the writing of all types of text, improving students' writing ability.

On the other hand, unlike academic, scientific, or literary writing, creative writing implies that both the teacher and the student share the same objective, which in words of Zubair (2019) should be to practice writing skills, employ the imagination, use creativity, play with language, express yourself, and share your feelings and emotions. In this way, classroom activities can focus on collaboration and active feedback, benefiting all students. For example, the teacher can write a list of characters with which the students randomly and jointly create a single story on the board. In each turn, students must think not only how to tell a story but also how to connect their ideas with those of their classmates, making use of different language elements.

By using collaborative activities to develop writing skills in English, the teacher can understand their students' personalities, abilities, and weaknesses to improve their pedagogical strategies. According to Maley (2009), teachers who teach through creative writing (CW) tend to be better teachers of writing overall. And perhaps most notable is the dramatic increase in self-confidence and self-esteem, which CW tends to develop among learners. Learners also tend to

discover things for themselves about the language and their difficulties, too, thus promoting personal and linguistic growth.

In summary, creative writing:

- creates a pleasant and collaborative learning environment
- makes activities more stimulating for students
- breaks with the monotony and rigidity of learning
- provides students with different activities to experiment with a foreign language
- builds confidence in students
- promotes cooperation among students
- incentives creation

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to carry out the research process of this monograph, it was taken into account, the research line "Education and human development" contemplated in the "ECEDU of the National Open and Distance University of Colombia," which is focused on the development of competences such as communicative, didactic, and language. It is essential to highlight that, regarding human development, this project's main objective is to guide English teachers towards the application of different pedagogical and educational strategies to develop basic English skills in rural high school students in Colombia. Didactics is immersed in the fulfillment of the main objective as the pedagogical tool in charge of the study of teaching methods. On the other hand, the theoretical construction proposed in chapter two, that is the literature review, focuses on developing English communication skills, strengthening the use of foreign language in students of rural secondary schools in Colombia.

On the other hand, to understand the main elements that students have to develop in each class, it was necessary to use qualitative research. This method consists in searching for various academic texts, research, books, interviews, articles, and others to examine, evaluate, and interpret the information related to the object of study. Besides, qualitative research is not based on hypotheses, but rather on open questions, seeking to build interpretations and conclusions on the topic studied.

The investigation was built from the literature focused on the methodologies and strategies for the development of basic English communication skills, syllabus design, cooperative learning, language immersion, learning environment, and the importance of motivation, which have been described by multiple authors around the world. Therefore, it does

not include statistical or numerical data. However, it will allow establishing a theoretical base, built thanks to the research carried out by different teachers around the world. According to Segura (2012), currently, the different methodological strategies for teaching have evolved. Thus, in the search for the best approach to develop communication skills in English, many pedagogues, linguists, and psychologists have carried out different investigations, which has generated a high methodological development, which has been brought to this research.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was implemented by reading different authors, to analyze and compare the various methodological strategies applied to teach English and especially those that contribute to the development of basic skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in students of rural high schools in Colombia. The authors consulted provided essential information, mainly related to pedagogical practice in the classroom. Hence, this information can proportionally benefit students and teachers.

In the first place, although nowadays there is a need to learn a foreign language and mainly English, in many schools, teachers continue applying archaic strategies, and they do not design new activities; therefore, they do not achieve motivating significantly their students. Unfortunately, that lack of pedagogical actualization from teachers is reflected in the inability that learners have to communicate effectively in a foreign language.

However, after studying different authors, it can be shown that there are several ways to motivate students to learn and collaborate with their classmates and teacher. In this sense, and from the perspective of several authors, the main problem centers on syllabus design and class structure, which is usually focused on the development of a single skill, when it can and should be divided synchronously in development of the four basic skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Secondly, and after analyzing the different considerations of the authors consulted in the study carried out, it is important to talk not only about the methods that teachers apply in classrooms so that their students learn English but also about the strategies they use to help them overcome all the difficulties that may arise during the learning process.

