

**Pedagogical Intervention at the UIS Language Institute as means of strengthening communicative competencies**

Práctica Empresarial

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### **Acknowledgments**

I am truly grateful to all the people who were part of my educational process, from the very first instance to the last one. In an effort to train quality professionals, my teachers have been a fundamental pillar and it is because of them that today I am at the doorstep of following up on the teaching legacy. To my parents, who have always been providing support in any situation, and especially to my life partner and wife Laura, who with her love and company made this stage of my life unforgettable.

- Camilo Monguí.

I'm deeply indebted to God, who gave me the opportunity to thrive in this unknown city and lifted my head up every time I felt unable to succeed; also, special thanks to my parents and siblings, who truly are my rock, thank you for betting on me and believing I am capable of everything I set out to do; finally, to my husband, who has always supported, nurtured and loved me throughout this process. I would not have been able to make it without them.

- Liseth Navarro.

**Table of Content**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1. Literature Review	13
1.2. Theoretical Bases	15
<b>2. Methodological Design</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1. Resources	16
2.2. Activities and Schedule	17
2.3. Data Collection Instruments	18
2.4. Pre-Tutoring Survey	18
2.5. Post-Tutoring Survey	18
2.6. Stages and Activities Implemented	18
<b>3. Analysis Of Results</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1. Description Of Population	21
3.2. Pre-Tutoring Survey	21
3.3. Development Of The Intervention	25
3.4. Post-Tutoring Survey	26
<b>4. Limitations</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5. Conclusions</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>33</b>

**List of Tables**

Table 1. Activities implemented throughout the business practicum.

13

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Demographic Data (Sex)	19
Figure 2. Demographic Data ( Gender)	19
Figure 3. English Level	20
Figure 4. Most liked skill	20
Figure 5. Most difficult skill	21
Figure 6. Hardest topic to understand	21
Figure 7. Was it possible to solve the existing doubts	23
Figure 8. How useful do you find the tutoring sessions	23
Figure 9. Did the practicing teacher fulfill their functions according to your language needs?	24
Figure 10. Does the tutoring program improve the ILUIS service?	24
Figure 11. Would you like to have the tutoring program more frequently at ILUIS?	25

### List of Appendix

Annex A. Pre-Tutoring Survey.	29
Annex B. Post Tutoring Survey.	29
Annex C. Lack of attendance from adult students.	29
Annex D. Virtual Tutoring Sessions.	30

### Resumen

**Título:** Intervención Pedagógica en el Instituto de Idiomas de la UIS como medio para fortalecer las competencias comunicativas.<sup>1</sup>

**Autores:** Liseth Dayanna Navarro Quintero y Andrés Camilo Monguí Ardila.<sup>2</sup>

**Palabras Clave:** Desafíos, Uis, Instituto, Tutoría, Futuros Docentes, Interés, Motivación, Actitud, Niños, Preadolescentes.

**Descripción:**

El Instituto de Lenguas de la UIS cuenta con una amplia oferta de programas para personas de cualquier edad a través de sesiones privadas, grupales e incluso intensivas. Sin embargo, hay casos en los que los alumnos tienen dudas o inquietudes sin resolver. Se sugirieron tutoriales en el sitio como una forma de ayudar a los estudiantes que enfrentan situaciones desafiantes con respecto al contenido de inglés, sin embargo, el resultado no fue exitoso debido a la falta de interés de los estudiantes adultos. Por ello, a través de encuestas, se propuso identificar las falencias de los alumnos más pequeños, preadolescentes y a su vez, recolectando información, se identificaron temas de mayor dificultad para tener un punto de partida claro para los tutores. Luego de las tutorías individuales y grupales, se concluyó que el servicio fue altamente satisfactorio, fomentando el aprendizaje y creando una alternativa educativa no solo para el

Instituto de Idiomas de la UIS sino también para los padres de familia que buscan constantemente que sus hijos tengan un buen dominio del inglés y la aceptación del idioma.

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<sup>1</sup> Tesis de Licenciatura

<sup>2</sup> Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas. Directora Tatiana Mikhailova.

### **Abstract**

**Title:** Pedagogical Intervention at the UIS Language Institute as means of strengthening communicative competencies.<sup>3</sup>

**Authors:** Liseth Dayanna Navarro Quintero and Andrés Camilo Monguí Ardila.<sup>4</sup>

**Key Words:** Challenges, UIS, Institute, Tutoring, Pre-service teachers, Interest, Motivation, Attitude, Children, Pre-teenagers.

