Exploring Communicative Competence Development in an EFLT Classroom at Cursos Libres

Exploración del Desarrollo de la Competencia Comunicativa en un Salón de Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjeras de Cursos Libres

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ABSTRACT

The present article is intended to report on a study carried out with students of level three at Cursos Libres. The research focused mainly on describing how the materials and the methodology implemented by the teacher contributed to the development of the students' Communicative Competence. To reach that research objective, an ethnographic case study design was used. Observations, interviews to students and teacher were employed as data collection instruments. The results are expected to contribute to the issue of the development of Communicative Competence in classroom contexts.

Keywords: communicative competence, communicative language teaching, interaction, materials evaluation, tasks, teacher's mediation.

RESUMEN

Se pretende en el siguiente artículo presentar el estudio realizado a los estudiantes de tercer nivel de los Cursos Libres. La investigación se centró principalmente en describir como el libro guía y la metodología implementada por el docente contribuyó al desarrollo de la Competencia Comunicativa de dichos estudiantes. Para la consecución de tal objetivo de investigación, se empleó un enfoque cualitativo con un diseño etnográfico de estudio de caso. Se realizaron observaciones, entrevistas a los estudiantes y al docente como instrumentos de recolección de datos. Se espera que los resultados contribuyan al desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en contexto de aula.

Palabras claves: competencia comunicativa, evaluación de materiales, actividades, mediación docente, enseñanza comunicativa de la lengua e interacción.

INTRODUCTION

The application of Communicative Competence notion and its different proposed models has become a fruitful research issue for Language Teaching (LT). This is the central notion behind the standards of competences in English according to the ministry of Education and therefore it is the goal for the Colombian schools. It is not clear, however, how in particular contexts, this competence is taught.

The research reported here aims at describing how the materials and the methodology implemented by a third level teacher at the Cursos Libres contribute to the development of the students' Communicative Competence.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section the concept of communicative competence and communicative language teaching are defined taking into account different models proposed in the last decades. Materials evaluation, as well as the notions of tasks and activities will also be discussed since they are central in this study.

Communicative Competence and proposed models

For Chomsky (1965), linguistic competence accounts for the implicit knowledge of grammar an ideal speaker and listener has in a homogenous speech community (ideal speaker-listener), whereas linguistic performance refers to the current use of that grammar knowledge in specific situations. In other words, linguistic competence relates to language and linguistic performance refers to speech (Johnson, 2004). On the other hand, the notion of Communicative Competence highlights the functional aspects of language (rules of use) where

linguistic performance is a manifestation of such competence (Hymes, 1972). These types of rules can allow speakers to use the appropriate communicative behavior to convey social meaning (Paulston, 1992). Besides, Communicative Competence depends on both knowledge and ability for language use (Munby, 1982).

Among the existing models of Communicative Competence, two important ones have been proposed to understand and operationalize such a notion for teaching purposes. According to Brown (2007), Canale and Swain's (1980) model includes four components of Communicative Competence: Grammatical competence, which refers to "knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 40); discourse competence, which accounts for the ability to connect sentences to build a coherent discourse into a meaningful whole (Brown, 2007); sociolinguistic competence, which relates to Hymes' social rules of language use. That is, any utterance is built within a socio-cultural context which defines it. Finally, strategic competence, according to Canale and Swain (1983) relates to "the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication" (p. 40-41). This strategy is employed by speakers to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules (Savignon, 1997).

In a more detailed model, Bachman (1991) proposes Language Competence, which shows the relationships among three categories: organizational competence which covers grammatical competence (vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology and graphology) and textual competence (cohesion and rhetorical organization). On the other hand, pragmatic competence is constituted by illocutory competence (ideational,

manipulative, heuristic and imaginative functions) and sociolinguistic competence (sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, sensitivity to differences in register, sensitivity to naturalness, and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech). For Bachman, Strategic competence is related to "a general ability, which enables an individual to make the most effective use of available abilities in carrying out a given task" (p.106).

