

Communicative Grammar and Differentiated Teaching in the English Class: Students' Perspective

Ana ARÁN SÁNCHEZ

Escuela Normal Rural "Ricardo Flores Magón"

Suggested Citation: Arán, Ana. (2023). Communicative Grammar and Differentiated Teaching in the English Class: Students' Perspective. *Nagoya JALT Journal*, X(1), xxx-xxx.

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify students' perceptions about the implementation of differentiated instruction to develop communicative grammar in the English classroom. It was constructed under the socio-critical paradigm and utilized a qualitative approach, using the action-research methodology. The population sample comprised first-grade students enrolled in the bachelor's degree program in preschool and elementary education, who were attending a public university located in the north of Mexico. The experience was documented during the 2020-2021 school year, through in-depth interviews with key informants and participative observation, using a timetable that details the activities, differentiation process, and the target grammar structure. Students were able to identify several elements of differentiation in the subject, which they considered made the English class a motivating and rewarding learning experience.

Keywords: Differentiated Teaching, Communicative Grammar, Higher Education, English Teaching.

Communicative Grammar and Differentiated Teaching in the English Class: Students' Perspective

The way English teachers approach grammar content in the class defines the kind of pedagogy utilized in the teaching and learning process (López-Rama and Luque-Agulló, 2012). However, recent studies in higher education have found that professors often teach grammar in the same way as they were taught, namely, using traditional approaches (Newby, 2015). On the other hand, and according to Rojas (1995), Communicative Language Teaching is based on using the target language in real situations, so students can interact naturally in a communicative act. Additionally, differentiated teaching or differentiated instruction is a methodology that can be used to work with grammatical contents from the communicative approach, because it caters to the students' particular needs, strengths, and learning preferences (Heacox, 2014).

Nowadays, English learning at a university level is part of almost all curricula, because of its international importance as a global language. In the case of Normal Rural Schools, which are higher education institutions in Mexico where students are trained to become teachers, this subject has been mandatory since the educational reform of 2012. The 2017 program was based on the communicative approach, and some of the principles that are included in the syllabus are closely related to the differentiated teaching methodology. This research used those two aspects to teach one of the most difficult elements of language instruction, which students often find tedious and complex: grammar. Accordingly, the purpose of this investigation was to identify students' perceptions about their experience in grammar learning with this teaching approach.

Theoretical Background

The Communicative Approach

Communicative competence is defined as "the skill to use language in social interaction, based on a negotiation of meanings between two speakers" (Benreguer-Román, et al., 2016,

p.19). When a person acquires this skill, it means they are able to share experiences and exchange ideas according to the context and the people around them, in a fluent and confident way (Sánchez and Pérez, 2020). As a result, the communicative approach helps students acquire this competence in the target language, so they are able to share their values, ideas, and opinions while developing the four skills from a functional and meaningful approach (Zambrano and Alirio, 2001). According to this perspective, language structures are practiced both orally and in writing (VunPhiHo and The Binh, 2014), so the teaching methodologies that are derived from this approach are the opposite of traditional methods based on direct learning by the teacher, as Sánchez and Perez (2000) state.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) asserts that language is always used within a social context, so it should not be taught in an isolated way (Chang, 2011). Consequently, it is based on the premise that humans are social beings who communicate in their everyday life within different contexts: the bank, the supermarket, or the movie theatre, for example. These are situations in which specific vocabulary words and grammar structures are used, so the aim is that students can be prepared for when they have to face these circumstances in real life and use the target language (Beltrán, 2017).

To achieve that goal, realia—authentic materials like magazines, newspapers, brochures, songs, or movies—are employed; objects that a native speaker uses in their daily activities and have not been altered for a pedagogical purpose (Chung, 2007). In this approach, the traditional roles of teacher and student change. According to Beltrán (2017), the learner has to be actively involved in the negotiation of meanings, while the professor acts as a guide who helps the student acquire communicative competence.

The Communicative Approach: Grammar.

According to Rojas (1995), communicative grammar competence is "the skill to use and understand a structure within a variety of situations, in a spontaneous way" (p. 172). Grammar teaching from this perspective indicates that students are using what they learn in a

practical way (Newby, 2015). Consequently, Medina (2000) points out that classwork should focus on language use in a communicative way. It has two objectives: presenting how the grammar structures are used, together with their meaning in a specific situation, and describing them through authentic written and spoken examples. The main purpose of communicative grammar activities is to convey meaning (Newby, 2015), so language is acquired through frequent conversational practices.