#### **Description:**

The UIS Language Institute has a wide offer of programs to people of any age through private, group, and even intensive sessions. Nevertheless, there are cases in which students have doubts or there are gaps that are not filled. On-site tutorials were suggested as a way to help students facing challenging situations regarding English content, however, the result was not successful due to a lack of interest from adult learners. For this reason, through surveys, it was proposed to identify the shortcomings of the child and pre-teenager students and the most difficult topics in order to have a clear starting point for the tutors. After individual and group tutorials, it was concluded that the service was highly satisfactory, promoting learning and creating an educational alternative not only for the UIS Language Institute but also for parents who are

constantly looking forward to their kids having good English proficiency and acceptance of the language.

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<sup>3</sup> Bachelor Thesis

<sup>4</sup> Human Sciences Faculty. School of Languages. Director Tatiana Mikhailova.

## **Introduction**

### **Contextualization**

The UIS language Institute is acknowledged as the biggest foreign language academy in the Colombian east side. It has been active for 26 years providing its services to the Santanderean community. It is attached to the faculty of Human Sciences of the Universidad Industrial de Santander, nevertheless, it is a self-sustained organization.

Among the corporate objectives of the UIS Language Institute, it is worth mentioning offering quality Foreign Language Programs and services, meeting national and international standards for users, individuals, companies, educational institutions, and the UIS community in general. Likewise, improving the administrative and academic processes in order to provide a better service to its customers. Additionally, having a qualified human team committed to satisfying the needs of its clients, making rational use of resources, and finally, adopting the latest technology resources for the teaching of foreign languages.

### **Mission**

Its mission is to offer services and programs regarding foreign languages with the highest quality in order to continue with UIS and international standards focusing mainly on the users' satisfaction and benefits.

### **Vision**

Its vision is to reach more places around the region, improving their facilities and aiming for adequate resources to give virtual and presential English lessons.

### **Values**

Regarding values, it prioritizes the high quality of customer service for both internal and external customers. It also highlights the importance of treating everyone in their community with integrity, respect, kindness, and equality.

### **Service Portfolio**

The UIS Language Institute does not only offer English lesson programs for all the community in general regardless of their age but also, translation services, English for specific purpose courses (ESP), foreign languages intensive courses, etc.

#### ***Young people and adults course***

The program for young people and adults (for people over 15 years of age), is adapted to what is described by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, an international standard that serves as a pattern to measure the four main communicative skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing achieved by the students. These courses are developed in eighteen levels of forty hours each with an intensity of two hours a day (intensive course), four hours a day (super-intensive course), or four hours a week (Saturday course). The French,

Portuguese, Italian and German courses are developed in twelve levels of forty hours each with an intensity of two hours a day (intensive course) or four hours a week (Saturday course).

***Kids, pre-teenagers, and teenagers course***

The English courses for Children and Teenagers between 7 and 15 years old are developed in twelve levels of forty hours each with an intensity of four hours per week (Saturday course). It is important to highlight that the opening of the UIS Language Institute courses depends on the minimum number of people that guarantee its sustainability.

***Translation services***

The UIS Language Institute also offers translation services as follows: Spanish -English, English - Spanish, Spanish-Portuguese, Portuguese-Spanish, Spanish-Italian, and Italian-Spanish.

***English for specific purposes course (ESP)***

In this establishment, business English courses are also offered according to the particular needs and interests of each company.

***Other services***

Additional services are also included in the service portfolio including Official Administration of TOEFL iBT, GRE iBT, GRE paper-based, EXADEP, BE Program (blended English), TOEFL preparation course, holiday courses for children, and Institutional competence exams.

**Quality Indicators (Q.I)**

***Satisfaction level***

It is associated with the perception of the beneficiaries towards the services offered by the system of quality management and can be measured through the satisfaction survey.

***Service opportunities***

It is linked with the time of care and provision of the service offered to a beneficiary and set through the satisfaction survey or the records inherent to the process.

***Assertiveness in communication***

It implies the measurement of aspects such as accuracy of the information, clarity of information, and respectful care, which can be obtained through the satisfaction survey.

***Corporate objective indicators***

- The average number of students who pass the standard exam at the last level of each cycle according to the CEFR (A2, B1, B2).
- Level of compliance with the updated plan for instructors and directives during the year.

