

English learning experiences of 10<sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students and characteristics of their English foreign language (EFL) instruction at a night shift school in Pereira city.



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Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito parcial para obtener el título de  
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## Resumen

Como resultado de la implementación de los estándares de competencias en lenguas extranjeras (inglés) en el currículo de la enseñanza del inglés, muchas de las instituciones privadas al igual que las estatales están haciendo lo mejor con el fin de formar ciudadanos competentes en el idioma inglés. Este estudio investigó qué papel juega el idioma inglés en los estudiantes no tradicionales así como aquellos aspectos de su vida diaria y que son un obstáculo para el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Al mismo tiempo, este estudio exploró cuales son las características de la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa llevadas a cabo sobre 5 estudiantes no tradicionales del grado décimo en un colegio oficial nocturno en la ciudad de Pereira, Risaralda. Los instrumentos utilizados para recoger los datos en esta investigación fueron: diarios, entrevistas y observaciones.

## Abstract

As a result of the implementation of the *estándares de competencias Básicos en lenguas extranjeras (inglés)* into the language teaching curriculum, most of state as well as private institutions are dealing with the process of educating competent people in the use of the English language. This study inquired into the role of English language among non-traditional students and those aspects that belong to their real-life activities and that interfere with the English Foreign Language (EFL) improvement. In addition, this study explored the teacher English language instruction characteristics to five tenth graders non-traditional students at a state night shift school in the city of Pereira Risaralda. The methods used to collect the data were: journals, interviews and observations.

## Dedication



This study is dedicated to my wife, Maria Magnolia Marin Zuluaga,

And to my two sons:

Jamerson Perdomo

Ángel Gabriel Perdomo

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## 1. Introduction

Non-traditional education along with non-traditional students are an unknown population waiting to be supported in research studies, especially in the English Foreign Language (EFL). That is why the objectives for this study were: 1. to explain how the daily-life characteristics of non-traditional students population influence on their learning process, and 2. to describe how the non-traditional population is being educated in EFL. The results obtained from the non-traditional students were positive since they achieved the objective (to explain how the daily-life characteristics of non-traditional students population influence on their learning process) Even though the findings in regard to their English language instruction were unexpected, they are considered as positive because they accomplished the objective as well (. to describe how the non-traditional population is being educated in EFL).

In the statement of the problem and rationale the reader will find the reasons why this population needs special attention in view of the fact that they should have the right to live with equal opportunities and on equal terms. Likewise, this study states what advantages non-traditional students could entail as English language speakers. In addition, the statement of the problem argues for what the Law 115 of education declares in regard to this population.

On the one hand, the literature review presents previous research conducted in the United States in order to help non-traditional students' academic performance. On the other hand, theory in regard to English language teaching is presented as the theoretical framework for this study. This theory was a key to better comprehend the results obtained in this study.

Additionally, the methodology offers a clear explanation of how I dealt with the data analysis and the methods used to collect the data. In addition, it shows the type of population as well as the context chosen for this study. Moreover, it reads my stance as researcher.

Finally, three research questions guided this study; their results obtained are seen as satisfactory because all the research questions were answered. Even though in the discussion section the findings concerning the third research question do not concord with what the theory recommends English teachers to put into practice, they are so much important because they show the truth about the way non-traditional students are being educated in EFL.



## 2. Statement of the problem & Rationale

English is used as a first language in forty-eight countries. In Colombia, as in most other countries of the world, English is taught in schools as foreign language. The English language is highly important and is currently the widest spread language in the world. Its significance can be evidenced in the following aspects. First, English is a tool for worldwide communication in transportation. Second, it is the main language spoken in trading, banking, business and tourism around the globe, and third, it plays a relevant role in fields such as technology, science and medicine, among others.

In addition, there are many reasons why learning English is very important in Colombia; for example, businessmen/women, professionals and technicians should know English as an advantage to do business with international providers and customers from other countries such as the United States and England with which Colombia does business on commercial products like coffee, leather and flowers. As a result, learning English could enable our students to be part of different disciplines and fields of action in the future, and non-traditional students can be active participants of a world that demands, at least, bilingual trained professionals.

Likewise, the importance of English in Colombia can be evidenced in the number of formal and informal institutions which are training people on how to learn the foreign language. In these institutions, we can find non-traditional students, people who study at night-shift and on weekends. This type of education can be conducted in classroom setting learning and blended learning course. Some of this population is mature; some have children and have to face how to make their living and efficiently progress by themselves. Non-traditional students have different conditions in their learning processes, and according to the standards, non-traditional students must achieve the same goals as traditional students do.

Due to the fact that our country is lately implementing some programs such as “Colombia Bilingual”, “*Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras*” to improve language teaching and learning, students from the different institutions should reach a B1 level when they finish the high school in the English foreign language. The “*Estándares de Competencias*” by the National Ministry of Education state that since the world has been growing from the point of view of commerce and technology, our country has the challenge to educate competent people to face the labour market. English as a foreign language brings enormous advantages such as a better capability to do business and to understand what the business customers need. Moreover, the standards claim that learning the English foreign language entail the learners to understand other cultures to increase our personal experience and development. Finally, the standards show us the importance of English in Colombia because it highlights that 99 percent of the students in 1994 chose the English language in the ICFES test. Taking into account that the free trade agreement might be signed between the United States and Colombia, this agreement increases the possibilities among the non-traditional students to succeed and take advantage of their skills as English language speakers.

I conducted my study on non-traditional students at a night school in view of the fact that this population needs more attention. That is, there is a lack of research on non-traditional students in all the areas including the English language. This is a problem that must be taken into account quickly because that is an obstruction against the rights of the non-traditional students in Colombia since research studies into this specific population may contribute to improve their education. From 1995 to 2000, I was part of this population, and as a former non-traditional student my point of view can help to understand this population better. The Law 115 of (1994) dictates in its decree 1860 that everybody has the right to study without any discrimination in all the institutions. In addition, it emphasizes that the non-traditional population has this right as well as every student to take advantage of the “National System of massive Education” Also the law, in the 5<sup>th</sup> article (fines de la educación) it orders that research studies have to be promoted for primary, secondary and non-

traditional education. Furthermore, it reads that everybody has the right to benefit from an adequate education in order to carry out equal opportunities for all the learners.



Consequently, the non-traditional population are the ones who need help, who ask for equality and call for a better education to permit and to give them the opportunity and the right of entry to higher education. They are not equal before the law, they have neither equal opportunity and they are not on equal conditions inasmuch research studies to help them to achieve academically in the process of learning a foreign language such as English are needed.

Diverse factors have contributed to get to number of two million of illiterate people from 15 years of age and onwards in Colombia. According to the ministry of education and its National Program of Literacy Teaching and Primary and Secondary Education for Young and Adults explain that this phenomenon has taken place due to the following aspects: First, these people have not had the chance to enter the education on the time predetermined by the ministry of education. Second, some of these people never had the possibility to enter the education. Third, others have been forced to abandon their studies for many reasons such as parental and proper authorities ignorance in relation to illiteracy, movements to other cities associated with economic problems that obligate this population to make their living by themselves since they are too much young. Fourth, other factors that interfere in non-tradition students' education are the lack of schools in inaccessible places, the need of quotas in institutions and the lack of support from the state in order to look for timely solutions so that non-traditional population can have a social and economical self-sustainability.

In addition, other factors such as forced displacements caused by paramilitaries and guerrillas actions explain the main differences between traditional and non-traditional students and clearly state that the non-traditional population has been in backward state, and in different conditions by which this

research study aims at opening a breach to be taken into account for the future education of the non-traditional population.

Taking into account that this population differ from the traditional students in terms of life-experience, another important aspect to keep in mind is that English teachers need to know better non-traditional students in order to plan classes, and to implement strategies and techniques into the classroom. The best way to get to know this specific population is by doing research so that teachers can understand them a little bit better.

Personal maturation and experience play an important role when non-traditional students decide to re-enter education. An American research study conducted by Jacobson and Harris (2008) report that non-traditional students are adults who abandoned their study before, and when they come back to the education again; they have got a broad experience and personal maturation which facilitate learning strategies because life-experience offers them enough confidence to choose what they want to study and they are self-assurance to ask for help. In addition, they also found that non-traditional students are motivated to come back to the education by external factors such as extrinsic goal orientation, job improvement, employment requirements, and a better standard of living. What the researchers stated is that non-traditional students enter to study without the desire to go through education (intrinsic motivation) and what determines their motivation to return, is not more than different personal interest (extrinsic motivation).

Non-traditional students in Colombia share some features with the American ones they could be adults of all ages who also abandoned their study before. Nevertheless, the government decree 3011 from the president of Colombia in its articles 16 and 23 about formal education for non-traditional students states that non-traditional students are divided in three groups:

Firstly, in Colombia all those boys and girls from 13 years old who have never been in primary school for many reasons as stated above, or the ones of

the same age who just achieved until the first, second, or third grade are considered as non-traditional learners since they are not allowed to continue studying along with the traditional ones because they exceed the time prearranged by the Ministry of Education in order to achieve the primary school.

Secondly, the people from 15 years old who already finished primary school, or the ones of the same age who reveal that have abandoned their study for more than two years before going to secondary school caused by different reasons are also considered as non-traditional learners.

Finally, non-traditional students also are people from 18 years of age and beyond who have already achieved the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and deciding to return to the secondary so that they can finish high school on a special schedule such as night shift and weekends. These schedules have to be carried out in classroom setting course, blended learning course and long distance learning in view of the fact that non-traditional students are not accepted to go to a normal calendar as traditional ones do. In addition, non-traditional students have to continue their primary and secondary school guided by a different program; this consists on a special cycle of a semester in order to achieve each grade.

For the nature of this study the students were adult non-traditional students.

## Study Description

This is a qualitative study conducted in a natural environment, which was focused on my interpretations, observations, reflections and analysis of the non-traditional students' life and learning experiences as well as with regard to their English foreign language instruction (EFL).

The methods used to collect the data were researcher's journals, observations and interviews. First, these data were collected by observing teacher and students' behaviours in a natural environment where the participants showed their ideas, feelings and thoughts in a typical language learning classroom. In addition, the data were collected by interviewing and interpreting real-life concerns, beliefs and behaviors of participants. According to Flowers and More (2003)

The primary objective of qualitative research is to obtain information by exploring, identifying, and examining an issue by questioning, engaging, and/or observing those individuals who are involved with, affected by, and/or familiar the issue under study. (p. 2).

Consequently, this research study is qualitative since the methods used to collect the data were conducted by observing, and interviewing in order to be explored and interpreted based on those relevant events; contrary to statistics and measurable paradigm.

As it was mentioned in the statement of the problem, some non-traditional students have never been enrolled in education for several reasons. First, economic problems, lack of schools in inaccessible places, need of quotas in institutions and lack of support from the state. Second, others have been forced to abandon their studies for many socio - economic reasons such as parental and authorities' ignorance, and movements to other cities with regard to financial problems and the armed conflict in Colombia.

Taking into account that non-traditional students are a specific population looking for obtaining a better standard of living through education, this study searched for their life and learning experiences as well as the characteristics of their EFL instruction. As a result of those learners' life characteristics, my findings can contribute to understand a little more this population. In other words, this study opened a small breach to think of the way non-traditional students in Colombia learn.

Reishmann (2004) illustrates the term “Andragogy” as the “scholarly approach to the learning of adults”. That is, “andragogy” is seen as the method to understand how adult non-traditional students learn by highly supporting their life practice and life experience.

### 3. Research Questions

The following questions conducted my study:

1. What is the role of English in the 10th graders non-traditional students' lives?
2. What challenges do the 10th graders non-traditional students face as they go through secondary education?
3. What characterizes the English instruction for 10th graders non-traditional students at this school?

### 4. Objectives:

1. To explain how the daily-life characteristics of non-traditional students population influence their learning process, and
2. To describe how the non-traditional population is being educated in the EFL.



## Relevant definitions

### Andragogy

Kenner and Weinerman (2011) comment how adult learners differ from young students in terms of learning styles and life experience, which may allow learners to success in education, or hinder their learning process. Consequently, the authors explain that it is the role of teachers to identify how adults learn and to create materials in order to identify learning deficiencies. Kenner and Weinerman (2011) suggest that to understand how adult's students learn, it is necessary to comprehend the term "metacognitive skills" which non-traditional students put into practice from peers, teachers and local culture. The authors explain that metacognitive skills are embedded among adult learners and these come from the "informal theory", which illustrate that metacognitive skills are recognized by co-workers at workplaces as a way reward what entails cleverness, experience and reflection as a life experience. In other words, the adults' workplace is a learning training environment.

Kenner and Weinerman (2011) cite Knowles (1974) to show the four main principles of the term "andragogy", which characterize adult learners:

- a. They are self directed, take responsibility for their own actions, and resist having information arbitrarily imposed on them.
- b. They have an extensive depth of experience, which serves as a critical component in the foundation of their self identity.
- c. They are ready to learn. As most adult learners return to college voluntarily, they are likely to actively engage in the learning process.
- d. They are task motivated. Adult students returning to college attend for a specific goal and the primary component of their motivational drive tends to be internal.

Similarly, Devenci (2007) cites Knowles (1980) to explain the main differences between pedagogy and andragogy. Devenci (2007) illustrates that the term "pedagogy" refers to children instruction, and the term "andragogy" denotes adult model of teaching and learning; also defines by Knowles (2007) as "the art and science of helping learners learn". That is, the word andragogy defines

expectations and reflections about adult teaching and learning taking into consideration that they are self-directed and experienced.

Law 115 of February 8, 1994 which is issued by the General Education Law declares in its articles 10, 36 and 43 the types of education in Colombia. Hence, it offers the following definitions:

### **Formal Education**

Se entiende por educación formal aquella que se imparte en establecimientos educativos aprobados, en una secuencia regular de ciclos lectivos, con sujeción a pautas curriculares progresivas, y conducente a grados y títulos. (p. 3)

### **Non-formal Education**

ARTICULO 36. Definición de educación no formal. La educación no formal es la que se ofrece con el objeto de complementar, actualizar, suplir conocimientos y formar en aspectos académicos o laborales sin sujeción al sistema de niveles y grados establecidos en el artículo 11 de esta Ley:

- Educación para personas con limitaciones o capacidades excepcionales
- Educación para adultos
- Educación para grupos étnicos
- Educación campesina y rural
- Educación para la rehabilitación social (p. 11).

### **Informal Education**

ARTICULO 43. Definición de educación informal. Se considera educación informal todo conocimiento libre y espontáneamente adquirido, proveniente de personas, entidades, medios masivos de comunicación, medios impresos, tradiciones, costumbres, comportamientos sociales y otros no estructurados. (p. 12)

With regard to the non-traditional education the government decree “3011” of the Presidency of the Republic in Colombia defines:

### **Non-traditional education in Colombia**

Artículo 2. Para efectos de lo dispuesto en el presente decreto, la educación de adultos es el conjunto de procesos y de acciones formativas organizadas para atender de manera particular las necesidades y potencialidades de las personas que por diversas circunstancias no cursaron niveles y grados de servicio público educativo, durante las edades aceptadas regularmente para cursarlos o de aquellas personas que deseen mejorar sus aptitudes, enriquecer sus conocimientos y mejorar sus competencias técnicas y profesionales. (P1)

In the same way, the law 115 of education in Colombia describes the non-traditional education:

ARTICULO 50. Definición de educación para adultos. La educación de adultos es aquella que se ofrece a las personas en edad relativamente mayor a la aceptada regularmente en la educación por niveles y grados del servicio público educativo, que deseen suplir y completar su formación, o validar sus estudios. (p. 13)

Even though the law 115 of education and the government decree 3011 from the Presidency of the Republic in Colombia offer a definition for non-traditional students, it is a little bit limited since the meaning refers to non-traditional students from the formal education and state education point of view. In addition, they do not state enough about non-traditional students as such. Therefore, I offer my own definition of non-traditional students in Colombia:

### **Non-traditional students in Colombia**

Non-traditional students are learners from 13 years old and beyond that exceeded the age determined by the Ministry of Education in order to have access to different grades and levels of formal education. They have to fulfill specific conditions of “age” so that they can return to education with a different syllabus because they have to attend a special cycle of six month for each grade. In addition, non-traditional students also may enrol to non-formal education, informal education and adult literacy programs carried out in many “contexts” such as media, classroom setting course, blended learning course, and long distance learning for both state schools and private institutions with the specific schedules: night shift, flexitime and on weekends.

From now on, an analysis of theory on the area of teaching will be written on the rest of this terms concerning the teaching approaches and teaching methods, as well as strategies and techniques upon the (ESL) and (EFL) teaching practice. This analysis is fundamental to understand the teaching practice so that I can compare, draw conclusions, evaluate and argue for the first and third research questions which reflect learning and teaching points of view.

### **Teaching approaches and teaching methods**

This study explored the grammar –translation method as the one adopted by the teacher. Consequently, theory concerning this method and the communicative approach to show differences and similarities is presented.

The grammar translation method has been used for more than one hundred years as foreign language teaching. Richards and Rogers (1986) comment that the grammar translation method controlled European and foreign language teaching from 1840 to 1940 and with some minor changes it is been used in some parts of the world at the present time. Richards and Rogers (1986) offer the next characteristics of the grammar-translation method when teaching a language: first, grammar is studied and translated as a vehicle for learning. Second, reading and writing are the main focus. Third, vocabulary is presented through translation of words lists, dictionary study and memorization. Fourth, much of the lesson is spent in dealing with sentence translation. Fifth, learners are highly expected to obtain a perfect dominance of accuracy. Sixth, teachers use their native language as the medium for presenting new topics and for comparing language items between the foreign and the first language.

When teaching a language the method adopted by the teacher plays an important role in the learner's language development and in the teacher's instruction pedagogic. According to Richards and Rogers (1986), cited in Brown, (2001)

“It is ironic that this method has until very recently been so stalwart among many competing models. It does virtually nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the language. It is remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners, from whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose”. [ ] Pp 19.

It means that the grammar translation method does not contribute to the use of the target language and it demands few teachers' abilities because of the fact that the grammar is taught in mother tongue, and not by using the foreign language. Thus, pronunciation is not taken into account when learning a

language; texts are not expected to be focused on meaning but grammatical explanation. In addition, translation of isolated words and disconnected sentences take place throughout the lessons. Similarly, Harmer (2004) states:

It is certainly true that most language learners translate in their heads at various stages anyway, and we can learn a lot about a foreign language by comparing parts of it with parts of our own. But a concentration on grammar – translation stops the students from getting the kind of natural language input that will help them to acquire language, and it often fails to give them opportunities to activate their language knowledge. The danger with grammar – translation, in other words, is that it teaches people about the language and doesn't really help them to learn the language itself.

On the contrary, the teaching of English as communication goes further than ordering correct sentences in situational presentations and sentence structure to be practiced in the classroom. Widdowson (1987) suggests that teaching English as communication is not simply to develop the comprehension of the language system, but also the sentences used to carry out different acts of communication in determined context, and with diverse purposes. Moreover, he disagrees with the teachers' action taken when using the communicative approach; hence, he proposes a change on both, the direction of the method and the language teachers' techniques. On the former, he suggests that its direction should turn on what elements are needed to be included in the process to communicate such as kinds, descriptions, classifications, requests, predictions and qualifications called by the author as "values" for communication. On the latter, the one about the teacher's language techniques, he suggests the use of these "values" to be implemented into the classroom.

