

# The *Illusio* of the Foreign Language Standard in a Colombian University

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## Abstract

The Ministry of education in Colombia set a policy for higher education in which graduates should achieve an intermediate proficiency level (B1) in another language; and by 2025 it expects that they leave college with an upper intermediate level (B2). This report deals with a private college that attempts to participate in the policy, yet the college has a requirement, not a foreign language policy. It offers their students 160 hours in which they hardly attain a high beginner level (A2). The Board of Directors of the college conducted a satisfaction survey that became the first cycle of the action research study reported here. The sample of 624 EFL learners expressed dissatisfaction with the program and frustration with the approach and with the results. The situation mirrored what Bourdieu (1995) defines as the *illusio*, the belief that the “game” we collectively agree to play is worth playing, that the fiction we collectively elect to accredit constitutes reality. The authors conducted a second cycle to establish the source of dissatisfaction, and to identify the needs and wants of the stakeholders. The results indicate that the administrators expect that English reinforce disciplinary knowledge, while learners expect to learn to speak it, and teachers expect to teach grammar. A third cycle has been planned to propose a curriculum proposal that reconciles the allotments of resources of time, space, staff, content learning and language learning with a standard that meets the needs and expectations of the program. In other words we expect to make a proposal that corrects the collective misperception of reality which constitutes a reality in itself.

**Keywords:** College; foreign language; needs analysis; program evaluation; standards

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## La ilusión de los estándares de lengua extranjera en una institución de educación superior de Colombia

### Resumen

El Ministerio de Educación de Colombia estableció una política para la educación superior en la que los graduados deben alcanzar un nivel de intermedio (B1) en otro idioma, y se espera que para 2025 terminen sus estudios universitarios con un nivel intermedio alto (B2). Este informe da cuenta del caso de una universidad privada que intenta participar en tal política, remarcando que la institución tiene un requisito, mas no una política de lengua extranjera. La institución ofrece a sus estudiantes 160 horas de instrucción, en las que apenas alcanzan un nivel de principiante alto (A2). El Consejo Directivo de la universidad realizó una encuesta de satisfacción como parte del primer ciclo de la investigación de acción divulgado en este artículo. La muestra seleccionada de 624 estudiantes revela la insatisfacción con el programa y la frustración con el enfoque y sus resultados. Esta situación se asemeja a lo que Bourdieu (1995) define como la *ilusión*, la creencia de que el juego que colectivamente acordamos jugar vale la pena jugarlo, y que la ficción que colectivamente convenimos acreditar constituye la realidad. Los autores llevaron a cabo un segundo ciclo para establecer las causas de la insatisfacción y también para identificar las necesidades y los deseos de las partes interesadas. Los resultados indican que los administradores de la universidad esperan que el inglés refuerce los conocimientos disciplinares, mientras que los estudiantes esperan aprenderlo para hablarlo y los profesores esperan enseñar gramática. Un tercer ciclo del estudio tiene previsto hacer una propuesta de currículo que compagine la asignación de recursos de tiempo y espacio, de personal, de aprendizaje de contenidos y aprendizaje de lengua a un nivel que satisfaga las necesidades y expectativas del programa y de la política pública. En otras palabras, se espera hacer una propuesta que corrija la percepción colectiva errónea de la realidad que constituye una realidad en sí misma.

**Palabras clave:** universidad; lengua extranjera; análisis de necesidades; evaluación de programas; estándares.

## A ilusão dos padrões de língua estrangeira numa instituição de ensino superior da Colômbia

### Resumo

O Ministério da Educação da Colômbia estabeleceu uma política para o ensino superior na qual os formandos devem atingir um nível de aptidão intermediário (B1) em outro idioma e espera-se que, para 2025, eles terminem o ensino médio com um nível intermediário superior (B2). Este relatório dá conta do caso de uma universidade particular que tenta participar dessa política, considerando que a instituição tem um requisito, mas não uma política de língua estrangeira. A instituição oferece aos seus estudantes 160 horas de instrução, nas quais eles atingem apenas um nível de falante básico (A2). O Conselho Diretivo da universidade realizou uma enquete de satisfação como parte do primeiro ciclo da pesquisa de ação divulgado neste artigo. A amostra selecionada dos 624 estudantes revela a insatisfação com o programa e a frustração com a abordagem e seus resultados. Essa situação se assemelha ao que Bourdieu (1995) define como a ilusão, a crença de que o jogo que coletivamente concordamos jogar vale a pena jogá-lo, e que a ficção na qual coletivamente pactuamos acreditar constitui a realidade. Os autores realizaram um segundo ciclo para estabelecer as causas da insatisfação e também para identificar as necessidades e desejos das partes interessadas. Os resultados indicam que os administradores esperam que o inglês reforce os conhecimentos disciplinares, enquanto os estudantes esperam aprendê-lo para falar, e os professores esperam ensinar gramática. Um terceiro ciclo do estudo prevê apresentar uma proposta de currículo que concilie a designação de recursos de tempo e espaço, de pessoal, de aprendizagem de conteúdos e aprendizagem de língua num nível que satisfaça as necessidades e as expectativas do programa. Em outras palavras, espera-se fazer uma proposta que corrija a percepção coletiva errônea da realidade que se constitui uma realidade em si mesma.