The aforementioned principles should resonate in the methodology employed when teaching grammar structures: activities should not focus solely on having the student identify grammar structures and patterns in the target language; they should be able to understand them in order to use them (Medina, 2000). Rojas (1995) recommends that classes should be planned to enable students to use the structures naturally, with enough time to acquire them through practice in different variations. Therefore, teachers should help students connect the new grammar contents with the ones they are familiar with (in the target language and even their native one), so the new contents become familiar by associating them with their previous knowledge (López-Rama & Luque-Agulló, 2012).

Thus, one of the most relevant advantages of this teaching perspective, when compared to more traditional ones, is the active role that students assume in their learning process. The practical use of the grammar structures increases the sense of accomplishment and motivation level, since they feel able to communicate in a different language, in meaningful activities that are connected to their everyday life (Ibid).

Differentiated Teaching

The higher education student population is very diverse, tending to have different proficiency levels due to their previous academic and non-academic experiences, learning motivation, or interests; they also have different needs and learning preferences. That is why the differentiated teaching methodology, also known as differentiated instruction, is a viable option in language teaching, as it considers all of these factors and includes them in the

teaching and learning process (Marriot and Zambrano, 2018).

In fact, according to Ismajli and Imami-Morina (2018), this approach emerges as an answer to students' diversity, as it recognizes that the pace at which individuals progress or the activities they need to acquire knowledge are not the same. Differentiated Teaching incorporates some aspects of the teaching and learning process that take place in multigrade schools because the teacher works with a group of students who have different proficiency levels (Arán and Ríos, 2020). In second language learning, "students need different learning paths to successfully acquire knowledge and achieve the proposed objectives and standards" (Fabere et al., 2016, p.117). Therefore, the teacher offers the students different routes to learning, thus achieving better results (Badillo, 2020).

Academic motivation implies that the activities and tasks that students need to accomplish help them familiarize with theoretical content, but also that they are able to use that information in a practical way. Additionally, the material should be interesting and relevant, fostering an active learning process. By considering these principles, the connection between this methodology and the communicative approach to teaching grammar becomes apparent, as they share common elements such as active learning, practical use of learning contents, and connecting those with everyday life so they become meaningful. Heacox (2014) states some of the purposes of differentiated instruction:

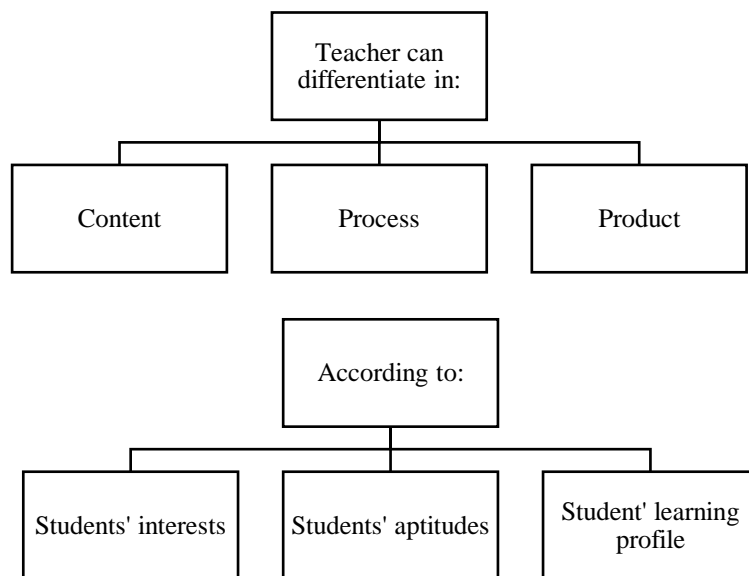
- Developing challenging and motivating tasks for each learner.
- Providing a flexible approach to content, instruction, and product.
- Developing activities based on essential topics, processes, and meaningful skills, as well as using different ways to present the contents.
- Tending to students' needs, interests, and learning preferences.