Similarly, Brown (2001) considers the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach as the way to teach the socio-cultural and pragmatic features and the discourse and grammatical elements; however, he highlights that those should be practiced in communication. In addition, the teacher should ask the learners to practice the foreign from authentic materials out of the classroom. He emphasizes that the communicative approach tells the teacher to guide, but not to control the learners so that they can create their own learner-centered

perspective based on autonomy. The aim of the approach is the communicative competence.

### **Lesson planning**

This study aimed at investigating the teacher's lesson planning characteristics. As a result, theory concerning lesson planning is analyzed.

In order to organize, implement, and accomplish learning and teaching, the teacher decides how to manage with the lesson components. Another important factor of the teachers' education is lesson planning. Richards and Lockhart (1994) argue that lesson planning is vital when teaching a language because the teacher can organize the content and lessons into logical sequences, choose significant materials to implement meaningful activities, and prepare all the lesson planning components in order to accomplish the overall aims. Richards and Lockhart (1994) offer the following steps in order to organize a lesson: 1. Opening: the procedures used to focus the learner's attention upon the learning aims of the lessons. 2. Sequencing: the presentation techniques, the practice of the language items and the production of the language in relation to what was practiced. 3. Pacing: the synchronization, movement and monitoring of the teacher so that the learners maintain engaged during the variation of activities, and 4. Closure: the conclusion of the lesson so that the facilitator can reinforce what was learned during the lesson, review the content already studied and preparing the learners for future topics.

Correspondingly, when planning a lesson, some characteristics are entailed throughout the teaching session. According to Ur (2003), there are some details that can be recognized when evaluating the criteria for lesson effectiveness: the teachers should pay attention to whether or not the learners were active, attentive and motivated during the lesson. Moreover, the teachers should be aware of how the lesson was developed in terms of materials, communicative and challenging activities and the steps of the lesson according to plan.

In order to plan lessons, to create meaningful activities, and to select materials and techniques according to the learner's needs teachers need to

know the students better. Adult students possess great cognitive abilities and self-assurance which enable them to have success in the language learning process. Brown (2001) argues that adult students have better cognitive abilities than teenagers, which provides them to handle with more abstract concepts. He offers some suggestions and cautions when teaching adult learners:

1. Adults are more able to handle abstract rules and concepts. But beware! As you know, too much abstract generalization about usage and not enough real-life language use can be deadly for adults, too.
2. Adults have longer attention span for material that may not be intrinsically interesting to them. But again, the rule of keeping your activities short and sweet applies also to adult-age teaching.
3. Sensory input need not always be quite as varied with adults, but one of the secrets of lively adult classes is their appeal to multiple senses.
4. Adults often bring a modicum of general self-confidence (global self-esteem) into a classroom; the fragility of egos may therefore not be quite as critical as those of children. Yet we should never underestimate the emotional factors that may be attendance to adult second language learning.
5. Adults, with their more developed abstract thinking ability, are better able to understand a context-reduced segment of language. Authenticity and meaningfulness are of course still highly important, but in adult language teaching, a teacher can take temporary digressions to dissect and examine isolated linguistic properties, as long as students are returned to original context. Pp 90-9.1

Additionally, Harmer (2004) states that teachers are to some extent in charge of the students' success in the learning process because motivated learners show positive attitude toward the subject studied and do better in the learning process. Consequently, the facilitator is the one that promotes the students participation, and the wish for discovering the new in the classroom. In addition, the author points out that the way students perceive the teachers' attitude and what they feel of his/her capacity to implement meaningful activities and materials represents an important aspect for the learners' engagement and enjoyment for learning. Hence, the teacher provokes the students to achieve the learning aims. Nevertheless, the author concludes that motivation comes from every ones' wishes for learning or personal interests.

## **Technology into language teaching**

My investigation sought to investigate the teacher's use of technology into language teaching. Therefore, theory in regard to the use of technology when teaching a foreign language is below explored.

The use of multimedia tools into language teaching entails great advantages for both the teaching practice and the learning process as teachers deal with the challenges of updating their traditional teaching instruction. Zhu (2010) says that the use of multimedia tools into language teaching is a strong pedagogical device that entails many advantages to teachers by being innovative and creative when using them. However, when teachers are not updated with multimedia tools use, they have to change their ideas and their methods so that multimedia tools can bring out effectiveness on teaching and learning.

Similarly, the uses of internet into language teaching not only enhance the learners' language, but also the internet improves teaching materials, it supports teachers' plans and motivates them to continue dealing with their professional development. According to Kabila & Rajab (2010):

This self-managed and self-directed experience using the Internet gives a real sense of ownership and relevance to the online professional development activities that the teachers are involved in such as engaging in intellectual discourses, participating in collaborations, and sharing and exchanging experiences, views, ideas and opinions. With its abilities to transcend time (synchronous and asynchronous) and geographical boundaries (ubiquitous), the Internet and its tools have the ability to enhance and boost a teacher's professional development meaningfully, i.e. based on his/her needs, interests and expectations. In a context like Palestine, where there is very little freedom of movement, the Internet offers the platform and the opportunity for teachers to connect with other teachers from other regions without travelling. The Internet also widens teachers' access to the abundance and myriad of resources, knowledge, ideas and teaching materials that the teachers can identify and utilize for teaching purposes. All these contribute to their overall professional development. (p. 65).

The authors argue that the use of the internet into language teaching encourages teachers to do their best because the internet permit them to create challenging activities, and to choose teaching materials which entail the interaction among teachers in order to share teaching ideas. In addition, the



internet offers them an environment where collaboration, participation and interaction take place. Moreover, Kabila & Rajab (2010) say that some teachers do not use the internet on the grounds of the fact that they do not know how to use the internet for pedagogical purposes and time does not allow them to learn because they are always busy. As a result of not being updated with the latest technology use, they are reluctant to implement it into the teaching practice.

Another contribution of the internet is the implementation of electronic emails into language teaching which entails self-confidence so that learners can interact with their peers and teachers. Wang (2010) argues how electronic emails allow learners to communicate each other while practicing the English skills: listening, reading and writing. The writer explains that the listening skill is practiced by uploading audio listening materials so that learners can download them to mp3 or mp4 players, or to listen to them online. In addition to practicing the listening skill, learners can deal with abundant readings online; they also can share their understanding among peers and respond to teachers' questions. Finally, when writing, learners become more confident inasmuch as they write to share ideas among peers without being afraid of making mistakes; teachers can ask learners to check each other their writing progress in order to offer feedback by themselves which entails correction because the learners' compositions are uploaded in the same e-mailbox.

A Chinese study reports the importance of learning a language by the integration of its foreign language culture through the use of media. According to Zhang (2010)

Students can learn the western etiquettes culture through TV and movies and get a vivid picture of what the life of westerners is like in the target culture, because they come to know the truth of native speakers' behaviors. From the observation through the media, the features of everyday situations and etiquettes will impress them such as sightseeing, telephoning, shopping or asking directions. What they have learned from books can be verified by the performance of the native speakers. While enjoying the attractive performance language learners have to observe details of everyday situations in case of greeting, farewell, compliment, apology, requirement and so forth. Through the

media, students can learn the polite behavior and etiquette means to solve conflict techniques of practicing intercultural communication and so on. Movies can also improve intercultural communication by conveying the important values, communication styles and so on. After watching movies, students may take notes of their observations, supplement the findings and talk with those who have shared the same movies so that they can apply what they have learned to real intercultural communication someday. (p. 69).

The writer argues how the foreign language culture knowledge entails many advantages to the learning process through media. Hence, teachers should ask learners to watch TV shows and movies, to listen and to read other authentic materials such as radio stations news, newspapers, and magazines so that learners can take advantages by interacting with native language speakers. Accordingly, learners are allowed to develop their knowledge upon the foreign language by observing, listening and reading the real-life functions and uses of the target language.

### **Teacher's and learners' language development in the classroom**

Another aspect investigated in this study was the language that the teacher and learners used in the classroom. Consequently, the next theory is analyzed from different theoreticians and those cite some techniques for teaching a foreign language.

The teachers' talk used in the classroom is indispensable to encourage and serving as a model for the students. The way English teachers talk and the balance among the learners to create communication in the classroom are essential techniques when teaching a language. Harmer (2004) argues that English teachers need to adapt their language according to the students' ages. Furthermore, He emphasizes that the best lessons are the ones where the students talking time is maximized, and where the teacher knows how to balance verbal communication and acting in the specific moment. What the author means is that the use of the body language such as gestures, expressions, and mime is highly effective when communicating an idea or a concept. Moreover, he declares that the target language should be practiced by asking the students to use the foreign language; otherwise, it could be impossible to learn. Finally, he points out that even though the teachers' language is important to serve as a model, the students talk is the one that needs to be used much time.

In the same way, another important aspect of the teacher's talk is an effective questioning technique because it elicits fairly prompt, motivate learners to answer so that they can practice the language. Ur (2003), highlights that teacher talk is essential when teaching a language. In addition, she emphasizes that an effective questioning technique develops language skills, motivates the learners to take risks, stimulates the learner's thoughts, and permits the teacher to check the learning process among other advantages.

Likewise, drawing out information and encouraging the learners to show what they know is an effective technique used to check learners' language development. Concerning these techniques, Scrivener (2005), highlights that eliciting is so much useful to check the learner's previous knowledge and

language improvement. As a result, the learners answer what was suggested according to their knowledge; the teacher gives feedback in concordance with what is shown, talks or writes from the learners. In addition, eliciting permits the teacher to check the learners' knowledge, and to prepare themselves for what is coming.

Apart from teachers' talk, another vital aspect of teachers' and learners' language in the classroom is the way learners respond to teachers as a result of their techniques used for teaching language skills whether receptive (language items recognized and comprehended in reading and listening materials) or productive (language items bring to mind and used by learners in speech and writing).

When dealing with problems with speaking activities, the teacher is the one who can help to solve them. Ur (2003) suggests that "when participating in speaking skills, the learners present some problems such as nothing to say, inhibition and mother-tongue use. Accordingly, the writer explains what the teacher can do. She provides five main points: 1. The use of group work, 2. The activities should be based on easy language, 3. The careful choice of topics and tasks so that the teacher can stimulate interest, 4. The instructions and training in discussion skills, and 5. The reminding and modeling of the teacher foreign language use in the activity in order to encourage learners to speak the target language.

In addition, the listening skill is fundamental when the students are involved in the process of learning English as a foreign or as a second language. Tsui (2007) states that when learning a language the learners should receive a linguistic input in order to understand what is said in academic or social situations. Nevertheless, this input must be consolidating with responses. He also suggests that when teaching, the facilitator selects the source which offers the input according to level; teachers create the listening tasks with the chance for stimulating the students' prior knowledge so that learners can

develop listening strategies, and the integration of the listening skill with different purposes.

The author highlights that the listening skill is the vehicle for learning a language in or out of the classroom. Hence, he highlights that language teachers should be careful when selecting the source so that they can stimulate the students as well as the listening activities should be appropriate for the learning purpose. Moreover, the tasks should incorporate the idea of creating interaction to permit the learners to manifest the connection between the prior and the new knowledge obtained during the listening activities. Finally, the tasks should integrate self-reflection of what is understood and define steps for interaction; the listening skill should be taught in connection with the development of other skills by combining the listening activities with reading passages, oral reports and presentations based on the listening activities and Witten assignments to check understanding.

Additionally, when teaching a language, the facilitator needs to build up a linguistic framework in order to enrich the learner's foreign language. Consequently, when teaching vocabulary, the most important is that learners can discover the meaning through the use of effective techniques. Gairns and Redman (2004) emphasize that when presenting vocabulary to the learners, the best way to do it is by illustrating meaning whether receptive (language items recognized and comprehended in reading and listening materials) or productive (language items bring to mind and used by learners in speech and writing). On the one hand, Gairns and Redman (2004) suggest that visual (aids) techniques are of great help because of the fact that they serve to teach concrete vocabulary. As a result, they permit the teacher to create activities for students' interaction, and also allow the learners to reinforce more abstract generalization by visualizing the meaning in connection with images and the teachers' strategies to convey knowledge. These visual aids are flashcards, photographs, realia, drawings in general, and the teachers' body language to reinforce concepts.

On the other hand, the authors illustrate the use of verbal techniques in order to present vocabulary. Among them are the uses of illustrative situations through questions to ensure that a concept is grasped, the use of words' definitions, antonyms-synonyms, contrasts and opposites, scales and examples of the same type words (superordinates). For example, the word "vehicle" is the superordinate concept for "Lorry", "automobile", "bicycle" and "tram". Finally, although the authors consider that translation to convey meaning in certain situation could be to some extent useful, they conclude that translation, as a strategy for presenting vocabulary is not a good idea due to the fact that the learners develop a false framework to connect logic relations on the target language. In addition, translation is not supportive for the listening exposure to the learners and it interferes not only with the listening skill development but also with the learners' interest for the new language.

## **Classroom management**

My research project explored the teacher's classroom management skills based on the following aspects: monitoring classroom activities, seating arrangement, and interaction patterns; I chose these aspects for two reasons: First, because they are much important to take into account when teaching a language since these strategies and techniques allow teachers to manage the classroom successfully. Second, these three aspects allow teachers and learners to put into practice the functional use of language, which is seen as a vehicle to express functions such as making requests, making offers, making predictions, asking for permission and apologizing etc., and the interactive view, which sees language as a vehicle for the creation and maintenance of social relations, the focus on patterns of moves, acts, negotiation and interaction, meaningful communication by using the target language, and students as the center of the learning process when teaching EFL.

### **Monitoring classroom activities**

In order to make sure whether the learners are performing what is asked to do or not and to support them on their tasks, teachers monitor learner's performance. According to Scrivener (2005)

[ ] be more visible and allow students to be aware of your presence and of the possibility of calling on you for help and advice. A teacher who is actively monitoring will be walking around, viewing and listening into many different groups and frequently offering spontaneous advice and corrections, as well as responding to requests and questions from students. (p. 94).

The author states that there are two ways of monitoring the learners; monitor discreetly and monitor actively. The former, he explains, is the one in which the teacher is in silence observing the learners to do the tasks asked. The latter, the teacher is around the learners supporting and advising them from group to group around the class. Nonetheless, he recommends the active monitoring as most effective when watching how the students are dealing with tasks. Similarly, Harmer (2004) points out:

In order to manage a class successfully, the teacher has to be aware of what the students are doing and, where possible, how they are feeling. This means watching and listening just as carefully as teaching. It means being able to move around the class, getting the level of proximity right. It means making eye contact with the students (provided that this is not culturally inappropriate), listening to what they have said and responding appropriately. (p. 16).

In the same way, when dealing with participation problems, the facilitator puts into practice useful strategies so that the environment turns in favor of the learning process. According to Ur (2003), factors that contribute to improve or avoid classroom discipline and participation are the classroom management skills, the appropriate choice of methodology, *the active presence of the teacher in activities to support and help students*, the encouragement of respect and the interpersonal relationships among the learners and teachers, careful lesson planning and the teacher's actions to motivate the learners through the implementation of meaningful activities in order to avoid boredom and lack of challenge.

Consequently, the teacher is the person in charge of activities development and class dynamics. Spratt et al (2005) state that one role of teachers is to monitor the students, which means teachers go checking learning, observing students, listening to the students throughout the classroom and making sure what learners are doing a certain activity.

Besides monitoring learning, teachers control learners' role in the classroom. Wright (1997) states that teachers should have the right balance when monitoring learners. Nonetheless, he states that there are some activities that require teachers to be more active paying attention to what and how the learners are performing activities. Finally, Wright (2007) concludes that there are two main aspects that teachers need to control in the classroom: the social behavior of class in general, and learners through learning activities by choosing the adequate way to organize students.



### **Seating arrangement**

Besides monitoring the classroom activities, teachers organize the classroom so that they can achieve the learning, teaching and personal aims. Scrivener (2005) states that changing the seating arrangements allow the learners to interact with their peers and permit them to share many situations in which the learners feel comfortable for recreating and varying the activities. In addition, the author argues that changing the seating arrangement facilitates the learning process because it avoids boredom. He makes a list of the following seating arrangements as suitable for guiding foreign language lessons:

Pairs

Enemy corners

Opposing teams

Face to face or back to back

Panel

Public meeting

Buzz groups

Wheels

Circle, and

Horseshoe

From this diversity, he highlights that the best seating arrangements used to teach the foreign languages are the circle and the horseshoe ones.

Equally, Wright (1997) highlights how changing the seating arrangement entails learners' responsibility for roles assigned when doing tasks, involves much effort and contribution to the topics studied, and brings about social relationship between teachers and learners. In addition, Wright (1997) shows seven main seating arrangements when managing with classroom and learners organization: individual, pair work, small group work, whole class, horseshoe, desk rows and circle.

Correspondingly, seating arrangement is an organization of the classroom, learners and learning aims. Spratt et al (2005) state that teachers change the seating arrangement according to their lesson plans so that learning aims can

be accomplished. In addition, the authors explain that among those seating arrangements teachers can change them the next way: in desk rows, in circles, in circles around the teacher and in groups.

Additionally, Lewis (2002) compares teachers' management of the classroom with "a gardener who supplies materials for growth (resources, encouragement) and rearranging the environment (furniture)". Through this metaphor the author explains that in communicative language classes, teachers act as supporters for students not only changing the seating arrangement but also offering learners' reinforcement by congratulating, answering and asking, and eliciting language. Moreover, Lewis (2002) illustrates how the different seating arrangements help learners to improve socialization and language in the classroom. As a result, the purpose for "whole class" arrangement is to increase socialization, language input and fluency. The "individual, pair and small groups" is a good strategy to create and practice interaction between students-students, and between teacher-learners.

## Interaction patterns

Different aspects determine the interaction in the classroom. Spratt et al (2005) suggest that there are different interaction patterns, which teachers put into practice when teaching a language. The authors explain that the interaction patterns used in the classroom depends on the following points: the kind of activities and learning objectives, the learners' needs, the students' personalities, and students' relationship with their classmates. Finally, Spratt et al (2005) illustrate that the patterns for interaction are pair work, individual work, open class and group work.

Equally important, teachers implement techniques in the classroom in order to deal with activities. Group work offers learning opportunities and creates self-confidence among the students. Ur (2003) believes that grouping is essential to practice the speaking skill; it offers many opportunities to talk. However, this depends on how the teacher organizes the students and the activities when practicing the language. Moreover, grouping brings great advantages such as cooperation among peers, motivation to do tasks, and it encourages the learners to be more responsible and self-governing. What the author comments is that grouping stimulates the learners to participate actively while doing tasks, and offer them self-belief to continue working in future interactions. On the other hand, the author explains that grouping improves critical thinking skills, shows respect for their peers when taking turns, and permits to share ideas creating a communicative environment to use the language.