**Palavras-chave:** análise de necessidades; avaliação de programas universidade; língua estrangeira; padrões.

## INTRODUCTION

A university in the west of Colombia that serves 3200 students in the schools of architecture, social sciences, business, and engineering requires for graduation that their students demonstrate an intermediate (B1) proficiency level in a foreign language. The standard set echoes the policy of the Ministry of Education of Colombia (MoE). The university offers four 40-hour English courses to meet the standard, which has proved insufficient for most of the student body that enter with a zero level. This situation has been examined under Bourdieu's concept of *illusio* (Bourdieu & Waqquant, 1995), which metaphorically describes the interest that subjects and social agents (the university) have to participate and stay in a "game" (of, in this case, higher education). The *illusio* is different depending on the social position occupied: member of the Board of Directors, faculty, staff, English teacher, or student.

In order to find out how the program was faring, the Board of Directors of the university conducted a satisfaction survey (Appendix 1) which served as the diagnosis in our first action research cycle. We conducted a second cycle with surveys (Appendices 2, 3, and 4), Teacher-peer assessment form (Appendix 5) to understand classroom practices, the perceptions and expectations of the stakeholders as well as the desirable conditions. The third cycle is underway trying to answer the question on how to identify the needs of a community for integrating content and language and what it would take to meet the standard (intermediate level B1) the university tries to adopt in accordance with the policy set by the MoE.

The Introduction section of this article first discusses the problem and then reviews key concepts in the areas of program evaluation and needs analysis (Alderson & Beretta, 1992; Brown, 1989 and 1995), as well as course design (Richards, 2001; Nunan, 1988). The Method section presents the action research methodology that sought responses to these questions: *How do learners, faculty, and staff evaluate the English language program? How do the perception of the learners compare with those of other stakeholders? How may Needs Analysis inform curricular content and methodology?* The Results section presents the data analysis and findings, and to interpret the results we propose the categories *accountability (of the program), architecture (of*

*the curriculum* and *associates* [stakeholders]). The Discussion section presents the conclusions, limitations, and areas for further research.

## Background

Witkin and Altschuld (1995) emphasize that: “The main job of evaluators is to help managers and staff to determine the merit and worth of particular programs and to decide the extent to which a program has been successful in meeting its goals” (p. 65). Accordingly, a team of professionals in statistics, and the teachers of English designed the satisfaction survey for the users of the language (see Appendix A). Since poor attitude and motivation were ascertained, they needed to be understood and addressed.

The first cycle of the action research identified a low degree of satisfaction. The second cycle inquired on what Richards (2001) calls three main areas in understanding the effectiveness of the current curriculum: “whether the new curriculum outline proposal responds to learners needs, whether further teacher training is required for teachers working in the program, or whether the students are learning sufficiently from it” (p. 286). Finding out how administrators, faculty, teachers of English and students evaluated the program shed light on the gap between the objectives of the curriculum and the expectations of the community. The literature on curriculum design indicates that language curricula include contents, methods, assessment, materials, and program evaluation. Richards (2001) claims that curricula development involves grasping the significance of the context, a conscientious planning of the course and materials, and the needs not only of the learners but also from the educators, as well as a continuous monitoring process of teaching and learning. This inquiry relates closely to the above; the first and second cycle dealt with goals and processes. The planned third cycle hopes to inform policy makers, to try a curriculum that seeks to define the guidelines for the teaching- learning process, as Saylor and Lewis (1981) argue. The identification of the students’ needs should help us decide where to start.

For Richards (2013) “Curriculum development in language teaching can start from input, process, or output. Each starting point reflects different assumptions about both the means and ends of teaching and learning.” (p. 7). So far, the data in the first cycle has led to examine the

output, the second cycle examined the process, and the third cycle expects to examine the input as point of departure for deciding on the process and on the output.

## **METHOD**

A program evaluation is a systematic process for determining and addressing needs, or gaps between current conditions and desired conditions or wants. The discrepancy between the current condition and the wanted condition signals a desire to improve or to correct a deficiency. The university serves 2300 students in the schools of architecture, social sciences, business, and engineering. In the first cycle of action research, 1200 students took the Satisfaction Survey (Appendix A) and the sample for this project came from the 624 students who expressed an affiliation to the language center; they were 20 to 30 years old.

The administrators and the faculty debated about the goals, the content, and the methodology that would meet the institutional mission and vision. In a meeting, the administration of the university argued that if the English courses dealt with disciplinary content there would not be room for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. An official called on the Language Center to design a curriculum that supports education in the professions as they develop language proficiency. He requested the faculty to gather further information and propose a curriculum. We opted for a mixed method: the data collected with the satisfaction survey (Appendix A) was quantitative. The data gathered from the English teacher peer-assessment in ten lessons (Appendix E) and the semi-structured interviews to five instructors (Appendix C) were of a qualitative nature. In the second cycle, we gathered evidence on aspects of content, teaching, and evaluation of learning from a focus group of 20 students who took the survey that appears in Appendix D.

## **RESULTS**

We identified concepts that appeared frequently in more than one instrument, and then we clustered and assigned them a code. "Identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link

people and settings together is the most intellectually challenging phase of the analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavor.” (Marshall & Ross, 1995, cited in O’Connor & Gibson, 2003, p. 4). To establish relationships in the data, we built groups and subgroups. Table 1 illustrates the codes and the groups built.