***Risks map indicator***

Percentage of fulfillment of the cycles planned and executed in the year.

**Justification**

The opportunity to provide the tutorial service and the experience of being the classroom teachers' assistants can amplify the pre-service teachers' panorama regarding their practical work experience. This can be a great chance to reflect on how better we can transfer the accumulated pedagogical knowledge to our future teacher role, by implementing the diversity of strategies, techniques, and methods in real-life classrooms.

The opportunity to serve as assistants and tutors in the Language Institute UIS, well recognized for its updated teaching methodologies and its outstanding quality of service can become a valued professional training, where the trainee teachers will observe different manners of integrating the acquired educational theories and knowledge with the practical realities of the classroom. Thus, by observing, analyzing, and assisting the everyday learning community at UIS, the student teachers will have an opportunity to develop their teaching skills and knowledge in the real-life classroom setting, with its corresponding advantages and constraints.

However, the main value and the particularity of this project is to start collecting experiences through observations, anecdotal notes, and posterior reflections, in order to enrich the pre-service teachers' professional creativity, understanding of the realities of language learning-teaching processes, to finally become better teachers-researchers and mentors, and to make more appropriate educational decisions in our professional life.

On the other hand, we expect to contribute positively to the quality of education of young learners at the Language Institute, by being attentive to their needs, difficulties, or different issues that can take place inside and outside the classrooms. We also expect that this business practicum can lead us to become more reflective, and attentive to our teaching behavior, so we can get enough insights, ideas, and reflections about the daily reality of the Language Institute.

## **Practicum Objectives**

### ***General Objective***

To foster the communicative competencies of the young learners at the Language Institute, by providing the necessary tutorial service and by assisting learners in their classrooms.

### ***Specific Objectives***

- To center the support during the tutorial service on oral production and oral interaction processes.
- To fortify oral interaction procedures in the classrooms, at the determined moments of the class.
- To determine if these interventions improve the communicative competencies of the young learners through the analysis of pre and post-tutoring surveys.

## **1. Theoretical Framework**

### **1.1. Literature Review**

*Aguilar, R. F. C., Cuellar, J. H. O., & Aguilar, A. C. (2019). Daily 6: An approach to foster oral fluency of English as a foreign language in adolescents. Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 21(2), 29-44.*

Fluency in a language is a key factor when developing interpersonal relationships and, at the same time, is an indicator of the speaker's high proficiency. This article focused on non-fluent teenage students being exposed to the Daily 6 approach in order to enhance oral fluency through technology using surveys, diagnostic tests, and software called VoiceThread in order to record their oral production and analyze it. The outcome of this research indicated significant improvements in oral fluency and higher motivation levels in virtue of providing them with a low-anxiety environment of learning.

***Valencia Valencia, S. F. (2018). Collaborative strategies to enhance oral interaction in an EFL classroom.***

Interpersonal relationships can hardly occur with zero interaction between individuals. When it comes to classroom environments, oral communication processes constitute one of the most relevant aspects to consider in order to acquire knowledge or information. During this research study, the author intended to foster oral interaction among seventh grader students from a public institution in Bogota. Some of the group characteristics included shyness, apathy, and bad relationships between themselves. Through collaborative strategies based on communicative approach principles, students made a 180-degree turn by being more participative, receptive to teachers' commands, and willing to interact in English.

***Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, D. (2005). Developing oral skills through communicative and interactive tasks. Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development, (6), 83-96.***

Some students experience socialization problems due to the bad approach that is given to this matter by instructors or teachers. In this project, the sample included ninth-grade students from a public institution in Bogota. The first step was a needs analysis in which lack of interaction and communication problems were revealed. Through the usage of interactive activities, motivating tasks, and conversational activities, students were able to engage in smoother oral environments of practice and interaction. Changes in learners' attitude, syllabus design, and English fluency were considered to be the most significant results after the research process.

## 1.2. Theoretical Bases

***Aguilar, R. F. C., Cuellar, J. H. O., & Aguilar, A. C. (2019). Daily 6: An approach to foster oral fluency of English as a foreign language in adolescents. Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 21(2), 29-44.***

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## **2. Methodological Design**

### **2.1. Resources**

The UIS Language Institute has a varied selection of technological resources in favor of the frequent use of ICT and to favor the learning of our students.