Also, patterns for interaction allow learners to develop interest, respect for others and socialization in the classroom. Wright (1997) believes that a good relationship between learners and teachers develops new sub-groups for interaction. The author states that changing modes of working is adequate because it implies new types of communication in the classroom. Wright (1997) explains that there are two ways of creating an environment for interaction in the classroom: the formal and the informal one. The former is the one where teachers control the patterns and types of communication. The latter is the one where teachers allow learners greater freedom for participation and interaction.

In conclusion, the author clarifies that teachers should be careful with such decisions since both formal and informal may have disadvantages for learning; he advises to choose one that can be suitable according to the pattern for interaction and the type of communication practiced in a certain activity.

Similarly, Interaction in the classroom among teachers and learners brings opportunities for information exchange; hence, interaction entails learning. Furthermore, the input given by the teacher in the classroom improves the linguistic students' ability because it encourages them to make some efforts to produce language (output) spontaneously ahead of their level. As said by Tsui (2007)

It has been argued that learners' engagement in the negotiation of meaning facilitates SLA because it provides the learners with opportunity to obtain comprehensible input, to express concepts which are beyond their linguistic capability and to focus on the part of their utterance requiring modification [ ]. (P. 123).

Classroom interaction allows learners to share ideas about certain tasks or questions raised by the teacher. It also offers opportunities to negotiate meaning which entails the students and teacher speech modification to form new structures in the use of language.

Thus far theory concerning teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and as a second language (ESL) in this section has been presented. The next section reads about research studies with reference to non-traditional students.

#### 4. Literature review

##### **Interests, expectations and learning experiences**

Life-experience and goal orientation are positive factors in favor of nontraditional students. According to (Graham & Donaldson, 1999, as cited by Jacobson and Harris 2008,)

“The research has shown (Graham & Donaldson, 1999; Duffy, 1998) and contributes to show that the non-traditional student seeks out higher education as a method of obtaining and facilitating a specific personal or employment goal, unlike the traditional student who enters college with a nonspecific, or general goal orientation (p.34).”

In regards to the authors, the non-traditional students return to education with clear and specific purposes in mind. Furthermore, non-traditional students have these personal abilities as a result of their life-experience gathered during the time they are out of the academic setting.

On the contrary, another study concludes that motivation plays another role among the non-traditional students when they re-enter education. Merriam and Brockett (1997) as cited in Jacobson and Harris (2008) report that non-traditional students have a broad life experience and personal maturation. As a result, they come back to study more intrinsically motivated than the traditional ones. Even though non-traditional learner's lack of confidence when they come back to study, the intrinsic motivation support and encourage them with personal values and abilities to face the learning process in general. In regards to what the researchers highlight non-traditional students are mature people who return to study with the wish of learning, they bring self-assurance, striving for mastery, they demonstrate curiosity for the topics studied, and they show enjoyment when dealing with tasks and activities.

Additionally, when non-traditional students are in the education system, it is highly important to pay special attention to the way they feel in and out of the classroom, and to the contribution made by the people who surround them is

not the key to succeeding in non-traditional student's academic performance. According to Keith et al (2006) the support from the family, co-workers, advisors, and peers is not significant in the campus comfort (adaptation to new school grounds) among the non-traditional students. Nevertheless, the support from professors increases their campus comfort.

The researchers also found that even if the support from professors increases the campus comfort among the non-traditional students, neither support from professors nor from family, co-workers, advisors and peers increase their academic performance, and that it was evidenced in their grades results. In addition, Keith et al (2006) also found that the age stress (the nervous tension for being adults and the thinking about having lesser amount of retentive and underprivileged learning skills) does not stand out directly as a negative factor for the non-traditional students' academic performance since it was revealed as positive in their grades results. In regards to these findings, the researchers argue that there are three main aspects: First, the support from professors is helpful when non-traditional students re-enter to study as a way of making the non-traditional students feel well in the school where the non-traditional students study; however, professor's support is not a contribution to succeeding academically. Second, none of the people's support mentioned above is helpful for non-traditional students to succeeding academically. Third, the age of the non-traditional students is not a negative factor that can impede upon their academic performance.

In contrast, collaboration among the adult non-traditional students and teachers as well as the role of materials to be implemented are the key to succeeding and creating socialization in the classroom. American studies conducted by Taylor et al (2003) explain that the physical set-up and materials encourage peer interaction and socialization in the classroom among the students and facilitator. The main reason for this is that both of them teacher and learners feel comfortable with the way things are organized in the classroom. Furthermore, literacy materials permit collaboration because are designed to work as a group, which creates a good environment and excellent

group work. The researchers also found that the teacher style of teaching influences on the collaborative practice among the students by creating a safe environment. For instance, the teacher acting in the role of a student so that the learners feel comfortable in class making mistakes and inviting everybody to collaborate with the question or with the topic practiced.

Likewise, another study supports the role of collaboration. The kind of tasks implemented in and out the classrooms are the solution to encourage the adult students to promote learning among them. Taylor et al (2003) report that the best literacy tasks used for effective collaboration among non-traditional students are reading tasks that include vocabulary spelling and comprehension activities. Moreover, writing tasks such as journal entries, group activities, workbook assignments, problem solving and computer tasks. Concerning, what the researchers reveal is that those literacy tasks above are the solution to create a great environment for learning a language. In other words, a class in which the non-traditional students feel confidence to collaborate and participating so that they can create scaffolding behavior because it gives them the liberty to go towards independent learning.

Additionally, another study corroborates the importance of the social-cultural process as a position when people look for improving or learning. Taylor et al (2003) cites Airney (2005) to state that the literacy skills reading and writing are learned throughout the language, direct contact with people and the use of sign systems. Concerning these results, the researcher highlights that the relationship among peers and the social-cultural environment in the classroom are the solution for learners and teachers when dealing with the process of reading and writing.

The non-traditional learners and their prior academic experience do not predict comfort on the campus when they return to study. Keith et al (2006)'s research suggest that the academic experience that non-traditional students have obtained when they are out of the secondary education, such as level of prior education, average credits, class level and continuous vs discontinuous

enrollment have no effect on the way they feel when they enter education as regards the campus. The researchers also explain that the older non-traditional students negotiate the place where they decide to study and the place's expectations effortlessly like younger non-traditional students do. Concerning these findings, the researchers consider two main points: First, the educational experience has nothing to do when looking for a place to study. Second, the age is not an impediment at the time of deciding where to study and which are the advantages or disadvantages of the institution to be chosen.

Non-traditional learners possess self-efficacy learning and autonomy which permits them to be recursive learners when using learning strategies. As shown in Jacobson and Harris (2008)'s research, between traditional and non-traditional students regarding help seeking the non-traditional ones are less inclined to ask for help. Concerning this finding the researchers conclude that the non-traditional students possess a strong ability to believe that they are very capable to face what is taught as new on the grounds of the fact that they already have some previous knowledge. Consequently, they take advantages to put into practice the prior and the new so that they can create new cognitive skills by implementing self-efficacy learning and autonomy.

In a similar way, another study recalls that the non-traditional students possess the ability to connect real-life experience and daily activities with the academic performance. Jacobson and Harris (2008), cite Tice (1997) to highlight that non-traditional students are different from the traditional ones. Hence, they differ from the ability to learn since non-traditional students learn easier than the traditional ones, they are able to bring concepts to apply them in the classroom and they are self-sufficient. Consequently, learning becomes more meaningful and thoughtful for non-traditional students. On the subject of these results, the researcher considers that non-traditional students entail their experience with what is learned unlike the traditional ones. This facilitates and increases cognitive skills; consequently, learning occurs.



### **Challenges and implications for learning**

The role of age has a different effect on the non-traditional students' cognitive performance and on learning capacity. Keith et al (2006) cited Carlan (2001) to comment that the non-traditional students have lesser learning abilities than traditional ones. As a result, the age is an impediment to progress in their academic performance because it diminishes learning capability, it entails slower effort speed when doing tasks, it reduces amount of adaptableness, as well as it is the cause of lesser amount of retentive and underprivileged skills to study. Regarding these findings, the researcher clearly states that the non-traditional students have many disadvantages on the learning process inasmuch as their age is an obstacle to perform well on their academic performance.

Participation in study topics, involvement in groups to make decisions concerning study organizations and the time required to be part of these is not part of the non-traditional activities. Bradley and Graham (2000) cited in Keith et al (2006) highlight that non-traditional students are less enrolled in college grounds and academic issues unlike the traditional ones. With regards to this finding, the authors state that there are two disadvantages among the non-traditional students concerning their daily- life activities and their relation to the school commitments. First, non-traditional students go home as soon as they finish the timetable due to some personal obligations. Second, they are less involved in educational organizations in the institutions where they study.

An American study conducted by Forbus et al (2011) comment that Non-traditional students are so much stressed-out as a result of work, family and school affairs. In addition, Forbus et al (2011) found that non-traditional students do not spend time at school enrolled in social activities because they go home as soon as classes finish due to personnel and family obligations. That is, non-traditional students are less concerned about having a good time at school than traditional ones. Finally, the researchers also found that non-traditional students face more than five miles distance to come to school.

In the same way, Byram (2004) highlights that adult non-traditional students face many challenges as they go through education. The researcher explains that those challenges make language learning harder as result of social responsibilities headed for children, family and job commitments. . In addition, Byram (2004) found different learning aims from the ones of adults, imposed by schools curriculums. Finally, economic conditions obligate non-traditional students to fulfill extra requirements to get to education.

In the same way Stone (2008) highlights how non-traditional students face many challenges due to personal obligations:

The major difficulties and challenges described by the participants can be classified as: financial struggles; lack of time; difficulties with organizing and prioritizing; dealing with changes in relationships with partners and children; and balancing the needs of study with the needs of family, home, partners and children. (P. 9)

So far, the analysis of research studies concerning non-traditional students' interest and expectations toward learning the English foreign language, learning and life experience and concerns and challenges when dealing with education have been studied. Hereafter, the context and the participants, the methods for data collection, my stance as a researcher and the data analysis are presented.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1 Context**

I conducted my research at a public institution which offers elementary, secondary and high school. This school is located downtown in Pereira city and houses 1200 students and 56 teachers, six of them are the English teachers, two in the morning, two in the afternoon and other two in the evening. The school offers classes during the morning afternoon and night. The English classes are carried out for one hour and a half per week for each grade. In the morning and in the afternoon the school offers classes to traditional students and in the evening to non-traditional ones. I focused this research study in the night shift with the non-traditional population.

### **6.2 Participants**

I focused my study on five non-traditional students Emerida, Hector, Yesenia, Janeth and Adriana. They are 25 years of age and up in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I accomplished my study in the English classes during the night shift. Most of them have children and something important to highlight is the fact that all these participants are breadwinners of their families. They are non-traditional students because they complied with specific condition of age so that they can return to education. That is, they are non-traditional students since they exceeded the 18 years of age after finishing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade which is determined by the Ministry of Education in order to have access to different grades and levels of formal education.

#### **Participant**

In addition, I observed the English teacher's instruction from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in the night shift while I observed the students. The teacher has been BA in Modern Languages for 18 years. He is about 39 years of age and has a broad experience as English teacher. He works as an English teacher for two schools one in the morning and another one at night.

### 6.3 Methods for data collection:

#### Observations

I observed 8 teaching sections of 1 hour and a half each one. On the one hand, I centered my observations on the teacher's instruction. Hence, I observed some characteristics of his classroom management by taking notes about the events occurred and then reflecting on the data. Freeman (1998) reports that through observations researchers collect information about events, actions, interactions and the physical settings of the classroom by taking notes. In addition, the researcher highlights that the purpose of the observations is to offer description of teacher and students' behaviors, group actions, non-verbal evidence and interactions among participants. In a similar way, Seliger and Shohamy (2001) state that observations collect data for many purposes: First, to focus on the students' use of language in different ways. Second, to study language teaching procedures. Third, to study the language learning processes. Fourth, to describe both the teacher's and learners' behaviors. Moreover, the authors explain that observations can be "opened," which means that researchers can observe many events taking place at the same time.

I found out which method the teacher adopted in order to perform his classes. As a result, I focused my observations on the learners and teacher's language in the classroom. Moreover, I focused on their language skills. Finally, I observed his lesson planning. In other words, I observed and analyzed the professor's positive and negative teaching skills such as techniques and strategies to organize, plan and instruct the EFL. On the other hand, I focused the observations on the student's participation and enthusiasm for learning the English foreign language. Furthermore, I did research into their English language background. I documented my observations through field notes, which I processed through adding details after each observation.

## Interviews

I performed one interview for each student. That is, I carried out five interviews in total. On the one hand, these interviews helped me to answer the first research question; the one about the role of English in the students' lives. On the other hand, I collected data that were interpreted by exploring, identifying and examining carefully the meaning so that I could get to the results of the second research question; the one about the non-traditional students' lives challenges to go through education. In other words, the interviews inquired about those aspects of their daily life such as family and job commitments. Moreover, the interviews inquired about their prior EFL knowledge and the learners' expectations and interests toward learning the English language. Each interview lasted about seventeen minutes. Freeman (1998) defines the interviews as a "structured oral exchange with someone" that aims at collecting data of different categories such as behaviors, beliefs, opinions, values, experiences and facts of their lives, or about the phenomenon inquired. Furthermore, Freeman (1998) clarifies that there are two types of interviews: unstructured and structured. The former permit participants to exchange words spontaneously. The latter follows a pre-arranged set of questions planned by researchers before. Similarly, Seliger and Shohamy (2001) explain that when doing research in language the interviews are important instruments to gather data because the interviews permit a level of in-depth information collecting, and the interviews allow the participants to answer without restrictions. In addition, the authors highlight that interviews collect information about motivation and attitude toward language learning and can include tests to assess language proficiency. Finally, Seliger and Shohamy (2001) state that there are two types of interviews: "structured and unstructured" they highlight that the structured interviews can be used in combination with the questionnaires.

As a result, the interviews in my study were conducted through semi structured interviews that were designed in order to gather the information. I provided sample questions below. In fact, the questionnaire was planned in both Spanish

and English languages, but it was conducted in the Spanish language in view of the fact that the students did not comprehend my words while speaking. I documented the interviews by audio recording, which I processed by transcribing them for analysis.

The following are the sample questions for the interviews:

- 1) ¿Qué piensa usted de la lengua inglesa?
- 2) ¿Es esta importante para usted? ¿Porque si? ¿por qué no?
- 3) ¿Tiene usted hijos? ¿Cuántos?
- 4) ¿Sus hijos estudian?
- 5) ¿Usted trabaja? ¿Cuál es su trabajo?
- 6) ¿Cómo cree usted que aprender inglés podría influenciar su vida?
- 7) ¿Cuántas horas trabaja por día? Y ¿dónde trabaja?
- 8) ¿Ha usted estudiado inglés antes? ¿Cuánto tiempo? ¿Cuántos niveles ha hecho?
- 9) ¿sabe usted leer en inglés, y en español?
- 10) ¿Le gustaría aprender inglés? ¿Por qué, Porque no?
- 11) ¿Cómo cree usted que se aprende el inglés?
- 12) ¿Tiene usted mujer o marido?

### **Researcher's Journal**

For the reason that the human eye does not get everything by observing, the researcher's journals were helpful in order to write my reflections and thoughts based on the data collected, and to support what I observed so that I could gather new information. These journals were accomplished to help me understand the nature of the three research questions. That is, I conducted one researcher's journal per each research question. The purposes for this study were to explain how the daily life characteristics of the non-traditional student population influence in the learning process and to describe how they are being instructed in the EFL.

On the one hand, the first researcher's journal supported me so that I could get to the results from the first research question; the one about the role of English in the students' lives. Hence, after the classes, I wrote my reflections and thoughts based on what I observed from the learners. Furthermore, after three lessons, I checked their notes and I asked them some key questions based on the events observed.

On the second hand, the second journal was vital to understand the second research question; the one about challenges and learning implications. In other words, I made enquiries about the non-traditional student's daily-life characteristics concerning their jobs affairs and family commitments in order to better understand what happen with the non-tradition students' lives.

Finally, the third research journal helped to comprehend the third research question, the one about the characteristics of the non-traditional students' English instruction. That is why, at the end of each teaching lesson and after adding details, I analyzed the events observed as part of the teaching practice; I wrote every single feature that could contribute to describe the teacher's actions and andragogy. With reference to Freeman (1998),

“Journals record thoughts, feelings, reflections, and observations of the writer. They may be focused on a specific lesson, activity, or student; they can describe the writer's more general day-to-day thinking or questions. And its purpose is to identify issues, puzzles or questions in teaching” (p210).

In the same way, Seliger and Shohamy (2001) report that journals are the researcher's reflection record in writing about different aspects and phenomena in relation to students' language learning experiences and teachers' language teaching practice.

In brief, the three research journals were highly important to understand the process of analyzing and interpreting the data, and they helped me to confirm and disconfirm findings easier when triangulating the information across the other data collection methods.

#### **6.4 Researcher's role**

Partially, I had an insider role taking into account that I had been part of that population when I studied at a night shift school. When it was time to take a break at the cafeteria place, I talked to the five non-traditional students: Emerida, Hector, Yesenia, Janeth and Adriana because I felt confident to do it. In addition, I checked their notebooks; I asked them key questions based on the events observed, and on what I felt and thought.

#### **6.5 Data analysis**

From the first reading of piece of data, I realized that some events observed were interesting for my purposes. Then, when the second piece of data was collected, I re-read both of them and some initial codes emerged from these so that I could guide the analysis process. As I did this, I started to take time after each class session over the researcher's journals writing my thoughts, feelings and questions from what I observed and asked to the learners and teacher as well as from what I read on the interviews. While these research actions and procedures occurred, I made connections to the research questions. Furthermore, at this stage I started making clusters, teasing out themes and coding for the first time. This process of analyzing occurred as I collected data; hence, I transcribed the data as I collected it.

As a result of appearing new data, new codes emerged inasmuch as I re-read the data already analyzed and the new one so that I could find similarities and contradictions among the data collection methods. Consequently, data collected across the methods started to support some of the first codes as well as the new ones. As a result, the re-reading and revisiting of data continued once more; the data were re-read and checked upon all the methods. Consequently, this triangulation confirmed the findings of this study.



On the one hand, the interviews were conducted individually to the five non-traditional students. Once the data were transcribed, I divided the interviews into three categories as follows: interests and expectations in relation to the foreign language “A”, English language background among the nontraditional students “B” and, challenges and their implications for learning “C”. I did this so that I could organize the data to support the findings from the research questions one and two.

On the other hand, I organized the findings obtained for the third research question into two main categories: 1. background to language teaching, and 2. Classroom management. The first main category was divided into four categories: teaching method, lesson planning, education and technology, and English language skills. The second main category was divided into three ones: seating arrangement, interaction patterns, and monitoring classroom activities. This organization was vital for two reasons; first, to present the findings in order, second, to develop the discussion section more effectively. The following chart shows the way they were grouped:

First research question:	What is the role of English in the 10 <sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students' lives?
<b>CATEGORY OF DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
A. interests and expectations in relation to the foreign language	1. Non-traditional students are motivated to learn the English language for different personal interests: future job opportunities, family support and travels abroad for job seeking.
B. English language background among the non-traditional students	2. For the nature of this study, non-traditional students return to the academic setting with no knowledge of the English language.

