

Perspectives of students belonging to CAU Neiva, about their learning process of English in distance education

DIANA LUCIA RENDÓN GUTIERREZ

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Contextualization

This research was developed in the context of CAU Neiva. in this campus is offered The B.A. in foreign language- English, this program has 20 students , 12 of 20 students were interviewed and surveyed, some of these students are full- time and part-time workers. students of this campus have different **occupations**, **They do not have a lot of time** to attend to one university all days. They continually should make use of their ability for autonomous learning and in this way strengthen their learning process as distance students.

From my self- context, as English student emerged different research interests, I heard different opinions and perspectives of students about their learning processes in foreign languages in distance education.,



Research question and objective:

- What are the **perspectives** and opinions of students who belong The B.A in Foreign Languages-English at CAU Neiva regarding their English learning process in distance education?
- To provide a characterization of students who belong to the B.A in Foreign Languages at Santo Tomas University (CAU Neiva) and their perspectives about their learning process of English in distance education.



Justification



The development of this project was important...

1. There hasn't been a study to collect and **understand the perspectives and opinions** of students of English program about their English learning process in distance education.
2. This study help to strengthen the process of *institutional accreditation* with the **characterization and recognition of academic and social reality** of students and it allowed identify their strengths, and weaknesses in their English learning process.
3. The English program **can improve and strength some learning process** that involucrate to students and English teachers to face program objectives in a proper way.
- 4.This study enriched the socio- academic macro project, **provided** to English program the analysis about perspectives and opinions from students, related to their learning processes in the English learning in distance education.



Macroproject

Understanding and characterizing EFL in the LLEI: experiences and phenomena in the pre- service teacher's educational contexts"

-Academic experiences described by students in their academic context.

-Experiences when they practiced autonomous learning, time to practice English, how they distribute their time between family, work and studies, the support given by English teachers and some difficulties in their performance during the career

The understanding done taking into account the perspectives and opinions of students, it allowed specify in what were students' perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses in their English learning process at distance.

Subproject

“Understanding English teaching and learning contexts in EFL education”

- This study took place in my own context as an English student belonging to Santo Tomas university at CAU Neiva, in which the perspectives and opinions of students who belong to the B. A in Foreign Languages about their learning and about the support given by English teachers were collected.
- It is related with the teaching or guide given by teacher in learning processes of students.
- The information collected is focused in all factors of the educational context where learn students according to their perspectives and opinions, therefore in that educational context are many factors that contribute or affect the learning process of students for example: family, socio- cultural factors, time, different professions, autonomous learning etc.

Case study

-The collection of data was done with each one of students of English program, listening their experiences about their English learning process, their difficulties, strengths in all linguistics skills and some proposes done by them to improve the English learning process in the CAU Neiva beside, they expressed in line with their experiences what are the weaknesses and strengths of English program and how is their experience in their performance when they express ideas in the target language.

-After of collection information of experiences of students to examine each phenomenon through different questions done in the data collection instruments, it was done the first analysis of information which make the first understanding of perspectives and opinions of students.

Narrative analysis

(Medina, 2011) “In this narrative design, data are collected about life stories and experiences of certain people to be described and analyzed, besides in these stories and experiences are of interest the target population itself and the environment where people interact”.

Instruments

According to the context and the objective of research were selected three kinds of instruments: questionnaire, mailed questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire and the interview were selected to be **applied to students currently enrolled** in the career with which some of their perspectives and opinions were collected, and **the mailed questionnaire** was selected because with this collected information about the prospects of graduate students of the career.

Theoretical framework



Autonomous learning:

(Betts & Knapp, 1981)

Distance education

Ekmekçi E. (2014). "the convenience, flexibility and adaptability of this mode of education to suit individual students' needs".