It has been shown that when the students help create the learning strategies, the desire to learn is significantly activated. Therefore, taking into account the different approaches described in this research, it is possible to affirm that to develop the basic skills in students of rural high schools in Colombia; several pedagogical aspects must be reviewed, some as typical as the way of learning of each student, the activities, and the strategies. Others include the syllabus approach, lesson plans, and how the various activities are articulated inside and outside the classroom, besides academic elements as necessary as motivation, cooperative learning, and timely feedback from the teachers.

The process to develop the basic English skills in students of rural high schools in Colombia is centered on four essential elements: the syllabus design, the activities, the learning environment and the language immersion, each one of them should be immersed in all the strategies designed by the teachers to develop students' different skills. Each of the elements will be explained after, highlighting that the process will generate positive outcomes if the motivation is present in the teaching, in the teachers, in and the students.

*The syllabus design.* For all teachers, the syllabus is the first element that clarifies the contents that must be taught at each level, organized with standards, competencies, objectives, and activities. The majority of those elements are found in the documents created by the ministry of education and hosted at [www.colombiaaprende.com](http://www.colombiaaprende.com). Nevertheless, although the government of Colombia has created a list of suggested contents, to develop the skills of speaking, writing, reading, and listening in students of rural high schools in Colombia, it is necessary to make some adjustments according to the students' context without having to diminish the level of learning. For that reason, before creating the syllabus, the teachers should think about the students' level.

Besides, they should consider developing one topic with diverse activities for each skill, but that is clear enough.

*The activities.* Once the syllabus has been created, teachers must design different educational strategies focused on one topic but with activities for each skill (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), thinking about how activities could complement each other. Likewise, activities should be according to students' levels, context, and specific vocabulary, making adjustments as students progress in their learning. It is essential to highlight that vocabulary teaching must be implemented in writing activities and not only through rote learning. If students do not regularly use the new vocabulary, they will quickly forget it.

*The learning environment.* If teachers want to change how students learn, they should change the way they teach. It is not just a matter of implementing the new technologies in the classroom, but the manner how students will interact with the learning. In this sense, neither teachers can be the center of attention, nor students can hope that teachers stand in front of the board to develop all the curriculum contents. The activities should mainly be thought to promote self-learning where the mistake is punished, the participation is stimulated, and active feedback is converted into opportunities to improve all the difficulties in students. According to a study made by Herzfeld (2014), the best way to learn is to face fear without it affecting our self-esteem.

*The language immersion.* One of the main obstacles in learning a foreign language is the few immersion processes that students have with the language. Usually, students receive a small dose of grammar and other components of the language. Then they do a few modifications to sentences or incorporate only the little vocabulary they know, and as a result, they neither advance nor develop the basic skills. For that reason, teachers must propose immersive activities



in which students have to use a lot of elements of the language, participate actively, cooperate with their classmates, and feel that they are learning more than basic grammar rules.

During the research, the elements immersed in the design of a foreign language study program have been analyzed. Besides, in many cases, some strategies and methodologies have been explained to contribute to developing basic skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in students of rural high schools in Colombia. However, to facilitate the teacher's work, the main elements described before are summarized in figure 3 pedagogical and educational strategies for the English class.

**Figure 3**

*Pedagogical and Educational Strategies for the English Class (own construction)*



Once the study plan has been structured with the contents, standards, and objectives for each level of foreign language teaching, the next step is to design the lesson plan to organize the strategies according to the time they require in each class. Each lesson plan must be clear about the objectives to be achieved during the course and the activities for each step. The lesson plan will help teachers to prepare very well for the class and have clear what they must teach. A good lesson plan includes:

- objectives and topics
- students' level or course
- date and timing
- the content and activities to be fulfilled
- step-by-step guide of strategies for each skill
- teaching resources

To make clear how to integrate the syllabus, cooperative learning, topics, and skills in the classroom, please see Appendix A: lesson plan sample, in which many of the strategies mentioned before are included.