Second research question:	What challenges do the 10 <sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students face as they go through education?
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
C. challenges and their implications for learning	Daily-life activities such as job affairs, housework and family commitments are negative factors that interfere with the non-traditional student's English language development.

Third research question:	1. What characterizes the English instruction for 10 <sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students at this school?
<b>MAIN CATEGORY:</b> <b>Framework to language teaching</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
Teaching method	The Grammar-Translation Method is adopted by the teacher in order to develop his lessons.
Lesson planning	The teacher plans his lessons by heart. Consequently, He does not write his lesson plan on a paper.
Education and technology	The use of technology is not implemented into the language teaching practice for the 10 <sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students.
English language skills	The teacher's language used in the classroom in order to facilitate his lessons is Spanish.

<b>MAIN CATEGORY:</b> <b>Classroom management</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
Seating arrangement	Desk rows arrangement is the strategy adopted by the teacher in his lessons to organize the classroom and the learners.
Interaction patterns	Open class and individual work are the patterns for interaction implemented by the facilitator in the classroom.
Monitoring classroom activities	The teacher places few demands and controls on the learners' performance when dealing with activities and tasks in the classroom.

## 7. Findings

The objectives for this study were to explain how the daily-life characteristics of the non-traditional students' population influence on the learning process, and to describe how they are being educated upon the English foreign language at the present time. Thus, results upon their expectations and interests on the English language and the challenges they faced are presented. In addition, some characteristics of their instruction were investigated as well.

### Nontraditional students

#### A. Interests and expectations in relation to the foreign language

When thinking about the English language, non-traditional students have some purposes in mind. They are inclined to learn the English language for external factors, and expect to take future labor advantages from the foreign language. Non-traditional students are motivated to learn the English language for different personal interests: future job opportunities, family support and travels abroad for job seeking. In other words, they want to improve their standard of living and receiving much compensation entailed by the command of English language. Hector is a non-traditional student who participated in this study. When asking him about his expectations and interests concerning the (EFL) in the interviews, his answers were as follows:

- A.
1. Researcher: bueno Héctor yo le voy a hacer unas preguntas y entonces usted me las responde con la verdad por favor
  2. Héctor: con la verdad y nada más que la verdad
  3. Researcher: bueno Héctor, ¿usted qué piensa de la lengua inglesa?
  4. Héctor: hum
  5. Researcher: del inglés ¿usted qué piensa?
  6. Héctor: ¿Qué pienso? He pues a ver... para nosotros es muy interesante aprender pues otros idiomas, y la lengua inglesa dicen que es la más fácil para aprender. Um, pues a mí me gustaría aprender más sobre ella. Y lo que pienso es que es muy importante porque con ella se hacen los negocios en el mundo.

7. Researcher: O.K, um ju. O sea que para usted es importante, ¿por qué?

8. Héctor: porque pues le abre más puertas a uno, y pues uno sabiendo siquiera un idioma más especialmente el inglés porque, porque es en el que se hacen los negocios. Pues yo creo que uno tiene más, más posibilidades de conseguir empleo.

9. Researcher: O.K, ¿Cómo cree usted que aprender inglés podría influenciar su vida?

10. Héctor: haber, ¿aprender inglés para influenciar mi vida? De Influenciarla... pues...

11. Researcher: ¿entiende lo que le pregunto o le repito la pregunta?

12. Héctor: ha no, no...Creo que, que como que me estoy perdiendo ahí. De influenciar en...

13. Researcher: para bien, ósea ¿Cómo cree usted que el inglés podría de pronto dar un cambio en su vida, si podría servirle?

14. Héctor: ha...

15. Researcher: ¿o que influencias o cosas buenas le podría traer, o Malas?

16. Héctor: pues yo le digo, por ejemplo de las buenas pues son muchas: que por ejemplo uno puede conseguir un trabajo mejor, porque ya con el bachiller y sabiendo algo de inglés uno puede conseguir un trabajo en una empresa. Por ejemplo hay... yo por ejemplo iba a conseguir un trabajo en una empresa donde la mayoría de maquinas vienen en inglés, entonces uno aprende ya como es que hay que hacer las cosas y eso me influiría para bien. Para un trabajo mejor.

In this exchange, Héctor looked enthusiastic when responding to what he thought of the English language. He acknowledged the hope for learning the English language as an advantage to have a better occupation (see turns 3-8). Later on, in the interview, another question was asked for checking the meaning of his words. Hector commented that he had had a past opportunity in which he could have gotten a job in a certain industry where the English language was a

requirement because of the fact that most of the machines' manuals of operation and control key functions were printed in the English language. Consequently, he corroborated the hope for learning the English language to be competent in the labor market (9-16). Next, Yesenia coincided with Hector's wishes, (learning the English language for future job opportunities).

- A.
1. Researcher: Yesenia buenas noches
  2. Yesenia: buenas noches
  3. Researcher: yo te voy a hacer una entrevista. Y espero que por favor me contestes con su mayor sinceridad.
  4. Yesenia: bueno
  5. Researcher: Yesenia ¿usted me puede decir qué piensa de la lengua inglesa?
  6. Yesenia: pues yo pienso que la lengua inglesa es muy importante... la lengua inglesa es muy importante ya pues que puede uno aprender mucho y sobre todo que le brinda a uno más oportunidades, pues creo yo para una buena labor. Como para aspirar a algo bueno es importante tener ese lenguaje.
  7. Researcher: o sea usted piensa que el inglés es algo bueno
  8. Yesenia: si
  9. Researcher: ¿qué es una oportunidad?
  10. Yesenia: sí que es una oportunidad muy buena para uno
  11. Researcher: O.K, entonces el inglés es para usted muy importante
  12. Yesenia: si, si
  13. Researcher: ¿y por qué?
  14. Yesenia: pues porque le genera a uno más oportunidades
  15. Researcher: ¿usted lo ve desde que punto de vista, laboral o por que le gusta?
  16. Yesenia: yo pienso es en lo laboral. No y es bueno uno saber poderse defender con este idioma, es importante.
  17. Researcher: cuénteme... ¿cómo cree usted que aprender inglés podría influenciar su vida?

18. Yesenia: ¿Cómo así? como creo yo que...
19. Researcher: bueno le cambio la pregunta. ¿Cómo cree usted que el hecho de saber inglés podría cambiar su vida.
20. Yesenia: pues a mí me ayudaría mucho en lo económico. Podría ayudar mucho a mi familia, podría aprender y así ayudarle a mi familia.

In this exchange, Yesenia states that the English language is so much essential for having a better standard of living as an advantage to get new job possibilities (turns 5-16). Furthermore, there is another important aspect for Yesenia's expectations upon the English foreign language; she commented that learning the English language could improve her and her family level of comfort due to the labor opportunities offered as advantage of learning the English language (17-20). Besides seeing the English language as personal interest another learner named by herself as 'student 1' also corresponds with the same ideas.

- A.
1. Researcher: hola buenas noches estudiante uno. Hoy le voy a hacer una entrevista y espero que me conteste con la mayor sinceridad.
  2. Student 1: claro
  3. Researcher: ¿Dígame, usted qué piensa de la lengua inglesa?
  4. Student 1: la lengua inglesa me parece una lengua muy interesante además que eso es una lengua universal.
  5. Researcher: ¿no más?
  6. Student 1: no más, Pues imagínese si es universal o sea que si usted se va el día de mañana tiene la oportunidad de irse para otro país y usted maneja la lengua inglesa bien, usted puede comunicarse muy fácil en cualquier parte del mundo.
  7. Researcher: ¿ósea que es importante para usted la lengua inglesa?
  8. Student 1: si bastante importante por lo que acabo de mencionar he... además que es la lengua que me gusta y me gustaría aprenderla y comprenderla muy bien.

9. Researcher: O.K, ¿Cómo cree usted que aprender inglés podría influenciar su vida?

10. Student 1: yo diría que mucho, mucho... o sea aprender inglés sería una influencia muy grande en mi vida porque es que como el inglés... anteriormente el analfabeta era el que no sabía leer ni escribir, hoy en día el analfabeta es el que no sabe inglés y no sabe sistemas. Entonces si uno sabe inglés se puede desempeñar muy bien en otros campos. Inclusive, por ejemplo, a mi me han llegado clientas que me hablan en inglés y yo soy bregando a entenderles y entonces como las va a entender uno. Eso se mueve en todos los campos, es muy importante.

Janeth named by herself at that time as (Student 1) stated that being an English speaker entails great opportunities to travel abroad (turn 6). Moreover, she admitted that it is a tool for communication (turns 4-6). In addition, she said that some costumers arrived to the place where she works and they had asked her for her services using the English language. For the moment, it has been a disadvantage for her business. Even though she considered important the idea of going out of the country and being competent to communicating her ideas, she highlighted the fact that her enthusiasm for learning is determined for personal interest (turns 6 and 10). Consequently, she emphasized that as a future English speaker, the foreign language could entail better advantages in order to improve her job service and other future job opportunities (turns 9 and 10).

The following non-traditional student concluded in this respect:

- A.
1. Researcher: buenas noches Adriana
  2. Adriana: buenas noches
  3. Researcher: hoy le voy a hacer una entrevista para mi proyecto de investigación. Solo espero que me conteste con toda sinceridad por favor.
  4. Adriana: claro que sí
  5. Researcher: O.K, entonces dígame ¿qué piensa usted de la lengua inglesa?
  6. Adriana: pienso que es muy importante. Que es muy importante y



que se ha extendido a muchos países, y es como la oportunidad que uno tiene para abrirse muchas metas. Me parece que está bien.

7. Researcher: um ju, O.K, ¿Usted dice que es importante... bueno qué es importante para usted o qué realmente no?
8. Adriana: para mi sí porque he sabido que pueden a uno abrirsele puertas, oportunidades para algo mejor.
9. Researcher: ¿Cómo cuales usted cree?
10. Adriana: Laboralmente y también personalmente por que uno no sabe en qué momento he... lo va a necesitar uno. A si no sea para trabajo lo va a necesitar a nivel personal.

Adriana commented her expectations on the English language development. She knows about the English language influence around the world and she imagines travelling for both to get new labor opportunities and to achieve personal goals (turns 5-10). Consequently, she highlighted the wish for learning the English language for two purposes: to travel abroad for job seeking and, or to stay in the city to get a better labor opportunity. In summary, non-traditional students expectations and wishes for learning the English language are determined by external factors.

The following information was taken from the researcher's journal, one of the other methods used to collect the data required to get to the findings.

**October 11, 2009**  
**Journal entry:**

Today I revised carefully the observations number three and I noticed that most of the students were enthusiastic to participate in the class by asking the teacher for explanations and doing exercises. This could be inferred with the idea that the learners have a positive attitude toward learning English. On the other hand, I checked their notebooks and four of the five students had written the exercises done by the teacher on the board. In general, the student's willingness to participate actively continues, but the student's English language demonstrated in the classroom when going out to resolve exercises is too much poor.

This entry shows the learners' enthusiasm for participating actively in class. The way they behave in class entails a positive position toward learning the English

foreign language. In addition, the learners respond well to homework assigned by the teacher. Even though their English language abilities are too poor, they make more effort to improve them.

### **B. English language background among the non-traditional students**

For the nature of this study non-traditional students returned to the academic setting with no knowledge of the English language skills (the participants in this study). When asking, talking, observing and testing the non-traditional students, results were revealed as negative upon their English language knowledge. Non-traditional students neither took any English course nor travelled abroad to acquire the English language during the years that they were out of the academic setting. This result confirmed my perceptions; I had designed previously the interviews to be conducted either in the Spanish language or in English language. When interviewing the learners questions and sample readings were performed in order to check whether they had any English language skills or not. The following pieces of data are displayed to explain the nature of this result

- B.
1. Researcher: cuénteme Yesenia, ¿antes de usted entrar al colegio había estudiado inglés?
  2. Yesenia: no señor
  3. Researcher: ¿no, nada, en ninguna parte?
  4. Yesenia: no señor
  5. Researcher: ¿usted saber leer en español?
  6. Yesenia: si señor
  7. Researcher: ¿y en inglés?
  8. Yesenia: no en inglés no, en inglés me va mal, no
  9. Researcher: ¿usted podría por favor hacer su mejor esfuerzo para leer desde aquí hasta aquí.

Sample to be read:

“I will have partially an insider role taking into account that I was part of that population when I studied at a night shift school.”

10. Yesenia: “i uas jai parti partili an ansider rol takin into tuan di buas

par di da población buen i estudent a nai chif sku:l”

11. Researcher: hasta ahí, O.K, ¿Usted cree interpretar lo que dice ahí?

12. Yesenia: pues yo participe... Cierto, no no no, no no creo, no.

She accepted that she had never studied the English language during the years she was out of the academic setting. Furthermore, she recognized that she did it too bad when dealing with the English subject as non-traditional student (turns 1-8). In addition to trying reading the sample, her speaking skill was wrong in terms of pronunciation. Furthermore, her reading comprehension level was considerably low. When she pronounced the letter ‘l’, it sounded exactly as the letter / i / in the Spanish language. Despite trying to pronounce the auxiliary verb ‘will’, it sounded so much strange similar to the word ‘was’ in the English language. When articulating the word ‘partially’, it sounded as the word ‘party’ / pa:rti / in the English language as well. In short, only two words ‘into and school’ were pronounced as satisfactory from the amount of the sample text. Following, another participant named Adriana showed not having English language skills at all:

- B.
1. Researcher: O.K, dígame algo, ¿usted antes de entrar al colegio había estudiado inglés?
  2. Adriana: no, nunca
  3. Researcher: ¿nunca?
  4. Adriana: nunca, nunca solamente lo que le enseñan a uno en el colegio. Y ahorita que volví a estudiar pero ya regresa uno más perdida que envolatada jajajajaja.
  8. Researcher: jajaja, O.K, ¿usted sabe leer en español?
  9. Adriana: si, si yo sé leer en español
  10. Researcher: ¿sabe leer en inglés?
  11. Adriana: no no, no sé leer en inglés. Para nada me toca que utilizar el diccionario hay como para poder defenderme un poquito
  12. Researcher: ¿tú me podrías decir esta primera línea hasta dónde va el punto... leer esa parte? como tu creas que se lee.

Sample to be read:

I will have partially an insider role taking into account that I was part of that population when I studied at a night shift school.

13. Adriana: ai uil jay partil ansider rol takin into acounta i buas par o ta popula.. población uen ey estuden a nai shi eskul.
14. Researcher: O.K, muy bien, sigamos ¿por qué cree usted o que es lo que más le parece difícil de leer?
15. Adriana: todo
16. Researcher: ¿la comprensión, tu sabes que dice ahí?
17. Adriana: no
18. Researcher: ¿no tienes ni idea?
19. Adriana: no nada

Adriana accepted she had never studied the English language during the time she gave school up. Moreover, she explained that after her return to the academic setting, she came back to some extent confused with the academic situation (turns 1-4). That is, she meant that her previous English language skills, if any, had been diminished due to the time out of the school. As a result, this information explains itself the nature of the fact that she being a non-traditional student, came back to study with no knowledge of the English language. In addition, when she tried to pronounce the sample reading, she failed to articulate the words in terms of accuracy, intonation and fluency (turns 12 and 13). Finally, I asked her about the reading comprehension of the passage she read, and the answer was totally negative. That is, she was unable to understand the meaning of the sentence she read. (turns 14-19).

In the same way, Emerida dealt with the questions and sample reading as befits her low English level.

1. Researcher: ¿dígame usted antes de entrar al colegio había estudiado inglés?
2. Emerida: no
3. Researcher: ¿nunca?
4. Emerida: nunca. Lo poquito lo he aprendido acá
5. Researcher: ¿usted sabe leer en español?
6. Emerida: si

7. Researcher: ¿y en inglés?
8. Emerida: no, no no
9. Researcher: ¿usted podría por favor tratar de hacer lo mejor posible de leer desde aquí hasta aquí?

Sample to be read:

“I will have partially an insider role taking into account that I was part of that population when I studied at a night shift school.”

10. Emerida: ai uil jabe part, partiali...

She stops for a moment

11. Researcher: tranquila bien pueda
12. Emerida: an chive role takin it tou pli uas par o da populati3n uen estuden at eveni chi eskul.
13. Researcher: O.K, ¿usted sabe que dice ah3?
14. Emerida: hum...
15. Researcher: ni idea
16. Emerida: entiendo que hay dice colegio de resto... y estudiante, pero de resto...

In this exchange, Emerida admitted to have learned nothing about the English language during the years she abandoned her studies (1-4). Consequently, she began to read the sample, and the only words she pronounced well were ‘I and will’. Furthermore, the next one, ‘have’, she articulated as if it was written in her mother tongue / jabe /; to say the following word, ‘partially’, she got confused and she tried it in two ways: / part / and / partiali /. She stopped for a moment to carefully check the next vocabulary, (turn 10). Then, she continued reading and the only utterance well articulated by her was ‘school’, / sku:l/ (turn 12). Finally, I asked her about the sample reading comprehension, and as the other learners, she failed in comprehending the text she read. (13-16).

The following information was taken from the observations, one of the other methods used to collect the data required to get to the findings.

Observation # 1 field notes

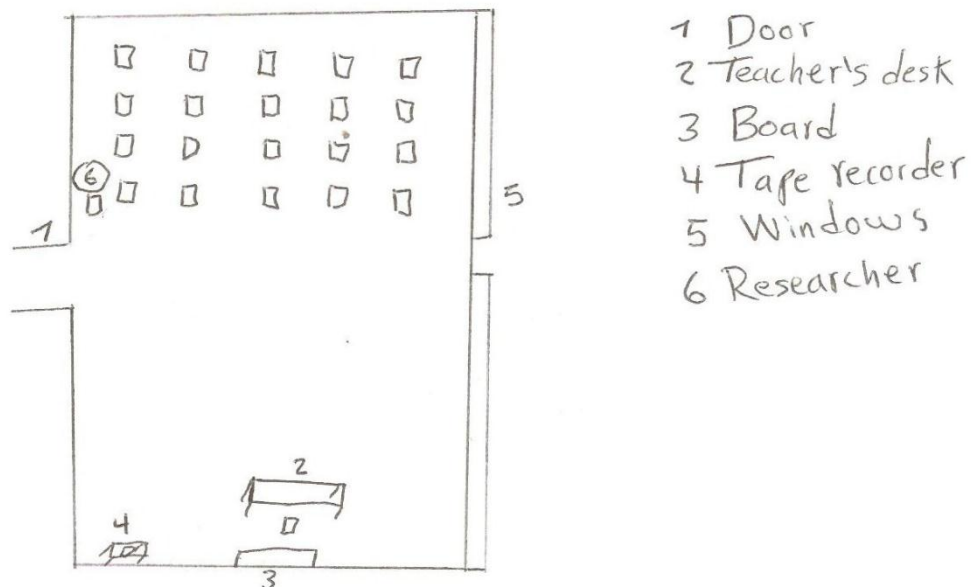
September 24, 2009

8:30 PM – 9:50 PM

English – 10<sup>th</sup> Adult High School

This is the first observation I carry out. The classroom is big, it has a good illumination and it also has two big windows. There is not any type of audiovisual aids and any use of technology is close at hand. Nevertheless, there is a tape recorder. The teacher is sat down in front of the learners and the board is behind him. The students are organized in desk rows. There are 20 students, 15 of them are less than 22 years and the rest of them are 25 and up. On the one hand, I will focus my observations on five learners: Yesenia, Emerida, Hector, Adriana and Janeth. (these are the participants' real names). On the other hand, I will observe the teacher's instructions.