Common European Framework:

NIVELES SEGÚN EL MARCO COMÚN EUROPEO	NOMBRE COMÚN DEL NIVEL EN COLOMBIA	NIVEL EDUCATIVO EN EL QUE SE ESPERA DESARROLLAR CADA NIVEL DE LENGUA	METAS PARA EL SECTOR EDUCATIVO A 2019
A1	Principiante	Grados 1 a 3	
A2	Básico	Grados 4 a 7	
B1	Pre intermedio	Grados 8 a 11	• Nivel mínimo para el 100% de los egresados de Educación Media.
B2	Intermedio	Educación Superior:	• Nivel mínimo para docentes de inglés. • Nivel mínimo para profesionales de otras carreras.
C1	Pre avanzado		• Nivel mínimo para los nuevos egresados de licenciaturas en idiomas.
C2	Avanzado		

In Colombia was adopted the scale according CEF

The acquisition - learning hypothesis

(Krashen, 2013) we have two very different ways of developing ability in another language, learning and acquisition.

(Ekmekçi, 2014) He investigated distance education students' **level of satisfaction and evaluations about distance English courses.**

Kenny & Zhang (2010) they argue that background knowledge and language proficiency, **impact the learning of the students** *Non-native English speakers required considerably more time to process readings and postings and to make postings themselves.*

(Sahin, & Shelley,2008) argues :

With this research is concluded that **understanding students' perceptions regarding distance education is the first step for developing and implementing a successful online learning environment.**

Interpreting information



Time to practice autonomous learning:

they **know the importance of autonomous learning** to achieve the academic objectives in a career in distance education therefore, many of them explain the form as they organize their activities and schedule to practice linguistics skills, for example:

listen to music, watch videos, reading some books, practice the language in different platforms, chatting with native persons, write the assignments of each subject, recording their voice to identify some mistakes in their pronunciation.

Normalmente, el tiempo que distribuyo, es alrededor de dos-tres horas por cada -unidad de trabajo- entre comillas, aclaro, para asi poder fortalecer en cada habilidad linguistica del ingles. Por lo general, yo por mi cuenta y bajo propio y autonomo ejercicio de investigacion, navego por paginas web dedicadas a fortalecer la escucha con distintos ejercicios y actividades. Asi mismo, tambien cuento con audifonos, microfono, me encierro en mi habitacion por el tiempo que yo necesite y asi voy tomandome descansos de intervalos entre 10-15 minutos como forma de receso, pero sigo con las lecturas de libros o cartillas de ingles que yo tenga en mi casa.

Image 2. Time to practice autonomous learning. Student 1. Questionnaire

(Betts and Knapp, 1981) the autonomous learner: "...one who solves problems or develops new ideas through a combination of divergent and convergent thinking and functions with minimal external guidance in selected areas of endeavor" (as cited in Fears, 2011 p.4)

- Leo artículos y noticias en inglés
- Escucho canciones en inglés todo el tiempo con las letras.
- Veo películas en inglés
- Converso con mis compañeros de trabajo y estudiantes.

Lectura de libros en inglés, cómics, noticias
- Escucho música en inglés, películas, veo documentales, reality shows,
- Escribo todos los días, cosas que hago diariamente en el idioma.

Image 4. Time to practice autonomous learning. Student 6. Questionnaire

It is necessary to improve linguistics skills practice them with a strategy very important like talking people from the other countries,

Mi tiempo lo distribuyo en los trabajos de la Universidad en su gran parte, Consultas por internet, aprendizaje autónomo, chatear con amigos de otros países que manejan el idioma.

This strategy is essential to improve linguistics skills because with it, students keep in contact with other English levels, kinds of vocabulary and they also can achieve a speaking level more advanced

Students do not have time because many of them work in rural areas where there is not **access to internet**, and many of resources given by English program are online also, some students have **full time jobs**

La utilidad que le doy no es muy constante pero, si cuando tenemos que leer algún artículo o para desarrollar algún trabajo se realiza, realizo la lectura. En cuanto al físico pues la verdad no ha habido muchos libros físicos, pero la utilidad que les doy siempre ha sido pertinente para desarrollar los trabajos dados por el docente.

Pues los libros que ofrecía la VUAD los trate de aprovechar al máximo, de hacerlos en su totalidad al igual que los ejercicios de la plataforma pero en realidad esos si eran muchos y no los desarrolle al 100%. ehh pues los libros que ofrecía la VUAD, de hacerlos en su totalidad al igual que los ejercicios de la plataforma aunque en realidad esos si eran muchos y no los desarrolle al 100%

Ekmekçi E. (2014) states, people prefer distance education for "the convenience, flexibility and adaptability of this mode of education to suit individual students' needs"(as is cited by Holmberg (1989, p 24). The students of Santo Tomas University are enrolled in this modality are those who are linked to work, and they have not the opportunity to access a conventional university.