According to Tomlinson (2000), teachers can differentiate in three elements of the class: content, process, or product, based on students' aptitude level, interests, or learning preferences. Content refers to the topics included in the syllabus, process to the activities that

learners carry out to acquire knowledge, and product is the projects that students construct to demonstrate what they have learned, which are then assessed by the teacher. On the other hand, aptitude relates to students' performance level, interests to the topics that ignite their curiosity, and learning preference includes different classifications, such as the multiple intelligences theory or how we process information (visually, orally, or kinesthetically). These ideas are summarized below.

Figure 1

Differentiation Process



Note. Arán and Ríos (2020), based on Tomlinson (2000)

This methodology demands that teachers be aware that each student is different, so they have to provide effective teaching by adapting the content, process, and product according to the students' learning style and interests (Fabre et al., 2016). According to Marriot and Zambrano (2018), differentiated teaching can improve students' performance levels since they get to work with innovative and meaningful activities. Before implementing this methodology, teachers should identify students' interests, aptitudes, and learning preferences through different techniques and instruments, such as interviews, class observation, and assessment (Ismajli & Imami Morina, 2018), so they can later plan and

design an adequate learning path. Regarding language teaching and the communicative approach, using this methodology involves:

Enables the teacher to provide resources that can help students advance from basic communicative language to an academic discourse required to achieve complex tasks. Since they do not practice the language at home, schools must help overcome that gap and provide changes so they get involved in meaningful language practice (Marriot and Zambrano, 2018, p.158).

The fact that the communicative approach is part of the new active teaching trends, which are opposed to the traditional ones, makes differentiated instruction a useful option in language learning (Ismajli and Imami-Morina, 2018). A concrete example of this statement is when working with reading assignments in the English classroom and providing students with multilevel texts, so they can use texts that are aligned with their own reading level and particular skills, thus advancing from common language points to a more advanced level (Marriot and Zambrano, 2018, p.158).

Method

This research utilizes the interpretative framework since its purpose is to examine a situation in a particular context (Ricoy, 2006). According to Walker (2022), the aim to understand guides this paradigm because it seeks to give meaning to participants' perceptions. Likewise, the chosen approach is qualitative, focusing on individuals' actions according to their experiences (Rodríguez, Gil, and García, 1996) and considering that educational reality is a social construct (Sánchez, 2013). Following the qualitative tradition, it employs the case study methodology, which explores various situations within a specific phenomenon (Chaverra et al., 2019). This methodology examines the phenomenon in its natural setting and utilizes an intensive type of study (Heale and Twycross, 2017).

Participants and the Research Context

The current syllabus for English teaching at Normal Schools used in the bachelor's degree for preschool education and elementary education is based on the communicative

approach. One of the program's principles states that teachers should focus on meaningful communication, with the purpose of developing activities in which the student is able to convey meaning. Additionally, vocabulary and grammar structures should be taught as part of conversations or texts (SEP, 2018).

Learning units are organized into three contexts: personal, community, and professional. In the personal context, students learn to introduce themselves and talk about their family and hobbies. In the community context, contents are related to the learner's place of origin, including topics such as flora and fauna, traditional food, and handicrafts. Finally, the professional context pertains to their future job, covering vocabulary related to subjects, actions that teachers do, and school materials.

Additionally, there is another syllabus principle related to differentiated instruction, which states that teachers must "differentiate teaching according to students' needs and interests" (SEP, 2018, p.12). This element is based on the recognition that groups are diverse, with students having varying proficiency levels, previous experiences with the target language, interests, learning styles, and personal goals. In order to incorporate these aspects, SEP (2018) recommends that teachers design and implement a wide range of class activities, as well as introduce tasks that involve different proficiency levels.

This research was conducted at the "Ricardo Flores Magón" Rural Normal School (ENRRFM), a public university in the north of Mexico. It was implemented during the 2020-2021 school year with 120 students of the bachelor's degree in preschool and elementary education. Of those students, 20 were randomly chosen as key informants for in-depth interviews to explore their perceptions about the class' methodology and approach. ENRRFM is a teacher training school that functions as a boarding school for low-income women. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, since March 2020, students had to leave school and temporarily return to their homes. Consequently, face-to-face classes were cancelled, and the institution had to gradually introduce online education, using synchronous

sessions via Zoom or Google Meet, and asynchronous activities using Google Classroom.