Sketch of the classroom:



In the classroom the teacher asked a volunteer to review the last topic and Janeth did it.

1. T: “¿cuál fue el tema que vimos en la clase pasada?”

2. J: “los pronombres personales”

3. T:” O.K, ¿dígame qué es eso?”

4. J: “pues, yo, tu, el, ellos, nosotros y todo eso”.

Janeth stopped talking

5. T: “um... pero lo que yo le pregunto es como se dicen en inglés”

6. J: “ha, ya bueno, he, she, we and they...”

Janeth does not pronounce well the personal pronouns: ‘we and they’. The first, she articulated as /gui/ and the second one as /tei’/.

7. T: “hum... no, listen, I, you, he, she, it, we and they.”

Everybody is in silence, immediately the teacher goes to the board to write the personal pronouns. Then, he starts explaining their relation with the verb to be.

8. T: “miren estos son los pronombres personales”

The teacher pointed at the board and started saying them.

9. T: “y existe también como ustedes saben el verbo ser o estar, el “is” va con el singular y el “are” va con el plural.

10. H: “¿Como así profe?”

The teacher started explaining its structure.

11. T: “pues que el verbo ser o estar tiene dos formas una que es para uno solo y la otra para cuando es más de uno. Por ejemplo, “I” que significa “yo” es uno y por lo tanto es singular. Por el otro lado puede ser “we” que es “nosotros” y es plural. “I” va con “am” “he, she and it” van con “is” y “you, we and they” van con “are”.

12. H: “a ya profe”

13. T: “como todos están callados eso quiere decir que ya se lo saben de memoria, ¿no?”

14. Y: “yes, teacher pero más o menos”

15. T: “OK. Ustedes verán, ahora vamos a escuchar un CD y vamos a contestar preguntas”

The teacher plays the tape recorder thrice; it consists in connecting the sounds to be listened with some pictures that the teacher gave out to the learners.

16. T: “Emerida please salga y resuelva el ejercicio número uno”

17. E:” no profe yo no entendí nada”

18. T: “¿Por qué?”

19. E: “eso está muy enredado... yo solo entendí ‘mother y father’ pero no más.”

20. T: “Héctor salga y resuelva el ejercicio 1”

21. C: “! no profe yo que voy a hacer el oso a ya!”

22. T: “OK. Yo hago el primero”.

23. T: “Adriana haga el Segundo”

24. A: “bueno teacher”

25. T: “Janeth el tercero por favor”

Adriana and Janeth went to the board and they tried to solve the exercises but they were not successful. The teacher did it and continued resolving all of them.

The class started and the teacher asked Janeth for the personal pronouns. Even though she recognized some of the personal pronouns, she was unsuccessful. First, she pronounced four of them out of seven; second, she did it wrong for the words ‘we’ /wi:/, because it sounded as /gui/ and ‘they’ she pronounced (pendiente) as the sound /tei/. Despite the fact that the teacher started explaining the verb ‘to be’ agreement ‘is’ and ‘are’ to the learners, Hector got confused because he did not know about it (9 and 10). The listening activity started, it consisted in matching some pictures on a sheet with the sounds listened from the tape recorder. The teacher played the tape recorder for three times. Then, he asked the students to resolve the exercises. Even though he gave them plenty of chances to listen to the CD (three times) and the exercises were too simple to be resolved, none of the non-traditional students were able to carry out the activity. Though the teacher resolved the first exercise in front of the class, both Emerida and Hector felt unconfident to solve the ones assigned to them (16-21). Furthermore, the teacher asked Adriana and Janeth to solve the second and third exercises, but they did not achieve the desired result in the activity. Accordingly, the teacher solved the exercises and he continued solving all of them.

In order to support this finding I took information from the researcher’s journal:



**Journal entry**  
**September 26, 2009**

I noticed that the students were willing to participate in the monolog but what they did was not significant taking into account that they are 10<sup>th</sup> graders. They told me that they had been trying to remember the sentences; but that they had forgotten them. Concerning this, what I can infer is that the teacher asks the learner to learn by memorizing the sentences. On the other hand, their pronunciation is too much poor in terms of fluency and accuracy. It could be that the learners have not been exposed to use the language in interactions.

Concerning this reflection I noticed that the learners were not able to act in the monolog because they do not have the English foreign language skills so that they could have state their personal information to the class. On the first hand, they were too much nervous trying to remember what they had to say. On the other hand, the non-traditional student's pronunciation was wrong in both terms fluency and accuracy.

**C. Challenges and their implications for learning English**

Daily life-activities such as job affairs, housework and family commitments are negative factors that interfere with the non-traditional student's English language development. Non-traditional students are involved in many different time demanding activities as they go through education. Results point at 'time' as most negative indicator on the student's learning process. Following, in the interviews Yesenia points out:

- C.     1. Researcher: dígame, ¿usted tiene hijos?  
       2. Yesenia: no señor,  
       3. Researcher: he, ¿usted trabaja?  
       4. Yesenia: si señor  
       5. Researcher: ¿donde trabaja?  
       6. Yesenia: en un restaurante  
       7. Researcher: ¡en un restaurante, muy bien! ¿Cuánto tiempo trabaja usted?  
       8. Yesenia: pues en esta empresa llevo 4 meses  
       9. Researcher: me refiero a cuánto tiempo diariamente. ¿Cuál es su horario?

10. Yesenia: nueve horas diarias
11. Researcher: O.K, thank you, me parece muy bien
12. Researcher: Yesenia, ¿usted que hace normalmente cuando llega a casa del trabajo y luego tiene que venirse a estudiar, algún oficio extra en la casa o cuáles son sus labores aparte de trabajadora?
13. Yesenia: bueno aparte de mi trabajo yo llego a mi casa a hacer todo lo de la casa, los oficios en la casa como arreglar comida y lavar ropa. Y en realidad no me queda tiempo para dedicarle al estudio. Por eso se me dificulta mucho. Porque hay días que en realidad no me queda tiempo de mirar los cuadernos, de hacer las tareas. Y en el trabajo también hay días que no puedo asistir a clases, ya que tengo que cumplir horas extras entonces siempre se me dificulta por eso. Las labores en la casa es demasiado, yo llego, organizo todo y estoy llegando a clases prácticamente ya cuando han ingresado todos los compañeros. Yo siempre me pierdo unos minutos de clase.
14. Researcher: hum, y eso que cuando tiene horas extras en el trabajo no puede asistir a clases
15. Yesenia: cuando tengo horas extras no puedo asistir a clases me toca seguir en el trabajo por ahí hasta las 10 de la noche, 11. Entonces se me dificulta mucho para asistir a la clase.
16. Researcher: Muchísimas gracias Yesenia por su sinceridad muy formal
17. Yesenia: ha con mucho gusto.

Yesenia states that there are two facts that impede her to do her best effort to face the academic performance. Those are her job and her house-work responsibilities (turns 9-15). On the one hand, she has to accomplish it during nine hours every day. Furthermore, she explains that due to her job schedule; she has arrived late to the school many times. Moreover, when she was not allowed to finish at work on time, she did not go to study as usual. On the other hand, she has to do all the house-work as soon as she leaves from work. Then, she has to go to the school if she has the time available after finishing her

commitments (13). In other words, these are big obstacles and difficult challenges that impede her to perform well on her academic performance.



With regard to Adriana, those daily-life activities such as family commitments and housework are too much time demanding, and they are unsupportive for her educational purposes.

1. Researcher: ¿usted tiene hijos?
2. Adriana: si una niña
3. Researcher: ¿Qué edad tiene la niña?
4. Adriana: 10 años
5. Researcher: ¿10 años?
6. Adriana: si
7. Researcher: O.K, bueno. ¿Y la niña estudia?
8. Adriana: si ella estudia esta en cuarto de primaria
9. Researcher: hum bueno. ¿Dónde estudia la niña?
10. Adriana: estudia en la Carlota Sánchez, en el nivel de primaria
11. Researcher: ¿usted trabaja?
12. Adriana: no estoy laborando en ninguna parte pero si tengo mis obligaciones en mi casa, tengo que despachar la niña al colegio... las obligaciones que uno tiene en la casa es como si uno tuviera otro trabajo.
13. Researcher: bueno, ¿pues dígame normalmente como es un día para usted?
14. Adriana: un día para mi comienza antes de las 5 de la mañana me levanto alisto almuerzo para que lleve mi esposo, levanto la niña la despacho para el colegio, la llevo la traigo y ya las obligaciones que tengo pues... la casa y el aseo. Ya saco algo de tiempo para organizar mis tareas, algunas veces tengo que pagar servicios el teléfono. Cosas así o sacar una cita médica o cualquier cosa así entonces no le queda como el tiempo para realizar todos los deberes escolares.
15. Researcher: O.K, ¿Cuánto tiempo usted cree que le dedica al inglés en la casa?

16. Adriana: no muy poco yo vengo a coger el cuaderno cuando toca Ese día de clases, o de pronto lo cojo cuando tengo alguna tarea. Pero que uno lo coja como practicar o como para envolverse en el tema, no, es muy difícil.
17. Me queda muy difícil por las obligaciones que tengo.
18. Researcher: ¿por la falta de tiempo?
19. Adriana: si que fuera que uno solo viera inglés, sino que uno ve muchas materias, entonces un día le hace uno a un taller en un trabajo, otro día de otra área, entonces queda muy difícil dedicarle al inglés solamente.

Adriana highlights the fact that she has to deal with her family commitments and housework as part of her daily activities. Consequently, she states that those daily activities are too much time demanding; she has no free time to manage neither with her English subject tasks nor in any situation to practice the English language (16). Moreover, Adriana has a daughter who is at primary school; Adriana gets up early to help her girl to go to the school, and to prepare the food for her husband to carry it to his job. Then, she deals with the housework and any other extra activities that arise as a result of the fact that she is a housewife (13 and 14). Although she admitted to having had some time to perform the school tasks at home, it is not enough to learn a language. The process of learning a language requires a lot of effort to achieve the desired effect because it demands much time and practice.

Likewise, Hemerida is a worker, a housewife, and a mother who always faces these challenges every day. In other words, she takes care of her family, she works, she does the housework and she manages with the time in order to study.

1. Researcher: O.K, dígame Hemerida, ¿usted tiene hijos?
2. Emerida: tengo una niña de 15 años
3. Researcher: ¿de 15 años?
4. Emerida: si

5. Researcher: ¿y la niña estudia?
6. Emerida: si esta en grado noveno en la jornada de la mañana
7. Researcher: a que bueno ya esta grande
8. Emerida: pues....
9. Researcher: ¡ja! 15 años. Dígame ¿usted trabaja Emerida?
10. Emerida: si
11. Researcher: ¿si, en que trabaja?
12. Emerida: trabajo como secretaria en un consultorio medico
13. Researcher: a que bueno tiene buen trabajo. ¿Cuántas horas trabaja normalmente?
14. Emerida: he, 8 horas, de 8 a 12 y de 2 a 6
15. Researcher: ¿y entonces como hace, a qué horas...?
16. Emerida: pues a ratos a veces allá en el trabajo cuando no hay como muchas cositas trato de adelantar mis trabajos extra clase. Pues porque mi jefe me ha colaborado mucho, que siga para adelante que termine mi estudio. Entonces él me da el espacio para que cuando me quede espacio libre empiece a adelantar. Y los domingos que es el único día que me queda también.

Emerida has a full-time job in a surgery; there she works eight hours from eight to twelve and from two to six pm. Nevertheless, she is lucky inasmuch as her boss facilitates her to perform tasks at times (turn 16). Even though she is allowed to carry out her tasks at work sometimes, it is not enough to learn a foreign language. In addition, she has to manage with her family commitments and housework. Something important to highlight is the fact that she only has the last day of the week off to really pay attention to her academic affairs. However, she has to help her family to do everything at home as well. In the same way, Héctor complains about how difficult it is to study for adults non-traditional students:

1. Researcher: aja, ¿y usted tiene hijos?
2. Héctor: no tengo hijos
3. Researcher: O.K, he, ¿usted trabaja?

4. Héctor: si trabajo, si trabajo...
5. Researcher: ¿Cuál es su trabajo?
6. Héctor: mi trabajo es de pintor en un taller de láminas de puertas y ventanas de cerrajería.
  1. Researcher: si a que bueno hombre. He, ¿cuánto tiempo usted Trabaja?
8. Héctor: yo trabajo 8 o 9 horas diarias
9. Researcher: O.K,
10. Héctor: los 6 días de la semana
11. Researcher: um ju. De qué horas, ¿Qué horario tiene usted?
12. Héctor: yo trabajo de 8 de la mañana a 12 y de 1 a 5:30 como 8 horas y media pero hay veces que me quedo hasta las 6
13. Researcher: ¿entonces como hace para irse para el colegio?
14. Héctor: pues salgo empepeucado a bañarme para irme para el colegio. Muchas veces a uno le toca muy difícil, pero eso son cosas que uno de pelado no piensa. El bachiller es muy importante
15. Researcher: ha claro, cuando usted era más joven
16. Héctor: aja

Hector comments that he has a full-time job in a factory that manufactures doors and windows for building purposes. He complains about the difficulty of working and studying at the same time (turn 14). Consequently, he has to leave from his job and try to be at the school on time. In fact, he recognized that it would have been better if he had finished the high-school education long before when he was younger.

This is an entry from the researcher's journal; the other data collection method used to gather information in order to get to result of the second research question.

**Journal entry**  
**September 27**

Last Friday I arrived to school all too soon, I started watching the learners playing soccer except the ones of my research study. When I arrived to

the classroom Yesenia neither was in class nor Hector. Even though Adriana was very enthusiastic when participating in class, she demonstrated not having English language skills because her words were wrong pronounced. I heard Adriana talking about serious financial problems, I wonder if she has to face difficult living conditions as I do because I have to support financially my family, to work and to study at the same time.

In this entry I noticed that some learners did not come to study. These repeated absences from school surprised me. In addition, I heard Adriana talking about economical difficulties which could have entailed problems to continue studying. Something important to highlight is that working, taking care of a family and studying as part of daily life activities is too much complex.

As a result of dealing with family commitments and job affairs, studying turns into an enormous challenge. Next, another journal entry confirms my perceptions.

**Journal entry**  
**October 13**

I was at the cafeteria place drinking some coffee when Yesenia, Janeth and Hector arrived to eat something. I approached to them with the hope of inquiring about their life concerns if any. Yesenia commented that she is about to quit studying because she is missing many classes due to her job commitments. Janeth is worried about one of her sons who is sick at the moment. In addition, she told me that the academic performance was something that was not in mind at that moment. There is something positive about Hector; he told me he was so much happy since he knew his wife was pregnant.

In this entry Yesenia stated that due to her responsibilities in the workplace she is about to give up studying. Consequently, she stopped studying the following week. On the other hand, Janeth highlights that due to the temporary condition of her son, she thinks the school attendance and performance could be affected.

In the following section, the results upon the teacher's language instruction characteristics are displayed.

### Framework to language teaching:

#### Teaching Method

The Grammar-Translation Method is adopted by the teacher in order to carry out his lessons. Hence, explanation of grammar rules, translation of disconnected sentences and isolated words took place throughout the eight lessons observed; those teaching characteristics played an important role for the teacher's instruction. In addition, memory and translation are the key learning strategies implemented by the facilitator when dealing with the teaching practice. Following, in observation three and four data are displayed to support this result. Here is an approximation of the classroom:

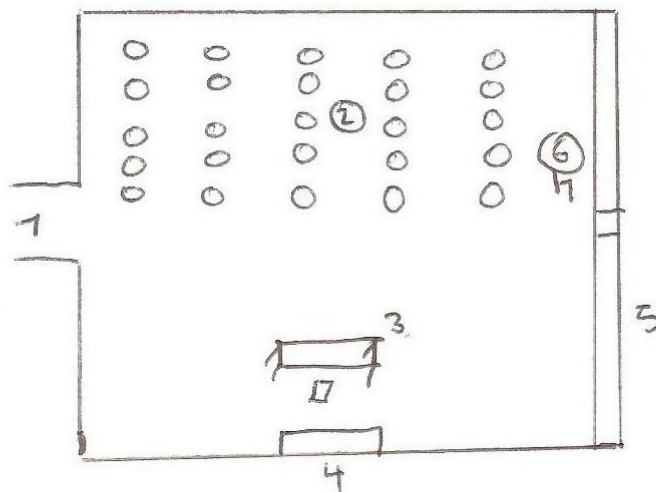
Observation # 3

October 8, 2009

8:30 PM – 9:20 PM

English – 10<sup>th</sup> grade Adult High School

Classroom representation:



1. Door
2. Students
3. Teacher
4. Board
5. Windows
6. Researcher



Sample taken from the observations:

The class started on time and everything in the classroom is located in the same place. There is not any type of audiovisual aid, multimedia tools and any use of technology is close at hand to be implemented in the classroom. Nevertheless, the teacher has a laptop computer on the table. The teacher is sitting in front of the learners and the board is behind him. The students are as usual in desk rows arrangement the lesson for today is about past simple.

1. T: "good evening everybody,"
2. E: "good evening teacher, ¿Como estas?"
3. T: "fine"
4. H: "profe ya estoy traduciendo todos esos verbos que usted nos dijo que tradujéramos a español.
5. T: "¿y cómo va?"
6. H: "no pues bien, pero eso es muy difícil memorizarlos todos".

Héctor spoke louder.

7. T: "hágale siga intentándolo, esa es la única forma de aprendérselos y eso es para todos. Si se aprenden esos verbos de memoria pueden ver el siguiente tema, de lo contrario es imposible. Y a propósito hoy empezamos un tema nuevo, se llama pasado simple."

The teacher went to the board and started writing. In brief, he explained the use of the verbs in present simple and in past simple.

8. T: " bueno como ustedes saben el presente simple se usa para cosas que pasan en el día a día. El pasado simple para cosas que ya pasaron, por eso se llama pasado simple. Por ejemplo si yo digo: Yo hablo español muy bien, como en la siguiente frase: 'I speak Spanish very well', entonces en pasado simple yo diría: 'yo hablaba español muy bien cuando yo tenía siete años', como en la siguiente frase. 'I spoke Spanish very well when I was 7'. "

The teacher continued writing on the board.

9. T: “vean pues, como en el presente, los pronombres van de acuerdo con el verbo. Por ejemplo, “I, he, she and it” van con “was” y “you, we and they” van con “were”.

The teacher explained while he wrote on the board.