Students have full time jobs and others work in rural areas, for this reason students in some occasions cannot organize their schedules for practice and use of resources, in occasions they cannot appropriate **the type of education to which they belong, they development activities without either a progressive** process where you can observe advances, it means that they do not take charge of their learning process in a properly way

RESOURCES GIVEN BY THE ENGLISH PROGRAM

(Tomlinson,2011) states “materials can be anything which is deliberately used to increase the learner’s knowledge and/ or experience of the language

habilidades en ciertos tópicos, entonces yo diría que la utilidad que le he dado al material físico y electrónico ha sido totalmente efectiva, me garantiza los conocimientos que o debo aprender y que además tienen actividades recreativas que también nos ayudan a mejorar.

Image 10. Resources given by the English program. Student 1. Survey

(Tomlinson,2011) states “Different learners have different preferred learning styles”, according to opinion of students the physical material given by the English program is good because, it has different didactic activities

This allows students to have a **sense of achievement** in their learning processes helping the learner to develop **self-confidence** when they make use of their autonomous learning as important aspect in the distance education.

Pienso que todos los recursos dentro de la licenciatura son buenos pero al desarrollarlos falta practica y tiempo, ya que muchas veces las tareas las actividades que los profesores implementan para el buen desarrollo de estas habilidades son de muy poco tiempo y no se desarrollan adecuadamente

Image 11. Resources given by the English program. Student 3. survey

La utilidad que le doy no es muy constante pero, si cuando tenemos que leer algún artículo o para desarrollar algún trabajo se realiza, realizo la lectura. En cuanto al físico pues la verdad no ha habido muchos libros físicos, pero la utilidad que les doy siempre ha sido pertinente para desarrollar los trabajos dados por el docente.

Image 12. Resources given by the English program. Student 7. survey

La verdad es que ha sido una utilidad del 100%, considero yo porque por el hecho de ser modalidad a distancia nosotros debemos proveernos y utilizar todo lo que ellos nos dan para poder pues sacar adelante un proceso de aprendizaje como es el idioma inglés.

(Cunnings worth, 1984) states students particularly more sophisticated adults and teenagers need to feel that the materials from which they are learning have to be connected with **the real world** and at the same time they must be related positively to the aspects of their inner make up such as **age, level of education, social attitudes, the intellectual ability and level of emotional maturity**.

En mi caso siempre lo estoy utilizando, bueno siempre lo trato de utilizar un día uno y otro día otro, porque son materiales excelentes pienso que son unos libros muy buenos y unos CDS que también me encantan y entonces día a día los trato de utilizar mucho, en mis clases en mi tiempo libre, y cada vez que puedo los utilizo.

Image 14. Resources given by the English program. Student 8. Survey

Yo considero que los recursos bibliográficos son de buena calidad, se han tenido buenos tutores regionales. La mayor dificultad fue, entre otras la falta de retroalimentación oportuna de parte de los tutores Nacionales y mayores recursos de inversión.

Image 16. Resources given by the English program. Student 11. Questionnaire

They feel that this support is as a resource more given by English program also, they think that it is a strength of English program of VUAD, learners think that it is important because their teachers have helped to achieve some of objectives of English program.

Fortalezas: Buenos docentes, buen material, buena plataforma, exigencia, calidad, los conversatorios los Sábados. Debilidades: Algunos docentes nacionales no responden a tiempo, el material llegaba tarde, no volvieron a dar los CDs del libro guía, se cambió el material físico por virtual

Image 18. Resources given by the English program. Student 12. Questionnaire

Las fortalezas que destaco dentro del programa Lengua Extranjera Ingles VUAD, podria ser su capacitacion de Docentes porque son Docentes que de verdad saben bastante del tema y lo dominan, lo cual ayuda a una satisfactoria orientacion frente a inquietudes que como uno de estudiante tenga, al igual que la disponibilidad y accesibilidad de tiempo, la

Image 19. Resources given by the English program. Student 1. Questionnaire

La verdad es que el acompañamiento de los docentes ha sido muy pertinente en cuanto al aula virtual y en cuanto a la tutorías presenciales, algunos no todos pero algunos docentes si responden a tiempo a nuestras solicitudes y también los docentes que están aquí presenciales en el CAU Neiva, también son docentes muy preparados todos, y la verdad es que si el acompañamiento ha sido muy pero muy bueno.