A diagnostic instrument was implemented with the students who participated in this intervention to ascertain their previous academic experiences with English, as well as their self-assessment of the four basic skills. Multiple intelligences or learning preferences tests were not used. Therefore, it was decided that, for each task, different proficiency level activities would be proposed, and the students were free to choose the one they felt most comfortable with. Tables 1 and 2 showcase the semester's content, the grammar structure that was taught, and the kind of differentiation that was implemented.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Two instruments were used: in-depth interviews and participant observation. The first one is helpful for collecting information such as knowledge, beliefs, and opinions about a certain topic, with the advantage that the researcher has the opportunity to interact personally with each individual (Varguillas and Ribot de Flores, 2007). Similarly, it is based on the idea that each person gives new meaning to their experiences, articulating them as part of their personal history, and thus contributing to the understanding of the object of study in question (Díaz-Barriga, 2007). On the other hand, participant observation helps the researcher to identify the activities that individuals perform in their natural environment (Kawulich, 2005). It also facilitates gathering information which is "more direct, enriched, profound, and complex... in a systematic way" (Sánchez, 2013, p.96).

Data Analysis Instruments and Procedures

The information gathered using the participant observation technique was recorded in a teacher's log, where relevant class aspects of each session, both positive and negative, were documented. These aspects are detailed in tables 1 and 2. The in-depth interviews with the key informants were recorded and later fully transcribed. Strauss and Corbin's (2002) procedure was used to analyze the information, divided into three phases: description, conceptual organization, and theory. In the first stage, the information from both instruments

was combined, to be later organized and classified according to different categories, which is the second step. Finally, the theory and background research were linked to the obtained data to explain the results.

Results/Findings

Two analytical categories were established after evaluating the information from the instruments: differentiated teaching and communicative grammar. Both the key informants' perceptions expressed in the in-depth interviews and the observation registers were integrated into those categories.

Differentiated Teaching

This category was divided into two sections: one related to process and product differentiation, and another one for differentiation in aptitude, interest, and learning profile.

What differentiation activities are effective in terms of process and product?

For practical reasons, only process and product differentiation were planned in the English class. The key informants expressed that they are given the opportunity to add a personal touch to their activities and can make them using the format that is more adequate for them. They highlighted that this is the only class where they have this freedom because in the other ones, they always have to use Word format.

They also remarked that each task has a variety of delivery modes, and they can choose the one they feel more comfortable with. For example, with oral communication activities, they can either record an audio note or a short video. Additionally, they explained that for most of the activities, they have to use their creativity, which made them more interesting. In this way, one of the principles that Heacox (2014) establishes about differentiated teaching is accomplished by giving students a wide variety of formats to work with. Some of the key informants considered another differentiation element in class regarding the learning evidence; they were able to hand in their work by uploading it to Google Classroom or sending them to the teacher using an instant messaging application. For

students who lived in very isolated communities, the teacher designed a booklet that was sent to them by regular mail, and once they were done, they sent it back to school for revision. It is imperative that the teacher provides students with different paths towards learning.

Regarding assignment variety, teachers explained that usually, the activities differ, and each time they focus on a different skill; the possibility of choosing helps maintain their interest. They also pointed out that some tasks involve all of the class, for example, when the teacher shows a video or a song and they have to participate by identifying a specific grammar structure. In other occasions, they have to work in pairs to elaborate and record a role-play dialogue, and in other instances, they work individually, for example, by taking a selfie with their favourite food and describing it. Many of the students noted that most of the assignments' content involves their everyday life, so they find them practical, and they are learning something that is close to their personal context. This finding is connected with differentiated teaching and the communicative approach because the students use the contents seen in class in a practical way, and they are meaningful for they resemble their daily life.

About the process, learners observed differentiated instruction when the teacher uses different games, like bingo, charades, and hangman. One of the activities that were mentioned the most and turned out to be memorable for the students was when, in a videoconference session, the teacher prepared a recipe and explained the ingredients and the steps when working with the topic of food. In this way, the key informants conveyed that different activities were used during the teaching and learning process, so they could get familiarized with the class' contents. This finding ties to Fabre et al., (2016) principle that states: teachers should offer students different learning paths.

In conclusion, differentiation activities that are effective in terms of both process and product include providing students with an assortment of formats to work with, offering them learning paths that include a variety of activities and including different types of work (individual, paired, team-based and as a whole group).

What differentiation activities are effective in terms of aptitude and learning profile?