The model of Communicative Competence used as framework for data analysis in the present study is composed of five components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, interactional competence, discursive competence, and strategic competence

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

As suggested by Richards and Rodgers (1982), Communicative Language Teaching is an approach which conceives language as communication. The authors affirm that LT targets communicative competence. Therefore, native-like language use is not any more the goal in LT, but the development of this fruitful construct. These authors also consider that when learners perform communicative activities, learning is promoted. Related to objectives, Piepho (1981), cited by Richards and Rodgers (1982, p. 73), suggests five possible objectives when using CLT:

1. An integrative and content level (language as a means of expression);

2. A linguistic and instrumental level (language as a semiotic system and an object of learning);

3. An affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct (language as a means of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others);

4. A level of individual learning needs (remedial learning based on error analysis);

5. A general educational level of extra-linguistic goals (language learning within the school curriculum).

The attainability of these objectives as possible guidelines that direct classroom realization has not been easy since every context has its own characteristics.

This contextual feature has not allowed a consensus about a possible syllabus for CLT. However, the discussion centers on two sides: on one hand, some suggest not having any syllabus, but assuming a more personal, implicit one which accounts for learners' "own needs, communicational resources, and desired learning pace" (Richards & Rogers, 1982, p. 165) ; on the other hand, some others follow a model proposed by Brumfit (1980), cited Richards and Rogers (1982, p. 76), "which favors a grammatically based syllabus around which notions, functions, and communicational activities are grouped".

Materials within CLT range from text-based, task-based to realia. They aim to promote classroom interaction and language use.

MATERIALS AND MATERIALS EVALUATION

Language teaching in the classrooms usually takes place with the help of the materials chosen or designed, which in most cases is basically the textbook, and normally, teachers base their practice on what the textbook proposes. So, it is necessary to examine materials' potential in terms of the development of communicative competence.

Materials are used to facilitate learning a language (Tomlinson, 2003). They can range from 'realia', such as real pencils, erasers, etc., to representations, such as photographs or drawings of a person, house or scene. But they also include text materials (textbooks, worksheets, etc.), authentic material (newspaper articles), teacher-written materials and learner-generated materials (McGrath, 2002)

In the case of textbooks, it is important for teachers to analyze the declared aims and audience as well as what they actually offer. Equally important is to analyze how a given textbook matches the context where it is meant to be used. Thus, according to McDonough and Shaw (1993) materials evaluation consists of two stages: external and internal evaluations. External evaluation accounts for the analysis of the 'blurb', the introduction and table of content. In these elements, the following information can be found: the intended audience, the proficiency level, the context in which materials are to be used, how the language has been presented and organized in teachable units/lessons, the authors' declared views on language and methodology. The authors' claims of the materials are perceived in this stage.

On the other hand, internal evaluation aims at determining the coherence and organization of the material claimed by the author. Among other aspects, it includes the presentation of the skills in the materials, the grading and sequence of the materials, opportunity for practicing reading skills on extended reading passages, the nature of the task and activities, real dialogues versus authenticity of the dialogues, the way the materials cater for the different learning styles, and the inclusion of self-study material and its justification.

Cunningsworth (1995) proposes a *checklist* as a methodological approach for materials eva-

luation. Some of the aspects he suggests in a checklist are:

- Aims and approaches

- Design and organization

- Language and content

- Skills

- Topics

- Methodology

- Ancillaries

- Practical considerations

Also, Littlejohn (1998) proposes a checklist as framework for the evaluation of materials. According to him, through his checklist, materials, seen as a Trojan horse, can be analyzed internally to see what lies within. The framework covers three questions which represent three levels of analysis:

- What is there? (objective nature of the material)

- What is required of users? ("deductions about what exactly teachers and learners using the materials will have to do " [p. 198]).