**Table 1. Codes and groups built**

Groups	Subgroups
Perceived Needs	Writing Paragraphs
	Speaking Exercises
	Extensive Reading
	Listening Exercises
Learner Difficulties	Speaking in public
	Listening
	Expressing ideas
	Reading
	Writing
	Participating in class
	Lack of Motivation
	Lack of Vocabulary
	Traditional Teaching Focus
	Heterogeneous levels of English proficiency
	Traditional testing and evaluation
Student preferences	Work in groups
	Improve reading comprehension
	Performance Activities
	Real Life Situations in the class
	Oral Evaluation
	Evaluation with group projects
	Learning by doing
	Real Life Tasks

Personal reasons to learn English	Travel to another country
	Oral Performance Development
	Personal goals
	Academic goals
Level of Motivation	Highly Motivated
Students Perceptions	Learning English is difficult
	Unwillingness to take English at this university
	Lack of organization in the classes
	Class does not contribute to professional development

For ensuring the reliability and validity, the sample of each survey was large enough to provide a representative base and the selection of the sample mirrored earlier surveys (Hague & Hague, 2016). As for the findings, we chose those appearing in three or more instruments. This triangulation strived for the accuracy with which a method measures what it intends to measure. It yields data that better represents 'reality' (Goodwin *et al.*, 1997 cited in O'Connor & Gibson); and it is a way of enhancing reliability and consistency of the research findings (Kvale, 1996). For triangulation, we compared the instruments and mapped the sequence of the occurrences. Tables 2 and 3 exemplify the tabulation.

**Table 2. Group: Learners' difficulties. Subgroup: Expressing ideas**

Group		Learners' Difficulties
Subgroup		Difficulty in expressing ideas
Instrument	N° of occurrences	Examples
1. Structured Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 1)	103	Es difícil entender lo que el docente dice si la clase siempre es en inglés. (It is difficult to understand what the teacher says if class is always conducted in English)
2. Open-ended interview to the teachers of English (Appendix 3)	16	Students cannot express ideas clearly due to their lack of vocabulary
3. Semi-structured focus group questionnaire. (Appendix 4)	17	No siempre entiendo lo que la profesora dice y esto hace que pierda la concentración. (I rarely understand what the teacher says, and I lose concentration).
4. Researchers' Journal	8	Most students answered the questions with difficulty reflecting reluctance to not being allowed to translate the whole text. They said it was impossible to respond if they did not understand the meaning of all the words.



5. Semi-Structured English Teachers' Questionnaire. (Appendix 2)	5	Most students have fear to participate in class, in some cases due to the lack of vocabulary they have.
6. Semi-structured Peer-teacher assessment questionnaire. (Appendix 5).	1	English teachers said that it was impossible for students to answer if they did not understand the meaning of all the words.

**Table 3. Group: Learners' difficulties. Subgroup: Unwillingness to take English**

Group	Learner's Difficulties		
Subgroup	Unwillingness to take English at our university		
Instrument	No. of occurrences	Sample	Answers
1. Structured Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 1)	554	I prefer to take English in a more prestigious institution.	
2. Open-ended interview to the teachers of English (Appendix 3)	14	Learners complained about the quality of the course and of teaching.	
3. Semi-structured focus group questionnaire. (Appendix 4)	15	"If I finish the English courses here I can achieve the requirements to have my degree, but if I took English courses in a different institution. I have to pass an international exam here in my university graduate. That is the most difficult exam ever". "I take English here because I have to."	
4. Researcher's Journal	8	Most of the students express to be there in order to avoid the international exam, in addition they express those courses are bad.	
5. Semi-Structured English Teachers' Questionnaire. (Appendix 2)	5	"Most students are in the final stage of their studies and they are only there to achieve the requirement for their graduation."	
6. Semi-structured Peer-teacher assessment questionnaire. (Appendix 5).	0		

Responses pointed to discrepancies on what students want and what they get. Table 4 portrays the situation, presents the degree of satisfaction, identifies the needs, and shows the trends. A tension was detected: some stakeholders expect the EFL curriculum to contribute to Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), while others expect it to contribute to the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2008).

**Table 4. Action research Cycle 1 and Cycle 2**

DATA		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
Groups	Subgroups	Instruments used for Triangulation				Instruments used for Triangulation			
		University Students Survey N=624	Interview to the faculty =20	Journal Entries = N=1110	Frequencies	Focus Group Survey N=20	Teachers Interviews N=5	External Observer N=1	Frequencies
Skill Needs	Oral Performance development	223	15	10	248	15	5	1	21
Specific Problems	Difficulty in expressing ideas	120	16	8	144	18	5	1	24
	Unwillingness to take English at this U.	569	14	7	590	14	5	0	19
	Grammatical Method	238	16	3	257	18	5	1	24
	Lack of organization in the classes	190	10	2	202	13	3	1	17
	No contribution to professional development	112	15	3	130	19	3	0	22
	Heterogeneous students English levels	174	17	2	193	15	5	0	20
Students preferences	Group work	61	12	10	192	17	3	1	21
	Real life tasks	170	19	7	87	16	2	1	19
Total of occurrences		1882	119	42	2043	145	36	6	187

In meetings, teachers expressed concern about the discrepancies on what the university requires from the students – an intermediate level (B1) measured by an international test, and what they can actually achieve in the 160 hours offered by the university a high beginner level (A2 level). The data from the first cycle also indicated that: courses were perceived as ineffective, that oral performance was desirable, and that the content of teaching should be related to the students' area of studies. In addition, the data suggested that the student reject the current grammatical syllabus and manifested that the faculty did not seem to be sensitive to their needs.