Due to time restriction issues and author's recommendations regarding this methodology, differentiation was focused on aptitude and learning profile, leaving out interest. Following Ismajli and Imami-Morina's (2018) recommendations of getting to know students by using different instruments, a diagnostic test was applied to identify the learners' English proficiency level. Using that information, the teacher started assigning different-level activities to each student; basic ones for beginners and more complex versions for advanced pupils. As the first semester progressed, the strategy changed, and the teacher started to design three different kinds of asynchronous activities: basic, complex, and more complex, but now students had the opportunity to choose according to their level.

It was probable that most of the students were going to select the basic level, regardless of their proficiency level, because it was simpler and required less effort. But this did not happen: students who had a lower grade in the diagnostic exam usually answered the medium-level activities. When asked about that in the interview, they explained that it was to try to improve their English because if they only worked on simple tasks, they were not going to improve their skills. This finding is connected to another one of Heacox's (2014) principles of differentiated teaching concerning teachers designing activities that are challenging to the learner.

And students who had a high proficiency level continued to select and work with more complex tasks so they could solidify their abilities. Their reasoning was that, working this way, their classmates who had a basic level could learn at their own pace, while they do not feel limited to continue to improve. This element underlines Marriot and Zambrano's (2018) statement about the benefits of using class activities according to the learner's aptitude level so they can evolve from a beginner stage to a more advanced one.

About aptitude differentiation during the process, the key informants expressed that, during video conferences, the teacher started a new topic with basic content and tasks, and

gradually included more complex activities. In connection to that, students emphasized that teachers should not assume that all of them have a high proficiency level in English just because they are higher education students. The learners that had basic skills mentioned that they considered that they were able to improve a little bit since the start of the school year because the English course started with simple contents. They also mentioned that they felt comfortable asking questions and that it helped that the teacher explained the tasks again when they didn't understand them, which in turn helped them advance. These testimonies illustrate how differentiated teaching takes into consideration students' diversity, for it respects each individual's learning rhythm (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018).

Concerning learners' profiles, differentiated instruction focused on learning style preferences, mainly visual and oral. In this regard, students were able to identify activities such as images, texts, and slides for visual learners; songs, dialogues, audios, and conversation for oral learners, and some that included both, like videos.

Differentiation in product regarding learning style, the key informants described that usually the assignments involved two skills, such as reading a text and identifying the main ideas, or listening to a conversation and answering comprehension questions. Nevertheless, they were not able to recognize that they were able to carry out assignments in different modalities, each of them focusing on a learning preference.

For example, for the daily routines content, they had the option to record a voice note, record a video, or make a PowerPoint presentation. This way, the element of differentiated instruction responding to students' needs and learning preferences (Heacox, 2014) was addressed in class.

In conclusion, one example of a differentiation activity that is effective in terms of aptitude consists of providing students with tasks at different level and letting them choose the one that they feel most comfortable with, so they are challenged yet can progress from a beginner phase, to a more advanced one. Additionally, content should be taught starting from

the most basic elements and then progressing to more advanced ones, so the teacher takes into consideration the students' diversity. Finally, regarding learning profiles, class activities should include visual, oral and kinaesthetic tasks to accommodate learners' preferences.

Communicative Grammar

The key informants were asked if the teacher took into consideration their previous knowledge regarding class topics, since it is one of the main components of the communicative grammar approach. They explained that the teacher did frequent reviews of the topics seen in class, asking them what they remembered about it and monitoring their written participations in the chat box. However, the students did not mention that an informal diagnostic was implemented before starting a new unit to identify their knowledge level and thus adapting the planning, but they mentioned that the teacher observed what they did or did not understand about each topic. This is related to what López-Rama and Luque-Agulló (2012) say about the learner connecting what they already know about a certain subject to what they are learning.

After implementing a brief diagnostic exercise, the teacher gave a brief introduction about the topic so all the students could get familiarized with it in case it was new for them before advancing with more complex issues. Regarding this strategy, students explained that by not taking for granted that all of them are acquainted with a specific subject matter, it helps them understand the contents of each unit better. Another core principle of the communicative grammar approach is to practice the four language skills. Students pointed out that they worked on listening comprehension by listening to dialogues, conversations, and songs; reading comprehension with different types of texts, such as short articles and comic strips. Regarding written expression, they said that they designed a brochure, an infographic, and also participated in the chat. Oral communication was developed with class participation, interviews, and role-plays. Also, the key informants were able to identify exercises where they had to use various skills at the same time. These sorts of activities correspond to the

recommendation of integrating language structures in one or more language skills as part of the communicative approach to grammar teaching (López-Rama & Luque-Agulló, 2012).