- What is implied?(conclusions related to the possible underlying principles of the materials)

On the other hand, Ellis (1998) distinguishes pre, while and post use evaluation. Pre-use evaluation accounts for "the need to choose materials that will be relevant and appropriate for a particular group of learners and possibly also by the need to identify specific aspects of the materials that require adaptation" (p. 220). While-use evaluation takes into account criteria used to make

decisions on which parts of the book to adapt and how to do it. And post-use evaluation which covers the effectiveness of the materials in terms of the language learning results, specific teaching activities, and teachers' reflections on their role within the whole process.

Teachers and textbooks usually organize their content around tasks and activities. It is through them that the goals and objectives of the class are achieved.

Tasks and activities

According to Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992), a task is "an activity which is designed to help achieved a particular learning goal" (page 373). As it seen, a task is something that most of the time occurs within the classroom. It has a pedagogical purpose (Nunan, 1989).

Within CLT, tasks are fundamental. For Richards et al. (1992), a task will be communicative if it is part of a range of different types of tasks. A communicative task contains goal, input, activity, teacher's role, learner's role, and setting (Nunan, 1989). Materials which have these kinds of tasks can contribute to the development of Communicative Competence. And as stated by Richards et al. (1992), a central aspect to task is that learning goals, learning and learning results will be determined by the teacher's choice of tasks. Therefore, to some extend the teacher can also subsidize achievable communicative goals.

Related to activities, they can be mechanical, meaningful, and communicative (Richards, 2006). Mechanical activities center on doing the activity with no major understanding of the language in use. It is controlled. Related to meaningful activities, though they are controlled, it is required meaningful choices from students. On

the other hand, communicative activities are derived from a communicative context, information exchange, and unexpected language use on the part of the students. However, the value of the mechanical-meaningful-communicative progression is still an issue (Snider, 2005). As it is seen, communicative are more closely connected with the aims of Communicative Language Teaching.

On the contrary, Van Lier (1996) considers that there are four types of practices: controlled and narrowly focused practice, not controlled but focused practice, controlled but not (narrowly) focused practice, not focused and not controlled practice. Though controlled and narrowly focused practice is necessary in order to achieve certain confidence in using language forms, non-focused and non-controlled practice would be more closely connected with the aims of communicative language teaching.

Teaching mediation

Mediation is a crucial concept within the sociocultural theory. Lantof (2001), cited by Guerrero Nieto (2011) affirms that "the mind is mediated. This means that the individual does not establish a direct relationship with the world, but that this relationship is mediated through the use of tools". Materials are usually manipulated and used by teachers in specific ways according to their beliefs and the contextual features. Their mediation is thus a very important feature in the classroom. And language turns out to be a cultural and psychological tool through which individuals understand and transform the surrounding. On the other hand, interaction is the activity that socially attaches individuals, for instance, a communicative activity in a language teaching class. Therefore, the teacher is the one that can mediate in the development of the Communicative Competence by promoting or following communicative tasks.

According to Johnson (2004), Vygoksky differentiates two levels of development on how higher mental functions are developed. The first level is the actual level of development and the second level is the potential level of development. This distance between the two is what he referred to as Zone of Proximal Development ZPD). Besides, this author considers that "the scaffolding mechanism is used to promote the novice's internalization of knowledge that has been co-constructed in a social activity" (p.131). Related to this, Gibbson (2002) considers that scaffolding is future-oriented because the learner learns how to do something with the teacher's assistance so that he/she can do it by himself/herself in the future.

Within LT, Vygotsky's ZPD notion is useful. For one thing, it allows teachers to design activities that are within each student's cognitive potential and lead them to the expected language development. It provides a useful metaphor for understanding how learning processes take place and the role of teacher support.

A crucial concept within mediation is Interaction. Interaction is the reciprocal action embodied as teacher-student and student-student relation. In this relation, according to Malamah-Thomas (1987), the interaction can influence the initial teacher's communicative action. Malamah-Thomas identifies two types of interaction: verbal interaction and pedagogical interaction. The difference between the two is that during the pedagogical interaction the teacher monitors and feedbacks students' action through teaching acts.