**Computer:** To prepare each tutoring lesson and provide assistance to the EFL teachers.

**Smartboards:** To explain the lessons with higher quality.

**Speakers:** To play songs, amplify the sound, and reproduce audiovisual resources.

**Video Beam:** To project visual aids such as pictures, videos, movies, flashcards, etc.

## 2.2. Activities and Schedule

**Table 1.**

*Activities implemented throughout the business practicum.*

<b>PHASE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>DURATION (WEEKS)</b>
1	Practicum project elaboration	4
2	Observation and Recommendations from Directors	2
3	Tutoring	8
4	Surveys	2
5	Results and analysis	4
6	Final report elaboration	3

*Note: This table shows the duration of each stage carried out during the business practicum.*

As part of the graduation process, this work was divided into several phases. In the first, the business practice modality was proposed where the company in which the intervention was developed was the UIS Language Institute, there, and after discussing the purpose with the directors, the idea was proposed, and once we evaluated the options, the go-ahead was given by them. In the second part, we developed the proposed activities as customized tutoring services, either face-to-face or virtual. Throughout the project, pre- and post-tutoring surveys were delivered to the beneficiaries, after people filled out the surveys, the results were analyzed and, at the end, the final report was built.

### **2.3. Data Collection Instruments**

In order to obtain a perspective of the students who were beneficiaries of the tutoring service, two surveys in the students' mother language were designed, which were completed only and exclusively by the students who were part of the process. The surveys were made on Google Forms, they were conducted with the purpose of recognizing the specific language necessities, lacks, and wants of learners (Kaewpet, 2009).

### **2.4. Pre-Tutoring Survey**

The first survey (see Annex A) was created with the main purpose of getting to know the students better. This survey was filled out before taking the tutoring service and hence, tutors could identify their needs, expectations, and interests about taking the tutoring sessions.

### **2.5. Post-Tutoring Survey**

Through the second survey "post tutoring" (see Annex B), it was intended to know the perceptions that the beneficiaries had of the service provided by the tutors. Likewise, the students had the chance to rate the quality of the sessions, providing a perspective of the work carried out.

### **2.6. Stages and Activities Implemented**

From the very beginning of the implementation, the main purpose consisted of attending customized sessions in a medium-sized classroom. It was also hoped that, at the end of our didactic intervention, the students of the Saturday course of the UIS Language Institute could be

able to find in us an additional resource to overcome possible concerns related to the subject of the language courses. Next, it will be described in detail each one of the stages that took place throughout the project.

### **Recognition of the Company.**

Through this phase, it was possible to have a conversation and subsequent acceptance by the director and coordinators of the UIS language institute, who were excited by the proposed work plan.

### **Creation of work plan by weeks.**

In this stage and after considering the options that were offered by the administratives, a work plan was designed so that it could fulfill the needs of both students and tutors. It was thought in this phase that the intervention would be carried out at UIS Language Institute Cabecera branch.

### **Intervention at Cabecera Branch**

The first part of the practical part from tutors started at the Cabecera branch where its director Claudia, provided us with people who were interested in taking the tutoring sessions. Most of the students who were part of the sessions argued about not having enough theoretical basis or structures that allowed them to communicate effectively in English, for this reason, they seemed motivated about the sessions. During the first three weeks, we as tutors (Liseth and Camilo) attended the Institute 10 hours a week, looking forward to solving students' questions and concerns regarding English topics or structures. However, after three weeks approximately, more and more students decided to stop attending the sessions. (see Annex C) It was a big concern for us since it was not predicted in the expected outcome. We as tutors had to

troubleshoot it and it was thanks to coordinator Angel that we were able to go on a different way of interventions.

### **Virtual Tutoring Sessions.**

As an alternative to what happened previously, and through the management of the grade director Tatiana M, we managed to establish an alternative model to develop the intervention. This model would bring with it virtual tutorials, which would be previously requested by the students or students' legal guardians of the UIS Language Institute at the main headquarters. As in the past model, availability would be 10 hours per week, as outlined by business practicum requirements. Despite the fact that in this phase it was not always possible to cover 10 hours due to the lack of students willing to request tutorials, it was possible to carry out several virtual sessions, (see Annex D) which were of great help to the students as described by the results of the surveys, which will be described in the next section.

### **3. Analysis Of Results**

The results obtained from each test and survey to the administrative staff will be presented with their respective analysis; both pre-test and post-test will be compared to show the level and comprehension of the group to the situations posed the first time and then to illustrate the effect of the intervention after taking the post-test.