Participants indicated that strategies, both in synchronous and asynchronous activities, were diversified, which made the subject less complex and tedious. Especially when considering that online learning involves a considerable amount of time in front of a screen, which can be both physically and mentally demanding. They also highlighted that even if theoretical content is addressed in class, there is always time to use it in a practical way, as Newby (2015) and Rojas (1995) state. Regarding class interaction, they reflected upon the fact that sometimes they had to participate in a written way, and in other instances orally. This was a conscious choice by the teacher in order to work on the class contents in a communicative way.

Students also identified class activities that were helpful to understand the content that was taught, and they were able to work on it in an autonomous way with asynchronous exercises, which were meaningful to them. In the teacher's log, it was documented that students showed a more positive attitude and increased motivation when they were working with popular songs or short videos of TV series and movies that they were familiar with, which were used to show grammar structures in a natural context and real situations; a way to favor meaningful learning (Rojas, 1995).

Discussion

Given the previously stated results, it is concluded that participants of this study were able to identify various differentiation elements in the English course, which they believe helped improve their motivation and interest towards the class. It should be noted that the key informants indicated another positive aspect that is related to this methodology but was not previously considered as part of it by the teacher/researcher: the option to turn in assignments using different ways, not only uploading them in Google Classroom but also via instant message or regular mail. Another relevant finding is that it worked better to let the students

choose the level of the task they wanted to work with than when the teacher was the one assigning them according to their proficiency level. This way, pupils that had a basic English level aimed to improve and strengthen their language skills by doing more complex exercises than the ones that the teacher/researcher was going to assign to them.

Another important finding is that students expressed that teachers should not assume that all students have the same proficiency level in the English language. Offering them tasks that have a different degree of skill helps them feel comfortable in class, as the learners that have had limited contact with the second language can progress at their own pace, while the ones that are more advanced can continue improving their abilities. Likewise, the key informants pointed out that several principles of the communicative grammar approach were fulfilled through a variety of activities and by taking into consideration their previous knowledge. Specifically, they noted that they were able to connect the new contents with those they already knew.

Conclusion

Differentiation activities that are effective in terms of both process and product, include providing students with an assortment of formats to work with, offering them learning paths that include a variety of activities and including different types of work (individual, paired, team-based and as a whole group). Regarding differentiation on aptitude, teachers can provide students with tasks at different levels, so they can choose the one they feel more comfortable with. Additionally, content should be taught starting from the most basic elements and then progressing to more advanced ones, so the teacher takes into consideration the students' diversity.

Results show that differentiated instruction is a viable alternative to implementing the communicative teaching approach in the English class, especially for grammatical content. Given that this research was implemented in a specific social and geographical context, and with a relatively small group of students, its findings cannot be replicated exactly.

Nevertheless, it can be concluded that differentiated teaching proved to be a useful alternative to addressing grammar in the English class, and it has the potential to improve students' performance as they increased their motivation and interest towards the subject. Future lines of research should explore the implementation of similar projects in other educational levels and geographical contexts.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank the students who participated in this research for their enthusiastic collaboration.

BIO DATA

Ana Arán Sánchez holds a PhD in Educational Sciences. She works as a full-time English teacher and researcher at a public Mexican university located in the North of Mexico. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7149-3461>