10. H: “¿pero profe y después que sigue?”

11. T: “¿Qué sigue?”

12. H: “si profe por ejemplo yo digo ‘I was’ ¿y después que digo?”

13. T: “lo que quiera, por ejemplo: ‘I was a soldier.’ Que quiere decir: “yo era un soldado.” Pero como es pasado entonces le agregamos una expresión de tiempo. ‘I was a soldier last year.’ ‘Yo era un soldado el año pasado’. Bueno apunten para que no se les olvide. Les voy a enseñar esas expresiones de tiempo.”

The teacher started writing a list of time expressions.

14. J: “¿profe o sea que cualquier cosa que vayamos a decir en pasado, utilizamos esas expresiones de tiempo?”

15. T: “si claro, de otra manera quedaría incompleta la oración.”

16. J: “ha bueno profe”

17. T: “ahora cada uno va a escribir tres oraciones en pasado y me las van a mostrar, OK.” [ ]...

After twenty five minutes the learners approach to the teacher to hand in their notebooks.

18. T: “bueno señores y señoras lo que puedo observar es que ustedes no tienen muy claro como se forma una oración.

“Si profe”

Most of the students answered at the same time. Then, the teacher erases the board and starts writing while explaining the grammar structure.

19. T: “primero va el pronombre, luego, el verbo, en este caso en pasado, luego sigue el complemento que normalmente es un sustantivo y finalmente, va una expresión de tiempo como las que escribí hace unos minutos. ¿Las escribieron?”

20. H: “si profe”

21. T: “bueno suficiente por hoy, ya tocaron practiquen lo de hoy y nos vemos mañana. Traduzcan este folletico.”

Everybody went out and the class finished.



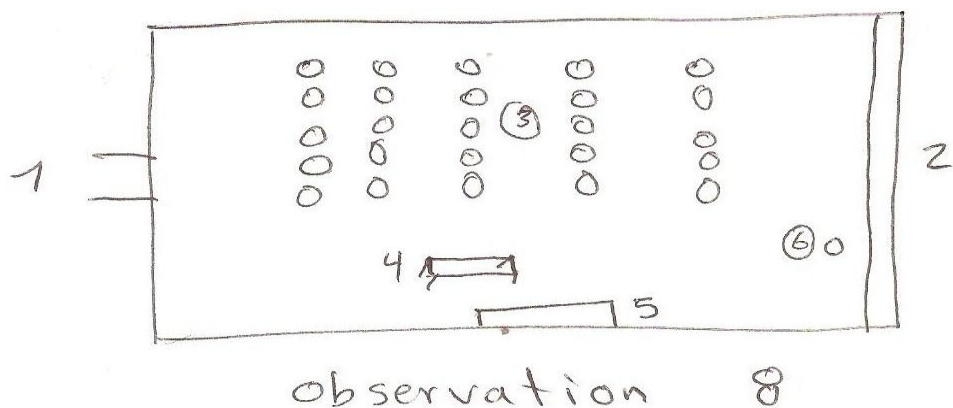
At the beginning of this lesson, Hector told the teacher that he had been translating and memorizing a list of verbs from English into Spanish (see line 4-6). Then, the teacher confirmed him that that was the only way to learn their meaning. (see turn 7). After that, the teacher started to explain the grammar structures of the present simple, past simple and the use of the personal pronouns (see turns 8 and 9). Something to highlight is the fact that the facilitator always translates sentences from English into Spanish while explaining their grammatical rules on the board (lines 8, 13). Furthermore, the teacher based his classes on grammar and translation of isolated words and disconnected sentences throughout the lessons I observed. In addition, he asks the learners to perform tasks based on the translations of texts to be accomplished at home (line 21). In the following piece of data as well as in all the information collected, the grammar-translation method is noticed as adopted by the facilitator.

Observation # 4

October 9, 2009

8:30 PM – 9:20 PM

English – 10<sup>th</sup> Adult High School



- 1 Door
- 2 Windows
- 3 Students
- 4 Teacher's desk
- 5 Board
- 6 Researcher.

This is the fourth observation, and the classroom and the learners are situated in the same shape as the previous lessons. The teacher arrived five minutes later and sits down on the same place. The classroom is in the same conditions since nothing has been changed, organized or added. The students were talking but when they saw the teacher, everybody became quiet. The teacher told them that the topic for that day was the same 'past simple'.

- 1. T: "señores hoy continuamos con el tema de la clase pasada, sin embargo hoy vamos a aprender cómo hacer preguntas."
- 2. H: "listo profe"

3. T: “bueno en español nosotros no necesitamos auxiliar para hacer preguntas pero, en inglés sí.”



The teacher went to the board and began to write the questions.

4. T: “Por ejemplo, en español nosotros decimos: ¿bebió café?, ¿usted bebió café? o ¿bebió usted café? sin embargo, en inglés no porque se necesita un auxiliar y este es el mismo verbo ser o estar. En inglés el verbo auxiliar va primero, luego, va el sujeto que puede ser un pronombre o un sustantivo y finalmente el complemento. Por ejemplo, “was George Washington the first president of the United States? ¿Fue George Washington el primer presidente de los estados unidos?, ¿ven el orden de la oración?”

The teacher continued explaining the parts of the sentence. Then, he asked the students to go to the board and write sentences to make questions.

5. T: “un voluntario que venga y escriba una sola oración”  
6. J: “listo teacher yo la hago”

Janeth went to the board and tried to construct a question. It was as follows:

7. J: “were Hector a policeman?”  
8. T: “no, no. Hay algo muy mal en esa oración. Emerida, ¿Qué está mal?”  
9. E: “no sé... de pronto... no, no sé.”  
10. T: “carlos”  
11. C: “es was no were”  
12. T: “muy bien, ¿Qué mas está mal Carlos?”  
13. C: “no... está bien”  
14. T: “Yesenia, ¿usted qué dice?”  
15. Y: “pues profe, lo que usted nos dijo de las expresiones”  
16. T: “muy bien Yesenia ¿y cuál expresión se le podría colocar?”

Yesenia did not answer

17. T: “Claudia”  
18. C: “yo creo que “last year” queda bien”  
19. T: “eso es perfecto, entonces la oración queda: “was Hector a policeman last year?”. Muy bien continuemos con el ejercicio, ¿algún

voluntario? ¿No hay voluntarios? Entonces voy a llamar al azar. Héctor salga y escriba una pregunta en inglés.”

20. H: “no profe, no tengo nada”

21. T: “pero tiene que salir y al menos intentarlo”

22. H: “pero señor no tengo nada, y me da pena salir”

23. T: “no, no, no desde que las disculpas se hicieron todos quedan bien. Entonces dejemos eso así, buenas noches señores, no demoran en tocar”

The teacher got out of the classroom and the lesson ended.

During this lesson the facilitator made some comparisons between the mother tongue and the foreign language in order to teach how to make questions (see turns 1-4). In addition, he continued instructing grammatical rules and translating them as he explained. In fact, these are characteristics of the grammar-translation method. Then, the teacher asked the learners to form three sentences into questions. When this activity finished, the students went to the board to resolve the exercises. In consequence of the teacher focused on the structures, the language was used neither on its function nor for communicative purposes (see turns 5-19).

This is an entry taken from the researcher’s journal that was conducted as data collection method:

**Journal entry**  
**October 11**

Once more, the students did not have the chance to practice the language in terms of interaction. They were all the time listening to him using the Spanish language and doing some exercises. There is not grouping to create an environment to share ideas, the teacher does not ask questions using English to practice it. I will pay closer attention to this. The use of technology has not appeared either in the teacher’s resources.

This reflection was carried out because I had noticed repeatedly the emphasis on grammar explanation and translation as well as the lack of interaction to

practice the foreign language. The fact that the teacher does not ask questions, does not group the learners to practice the language and does not talk using the English language means that he is interested in teaching the learners the grammar structures of the English foreign language.



### **Lesson planning**

Lesson planning does not take place as theory suggests. For example, by taking into account some learning and teaching components and by writing the plan on a paper. However, the teacher plans his lessons by heart. When dealing with the teaching practice, and as time and lessons went through time disorganization on the teacher's topics was noticed. Moreover, the components for a lesson plan such as aims, procedures, timing, interaction patterns, anticipated problems, stimulation of interest, pacing and timetable fit were not stated, materialized or carried out by the facilitator during his classes. In addition, only handouts were used twice during all the classes observed. Furthermore, other teaching aids such as flashcards, handouts, pictures, flipcharts, leaflets and realia among other were never used in class. Consequently, the board was the main resource used to teach. Below samples that support the lack of lesson planning are presented:

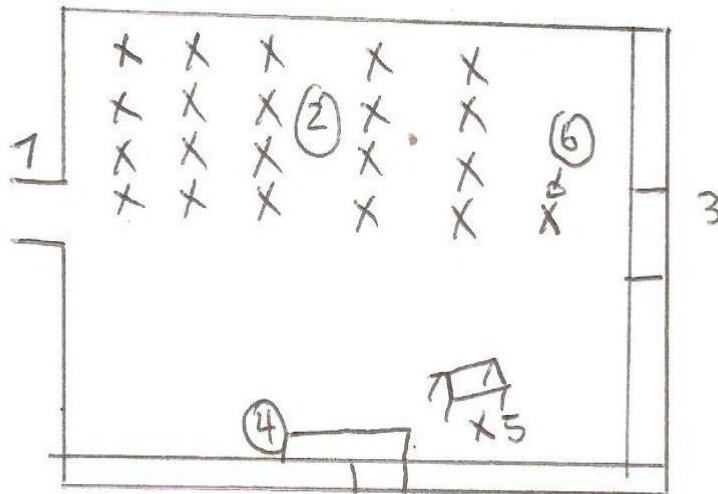
Observation # 5

October 15, 2009

8:30 PM – 9:20 PM

English – 10<sup>th</sup> Adult High School

This is an approximation of the classroom:



- 1 Door
- 2 students
- 3 windows
- 4 Board
- 5 Teacher
- 6 Researcher.

The classroom and the sitting arrangement continue the same way. There is nothing new. There are not variations at all neither for any kind of material nor for the use of technology. The teacher arrives on time and the students are getting in one by one.

The teacher goes to his desk, looks for a marker, and he approaches the board. After that, he begins to write down some sentences along with the explanation of their grammatical rules.

2. T: “vamos a hacer preguntas con el verbo ‘did’. Primero que todo el verbo ‘did’ no tiene ningún hermano, pues se utiliza con todas las personas. Miren pues, como es.”



The teacher starts to write the auxiliary verb 'did' along with an arrow pointing at the personal pronouns. Showing that when questioning this verb is for all people.

3. T: "para preguntar es lo mismo que con el verbo "ser o estar", se coloca primero. ¿Se acuerdan?"

4. E: "si profe, primero el auxiliar, luego el pronombre... ¿y qué es lo que sigue?"

5. T: "bien Emerida, atención, lo primero es el auxiliar como dijo Emerida, luego el sujeto o pronombre es lo mismo, el verbo principal en infinitivo y una expresión de tiempo porque hay que especificar cuando algo pudo haber pasado. Bueno vamos con un ejemplo."

The teacher writes a sentence on the board

6. T: "did Albert Einstein win the novel Price?" Como ven ese es el orden"

The teacher underlined each part of the sentence and labeled them with red color while explaining. On the other hand, the learners were writing down on their notebooks.

7. T: "ahora haremos otra oración en plural, "did we go to the park this morning?" ¿Fuimos nosotros al parque esta mañana? es el mismo orden de la oración anterior con la pequeña diferencia que el pronombre es plural. Eso es todo, ahora, vamos a hacer 10 ejercicios."

He writes ten wrong order sentences on the board to be structured individually. While the learners were ordering the sentences, the teacher observed his laptop computer for twenty five minutes. After that, the students started to deal with different activities. While the exercises were performing individually, most of the learners in groups talked, smiled and answered cell-phone calls.

8. T: "Adriana ven y has la primera pregunta"

Adriana went towards the board to construct the question:

9. A: "listo profe, yo no sé si está bien o no"

10. T: "no importa, inténtelo, no vaya a hacer lo que otros."

11. A: "ha bueno profe, entonces yo creo que eso es así: "did Alfred kill the great all the Vikings?"

In this lesson, the teacher started with a blackboard explanation on how to form questions with the auxiliary verb 'did'. Then, the learners were asked individually to order ten disorganized sentences into questions. Furthermore, they were asked to go to the board to write their composition. During this activity, there were not any teaching materials implemented during re-ordering the sentences nor timing was stated or took into account (see turn 7). Moreover, the facilitator was away from the class focused on his laptop computer for twenty minutes. As a result, the learners were dealing with different things instead of being focused on the task assigned. There were not any interaction patterns more than the 'open class', and the language was not practiced for communicative purposes except for grammar structure. Moreover, something important to highlight is that the teacher decided to start the explanation on the auxiliary verb 'did' teaching how to form questions instead of instructing the affirmative and the negative form before which would have been easier for them (see turn 1 and 2). Another important aspect to highlight is the fact that I never noticed any paper during the eight lessons I observed in which the teacher could have written his lesson plan. In the next lesson, the topic changed to present perfect, and the past simple instruction was taught partially. In fact, changing the topic with an incomplete explanation of the previous one indicates that his lessons did not fit logically into sequences because "present perfect" will be for learners more complex than "past simple" tense without understanding the prior knowledge needed. Lesson six evidences the too much advanced and unexpected change in topic.

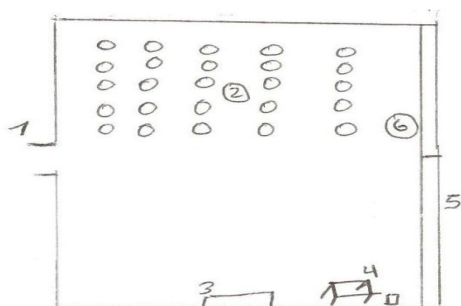
Observation # 6

October 16, 2009

8:30 – 9: 20 pm

Adult high school education

Sketch of the classroom:



Door: 1  
 Students: 2  
 Board: 3  
 Teacher: 4  
 Windows: 5  
 Researcher: 6

As all the classes observed, everything is located in the same place as always. Nothing has changed in terms of seating arrangement and teaching aids. The teacher arrived on time as usual along with the students. The topic for this lesson is “present perfect”.

1. T: “good evening everybody”
2. H: “good evening teacher”
3. A: “buenas noches profe”

The rest of the learners continue in silence

4. T: espero que hayan descansado bien y que tengan una actitud positiva. Hoy empezamos un tema nuevo, “present perfect”
5. H: “¿y eso que quiere decir señor profesor?”
6. T: “eso es “presente perfecto” y es algo a lo que tienen que ponerle mucha atención, pues es un poco más complicado.”

Everybody is quiet and paying close attention. The teacher stands up and goes to the board. Then, he gets back to the desk and takes out a pair of markers to write on the board. After that, he draws a line to indicate time.

7. T: “bueno señores, mucha atención. Esta línea representa el tiempo: presente, pasado y futuro. El pasado ya lo vimos, el presente también pero el futuro no; y no se preocupen por eso. El presente perfecto es el que empezó aquí en el pasado pero aun continua en el presente, pues, no se ha acabado.”

He points at the line to illustrate the topic.

8. T: “¿está claro?”
9. E: “no profe”
10. H: “no”

Some students state to be somewhat lost.

11. T: “bueno señores como ven el pasado tiene un fin, “¿es eso claro o no?”

The teacher looks at the class. Then, the students confirm it.

12. T: “bueno, el presente es lo que vivimos en el transcurrir del día; ¿sí o no?”

Again most of the learners corroborate what the teacher says.

13. T: “entonces el presente perfecto es una acción o algo que cualquiera empezó en el pasado, pero que aun lo sigue haciendo en el presente. Por ejemplo: yo entre al magisterio hace 17 años y aun sigo aquí. No he renunciado todavía, ni me han echado. Eso es presente perfecto.”

The teacher erased the blackboard and continued writing on it.

14. T: “miren esta oración, “I have been on the army for three years” esto quiere decir “he estado en el ejercito tres años” como se observa, la oración está compuesta por el pronombre “I” verbo auxiliar “to have” que es el que se utiliza para formar el presente perfecto, luego sigue una frase “on the army” y finalmente una expresión de tiempo “for three years” lo mismo que en el pasado aquí también existen las expresiones de tiempo.” [ ]...

28. T: “hagamos algunos ejercicios”

The teacher continues working on the board

29. T: “hagamos unas oraciones con “for”. “I have worked here for 17 years” Emerida, ¿que traduce esta oración?”

30. E: “yo he trabajado por 17 años” no sé, que es “here”

31. T: “más o menos, aquí dice “yo he trabajado aquí durante 17 años”.

32. E: “casi le pego, a la próxima profe”

The teacher continues on the board

33. T: “ahora hagamos una con tercera persona, “she has gone to Miami 4 times”. Como ven el auxiliar cambia de “have” a “has” porque es tercera persona singular, lo mismo es con “he and it”. ¿Hay necesidad de hacer otro ejemplo?”

34. A: “si profe, por favor”

The teacher smiles at her and continues the same way

35. T: “bueno con “ever” entonces. “Has he ever gone to the U.S?” esto quiere decir “¿ha él ido alguna vez a los Estados Unidos?” ahora cada uno va a hacer 5 oraciones con “ever” y cinco con “for”.

The bell rings at the same moment.

36. T: “bueno señores dejemos esos ejercicios de tarea. Que tengan buena noche”.

As a result of the teacher’s emphasis on planning lessons by heart, he forgets to follow the components of an EFL lesson as theory suggests. In this lesson the teacher decided to start the explanation of a new topic “present perfect” and he stopped instructing the previous one “past simple” incomplete (see turn 4). Once again, it is observed that he only establishes the teacher-group pattern for interaction and the procedure for the activity was the same as usual; the students trying to resolve some exercises based on grammatical rules (turns 28-33). In addition, neither variation of activities was taken into account by the facilitator nor was timing implemented to carry out the task (turns 35-36). Concerning this finding, I present an entry from the journal:

October 15, 2009

Today I observed that the teacher does not have an order to teach. It is better to instruct the affirmative sentences first, instead of starting by the question form which could be a little more difficult for them to understand. Concerning this, I approached to the teacher and asked him for his lesson plan; his answer was that he planned by heart and that he did not use any sheet to write his plans. It can be inferred that he may not plan his classes because he considers having abroad experience working with the same population and for many years. The facilitator spent too much time on his laptop computer while some of the students were out of the activity. There is something weird, he never changes the activity; it is the same for all the lessons. On the other hand, it seems that the facilitator needs to control himself and learners adequately when there is any kind of disagreement between him and the students.

The teacher is so punctual and asks the students to be on time as well. It is good in order to facilitate students not to miss anything and encourage them to have responsibility for their learning process.

Something really important to highlight from this reflection is the fact that the facilitator admitted that he did not plan the lessons on a paper. It is evidenced when he told me that he did not write his lessons plans inasmuch as he did it by heart. Indeed, it is impossible to plan lessons by memorizing all the components

to be implemented. On the other hand, there was just one activity; the one about ordering ten wrong order sentences. Another important aspect of his lesson planning is that the teacher never creates different activities so that the learners can practice the language through them. In addition, he did not check the learners upon their language development; instead, he was working on his computer on different issues.