Image 20. Resources given by the English program. Student 7. survey

A nivel de los profesores que tuvimos a nivel regional, pues la asesoría fue muy importante porque teníamos la oportunidad de encontrarnos con ellos cada semana, digamos que eso nos ayudó mucho y nos enfocaba mucho en las materias pero, que obviamente el tiempo para mí es muy limitado en este sentido para poder tener mejor acompañamiento en el desarrollo de las habilidades.

Image 21. Resources given by the English program. Student 11. survey

IMMERSION ACTIVITIES AND LINGUISTICS SKILLS

When is asked to students talk about their experience using the English language, they think that their speaking skill is not as good as they expected in the beginning of career, they say it is responsibility of English program because it does not an enough support and interaction spaces of immersion to practice English language

Las debilidades son: falta de recursos para la practica del idioma, mas horas de clases de ingles para su comprensión y practica y poco tiempo con que contamos, por eso es importante mas tiempo en na universidad con la practica del segundo idioma.

Image 22. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 2. Questionnaire

- falta mayor espacios para practicar speaking y hacer uso del idioma en contexto real.
- Falta un espacio virtual diario, donde podamos encontrar un espacio para hablar y practicar el idioma.
- Faltan mayores tutorías

Image23. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 6. Questionnaire

They believe that these difficulties with their speaking skill are due to English program have not given or implemented constant spaces of immersion in the target language. However, students did not remember that immersion activities are not constant because **they are enrolling in a distance education**,

Mi experiencia ha sido regular; porque siento que hay un vacío muy grande en la parte comunicativa y una de las cosas es por la falta de estrategias de la universidad; pienso que deben reestructurar esta metodología en especial la b para mejorar la habilidad comunicativa..

Image 25. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 7. Questionnaire

Mi desempeño es bajo pues, en la carrera senti que habian fallas estructurales en la organizacion del pensum y los recursos para un contacto constante con el idioma ingles que permitan el desarrollo integral de mis habilidades comunicativas.

Image 26. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 11. Questionnaire

(Clever, 2013) states “Immersion programs, in which students spend at least 50 percent of their time learning in a second language, work amazingly well in developing students’ fluency and skills”,

Many of students are part of speaking project offers in the CAU Neiva one or twice in the month but, they believe that English program should more opportunities as speaking project to practice the target language

pueden hacer fácilmente realizar actividades aquí en Neiva, con docentes un solo día puede ser, quincenal que es más factible donde solamente se practique el inglés, donde solamente se desarrollen actividades fuera de la universidad, pienso que la universidad no es un lugar adecuado para realizar actividades como las que yo estoy pensando, en campo abierto que pueden ser juegos diálogos, dramatizaciones que son muy necesarias para poder desenvolvernos muy bien en este idioma en el inglés.

Image 27. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 3. Survey

Que sean con más frecuencia en el sentido de que no alcanza las horas, ya que el inglés es una carrera que debería ser de mucha constante practica a parte de la práctica que nosotros hacemos por fuera de la universidad , la universidad debería brindarnos muchas horas de practica en este caso de esta clase de immersion speaking.

Image 28. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 8. survey

(Underhill, 2015). states two of reasons why learning a new language requires immersion are, the first, you learn to let your fears go and the second You become acquainted with the way the language is spoken in "real life." Students have felt satisfaction when they have taken part of speaking project, they express that with this type of activities help to them to improve their linguistics skills with each activity development

Bueno para complementarlo lo que más hago es escuchar música entender la letra para ganar vocabulario he intentado también comunicarme con personas del habla inglés pero se me ha complicado un poco por el tiempo pero, intento comunicarme , a veces también busco por internet diálogos eee diálogos para mejorar la escucha.