In addition to the validity of the research process and findings, there is also the need for validity of data analysis process. Here, we explain the construction of the ensuing tables. Given that students,

faculty, and teachers of English participated, it was necessary to assign a weight to the responses of each group. Self-weighting samples are often preferred, for they offer advantages in simplicity, in reduced variances, and in robustness (Kish, 1977). The satisfaction survey (N = 624 students) received a weight of 6/10; interviews with the faculty received a weight of 2.5/10; and journal entries received a weight of 1.5/10. We felt that the magnitude of the sample of students justifies the weighting of 6/10. Since the population was similar in both cycles, the weighting scale was equal for each cycle. Table 5 includes the weighting scale (WS) or level of importance for each.

**Table 5. Findings from action research Cycle 1 and Cycle 2**

DATA Weighting scale (WS)		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
Groups	Subgroups	6.0	2.5	1.5	WS= 10	6.0	2.5	1.5	WS= 10
		University Students Survey N=624	Staff Interviews =20	Journal Entries= N=xx10	Frequencies	Focus Group Survey N=20	Teachers Interviews N=5	External Observer N=1	Frequencies
Skill needs	Oral Performance development	223 35.73%	15 75%	10 100%	248	15 75.00%	5 100%	1 100%	21
Specific problems	Difficulty in expressing ideas	120	16	8	144	18	5	1	24
		19.23%	80%	80%		90.0%	100%	100%	
	Unwillingness to take English at this university	569	14	7	590	14	5	0	19
		91.20%	70%	70%		70.00%	100%	0%	
	Grammatical Method	238	16	3	257	18	5	1	24
		38.14%	80%	30%		90.0%	100%	100%	
	Lack of organization in the classes	190	10	2	202	13	3	1	17
30.44%		50%	20%	65.0%		60%	100%		
Lack of professional development contribution	112	15	3	130	19	3	0	22	
	17.94%	75%	30%		95.0%	60%	0%		
Heterogeneous students English levels	174	17	2	193	15	5	0	20	
	27.88%	85%	20%		75.0%	100%	0%		
Students preferences	Work in Groups	61	12	10	192	17	3	1	21
		09.77%	60%	100%		85.0%	60%	100%	
	Real life task	170	19	7	87	16	2	1	19
		27.24%	95%	70%		80.0%	40%	100%	
Total of occurrences in each population		1882	119	42	2043	145	36	6	187

To characterize the population, each instrument has the number (N) of the people that replied and the individual number of occurrences from each Subgroup. Each Subgroup has the number of individual occurrences of each population in each instrument.

**Table 6. Occurrences**

DATA Weighting Scale		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
		6,0	2,5	1,5	WS= 10	6,0	2,5	1,5	WS= 10
Groups	Subgroups	University Students Survey N=624	Staff Interviews =20	Journal Entries= N=1x10	Frequencies	Focus Group Survey N=20	Teachers Interviews N=5	External Observer N=1	Frequencies
Skill Needs	Oral Performance development	223 35.73%	15 75%	10 100%	248	15 75.00%	5 100%	1 100%	21

For instance, in Table 5 there is one group: *Skill needs* and it has one subgroup named *Oral performance development*. In the instruments applied in Cycle 1, this subgroup appeared 223 times in the Learners’ survey, and 15 times in the instrument applied to the faculty; it also appeared 10 times in the journal. In contrast, in Cycle 2, that same group –*Skills needs* was found 15 times in the focus group survey, five times in the teachers’ interviews and once in the instrument for the external observer. We added up the occurrences in every instrument; and the total of occurrences of the subgroup *Oral performance development* in this inquiry was 191.

**Table 7. Percentages**

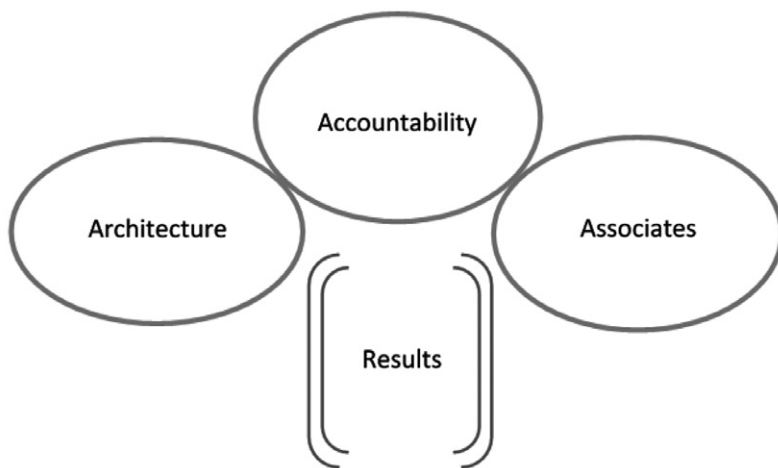
DATA Weighting Scale		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
		6,0	2,5	1,5	WS= 10	6,0	2,5	1,5	WS= 10
Groups	Subgroups	University Students Survey N=624	Faculty Interviews =20	Journal Entries= N=1x10	Frequencies	Focus Group Survey N=20	Faculty Interviews N=5	External Observer N=1	Frequencies
Skill Needs	Oral Performance development	223 35.73%	15 75%	10 100%	248	15 75.00%	5 100%	1 100%	21

In Tables 6 and 7, the percentages that appear in boldface present the percentage obtained from the number of occurrences of each group of the responses to each instrument; e.g., in the *Students Survey* 624 people took it; 624 constitute 100% of the sample in this instrument. The subgroup *Oral performance development* appeared 223 times population, representing 35.73% of the total.