### **3.1. Description Of Population**

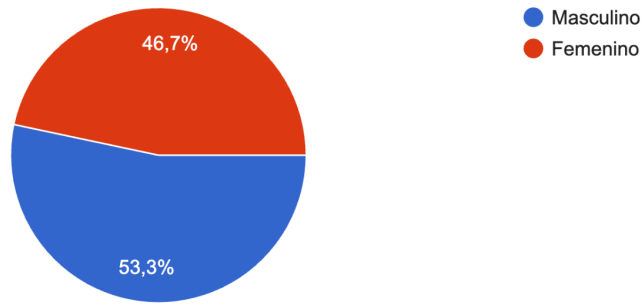
The population consisted of students of the language institute UIS living in the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga, and only one student who traveled all the way from Zapatoca to the city to be in the tutoring sessions for one week; most of the students belonged to the groups of pre-teenagers and teenagers, three of them in the group of adults. Two virtual surveys were conducted, before and after the intervention with the students to find out their personal interests, English level, and willingness to take the classes among other questions were asked to each student and analyzed with the purpose of fronting the students' perceptions before and after the tutoring classes.

### **3.2. Pre-Tutoring Survey**

The survey conducted before the tutoring provided us with demographic data to analyze our population.

#### **Figure 1**

*Demographic Data (Sex)*

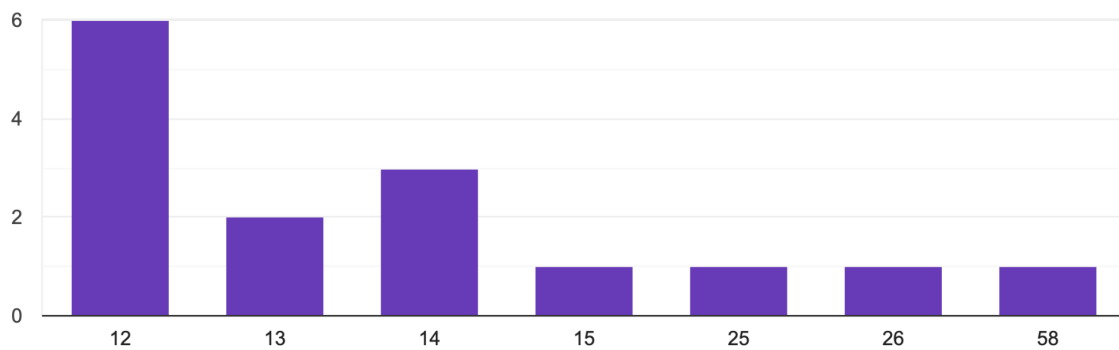


*Note: This diagram represents students' gender.*

The first demographic question to the fifteen participants is regarding the participants' sex and most of the group was identified as males with 53,3%, followed by 46,7% identified as females.

**Figure 2**

*Demographic Data (Age)*

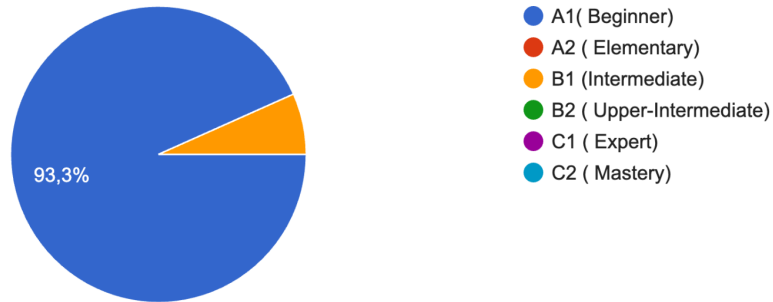


*Note: This table represents students' age.*

According to Figure 2, it is evidenced a varied group that oscillates between 12 to 58 years old with the highest percentage represented by participants aged 12 years.

**Figure 3**

*English level*

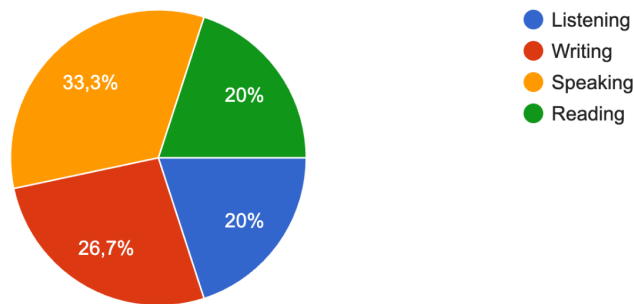


*Note: This figure classifies the participant’s English level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*

Based on Figure 3, they are estimated to have a Beginner English level (A1) with 93.3% and an Intermediate English level (B1) with 6,7%. None of the participants considered themselves to be above the B1 level.