Image 30. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 2. survey

La del habla siento que me hace mucha falta la parte de los tiempos y alguna pronunciación de los verbos, de verbos en pasado, para mí eso siempre se me ha dificultado un poco y si esos son una de las cositas que tengo por mejorar.

Students can improve their linguistics skills is with the tutorials provided each weekend in the CAU. According to opinion of students, this resource is very important because is the only one space where they can share with their teachers face to face and guide their learning processes in a synchronized way but, students also identify some difficulties with that resource given by English program

Con respecto a las tutorías he asistido a todas porque es el espacio donde yo puedo practicar con el profesor y con respecto a las cuatro habilidades también voy para que el profe me corrija y me ayude a mirar en que me estoy equivocando en los trabajos, se pueda mejorar pero creo que falta en algunos profesores más como el incentivo a la escucha y al habla porque pues de todas formas es un espacio pero no solo para que le revisen , uno les dice en algunos momentos nos ha colaborado con el speaking pero hace falta la escucha, no sé qué nos lleven una actividad de escucha y nos pongan a escuchar, nos pregunten... pues como si fuera una clase más que solamente revisión de trabajos que así lo veo yo.

Ahora solo voy para que me digan si mi trabajo está bien hecho o no, ya que como lo decía antes los docentes de ahora no se prestan como para uno establecer una conversación, una ayuda o algo más sino solamente revisar y listo está bien ya puede enviarlo no todos pero si los que han cambiado son así.

Image 34. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 3. Survey

Students recognized their responsibility in each one of these spaces for this reason, they believe, they do not make suggestions to their teachers in tutorials

algunas guías que me han enviado, les hago las preguntas y ellos me colaboran, la revisión de algunos trabajos pero también les pido que me den de pronto algunas páginas o algunas ideas para mejorar el speaking o la escucha y pues ellos me han asesorado. También les he pedido que la tutoría sea un poco más práctica para mejorar speaking y creo que también les hace falta un poco a los profes de eso no?

Tener mas sentido para con los estudiantes

Image 36. Immersion activities and linguistics skills. Student 2. Survey

SUPPORT GIVEN BY TEACHERS TO STUDENTS

(Sampson, 2003) states “the response of tutors and "turn-around time" for comments and grading is cited again and again as being a critical component of student support, with students who receive timely feedback on assignments responding more positively to the course than those who have to wait for feedback”

Han sido virtuales y presenciales, con los docentes regionales utilizo el WhatsApp ya que es un medio muy asequible el cual se da las respuestas rápidas, y por correo que es lo que nos brinda la universidad para con los demás docentes pero aunque muchas veces los docentes nacionales no responden con rapidez y tiene uno que esperar muchas veces se pasa el tiempo de enviar el trabajo y queda uno con las mismas dudas, entonces falta mucho, algunos docentes son muy demorados en responder, parecen que no estuvieran interesados en solo poner la nota al final y que el estudiante pierda pienso yo y ahí sí que podemos hacer? Nada, solamente

Image 38. Support given by teachers to students. Student 3. Survey

y recursos de la universidad. Sin embargo, una de las peores debilidades son la falta del acompañamiento en nuestro proceso de aprendizaje y la falta de retroalimentación en muchos de nuestros trabajos.

Es que quiero hacer una anotación aquí en esta pregunta, porque una de las grandes falencias que tuvimos nosotros y que reclamamos constantemente los estudiantes acá en el CAU Neiva era la falta de retroalimentación oportuna de los tutores nacionales, se les enviaba mucha comunicación por correo electrónico y sobre todo los trabajos cuando se entregaban se esperaba que tuvieran un máximo de tres a cinco días una ya una revisión, una retroalimentación que en la mayoría de los casos casi nunca obtuvimos, algunos maestros no se descarta que fue muy

Image 40. Support given by teachers to students. Student 11. Survey

Students, they feel the necessity of have immediate accompaniment by the national teachers who are the ones who assessment different assignments

A nivel de los profesores que tuvimos a nivel regional, pues la asesoría fue muy importante porque teníamos la oportunidad de encontrarnos con ellos cada semana, digamos que eso nos ayudó mucho y nos enfocaba mucho en las materias pero, que obviamente el tiempo para mí es muy limitado en este sentido para poder tener mejor acompañamiento en el desarrollo de las habilidades.