## DISCUSSION

The *illusio* of the foreign language standard in a university of Colombia reveals the tensions of a well-intended national policy that does not materialize since some institutions do not invest in the people and in the resources that are necessary to implement it successfully. This project provided evidence that continued program evaluation and needs analysis are critical to improve the quality of policy and of program decisions. That climbing on the bandwagon of the standards demands responsibility from the educational community; the findings imply that the participants expect a curriculum organized in terms of goals, methodology, contents, scope and sequence, not only of the standard to be achieved. Figure 1 illustrates how we interpreted the results by putting forward the categories: *associates*, *accountability*, and *architecture* grouped as the 3As.

**Figure 1. The 3As to interpret findings**



Source: Castillo & Pineda (2016).

## Accountability

*Accountability* refers to the policy of holding schools and teachers accountable for students' academic progress. In this inquiry, accountability helped us identify how the university system works or fails to work. The first result falls under the category of *accountability*: the data suggest that the administrative demands in terms of proficiency at this university are too ambitious for the time allotted of 160 hours of study. This situation explains that 17.94 % of students, 65% focus group, 60% English teachers, and 75% of the staff community deem that there is a lack of organization in the syllabi. Teacher individualism, isolation, and absence of team work account for that assessment which may be rooted in the frustration of not attaining a level that cannot be reached under the current conditions. Moreover, respondents expressed that the courses do not contribute to their education in the professions: 30.44% of students, 50 % staff, 65% focus group, and 60 % of the English teachers. The point of learning English in the walls of the university for the sake of passing the courses does not meet the expectations of the student body.

## Associates

*Associates* refer to persons who share actively in anything, such as a business, enterprise, or undertaking. It refers to the stakeholder of this study – administrators, faculty and students, and how they evaluate the current program and how they perceive the standards set and the program needs. The second result falls under this category. The standard set affects the *Associates'* (i.e. the teachers') own practice by limiting the possibility of developing a program that provides a sense of success. This relates to the statistic that 91.20% of the student body manifested unwillingness to take any English course in this university.

## Architecture

*Architecture* refers to the structure of anything. The category architecture serves to interpret the current curriculum structure and its effectiveness. The data revealed discrepancy between the students' wants and

the university proposal. We can infer that the organizational framework at this university lacks from a methodological approach to meet the learners' preference for developing speaking evidenced by 35.73% of the students, 75% of the focus group, 75% of the staff community, and in all the classroom observations.

Complexity of language, especially when one has to use it with intricate academic subjects, has long been recognized. Of particular interest has been the ability to use language in subject matter learning, contrasted with what (Cummins, 2008) termed Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), characterizing more conversational language that is cognitively undemanding, and embedded in context. Administrators at this university should thus come to distinguish between oral proficiency and academic proficiency. The academic criterion is more complicated, and is usually measured with a standardized English reading achievement test. A report presented by Hahta, Butler, and Witt (200) reveals that oral proficiency takes three to five years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take four to seven years. The above explains the associates' dissatisfaction with the courses. On the other hand, the program *Architecture* that insists on grammar and language study contradicts the undergraduates' wants. From the comparison of data in Cycles 1 and 2, the grammar method was rejected by 38.14% of the learners in Cycle 1, and by 90% in Cycle 2; the latter figure comes from the focus group.

The findings grouped in three categories allow an explanation and an interpretation. The lack of *accountability* affects the *Associates'* own practice. In the case of the teachers of English, the program limits their possibilities to offer the student body opportunities of success and they deny themselves job satisfaction. The category *architecture* of the English program helped explain the issues related to syllabus design and methodology.

The third cycle hopes to implement a methodology in which BICS and CALP can be reconciled. We will report the results to the university administration to inform which proficiency level our learners can actually attain in 160 hours. It will serve to show the reality for adjusting the standards, but more importantly to formulate a sensible policy.

## CONCLUSION

The study shows that the university and the faculty need to agree on the EFL methodology, the scope, the sequence, and the materials, then formulate a policy, and last, set a standard. Then, discuss options to balance communicative (BICS) and academic purposes (CALP). The challenge ahead is represented by the teacher-researchers' role of curriculum designers. This should position teachers as professionals who reflect on their practices, innovate, and evaluate them. The awareness of the students' changing needs depend on the experience of the faculty and on their capacity to reflect and to teach differently. The stakeholder's testimonies provide a picture what the university needs to address in the agenda:

- Administrators expect teaching of content related to the learner's majors
- Learners reject the current grammatical method
- Learners expect and demand oral proficiency
- The curriculum fails to meet the learners' needs
- The curriculum does not contribute to professional development
- The courses are perceived as ineffective
- There is a need to develop collegiality and teamwork among the staff.

The results of satisfaction survey and of the needs analysis coincide with those of Bagshaw and Brindley (1984), who conducted a major needs analysis with the purpose of investigating the awareness of learners and the extent to which they are able to articulate their language learning needs. In this and in their study the main findings point toward learners being able to express long-term goals as well as instrumental reasons for taking language classes. Both their study and this report conclude that teachers and learners hold differing views of needs.