The primary purpose of the research is to provide English teachers in rural schools in Colombia with theoretical foundations and methodological strategies to teach the foreign language. This purpose was born as the result of the evident needs of rural schools in Colombia where the English teaching and learning can be affected due to different situations associated with the structure and operation of rural education. In this sense, in the rural area, the schools can function in three ways. First like elementary schools with courses from preschool to fifth grade where the technical relationship student-teacher established by the Ministry of National Education is 22 students for each teacher. This means that a single teacher must assist five or six

courses at the same time and all areas with a teaching modality called “New School”, in which the work is mainly directed through learning guides. Nonetheless, there might be some cases where teachers can have even less than five students or until thirty. If the projection of students in the zone where the school was built does not exceed the thirty boys or girls, the government will not assign a second teacher. The second type of rural school is “Post-Primary”. This kind of school besides assisting preschool to fifth-grade students extends their services to students from sixth to ninth grade, complementing the cycle of basic secondary education. However, as the number of students is usually small in this kind of school, one or until three teachers must teach to that educational cycle with the same modality of “New School”. The third type of rural schools is those where the educational service is provided from preschool to eleventh grade. In this school the levels of preschool to fifth work under the modality of “New School” and the other courses with teachers for each area. Nevertheless, one of the great difficulties in each case is that there is always a lack of specialized teachers in certain areas of knowledge such as English (Mineducación Colombia, 2002).

For this reason, teachers and students make great efforts to learn English. Thus, the strategies designed for teaching English in rural schools should be thought of according to the students' level and the available resources. As a result of the analysis of the addressed authors in this research process, the following lists per communicative skill include strategies that can be applied to improve English language level at rural high school classrooms:

#### *Listening strategies*

1. Before each listening activity, the teacher must prepare a list with the most relevant vocabulary present in the audios to analyze with students. Once students have learned the new vocabulary, it will be easier for them to understand what they hear.

2. It is essential to carry out pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities.
3. Recommend students to listen to recordings from native speakers, podcasts, videos, and music in English.
4. Listen to stories in a different order and organize them later.
5. Use images as a reference to the ideas present in the audios.
6. Listen to varying audios of daily conversations and comment on their content.
7. Use recordings of discussions with different accents and speed.
8. Teach students to get the main ideas from the audios.
9. Design an outline for taking notes as you practice.
10. Review students' understanding, analyze the main difficulties, and provide strategies to overcome them.
11. Listen to a podcast on a single topic for several days to learn vocabulary.
12. Listen to the pronunciation of specific vocabulary.
13. Use activities in which students have to write different words that they recognize in the audios they listen to.
14. Use the stand-up/sit-down method. Before starting to listen to the audios, the teacher must give the students a list of words and stand up when they hear them. This activity works best if it is done as a competition between the two groups.
15. During the week, work with specific vocabulary. Then divide the students into several groups. The teacher will be outside the classroom, and in turn, a representative from each group will come out to listen to a word spoken by their teacher. After listening to it (only once), students return to their group to communicate the word to their other classmates. They must

write the word that their partner has told them. After completing the exercise, the teacher will review the list of each group and assign a winner.

*Reading strategies*

1. Create cooperative reading activities where students with superior abilities read the same text with those who have difficulties.
2. Use short texts to motivate student participation and help them improve fluency and proper expression.
3. Give all students a copy of the same document and have them read aloud, giving turns to read according to punctuation.
4. Instruct students to recognize each paragraph's main ideas so that from there, they infer the topic and general information of what they are reading without having to read it thoroughly.
5. Choose topics of interest to students to incorporate into reading activities.
6. Make graphic representations of the ideas present in the texts.
7. Carry out recreational activities. For example, reading poems and tongue twisters aloud.
8. Before reading a text, you must work with specific vocabulary on the subject to be read.
9. Teach to read using the global understanding of ideas and not through word-by-word translation.
10. Build a word wall where students can write or place the new vocabulary, they find immersed in the readings. In this way, they will serve as a reference and support for the other activities that are being carried out.

11. Ask students to select an article of their interest to read in class. Before reading it in front of their classmates, most students will have reviewed the texts at home, so they will feel more comfortable reading it in public.

12. Employ the 3-2-1 technique. It is an enjoyable strategy where students after reading should write three things they learned; then two things that are interesting and finally a question they have.