METHODOLOGY

Communicative Competence, the focus of this study, is a construct which is not measurable; it needs to be observed, analyzed and described since it is evidenced mainly through the oral and written production of students. Therefore, oral production has to be recorded and transcribed and written texts can be described and analyzed. The study was developed under the qualitative paradigm and it is a case study which used ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2003; Lichtman, 2006; Richards, 2003). An ethnography design (Burns, 2000; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Lee, 2006; Robson, 2002) and case study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Patton, 2002; Richards, 2003; Seliger & Shahomy, 2001) were combined in an ethnographic-case study. As a case study, it focused on the way a group of three students develop their communicative competence as the teacher implements the material. In order to carry out the case study, techniques proper of ethnography were employed, such as observations, interviews to the students and the teacher, and document analysis (Burns, 2000; Drew, Hardman & Hosp., 2008; Lee, 2006; Richards, 2003; Robson, 2002).

Two interviews were administered: one for the teacher, before he started the class and the other for the three selected students. The teacher was interviewed so as to have information related to the knowledge he had about the Communicative Competence and the way it could be developed. Students were interviewed to determine whether the teacher's implemented methodology helped in the development of their Communicative Competence.

Data collection was developed over a period of 15 hours, which cover a complete unit of Access 3 (Evans & Dooley, 2008), the textbook used as backbone of the course observed. Littlejohn's (1998) internal and pre-use evaluation, as well as Ellis' (1998) post-use analysis were employed to design a checklist to analyze the features

of the textbook. The classroom discourse and activities implemented were analyzed to identify the components of communicative competence that were addressed in class. This analysis was then contrasted with the analysis of the textbook. (Appendix).

Participants

A group of 18 students of third semester of Cursos Libres at a public university of the Caribbean region was selected. The group consisted of university students, high school students, professionals and workers. 3 out the 18 students were chosen to be observed and interviewed. With the teacher's help, they were selected based on the following criteria: a student with a good command of the English language, a student with less command of the language, and a student with difficulties when using English.

Context

Cursos Libres offers English, French, German, and Italian languages to a complex learning community composed by university students, high school students, professional workers, children over ten years, teenagers, and adults. Each course has a different hour intensity. The duration of the complete English course is three years, divided in six levels of proficiency: one for each term. These proficiency levels are based on the traditional levels of proficiency: beginner (levels one and two), intermediate (levels three and four), and advanced (levels five and six). The other languages have a four-semester program each.

RESULTS

The material analyzed was *Access 3,* created by Virginia Evans and Jenny Dooley, published by Express Publishing in 2008, used for teaching

and learning the English language at Cursos Libres in third level. Among other things, the material claims to be aligned with the principles of the Council of Europe Common European Framework of reference level B1. It follows a task-based approach, in which tasks are supposed to be communicative. The material integrates the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It recycles systematically key language items. Besides, the material attempts to promote an active, holistic and humanistic learning. It is divided into ten modules. Each module is developed through eight lessons. The first lesson is the introduction of the module, but it also contains the main vocabulary. The last lesson is a self-check so that students can evaluate themselves on their language progress. Module six, taken as the object of analysis, is titled as *"Safety comes first"*. It proposes 43 tasks, in seven lessons, for teacher and students.

Communicative Competence components developed by the textbook Access 3 (module six)

After analyzing module six of the textbook Access 3, here are the communicative competence components targeted by it.

Linguistic competence

The principal component of the Communicative Competence emphasized by the material was the linguistic competence. 17 tasks targeted this type of competence. The elements related to the linguistic competence, vocabulary and grammar, were presented in context in some tasks: in four different texts where words were highlighted and the students need to infer the meaning of those words; and in others, they were decontextualized: vocabulary was presented accompanied with illustrations (once: 7 images labeled with

phrases related to breaking the law), in lists of words (once: 8 words with their corresponded 8 synonyms), and as a question (once:7 words related to crime).

Socio-linguistic competence

Out of the forty three tasks, there were six tasks (task 3, 4 and 6, lesson four; tasks 4 and 6, lesson six; and task 1, lesson 7) related to the socio-linguistic competence. This component was addressed in the material through a reading and writing task. In the reading (an e-mail), students could find out relevant information related to the use of language in written communication. Also when writing a similar e-mail, they could replicate such use, too.