One of the factors, that could contribute to solve the problems identified, would be to develop collegiality among the teaching staff. Hargreaves (1997) lists eleven benefits of collaboration among school staff: moral support; increased efficiency; improved effectiveness; reduced overload; synchronized time perspectives between teachers and administrators (i.e., shared and realistic expectations about timeframes for change and implementation); situated certainty of collective professional wisdom; political



assertiveness; increased capacity for reflection; organizational responsiveness; opportunities to learn; and continued learning.

The gap identified in the literature refers to the absence of a framework for an EFL curriculum in which the higher education system prepares people to use English for communication and not as a subject of study, but that relates to the professions. Also desirable would be a study that examines how literacy strategies and activities may help EFL learners to move from BICS to CALP and solve problems of understanding, interpretation and of language acquisition.

One of the limitations of the study concerns the time available to investigate the problem and to measure change or stability over time. The administration of the university demanded a prompt response and action to the satisfaction survey, therefore not all the information could be weighted sufficiently.

In closing, we would like to invite further research into some of the questions asked by Castillo (2012): How can language programs propose ways to address the teaching of the FL as meaningful and useful to their learners and to their institution? How can new spaces be created to stimulate learner's agency and autonomy in FL learning? More studies are desirable to establish how other university programs succeed to balance BICS and CALP. In other words, we need research that can tell us how to combine teaching for social situations, with teaching subject area content.

The data collected from the stakeholders provided a picture of the administrators', and teachers' and students' motivations, expectations, and assessment of the program. The study also gave us insights into how learners' perceive needs compared with those of other stakeholders. This study hopes to contribute to those practitioners who are trying to define the language, the content and the methodology to satisfy the needs, and expectations of university students engaged in the study of another language, as a support to their academic literacy and to their professional development.

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# APPENDIX A

Figure 2 shows a survey form applied by the university (n = 624).

**UNIVERSIDAD INSTRUMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN**

Señor Estudiante: este instrumento tiene por objetivo conocer cómo ha sido el proceso de formación y de los servicios que presta el Centro de Idiomas (CIDI). Esta valoración es necesaria para apoyar los procesos de desarrollo de la Universidad, del Centro y de los docentes. Los resultados dependen de su objetividad y sinceridad al responderlo.

¿Conoce o conoce Usted los servicios que el CIDI ofrece? - Curso de formación en lengua extranjera (tales como Inglés, Francés, Portugués y Alemán), - Preparación prueba de suficiencia, entrenamiento, simulacros, y certificación de pruebas internacionales KET, PET, FE, IELTS, cursos EAP, inglés con fines académicos, conferencias y charlas con invitados extranjeros. SI \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Si su respuesta es SI continuar con el diligenciamiento de la encuesta. Si su respuesta es NO favor remitirse a la casilla denominada "Segunda Parte".

**MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACIÓN Y COLABORACIÓN.**

**Según su opinión usted debería escoger la calificación más adecuada para cada afirmación, teniendo presente que 1 es la calificación más baja y 5 la más alta.**

	Muestra dominio de los contenidos y conceptos relacionados con el curso que orienta	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Muestra actitud receptiva frente a las inquietudes de los estudiantes.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>LABOR DOCENTE</b>	Relación y trato establecidos entre estudiante docente que contribuyen a crear un ambiente propicio de aprendizaje.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Realiza actividades que promueva la participación en clase tanto en forma oral como escrita	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>P R I M E R A</b>	El docente genera otros espacios de encuentro y es accesible fuera de clase o en línea	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	El docente transmite entusiasmo o motivación para el aprendizaje en la lengua extranjera	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>R E S P O N D E</b>	Las evaluaciones realizadas tienen relación con los contenidos orientados	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Evalúa con base en los criterios establecidos y comunicados previamente.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>A</b>	La atención recibida por parte de los funcionarios del CIDI ha sido	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Recibe Usted información oportuna acerca de los servicios ofrecidos por el CIDI	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>P</b>	Los recursos / materiales que posee el CIDI facilitan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	El personal se muestra dispuesto a resolver las dificultades de los estudiantes en oportuna	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>R</b>	Preferir realizar su aprendizaje en lengua extranjera en:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Si conoce a uno de los siguientes docentes califique de 1 a 5		1 2 3 4 5	
<b>S</b>	A. CIDI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. John Doe		1 2 3 4 5	
<b>G</b>	B. Institución Externa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. ababab abababc		1 2 3 4 5	
<b>U</b>	En caso de responder en una Institución Externa Señale una (1) razón que para usted es la más importante						
<b>N</b>	¿Cuál es la razón?						
<b>U</b>	- Valor de los cursos						
<b>N</b>	- Ubicación, cercanía o fácil acceso						
<b>D</b>	- Dificultad con los horarios						
<b>A</b>	- Poca o nula facilidad de pago y/o descuentos						
<b>P</b>	- Dotación y/o recursos para las clases						
<b>A</b>	- Características de los salones						
<b>P</b>	- Calidad en el servicio prestado por la Coordinación del CIDI						
<b>R</b>	- Calidad de los docentes						
<b>T</b>	- Otro ¿Cuál?						
<b>E</b>	- Otro ¿Cuál?						
<b>¿QUÉ OTRAS OPINIONES Y SUGERENCIAS DESEA EXPRESAR?</b>							
Comentario sobre los docentes:							
1. Fran sababab abababc 12. ababab abababc 13. Juan ababab abababc 14. Anreji ababab abababc 15. Al ababab abababc 16. ababab abababc 17. Agnes ababab abababc							

## APPENDIX B

This appendix presents a series of interview questions (in Spanish) applied to the university's Dean, Staff, Language Centre Coordinator, and English program director.