13. Make use of metacognition. Through short conversations, ask students to try to deduce what the text will be about by giving them only the title or with guiding questions.

14. Incorporate play into reading. For example, together with students, the teachers can create cards of characters such as children, grandparents, angry women, clowns, madmen, robots, among others. Then before starting any reading, students must choose (without seeing) one of the cards and carry out the reading imitating the voice of the selected character.

15. Avoid excessive correction. The best method is to let students do the reading entirely, and while that happens, take notes on the difficulties presented to give advice on how to improve.

### *Speaking strategies*

1. Use podcasts or scripted audios to follow the text as you listen to the audiobook or conference. This type of strategy will help improve the pronunciation of words.

2. Present a topic to students and ask them to record themselves, giving their opinions for at least 2 minutes. (The time may vary depending on the level of the students)

3. Read aloud.

4. Create thoughtful conversations. Teach students to be creating conversations or answers to different questions in their minds. Of course, students should think as if it were a normal conversation.

5. Create communities to converse in English at extra hours.

6. Each class asks questions about everyday life or specific topics using the expression. What do you think about...? In parallel, teach students different phrases to answer these types of questions.

7. Encourage students to read so that they gain a lot of vocabulary.

8. Teach complete expressions and not just words.

9. Create games and other class dynamics. For example, in one class, students take turns standing up and describing an object (in English) while their classmates try to guess it.

10. Create different group conversations with character portraits.

11. Incorporate small discussions.

12. Create spaces to share experiences or tastes. For example, in one class, students can tell their classmates about preparing their favorite food dish, their interest in learning English, things they do not like, or even making their appreciation of a movie known.

13. Present images to all students for descriptions. Depending on the level of students, you can define the time to do it.

14. Make representations of interviews or newscasts in an improvised way.

15. Perform phonetic activities. For example, learning or practicing the pronunciation poem (see Appendix B). With this exercise, students can practice pronunciation and listening skills.

*Writing strategies*

1. Learn the spelling rules.
2. Promote creative and spontaneous writing.
3. Do send-receive writing exercises. For example, E-Mails, Letters, requests, among others.
4. Write stories in a group.
5. Write business reports or news about your environment.
6. Design posters for different events.
7. Write descriptions.
8. Write the instructions for a game that has already been created or invented.
9. Write essays.
10. Encourage students to read a lot.
11. Study different writing styles.
12. Create a journal to learn to write. Unlike a normal journal, students will write 5 or 10 unknown words. Then they will write sentences or paragraphs, including or describing the terms. The idea is that they do exercise every day.
13. Do activities to write different paragraphs on a single topic or idea.
14. Carry out re-editing activities. For example, in one class, students can write about a topic, take the text home, and write another one trying to communicate the same ideas but with different words.
15. Create a school newspaper in English.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the biggest challenges for teachers is to find adequate strategies to share their knowledge with students and develop the necessary skills so that they can face problems in their daily life. Nonetheless, for rural teachers, the challenge is bigger when they have to teach a foreign language. The main reason is that the majority of teachers who have to teach English in rural schools have a lot of problems due to the fact that they are not specialized in that area. In many cases, they have to do it only by academic assignment and not for pleasure or knowledge.

In that sense, this monograph provides a huge variety of pedagogical and methodological elements that will facilitate teachers' work through strategies that will contribute to developing English basics skills in students of rural high schools in Colombia. In addition, with the incorporation of strategies described in this monograph, students will feel that they are part of a participative and collaborative process and that the classroom turns into a special environment of reflection and active learning. Hence, students will feel more motivated, and little by little, they will improve their skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English.

The first recommendation for rural teachers who have to teach English is to devote time to create a well-structured syllabus by levels of complexity. The syllabus is the most complex pedagogical element and it should be guided by a professional in teaching English, but before asking for help, teachers should think about the context, interests, weaknesses, and strengths of their students, even about resources that are available in the school. Only when having clear which are the real needs of students, it will be possible to create a curriculum that can contribute effectively to the learning of that students' community.