**Figure 4**

*Most liked skill*

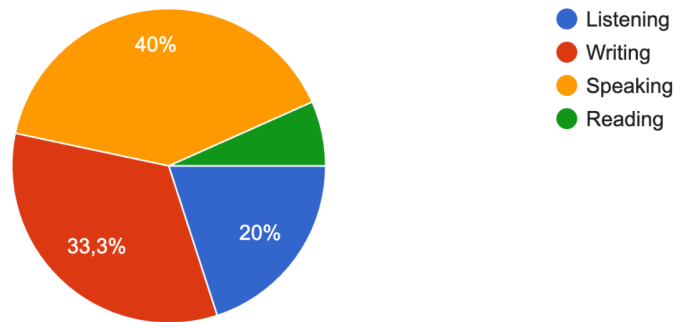


*Note: This figure classifies the participants’ preferences when it comes to English skills*

Regarding Figure 4, it is estimated that the most liked skill is oral production (speaking) with 33,3%, followed by writing production with 26,7%, then we can find a tie down between listening and reading, both with a 20% of answers in favor.

### Figure 5

*Most difficult skill*

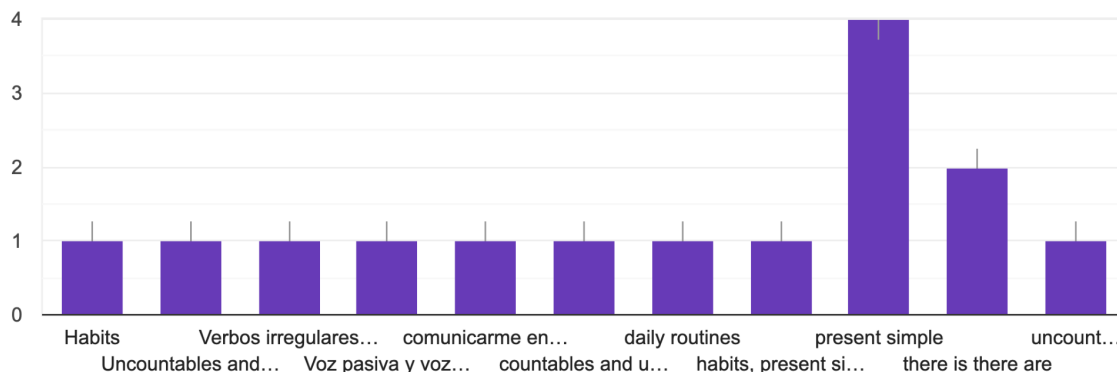


*Note: Now, this figure classifies the English skills that are found to be the hardest to perform*

According to figure 5, it is estimated that the most difficult skill is oral production (speaking) with 40% of answers pointing that way, it is somehow peculiar observing the way students like speaking the most but also find it the most difficult, followed by the writing production with a 33,3%, then we can find listening with a 20% and finally reading with 6,5%.

### Figure 6

*The hardest topic to understand*



*Note: This diagram represents some of the most difficult English topics for students.*

According to this figure, some of the hardest topics or subjects for students to understand include habits, irregular verbs, countable and uncountables, English communication, and routines. However, it was noticeable that an important number of students argued having issues with present simple, this is one of the most concerning topics when starting learning English, and, as described before, the majority of students who asked for the service were beginners.

### **3.3. Development Of The Intervention**

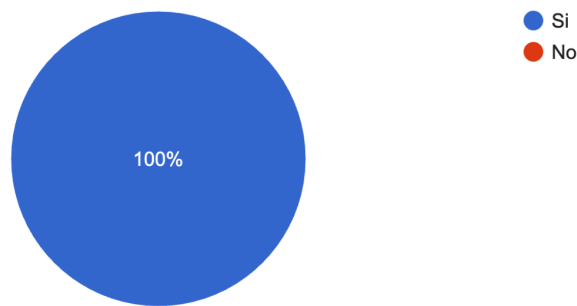
The tutorial lessons were carried out based on the guidance provided by the institute, which consisted of a document with the number of students, their personal information, and the topics to work on; the pre-tutoring survey would be conducted first to set a previous perception followed by the lesson given by one of the practicing teachers; lessons would normally take one hour or two depending on the number of students present on the tutoring session. At the end of each lesson, the second survey would be conducted to provide a new perspective after the intervention and analyze them both.