### Interview questions

Universidad ABC instrumento de evaluación: Entrevista

Señor \_\_\_\_\_: este instrumento tiene por objetivo conocer cómo ha sido el proceso de formación y de los servicios que presta el Centro de Idiomas. Esta valoración es necesaria para apoyar los procesos de desarrollo de la Universidad, del Centro de Idiomas y del programa. Los resultados dependen de su objetividad y sinceridad al responder la siguiente entrevista. Muchas gracias por su participación y colaboración.

1. ¿Qué nivel de motivación ha evidenciado en los estudiantes sobre los cursos de inglés?
2. ¿Qué dificultades ha evidenciado usted dentro del programa de inglés?
3. ¿Qué cree usted que debería hacer el Centro de Idiomas para subsanar esas dificultades?
4. ¿Qué estrategias considera usted que se deberían implementar en esta universidad?
5. ¿Cuáles son las necesidades de los estudiantes que se evidencian en los cursos de inglés?
6. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre la pertinencia de la organización académica del programa de inglés que plantea el centro de idiomas?
7. ¿Qué otro comentario desea expresar?

## APPENDIX C

This appendix presents the English-language teacher interview form.  
English-language teacher interview form

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER INTERVIEW FORMAT

El propósito de este formato es conocer las necesidades de los estudiantes de respecto al proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje de inglés en la Universidad. Se debe responder de manera anónima y los resultados del mismo serán utilizados con propósitos investigativos.

NECESIDADES DEL ESTUDIANTE DE INGLÉS: MOTIVACIONES, OBJETIVOS Y TÉCNICAS DE ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE

1. Qué razones pueden ser un factor de motivación para el aprendizaje del inglés de los estudiantes de esta institución.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Cuál de los siguientes enunciados representa un alto nivel de preferencia de los estudiantes en el aprendizaje del inglés:  
\_\_\_ Auto motivación \_\_\_ Autodisciplina \_\_\_ Competitividad Laboral \_\_\_ Resolución de problemas
3. Cuál de los siguientes enunciados representa un alto nivel de preferencia de los estudiantes hacia el desarrollo de las clases:  
\_\_\_ Trabajo individual \_\_\_ Trabajo con toda la clase \_\_\_ Trabajo en pareja \_\_\_ Trabajo en grupo \_\_\_ Exposiciones
4. De acuerdo con su experiencia, ¿cómo cree usted que los estudiantes prefieren ser evaluados? Explique.  
\_\_\_ Exámenes \_\_\_ Quizes \_\_\_ Exposiciones \_\_\_ Actividades extra clase  
Otras: \_\_\_\_\_
5. ¿Qué tipo de materiales para la enseñanza del inglés son los más comunes en esta institución?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. ¿Qué objetivos considera usted que los estudiantes deberían alcanzar al final del curso de inglés?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. De acuerdo a su percepción, ¿cuáles deberían ser las razones por las que los estudiantes de esta institución aprendan inglés?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. De acuerdo con sus percepciones ¿qué sentimientos, actitudes, comportamientos, le genera el aprendizaje del inglés a los estudiantes de esta institución? Y las razones de esos sentimientos.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. De acuerdo con sus percepciones, califique de 1 a 6 el grado de dificultad de las siguientes habilidades en inglés para sus estudiantes. Tenga presente que uno es el grado con menor dificultad y seis el valor que representa una dificultad muy alta.  
\_\_\_ Hablar \_\_\_ Leer \_\_\_ Escribir \_\_\_ Escuchar \_\_\_ Gramática \_\_\_ Vocabulario
10. ¿Cuál de las siguientes habilidades cree usted que necesita ser más desarrollada en las clases de inglés. Ordénelas de 1 a 6, siendo 1 la más necesaria y 6 la menos necesaria:  
\_\_\_ Habla \_\_\_ Lectura \_\_\_ Escritura \_\_\_ Escucha \_\_\_ Gramática \_\_\_ Vocabulario
11. ¿Qué estrategias de aprendizaje necesitan nuestros estudiantes de esta universidad en el aprendizaje del inglés?  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Cuál de estas actividades prefieren sus estudiantes para el aprendizaje del inglés:  
\_\_\_ Manuales en inglés \_\_\_ Dinámicas \_\_\_ Dramatizaciones \_\_\_ Estudios de caso
13. Cuáles de las siguientes distribuciones para el trabajo de clase es el de su preferencia como docente. Explique por qué.  
\_\_\_ Trabajo individual \_\_\_ Trabajo con toda la clase \_\_\_ Trabajo en pareja \_\_\_ Trabajo en grupo \_\_\_ Exposiciones

## APPENDIX D

This appendix presents the (Spanish-language) semi-structured focus group questionnaire (N = 20).

### Semi-structured focus group questionnaire

Researchers: A and B.

Project: English language program at university.

Objective: Gather information to characterize the users of the Language Center, their learners' preferences and opinions on English language learning.

Carrera..... Semestre..... Edad.....