Support given by teachers to students. Student 11. Survey

Gibbs & Simpson (2004-2005)” In online learning, where there is no face-to-face interaction, instructors are particularly challenged to convey their intentions accurately and provide appropriate feedback to help students achieve the targeted learning objectives”,

Bueno pues aparte de que el profesor... en algún momento no haya comprendido algunas guías que me han enviado, les hago las preguntas y ellos me colaboran, la revisión de algunos trabajos pero también les pido que me den de pronto algunas páginas o algunas ideas para mejorar el speaking o la escucha y pues ellos me han asesorado. También les he pedido que la tutoría sea un poco más práctica para mejorar speaking, y creo que también les hace falta un poco a los profes de eso no? Tener mas sentido para con los estudiantes



Conclusions

The collection and analysis of data carried out in this research allowed the understanding of perspectives about the learning process of English in distance education of students belonging to CAU Neiva. **With this study academic and social characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of students were identified.** First of all, it was plausible to talk about **autonomous learning** since it is an ability that all distance students need to achieve the objectives of their career.

-Students have implemented different strategies to achieve the English level and objectives required in their career. In spite of all the activities or strategies developed, **they expressed that their English** level is not the required according to the level in which they are supposed to be. Consequently, they have encountered difficulties that have not allowed them to advance according to the objectives of the career.

- **Students belonging to CAU Neiva have another conception about tutorials**, by cause of they are aware of English level required by the English program, which they consider is not reached properly then they regard that tutorials should be oriented in another way, with the propose of improve the linguistics skills according to the needs of each student and not with the objective of revision or guide in assignments of each subject. Consequently, it is necessary regional teachers in each tutorial provide some suggestions which allow improve linguistics skills.

The first, students make suggestions for the **change of methodology** of tutorials but, the do not make those **demands on teachers, they just talk about weaknesses and they are not part of the solution**. The second issue is related with the amount of tutorials, although students practice autonomous learning tutorials are not enough taking into account that the B.A in Foreign Language is a career where students should be in contact with real contexts or immersion spaces for practice the target language.

-They practice the English language in many ways, but these **activities are not organized in a schedule**. Apart of that, **they do not have enough time to practice the target language**. Students should organize their academic schedule, **strengthening skills in which they have more difficulty** , they should be aware that the English program gives many resources that are helpful to achieve the objectives of the degree. However, these resources are only a scaffold because autonomous learning is the major element of a distance student.

-The English program contributes to the learning processes of students in many ways. Despite of this, **their learning processes have been affected**, on the grounds that **national teachers do not provide a quick feedback or assessment to assignments of students**. Learners can develop the next stage of some courses and they still do not know the results of the previous one or what was their process. It has not continued the learning process according the opinion of students interviewed. This makes the education system not work properly even.

-Learners have difficulties in the performance with **linguistics skills**, such as: the coherence between ideas when a paragraph is organized, some mistakes of grammar in the organization of sentences, listening comprehension when they listen native pronunciation, reading comprehension and the comprehension of foreign people.

- The English program should closely be **monitoring** the processes of learning of students, which should guarantee the fulfillment of the objectives and English level required for students when they finish the career, in this way students would be more satisfied with their performance in English, also English program should create strategies guarantor to strengthen students' communication skills and teach students suitable ways to create and organize their time and activities conforming to strengthen and weaknesses in the learning of English language.

- The support given by national and regional teachers is meaningful for students, they feel is a very good support, learners can keep in contact with some regional teachers through **social networks** students think would be necessary English program give more tutorials in each one of subjects because in The B.A. in foreign language in distance education is crucial the accompaniment of tutors.

-**The characterization** carried out with this study allows English program identified important aspects of learning process of students, English program can continue strength the academic process, focusing in the strengths and weaknesses of students.

-The students surveyed think **their speaking skill** is not as a good as they expected, even the students who finished all subjects of curriculum think the same, one of weaknesses of distance English program is the communicative performance of students.

In the case of campus of Neiva, students think about immersion activities are very important for strengthen linguistics skills of them, according to their experience when they attended "**speaking project**" carried in this campus some weekends,