References

- Alvarez, Z. & Menegotto, A. (2004). Sobre gramáticas comunicativas del inglés y del español [Regarding communicative grammar of English and Spanish]. *Aristas Revista de estudios e investigaciones*, 2, 15-31.
https://www.academia.edu/26547173/Sobre_gram%C3%A1ticas_comunicativas_del_ingl%C3%A9s_y_del_espa%C3%B1ol
- Arán, A. y Ríos, V.L. (2020). El aprendizaje del inglés mediante la enseñanza diferenciada [English learning through differentiated Teaching] *Educando para Educar*, 39, 53-74.
<https://beceneslp.edu.mx/ojs2/index.php/epe/article/view/67>
- Badillo, L.F. (2020). Adaptación curricular y enseñanza diferenciada en el bachillerato universitario. [Curricular adaptation and differentiated Teaching an University baccalaureate]. *Revista del Colegio de Ciencias y Humanidades para el Bachillerato*, 12(32), 35-39. <https://www.revistas.unam.mx/index.php/eutopia/article/view/77398>
- Beltrán, M- (2017). El aprendizaje del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera [Learning English as a foreign language]. *Bol. Redipe*, 6(4), 91-8.
<https://doi.org/10.36260/rbr.v6i4.227>
- Berenguer-Román, I., Torres-Berenguer, I. & Roca-Revilla, M. (2016). La competencia comunicativa en la enseñanza de idiomas. [The communicative competence in language Teaching]. *Dominio de las Ciencias*, 2(2), 25-31.
<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5761589>
- Chang, S. (2011). A Contrastive Study of Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Approach in Teaching English Grammar. *English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 13-24.
<http://dx.doi.org.10.5539/elt.v4n2p13>
- Chung, S.F. (2017). A communicative approach to teaching grammar theory and practice. *The English Teacher*, 34, 33-50. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:18896808>

- Chaverra, B.E., Gaviria, D.F. & González, E.V. (2019). El estudio de caso como alternativa metodológica en la investigación en educación física, deporte y actividad física.[Case study as a methodological alternative in researching physical education, sports and physical activity].*Conceptualización y aplicación. Retos*, 35, 422-427.
<https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/retos/article/view/60168>
- Díaz-Barriga, A. (2007). La entrevista a profundidad.[The in-depth interview].*TRAMAS. Subjetividad y Procesos Sociales*, (3), 161-178.<https://tramas.xoc.uam.mx/index.php/tramas/article/view/54>
- Fabre, P., Calero, J.L. & Albán, J.J. (2016). La enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en el Ecuador [Teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador]. *Didasc@lia: Didáctica y Educación*, 7(2), 109-122.
<http://revistas.ult.edu.cu/index.php/didascalía/article/view/479>
- Heacox, D. (2014). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: how to reach and teach all learners*. FreespiritPub
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2017). What is a case study?.*Evidence-based nursing*, 21 (1), 7-8
<https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2017-102845>
- Ismajli, H. & Imami-Morina, I. (2018). Differentiated Instruction: Understanding and Applying Interactive Strategies to Meet the Needs of all the Students. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(3), 207-218. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1183415>
- Kawulich, B. (2005). La observación participante como método de recolección de datos [Participative Observation as a data collection method].*FQS*, 6(2).
<http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/>
- López-Rama, J. & Luque-Agulló, G. (2012). The role of grammar teaching: from communicative approaches to the common European framework of reference for

languages. *Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas*, (7),179-191.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4995/rlyla.2012.1134>

Marriot, H. & Zambrano, A.M. (20018). Implementando la instrucción diferenciada en el aula de clase de idioma extranjero [Implementing differentiated Teaching in a the foreign language classroom]. *INNOVA Research Journal*, 3(5), 155-166.

<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6778652>

Medina, L. (2000). Gramadínámica: una propuesta teórica metodológica para estimular competencia comunicativa a partir de la gramática. [Gramadynamics: a theoretical and methodological proposal to stimulate the communicative competence from grammar]. *Onomázein*, 5, 295-299.

<http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=134518327019>

Newby, D. (2015). The role of theory in pedagogical grammar: A cognitive Communicative approach. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1(2), 13–34.

<http://dx.doi.org.10.32601/ejal.460614>

Sánchez, V. y Pérez, O. (2020). Communicative Approach in the Teaching-Learning Process of English as a Foreign language. *Revista ConCiencia*, 5(2), 1-14.

<https://doi.org/10.32654/CONCIENCIAEPG.5-2.1>

Ricoy, C. (2006). Contribución sobre los paradigmas de investigación. [Contribution about Research paradigms]. *Educação. Revista do Centro de Educação*, 31(1), 11-22.

<http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=117117257002>

Rojas, O. (1995). Teaching communicative grammar at the discourse level. *Encuentro: revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas*, 8, 173-189.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10017/902>

Rodríguez, G., Gil, J. & García, E. (1996). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa* [Qualitative Research methodology]. Ediciones Aljibe: Granada.