Discourse competence

Only two tasks focused on coherence (Task 5 and 6, lesson 4). In task 5, the material asked students to write sentences based on four notes related to sitting exams. The given model provided just a cohesive device (this way) on how to connect the sentences: "the *best thing you can do is to make notes as you read. This way, you'll remember things more easily". Also*, in task 6 the students were asked to write an e-mail and again, the only form to connect sentences was *this way.*

Interactional competence

Seven tasks provided opportunities for interaction practice (task 9, lesson 2; task 1, 2, and 7, lesson 3; task 6, lesson 5; task 1and 6, lesson 6). No task prompted the teacher-student interaction. All of them prompted student-student interaction. For example, in task 1, lesson 3, students were asked to answer 4 questions in pairs related to streetwise. Another example is task 2, lesson 3, Learners needed to decide, from a list of 7 di-

fferent types of crimes, which one was the most serious with a partner.

Strategic competence

Just one task prompted the opportunity to practice the strategic competence (task 6, lesson 6). In this task, students were asked to create a dialogue and act it out. By doing this, they had the opportunity to cope with possible communication breakdowns that would affect the interaction when performing the task. However, the material did not provide any formal instruction on how students could cope with communicative problems.

Communicative Competence components developed by the teacher's implemented methodology in module six

After analyzing how the teacher implemented module six of the textbook Access 3, here are the communicative competence components targeted by him.

Linguistic competence

The main competence of the Communicative Competence the teacher focused on was the linguistic competence. 15 tasks targeted this type of competence. However, the teacher presented the elements related to this competence, vocabulary and grammar, in some tasks in context (10 tasks), but in others, without a context (5 tasks). For example, in task 1, lesson 1, the material provides vocabulary (words and phrases related to breaking the law) input through illustrations, the teacher created context by asking questions and eliciting information from students about breaking the law and its legal implications. And he used one phrase (picking pocket) to describe it. Besides these two strategies to create context, the teacher also employed translation, asking and

providing synonyms, mimicking, and learner's cultural reference.

On the other hand, there were tasks (5) in which the teacher presented the vocabulary and grammar without any context. For example, in task 4, lesson 3, the material presented the target grammar through a chart and asks students to report the sentences. The teacher just emphasized the distinction between told and said and when a sentence belonged to a specific tense. Then he asked students to write the sentences on the board to check accuracy.

Socio-linguistic competence

Out of the forty three tasks, there was only one task (task 2, lesson 6) related to the socio-linguistic competence. The teacher did it as follows:

Teacher: Yes, imagine that you have an accident or a person has an accident, person that sprains or twist an ankle, so how would you express sympathy? What would you say to express sympathy? For example, oh, dear! Poor girl or oh, dear, yes? That is a way of expressing sympathy. Yes, when do you express sympathy in these situations? When a person has…

Student: An accident

Teacher: An accident, then you say oh, dear! Oh, poor, thing! You sprained an ankle. Right? Well, here we have some accidents.

The teacher provided a context for the use of the sentences related to expressing sympathy. Through this, he expected students to use these expressions appropriately.

Discourse competence

The teacher did not do any task that focused on coherence. The connections of sentences or organization of discourse was never the aim of the instruction. Neither the students produced connected sentences.

Interactional competence

The teacher only proposed one task (task 4 in lesson 6) for opportunity to student-student interaction practice. The input for the development of this competence was a conversation presented by the material. Students had to take the conversation as a model and interacted in pairs:

Teacher: So, please. In pairs, you are going to practice a conversation in which you say a problem about your partner. And the other person is going to explain how it happened. Look at this model. Listen and repeat (he plays the audio and students read and repeat)

Teacher: Ok, listen! Speak up!

Student 1: Have you ever hurt your back?

Student: Yes, I have

Student 1: How did it happen?

Student 2: It happened when I lift a heavy box.