<b>Sección 1</b>
1. Complete las afirmaciones de acuerdo a su nivel de conocimiento, siendo NADA la más baja, POCO la escala media, y bastante la más ALTA.
A. Habilidad Escrita
B. Habilidad Comunicativa
C. Habilidad Gramatical
D. Escucha
E. Lectura
1.1 Complete las siguientes afirmaciones de acuerdo con la frecuencia en la cual realiza las acciones mencionadas. Utilice los adverbios de frecuencia (siempre, frecuentemente, a veces, raramente y nunca).
A. En un acto comunicativo usted piensa qué tipo de oración usar.
B. Es fácil para usted interactuar con otros en inglés.
C. Es importante involucrar el aprendizaje del inglés con otras áreas.
D. Las actividades en clase deben estar relacionadas con el mundo real.
E. Cuestionarse sobre algo es sinónimo de aprendizaje.
F. El trabajo en equipo es importante para un mejor aprendizaje.
G. Contrastar mi conocimiento con el de mis compañeros mejora mis capacidades.
H. La adquisición de una lengua es mejor si se enfoca en resolver problemas de la vida real
1.2 Enumere de 1 a 5 las siguientes acciones que prefiere realizar al hablar inglés, siendo uno (1) la acción preferida y cinco (5) la que menos.
A. Hablo sin fijarme en la estructura.
B. A la hora de hablar me hago entender de forma clara.
C. Me apoyo en mis compañeros para entender los temas.
D. Me hago preguntas para entender los temas.
E. Entablo un diálogo con docentes como recurso para entender mejor los temas.

<b>Sección 2</b>
2. Describe brevemente el proceso que ha llevado al cabo durante el aprendizaje del inglés.
2.1 En su opinión, ¿cuáles actividades permiten una comunicación real en el aula?
2.2 Para desarrollar una comunicación real en el aula, ¿Qué actividades de lengua extranjera considera deben tener un mayor énfasis? Califica de 1 a 5.
A. Ejercicios de lectura.
B. Ejercicios de escucha.
C. Ejercicios de gramática.
D. Ejercicios de interacción oral.
E. Ejercicios de escritura.
F. Resolver problemas.
G. Debates.
H. Proyectos

## APPENDIX E

This appendix presents the peer-teacher observation form.  
Peer-teacher observation form

### PEER-TEACHER OBSERVATION FORM

#### I. LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

##### A. PREPARATION

1. SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE – The teacher:
  - a. maintains broad, accurate and organized knowledge of subject matter.
  - b. is knowledgeable of appropriate resources.
  - c. is knowledgeable of appropriate curricula.
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE – The teacher:
  - a. is knowledgeable of appropriate and current theories and practices.
  - b. is knowledgeable about the intellectual and social developmental stages of learners.
  - c. is knowledgeable of how content areas relate to each other.
  - d. is knowledgeable of higher level thinking skills.
3. COMMAND OF LANGUAGE – The teacher:
  - a. models communication effectively and accurately.

##### B. EVIDENCE OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

1. participates in professional development activities such as coursework, in service, academic readings, travel, cultural exchange activities, professional organizations and other enrichment activities.
2. continues to develop a general understanding of educational technology and its relationship to the instructional process

#### II. TEACHING POWER AND INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

##### A. SELECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF SUBJECT MATTER – The teacher:

1. has clear goals and objectives and clearly communicates them.
2. maintains compatibility with proposed syllabus.
3. adapts subject matter to student needs, interests and abilities.
4. teaches prerequisite skills.
5. recognizes the sequence in which skills are developed.
6. establishes relationships between content areas.



**B. MOTIVATION – The teacher:**

1. develops student interest in learning
2. uses appropriate problem solving strategies to develop higher level thinking skills.
3. clearly communicates common goals to students.
4. demonstrates sensitivity to the academic and social needs of students.
5. promotes student interest and participation in extra-curricular activities.

**C. LESSON DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION – The teacher:**

1. appropriately allocates time, energy and resources.
2. uses teacher and student experiences for the enrichment of content.
3. organizes daily plans as a part of a larger unit.
4. adapts instruction to unexpected situations.
5. simulates student learning through varied questioning techniques.
6. treats student responses appropriately.
7. complies with system policy regarding nature and use of assignments.
8. uses a variety of effective and realistic forms of student assessment and evaluation.
9. adapts lessons based on immediate analysis of student responses.
10. develops instructional approaches to improve student test taking skills.

**III. EXECUTIVE ABILITY AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

**A. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT – The teacher:**

1. organizes the classroom to fit different learning situations.
2. applies classroom rules and procedures fairly and consistently.
3. effectively encourages positive student behavior.
4. maintains positive learning climate for students.
5. organizes effective transitions for students.

**B. PERSONAL ORGANIZATION – The teacher:**

1. plans appropriately
2. proficiently performs required duties.
3. makes appropriate and timely decisions.
4. appropriately organizes, cares for, and utilizes equipment and materials.
5. utilizes technology to personally manage daily tasks.

**IV. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, ETHICS & INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**The teacher:**

1. demonstrates understanding for discretion in the use of confidential information.
2. shows understanding and sensitivity in working with university personnel.
3. acknowledges the importance of the group decision making process.
4. observes university practices and administrative procedures such as designated schedules, punctuality, and attendance.
5. demonstrates an interest in students and their welfare.
6. maintains appropriate appearance.
7. displays self-control, initiative, confidence, and flexibility.
8. maintains effective and appropriate communications with students and co-workers.
9. evidences integrity and understands the established conventions of the school and the community.
10. treats students and staff fairly.
11. uses self-evaluation for improvement.