- Salazar, V. (2006). Gramática y Enseñanza comunicativa del español-lengua extranjera [Grammar and communicative Teaching of Spanish as a foreign language]. *Marco Ele, Revista de Didáctica Español Lengua Extranjera*, 2, 1-34.
<http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=92152371005>
- Sánchez, R. (2013). La observación participante como escenario y configuración de la diversidad de significados. [Participative observation as a scenery and configuration of meanings diversity]. En *Observar, escuchar y comprender. Sobre la tradición cualitativa en la investigación social*. México: FLACSO.
- SEP (2018). Plan de estudios licenciatura en educación primaria.[Syllabus for the elementary education bachelor's degree]
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (2002). Bases de la investigación cualitativa. Técnicas y procedimientos para desarrollar la teoría fundamentada.[Qualitative Research basis. Techniques and procedures to develop grounded theory]. Colombia: Universidad de Antioquía.
- Tomlinson, C.A. (2000). *Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades*. Eric Digest.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED443572>
- Zambrano, L. & Alirio, E. (2001). Aplicación del enfoque comunicativo a la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés en los establecimientos secundarios de Neiva.[Implementation of the communicative approach for English learning in Neiva's middle school]. *Entorno*, 2(14), 27-32.
<https://doi.org/10.25054/01247905.364>
- Varguillas, C.S. & Ribot de Flores, S. (2007). Implicaciones conceptuales y metodológicas en la aplicación de la entrevista en profundidad. [Conceptual and methodological implications of implementing in-depth interviews]. *Laurus*, 13(23), 249-262.
<http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=76102313>

Vu Phi Ho, P. & The Binh, N. (2014). The Effects of Communicative Grammar Teaching on Students' Achievement of Grammatical Knowledge and Oral Production. *English Language Teaching*, 7 (6). <http://dx.doi.org.10.5539/elt.v7n6p74>

Table 1*First Semester*

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Grammar Structure</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Introducing my family	Verb to be	Personal	Differentiation in learning profile/process	Describe photographs of famous families, songs and movies with verb to be. Participation in Google Classroom forum to present their families.
Describing rooms in a house	Descriptive adjectives. There is/there are A/an	Personal	Differentiation in aptitude/process	Choose one of three possible dialogues (basic, complex and more complex), answer listening comprehension questions..
Sharing daily routines	Simple present	Personal	Differentiation in learning profile/product	Record a video, audio note or make Power Point presentation explaining a day in the students' life
Exchange information about flora and fauna	Descriptive adjectives. There is/there are A/an Simple present	Community	Differentiation in learning profile/product	Students choose one ecosystem, they have to research its fauna and flora and make aninfo graphic, short documentary video o brochure about it.
Describe actions that teachers and students perform	Present continuous Action verbs	Professional	Differentiation in learning profile/process	Teacher shows a comic strip and classrooms photos so students describe the actions using the present continuous. In the video conference, teacher plays "charades" with the action verbs vocabulary.
Explain the characteristics of a great teacher	Modal verbs	Professional	Differentiation in learning profile/process	Teacher reads a Dr. Seuss story that includes modal verbs, and shows videos teachers. Students have to classify the characteristics of a good teacher according to the modal verbs.

Note. Elaborated by the author.

Table 2*Second Semester*

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Grammar Structure</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Make, accept and reject plans	Present continuous	Personal	Differentiation in aptitude/product	Choose one of the 3 possible oral communication activities (basic, more complex, complex), invent a role play about making plans.
Give indications to get to a place.	Wh-questions	Personal	Differentiation in aptitude/process	Identify wh-words in a song, role play about giving instructions, Google Classroom forum participation and feedback
Explain a recipe's ingredients and steps	Simple Present	Community	Differentiation in learning profile/process	Choose one of the following activities: take a selfie with my favourite dish, make a tutorial recipe video or write a recipe.
Describe handcrafts	Wh-questions Descriptive adjectives Verb to be	Community	Differentiation in learning profile, process	Multiple choice exercise to describe a handcraft, locate in a world map the origin of different handcrafts and identify the traditional object that the teacher shows on Zoom.
Give advice about health problems	Have/has Modal verbs	Community	Differentiation in interest/product	Choose one reading text of the 3 possible options (basic, more complex and complex), answer reading comprehension questions.
Talk about subjects of a schedule	Have/has Present continuous	Personal	Differentiation in aptitude/process	Song with school subjects, telling time dictation and using the students 'schedule to exchange information about subjects and daily activities.

Note. Elaborated by the author.