He tried to foster pedagogical interaction since the expected learning effect was awareness on fluency on the part of the students.

Strategic competence

The teacher proposed one task that centered on the opportunity to develop the strategic competence on students. This was perceived in task 3 in lesson 3. The teacher provided information on how to speak with fluency:

Teacher: Ok, out of sight. Keep it out of sight. Ok. No more people? Remember when you are speaking try not to stop. That is a technique to be in fluency. So if you are speaking about safety, so if you are walking down the street, oh, my God, keep talking, continue speaking to get fluency, oh, my God. I don't remember

what are going to say, my mother is going to hit me, Jesus Christ, continue speaking. Look for expressions when you don't know what to say (The teacher writes some expressions relate to fillers. I mean, Uh… er… ok, I mean, you know all right, well, right, er… well, I'm to talk about, uh… I mean, you know, ah, I'm going to talk about public transport. Well, ah, I don't remember in this moment when you take, ah, public transportation carefully because

Teacher: I mean…

Student: I know.

Teacher: Uh… er… ok, I mean, you know all right, well, right, er… well, I'm to talk about, uh… I mean, you know, ah, I'm going to talk about public transport. Well, ah, I don't remember in this moment when you take, ah, public transportation carefully because. Ok, there are fillers (The teacher writes some filler on the board: Right, I mean, You know, Ah…, Er…, Ok. No problem?)

Teacher: Right, I mean, you know, Ah…, Er…, Ok. No problem? You can use this in your house. You can use it in any topic. And you speak for ten seconds, then for fifteen seconds, then for forty seconds, and so on. If you are speaking in English, practice, practice, read, read, listen to music, watch DVDs, practice, practice, practice. Let's continue. This is something like that. Ok, that is the idea.

Student: ¿Pero se le quita el o sea?

Student: When you…

Student: No entiendo.

Teacher: When you are speaking, and you don't know what to say,

Student: Son como muletillas.

Teacher: I mean

Student: Muletillas en ingles.

Teacher: Fillers, ok, fillers, " mulletilllas".

However, this technique, as he considered, just prompted fluency in terms of continuity in the release of utterances, but not for a possible breakdown in the interaction.

Components of the Communicative Competence developed by the material in connection with those developed by the teacher.

Based on the analysis of the components of the Communicative Competence developed by the material and those developed by the teacher, it might be said that some competences were addressed by both and other components were not targeted by them. Among the components addressed by both, they are the linguistic competence (the material targeted seventeen tasks and the teacher, 15 tasks), socio-linguistic competence (three tasks by the material and one task by the teacher), and interactional competence (the material included seven tasks and the teacher employed three tasks). However, it was in the linguistic competence that both the material and the teacher coincided most.

The material intended to address the discourse competence through 2 tasks. In these tasks, students had to focus on how to write sentences by using "that way" as cohesive device (task 5 in lesson 4) and how to write an e-mail (task 6 in lesson 4). The teacher did not provide any input associated with this competence.

On the other hand, the material provided opportunities for the development of strategic competence through 1 task. In here, students had to present a project and they had to use some strategies for it. The teacher did this through one task proposed by him in which students needed to keep talking by using some expressions and fillers.

Nature of the expected output proposed by the material and the teacher

The expected output the material and the teacher proposed ranged from oral/written word, oral/written phrase, oral/written sentence and oral/written discourse. In some tasks, both the material and the teacher coincided in the same kind of output, but in some other tasks, they did not coincide. The following table (table 1) shows this.