The second recommendation is to design a lesson plan that allows the effective development of the syllabus. This format must contain clear and well-structured features where activities are planned to develop the four basic skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) connected by the same topic and that enable the active participation of all students. The lesson plan must describe the different strategies that teachers will use to teach. Hence, regarding the methodological approach to developing listening skills in English students, the teacher must incorporate pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities to generate a conversation with the students and correct them if it is the case, giving them specific support activities for each student. These support activities help them improve their ability to understand communication by English native speakers.

In addition, to have confidence and to read all kinds of texts with ease, it is crucial that teachers design methodological strategies that allow learners to analyze texts from reading interpretation and understanding and not from word-to-word translation. For example, during a class, the teacher can develop the learning process through the topic “Olympic Games”. So, with students create a vocabulary list, define it with their words, then they learn specific grammar concepts, and use the new words in sentences or paragraphs, talk about their favorite sports or athletes in a free class environment, and with simple expressions, where teacher participates by making corrections and suggestions. Finally, when students have incorporated the main vocabulary, the teacher can ask them to read a text about the “Olympic Games”. If the process was good, students will not have problems understanding them and in many cases, they will not need to translate anything.

On the other hand, to develop writing skills in students of rural high schools in Colombia, it is essential to know that to learn to write you need to write. However, most students do not like

to write, or it is difficult for them. Hence, teachers have to incorporate creative writing strategies. With this type of procedure, students will feel more comfortable and will be able to express themselves without thinking about so many grammatical rules.

Finally, strategies in this document can be mixed and modified in different ways and in the function of specific activities which will help students to improve upon their bigger difficulties, even without the teacher pressure. Nevertheless, the major recommendation is that in any case strategies are adapted to students' context and not backward. Accordingly, the activities will be more effective and the outcomes more successful.

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## APPENDIX A: LESSON PLAN SAMPLE INTEGRATING PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

To give clarity about how to integrate the syllabus, cooperative learning, topics, and skills in the classroom, check the next lesson plan sample where many of the strategies mentioned before are included.

<b>LESSON PLAN 1</b>		
<b>Teacher's Name:</b>		
<b>Course:</b> Eighth	<b>Date:</b> --/--/----	
<b>Topic:</b> <u>Environmental practices.</u>  <b>Subtopics:</b> 1. Expressions to describe human actions in the environment. 2. Adverbs of frequency. 3. Sequence connectors.	<b>Vocabulary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Plant trees</li> <li>• Throw garbage</li> <li>• Reducing carbon print</li> <li>• Recycle</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Biodegradable</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Deforestation</li> <li>• Endangered species</li> <li>• Energy conservation</li> <li>• Natural resources</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective(s):</b> 1. Revise vocabulary related to the environment. 2. Learn how to use the adverbs of frequency and sequence connector.		
ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	TIMING	TEACHING RESOURCES
<b>Warm-Up:</b> 1. Watch the video with the students. 2. Conversation: What do you think is the video about?	15 minutes	<b>Video</b> Earth song by Michael Jackson Time: 6:44  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAi3VTSdTxU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAi3VTSdTxU</a>

<b>Reading Time</b>		<b>Reading</b>
<p><b>1. Recognition vocabulary.</b></p> <p>Before reading, the teacher and students define the meaning of the next vocabulary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental problem.</li> <li>• Water shortages.</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Waste management.</li> <li>• Sustainable development.</li> <li>• Global warming.</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Polluted air.</li> <li>• Illnesses.</li> <li>• Dumping of pollutants.</li> <li>• Wastewater.</li> <li>• Fuel spills.</li> <li>• Overfishing.</li> <li>• Renewables.</li> <li>• Sustainable.</li> <li>• Harms.</li> <li>• Biodiversity.</li> <li>• Poaching.</li> <li>• Threatened forests.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Instruction for comprehension.</b></p> <p>Before the reading, the teacher give some recommendations, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the title and subtitles first.</li> <li>• Don't translate word to word.</li> <li>• Check the main ideas and unknown vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Graphic representations.</b></p>	20 minutes	<p>The big global environmental issues we need to resolve by 2030</p> <p><a href="https://www.iberdrola.com/environment/most-important-environmental-issues">https://www.iberdrola.com/environment/most-important-environmental-issues</a></p> <p><b>Pdf to print.</b></p> <p><a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ga5Z296q-ONwJ7hX2f_Pd_Zs0Fi7mc_J/vi?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ga5Z296q-ONwJ7hX2f_Pd_Zs0Fi7mc_J/vi?usp=sharing</a></p>