### Education and technology

The use of technology is not implemented into the language teaching practice for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students. When dealing with the teaching practice, technology resources such as overhead projectors, PCs, internet, educational games and multimedia tools were neither implemented by the facilitator as teaching aids in the classroom nor were they asked to be used in the learning process as tasks out of the classroom. The following sample taken from observation three is presented in order to support this finding.

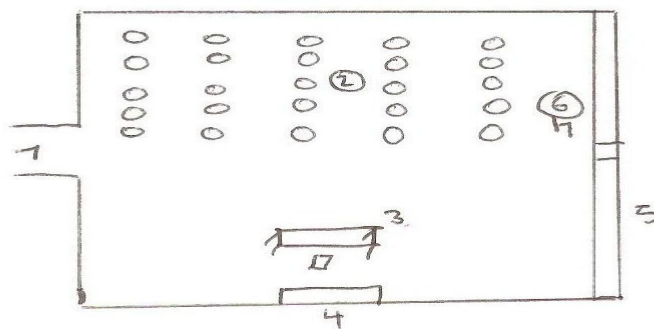
Observation # 3

October 8, 2009

8:30 PM – 9:20 PM

English – 10<sup>th</sup> grade Adult High School

The class started on time and everything in the classroom is located in the same place. There is not any type of audiovisual aid, multimedia tools and any use of technology is close at hand to be implemented in the classroom. Nevertheless, the teacher has a laptop computer on the table. Here is an approximation of the classroom:



1. Door
2. Students
3. Teacher
4. Board
5. Windows
6. Researcher

The facilitator never implemented technology in his classes during this process of investigation; it is evidenced throughout this document as data are revealed. Consequently, the facilitator considers that the only technique used to

learn vocabulary and to discover their meaning is by memorizing words. In contrast, he could have used a slides projector to present definitions, and examples with full sentences in context; or with colorful images in connection with words. For instance, the teacher could have employed a video which is a useful tool in order to convey meaning. Moreover, he could have requested the learners to practice the meaning of words and their function on a web page as an alternative. Something to highlight is the fact that the facilitator owned a laptop computer that he never used as a tool for teaching purposes. In fact, this frequent teaching by heart as strategy evidences that the facilitator is not updated with the new approaches to teach languages. A possible explanation for this result is that the teacher is not familiar with the new technological development to face the challenges of our professional duties as language teachers.

Next, I present data collected and interpreted from the researcher's journal:

**Journal entry**  
**September 25**

[ ]...it seems that technology is not part of the teaching aids. I wonder if he uses his laptop computer for pedagogical purposes. I will pay closer attention to this topic.

At that time I start noticing that the teacher did not use any kind of audio visual aid, or multimedia tool. Furthermore, he did not use either computer-assisted learning program to support his lessons, or any kind of virtual learning environment. Concerning my expectation to observe whether or not the facilitator would implement technology into language teaching, I realized that this never happen during the eight classes I observed.



### Oral skills in the English language

The teacher's language used in the classroom in order to facilitate his lessons is Spanish. A possible explanation why he spoke in Spanish language is because he was not good at speaking in the English language, or for the reason that he had forgotten how to communicate orally his ideas in the English language. In the classroom the dominant language used by the facilitator was Spanish during all the time in class. In fact, it happened in the entire amount of lessons. When the teacher stated some words in the English language, he mispronounced some words. Below, the information to support this result is presented:

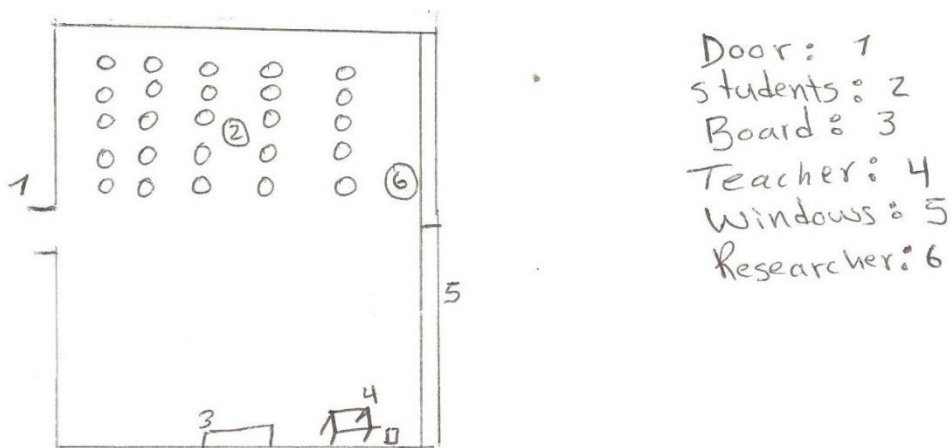
Observation sample:

Observation # 6

October 16, 2009

8:30 – 9: 20

Adult high school education



As all the classes observed, everything is located in the same place as always. Nothing has changed in terms of seating arrangement and teaching aids. The teacher arrived on time as usual along with the students. The topic for this lesson is “present perfect”.

1. T: “good evening everybody”

2. H: “good evening teacher”

3. A: “buenas noches profe”

The rest of the learners continue in silence

4. T: espero que hayan descansado bien y que tengan una actitud positiva. Hoy empezamos un tema nuevo, “present perfect”

5. H: “¿y eso que quiere decir señor profesor?”

6. T: “eso es “presente perfecto” y es algo a lo que tienen que ponerle mucha atención, pues es un poco más complicado.”

He points at a line to illustrate the topic.

8. T: “¿está claro?”

9. E: “no profe”

10. H: “no”

Some students state to be somewhat lost.

11. T: “bueno señores como ven el pasado tiene un fin, “¿es eso claro o no?”

The teacher looks at the class. Then, the students confirm it.

12. T: “bueno, el presente es lo que vivimos en el transcurrir del día; ¿sí o no?”

Again most of the learners corroborate what the teacher says.

13. T: “entonces el presente perfecto es una acción o algo que cualquiera empezó en el pasado, pero que aun lo sigue haciendo en el presente. Por ejemplo: yo entre al magisterio hace 17 años y aun sigo aquí. No he renunciado todavía, ni me han echado. Eso es presente perfecto.”

The teacher erased the blackboard and continued writing on it.

14. T: “miren esta oración, “I have been on the army for three years” esto quiere decir “he estado en el ejercito tres años” como se observa, la oración está compuesta por el pronombre “I” verbo auxiliar “to have” que es el que se utiliza para formar el presente perfecto, luego sigue una frase “on the army” y finalmente una expresión de tiempo “for three years” lo mismo que en el pasado aquí también existen las expresiones de tiempo.”

The teacher pointed at each part of the sentence while explained. The teachers' words in terms of pronunciation are not well articulated. He pronounces the word "been" as a sound in Spanish /ven/ and the word "three" /Ori: / as /tri: /, the word years /jir/ as the sound in Spanish /llears/.

15. T: "¿preguntas?"

16. J: "si profe"

17. T: "si Janeth"

18. J: "yo no entendí lo del auxiliar, ¿Cómo es eso del verbo "to have", ¿qué es eso?"

19. T: "ese es un verbo que también existe en español y en este caso quiere decir "he". Por ejemplo, "yo he bailado durante 7 años", en esta oración el "he" es el mismo verbo auxiliar "to have". Todo lo que es "yo he, el ha, nosotros hemos, ella ha, esto ha y ellos han" es el mismo verbo auxiliar del inglés. Por ejemplo, así queda la oración de arriba."

The teacher points at the sentence.

20. T: "yo he bailado durante 7 años" quedaría así, "I have danced for seven years"

21. J: "o sea que "I have danced" es como "yo he bailado". ¿Sí o no?"

22. T: "si claro, así es. Ahora vamos a ver las expresiones de tiempo y algunas frases."

The teacher continues writing on the board and giving details at the same time.

23. T: "Por ejemplo, "for" se utiliza antes de los años, los días y la hora. Ejemplo, "for two years, for three days and for five hours." Otra, "ever" se utiliza para preguntar y quiere decir "alguna vez" un ejemplo seria, "have you ever been to Brazil?" que quiere decir "ha estado usted alguna vez en Brasil?". Otra seria "never" que quiere decir "nunca" y se utiliza para dar una respuesta negativa. Por ejemplo, en la pregunta anterior podemos utilizar perfectamente este para negar y seria, "no, I have never been to brazil." Como ven no es tan difícil."

24. H: "¡que no! yo ya estoy perdido"

25. T: ¿pero por qué?

26. H: "no se eso lo veo muy enredado"

27. T: “es cuestión de practicar las reglas y hacer unos ejercicios. Ustedes saben que los parciales con migo son escritos. Yo no les voy a preguntar nada oral, así que no se preocupen.”

28. T: “hagamos algunos ejercicios”

The teacher continues working on the board

29. T: “hagamos unas oraciones con “for”. “I have worked here for 17 years” Emerida, ¿que traduce esta oración?”

30. E: “yo he trabaje por 17 años” no sé, que es “here”

31. T: “más o menos, aquí dice “yo he trabajado aquí durante 17 años”.

32. E: “casi le pego, a la próxima profe”

The teacher continues on the board

33. T: “ahora hagamos una con tercera persona, “she has gone to Miami 4 times”. Como ven el auxiliar cambia de “have” a “has” porque es tercera persona singular, lo mismo es con “he and it”. ¿Hay necesidad de hacer otro ejemplo?”

34. A: “si profe, por favor”

The teacher smiles at her and continues the same way

35. T: “bueno con “ever” entonces. “Has he ever gone to the U.S?” esto quiere decir “¿ha él ido alguna vez a los Estados Unidos?” ahora cada uno va a hacer 5 oraciones con “ever” y cinco con “for”.

The bell rings at the same moment.

36. T: “bueno señores dejemos esos ejercicios de tarea. Que tengan buena noche”.

In the classroom the facilitator articulated occasional words in the English language while writing on the board. When it occurred, a number of them sounded differently (see turn 14). He articulates the word “been” as a sound in Spanish /ven/ and the word “three” /θri: / as /tri: /, the word “years” /jiar /, as the sound in Spanish /llears/. In addition, he made clear to the learners that he only would have evaluated them upon some grammatical rules. Consequently, he advised them not to feel worried about the speaking skill development since it would not be tested (turn 27). It makes sense in view of the fact that he neither

speaks the English language nor provides it as a model for his learner's improvement of their listening and speaking skills.

In addition to observing and listening to him in class, I present a sample taken from the researcher's journal:

October 9, 2009 today after this class ending when the teacher went out, I met him going down stairs. When talking to the teacher, I realized something that for me is hard to believe, the teacher English language is too much poor. He tried using English to talk to me but he was no able to get the message. He could not communicate in English language because he needed to use Spanish to finish his ideas. I asked him why he had not understood my words, and he told me that he had forgotten his English language because of the fact that he had finished studying long time ago.

With reference to this journal entry, it was the key to understand the nature of this finding. I confirmed what I have heard in all the classes observed. Nevertheless, I was quite impressed when I realized that the teacher was not able to answer my questions in view of the fact that he does not speak English. Furthermore, he admitted he did not speak the English language inasmuch as he had not practiced the language since he graduated from the university in 1979.

The following category presents the findings from the teacher's strategies and techniques of another vital aspect when teaching a language; classroom management.

## **Classroom management**

### **Seating arrangement and interaction patterns**

Desk rows arrangement is the strategy adopted by the teacher in his lessons to organize the classroom and the learners. In class, the teacher always stands in front of the learners. This was the only and proper way used to arrange the classroom for the teacher's criterion. Because the classroom was never arranged in a different way, the activities were the same for all the lessons. "Open class" and "individual work" are the patterns for interaction implemented by the facilitator in the classroom. There were not any variation of activities and there was not grouping, or pair work implemented to deal with activities or to practice the language. Throughout the data collected, these events were noticed. The following data illustrates and supports these findings:

### **Seating arrangement**

#### **Observation # 8**

November 5, 2009

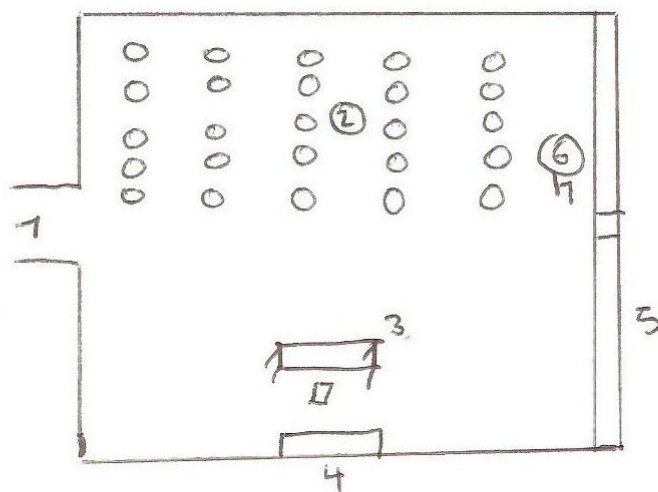
8:30 – 9: 20

Adult high school education

The class organization and the students arrangement is the same. The students are in desk rows and the teacher is in front of the students. Nothing has changed since the beginning of my observations. The teacher and the students arrived on time. The lesson for today is about the same topic "present perfect". The idea is to learn how to form negative sentences.

This is an approximation of the classroom

Sketch:



1. Door
2. Students
3. Teacher
4. Board
5. Windows
6. Researcher

As noticed in the sketch the teacher always organizes the learners in desk rows arrangement. In fact, this action took place during the eight sections I observed. Number two represents the way students were organized while number three indicates that the teacher was performing the class in front of the learners.

### Interaction patterns

1. T: "buenas noches señores"

Most of the learners replied the same.

2. T: "que tal, ¿han trabajado mucho?"
3. J: "si profe mucho"
4. H: "claro profe, empeuecado trabajando"

The rest of the learners are in silence

5. T: “hoy vamos a trabajar en el mismo tema, pero veremos cómo hacer oraciones negativas. No se preocupen que es aún más fácil que hacer preguntas.”

The teacher goes to the board

6. T: “miren pues señores como es esto de sencillo. Ustedes saben que cuando uno pregunta, se coloca el auxiliar primero y luego el sujeto. Cuando negamos, simplemente lo dejamos como si fuéramos a formar el afirmativo. Lo que significa que agregamos el negativo después del verbo auxiliar.”

7. E: “lo mismo profe”

8. T: “no, lo mismo no es”.

9. T: “bueno, ¿lo mismo de qué?, ¿á que se refiere?”

10. E: “pues a... como se hacen las afirmaciones”

11. T: “no, no porque en afirmaciones va lo siguiente”

He starts to write

12. T: “miren pues, “I have done the best all my life” “yo he hecho lo mejor toda mi vida” si ven, esta oración es afirmativa. Ahora vamos a ponerla en negativo, “I have not done the best all my life” “yo no he hecho lo mejor en toda mi vida” como ven el negativo “not” va después del verbo auxiliar. ¿Está claro?”

13. H and C “si claro profe clarísimo”

14. T: “levanten la mano los que hayan entendido”

All the students raise their hands

15. T: “muy bien, entonces sigamos con el siguiente paso. Saquen el cuaderno y hagamos 10 oraciones en negativo, y cuando las tengan me las traen en una hoja marcada con el nombre.”

Having said this, the teacher goes to his desk and sits down. Then, he turns on his laptop computer, and continues on it for thirty five minutes. After that, he stands up and asks everybody to give him the sheet with the exercises on it.

16. T: “bueno señores tráiganme la hoja con los ejercicios”

The learners stand up and go toward the teacher. Then, everyone gives him the sheet. After that, he asks some students to go to the board and resolve the exercises.



17. T: “señores vamos a solucionar los ejercicios. ¿Quién quiere venir a resolver el ejercicio numero 1.”

18. E: “yo profe”

19. T: “muy bien Emerida”

Emerida goes to the board, and she asks the teacher for the marker to solve it. She speaks while she is working on it:

At the beginning of this lesson, like in all the teaching sections, the teacher was in front of the learners leading the class. In addition, the learners were listening and looking at the teacher while he explained (see turns 5-14). This teacher's action is known as the 'open class' pattern for interaction according to Pulverness, A., Spratt, M., & Williams, M. (2005). Then, the teacher asked the learners to construct individually ten sentences into negative tense (turn 15). After that, when the activity had ended, the teacher asked the learners to hand the sheets with their names on it to him (15 and 16). Finally, he asked the learners to go to the board in order to solve the exercises individually. Consequently, Emerida went to the board to answer the exercise number one in front of the class. This is another characteristic of the individual and open class patterns for interaction. In addition to doing exercise individually, the seating arrangement never changes, neither in any teaching section nor for any activity in all this research process.

The next data were collect from the researchers' journal

Once more, the students did not have the chance to practice the language in terms of interaction. They were all the time listening to him using the Spanish language and doing some exercises. There is not grouping to create an environment to share ideas, the teacher does not ask questions using English to practice it. I will pay closer attention to this. The use of technology has not appeared either in the teacher's resources.

The following data present another important component of the classroom management

### Monitoring classroom activities

The teacher places few demands and controls on the learners when activities are asked to be performed in the classroom for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional student's instruction. In class, the facilitator stated the learners to perform activities neither with supervision nor by providing help and encouragement when it was necessary. Instead, the facilitator was always involved in different activities while the learners dealt with other tasks dissimilar from the ones assigned. Pieces of the most relevant data are retaken to support this finding.

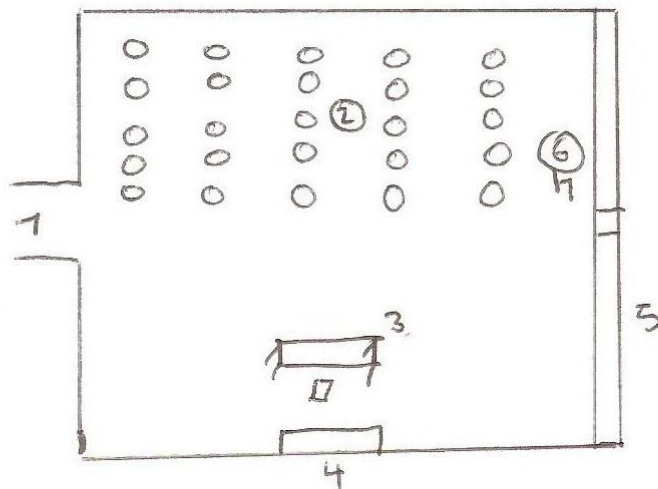
Observation # 3

October 8, 2009

8:30 PM – 9:20 PM

English – 10<sup>th</sup> grade Adult High School

Sketch of the classroom:



1. Door
2. Students
3. Teacher
4. Board
5. Windows
6. Researcher

The teacher explained while he wrote on the board.

Les voy a enseñar esas expresiones de tiempo.”

The teacher started writing a list of time expressions.

14. J: “¿profe o sea que cualquier cosa que vayamos a decir en pasado, utilizamos esas expresiones de tiempo?”

15. T: “si claro, de otra manera quedaría incompleta la oración.”

16. J: “ha bueno profe”

17. T: “ahora cada uno va a escribir tres oraciones en pasado y me las van a mostrar, OK.” [ ]...

Even though the exercise is being performed individually, most of the learners are in groups talking, smiling and answering cell-phone calls while the facilitator is checking something on his PC. Due to the fact that my position is on a corner I cannot comprehend well what the other learner’s conversation is about. After twenty five minutes, the learners approach to the teacher to hand in their notebooks.