Table 1. Nature of expected output (material-teacher)

Expected output	(task) Material	(task) Teacher
Oral word	4	6
Oral phrase	1	2
Oral sentence	5	3
Oral discourse	14	10

Expected output	(task) Material	(task) Teacher
Written word	1	1
Written phrase	1	0
Written sentence	7	4
Written discourse	4	0

The material proposed 24 tasks related to oral output (4 tasks for oral word, 1 tasks for oral phrase, 5 tasks for oral sentence, and 14 tasks for oral discourse) and 13 tasks as written output (1 task for written word, 1 task for written phrase, 7 tasks for written sentence, and 4 tasks for written discourse). Related to oral output, the teacher covered the 4 oral word tasks suggested by the material and proposed 2 more. He also proposed an extra oral phrase task. He just covered 3 oral sentence tasks out of the 5 suggested by the material. Though the material targeted 14 oral discourse tasks, the teacher only covered 10. On the other hand, related to written output, the teacher covered the written word task suggested by the material. He did not do the written phrase task the material targeted. Though the material suggested 7 written sentence tasks, the teacher covered only 4. He did not do any written discourse tasks the material targeted.

This suggested that not only the material, but also the teacher focused on the development of the oral language. On the other hand, the treatment of the written discourse was limited on both sides. Neither the material nor the teacher was totally interested in the development of the written language.

The conclusions on the teacher's interview are

The teacher has his own notion of Communicative Competence. According to him, the development of grammar structures supports oral language. The teacher emphasizes the important role of grammar structures for communication in the foreign language. The teacher recognizes the importance of context since this provides a background for future language use. The teacher considers that the development of Communicative Competence is achieved by providing a context of use for the grammar structures which will be used orally in real situations by the students. The teacher focuses on the practice of oral language. Due to this, he proposes oral activities in the class so that students can practice the oral language.

What students said in the interviews reflected what happened in class and corresponded to the emphasis the teacher did. They attached more importance to what the teacher did in terms of the development of linguistic competence. They

remembered the few things the teacher did in terms of sociolinguistic competence, for example:

Interviewer: generally, what are the expressions you usually use when you give opinions in English?

Student 1: I think

Interviewer: what expressions do you usually use when you give opinions in English?

Student 2: I think my opinion…

Interviewer: what are the most common expressions in English to give your opinion?

Student 3: I think

Students recognize the importance of "fillers", but they have a limited knowledge on this. The teacher's explanation was an initial reference for them without deepening about this linguistic feature.

On the other hand, related to the grammar instruction, students recognized the role of the teacher in this aspect. They consider that the teacher's explanation is fundamental since it provides the knowledge for the understanding of grammar:

Interviewer: did you know the difference between tell and say.

Jefferson: yes today I could understand

Interviewer: because I remember in one moment of the class you stopped the teacher and said teacher was the difference between say and tell?

Jefferson: yes

Interviewer: was it clear the explanation to you when the teacher explained. I mean the teacher said and then it was clear I oh now it's clear for me the difference between tell and say?

Jefferson: yes

Also, the students also consider that the explanation about vocabulary, provided by the teacher, before reading, allows them to understand the text better. Questions related to the reading clarify word meaning:

Interviewer: did the explanation of the teacher about the vocabulary make the text easy or difficult for you to understand?

Student 1: yes, it's easy.

CONCLUSIONS

The material targeted principally, but to some extent partially, the development of linguistic competence, which is a limited scope of Communicative Competence. The vocabulary and the grammar were presented in some tasks in context, but in others, without a context. The material did not provide the necessary background for the development of the socio-linguistic competence. Related to discourse competence, there was limited opportunity for the development of this important competence. There was only a single option to connect sentence: *this way*. For the development of the interactional competence, the material focused on student-student interaction, but the teacher-student interaction was neglected. In order to develop strategic competence, the material offered few opportunities for its development. The material did not provide any formal instruction on how students could cope with communicative problems. It would be desirable that materials include tasks on this competence since it allows students to cope with possible communication breakdowns.

The analyzed tasks proposed by the material were not quite communicative, as claimed by the authors. Due to the limited scope of the construct of the Communicative Competence identified in the textbook Access 3, the majority of them did

not provide a real context for communication. They centered principally on mechanical activities. Cite van lier, though I think it is not van lier who invented them.

Few of them were meaningful. This distinction of tasks is crucial since a textbook is considered communicative if its tasks represent the principles of a communicative methodology (Richards, 2006). Or, as Snyder proposes, if a good amount of tasks or activities are communicative in the sense he reminds in his article.