**3.4. Post-Tutoring Survey**

This survey is expected to provide information about the students’ impression of the service that the practicing teachers are contributing to the Languages Institute UIS.

**Figure 7**

*Was it possible to solve the existing doubts?*

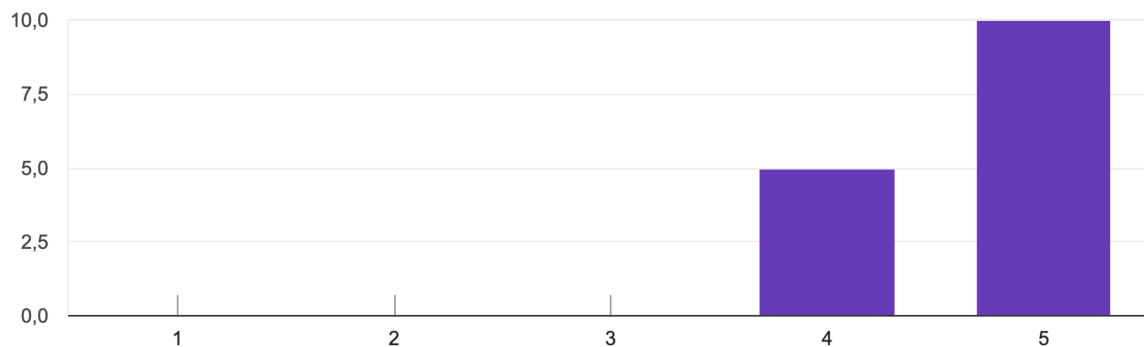


*Note: Students thoughts about questions and doubts solving by tutors.*

In this question, as is shown in the graphic, 100% of the population received the needed help to solve their doubts and questions; the previous graphic expresses the effectiveness of the tutoring sessions and the practicing teachers.

**Figure 8**

*How useful do you find the tutoring sessions?*

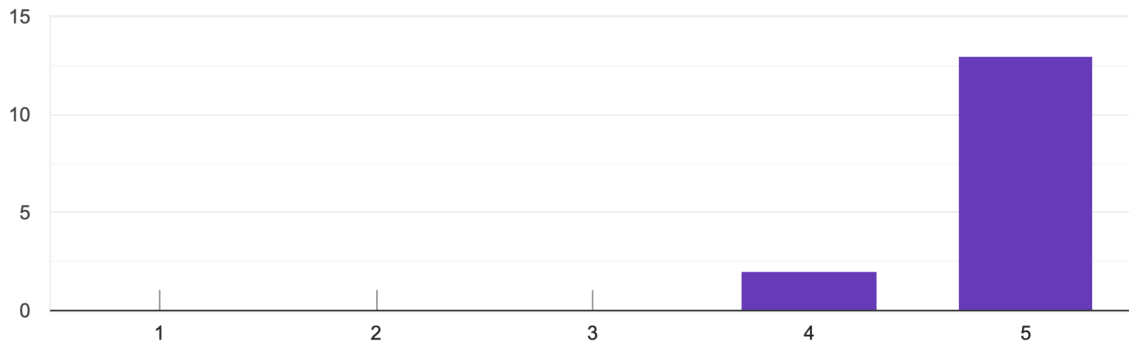


*Note: This figure represents the level of usefulness of the tutorships.*

According to this figure, the majority of students found the sessions quite useful. Around 67% of students qualified the utility of the sessions with the highest score in the rank, and only 33% graded the utility with the second highest score; expressing the students' well reception of the practicum.

**Figure 9**

*Did the practicing teacher fulfill their functions according to your language needs?*

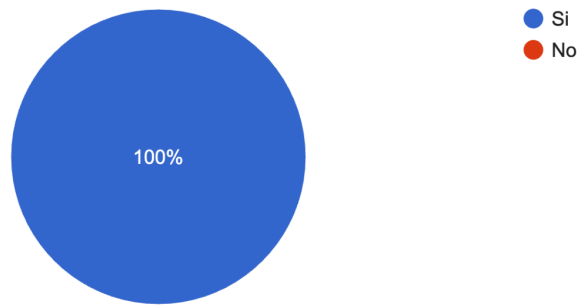


Note: Effectiveness of the service provided by practicing teachers.