<p>The teacher will ask the students to make a graphic representation of the main ideas of the text.</p> <p><b>4. Teacher feedback.</b></p>																																																	
<p><b>Writing Time</b></p> <p>1. Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverbs of frequency.</li> <li>• Sequence connectors.</li> </ul> <p>By using the vocabulary and expressions to describe human actions in the environment, the teacher will explain the subtopics.</p> <p>2. The teacher explains to the students the writing method:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning</li> <li>Drafting</li> <li>Revising</li> <li>Editing</li> </ol> <p>3. The students will write paragraphs to answer the next questions doing use of the subtopics. Each section must have an extension of at least six lines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the garbage recollection system in your town?</li> <li>• What must your school to minimize the contamination?</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher feedback:</b> during the writing process.</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>	<p><b>Adverbs of frequency</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1094 558 1357 953"> <thead> <tr> <th>frequency</th> <th>adverbs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>100%</td> <td>always</td> </tr> <tr> <td>90%</td> <td>usually</td> </tr> <tr> <td>70%</td> <td>often</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50%</td> <td>sometimes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10%</td> <td>hardly ever rarely</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0%</td> <td>never</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Sequence connectors</b></p> <table border="0" data-bbox="1019 1066 1430 1266"> <tbody> <tr> <td>• First</td> <td>• First of all</td> <td>• In conclusion</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Second</td> <td>• By the time</td> <td>• To summarise</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Third</td> <td>• Eventually</td> <td>• Afterwards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Finally</td> <td>• At last</td> <td>• Firstly</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Next</td> <td>• At the end</td> <td>• Secondly</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Meanwhile</td> <td>• Furthermore</td> <td>• Thirdly</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• After</td> <td>• Further</td> <td>• And</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Before</td> <td>• Moreover</td> <td>• In the end</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Later</td> <td>• Another</td> <td>• Soon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Then</td> <td>• In addition</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Subsequently</td> <td>• Also</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	frequency	adverbs	100%	always	90%	usually	70%	often	50%	sometimes	10%	hardly ever rarely	0%	never	• First	• First of all	• In conclusion	• Second	• By the time	• To summarise	• Third	• Eventually	• Afterwards	• Finally	• At last	• Firstly	• Next	• At the end	• Secondly	• Meanwhile	• Furthermore	• Thirdly	• After	• Further	• And	• Before	• Moreover	• In the end	• Later	• Another	• Soon	• Then	• In addition		• Subsequently	• Also	
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<p><b>Listening Time</b></p> <p>1. Pre-listening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is an environment?</li> <li>• Think about which are the environmental problems.</li> <li>• Define in your main the next terms: Pollution, deforestation,</li> </ul>	<p>30 minutes</p>	<p><b>Video</b></p> <p>The environmental problems and solutions.</p> <p>By Logos Academy Time: 3:08</p>																																															

<p>desertification, extinction of animals, and habitat loss.</p> <p>2. Listening: Play the audio, and while you are listening to it, take some notes like vocabulary or expressions.</p> <p>3. Post-listening: What was the topic in the audio? Share your ideas with your classmates and teacher.</p>		<p><b><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu2cgoQwnPU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu2cgoQwnPU</a></b></p>
<p><b>Speaking Time</b></p> <p>1. Think that you and one of your classmates are a presidential candidate, and in your government plan, you must include five proposals for the protection of the environment. Between the two, write your proposals and then mention them aloud to your classmates. Remember that both you and your friend will represent only one candidate, and you should cooperate to build the best plan.</p> <p>2. Follow the next recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning what do you want to communicate, and how are you going to said?</li> <li>• Create short phrases and a logical sequence.</li> <li>• Practice the pronunciation.</li> <li>• Evaluate yourself before speaking in front of your classmates.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback by the teacher and classmates.</b></p>	<p>25 minutes</p>	