 Therefore, a textbook can promote real interaction if the textbook has these tasks.

In relation to the Teacher's implemented methodology, the teacher's limited scope of Communicative Competence neglected, to some extent, the pragmatic, sociolinguistic, strategic and interactional components of the construct. His beliefs clearly defined his own construct of the Communicative Competence and his teaching method. After a contextless presentation of a grammar phenomenon, he provided limited opportunity for students to work on its use in communicative situations.

Though he tried to personalize grammar, the exercises were mechanical and they did not support any meaningful learning on students. As he said in the interview, providing a context of use for the grammar structures would allow students to use them orally in real situations by the students. Since the tasks were not totally communicative, he did not go beyond this limited scope. The teacher generally centered on mechanical activities which did not allow students to work on negotiation of meaning.

The opportunities for interaction proposed by the teacher were limited, and unreal. He asked stu-

dents to communicate without a real information gap, since students knew what information was missing or required. He emphasized pedagogical interaction, one of the category suggested by Malamah-Thomas (1987). This happened because he wanted to get a learning effect from the students. The interview showed that he tried to focus on the practice of oral language. Due to this, he proposed oral activities which output was oral (21 tasks) in class so that students could practice the oral language. However, it was not enough to foster the necessary background for the development of this crucial competence.

For the development of strategic competence, the teacher did not really provide solid information for students to cope with communication problems. He just centered on how to keep on speaking as a kind of monologue. The opportunity he provided to the students did not really target or pretend to work on developing any "general ability" for them to use other possible abilities when they carried out tasks (Bachman, 1991).

On sociolinguistic competence, the teacher targeted this competence just by providing the context of use for specific expressions for sympathy. Though the material simply provided a list of these expressions, he tried to instruct students to use them appropriately. However, he did not mention explicitly anything related to formal and informal register which is valuable information for students to know when using expressions during interactions with others.

Related to discourse competence, the teacher did not focus on providing any relevant information or any opportunity for the development of this competence. He just covered the activity and did not provide any instruction on how to connect sentences orally or written.

The spectrum and scope of the competences developed by the students was limited. Regarding linguistic competence, there was not any clear evidence (knowledge and use of vocabulary and grammar) on the part of the students that they developed this type of competence. Neither did the materials nor the teacher fully centered on the presentation of vocabulary and grammar in context. Also the patterns of interaction were not communicative. Therefore, students did not use the target grammar to communicate in context, just mechanically.

Related to the materials in conjunction with the teacher's implemented methodology, both the material and the teacher's implemented methodology tried to target the same competence: linguistic competence. Due to the limited scope of the material on the construct of the Communicative Competence and the teacher's limited notion of this competence, they could not go beyond tasks related to grammar and vocabulary. The other competences of the construct were not targeted at all either by the material or by the teacher. To this respect, the opportunities students could have for the development of the Communicative Competence, proposed by the materials and the teacher, were not effective. Related to the students' interview, it showed that they believed that the teacher's explanation on grammar and vocabulary was fundamental for their understanding. They did not mention the role of the materials for this aspect. However, students did not seem to want anything beyond linguistic information.

IMPLICATIONS

Since the development of Communicative Competence is a crucial aspect in the bilingual policy in Colombia, based on the results of the study, it important to keep in mind aspects such as:

- Teacher training must target theoretical and practical aspects concerning the development of Communicative Competence.

- Textbook evaluation must evaluate to what extend materials are communicative. Since an integral part of materials is the task, its communicative nature needs to be reveal for a better implementation.

- Related to teachers' beliefs, there must be a consensus among them since a misunderstanding of the Communicative Competence construct tends to cause an unbalance development of it.

- Evaluation practices must target the components of Communicative Competence. It is not only the language knowledge, but the necessary abilities for students to communicate appropriately.

- In-service teachers need to know how to develop the Communicative Competence. Workshops need to be offered to them to work on theoretical and practical aspects implying the development of the construct in classroom context.

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