The topic for this lesson was about the past simple tense. There was one activity in which the teacher asked the students to form three sentences. They started writing the three sentences while the teacher checked something in his computer during twenty five minutes (17). Then, he asked them to bring him the written sentences, and everybody got together with him while he checked their work. Something to highlight is the fact that he remained seated during the whole activity checking his laptop computer. Consequently, the learners were completely disconnected of the activity talking and smiling. (see turn after 17). In addition, he neither looked around the learners nor did he ask them for any inconvenience. In fact, the learners may have found some difficulties in the process of constructing the sentences inasmuch this was the introduction of a new topic. On the contrary, it would have been better if he had checked and supported them on what they were doing during the activity. Furthermore, about thirty minutes were lost by both the teacher and learners carrying out other activities different from teaching and learning ones. These teacher’s actions were noticed as data were collected.

The following information is presented to continue supporting this fact. A sample taken from the researcher's journal as a reflection on the observations confirms these actions:



October 12, 2009

When the teacher guided the activity, the one to construct 3 sentences in past; he gave too much time to resolve them. On the other hand, he neither monitored the learners nor supported them, and it is important at the time of doing a task. In fact, I had noticed this behavior during all the classes. Even if he gave feedback to the learners after the exercises, it was not enough; I know it because I asked the learners for the way of constructing a sentence, and their answers were not adequate.

This reflection was carried out based on what I observed from the third section and from what I had been observing at that time.

Thus far, the findings section has been presented. Hereafter, the discussion section is presented so that I can compare and discuss the results with what is known from the different authors as reflected in the literature review.

## Discussion

On the one hand, this section was reordered so that I could discuss the findings from the first and second research questions based on the following categories: interests and expectations upon the foreign language, challenges and their implications for learning. On the other hand, I regrouped the results from the third research question based on the next categories: teaching method, lesson planning, teacher's foreign language skills, education and technology, monitoring classroom activities, seating arrangement and interaction patterns.

### **Interests and expectations in relation to the foreign language**

External factors play an important role when learning a foreign language. One of the findings in this study was that the non-traditional students are motivated to learn the English language so that they can take advantages of future job opportunities, family support and travels abroad for job seeking. This result aligns with Jacobson and Harris's (2008) given that non-traditional students return to the academic setting motivated for different personal factors such as extrinsic goal orientation, job improvement, employment requirements, and a better standard of living. In a similar way, Jacobson and Harris (2008) cited the research study of Graham & Donaldson (1999) to declare that "non-traditional student seeks out higher education as a method of obtaining and facilitating a specific personal or employment goal, unlike the traditional student who enters college with a nonspecific, or general goal orientation". (p.34). Thus, this study supports that non-traditional students search for learning the English foreign language motivated for personal interests.

### **Challenges and their implications for learning**

Another contribution of this study is the fact that those daily-life activities seriously affect the non-traditional students' foreign language development. The data show how job affairs, housework and family commitments are negative factors that interfere with the learners' academic performance as reflected on their language skills and school attendance. . My study aligns with Byram (2004) since the author found that social responsibilities headed for children,

family and job affairs and economic conditions are serious challenges, which negatively contribute to make learning a more difficult process. Moreover, Byram (2004) highlights that school curricula are designed without thinking of non-traditional population, which also is a negative factor that entails negative implications toward learning a language. In the same way, my study concurs with Forbus et al (2011) because they found that non-traditional students are so much stressed-out as a result of work, family and school affairs. Furthermore, Forbus et al (2001) found in their study that non-traditional students face greater distance to come to schools contrary to traditional ones. Keith, et al (2006) cited the study of Bradley and Graham (2000) to comment why the non-traditional students are not part of any involvement on groups to take decisions concerning study organizations and to explain that they go home as soon as they finish their timetable at the school due to the amount of personal obligations. That is why this study emphasizes that those daily life activities mentioned above, affect deeply the non-traditional students in the process of learning a language.

### **Teaching method**

The language teaching method adopted reflects the way learners are instructed in a foreign language. One of the purposes for this study was to show how the non-traditional students are being instructed in EFL. Therefore, this study reported that the non-traditional students (the five ones who participated in this study) are instructed by the implementation of the grammar-translation method. The characteristics found concerning this finding concord with Brown (2004). He states that “the grammar-translation method is implemented by comparisons of the mother and foreign language; hence, he highlights that this is an impediment when teaching a language inasmuch as it stops the learners acquiring the natural input needed.” In the same way, (Richards and Rogers, 1986, as cited in Brown 2001) argue that the grammar-translation method does not develop the student’s communicative ability in the language. In addition, they state that this method is practiced by a tedious experience of memorizing endless list of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary. (P. 19). These results (the ones from Richards and Rogers 1986) align with the characteristics that were found from the way the facilitator conducted his classes. In contrast,

teaching a language requires the practice of communicative techniques in order to engage the learners in functional use and authentic language for meaningful purposes. Widdowson (1987) points out that when teaching a language, the teacher is the one who creates meaningful activities and materials so that the learners can practice the language functions based on kinds, descriptions, classifications, requests, predictions and qualifications for communicative purposes. On the contrary, the results of this study did not show any interactive, communicative, or functional view as a vehicle to learn a foreign language.

### **Lesson planning**

The way teachers plan their lessons show their actions in the classroom. This study demonstrated that the facilitator did not plan his lessons on paper as suggested by theory for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students. This result contrasted with what was found on the literature review. The research studies and the theory describe the way teachers should plan their lessons so that they can accomplish the teaching practice by implementing the lesson planning components. Richards and Lockhart (1994) explain that “planning a lesson is the only way to organize the teaching sections. They point out that each stage of a lesson has different learning purposes. Consequently, they show four main stages to develop the teaching practice: Opening: the way learners are introduced to the aims of the lesson, and the connection to previous topics. Sequencing: the organization of the three main stages: the presentation techniques, the practice of the language items and the production of the language in relation to what was practice. Pacing: as the teacher’s synchronization and speed for the activities so that the learners maintain engaged, and closure: as the conclusion of the lesson so that the facilitator can reinforce what was learned during the lesson; the review of the content already studied and the preparation of the learners for future topics”. In the same way, Ur (2003) illustrates that when teachers plan lessons, the lesson plan entails active and attentive learners all the time, the learners enjoy the lesson and learning takes place, as well as the foreign language is used communicatively throughout the class. (p. 219). None of these components, actions and or procedures were observed in the teacher’s instruction in this study. The data

collected show negative teacher teaching skills. A possible explanation of this result is that the teacher is neither updated with the new approaches to teach a language, nor he knows andragogy procedures to teach adults non-traditional students.

### **Education and Technology**

The implementation of multimedia tools in foreign language teaching demands teachers to be familiar with the new technology. Zhu (2010) argues how “the uses of multimedia tools entail exceptional advantages to the teaching and learning practice. However, English teachers are expected to renovate their ideas and to change their concepts so that they can perform well upon their teaching practice by using technology”. In contrast, one of the results obtained in my study was that the use of technology was not implemented in the EFL teaching practice. I concur with Zhu’s comments when he says that the EFL instruction demands updated concepts and renovated ideas from the teacher’s integration of technology into language teaching. In a similar way, Kabila & Rajab (2010) point out that “some English teachers are not updated with internet use for pedagogical purposes and it takes place because they are always busy in other school commitments. They explain that the use of the internet and its tools help teachers on their teaching practice by sharing ideas, views and exchanging experiences among teachers’ practices. In addition, the internet uses allow teachers to contact the great quantity of teaching materials and resources so that they can implement them according to teaching aims”. The use of e-mails for pedagogical purposes brings about meaningful advantages for the learning process. Wang (2010) highlights how “the use of the e-mails for follow up activities entails the development of the four English language skills. On the contrary, this study did not implement any use of e-mails during the time this research study lasted on behalf of learning a foreign language.



### **Oral skills in the English language**

The teacher's foreign language skills play an important factor upon the learner's language development. Another unexpected finding of this study was the fact that the facilitator does not speak the English language since it is necessary in order to expose the learners to listening to the foreign language. Harmer (2004) considers that "the teacher's talk is vital when teaching a language; however, he suggests that the best lessons are the ones where the students talk is maximized. Nevertheless, it is the teachers' job to know how to balance their talk in the specific moment".

Participation and encouragement are vital in order to expose the learners to use the language, and to facilitate the learning process. Ur (2003) highlights that "an effective questioning technique permits the learners to practice the language on equal terms, provide the teacher to serve as a model for language use, stimulate thinking and motivate students to take risks". (p. 229). Similarly, Scrivener (2005) states that "eliciting" as part of the teacher's talk is very important to encourage the learners' participation based on what they have learned. In addition, it allows the teacher to check the students' language process". (p. 99). The foreign language as communication among the learners and teacher support the learning process. Widdowson (1987) recommends that teachers should direct their language techniques and the teaching method so that the learner can practice the language for communicative purposes based on language functions such as kinds, descriptions, classifications, requests, predictions and qualifications. Tsui (2007) suggests that "the classroom interaction entails an enormous advantage for the learners. The teacher offers input to the learners through the language. As a result, the learners do their best to modify their speech, and to express concepts which are beyond their language abilities so that they can communicate their ideas" (p. 123). On the contrary, the results of this study were negative concerning the teacher oral skills used in the classroom because the speaking skill is so much important for a facilitator to serve as a model for the learners when teaching a language. A possible explanation for this finding is that the teacher finished studying seventeen years ago, and he did not continue improving upon his own learning

process. I infer this assumption because he told me he had forgotten the English language due to he had finished studying long time before. Consequently, this result suggests that the process of learning a language is not a matter of some years of study but also it is lifelong process.

### **Classroom management:**

When dealing with classroom management strategies, the most important is the teacher's abilities to organize the learners as well as the learning process. During this study, I noticed three characteristics of the teacher's instruction: monitoring, seating arrangement and interaction patterns which will be discussed below.

#### **Monitoring classroom activities**

Monitoring learner's tasks allow teachers to support the student's abilities and difficulties toward the topics being practiced. This study shows that the teacher did not monitor the learners when the students were asked to perform activities. In contrast, Scrivener (2005) states that "there are two ways of monitoring the learners, passive and active ways. He emphasizes that teachers who monitor actively, walk around, view and listen the learners from group to group; this allow teachers to support and advices them on the tasks being perform". (p. 94). Likewise, Harmer (2004) points out that "a successful lesson is the one where teachers monitor the learners by watching and listening to the students throughout the classroom so that teachers can support them by answering the learner's questions". (p. 16). As a result of the lack of teacher's unconsciousness of how learners are working and feeling discipline problems arise. Ur (2003) emphasizes that "some of the factors that contribute to generate indiscipline are the lack of managing strategies, the teachers' passivity to create meaningful activities and to check what and how the learners are doing activities in the classroom because it entails boredom and lack of challenge". This research study concords with Ur (2003) because it was noticed that when the teacher did not monitor learners, they were out of the learning activity involved in different issues.

### **Seating arrangement**

My research study found that the way teacher used to organize the classroom, the learning and the learners was “desk rows arrangement” in the eight classes I observed. In contrast, seating arrangement evidences teachers’ variation of activities, class organization and students participation. Scrivener (2005) explains “how changing seating arrangements, socialization takes place throughout the classroom and how it arises a good classroom atmosphere. In addition, teachers can modify the focus of topics in the specific moment by changing the correct seating arrangement. Therefore, the writer recommends that when teaching a foreign language, the circle and horseshoe arrangements are the most suitable”. (p. 93). In the same way, Lewis (2002) highlights “that “whole class” arrangement increases socialization, language input and fluency. The “individual, pair and small groups” are good strategies to create and practice interaction between students-students and teacher-learners”. Event though the participants of my study worked individually, the facilitator did not create an interactive environment. Wright (1997) highlights “how changing the seating arrangement entails learners’ responsibility for their roles assigned when doing tasks, involves much effort and contribution to the topics study, and brings about social relationship between teachers and learners”.

### **Interaction patterns**

This study found that the teacher patterns used to interact with the learners in the classroom were the “open class” and the “individual work”. On the contrary, Grouping entails great advantages when dealing with classroom activities. Ur (2003) argues that “grouping provokes the learners to socialize and cooperate among peers, as well as it motivates learners to be autonomous and encouraging them so that they can practice the language”. In addition to practicing the language into different patterns for interaction such as teacher to students, students to students, whole class, individual work, in pairs, or in groups, teachers go beyond. Patterns for interaction have learning and teaching aims such as to increase language interest, to respect others and to socialize in the classroom. Wright (1997) explains that “there are two ways of creating an environment for interaction in the classroom: the formal and the informal one.

The former is the one where teachers control the patterns and types of communication. The latter is the one where teachers allow learners greater freedom for participation and interaction. In contrast, my results differ from Wright (1997) ones since instruction for non-traditional students in my study did not implement any environment for interaction. Even though the results of this study do not concord with the authors, I firmly believe that the authors are right when they explain the way interaction should be put into practice when learning a foreign language. Correspondingly, Spratt et al (2005) explain that “the type of interaction patterns to be used in the classroom depends on the kind of activities and learning objectives, the learners’ needs, the students’ personalities, and students’ relationship with their classmates”. In contrast, This study showed that the teacher always used the same interaction patterns “individual work and the open class”, which disagree with the author’s ideas since there was not changing of working modes, and it is inadequate because it does not imply new types of communication in the classroom.

### **Instructional and research implications**

This study found some helpful real-life affairs in regard to the non-traditional population since this population is un-known for many language teachers; they may serve to be taken into account into language teaching. Furthermore, some characteristics of their English instruction were revealed as well. Apart from these, the research implications will be written below in order to find what other areas need to continue to be investigated.

#### **Instructional implications**

This study found that personal interests determine the hope for learning the English language as well as the challenges that non-traditional students face in their real-world. Therefore, this study suggests that teachers should implement better strategies and techniques so that they can develop interesting, challenging and meaningful tasks and activities according to the learners' real-life so that teachers can identify their expectations and needs.

Moreover, it was found how the non-traditional population in this study is educated in the foreign language; I found unexpected and negative results. Consequently, this study suggests to language teachers to be more conscious of the hard duties required for our profession.

This study reported that the use of technology into language teaching was not part of the teacher's resources. As a result, this research advises teachers, principals and school owners from night shift and weekend (non-traditional schedules) to incorporate the use of technology into school curriculum so that non-traditional students can take advantages of its uses.

In addition, this research recommends school owners, head teachers and principals to update language teachers on the new approaches to teach languages.

This study suggests to schools' curriculum committee (for the ones who do not) to understand how non-traditional students learn in order to establish

programs that fit on those particular life experience and characteristics of non-traditional students.

### **Research implications**

After performing this research study, the next considerations for further research are taken into account. An important factor to be investigated is the language learning expectations and the real-life differences, or similarities that traditional and non-traditional students might have in common.

Additionally, further research could be conducted to know what learners' perspectives on the English curriculum are.

A research study could be carried out to find out which learning strategies, if any, nontraditional students entail as a result of life experience.

In view of the fact that la Ley 115 de 1994 dictates in its article 5<sup>th</sup> (fines de la educación), that research has to be promoted for all the areas of education, another essential aspect to be investigated is what the ministry of education does in order to promote research for the non-traditional education improvement.

Furthermore, a study can be carried out by including design and implementation of instruction in order to check the language learning impact taking into account that it should be based on a different instruction.

Research can be conducted in order to explore the English curriculum characteristics for the non-traditional education.

Also, a study should be conducted among teachers, principals and school owners as participants to know what are their perspectives in relation to implementing technology into English language teaching.

Moreover, research should be conducted for English teachers to inquire into the teachers' "andragogy" to know for sure whether or not language facilitators know how to teach non-traditional students.

A similar study could be conducted in other non-traditional institutions to correlate the teachers' instruction and the learners' learning and life experience characteristics found in this study.

Finally, it is important to know whether, or not directors and rectors do something to support and upgrade teachers to be aware of the new approaches to teach a foreign language.

## Conclusions

This study set out to investigate the English learning experiences of 10<sup>th</sup> graders non-traditional students at a night shift school and their English foreign language instruction. First, this research explored the non-traditional students' role in relation to the English language by inquiring into their motivation and expectations for learning the foreign language. Second, I did research into non-traditional students' daily life activities commitments to know which effect could be taken on their language learning. That is, research was conducted to find out the challenges faced by the non-traditional students as they went through education. Furthermore, this study identified the main aspects of their English language instructions as reflected on the teaching method, lesson planning, education and technology, teacher's oral skills in the English language and some aspects of the teacher's classroom management.

Results showed that personal interests such as future job opportunities, family support and travels abroad for job seeking determined the learners' motivation for learning the English language; they were supported by previous research that suggested that the non-traditional students returned to the academic setting with a clear purpose in mind and motivated by external factors.

Real-life activities such as job affairs, housework and family commitments were shown as a negative factor that interfered with the non-traditional students' language improvement; the data showed time as the most negative factor. Even though non-traditional students were out of the academic setting for many years, they returned to study with not knowledge of the foreign language. I know it because they entered to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade after many years the same week I start doing this research. In other words, I collect real data at the precise moment.



The grammar-translation method appeared to be the one adopted by the facilitator with a rich practice of grammatical structures, but with no effect in order to practice the language for communicative purposes.

It was evidenced that the lesson planning was not implemented for the learners' instruction. In general, results in regard to the teacher's abilities to managing the classroom and the learners, as well as the learning demonstrated a lack of the teacher's andragogy to deal with the hard duties as a foreign language teacher. On the one hand, these results suggest further research by including design and implementation of instruction in order to check the language learning impact and results taking into account that it will be based on a different language instruction. On the other hand, further research is needed so that to inquire what actions chief directors, school owners and head teachers do in order to update language teachers on the new approaches to teach languages.

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## Appendix

### Formal education

Formal education is defined as the one which is taught in approved institutions that offer education in a regular sequence of the school year. This education is subject to developmental curricula standards leading to the achievement of levels and degrees.

### Non-formal education

Article 36: non-formal education is the one offered in the educational system with the aims of supplementing, updating and making up for knowledge as well as training in academic aspects, and work related issues without being subject to grades and levels issued in article 11 of the general law of education in Colombia. Next, is listed the population (non-traditional students) who attend this type of education:

- Education for people with limited or extraordinary abilities
- Adult Education
- Education for ethnic groups
- Education in countryside for farmworker people
- Education for social rehabilitation (p. 11).

### Informal education

Article 43: the informal education is the knowledge acquired freely and naturally from people, institutions, mass media, print media, traditions, habits and social behavior throughout life. (p. 12).

### Non-traditional education in Colombia

Article 2: For the aims of this government decree, adult education is the set of organized processes and formative actions to deal with in a special way the needs and capacities of people who for various reasons did not attend the educational system of levels and degrees of public education during the age

regularly accepted or those who wish to increase their skills, improve their knowledge and enhance their technical and professional abilities. (P1)