## APPENDIX B: PRONUNCIATION POEM

One of the difficulties of learning English for Spanish speakers is pronunciation. While Spanish has 22 phonemes in English, there are 44. Taking into account this marked difference for any learner, in 1920, the author of the book “The Chaos and Drop your Foreign Accent” published the next poem. Taken from Gerard Nolst Trenité (1992)

### Pronunciation Poem

Dearest creature in creation,  
 Study English pronunciation.  
 I will teach you in my verse  
 Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.  
 I will keep you, Suzy, busy,  
 Make your head with heat grow dizzy.  
 Tear in eye, your dress will tear.  
 So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.

Just compare heart, beard, and heard,  
 Dies and diet, lord and word,  
 Sword and sward, retain and Britain.  
 (Mind the latter, how it's written.)  
 Now I surely will not plague you  
 With such words as plaque and ague.  
 But be careful how you speak:  
 Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;

Cloven, oven, how and low,  
 Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.  
 Hear me say, devoid of trickery,  
 Daughter, laughter, and Terpsichore,  
 Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,  
 Exiles, similes, and reviles;  
 Scholar, vicar, and cigar,  
 Solar, mica, war and far;  
 One, anemone, Balmoral,  
 Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;  
 Gertrude, German, wind and mind,  
 Scene, Melpomene, mankind.

Billet does not rhyme with ballet,  
 Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet.  
 Blood and flood are not like food,  
 Nor is mould like should and would.  
 Viscous, viscount, load and broad,  
 Toward, to forward, to reward.  
 And your pronunciation's OK  
 When you correctly say croquet,  
 Rounded, wounded, grieve and sieve,  
 Friend and fiend, alive and live.



Ivy, privy, famous; clamour  
 And enamour rhyme with hammer.

River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,  
 Doll and roll and some and home.  
 Stranger does not rhyme with anger,  
 Neither does devour with clangour.

Souls but foul, haunt but aunt,  
 Font, front, wont, want, grand, and grant,  
 Shoes, goes, does. Now first say finger,  
 And then singer, ginger, linger,  
 Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, gouge and gauge,  
 Marriage, foliage, mirage, and age.

Query does not rhyme with very,  
 Nor does fury sound like bury.  
 Dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth.  
 Job, nob, bosom, transom, oath.  
 Though the differences seem little,  
 We say actual but victual.

Refer does not rhyme with deafer.  
 FeOffer does, and zephyr, heifer.

Mint, pint, senate and sedate;

Dull, bull, and George ate late.

Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,

Science, conscience, scientific.

Liberty, library, heave and heaven,

Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven.

We say hallowed, but allowed,

People, leopard, towed, but vowed.

Mark the differences, moreover,

Between mover, cover, clover;

Leeches, breeches, wise, precise,

Chalice, but police and lice;

Camel, constable, unstable,

Principle, disciple, label.

Petal, panel, and canal,

Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal.

Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,

Senator, spectator, mayor.

Tour, but our and succour, four.

Gas, alas, and Arkansas.

Sea, idea, Korea, area,

Psalm, Maria, but malaria.

Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean.

Doctrine, turpentine, marine.

Compare alien with Italian,

Dandelion and battalion.

Sally with ally, yea, ye,

Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, and key.

Say aver, but ever, fever,

Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver.

Heron, granary, canary.

Crevice and device and aerie.

Face, but preface, not efface.

Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.

Large, but target, gin, give, verging,

Ought, out, joust and scour, scouring.

Ear, but earn and wear and tear

Do not rhyme with here but ere.

Seven is right, but so is even,

Hyphen, roughen, nephew Stephen,

Monkey, donkey, Turk and jerk,

Ask, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.

Pronunciation (think of Psyche!)

Is a paling stout and spikey?

Won't it make you lose your wits,

Writing groats and saying grits?

It's a dark abyss or tunnel:

Strewn with stones, stowed, solace, gunwale,

Islington and Isle of Wight,

Housewife, verdict and indict.

Finally, which rhymes with enough,

Though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?

Hiccough has the sound of cup.

My advice is to give up!!!