With 86,8% of answers grading positively in the previous graphic, it is possible to affirm that the practicing teachers' performance is efficient and professional enough to reach the goals of the tutoring sessions.

**Figure 10**

*Does the tutoring program improve the ILUIS service?*

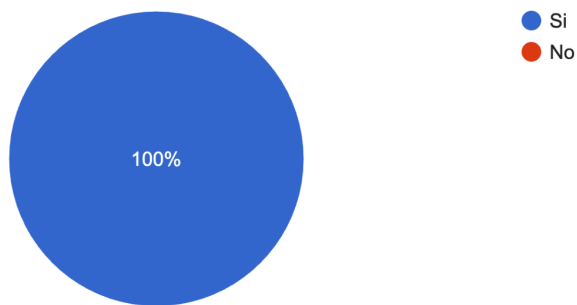


*Note: Level of improvement of the UIS Language Institute with the tutorships.*

Agreeing with the previous graphic it is accurate to affirm that the student as the user feels satisfied and driven by the implementation of a tutoring service program, therefore it is correct to say that 100% of the students would rather attend the assigned tutoring sessions if implemented constantly, as it is shown in the following graphic.

**Figure 11**

*Would you like to have the tutoring program more frequently at ILUIS?*



*Note: Willingness to accept future tutoring sessions at the UIS Language Institute.*

As described in the graphic, students will be glad to keep having future tutoring sessions at the UIS Language Institute as an effort to improve their English skills as well as their language proficiency.

#### **4. Limitations**

Once the results have been analyzed, it can be determined that, although the level of satisfaction on the part of the beneficiaries was high, there were many limitations that had an impact on the development of the intervention. Firstly, there was a noticeable willingness from both tutors and administrative workers. This being said, it is important to highlight the effort in making tutoring services visible to everyone (see Annex C). Nevertheless, as described in the situation at Cabecera place, some students were not quite interested in taking the free tutoring services even though it was being constantly announced in several places including on social media, on websites, and also, at the main entrance of the UIS Language Institute. Additionally, during the second stage of the intervention, the number of virtual tutoring requests was not as high as expected at first although it was higher than the face-to-face ones at Cabecera. Pricing and tutoring costs might have been the reason for the lack of demand.

We advise that, for further interventions, it is remarkably important pre advertise with all the community members looking forward to spreading the information and attracting interest from them as well as doing pre-research in order to find acceptance or interest in this kind of service.

#### **5. Conclusions**

To sum up, the effectiveness of the voluntary tutoring sessions in adults is nearly null and not due to the content, but due to the lack of demand of requests made by the students; also, for a tutoring session to be effective, it must be assigned by the teacher in charge, we could prove that the most assisted sessions were because of the recommendations and assignments of the

teachers; therefore, the students of the ILUIS who assisted repetitively claimed to have improved their English level and even their grades. Having the fact of applying tutoring sessions performed by the students of the language school at UIS represents a WIN-WIN relationship; on one hand, the institute improves the students' level without increasing its monetary cost; on the other hand, the practicing tutors obtain benefits such as the development of their degree project and the professional practicum.

Some recommendations include the implementation of programs with practicing students of the school of languages in the ILUIS, more frequently and in a higher amount. Also, it is important the assignment of a specific department that could manage the recruitment of practicing tutors from the language school UIS so that there is a better synergy in the process of the practicum.

Finally, it is important to take into account the assignment of the tutoring sessions by the teachers in charge at the ILUIS to the students that require extra help with the topics seen in class.

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## Appendix

### Annex A. Pre- Tutoring Survey

#### Encuesta Previa Tutorías UIS Language Institute

Reciban un cordial saludo estudiantes y acudientes del Instituto de Lenguas UIS Sede Cabecera y Sede Central. Esperamos se encuentren muy bien.  
Les saluda Camilo Monguí y Liseth Navarro, estudiantes de la carrera de licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander.  
Somos estudiantes de décimo semestre y mediante este proyecto de práctica empresarial, ofrecemos tutorías a nivel grupal o individual de acuerdo a las necesidades que se presenten en los diferentes cursos que se ofrecen.

### Annex B. Post Tutoring Survey

4. En una escala del 1 al 5 responda, considera que el trabajo realizado por los tutores corresponde a sus necesidades en el idioma? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
No corresponde	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Corresponde

### Annex C. Lack of attendance from adult students.



### Annex D. Virtual Tutoring Sessions

